



Statement by

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on the occasion of the

57th Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women

New York
11 March 2013

Please check against delivery

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Madam Chair,

On behalf of the minister of Home Affairs responsible for the National Gender Policy of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Soewarto Moestadja, who could not be present at this session, I will make a statement on the policy view and actions of the Surinamese Government regarding the issue of gender based violence.

At the outset, we align ourselves with the statements of the G-77 and China, CARICOM and CELAC, respectively delivered by the distinguished representatives of Fiji, Guyana and Cuba.

The available data on the prevalence of violence against women in the Secretary General's report should serve as a strong impetus to scale up efforts worldwide to prevent and eliminate this violation of human rights. For Suriname, these disturbing figures become reality when the recent numbers of violent death of women as a result of violence are on the increase.

The Government of Suriname in its Development Plan 2012-2016, has committed itself to the eradication of violence against women. Mindful of the complexity of violence against women and girls, the Government of Suriname has adopted multifaceted strategies in close collaboration with many stakeholders. Due attention is given to legislative measures, especially on the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, the criminalization of rape within marriage, Stalking as well as the Domestic Violence Act. A draft Act on sexual harassment in the workplace has been presented to Parliament.

Prevention is also considered as an important element and therefore various country wide awareness raising campaigns were held with the participation of children, religious leaders, the media and other stakeholders.

I would like to highlight the organization of an essay contest with the theme "*From peace in the home to peace in Suriname: Let's put an end to violence against women*", drawing competitions as well as broadcasting of a television programme containing views of religious leaders regarding violence against women.

Ongoing activities include the re-activation of the Steering Committee Domestic Violence, comprising of representatives of the ministries of Justice and Police, Home Affairs, Social Affairs, Education and Regional Development. Together with the Platform on Domestic Violence, consisting of NGO's and governmental organizations, work will be done on an integrated policy on domestic violence.

We cannot but underscore the importance of the availability of reliable data disaggregated by sex and age in the formulation of comprehensive and effective policies and programmes that address violence against women and girls.

Madam Chair,

The involvement of men and boys in eradicating violence against women remains our best weapon in this fight. Changing attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate the superiority versus inferiority of the sexes is crucial. Men have to engage men to speak out against this scourge. A Surinamese NGO "Men meet Men" is actively pursuing the objective to change the minds of men in all walks of life based on religious principles.

Suriname is of the view that support for victims and survivors should be an integral part of a comprehensive strategy in the prevention and elimination of violence against women. A special Bureau Victim Assistance was established, which provides assistance to victims of all forms of violence on access to justice and other services, such as healthcare. Furthermore a hotline was established for children to report sexual abuse and special arrangements are made for children to testify in special Chambers at legal proceedings to avoid intimidation by perpetrators.

In closing, Madam Chair,

We expect that this 57th Session of the Commission will conclude in the adoption of an action-oriented outcome document, a document with commitments from all stakeholders to take concerted action towards the prevention and elimination of violence against women. A document for the millions of women and girls worldwide who are subjected to violence against them every day!

Thank you.