



SURINAME NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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SURINAME

NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE



FOREWORD

Migration trends and flows in the Caribbean region have shifted significantly in the last decade, demonstrating the need to create migration governance systems that can adapt and respond effectively for the management of these evolving flows. Suriname faces unique migration flows and challenges while making positive advancements towards improving migration governance and recognizing the benefits migration can provide to its national development.

As the leading organization addressing migration around the world, and recognizing the impact of migration on development, IOM works with governments and partners in the international community to tackle old and new challenges posed by migration management; promote understanding about the nature of migration flows; encourage social and economic development through the benefits of migration; and ensure respect for the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

The series of Migration Governance Needs Assessments, now implemented in Suriname, address the challenges and opportunities for guaranteeing that migration to, from and within the region occurs through well-managed migration policies and mechanisms. This report for Suriname has been contextualized to Suriname's particular situation, and,

published in both English and Dutch, provides key information to support the Government in understanding the current migration governance systems. The report highlights specific identified needs to support informed decision-making to strengthen migration governance that will benefit both the State and migrants.

The Migration Governance Needs Assessments represent a far-reaching effort across Central America, North America and the Caribbean, seeking to expand the understanding of the institutions and policies regulating migration in the regions in order to support intraregional sharing of good practices and the identification of efficient solutions to challenges in migration governance.

We believe that producing accurate and reliable information and analysis is a crucial step towards empowering governments and identifying ways in which IOM and other international partners can assist in strengthening effective migration management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'R' followed by several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert Natiello

Regional Coordination Officer for the Caribbean and Chief of Mission, IOM Guyana

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	General Bureau of Statistics (<i>Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek</i>)
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBB	Central Bureau of Civil Affairs (<i>Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken</i>)
CCRIT	Caribbean Community Risk Information Tool
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CONSOLE	Council for Security and Law Enforcement
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
KV	Short-stay visa (<i>Kortverblijf</i>)
MKV	Short-stay permits (<i>Machtiging tot Kortverblijf</i>)
MRZ	Machine-Readable Zone
NCCPSAP	National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
NCCR	National Coordination Center for Disaster Relief (<i>Nationaal Coördinatiecentrum voor Rampenbeheersing</i>)
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
PSA	Persons of Surinamese Descent (<i>Personen van Surinaams Afkomst</i>)
RGD	Regional Health-care Service (<i>Regionale Gezondheidsdienst</i>)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRD	Surinamese Dollar

INTRODUCTION

Migration trends in the Caribbean have changed along with regional and global dynamics. In recent decades, the region has seen important transformations in the factors that push people to migrate, in the profiles of migrants and in the risks to which migrants are exposed.

In this context, promoting organized, safe, and regular migration is key. With the support of the international community, governments in the region have recognized the need to develop migration governance systems that allow them to respond to emerging challenges and to maximize the opportunities presented by migration.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has developed different guidelines and tools to support governments in this process and to facilitate aligning domestic policy with international standards for the protection of migrants, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically goal 10.7 to “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”¹

As part of these efforts, IOM has created the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which defines the principles and objectives of effective migration governance. Additionally, IOM has developed the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) as an instrument that,

without addressing implementation, assesses the institutional, legal and public policy framework on migration in the countries that request it. Currently, Suriname has not yet implemented the MGI; however, it is the subject of a Migration Profile, developed by IOM in 2015, that includes basic information about the main migration management structures.²

This report is part of a study that seeks to complement the available information, offering a panoramic view of migration governance in Suriname, including information about the successes and challenges in the implementation of migration policy and incorporating the perspective of the private sector and civil society.

The Migration Governance Needs Assessment in Suriname was developed in an accessible format that provides data on the structures and policies regulating migration governance and that identifies priorities for strengthening government capacity to manage migration effectively. In this sense, this report complements and builds upon the Suriname Migration Profile: A Study on Emigration From, and Immigration into Suriname.

1. United Nations, 2015.
2. IOM, 2015.

METHODOLOGY

In 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) carried out a comprehensive assessment of migration governance needs in ten Caribbean countries. In 2019, the study was replicated in Haiti, and in 2020 the methodology was expanded to Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Suriname.

The methodology involved:

- A review of secondary sources of information, including national legislation, regulations and protocols, government reports and studies conducted by IOM, other United Nations agencies and international organizations.
- A baseline questionnaire made up of a set of 35 indicators and 89 sub-indicators, based on the principles and objectives of the IOM Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). The questionnaire made it possible to identify the specific information gaps and inform the development of protocols for conducting semi-structured interviews.
- A series of in-person and remote semi-structured interviews conducted with government officials, members of civil society and representatives of United Nations agencies.
- Triangulation of primary data, compared with information provided by different information sources, in order to guarantee the reliability of the results.

In Suriname, 12 interviews were conducted in February and March 2020 with 17 representatives of government ministries, civil society and the private sector. Interviews with government officials included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken*), the Ministry of Justice and Police (*Ministerie van Justitie en Politie*) and its Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit, the Ministry of Defence (*Ministerie van Defensie*), the Ministry of Labour (*Ministerie van Arbeid*), National Coordination Center for Disasters (*Nationaal Coördinatiecentrum voor Rampenbeheersing, NCCR*), General Bureau of Statistics (*Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek*) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken*).³

The final result is a document that offers an updated panoramic view of migration governance in Suriname, structured in six thematic chapters:

1. Migration Policies and Adherence to International Standards
2. Migration and Border Management
3. Migration Management in Situations of Emergencies and Disasters
4. Migrant Protection and Assistance
5. Migration and Health
6. Labour Migration and Human Development

Each chapter is divided into three subsections that include:

- a) a factual description of government management of migration;
- b) a section of bullet points that highlight the most important aspects discussed in the description; and
- c) a table that details the principal needs related to migration governance, organized by sector.

The identified needs included in each chapter were prepared based on the information provided by government representatives, IOM specialists and representatives of civil society. These offer recommendations and opportunities for improvement, but they are not exhaustive and do not represent the official position of the Government of Suriname or the organizations consulted.

3. The names of ministries here may differ from those used throughout the report, as the names of some ministries changed between the time in which interviews were conducted and the time of publication of this report. While the report includes the most updated names, the information here is intended to represent the names of the ministries at the time the fieldwork was conducted.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: SURINAME

The Republic of Suriname, located on the northern mainland of South America, is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the west, Brazil to the south and French Guiana to the east. At just under 165,000 km² and divided into 10 administrative districts, Suriname is the smallest independent country on the continent.⁴ The country, formerly known as Dutch Guiana, was a plantation colony of the Netherlands in the late-17th century. It gained independence on 25 November 1975, and today it remains the only Dutch-speaking country in South America.

Suriname has a diverse population of approximately 575,911 people,⁵ comprised of eight ethnic groups primarily of Amerindian, African, Indian and Javanese descent. The vast majority of the population is concentrated in the capital, Paramaribo, constituting around 239,000 people.⁶ Although Dutch is the official language, the local language, Sranan Tongo, is still widely spoken.⁷

Suriname is part of several regional institutions and mechanisms, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization for American States (OAS), the Community for Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). In 1995, Suriname became a member of CARICOM, which comprises 15 Member States and five Associate Members. Subsequently, the country engages in its various organs, including: the CARICOM Single Market and

Economy (CSME); the Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS); the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA); and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). Suriname is also a participant in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the Global Compact on Migration, and the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC), which is a regional consultative process under development in the Caribbean.

Suriname is considered an upper-middle-income country, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 3.985 billion⁸ and a GDP per capita of USD 6,854.90.⁹ The mining industry and national exports of oil and gold account for nearly 86 per cent of exports and 27 per cent of government revenues, making the country vulnerable to mineral price changes.¹⁰ In 2019, the World Bank Group approved a USD 23 million loan to support international engagement for sector governance to promote economic diversification, contribute to private sector growth opportunities of the agriculture and tourist industries, stimulate job creation, and benefit small and medium enterprises. The project also supports the administration of the mining industry, including better management of environmental and social impacts.¹¹

In 2018, Suriname scored 0.724 in the Human Development Index (HDI), composed of indicators on life expectancy, education, and per capita income, placing the country in the high human development classification and positioning it at 98 out of

4. CIA, 2020.
5. World Bank, 2019e.
6. CIA, 2020.
7. Ibid.
8. World Bank, 2019a.
9. World Bank, 2019b.
10. CIA, 2020.
11. World Bank, 2019f.

189 countries and territories.¹² According to the Human Development Indicators, the average life expectancy of Surinamese is 71.6 years.¹³ The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which calculates the loss to achievements in reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation due to inequality between men and women, ranked Suriname 112 out of 162 countries.¹⁴

Suriname has a net migration rate of -1.7 and its emigration rate is among the 20 highest in the world, as approximately 42 per cent of Surinamese reside abroad.¹⁵ The Netherlands constitutes the primary destination country for emigrants, followed by the United States of America, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, French Guiana and the Netherlands Antilles.¹⁶ In April 2020, 357,000 Surinamese nationals resided in

the Netherlands, comprising 177,000 first generation residents and 180,000 second generation residents.¹⁷

The number of migrants living in Suriname nearly doubled in the past two decades. In 2019, the total registered immigrant population in Suriname was 46,200,¹⁸ with Guyana as the most common origin country, followed by Brazil, China and the Netherlands.¹⁹ According to the Government of Suriname, migrant flows from Haiti and Cuba have also increased significantly over the past few years.

12. UNDP, 2019.

13. UNDP, 2020.

14. UNDP, 2018.

15. IOM, 2019b.

16. ABS, 2013.

17. CBS, 2020.

18. These numbers represent an estimate from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Population Division and do not include the irregular population in Suriname. Please see for more information: www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/countryprofiles.asp.

19. UN DESA, 2019.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CAPITAL	CURRENCY	POPULATION ²⁰	AREA (km ²) ²¹	GDP PER CAPITA (USD) ²²	MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES ²³
Paramaribo	Surinamese Dollar (SRD)	575,911	163,821	6,854.90	Mining

MIGRATION DATA

IMMIGRANT POPULATION ²⁴	IMMIGRANT POPULATION (% of total population) ²⁵	WOMEN (% of immigrant population) ²⁶	EMIGRANT POPULATION ²⁷	INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS ²⁸	REMITTANCES RECEIVED (USD) ²⁹	REMITTANCES RECEIVED (% of GDP) ³⁰	NET MIGRATION RATE ³¹
46,400	7.9	45.3	423,500	6,000	519,054,097	0.014	-1.7

20. World Bank, 2019e.

21. CIA, 2020.

22. World Bank, 2019b.

23. CIA, 2020.

24. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. IDMC, 2017.

29. World Bank, 2019d.

30. World Bank, 2019c.

31. Migration Data Portal, 2020.

MIGRATION POLICIES AND ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

This section describes the different national policies that have been developed in Suriname for the management of migration. It also includes information about the status of ratification of international treaties that support the respect for the rights of migrants.

Suriname has ratified six of the nine main international instruments in the field of human rights. The Government of Suriname has not ratified the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, the *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, or the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances*. In addition to Suriname's adherence to international standards, other commitments such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration reflect the Government's commitment to improve migration management.³²

The main legislation regulating immigration and emigration in Suriname can be found in several statutes, the most relevant being: the *Aliens Act 1991* (S.B. 1992 no. 3); the *Aliens Decree 1995* (S.B. 1995 no. 85); the *Work Permit Aliens Act* (as amended in S.B. 2002 no. 23); the *Penal Code* (S.B. 2015 no. 44); the *Persons of Surinamese Descent Act* (S.B. 2014 no. 8); and the *Nationality and Residency Act* (as amended in S.B. 2014 no.121). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Internationale Business en Internationale Samenwerking*) and the Ministry of Justice and Police (*Ministerie van Justitie en Politie*) are the primary government entities mandated with migration management. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation functions as the coordinating hub equipped to guide policy, action and distribution of resources related to migration, while the Ministry of Justice and Police acts as the implementing government entity in Suriname.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation currently leads the development of a migration policy; however, due to the global emergency surrounding COVID-19, the validation of the draft policy has been postponed, as the focus of the Government has briefly shifted to the repatriation of the Surinamese citizens and residents and the provision of consular assistance. The Ministry also established the Migration Flow (*Personenverkeer*) Committee, convening different ministries as a formal

interministerial coordination mechanism on migration.³³ Meeting monthly, the committee is tasked with developing and re-evaluating guidelines, legislation and recommendations related to migration. While efforts are being made towards improving migration management, the Ministry identified the need to increase the number of qualified staff working on migrant related issues and to allocate funds for resources such as new offices and computers. Additional needs identified by other ministries to work towards effective migration governance include: intensified and structured cooperation between ministries; allocated budgets for migration matters; migration training on key concepts and trends in Suriname and in the region; and participation in international migration conferences.

Suriname has signed bilateral agreements with several countries to facilitate extradition of crime suspects,³⁴ including Brazil, the United States of America and the Netherlands. The Department of Alien Service (*Vreemdelingendienst*), located in the Ministry of Justice and Police, is mandated through the *Alien Act 1991* (Arts. 24 and 32) with executing orders for deportation, expulsion or extradition of foreign nationals.

The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* (*Grondwet van de Republiek Suriname*, S.B. 1992 no. 38, Art. 8) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of "age, sex, race, language, religion, nationality, education, political affiliation, economic position or social circumstances or any other status."³⁵ The Act does not explicitly mention migration status; however, it does apply to national extraction, and thus provides some protection to migrants.

The Central Bureau for Civil Affairs (*Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken* or CBB) maintains a database for the registration of foreign nationals with residency permits as well as the deregistration of nationals residing abroad, and this information can be disaggregated by age, sex, nationality and residence. The CBB and the General Bureau of Statistics (*Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek* or ABS) compile and publish data on immigration and emigration, including in the national census; however, while emigrants are required to deregister at the CBB, some forget to do so, which distorts the true number of people actively registered in Suriname. Data collection and management remains a major challenge. IOM contributed to filling this gap with a 2015 *Suriname Migration Profile: A Study on Emigration from, and Immigration into Suriname*.³⁶

32. UN, 2018.

33. The Migration Flow Committee includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Ministry of Defence, and a representative of the State Media.

34. CERD, 2003.

35. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992a.

36. IOM, 2015.

The *Aliens Act 1991* (Art. 10) stipulates that foreigners are eligible for permanent residency if they have obtained a temporary residence permit or if they have been admitted as refugees.³⁷ A temporary residence permit is granted for a maximum of two years, with the possibility of renewal. In order to receive a permanent residency, foreigners must legally reside in Suriname for a minimum of five years. According to the *Nationality and Residency Act*, Surinamese nationality is obtained: (a) by birth, if a parent is a Surinamese national, or (b) after the age of 18, if the person resided in Suriname for three years immediately preceding the date that citizenship is to be conferred — except if the person is descendent from diplomats of foreign states.³⁸ Surinamese nationality can also be obtained through naturalization, if a person had their residence in Suriname for the proceeding five years. According to the Ministry of Justice and Police, approximately 200 to 300 migrant residents naturalize each year. Nationality by birth right is not recognized in Suriname.

The *Persons of Surinamese Descent Act* establishes the status of a person of Surinamese descent and the rights and obligations arising from that status, including the right to travel freely, obtain residency and work in Suriname.³⁹ A PSA status and PSA document may be granted to persons without Surinamese nationality and who: (a) were born in Suriname and currently hold another nationality; (b) were not born in Suriname, but have at least one parent who was born in Suriname; or (c) were not born in Suriname but have at least one grandparent who was born in Suriname. The PSA document is valid for five years and allows persons to stay in Suriname for a maximum of 12 months, with possibilities for extension. Applicants can activate their status and apply for a document online,⁴⁰ and documents may also be requested by family members, such as a legal partner. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation is responsible for receiving, processing and issuing the applications, which usually takes between six and eight weeks.⁴¹

The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* (Art. 57) states that every person who is 18 years or older and a Surinamese national may vote.⁴² Nationals who are not in the country during the voting period and migrants who are not naturalized Surinamese nationals are not allowed to vote.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Legislation governing migration		<i>Alien Act 1991</i> and the <i>Aliens Decree 1995</i>
National migration policy in a programmatic document		Draft policy under development
Interministerial coordination mechanism		Migration Flow Committee
National laws dealing with extradition and agreements for extradition facilitation		<i>Alien Act 1991</i> , Articles 24 and 32

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families</i>		
<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Its Two Protocols</i>		1976. Optional Protocol ratified in 1976. Second Optional Protocol not ratified
<i>International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>		1976
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>		1993
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>		1993
<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>		2017
<i>Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment</i>		
<i>International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances</i>		
<i>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i>		1984

37. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.
 38. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014c.
 39. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019j.
 40. Please see www.gov.sr for more information.
 41. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019k.
 42. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

MIGRATION POLICIES AND ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS



Migration strategy and regulatory framework

- The primary migration legislations are the *Aliens Act 1991* and the *Aliens Decree 1995*.
- Other laws directly related to migration include the *Work Permit Aliens Act* (as amended to S.B. 2002); the *Penal Code* (S.B. 2015); the *Persons of Surinamese Descent Act* (S.B. 2014); and the *Nationality and Residency Act* (as amended to S.B. 2002).
- There is no comprehensive migration policy or strategy, though a draft is under development; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation leads these efforts.
- The Migration Flow Committee is the formal interministerial coordination mechanism for migration.
- Suriname has signed bilateral agreements with several countries to facilitate extradition processes.
- The Department of Alien Service is mandated with executing orders for deportation, expulsion or extradition of foreign nationals.



Anti-discrimination

- The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname of 1992* prohibits discrimination on nationality and social status; however, it does not include migration status.



Records and data collection

- The Central Bureau of Civil Affairs maintains a database for the registration of foreign nationals with residency permits and documents of Persons of Surinamese Descent, disaggregated by age, sex, nationality and residence.
- The Central Bureau for Civil Affairs and the General Bureau of Statistics compile and publish data on immigration and emigration.
- Data collection remains a major challenge, particularly when emigrants do not deregister.



Residence and citizenship

- Temporary residence permits are granted for a maximum of two years, with the possibility of renewal.
- Foreigners are eligible for permanent residency if they have obtained a residence permit or if they have been granted access to Surinamese territory as refugees.
- In order to receive permanent residency, foreigners must legally reside in Suriname for a minimum of five years.
- Citizenship is obtained by naturalization or by birth.



Access to political rights

- Migrants who are not naturalized Surinamese nationals are not allowed to vote.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Ensure that the draft migration policy adheres to international standards.
- Expand qualified staff within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation and allocate funds for advanced facilities, specifically working spaces and computers.
- Support in the development and promotion of training across all ministries on key concepts and trends related to migration in Suriname and in the region.
- Deepen and structure cooperation between ministries related to migration.
- Improve international engagement to exchange experiences and learn about migration issues and good practices.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, the *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* and the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances*.
- Complete the draft and implement the migration policy in adherence with international standards.
- Update anti-discrimination legislation to include migration status.
- Develop a centralized data collection system for migration data.

MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT

This chapter presents a brief description of the main structures and systems available in Suriname to manage migration flows and exercise border control.

The Republic of Suriname has two principal airports, two border crossing points along the rivers with the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and French Guiana, and one international seaport which are considered the principal border crossing points in the country.⁴³ Unofficial border crossing points have been detected across the extended borders with Brazil, French Guiana and Guyana that are generally isolated and unmonitored, which allows for irregular migrant movements to and from Suriname. The Military Police (*Korps Militaire Politie*), located in the Ministry of Defense, has direct responsibility for immigration control at Suriname's principal border crossing points. Together with the Police Force (*Korps Politie*) of the Ministry of Justice and Police (*Ministerie van Justitie en Politie*), military personnel conduct joint patrols as part of Suriname's efforts to combat crime, and both serve on special security teams.⁴⁴

The Department of Alien Service (*Vreemdelingendienst*), also located in the Ministry of Justice and Police, is responsible for supervising the admission of stay and executing orders for deportation, expulsion or extradition of foreign nationals. The most common migrants in irregular status in Suriname are overstayers who make use of visa-free entry (e.g. Brazilians, Guyanese and Haitians) or who enter via tourist visas (e.g. Chinese and Dutch nationals).⁴⁵ Data from the border management system, which automatically flags visa overstays, show that between 2012 and 2014, a total of 54,883 persons overstayed, the largest group being Brazilian nationals (15,921), followed by passport holders from the Netherlands (12,845), French Guiana (10,339), and Guyana (5,622).⁴⁶ According to the *Aliens Act 1991* (S.B. 1992 no. 3), foreign nationals who have been denied entry or do not hold a valid residence permit can be subject to forced return and will be given a reasonable period of time to leave the country.

Migrants – and in the case of migrant children, their parents – are obliged to pay the necessary expulsion costs; if a migrant is not able to pay the costs for expulsion, the State may confiscate the migrants' belongings. As Suriname's migration law is civil rather than criminal, the country does not have a dedicated detention centre; migrants in irregular status are taken into temporary custody specifically for migrants (*vreemdelingenbewaring*) as they await extradition.

According to officials from the Ministry of Justice and Police, migrant children, for whom the age of criminal responsibility is 12 years old as stipulated in the *Penal Code* (*Wetboek van Strafrecht*, S.B. 2015 no. 44, Art. 105),⁴⁷ are taken to a general children's shelter. Nonetheless, Suriname has made significant efforts to assist migrants in irregular status to access regular migration channels by allowing them to regularize their status by paying a fine, including through the *Project Legalisation* (*Project Legalisatie*), which started in September 2017. However, after 3,347 submissions for residency, with 1,537 applications from Haitians, 983 from Chinese and 229 from Cubans, a large group of foreigners still remain in an irregular situation, because only a small portion of migrants in irregular status had applied.⁴⁸

The national development plan of Suriname (*Ontwikkelingsplan 2017–2020*) commits to increased prevention and control of cross-border crime related to human trafficking and smuggling by strengthening border posts with support from the Netherlands.⁴⁹ Provisions against human smuggling are included in the *Penal Code* (Art. 249b), which prescribes punishments from six to 15 years of imprisonment and a fine between SRD 50,000/USD 6,725 and SRD 100,000/USD 13,450. Although legislation for the prosecution and conviction of human smugglers is in place, immigration officers have identified several needs for addressing smuggling, including: training on human smuggling, languages and culture; international cooperation for law enforcement and the identification of smuggling routes; interministerial coordination; and financial resources. Additionally, officers identified the reception and assistance of smuggled migrants as a substantial need, as assistance is currently provided on an ad hoc and informal basis.

The border management system, provided by Serbia-based Vlatacom, verifies travel documents and stores electronic records about regular and irregular entries, (over)stays and exits of travellers. Some official border crossing points have machine-readers that capture MRZ (Machine Readable Zone) codes, and others have scanners that capture MRZ codes and take photographs of travelling documents. The collected data can be shared with other migration entities upon request. However, the system is not automatically integrated with any other national databases. Alerts from international watch lists, including the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), are received via the Joint Regional Communication

43. IOM, 2015.

44. United States of America Department of State, 2019.

45. IOM, 2015.

46. Ibid.

47. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2015c.

48. GFC Nieuws, 2020b.

49. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2017a.

Centre (JRCC) and the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS), as stipulated in the *Transfer of Passenger and Crew Information Act (Wet Overdracht Passagiers–en Bemmanningslijsten*, S.B. 2016 no. 113). According to the Act, APIS information is stored for three years and may be shared with the intelligence services with which Suriname has an agreement and which have been approved by the CARICOM Council for Security and Law Enforcement (CONSOLE).⁵⁰ Although the necessary equipment is available to capture and store fingerprints, it is currently not operational. Nonetheless, according to key government officials, Suriname is considering including biometric features in its passports, as this is a condition set by the European Union (EU) to eliminate visa requirements between Suriname and EU nationals. Eliminating these requirements is expected to enhance the free mobility of Dutch nationals, one of Suriname’s largest foreign populations.⁵¹

In 2011, the Government of Suriname introduced the tourist card (*toeristenkaart*) for foreign nationals of 37 countries visiting the country for tourism purposes for a maximum period of 90 days.⁵² The card could be obtained at Surinamese consulates as well as at the national airport on arrival. In 2019, the then Ministry of Foreign Affairs replaced the paper-based tourist card with an electronic visa scheme, operated by Visa Facilitation Service Global (VFS Global), and introduced the following e-visas: a) single-entry tourist card for three months; b) multi-entry tourist visa for two to 12 months; and c) multi-entry business visa for two to 24 months.⁵³ Although it expanded the visa options for foreign nationals of 51 countries,⁵⁴ it subsequently limited the free movement of people who were not aware of the new visa regulations or did not have access to the internet. Information outlining visa options is not fully standardized across sources, and some websites, including www.gov.sr, still refer to the former tourist card.⁵⁵ Travellers are still required to print out their electronic visa in order to enter Suriname.

The Department of Alien Affairs (*Vreemdelingenzaken*), located in the Ministry of Justice and Police, is the unit responsible for managing residency applications and approvals, extensions of stay, naturalization of migrants and the expulsion of foreigners who are not allowed in the country.⁵⁶ The Department issues short-stay permits (*Machtiging van kortverblijf* or MKV), along with the required short-stay visas to enter the country (*Kortverblijf* or KV), to foreign nationals who intend to stay in the country longer than three months. Applicants must submit their application to a Surinamese consulate or embassy three months prior to departure for Suriname, and applicants from countries without a Surinamese consulate can submit

INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

Border Management System	✓	Operational at all official border crossing points
Records of entries and exits	✓	Digital records
Electronic/biometric passports	✗	In development
Readers or scanners	✓	Machine-readers and scanners capture MRZ codes and take photographs of travel documents
Identification of fraudulent documents	✓	

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons	✗	
Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	✗	
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols	✓	2007
Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea	✓	2007
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances	✗	

50. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2016b.

51. UN DESA, 2019.

52. IOM, 2015.

53. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019c.

54. VSF Global, 2019.

55. Government of the Republic Suriname, 2019m.

56. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019a; Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019n.

their application in a country where diplomatic representation is present.

Upon arrival, MKV holders must register at the Department within eight days and apply for a required residency permit within 14 days.⁵⁷ Subsequently, foreign nationals who want to apply for residency must register at the office of Alien Registration (*Vreemdelingen Registratie*), located within the Central Bureau of Civil Affairs (*Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken* or CBB), which registers all foreign nationals with residency permits and PSA documents.⁵⁸ While still in their country of origin, applicants have the option to submit the required documents for the MKV to the office of Alien Registration as well for the rapid assessment and issuance of a residence permit.

According to the Global Passport Power Rank, which measures the mobility opportunities of a country's citizens, Suriname ranks 61 out of 193 countries. The passport index shows that Suriname nationals can travel to 38 countries visa free, to 43 countries with a visa on arrival, and to 117 countries with a visa arranged in advance.⁵⁹ Suriname was the first country to receive the machine-readable CARICOM passport,⁶⁰ which is provided by Canadian Bank Note Company, Limited (CBN). Passport costs range between SRD 300/USD 40 and SRD 1000/USD 134. Upon submission, a passport is issued within three to six weeks.⁶¹

MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT



Border management

- Suriname has two principal airports, two official land border crossing points, and one international seaport.
- Unofficial border crossing points have been detected across the extended borders with Brazil, French Guiana and Guyana.
- The Military Police has direct responsibility for immigration control at Suriname's principal border crossing points.
- Military personnel conduct joint patrols with the Police Force as part of Suriname's efforts to combat crime, and both serve on special security teams.



Migrant detention

- Migration law in Suriname is civil, and the country does not have a dedicated detention centre for migrants.
- Migrants in irregular status are taken into temporary custody specifically for migrants as they await extradition.
- The age of criminal responsibility is 12 years; migrant children in irregular status will not be detained for migration violations.



Smuggling of migrants

- The *Penal Code* (S.B. 2015) prescribes punishments for the crime of smuggling that range from six to 15 years of imprisonment and fines between the SRD 50,000/USD 6,725 and SRD 100,000/USD 13,450.
- There are no data available on the number of prosecutions or convictions of smugglers.

57. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019f.

58. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2020b.

59. Passport Index, 2020.

60. CARICOM, 2007.

61. Government of the Republic Suriname, 2020a.



Border management system

- The border management system is operational at all principal border crossing points.
- Some border crossing points have machine-readers, and other have scanners that capture MRZ codes and take photographs of traveling documents.
- Information-sharing between migration entities is done upon request.
- There is no centralized database for fingerprints.



Visas

- E-visas are issued through VFS Global to foreign nationals of 51 countries.
- Short-stay visas and permits are provided to foreign nationals staying longer than three months in Suriname.



Travel documents

- The delivery of a passport takes three to six weeks.
- Suriname issues CARICOM machine-readable passports.
- Applications for passports may be collected at embassies and consulates abroad to be processed in-country.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Adopt advanced border control tools, including e-passports and the collection of biometric data.
- Develop an inter-institutional coordination mechanism for border management and strategy.
- Regularize training for government entities related to border management and security and counter-smuggling.
- Facilitate international cooperation for law enforcement and the identification of smuggling routes.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the 1954 *Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons*, the *Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, and the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances*.
- Develop an inter-institutional coordination mechanism for border management and strategy.
- Create an integrated system for the data collection and analysis of migration data.
- Increase awareness-raising campaigns on the new e-visa options for the Surinamese diaspora communities and other migrants.

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

This section offers an overview of the different institutions, laws, regulations and national plans that exist in the Republic of Suriname for the management of emergencies and disasters, emphasizing to what extent the migration issues are incorporated.

Suriname has no legislation dedicated to disasters, and existing procedures do not explicitly include migrants; however, the *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname (Grondwet van de Republiek Suriname, S.B. 1992 no. 38)* mandates the President to declare a state of emergency to maintain security in case of danger or threat.⁶² The *Act on Regional Bodies (Wet Regionale Organen, S.B. 2002 no. 54)* includes provisions for the District Commissioner to demand the use of buildings and vehicles and request the assistance of competent residents in case of disasters in the district, enforced by the police if needed.⁶³ The National Coordination Centre for Disaster Relief (NCCR), established in 2016 and operating under the National Security Directorate of the Presidential Cabinet, is the primary agency for disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management. In 2012, NCCR was designated as the coordinating institute to work with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the various stakeholders regarding national disasters in order for assistance to be provided in an effective and organized manner. Notwithstanding, as it can be difficult to reach remote or rural areas of the country, initial disaster response activities are carried out through an incident command system at a district level.⁶⁴ Only when an event surpasses the capacity of first responders will the response be escalated to the NCCR and its crisis team, comprised of Disaster Coordinators from several ministries. Moreover, the National Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development in Suriname (*Nationaal Instituut voor Milieu en Ontwikkeling in Suriname* or NIMOS) oversees the broad management of environmental matters.

Suriname's *Country Document on Disaster Risk Reduction (2014)* presents an overview of disaster risk reduction in two selected districts that are vulnerable to natural hazards, Para and Commewijne, and operates as a reference guide for policy design, decision-making and

coordination with entities supporting the country.⁶⁵ From a human mobility perspective, this document makes reference to the districts as in transit areas for internal migration of individuals who are identified as members of vulnerable groups, especially women.

IOM seeks to support States in responding to migrants' needs before, during and after crises. The IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), adopted in 2012, is an operational and institution-wide tool to improve and systematize the way in which IOM supports its Member States to better prepare for and respond to migration crises.⁶⁶ The IOM Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, launched in 2014, provides guidelines and support for ensuring that migrants are included in crisis preparedness, emergency response and post-crisis action.⁶⁷ Both of these frameworks are voluntary for States, and they are intended to complement national policy regarding emergency management. Suriname has not explicitly integrated these frameworks into national policies and strategies. According to key officials from NCCR, it is mandated to provide displaced persons with relief camps or shelters as well as medical assistance.

In response to the global pandemic surrounding COVID-19, Suriname instituted the *State of Emergency COVID-19 Act (Wet Uitvoering Burgerlijke Uitzonderingstoestand, S.B. 2020 no. 83)*, in April 2020. The Act establishes the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team which is led by the Vice President and comprised of several ministries and departments, including the National Bureau of Security and NCCR.⁶⁸ Although the Team has set a number of protocols with regard to shelter and medical assistance for nationals and migrants, officials from NCCR have identified the need for a migration policy that includes provisions for migration management in situations of emergencies and disasters.

Data on natural hazards are collected through the Caribbean Community Risk Information Tool (CCRIT), which was implemented in 2016 in nine of the ten districts of the country. The toolkit was updated in 2018, with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and CDEMA, to include child-centred vulnerability indicators, strengthen the

62. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

63. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2002b.

64. Weeks and Bello, 2019.

65. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014a.

66. IOM, 2012.

67. MICIC, 2016.

68. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2020d.

resilience of children to the impacts of environmental change and improve adaptive capacity to emergencies as outlined through the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway)⁶⁹ and the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*.⁷⁰ The NCCR is mandated to analyze the risk data collected through the CCRIT.⁷¹ Moreover, the General Bureau of Statistics (*Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek* or ABS), conforming to the guidelines for CARICOM indicators, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators, keeps records on the registered individuals affected by environmental hazards, disaggregated by district and sex, but not by nationality.⁷² While the country collects data on the number of individuals located in risk areas, NCCR has identified the need for a comprehensive risk mapping in order to guide preparedness planning and management of disaster-induced displacement of all vulnerable groups, including migrants. Moreover, according to officials from the NCCR, people working in Suriname's mining interior, particularly migrants in irregular status, tend to migrate from place to place, making it difficult both to regulate mining activities and to track these vulnerable groups in times of natural hazards, such as heavy rainfall.

Suriname's early warning system connects the information servers of all district administrations to a centralized system in the capital, Paramaribo, and is used to communicate disaster information from the administrations.⁷³ The inter-districts partnership (inter-districten samenwerkingsverband) is the integrated network established between districts to enhance cooperation.⁷⁴ Information centres located in the districts provide information to the public. Other communication between the public and NCCR takes place through social media, television and radio broadcasts in Dutch as well as in the local Sranan Tongo language; however, information is not disseminated in other languages. According to the NCCR, while the multilingualism of Surinamese nationals, including staff leading emergency response, allows for communication with migrants who speak other languages, interpreters may be requested at the appeal of the migrant.⁷⁵

INCLUSION OF THE MIGRATION PERSPECTIVE IN PLANS AND PROTOCOLS

Mechanism to include the migration perspective	X
National risk and disaster management	X
Early warning system	X
Environmental changes	X

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty	Year of ratification	
<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>	✓	1997
<i>Paris Agreement on Climate Change</i>	✓	2019
<i>Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations</i>	X	
<i>Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>	✓	2006

69. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway is an international framework developed in 2014 to identify the priorities of small island developing States (SIDS) to be considered in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For more information see: www.2030caribbean.org/content/unct/caribbean/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/samoa-pathway.html.

70. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 outlines targets and priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks. For more information, see: www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030.

71. UNICEF, 2018.

72. ABS, 2018.

73. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014a.

74. Weekes and Bello, 2019.

75. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014a.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, International Business en Internationale Samenwerking*) there is no formal mechanism for the Ministry to coordinate with other ministries during disaster response, and this has been identified as a need to work towards effective migration management in times of emergencies and disasters.

As part of Suriname's participation in climate change mitigation, the country submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) in 2015, per the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in which the country committed to establishing and implementing the 2014–2021 *National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan*.⁷⁶ The Plan makes reference to the linkage between the impacts of environmental change and the country's vulnerability to sea level rise with migration flows, and it addresses the importance of timely adaptation measures, such as relocation, as most of Suriname's population and critical infrastructure are located along the coast.⁷⁷ The 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) notes that given the vulnerability of coastal areas to the impacts of climate change, "Suriname's dilemma is whether to continue to invest heavily in adaptation or relocate and rebuild its entire economy away from the threat of the rising sea."⁷⁸ However, the latest NDC submitted to the UNFCCC in 2020 notes that, while the 2015 NDC and the national *Development Plan 2017–2021 (Ontwikkelingsplan 2017–2020)* recommended partial relocation to limit exposure to sea level rise, this measure has not been included in the latest plan and has been abandoned.⁷⁹ Human mobility related to climate change is otherwise absent from the latest 2020 NDC and the Development Plan puts a stronger emphasis on in situ adaptation measures.

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS



Emergency and risk management

- Suriname has no legislation dedicated to disasters.
- The *Disaster Risk Reduction Country Document for Suriname* provides a comprehensive overview of the country's status at the district and community levels.
- The National Coordination Centre for Disaster Relief (NCCR) is responsible for disaster preparedness and coordination of risk management actions.
- The specific needs of migrant populations are not considered in any official document.



COVID–19 emergency response

- In April 2020, Suriname instituted the *Act State of Emergency COVID–19* for a maximum period of three months.
- Suriname established a Crisis Management Team that set a number of protocols with regard to shelter and medical assistance for nationals and migrants.

76. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2015a.

77. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014b.

78. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2015a.

79. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019l.



Early warning systems

- Communication through social media, television and radio broadcasts is in Dutch and in Sranan Tongo language; however, information is not disseminated in other languages.



Strategies for mitigation and adaptation related to environmental change

- The *National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan* establishes a plan to enhance Suriname's capacity for national adaptation planning to foster climate resilience.
- Environmental change guiding documents do not currently integrate human mobility as a key theme; however, they do consider relocation as an adaptation measure.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Develop a comprehensive migration policy that includes specific division of tasks regarding migration crises and disaster management.
- Conduct a comprehensive risk mapping in order to guide preparedness planning and management of disaster-induced displacement of all vulnerable groups, including migrants.
- Create a formal mechanism for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation to coordinate with other ministries in times of emergencies and disasters.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Disaster Relief Operations*.
- Create legislation dedicated to emergencies and disasters that includes human mobility concerns.
- Expand the *Disaster Risk Reduction Country Document for Suriname* to address internal displacement and incorporate provisions to more fully support migrants before, during and after emergencies.
- Collect data on migrant populations in conditions of vulnerability.
- Develop a comprehensive national database on multiple risks or protocols for information sharing.
- Disseminate information in additional languages and provide language training to staff.
- Advance and mainstream human mobility in environmental policy and strategic documents.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

The following section will discuss the main government institutions, legislation, and initiatives that exist in Suriname to provide protection and assistance to the migrant population, particularly to vulnerable groups, refugees and asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, and returnees.

The protection of and assistance to various vulnerable groups in Suriname (including children, youth, people with disabilities, homeless persons, and families with a low income) fall within the mandate of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (*Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Volkshuisvesting*).⁸⁰ Although no specific support services are dedicated to migrants, all migrants are able to make use of the Ministry's services. Victim care related to crimes, such as domestic violence, suicide attempts, sexual assault and human trafficking, are the responsibility of the Bureau of Victim Services (Bureau Slachtofferzorg) within the Ministry of Justice and Police (*Ministerie van Justitie en Politie*). Services provided to victims include: social and psychosocial counselling, medical and legal assistance, referral to other authorities and the harmonization of communication flows between the victim, police, public prosecutor's office and other relevant organizations.⁸¹ All migrants, including migrants in irregular status, who are victims of crime, may access the services provided by the Bureau.

The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* (*Grondwet van de Republiek Suriname*, S.B. 1992 no. 38, Art. 8) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of "age, sex, race, language, religion, nationality, education, political affiliation, economic position or social circumstances or any other status."⁸² The Act does not explicitly mention migration status; however, it does apply to national extraction, and thus provides some protection to migrants. Special provisions for the protection of LGBTIQ+ people are also not included in the Act, which leaves LGBTIQ+ migrants in Suriname in a vulnerable position. In 2019, the Ministry of Labour submitted the *Equal Labour Treatment Act* (*Wet Gelijke Behandeling*) to the National Assembly of the Republic of Suriname, which seeks to prohibit labour discrimination on grounds of national origin, gender, skin colour, social origin, and HIV-positive status.

Suriname has developed several national policies and action plans in relation to other vulnerable groups, specifically women and children, including: the *Gender Vision Policy*

Document 2021–2035; the *Gender Action Plan 2019–2020*; the *National Action Plan to Combat Child Labour 2019–2024*; and the *National Action Plan Children 2019–2021*. These documents do not make any specific mention of migrants.

In 2018, Suriname hosted 30 refugees from Cuba and six from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The country also hosted 158 asylum seekers from Cuba, followed by 34 from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and 14 from the Dominican Republic.⁸³ Suriname is a party to the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and stipulates provisions for the protection of refugees in the *Aliens Act 1991* (S.B. 1992 no. 3, Arts. 10, 16 and 17).⁸⁴ Although Suriname's national law provides protection to refugees, the country has not developed a formal national refugee status determination procedure. In the absence of a comprehensive formalized government asylum framework, the Suriname Red Cross, with support from UNHCR, currently manages these processes in the country. According to authorities, the Government of the Republic of Suriname is currently working towards the creation of a formal refugee status determination framework in order for the Government to eventually carry out this task independently.

Suriname does not have any specific legislation for countering trafficking in persons; however, the *Penal Code* (S.B. 2015, no. 44, Art. 334) prohibits all forms of trafficking.⁸⁵ Although the country has ratified the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, the current legislation does not meet the international standards of counter-trafficking as it only addresses one of the tenets of the 4Ps approach:⁸⁶ prosecution. Specific provisions for the protection and assistance of victims of trafficking are not included in the Act. The Trafficking in Persons Working Group is the interdepartmental coordination mechanism for combating human trafficking in Suriname.⁸⁷ In 2019, the working group approved a national action plan that includes cooperation with civil society and specific funding from the budget of the Ministry of Justice and Police.⁸⁸ The Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit (Counter-TIP Unit), located within the Police Department of the Ministry of Justice and Police, is mandated with the investigation of trafficking in persons and provides victim relief and protection. According

80. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019i.

81. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2016b.

82. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

83. UNHCR, 2018.

84. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

85. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2015c.

86. Makes reference to the comprehensive framework to combat human trafficking, the 4 Ps approach: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership.

87. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2020c.

88. U.S. Department of State, 2019.

to key officials from the Unit, Suriname has one dedicated shelter for women victims, operated by the Government. There are no shelters dedicated to men, child, or LGBTIQ+ victims. Nonetheless, the Government developed and funded an updated referral process for the Unit to refer all victims to the Bureau of Victim Services for shelter, medical, psychosocial and other assistance.⁸⁹

The number of victims identified in Suriname has decreased significantly over the past years, from 39 victims of trafficking identified in 2014 to three in 2019.⁹⁰ The Government did not effectively identify child or migrant victims; although the Counter-TIP Unit increased inspections in locations in which trafficking in persons is prevalent, such as massage salons.⁹¹ While the legislation for the protection of victims has not yet been created, the Government still sustains efforts for the safe voluntary return of victims of trafficking. In collaboration with the Guyanese embassy and Haitian consulate, Suriname actively investigated the increasing numbers of vulnerable Haitians who entered its territory through the border with Guyana in 2018. In addition, the Counter-TIP Unit screens migrants in their native languages, with the assistance of foreign embassies, consulates or bilingual staff, and provides them with the option to stay in Surinamese territory, guiding them through the process of applying for a visa via the Department of Alien Service (*Vreemdelingendienst*). According to key officials from Unit, the Public Prosecution Service ultimately decides when a victim can return home.

For the fiscal years of 2018 and 2019, a total of 31 Surinamese nationals were subject to forced return from the United States of America alone.⁹² However, there are no dedicated programmes aimed at receiving and assisting forced returnees.⁹³ According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, International Business en Internationale Samenwerking*), Suriname has a memorandum of understanding related to migration with Brazil, Haiti and the Netherlands.⁹⁴ The specific agreements for the voluntary return of migrants from the Netherlands includes special return arrangements such as financial support for return migration.

89. U.S. Department of State, 2020.

90. For more information see the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Reports.

91. U.S. Department of State, 2020.

92. United States of America Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2019.

93. The compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, transit or third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act. See also deportation, removal, repatriation.

94. IOM, 2015.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Institutions for the protection and assistance of migrants	✓	The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing and the Bureau Victim Support Services of the Ministry of Justice and Police
Anti-discrimination legislation that includes migrants	—	<i>Constitution of the Republic of Suriname</i> (S.B. 1992 no. 38, Art. 8)
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting migrant women	✗	
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting unaccompanied children	✗	
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting asylum seekers and refugees	✓	<i>Aliens Act 1991</i> (S.B. 1992 no. 3, Arts. 10, 16 and 17)
Specific legislation for the combat of trafficking in persons	✗	
Formal provisions for protecting and assisting returnees	✗	

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families</i>	✗	
<i>Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)</i>	✗	
<i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	✓	2017
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	✓	1993
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>	✓	1993
<i>1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees</i>	✓	1978
<i>1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees</i>	✓	1978
<i>1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness</i>	✗	
<i>Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children</i>	✓	2007

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE



Provisions to protect all migrants

- The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* prohibits discrimination based on nationality and social status, but does not include migration status.



Vulnerable groups

- Several national policies and action plans have been developed dedicated to women and children; however, no specific mention is made to migrants.
- There is no anti-discrimination legislation protecting LGBTIQ+ people, which leaves LGBTIQ+ migrants in Suriname in a vulnerable position.



Refugees and asylum seekers

- In 2018, Suriname hosted 36 refugees from Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and 206 asylum seekers from Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Dominican Republic.⁹⁵
- Suriname does not have a dedicated asylum legislation or comprehensive formal national refugee status determination procedure.
- The *Aliens Act 1991* provides some provisions for the protection of refugees.
- The Suriname Red Cross, with support from UNHCR, currently manages refugee status determination in the country; however, the Government is currently working towards the creation of a comprehensive refugee status determination framework.



Victims of trafficking in persons

- The *Penal Code* (S.B. 2015) prohibits all forms of trafficking; however, it does not include provisions for the protection and assistance of victims of trafficking.
- In 2019, the Government of the Republic of Suriname identified only three victims of trafficking.⁹⁶
- A dedicated shelter exists for women victims of trafficking, but there are no shelters specifically for men, child or LGBTIQ+ victims; the Bureau of Victim Support is responsible for providing shelter to all victims.
- Victims of trafficking are granted with the option to stay in Suriname to complete the residency process, guided by the Counter-TIP Unit.
- Suriname has collaborated with the Guyanese embassy and Haitian consulate for the safe return of victims of trafficking.

95. UNCHR, 2018.

96. United States Department of State, 2020.

Returnees

- For the fiscal years of 2018 and 2019, a total of 31 Surinamese nationals were subject to forced return from the United States of America alone.⁹⁷
- There is no dedicated agency that assists forced returnees.
- Suriname has specific agreements for the voluntary return of migrants from the Netherlands which include financial support.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Implement the *Equal Labour Treatment Act (Wet Gelijke Behandeling)* to prohibit labour discrimination on grounds of national origin, among other categories.
- Develop a law, policy and procedure related to refugee status determination to ensure refugee identification and protection.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, the *Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)*, and the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.
- Update anti-discrimination legislation to include migration status and LGBTIQ+ people for the protection of all migrants.
- Update national policies and actions plans dedicated to women and children to include migrants.
- Create and adopt a comprehensive legislation to counter-trafficking which includes provisions for all tenets of the 4Ps approach.
- Develop mechanisms to provide reception and reintegration assistance to forced returnees.

97. United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2019.

MIGRATION AND HEALTH

The following section describe the health–care system in relation to the integration of the migrant population and analyses the level of inclusion of the migrant perspective in the different policies, guidelines, practices and programmes related to health.

The provision of health care in Suriname is headed by the Ministry of Health (*Ministerie van Volksgezondheid*), which is responsible for guaranteeing all persons — irrespective of nationality — the right to health⁹⁸ and to ensure the quality, availability and accessibility of health care.⁹⁹ The country's health–care system consists of subsystems, including: Regional Health Systems; a non–governmental health–care organization; and private providers operating in different geographic locations. The Regional Health–care Service (*Regionale Gezondheidsdienst* or RGD) operates 43 primary public health clinics and posts in the coastal area. The Government provides subsidies to the non–governmental faith–based primary health–care organization Medical Mission (*Medische Zending*) which is active in the rural interior.¹⁰⁰ The Medical Mission manages 56 primary health clinics at the community level, which receive an average of 60,000 patients annually.¹⁰¹ The country has seven hospitals — two private hospitals and five public hospitals that provide primary, secondary and tertiary care — as well as one psychiatric hospital (*Psychiatrisch Centrum Suriname*). Four hospitals are located in the capital Paramaribo, and only one of these receives emergency cases. Individuals from the hinterland are referred to this specific hospital for specialist care including high–risk pregnancies. The hospital in Wanica was appointed to handle all infected patients in response to the global emergency surrounding COVID–19. All regular migrants can seek health care in these facilities.

Suriname's health–care system includes different modes of financing and membership, with each system specializing in different population groups, depending on the geographic location, employment, income level and social status.¹⁰² According to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, the total expenditure on health in 2014 was 5.7 per cent

of GDP.¹⁰³ The Ministry of Finance contributes approximately 37.5 per cent,¹⁰⁴ as it collects taxes and allocates budgetary resources to the Ministry of Health, which funds the RGD, the Medical Mission, and the psychiatric hospital.¹⁰⁵ The urban–based private clinics are supported through private insurance schemes, contributing 34.1 per cent, and household out–of–pocket expenditures, contributing 20 per cent.¹⁰⁶

As stipulated in the *National Basic Health Insurance Law (Wet Basiszorgverzekering, S.B. 2014 no. 114)*, all residents — defined as anyone who has a domicile, principal residence or actual residence in Suriname — are responsible for financing the expenses of personal health care and are therefore obliged to obtain basic health insurance.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that all migrants, including those with irregular status, must obtain health insurance. Free health–care is provided by the Medical Mission to populations in the hinterland, as well as to Surinamese nationals under the age of 16 and over 60 years through a health–care card.¹⁰⁸ ID cards, and in some cases birth certificates and residence permits, are required for foreign nationals to obtain health insurance for a fee, which limits the opportunities for migrants in irregular status and migrants without residency to access health–care. As a requirement in obtaining legal long–term residency in Suriname, all foreign nationals (main applicants and family members) must show proof of health insurance. Migrants may not see the need for a health coverage plan due to the low cost and easily accessible health care of the private sector. As a result, a significant share of migrants, particularly those of low–income groups, are uninsured.¹⁰⁹ According to key officials from PAHO/WHO, emergency treatment is provided free of charge to migrants, irrespective of their status; however, there is a need for alternatives for the contribution of migrants in both regular and irregular status to the health insurance programme.¹¹⁰

The Ministry of Health, with support from the PAHO/WHO, established the *National Strategic Plan for Health and Welfare 2019–2028 (Nationaal Strategisch Plan voor Gezondheid)*.

98. The right to health is described in the *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* (Art. 36).

99. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019h.

100. Eersel, Vreden, van Eer and Mans, 2018.

101. ISAGS, 2012.

102. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019g.

103. WHO, 2020.

104. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2011.

105. ISAGS, 2012.

106. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2011.

107. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014d.

108. IOM, 2015.

109. Ibid.

110. See the Labour and Human Development chapter for more information on social security.






One of the key policy areas included in the plan is to enable access to affordable and quality care of all individuals and families throughout the country.¹¹¹ However, the strategies outlined to accomplish this goal do not make any provisions related to the needs of migrants, nor do they specify the access of migrants to health services. Health-care workers do not have a protocol for providing medical assistance to victims of trafficking or other vulnerable migrant groups. Nonetheless, the Suriname Red Cross (*Surinaamse Rode Kruis*), in partnership with the UNHCR, seeks legal channels to address the medical and psychosocial needs of asylum seekers, mainly from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba. Key officials from PAHO/WHO have identified the need for a formal government health framework for the case management of vulnerable migrants, and refugees and asylum seekers.

Standard operating procedures regarding the International Health Regulations (IHR) have been approved and are currently operational.¹¹² The Bureau of Public Health (*Bureau voor het Openbare Gezondheidszorg*), located within the Ministry of Health, has been appointed as the National IHR Focal Point to facilitate communications related to the IHR. The Ministry of Health has also established the following two committees relevant to public health and migration: (a) the Multi-sectoral Port Health Committee (Multi-sectorale Port Health Commissie), tasked to develop systems in relation to IHR at airport, seaport and ground border crossings,¹¹³ and (b) the Health Response and Preparedness Committee (Rampencommissie Volksgezondheid), mandated to develop policies on early detection, response and control and medical care during public health emergencies.¹¹⁴ In 2018, Suriname earned an average capacity score of 80 per cent on the Strategic Partnership for IHR and Health Security (SPH).¹¹⁵






In 2015, the Ministry of Health, with support from PAHO/WHO, developed the *National Strategic Plan for Mental Health Care 2015–2020* (*Nationaal Strategisch Plan Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg 2015–2020*). The Plan aims to ensure that mental health care in Suriname is decentralized and offered in an integrated manner.¹¹⁶ However, it does not include any provisions to include migrant populations.

Suriname participates in the Regional Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) migrants' project to improve access to HIV services for migrant populations.¹¹⁷ Between 2013 and 2014, government employees from both health and non-health sectors

MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Access to primary health services		With national basic health insurance
Access to secondary health services		With national basic health insurance
Access to psychosocial care		With national basic health insurance and free of charge through HIV/AIDS counselling
Access to post-exposure prophylaxis treatment		
Access to the national plan to combat HIV/AIDS		
Access to interpretation and translation services		Not automatically – only when required, an interpreter or translator will be requested

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>Constitution of the World Health Organization</i>		1976
<i>International Health Regulations (IHR)</i>		2007
<i>Resolution on the health of migrants (WHA 61.17)</i>		2008
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>		1993
<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>		1993
<i>International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights</i>		1976

111. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019g.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

114. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019d.

115. WHO, 2018.

116. Nieuws Suriname, 2015.

117. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2015b.

received training in stigma and discrimination, cultural sensitivity and human rights related to health and migration. PAHO/WHO has provided training to community-based health workers hosting migrants on malaria and HIV prevention as well as basic Portuguese. PAHO/WHO has also trained MZ to provide education to rural communities on malaria, HIV/AIDS, safe drinking water and sanitation. Other outreach services for migrants include psychosocial support in the form of individual counselling, group sessions, condoms and lubricant distribution and referral to services for HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).¹¹⁸ There are no dedicated health campaigns targeting migrants, and interpretation and translation services are generally provided upon request.

When accessing health-care services, basic information is collected by health-care workers; however, it is not mandatory to collect migration data at either primary care facilities or hospitals. As such, there is no information on the number of migrants accessing the health system or their specific health needs.

MIGRATION AND HEALTH



Health-care system

- Regional Health Systems, private providers and a non-governmental health-care organization operate in different geographic locations of the country.
- Suriname has one psychiatric hospital and seven hospitals providing primary, secondary and tertiary care.
- The hospital in Wanica was appointed to handle all infected patients in response to the global emergency surrounding COVID-19.



Protocols and guidelines

- There is no specific protocol regarding health screening and referrals for migrants.
- There is no action plan or protocol specific to general migrant care.
- Venezuelan and Cuban migrants are assisted by the Red Cross, in partnership with UNHCR, to access Suriname's health care system.



Training

- Health-care professionals are trained on the International Health Regulations.
- Community-based health workers supporting migrants have received training on malaria prevention as well as basic Portuguese training.
- Health-care professionals have not received training with regard to victims of trafficking or on responding to the specific needs of migrants.

118. Ibid.



Mental health services

- There is no specific protocol regarding mental health services for migrants.



Data collection

- Data are not collected to determine migrants' access to or use of the public health system, or the specific health needs of migrants.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM AND OTHER UN AGENCIES¹¹⁸

- Develop a legal health framework for the case management of vulnerable migrants, especially with regards to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Find alternatives to facilitate the contribution of both migrants in regular and irregular status to the national health insurance programme.
- Expand health campaigns to target migrant populations.
- Train non-health-related officials on health vulnerabilities of migrants and their particular needs in terms of access and main health conditions.
- Develop and implement a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Plan for migrants, including subsequent protocols and referral mechanisms.
- Collect data to determine migrants' access to and use of the public health system and the specific health needs of migrants.

118. Due to the global emergency surrounding COVID-19 during the primary data collection, access to government health officials was limited, and, as a consequence, the information included in this chapter comes mainly from other government officials and health stakeholders.

LABOUR MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is divided into two subsections: (a) labour migration, which briefly presents a panoramic view of labour migration in the country, as well as the relevant systems to manage labour migration governance; and (b) human development, which describes the extent to which the migration perspective is mainstreamed in national development policies, strategies incorporating the diaspora into the socioeconomic development of the country and how remittances contribute to local development and to migrant families.

LABOUR MIGRATION

Suriname is a signatory to the *Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas* establishing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), which enables the movement of CARICOM nationals. Free movement for economic purposes is managed by the mobility arrangements for the Movement of Skilled Nationals, Right of Establishment, and Provision of Services, which came into effect in Suriname in 2016 with the implementation of the *Skilled Nationals Act (Wet Bekwame Burgers van de Caribische Gemeenschap, S.B. 2006 no. 19)*.¹¹⁹

The Ministry of Labour (*Ministerie van Arbeid*) is mandated with the development of labour legislation and labour policy in Suriname. According to the *Labour Policy Note 2016–2021 (Beleidsnota)*, one of the Ministry's main objectives is to achieve full and productive employment while promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all people in employment, as stipulated in SDG target 8.8: to “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment.”¹²⁰

Foreign nationals are granted access to the labour market through the Department of Work Permits (*Afdeling Werkvergunning*), located in the Ministry of Labour. Upon receipt, work permits are processed within 30 to 60 days and are valid for one year, with the opportunity for annual renewal. They are exclusively linked to an employer and intended for a specific position, and employers must apply for the permits. According to the *Work Permit Aliens Act (Wet Werkvergunningen Vreemdelingen, S.B. 2002 no. 23)*, foreign nationals must obtain both a work permit and a residency permit in order to work in Surinamese territory.

Work permits are denied when a foreigner's residency permit is rejected, if a foreigner is considered unacceptable by the Government or if the labour supply of the country is sufficient to meet demand,¹²¹ as the Government gives priority to the local labour supply. The following migrant categories are exempt from work permits: (a) foreigners who are married to a Surinamese national; (b) foreigners who fall under the *Persons of Surinamese Descent Act (Wet van Personen van Surinaamse Afkomst, S.B. 2004 no. 8)*; (c) return emigrants of Surinamese origin, currently in possession of non-Surinamese nationality; (d) foreigners who are employed as civil servants for the Surinamese government; (e) foreigners who have obtained the status of refugee; and (f) CARICOM nationals who have obtained a CSME Skills Certificate from the country of origin. In 2014, the three most common migrant groups working in the labour force of Suriname were from the Netherlands (39%), China (39%), and India (124).¹²² According to labour officials, approximately 1,700 to 1,800 work permits are issued annually, and the most common sectors in which migrants work include: agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and fishery, trade, lodging and food services.

Migrants who are 18 years or older, who have an approved medical examination, and who meet the legal requirements of the prospective position, can access employment in the public sector as stipulated in the *Personnel Act (S.B. 1987 no. 93)*.¹²³ According to officials from the Ministry of Labour, foreign entrepreneurs are granted equal access with nationals to self-employment; they must register at the Chamber of Commerce and are able to work without a work permit or business license. Data from the Chambers of Commerce show that in 2014, foreign nationals owned a significant share of firms, foundations and associations in Suriname. The greatest number of foreign firms were registered as retail market (3,332), followed by industrial sector (1,027), hospitality (930) and finance (460). Migrants also have the right to establish and join trade unions.

Currently, the Department of Work Permits conducts national assessments for monitoring the labour market demand for migrant workers to ensure that the local labour supply is prioritized. Nonetheless, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), there is a need to strengthen Suriname's Labour Market Information System to identify the type of skills and occupations needed in the labour market.¹²⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, International Business en Internationale Samenwerking*) has also identified to conduct a labour assessment to identify the type of missing skillsets and occupations in the labour market in order to engage with the diaspora to attract those skills. Furthermore, although Suriname has implemented the Decent Work Agenda, which is focused on employment development, fundamental rights to work, social protection and social dialogue, government officials stated

119. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2008.

120. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2016a.

121. Government of the Republic Suriname, 2002a.

122. IOM, 2015.

123. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1987.

124. ILO, 2019.

that the reporting of Suriname’s labour achievements has been insufficient. Information on labour sometimes fails to reach the standard contributors of international organizations such as the World Bank. Government officials report that ranking regarding labour gets distorted, whether or not correct information is sent to contributors. Government officials have also identified issues with migrant interns and consultants who do not qualify for the provisions regarding work permits or the national labour scheme. As a result, it is difficult for the Government to have a clear understanding of the role foreigners play in the labour market, and this is an obstacle to maximizing the potential of labour migration to contribute to the national development of Suriname. In order to conduct a full analysis of the formal work force, and in response to this identified gap, the Ministry would like to adapt the *Civil Code* (S.B. 2004 no. 25, Art. 1613), which stipulates labour agreements between employers and employees through employment contracts,¹²⁵ to include interns and consultants.

Historically, skilled foreigners, predominantly from the Philippines and Cuba, have been actively recruited to fill the labour gap in the health sector of Suriname. Specific agreements have been established between Suriname and Cuba to allow specialized health workers from Cuba to work in the country.¹²⁶ As the need for health professionals in Suriname has remained prevalent, the country received 50 health-care workers from Cuba in response to the global health emergency surrounding COVID-19.¹²⁷

Labour and recruitment agencies may influence the employment experience of migrant workers in Suriname. According to the Ministry of Labour, there are currently 23 recruitment agencies in the country which are required to work in accordance to the *Employment Act by Intermediaries* (*Wet Ter Beschikking Stellen Arbeidskrachten door Intermediairs*, S.B. 2017 no. 42). The Act aims to prevent the exploitation of temporary workers, as it establishes a legal relationship between employment agencies and the government.¹²⁸ However, the country does not have a national employment strategy to manage the supply and demand of skilled and unskilled foreign labour.

The Ministry of Labour and the General Bureau of Statistics (*Algemeen Bureau voor de Statistiek* or ABS) collaborate on labour data collection, as the Ministry provides relevant data on employment to be published by the ABS. The ABS gathers continuous labour statistics through household surveys conducted in the district of Paramaribo, Wanica, Nickerie and Commewijne, as well as through the national census conducted every ten years. Data are collected on the regular migrant population through work permit registrations. According to government officials, this information can be disaggregated by nationality, gender, age and other indicators such as skill set, occupation and district of occupation. Moreover, as stated by the ABS, in 2018, Suriname’s large informal sector, prevalent in the artisanal and small-scale mining industry,¹²⁹ was expected to result in an underestimation of estimates of

MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to work in the private sector	✓	Same access as nationals; with the proper work permit
Possibility of self-employment	✓	Same access as nationals
Access to work in the public sector	✓	Same access as nationals; with the proper work permit
Access to social security scheme	✓	For contributors; not accessible to population in irregular status
Data collection on migrants accessing the labour market	✗	
Shortage occupation list	✓	Utilized to protect local employees

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Convention or treaty		Year of ratification
<i>International Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	✓	1993
<i>ILO Convention on Migration for Employment (Revised, No. 97)</i>	✗	
<i>Complementary provisions of the ILO Convention on Migrant Workers (No.143)</i>	✗	
<i>Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)</i>	✗	

125. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2004.

126. IOM, 2015.

127. GFC Nieuws, 2020a.

128. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2017b.

129. IGF, 2017.

GDP by as much as 16 per cent.¹³⁰ However, given the limitations in documenting irregular migration, Suriname does not currently collect data on the number of migrants in irregular status participating in the labour market, and labour officials have identified the need for research in order to determine the scope of the irregular labour force. Additionally, they have expressed the need for a baseline study or specific guidelines on how to reduce migration irregularity and transition to the formal economy.

In Suriname, migrant women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation in the artisanal and small-scale mining industry, among other industries.¹³¹ According to the *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname (Grondwet van de Republiek Suriname, S.B. 1992 no. 38, Art. 15)* “no one shall be obliged to do forced or compulsory labour.”¹³²

According to the *National Insurance and Social Security Act (Wet Nationale Basiszorgverzekering, S.B. 2014 no. 114)*, all residents in Suriname, including foreign residents, are obliged to obtain basic health insurance which includes a social security scheme for old age pension and minimum wage.¹³³ Employers are compelled to pay at least 50 per cent of the insurance, while registered employees pay the remainder.¹³⁴ Individuals must submit a valid ID card and, in some cases, a birth certificate and residency permit, to obtain basic health insurance, which limits the opportunities of migrants in irregular status or migrants without a valid ID to access social security and health-care. In March 2019, the Government adjusted the minimum wage per hour from SRD 6.14/USD 0.80 to SRD 8.40/USD 1.1, which must be paid to any person who is formally employed, regardless of nationality, and is thus not applicable to migrant workers in irregular status. Public pensions are available to legal residents aged 60 and older who have contributed to the public pension fund for a period of at least five years. Other social benefits, including social welfare payments and financial support, are only available to Surinamese nationals.¹³⁵ Moreover, Suriname has specific agreements for the voluntary return of migrants from the Netherlands that includes the following social benefits; (a) return migrants may receive Dutch social benefits that they are entitled to in Suriname; and (b) migrants may access special return arrangements such as financial support for return migration.¹³⁶ Suriname has not signed the *CARICOM Agreement on Social Security*, and there are no institutions protecting that right for migrants abroad.¹³⁷

LABOUR MIGRATION



Labour migration

- The *Labour Policy Note 2016–2021* includes the improvement of safe and secure working environment of migrant workers, especially women and migrants in irregular employment.



Access to labour markets

- Migrants have access to the labour market with a valid work permit; however, work permits are specific to employers and occupation.
- Migrants who are 18 years or older, who have an approved medical examination, and who meet the legal requirements of the prospective position, can access employment in the public sector.
- Foreign entrepreneurs are granted equal access with nationals to self-employment; they must register at the Chamber of Commerce and are able to work without a work permit or business license.
- Legally employed migrants are protected under labour legislations.
- There are no specific provisions or mechanisms to promote extensive integration of migrants into the labour market.

130. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2018.

131. United States of America Department of State, 2020.

132. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

133. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2014d.

134. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019b.

135. IOM, 2015.

136. Ibid.

137. IOM, 2019a.



Labour agreements

- The CARICOM Single Market and Economy enables individuals with Skills Certificates, service providers and individuals establishing a business to move across CSME Member States.
- Specific agreements have been established between Suriname and Cuba to allow specialized health workers from Cuba to work in the country.



Data collection

- The *Labour Policy Note 2016–2021* includes the improvement of safe and secure working environment of migrant workers, especially women and migrants in irregular employment.



Forced labour

- The *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname* prohibits all forms of forced labour.



Access to social security

- Social security benefits are available for migrants via the national health insurance.
- The Netherlands has old-age pension portability for Surinamese returnees.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Adapt the Civil Code to include provisions for employment for migrant interns and consultants.
- Develop specific guidelines or conduct a baseline study on how to reduce migration irregularity and transition to the formal economy.
- Ensure that information on labour is communicated to international and regional organizations in a timely and organized manner.
- Conduct a labour assessment to identify the type of missing skillsets and occupations in the labour market in order to engage with the diaspora to attract those skills.
- Conduct research on the number of migrants in irregular status participating in the labour market in order to determine the scope of the irregular labour force.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Ratify the *ILO Convention on Migration for Employment* (Revised, No. 97), the *Complementary provisions of the ILO Convention on Migrant Workers* (No.143), the *Domestic Workers Convention* (No. 189), and the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*.
- Establish an inter-ministerial committee on labour migration comprising of several ministries related to labour migration such as the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation to mainstream labour migration needs throughout the government spectrum.
- Develop a national labour policy to manage the supply and demand of skilled and unskilled foreign labour in the country following ethical recruitment principles.
- Strengthen the Labour Market Information System to identify the type of skills and occupations in the labour market and develop mechanisms to conduct regular labour market analyses on skills supply and demand, including for foreign labour.
- Expand collection of data on the access of migrants to the labour market.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Suriname scores 0.724 in the Human Development Index (HDI), composed of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, putting the country in the high human development classification and positioning it at 98 out of 189 countries and territories.¹³⁸

Although Suriname is located on the mainland of South America, it is still considered a small island developing State (SIDS) due to its economic dependency on a few sources of income and its low level of resilience against natural hazards.¹³⁹ To meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Suriname is a signatory to the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway) — a global framework establishing intergovernmental partnerships to identify SIDS priorities in the formulation of international development goals.¹⁴⁰

Development goals are incorporated in the country's *Development Plan 2017–2021 (Ontwikkelingsplan 2017–2020)*. The document also includes migration as a core theme for sustainable development, as it identifies the country's small population, labour market gaps and open economy as interrelated challenges. Chapter 2.1 outlines the country's low fertility rate of 2.4 total births per women¹⁴¹ and high emigration rate of 42 per cent¹⁴² as the root cause of the small size of the national economy. It identifies international and national migration flows as a potential “game changer” for increasing the population and bolstering the economy, especially in the agricultural sector.¹⁴³ While the *Development Plan* is aligned with several SDGs, it does not include any provisions to address target 10.7 to “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, although migrant populations are outlined as important contributors to the economic development of Suriname, no strategy or policy currently exists for the social and economic integration of migrants.

As stated in the *Development Plan*, Suriname is also committed to the development of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual educational system, as reflected by its society, in order to make education more accessible to its population.¹⁴⁵ Through the *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname*, basic education is guaranteed through the public system for all children of compulsory school age free of charge.¹⁴⁶ The *Compulsory School Attendance Act* (Lager Onderwijswet, S.B. 1965 no. 128) requires all children to attend school until they are at least age 12.¹⁴⁷ Nonetheless, while the minimum age of work has been raised from 14 years to 16 years, children between the age of 12 and 16 are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour, as they are no longer required to attend school and are not legally permitted to work.¹⁴⁸ To access primary education in Suriname, a file from the Civil Registry (*Bevolkingsregister*) is required, which can only be obtained if a migrant child has obtained a legal residency status. Migrant children without a legal residency status may be permitted to enrol if a legal resident signs as a legal guardian in order to allow the child to attend school.¹⁴⁹ According to the 2015 IOM Migration Profile for Suriname, migrant children may access secondary education without barriers, but there have been some cases of children of migrants in irregular status who were unable to continue their education without a proof of residency. Thus, in practice, migrant children irregular status face challenges to access primary and secondary education. Legal residency is not required for migrants to access the only university of the country, Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname, where students are required to have their secondary diploma validated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (*Ministrie van Onderwijs, Wetenschap en Cultuur*).¹⁵⁰

138. UNDP, 2019.

139. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2013.

140. United Nations Caribbean, n.d.

141. World Bank, 2018.

142. IOM, 2019b.

143. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2017a.

144. United Nations, 2015.

145. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2017a.

146. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1992b.

147. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 1965.

148. U.S. Department of Labor, 2018.






149. IOM, 2015.

150. Ibid.

In terms of housing, both residents and non-residents are allowed to buy or build a house with the approval of the Foreign Exchange Commission of Suriname. However, only Surinamese nationals have access to the Low Income Shelter Programme which facilitates affordable mortgages to lower-income people.¹⁵¹ Moreover, according to a 2012 mission report of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Haitian populations in Suriname, Haitians who have been in Suriname since 1980, commonly owned homes and shared the same standard of living enjoyed by the average Surinamese family, while more vulnerable groups of Haitians, including the unemployed, newly arrived, single female-headed households, and those in irregular status, lived in challenging conditions, such as in abandoned construction sites.¹⁵²

The Department for Consular Affairs and Movement of Persons (*Afdeling Consulaire Zaken en Personenverkeer*), located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, International Business en Internationale Samenwerking*), oversees a Diaspora Division (*Diaspora Divisie*) which is responsible for enacting the country's diaspora policy. In order to formalize the relationship with its diaspora population, Suriname established the *Persons of Surinamese Descent Act* (*Wet van Personen van Surinaamse Afkomst*, S.B. 2014 no. 8). In 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with support from IOM, conducted a skills gap assessment for Suriname, which resulted in the *Mapping Suriname's Diaspora* project to strengthen the capacity of the Surinamese government for diaspora engagement through the establishment of the website www.diaspora.sr, allowing the diaspora to register and indicate their areas of expertise. The skills gap was also the impetus for the 2017 *Effective and Sustainable Diaspora Engagement for Development in the Caribbean project*.¹⁵³ According to the assessment, 92 per cent of the government participants reported shortages in government personnel as a significant challenge for diaspora engagement, and 38 per cent reported having recruited underqualified personnel as a result. Moreover, 92 per cent of the diaspora who had registered via the

INCLUSION OF THE MIGRATION PERSPECTIVE IN PLANS AND PROTOCOLS

Human Development Index		0.724 rank 98 of 189 countries and territories
Inclusion of migrant population into development strategy		International and national migration as key for development
Development strategy in alignment with SDG target 10.7		
Programmes to engage the diaspora in development strategies		
Initiatives to reduce the cost of sending remittances		

151. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019e.

152. ICMC and UNHCR, 2012.

153. IOM, 2017.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

website at the time of the study reported interests in contributing to the development of Suriname, of which 82 per cent were willing to work in an appropriate position in the country. In an attempt to address some of the identified gaps, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation is currently including information on the websites of the Surinamese consulates and embassies about opportunities for persons of Surinamese descent in the diaspora. Key officials from the Ministry have identified the need to carry out an assessment to determine areas in the country in need of development in order to effectively engage with the diaspora.

According to the Government of Suriname, annual remittances have become essential for the monetary stability of the country.¹⁵⁴ In 2019, the amount of remittances received was approximately USD 29,865,7000,¹⁵⁵ constituting 0.7 per cent of Suriname's GDP.¹⁵⁶ Recipient families use remittances for everyday consumption, medical expenses and education.¹⁵⁷ Although current data are hard to find, a 2006 study on remittances from the Netherlands to Suriname showed that the Netherlands was the primary sending country of remittances, representing 85 per cent of the total remittances received, followed by the United States of America and the Netherlands Antilles.¹⁵⁸ In 2017, the average transaction cost for sending remittances to Suriname was approximately 5.6 per cent,¹⁵⁹ which is higher than the SDG estimate of target 10.c to reduce less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittances corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.¹⁶⁰



Mainstreaming migration into development strategies

- The Development Plan 2017–2021 (*Ontwikkelingsplan 2017–2021*) includes migration as a core theme for development.
- The Government of Suriname considers international and national migration key factors to increase the country's population and expand the economy.
- The national development plan is in alignment several SDG targets but does not include provisions for target 10.7 on effective migration governance.



Migrant inclusion in social development programmes

- Education is compulsory until the age of 12.
- Access to primary education is universal; however, migrant children in irregular status face challenges to access primary and secondary education.
- Both residents and non-residents are allowed to buy or build a house in Suriname; however, the Low Income Shelter Programme is accessible only to Surinamese nationals.

154. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2017a.

155. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019d.

156. Government of the Republic of Suriname, 2019c.

157. IOM, 2015.

158. Unger and Siegel, 2006.

159. World Bank, 2017.

160. United Nations, 2015.



Diaspora engagement

- The Diaspora Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation has broad responsibilities with diaspora engagement.
- Shortages in government personnel pose a significant challenge for diaspora engagement.
- 92 per cent of the diaspora has interest in contributing to the development of Suriname.



Remittances

- In 2019, approximately USD 29,865,7000 was received in remittances,¹⁶¹ constituting 0.7 per cent of Suriname's GDP.¹⁶²
- The Netherlands constitute the prominent sending country of remittances.
- The average transaction cost for sending remittances to Suriname was approximately 5.6 per cent in 2017.¹⁶³

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Identify opportunities for engaging the diaspora on the country's development efforts by determining areas in the country in need of development.

MAIN NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY IOM

- Main needs identified by IOM
- Include the SDG target 10.7 in development plans to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration through a comprehensive and well-managed migration policy.
- Mainstream the social and economic integration of migrants into social policy and strategy documents.
- Revise the *Compulsory School Attendance Act* to include requirements for all children, including migrants irrespective of migration status, to attend school until they are at least age 16.
- Develop and implement a formal housing scheme for vulnerable migrant groups.
- Recruit qualified government personnel for the Diaspora Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation to effectively engage with the diaspora.
- Lower the costs of sending remittances to align with SDG target 10.c.

161. World Bank, 2019d.

162. World Bank, 2019c.

163. World Bank, 2017.

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