



Statement by H.E. Mr. M. Noersalim, Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Suriname at the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women - *Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development*, New York, 15 March 2016

Mr. Chair,

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the G-77 and China, CELAC and CARICOM delivered earlier.

My delegation is honored to address the Commission on this important occasion regarding the theme: *Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development*.

With regard to women and the labor market, our Ministry of Labor submitted in October 2015 several draft legislation for review by the Council of Ministers. One of these draft laws regards the accession of Suriname to three fundamental Conventions of the ILO. It involves the basic treaties which oblige countries to ensure equal pay for work of equal value; the elimination of discrimination in the workplace; and the convention which obliges countries to set a minimum age for young people wishing to enter the labor market.

In the area of education we have made progress, in that increased numbers of girls and young women are enrolled and graduate at high school and university level. These numbers, however, are not yet reflected in the labor market.

Mr. Chair,

The combined CEDAW Reports, numbers 4, 5 and 6, have been concluded recently. It is important to continue the collection of data, which will enable us to base our policies on the real needs of women and other vulnerable groups.

The National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy for the period 2013 -2017 recognizes and reflects women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. This policy contains strategies and priorities aimed at further improving the maternal health services, working

towards a decline of new infections of HIV, increasing awareness and education for the prevention and reduction of teen pregnancies, sexual violence, cervical cancers and other sexual related issues.

The Minister of Home Affairs, together with male members of the Ministry, committed themselves as agents in the fight for gender equality. In this respect, the launch of the “Orangeday” campaign and the “HeforShe” commitment will take place in the urban as well as rural areas.

Further worth mentioning is a research project regarding the nature and causes of violent behavior among male perpetrators of intimate partner violence, which has been conducted in one of our rural districts. The aim of this research was to gather information to develop programs aimed at the prevention of such intimate partner violence.

Mr. Chair,

Last year, general elections have been held in Suriname, and civil society, together with the National Assembly and support from the government, implemented a nationwide educational and awareness raising campaign to strengthen the capacity of women within the political parties. The new cabinet now includes 4 female ministers, compared to 1, previously. The number of women in parliament has also increased from 6 to 13 female parliament members. This means an increase from 10% in 2010 to 25% in 2015.

Also worth mentioning, in the area of women and decision-making, is the appointment of the first woman as superintendent of the Police Force - the highest rank within this organizational structure. Furthermore, more women were appointed as Permanent Secretaries within the government.

With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ministries of Regional Development and Home Affairs are executing the project “Localizing the SDGs”. The aim of this project is to raise awareness and involve the local community in the implementation of the 17 Development Goals. The aim of the government, overall, is to cooperate with NGOs, CBOs and the private sector towards achieving gender equality.

In this regard, one of the priorities for this year is the formulation of the Gender Policy Plan for the period 2017 – 2021 in which the SDGs will be integrated, gender sensitizing of the high level government officials, and raising awareness in gender and gender equality issues in society.

Mr. Chair,

Despite our national gains, we acknowledge that the achievements have been uneven and that still a lot has to be done in the fight for attaining gender equality and violence against women. We are aware of the persistent intersecting social forces confronting women with multiple forms of discrimination, and that serving the needs of specific groups of women who have been marginalized, including Indigenous and Maroon women, requires close cooperation with communities and development of long term policies that are in accordance with local circumstances and needs.

In this fight, the Government of Suriname has to cope with many challenges including obstacles hindering the process of gender mainstreaming due to weak mechanisms, no or limited gender budgeting, limited financial resources, and lack of data and expertise.

Chair,

Despite the challenges that we face, we will continue our efforts in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women through joint efforts with various stakeholders, such as NGOs, the private sector, grassroots and faith-based organizations, through the targeted policies and programs at the national level and through advocacy at the regional and international level.

We stress the importance of mobilizing resources for the achievement of the sustainable development goals and acknowledge that nobody must be left behind in the fight for gender equality.

I thank you.