

International Human Rights Clinic

University of Oklahoma College of Law

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Inputs on Rights of the Child and inclusive social protection in Suriname

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*This report does not represent the official position of the University of Oklahoma or the College of Law, and the views presented here reflect only the opinions of the individual authors and of the International Human Rights Clinic.*

**Summary**

The University of Oklahoma College of Law International Human Rights Clinic, U.S.A. (“IHRC-OU”) submits this alternative report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child about the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Suriname.

The University of Oklahoma (hereafter “OU”) was established in 1890. The College of Law is currently the academic home of over 700 students enrolled in the full-time Juris Doctor Program. The College of Law also offers Master of Law programs in Energy and Natural Resources, Indigenous Peoples Law, and U.S. Legal Studies and Master of Legal Studies programs in Energy and Natural Resources and Indigenous Peoples Law.

The University of Oklahoma College of Law Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy provides counsel to tribal, state and national policymakers and serves as a forum for the interdisciplinary discussion and resolution of problems facing Native communities. The International Human Rights Clinic was created in 2009 to provide research and training in the field of International Human Rights Law.

The purpose of this report is given inputs on Rights of the Child and inclusive social protection in Suriname.

**The State party in its last national report, among other things, mentioned:**

Since the ratification of CRC in 1993, several coordination structures have been established, including the National Committee for Children’s Rights (NCCR, 1998) and the Steering Group Youth Policy (1998). Ultimately, both national bodies were dissolved due to a transition of governments and related policy changes. In 2001, the Child Rights Bureau (CRB), a department within SOZAVO and a former working arm of the NCCR, was reactivated to coordinate the implementation of the CRC and has been assigned since 2007, with the formal responsibility for the national coordination and monitoring of the CRC. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para.20.

Suriname has developed a second National Action Plan for Children (NAPC) for the period 2009–2014, based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations of 2007 (para. 13) and on the UN document: “A world fit for children”. The plan has been approved by the Council of Ministers and fits within the larger national frame of development policies, including the Development Plan (DP) and the policy documents of the various relevant ministries (SOZAVO, Justice and Police, MOECD, Regional Development, Public Health, Labour, Technological Development and Environment (ATM) and Home Affairs). Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para. 25.

The Child Rights Bureau is responsible for coordinating the government self-monitoring of the implementation of the CRC through the established “Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism Implementation of an Integrated Child Rights Policy” (“Monitoring an Evaluative Mechanism Uitvoering Integraal Kinderrechten Beleid” – MUIK). The CRB is also responsible for monitoring of the NAPC. In this regard, the CRB has initiated the development of a monitoring plan for the NAPC 2009–2014, in close collaboration with all relevant ministries. In April and May 2012, several M&E workshops were organized with key representatives from all ministries, who will function as focal points to build and strengthen the capacity for adequate monitoring of the NAPC. These focal points will cooperate closely with NGOs and other non-governmental stakeholders. The main tasks of these focal points will be to identify annual priority child rights actions, build partnerships, support and facilitate implementation and collect data for monitoring and evaluation of these priorities. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para. 28.

The government acknowledges the need for the institutionalization of a comprehensive and child-friendly mechanism for the submission and investigation of complaints from children. In accordance with the so-called Paris Principles, this independent body will have the mandate to receive complaints from or on behalf of children and to investigate these complaints, make appropriate recommendations for addressing the investigated complaints and present an annual overview of the violations of children’s rights. In accordance with the Paris Principles, the government, in particular the Bureau for “Woman and Child Policy” of the Ministry of Justice and Police, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, drafted legislation, in particular a draft bill on the “Child Ombuds Bureau”, which was sent to the Council of Ministers and was approved in 2010. The bill passed the State Council where it was revised. In 2011, the revised bill was sent to the Ministry of Justice and Police, Department of Legislation, for further processing. The next step will be to submit the proposed legislation to Parliament. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para. 31

With technical support of UNICEF, the GOS is exploring the possibility of bilingual education. Currently, a study is being implemented on Indigenous and Maroon Education, maintaining a strong focus on bilingual education. UNICEF anticipates the research to be finalized by the end of January 2013. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para.202 (g).

The Surinamese government acknowledges the marginalized and deprived situation of thousands of urbanized people from the interior, in particular of women and children. Most newcomers perceive both advantages and disadvantages in the city. A future perspective of access to education and work, in particular for their children, is experienced as an advantage. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para. 206.

The State party in its National Committee mentioned: On November 20, 2009, the Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment established the “National Commission concerning the Elimination of Child Labour”, by state decree. It is comprised of officials from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Ministry of Social affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Regional Development, as well as representatives from labour unions, the private sector, NGOs, the University and the Cabinet of the President of Suriname. The commission’s mandate includes formulating national policy regarding the eradication of child labour, raising awareness, initiating specific programs for indigenous children, developing a list of occupations involving the worst forms of child labour, and monitoring the country’s compliance with international child labour standards. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/3-4. para. 216.

**Among the list of issues in relation to the combined third and fourth periodic reports received during the seventy second Committee session from May 17 to June 3, 2016.**

Please provide information on whether the State party has put in place measures to disseminate legislation on care institutions in different indigenous languages and in child-friendly and accessible formats. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/Q/3-4. para. 10.

Please report on the existence of public databases to assess the needs and effective access to public services and the public policies to improve the socioeconomic situation of children living in remote areas, in particular indigenous children and children from the interior, who are considered “internal migrants”, in the light of paragraph 206 of the State party report. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/Q/3-4. para. 17.

Please report on the measures adopted by the State party to address discrimination in education, and in particular those efforts to tackle drop-out rates among children living in the interior, to improve the quality of education in remote areas, to provide education in indigenous languages and in ways that are appropriate to the indigenous cultures and to ensure equal access to secondary and tertiary education for girls and boys. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/Q/3-4. para. 19.

**Among the concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Suriname.** Doc. CRC/C/SUR/CO/3-4. November 9, 2016

Children belonging to minority and indigenous groups. **The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends** that the State party continue to improve access to health, education and other services in the interior areas of the State party for Amerindian and Maroon children, including by approving the draft law on language education and the language council, ensuring access to free primary education, building more public-school facilities, expanding preschool education, improving training for teachers and administrators and expanding the child-friendly school project. **The Committee also recommends** that the State party ensure access by the Amerindian and Maroon communities to quality health care and to clean water and sanitation, by expanding the WASH project. It should also ensure that Amerindian and Maroon communities are protected from illegal and uncontrolled logging and mining, which has a negative environmental impact on these communities, by adopting and enforcing legislation on sustainable land management in consultation with local communities and promote corporate social responsibility. Doc. CRC/C/SUR/CO/3-4. para. 36.

**The Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Suriname.**

Unfortunately, the State party has not provided evidence of significant action taken towards the implementation of the recommendations to improve access to health, education and other services

for Amerindian and Maroon children.

The State party has not provided a follow-up report about the draft law on language education and the language council, guarantying in coordination with the Amerindian and Maroon training for teachers.

No additional information provided by the State on the particular issue of (**I)** ensure access by the Amerindian and Maroon communities to quality health care and to clean water and sanitation; **(II)**

protection from illegal and uncontrolled logging and mining, which has a negative environmental impact on these communities

**Recommendations:**

* In the next State report, provide information on the draft bill on the “Child Ombuds Bureau”, which was sent to the Council of Ministers and was approved in 2010, and present the result of that.
* In the next State report, provide information on whether has put in place measures to disseminate legislation on care institutions in different indigenous languages and in child-friendly and accessible formats, and present the result of that.
* In the next report, present the results of public databases to assess the needs and effective access to public services and the public policies to improve the socioeconomic situation of children living in remote areas, in particular indigenous children and children from the interior.
* In the next report, present the results on the measures adopted to address discrimination in education, and in particular those efforts to tackle drop-out rates among Amerindian and Maroon children.
* In the next report, present the results on the guarantees to provide education in indigenous languages in ways that are appropriate to the Amerindian and Maroon cultures.
* Develop a comprehensive strategy concerning how to best structure the classroom for Amerindian and Maroon students and ask to them whether multi-grade institutions are best for the students.
* Vigorously create access to scholarships for Amerindian and Maroon students.
* Extend a standing invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education.