

**Statement by Mariska Muskiet  
to the UN Committee for the  
Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
on the Third Periodic Report from the Government of the Republic of Suriname  
New York, 25 January 2007**

Thank you, Madam Chair for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee on the Third Periodic Report submitted by the Government of Suriname. I speak on behalf of Women's Rights Centre, Ultimate Purpose and Moiwana Human Rights Organization in Suriname; NGO's who all contributed to the list of ten critical issues submitted to your Committee last year.

Although all these issues are of great importance I ask specific attention of your Committee for four (04) of the issues.

These are:

1. Domestic Violence.
2. Paid maternity leave.
3. HIV/AIDS.
4. Maroon and Indigenous women.

**1. Domestic violence (article 5 and 10 of the Convention)**

Women's' Rights Centre, with the utmost exertion of very committed voluntary NGO and GO legal and gender experts, has drafted a Domestic Violence Legislation that was thoroughly reviewed by a broad representation of stakeholders and submitted to the Minister of Justice and Police last May.

We are all very interested in the status of the draft Domestic Violence Act.

This Legislation is especially intended to protect victims and potential victims of domestic violence and introduces a for Suriname new provision of the protection order.

This Domestic Violence Legislation is the result of yearlong activities in the framework of a strategy aimed at:

- training and sensitization of workers in the frontline;
- a just treatment of victims, including shelter for the victims;
- the incorporation of domestic violence training in the curriculum of the training of frontline workers such as police officers and first aid workers;
- training of the judiciary sector;
- protection and a sense of justice of victims of domestic violence;
- the trial of perpetrators;
- a warning to perpetrators of domestic violence.

**Recommendation**

As domestic violence legislation is a very indispensable instrument in the struggle to curb domestic violence, we strongly recommend implementing Domestic Violence Legislation in short term into our national legislation.

## **2. Paid maternity leave (article 11)**

Pregnant workers in the private sector and those of them who delivered their baby/babies experience discrimination and lack provisions concerning paid maternity leave comparing to those working for the government.

Women civil servants have, based on the Civil Servants Code, the legal right to paid maternity leave.

### **Recommendation**

In the interest of pregnant women and their babies which both need special care and protection we strongly recommend equal treatment of all pregnant employees. This can only be achieved by implementing legal provisions to guarantee paid maternity leave in the private sector.

## **3. HIV/AIDS (ARTICLE 12)**

Research results proved that women, especially young women, have a high vulnerability for HIV/AIDS.

We acknowledge the many efforts from the government and civil society in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, but we want to stress that the epidemic still is increasing and we must do more to raise HIV consciousness in Suriname.

### **Recommendation**

To successfully combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic more efforts towards gender inequality and the empowerment of women are to be made, because women's subordination to men contributes to their vulnerability for this virus.

## **4. Maroon and indigenous women (article 14)**

Rural women, Maroon and indigenous women play a significant role in the economic survival of their families and communities.

Although women form an important part of the producers in the agricultural sector and provide their families with food, they are nevertheless a significant minority amongst those who have an official title on the land.

It is of utmost importance that tribal societies who already are in a disadvantaged position, acquire a collective title on the lands that they inhabited and cultivated for centuries.

### **Recommendation**

To change this unjust and unfair treatment of the tribal folks, it is recommended that their land rights are recognized, legal provisions for collective land rights are implemented in our national legislation after which they are granted land title.