



REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

**Remarks by Ms. Shiefania Jahangier at the virtual
*60th Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference
on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*
23-25 February 2021**

**Agenda item 5: Reports by the countries on the implementation of the
Santiago Commitment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Paramaribo, 23 February, 2021

Good afternoon everyone.

I am Shiefania Jahangier, deputy head of the Bureau Gender Affairs Suriname. Joining me at this meeting are my two colleagues, Ms. Mireille Ngadimin, Policy Advisor at the Bureau Gender Affairs and Ms. Meryll Malone, Senior Desk officer at the Multilateral Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation.

It is our pleasure to share with you today on this platform an initiative taken by the government of Suriname in cooperation with UN Agencies in the area of gender-based violence.

Various studies show that one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence mostly by an intimate partner. Unfortunately, Suriname also copes with a disturbing incidence of violence against women.

The “National Health Survey among Women for Suriname 2019”, which was conducted among 1527 women in the age category 15-64 years, shows that 32 percent of women who have ever cohabited, experienced at least one act of physical and / or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their life.

Furthermore, it is estimated that more than 50,000 women in Suriname have experienced one or more acts of physical and or sexual violence by male partners and that about 9,000 women are probably still in an abusive relationship. The survey also found that approximately one in three women who experienced intimate Partner Violence never disclosed their experience and most survivors did not seek or receive assistance.

This finding and the fact that women are at higher risk of experiencing intimate partner violence during crisis, urged the government of Suriname, namely the ministries of Home Affairs and Justice and Police in cooperation with UNFPA and UNDP to look closely at, and address the weaknesses of the available services for survivors of domestic and gender based violence.

In this regard the project “Gender Based Violence (GBV) interventions in response to COVID-19 measures” was carried out since June 2020. This project has three components, namely communication campaign, capacity building and establishment of referral pathways with the following objectives:

- Ensure continuation of essential GBV/DV services including through remote service provision;
- Increased knowledge on GBV/DV and the available support services;
- Increased knowledge of stress coping mechanism to prevent violence; and
- Establishment of GBV/DV referral pathways for improved access to services.

So, what has this project brought us so far?

First of all video communication material has been developed and broadcasted in various languages through television from December 2020 to January 2021. In general the message was that gender based violence is condemned and that services for survivors are available.

Secondly, a number of trainers have been virtually trained during three to four months in remote GBV case management service provision. These trainers are intended to train other service providers. One group of service providers has already been trained.

Lastly a mapping of available GBV service providers has been done and referral pathways are developed in booklet form, as well as a poster, containing information about various GBV services. Hard copies of the booklet and poster have been disseminated nationwide and will be soon made available in digital format.

I would like to conclude by indicating that the project partners are currently working on how to make the results more sustainable.

Thank you.