

ACTO/IDB Project

Strategic Framework for Developing a Regional Agenda
for the protection of Indigenous Peoples living in
Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact



Suriname Institutional Analysis on Indigenous Peoples in Border Areas



Saskia Wip

National Coordinator Suriname

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Summary

This report presents the result of an institutional assessment conducted by the National Coordinator of Suriname for executing the ACTO/IDB Project “Strategic Framework for Developing a Regional Agenda for the protection of Indigenous Peoples living in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact”.

The research was conducted through extensive desktop research, studying legislation, reports and policy documents. Furthermore interviews were taken with key actors of Ministries involved with afore mentioned ACTO/IDB project.

Chapter one provides the general background on Indigenous Peoples in Suriname. As part of this chapter the history and location, the demographic data, Indigenous peoples in border areas and the Government policy are described.

Chapter two gives an overview of the legal framework on protection of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname in relation to collective and human rights. Efforts of the Government in relation to the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples are also illustrated.

The closing chapter of this research, chapter 3, describes the following policy for protection and sustainable development: education, health, social, cultural and economic. Attention is also paid to the administrative and legal context for environmental protection, environmental awareness and public participation. Finally an overview is given of the International Organizations, the NGOs and INGOs involved.

Chapter 4 describes the findings of the information collected in this report. In the chapter on Future outlook and recommendations, the author takes the liberty to present possible ways forward and general recommendations.



Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| ACC | Amazon Cooperation Council |
| ACT | Amazon Conservation Team |
| ACT | Amazon Cooperation Treaty |
| ACTO | Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization |
| AOV | General Provision for Old Age |
| BFT | Bromki Fu Tamara |
| CBO | Community-Based Organization |
| CCOOR | Coordinating Commission of the Amazon Cooperation Council |
| CCT | Conditional Cash Transfer program |
| CL | Cutaneous Leishmaniasis |
| DC | Districts-Commissioner |
| FPIC | Free Prior and Informed Consent |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IDB | Inter-American Development Bank |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| INGOs | International Non – Governmental Organizations |
| ITC – zone | Inter – Tropical Convergence Zone |
| LVV | Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries |
| MM | Medical Mission (Primary Healthcare) |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| PNC | Permanent National Commissions |
| PS | Permanent Secretariat |
| SB | State Decision |
| SBB | Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control |
| STINASU | Foundation for Nature Conservation in Suriname |
| UN | United Nations |
| VIA | Visual Inspection with Acetic acid |
| VIDS | Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |



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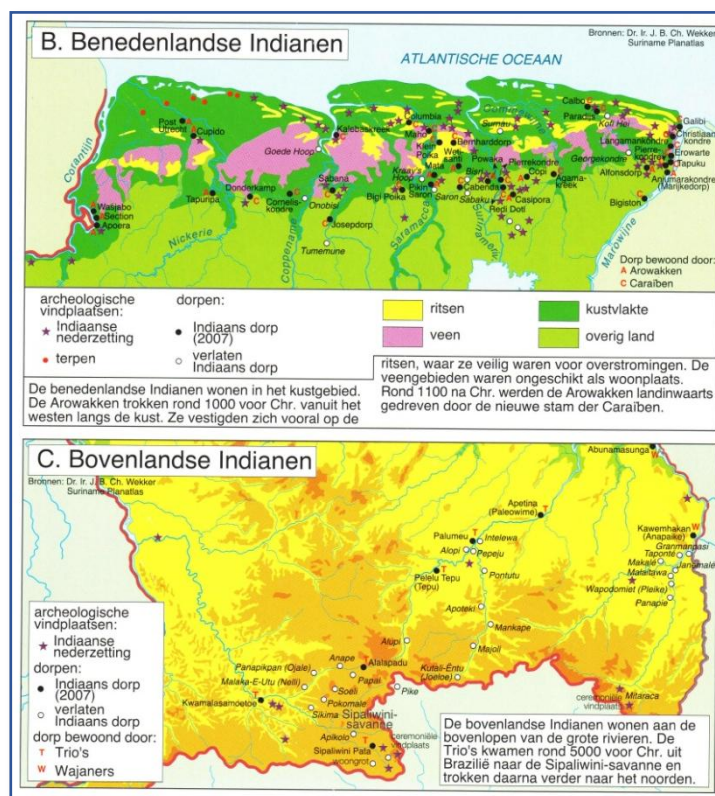
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Introduction

Indigenous Peoples in Suriname live in several villages spread across the nation in both coastal and remote areas. In terms of area of living, a distinction can be made in the so called "Lower land" Indigenous Peoples and "Upper land" Indigenous Peoples. The "Lower land" Indigenous Peoples live in the coastal area, in the northern part of Suriname whilst the "Upper land" Indigenous Peoples mostly live in the southern part of the country.



Living areas of the Indigenous Peoples in Suriname

(Source: Suriname Wereldland atlas)

This report presents the result of an institutional analysis in the framework of policy for Indigenous Peoples in remote areas in Suriname, which was conducted between May and September 2014 and funded by the Inter - American Development Bank (IDB).

This report presents the result of an institutional analysis in the framework of policy for Indigenous Peoples in remote areas in Suriname, which was conducted between May and September 2014 and funded by the Inter - American Development Bank (IDB). It includes a description of the relevant actors in all sectors and details of protection initiatives at local, national and regional levels.

The Consultant responsible for executing the project was contracted by ACTO through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was responsible to provide professional consulting services to systematize the information that will contribute to the ACTO/IDB program *“STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A REGIONAL AGENDA FOR THE PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LIVING IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION AND INITIAL CONTACT”*.

It is worth mentioning that Suriname has no registered cases of Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation and initial contact. However there are communities living in remote areas, which are difficult to reach what makes it a challenge for the rest of the society to be in contact.

Background project

The Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT) was signed on 3 July 1978 by representatives of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela, started the beginning of a process of Amazonian coordination and cooperation that celebrated its 36 years in force in 2014. The ACT has a large history of developing mechanisms to consolidate and institutionalize the common vision that motivates its Member Countries.

In 1998, the countries decided to take one more step in this joint process by establishing the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and its Permanent Secretariat (PS). Within the framework of these efforts and challenges, on 13 December 2002 the ACTO headquarter were inaugurated in Brasilia, Brazil, where its PS functions.

ACTO is an international organization that has the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs as its highest body, supported and assisted by the Amazon Cooperation Council (ACC) and by the Coordinating Commission of the Amazon Cooperation Council (CCOOR). At the national level, the Member Countries have Permanent National Commissions (PNC) that are responsible for applying the provisions of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty and for executing the decisions adopted by the meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Amazon Cooperation Council, without prejudice of other tasks assigned to it by each State (Article XXIII of the ACT). Presided by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the PNCs congregate all the entities responsible for Amazonian cooperation and development in their respective territories.

Following extensive consultations, regional sectoral dialogue and information gathering in the Member Countries in the framework of the 2004-2012 Strategic Plan review, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in their 10th meeting approved the new Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda with an 8-year implementation horizon. This Agenda addresses Indigenous affairs through three broad areas, one of which is Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact. Of the various activities programmed, the following was prioritized for the short term: "Implementation of a regional project to protect Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact".

The program "Strategic framework to develop a regional agenda for the protection of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact" was approved on the 15th of February 2011 and funded by the Inter-

American Development Bank (IDB). ACTO, through its Permanent Secretariat, is the projects' executing agency. The program aims to help protect Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation and initial contact by defining effective policy and consensual actions between Governments, Indigenous organizations and non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) with experience on the topic.

Indigenous Peoples in isolation and initial contact can be found in areas of the Amazon regions of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Most of them concentrate in frontier zones, where they live in tropical forests of difficult access to avoid contact with the rest of the society. Isolated Indigenous Peoples survive of forest and/or river resources on an itinerant basis; they take no notice of political frontiers and have no desire to obtain the material goods of modern society. The areas across which they travel are home to an extremely wealthy biodiversity that is currently under pressure due to the expanding agricultural and extractive harvesting frontiers.

Isolated Indigenous peoples are in a critically vulnerable state due to:

- (i) pressure on their territories and livelihoods as a result of the advancing economic frontier, particularly from hydrocarbon, mining and logging activities, both legal and illegal;
- (ii) their lack of defense against communicable viral or bacterial respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases that have decimated their populations and led to true ethnocide in the past;
- (iii) the fact that they are unable to speak up for themselves and are particularly incapable as a group of participating in the decisions that affect them, as a result of their isolation;
- (iv) deficiencies in the legal frameworks and public policy that exist to protect them and the consequent difficulty in implementing measures to ensure their physical, cultural and territorial integrity while investments are sustainably made in the areas that surround their territories.

To this extent, the program will be executed through 5 components:

- (i) a regional inter-institutional coordination mechanism supported by national bodies;
- (ii) a concerted strategic framework that incorporates measures to protect the physical and cultural integrity of these peoples;
- (iii) an action plan containing territorial protection measures, including legal protection and physical control of the activities developed by external agents in the territories occupied by these peoples and in transboundary areas;
- (iv) a regional healthcare strategy that includes a technical standard for prevention in health with an intercultural approach, and emergency health systems in the regions inhabited by these peoples; and
- (v) systematized data and knowledge on the situation of Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, and capacity development and commitment to protect them (sustainability of the Regional Strategic Framework).

For this report component one (1), a regional inter-institutional coordination mechanism supported by national bodies, will be executed. Its objectives are:

- ❖ The conduction of an institutional assessment identifying the bodies, sectors and specialized working groups of the executive, legislative and judicial branches at national, provincial (or equivalent) and municipal (or equivalent) levels, describing the mandates directly related to Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact;
- ❖ Identification of relevant players in all the sectors (Governments, Indigenous organizations, civil society and private sector);
- ❖ Identification of protection initiatives already in place at the local, national and regional levels.





1. General Background on Indigenous Peoples in Suriname

This opening chapter introduces the main actors in this report: Indigenous Peoples of Suriname. Also a brief description is given of the geography, demography, and other background information that describes the areas of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname. The chapter ends with an overview of the relevant Government policy.

1.1 History and location

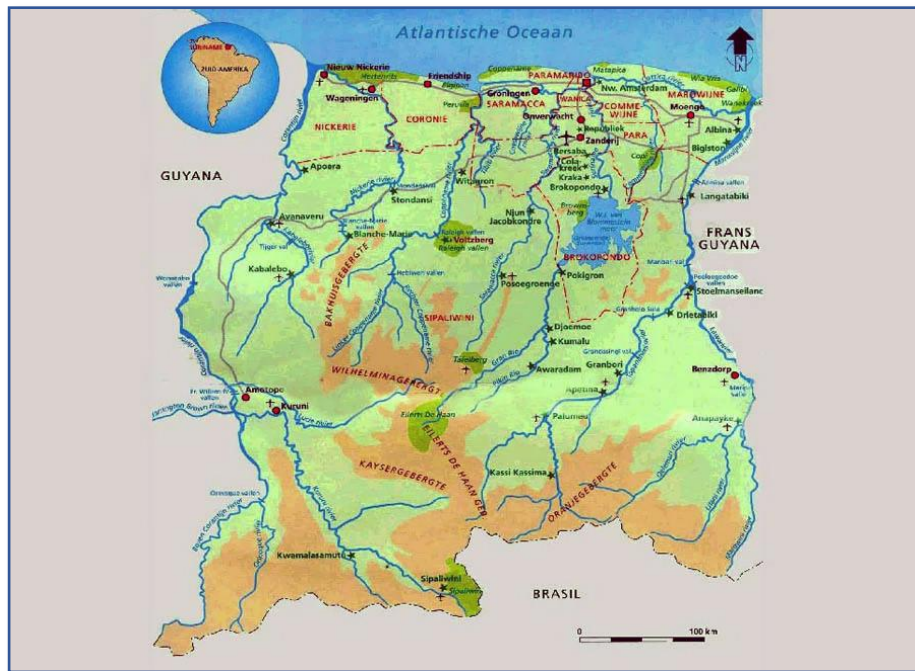
Indigenous Peoples are central to Suriname's national identity. The national coat of arms, showing two Indigenous persons holding an oval escutcheon, is depicted on the national currency and is often used for official documents. They were the first inhabitants of this country, which prides itself in preserving vibrant Indigenous cultures. These cultures exist in harmony with the many other cultures in this small multi-ethnic country on the northern shores of South America.



Suriname is located at the north-east coast of South America surrounded by Guyana (on the left), French Guyana (on the right) and Brazil (down south). Suriname is situated 2-6°C on the northern hemisphere 54-58°C western length and is subjected to N-E to S-E winds. Suriname has a humid tropical climate, with an average annual rainfall ranging from 2000 to 2500 mm, an average maximum temperature of 31°C, while the average minimum temperature is 23°C the relative humidity is very high: 70-90% percent.

As result of crossing the Inter – Tropical Convergence Zone (ITC – zone) over Suriname two times a year, four seasons can be distinguished in the coastal region, a long rainy season from April to the middle of August, a long dry

season from the middle of August to the end of November, a short rainy season during December and January and a short dry season during February and March. Therefore extremely dry seasons rarely occur.



Map of Suriname

The southern part of Sipaliwini in Suriname is the most isolated region in the country and mainly inhabited by the Trio (Tirio or Tareno) and Wayana Indigenous Peoples. In the 70s a process of centralization started, where a few agglomerations were created as Kwamalasumutu in Suriname, and Missao Tiriyo in Brazil. In this period about 60% of the Trio population in Brazil (about 460 persons) lived in and around Missao Tiriyo, remaining (about 350 persons) lived distributed among several small villages along the Paru de Oeste river and in the village called Igarape Cuxare.

The approximated Trio and Wayana area demarcations do not correlate with the existing country borders. The area inhabited and used by the Trio people is concentrated in the south of the Sipaliwini province of Suriname and the northern parts of Brazil; also there is a sub area that reaches into Guyana. In the case of Wayana people their living area entails the southeastern part of the Sipaliwini province of Suriname and parts of the south western part of French Guyana.

Next to being inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, this region consists mainly of primary tropical rain forests with high levels of biodiversity and contains natural minerals as gold, copper and bauxite. Also it includes major parts of the largest river systems and fresh water aquifers in the South American continent.

On the Suriname side, the Trio people are mainly concentrated in Kwamalasumutu located on the Sipaliwini River and Pelele Tepu on the Tapanahoni River.



Kwamalasumutu village in South Suriname

The Wayana people are concentrated in the villages Apetina (on the Tapanahoni River) and Kawemhakam on the Marowini/Lawa River. On the Brazilian side, the Tiriyo's live in a now called "Parque Indigena de Tumucumaque" reserve. There are agglomerations at the Paru de Oeste/Cuxare River and the Paru de Leste River that crosses through this area. On the Paru de Oeste/Cuxare River the Tiriyo's share their lands with other tribes as the Kaxuyana, Ewarhuyana, Tsikuyana, some members of the Akuriyo, Waiwai and Waiapi. On the Paru de Leste River the Tiriyo's live predominantly in the northern part of the river while there are also some Wayana's and Apalai living in the area.

1.2 Demographic data

Studying data of the Census held in 2012¹ in Suriname and interviews with relevant actors did not result in official demographic data regarding Indigenous Peoples in remote areas. The data available from the Census gives a general overview of the population amount per resort but does not indicate the ethnicity of the people counted. The total amount of Indigenous Peoples counted in the Census is 20,344². There is no indication of the living areas of these counted Indigenous Peoples and they also have different nationalities, counting 19,282 as Indigenous Peoples with the Surinamese Nationality.

Indigenous Peoples have a nomadic lifestyle, moving in and out of the villages and sometimes crossing the surrounding countries. Based on the 2014 data derived from research done by the Medical Mission Primary Healthcare (MM) the current population living in the interior is presented in table 1.

| Clinic | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Population | | |
| Kwamalasumutu | 1044 | 1055 | 862 |
| Pelele Tepu | 468 | 497 | 394 |
| Puleowime | 323 | 361 | 283 |
| Kawemhakan | 201 | 237 | 225 |
| Palumeu | 231 | 328 | 306 |
| Sipaliwini | 138 | 185 | 173 |
| Alalapar | 35 | 68 | 83 |
| Coeroeni | | 76 | 84 |
| Total Resort | 2440 | 2767 | 2410 |
| Apoera | 1047 | 1201 | 955 |
| Washabo | 631 | 737 | 303 |
| Total Resort | 1678 | 1938 | 1258 |

Table 1: Numbers of Indigenous Peoples living in the interior registered in MM clinics

These numbers are an overview of the Indigenous Peoples who uses the facilities of the Medical Mission. Note that the demographic information for

¹ Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek, Resultaten Achtste (8e) Volks- en Woningtelling in Suriname, September 2013

² Annex 1, Census data Indigenous Population

Suriname is meant for indicative reasons and that the limitation of this data is that it only includes villages where a health clinic of the Medical Mission is located and where there is a registry of inhabitants.

1.3 Indigenous Peoples in border areas

As mentioned before, Indigenous and other Tribal communities live for an important part in the interior of Suriname, in villages along rivers at the border with Guyana, French Guyana and Brazil. The border area with Guyana and Brazil is to a large extent inhabited by Indigenous Peoples. These living areas at the border with Brazil are difficult to access and can be reached, for a greater part of the year, only by air. The Indigenous clans in border areas on the Suriname side are: Trio, Wayana, Kaliña Lokono and Caraïbs.

The villages in the border area with Brazil are:

- ❖ Kwamalasumutu
- ❖ Kawemhakan
- ❖ Palumeu
- ❖ Alalaparoe
- ❖ Coeroeni
- ❖ Puleowime
- ❖ Pelele Tepoe
- ❖ Sipaliwini

The villages with Guyana are:

- ❖ Apoera
- ❖ Section
- ❖ Washabo

In the border area with French- Guyana, the villages are"

- ❖ Christiaan Kondre
- ❖ Langamang Kondre, very often referred to as Galibi

In the framework of this report, the focus will be on the border areas with Brazil and Guyana.

There is contact between the Indigenous Peoples in the border areas of Suriname and other Indigenous Peoples from Brazil and Guyana. They travel back and forth for medical care and family visits. The responsibility for the medical care in the interior of Suriname lies with the Medical Mission. Within the Indigenous villages they also have traditional clinics. It is up to the patient to decide whether they go to the clinic of the Medical Mission or the traditional clinics. In case a patient from a neighboring country enters Suriname to visit a health clinic of the Medical Mission they will be treated with the most appropriate care despite their nationality. The medical care is being financed by the Medical Mission who is funded by the Ministry of Public Health Suriname.

1.4 Government Policy

The existing Government policy should be seen in a national context: the Government formulates policy for the entire territory, based on principles of equality and sovereignty. Reference can be made to existing policy in the following areas, inter alia health, transport, communication, education, environment, mining, agriculture and social services.

In the Development Plan 2012- 2016 the commitment of the Government to define policy and actions on all these themes is reflected. However, taken into consideration, the geographical reality of Suriname, consecutive administrations formulated specific policy based on the reality of a certain area. In this framework reference can be made to the policy formulated for the interior of Suriname, which the Districts of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini are part of. In the context of this work light will be shed specifically on the existing Government policy which is beneficial for the Indigenous population

near the border areas to a high extend, namely the decentralization program.

The Decentralization Programme

The Decentralization Programme can be regarded as one of the most prominent Government policy, given the fact that it is of great importance for the benefit of local populations.

In 1987, a new regional Government system was introduced in Suriname through the adoption of the Constitution and the Law on the Regional Organs (SB 1989, no. 44) with the aim of decentralizing the Government. According to the law, Suriname is divided into ten districts, which are in turn subdivided into *Resorts*. The highest regional decision making bodies are the District Council and the Resort Council, which are directly and indirectly elected by inhabitants of the district and the *Resort*, respectively.

The day-to-day decisions of the two councils are executed by a District Executive Board which consists of representatives of line ministries and is headed by a District Commissioner (DC), a Government appointee³.

The district of Sipaliwini, the largest district, is divided in seven (7) administrative resorts. It is the intention that a DC should be appointed in each resort. At the moment there are five (5) DCs⁴. Paramaribo is also divided in two (2) administrative resorts, because of population density.

The Decentralization Programme can also be seen as a protection initiative, since this program should allow the locals to be, 'grass-root level' and 'demand driven', fully involved in the process and as such may determine their own priorities for the improvement of housing, living, working and production conditions⁵. At the start of the Decentralization Programme, the Indigenous and other tribal governing institutions have not been formally included.

³ Ellen-Rose Kambel, *Indigenous and Tribal Government and the Decentralization Programme in Suriname: International Legal Framework and Examples of Self-Government Arrangements from Abroad*, 2010.

⁴ Annex 2, List of District Commissioners.

⁵ Ministerie van Regionale Ontwikkeling/DLGP, *Guideline Decentralization 2003-2006*, Project Information Document IX, September 2005.

Therefore, a study "*Indigenous and Tribal Government and the Decentralization Programme in Suriname: International Legal Framework and Examples of Self-Government Arrangements from Abroad*" was commissioned with the following objectives:

- ❖ To provide insight into the (inter)national legal status of the traditional authorities of the Indigenous Peoples and Maroons in Suriname within the framework of the Decentralization Programme and;
- ❖ To formulate recommendations for the legal regulation of the position and powers of the traditional authorities based on examples from other countries in the region, and to discuss these with the relevant Government bodies, traditional authorities and civil society.

With regard to the second objective of this study, a law with the purpose of recognition of rights of the traditional authority of Indigenous and other tribal communities is drafted, which is being discussed with the target groups, before submitting it to the National Assembly.

As part of the Decentralization Programme, administrative centers are set up which are housing various Government offices and services in the districts, including various parts of the interior. These centers are being coordinated by the District Commissioner.

The benefits of decentralization for Suriname, including the interior are the following:

- ❖ It provides improvement in the delivery of the main basic public services;
- ❖ It promotes citizen participation in the planning and sustainability of these programs is guaranteed;
- ❖ It increases the capacity and speed to meet local needs;
- ❖ Mechanisms and spaces that promote transparency and accountability of local authorities are created;
- ❖ Government intervention is implemented, more integrated and better coordinated which is a better way to resolve conflicts.

The relation between Government Authority and Traditional Authority

Within the existing structure of authority in Suriname, distinction can be made between Government or Official authority and Traditional authority. The Government or Official authority refers to the national system of governance whereby the Administration exercises its executive power for the entire territory. The Ministry of Regional Development is responsible for coordinating all activities of the Government in the interior. The Division for the Interior is tasked with supervising the District Commissioner's offices in the interior, which are serving as intermediary between the Government on the one side and the people and authorities of the interior on the other side. Against the backdrop of this task the Ministry has a direct relation with the Traditional authorities of the Indigenous population.

The Traditional authority refers to existing governance structures based on traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples. The person charged with above mentioned authority is referred to as the paramount chief or "Granman" and is supported by a council of elders, head-village chiefs or "hoofd- kapiteins" and village chiefs or "kapiteins". Most villages have two or three village chiefs. The Granman and village chiefs are assisted by "basias" who have the function of administrative assistants.

Within the Indigenous Tribes, Traditional authority positions are transferred from father to son, taking into consideration certain qualities. The meeting structure within the Traditional authority structure is the "krutu" or extensive meeting between the authority and the support staff and village elders. In the case of tribal decisions the Government can also be involved in "krutus".

The Traditional authorities in the interior have the following roles⁶, representing their responsibilities and duties:

- ❖ A political and administrative role, including maintaining relations with the national Government;

⁶ Report Support to the Traditional Authority Structure of Indigenous Peoples and Maroons in Suriname, 2010, P. 7

- ❖ A socio-cultural role; taking care of the well-being of his community, protecting the tribe against adverse external influences. In addition, customary authorities are often the religious leaders of their group;
- ❖ A juridical role; enforcing law and justice in his territory;
- ❖ A function as land stewards and managers.

The National Government pays the monthly public honorarium of Traditional authorities; however they receive it only three times a year. The extent of the authority can be very questionable in some cases, e.g. law enforcement and justice. The Criminal Code of Suriname is applicable for the entire territory but the Traditional authority is also charged with law enforcement.

Representation in political decision making

The level of influence that the various ethnic groups have on national political decision making depends directly on their presence in the various national and regional Government offices. The limited political voice of Indigenous Peoples has a direct impact on the levels of Government attention and resources allocated to their communities in a country like Suriname, where personal alliances and ethnicity-based favoritism continue to shape policy making. It is noticeable that the representation of Indigenous Peoples in Government structure is elevating. The Current Administration Bouterse/Ameerali to a certain extent paid attention to the Indigenous Peoples as a highly vulnerable group given the fact that the number of Indigenous peoples in high positions and in decision making bodies is increasing compared to previous administrations. Reference can be made to the District Commissioner of Kabalebo, Mr. Armand Jurel, who is a representative of the Indigenous village Apoera itself and is now tasked with governing this administrative resort. Furthermore, two members of the Parliament are representatives from Indigenous Communities, namely Mr. Lesley Artist from the District of Para and Mr. Ramses Kajoeramarie from the District of Marowijne.



2. Legal framework on protection of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname in relation to collective and human rights

Chapter two gives an overview of the existing Legal framework on protection of the Indigenous Peoples and the initiatives of the Government in the observance of human rights.

General

The rights of man or simply human rights are rights which every person is entitled to. Human rights are there to protect citizens from the power of the State and to ensure that everyone can live in dignity. Human rights mean that everyone e.g. can have their own free opinion and free expression thereof and that the Government may not just use force violence on citizens. Human rights also mean the right to education, the right to adequate healthcare. States agreed to ensure these rights to everyone, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Human rights are the basis for all legislation and Government policy⁷.

2.1 Legal and Institutional Framework of Human Rights

Suriname is committed to the protection and promotion of human rights as evidenced, in addition to the Constitution, by the domestic legislation and its adherence to international treaties.

The Constitution

The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname is the supreme law of the country. It sets out and defines the authority of main bodies of the State. All

⁷College voor de Rechten van de Mens op www.mensenrechten.nl

other legal regulations and laws must be in line with the Constitution; otherwise they will be null and void⁸.

The preamble of the Constitution embodies the guarantee that the principles of freedom, equality and democracy as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of mankind will be respected. Chapters V and VI of the Constitution set out the different basic rights and freedoms as well as the manner in which they can be protected. Article 10 of the Constitution states that: *“Everyone has in case of infringement of his rights and freedoms a claim to an honest and public treatment of his complain within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial judge”*.

Surinamese law acknowledges two authorities that can administer justice: The Cantonal Court, which is the first court in the State, where as the Constitution designates in article 39 the High Court of Justice as the highest authority entrusted with the administration of justice in Suriname. Article 144 of the Constitution provides that there shall be a Constitutional Court which is an independent body composed of a President, Vice-President and three members, who - as well as the three deputy members - shall be appointed for a period of five years at the recommendation of the National Assembly. The tasks of the Constitutional Court shall be verifying the purport of Acts or parts thereof against the Constitution, and against applicable agreements concluded with other states and with international organizations and assessing the consistency of decisions of Government institutions with one or more of the constitutional rights mentioned in Chapter V⁹. It must be noted that the Constitutional Court is not yet operational but the preparations are being made by the Government.

Furthermore, Suriname also recognizes the original jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice for the interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the contentious jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.

⁸Suriname UPR National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1. Genève 2-13 May 2011.

⁹Surinamese Constitution

The human right infrastructure of the Republic of Suriname has both legal and institutional components. The legal component includes the constitutional regulations, the national law of Suriname as well as its international obligations. The institutional infrastructure is composed of Governmental Institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations for the different areas of human rights¹⁰.

Thus, in the legal system of Suriname, the provisions of international and national law are diverse. International law hierarchically has a higher place than national law within this system. This means that priority is given to international law when there is inconsistency between national and international law¹¹.

Ratified international treaties therefore constitute to an important source of human rights for Surinamese citizens. Suriname holds membership in a number of international organizations, among others the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations (UN), and has signed or agreed to a number of human rights treaties and declarations.

Within the UN system, the following treaties are of importance¹²:

- ❖ The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- ❖ The International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- ❖ The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- ❖ The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1993)
- ❖ The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Within the OAS system, Suriname has signed or ratified the following treaty and declaration:

- ❖ The American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man (1948)
- ❖ The American Convention on Human Rights

¹⁰ Idem 2

¹¹ Article 106 Constitution of Suriname

¹² Final Report of the Presidential Land Rights Commission

With regard to human rights, the Development Plan 2012 - 2016¹³, states that:

“It is the duty of the State of Suriname to guarantee, to promote and to protect the fundamental human rights of its citizens in all circumstances. The Government as executive power within the constitutional framework also committed to comply with this obligation. Measures will therefore be taken in order to guarantee the safety of the citizens.

In this planning period, the optimal experience of human rights, both the classical and the socio-economic rights are recognized to be a key condition to achieve development. In this regard necessary conditions will be created whereby everyone, who is within the territory of the Republic of Suriname, can experience their human rights. The Government will, for this purpose, establish an institute for human rights according to international standards.

In the implementation of the Development Plan 2012 - 2016, the Government will consistently and resolutely use all lawful means to prevent corruption. In this planning period, special attention will be paid to groups, such as women, children, the elderly, the socially disadvantaged and people with disabilities that due to various socio-cultural factors are not able to fully enjoy these rights. In view of the respect for human rights, the Government will enact laws that are not in place or inadequate laws will be optimized.

The Government also envisaged measures and activities aiming at institutional strengthening and support of the Bureau for Human Rights”.

Further activities will be undertaken to raise awareness of the society of value, necessity and scope of respect for human rights. This indicates that

¹³ Suriname National Development Plan: Suriname in transformation 2012 – 2016

the Government also believes that relevant measures should be taken regarding optimal experience of human rights.

2.2 Rights of Indigenous and other Tribal Peoples¹⁴ in Suriname

As mentioned before, every citizen in Suriname is equal to the laws of the country. This means that the laws of Suriname are applicable equally to every citizen. Suriname has not yet enacted specific laws protecting the rights of Indigenous and other Tribal Peoples, as is set forward in the treaties that Suriname has ratified on this subject.

Suriname is a former colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In this administration period the Government of Suriname recognizes the existence of autonomous Indigenous and Maroon People communities in not formally demarcated territories in the hinterland. The colonial period is marked by several peace agreements, which explained that these groups may continue to live in the habitats they had chosen¹⁵ while fleeing from colonial slaves' domination. The recognition of the communities in the hinterland includes respect for tribal leadership which is based on common law. These groups still have means of traditional governance in place. The Amerindians still use their traditional forms of governance, while the Maroons, descendents of fled enslaved Africans, developed their own forms of tribal governance based on African tribal structures. The Maroons have a fully developed hierarchical tribal structure with a Paramount Chief (Granman) at the top and with Chief Captains, Captains and Basias¹⁶ lower in the hierarchy¹⁷.

Protection of the settlements of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples by the Government is mentioned in several laws in the form of protection clauses. From the moment the colonial Government granted mining rights in Suriname, protection clauses were included aiming at protection of the

¹⁴ Refers to the Maroons

¹⁵ Article 2 of the Peace Agreement of 10 October 1760 between the Colonial power and the N'Djuka tribe.

¹⁶ Definition Basia: Assistant of the Captain and member of the Traditional authority.

¹⁷ Support for Sustainable Development in the Interior (SSDI), Draft Report on Current Activities Assessment Development Planning (101), April 2009

rights of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples. These clauses are included in the following regulations:

- ❖ The L-Decrees¹⁸; these decrees were enacted in the period of the Military Coup. They came in the place of the Agricultural Regulation and introduced two new elements to the land policy, namely the legal definition of the domain principle and the land lease as a new title to land.

The protection clause is enshrined in Article 4 of this Decree stating that:

- "1. At the disposal of domain land, the rights of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples on their villages, settlements and plots are respected, to the extent that the public interest does not resist these rights*
- 2. Public interest also include the implementation of any project within the framework of an approved development plan / project"*

The domain principle in the L-Decrees reads that: all land, to which others have not proven their right of ownership, is domain of the State.

According to Quintus Bosch the reason why Indigenous and Maroon Peoples don't have rights to land under the Surinamese law is because the domain principle has always been the basis of Surinamese land and resource legislation¹⁹.

- ❖ The Forest Management Act of 1992; this law gives the Government a legal framework for its policy towards the land and contains regulations relating to the processing of timber and other forest products. The Explanatory Memorandum of afore mentioned Act states that the policy of the Government is aimed at protecting the forest. Furthermore, the general provisions of this law explain the concepts of communal land and community forest. The Protection clause of this law is cited in article 41 paragraph 1a sub 4: *"The customary rights of Tribal Peoples regarding*

¹⁸ Land Reform Decrees of 1982 (Landhervormingsdecreten: SB 1982 no. 10)

¹⁹ Quintus Bosch, Three Centuries of Land Policy in Suriname. Paramaribo, 1980

their villages and settlements on their plots remain respected as far as possible".

- ❖ Mining Decree of 1986; except for the exploitation of oil and bauxite, most mining activities are exercised on the basis of this Decree, as well as the extraction of building materials such as sand and gravel. This Decree assumes that the ownership of land is separated from the ownership of minerals in and on the ground (Article 2, paragraph 1). The protection clause of this Decree is included in Article 25, paragraph 1 b: *"The applicant to obtain the right to exploitation will have to specify a list of the villages of people living in tribes present in the vicinity of the area applied for"*.
- ❖ The (Nature) Conservation Decree of 1986; in the 50s when Suriname had no roads and bridges in the rainforest, which would be connected to the coastal area in order to facilitate the exploitation of natural resources, the decision was taken directly to reserve specific sections in the interior as protected areas.

In this Decision, the Protection clause provides in Article 4 that: *"To the extent that in this State Decree designated as a nature reserve areas, villages and settlements of tribal peoples²⁰ are located, the rights obtained shall be in force and respected"*.

- ❖ The Nature Protection Resolution 1998; in June 1998 a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the establishment of a Central Suriname Nature Reserve was signed between the State of Suriname and Conservation International Suriname. Article 2 of this resolution states that: *"In so far the State designated nature reserve areas, in areas with villages and settlements of tribal peoples, the rights obtained hereto shall be respected unless:*
 - a. The public interest or the national goal of the nature is prejudiced;*
 - b. Otherwise specified.*

²⁰ Referring to Indigenous and Maroon Peoples

Despite the existence of these clauses and relevant international treaties protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Maroons, these groups do not enjoy the rights arising from the aforementioned documents optimal, because they have no “legal” title to the lands they have used and inhabited for centuries. Even though the Suriname Central Government takes the traditional way of life of the Indigenous Peoples and Maroons into account to some extent, to this date, they have not yet succeeded in developing an arrangement that legally recognizes the Indigenous and Maroons customary rights to land in the national legal framework²¹.

A treaty that in terms of the rights of Indigenous peoples is more detailed is the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal peoples in independent countries, no. 169 (ILO 169). Suriname has not ratified this treaty yet, but the Government stated its intent to consider ratifying this treaty.

Another important source of right for the Indigenous and Maroons in Suriname are the human rights treaties and the treaties and declarations on protection of the environment that have been ratified by Suriname. It appeared that Suriname has substantial obligations under international human rights law to recognize and respect the rights of the Indigenous and Maroon Peoples. Study of the Suriname laws and policy shows that they comply with the international norms. Practice shows that even the basic rights such as the right to participate in decision making, rights to enjoy property, and other non-discriminating rights are often not guaranteed by the Government²².

In 2007 Suriname was judged by the Inter-American Court on Human Rights in the Saramaka case. This judgment obliges Suriname, among other things, to adopt national legislation and standards to demarcate and legally recognize the collective ownership of the Saramaka²³ Maroon people over their traditional tribal lands, and to respect their right to free, prior and informed consent. Suriname is also judged in the Moiwana case in similar

²¹ Support for Sustainable Development in the Interior (SSDI), Draft Report on Current Activities Assessment Development Planning (101), April 2009

²² Support for Sustainable Development in the Interior (SSDI), Draft Report on Current Activities Assessment Development Planning (101), April 2009

²³ Saramaccan, Saramaka and Saamaka all have the same definition, the Saramaccan; a Maroon clan/tribe

way. Two other similar cases are under consideration by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which are submitted by the Indigenous peoples of the Lower Marowijne River area in East Suriname and the Maho Indigenous community in Central-West Suriname²⁴.

2.3 Efforts of the Government in relation to the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples

The land rights issue has been a point of concern for successive Governments. Several attempts were made to find a satisfactory solution for this issue. However, because of various circumstances, no adequate solution has been found as yet. To confirm its intentions, the Government, via the Ministry of Regional Development, requested the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, Professor James Anaya, to provide technical and advisory assistance regarding legal recognition of the rights of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples in Suriname. James Anaya agreed and made an orientation visit to Suriname from 13 to 16 March 2011. During his visit discussion meetings were held with the Government and representatives of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples.

Professor Anaya submitted reports to the Government in which he outlined a process for moving towards developing legislation and related administrative measures to secure these rights and included suggestions about the basic content of the legislation, while emphasizing that this legislation should be the outcome of a participatory process, assisted by relevant international institutions, in which Indigenous and Tribal peoples are involved²⁵.

In October 2011 a national conference on land rights was organized by the Government, to serve as a platform for making concrete proposals, building national awareness on the need for recognition of land rights, and designing the way forward in this process. However, the conference did not yield the expected outcome - which was to conclude a Joint Declaration, whereby all

²⁴ Case of the Saramaka Lo vs Suriname and Case of Moiwana Village vs. Suriname

²⁵ Ministry of Regional Development. Final Report Visit of Professor James Anaya

parties concerned would agree to continue collaboration for the purpose of a solution on the land rights issue - as the presentation of the joint position and proposals of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, making clear demands for recognition of land rights and rights on the natural resources, the Government decided to terminate the conference. In the statement of the President of Suriname, he explained that the position of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples was too far reaching and this is a matter that needs to be discussed in the Parliament²⁶.

In order to continue the process in finding a solution to the land rights issue and to give more effect to the efforts of the Government to resolve the land rights issue, the current President, His Excellency D. D. Bouterse, deemed it necessary to appoint a Presidential Commissioner. The Commissioner is a descendent of the Tribal Peoples and is entrusted with giving advice concerning all aspects of the land rights issue, and making proposals to prevent unbalanced social consequences of the land rights issue for the nation. He has also been appointed as the Agent of the State of Suriname to the OAS; therefore he is acting in two capacities. The duties, with regards to both functions, are performed from the Bureau Land Rights Issues. The Bureau Land Rights Issues has, as part of finding a solution for the land rights issues, the following on schedule²⁷:

❖ *Recognition of the Traditional Authorities through legislation*

In fact, in practice the Traditional Authority of Indigenous and Maroon Peoples are recognized. The Government maintains a good relationship with the Traditional Authority since decades. Members of the Traditional Authority are hereby recognized as formal partners of the Government and draw an allowance from the Government. A law would only be a formalization of the recognition. Nevertheless, the Government through the Bureau of Land Rights has hired a consultant who drafted a law on aforementioned. The draft is, at the moment, being discussed with the target groups.

²⁶ IWGIA – The Indigenous World– 2012 and Reports of the National Land Rights Conference 2011 (Ministry of Regional Development

²⁷ Addressing the issue of land rights Indigenous Peoples and Maroons (Bureau Grondenrechten, Aanpak van het grondenrechten vraagstuk van Inheemsen en Marrons)Paramaribo, maart 2014

❖ *Developing a protocol on Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)*

The State recognizes and adheres to the existing Traditional mechanisms and instruments of consultation and decision making structures of Indigenous and tribal communities and its traditional leadership.

Regular consultation between the Government and the communities of Indigenous and Maroons are taking place, safeguarding local involvement in the formulation of public policy on the use of resources, development planning and potential reallocation, among others, in areas traditionally inhabited by Indigenous and Tribal communities. In light of the many outstanding issues related to ensuring collective land rights to Indigenous and Tribal communities, improving mechanisms for consultation would be of particular importance to the State and to these communities as well. The State is in the process to develop a model through which the principle of FPIC would be reflected in an ample manner. The State will continue its efforts to improve consultations with Indigenous and tribal communities to further the principle of FPIC within the existing (traditional) structures.

❖ *Conducting an awareness campaign*

It is clear that there are certain levels of lack of confidence in the central Government, which have their origin in the history and the development of our young Republic. The view of this Government is that by letting society think along and to actively participate a broad support will be created, which is necessary for the resolution of this matter. Through lectures, presentations, programs on radio and television, and social media the society will be involved in an interactive way in the process of recognition of the land rights.

The land rights issues can be solved sustainably through involvement of the different actors in society (politicians, civil society, business sector, women's organizations, community based organizations, Indigenous and Maroon organizations). This campaign is to inform community on the issue of land rights of Indigenous peoples and Maroons in order to obtain a solution.

Taking the afore mentioned into consideration, it can be concluded that the State is committed to work towards an acceptable solution for a matter which is of national importance and must undertake all efforts to engage into a cooperative attitude from all stakeholders from the conviction that a unification of the entire nation is an absolute prerequisite.



President D. D. Bouterse at the Land rights conference of October 2011



3. Policy for Protection and Sustainable Development

Chapter 3 deals with a description of the Policy of the Governmental Institutions and the activities of Non – Governmental Institutions responsible for the protection and sustainable development of Indigenous Peoples.

3.1 Education

Suriname has a centralized education system, which is coordinated, monitored and regulated by the Ministry of Education and Community Development which is responsible for the provision of education in Suriname. The educational system is still suffering from misallocation of resources, inefficiencies, mismanagement and weak teaching capacity. These constraining factors are very much present in the interior of Suriname and there is a significant difference between the situation in the coastal area and the interior. Reference can be made to the lack of qualified teaching staff, the absence of appropriate school buildings and facilities, and the lack of decent living conditions for teaching staff.

The main problems the education system in the interior is facing starts with the absence of decent facilities; on yearly basis there is a high number of graduating teachers but due to the situation in the interior they do not prefer to live and work there for a minimal period of two (2) years. These teachers need to take their families with them and with the weak level of education they do not prefer their children to visit schools under these circumstances. The result is that there are not enough qualified teachers to teach children in these areas. Another impairing situation is also that there

are combined classes of diverse education levels, which means that there is a lack of focus on the individual situation of the pupils.

The representatives of the VIDS and other Indigenous representatives indicated in the ACTO National Workshop “Indigenous Peoples in Border Areas” that the situation in some villages is abominable. The village Sipaliwini Savannah does not have a school even though it was promised to the Village Chief. The children of this village need to enjoy basic education on the other side of the border in French Guyana and this is a very dangerous situation due to the travel. It also has a lot of negative influence on their culture preservation because they are obliged to dress in a different way that is not part of their own culture.

Thus, access to education and educational facilities in the border areas or living areas of Indigenous Peoples is very minimal. There is only access to elementary education and the schools are lacking the most basic resources as mentioned before, qualified and adequately paid teachers, appropriate school buildings, tables and chairs, books, sanitary facilities and electricity. Furthermore it is worth mentioning that there is no electricity in these villages what makes it very difficult for children to study after 06:00 P.M.

In villages where there are no teachers present, local people take the initiative to teach the children basic things they themselves not know properly. In some cases families decide to send their children to another village where basic education is provided or close to these facilities.

In the Indigenous villages the children are not attending school at all, so they are send to Kwamalasumutu or Paramaribo for education. It is unlikely that the Ministry of Education will build a school in the villages because of the low population number.

There is absolutely no secondary or higher education provided by the State or other private institution. In case children finish the primary education, which is very unlikely, they travel to a nearby village or District or to Paramaribo for further education. Taking into consideration the above

mentioned less favorable situation, it is logical that the educational achievement in all the villages is very poor.

Current educational projects

Through the years different projects have been implemented by both the Government and NGOs to stimulate education in difficult accessible areas. One of the new projects which are now in execution is the laptop initiative of the Office of the First Lady of the Republic of Suriname, Mrs. Ingrid Bouterse-Waldring. The Government of the Peoples' Republic of China donated 1000 desktop computers and 1000 laptops to the Cabinet of the President, Office of the First Lady, in the framework of an ICT project aiming to educate youngsters on different educational level to be acquainted with ICT technology and to bring ICT closer to the community. The general objective is to stimulate education development in Suriname on all levels. The laptops were handed over on 13 February 2014²⁸. Within this initiative the First Lady is distributing the laptops over different schools in Suriname and 125 laptops for schools in the interior. Due to the physical conditions in the areas which are not easily accessible and where basic utilities such as electricity are lacking besides the absence of schools, it is questionable whether the youth in these villages will be included in and enjoy this initiative.

The Government is aware that education is an important instrument for the development process which leads to prosperity and welfare of the population. The current and future policy will aim at creating the right and inevitable conditions in order to provide opportunities to the peoples' development for them to contribute to the development of Suriname. Enhancing the quality of education in Suriname is one of the main goals of the Government mentioned in the Development Plan 2012 - 2016.

²⁸ Speech by the First Lady of the Republic of Suriname, Mrs. Ingrid Bouterse - Waldring on the occasion of the official handing over of the computers by the Government of the Peoples' Republic of China, February 13th 2014.

3.2 Health

The healthcare of Indigenous peoples in the border areas of Suriname is being monitored by the Foundation Primary Health Care Suriname or Medical Mission (PHCS/MM). The MM is a private foundation, which was founded out of a cooperation of three religious organizations that jointly provide medical services to the people living in the sparsely populated and difficult to access interior of Suriname. The foundation aims to promote and ensure the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of the population in the interior of Suriname, all driven by the motive to carry out the Gospel in Word and deed, according to primary healthcare principles. There are strong indications that a serious health gap exist between the interior population and that of the rest of the country. Therefore, the vision of the MM is²⁹:

- ❖ Preventive and curative healthcare must be available and accessible for the whole population of the hinterland;
- ❖ Primary healthcare services of the MM must follow international quality standards;
- ❖ Community participation is strongly stimulated;
- ❖ Responsibilities and tasks should be decentralized as much as possible.

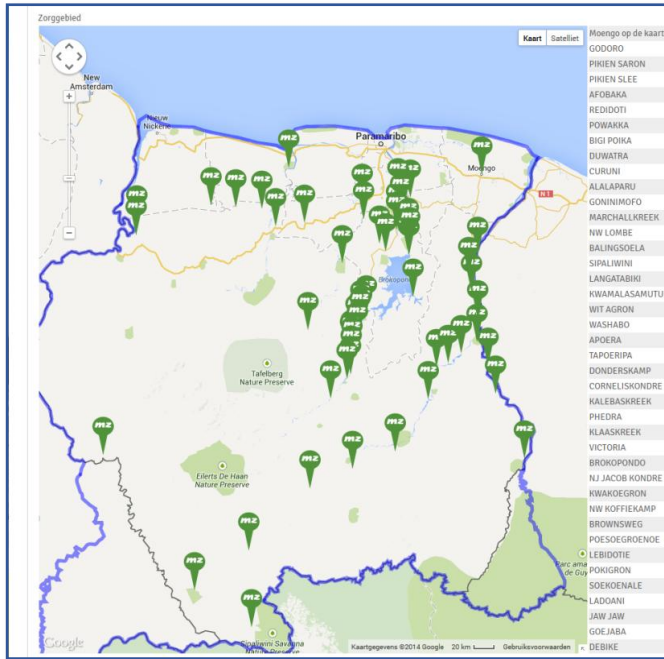
The healthcare policy of MM is based on the Primary Health Care Strategy and has been drawn up with input from the personnel of the foundation. This strategy is mostly based on prevention and less on healing. Some of the policy objectives are:

- ❖ Universal access to care and availability of care based on the need to optimize the target group with basic healthcare;
- ❖ Obligation to equal health opportunities as part of social justice, with supportive mechanisms are available;
- ❖ Community participation in defining and implementing health agendas (Active community participation);

²⁹ Presentation: Delivering of Quality Integrated PHC-Services in the Hinterland of Suriname by Edward van Eer, MD MPH

- ❖ Promoting health through health promotion and - education;
- ❖ Use of available and affordable technology.

The target groups of the MM are the inhabitants of the interior, who enjoy free healthcare by the Government and organizations. The geographical work area of the MM covers 90% of the surface of Suriname, in which about



56,000 people live, with the largest concentrations along the rivers in the eastern half of the country. In this area the MM has a total of 57 healthcare centers, which are controlled and supported by the coordination center at the Headquarter in Paramaribo. In these centers the service is provided by a healthcare assistant (GZA) and a malaria

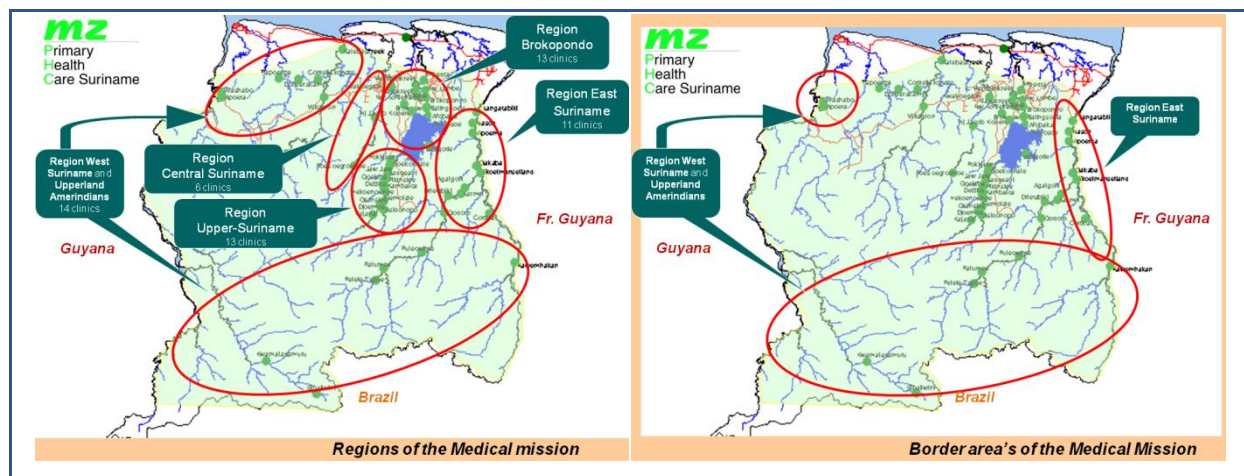
micro-scopist, who are controlled and supervised by the regional clinic supervisor (a nurse or experienced health assistant) and the regional manager (general practitioners, some of them specialize in public health)³⁰.



MM Health center in the interior

³⁰ Interview with Edward van Eer, MD MPH General Director of the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname (MM)

The MM is also offering specialist care to patients, who are referred by the local doctor or a Healthcare Assistant for specialist help in Paramaribo, but due to various reasons such as lack of housing in Paramaribo, they don't want to travel to the capital. The specialists travel to different villages in the interior and have consultations. Patients, who can be treated on the spot, do not have to undertake the journey to Paramaribo. So far there are specialist missions of pediatricians, dermatologists and ophthalmologists.



Regions and border areas of the MM

3.2.1 The working force of MM

The healthcare is provided by health professionals of different educational level with a clearly defined level of responsibility. The working force of MM consists of medically trained health assistants (GZA), regional clinic supervisors and regional managers, logistical staff (skilled boatmen, drivers, and maintenance workers), technical services staff and administrative personnel.

Most of the health workers are persons from local communities, who are educated and trained by the Medical Mission. But nowadays persons from other ethnicity can also apply for the GZA training under the condition that after finishing the training, they are able to communicate fluently in one of the dialects of the peoples living in the interior.

In daily practice the health assistants make the first contact with patients. These health assistants have a diploma recognized by the Ministry of Health and are subject to the inspection of nursing and caring professions. The health assistant training consists of two years of practical training in the local language in one of the MM clinics. This local training is followed by a Dutch-language training provided by a medical doctor in Paramaribo two (2) years. The most important condition to apply for the job of health assistant is that you must have a primary education certificate. It's also important that you are from Indigenous ethnicity (Amerindian or Maroon). The last year it became a little bit difficult to recruit health assistants, because of the salary the other sectors, especially tourism sector, are offering. The GZA's are trained in such way that they can handle the wide range of questions that a client presents. Their work varies from keeping office hours, providing medicines, giving health education, vaccination, infant consultation to suturing wounds and policlinic deliveries³¹.

In addition to these health assistants there are also staffed malaria microscopists, who are able to examine patients on malaria through the microscope. Finally, there are also other support workers/clinic aids. These medical workers are supervised and guided by the regional clinic supervisor and the regional manager³². The MM has 11 doctors and 120 health assistants for all of the health centers in Suriname. This makes it impossible to station a doctor in the villages or medical posts. Also the populations of the villages are not so huge to have a doctor for daily consultation. Finally, the distances between the villages are huge.

Through an extensive network of radio communication and regular or periodic visits, the medical workers can contact a nurse, physician and/or medical specialist to seek advice or in case of an emergency, at any time of the day.

³¹ Interview with Edward van Eer, MD MPH General Director of the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname (MM)

³² Idem

The Medical Mission is funded by the Ministry of Health. However, these resources are not adequate to cover the operating costs of the organization. Therefore, MM depends on donors to complement the budget.

3.2.2 Most common diseases

According to the MM in 2007 the health of the Indigenous Peoples in the border areas appeared in general to be good and the child mortality numbers were low. The most prevailing health problems observed, were the following; Malaria, respiratory ailments, anemia, pregnancy-related problems, sexually communicable diseases, problems regarding hygiene, restricted access to sanitary facilities (no latrines in most villages) and safe drinking water (villagers obtain their drinking water from creeks and rivers)³³.

In recent years new trends, especially the gold mining boom with an influx of companies, ‘foreigners’ and money, has destabilized traditional life and traditional leadership and brought besides income opportunities for some, also new health risks along for the peoples in this area, who are dependent on the waters from the creeks and rivers. The most common diseases nowadays are: Cervical Cancer, Leishmaniasis, Malaria, Mercury contamination and HIV³⁴.

Cervical Cancer

Cervical Cancer mortality and morbidity rate are high in Suriname and is the most common disease among in Indigenous young girls and women. A National Strategic Plan for cervical cancer has been developed.

Although this plan has not been approved yet, some activities are being carried out such as cervical screening. Visual Inspection with Acetic acid (VIA) is used to detect premalignant lesions or carcinoma and involves

³³ See ACTS, 2007. Trio Baseline Study and ACTS, 2007. Wayana Baseline Study..

³⁴ Interview with Edward van Eer, MD MPH General Director of the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname (MM)

naked eye examination of the uterine cervix after swabbing with acetic acid³⁵. When the cervical cancer is discovered, the infected cells are frozen with acetic acid. After a few months the patient must return for a checkup.

Cutaneous Leishmaniasis (CL)

The parasitic disease cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL), caused by single cell *Leishmania* parasites, is an increasing health threat in Suriname, mainly affecting poor populations in the interior. It is a chronic infection with a spectrum of clinical presentations, most excessive is the extensive ulceration and disfiguring scar formation. In Suriname CL is known as Boschyaws or Boessie-Yassi. Diagnosis of CL can be difficult and the treatment options are not much, with serious side effects, and increasingly failing, possibly due to emerging drug resistance against the first line treatment. Furthermore, insight in epidemiology and biology of the disease is lacking. CL also puts a significant economic burden on affected people, and has a great social impact on quality of life as patients are often mutilated by CL, leading to severe stigmatization.

A research programme, supported by the Ministry of Health of Suriname and medical, societal and economic stakeholders in the country and carried out by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NOW), shown that there is no leishmaniasis control programme established in Suriname³⁶. The research programme consists of three (3) projects that in an integrated manner address all major aspects of leishmaniasis in Suriname. The first two (2) projects, a clinical and a biology component, aim to put in place validated diagnostic algorithms, based on improved insight in disease epidemiology and implementation of innovative molecular diagnostic and monitoring tools. Furthermore, efficacy of first-line treatment regimen for CL will be evaluated in detail in a clinical trial and the efficacy of an alternative treatment option, i.e. short term course, will be assessed. In addition, possible occurrence of drug resistance will be studied using an established

³⁵ Idem

³⁶ <http://www.nwo.nl/>

in vitro model. Leishmaniasis Guyanensis is thought to be the only parasite species causing CL in Suriname. However, recent studies have demonstrated the presence of other species that require other treatment modalities. Moreover, the clinical presentation may vary in relation to sub-species of Leishmaniasis Guyanensis. Determination and epidemiology of endemic Leishmania (sub-) species, vectors and reservoirs will be studied in detail using e.g. molecular taxonomy.

The third project has an anthropological approach and focuses on perceptions of and treatment seeking behavior for CL. Special attention will be given to stigmatization and the related reluctance to seek biomedical help. Preference for self-treatment and treatment by traditional healers among various population groups will be studied in the context of local social and cultural beliefs regarding health and disease and CL in particular. It should be pointed out that perceptions to CL have never been studied in Suriname³⁷.



Traditional Trio treatment of leishmaniasis

³⁷ <http://www.nwo.nl/>

Malaria

Suriname has eradicated malaria in the capital city and coastal areas mainly through the successful use of chloroquine and DDT (dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane) during the Global Malaria Eradication programme that started in 1955. Nonetheless, malaria transmission rates remained high in the interior of the country for a long time. An impressive decline in malaria cases was achieved in the past few years, from 14,403 registered cases in 2003 to 1,371 in 2009³⁸. The introduction of Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT) in 2004 has further fuelled the decrease in the number of infections with *Plasmodium falciparum*.

The MM has implemented a five year program entitled, the Medical Mission Malaria Programme (MM-MP) 2005-2009, to eradicate malaria in Suriname. The interventions of the MM-MP included new strategies for prevention, vector control, case management, behavioral change and strengthening of the health system (surveillance, monitoring and evaluation and epidemic detection system). After a slow first year with non-satisfying scores for the performance indicators, the MM-MP truly engaged in its intervention activities in 2006 and kept its performance up until the end of 2009. A total of 69,994 long-lasting insecticide-treated nets were distributed and more than 15,000 nets re-impregnated. In high-risk areas, this was complemented with residual spraying of insecticides. Over 10,000 people were screened with active case detection in outbreak and high-risk areas. Additional notification points were established and the national health system was strengthened.

Suriname was a high malaria risk country before the introduction of the MM-MP and Malaria was endemic in the forested interior, where especially the stable village communities were affected. Through these efforts, malaria has been reduced to pre-elimination levels in most stable communities with the disease largely confined to the interior locations of the country.

³⁸ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

Populations at risk are mobile miners, who may not easily access malaria services and among whom 81% of the estimated 15,000 mobile miner population have been diagnosed and treated for malaria. However, regional inconsistency and service gaps remain³⁹. The MM concluded that the only population group still heavily burdened with malaria are the gold mining industry workers.

Interestingly, an important part of malaria cases diagnosed and treated in Suriname originate from border regions. Therefore, practical initiatives of combined efforts between neighboring countries must be scaled up in order to effectively attack these specific areas. Furthermore, it is of vital importance to keep investing into the malaria control programme and public awareness campaigns. Especially the correct use of ACT must be promoted in order to prevent the emergence of resistance. However, effective preventive measures and adequate therapeutic options are on their own not enough to control, let alone eliminate malaria. Changing personal and social behavior of people is particularly difficult, but crucial in making the current success sustainable. With this in mind, research on successfully implemented interventions, focusing on behavioral modifications and methods of measuring their effectiveness, must be expanded⁴⁰.

Mercury contamination

In the past decades, the mineral-rich Lawa and Tapanahoni watersheds have attracted large numbers of legal and illegal small-scale gold miners. These gold miners use mercury, which amalgamates with gold, to separate gold particles from the soil and waste materials. Evaporated mercury from burning of acquired gold nuggets also gets airborne. A considerable amount of mercury ends up in creeks and rivers as it is spilled or, indirectly, after evaporation with rainfall. People risk chronic mercury poisoning when they absorb the toxic through the skin and mucous membranes by inhalation and ingestion over a longer period of time.

³⁹ A Global Report on Population Mobility and Malaria: Moving towards elimination with migration in mind, August 14, 2013

⁴⁰ Report of the Medical Mission Malaria Programme (MM-MP) 2005-2009

The Indigenous Peoples living in close proximity to the gold fields are particularly vulnerable to mercury contamination, due to their high levels of fish consumption. Several studies done in the past decade show that the average levels of mercury identified in hair samples of these peoples were well above the WHO standard. More than half of the tested people showed mercury accumulation above this standard.

HIV/AIDS

According to MM for so far there has been only one case of HIV/AIDS infection and it's been said that the person contracted the disease during a short stay in Paramaribo.

It's worth to mention that the borders of the countries don't exist for the peoples living in these areas, in the sense that they can travel freely between the countries without a passport and problems with the customs and military.

Traditional knowledge

The Medical Mission supports the rediscovery of wisdom, tradition and culture of the locals. In this context, there is cooperation with the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), which officially started with a "Memorandum of understanding" between the two parties in July 1999, with the main goal to search for possibilities for the integration of traditional medicine into the mainstream healthcare of the Medical Mission. The more cost-effective practical approach by inland residents of some health problems in the traditional way (Leishmania by the trio Indians) is the driving force for the Medical Mission to promote research to the base of these methods.

An important aspect here is the cooperation between the clinics of ACT and those of the Medical Mission on the spot, where mutual trust and exchange of knowledge are central. For the Medical Mission this is an important goal

to achieve, because in this way community participation in the healing process of a group proves to be better⁴¹.

3.3 Social policy

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing is responsible for the social policy of the country and has as main objective to create and recreate conditions to ensure social security, to which the population can develop themselves, with a special focus on socially disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups, their thinking and their own living condition, so that they can get out of the vicious circle of poverty and deprivation. There is no specific social policy for the Indigenous Peoples in the border areas, so they should rely on the policy for the total Surinamese population⁴².

The social policy is based on the Development Plan 2012 - 2016 of the current Government, which promotes welfare and prosperity for the individuals and groups who suffer from welfare deficit, because of their disadvantaged positions and of their disability to participate in social intercourse. Within the social policy, the implementation of the National Health Insurance and the General Pension Insurance are of great importance for the Government and for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing. Also the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer program: “Bromki Fu Tamara” (flowers of tomorrow) and “Kraka Yu Srefi” (support oneself) are of equal importance⁴³.

The National Health Insurance started on July 1, 2013, with the distribution and collection of the health insurance cards through the schools. More than 130 thousand persons are eligible for the free health insurance. The first phase is for every child up to sixteen years and elderly people from 60 year

⁴¹ Interview with Edward van Eer, MD MPH General Director of the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname (MM)

⁴² Interview with Ms. Ghamie Nawikromo, Deputy Director of the Sub- directorate General Social Care

⁴³ Idem

and older. In the second phase the healthcare system will be available for the whole Surinamese population, whether or not for payment.

The Government also implemented a General Pension Insurance. The main reason for implementing this insurance is because the General Provision for Old Age (AOV) was not on a level that the basic minimum standard of living can be reached. Also the peoples working in the private sector were not certain of a pension, when they reached the pension age⁴⁴.

On August 29, 2014 the National Assembly has approved these “social laws” and the Government can start to implement a general pension and the national basic health insurance. The target date for entry into force of these laws is January 1, 2015. Basic health insurance to which patients are entitled is included in the national law. The insurance pays all costs, including the threshold cost.

3.3.1 Conditional Cash Transfer program (CCT)

The Conditional Cash Transfer Program consists of two components:

- ❖ Bromki Fu Tamara, BFT (flowers of tomorrow)
- ❖ Kraka Yu Srefi, KYS (support oneself)

The objective of the “Bromki Fu Tamara (BFT) project” is to support the effort of the Government to enhance the effectiveness of spending on non-contributory social protection programs and improve efficiency on the targeting of important social protection programs, to promote poverty reduction and human capital development. The CCTs provide money to poor families, conditioned on investment in human capital in order to make it possible that these families can send their children to school, bring their children on a regular basis to the health consultations and to educate the

⁴⁴ Presentation of the Social programs of the Republic of Suriname by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing

parents of these families. The target groups are children between 0 and 48 months and (pregnant) women and children attending primary schools.

The conditions to benefit from these projects are:

- ❖ 85% school attendance of the children in primary school;
- ❖ On a regular basis doctors consultations by pregnant women and vaccination of babies.

The “Kraka Yu Srefi project” is aiming to strengthen the potential and capacities of disadvantaged families and individuals, who are in a disadvantaged position or threat thereof, through tailored pathway (empowerment, activation, coaching, counseling and training). KYS is one of the exit-strategies to help the beneficiaries (in the first place) of the CCT to support oneself and be self-sufficient. The target group for this project is disadvantaged individuals and families, namely:

- 1) Individuals with a distance to the labor market e.g.:
 - ❖ People with (slightly) mental or physical disabilities;
 - ❖ Psychic vulnerable people;
 - ❖ People with insufficient training or learning;
 - ❖ Long-term unemployed;
- 2) Families with a socio-psychological and pedagogical weak structure;
- 3) Socio-economically disadvantaged families;
- 4) Unemployed single mothers or fathers;
- 5) Unemployed young people;
- 6) Teenage parents (mothers and fathers);
- 7) Early school leavers (drop-outs).

Preparations were made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing to accommodate the agency hired, to execute the CCT program. The execution of the program was supposed to start in august 2013, but due to

logistical and financial problems and a lack of social workers the Ministry was not able to reach the key constraints⁴⁵.

3.3.2 Medical support

When the citizens, living in the interior and under medical supervision of the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname, are seriously ill and need hospitalization or further treatment, they need to go to Paramaribo. In this case the responsibility of this group is shifted to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing.

It's clear that there is a good cooperation between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing and the Medical Mission Primary Health Care Suriname⁴⁶. One occurring issue is that, when the citizens living in the interior have to travel to Paramaribo for further treatment, the Government is not responsible for their accommodation. They have to stay with family or in a “shelter” under very bad conditions. The Government is aware of this situation and is seeking a permanent solution.

3.3.3 Financial support

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing is also responsible for financial support of the disadvantaged individuals, elderly persons and children. Because of the distance with Paramaribo and between the villages, the financial support to the disadvantaged individuals and the child allowance are being paid out yearly. The General Old Age Provision (AOV) is being paid out every trimester⁴⁷. Another activity of this Ministry is that uniforms are being put at the disposal of children living in these areas at the start of each school year.

⁴⁵ Presentation of the Social programs of the Republic of Suriname by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing

⁴⁶ Interview with Ms. Ghamie Nawikromo, Deputy Director of the Sub- directorate General Social Care

⁴⁷ Interview with Ms. Ghamie Nawikromo, Deputy Director of the Sub- directorate General Social Care

The program 'Implementation of community development projects' in collaboration with NGOs and CBOs is mostly aimed at the empowerment of local communities.

3.3.4 Housing

During this Government the housing policy has shifted to an institution named the Housing Authority Suriname.

3.4 Cultural policy

Surinamese people take great pride in their cultural diversity. In this regard, Suriname's cultural policy is based on the plurality of the Suriname population. The policy is therefore based on cultural democracy, which is characterized by the equality of all cultures and mutual acceptance and appreciation of one another's cultural expressions⁴⁸. The ministry responsible for cultural policy is the Ministry of Education and Community Development, with its Department for Culture. Suriname's cultural policy is aimed at⁴⁹:

- ❖ Sustainable national development in which culture plays the central role;
- ❖ Laying intercultural encounters in all walks of cultural practice in our country, so that the perception of our cultural diversity is visible and tangible across the spectrum.

The objectives of the culture is to elevate the inner dignity of the Surinamese people, and to develop policy that focuses on the creative diversity and acceptance, and that meet the needs and requirements of all groups.

⁴⁸ National Report of the Republic of Suriname on the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Education and Community Development, National Cultural Policy; Scope and Basic Principle. <http://gov.sr/sr/ministerie-van-onderwijs-en-volksontwikkeling/over-minov/cultuur.aspx>

Suriname's cultural policy recognizes article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also aims at having every individual participate in full freedom in the cultural life of the community, for him or her to enjoy art, be part of scientific progress and its outcomes. Furthermore, every person has the right to protection of his or her spiritual and material interests that ensue from scientific, literary or artistic creations which he/she has produced.



The Government of Suriname has not yet adopted special measures to secure adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals, such as the Indigenous and Maroon Peoples that require protection.

The Indigenous and Maroons have a clearly different culture than people living in the coastal area in terms of way of life, norms and values, artifacts. Culture of course is very pervasive in all aspects of life and difficult to isolate. It goes from the way one plants cassava to architecture of houses and ways to survive amidst a harsh environment. Culture, however, is never static and cannot be “preserved” completely, since people have to adapt to new opportunities, but also threats in their environment. The fact that there are several Indigenous and Maroon tribes in Suriname is seen as a unique

feature in itself. It adds to the complexity of Suriname society and is an intriguing feature for linguists and anthropologists, but also for tourists. An increase of tourism into the tribal areas, however, does not only bring in much needed cash, but also intrusions into their life. The old traditional pure subsistence way of life in most villages is disappearing and has been disappearing for some time⁵⁰.

Thus, this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the Tribal peoples, the Government, tour operators and others (NGOs), in order to find proper solutions.

3.5 Economic Policy

The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname and bylaws, are founded on the specificities of our nation. Henceforth, the social and economic objectives of the Government of Suriname are aimed at building a national economy for the benefit of the entire population, in which each citizen shares equally in the socio-economic development and achievements.

The Government of Suriname is aware of the fact that equal income distribution is one of the major challenges in the development of the national economy. In the Development Plan 2012 - 2016 the creation of more job opportunities in the private sector is emphasized and the aim is to double the GDP in the year 2020, which means an economical growth of 6% annually. To reach this goal development and enhancement of the following subsectors are identified: mining, agriculture, forestry and timber. Other contributing (sub) sectors include tourism, trade, transport, financial services, construction and the development of the interior⁵¹. In this regard the focus will be on sectors or economic activities which (partly) contribute

⁵⁰ Suriname International Partners (SIP-Conservatorium), Draft Report on Current Activities Assessment Development Planning (101) by SSDI. Paramaribo, April 2009.

⁵¹ Suriname International Partners (SIP-Conservatorium), Draft Report on Current Activities Assessment Development Planning (101) by SSDI. Paramaribo, April 2009.

to the development of the interior. The following (sub) sectors/economic activities are involved in the development of the interior of Suriname⁵²:

Agriculture

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV), the Department for Agriculture Development of the interior is responsible for the support of agriculture projects in the interior of Suriname. Agriculture in this area is much more important than in the coastal zone, even though no reliable statistics are available. The traditional agricultural system of the Indigenous and Maroon farmers is a shifting cultivation system, which is mainly based on the rotation of plots where the area is cut open and burned before agricultural activities are commenced. After harvesting, the plot is abandoned and the farming activities are relocated to a different area. In many Development Plans remarks have been made to change this system into a more permanent agricultural system, but few successful trials with permanent agriculture are known. The agricultural initiatives in the interior are mainly focused on an alteration or adjustment of the traditional methods of cultivation.

The results of the projects revealed an improvement in both quality and quantity of agricultural output. An exact prognosis of the increase in income for households as a consequence of these projects is hard to predict since data of the amounts gained from agricultural yields is not available. Agricultural products/crops are traded in Suriname's neighboring country French Guyana and in Paramaribo.

Forestry

Figures of the SBB demonstrated the granting of 86 licenses for forestry concessions covering about 1,2 million hectares of land which will contribute to employment in the interior. In order to exploit the complete amount of concessions, a significant job creation might be the result. People from surrounding communities are likely to fill in the necessity for labor,

⁵² Idem

especially in the case of forestry where physical work is an important element of labor. The main trend in initiatives is to implement sustainable practice of forestry. Forestry traditionally is an important sector for Tribal peoples in terms of employment and earning capacity. This sector should be able to contribute significantly to their economic well-being if they can get the necessary concessions, learn proper forest management, and get training and capital. It is also very important for the local economy e.g. building material for houses.

The Government has created the system of Community Forest (Gemeenschapbos). Community forests are used for logging, gathering of forest products and for carrying out agricultural activities.

In accordance to article 41 paragraph 2 of the Forest Management Act (SB 1992 No. 80.), land is granted by the Minister of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management (RGB), after consultation with the Minister of Regional Development, as community forest for the benefit of tribal people living in villages and settlements. The village community, represented by the chief of the village, is responsible for managing the Community Forest and to ensure that logging activities are carried out in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, such as the sustainable management of the forest and the payment of the required fee to the State. A Village Fund should be set up for the village, by opening of a bank account. The money that is arising from the logging activities must be deposited in the Village Fund. At least three (3) persons, including the village chief⁵³, are required to sign before any amount of money, which must be used for village development projects, can be extracted from the Village Fund⁵⁴.

Tourism, Arts & Craft

According to the statistics of the Suriname Tourism Foundation (STS) there is a significant increase in tourism. Most of the lodges are established in the interior along rivers. However, for the Interior it should be stressed that

⁵³ Captain and Village chief means the same (the head of the Village)

⁵⁴ Ministry of Regional Development, Evaluation of Community Forests January 2008 – August 2010.

despite its potential the Tourism sector also has its weak points e.g. disruption of local life if there are too many tourists, introduction of other norms and values that may not correspond with local norms and values. Besides that tourism, to a certain extent, contributes to employment for the local people.

Mining

Mining activities, with regard to bauxite and gold, take place in the interior. Since the extraction of gold takes place in the interior of Suriname it contributes to the income pattern of both Maroon and Indigenous peoples. Illegal gold mining, and especially contamination⁵⁵ of the environment with mercury, is an important issue in parts of the Interior.

Together, BHP Billiton and Suralco provide employment for approximately 4,200 workers. Recently bauxite reached its limits in Marowijne and the mines are closing down there. In 2008 negotiations with the Surinamese Government about plans to exploit the Bakhuys Mountain in the West of Suriname, resulted in the withdrawal of Billiton from Suriname. This will cause unemployment for about 1,100 employees.

According to a synthesis report of the Indigenous Peoples and mining in West Suriname, there are about 10.000 to 20.000 small-scale goldminers in an area of some 20.000 km in East Suriname, with many of these being Maroons and an estimated 6-8,000 being small-scale miners from Brazil.

Annual Reports of mining Company IAmGold, demonstrated purchasing details of products the company bought from the surrounding communities. These products included charcoal, wood, bricks, fruits and vegetables. The company also invests in community projects, but at times they have a strained relationship with small gold diggers from the area, who do not have free access anymore.

⁵⁵ In March 2014 there was a hearing, requested by Daniel Peplow and others, at the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, regarding mercury pollution in the area of the Indigenous community of Apetina.

It is of interest to mention that after three years of exploration Surgold (a 50%-50% joint venture between Newmont Mining Company and Suralco) reported an estimated 3 million ounces of gold in the Nassau Concession. Recently Surgold signed an Agreement for exploitation with the Government. The building of the mine for Surgold is already in process. Surgold has also signed a Memory of Understanding with the Pamaka community⁵⁶. It is agreed that Surgold, among other things, will carry out a number of development projects for the benefit of the community, at least partly will be executing, assisting or financing these projects⁵⁷.

The Government of Suriname has been given gold mining rights (concessions) in the Interior to many people and organizations from the coastal areas and even foreigners (who often rent these concessions from Surinamers). A consequence is that most often the local population is not the greatest beneficiary of the activities and many concessions have been granted without consulting the local population. Due to the latter, the communities often have limited influence over the mining areas, while the impact on their way of life is substantially affected.

Transport

Water transport has been the main transport mode in most of the interior so far. This will continue to remain an important mode, especially along the Marowijne, Tapanahony and Lawa River in the South East, the Upper Suriname River in the Central South, and the Wayambo River in the Central West. It will also remain an important transport mode between the Trio and Wayana villages in the far South. Transport by air from Paramaribo to the South, and vice versa, is very expensive; it is virtually the only connection to Paramaribo. This is one of the reasons why persons from these areas do not visit Paramaribo or other districts very often.

With the extension of Suriname's road network from the 1960s on, this mode has overtaken water transport in most of the Districts of Para,

⁵⁶ Surgold will be mining in the area where the Pamaka people, a Maroon tribe, live.

⁵⁷ Interview with a member of the Pamaka Negotiation Commission.

Brokopondo and Marowijne. Communities in these districts are mostly well connected by road, while the roads will improve considerably in the next few years. For the people from the Upper Suriname River they already have to travel both by boat, to Atjoni, and then by road.

3.6 Administrative and legal context for environmental protection

Institutional responsibilities for environmental management and nature resource conservation are shared by a number of Government organizations. Environmental management and protection are the responsibility of the Cabinet of the President of Suriname, the Ministry of Labor, Technological Development and Environment (ATM), and the National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname (NIMOS). In addition, a number of agencies and departments in sectoral ministries hold responsibilities in environmental protection, such as enforcing existing environmental regulations and contributing to the Ministry of ATMs' environmental planning activities.

Responsibility for natural resource exploitation and management rests with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Within the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management, the Suriname Forest Service and specifically the Nature Conservation Division of the Forest Service, is the agency responsible for managing natural reserves and parks, except for the Brownsberg Nature Park, which is held in leasehold and managed by the Foundation for Nature Conservation in Suriname (STINASU). The Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control (SBB) is responsible for the monitoring of forest exploitation and forest cover in Suriname. Reforestation is also one of the main activities which are being stimulated by the SBB.

In the framework of the sustainable management of forests Suriname initiated the REDD-Plus mechanism which will be contributive to environmental protection and the minimization of climate change.

With respect to a national legal framework for environmental management, improvements in the areas of legislation, regulation and enforcement are pivotal for managing the above mentioned increasing pressure on the country's natural resources base due to economic investments. In terms of legislation, Suriname currently lacks an over-arching environmental law that promotes sustainable economic development and the systematic application of environmental management tools, such as environmental impact assessments, environmental management plans, and pollution control measures. Also, despite the fact that Suriname has ratified fifteen major international environmental conventions and protocols the majority of the commitments made under these conventions are not yet reflected in corresponding national legislation.

In addition to approve this pivotal environmental law, there is an urgent need to adopt and implement corresponding environmental regulations. In particular, existing Environmental Impact Assessment draft regulations should be aligned with the environmental law, finalized and applied immediately, criteria and guidelines must be devised to provide better environmental management and monitoring of development projects, and specific regulations are required to address Suriname's obligations under the various international environmental conventions which it is a signatory to. The enforcement of existing legal provisions tends to be insufficient due to limited human and material resources within ATM and NIMOS, as well as within the sectoral ministries that have environmental responsibilities. As a result, illegal logging, mining, and fishing have virtually no oversight or regulation, and licensed individuals and companies frequently ignore the restrictions of their licenses. For example, gold miners work outside the boundaries of their concession area and shrimp fishermen fish in the shallow waters that form breeding and production grounds.

With regard to (illegal) mining, the Management Team "Ordering Goud Sector" of the Cabinet of the President is charged with redressing the illegal situation in the gold mines in the interior. This intervention of the

Government is also aiming at environmental protection and rehabilitation of the gold mines. It also contributes to security in the communities in the interior of Suriname if we take into consideration the different violent escalations amongst gold miners and between gold miners and the Government. The cooperation with the Police Corps of Suriname and the Ministry of Defense should not be estimated in reaching this objective. It is worth mentioning that there are no large-scale gold mining activities in the Indigenous villages mentioned in this report; the Indigenous Peoples are conducting small scale logging and mining activities for own use.

3.6.1 Environmental awareness and public participation

Public awareness about environmental issues and risks used to be very low, but increased in the last five (5) years. However observations suggest limited citizen concern with environmental pollution. For example, a study done in 2003 among students in the ages 16-30 found that only 20% of college youth possessed a level of environmental knowledge that could be classified as reasonable or good (Van der Kooye, 2003). When we observe the different environmental protection programmes of the recent years, e.g. the initiative to collect PET-bottles among student in schools, there is a noticeable increase of awareness among the youth. Also more students are applying for the study Environmental Sciences at the Anton de Kom University of Suriname and are conducting research on environmental pollution inter alia.

Knowledge was especially lacking in the area of waste management, water, agriculture and pesticides, oil pollution, and environmental organizations. Moreover, unregulated garbage dumping, home waste burning, and irresponsible oil disposal were also occurring on a daily basis. The Government introduced different policy to cope with these problems, e.g. the Ministry of Public Works, which is responsible for waste disposal and management, regulated the waste management sector and introduced a

yearly initiative to clean up the country by youngsters in the month September. Furthermore the Fire Department through the Ministry of Justice and Police introduced a prohibition for home waste burning whereby fines are enforced in case of violation.

Maroon and Indigenous communities affected by small-scale mining were concerned about water pollution, their knowledge of mercury pollution related to small-scale mining was very poor. Mercury pollution seems to be one of the major constraining factors to Indigenous Peoples health.

3.7 Non – State Actors: International Organizations, NGOs and International Non – Governmental Organizations

As Non – State Actors the following International Organizations among others are involved in advocating wellbeing and sustainable development of Indigenous Peoples:

- ❖ Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)
- ❖ World Health Organization (WHO)
- ❖ World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

The Non – Governmental and International Non – Governmental Organizations (INGOs) are delivering a mayor contribution to the sustainable development in all Indigenous communities in Suriname.

The most prominent among these NGOs are:

- ❖ *Organization for Indigenous Peoples (OIS)*: they represent the Indigenous Peoples in Suriname. The OIS is advocating the rights of the Indigenous population in Suriname by striving to improve their marginal position and promoting their culture. The International Day of Indigenous Peoples on August 9, being a national holiday in Suriname, is one of the main achievements of the OIS. OIS is also advocating the recognition of land rights and other collective rights of Indigenous Peoples in order to guarantee their habitat.

- ❖ *Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS)*: is a union of village leaders of all Indigenous villages in Suriname. According to this organization it is not an NGO but a structure of traditional authorities. VIDS has a technical and administrative office. Many projects have been implemented since the establishment in 1992 including demarcation of Indigenous lands, strengthening of traditional authority structures; assistance to villages; health, education and culture projects, various studies and publications.

The International Non – Governmental Organizations with a Surinamese office are:

- ❖ *Conservation International (CI)*: CI-Suriname is helping to protect nature in one of the greenest and most biodiverse countries on Earth⁵⁸. Conservation International Suriname is focused on supporting national policy for green economic development by supporting land use planning and demonstrating the value of ecosystem services in Suriname. Their motto is that 'people need nature to thrive' and use science-based knowledge to try to improve policy and increase awareness to help sustainably manage their natural resources.

CI-Suriname has been carrying out part of a regional climate change and avoided deforestation project funded by the German Development Bank KfW since late 2009. In Suriname, the emphasis of this project lies on support for the Government of Suriname in its efforts to develop its Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system. This is a key element of REDD+ — an international mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and through forest conservation — which the country is currently working towards implementing. Their achievements include producing a forest cover map, a historical deforestation map, and provided training and software in land use planning.

⁵⁸ www.conservation.org/global/suriname

- ❖ *Amazon Conservation Team:* The Amazon Conservation Team Suriname Foundation has entered into partnerships with Indigenous and Maroon communities in order to protect and preserve the biodiversity, culture and healthcare within the boundaries of Suriname. The organization's activities commenced in 1999, in the South-West of Suriname with the traditional healthcare program and mapping of the home lands of the Trio Indigenous tribe. The Amazon Conservation Team Suriname Foundation was officially founded on 2 September 2002, as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), under Suriname law. The foundation was established with the objective of preserving our ecosystem and all biological organisms in it, with special focus on human beings. Programs mainly focus on social and educational purposes; namely developing and managing a series of scientific projects, and other projects oriented on the protection of nature and culture in Suriname.

To reach this goal, the foundation primarily enters into partnerships with Indigenous and Maroon communities that live in the interior, and secondly with organizations such as NGO's, Government institutions and Semi-Governmental institutions, that contribute to the empowerment of this main target group.

Their projects are based on increasing the living standard in Indigenous and Maroon communities through strengthening traditional knowledge and skills⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ www.act-suriname.org





4. Conclusion

The conclusion can be drawn that Indigenous Peoples are in a less favorable position compared to peoples living in the coastal area where all basic services are being provided by the Government, due to the remoteness of their living areas which are not easily accessible. These constraining factors are facilitating the lack of basic services in these areas such as education and health. Due to the distance of villages and the diverse ages among the children it is not profitable to have schools in each community.

Indigenous Peoples' nationality is quite difficult to determine due to the fact that they have a nomadic lifestyle. This leads to constraints in the formulation of policy for this group. If we look at the census data it is notable that demographic information is also difficult to obtain. The only tangible source was provided by the MM, namely the registered patients of villages in the direct area of a MM medical clinic.

As indicated before, there are no registered cases of Indigenous Peoples in voluntary Isolation or initial contact in Suriname. However, in the border areas there is contact between the Indigenous Peoples of Suriname and other Indigenous Peoples from Brazil and Guyana who travel back and forth for medical treatment and family visits. The existing Government policy should be seen in a national context based on principles of equality and sovereignty and not for specific ethnic groups. Despite the fact that the Government has a national approach, policy is formulated for specific areas.

The Decentralization Programme is an effective reference providing benefits to local populations since it can be seen as a protection initiative where locals are fully involved in the process of their own working and production conditions and priorities for the improvement of housing and living.

It is good to mention that the relation between the Government and the Traditional Authority is on a good level. The Traditional Authority also takes part in decision making and they are recognized by the Government. The direct contact point of the Government with the Traditional Authority is the District Commissioner.

Participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision making bodies is elevating in recent years, as more Indigenous Peoples are represented in high Government bodies e.g. parliament and as District Commissioners.

The law of Suriname is based on the principle of equality whereby every Surinamese citizen is equal. However, taking into consideration the specific position of Indigenous Peoples in remote areas there are special clauses in Acts or Agreements which are supposed to be in their favor. In some living areas of the Indigenous Peoples mining or logging concessions are still given to entrepreneurs.

The land rights issue is still a concern for the Government despite the several attempts which have been made to solve this issue. This situation makes it difficult for Indigenous Peoples to know what their rights and duties are in the areas.



Residents of Sipaliwini, Suriname examine a map produced by their community which identifies which areas are the most important for subsistence, income and other values. (© Milton Kam)

The following institutions are involved in policy making and execution for Indigenous Peoples, inter alia:

- ❖ The Cabinet of the President
- ❖ The Ministry of Regional Development
- ❖ The Ministry of Labor, Technological Development and Environment
- ❖ The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing
- ❖ The Ministry of Education and Community Development
- ❖ The Ministry of Natural Resources
- ❖ The Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management
- ❖ The Ministry of Transport, Communication and Tourism
- ❖ The Ministry of Justice and Police
- ❖ The Ministry of Defense
- ❖ The Ministry of Public Health
- ❖ The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

The NGOs are:

- ❖ VIDS
- ❖ OIS
- ❖ ACT
- ❖ CI

The general conclusion can be drawn that despite the tasks of each institutions within the Government structure there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in order to positively change the current position of Indigenous Peoples in a disadvantaged position.



5. Future outlook and Recommendations

This chapter will present a possible way forward in the protection of Indigenous Peoples in villages which are in remote and not easy accessible areas and general recommendations arising from the findings of the Projects' National Coordinator.

5.1 Future outlook

If we take into consideration the findings of this report it is noticeable that Indigenous Peoples in remote areas are in a less favorable position compared to the population in the coastal areas. Through the years since Suriname became independent on 25 November 1975, not much has changed with regard to their position. However, there are some major changes taking place nowadays. It is important to identify what actions need to be or will be taken in the future in order to elevate the detrimental situation of this vulnerable group.

With regard to health provision in the remote areas, the MM will shortly submit a project to the Ministry of Public Health for the purchase of one or multiple “water ambulances”. These ambulances are necessary to provide optimal health services in the interior of Suriname, namely the villages in the “Boven- Suriname” area which are difficult accessible. In this case it regards villages along the river side. Also for the village Apoera a “water ambulance” is necessary to transport patients to the district of Nickerie for medical care.

A Traditional Hospital has been re-used in 2014 in Kwamalasumutu, providing traditional healthcare to both local people and outsiders.

There is also a traditional clinic next to this Traditional Hospital.⁶⁰



Traditional hospital in Kwamalasumutu village



⁶⁰ www.act-suriname.org

With regard to education, the Government is planning to provide equal education in the interior since the education which is provided in the remote areas differs from the education in the coastal area.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the report the following basic recommendations will be presented.

1. It is recommendable that the Government addresses the major problems in the interior by formulating a Strategic Plan. The most prominent issues that need to be addressed are education and the land rights issues. The Strategic Plan must include the following:
 - ❖ a description of the situation
 - ❖ a description of the problem
 - ❖ possible solutions
 - ❖ actions on short, medium and long term
 - ❖ identified partners to execute actions
 - ❖ donors
2. Furthermore it is important that the Government of Suriname takes the lead in research in remote areas in order to have ownership of the problems. Within ACTO initiatives can be developed with other member countries in order to allocate funding for research on the situation in the border areas with Brazil and Guyana. By facilitating and supporting NGOs in their research they have a better understanding of the situation.
3. The human rights issues of this group are drawing international attention. The first steps need to be taken to address this matter in an effective, efficient and for all parties reasonable way. Providing a basic solution in cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples can be seen as a beginning. The current situation provides an environment for several

groups to claim rights and submit legal claims at international human rights bodies.

4. The demarcation of Indigenous Peoples' living areas is important because it facilitates efficiency in the formulation and implementation of policy.
5. It is also recommendable that the ministries responsible for policy in the interior take their responsibility and have an overview of their actions and tasks. During the research for this report it was difficult to receive data regarding their field of work.



His Excellency President Desiré Delano Bouterse, who also has Indigenous roots



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- ❖ Mrs. Ghamie Nawikromo, Deputy Director Sub Directorate Social Care, Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing
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ANNEXES





Annex 1: Census data Indigenous Population

| Ethnic group | Total | Nationality | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | | Surinamese | Dutch | Guyanese | French | Brazilian | Haitian | Chinese | American | Other Caricom | Other | Don't know | No answer |
| Indigenous | 20.344 | 19.282 | 84 | 466 | 190 | 242 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 27 | 12 |
| Maroon | 117.567 | 113.779 | 169 | 30 | 2.948 | 7 | 9 | 36 | 0 | 33 | 122 | 222 | 212 |
| Creole | 84.933 | 80.025 | 2.341 | 1.123 | 108 | 92 | 499 | 52 | 32 | 105 | 50 | 37 | 469 |
| Afro-Surinamese | 3.923 | 3.641 | 227 | 23 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Hindustani | 148.443 | 139.646 | 2.388 | 5.247 | 35 | 24 | 2 | 4 | 24 | 50 | 131 | 84 | 808 |
| Javanese | 73.975 | 73.052 | 366 | 18 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 68 | 43 | 396 |
| Chinese | 7.885 | 3.980 | 185 | 5 | 11 | 17 | 4 | 3.567 | 12 | 3 | 45 | 23 | 33 |
| Caucasian | 1.667 | 529 | 782 | 12 | 3 | 196 | 0 | 1 | 42 | 9 | 89 | 2 | 2 |
| Mixed | 72.340 | 66.434 | 3.280 | 1.045 | 212 | 769 | 25 | 26 | 74 | 40 | 173 | 68 | 194 |
| Other | 7.166 | 2.651 | 357 | 201 | 32 | 3.448 | 141 | 39 | 27 | 35 | 206 | 18 | 11 |
| Don't know | 1.805 | 1.141 | 23 | 101 | 7 | 204 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 40 | 254 | 19 |
| No answer | 1.590 | 1.085 | 46 | 7 | 14 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 400 |
| Total | 541.638 | 505.245 | 10.248 | 8.278 | 3.575 | 5.027 | 701 | 3.758 | 228 | 292 | 946 | 778 | 2.562 |

Population by ethnic group and nationality

(Source: 8th Census 2012 General Bureau of Statistics)



Annex 2: List of District Commissioners

| Nr. | District | District Commissioner |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Paramaribo | |
| | Paramaribo Noord – Oost (North – East) | Mr. Mohamad Kasto |
| | Paramaribo Zuid – West (South – West) | Mr. Mike Nerkust |
| 2 | Wanica | Ms. Roliene Samsodien |
| 3 | Para | Mr. Jerry Miranda |
| 4 | Saramacca | Mr. Rawien Jiawan |
| 5 | Nickerie | Mr. Wedprekash Joeloemsingh |
| 6 | Coronie | Mr. Aroenkoemar Ramdhani |
| 7 | Commewijne | Mr. Remy Pollack |
| 8 | Marowijne | Mr. Theodurus Sondrejoe |
| 9 | Brokopondo | Ms. Yvonne Pinas |
| 10 | Sipaliwini | |
| | Kabalebo | Mr. Armand Jurel |
| | Tapanahony | Ms. Margretha Malontie |
| | Paramacca | Mr. Mavrick Boejoekoe |
| | Boven - Saramacca | Ms. Gracia Emanuel |
| | Boven – Suriname | Mr. Naltus Naana |
| | Boven – Coppename | Mr. Naltus Naana |
| | Coeroeni | Mr. Naltus Naana |

(Source: Ministry of Regional Development)