



**Convention on the  
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**COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**  
**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES**  
**UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2000**

**SURINAME\* \*\***

[22 August 2005]

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\* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Suriname, see CRC/C/28/Add.11, for its consideration by the Committee, see documents CRC/C/SR.635-636 and CRC/C/15/Add.130.

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## DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

### A. Demography

1. Suriname is a country with a relatively low annual average population growth of 1.3 per cent. The estimated population grew from 409,000 to 425,000 (4.9 per cent) between 1995 and 2000. Disaggregated data were available only until 1995. In this particular year Suriname's mid-year population was 408,866. About 33 per cent of the population is youth in the age group 0-14. More accurate data will be provided by the Millennium Population Census that is expected to start in 2003.

2. The total economically active population (age group 15-65 and over) in the two urban districts of Paramaribo and Wanica was approximately 95,000 (32 per cent). According to official statistics women comprised 35 per cent of the labour force, but in reality this figure is obviously higher because official statistics do not reflect the large proportion of women who are involved in informal and unpaid labour. The total unemployment rate for men and women taken together was approximately 10 per cent. In every year women experienced significantly higher unemployment; in most years twice as high as their male counterparts.

### B. Economy

3. Suriname's deteriorating economy was marked by some significant trends in production and the labour market. Many businesses (40 per cent) were affected by low profits, increased labour costs and high dependency on imported inputs. The Asian crisis and globalization had severe negative effects on Suriname's export economy, such as loss of preferential and other markets. As a result of both domestic and international factors, a considerable proportion of private businesses face a doubtful future.

4. GDP growth rates decreased from 3 per cent in 1995 to 2 per cent in 1998 (IDB). After the average annual inflation rate had rocketed to an astronomical 369 per cent in 1994 (236 per cent in 1995), it dropped to 21 per cent in 1998. In spite of this positive turn, an estimated 85 per cent of the population continued to live below the poverty line. The cause of this continuing impoverishment was the steadily increasing exchange rate of the Surinamese guilders vis-à-vis the American dollar (during mid-year 2000 already Sf 3,000 : \$1). Owing to the measures for economic recovery introduced by the newly elected Government in 2000, the exchange rate for the United States dollar stabilized around Sf 2,325 since December 2000. Simultaneously with new adjustment measures, the Government of Suriname introduced a temporary financial compensation for public servants and for those entitled to social benefits in order to strengthen their purchasing power. The private sector has also been asked to give compensation to its personnel.

5. The economic crisis had unavoidable impacts on the labour market. Structural unemployment, the loss of real income and an increasing movement towards informal employment were the main trends observed in the late 1990s. The negative economic situation increasingly forced women to perform paid labour, thus pushing up the unemployment rates for women and consequently forcing them to seek employment in the informal sector. According to the General Bureau of Statistics (ABS) the unemployment rates for women increased from 11 per cent in 1995 to 16 per cent in 1997. For men the rate was 7 per cent in 1995 and 1997.

### **C. Politics**

6. This periodic country report covers two periods of fundamentally different political governance, coinciding with the national elections held in May 1996 and May 2000. The fundamental difference is that in 1996 the newly elected Wijdenbosch Government cancelled the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme, which the Venetiaan Government had introduced in 1993 to revitalize country's economy. However, in 2000 the economic reform programme was put back into effect after a victory of the "New Front" coalition party. President Venetiaan again leads the new cabinet.

7. Since the independence of Suriname in 1975, the socio-political climate has been one of continuing turbulence. The country's independence, the coup d'etat in 1980 and the introduction of a structural adjustment programme in 1993 have led to substantial emigration. Along with this exodus, the situation in the country has been frequently affected by strikes and street demonstrations demanding the reduction of prices, increased salaries, increased availability of housing and eventually the resignation of the ruling Government. The last major strikes, which began in 1998 and continued into 1999, resulted in early elections in 2000.

8. The increasing poverty in Suriname has created the priority for a poverty reduction plan. With UNDP's support, the Government initiated a poverty analysis study in 1998 in preparation of a national strategy for poverty reduction. The study is ongoing. The current Government Declaration emphasizes sustainable development and the initiation of coordinated efforts towards poverty reduction. The Government has identified women (heads of households), youngsters (under 18 years), people with a disability, elderly people (60 years and older) and low-income households as special vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing maintained its responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Child Rights Convention, as well as the implementation of child rights promotion (within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and their specific context to the country).

## **I. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **A. Introduction**

9. The period of 1991 to 1996 was characterized by a growing awareness that the Government of Suriname should change its role and image from a fully providing to a facilitating State. Amidst this transition, which was accompanied by structural adjustment, the Government committed itself to the implementation of the CRC. With a strongly reduced budget and implementation capacity, the Government still managed to initiate a number of legal and policy-related measures. In addition, the Government managed to sustain a social system that includes a subsidy scheme for vulnerable individuals.

10. To provide certain types of public services the Government built close relations with civil society organizations (CSOs). Their capacity to provide social services led CSOs to fulfill a

complementary role and therefore the Government purposely promoted this process in order to create a basis for increased community participation. CSOs specialize in protecting and promoting the interests of various beneficiary groups. The Government contributed to and facilitated this process by lending salaried personnel and providing facilities for meetings.

11. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing contracted a private consultant to assist with the formulation of Suriname's first periodic CRC report (CRC/C/28/Add.11) for submission to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Two workshops were held, including one with young people, to discuss the draft report. Comments were included in the final version.

## **B. Legislation and policy**

### **1. Status of the Convention in domestic law**

12. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified in 1993 and published in Suriname's *Official Gazette* of November 1999.

13. Article 103 of the Constitution states that agreements with other powers and international organizations shall be concluded by or with the authority of the President, and insofar as the agreement requires shall be ratified by the President. The National Assembly shall be notified of such agreements as soon as possible; they shall not be ratified and they shall not come into effect until they have received the approval of the National Assembly.

14. Article 105 of the Constitution provides that the provisions of the agreements mentioned in article 103, which may be directly binding on anyone, shall become in force upon promulgation.

15. Article 106 of the Constitution stipulates that legal regulations in force in the Republic of Suriname shall not apply if such application should be incompatible with provisions of agreements which are directly binding on anyone and which were concluded either before or after the enactment of the regulations.

### **2. Conformity of national legislation with CRC**

16. The process of making national legislation conform with the CRC is ongoing, although at a slower pace than desired because intervening political issues often required the full attention of policy makers. The first comprehensive analytical comparison of the national legislation with the CRC took place prior to Suriname's ratification of the CRC in 1993. The preparation of the initial report elaborated upon this analysis. Several thematic analyses were conducted since, including legislation with regard to childcare and protection, and the recently completed juvenile justice assessment.

17. Based on the outputs of ongoing analyses, the Government continues to work on bringing national legislation into conformity. This process requires time and continued research, with consideration of social and contextual factors. The political unrest and strikes of 1998 and 1999 were responsible for a major delay in the work of the Government and the National Assembly, as a result of which the anticipated approval of the draft bills was seriously delayed. That the Government underscores the priority and urgency of aligning legislation with the convention and local practice was illustrated by the progress made in spite of the many challenges encountered.

18. With reference to the bills developed, as listed in paragraph 11 of the initial report, the status of affairs is as follows:

- The bill on the elimination of discrimination of children born out of wedlock was adopted by the National Assembly and took immediate effect in February 2000 (published in the *Official Gazette* of 18 February 2000);
- The two bills on offenses against public decency are still a draft; an inter-ministerial Committee was appointed to complete the draft;
- The bill on visitation rights of divorced parents (and visitation rights of close relatives and other significant persons for the child), and the bill of hearing minors during court proceedings, which concerns their personal interest, are yet to be adopted. The bill on visitation rights is currently at the National Assembly for approval, while the bill of hearing minors is at the State Council. The National Women's Movement has submitted a proposal to UNICEF for adjustment of the bills and for a public awareness campaign.

19. With respect to other and new initiatives it should be indicated that:

- The Ministry of Social Affairs awaits the approval of the National Assembly concerning the bill on Child Care and Day care centres;
- A bill has been developed for the legal regulation of social assistance for Youth. The draft contains a paragraph on the regulation of foster care, and the registration and certification of all Government, non-governmental and private institutions. The next step planned is the consultation of all partners to receive their input and final approval;
- Suriname participated in the regional initiative to conduct a Juvenile Justice Study in order to assess the situation of juvenile delinquency. The study in Suriname was conducted in 1999-2000 and pointed out the urgent need for adjustment of the Surinamese Penal Code for youth 10-18 years of age, because Suriname's legal system does not adequately regulate the position and protection of young persons in conflict with the Law. Because of increasing juvenile criminality and the situation of

children in prison, this issue is receiving the Government's serious attention. In this regard a special meeting held in 2000 approved the following proposed increase of ages for penalty:

- from 12 to 14 years officially, and
- from 14 to 16 years in case of complaint;
- The National Women's Movement has developed a 3-year project for reform of marriage legislation, including the increase of the minimum age for Asian marriage (Hindus and Islamic), and the elimination of the unequal provisions made for age of the female and male. The proposal has been submitted to donors for funding;
- Within the framework of its annual Project Plan of Action for the GOS/UNICEF programme, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has included a project for addressing the minimum age for employment. This was in recognition of the existing age gap between the maximum age for obligatory education (12 years) and minimum age for employment (14 years).

### **C. Social policies and programmes**

#### **1. Budget trends**

20. The absence of budgetary analyses makes it impossible to indicate trends regarding the amount and proportion of the national budget spent on children. Since 1998, the Government of Suriname has been allocating 25 per cent of the national budget to the social sector, approximately two thirds of which were spent on salary and overhead costs. The main beneficiaries of the remaining budget were mothers and children. The Government has been working on the development of models for effective distribution between the sub-sectors (Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, Education and Community Development, Health, and Labour and Environment) for this 25 per cent of its funds. A fundamental challenge is the great imbalance between overhead costs and the expenditures on activities. It was roughly estimated that (only) 30 per cent of the available budget for the social sectors was spent on activities. In this context it requires mentioning that public sector reform (rationalization of employees and resources) is an ongoing issue that has recently resulted in a draft plan from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

21. The Government also supports the 20/20 concept, which stipulates that 20 per cent of Government spending and international support should be dedicated to basic social services directly. In this context the Director of the General Bureau for Statistics participated in a regional workshop for budget analysis models and skills. Since 1998 the Government has been preparing to conduct an in-depth 20/20 country analysis. Socio-economic and political instability, as well the lack of human resource capacity has contributed to this delay. With UNICEF support the 20/20 country analysis will be implemented in 2001.



## **2. National policy and plan of action in the framework of the Convention**

22. The finalization of a proposed framework for National Youth Policy in 2000 by the National Steering Committee for Youth Affairs, appointed by the President, was an important step forward. It was the result of consultations of sector Ministries, NGOs and the National Youth Council. In August 2000 the Steering Committee officially presented the National Youth Policy Framework to the President. The policy framework outlines the steps to be undertaken in the following four priority areas: (a) survival and health care; (b) early development and education; (c) the right to protection; (d) participation.

## **3. Persons with a disability**

23. A National Advisory Council for Policy for People with Disabilities advises the Government on requests as well as unsolicited. To promote the integration of disabled people in society, as concluded in the framework of the United Nations resolution of 4 March 1994, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing initiated an assessment of the conditions of disabled people with respect to all aspects of human life.

## **4. Protection against adverse effects of economic policies**

24. The Government initiated the following measures to protect children and families against the adverse effects of monetary and sector reforms:

- Preparations for the introduction of a National Health Insurance system;
- Ongoing breastfeeding promotion campaigns through the “Breastfeeding Division” of the Bureau for Public Health;
- Increased access to affordable weaning (canned baby milk) through a 5 per cent reduction of the profit margin normally allowed for sellers (from 20 per cent to 15 per cent), an active surveillance of the implementation of this measure and the improved nationwide distribution of weaning products. It should explicitly be mentioned that nutrition campaigns of the Government promote breastfeeding rather than weaning, but where necessary, mothers/parents should have access to affordable weaning;
- Introduction of price ceilings for basic goods, as well an active surveillance to guarantee that sellers live up to this regulation;
- Implementation of a school feeding programme with an outreach to schools in socially deprived communities;
- The promotion of small funding opportunities for the support of local initiatives in the areas of child development, community development, food security and empowerment of women. In this regard the Government supported community’s access to, inter alia, the following facilities: Fund for Development of the Interior (1993); the European Union Micro-Projects Programme (1994); NGO Fund (1995); the Canadian International Development Agency’s Caribbean Gender Equality

Programme; the UNIFEM Programme “Women and sustainable development in Suriname” (1997); the UNICEF-assisted “Amazon Programme” and the “Multi-country programme for cooperation” (1997); the Inter-American Development Bank-supported Community Development Fund and Low-Income Shelter Project (1998).

#### **D. Mechanisms for improved coordination, planning and monitoring**

##### **1. National coordination**

25. The shortening of the term of the former Government by one year had consequences for the continuation of the activities of the National Steering Committee for youth affairs. The Steering Committee was dissolved as of 16 November 2000 by a Presidential resolution, dated 15 November 2000, in which the members were thanked for their important work and informed that their services were no longer required, given the changed circumstances.

26. The Steering Committee had not officially replaced the National Commission on the Rights of the Child that was appointed in 1995. After the Commission’s mandate of two years, no reappointment took place. In its evaluation the Commission had indicated that it was not able to function adequately, partly due to the heavy workload and multiple commitments of its members. Based on an assessment of how best to proceed after the Commission discontinued its functioning, the Government decided to appoint a Steering Committee as of 9 October 1998. The Committee was placed under the direct supervision of the President and chaired by the Deputy Minister for Social Affairs and Housing. The financing of its activities came out of the Government budget. The tasks of the Committee were to:

- Formulate a National Youth Policy;
- Guide the process of conforming the national legislation on youth with the CRC;
- Establish a National Youth Council;
- Provide guidance to the National Youth Institute.

27. These members represented the Government, non-governmental and private sectors. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is preparing the reactivation of this National Commission. Based on the experiences of other countries, the tasks and role of the Commission will be focused on coordination, advocacy and monitoring rather than on implementation.

28. Efforts have been made to effectuate coordination structures at macro and meso levels, such as:

- The GOS/UNICEF Multi-sectoral National Steering Committee, consisting of Sector Coordinators from the Ministries of Planning and Development Cooperation; Social Affairs and Housing; Health; Education and Community Development, and Regional Development: the Committee is responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in Suriname of two UNICEF assisted programmes: the

Amazon Programme (for Indigenous and Maroon people) and the Multi-country programme of Cooperation for the OECS and Suriname. Each Sector Coordinator organizes quarterly meetings with Government and NGO representatives to discuss sector-related policy priorities and projects that focus on children;

- District Teams in the Amazon region that consist of local representatives of different ministries and NGOs: the District Teams are an important structure in the decentralization efforts of the Government, and their responsibilities and tasks are almost identical to those of the above- mentioned Steering Committee. The major difference is that the District teams function at meso level while the Steering Committee has a macro level mandate. It is the intention to expand District Teams to other districts;
- Theme Working Groups in the District of Marowijne: this District provided the basis for the development of a model for decentralized development planning, implementation and monitoring. As a result, local government and NGO representatives formed two working groups. One on Child Rights Promotion and another one on Health Promotion. The groups have undertaken coordinated initiatives in the interest of child development and child rights;
- Lima Working Group. This is an inter-ministerial working group consisting of the Ministries of Planning and Development Cooperation, Education and Community Development, Health, Social Affairs and Housing, Regional Development, Justice and Police, Natural Resources, and Home Affairs. The group has, among other things, been in charge of jointly writing the report on the status of children, e.g. the report in addition to the 5th Ministerial Meeting held in October 2000 in Jamaica, the End of Decade Report, the National Report on follow-up to the World Summit of Children, and the additional report on the List of Issues requested by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- Young Women's Network. In 1995 the Young Women's Central Foundation (JOVROCE) and the Lobi Foundation for Responsible Parenthood took the initiative to establish the Young Women's Network. The purpose of the network is to implement effective (sexual/reproductive) health education in a structural and efficient way. Other partners in this network are:

*NGOs:* Peer Education Programme Suriname (PEPSUR), Stop Violence Against Women Foundation, and Maxi Linder Foundation. *GOs:* Bureau Alcohol and Drugs (BAD), National Aids and STDs Programme, Youth Police, the Dermatological Service, and the Teenage Mother Project of the Youth Affairs Department, School Inspection. The latter cooperates with School Inspection too;

Violence Against Women Network. The National Gender Bureau facilitated the establishment of a Violence Against Women Network to promote coordination and improved planning with regard to the reduction/elimination of violence against women and children. The CIDA - Caribbean Gender Equality Programme provided the initial technical support for this initiative in 1998, which UNIFEM continued in 1999. The Network was formalized in December 2000 and consisted of

30 organizations and 21 individuals. Among the participants in the network are the police and military forces, governmental organizations, religious organizations, NGOs, and individuals. In the future, the network will focus more strongly on child abuse and gender-based violence against children.

## 2. National institutions

29. An important initiative in 1999 was the preparation for the re-establishment of the National Bureau for the Rights of the Child in 2001. For this purpose, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing entered into an agreement with STASCARIBE (Consultant Bureau) that would develop the Plan of Action and seek funding for the preparatory phase. After having conducted a survey in November 1999, STASCARIBE developed an elaborated plan for the Bureau, including its purpose, tasks, activities and required human resource capacity. The tasks of the Bureau will be to promote Child Rights and act as the national focal point for affairs concerning children in Suriname. In terms of activities, the Bureau will:

- Coordinate and implement activities to make the principles and spirit of the Convention widely known among the population;
- Coordinate training on the principles and content of CRC for functional groups, including the media;
- Coordinate the testing of policies on the principle of “best interest of the child”;
- Provide administrative support to the National Commission for Child Rights; and
- Provide administrative support to the Inter-Ministerial LIMA Working group.

30. In the light of the sensitivity of child abuse and neglect, and the barriers for children to access the regular facilities, the Government recognizes the need to institute a comprehensive and child-friendly mechanism for the submission and investigation of complaints from children. Currently, the Youth Police is the only place where children can submit official complaints for investigation. The Youth Police receive many complaints that are beyond their mandate and that can be resolved through the provision of social guidance, intermediation or counselling. In such cases, they refer complaints to the proper authorities or organizations. A well-known non-governmental organization in this area is the Foundation for Human Development (BKO). The National Youth Council was appointed on 20 November 1999 for a period of two years. It consists of 21 members within the age group of 12–17. The members were chosen by elections held in all 10 administrative Districts. In all Districts youth congresses were organized with the focus on child rights, during which the participating children held presentations on various child rights. The task of the Youth Council is to advise the Government on child-related issues and youth policy. It operates through the established National Youth Institute (NYI), in which it is incorporated as one of the two chambers: one for children of 12-17 and one for youth of 18-30 years old. For the activities regarding the installation of the Youth Council an amount of Sf 30 million (US\$ 30,150.75) was allocated, whereas the National Youth Congress for the election of the Youth Council was conducted with UNICEF support.

31. After a successful start, the Institute was caught in the political turbulence of the national elections in May 2000, not long after its establishment. During the Wijdenbosch government the NYI was directly linked to the Office of the President. However, this structure changed since the Venetiaan Government took office in May 2000. In a special meeting with NYI on 13 September 2000, President Venetiaan emphasized the importance of having a national institute that can make the voices of children heard at the highest policy level, but he also indicated that the NYI should in fact be facilitated and supervised by the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education.

32. In the short year of its active functioning, the Youth Council implemented the following activities:

- Initiation of a youth meeting in a poor urban area (Saron), which resulted in the establishment of a local youth organization, after which a clean up action of the neighbourhood and renovation of a school was organized;
- In December 1999 the Youth Council initiated an informative television programme for and by youth entitled “Join 2000”. Because of a lack of means the programme stopped in May 2000;
- Council representatives of the District of Nickerie initiated a radio programme;
- The Council also initiated a children’s journal containing information about its work and general youth affairs;
- During a strike of the Organization of Bus Drivers in Suriname (OBS), the Youth Council successfully negotiated with OBS to stop the strike (which was affecting school children);
- Various meetings with President Wijdenbosh to inform him about decision of the Youth Council and to advise the President on certain issues concerning children;
- In the period before the national elections, the Council organized a meeting with political parties to inform young people about specific party policy plans for youth, and the parties’ opinion about the existence and continuation of the Youth Council;
- Successful advocacy for the increase of Child Allowance;
- A meeting with the National Assembly;
- Fundraising activities to finance the activities and office costs of the Youth Council;
- Establishment of four permanent commissions, a working team (of 30 volunteers) to assist the Council with its activities, and an Advisory Committee consisting of three adults;

- Participation in various skills training activities, national and regional meetings, international youth conferences, and many other events to which the Council was invited;
- Cooperation with organizations in other countries.

33. The Youth Council was very successful and was approached by Grenada, the Dominican Republic and other States to share its experiences with respect to the development of its organization. Two members were chosen as the UNFPA Youth Ambassador for Suriname and the CARICOM Youth Ambassador for Suriname, respectively.

### **3. Planning, evaluation and monitoring systems**

34. Within the UNICEF-GOS Cooperation Programme, initiatives have been taken to generate data and institute systems for the effective planning and monitoring of progress with respect to the well being of children. In this regard, the Government decided to implement a combination of systematic data collection (data systems) as well as to facilitate a set of required studies and an inventory of existing publications to produce the necessary information for focused planning activities for specific groups. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is the focal point for the data management systems on children.

35. Presently, the Ministry is finalizing the Child Indicators Monitoring System (CIMS) with UNICEF support. The main objective of CIMS is to institute and strengthen a system of regular monitoring of indicators relevant to the well being of children and their families in all parts of the country. This will help to monitor the status of vulnerable groups, influence policy decisions and support planning and implementation of appropriate actions. A CIMS committee was appointed in 1999 and consists of representatives of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Housing, Health, Education and Community Development, and Home Affairs, as well as the General Bureau for Statistics. A plan of action was developed and initiated. The first sets of data will be published in 2001 and disseminated to relevant organizations and institutions.

36. In order to monitor the situation and rights of Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing instituted the CNSP monitoring subsystem. This project is a subsystem of CIMS that covers the gathering of data on children in institutions, children in conflict with the Law, children with disabilities and abused and neglected children. The first pilot project was conducted in 1999-2000 and involved 12 institutions, which comprised 10 per cent of the total number of institutions. The institutions were strengthened to collect data and use these for improving and managing their administration. They will submit data to the Ministry on a regular basis. A draft report is available. The second pilot is now in progress. MICS (Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey): is a survey on the situation of children and their families. It has been implemented in Suriname to collect nationwide information through an in-depth and up-to-date set of indicators on the health situation and well being of children in Suriname. The outcomes will be used as an input for the National Plan of Action (NPA) and for the development of effective measures, which should lead to the achievement of the World Summit Goals. The MICS reporting has been finalized and presented to the government. The report regarding data on the "Status of Children in Suriname, World Summit Goals, Indicators and Definitions" was composed by the provisional data produced by MICS.

37. Among the surveys initiated to complement the required qualitative and quantitative monitoring indicators, were the following:

- In 1998 a survey was carried out on early school dropouts in the Districts Sipaliwini and Marowijne (interior), which indicated that approximately 627 children in the age group of 4 – 14 did not attend school in Marowijne, while almost 60 per cent of that age category of children in the Upper Suriname River were out of the school system. The final results will be used for developing a needs-based vocational training programme to provide basic skills, including numeracy and literacy with the aim of bringing the youth back to the mainstream of the society. Meanwhile, training took place of 25 child-minders from nine villages in the Districts Marowijne and Sipaliwini to provide early child education;
- The implementation of a baseline survey in 1998 in 34 villages of the District Marowijne, which provided data for decentralized planning. An immediate result was the institution of a health surveillance and health education programme in the District Marowijne through the training of Village Health Promoters (VHPs) from 17 villages. The VHPs have been trained to regularly update the baseline data of their village;
- In 1998 an assessment of Hygiene and Sanitation practices in four villages was conducted which resulted in the implementation of a drinking water and sanitation project in 10 Amerindian and Maroon villages in the interior;
- In 1998 a Child Labour Study Survey, conducted in 9 of the 10 administrative Districts of Suriname, showed that 3.2 per cent of the surveyed children had ever been involved in child labour, while at the time of the survey 2 per cent participated in some kind of economic activity. The survey concluded that the majority of children worked to help their mothers: 80 per cent did so by helping in the field (agriculture) or by assisting their mother in the care of younger siblings. Two draft reports were produced;
- Currently Bureau Alcohol and Drugs (GO) and an NGO in collaboration with PAHO and WHO are preparing a Global Youth Tobacco Survey;
- The KLIMOP Foundation, which provides training for managers of and workers in day-care centres, conducted a survey on the situation in day-care centres;
- A literature review of more than 50 reports on various themes through which all produced information has been documented, while all agencies, individuals and educational institutions have been listed that carried out studies and research concerning the protection of the rights of children in Suriname;

- The National Council on Occupational Health (NRB), with the support of PAHO and the assistance of the Foundation for Occupational Health (Stichting BGZ), made an effort to establish a National Health Information System on Occupational Morbidity and Mortality. This system will comprise of Public Health data; medical data; data on Pharmacies, Dentists, Physiotherapists and on the Foundation for Family Planning; and occupational health data and residential data;
- In 1999 the Bureau for Public Health implemented a maternal mortality and perinatal mortality survey in 4 hospitals, which provided updated data;
- The Foundation for the Development of Women and Children “Sanomaro Esa” initiated a project to collect data on children in the interior and indigenous children who are in the city for study purposes.

38. Obviously, the collected data have encouraged the Government and NGOs to increase their investment in basic social services and will continue to ensure that decision makers, NGOs and communities have access to necessary information for the identification of activities in favour of children.

#### **E. Measures for publicity of the Convention**

39. Activities with respect to publicity of the Convention intensified in the past five years, after the former National Commission on the Rights of Children had undertaken initial publicity campaigns to make the Convention, its content and intentions known to the public. More organizations, although still small in number, became sensitized and active in the field of child rights promotion as can be concluded from the list below:

- On the initiative of the Steering Committee, a Child Rights paper was published and distributed to promote child rights all over the country through schools; press releases were made about the mobilization activities and mini-congresses were organized by the Steering Committee and broadcasted through the media;
- The National Women’s Movement carried out a nation wide public education programme on the rights of children born out of wedlock and initiatives for sensitization of the State Commission for developing legislation on the elimination of discrimination against children born out of wedlock. A video that was translated into six local languages was broadcast on all TV stations;
- Until 2000, the Foundation Pikin fu Sranan (NGO) presented radio and TV programmes on CRC articles on a weekly basis. Other media used copies of the productions to discuss child rights in their programmes for children;
- In 1999, the Government participated in the celebration of 10 years of the Convention. Activities on this day included an information fair on child rights at the Independence Square in Paramaribo. In 2000 the Government proclaimed 20 November as National Child Rights Day. In this regard the following activities had taken place: the STASCARIBE Foundation initiated a media campaign on child rights in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing and UNICEF.



The First Lady chaired a committee that launched a 3-day national awareness campaign on Child Rights from 17 to 19 November. Another initiative was a poster competition on child rights, the winning posters of which were printed and disseminated throughout the country. The posters were also exhibited in Paramaribo;

- A joint initiative of the Government, UNICEF and “Truwisi Productions” resulted in the initiation of the "Adriaan Thurnim Award" for the Media. This award is presented every two years to four media houses, journalists and community members for their exemplary efforts to promote and protect child rights through the media. The first award was presented in 1999. The establishment of the “Media Board Foundation” in November 2000 was an outcome of the “Adriaan Thurnim Award” an initiative that the Board incorporated in its activities. The Media Board consists of volunteers (professionals working in the media or with the youth) and acts as a media watch to guarantee that media do not violate child rights. The Media Board will also have an advisory role for the Government’s Child Rights Bureau;

40. Through the GOS-UNICEF Cooperation Programme 1998-2002, up to now the following activities have taken place:

- Survey among media workers on media programmes for children and youth;
- One-day media workshop to consult with media practitioners on ways and means of improving current programmes and sensitize them on CRC principles;
- Media training on ways for developing programmes with a focus on Child Rights;
- At district level a seminar was organized on the awareness of child rights among youth; representatives from youth and church organizations and CBOs attended this seminar.
- With regard to the 10th anniversary of the CRC, a workshop was organized with a focus on the right of children to information; this workshop was attended by school children;
- In November 1999 a competition was held where 22 law students made presentations regarding child rights as human rights, child rights in theory and practice, crimes of youth and crimes against youth. These speeches are currently being bound in a booklet for presentation to the larger community;
- To increase public awareness on the situation of women and children, a video was produced in 1998 entitled "Mi Sa Singi" (“I Will Sing”). On International Children’s Broadcasting Day, the Rotary Service Club sponsored the broadcasting on all TV stations in Suriname;

- Four CRC TV spots were produced for regular broadcasting;
- CRC stickers (in 4 local languages), folders and posters were produced and distributed.

41. An innovative and successful project entitled ‘Children as Promoters of Child Rights’, also known as the Peer Education Project, was carried out in Indigenous and Maroon communities in the Marowijne District. The project now serves as a model for other local communities. It was an initiative of the local Child Rights Promotion working group that received support from the UNICEF assisted Amazon Programme (being implemented in the eight Amazon countries including Suriname). The project included the following activities:

- Training of trainers for members of the Child Rights Promotion working group in Marowijne to skill them in the delivery of training on basic life skills and child rights in order to improve knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills for young people, with special emphasis laid on the reduction of teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, child abuse, and HIV/AIDS;
- Training of 95 teachers from 18 schools at basic education level, in order to create a sustainable basis for the improvement of child and family living conditions and to ensure professional coaching of the children who were trained as peer educators;
- About 36 children of the 5th and 6th grade – two of each of the 18 schools - were trained as peer educators;
- The production of an illustrated card game to trigger discussions about child rights among school children;
- As a result of the project, the children selected the top ten priority rights for Marowijne, while each school (5th and 6th grade) selected its own 10 priorities;
- A Child Rights theme song (written and composed by a teacher).

42. The training of teachers is ongoing. Until now there has been no incorporation of human rights and child rights into the school curricula. The Basic Life Skills Committee developed material on aspects of children’s rights, but the CRC has not yet been included as a subject in the curriculum.

## **II. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD**

### **1. Legal minimum ages**

43. With reference to the legal minimum ages for legal and medical counseling, consumption of alcohol, sexual consent, marriage, and other affairs, it has been observed that Suriname’s legislation is inconsistent. The following information clearly proves this:

- The legal minimum age for legal counselling without parental consent is 10 years. According to the charter of the Police, juvenile delinquency in Suriname implies a

punishable act or offence committed by a person of 10 years or older, but who has not yet reached the age of 18. Article 56 of the Police Charter states that no legal penalty for committing a fact will be applied to a child who has not reached the age of 10. No measures have been taken to increase the age of criminal responsibility. Based on the recently finished Juvenile Justice study, national consultations and seminars are planned in order to reach consensus regarding adjustments in the juvenile justice system, including on this issue;

- There is no legislation or other regular provision on a legal minimum age for medical counselling without parental consent. No alarming problems or situations have ever occurred in this regard requiring such regulation. In practice the parents or guardians of minors are consulted;
- With respect to the legal minimum age for sexual consent: According to article 297 of the Penal Code, a person who has intercourse with a girl under the age of 12, will be punished with a sentence of 12 years. Article 298 of the Penal Code states that a person who has sexual intercourse with a girl who has reached the age of 12 but not 14, will be punished with a sentence of eight years. Article 298 should be seen in the light of the Asian Marriage act, which indicates that the minimum age of girls for marriage is 13 years. The articles are outdated (dated 1916) and discriminatory against boys. The Government has taken some initiatives to revise this legislation through establishment of a commission;
- The legal minimum age for the consumption of alcohol is 16 years, according to article 536 of the Penal Code. Apart from the police there is no authority mandated with the inspection and reporting of cases of alcohol consumption under 16;
- The legal capacity to inherit is provided to every existing (living) individual regardless of age. Article 3 of the Civil Legislation permits even a fetus (unborn) this right as it states that the child of which a woman is pregnant must be considered already born as often as (its) self-interest requires this. Born dead, the child is considered never to have existed;
- To conduct property transactions and create associations, a person should be of age. In practice children have the freedom to join associations with parental consent;
- No legal minimum age for choosing a religion has been provided;
- No measures have been taken or are envisaged to increase the legal minimum age for civil marriage of girls (15 years) to the equivalent of boys (18 years). No measures have either been taken for amending the Asian Marriage Act to increase the legal minimum ages for marriage of boys (15 year) and girls (13 year). This issue remains a sensitive area for formal intervention since it regards customs based on cultural-religious norms and values. For example, particularly in cases of early pregnancy, the girl's family will protect her and its own honour by trying to arrange a marriage with the child's father. The Government recognizes the need to address the issue of early marriage and has attempted to do so since 1973, but has experienced some resistance coming from several groups.

**Table 1**  
**Number of marriages by type, sex and age in the period of 1995-1999**

Age	1995						1996						1997						1998						1999						Total	
	CL		H		I		CL		H		I		CL		H		I		CL		H		I		CL		H		I		M	F
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F				
13	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	1	0	1	-	-	0	1	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	2	0	2	0	7
14	-	-	0	4	0	1	-	-	0	5	0	1	-	-	0	1	0	3	-	-	0	0	0	1	-	-	0	6	0	1	0	23
15	-		1	28	1	8	-		1	18	0	12	-	-	0	10	0	5	-		0	21	0	4	-		0	10	0	5	3	121
16	-		1	56	1	18	-		2	78	0	27	-		0	23	0	11	-		1	33	0	11	-		1	29	0	6		
17	-						-						-						-		2	48	0	20	-							
Total	-						-						-						-						-							

Source: Central Registry Office, 2000.

CL= Civil Law; H = Hindu Marriage; I = Islamic Marriage.

## **2. Compulsory school attendance**

44. No measures have been taken yet to increase the minimum school-leaving age for compulsory education for children. Within the Ministry of Education and Community Development there are suggestions to increase the minimum school-leaving age from 12 to 14.

### **III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **A. Non-discrimination**

##### **1. Children born out of wedlock**

45. The National Women's Movement (NVB) has taken action to eliminate discrimination against children born out of wedlock with respect to the law of succession. Previously, the Surinamese law of succession discriminated against children born out of wedlock. Following requests from both individual women and women's community groups to provide information about the position of children born out of wedlock in the law of succession, the NVB undertook a broad social mobilization and advocacy campaign since 1993 to reach legal equality between children born in and out of wedlock.

46. The campaign has so far included:

- The production of three videos on “the position of legitimate children in law of succession”, “the position of children born out of wedlock in law of succession”, “common law marriage and the law of succession”, respectively;
- Broadcasting these videos on television;
- The organization of discussions with women's groups and community groups, based on the videos and supported by legal experts who provided detailed information on these subjects;
- The production of a booklet on this problem;
- A survey to assess the view of the Surinamese population in general, on the current legislation and on the proposed modifications;
- The organization of a seminar in December 1996 on the survey results with representatives of women's organizations and government representatives;
- The presentation of the outcomes of the seminar to the Government and the National Assembly as part of the International Women's Day activities 1997: reports were presented to the President, the Minister of Justice and Police; the Minister of Regional Development;

- Close contact with top officials of the Ministry of Justice and Police in order to have the proposal discussed and approved by the Council of Ministers (the amended legislation was approved by the Council of Ministers in March 1998, before International Women's Day 1998,). This campaign resulted in the passing of a Bill by the National Assembly in January 2000, guaranteeing equal rights for children born out of wedlock in Law of succession;
- Because the passing of the Bill left questions for people about the changes and the new position of children, it was necessary to give the public information. So on 24 March the NVB held a live television programme in which people could call and pose their questions;
- Furthermore, a set of pamphlets on the implications of the new legislation has been produced and disseminated. Passing of the new legislation is a mayor step forward to eliminate discrimination. However some aspects of discrimination remain, i.e. if the father refuses to claim fatherhood.

## **2. Sexual consent**

47. The existing law provisions on sexual consent still discriminate against boys (see Chap. II, point 1). In practice, though, boys have every opportunity for legal protection according to more or less the same procedural provisions as made for the girls. There are at least two articles in Suriname's Penal Act that provide this opportunity for boys. Article 300 says that anyone who assaults someone under the age of 14 indecently, or seduces the latter to commit or tolerate such acts of intercourse out of wedlock will be punished with a sentence to a maximum of 6 years. Article 302 is applicable in cases of homosexual rape since it reads that the person of age who assaults a minor of the same sex indecently, whose minority he knows or should reasonably presume, will be punished by a sentence of four years.

48. Yet, it remains of the utmost importance that the draft legislation was finally approved, after a prolonged delay of six years, because it also contains an extension of the definition of rape, an increase of punishment and the raising of victim age limits for official prosecution and for complaints.

## **B. Best interests of the child**

### **1. Measures taken to ensure the best interests of the child**

49. The Ministry of Justice and Police has prepared a bill for the change of the existing legislation in order to guarantee the rights of children to have direct communication with their parents. The (Government) Bureau for Family and Legal Affairs is frequently confronted with practical problems, due to inappropriate legislation, which it aims to resolve by liaising with parents in the best interests of the child. When consulted by Court, the Bureau for Family and Legal Affairs provides advice after hearing the family, including hearing the child. Children born out of wedlock, who are legitimized by the father, enjoy the same protection rights. In such cases the father has the right to apply as guardian. The Ilse Henar Hewitt Bureau for Women's Rights (NGO) has taken the initiative to accelerate the process for approval of the bill. This

Bureau offers advice, information and education to the public in general and to women in particular. As such, the Bureau also experiences problems of the same nature, in which children of divorced couples are caught between the conflicts and emotions of their parents. This has been an obstacle for children to enjoy a peaceful life and exercise their rights to have contact with both parents. The CRC states in article 9.3 that State parties to the Convention shall guarantee the rights of children who live separately from one or both parents, to have personal relations or direct contact with both parents unless this is against the interests of the child. It is therefore hoped that the bill will soon be approved and implemented.

50. Children are being heard in cases concerning their adoption, foster care and placement in alternative care, although no conforming legislation exists.

## **2. General welfare of the child**

51. Concerning children's general welfare, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing subsidizes State-owned care centres, especially those that provide care for the physically and mentally disabled. The following bills and regulations were formulated for improved regulation:

- Bill on child care in day care centres;
- Regulation on the provision of Social Services; this has passed the Board of Ministers and has now been sent for advice to the advisory body of the Government;
- Bill on youth social assistance.

52. Furthermore, there is a Child Feeding Division that provides meals to children in day-care centres on a daily basis and to schools.

53. With reference to the remark of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child with regard to the initial report, paragraph C2, on the non-existence of social care for juveniles, it should be confirmed that the Division for Youth Care has hardly functioned according to its responsibilities in the past seven years. The correctional institution for girls is still closed. As a consequence, the girls are either sent back home without adequate provision for guidance and counselling, or placed in alternative homes. In cases where the police have taken underage sex workers from the street, these children were taken to the Maxi Linder Foundation (drop-in centre for street sex workers) or to the Foundation for the Child (Home for sexually abused children). Because both organizations are under-resourced and highly dependent on donor funding, they could not take proper care of all cases. Moreover, their authority to undertake child protection measures was, and continues to be, limited. Often they face discouraging bureaucratic procedures before a satisfactory solution is found in the interests of the child.

54. Also, no legal provisions have been made as yet for the supervision and inspection of private institutions with regard to professional requirements for personnel, safety, confidentiality and other important matters. In this context, it needs mentioning that training programmes for professionals, mainly provided by NGOs, have elevated the quality of services provided by different institutions.

### **C. Respect for the views of the child**

55. Another important bill that has been prepared is related to article 12 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. This article states, among other matters, that State parties to the Convention shall ensure that children have the capacity to have an opinion and to have the right to speak their mind freely in all cases related to their own interests. As such, children shall have the opportunity to give their views in all legal and administrative procedures related to their interests. In order to improve the protection of children under the Surinamese legislation, a bill has been prepared by the Ministry of Justice and Police.

56. This bill will enable children at the age of 12, whose parents are involved in divorce procedures, to inform the judge of their opinions, especially concerning matters of guardianship. In practice, even children under the age of 12 are heard in cases concerning their guardianship and placement in alternative homes. The Ilse Henar-Hewitt Bureau for Women's Rights and the Bureau for Family and legal Affairs (Ministry of Justice and Police) promote awareness and foster a general debate about the rights of children of divorced parents to communicate with both parents. They are also encouraging the recognition of children's rights to contribute as soon as possible to the passing of the related Bill by the National Assembly.

57. A practical example of respect for the views of the child is the existence of the National Youth Institute. Through the Institute children are able to give their opinions and advice on child-related issues. For instance, during recent strikes in the education sector, the Youth Council contributed to the national debate regarding the impact of the strikes on children and they proposed possible solutions. In Suriname's history there are only a few examples of (street) protest demonstrations organized by (school) children; for example, against conditions in school and school exam work, and against the increasing prices of basic goods. Children experience no obstacles whatsoever to organizing themselves informally and undertaking activities in their own interest. They receive support and guidance from the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and Community Development on the development of their organization.

## **IV. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

### **1. Corporal punishment**

58. The law forbids corporal punishment. The Ministry of Education addressed memos about this matter to teachers dating back as far as 1942. In a memo dated 29 March 1950, addressed to the heads of schools, it is once again stipulated that corporal punishment is a detestable practice and against Government policy. The memo further stipulates that every application of corporal punishment has to be reported to the Ministry by the head of school. The memo states that consequences for application of corporal punishment vary from reprimand to immediate dismissal of the teacher. It is a known fact, however, that corporal punishment is still common practice in schools in Suriname. Parents are not aware of the existence of a law against corporal punishment; neither are they informed about procedures for complaints, because no public awareness activities have been implemented in this respect for many years.



59. There is no national data regarding corporal punishment in families. In a survey conducted by the Teachers Training College in 1999, 12.9 per cent of parents reported that they applied corporal punishment, while 50 per cent endorsed the use of corporal punishment in school. With Government endorsement the National Women's Movement received UNICEF support in 1999 to implement community awareness and education activities on better parenting. In this context videos were produced which address the issue of corporal punishment and which present alternatives. These videos were aired on TV and made available to community groups for educational purposes.

60. In order to influence public opinion, the Teachers Training College initiated a community education campaign with posters, folders and seminars to increase awareness regarding the harmful nature of corporal punishment. Students and teachers are also being sensitized regarding the issue. There are no data available regarding the prevalence of corporal punishment in care and other facilities, but it can also be assumed that this is common practice. With the above mentioned community awareness and sensitization activities it is anticipated that corporal punishment will become less socially acceptable and less prevalent. It is also important for the Government to enforce existing disciplinary measures, i.e. dismissal of teachers applying corporal punishment.

## **2. Police brutality**

61. There have been some cases of police brutality and unlawful use of force against children in detention. In these cases, a written complaint is filed to the Head of the Judicial Child Protection Service. Then the complaint is brought to the attention of the Head of the Juvenile Reformatory and the offender is reprimanded to correct his behaviour. If this does not lead to a satisfactory solution, then the Public Prosecution Office becomes responsible for investigation.

62. Cases concerning police brutality against children living/working on the streets have not been reported. A mechanism to investigate complaints in this regard is found in the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Justice and Police.

## **V. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE**

### **A. Parental guidance**

63. The State does not interfere in affairs of parental guidance exercised in various ways in the country, given the multi-dimensional aspects of culture, ethnicity and religion, unless it is explicitly required. This happens, for example, in cases of inconsistencies between local legislation and nationally accepted moral standards, cases where alternative childcare may be required. Also, no regular family counselling services are provided at State level. The Medical Pedagogical Bureau (MOB) has a home teaching programme for guidance of young children (0-6 yrs) with developmental problems, including children with disabilities. In collaboration with the Foundation for Early Detection and Early Stimulation (VTO & VS), the MOB disseminated a series of educational folders and posters for early stimulation in self-help skills. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing supports the activities of the Parent Association "The Fist" (De Vuist), which was founded in May 2000 to advocate for the rights and equal opportunities of children with disabilities.

64. The Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and Community Development is currently in the phase of preparations to implement a programme for the promotion of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). This programme is intended to increase the involvement of parents on the education of their child.

65. Present day dynamics in family life as a result of economic decline (child labour and prostitution, early school dropout, housing problems), displaced families, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and domestic violence are increasingly being addressed by civil society organizations among whom religious, socio-cultural, rights-based and women's organizations. NGOs such as the Human Development Foundation (BKO), the Stop Violence Against Women Foundation, the National Women's Movement (NVB), The Lobi Foundation for Responsible Parenthood, and different religious communities regularly organize activities to discuss a variety of issues, which adversely affect family life. The activities of the NGOs are mostly project-related.

- In its upgrading project for child minders, BKO implemented educational meetings with parents (mothers);
- BKO produced and disseminated a series of educational brochures with respect to the care of children under 1 year of age;
- The Stop Violence Against Women Foundation organized training workshops for religious organizations and volunteers on violence in the home;
- NVB conducted a research on gender socialization and will use the results for public education and the development of modules for the Basic Life Skills Education programme;
- The Lobi Foundation implemented ten workshops for 173 parents on Family Life and Sex Education in one urban community (Latour) with the assistance of UNICEF in 1999/2000. Along with this, a brochure on the sexual development and education of children 0-18 year was developed and distributed as a manual for the parents;
- Religious organizations have religion-specific programmes, also including family counselling with respect to family life education.

### **B. Children deprived of a family environment**

66. In 1996 a bill was drafted to regulate all types of childcare facilities, including day care centres, children's homes and alternative care institutions. The bill was the result of NGO-Government consultations. Key issues of the bill include:

- An appointment of an interdisciplinary committee to review requests for permits and to monitor child care agencies;
- Training and qualifications of staff;
- The development and enforcement of specific issues such as size, occupancy rate, number of staff, nutrition, and activities.

67. Through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing a draft bill was prepared with regard to the introduction of a permit system for the exploitation or establishment of a care-providing institution. This bill introduces the obligation to obtain a permit through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, due to the fact that in the past decade there has been a significant growth in the types and numbers of formal and informal childcare facilities.

68. Certain conditions are incorporated in the bill to guarantee the quality of provisions, services and protection measures for the child. In Suriname, the Government and NGOs are engaged in alternative childcare. Government care centres and a number of private childcare institutions are associated with the Government foundation “Supervision and Exploitation of childcare institutions” and receive government subventions. The majority of social institutions are members of the Association for Private Social Institutions (VPSI) that acts as a focal point and provides regular services for ensuring quality care by conducting, among other things, upgrading training and guidance, seminars, policy dialogue, international collaboration, and project development. The KLIMOP Foundation is a specialized NGO for quality training of day-care staff. Like the majority of NGOs, KLIMOP entirely depends on donor funding for implementing its training programme, which presents many risks with regard to the continuation of its activities.

69. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing also had legislation drafted to regulate social assistance for youth. In this draft bill, guidelines and conditions are incorporated in institutions responsible for social assistance for the youth. Furthermore, there are regulations in this draft concerning the responsibilities and qualifications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. The bill provides regulations on the placement of children in institutions, supervision during the period of placement and periodical evaluation. The Youth Care Division, which is responsible for the placement of children, has functioned poorly in the past years because it was affected by the outflow of qualified staff and by budget cuts.

70. While the draft has not passed the National Assembly yet, the spirit and contents are already being included in government-supported training programmes for child care staff and have also been incorporated in the monitoring system for Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP). The Government has also begun to reorganize its day care centre programme accordingly. These initiatives illustrate the Government’s recognition of the need to pass and enforce the bill and to develop appropriate legislation, further defining a code of standards for childcare facilities. Unfortunately, this initiative was also delayed because of the unfavourable situation in the country during the reporting period.

71. As previously mentioned, the Government of Suriname has been structurally allocating 25 per cent of its budget to social services since 1998. In spite of serious budgetary constraints, the Government is making an effort to increase or allocate funds for key areas including alternative care. The Government owns two shelters for ‘Youth in Crisis Situations’ (one for boys, “Koela”; and one for girls, “Mi Abri”), which are supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. Because of the poor condition of the building, the shelter for girls has not functioned since 1994. During the period of closure, efforts were made by

private institutions to provide alternative or permanent care for these children. Currently, preparations are made in collaboration with other Ministries for the renovation of “Mi Abri”. The Government approved the amount of Sf 130,000,000 (US\$ 55,000) for the operationalisation of this shelter, while it will also provide technical personnel for construction work.

72. The need for institutional care in Suriname is relatively high according to a study on children in institutions, conducted by NIKOS (local consultant bureau) in Suriname, Guyana and Trinidad in 1999. The study was carried out on behalf of International Child Development Initiatives (Leiden, the Netherlands) and pointed out that institutional childcare was more predominantly present in Suriname compared to the other States, which had relatively fewer institutions. The most frequent reasons for placing children in institutions in Suriname were due to disturbed relationships (which counted for about one-third of the cases) and poverty-related factors.

73. In 1996 NIKOS carried out an inventory of institutions in Suriname at the request of the Federation of Private Social Institutions in Suriname. The survey registered 57 institutions among which 34 child institutions, 10 boarding schools, 8 homes for children with physical and/or mental disabilities, and 5 institutions in the category of ‘other’ (shelters for families and persons of various ages).

74. The Federation of Private Social Institutions (VPSI) is an umbrella organization for private social institutions, and for associations of and for self-advocates in Suriname. It is the only one of its kind. It was founded in December 1991 by a working group of concerned directors of children’s homes and orphanages and consisted of approximately 40 member organizations by 1995. VPSI’s current membership is 67 institutions/organizations, including 44 that provide services for children, children’s homes, orphanages, foster homes, boarding schools and dormitories, and homes for children and adults with disabilities. As an umbrella agency the goal of the VPSI is to represent and protect vulnerable groups in society, including children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

75. Objectives of the VPSI are to improve the cooperation between individual member organizations to collectively improve the standard of living for all within the target groups, to support the specific interests of member organizations and to assist with and possibly coordinate the generation of resources by and for member organizations. Also non-member organizations, for example, governmental institutions that work with the target groups, participated in the monthly dialogue held for each target group. Members of the VPSI as well as VPSI itself participate in three advisory boards, which advise the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing on issues regarding the various target groups.

### **C. Adoption**

76. For years now, Suriname has had a “kweekjes” system. This means that parents who are in a socio-economic deprived situation can let another couple take over the care for their child. There is no need for there to be a family relationship between the biological parents and the foster parents. The important factor is that the foster parents of the ‘kweekje’ will be able to

provide for the needs of the child. Furthermore, there is also the possibility for a relative, e.g. an aunt or the grandparents, to be trusted with the care of the minor. These are cases in which the foster parents do not have the formal guardianship of the child.

77. In 1981 a draft Decree was formulated regarding Foster Children through which everyone who has the care of children without having formal custody of these children is compelled to register this fact at the Bureau for Family and Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Justice and Police. This Decree, however, has never taken effect. Nevertheless, the Bureau keeps promoting formal custody through public education and desk information.

#### **D. Protection against violence, abuse and neglect, and help for victims**

78. Currently there is no formal Government procedure for the submission and investigation of complaints from children suffering from violations of their rights. In general any citizen, including children, can submit a complaint at the police office or the office of the Public Prosecution. After someone has made a complaint, a report is drawn up. Then legal advice is given or the person is referred to the relevant institutions or to a lawyer (people with low incomes are entitled to free government legal services). The Office of Public Prosecution investigates every complaint regarding child rights violations, including sexual or physical abuse of a child.

79. No National Institute for Human Rights is operational in Suriname. There is a non-governmental organization, Moiwana '86, whose objective is to observe human rights in Suriname and in particular to enhance civil and political rights. This organization investigates human rights violations and brings these cases to the attention of the proper authorities. These last few years Moiwana has become more active in the field of domestic violence and has participated in a number of coordinated efforts of NGOs to bring undesirable situations concerning women and children as well as prisoners to the attention of decision makers and the public.

80. The shortage of adequate alternative care and counseling services for abused children is a major concern. Many cases of difficulty in the placement of children in alternative homes are reported either as a result of a lack of available shelter or because sexually active children are not welcome in the home. Because adaptations to the legislation on sexual consent have not yet been approved, children remain in a situation where they cannot be adequately helped, for example in cases which require the submission of a complaint but in which the child is discouraged or intimidated from doing so.

81. The Government acknowledges and underscores the high priority of protecting children against all forms of violence and has provided support to NGOs and private institutions to develop and improve their services in this regard. Unfortunately, the Government has endured major budget cuts, which have had repercussions for securing sufficient financial and human resource support for programmes aimed at the prevention and treatment of child abuse. Within the Government, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is responsible for social youth protection measures. There is a special division where social workers provide assistance for

children and their family who are in a socially deprived situation, but this division does not handle cases of abuse. Traditional views within the Government with regard to the content of social services still include an unwritten code against direct interference in family-related matters, which possibly is the reason why family counseling has not been institutionalized.

82. Various non-governmental organizations are active in the field of child abuse: Maxi Linder Foundation (commercial sex); Foundation for the Child, Human Development Foundation, Stop Violence against Women Foundation, and the Violence Against Women Network. The Youth Department of the Police in cooperation with these NGOs handles most cases of child rights violations that are reported. Within the Foundation for the Child there is a crisis centre that provides care for the child after a complaint has been filed. Also, medical guidance is provided. In some cases counselling services are provided to the abused child, its abuser and other family members so as to resolve problems and to re-establish a family relationship. The organizations investigate complaints and then report the results to the proper authorities.

83. As a result of the awareness raising-campaigns, the society has become more alert and responsive to cases of child abuse, which has led to increased reporting. In many cases the governmental and non-governmental organizations are under-resourced to respond adequately to the reported cases of child neglect or abuse. In general these cases are brought to the attention of organizations or authorities by:

- Teachers;
- Religious organizations;
- Parents;
- Health workers; and
- Social workers.

84. Legal and other services for abused and neglected children are provided by:

- Youth Police - Ministry of Justice and Police;
- Foundation for the Child;
- Foundation Tamara;
- Koela (crisis centre for boys);
- Emmaus (crisis centre for neglected children);
- Medical Pedagogical Bureau within the Ministry of Health.

85. The Foundation for the Child and some other NGOs have also been active in community awareness-raising activities over the past years, with partly government support. This support has covered financial subventions and has lent personnel (civil servants). In 1999 the Gender Bureau, a division of the Ministry of Home Affairs, initiated the Domestic Violence Network in order to achieve a comprehensive national effort to identify, treat, and prevent all types of domestic abuse, including child abuse. Relevant Governmental and Non- Governmental Organizations have been invited to participate in this network. Key objectives are to evaluate and improve inter-agency collaboration, to avoid duplication, and to provide further training for key partners in this process.

86. In spite of all efforts made to reduce child abuse, whether physical or sexual, there are indications of an alarming increase. This may be partly attributable to the increased awareness in society, and among children, as a result of intensive public awareness campaigns and increased provision of services in this regard. Nevertheless, the increase is highly alarming and is receiving special attention from the authorities.

87. In the past five years the Foundation for the Child registered an increase of over 100 per cent in cases of sexual abuse of children. In 1995 the Foundation had registered 50 children, while at the end of 2000 this number was more than 100. The Crisis Centre for Sexually Abused Children operated by the Foundation for the Child started functioning in 1994 and has lately been providing services to an average of 100 child victims of sexual, physical or other types of abuse annually. The Foundation observed a trend that, besides girls at the age of 3 to 16, sexual abuse also victimized babies and disabled children. In general, 95 per cent of the abusers were known to the children, which was confirmed by police statistics. Because of the alarming reports, the Youth Affairs Department of Police immediately intensified its education programmes for children in school and through the media, as a result of which children reported more cases.

88. Responding to a special request from the Committee on the Rights of the Child, additional information on the founding of the Human Development Foundation is hereby provided. An employee of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing founded the Foundation for Human Development in August 1989. The goal of the Foundation for Human Development is to enhance and promote the optimal development and well being of children in Suriname and to initiate, encourage, assess and guide activities in Suriname aimed at children and youth in Suriname. The Bureau for Child Development (BKO) was established as the working arm of the Foundation, while the Foundation also operated a Crisis Centre with Government support between 1991 and 1993, however that was, closed due to internal problems (it was immediately followed up by the Crisis Centre for Sexually Abused Children, established in 1993). BKO pioneered interventions to increase community awareness and develop and implement strategies to reduce, identify and prevent child abuse in the family and in the community. Recognizing the importance of such an organization, the Government of Suriname released its employee with full salary and benefits, from her duties to become the director of the Bureau for Child Development. The Government also provided two additional workers and subvention to the Bureau from the onset. In 1994 the collaboration between the Foundation and the Government was formalized in a Letter of Agreement in which the Government pledged to provide support to the Foundation for the implementation of activities that had been approved by the Government. The Letter

of Agreement in general mentioned activities in favour of enhanced development and the well-being of children and youth, and specifically community education, training, guidance, and support to children in crisis situations.

89. Within this context the Bureau for Child Development (BKO), as the working arm of the Foundation for Human Development, developed and provided training for key groups in the community including police, the Department of Justice and health workers. Intensive community education activities were carried out in order to sensitize the community in this regard.

90. BKO daily receives complaints with respect to child abuse. Awareness raising campaigns and other activities of the Foundation have resulted in increased reporting. This is a reason why the BKO Foundation is now understaffed and under-resourced for adequately processing all its cases. Nevertheless, BKO has managed under the given conditions to make substantial contributions in the area of child protection and care. Among the activities conducted between 1995 and 2000, the following stood out:

- Promotion of CRC on different occasions (workshops, seminars), training of children's groups on the content of CRC, organizing thematic discussions on legal issues, intermediation in cases of violations of child rights;
- Formulation of an NGO report on CRC that was submitted to the United Nations Committee in 2000;
- Implementation of various surveys on the situation of children and violations of their rights in the context of international conventions: the quality of preschools, situation of street children, surveys situation of children in prison, assessment of the situation of children in day care centre;
- The surveys resulted in a number of BKO actions: courses for volunteers and service providers on "Detection of Child Abuse", the establishment of a BKO division (30 volunteers) in the rural District of Nickerie, Counseling training for social workers in Nickerie and training of child minders (upgrading home-based day care facilities for children);
- BKO's participation in several national commissions, committees and meetings.

91. The Help to Victims Foundation was established with the goal to provide emotional, social and financial support to victims of crime. The reason for the establishment of the Foundation for Help to Victims was that in the current court system the focus was on the offender, with little attention paid to the victim. Due to lack of funds and human resources the Foundation currently operates on a voluntary basis, mainly in the area of community sensitization and education.

92. Like other NGOs in Suriname, the above-mentioned foundations face many challenges. The current economic crisis and the brain drain have significantly compromised the Government's capacity to provide leadership and financial support to NGOs. Due to severe



inflation, the significance of subventions provided by the Government has gradually decreased. NGOs are now forced to actively identify and compete for additional funds. Other challenges include poor collaboration and rivalry between NGOs, lack of qualified staff and limited access to private funds.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE**

### **A. Public health**

#### **1. Children**

93. In general it can be concluded that over the past 15 years Suriname has gone through a severe economic and social decline, which has adversely affected the situation of children. Infant and child mortality and morbidity, which had been steadily declining in the 1980s, have been on the rise. The negative impact of the country's economic crisis has resulted in a decreased quality of health care services and a rise in poverty-related morbidity and mortality. The lack of significant improvement and in some cases deterioration of infant and child survival indicators in Suriname prompted the Planning Division of the Ministry of Health to initiate broad-based consultations with relevant groups in the community. With UNICEF support, three policy meetings were held with pediatricians, gynecologists, dietitians and public health specialists to review and discuss maternal and child health, in particular prenatal, perinatal and newborn care. The results indicated a lack of standardization and planning in the care provided. Effort is now focusing on the development of a uniform policy and protocol for maternal and childcare.

94. Infant and child mortality: Mortality rates for 0-1 per 1,000 live births were 22-23 between 1988 and 1994 and dropped then to 15-17 between 1995 and 1999. Perinatal mortality, gastroenteritis, congenital disorders and respiratory diseases were leading causes of infant mortality. A drop in infant mortality rate to 14 in 1997 and 1998 was probably due to underreporting. In order to increase the reliability of infant mortality data, the Bureau for Public Health (BOG) conducted a perinatal mortality survey 1996-1999 and trained staff to improve the national reporting system. In 1999 the Epidemiology Division of the Bureau for Public Health initiated a perinatal mortality survey to review all perinatal deaths from 1995 to 1998 and to develop protocols for appropriate reporting. The survey results were disseminated in September 2000. The Health Education Division of the Bureau of Public Health developed radio and TV messages regarding nutrition, growth and development, diarrhea and safe practices, which are currently being aired.

95. Mortality rates for 1-4 remained at 21 over the past decade. Leading causes of death for this age group were gastroenteritis, accidents and trauma, malnutrition, respiratory diseases and congenital disorders.

96. Malnutrition: during the civil war in the 1980s and in the early 1990s, malnutrition was a significant problem in the whole country. A 1994 study among primary school children in Paramaribo found 10 per cent of the children with a weight-for-age below the third percentile. Hospitalization of 0-5's due to malnutrition sharply increased from 33 in 1988 to 185 in 1994.

More than 50 per cent of the hospitalized children were in the age group 0-1. Currently there is some evidence that malnutrition is slowly decreasing. In the period of 1997-1999 it disappeared from the list of 5 main causes of death for children less than one year old.

**Table 2**  
**Hospitalized cases of malnutrition, by age**

Age	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Total
< 28 days	7	3	3	2	1	16
28 days-11 months	85	72	70	67	45	339
1-4 yrs	73	53	64	62	69	321
5-9 yrs	2	4	1	2	6	15
10 yrs-older	1	2	1	0	0	4
Total	168	134	139	133	121	

*Source:* Epidemiology Data 1995-1999, Bureau for Public Health, September 2000.

97. Between 1995 and 1999 hospitalization due to malnutrition dropped from 168 to 121. According to the Medical Mission there have been no reported cases of acute malnutrition in the interior. However, Maroon children comprised 44 per cent of the total hospitalized cases in the 4 hospitals of Paramaribo. For the Indigenous population the total rate was 7 per cent.

98. The Ministry of Public Health is aggressively promoting breast-feeding of children up to two years of age, appropriate weaning practices and hygiene and sanitation for the prevention of diarrhoea and malnutrition. The Breastfeeding Section of the Bureau for Public Health was re-activated in 1992 in response to the increasing malnutrition. In the period 1998-2000, this Section trained a cumulative number of 400 health workers, including doctors, health assistants of the Medical Mission and Regional Health Services, a number of volunteers, called "Breastfeeding Supporters", were trained in collaboration with the Suriname Breastfeeding Foundation to provide support and guidance to mothers and groups of mothers in different local communities. Although the results were difficult to measure, observations of various practitioners indicated an increased incidence of breastfeeding. Regulated prices for weaning products are part of this integrated programme, as is the established Nutrition Working Group. The Working Group was appointed and installed by the Minister of Health in November 2000 to conduct the following tasks:

- Update the report of the Nutrition Commission installed in 1989 that was in produced 1992.
- Formulate a National Nutrition Policy (that shall, inter alia promote breastfeeding).
- Develop a monitoring structure and surveillance system for risk groups.

99. The Working Group is composed of three subgroups covering the areas of health promotion, health education and food safety and security. Each subgroup has the task to make an inventory of the activities and problems related to its working field and to solve occurring

problems. The Bureau for Public Health will conduct a survey on nutrition customs and traditions in the rural districts, of which the result will be utilized for the development of training and education materials on nutrition education.

100. Malaria: during the civil war the incidence of malaria sharply increased since the interior was not accessible and the malaria prevention programme was not operating. Reportedly 25 per cent of children and 11 per cent of pregnant women in the district of Sipaliwini have malaria (Medical Mission, 1998). The Medical Mission registers about 60 -70 per cent of all positive smears. As a response to the critical state of the malaria epidemic in Suriname, the Government appointed a Malaria Committee to develop plan of action. In this context a crash programme was developed and implemented from 1997 to 1999, which included targeted spraying, community education and cleaning campaigns, and impregnated bednet campaigns. National Malaria Institute was also established. Full implementation of the action plan and functioning of the Malaria institute are being hampered by the lack of funds, yet there is some evidence of reduction of malaria incidence. Positive smears fell 25 per cent between 1996 and 1998 (Medical Mission, 1999). With the support of the Government (Bureau for Public Health) and donors such as UNICEF, the Medical Mission continues to implement community awareness and impregnated bednet activities. Recent evaluations indicate that 70 per cent of children sleep under a bednet, while 40 women's groups of different villages in the interior are involved in sewing and impregnation of bednets.

101. Vaccination coverage: until the civil war, Suriname had very high immunization coverage of over 95 per cent. Due to the civil war and the ensuing destruction of infrastructure, immunization coverage dropped significantly to 70 per cent in 1994. Over the past years the Government has made an intensive effort to increase immunization coverage through community education and mass immunization campaigns. Current national rates are OPV3 and DPT3, 85 per cent, and MMR, 85 per cent. MMR was introduced in Suriname in 1994. A rubella and yellow fever immunization campaign started in October 2000 and will be finished by mid-2001. No sex disaggregated data are being kept. The situation in the interior remains a concern, with rates of around 60 per cent for OPV3 and DPT3, which the Medical Mission is addressing through mass immunization campaigns and rehabilitation of the cold chain.

**Table 3**

**Immunization coverage 1995-2000**

Year	DPT3	OPV3	Measles	MMR
1995	84.0	81.3	-	82.8
1996	85.1	83.7	-	87.0
1997	81.3	81.2	98.4*	78.5
1998	89.7	90.1	-	82.3
1999	85.0	84	-	85.33

*Source:* Bureau for Public Health, 2001.

\* Measles mass immunization campaign.

102. In Suriname there are three organizations involved in the immunization of children, each with their own administration system. The Regional Health Services (RGD) is responsible for health care in urban and rural areas, the Bureau for Public Health (BOG) is national, while the Medical Mission works in the interior. As the organizations work with divergent geographical mapping, discrepancies are common. Uniformity has become a prime target. The Bureau for Public Health is responsible for national data collection and is, therefore, preparing to set up a central administration system that should be operational as of 2001. Currently the Bureau still fully depends on the administration system at individual clinics, which do not necessarily meet the required standards for administration and reporting.

103. Primary School Health Programme. The Regional Health Services (RGD) recovered its health programme for primary schools in 1995 with the support of PAHO and UNICEF. The support was primarily used for training school nurses. RGD's school programme had endured hardship due to the chronic lack of qualified school nurses, and of medical equipment since the late 80s. Consequently, it had only been able to sustain its school immunization programme during the previous 15 years. The programme involves the provision of medical examination at 236 registered primary schools in the coastal plain with a total estimated number of 143,000 children between 6 and 15. In 1996 RGD trained 23 school nurses with PAHO support and in 1999 another 19 nurses with UNICEF support, which also included the purchase of basic medical equipment and material. Also, 30 school nurse assistants were trained in 2000. As a result of the support from PAHO and UNICEF, RGD has been able to conduct medical examination among a total of 11,292 children from 60 schools between 1997 and 2000. The examination includes hygiene, eye and ear examinations, skin infections, head lice, etc.

104. Village Health Promoters (VHPs). With the support of UNICEF, RGD trained 17 VHPs, of an equal number of villages, in the District of Marowijne. These villages are based in the coastal area and, therefore, are not covered by the Medical Mission. While the VHPs are currently still in training, they have already started working. They are being monitored by the RGD health centre in Marowijne.

## **2. Children with a disability**

105. Currently no national data are available on the nature and frequency of children with disabilities in Suriname. The CNSP (Children in Need of Special Protection) data system, which is being developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, is anticipating generating reliable data in the future.

106. From 1999 to 2000 a situational analysis study of Children with Disabilities was conducted which found that on a sample population of 3,095, 1.3 per cent (39 children) concerned disabled children. The major disability was difficulty in learning, followed by difficulty with speech and hearing. Significantly more males than females were identified. The study focused on children up to the age of 18 and examined the services available to disabled children. It was, inter alia, found that negative attitudes towards persons with a disability are still common in Suriname. The results of the study will guide the Government in improving its planning of policies and programmes, and the monitoring of services for children with disabilities. While there is no policy document for special education, the Ministry of Education

and Community Development provides learning experiences for over 1,800 children with disabilities in collaboration with the private sector, on the levels of Basic Special Education, Secondary Special Education, and vocational training.

107. The Service for Care of Disabled provides various services upon request, and has an outreach that covers 20 per cent (total annual average of 67 persons) of the estimated disabled people in Suriname. The services include a broad range of intermediate and direct social and health care. Home care services are given to less mobile persons. The highest demand for services appears to be in the age group 0-25, which includes a large number of youth. The education system has created special education opportunities and specialized care for those who cannot visit regular schools. NGOs and private institutions also provide a considerable proportion of services. These services include shelter, day care, vocational training, income generation, housing, transport facilities, etc. The “WI OSO Foundation” is in particular carrying out these activities.

108. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has been mandated to provide and coordinate assistance to persons with disabilities. To this end, Presidential Decree 7541 established a National Advisory Board (NARG) in 1981, with representatives from the Ministries of Education and Community Development, Social Services and Housing, and Labour and Environment, as well as NGOs and the private sector. The Advisory board has the task of advising the Government regarding legislation, subvention, permits, care and other issues related to people with disabilities.

109. With regard to direct support for children with disabilities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has provided subventions to about eight institutions providing care to children with disabilities. The total amount allocated for 1997 was the equivalent of US\$ 49,162.56; for 1998, US\$ 57,672.41 and for 1999, US\$ 45,025.13.

110. The Medical Pedagogical Bureau (MOB) of the Ministry of Health provides services for the assessment of children, their placement in regular or special schools, and various related services, such as guidance, screening, early detection, early stimulation, care for children and parental guidance. The MOB used to have a staff of physicians, psychologists and social workers but as a governmental organization it experienced a disturbing brain-drain because of low salaries and insufficient facilities. The Medical Pedagogical Bureau and the Association of Private Social Institutions (VPSI) jointly undertook public awareness activities, which started in 2000 with the financial support from UNICEF.

111. The World Health Organization set the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps, which is being used to develop standard rules for people with disabilities. A curriculum is also being developed for the education and training of social workers and volunteers to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Plans are being made for increased vocational training for the disabled. The Government admits that people with a disability are an underprivileged group in Suriname and that more should be done to fully integrate them in society. Children with disabilities are, for example, usually not being integrated in regular schools or in daycare and residential care facilities, although MOB home teachers achieved some successes with the individual integration of children with disabilities in regular kindergartens. This was done in collaboration with the Early Detection and Early Stimulation Foundation.

### 3. Adolescents

112. Accidents, traumas and suicides were leading causes of death among adolescents. In general there is a lack of data regarding adolescent health. The Basic Life Skills Committee performed a situation analysis in 1997, which indicated that youth prostitution, youth crime, and the use of alcohol and drugs among youth were increasing. In 2000 the Basic Life Skills Committee implemented a national adolescent health and needs assessment that provided needed baseline data for the development of appropriate interventions. A sectoral approach resulted in a Plan of Action for the health and education sectors as well as for social service providers.

113. With the support of UNFPA and UNICEF, the following activities took place:

- The Lobi Foundation for Responsible Parenthood developed a publication with background information on teenage pregnancy in Suriname at the request of the First Lady in 1997;
- Three youths participated in the Caribbean Youth Summit in Barbados (1998);
- A series of 12 TV programmes was developed by and for youth on various sexual and Reproductive Health (ARSH) issues and broadcasted by 3 television station (1999/2000). Lobi implemented 2 surveys on ARSH-issues in 1999;
- In March 2000 the UNFPA pilot project “Mi Libi” on adolescents sexual and reproductive health and rights started in one urban (Latour) and one rural (Moengo) area. Components of the project are Advocacy, Training, IEC and Service Delivery. The project is part of the UNFPA/GOS agreement (Ministry of Health) and is being implemented by NGOs;
- The Pro Health Foundation conducted a community baseline survey on adolescent/youth sexual and reproductive health care in Latour and Moengo in 2000;
- The Loby Foundation with government endorsement started consultations in an urban community (Pontbuiten) on community involvement activities ARSH In 2002 (Adolescence Reproductive and Sexual Health).

### STDs/HIV/AIDS

114. In general the reported incidence of STDs has sharply increased over the past decade. Between 1989 and 1995 the diagnosed incidence of syphilis doubled from 105 to 225, while gonorrhoea increased from 1601 to 2072. This increase in reported cases can probably be partially attributed to increased awareness and care-seeking behaviour promoted by the public education and awareness raising campaigns on STDs implemented by the Ministry of Health and NGOs.

115. While the data of the Ministry of Health does not suggest an increase in the prevalence of STDs among youth, the persisting high prevalence of teenage pregnancy and reported low incidence of condom use are indicators of increased risks and the prevalence of STDs among

youth. With the aim to develop comprehensive STDs/HIV prevention efforts, the Government merged the STD Programme and the National AIDS Programme in 1997: now called the STDs/AIDS Programme. At national policy level an STDs/HIV Task Force has been functioning since the 1980s. Multiple community awareness and prevention campaigns for youth have been implemented during the past years.

116. Sex-disaggregated data on HIV/AIDS have been kept since the Beijing World Conference of Women in 1995, but age disaggregation is still a problem. In 1996 the administration of HIV/AIDS was moved from the National Aids Programme (NAP) to the Dermatological Service. Internal problems with the transfer of the administration caused a gap in data registration. Since 1997 data disaggregation by age improved somewhat. In 1997 there were no HIV-positive tests in the age group 5-14, and four cases in the age group 15-17. Data for children under five years reflect mostly perinatal cases.

**Table 4**

**HIV/AIDS cases in Suriname 1995-2000 by sex**

Year	New cases	Male	Female	Cumulative	Children 0-5 yrs
1995	80	46	34	514	0
1996*	-	-	-	-	-
1997	182	96	86	783	6
1998	186	97	89	965	5
1999	267	131	136	1 232	N.A.
2000**	285	152	133	1 517	6

*Source:* Dermatological Service, March 2001.

\* Data for 1996 not available because the National AIDS Programme was moved to Derma.

\*\* Only provisional data available for 2000.

**Early pregnancy**

117. Pregnancy among teens slightly increased from 16 per cent before 1995 to around 17 per cent of the annual number of live births. About 1 per cent concerned girls younger than 15. A 1992 survey reported contraceptives use among teenage women of less than 30 per cent.

**Arranged marriages**

118. There are no data available regarding arranged marriages. However, it still occurs in rural areas and in the interior that girls engage in a partner relation at a young age (14-19 ). It is not clear which percentage of these unions are by choice or arranged by parents. Due to cultural beliefs and customs as well as the lack of educational facilities, early partner engagement and pregnancy is still being practised.

### Drug and alcohol abuse

119. No data are available regarding drug and alcohol abuse among youth but this problem seems to have rapidly increased. Police statistics, which only reveal the tip of the iceberg, show an increase of youth taken into custody from 12 persons in 1996 to 62 in 1999. It is well-known that the police release many young drug offenders because of overcrowded cell spaces in youth prisons. A situation analysis conducted by the Basic Life Skills Committee indicated that young people have the impression that drug and alcohol abuse in their age group is increasing.

### Crime and violence

120. Data provided by the Police and Ministry of Justice indicates that crime and violence among youth has seriously increased. Between 1996 and 1999 the number of youth detained by the police for acts of crime and violence increased by 40 per cent.

**Table 5**

#### Number of youth taken into custody by age group and sex

Age	1996		1997		1998		1999	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
10-16 yrs	308	29	235	27	397	37	438	23
17-18 yrs	190	23	219	19	233	29	286	17
Total	498	52	454	46	630	66	724	40
Total M+F	550		500		696		764	

*Source:* Statistical Yearbook, General Bureau for Statistics November 2000.

The police also report a coarsening of violent acts committed by youth and an increase in the use of knives and firearms.

### Suicide

121. While suicide was the second leading cause of death among children 5-14 years old before 1995, it disappeared from the list of 5 main causes of death after 1995. From 1992-1994 a total of 52 deaths (30 boys and 22 girls) was reported.

### Mental health concerns

122. The high school drop-out, repetition and failure rates in the education system and the persisting economic crisis compounded by increasing juvenile violence, crime and substance abuse indicates a need for higher concern regarding the mental health of youth in Suriname. These concerns contributed to the wholehearted support of the Basic Life Skills Programme by the Government, as described below. The Government recognizes that limited financial resources and the bureaucracy compromise the full potential of this programme. However, the Government will continue to support the Basic Life Skills Programme and other programmes contributing to the health and well-being of youth in Suriname.



123. In 1996 the CARICOM Multi-Agency Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme was initiated. The representatives of Suriname, i.e. the Ministers of Education and Health endorsed Suriname's participation in this project. In March 1997 the Minister of Education appointed the Basic Life Skills Committee with the responsibility to coordinate the national implementation of the HFLE project. A part-time coordinator for the BLSC project was appointed by the Ministry as well as a full-time assistant.

124. Between 1997 and 1999 the school-based activities of the Basic Life Skills (BLS) Programme were significantly constrained by the frequent school closures caused by strikes and public unrest. Progress was made, however, in public awareness, training and extension of the programme in all sectors. A draft Basic Life Skills policy document and action plan were prepared and presented to policy makers from key Ministries. A total of 306 primary, secondary and tertiary teachers from Paramaribo, Nickerie and Marowijne participated in values clarification workshops, which were implemented with the support of UNICEF and PAHO. The training was very well received and as a result several schools have initiated follow-up values clarification activities for teachers and students.

125. Using the pyramid HFLE training model, a team of eight representatives from the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Affairs participated in a two-week sub-regional training in Guyana. Upon return, the participants formed a BLS Country Team and initiated the development and implementation of activities towards the integration of BLS principles and material in the functioning of their respective Ministries. Planned activities included BLS orientation and information meetings at the various Ministries and training for key divisions in the Ministries. The Basic Life Skills Committee was strengthened through the provision of office furniture and a computer. So far the activities included:

- One-week training for 40 BLS country facilitators (educators, health workers, trainers, media);
- Training workshop for educators, parents and media involving a total of 160 participants from three districts;
- Stress Management training for educators, youth, parents and media (total of 90 persons);
- Implementation of a Needs Assessment Study to establish baseline data for monitoring and evaluation;
- Create national demand for BLS by: (a) presenting policy makers with a Policy Document and National Plan of Action; (b) conducting 2-day workshops in several areas; and (c) community education through mass media (TV, radio and a media orientation meeting).

126. Currently the BLS programme is entering its fourth phase, which includes the training of 240 health workers and 90 social workers on the practical application of BLS and the transfer of BLS knowledge to the population.

## **B. Social security and child care services and facilities**

### **1. Social security**

127. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing along with several NGOs and CBOs, is involved in providing shelter, food and/or clothing to the poor and homeless, including children. The School Feeding Programme of the Government is being managed in close collaboration with NGOs who also provide food to schoolchildren. The Social Development division of the Ministry provides clothing and physical care (haircut, showering, etc) for homeless people. Among the non-governmental organizations are the Salvation Army, Emmaus Foundation (shelter for “homeless” children), Young Women Christian Association, “Begi en Wroko” Committee (food for homeless), Pater Ahlbrinck Foundation (interior), and many other urban neighbourhood and community based organizations. The TAMARA Foundation, based in the Netherlands and Suriname, regularly sends containers from Holland with second-hand and new clothing, shoes, school materials, furniture and other goods. Organizations in Suriname can freely apply for these goods. Some organizations organize bazaars for selling second hand goods. People in the interior receive regular support from Christian and Moravian organizations in the Netherlands, which operate through local NGOs and CBOs. There are also numerous private initiatives of people in Suriname who donate second hand goods to poor neighbours, friends, family and others. Most of the organizations also provide help to socially deprived people who have lost their home after a fire.

128. The Emmaus Home for Children was established by the Bishopric in 1995 in response to the growing phenomenon of street children. Emmaus provides shelter to boys only. None of the children are really homeless. The majority has parents or other family to look after them, but they ended up in the street because of problems at home. Emmaus has a capacity for 20-25 children, which covers less than 50 per cent of male street children. A rehabilitation programme ensures that the children return to school and are reunited with their parent(s) or guardian(s). A social worker from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing runs the Shelter and provides child and family counselling. The expenses of Emmaus are met through private donations, which do not cover all costs. No subvention is being received from the Government.

129. Currently there are no provisions for care of female street children.

### **2. Child care facilities**

130. There are 19 Government owned day care facilities, which are all located in Paramaribo. However, the continuation of these facilities is jeopardized by the serious lack of resources, which results into operational constraints. The exact number of private childcare facilities in Suriname is unknown because no permit is required. A survey conducted by the KLIMOP Foundation in July-August 2000 listed 102 child day care facilities (that accommodate more than eight children) throughout Suriname. Most of them are situated in Paramaribo or at a short distance from the capital. Only a few facilities were in other districts and in the interior. In general, several facilities seem to have capitulated to the unfavourable economic conditions in the country. Alarming is the existence of privately run “facilities” whose accommodation and services are below the accepted minimum requirements. The following is being done to prevent undesired situations in care facilities:

- Training of the child care providers. UNICEF has supported training and guidance programmes for child minders in poor urban areas and in the interior. The programmes were developed and implemented by the NGOs BKO, the KLIMOP Foundation (specialized in training of day care workers), and Kenki Skoro (specialized in informal education). This programme will be continued and expanded to other poor communities. A recently conducted impact assessment study of the UNICEF supported child minders programmes in the Marowijne District pointed out the great relevance of such facilities for children;
- Health inspection by the Bureau for Public Health. All known facilities are subject to health inspection;
- The CNSP indicators monitoring system has increased the awareness on minimum requirements among institutions that provide childcare.

### **C. Standard of living**

131. The policy document 1997-1999 of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing identifies elderly people, people with a disability, young people (0-18) and women (female heads of households) as the prime target groups of social services. Therefore, they should be considered the main rightful claimants to social subvention of the Government, which intends to increase the living standard of the poorest. Subventions of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing include:

- Child Benefit for persons who do not receive child allowance from employment. The annual number of beneficiary children gradually dropped from 55,661 in 1995 to 35,627 in 1999;
- Financial Support for individuals with an income of less than Sf 40,000 a month. The total number of beneficiaries went from 6,370 in 1995 to 5,080 in 2000;
- Free Medical Care for minima households: category A (maximum income of Sf 40,000) and category B (income between Sf 40,000 and Sf 80,000). The total number of rightful claimants increased from 45,231 in 1995 to 47,903 in 1999;
- Subvention for School Uniforms, Shoes and Learning material for minima households A and B. In 1999 this concerned 18,334 children (from 4,692 claimant households);
- Subvention for Social Institutions, based on exploitation costs and individual subsidy for inhabitants. In 1995 this concerned 33 children's homes and boarding schools with an occupation of 1064 children in total.

132. Subvention levels of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing are based on monthly estimations of a subsistence minimum level so as to keep the social services effective in relation to the basic costs of living. However, the unpredictable fluctuations of the exchange rate and insufficient resources have limited the Government's capacity to follow a consistent policy with respect to the adjustment of subventions. Instead, the Government implements a

macro-economic policy that is aimed at the reduction and stabilization of the exchange rate. The latest fixed minimum existence level, based on estimates, was Sf 30,000 per month (equivalent of US\$ 37.50 in early 1999. However, at the end of 2000 this was worth the equivalent of US\$ 13).

133. In 1997, the Government started the execution of a public low-cost housing programme. Its purpose was to provide low and middle-income groups with the opportunity to buy a house at a reduced price. During the period 1996 and 2000, a total number of 2,012 houses were built and 405 are still in reconstruction but were squatted for the most part, given the high need for social housing. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is currently in the process of removing the squatters so that the houses can be granted to their rightful claimants. With the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) a "Low Income Shelter" programme was initiated in 1998. The programme was designed in close collaboration with NGOs and CBOs who will become the main implementers. A medium-term initiative of the Government that is presently in the preparation phase is the establishment of a small industry for the manufacturing of organic construction material for prefab houses. The Government is seeking investment funding for this plan.

134. Besides the Government there have also been private initiatives of cooperatives for the construction of houses for socially deprived people. The initiatives were not so successful because of the lack of credit/loan facilities and of access to land. The cooperatives and NGOs, which work in the area of affordable housing, are represented in the IDB project. The Forum of NGOs acts as their focal point and is the coordinator in this respect.

## **VII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Education, vocational training and guidance**

#### **1. Student enrolment and performance in education**

135. A comprehensive report for the education sector was provided by the retrospective Education Sector Study for the period 1983-1993 conducted in 1998, with the support of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB). The interior was not included in the study. Results of the IDB study showed that dropout and repetition rates were extremely high in Suriname. The primary school consists of grades 1-6 for the ages 6-11. Until 1992, dropouts averaged about 4 per cent each year at the primary school level for grades 1-5 and then sharply increased to 20 per cent-25 per cent in the 6th grade (IDB 1998). 70 per cent on an average reached the 5th grade. While about 9 out of 10 children start school, less than four in a thousand would finish senior secondary school 12 years later. One out five students who started first grade did not return for second grade and about a quarter of the students at every grade (1-6) repeated that grade the following year.

136. Data on student dropout and repetition were not available for junior secondary schools. It was suggested that 17 per cent dropped out each year while at senior secondary one of every three students dropped out after the first year. The IADB study concluded that the high rates of dropout and repetition indicated high rates of wastage and low internal efficiency. In other

words, the government invested fifteen years of primary schooling for every student who completed the six grades. Sex disaggregated data on dropouts and repetition were only available for the senior secondary technical college (NATIN) for the period 1989/90-1992/93.

137. Gross enrolment was estimated at 78 per cent of all children: around 80 per cent for 1-4 years old, 75 per cent for grade 1-4, and 65 per cent for grade 6. According to the Ministry of Education and Community Development the proportion of children reaching grade 5 was 74.4 per cent in 1990 and 71.8 per cent in 1998. In the MICS national sample 83.8 per cent reached grade 5 among which 92.8 per cent of the urban, 82.5 per cent of the rural, and 64.5 per cent of the interior population (MICS 2000).

138. The General Bureau for Statistics reported in 1995/1996 that 81.3 per cent of the children in Suriname, with the exception of the interior, participated in learning activities prior to starting formal schooling. Suriname's 1999 EFA report estimated that close to 100 per cent of the children enrolling in formal education, the interior excluded, have participated in kindergarten (age 4 and 5). In the MICS sample 61 per cent of the 4-5 yrs and 14 per cent of the children aged 3, including in the interior, participated in preschool learning activities.

139. The Ministry of Education and Community Development estimated adult literacy rates in Suriname to be over 90 per cent during 1991-1994. The Bureau for Statistics reported adult literacy rates for males 95 per cent and for females 91 per cent in 1997 for Paramaribo and Wanica (these two urban Districts comprise 80 per cent of the total population). In the national MICS sample the national literacy rate was 80.2 per cent (urban 92.9 per cent, rural 87 per cent and in the interior 51 per cent).

140. The official teacher-student ratio was estimated at 1 to 22 at primary level and 1 to 12 at junior and secondary level. However, due to the high number of "ghost" teachers and absent teachers (50 per cent according to the IADB report) as well as the shortage of schoolrooms, actual class sizes were larger. In practice, the teacher-student ratio is closer to 1 to 40.

141. There are no official data regarding truancy rates. Repetition rates: the estimated repetition rate for grades 1-4 was 25 per cent. Over 44 per cent of primary school children do not complete primary education in the stipulated six years. Dropout rates: for grade 1-4, 4.5 per cent, grades 5-6, 12.5 per cent and 22.4 per cent.

142. Suriname devotes 5 per cent of its GNP to education (the largest share of all Caribbean and Latin American countries according to the 1998 IDB report. Most of these resources (65 per cent) were spent on non-instructional staff. 30 per cent of all civil servants on the Government's payroll work in the education sector).

## **2. Equal opportunities and access at all levels of the education system**

143. The educational system has the complicated task of accommodating pupils who have different mother tongues and widely divergent social and cultural backgrounds.

Suriname is a small but heterogeneous society. Besides the indigenous people and the descendants of the colonists and slaves, there are significant groups of East Indians, Javanese and Chinese.

144. The Government recognizes that access to all levels of education is not equal for all children. In particular the children in the interior have limited access since the villages are geographically widespread which makes it difficult - if not impossible - to provide all levels of educational services in the interior. The Government provides limited boarding and financial support for children from the interior to reside in the capital for educational purposes.

145. In 1999 the Ministry of Education and Community Development commissioned the NGO "Kenki Skoro" to conduct an assessment of the feasibility of the use of the mother tongue in education in particular with regard to the Maroons in the interior. In these communities the Saramaccan and Aucan (Ndyuka) languages are spoken, while schooling is entirely in Dutch. Conclusions and recommendations include:

- The current model of Dutch instruction contributes to high drop-out and repetition rates;
- The current system does not recognize or include the child's own language and culture;
- There is a need for a pilot to assess the feasibility of introduction of the Mother-tongue approach in particular in the interior of Suriname.

146. The Government will include the recommendations of this study in the National Education Congress to be held in 2002, to reach national consensus regarding the issues.

147. Children with disabilities in general lack equal opportunities and access to the educational system. Suriname has a segregated school system with a range of special schools: one school for the visually impaired, one for hearing impaired, one for physically challenged, a number for children with learning difficulties (approximately 14 for "slow learners" (MLK) and two for "very slow learners" (ZMLK)], two for children with learning and behavioural problems (LOM), as well as approx. 14 special classes at regular elementary schools and 14 facilities at secondary level as well as for self-help and vocational training. But even these special schools often are not accessible because of a lack of transportation and other supporting facilities. In collaboration with NGO's such as VPSI the government makes significant efforts to encourage integration of children with disabilities.

148. With regard to the access of teenage mothers to education, situations are improving. Even though the Ministry of Education and Community Development has never had an official rule or policy to restrict pregnant girls from visiting school, in practice school administrators, teachers and parents have been discouraging pregnant girls or teenage mothers to continue with school. However, dropping out of school because of pregnancy has been reduced over the past years. Most of the junior and senior secondary schools now allow pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers to continue with school, in particular when students are in exam classes.

149. The Youth Department of the Ministry of Education and Community Development started a teenage-mother project in 1989 to create conditions for teenage mothers to finish their education, learn job-skills and parenting skills. The programme is only available in the coastal area of Suriname and includes reproductive health education and building the self-esteem of teenage mothers. The government recognizes the need to develop appropriate and comprehensive programmes for teenage mothers in the rural areas and interior of Suriname.

### **B. Aims of education**

150. The policy document of education for the period 2000-2002 had initiated the following general objectives for education which fall apart into two categories. The first categories concern the educational and general forming function of education:

- To give all young citizens the opportunities to make use of modern adjusted, qualitative flexible and affordable educational facilities for the benefit of pedagogic sensible development;
- To give all citizens the opportunity to gain a critical constructive mentality conform the own possibilities and talents;
- To equip young citizens with adequate intellectual and social know-how and skill to participate as a fully harmoniously-formed citizen of the world;
- To develop and hand over collective norms of the community (such as tolerance and the willingness to work on behalf of the property and welfare of all citizens in the community);
- To give insight in the variety of the culture of Suriname and to stimulate the development of the culture of Suriname and the community.

151. The second group of objectives concerns the preparatory function of education for future professions and the provision of the Surinamese community with sufficiently adequately trained people for cultural, social and economic development.

### **C. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities**

152. Whereas the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, along with other Ministries, is primarily focused on the social or health care of children 0-18 years, the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and Community Development regards community development policy and activities for youth between 0 and 30 years as its main responsibility. Its policy aims at the social and cultural development and education of youth in order to increase their full societal participation and functioning. In particular disabled youth, young women and youth organizations receive ongoing attention.

153. Youth Affairs worked closely with 12 active youth organizations and 26 (youth divisions of) neighbourhood organizations, who regularly meet to participate in the planning of activities for youth. There is good collaboration between Youth Affairs and community centres in different neighbourhoods. Quite popular are the school holiday activities, which Youth Affairs organizes each year in poor neighbourhoods of Paramaribo and the Districts as a means to provide leisure experiences for youth that their parents usually cannot afford to give them.

154. To achieve its goal, the Youth Affairs Department has set out an integrated policy and programme framework consisting of the following focus areas and projects:

- Baseline studies to obtain relevant and update local information on youth and community development organizations, their activities, functioning and needs. Since 1994, training workshops have been organized to improve the organizational skills of youth groups;
- Employment: help youth to identify employment opportunities and help them to create such opportunities for themselves;
- Information and education: Changes in society require appropriate informal and out-of-school education of youth. Topics such as drugs abuse, teenage pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS are among the issues, which are being highlighted and discussed in collaboration with other departments and NGOs. After school activities are being undertaken in 15 communities for children of 6-13 (an estimated total of 1,000 children);
- School holiday activities: In many deprived communities, children have fewer options for spending their free time in a useful manner. Therefore, Youth Affairs organizes recreational and creative activities in various community centres. The activities are being implemented by (about 100) youth workers and teachers who are hired for this work on a part-time basis;
- Young women: Given the fact that young women are more vulnerable, for example to early pregnancy and sexual abuse, which may cause early school dropout, it is acknowledged by the Government that special programmes should be in place to guide girls back to school and have them finish their education. The Teenage Mother Project started in 1994 and has so far been successful in school dropout among girls. For example, by providing opportunities for teenage mothers to return to school and by teaching them special skills to take care of themselves and their child, as well to prevent future unwanted pregnancies;
- Exchange programmes: Exchange visits between youth groups and study tours are being organized at local level and within the Dutch-speaking Caribbean region;
- Material support: Limited material support is being provided to youth organizations.

155. The activities of Youth Affairs are many and occasionally include the involvement of youth in the planning and implementation of activities. To its mandate has recently been added the guidance and support of the Youth Council. The Government finances almost the entire



programme and implementation jointly takes places with youth organizations, NGOs, CBOs and other Government structures. The annual budget of Youth Affairs is currently Sf 50 million (equivalent of \$22,000).

156. Suriname has many NGOs and CBOs throughout the country (urban, rural and interior) that organize recreational, sport and cultural activities for youth. The Forum NGOs, founded in 1993 by some 30 organizations, had a registered number of 180 member organizations by 2000, half consisting of CBOs from the interior and urban neighbourhoods. Community and sports facilities are available in most parts of Paramaribo and in the centres of the rural Districts. They usually have a special youth division and organize various activities for youth. The SOGK (NGO) organizes sport and recreational activities for children with disabilities. The Sport and Recreation Department of the Ministry of Education and Community Development used to give sports material and subventions to non-governmental organizations but stopped doing this in the mid-1980s because of the economic crisis. Most organizations became dependent on donations from donor agencies and the private sector as well as on their own fundraising activities.

## **VIII. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES**

### **A. Children in conflict with the law**

#### **1. Arrest, detention or imprisonment of children**

157. The Code of Criminal Procedure contains regulations for the juvenile justice system (arts. 403-428). The charges being applied during the criminal process are the same for adults and youngsters. For children the process is strongly inquisitory. The terms of the kinds of pressure allowed to be used are included in the Law.

158. Apprehensions, which are not covered by the act, may be undertaken exclusively by the investigators and Judicial Authorities (article 44 Code of Criminal Procedure). The place for the custody of youngsters is the Police Office for Youth Affairs. In practice it also happens that youngsters are kept in other Police stations. Arrests of children outside Paramaribo are made by a policeman of the police station in the district. According to article 53, subsection 2 of the criminal Code the youngster can be kept for six (6) hours at the most, in which period of time the police can decide to free or detain him or her. The detention is undertaken by an Inspector of Police of the Youth Affairs Division (Deputy Public Prosecutor). The police consult the Public Prosecutor in charge of Youth Affairs about whether they should proceed or not. The public Prosecutor decides whether or not detention will be extended. The detention can be extended by thirty (30) days at the most (articles 49/50) of the Code of Criminal Procedure). The youngster who is in detention can request his release from the Examining Magistrate (article 54a of the Code of Criminal procedures).

159. This request is granted if the examining magistrate judges the detention unjust. In reality a youngster or his lawyer rarely makes this request.

160. The investigators are allowed to keep the child for a hearing (interrogation) six hours at the most (article 53, subsection 2, Criminal Procedure). Within these six hours the police take the decision to either let the youngster free or to detain him. This detention which takes place by

an Inspector of Police of the Youth Affairs Division (Deputy Public Prosecutor) can only take place in cases in which according to the law preliminary detention is possible. Boys are put in jail with adults. Girls are separated.

161. The public prosecutor in charge of Youth Affairs is consulted by the police with the investigation mostly on the question of whether to proceed with detention or not. If there is no reason to keep the youngster any longer, then he is set free. If not, then arraignment takes place at the Public Prosecution. The Public Prosecutor decides whether or not detention will be extended. The articles 49/50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulate that detention can be extended by 30 days at the most. The youngster who has been detained can during the period of detention request his release from the Examining Magistrate pursuant to the article 54a of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This request is granted if the Examining magistrate judges the detention unjust.

162. In practice a youngster or his lawyer rarely makes this request. Due to the lack of public information, many people are unaware of this possibility. If the Public Prosecutor deems it necessary that the youngster be detained longer, mostly because the investigation is not yet completed, the Public Prosecution will ask the Examining Magistrate to issue an “order for detention”.

163. The Public Prosecution can claim a judicial preliminary hearing with the Examining Magistrate to continue the investigation in order to clarify the case. This judicial preliminary hearing does not take place in all cases of young persons. Detaining lasts 30 days at the most (article 57 Code of Criminal Procedure). This term of detention can be extended by three times 30 days at the most (extension of detention) by virtue of article 60a Code of Criminal Procedure. In no case can the youngster be kept in preliminary detention longer than 120 days during the time preceding the session (article 60a, subsection 1, Code of Criminal Procedure). An exception to this article is contained in article 60a, subsection 2, Code of Criminal Procedure, namely in the cases when a judicial preliminary hearing had been claimed and particular circumstances occur which have a bearing on the case itself, when the term of 120 days of preliminary detention can be extended to two times 30 days at the most. Practice shows that these legal terms are observed correctly when it concerns young persons. The Examining Magistrate can set the youngster free if there is insufficient proof.

164. The Examining Magistrate also assigns a lawyer to the youngster who appears before him and has no lawyer (article 405 Code of Criminal Procedure). The Judge makes this request for the assignment of a counselor through the Social Legal Care Service (Sociale Rechtzorg). However, it was reported that often these lawyers do not appear during trial, possibly because of their low remuneration. In these cases the magistrate has to postpone the trial, and sometimes assign another lawyer to the juvenile.

165. With regard to the prosecution of young persons between 16 and 18, the Public Prosecutor takes the decision by virtue of article 58 of the Penal Code, whether to prosecute

them as youngsters or adults (demanding a measure or penalty). Finally the judge will determine at the session if he is going to sentence the 16 or 18 year old youngster as a young person or as an adult. After arrangement, if the Public Prosecution decides to try, the Judicial Child Protection Service (Justitiële Kinder Bescherming) starts with the drafting of a pre-report for the judge as a result of an investigation while a report on the child's environment is drafted for the Public Prosecution.

## **2. Access to legal or other appropriate assistance and rights to appeal**

166. A suspect can choose a lawyer while there is a possibility for an assigned lawyer, or through the Social Legal Care Service if the suspect cannot pay a lawyer.

167. According to article 405 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a lawyer is assigned to any minor suspect against whom an order for custody is issued or who in the judicial preliminary hearing (by the Examining Magistrate) is heard before reaching the age of 18. The Examining Magistrate has to point out to the Social Legal Care Service that the assignment must take place.

168. Article 415 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that youngsters under the age of 16, who appear before the judge without a lawyer, are assigned a lawyer at the session, assigned by the judge. In the event that no assignment or timely assignment of a lawyer has taken place, the parents, according to article 38 shall be entitled to have the right of appeal. The Social Legal Care Service has the task to assign a lawyer to young persons. The procedure is that the police (Reporting Service) must ask for the assignment of a lawyer immediately after apprehension of a youngster through a B-form. Next, the Social Legal Care Service carries out an investigation regarding the assets of the youngster and the family where the youngster comes from. A lawyer is assigned to socially deprived persons (immediately after apprehension).

## **3. Legal proceedings**

169. The judge is obliged to send for an interpreter if the youngster does not understand or speak the language (Dutch) used at the sitting of the Court (article 291/292 Code of Criminal Procedure). The interpreter must have reached the age of 18. The judge also meets the youngster by speaking Sranan Tongo (the unofficial language) when necessary. The Judge also often explains notions to the young person in order to clarify.

170. Juvenile cases take place *in camera* (article 419 of the Code Criminal Procedure). When youths under the age of 16 years old are tried, this takes place *in camera*. This is the same when persons of 16- 18 years of age are tried as youths. In case persons of 16- 18 are tried as adults, these cases are public unless the Judge deems this unnecessary (mostly in cases of indecency offences).

171. When the media attend the court sessions, they receive a guideline from the judge with the instruction that names must not be stated in reports. In case such a rule is violated, the media is addressed on this matter. It does not often happen that the press publishes the names of sentenced youngsters. No sanctions have been arranged in case of violation of the guidelines.

#### **4. General rights of children in arrest, detention or imprisonment**

##### **Visitation rights**

172. Although visitation rights especially for children are not explicitly laid down in the law, the rules for visitation are from 10 to 12 on Sundays, festive days and birthdays.

##### **Monitoring of the conditions of children in detention**

173. The Judicial Child Protection of the Ministry of Justice and Police visits, counsels and advises the convict and drafts a pre-report for the judge as a result of an investigation. Monitoring of children in detention is, however, not optimal. There is likewise no mechanism for complaints.

##### **Independent complaints mechanism for violations of the child's rights**

174. There is no explicit independent mechanism for this. Normally, family members of the child take the initiative to register complaints at higher levels of the police system. Sometimes they also approach other organizations, while the media sometimes are asked to make their voice heard and to provoke proper actions.

#### **5. Accessibility of education, health and social services**

##### **Medical provisions**

175. There is a general physician who visits the Institution once a week (Wednesday). On the site of the Central Penitentiary Institution there is an outpatients' clinic as well where nurses are present every day in order to offer help. For emergency cases, they can ask a physician to visit or send the child to visit one outside the Institution.

##### **The right to education**

176. Hardly any education was provided in the Juvenile Reformatory (Jeugd Opvoedingsgesticht) from 1994-1996. Until October 1999, two teachers, among whom was a retired teacher, were attached to the Institution. Since January 2000, five teachers have been attached to the Institution in order to provide education:

- Two teachers provide primary education; one of them also provides education at Junior Secondary General Education level;
- Two teachers provide technical education;
- One teacher provides B.O (Special) education at Basic Education level.

177. The incarcerated young person participates in the exams of the Ministry of Education and Community Development through a school in the neighbourhood after an evaluation has been made. Young persons who follow Junior Secondary General Education can be given the opportunity to continue their education under certain conditions (mostly dependent on the behavior of the person). Often this is done during the period of "external activities".

178. The penitentiary has one teacher. Children in detention have no access to education.

#### **Other provisions and material conditions**

179. The facilities are poor because the Government lacks the money to improve these or build new facilities. The youngsters do not wear uniforms. In general, recreational activities are lacking. There is a radio and television set and a few games in the recreation room. In case of good behaviour the young people are allowed to have a radio in their rooms. Religious organizations frequently visit the institution. Welfare workers visit the institution twice a week. Their activities mainly consist of having group and individual talks with youngsters.

180. There is no fixed activity programme, mainly due to the lack of resources. Educational activities such as lectures, training and day trips are seldom organized. As a result, youngsters spend most of their time doing nothing. It is necessary to develop low-cost educational and recreational activities for youngsters in detention.

181. There is no special guidance for repeat offenders. The guidance is the same as the one for first offenders. This can be considered a serious shortcoming. The welfare workers visit the Institution. In addition, Penitentiary Government Officials are responsible for the young persons. They have followed a general training programme for Penitentiary Government Officials and have taken a refresher course after that, but they have not had specialized training with regard to young persons.

182. There is regular contact between the welfare workers and the Management of the Juvenile reformatory. The re-educational character of this contact, however, is not evident from the activities undertaken in the field.

#### **6. Recovery and rehabilitation services for children**

183. At present the Judicial Child Protection is carrying out a pilot project in the Juvenile Reformatory. This project is intended for young persons who are expected to be discharged from the Youth Custody Centre and youngsters who have been in the Institution for two to two-and-a-half years and who, in consultation with the Public Prosecutor are being considered for early release.

184. This pilot project emphasizes re-socialization. The programme starts 6 weeks to 3 months before release. The candidate is assigned to a social worker for intensive observation and guidance. Key aspects are assessments of the level of self-confidence, the sense of responsibility and the fears of the youngsters. The youngsters must carry out external activities as a preparation for the release. It should be observed that the young persons carry out activities only at Government offices. As a result of this, re-socialization does not really take place. There is a need for the adaptation and expansion of this pilot project to include more forms of re-socialization aimed at recreation, vocational training and after care. There used to be recreational activities but they stopped some years ago because of the lack of financial resources.

## **B. Children in situations of exploitation**

### **1. Sexual exploitation**

185. There are no reliable data regarding sexual exploitation of children, child prostitution, child pornography and sale and trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation. Informal estimates are that child pornography and child prostitution are on the increase. There have been some high-profile media cases of alleged commercial sexual exploitation of children.

186. There is a need for systematic documentation and generation of data in this respect. A step in this direction was a study of "Maxi Linder" on the sexual exploitation of children, in particular on the risks of children of sex workers becoming involved in sex work. The study will be completed in 2001. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing anticipates the systematic generation of data through the CNSP system and its participation in the Domestic Abuse Prevention Network that aims at developing appropriate data collection and intervention measures regarding sexual abuse.

### **2. Children living and/or working in the street**

187. There are no national data to support the claim of increasing numbers of children living and/or working in the street. A child labour survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1998 reported that 3.2 per cent of the children in the sample had once been involved in child labour, while at the time of the survey this figure was 2 per cent. The most prevalent activity was helping in the field (agriculture), followed by caring for younger siblings. Around 80 per cent of the children reported doing this "to help the mother/family". This suggests that the economic crisis in Suriname is forcing families to engage children in economic activities to support the family unit.

188. Currently the Government has no active approach towards reduction or prevention of child labour. In the past the Youth Police removed children under the age of 12 who were involved in commercial activities from the street. However, this was not a formal policy. The Government acknowledges the need to initiate activities to prevent and reduce child labour.

189. With regard to Suriname's intentions of becoming a party to ILO Conventions No. 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment and No. 182 concerning the worst forms of child labour, the following can be said:

- Convention No. 138: there is a need to evaluate the conditions in the Surinamese Labour act and the practical situation in relation to Convention No. 138;
- Convention No. 182: there are no obstacles to ratify this convention; however there has never been a forum at which this convention was presented for ratification. Whenever this moment occurs, Suriname will not hesitate to ratify.

### **3. Substance abuse**

190. The Bureau for Alcohol and Drugs (BAD) of the Ministry of Health provides substance abuse prevention and treatment services, including counselling and treatment programmes for victims of substance abuse and their families.

191. Activities for the youth include school visit with the purpose of information and education on drug prevention. This agency implements specific activities in schools, through the media and at community centres aimed at educating and sensitizing youth regarding substance abuse. In the past years effective peer education programmes have been implemented in several districts. The Basic Life Skills Programme also addresses substance abuse and other health-risk issues, and aims at equipping young people with the skills necessary to make healthy choices.

192. The use of children in the production and/or trafficking of illicit drugs: deliberate provocation to commit an offense has been made punishable according to article 72, subsection 2, of the Penal Code. Thus the person who uses a child in the production and/or trafficking of illicit drugs is punishable by law. A special article dealing with provocation of children has not been included in the Law. This has not been included as an aggravation of penalty.

### **C. Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group**

193. There are no specific statistics for indigenous (or rural) groups being collected at national level, while national data normally reflect the situation of the urban population (Paramaribo and Wanica). Information on indigenous groups is only available through anecdotal information and incidental surveys. The total number of children in indigenous communities is, for example, unknown, as is their precise participation in education and access to health care. Since the information on indigenous groups has been integrated in the different chapters of this report, this paragraph is limited to some specifics.

#### **Education**

194. The 1998 UNICEF-funded survey pointed out that two-thirds of the kindergarten children along the Upper Suriname River area (District of Sipaliwini) were out of school. Although compulsory education does not apply to this age group, the advantages of pre-school learning are evident. Children in the interior are deprived of this opportunity. On an average half of the 6-10 years old and two-thirds of the 11-14 years of age were not receiving education. It was also observed that instruction material was not adapted to the children's perception of their environment/habitat, whereas lower educational standards in the most remote areas of the interior created inequality between children from these areas of the interior and other parts of the country.

195. The Ministry of Education and Community Development addressed the problem of teacher shortage in the interior by initiating a pilot programme in 1984 to recruit people from villages with at least some junior secondary education to prepare them as teachers after a six months training. These teachers received a special certificate known as "Boslandakte" (only for the interior). The children from indigenous and Maroon tribal communities located in the coastal areas had better and more equal access to education. There are no public schools in the interior. The Catholic and Moravian society receive partial subvention from the Government to provide education services for children in the interior.

196. A rapid assessment of the situation of schoolchildren conducted within the framework of the UNIFEM/UNICEF-supported programmes in the Amazon region, indicated a higher early school dropout of boys in gold mining areas. The boys were involved in informal gold mining.

**Health**

197. According to the Medical Mission (MM), access of children to health care was alarming, however. The state of well-being of Maroon groups in particular was alarming in many cases. Traditional beliefs and customs as well as behavioural problems were often underlying causes of health problems, e.g. malaria, STDs/HIV/AIDS along with diseases due to poor hygiene and sanitation practices. MM covers health care for a population of about 49,000 people, 80 per cent of which are Maroon and 20 per cent Amerindian (according to the population census of 1980, the Amerindian population was half that of the Maroon's).

198. As an NGO, MM has access to most donor facilities and also receives subvention from the Government. It has, therefore, been able to implement several health care programmes and health education activities, e.g. in the areas of child health care promotion, reproductive health and the prevention of malaria, malnutrition and STDs/HIV/AIDS. For this purpose, MM operates through the establishment of women's groups who receive regular training to provide health education and guidance to the local communities' population.

199. A recently conducted water and sanitation survey by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing in collaboration with PAHO, UNDP and UNICEF concluded that only 18 per cent of the interior population had access to piped water while 60 per cent made use of river or rain water. The figures for access to piped water in the urban area was 91 per cent and for rural areas 65 per cent. Access to sanitation in the interior was 31 per cent, whereas figures were 99 per cent and 98 per cent for the urban and rural areas, respectively. The follow-up that will be given to this survey will soon be decided by the Government and collaborating agencies.

**Other services**

200. The majority of the NGOs that have been listed in this report are also working in one or more areas of the interior. There are also NGOs who specifically work in the interior, for example, the Pater Ahlbrinck Foundation (Catholic), the Centre for Community Development (Moravian), Forum NGOs, Conservation International Suriname, Eco System 2000 (environmental), National Women's Movement, Sanomaro Esa, and Pro Health. The majority of these organizations are located in the capital of Suriname. Therefore, the capital dependency syndrome of the interior is one of a complex nature.



**Annex I**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF  
SURINAME'S FOLLOW-UP**

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that its laws conform fully to the principles and provisions of the Convention. The Committee also encourages the State party to consider the possibility of enacting a comprehensive code for children. The State party is encouraged to take all appropriate measures to adopt, at the earliest opportunity, the additional draft legislation. The Committee recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review of legislation as it relates to Juvenile Justice;</li> <li>– Review of legislation as it relates to ILO Conventions 138 and 182, and compulsory education;</li> <li>– Review of legislation as it relates to ages for sexual consent and marital acts.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to strengthen coordination, including at the local level and with NGOs, and to monitor progress of the implementation of the Convention through the expansion of an existing governmental mechanism or the establish a new one with adequate powers, functions and resources. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the Steering Committee on Youth by, inter alia, allocating adequate financial and human resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishment of National Child Rights Bureau in 2001;</li> <li>– Establishment of child abuse prevention network in 2002.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to establish a central registry for data collection and introduce a comprehensive system of data collection incorporating all the areas covered by the Convention. Such a system should cover all children up to the age of 18 years, with specific emphasis on those who are particularly vulnerable, including children living in the interior of the country, especially those belonging to Amerindian and Maroon communities; children with disabilities; children living in poverty; children in conflict with the law; children of single-parent families; sexually abused children; and children living and/or working on the streets. In this context, the Committee recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishment of Child Indicators Monitoring System (CIMS) and publication of first report in 2001;</li> <li>– Further development of Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP) monitoring system (ongoing).</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>The Committee recommends that an independent child-friendly mechanism be made accessible to children to deal with complaints of violations of their rights and to provide remedies for such violations. The Committee further suggests that the State party introduce an awareness raising campaign to facilitate the effective use by children of such a mechanism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishment of Child Rights Bureau in 2001;</li> <li>– Preparations for establishment of Children's hotline at Child Rights Bureau (ongoing).</li> </ul>
<p>In light of articles 2, 3, and 6 of the Convention, the Committee encourages the State party to pay particular attention to the full implementation of article 4 of the Convention by prioritizing budgetary allocations to ensure implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, to the maximum extent of available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation. In allocating resources, the State party should pay particular attention to districts in the interior and ensure that the inequalities in service provision in these parts of the country are not perpetuated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completion of 20/20 budget analysis and sensitization of senior policy makers regarding the issue in 2001.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that greater effort be made to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are widely known and understood by adults and children alike. In this regard, the Committee recommends the reinforcement of adequate and systematic training and/or sensitization of professional groups working with and for children, such as judges; lawyers; law enforcement personnel; teachers; school administrators; health personnel, including psychologists and social workers; and personnel of childcare institutions. The Committee recommends that the State party seek to ensure that the Convention is fully integrated into the curricula at all levels of the educational system. The State party is encouraged to translate the Convention into local languages and to promote its principles through, inter alia, the use of traditional methods of communication. In this regard, the Committee further suggests that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNICEF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development and distribution of CRC materials, including TV and radio spots, protection song, posters, folders, calendars, CRC card game, in various languages (ongoing);</li> <li>– Development of short CRC trainings by the Child Rights Bureau in 2002;</li> <li>– Development of academic CRC training by the University Law School in 2002.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party raise the legal age for criminal responsibility to a more internationally acceptable age, by reviewing its legislation in this regard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review of Juvenile Justice system in 2000;</li> <li>– National seminar to discuss outcome of the study in 2002;</li> <li>– Establishment of a Juvenile Justice Working group in 2001.</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
The Committee recommends that the State party review its legislation relating to the legal ages for marriage to bring it into conformity with the provisions of the Convention and to ensure non-discrimination. It is recommended that the State party take all appropriate measures to raise awareness about the harmful effects of early and forced marriages, particularly as regards girls.	– Initiation of review regarding Asian marital law by Child Rights Bureau and University law school in 2002.
The Committee recommends that the State party increase the legal maximum age for compulsory education from 12 to at least 14 years to guarantee the rights of those children between the ages of 12-14 years, who are beyond the age of compulsory education, but too young to be legally employed.	– Completion of review on implications of discrepancies between legal maximum age for compulsory education and age to be legally employed by Child Rights Bureau in 2002.
The Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to ensure the implementation of laws, policies and programmes guaranteeing the principle of non-discrimination and full compliance with article 2 of the Convention, particularly as it relates to the vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of HIV/AIDS non-discrimination public awareness campaign by Foundation Maxi Linder in collaboration with the President of Suriname in 2002;</li> <li>– Development of inclusion public awareness campaign for people with disability by NGO VPSI with UNICEF support in 2002.</li> </ul>
The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the general principle of the best interests of the child is appropriately integrated in all legal provisions as well as in judicial and administrative decisions and in projects, programmes and services which have an impact on children.	– Completion of National Policy Plan for children in 2001.
The Committee recommends that the State party review and expand the scope of the Bill referred to in the previous paragraph; develop a systematic approach to increasing public awareness of the participatory rights of children; and encourage respect for the views of the child within the family; communities; schools; and care, administrative and judicial systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development and airing of TV and radio spots on child participation by the Child Rights Bureau in 2000-2002;</li> <li>– Initiation of a weekly child rights radio programme by children for children by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in 2001.</li> </ul>
In light of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party undertake appropriate measures, including awareness-raising among government officers, community and religious leaders, and parents themselves, to ensure that all children are registered at birth.	– MICS study revealed that birth registration is very high, even in the interior.

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>The Committee recommends that all appropriate measures be taken to fully implement the provisions of article 37(a) and 39 of the Convention. In this regard, the Committee further recommends that greater efforts be made to prevent police brutality and ensure that child victims are provided adequate treatment to facilitate their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration and that perpetrators are sanctioned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Juvenile Justice seminar to develop an action plan dealing with children in conflict and in contact with the law;</li> <li>– Establishment of child abuse prevention network with police as participating agency, to agree on treatment of child victims and to develop national capacity to adequately deal with child victims.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends the State party to expedite as much as possible the passing of the Bill mentioned in the above paragraph (32) and to establish a code of standards to ensure adequate care and protection of children deprived of a family environment. It further recommends that the State party provide additional training, including in children's rights, for social and welfare workers, ensure the periodic review of placements in institutions and establish an independent complaints mechanism for children in alternative care institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Discussion of draft legislation with stakeholders, and revision of the legislation based on the feedback in 2001-2002.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party undertake measures to ensure the effective monitoring and follow-up of placements in the foster care programme; introduce programmes to raise awareness and promote foster care; and to undertake measures to regulate the "kweekjes system" in order to ensure that the best interests of the children concerned are taken into account. Additionally, the Committee encourages the State party to consider the possibility of acceding to the Hague Convention of 1993 on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No specific action taken.</li> </ul>
<p>In light of article 19, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake studies on domestic violence, ill treatment and abuse (including sexual abuse within the family) in order to adopt adequate policy measures and contribute to changing traditional attitudes. The Committee recommends that all appropriate measures be taken to introduce mandatory reporting of abuse, including sexual abuse of children. It also recommends that cases of domestic violence, ill treatment and abuse of children be properly investigated within a child-friendly judicial procedure and sanctions applied to perpetrators including treatment, with due regard given to protecting the right to privacy of the child. Measures should also be taken</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Completion of study on current legislation and practices regarding reporting of (suspected) child abuse by police, teachers, health workers, social workers;</li> <li>– Completed assessment on the extent of training modules on how to deal with children, in particular child victims, in current curriculum of teachers, police, health workers, social workers, and legal personnel.</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>to ensure the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of victims in accordance with article 39 of the Convention, and the prevention of criminalization and stigmatization of victims. The Committee recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF.</p>	
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party take legislative measures to prohibit all forms of physical and mental violence, including corporal punishment within the family, schools and care institutions. The Committee encourages the State party to intensify its public awareness campaigns to promote positive, non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment at all levels of society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public awareness campaign regarding the harms of violence against children (2002);</li> <li>– Proclamation of April as national child abuse prevention month (2002);</li> <li>– Pilot project with 7 schools to reduce corporal punishment in school (2002).</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party allocate appropriate resources and develop comprehensive policies and programmes to improve the health situation of children, especially those living in the interior; facilitate greater access to primary health services; increase the number of trained medical and other health personnel; reduce the incidence of maternal, child and infant mortality; improve breast feeding and weaning practices; prevent and combat malnutrition, especially in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children; increase access to safe drinking water and sanitation; and reduce the incidence of malaria. It is recommended that the State party undertake a study on child suicides and accidents with the view to understanding the nature and scope and implementing appropriate preventative policies and measures. Additionally, the Committee encourages the State party to consider technical assistance for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses and other measures for child health improvement from, inter alia, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development and implementation of certificate training for health workers at under-five clinics (2001);</li> <li>– Completions of EPI upgrade training for health workers in urban, rural, and interior regions;</li> <li>– Certification training for WHO 40-hours breastfeeding counselling (2001);</li> <li>– Implementation of malaria crash programme.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts in promoting adolescent health policies and counselling services as well as strengthening reproductive health education, including the promotion of male acceptance of the use of contraceptives. The Committee further suggests that a comprehensive and multidisciplinary study be undertaken to understand the scope of adolescent health problems, including the special situation of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Basic Life Skills Needs Assessment;</li> <li>– Initiation of HIV/AIDS Situation Analysis, Response Analysis and National Strategic Plan;</li> <li>– Launch of HIV/AIDS Youth Empowerment and Peer Education programme in 2001;</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>children infected with, affected by or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and STDs. Additionally, it is recommended that the State party undertake further measures, including the allocation of adequate human and financial resources, to increase the number of social workers and psychologists, and to develop youth-friendly care, counselling, and rehabilitation facilities for adolescents. The State party is encouraged to reinforce its efforts in implementing the Caribbean Regional Health and Family Life Education Programme for adolescents by, inter alia, allocating adequate financial and human resources. It is further recommended that the State party seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ongoing implementation of HFLE by the Basic Life Skills Programme.</li> </ul>
<p>In light of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly Resolution 48/96) and the Committee's recommendations adopted at its General Day of Discussion on "The Rights of Children with Disabilities" (CRC/C/69), it is recommended that the State party reinforce its efforts to develop early identification programmes to prevent disabilities, increase its efforts to implement alternatives to the institutionalization of children with disabilities, establish special education programmes for children with disabilities and further encourage their inclusion in society. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake an awareness raising campaign to sensitize the public about the rights and special needs of children with disabilities as well as children with mental health concerns. The Committee further recommends that the State party seek technical cooperation for the training of professional staff working with and for children with disabilities from, inter alia, the World Health Organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Implementation of inclusion public awareness campaign aimed at integration of children and adults with disabilities;</li> <li>– Training of health workers at under-five clinics to improve skills for early detection of growth and development abnormalities;</li> <li>– Provision of test kits for early detection (Von Wiegens sets) to under-five clinics and other relevant agencies.</li> </ul>
<p>In accordance with article 27 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to provide material assistance and support to economically disadvantaged families and guarantee the right of children to an adequate standard of living. The Committee further recommends the State party to establish mechanisms to ensure that children living and/or working on the streets are provided with identity documents, nutrition, clothing, and housing. Moreover, the State party should ensure that these children are provided adequate access to health-care; rehabilitation services for physical, sexual, and substance abuse; services for reconciliation with families; and education, including vocational and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Continuation of Government subventions and free medical care programmes for qualifying families.</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>life-skills training. The Committee recommends the State party to cooperate and coordinate its efforts with civil society in this regard.</p>	
<p>The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures, including the allocation of adequate financial, human and technical resources, to improve the situation of education and ensure that all children enjoy the right to education. It is further recommended that all appropriate measures be taken to increase access to education, especially as regards children living in the interior and to encourage trained teachers to stay in teaching. The Committee further recommends that the State party seek to implement additional measures to encourage children, especially girls in the interior and boys in urban communities, to stay in school, particularly during the period of compulsory education. The Committee encourages the State party to reinforce its efforts to include the use of traditional languages in the school curricula. The State party is encouraged to follow through with its proposal to host a National Education Congress to improve the overall situation of education in all regions of the country. In this context, the State party is strongly encouraged to consider the inclusion of the General Principles of the Convention as well as articles 28, 29 and 31 in the discussions and recommendations of the Congress for further consideration by the State party. It is recommended that the State party encourage child participation within the school environment, including in disciplinary matters. It is recommended that the State party seek to strengthen its educational system through closer cooperation with UNICEF and UNESCO.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ongoing national education reform process through mini congresses and national education congress by the Ministry of Education during 2000-2002;</li> <li>– Study on mother-tongue approach in 1999-2000;</li> <li>– CRC promotion through peer education in school (ongoing);</li> <li>– Ongoing collaboration with UNICEF.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee encourages the State party to introduce monitoring mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of labour laws and protect children from economic exploitation, particularly in the informal sectors. It is further recommended that the State party undertake a comprehensive study to assess the situation of child labour. The Committee encourages the State party to consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regional child labour study in 2002;</li> <li>– National child labour study in 1998.</li> </ul>

Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>In light of article 33 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures, including administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of alcohol, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances. It encourages the State party to support rehabilitation programmes dealing with child victims of alcohol, drug and substance abuse. In this regard, the Committee encourages the State party to consider seeking technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF, WHO and the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ongoing support for the Bureau of Alcohol and Drugs (BAD) to provide community education and rehabilitation programmes;</li> <li>– Ongoing support for the Basic Life Skills Programme to reach out to youth and teach life skills.</li> </ul>
<p>In light of article 34 and other related articles of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake studies with a view to understanding the scope of the problem and implementing appropriate policies and measures, including the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of victims. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account the recommendations formulated in the Agenda for Action adopted at the 1996 Stockholm World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Study on child prostitution by the NGO Maxi Linder in 1999-2001;</li> <li>– Participation of Ministry of Social Affairs in Regional Governmental Congress on Sexual exploitation of children in 2001;</li> <li>– Ratification of the Inter-American Convention to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women (Belem do Para) in 2002.</li> </ul>
<p>The Committee, while noting the completion of a study on juvenile justice, recommends that the State party:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(a) Take all appropriate measures to implement a juvenile justice system in conformity with the Convention, in particular articles 37, 40 and 39, and of other United Nations standards in this field, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(b) Use deprivation of liberty only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time; improve the conditions in detention facilities; protect the rights of children deprived of their liberty, including their right to privacy; and ensure that children remain in contact with their families while in the juvenile justice system;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Juvenile Justice Seminar in 2002 to develop a national plan of action;</li> <li>– Establishment of a JJ working group in 2001.</li> </ul>



Committee recommendations	Follow-up action
<p>(c) Introduce training programmes on relevant international standards for all professionals involved with the administration of juvenile justice;</p> <p>(d) Consider seeking technical assistance from, inter alia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Centre for International Crime Prevention, the International Network on Juvenile Justice and UNICEF, through the Coordination Panel on Technical Advice in Juvenile Justice.</p>	
<p>Finally, the Committee recommends that, in light of article 44, paragraph 6, of the Convention, the initial report and written replies presented by the State party be made widely available to the public at large and that the publication of the report be considered, along with the relevant summary records and the concluding observations adopted thereon by the Committee. Such a document should be widely distributed in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention and its implementation and monitoring within the Government and the general public, including NGOs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Broad dissemination of Initial Report and Committee recommendations to all relevant Government agencies and NGOs;</li> <li>– Broad discussion and dissemination of the first periodic report.</li> </ul>

**Annex II\***

**SUMMARY UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES 2001-2002**

1. Finalization of the Suriname MICS report; there was a high level launching of this report in September 2001.
2. Completion of the first Suriname CIMS report.
3. A comprehensive Suriname Situation Analysis was drafted by the Ministry of Social Affairs with technical support from national consultants. The SITAN describes the situation of children with regard to social development and poverty, legislation, health & survival, early childhood development, basic education, protection and participation. The SITAN report was also presented to the Government and Parliament and dissemination in the community is ongoing. Based on the Situation Analysis, a National Plan of Action was drafted, outlining emerging protection for children and proposing 5-year objectives. A national consultation was held to discuss the draft NPA and the recommendations were incorporated in the NPA. After completion the NPA was approved by the board of ministry.
4. To increase the availability of data for improved social planning, the Ministry of Social affairs and Housing prepared a budget study on Government expenditures on basic social services (20/20) over the period 1996-2000. The report provides insight into Government spending and can serve as a planning tool.
5. In 2001 the CNSP pilot was completed along with a final revision of the data collection instruments.
6. To establish transparent national mechanisms for coordination, monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the Convention, the Child Rights Bureau at the Ministry of Affairs and housing was reactivated on the 25th of June 2001.
7. As a preparation to ratifying ILO Convention 138 and 182, a survey has been done on the implications of discrepancies between legal maximum age for compulsory education and age to be legally employed by the Child Rights Bureau.
8. Continued social mobilization and public information on CRC concentrated on protection issues:
  - Production of a CD with a protection song for children;
  - Production of a 5-minute video infomercial on child abuse;
  - Printing of Calendars and stickers designed by children with CRC messages;

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\* Annex is reproduced as received.

- A second Media Award was presented by the media board to commend the media houses for exemplary attention to children's rights.
9. Signing of the two optional protocols by the president of Suriname on 11 May 2002 during the Special Session on Children in New York:
    - (a) Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
    - (b) Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.
  10. A National Child Abuse prevention network has been established in which 29 (governmental and non-governmental) organizations are members, including the police as a participating agency, to agree on treatment of child victims and to develop a national capacity to adequately deal with child victims.
  11. Public awareness campaign regarding the dangers associated with violence against children and the proclamation of April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month in 2002.
  12. To include children in the national discourse on abuse, a children's seminar was held on child abuse.
  13. An assessment has been done on the effectiveness of training modules on how to deal with children, in particular child victims, in the current curricula of teachers, police, health workers, social workers and legal personnel.
  14. An assessment has been done on current legislation and practices regarding reporting of (suspected) child abuse by police, teachers, health workers and social workers.
  15. Completion of a national mass immunization campaign to increase immunization coverage during 2000-2001.
  16. Training and certification of physicians and nurses providing care at under-five clinics to upgrade the quality of under-five care.
  17. Certification of 19 health workers as trainers for 40-hour WHO breastfeeding counselling.
  18. Initiation of a national database on children in school to enable effective tracking of school performance in 2001.
  19. Establishment of a National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Coalition in 2002.
  20. Launch of a National Youth Empowerment and HIV/AIDS Prevention Campaign in collaboration with youth organizations (with UNICEF support) in July 2001.

21. Training of 100 religious HIV/AIDS support persons and counsellors to support women and children affected by HIV/AIDS, December 2001-February 2002.
22. Signing of the cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Justice and Police, Federation of private Social Institutions (VPSI) and “Stichting Juegdzorg Den-Haag” regarding child protection measures and focusing on the issue of guardianship of children.
23. Preparation for establishment of a children’s hotline at the Child Rights Bureau.
24. Development of short CRC trainings by the Child Rights Bureau.
25. Development of academic CRC training by the University Law School of Suriname.
26. Development of an HIV/AIDS Non-discrimination Public Awareness Campaign by Foundation Maxi Linder in collaboration with the President of Suriname.
27. Development and airing of TV and radio spots on child participation by the Child Rights Bureau.
28. Development of an Inclusion Public Awareness Campaign for people with disabilities by NGO VPSI with UNICEF support in 2002.
29. Initiation of a weekly child rights radio programme by children for children by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in 2001.
30. Establishment of a Juvenile Justice working group in 2001 and a Juvenile Justice seminar has been taken place in February 2002 to develop a plan of action dealing with children in conflict and in contact with the law.
31. A pilot project has been done with 7 primary schools by the Child Rights Bureau regarding the reduction of corporal punishment and the strengthening of positive alternative disciplining practices.
32. Initiation of a review regarding Asian marital law by the Child Rights Bureau and University law school in 2002.
33. Development and implementation of certificate training for health workers at under-five clinics (2001).
34. Completion of EPI upgrade training for health workers in urban, rural and interior regions.
35. Certification training for WHO 40-hours breastfeeding counselling course by 19 senior health workers in 2001.

36. CRC promotion through peer education in schools in the districts of Para and the Peri-urban by the Ministry of Regional development.
37. A regional child labour study was initiated in 2002.
38. Participation of the Ministry of Social Affairs in a Regional Governmental Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children in 2001.
39. Ratification of the Inter-American Convention to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women (Belem do Para) in 2002.

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