



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports submitted by Suriname under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2021^{*}, ^{}**

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



List of abbreviations

BEIP II	Second Basic Education Improvement Program
BuFaz	Bureau for Family Law Affairs (Bureau Familierechtelijke Zaken)
BRvK	Bureau Rights of the Child (Bureau Rechten van het Kind)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child
ECD	Early Childhood Development policy
ECE	Early Childhood Education
G.B.	Gouvernements Blad meaning the Official Gazette (before 1975, the year of independence of Suriname)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
i.e	id est
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOs	International Organizations
ITPs	Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ITPs)
KJT	Kinder en Jongerentelefoon (Children and Youth Telephone)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NCDV	National Council on Domestic Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
S.B.	Staatsblad meaning the Official Gazette (after the independence of Suriname)
SBA	Stand-By Agreement
SITAN	Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Suriname 2021 UNICEF
SRD	Surinamese Dollar
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VAC	Violence against children
VVOB	Education for Development (previously Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en technische Bijstand)
WHO FCTC	WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Introduction

1. In accordance with article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Government of the Republic of Suriname hereby submits to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) its combined Fifth and Sixth periodic report for consideration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
2. The Republic of Suriname became a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child by accession on 1 March 1993. Pursuant to article 44 of the CRC, the Republic of Suriname has already submitted three reports, of which the last one was the combined Third and Fourth Report. This combined Fifth and Sixth report covers the period 2015–2021.
3. This report adheres to the general guidelines for the submission of periodic reports provided by the Committee. It furthermore takes into account the Concluding Observations provided by the Committee during its consideration of the Third and Fourth Periodic Report of Suriname at its 2146th and 2147th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.2146 and 2147), held on 21 and 22 September 2016.
4. The Republic of Suriname has in the meanwhile submitted an updated Common Core Document in accordance with the reporting guidelines for States parties. This periodic Report is a single document.
5. The Report comprises an introduction, which describes the general political structure of the country and the framework in which human rights, including the rights of the child are promoted and protected, followed by the main section.
6. The main section contains not only the responses of the Republic of Suriname to the recommendations formulated by the Committee during consideration of the Third and Fourth Periodic Report of Suriname, but also responses to questions in the guideline.
7. This report concludes with closing remarks and conclusions.
8. The present report should be considered against the backdrop of several key political developments in the Republic of Suriname, since it submitted its periodic report in 2014. Following the combined Third and Fourth periodic report the Republic of Suriname has demonstrated that it continues its tradition of being a stable multi-party democracy with the successful holding of general and free elections by secret ballot in 2015 and 2020.
9. The Republic of Suriname also remains committed to the promotion and protection of Human Rights including the rights of the child, Democracy and the Rule of Law. It can be stated that the Rights of the Child are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution.
10. Suriname informs the Committee that this report is produced based on an inclusive, transparent and participatory process, which involves society as a whole, for example (e.g.) by soliciting comments and input via the public and private sector which were consulted as well as civil society.

State of play of the Republic of Suriname

11. In 2015, Suriname experienced a recession. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 2.6 % in that year, which continued in 2016 with 5.1 %. The backdrop of the afore-mentioned lies in the cessation of bauxite production in the last quarter of 2015. Additionally, a sharp decline in the international prices of Suriname's main export commodities (gold and crude oil) contributed to the interruption of the experienced sustained growth of real GDP from 2001–2014 (averaging 4.4 %). Relatively large fiscal and external imbalances, rising debt levels, and a drawdown of international reserves accompanied the economic decline. In 2016, Suriname signed a Stand-By Agreement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), however mid-2016, the first and second reviews of the SBA did not proceed. In January 2021 the Government requested IMF financial support for its economic plan aimed at tackling the country's macroeconomic vulnerabilities and putting Suriname back on a path of strong, sustained, and equitable growth.

12. By 2017, the economy recovered with a growth of 1.7 %. Growth of 2.0 % was projected over 2018. Drivers of the economy are exports (oil and gold in combination with increased exports of timber and food products) and public investments in infrastructure financed by loans. Monthly inflation (year-on-year) declined from 48.7 % in January 2017 to 9.2 % in December 2017 and 5.4% up to December 2018, after spiking at 79.2 % in October 2016 (attributed to higher costs for utilities and the exchange rate depreciation). After the currency depreciation of 102 % from 2015 to 2017, the exchange rate temporarily stabilized at a range of USD 1 – Surinamese Dollars (SRD) 7.43 – 7,54, with a relatively low volatility of 0.27%. In September of 2020, the Central Bank of Suriname devalued the exchange rate of the SRD against the USD by about 90 % to SRD 14.29. GDP Annual Growth Rate in Suriname decreased to -13.40% in 2020 from 0.30% in 2019.

13. A factual contextualization of the political, economic, social, and cultural circumstances is of essence when country-analyses are considered. Suriname, like many other countries in the sub-region and region, is experiencing numerous challenges.

14. Suriname is particularly vulnerable to external shocks, among others:

(a) economic, due to its economic resource base and the current regime of international trade and concessional development financing and;

(b) environmental, due to the effects of climate change.

15. The implications hereof to the sustainable development goals and commitments of the Government of Suriname, at times, is rather challenging. In addition, hereto, the Government of Suriname is also confronted with the immense task to restructure its economy and macro-economic – and relevant social reforms.

16. The COVID-19 pandemic gradually unleashed an unprecedented development crisis. The outbreak of the pandemic has put the country's public health, social protection and education system, environmental (climate change adaptation), agricultural as well as other production sectors, under tremendous pressure. The newly elected Government of Suriname has instituted additional emergency measures, including a social protection system as well as targeted economic measures to support vulnerable groups in our society.

17. The Government is continuously monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting the measures to find the proper balance between the health of the people and the economy. This, despite the national and international financial constraints, in particular high national debt and the challenges in relation to access concessional financing.

18. The Constitution stipulates in article 8 para. 2 that: "No one shall be discriminated against on the grounds of birth, sex, race, languages, religion, education, political opinion, economic position or any other status". The keen awareness of these profound principles among the many ethnic groups has taught Suriname to peacefully coexist by expressing tolerance, practicing respect for each faith, cultural background and the enjoyment of religious freedom.

19. Within this context, the Government of Suriname and The National Assembly (Parliament) establish laws and policies in a well-balanced manner in order to guarantee equality, promote national unity and ensure the indivisibility of the nation. The social and economic objectives of the Government are aimed at building a national economy benefiting the entire population, in which equality and social programs such as healthcare and education are accessible to each citizen.

20. As an expression of genuine respect and peaceful co-existence, the different ethnic groups celebrate the National Day of Independence in addition to holidays, such as the commemoration of the Abolition of Slavery, Indigenous Peoples Day, Maroon Day, and Hindustani (East – Indian), Javanese and Chinese immigration. Suriname treasures its harmonious and interwoven multitude of cultures and religions as its greatest wealth. Suriname is a beacon of respect, tolerance and diversity; therefore, it is honored to share its way of peace with the world.

21. It can be stated that the rights of the child are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution in general, but more in particular in the chapters V and VI of the Constitution among other legislation. The Republic of Suriname is party to the following United Nations

human rights instruments, namely; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It is noteworthy that Suriname is also a party to regional human rights instruments.

22. A number of socio-economic challenges faced by Suriname, such as taking mitigation and adaptation measures in the context of climate change, the fight against poverty, collective (land) rights of Indigenous and Maroon tribal communities, illegal gold mining and the pollution of the environment, and combating crime, require a significant amount of more time and resources e.g., funding and technical expertise, to be addressed effectively. For these reasons, the Government of Suriname continues to work with national and international partners in an effort to respond to these challenges effectively.

23. While efforts have been made to strengthen data collection systems, the availability of appropriate qualitative and quantitative disaggregated data remains a challenge, particularly in the process of treaty body reporting. Information and communications technology, as well as the availability of resources play an important role in improving (regular) data collection.

24. The Government of Suriname acknowledges the need to move forward towards setting up an institution or mechanism to collect the necessary data for human rights reporting. In this regard, technical cooperation with OHCHR and other partners, as well as sharing of best practices, are welcomed in support of national efforts for implementation of and follow-up on recommendations by human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

I. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6 of the Convention)

A. Harmonizing domestic legislation with CRC

25. Children in Suriname are protected implicitly and explicitly by the following laws: The Constitution, the Penal Code, the Civil Code, the “Combating Domestic Violence” law, the Act on Care Institutions as well as the Children and Young Persons Employment Act.

26. In 2015, the State revised its Penal Code with regard to Trafficking in Persons (TIP). The revised Act is aligned with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (especially Women and Children) and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

27. With this amendment both sexes are protected against trafficking and the penalties have been extended, especially when under-aged victims are involved. In addition to sexual exploitation other purposes of trafficking are included in the Act, such as labour or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery and removal of organs.

28. In the amended Penal Code, it is stated that ‘Any of the crimes described in the articles 292 until 305 and article 339, insofar as the offense was committed against a person who has not yet reached the age of eighteen years is punishable.

29. The Government enhanced the protection of children in general, in particular against sexual abuse through social media. The Penal Code was adjusted in this context, to prevent the publication and display of shocking images. The distribution of fake news and the production of fake accounts is also covered by the amendment of the Penal Code.

30. To eradicate child labour and to harmonize the Surinamese labour law concerning child labour with ILO standards (ILO- convention 138 and 182), the Act on Labour of Children and Youth was adopted in 2018.

31. With the support of UNICEF, the ministry of Justice and Police is enacting legislation on foster care.

32. Article 9 of the Compulsory Military Service Act (G.B. 1970 No. 98, as last amended by G.B. 1975 No. 75) states that as far as the law provides otherwise, all males, holders of the Surinamese nationality, residing in Suriname and between the ages of 18 and 35 years, are obliged to serve in the armed forces. According to this Act, Suriname is in compliance with the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

B. Comprehensive National Strategy

33. There is a draft National Plan of Action 2019–2021 to implement the rights contained in the CRC and the last Concluding Observations of the Committee, and although this Plan was not officially adopted it was partially implemented. The aim of this National Plan of Action was facilitating a coordinated and an integrated implementation of legislation, policies and programs aimed at creating the optimal development opportunities for all children in Suriname. The evaluation of the previous National Plan of Action (2009–2014) revealed that the poor implementation of the action areas has mainly been due to the lack of coordination, the lack of sufficiently qualified personnel as well as the lack of availability of resources, ‘changed policy insights’ and thus discontinuity in the policy. A new administration took power after the election in May 2020. The 2016 Concluding Observations are implemented by several ministries.

34. The National Action Plan on prevention and reduction of Child Labour 2019–2024 entered into force. The ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs participates in the Referral System, which falls under the aegis of the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing and under the Child Protection Network (Het Integraal Kinderbescherming Netwerk) “IK BeN”. One aspect of this Referral System is child labour.

C. Coordinating authority

35. The Bureau Child Rights (BRvK), a working unit of the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is the coordinating body and is monitoring the implementation of the Convention among the ministries. The BRvK consists of eight officials, including the Head of the Bureau.

D. Budget allocation

36. The budget for the implementation of the Rights of the Child is linked to the annual budget of the State. The implementation of the National Plan of Action has mainly depended on the allocation of resources. The only budget information, which was available then, was the share in total public spending of the education, health and social protection sectors (See annex 1). The 2017 data revealed that the health and social protection sectors had to settle for 1.6% and 3.9% of the government budget respectively.

E. International assistance and development aid

37. The Government of the Republic of Suriname continues to cooperate with various national, regional and international partners, taking into account its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights in general, including the Rights of the Child, as well as sustainable development. The afore-mentioned includes cooperation or other assistance, which support human rights, including the rights of the child, promotion and related budgetary allocations in the framework of the United Nations.

38. The United Nations Country Implementation Plan (UNCIP) is the plan for cooperation between the UN System and the Government of Suriname. Technical assistance from the

UN System in human rights reporting, e.g. CRPD, CERD, UPR, CRC, ICCPR is incorporated in this plan. In the UNCIP document 2019–2020, which is extended until 2021, afore-mentioned technical assistance is an ongoing process.

39. In 2018 and 2019, workshops were organized in the context of the Rights of the Child in cooperation with the local United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The participants of these workshops were Government officials and NGO representatives who work with children, including those in crisis situations.

F. Independent National Human Rights Institute

40. Suriname is in the process of establishing an Independent National Human Rights Institute in accordance with the Paris Principles. Suriname has a decree regarding the Human Rights Institute which dates from before the Paris Principles were adopted.

41. A working group consisting of Human Rights experts including the Government is currently working on revising this decree by drafting a law that will allow the Human Rights Institute to function in accordance with the Paris Principles. Civil Society will be consulted in this regard, and awareness raising campaigns will be conducted. In addition, following the Universal Periodic Review of Suriname in November 2021, technical assistance from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner (the High Commissioner) for Human Rights has been requested in this regard.

42. On 23 November 2021, the President of the Republic of Suriname established a presidential working group ‘Conditions and Implementation Children’s Ombudsbureau Suriname’ for 5 months, starting from 17 November 2021. This working group is tasked with finalizing all relevant legislation, regulations and conditions for the establishment of the Children’s Ombudsbureau according to the Paris Principles.

G. Dissemination of the Convention

43. The CRC is translated into Dutch and distributed to all education institutes. The Government intends to translate the Convention into other local languages.

44. The BRvK carries out awareness activities in collaboration with UNICEF in schools and care institutions. This involves educating the children and the staff of the school or institution about the rights of the child. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, these activities have been put on hold.

H. Public dissemination

45. The Republic of Suriname has made the national report and Concluding Observations widely available, not only among the ministries and government officials in order to create policy but also to civil society and NGOs which are cooperating and assisting in implementing and monitoring the rights of the child in Suriname. The BRvK does not yet have its own website, but is the administrator of the IKBeN website. In 2022, BRvK will set up its own website in collaboration with UNICEF. The Convention, all national reports regarding the rights of the child and Concluding Observations will be placed on the site.

I. Civil Society and other groups are participating in all activities regarding the rights of the Child

46. In 2015, at the “Scientific Research Center Suriname” (SRCS), Academic Hospital Paramaribo (AZP), a large-scale study started “Meki Tamara” on the effects of mercury and pesticides on maternal and child health. Over a period of five years, one thousand pregnant women and the children they give birth to will be followed until the age of four.

II. Definition of the child (art. 1)

Minimum age of marriage

47. Suriname is committed to eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030 in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

48. In article 82 of the Civil Code, the minimum age for marriage for boys has been established to 17 years and for girls to 15 years. Consultations between government and NGOs resulted in the amendment of the law on child marriage in the draft revised Civil Code. Consequently, the minimum age to enter into marriage for both boys and girls is raised to 18 years in the draft revised Civil Code. Additionally, the possibility for parents to request dispensation for child marriage is repealed.

49. Furthermore, in the Penal Code sexual violence/rape within marriage is now recognized and punishable (2015). Also, sexual abuse of minors (age has been raised to 16 years) as a form of sexual intimidation has been defined as a criminal offence and the definition of sexual harassment has been expanded.

III. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

A. Non-discrimination (art. 2)

50. The Constitution guarantees the non-discrimination principle, which includes children.

51. In accordance with the Constitution art. 35 paragraph 3: “every child has the right to protection without discrimination”. In paragraph 4 of the same article, it is stated that parents have the same responsibility towards legitimate children and those born out of wedlock. Consequently, national legislation was amended guaranteeing equal rights for children in the context of the Law of succession.

52. All legislation in which the non-discrimination principle is guaranteed, includes children whether nationals or non-nationals.

53. The gender-related laws and all rights whether civil, political, social, economic, cultural also apply to children. This will be the same for collective rights, once adopted by Parliament.

54. In this regard, the national Center for Continuous Professional Development – Centrum voor Nascholing Suriname (CENASU) in collaboration with VVOB provided:

- Gender Sensitive Prevention and Management of Behavioural Problems training (all LBO schools between 2017–2020);
- A module to strengthen teachers’ teams in the area of gender-sensitive prevention and approach to behavioural problems (GPAG); this means that teachers will tackle behavioural problems from a gender-sensitive point of view.

55. Themes that are covered in this training package are among others:

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Gender-based violence and sexually transgressive behaviour and
- Extra attention for safe schools in the iGROW project in LBO.

B. Best interests of the child (art. 3)

56. The principle of the best interest of the child is integrated in several pieces of legislation. Case in point, the Act on Labour of Children and Youth, adopted in 2018. This Act aims to eradicate child labour and to harmonize the Surinamese labour law concerning child labour with ILO standards (ILO-convention 138 and 182). In order to secure the

effectiveness of this Act in practice, training courses for relevant stakeholders such as social workers and police officers are ongoing.

57. With regard to financial assistance, the government is implementing, as primary consideration, the best interest of the child through programmes and projects which are relevant and have an impact on children, including children with disabilities and children of ITPs.

58. In the period 2015–2018, an average of SRD 46.9 million was spent on financial assistance for this target group. As of January 2019, the ministry of Finance has 5508 registered persons who were eligible for financial assistance. The registered persons receive this assistance for themselves or for minor children with a disability. See annex 2 for the annual number of persons with disabilities registered by district over the period 2016–2020 who received financial support.

59. The judges working in the family unit of the Cantonal Court (court of first instance) and the Court of Justice (court of appeal) implement the principle of best interest of the child when handling cases where the guardianship and alimony of the child needs to be decided upon. The child is heard by the court when older than 10 years and if necessary, age < 10. This is being done to ensure that the opinion of the child is also taken into account. The Court always asks for the opinion of social services and very often the psychologist is also involved before taking a decision on which parent is awarded guardianship. The interest of the child is also taken into account when having to decide whether or not the father can obtain permission to recognize a child as his own.

60. A similar methodology is used with children in conflict with the law.

C. The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

61. In 2018, 77 % of children ages three to four were developmentally on track, based on the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI). In comparison, on average, only 47 % of children ages 7–14 had the expected reading skills and 25 % had the expected numeracy skills for their grade. Children who did not have foundational skills in reading and numeracy were more likely to be male, live in urban areas, from the poorest households, and ethnically Maroons and Hindustani. Measures taken in support of Early Child Development (ECD) included the distribution of kits and training of counselors.

62. Suicidal behaviour is a major problem in Suriname. Suicide attempts can be impulsive or associated with feelings of hopelessness and loneliness. The proportion of adolescents attempting suicide (suicidal thoughts) in the age range 13–17 in Suriname is prevalent. In Suriname, 16.6 % of adolescents considered attempting suicide; girls (21.4 %) were nearly twice as likely as boys (11.4 %) to have suicidal thoughts. More specifically, adolescents ages 16–17 (19.8 %) were slightly more likely to have suicidal thoughts, compared to adolescents ages 13–15 (15.5 %). Girls ages 16–17 years (29.0 %) were most likely to consider attempting suicide, and to do so at a rate more than twice that of boys in the same age group (13.4 %). Annex 3 shows adolescents in 2016 who considered attempting suicide by age group and sex (%).

63. Currently, the ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs provides information programmes aimed at young people which have a wide reach among the group. The subjects of the educational programmes include suicide prevention, internet use, dangerous games, teenage pregnancy, child labour, sexual abuse and child abuse. In addition to educational programmes, the ministry's policy is to develop a strategic prevention plan with a multi-sectoral approach, involving all stakeholders focusing on youth.

64. In December 2021, in the context of suicide prevention among the youth, two experts were commissioned to carry out a study into the causes of suicidal thoughts and acts among the youths and identify social and psycho-social service providers. Furthermore, an Action Plan will be developed to take up prevention. The funds for these activities were made available by UNICEF.

D. Respect for the views of the child (art. 12)

65. In judicial proceedings a child is heard as long as he or she can formulate their own will and can state where they would like to stay or where they are most comfortable. The child is heard without the adults present so that he or she is not intimidated or feels pressured to answer in a certain way.

66. In addition to the implementation of legislation recognizing the right of the child to be heard in relevant legal and administrative proceedings, the Government trains social workers and police officers on a regular basis. In legal proceedings related to sexual abuse, children under 12 years of age are heard in Chambers. On average judges in criminal cases adjudicate relatively 5 sexual abuse cases per week involving children or youths.

67. In the context of youth community development, the Government organized four cluster symposia nationwide in 2020. The launch took place in the border district Nickerie with attendance from the neighboring district Coronie and the administrative resort Kabalebo in district of Sipaliwini. The symposium focused on youth participation, community development and the role of community organizations in this regard. Interactive sessions were held, in which 80 active community organizations who have youth as their target group and individual youths were given the opportunity to exchange thoughts and experiences and to make recommendations for enhancing policy on community development.

68. The Children and Youth Telephone (KJT), also Children Helpline, in recent years, among others made the following efforts:

69. Develop media productions (Kidstalk and Kidstalk-Teen) to allow children and youth to experience their right to free expression and to give shape to the principle of participation contained in the CRC.

70. Kidstalk – Kidstalk Teen: This program gives children between 9 and 16 years a forum through which they can express their opinions about everyday matters. In this way the principle of participation and the right to participation of children is given substance. This also encourages the children to become more assertive and critical citizens. In addition, through this program, awareness is given to the KJT. Due to its design, Kidstalk is suitable for children, youth and families.

71. The National Youth Parliament accommodated participation of all youths from ages 12 to 25 to elect youth representatives for the next three years. In 2017, nationwide, a total of 200 candidates took part in the election, 29 of whom were ultimately elected as youth parliamentarians for a period of three years. There were 343 polling stations nationwide.

72. The distribution of seats for the Youth Parliament is as follows: Paramaribo (9), Coronie (1), Wanica (4), Nickerie (3), Para (2), Marowijne (2), Commewijne (2), Saramacca (2), Sipaliwini (2) and Brokopondo (2).

73. In 2018, the Youth Advisory Council advised that the youth parliamentarians needed support in areas such as meeting techniques, team building, effective leadership, parliamentary procedures, effective meetings, project management in order to improve their functioning.

74. In this regard, in 2020, the Research Information and Staff Development Department of the then ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs continued to strengthen capacity through e-learning. Some 84 staff and youth representatives participated in a (refreshment) training course concerning the effective and efficient implementation of sports and youth policy and achieving the goals set by the Government. This training is based on a continued partnership with Junior Chamber International (JCI) Suriname for several years now.

75. In February 2021, the National Youth Institute in Suriname, in particular the National Youth Parliament, under the purview of a working group started an evaluation process that is divided into three phases, namely: research, consultation and recommendations. After conducting intensive research on youth participation at the national and international level, the consultation phase was started with relevant stakeholders.

76. During such a consultation round, various topics will be discussed for the evaluation, including the elections, the method (taking into account the financial means and the COVID-19 pandemic), the requirements of the candidates, the identity and role of the National Youth Parliament and in which way further policy will be set. The consultations will be both physical and virtual because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the observance of relevant measures. The virtual consultation will take place by means of “online surveys”.

IV. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, and 13–17)

77. It can be stated that human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution in general, but more in particular in the Chapters V and VI, of which the civil rights and freedom relate to any person who is within the territory of Suriname including children.

A. Birth registration, nationality and name (art. 7)

78. The requirement of every birth on Surinamese territory is the registration at the Civil Registrar in the district of the birth irrespective of the status (Surinamese, foreigner or illegal person) or residence of the parents. Thereafter the birth of the child is confirmed in the Register of Birth of the Civil Registry of that district and the year of birth.

79. Births within the capital, Paramaribo, have to be registered within three days at the Civil Registry, regardless of the status or residence of the parents. In the other districts the registration should be done within 16 days, not including the day of birth, Sundays and holidays.

80. Besides the regular registration of birth, as in the ten districts by local registry offices, the Government continues to strengthen its efforts to ensure that children in the interior are also registered. This is conducted by mobile units, especially in the villages, and also with awareness raising campaigns.

81. The Civil Registry is raising awareness and reaching out on the importance of birth registration. The awareness raising is through the media and the outreach is by placing mobile units in the various districts and the interior.

82. In Suriname, nationality is according to the *jus sanguinis* principle. Children are recognized as Surinamese citizens, if at least one of their parents is Surinamese. When a child is born in Suriname to a legal migrant, the regular procedure of birth registration is followed.

83. However, if a child is born in Suriname to an illegal migrant, and a declarant has filed a birth certificate with the necessary documents at the registry office of the place of birth of the child, the declaration is recorded, and the birth certificate of the child is drawn up.

84. The child is registered in the civil registry, but at the same time the child’s status is deactivated due to having a foreign nationality because of the mother’s unknown residence status. Although the birth of the child is registered, the civil registry will not issue official documents to foreigners, who do not have a valid residence status.

85. Regarding the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, it can be reported that to ratify these afore-mentioned conventions a national dialogue is required. Although Suriname is not a party to these Conventions, the Nationality and Residence Act of November 24, 1975 (GB 1975 No. 171) as last amended by S.B. 2014 No. 121, prevents statelessness of children born on its territory. Case in point, article 3 sub d of the Nationality and Residency Act reads as follows: Surinamese by birth is the natural not recognized child born in Suriname, unless it appears that this child has the nationality of another State.

86. Article 4 sub a of the Nationality and Residency Act reads as follows: Surinamese is also the child that is found (foundling) or abandoned within the territory of Suriname, if both parents are unknown. Every child is registered in the family book of his or her mother/parents.

B. Preservation of identity (art. 8)

87. In 2018, the Identity Cards (ID Cards) Act 2018, (S.B. 2019 No. 16) was adopted by Parliament. This Act contains the rules for identifying citizens, manufacturing, issuing and withdrawing ID cards. With the entry into force of this law, the Identity Act of July 3, 1974 (G.B. 1974 No. 35, as amended by S.B. 2002 No. 19) and the implementing regulation based on this law were repealed. The Identity Annex I (S.B. 1976 No. 10) has been withdrawn. Article 3 sub 1 and 2 of the Identity Act 2018 states that every resident who has reached the age of sixteen (16), is obliged to carry an ID card. The ID-card referred to in the abovementioned sentence should be applied for in person and is issued by or on behalf of the minister responsible for the determination of the Surinamese nationality, the issue of certificates of nationality, certificates of identity and passports.

88. When a child has become a victim of human trafficking or kidnapping and its identity is questioned, the Bureau for Family Law Affairs will intervene when it is within its target group, often prompted by the youth police and the Public Prosecutor for youth affairs. This is also the case with foundlings. An abandoned child whose parents are untraceable can be provided with an identity again with the President's permission.

C. Freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information (art. 13)

89. Article 19 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right to make public his thoughts or feelings and to express his opinion through the printed press or other means of communication, subject to the responsibility of all as set forth in the law. This includes children.

90. The recently launched programs "*Developmental Education*", has a designated pillar regarding the methodology to effectively teach students to better express themselves. Freedom of expression including voicing of the pupil's wishes is encouraged in this educational innovation.

91. Children have a right to free speech. This is reflected in the right to be heard, whereby children can also express their opinion about matters that concern them.

D. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14)

92. Both the Constitution and the Penal Code prohibit discrimination based on religion. Violation may be brought before the Judiciary. The Penal Code under the articles 194 and 195 provides provisions that include punishment for those who instigate hate or discrimination against persons (including children) based on religion.

93. In Suriname schools are operated by the Government and religious organizations. Non-religious students are allowed in schools run by these organizations. This also applies for orphanages, boarding schools, children's homes and places of worship.

E. Freedom of association and of peaceful assembly (art. 15)

94. Freedom of assembly and freedom of association, including for children, is guaranteed by the Constitution but can also be restricted by law. From March 2020 to date, as a consequence of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Government temporarily restricted these rights by law in order to protect public health. In this pandemic period activities of youth organizations such as the Youth Parliament, sport organizations and other social organizations were restricted in their activities.

F. Protection of privacy and protection of image (art. 16)

95. The Government enhanced the protection of children in general, in particular against sexual abuse through social media. The Penal Code was adjusted in this context, to prevent the publication and display of shocking images. The distribution of fake news and the production of fake accounts is also covered by the amendment of the Penal Code.

96. Furthermore, an adjustment of the Penal Code was needed, among other things, to protect youth against “grooming”. This concerns behaviors in which acts are committed with the aim of sexually abusing a child.

97. To further protect children, the Department of Youth Affairs provides various information programs regarding the violations of children’s privacy on social media at schools and other places where children come together.

98. In November 2021, the BRvK in collaboration with UNICEF started the project to draft a Bill named “Protection of the privacy of the child in the media”. This legislation will offer every person in the age group 0 to 17 years, protection of privacy in all parts of society. The law aims to guarantee the protection of the privacy of the child in the entire public sphere including the mass media, visual media and digital media. During the drafting of this report this project was still being tendered.

G. Access to information from a diversity of sources and protection from material harmful to a child’s well-being (art. 17)

99. Article 175 and 175a of the Penal Code prohibits propaganda for violence. Several media houses provide tv and radio programmes specifically designed for children such as “10 minuten Jeugd – Journal – 10 minutes of Youth News”.

H. Role of the media with regard to the promotion and protection of child rights

100. Every year the media pays attention to the celebration of World Children’s Day. Information regarding this day and topic are being spread throughout the media. Awareness raising and the dissemination of information about the rights of the child will become part of the mission of the Bureau for Family Law Affairs after its transformation.

V. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24, para. 3, 28, para. 2, 34, 37 (a) and 39)

101. In 2017, a study on Violence Against Children (VAC) found that children have a high level of exposure to violence in the home and family. Most adolescents experienced physical – (84%) (including slapping), sexual – (15%) and psychological (81%) violence in their lifetime. In addition, one out of three or 34 % of adolescents witnessed domestic violence.

A. Abuse and neglect (art. 19)

102. In 2018, stakeholders in the education system took part in the training course ‘Identifying and stopping child abuse. In the context of tackling violence against children, the Bureau for Women and Child Policy (ministry of Justice and Police) prepared and implemented an awareness program in collaboration with UNICEF in 2019. The aim of the program was to raise awareness among children in schools about different forms of violence especially child abuse, bullying, sexual abuse and cybercrime. The launch took place on 18 December 2019, a total of 8 information sessions were conducted up to January 2020.

103. To date, there is no national database regarding abuse and neglect. The information is available but spread among the responsible ministries. There is no comprehensive assessment as yet.

104. In 2018, registration of domestic violence was standardized and relevant stakeholders were trained accordingly. Furthermore, an awareness-raising program is being conducted in schools, particularly in the areas where there are child protection centers. During these sessions, information about several forms of violence (corporal punishment included) are presented and discussed with the children.

105. Various target groups, among others, the Bureau for Family Law Affairs, Police Youth Affairs, Legal Care and helplines personnel were trained as educators to provide information about abuse and neglect of children. To increase access to services for child victims of violence, the ministry of Justice and Police further established ‘Meldpunten Kindermishandeling’ (Centers for Reporting Child abuse) in communities with relatively high prevalence of child maltreatment. In 2019 several actions were implemented to further strengthen the delivery of services at the afore-mentioned Centers, such as development of operational plans, capacity building of service providers and establishment of case management teams for enhancing an integrated approach in supporting child victims of domestic violence.

106. The following child protection measures are available in the Civil Code:

- (a) Placement of the child under supervision of a guardian (Article 372 SBW);
- (b) Removal from Parental Supervision (Article 371 en 372 of the SBW);
- (c) Provisional entrustment to the Office for Family Law Affairs (art 371f SBW).

B. Measures to prohibit and eliminate all forms of harmful practices including but not limited to, female genital mutilation and early and forced marriages (art. 24, para. 3)

107. In the Republic of Suriname, female genital mutilation is not a practice. Furthermore with the adoption of the revised Civil Code early and forced marriages will be abolished.

C. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

108. The national survey ‘Violence against Children in Suriname’ shows that about 1 in 6 children, 13%, have experienced sexual violence in the past year while 15% have experienced this form of violence at some point in their lives. It is noteworthy here that the current sexual violence experienced by children within their own family is hardly different from the sexual violence experienced by children outside the family, namely 8.2% to 8.6%.

109. Children are typically reluctant to report physical and/or sexual victimization due to feelings of shame, fear of stigmatization and discrimination, and doubts that informational related to their abuse and victimization would remain confidential. In most cases, children prefer to go to their parents or close relatives when they have problems. Mothers are also reluctant to get involved and report incidents of child sexual abuse; only 45 % of mothers reported they would notify the police if they were aware of a child being abused in their community, and only 24 % would notify the police if it was a child in their family that experienced sexual violence. More than one out of two or 54 % of mothers were afraid to intervene in the family matters of others. In small communities, there is often reluctance to make family matters public because it can harm the reputation of the family.

D. Torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including corporal punishment (arts. 37(a) and 28, para. 2)

110. The 2017 Violence Against Children (VAC) study found that children have a high level of exposure to violence in the home and family. Most adolescents experienced physical violence (including slapping) and psychological violence in their lifetime (84 % and 81 %, respectively) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (72 % and 74 %, respectively). Nearly one out of two or 48 % of adolescents experienced physical violence, excluding slapping,

and 15 % experienced sexual violence. In addition, one out of three or 34 % of adolescents witnessed domestic violence.

111. See annex 4 which reflects the adolescents (ages 11–18) who experienced violence in the home.

112. It is notable that 76 % of mothers considered VAC to be a major problem in Suriname. More than three out of four or 78 % of mothers reported children in their family ever experienced physical and/or psychological violence (lifetime), and more than two out of three or 69 % reported their children experienced violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. Annex 5 shows the proportion of mothers who reported their children experienced violence in the home.

113. Reporting violence of children will increase when awareness raising programmes are conducted intensively.

Corporal Punishment

114. In 2018, 87.3 % of children ages 1–14 experienced violent discipline. More specifically, 62.6 % of children experienced some form of physical punishment, among which 8.0 % experienced severe physical punishment. In addition, 83.6 % of children experienced psychological aggression. Boys and girls were equally likely to experience violent discipline, but boys (65.3 %) were slightly more likely than girls (59.3 %) to experience physical punishment. Younger children (ages 1–9) were more likely to experience physical punishment than older children (age 10–14); although children ages 1–2 were least likely to experience severe punishment. In addition, children in the rural interior and poorest households were more likely to experience (severe) physical punishment.

115. In a 2020 a pupil survey was conducted among a group of 1429 pupils aged 11–18 years, selected from 74 schools across different levels of education in all 10 districts. The survey, pertaining results and insights regarding corporal punishment, as part of parental discipline, focused on the number of students who experienced violence, in the past year, by type of violence. Annex 6 shows the number of students who experienced violence, in the past year.

116. It has been determined that the proportion of children who have experienced three forms of violence in the past year (2020) is 16% (absolutely about 9,849 children), with the most frequently mentioned combination being physical violence, psychological violence and witnessing violence between parents. About 6% of children (about 3,364 children) reported to have experienced 4 forms of violence in the past year, namely physical, psychological, witness of violence as well as sexual violence. Violence against children, regardless of form, is highest in the rural interior (91%), followed by the rural coastal plain (81%) and urban areas (80%).

117. The article further reveals that the in discussion of corporal punishment of children, a distinction is often made between corporal punishment in three contexts, namely:

- (a) Corporal punishment in correctional institutions;
- (b) In educational and other childcare institutions; and
- (c) Corporal punishment in the family.

118. Corporal punishment at primary school is reported more by pupils in special education (16.4%) than pupils in government schools (13%). Boys report more corporal punishment than girls: 16% to 13%. Secondary Education schools pupils experience the least amount of physical violence by teachers: 7%. It is worth mentioning that the reported corporal punishment at school was mainly limited to ‘slapping’, ‘pinching’, ‘shaking’. Harsh punishments such as beating with objects were reported less.

119. Also in penitentiary institutions the policy guideline is that corporal punishment of children is prohibited. However, the sub-study on violence in correctional institutions shows that about half of the youth, 49%, in (pre-)detention ‘received a beating with an object’.

120. Physical violence against children within the home (family) refers to violence experienced by children from both adults and other children. Annex 7 shows that physical

violence within the home mainly occurs in the context of discipline by parents or caregivers, with children experiencing corporal punishment of varying intensity.

E. Measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social integration of child victims (art. 39)

121. Measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social integration of the child victims are intensified and expanded.

F. Availability of Helplines

122. The ministry of Justice and Police has introduced the policy for setting up Helplines for Child Protection in various regions where there is a high frequency of sexual abuse of children. Other forms of violence against children can also be reported. This reporting center works together with the police and other emergency services. With the aim to accommodate children in reporting domestic abuse and other abusive situations, the Child Helpline 123 was set up in 2007 and is now available 24/7. The helplines were set up in different areas for ease of accessibility, to avoid the threshold fear among citizens and identify cases of sexual abuse within local communities.

123. There are three Centers for Reporting Child abuse (Meldpunt Kinderbescherming) located in the districts Sipaliwini (Apoera), Coronie and Paramaribo. The Child Protection helpline Apoera and Coronie were set up in October 2015, in response to the high level of child abuse detected in the Apoera and Coronie region. With the support of UNICEF this Child Help Line was upgraded to a 24 hour Helpline for children and adolescents.

124. In 2021, the group of beneficiaries was also extended to adults who fall victim to abuse; the name of the Helpline was changed to 'Mi Lijn', which literally translates to "My Line" but in figurative speech means as much as "my friend, my support".

125. The third helpline in Paramaribo- South (Latour, Stibula) was set up in the period August to December 2016, due to, among others, the increasing complaints of prostitution among the teenagers in those areas which are demographically heavily populated with teenagers.

126. Children are heard in a child-friendly way, in order to aid the process, for instance the staff of the third helpline in Paramaribo-South (Meldpunt Zuid) has its facilities furnished in a child-friendly manner with the assistance of funds from UNICEF. This pilot project has already exposed many abuses.

127. The MinOWC pledged to assist in strengthening this Helpline by making school social workers available.

128. However, the organization is facing a chronic shortage of staff and other resources such as transportation for outreach and other activities, training space for in-service training of permanent staff and volunteers. The effectiveness of the helpline is for a large part (when it comes to cases that need to be referred to partners) reduced by the lack of a unified/coherent child protection network. Unambiguous procedures, which are laid down in protocols, are not followed. Furthermore, cases cannot be picked up and handled smoothly by partners because of the missing preconditions (staff and transport).

129. In recent years, the Helpline has made the following efforts:

(a) It kept the helpline running (recruiting, training, retraining of personnel, handling cases, referring and monitoring referred cases, data collection and processing regarding cases);

(b) It initiated outreach programs at schools, community centers and boarding schools, where there were interactive education sessions on e.g.: Bullying and Child Abuse. Sessions for teachers and kindergarten teachers, among others, are also provided to enhance their ability to identify and deal with these issues;

(c) It conducted awareness campaigns such as:

- ‘Be a Hero and Report’ Campaign: A campaign for timely reporting and intervention in cases of abuse against children. Aim of the campaign: To alleviate the suffering of children and young people through timely identification, reporting and intervention.
- ‘Click it 2 Win it’ campaign: The project aims to make young people aware that there is someone willing to listen to them if they feel the need to talk about their problems. For the project, 3 posters were developed. The posters depict the possible problems young people face. In this project, engagement of the target group on FB was initiated by giving away prizes.

VI. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18, para. 1 and 2, 20, 21, 25 and 27, para. 4)

A. Family environment and parental guidance in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child (art. 5)

130. In the event that the family environment and or the parental guidance are compromised, the Bureau for Family Law Affairs certainly has a role to play in supporting parents and/or guardians in their responsibility in caring for minors. The Bureau has a leading role in the child protection chain. There is a need for a network of institutions that can assist families in need of a structural solution to their problems.

B. Parents common responsibilities, assistance to parents and provision of childcare services (art. 18)

131. General Child Allowance (AKB): increased from SRD 3 to SRD 50 then SRD 75 and in 2021 this amount was increased to SRD 125.

132. Financial Assistance for People (Children) with Disabilities is a monthly assistance paid to the parent/guardian of that child or children. This amount was increased from SRD 325 to SRD 500 and in 2021 it was increased to SRD 750.

133. The Republic of Suriname is in the process of examining the possibility of ratifying The Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in respect of parental responsibility and Measures for the protection of children. This Convention improves the protection of children in international situations.

134. In instances where counseling is needed within the family nucleus, the Bureau for Family Law Affairs has a referral role to other national aid agencies. The Bureau also assists in preparing the case file for the legal hearings as it relates to alimony and custody arrangements. See annex 8 the annual number of children for whom the Government paid Child Benefit by District from 2016–2020.

C. Separation from parents (art. 9)

135. Regarding the Hague Convention on the Civil aspect of International Child abduction, the Ministry of Justice and Police, in collaboration with UNICEF, engaged a consultant to provide advice to the Ministry for the ratification of this convention. When ratification will take place is not yet known. The Convention was drafted to ensure the prompt return of children who have been abducted from their country of habitual residence or wrongfully retained in a contracting state not their country of habitual residence.

136. The first option for separating a child from their family is to look for possibilities to place the child with immediate family. Placing the child in a home away from its immediate family should also be a temporary solution and should be as short as possible. Unfortunately, there are situations where children cannot return home quickly or at all. For example, children who have been abandoned. The Bureau for Family Law Affairs is the designated body that

mediates in adoption cases. For these children, the process of placement in a foster family is initiated and, in principle, the application for adoption can be made after six months. In the case of adoption on the grounds of neglect, the guardian will be disbarred. See article 342k of the Civil Code and art. 677a-k of the Code of Civil Procedure for adoption as a child protection measure.

D. Family reunification (art. 10)

137. For the reunification of the minor foreign national with the family or legal representative, there is cooperation with the embassy or consulate of the foreign national in question. The embassy or consulate will contact the authorities in the country of origin and further investigation will be conducted into the background of the foreign national.

138. In the period February–August 2020, a group of minors illegally crossed the border and for this group incidental actions were taken by the sub-directorate Immigration Affairs in collaboration with social shelters. The sub-directorate cared for this target group until the parents and/or legal representatives were identified.

E. Recovery of maintenance for the child (art. 27, para. 4)

139. Regarding The Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child and other forms of Family Maintenance 2007, the ministry of Justice and Police, in collaboration with UNICEF, engaged a consultant to provide advice to the ministry for the ratification of this convention. When ratification will take place is not yet known.

140. This Convention is governing the enforcement of judicial decisions regarding child support (and other forms of family support) extraterritorially.

F. Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

141. Custodial placement is initiated when the child's family environment is deemed unsafe and a threat to their personal development. This form of placement can only take place after an investigation and with the permission of the Public Prosecution Service (the youth officer). After permission is granted for the out-of-home placement, the agency receives a decision. Custodial placement is a child protection measure with an urgent character. There is no support for foster families from the Bureau. The Bureau mediates and counsels while the case is still pending at the Bureau. Foster families often send updates of the child, especially if their next step is adoption.

142. The Foster Care Act is now in its final phase and must be examined in light of the draft revised Civil Code.

G Periodic review of placement (art. 25)

143. Due to staff shortages, the periodic assessment of placement of children is somewhat hampered. The government will eliminate this deficit in order to carry out the periodic assessment efficiently and effectively.

H Adoption (art. 21)

144. Adoption is regulated by the Civil Code. In the draft revised Civil Code, the regulations concerning adoption have been brought into conformity with the CRC.

145. The ministry of Justice and Police, in collaboration with UNICEF, engaged a consultant to provide advice to the ministry for the ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

146. This convention provides safeguards for children and families involved in adoptions between participating countries and also works to prevent the abduction, sale, or trafficking of children. The above-mentioned ministry is currently in the process of formulating, in collaboration with UNICEF, a Bill on Foster Care.

147. Children who are put up for adoption are those abandoned in general and specifically in hospitals (sometimes with a disability or HIV infected), and those born as a result of incest.

I. Illicit transfer and non-return (art. 11)

148. Suriname is intensifying and expanding the measure to combat illegal transfer and non-return of children abroad.

J. Measures to ensure the protection of children with incarcerated parents and children living in prison with their mothers

149. The government is intensifying measures to protect children whose parents are incarcerated while children are not living with their mothers in prison.

K. Under this cluster, States parties should take into account the Committee's general comment No. 7 (2005) on implementing child rights in early childhood and consider the Guidelines for the alternative care of children (General Assembly resolution 64/142, annex)

150. The State Decree of January 27, 2017, implementing Article 2 of the Care Institutions (Opvanginstellingen) Act (S.B. 2014 No. 7) establishes the quality standards for care institutions. These standards serve as measurement tools to ensure the quality of care provided in care institutions. The standards relate to:

- Early child development (standards for early childhood development institutions).
- Care facilities for elderly persons.
- Care facilities for persons with disabilities.
- General and residential childcare.

151. The department ensures the rights and freedoms of children in alternative care through the following:

- Inspecting the care institutions. In this regard, the quality standards are the measuring tool to ensure the quality of care offered in the institution. The non-discrimination principle, privacy, development and participation, nutrition, safety and hygiene are central to this.
- When irregularities or other matters that pose a threat to the rights and freedoms of children are discovered, this is communicated to the management of the institution. A report is also made to the deputy director of social services and the department must await further instructions.

152. See annex 9 for the total number of care facilities.

VII. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18, paras. 3, 23, 24, 26, 27, paras. 1–3, and 33)

153. Suriname signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on March 30, 2007 and ratified it on March 29, 2017.

154. By providing free health care and social benefits, the State tries to ensure the survival and development of persons with disabilities to the maximum extent possible.

155. After the signing and ratification of the CRPD, Suriname continues with its awareness raising campaign. In 2005 the staff of the ministry of Labour with the support of Association of Private Social Institutions (the Vereniging van Particuliere Sociale Instellingen), were trained in identifying persons with disabilities and the introduction to the documents with the rights of these persons.

156. The division Categorical Social Work is a sub-directorate of the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. This sub-directorate is responsible for the collection of statistical data concerning children with disabilities. Awareness raising campaigns were launched in December 2017, at the Training Center for adolescents with disabilities and a school for persons with a visual disability. In 2019 there was an awareness raising campaign conducted by this bureau in two schools for special education: the Kennedy school (73 pupils) and the special primary school in Tamanredjo (42 pupils). In every school where there is an awareness campaign, a wall will be painted by the pupils under the supervision of an artist. Pupils are also allowed to make drawings to express the way they enjoy their rights.

157. In the interest of improving the self-esteem and position of persons with disabilities including children, the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is implementing two national campaigns “Sori yu srefi” (“Reveal yourself”) and “Kenki a Denki” (“Change your mindset”). These campaigns are focused entirely on making citizens with a disability visible and eliminating the stigma. In this context, the community is provided with information through flyers, brochures and videos.

158. Most of the persons with disabilities have had a form of special education and have attended primary school. One fifth of the respondents have attended secondary school. Still few of them have employment whereas some of them indicated to be able to work.

159. With regard to education for children with a disability, the Office for Special Education is a division of the MinOWC that deals with administrative processes and curriculum development within Special Education. The main tasks of the Special Education Office are primarily to ensure adequate and structured administration and the qualitative and quantitative staffing of the teaching staff. Special Education can be divided into two groups such as: Special Education Schools and Continued Special Education Schools (VSO). See annex 10 for Overview of Schools of Special Education (SO) and Continued Special Education Schools (VSO).

160. In order to be able to steer the learning process of the students and, if necessary, to take remedial action, a diagnostic test is conducted. The students are tested in the following course components:

- Reading.
- Writing.
- Arithmetic.

161. On the basis of the test results, it can also be determined at what level the child is functioning in VSO-A, VSO-B or VSO-C direction. The curriculum may be changed if necessary. The schools in the capital and the neighboring districts do offer all subjects. The Emmaschool is the largest public school for vocational training and is situated in the center of Paramaribo. The students of the Basic Special Education (SO) move on to the Secondary Special Education (VSO) at the age of 15. In 2019 a total of 99 students participated at the diagnostic test of the Special Education Office.

162. Institutions for children with disabilities, for instance care institutions, were previously subject to periodic inspection to determine the extent to which quality standards are being met. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and other challenges the inspection office only acts after receipt of tips or complaints from the community.

A. Survival and Development

163. The Constitution guarantees the right to life, survival and development to all under its jurisdiction including persons with disabilities. The amended Penal Code also states that

offenses such as abortion with or without permission (articles 355–358), euthanasia (article 353), infanticide (article 351), assistance with suicide (article 354) are punishable under the law. No one under the Surinamese jurisdiction can be forced to be sterilized, including persons with disabilities.

164. The information provided in sections (b) through (h) below is predominantly retrieved from SITAN (2021).

B. Health and health services, in particular primary health care (art. 24)

165. On the one hand, everyone with the Surinamese nationality in the age category of 0 to 16 years and those over 60 are exempt from paying the health insurance premium, which is paid by the Government. For those employed, every employer is obliged to pay at least 50% of the premium. The employee pays the remainder.

166. On the other hand, there is no optimal access of pregnant women, mothers and children to the primary care system as yet. For example, the Academic Hospital Paramaribo (AZP, May 2018) reports a worrisome situation where about 10% of pregnant women who consult the hospital are not insured. Furthermore, figures from primary care show that 9.4% of children between the ages of 0 and 16 are still uninsured, as many girls as boys. The proportion of young people between the ages of 17 and 20 in the group of uninsured is 11%, with a greater number of uninsured young men (8.927) than uninsured women (6.590).

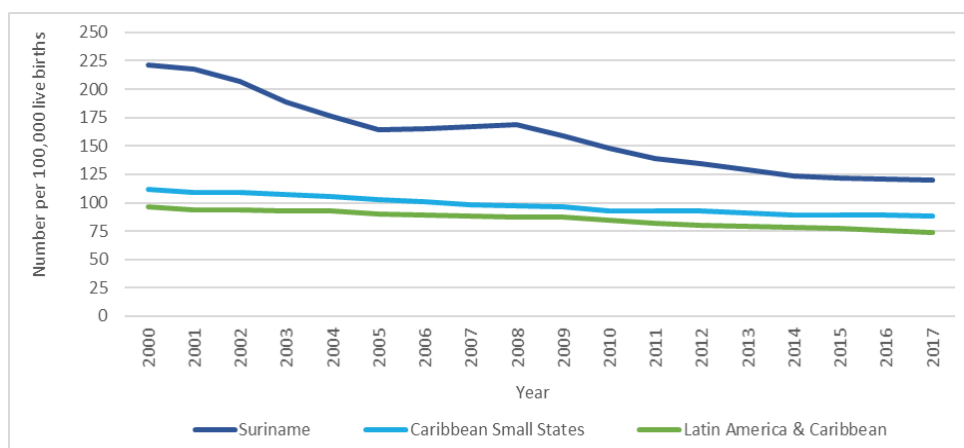
167. Suriname has a high maternal mortality rate compared to other Latin America and Caribbean countries with similar or lower income economies. In Suriname, research has found that 69 % of maternal deaths are related to lack of medical and social insurance, which is an indicator of poverty. In addition, 85% of maternal deaths occurred in hospitals, with the most important substandard care factor being delay in diagnosis (59%), delay or wrong treatment (78%) and inadequate monitoring by health care providers (59%).

168. Most maternal deaths were classified as direct causes (63%) versus indirect (32%) and unspecified (5%) causes, because the cause of death was unknown. The two leading causes of maternal mortality were obstetric and non-obstetric sepsis (27%) and obstetric hemorrhage (20%). Hypertensive disorders – such as pregnancy induced hypertension and preeclampsia – were diagnosed in 30 % of all maternal deaths. Hypertensive disorders and its complications – cerebral bleeding and eclampsia – accounted for 14 % of maternal medical emergencies.

169. National experts recognize that health literacy and understanding of how maternal mortality can be prevented is low, particularly among poor and rural women, which results in unpreventable emergencies. Another challenge is access to prenatal and postnatal care for urban areas.

170. To reach the SDG of a maternal mortality ratio less than or equal to 70 per 100,000 live births, national experts have recommended that the Government needs to take steps to eliminate preventable maternal deaths by improving data surveillance and establishing a maternal death review committee and implementing national guidelines for prevention and management of major complications during pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium. In an effort to address Maternal and Child Health (MCH), the Government recently developed a two-year MCH Strategy and Action Plan; however, implementation capacity is weak. The ministry of Health needs adequate staffing and dedicated and qualified personnel to effectively implement the MCH Strategy and Action Plan.

Chart 1 below shows the maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimates per 100,000 live births), 2000–2017



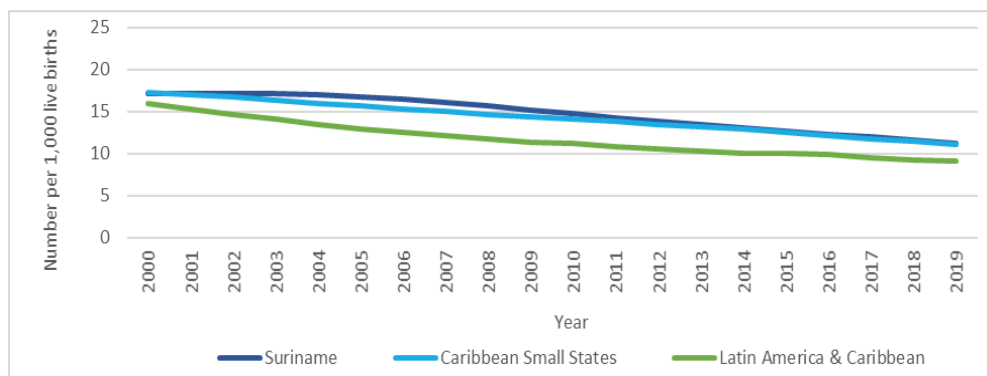
Source: SITAN.

171. Chart 1 above shows trends in maternal mortality ratios per 100,000 live births for Suriname and Caribbean Small States and Latin America and Caribbean for comparison purposes. Over the past two decades, Suriname has seen a 46% reduction in the maternal mortality ratio from 221 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 120 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017.

Neonatal Mortality

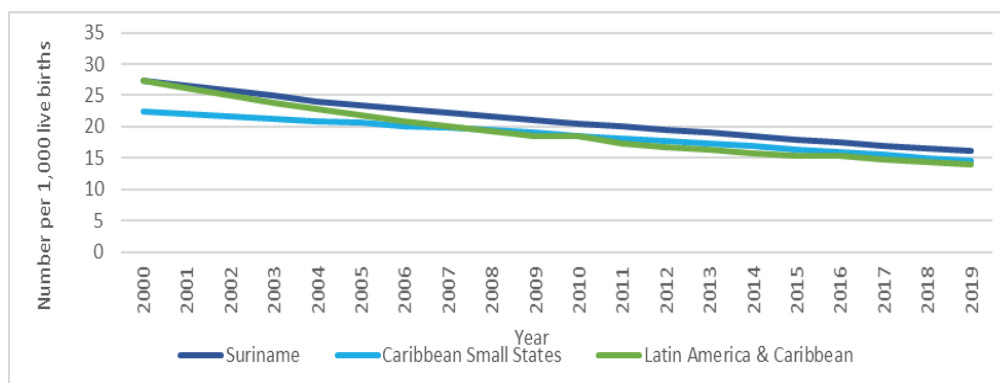
172. Chart 2 below reveals trends in neonatal mortality rates per 1,000 live births in Suriname from 2000 to 2019. Over the past two decades, the neonatal mortality rate in Suriname decreased by 35%, from 17 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 11 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019.

Chart 2. Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2000–2019



Source: SITAN.

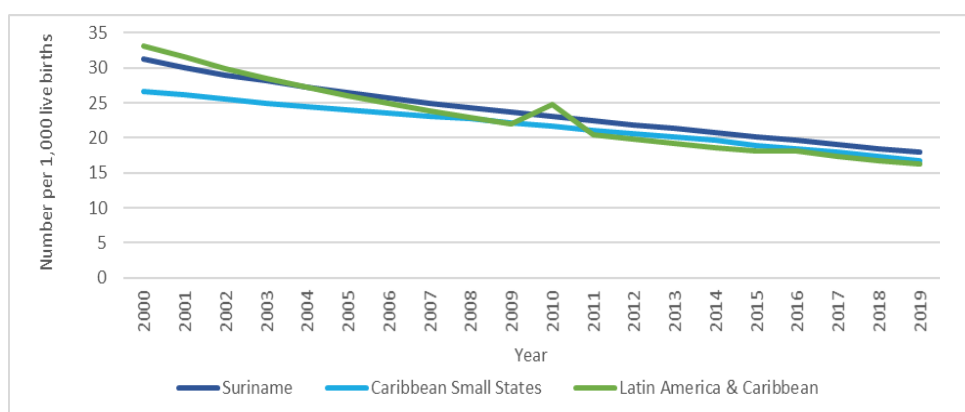
173. Chart 3 shows trends in infant mortality rates per 1,000 live births for Suriname from 2000 to 2019. Over the past two decades, the infant mortality rate in Suriname decreased by 41% from 27 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 16 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019. Infant mortality in Suriname is nearly comparable to the average infant mortality rate for Latin America and Caribbean countries.

Chart 3. Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2000–2019

Source: SITAN.

174. Further analysis revealed that over the past two decades, the male infant mortality rate has been consistently higher than the female infant mortality rate. In 2000, the male infant mortality rate was 31 per 1,000 live births, whereas the female infant mortality rate was 24 per 1,000 live births. From 2000 to 2019, there was a 42% decrease in the male infant mortality rate to 18 per 1,000 live births and a 41% decrease in the female infant mortality rate to 14 per 1,000 live births.

Under-Five Mortality

Chart 4. Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2000–2019

Source: SITAN.

175. Chart 4 above reveals trends in under-five mortality rates 1,000 live births from 2000 to 2019, including a 42% decrease in the under-five mortality rate in Suriname. This decline was similar to average declines for Latin America and Caribbean countries and Caribbean Small States. From 2000 to 2019, the under-five mortality rate has been consistently higher for males than females. Since the minimum SDG target of at least 25 under five per 1,000 live births has been achieved, Suriname can aim to end preventable deaths by 2030.

176. Neonatal and mortality rates of children under 5 years of age (number of deaths per 1,000 live births) over a 5-year period prior to the study at the national level by district.

C. Efforts to address the most prevalent health challenges, to promote the physical and mental health and well-being of children and to prevent and deal with communicable and non-communicable diseases

177. Suriname is ‘on course’ to meet one target for maternal, infant and young child nutrition. The prevalence of overweight children under 5 years of age is 3.5% and Suriname

is ‘on course’ to prevent the figure from increasing. Suriname has shown limited progress towards achieving the diet-related non-communicable disease (NCD) targets.

178. The ministry of Health drafted the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases for 2015–2020. This Plan sets targets to adopt local and national strategies that prevent NCDs, reduce alcohol and tobacco use, integrate NCDs within the country’s approach to chronic care, and strengthen Suriname’s ability to conduct surveillance and research into NCDs.

179. The Government also recognizes infant and maternal linkages between early nutrition, obesity and NCDs. Having found increasing non-compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes in recent years, the Government has drafted national codes of practice for the marketing of formula milk and related products, and also for food products for infants and young children. There are also efforts to integrate and promote breastfeeding.

180. Additional areas of action under consideration are tax on sugar-sweetened beverages; further increases in excise taxes on tobacco and alcoholic beverages; revision of education curricula to encourage healthy lifestyles; and the creation of safe spaces for people to exercise.

181. A project from the Bureau of Public Health (BOG) of the Suriname ministry of Health has as its main objective to identify variables for monitoring of the five most important NCDs and their risk factors in the country, and to build a national NCD database.

182. Children in Suriname also suffer from diabetes. Since almost all of these are behavioral risk factors, and since we have it under our own control, diabetes is a chronic disease that can be well controlled with the right guidance. Overweight is one of the risk factors to gain diabetes.

183. The proportion of children under five who are overweight has remained low, at only 3% from 2000 to 2018. In comparison, in 2016, the proportion of adolescents ages 13–17 who were overweight ($>+1$ SD from median for body mass index (BMI) by age and sex) and obese ($>+2$ SD from median for BMI by age and sex) was much higher, adolescents ages 13–17 were more than twice as likely to be overweight than obese. In 2016, more than one out of four or 26.7% of adolescents were overweight and 10.4 % were obese. More specifically, adolescents ages 13–15 were more likely to be overweight (28.6 %) and obese (11.6 %) than adolescents ages 16–17 (21.2 % and 7.0 %, respectively). It is notable that the proportion of overweight adolescents ages 13–15 increased from 19.3 % in 2009 to 28.6 % in 2016. Likewise, the proportion of obese adolescents ages 13–15 nearly doubled from 6.6 % in 2009 to 11.6 % in 2016. Among adolescents ages 16–17, boys (7.0 %) were more likely than girls (4.1 %) to be obese. In contrast, girls were five times more likely to be overweight than obese, and boys were three times more likely to be overweight than obese.

D. Reproductive health rights of adolescents and measures to promote a healthy Lifestyle Improving adolescents’ access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

184. In the 13–17 age group, more boys (38%) than girls (21%) have ever had sex and that for more than half of boys (55%) this took place before the age of 14. Among girls, this proportion was lower at 30%. Of the sexually active teens, 68% of boys and 61% of girls had used the condom at the last time of sex (Global School-based student Health Survey/PAHO, 2017).

185. The proportion of adolescents, 15–19 years, in the total number of 9,910 live births in 2016 was 14% (1408), most of them in Sipaliwini and Brokopondo.

186. Adolescent fertility is highest among young women who are poor, who live in rural areas and/or the interior.

187. In 2016, the number of married adolescents, especially girls, was still 149 (CBB 2016). Adolescents who are married or living in a common law relationship are most common in rural areas and in the interior and are highest among young women with low education and income.

E. Measures to protect children from substance abuse (art. 33)

188. Measures to protect children from substance abuse are among others legislation and awareness raising programmes. There is also legislation on alcohol and tobacco use. Suriname has a comprehensive law on tobacco control.

189. Article 10 of the Tobacco law states that any person is prohibited from selling tobacco and/or tobacco products to a person who has not been determined to have reached the age of eighteen years.

190. Article 11 of the same law states that it is prohibited for persons who have not attained the age of eighteen years to sell or cause to be sold tobacco and/or tobacco products.

191. Suriname ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2008. The ministry of Health launched the FCTC 2030 project for Suriname in July 2020. Suriname is one of nine Parties to the WHO FCTC selected for Phase II of the FCTC 2030 project through an application process.

192. The FCTC 2030 project aims to support Parties to accelerate implementation of the WHO FCTC to achieve the SDGs.

193. The project is led by the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC in partnership with WHO and UNDP, with additional support from civil society experts and academic institutions. Suriname has one of the most comprehensive laws on tobacco control in the Caribbean region mandating implementation of key effective measures as established in the Strategy and Plan of Action to strengthen tobacco control in the Americas 2018–2022.

194. The FCTC 2030 project is therefore an opportunity to access technical support for strengthening enforcement of the tobacco control law, developing a comprehensive, cost national tobacco control strategy and supporting the development of national tobacco cessation guidelines. The project also includes a needs assessment exercise and an “investment case” to demonstrate the social and economic benefits of comprehensive WHO FCTC implementation in Suriname.

F. Social security and childcare services and facilities (arts. 26 and 18, para. 3)

195. The Government increased the assistance for single persons from SRD 33 to SRD 108 (227% increase) and for households from SRD 40.50 to SRD 115.50, a 185 % increase. As of July 2021, the amount of all of the above-mentioned basic social protection services was increased. In addition, the Government provided SRD 200 million per year for food packages for vulnerable households and fixed maximum selling prices for 30 basic goods.

G. Standard of living and measures taken, including material assistance and support programmes with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing, to ensure children’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, and to reduce poverty and inequality (art. 27, paras. 1–3)

196. Awareness raising programmes to strengthen the standard of living is an ongoing process.

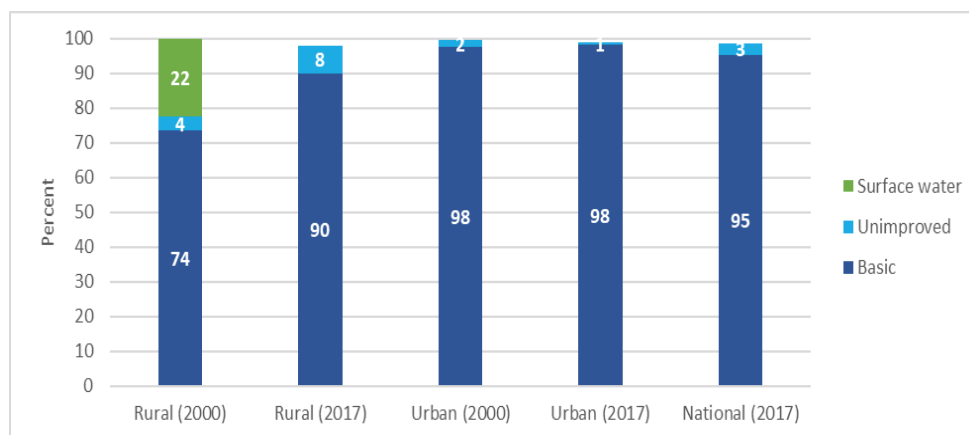
197. The Government through the ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Affairs has now disbursed almost SRD 35 million in COVID aid. The fund is intended to alleviate the immediate needs of the indigent household hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

198. In cooperation with the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, special financial measures have been taken.

199. Safe drink water and sanitation.

200. The chart below shows improvements in access to safely managed drinking water in urban and rural areas from 2000 to 2017. In 2000, 22% of the rural population relied upon surface water as drinking water in rural areas and only 74% of the population had access to basic drinking water from an improved water source. By 2017, 90 % of the population in rural areas had access to basic drinking water from an improved water source. In urban areas, drinking water supplies are managed by Surinaamsche Waterleiding Maatschappij (Suriname Water Company), and 98% of the urban population has access to basic drinking water. As of 2020, the price for water had not increased, however there was a strong likelihood that Surinaamsche Waterleiding Maatschappij would raise water prices in the future.

Chart 5. Population using safely managed drinking water by residence area and year (2000 and 2017)



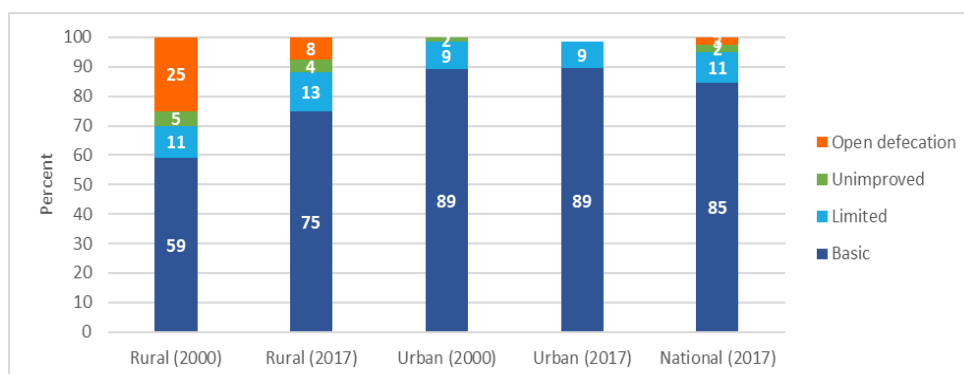
Source: SITAN.

201. When it comes to improving access to safely managed drinking water, multi-stakeholder dialogue revealed bottlenecks that still exist, including:

- Lack of a water policy and legal frameworks.
- Lack of financial resource allocation and prioritization of safe water.
- Lack of awareness of need and low political prioritization.
- Lack of a human resource strategy.
- Gaps between demand and availability of vocational courses in water discipline.

202. In Suriname, in 2000 and 2017, 89 % of the population in urban areas used basic sanitation services (Chart 6. below). In rural areas, only 59 % of the population had access to basic sanitation services in 2000, whereas 25% of the rural population practiced open defecation. In 2017, the sanitation situation had improved, with 75 % of the rural population having basic sanitation, 13% having limited sanitation, 4% having unimproved sanitation and 8% practicing open defecation.

Chart 6. Population using safely managed sanitation services by residence areas (%), 2000 and 2017



Source: SITAN.

203. In 2018, the Suriname Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey also measured access to safely managed sanitation services, of which 89 % of households had at least basic sanitation services (i.e., use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households). Clearly, there is inequality between urban, rural coastal and rural interior regions when it comes to access to safely managing sanitation services. While most of the population in urban and rural coastal areas had access to at least basic improved sanitation facilities designed to hygienically separate excreta from human contact.

204. When it comes to improving access to safely managed sanitation services, multi-stakeholder dialogue revealed bottlenecks exist, including:

- Inadequate policies and legal framework, including provisions for sanctions in cases of non-compliance.
- Sanitation is not featured in the NAP.
- Lack of recognition and awareness as to the role of regulatory authorities.
- Lack of clarity as to institutional roles and responsibilities of authorities.
- Lack of a coordinated planning and budgeting to improve urban sanitation.

H. HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child; on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; on the rights of children with disabilities; on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (art. 24)

HIV/AIDS

205. In Suriname, there are no official figures on the number of people living with HIV/AIDS; however, UNAIDS collects and maintains some data. In 2016, Suriname had less than 500 new HIV infections and fewer than 200 AIDS-related deaths. That same year, there were 4,900 people living with HIV, of which 48 % of HIV positive persons were accessing Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). In 2019, UNAIDS estimated that 5,800 people were living with HIV in Suriname; however, this statistic has not been officially confirmed, of which 38 % to 58 % of HIV positive persons were reportedly accessing ART. To reduce the rate and increase the knowledge on HIV are measures to reduce this disease.

206. Findings reveal that only one out of three young women and men ages 15–24 had comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, only 40.9 % of females and 38.3 % of males had knowledge of all three means of HIV transmission from mother-to-child. Yet, 72.9 % of females and 62.9 % of males know where to get tested for HIV. It is notable that young women (31.7 %) were more than twice as likely as young men (12.5 %) to have been tested for HIV in the past 12 months.

207. The National Strategic Plan adopted a multi-sectoral approach to combating the spread of HIV and improving the quality of care for people living with HIV/AIDS. The ministry of Health provides access to HIV testing and ART; however, following the economic crisis of 2015, this momentum has lagged. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to shortages of ART medicines.

VIII. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

208. From 2015 to 2020, the government's policy focused on increasing the supply of facilities for students including housing, and the fulfillment of SDG 4 and 10 i.e. quality education and reduced inequalities.

209. In that respect, numerous measures were taken within the framework of increasing and strengthening the human potential for the development of Suriname as a nation. These measures have been taken at all levels of education. Efforts have also been made to create conditions for students, such as student flats, the school construction programmes in the interior, and the expansion of the Student Finance Fund. In total SRD 61 million was made available for study financing. Parents who could not afford to pay school and book fees for their child to be educated at Secondary and Tertiary level had the option of applying for a student grant.

210. In addition to the monthly maintenance fee, Surinamese students can now apply for (study) financing for enrollment, tuition fees and necessary material. The students pay 4% interest on an annual basis. From 2015–2018, approximately 138 students opted for funding.

211. With a loan from IDB (US\$20 million), the BEIPII programme is currently being implemented, which focuses on:

- Curriculum development.
- Building more public-school facilities, particularly in the interior.
- Increasing the number of qualified teachers.
- Integrating gender into the curriculum.
- Expanding and strengthening child-friendly education programmes.
- Increasing the use of ICT in primary education.

A. The right to education, vocational training and guidance (art. 28)

212. In Suriname, the educational system consists of kindergarten, primary school, junior and senior secondary schools, and vocational and tertiary education. Reforms would focus on increasing the compulsory schooling for children ages 4–16, which would include kindergarten, primary and lower secondary education, bringing compulsory education up to Grade 10.

213. With the aim to combat poverty and provide quality education to all in realization of the SDGs, the distribution of the annual school backpack project was continued in 2019. Nationwide, 42,000 school backpacks were distributed to pupils and students at primary school, junior and senior secondary school level. The SDG Youth Ambassadors who were facilitated by the then ministry responsible for Youth Affairs coordinated this initiative.

214. With regard to education in the interior, MinOWC is aware of the complexity of teaching in the interior, as it regards adequate facilities. The renovation of schools, the water shortage faced by teachers, overdue maintenance, the availability of suitable service quarters, security, transport of teachers and power supply are some of the concerns that make the approach to teaching in the hinterland somewhat complicated.

215. In order to address the afore-mentioned challenges, an inter-ministerial approach is required, with actors from ministries such as Public Works, Natural Resources, Justice and

Police and Defense. All ministries contribute to education in the interior being brought up to standard e.g. water tanks were made available in areas where there was a shortage of water.

216. The focus is currently to provide kindergarten education to children of four-years of age in all villages. Although it is a very complicated project, the ministry and an assigned Task Force will ascertain the costs of providing nursery education and conditions required. Some trial runs are already underway. There are also schools being built in Coeroeni and Amotopo in the Sipaliwini district. In these villages, the children have never been to school. Providing education in these villages will be a challenge, considering that in some instances children of six or fifteen years old will be going to school for the first time.

217. In 2018, the ministry commenced with the ‘decolonization of the curriculum’ and developed new textbooks for grades 7 and 8 starting in school year 2020–2021. This new curriculum (the third in less than 10 years), is said to reintroduce multilingualism. Instead of only Dutch and English, the curriculum is to include ten local languages: Sranan, Sarnami, Surinamese-Javanese and Hakka, as well as the two largest Maroon languages: Saamaka and Ndyuka and four indigenous languages: Kaliña, Arowak, Tiriyo and Wayana. Translations of keywords, simple sentences, songs and poems will be provided in a teacher-guide which will also include audio recordings to ensure the right pronunciation.

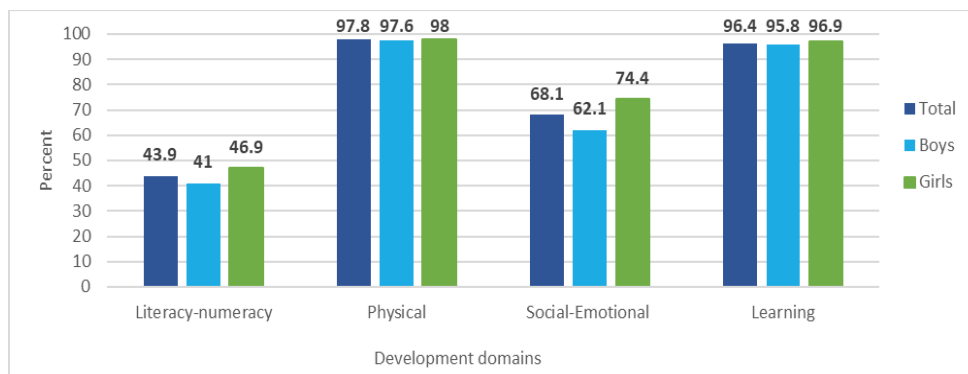
218. Dutch will continue to be the language of instruction, while special ‘multilingual lessons’ (half an hour per week), will be devoted to learning short sentences and songs in the languages that are present in the classroom. The multilingual approach will be applied to all subjects and translations of words and concepts are to be included in math, history or nature education lessons.

219. The professionalization of teachers falls within the purview of the government and religious organizations. The proportion of trained teachers has remained high at the kindergarten and primary school levels from 2010–2018. The proportion of trained teachers at the lower secondary level is not as high but increased from 79 % in 2010 to 87 % in 2018. At the upper secondary level, the proportion of trained teachers is the lowest at 50 percent in 2015; data is not available for 2016–2018.

220. Due to the high costs of transport and accommodation, professionalization workshops are usually organized in the city. During the school holidays, faith-based schools organize training often when most teachers are in the city. The education inspection office used to provide professional development and guidance to teachers in the Interior. However, because of lack of funds, they have been unable to visit schools in the Interior during the past five years. The only means of communication with the schools is by mobile phone. The lack of in-service training and possibilities for further education for teachers, is another important reason why teachers are reluctant to go to the hinterland.

221. Through the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy, the ministry believes that one of its goals is to fight poverty and also to eliminate social inequalities. Necessary legislation is also being drafted and existing legislation will be amended where necessary to create those equal opportunities, especially for children with disabilities and those living in the interior. ECD has been identified as the key strategy for solving most of the problems related to poverty reduction and social inequality.

222. Over three-quarters (77 %) of children are developmentally on track, based on the ECD Index, as presented in the table below.



Source: Suriname MICS, 2018.

223. Additionally, the share of children developmentally on track is higher for girls and urban children. Importantly, the share of children attending Early Childhood Education (ECE) who are developmentally on track is 12 % higher than that of children not attending ECE. This is a key difference, given that only 46 % of children aged 3–4 years nation-wide attend ECE. Furthermore, attendance is higher among urban children and also among children whose mothers attended higher levels of education.

224. The MinOWC is supposed to implement a National Policy for ECD. UNICEF Suriname is a partner of MinOWC in this process. However, it cannot do this alone and therefore feels that an intersectoral approach should be maintained.

225. The first step in this direction was taken with a workshop for the establishment of an ECD Network Suriname, in which various stakeholders participated in November 2021. The aim of the workshop was to have a national discussion on the national ECD policy to be implemented. Representatives of various ministries and agencies participated in the aforementioned training.

226. Only 79% of the children who successfully complete primary school continue on to secondary education. Gender parity in secondary education is 1.24, with more girls than boys moving on to secondary education. Suriname has the highest rate of repetition in primary education in the region, with a rate of 18% for boys and 14% for girls respectively in 2015. Retention is most common in grade 6 (year 8) and nationally the districts of Sipaliwini, Marowijne and Brokopondo have the highest scores. Also in secondary education the share of repeaters is high.

227. The national average is 20% for secondary school and 23% for primary vocational education in 2015. The primary school pass rate in 2018 was still just over half, 53%, and in secondary school around 60%. The secondary school drop-out rate is almost 25%. The drop-out rate from primary vocational education schools was 36% in 2015.

228. In order to mitigate dropouts and repeat students over the period 2015 to 2020, policy continued in reforming the technical & vocational education and training (TVET). With the aim of fulfilling SDG 4 of quality education, more than USD 480,000 has been made available for its implementation.

229. Activities undertaken in this regard, entailed:

- Consideration in Parliament of the draft Secondary Vocational Education Act.
- The rehabilitation and improved equipment of the facilities for Training Hubs/Practice Centres (39 practice rooms nationwide).
- The reform of the law and regulations of the Vocational Education System by mainly establishing a National Training Authority (NTA).
- The purchase of materials and equipment for the practical centres.
- Strengthening vocational education by providing training to teachers as well as implementing train-the-trainer programmes and capacity building for vocational education.

- Refurbishing the LBO school and boarding house in Atjoni.
- Providing training courses for teachers and schoolbooks including manuals and other educational materials.
- Updating curricula in two technical areas and integrating basic life skills into the curricula.

230. Additionally, technical education at LBO and MBO level has improved, students from the hinterland also get access to primary and secondary (technical) education and students can work at their own pace and set their own timetables, depending on their personal circumstances.

B. The aims of education (art. 29) with reference also to the quality of education

231. In the period 2017–2021, UNFPA’s collaboration with Government partners and policy advisors for faith-based organizations and Population Policy; focused among others on the following main initiatives (with the ministry of Sports and Youth): providing support to keep teenage mothers in school, preventing a second pregnancy and the upgrading and decentralization of Programmes for Teenage Mothers.

232. Thirteen young school mothers spent a few weeks brainstorming with staff members of the Deputy Directorate of National Youth Affairs (NJA) of the ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs about problems they face in their daily lives. This is in line with the government’s policy on the counseling, prevention and rehabilitation of vulnerable youths emanating from the development plan 2017–2021 and financed by UNICEF.

233. The school mothers project was created specifically to help young people who are at risk of dropping out of school because of pregnancy and even more so to overcome the other related social and economic challenges.

234. Additionally, the MinOWC in collaboration with VVOB commenced the Initiative for Gender-Responsive Education (iGROW). The iGROW programme creates a supportive school environment for students in lower secondary vocational education on topics such as sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender responsiveness.

235. Emanating from the National Action Plan for Children 2019–2021, the government and non-governmental organizations support pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers support and guide the (re-)entry into the education system and the labour market.

236. In December 2021, the MinOWC received three publications of the Association of Indigenous Village Chiefs in Suriname (VIDS), which included a ‘Baseline report on the Indigenous People in Suriname’, ‘The historical Indigenous People on the Corantijn River’ and ‘Archival research on historical and contemporary sources of the Kaliña and Lokono on the Lower Marowijne River’.

237. The studies were done by the Indigenous People themselves and concern the living situations in their areas. The publications pay attention to, among other things, health care and education. The content, which also relates to the implementation of the SDGs, will support the government in further developing the village communities.

238. These reference works can be used as a guide for determining the educational policy for the Indigenous Peoples. First-hand analysis of the areas makes it easy for the ministry to make the necessary adjustments. The ministry indicated that changes will be made to education in the interior, as schools will be built in the Trio villages of Amotopo and Coeroeni.

239. As part of the project ‘Strengthening local community support mechanisms for Indigenous women and girls in the hinterland of Suriname, being executed by Projekta in partnership with the VIDS’ from 2021–2024, funded by The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women:

- A group of local trainers from 6 geographical regions were trained by the local trainers, coached and supported to provide basic counseling and referral to indigenous girls and women that are at risk or are victims of domestic violence.
- Culturally sensitive and context-appropriate case registration methods and case management systems will be developed for community workers.

240. As part of the project ‘School gardens for education, environmental awareness & life skills’, executed by Projekta, in 2018, funded by Alcoa Foundation Suriname:

- Teaching materials were developed for five elementary schools from Marowijne, Brokopondo and Para on how to use the garden to teach lessons in the following areas: Arithmetic, Language, Art & Culture and Self and World Orientation.
- Pupils from the participating schools in Marowijne, Brokopondo and Para were also taught life skills, including collaboration and communication, through the gardens.

C. Cultural rights of children belonging to indigenous and minority groups (art. 30)

241. In 2018, the Government organized the Youth Cultural Exchange Festival, aimed at contributing to cultural awareness at a young age and accommodating young people to affect their own development. The afore-mentioned is based on the concept that the development of cultural competences at a young age can contribute to personal, social and societal development. During this two-day festival pupils became acquainted with the various aspects of culture, such as singing, dance, drama and demonstration sports.

D. Education on human rights and civic education

242. In 2016, in connection with the International Day for the Rights of the Child, a station race was held at the Ellen Mulo School in the Commewijne district. In the process, awareness about gender and gender-related issues was raised among teachers and students. During the Station Race, the pupils’ knowledge on gender and gender-related topics was tested by means of various assignments.

243. As part of the project ‘Stand with Us: creating the building blocks for an LGBT-inclusive Suriname’, being executed by Projekta in partnership with Parea, from 2022–2024, funded by The European Union (European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights):

- A training was offered to community organizations to provide LGBT information and raise awareness in their communities and to act as a safe space
- A series of thematic mini-dialogue rounds was developed and implemented for a media workers dialogue, an Armed Forces Dialogue-policy, an education for Human Rights dialogue; the Declaration of Paramaribo-private sector dialogue; an Inclusive Health Services dialogue
- A broad advocacy and public awareness campaign was organized to increase public awareness of LGBT human rights.

244. Significant challenges in implementing child rights activities since March 2020 were due to the COVID-19 crisis and exacerbated by the financial-economic crisis. Community organizations and community workers had less opportunities for face-to-face activities and faced significant financial constraints.

E. Rest, play, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities (art. 31)

245. Over the period 2015–2020, World Cerebral Palsy Day was celebrated three times. In 2019, World Palsy Day was commemorated through awareness and sports activities in the

districts of Nickerie and Paramaribo. The aim was to raise awareness about Cerebral Palsy and to stimulate movement through sports and games for children with motor disabilities.

246. The Government and University intend to raise awareness among trainers of specific sports to create opportunities to offer people with motor disabilities sports on a regular basis. In this way, it wants to make a sporting lifestyle possible for everyone in society. Cerebral palsy is the most common motor disorder in children, but also one of the least known and understood because the target group often remains out of sight and without options. The target group and their families participated in various sports such as dancing, football, boccia, volleyball, badminton, tennis, basketball, swimming, judo and race running.

247. As part of the project 'Community Sport for Inclusivity and Gender Equality' executed by Stichting Projekta from August 2018–December 2019, funded by The Dutch Embassy in Suriname and the International Sports Alliance (ISA), community coaches were trained in life skills, gender equality and awareness of sexual and domestic violence. An awareness and training package was developed, including audio-visual materials, activity and sport games and scripts, and user manuals for coaches, activity leaders and workers of community organizations.

248. The Care Institutions Act will soon be subjected to a legislative and policy review. The quality standards also need to be adjusted, as they do not meet the requirements of today's society. During the inspection of all registered and non-registered childcare institutions, attention is paid to hygiene and other safety regulations. The competence of the staff and management (if new) is also checked. Institutions for children with disabilities, like other care institutions, were previously subject to periodic inspection for compliance with quality standards.

IX. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d), and 38–40)

A. Refugees, internally displaced and migrant children seeking refugee protection (art. 22)

249. Improvement of the care for foreigners and the formulation of a national migration policy are amongst the priorities of the ministry of Justice and Police for 2022.

250. The government of Suriname acknowledges that intensified efforts are required in the area of measures taken to protect children, including children seeking refugee protection, internally displaced children, migrant children and children affected by migration.

251. All residents of Suriname, including foreigners, are entitled to the care included in the basic health insurance package. Children with another nationality receive social benefits from the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing if they are residents. If registered, they are eligible for basic health insurance.

252. Based on the Compulsory School Attendance Act (Lager Onderwijswet, S.B. 1965 No. 128) not only Surinamese, but also migrant children with legal residence status have access to education. To access primary education in Suriname, a file from the Civil Registry is required, which can only be obtained if a migrant child has obtained a legal residency status. Migrant children without a legal residency status may be permitted to enroll if a resident or guardian with legal residency status signs as a legal guardian in order to allow the child to attend school. According to the 2015, IOM Migration Profile for Suriname, migrant children may access secondary education without barriers, but in practice migrant children with an irregular status face challenges to access primary or secondary education. There have been some cases of children of irregular migrants who were unable to continue their education without a proof of residency. To access the university of Suriname, legal residency is not required for migrants.

253. In preparation of a strategic, transparent and feasible migration plan for Suriname, there is intensive cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The

activities in this context are being carried out in phases. The first activity carried out together with the IOM is the Migration Need Assessment.

254. Currently the Migration Governance Indicator Assessment is being carried out. Consultations with various stakeholders on this matter started in the first quarter of 2022.

255. The analyzed data obtained from the Migration Governance Indicator Assessment will provide a panoramic view of the current state of migration policy areas (including health, education, security and economy), as well as a broader perspective on opportunities to strengthen migration management, also for migrant children.

256. The results of the Migration Governance Indicator Assessment were projected for mid-April 2022. The stakeholders will be given the opportunity to comment on the results of the research. According to planning, the final report will be validated in September 2022, followed by the publication via a Migration Data Portal.

257. Annex 11 shows the number of applications of Refugees/Asylum seekers from 2018–2021.

B. Children belonging to a minority or ITPs (art. 30)

258. Various special measures are provided for children belonging to Indigenous and Maroon communities in the interior with respect to access to health, education and other services, however implementing these measures have proven to be challenging.

259. Children from the interior who wish to continue their studies are accommodated in Paramaribo at the expense of the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

260. With regard to other social benefits for the Indigenous and Maroon children, see Section 6 sub b regarding provision of childcare services.

261. Efforts to improve education in the interior are ongoing. A Task Force on “Education in the Interior” has been established by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

262. Some aspects concerning the policy on Education in the Interior are:

- Setting up kindergarten classes in all villages, taking into account the number of toddlers per village.
- Year 9 Cluster Schools.
- Distance Education.
- Container houses.
- Multilingualism.
- Offering meaningful and context-bound education.
- Further professionalization of teachers.
- For further reference, see Section 8, sub a.

C. Children in street situations

263. One of the forms of child labour that remains a challenge are child vendors, who are often selling fruit in the streets during and after school hours. The Government recognizes the need for an efficient policy and concrete action to keep child vendors off the streets.

264. A pilot project was carried out by the Labour Inspectorate to map out the group of children involved in child labour, hereby implementing an important obligation of ILO Conventions No. 182 and No. 138 (identifying children involved in child labour) in order to work towards reintegration of these children into the education system.

265. In this regard information about the children was collected through personal observation and interviewing the children and their parents. The project showed that this phenomenon stems from the social situation in which the families of these children live.

266. Various home visits were undertaken by the ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (Social Service Division), which acts on the basis of reports of child labour. Efforts are undertaken to collaborate with parents in order to ensure awareness and a sustainable solution towards eliminating child labour. This includes individual and family counseling, care and other support measures for the children or young people involved and collaboration with parents in order to find ways to alleviate social needs.

267. The results of the project underscored the need for a multifaceted solution and an integrated approach to combating child labour. The following recommendations were made:

- To work on improving the educational level of the parents of these children. Providing a language course in the Surinamese (lingua franca) and the official language is considered a first step to increase their chances on the labour market and to make it possible for them to tutor their children.
- To provide psychological guidance and extra schoolwork guidance for these children.
- In accordance with the protocols of the referral system, every aspect of the solution to this problem will have to be taken care of by a competent authority (ministry of Labour).
- Assistance to the families in the form of food packages and medical facilities (ministry of Social Affairs).

268. Countrywide there were awareness programmes to combat child labour and to promote education for children under 16.

D. Children in situations of exploitation, including measures for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

Economic exploitation including child labour (art. 32) with specific reference to applicable minimum ages.

269. In 2016–2017, research was conducted on Child labour and in 2018 and 2021 the National Commission on the elimination of child labour was re-established. Consequently, a National Action Plan on prevention and reduction of Child Labour 2019–2024 entered into force.

270. The annual plan 2021–2022 of the National Commission on the elimination of child labour includes several components and activities, amongst which:

- In partnership with UNICEF the “Child and Youth Employment Act 2018” was distributed amongst youth, youth organizations, schools, families, governmental organizations in charge of youth policy, NGOs and companies;
- Encouraging the implementation of a multilingual information programme sponsored by UNICEF (written material, radio and TV);
- Train and appoint additional labour inspectors for the districts and in particular for the interior;
- Identifying national and international partners for technical assistance and funding of structural research on child labour;
- Drafting of a Bill on Psychosocial counseling for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Awareness-raising activities in cooperation with UNICEF and the ILO Regional Initiative on Child Labour.

271. Child labour is one of the aspects of the Referral system in the framework of the Child Protection Network “IK BeN” as referred to in Section 1 “General measures of implementation”.

272. In this context, the Labour Ministry, selected the child street vendors selling fruit in Paramaribo (south) for participation in the aforementioned Referral System for research and

household assistance based on the Child Labour Act. The evaluation of the Referral System took place in 2021.

273. The Government acknowledges that efforts should be intensified to prevent that children in Suriname are being subjected to the worst forms of child labour, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in mining.

274. The labour legislation is applicable for both the formal and the informal sector, including in mining and agricultural areas and fisheries etc.

275. The enforcement of the labour laws in the interior remains a challenge due to the absence of permanent offices, transport facilities and a serious understaffing. This is carried out by the Labour Inspectorate in close cooperation with the ministry of Defense.

276. In 2022 the ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs will train 25 labour officials to labour inspectors. The Labour Inspectorate does need specific training for inspection of the economic sectors, such as off-coast fisheries and offshore petroleum. To become more eligible for ILO technical assistance the ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs has proposed to the tripartite Labour Advisory Board, the ratification of the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention (No. 129).

Table: Statistics on children's work and education

<i>Children</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Working (% and population)	5–14	7.2 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5–14	95.3
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	7.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)	-	85.9

Source: United States Department of Labour 2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Suriname.

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (art. 34)

277. When it regards child protection, government agencies responsible for child protection do not collect real-time data on violence against children. Data that is collected is disaggregated in general terms – physical violence, sexual violence and neglect – which does not allow for an in-depth assessment of the situation of violence against children and/or sexual exploitation and abuse. For detailed information please see paragraph 5 on violence against children.

Sale, trafficking and abduction (art. 35)

278. In addition to the legal instruments regarding TIP, as referred to under section 1 “General measures of implementation” of this report, Suriname has also established a procedure and guidelines for reporting suspected cases of Trafficking in Persons by order of the Minister of Justice and Police (SB 2014 No. 99).

279. A “first response trafficking in persons protocol” is in place. Officials were trained and refresher courses were provided on how to identify and handle victims of trafficking in persons. Investigating, prosecuting and convicting traffickers remain a challenge in the interior of Suriname.

280. In 2019, the government renewed the mandate of the inter-ministerial Trafficking in Persons Working Group for three years and launched a National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons under the pillars of “Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnership and Policy”.

281. In 2022 the inter-ministerial Trafficking in Persons Working Group was renewed. The Working group is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the TIP strategy, reporting to the Minister of Justice and Police on its effectiveness, and ensuring that emerging issues are addressed on a whole-of-government basis.

282. The National Plan of Action to combat Trafficking in Persons in Suriname was enacted in 2019 and updated in 2020. The action plan of 2021 is based on recommendations of the U.S. Department of State. This action plan has four core elements:

- Prevention.
- Detection and investigation.
- Criminal prosecution.
- Victim support and rehabilitation.

283. The ministry of Justice and Police and the Interdepartmental Working Group ensure that the national action plan sets out guidelines, priority actions and specific objectives to be executed by relevant ministries, as well as targets for implementation.

284. The TIP Action plan is commendable for addressing both cross-border and internal trafficking, and for its prioritization of specific goals.

285. Its five highest priorities are:

- (a) Strengthening of the borders;
- (b) Awareness-raising with regard to criminal activities;
- (c) The creation of a victim identification procedure;
- (d) Promotion of safe return of victims to their country of origin;
- (e) Provision of adequate medical treatment shelter to victims with legal status in Suriname.

286. See annex 12 for the statistics on the number of youth TIP victims from 2015–2021.

E. Children in conflict with the law, juvenile justice

287. With respect to the sentencing of children, in particular prohibition of capital punishment and life imprisonment based on art 37(a) of CRC and the existence of alternative sanctions based on a restorative approach, the following can be reported.

288. Death penalty has been abolished in both the Penal Code (2015) and the Military Penal Code (2021). This allows Suriname to take further steps towards ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

289. In the Juvenile Division, the Alternative Settlement “Assistant Public Prosecutor’s Model” was introduced by the Prosecutor’s Office. This model is used for defendants who have committed crimes of minor gravity and on specific offenses.

290. To avoid criminal prosecution, the assistant public prosecutor, a designated police inspector, can make a juvenile eligible for alternative correctional measures. This aforementioned measure consists of the juvenile participating in a learning and/or work project. In this regard, three cases were successfully completed, and two new cases were initiated.

291. The Alternative Settlement “Assistant Public Prosecutor’s Model” is already operational and being implemented in Opa Doeli, a pre-trial detention facility for minors that offers adequate shelter, housing, education and pedagogical guidance to juvenile detainees aged 12/17–18 years. The manual of apprenticeships has already been developed. The social workers still need to be trained. In the case of community service, the preconditions are being put in place.

292. The judicial child protection department (JKB) provides social counseling, based on learning objectives for young people in detention, between 12 and 18 years of age.

293. As part of a music education project of the Suriname Police Band, juveniles at Opa Doeli are being provided with music lessons as of April 2022. The music lessons are part of the resocialization process of these young people.

294. Data on children in conflict with the law is provided in annex 13.

X. Follow-up to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

295. Suriname is committed to fulfill its reporting obligation under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

296. The preparations for the aforementioned report will commence in 2022 and will be conducted in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including UNICEF.

XI. Follow-up to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

297. Suriname deposited the relevant Instrument of Ratification in May 2012, but in order to complete the ratification process, yet had to deposit the Declaration in accordance with art. 3(2) of OPAC that sets forth the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces and a description of the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced.

298. The ratification was affected on 16 November 2021, with the Declaration under article 3 (2):

- *“Pursuant to Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, the Republic of Suriname hereby declares that in accordance with Article 9, Paragraph 1 sub b and Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the Military Legal Position Law (S.B. 1996 No. 28) of the Republic of Suriname, the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Suriname National Army is 18 years. In order to guarantee that applicants are not under aged, they are required to submit a certificate from the National Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.”*

299. The Protocol enters into force for Suriname on 16 December 2021 in accordance with its article 10 (2).

Closing remarks

300. The Republic of Suriname has already integrated most rights enshrined in the CRC in parts of its legislation and will continue to do so where necessary. However, the government is aware of the fact that the legal provisions are in itself not enough to make the best interest a primary consideration in the daily practices of service delivery and legal procedures. Therefore, the government tries continually to adapt its policies to the standards of the rights of the child. In this context it has also organized a number of training courses for relevant stakeholders, such as government officials, correctional officers, the police, prosecutors and judges, to raise awareness and strengthen skills to apply children’s rights issues in practice. Children’s rights education is being incorporated in the national curriculum for the past 10 years. Textbooks are being produced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture for the primary level grades 4–6 (10–12 yrs) mainly in the subject area History. The curriculum department is still working on developing new course material for the higher levels incorporating children’s rights issues.

Conclusion

301. The Government of the Republic of Suriname firmly states that it recognizes the fundamental human rights of any individual without distinction. It condemns racial

discrimination and strives tirelessly to meet its international obligations, including its obligation pursuant to article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, reasons why the State submits this combined fifth and sixth periodic report in one document.

302. The State continues its endeavors to address and implement all the recommendations and issues of concern communicated by the Committee. However, the State is fully aware that despite the significant progress it has gained, there are still some unmet issues, which is the reason why this document is not exhaustive and will most likely not comprise all aspects in the above-mentioned Convention.

303. Nonetheless, taking into account the good faith effort of the State to comply with its obligation set forth in the Convention, it will, if requested, be more than willing to supply in writing or orally any additional information with regard to the situation of the rights of all children in the jurisdiction of the Republic of Suriname.
