

STATEMENT
UPR Pre-session on Suriname
Geneva, 7 October 2021
Delivered by: Stichting PROJEKTA

1- Presentation of the Organisation

This statement is delivered by Stichting PROJEKTA, a Surinamese civil society organisation focusing on human rights, democracy and good governance, with specific focus on gender equality and women's rights. PROJEKTA has ECOSOC consultative, and has been involved in one way or the other in UPR processes since 2011. However, this is our first shadow report.

2- National consultations for the drafting of the national report

For the drafting of this cycle's National Report, Projekta and other stakeholders were emailed to provide information to the Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and Police. We are unaware of any other actions after these requests.

3- Plan of the Statement

Our statement today addresses only two of the issues in our shadow report, namely (1) children's rights with a focus on violence against children, and (2) freedom of expression and opinion.

4- Statement

Children's Rights

A. Follow-up to the first review

Violence against children remains a huge human rights issue in Suriname, with 280 cases of sexual abuse reported in 2020, while many more cases go unreported. 88 % of children aged 2-14 years were subjected to at least one form of violent psychological or physical punishment by household members, according to the 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

At the 2nd UPR, Suriname received recommendations from Canada to strengthen and expand the child protection system by ensuring that survivors have access to shelter, justice, health-care services and social support services.

B. New developments since the first review

In 2018, the Government of Suriname initiated a coordinated mechanism for child protection services: the Integrated Child Protection Network (IKBeN), which included service providers from government and NGO's. The pilot for a system of case work and case management was postponed due to Covid, and has only now started. In order to speed up decision making on policies and budgets regarding the protection of children, a sub-council of the Council of Ministers was installed in March this year, as well as an inter-ministerial technical committee. However, current child protection programmes are still vastly inadequate and underfinanced. Furthermore, the ongoing Covid pandemic and the financial and economic crisis have impacted children severely.

C. Recommendations

We therefore recommend that the government of Suriname:

- Continue the inter-ministerial technical committee
- Commit funding for:
 - institutional strengthening of government service providers
 - strengthening NGO-led service delivery
 - establishing adequate emergency children's shelters with resources and skilled personnel
 - basic conditions for service delivery workers, such as transportation and field work allowances.

Freedom of expression and opinion

A. Follow-up to the first review

In Suriname's 2nd UPR cycle in 2016, Suriname received and noted the recommendation from Ireland to adopt a freedom of information law in line with international standards. However, Suriname still has no such Law, and there is no movement to indicate that the law is forthcoming.

B. New developments since the first review

There are no new developments to mention in this regard.

C. Recommendations

We therefore recommend that the government of Suriname work together with parliament, civil society and other stakeholders for the realisation and enforcement of Freedom of Information legislation.