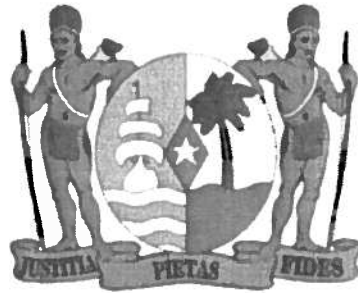


NATIONALE REPARATIE COMMISSIE  
SURINAME (NRCS)



Paramaribo - Suriname Tel. 8654072/8979066

**SECOND CARIBBEAN REPARATIONS CONFERENCE**

**ANTIGUA & BARBUDA**

**October 12-14 2014**

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Distinguished Dignitaries,

Distinguished organizers of the Second Caricom Reparations  
Conference,

Please receive the greetings of the National Reparations  
Committee of Suriname and especially of the Chair of our  
Committee, Drs. Armand Zunder who cannot be here today.

Dear family,

With great pleasure the National Reparations Committee of Suriname accepted the invitation to be here at this great Caribbean conference on Reparations. This gives us the opportunity to change ideas and possibly discuss some of the matters and issues regarding the position of the First Nations of Suriname with you.

Looking back at the first and second Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples from 1995-2004 and 2005, ending in 2014 we conclude in Suriname that the main objectives for the UN Decades were 'to strengthen international cooperation to solve the problems faced by indigenous people in the areas as human rights, culture, the environment, social and economic development, education and health'. We are now at the end of the second decade and much to our regret we must conclude that in Suriname we have only seen little progress in fulfilling the objectives of the two UN decades that will pass in a couple of months.

We believe that one of the major constraints have been the lack of unity among the Native people of Suriname, resulting in the fact that we have not been able yet to even formulate amongst ourselves a development strategy and plan for the benefit of our people.

Let me inform you briefly on the position of the Native people of Suriname.

When the Europeans, we now refer to the Spanish 'conquistadores' arrived in Suriname in 1492 there were around 70.000 Native people in Suriname, who had lived for more than 5.000 years on those lands. The Spanish and other European colonialists, besides that by brutal force took our lands away from us committed genocide among the Native people. This resulted in the fact that at the census of 1921 only 1.400 Native people were registered amongst the population of Suriname. So despite the heroic struggle of our late Native leaders like Toenae, Kaikoesie, Joeriboedi, Symbia, Ipomadi and Asongo we as a people almost vanished in Suriname. After our land was taken away from us we were also enslaved by Dutch colonialists in our own country. Only because we were and are a strong people with a strong cultural background we were able to survive the genocide during colonial times in Suriname.

At the last census of 2012, 20.344 Native people were registered, consisting of 10.296 men and 10.048 women. Our people are spread all over the country, but there is a strong presence in the capital city, Paramaribo. Suriname had a population of approximately 550.000 in 2012, while also the same amount of Surinamese resided in the diaspora, especially in the ex-colonial country, the Netherlands. At the last census the working population of Suriname consisted of 188.229 persons between the age bracket of 15-64, the so called working population, of which 5.918 (3.1%) were Native people. This implied that the participation rate of the Native people in the formal economy was only 3.1%. The Native people of

Suriname were mainly active in the traditional agriculture sector and as Government workers. In general it was concluded in the census of 2012 that the position of the Native people in the field of formal education was still quite poor. The figures showed that 81 percent had not completed primary school, that 6 percent had completed secondary school and that only 3 percent had completed higher education. The Native people of Suriname at this moment also faces the following challenges: Difficiencies in the field of:

- Cultural and educational facilities;
- Proper housing;
- Employment opportunities in the formal economy;
- Owning their own businesses;
- Ownership of land, including agricultural land
- Actions to combat challenges in the field of different forms of pollution.

Notwithstanding these difficiencies the census of 2012 concluded that the Native people of Suriname showed the best ranking in the field of not attaining chronic diseases as diabetes mellitus 2, hearth diseases and high blood pressure.

The Native people of Suriname now face the serious challenge to break away from the past of underdevelopment. Therefore with the technical cooperation of the National Reparation Commission of Suriname, in which the Indigenous people fully participate they are now working to establish a Federation of organizations of Native people of Suriname. The

main objective of the Federation is to formulate a development strategy, a development plan and a program of action for the development and change of the Native people of Suriname. Another objective is to involve the Native people, especially the youngsters as much as possible in these processes.

We hope that we can count on your support in the challenges that we face in the future in the field of improving the position of the Native people in my country.

Thank you for your attention.

On behalf of the National Reparation Committee of Suriname

Stanley Liauw Angie

Vice-Chairman

Antigua: 12-14 October 2014.