

**November 2021**

# **Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Suriname**



Stichting Lobi Health Center



## **STATEMENT**

**UPR Pre-session on Suriname  
Geneva, October 7, 2021**

**Delivered by: Women's Right Centre (WRC) and Stichting  
Professional Associates for Representation, Equality and  
Acceptance (Stichting PAREA)**



**Domestic stakeholders' contributions to the  
39<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review  
of the Human Rights Council on the status of  
human rights in the Republic of Suriname**

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### 1- Presentation of the Organizations

This statement is based on the joint stakeholders' submission by Stichting Lobi Health Center, Women's Rights Centre and Stichting PAREA, all national not-for-profit, independent organizations. My presentation will focus on the sections for which Women's Rights Centre and Stichting PAREA were the main responsible organizations. Stichting PAREA is an association of LGBTQI+ professionals set up in 2014 to serve the interests of the local LGBTQI+ community of Suriname. Women's Rights Centre was established in 1997 to advance and protect women's rights in Suriname.

### 2- National consultations for the drafting of the national report

Two (2) consultations with relevant stakeholders were held in the process of drafting the national report. One in advance to the draft report and the other one in advance to the final report.

### 3- Plan of the Statement

This statement addresses the following overarching themes: (1) Women's rights and gender inequality and (2) non-discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

### 4- Statement

#### I. Women's rights and gender inequality

##### A. Follow-up to the previous review

Suriname has received recommendations on the sub-themes: '*maternal mortality*', '*traditions violating sexual consent and gender equality*' and '*sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination and stigmatization*' at the previous cycles of the UPR. Despite, supporting, for example, the recommendations to draw up a national health policy in order to reduce the high rate of maternal mortality (Senegal) and to promote efficiently equality between men and women, and take all necessary measures to combat violence against women and trafficking in persons (France), Suriname fell short in effective implementation of the recommendations it supported and noted.

In the period under review, maternal mortality ratios and stillborn rates remained alarming high. Women, girls, lesbian, bisexual and trans-women, women living with HIV, sex workers and migrant women and girls continued to experience Sexual and Gender Based Violence, discrimination, and stigmatization in the private and the public domain. And both employees and employers continued to recognize sexual harassment as a serious problem in the private and public workplace.

##### B. New developments since the previous review

In the period under review there was no significant progress on the sub-themes of the overarching theme of Women's Rights and Gender Inequality to be reported.

##### C. Recommendations

We therefore strongly propose to make Women's Rights and Gender Inequality a prominent theme during the review of Suriname, with a priority on '*maternal mortality*', '*traditions violating sexual consent and gender equality*' and '*sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination and stigmatization*', and recommend that States urge Suriname to:

1. *Develop and implement in partnership with relevant stakeholders, comprehensive and budgeted maternal healthcare policies and measures that ensure accessible, sufficient, and timely obstetric care for all women, addressing postnatal care, maternal mortality causes and a surveillance and monitoring system.*
2. *Develop and implement a Plan of Action to protect, respect, and fulfil, in a balanced manner, the cultural rights and the right to health of the Samaaka people.*

3. *Incorporate the Inter-American Model legislation Femicide in its entirety in the Criminal Code and in line with it, develop, dedicate adequate resources, and carry out a comprehensive multi-sectoral policy approach, in particular protocols aiming at enhancing and guaranteeing the provision of professional sexual and gender-based violence services.*
4. *Amend Article 500a of the Penal Code to include gender and HIV-status.*
5. *Abolish the offence of indecent conduct by women as described in Articles 65 and 66 of the Police Penal Code.*
6. *Increase the capacity at all levels of the Ministries of Health and Justice and Police on human rights of sex workers.*
7. *Facilitate an in-depth public debate including with women's organizations and labor unions as input for the current draft legislation around sexual harassment at the workplace, and raise awareness on sexual rights, for specific target groups in culturally appropriate language.*

## **II. Non-discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression**

### **A. Follow-up to the previous review**

Suriname received recommendations on the overarching theme non-discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Suriname supported, among others, the recommendation to take all necessary steps to adopt legislative and other measures to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Netherlands) and to adopt specific legislation to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Chile), but failed to effectively implement the recommendations it supported and noted.

In the period under review, the LGBTQI+ individuals continued to face various forms of discrimination, without sufficient legal remedies, preventing them to fully enjoy their right to family life and in particular hindering trans-persons to supplement their civil status registry in accordance with their re-assigned gender and sex as ruled by the domestic District Court in first instance.

### **B. New developments since the previous review**

In 2017 the Central Bureau for Citizen Registration was ordered by the domestic District Court to change the gender of the interest party in the registers of birth, in accordance with the law. This ruling is currently challenged in appeal by the government. The 2017 conducted public hearing under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Police, revealed broad public support for the full enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTQI+ individuals. Two draft labor laws with explicit protection of LGBTQI+ workers were submitted to Parliament, but no further development can be reported on these draft laws since January 2020.

### **C. Recommendations**

We therefore strongly propose to make sexual orientation and gender identity and expression a prominent theme during the review of Suriname, with a priority on *'the right to family life, 'sexual orientation and gender identity-based rights violations'* and *'sex re-assignment and related services* and recommend that States urge Suriname to:

1. Amend Article 80 of the Civil Code by making it gender neutral to guarantee the full enjoyment of the right to family life by LGBTQI+ people.
2. *Enact and adopt comprehensive legislation and policies that prevent all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and provide appropriate civil and criminal legal remedies to victims of these forms of discrimination.*
3. Review and make compatible with applicable law, all policies and measures on gender recording in the deeds of Civil Registry, to allow supplementing the registers of birth following gender and sex re-assignment.

**Thank you for your attention.**