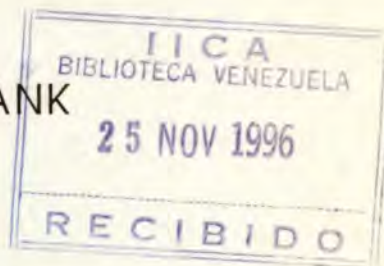
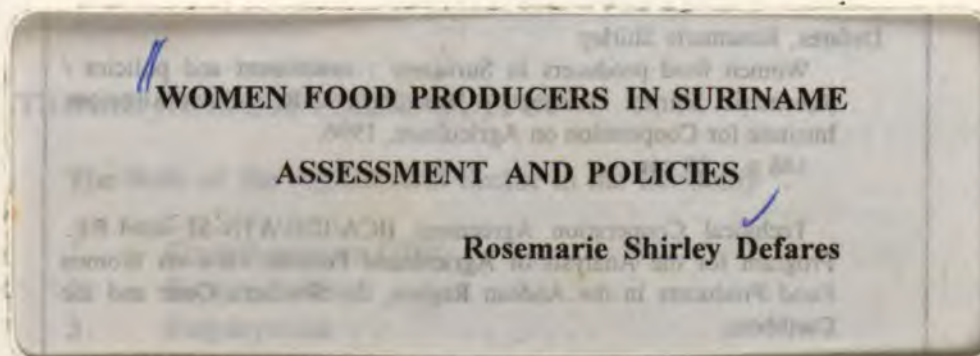


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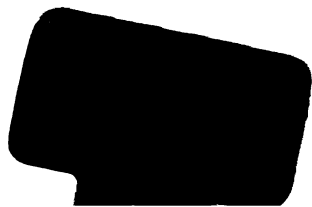


Program for the Analysis of Agricultural Policies  
vis-a-vis Women Food Producers  
in the Andean Region, the Southern Cone  
and the Caribbean



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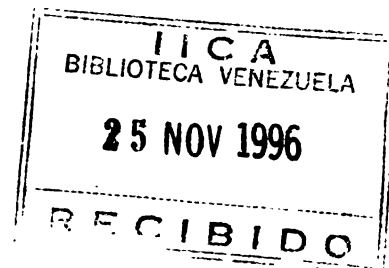
AREA OF CONCENTRATION IV  
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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**TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT IICA/IDB/ATN-SF-4064-RE**

**PROGRAM FOR THE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES  
VIS-A-VIS WOMEN FOOD PRODUCERS IN THE  
ANDEAN REGION, THE SOUTHERN CONE AND THE CARIBBEAN**



**WOMEN FOOD PRODUCERS IN SURINAME  
ASSESSMENT AND POLICIES  
Rosemarie Shirley Defares**

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**AREA OF CONCENTRATION IV  
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ASA</b>	<b>FOUNDATION FOR RURAL WOMEN</b>
<b>EBGS</b>	<b>EVANGELISCHE BROEDER GEMEENTE SURINAME</b>
<b>CELOS</b>	<b>CENTRUM VOOR ECONOMISCH EN LANDBOUW ONDERZOEK SURINAME</b>
<b>FAL</b>	<b>FEDERATION OF FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS</b>
<b>FAO</b>	<b>FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS</b>
<b>IDB</b>	<b>INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK</b>
<b>IDOS</b>	<b>INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND ADDITIONAL EDUCATION</b>
<b>IFAD</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>IICA</b>	<b>INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE</b>
<b>LHK/4H</b>	<b>LANDBOUWHUISHOUDKUNDE/4H SERVICES</b>
<b>M.O.P.</b>	<b>MEERJAREN ONTWIKKELINGS PLAN</b>
<b>NAFEDCO</b>	<b>NATIONAL FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION</b>
<b>N.V.B.</b>	<b>NATIONAL VROUWEN BEWEGING</b>
<b>OSO</b>	<b>INSTITUUT VOOR TAALKUNDE, LETTERKUNDE EN GESCHIEDENIS</b>
<b>PAS</b>	<b>PATER ALBRINCK STICHTING</b>
<b>P.V.U.</b>	<b>PROGRESSIEVE VROUWEN UNIE</b>
<b>S.S.P.</b>	<b>SMALLHOLDER SUPPORT PROJECT</b>
<b>S.W.I.</b>	<b>STICHTING WETENSCHAPPELIJK INSTITUUT</b>
<b>STIPRIS</b>	<b>STICHTING PROEFTUINEN SURINAME</b>
<b>SNRI</b>	<b>STICHTING NATIONAAL RIJST ONDERZOEK INSTITUUT</b>
<b>STINAPA</b>	<b>STICHTING NATIONALE PARKEN</b>



## **PREFACE**

*The Program for the Analysis of Agricultural Policies vis-a-vis Women Food Producers in the Andean Region, the Southern Cone and the Caribbean, executed by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) under Technical Cooperation Agreement ATN/SF-4064-RE, is the second phase of a program which included 18 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean: Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.*

*The first phase of the Program was implemented in 1992-1993 in six countries in Central America, under the auspices of the Council of Central American Ministers of Agriculture. The second phase was carried out by request of the First Ladies during their Summit Meeting on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in February 1992.*

*This document is one of three reports per country which present the technical results from the four areas of Program research, as well as the recommendations and preliminary action proposals related to women food producers. The three documents are:*

***Assessment and Policies.** Assesses the participation of women in the agricultural sector and their contribution as food producers on small-scale farms, and presents an analysis of the agricultural policy and program environment and its effects on rural women.*

***Technology and Marketing.** Analyses the technology utilized on small farms and by women in food production processes, and the role of women in the processing and marketing of farm food production; agricultural technology and marketing policies and programs and their effects on rural women are also examined.*

***National Summary.** Drawing from the above two reports, this document synthesizes the major findings and research results, and presents the principal policy, program, and project proposals.*

*Other activities carried out under this Program included the elaboration of regional comparative documents; the formulation of policy proposals and other actions in conjunction with the ministries of agriculture, the Offices of the First Ladies, and other public and private organizations involved in agricultural and rural development; national and regional seminars to present and discuss Program recommendations; and the publishing and distribution of the final results.*



## **SURINAME COUNTRY OVERVIEW**

Suriname is situated on the northern coast of South America. It lies between 54 and 58 degrees west longitude and 2 and 6 degrees north latitude. To the west, it is bordered by the Republic of Guyana, to the south by Brazil, and to the east by French Guiana. The country stretches 300-400 kilometres from east to west, and 400-500 kilometres from north to south.

Suriname gained independence from the Netherlands on November 25, 1975. The official language is Dutch.

### **Agroecological areas**

The total land area of Suriname is 16.4 million hectares, of which approximately 85 per cent is covered by tropical forest. About 1.5 million hectares of land of which 85 per cent is located in the coastal plains and 15 per cent on the river terraces in the interior are considered to have potential as agricultural land. Only 106 000 hectares or 1 per cent is currently under cultivation, concentrated largely in the young alluvial coastal zone (see map). The soils are considered highly fertile (Suriname Planatlas 1988).

There are five main agroecological regions (IFAD 1992), as follows:

1. The coast, formed by extensive mud flats and sandy shell beaches, and mainly covered by mangroves; except for fishing, no other significant agricultural production is taking place in this area.
2. The young coastal plain, ranging in width from 20 km in the East to about 150 km in the West. The land is low-lying (0-4 metres above sea level) with a flat topography, and consists of fertile heavy clay soils, locally interspersed with sand and shell ridges. Most agricultural production takes place in this zone; currently agricultural production in this area comprises mostly of mechanized rice, fruit, and vegetables in large scale and small scale market- oriented enterprises. Some agricultural production also takes place on the less fertile but well-drained sandy ridges.
3. The old coastal plain, made up of remnants of ridges, gullies and mud flats. It is less fertile than the Young Coastal Plain, with some parts used for pastures, fruit and vegetable production. The Old Coastal plain is primarily used for mining and animal husbandry. South of these coastal areas lies a wooded belt of 1.2 million ha used for forestry, palm oil production, fruit crops and other produce.
4. The savannah belt consisting of coarse bleached white sand, with only small areas usable for agricultural production; mainly of ananas, cashew and some cassava.

5. The Guyana Highland region, the interior zone covering 85 per cent of the country and consisting of highly weathered Precambrian formations, generally unsuited for sedentary agricultural production. Scattered areas on the river terraces are used for agriculture, using slash-and-burn practices (shifting cultivation). The products from these areas are roots and groundnut, highland dry rice and a little vegetables.

### **Climate and rainfall**

The climate is tropical, with fairly heavy rainfall. Annual rainfall ranges between 1250 and 2500 millimetres in the main agricultural areas, generally increasing from the west towards the east. There are two wet and two dry seasons: a long rainy season from April to August, a long dry season from August to December, a short rainy season from December to February and a short dry season from February to April. The heavy rainfall creates some problems for agricultural production on the heavy clay soils, as drainage is generally needed. During the dry season, the heavy clay soils dry out and make agricultural production difficult without irrigation. The average relative humidity is fairly constant throughout the year at 81 per cent. Temperatures are also fairly constant and range from 23°C to 31°C (IFAD 1992).

Surface water supplies are abundant in Suriname, with four main rivers, Corantijn, Coppename, Suriname and Marowijne (see map) with their tributaries draining the forested catchment areas in the South. Three large swamp areas in Nickerie, Coronie and Saramacca serve as water conservation areas for rice production. Due to malfunctioning of the drainage systems around Nickerie agricultural production is, currently experiencing serious stagnation. In those areas (Saramacca and Nickerie) where the drainage system is not functioning adequately because of insufficient maintenance, large areas are inundated for prolonged periods.

Most of the small scale farms are tapping water from the swamps or rivers and when available using water pumps in the time of dry seasons. Generally these small farms experience problems with water irrigation in the dry as well as rainy seasons.

### **Population**

The population of Suriname is estimated by the Central Bureau for Population Administration (CBB 1990) to be 420 000. The majority is concentrated along the roads and rivers of the coastal area and in the Districts of Para and Brokopondo. Nearly 50 per cent of the population is living in the capital of Paramaribo. As a result of a decline in the birth rate and an increasing emigration the population growth decreased from 0.59 per cent in 1987 to 0.39 per cent in 1991 (CBB 1992).

The population is ethnically diverse and consists of descendants of Creoles, East Indians (Hindustanis), Javanese, Maroons, Amerindians (the original inhabitants), Chinese and European settlers. The Amerindian population consists of approximately 6000 people or 1.8 per cent, and



the Maroon population is estimated to be about 35 000 or 8.5 per cent. Development is concentrated along the coastland, where the main population centers are located. The people in the interior are widely scattered and in some regions they have not participated in the general development of Suriname because of their isolation.

The following table shows the distribution of ethnic groups, their estimated numbers and their percentage in the total population.

**Distribution of ethnic groups, by size and percentage of total population. Suriname, 1990.**

<b>Ethnic groups</b>	<b>% of total population</b>	<b>Estimated number of persons</b>
Creoles	33.5	140,700
Hindustani	34.2	143,640
Javanese	17.8	74,760
Maroons	8.5	35,700
Amerindians	1.8	7,560
Other ethnic groups*	4.2	17,640
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>420,000</b>

\* Chinese, Europeans and Lebanese.

Source: Central Bureau for Population Administration.

### **Economic and political conditions**

Suriname gained its independence from the Dutch in 1975 without any armed struggle or serious political tension between the two countries. In 1980, a military coup resulted in the overthrow of the democratic Government and a military regime was set up. In December 1982, the so-called "December Massacre" took place, in which 15 opponents to the military regime were summarily executed. As a result, the Dutch Government suspended all development aid to Suriname.

In 1987, the military Government relinquished power, and a civilian Government was elected. In 1990, the military again took over, and set up a transitional Government. Elections were held in May 1991, and a constitutional Government was again put in power.

Since 1945, the economy of Suriname has been primarily dependent on Dutch development aid and the revenues from the bauxite sector. In 1975, Suriname experienced an economic decline which was accelerated by the serious events of 1982. Government expenses considerably increased after the military coup due to an increase of personnel costs, the modernization and

expansion of the military force and the Government financing of certain development projects. In the period between 1981 and 1983, imports exceeded exports, resulting in a negative balance of payments. The low export earnings and tax revenues led the Government to cover the budget deficit through monetary financing, causing an inflation rate which is estimated to be at least 120 per cent in 1993 (Inter-American Development Bank ATN/SF-4286-SU 1993). The creation of a system of several different exchange rates generate an illegal market for foreign exchange and causing financial distortion which had its negative impact on all strata of the population. Another factor was that the development aid of Sf. 3.200.000.000,00 promised to the new republic was designated as balance of payment support and was not destined for the productive sector.

In 1992, the Warwick Research Institute reported that the trend of the past ten years had been one of significant decline in the contribution of the productive sectors to the GDP, accompanied by an inflationary growth of the share of the services sector. The GDP share of the public sector had also grown in real terms. The suspension of Dutch development aid had recently led to a rapid decline. Deterioration in the balance-of-payments position, foreign exchange shortages, increasing inflationary pressures and low real rates of remuneration both to labour and to capital had resulted in low rates of physical investment and demoralized labour forces.

Socioeconomic indicators point to a further deterioration during the past two years. It has become clear to the Government that a structural adjustment program (SAP) designed to deregulate the economy was inevitable; it is scheduled to be initiated in 1994. A social program aimed at alleviating the severe impact on the less fortunate sectors of society has also been proposed, as well as other measures aimed at promoting the productive economic sectors.

Years of neglect of the rural communities in the interior led to serious disturbances in that region in 1982, when the Maroons and the Amerindians took up arms against the Government. The struggle, which lasted until 1992, caused great devastation and loss of life in the interior. As part of the peace treaty, the Government, with Dutch help, has promised to make a special effort to address the problems and dissatisfactions of the people of the interior, in order to enable them to participate fully in the development of Suriname and enjoy a greater share of the economic benefits.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

With respect to the issue of rural women food producers in small-scale production units in Suriname, there is an obvious need for the gathering of the scant data and information available to document and recognize their role and contribution to the agricultural production and development of the country. This study is intended to gather and analyze the information available, in order to allow for a better understanding of the role played by women as food producers. This chapter presents some vital information on the role of women and their contribution to the agricultural sector at key stages in the history of Suriname. The significant role women have played in food production on smallholdings, as well as in the marketing of food products, has not been recognized, nor has a proper study been conducted of the relationship between national agricultural policy and the role of women farmers in food production and marketing.

Small-scale farming is of crucial importance for the agricultural production of the country. History shows that women farmers have always contributed to the production of these farm enterprises. However, there is a serious lack of information on their very important role in agricultural production. Full and accurate information is needed regarding the role of women in production and their position in the household, e.g. the farm production system, access to credit, land, labour, health care, housing and social services, in order to allow for a thorough understanding of the current situation of rural women and women food producers in Suriname.

In most socioeconomic studies of Suriname, women are not taken into account as part of the production system and the rural economy. Available data and information on the situation and role of rural women, i.e., women food producers, are at best incomplete, and when such information is available, it is not directly related to the true situation as regards poverty, needs, problems and potential for future development. For years the importance of the many activities carried out by women in the household and in the field has not been acknowledged, despite the impact of these activities on the household and their implications for food security and quality of life.

Studies conducted in the Caribbean region (IFAD, GC 15/L.5 1991) have shown that a higher percentage of the cash income generated by rural women is used to meet basic needs of the family than of the income produced by men. These studies also highlight a lack of understanding of the capacity women have to bring themselves and their families out of critical poverty. The same conclusion holds for the situation in Suriname as a whole.

Over the past forty years, Government agricultural policy has focused on the growth of export products, such as rice and bananas, which are produced by highly mechanized capital-intensive parastate and private enterprises. Despite the fact that the largest number of agricultural holdings in Suriname are small-scale farms and despite their socioeconomic importance, little effort has been made to improve their situation. Since Government policies usually make no distinction between men and women nor do they specifically target one group or the other, no positive political environment has been created to address the problems of women and the issues relating to their participation in production, access to credit, and land tenure.

In 1992, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF), recognizing the contribution of women farmers to agricultural production, launched a special program and conducted a preliminary study of the role and contribution of women farmers. The findings of this study were presented in 1993 in a report entitled "Surinamese Women in the Agricultural Sector: A Preliminary Study of the Role and Contribution of Women Farmers in the Rural Districts of Wanica and Para" (Ministry of Agriculture 1993).

#### **A. Background: A Historical Overview of the Role of Women in Agriculture in Suriname**

Women have had a key role in agriculture since the time when Suriname was inhabited by Amerindians. During that period, Amerindian women were not only involved in agricultural activities but also in nonagricultural activities such as handicrafts and pottery making. Men were usually in charge of hunting and fishing. The myths recorded in history, as well as modern studies (OSO 1984) show that traditionally a distinction was made between tasks based on the differences between men and women, but that women and men alike shared the same rights and responsibilities in the community.

In 1667, the English Government ceded Suriname to the Dutch in exchange for Nieuw Amsterdam (New York). They began to develop the country as a plantation society. The colony developed a prosperous plantation economy based on slave labour imported from Africa. The main products were sugar, cotton, coffee and cacao.

Most of the African women who came to Suriname as slaves during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries worked primarily in the field, on sugarcane, coffee, cacao and cotton plantations. They also performed some domestic chores, however.

The profitability of the plantation system was based on the cruel exploitation of slave labour. During the entire slavery period, men and women worked under the same conditions in the fields and were expected to produce the same quantity and quality. There was no strict sexual division of labour on the plantations, except for some tasks in the factories, such as the handling of heavy factory equipment which necessitated great physical strength; the operation and maintenance of factory equipment (boilers etc.) was also considered men's work.

The eighteenth century was one of economic decline and political turmoil. Many slaves rebelled and fled into the jungle (the interior) banding together in groups known as "the Maroons". After the abolition of slavery in 1863, there was a critical shortage of manpower. Former slaves were now hired as paid labourers to work on the plantations; they were also allowed to work on small plots near the estates, cultivating their own food, such as vegetables, cacao, coffee, coconuts and root crops. However, the need to keep wages at a minimum was the determining factor that led the capitalist planters to create a new, cheap and reliable labour force. To this end, the Dutch colonizers began to bring indentured workers from China, Java and India. As in the case of the African women slaves, the East Asian women were brought to Suriname to work on the

plantations and in the factories. They came with the expectation of improving their living conditions and their economic situation (OSO 1984).

From the beginning of the indenture system, the division of labour based on sex was different from that prevailing on the slave plantations. Under the indenture system, working conditions were more rigid. In the factories, women's work was limited to certain unskilled tasks. Although women worked longer hours than men and were doing similar work, except for certain tasks in the factories, there was a difference in remuneration. Women earned a daily wage of Sf. 0.40, while men earned Sf. 0.60 per day (OSO 1984:218). Therefore,

an obvious discrimination in equal labour for less pay continued throughout these years, and it could be considered as part of the remuneration system that defines female work as "unequal and weak" in comparison with men's labour" (FAO 1988:15).

The fact that women were supposedly doing lighter work that was considered unskilled and of low status gave grounds to justify the division of labour on the plantations. Like men, women signed a contract to work in the fields and in the factories for a specified number of years, usually three years for women and five years for men. After this period they were given the option of free passage back to their home country or settlement in Suriname, usually with a land grant (OSO 1984).

Normally after the first contract expired, most of the Hindustani women remained in Suriname to work on their plots. Cultural traditions and communication constraints kept the Hindustani women mostly in the peasant household and in their own community. The Javanese women, on the other hand, continued to work in the plantation fields, as well as on their own plots. Culturally, the Javanese women were not so restricted in their choices as the Hindustani women. Influences from former slave women, who had a fairly independent position within their own culture and families, had little effect on the immigrant women. At the end of the indentureship, most of the immigrants decided to stay in Suriname. The strict establishment policy of the colonial Government created large East Asian (Indian, Javanese) communities in various rural areas. Moreover, this policy resulted in the development of an occupational structure along ethnic lines, with East Asian people employed in the agricultural sector, while Afro-Surinamese (former slaves) became more involved in vocational professions in the urban sector (SWI 1988:48).

After World War I, East Asians received substantial support from the Dutch to set themselves up as independent small farmers. The Government gave them two hectares of land in lease in order to enable them to grow their own food. Thus, they were still available to supply cheap labour to the plantations (SWI 1991:38). The Creoles, on the other hand, tried to improve their agricultural activities (for example, in the district of Coronie) without much help from the Dutch rulers. This policy by the Dutch led many Creoles to leave the agricultural sector. Most of them were absorbed into other sectors, such as the forestry industry (wood/balata) and the

mining industry (gold). Others migrated to the urban sector and engaged in manual occupations. Many Creole women migrated to the urban areas and found employment in the domestic sector.

World War II caused a drastic reduction in external supplies of food, and policy measures were introduced to encourage self-supporting schemes for families and promote the marketing of domestic food products (Morenc 1988). Especially during World War II and some years after, women were encouraged to participate more in food production.

After World War II, mechanization and capitalization trends in agricultural production led to a reduced demand for workers.

As a result, many women left wage labor and entered the so-called category of housewives. The removal of women from wage labour and their introduction to the housewife ideology (colonial European concept of the housewife) that prevailed between 1950 and 1970, meant that in the farm community, i.e. in the farm household, women were perceived as wives and mothers, and only rarely as farmers (FAO 1988:20); few women owned or managed the farm. The many roles of women were not seen as an integrated part of the productive, reproductive and social patterns of the farm enterprise.

Not much has changed over the years, and contemporary rural women still make an enormous contribution to production activities in the fields, especially as regards physical work. The division of labour along gender lines in the field remains to a great extent unchanged. On the farm, it is the men who are primarily responsible for management and supervision. Recent improvements in conditions relating to land tenure/land reclamation and farm mechanization have had little or no positive impact on the situation of women farmers/producers.

## **B. Objectives**

### **1. General objective of the study**

To draw up a basis for orienting the policies and actions of participating governments, with a view to improving the living and working conditions of women food producers in the region, thus ensuring food security and improving the efficiency of the agricultural sector.

### **2. Specific objectives**

#### **a. Assessment**

The objective of this component is to determine the scope of and assess the contribution of women to the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, taking into consideration their domestic and production responsibilities, including their contribution to

family income through nonagricultural activities. Also, policy recommendations will be formulated on the role of women in the agricultural sector.

#### **b. Policies**

Sectoral policies and their effect on rural women will be analyzed; policy recommendations will be formulated on the basis of the findings. Policies on credit and on land ownership and use, as well as training, research and agricultural extension programs will be studied.

#### **c. Technology**

Technologies used in food production, including those used by women, will be analyzed. On the basis of this analysis, recommendations will be formulated for policies, institutional systems and possible programs and projects designed to give rural women access to more advanced, but appropriate, technology.

#### **d. Processing and marketing**

The characteristics of the processing and marketing of agricultural products will be identified, including how they affect women producers; emphasis will be placed on the role of women in these processes. On the basis of this analysis, recommendations will be formulated regarding policies, institutional systems and possible programs and projects.

### **C. Methodology**

The research methodology used to attain the objectives was based on a combination of the following methods:

- \* analysis of secondary data,
- \* collection of data through the use of questionnaires, and
- \* field visits and meetings to obtain additional information.

#### **1. Analysis of secondary data**

Analysis of secondary data consists of:

- Review of existing agricultural policies at both the national and the regional levels;
- Analysis of studies, documents and reports on the agricultural sector in Suriname, with particular attention to studies on small-scale farming systems in Suriname;

- Collection of data pertaining to women in the agricultural sector in Suriname, the home economics sector in the rural districts of Suriname as regards the economic and social role of women in the farm household, and the role of women in the economic and social life of the community and the society;
- Analysis of relevant information from official institutions concerned with issues covered by the study, such as the Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Planning Institute.

## **2. Survey data**

Data collection was carried out by the use of questionnaires. For the purposes of the study, it was important that women of all the ethnic groups involved in agricultural production should be represented. This includes the East Indian, Creole and Javanese women, as well as the women of the interior, i.e., the Maroons and Amerindians.

To gain a thorough insight into the details of women's farming activities, three main food crops -vegetables, cassava and peanuts- produced by these women were selected for the study. The areas selected were the rural districts of Saramacca, Wanica, Para, Commewijne and the interior, Boven (Upper) Suriname River and the Marowijne area (see map).

## **3. Field trips and meetings**

An important strategy for obtaining information and data was meetings with officials from both Government and non Government organizations, Women's groups, farmer's organizations and community grass roots groups and farmer's cooperatives. Preliminary visits were made to the Districts of Saramacca, Marowijne, Commewijne, Brokopondo (upper Suriname River), Wanica and Para, in order to meet with officials of the agricultural offices, NGOs, women groups and women farmers.

## **D. Organization of the Report**

This report is submitted in accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR), the general guide for conducting research on women food producers in Suriname. It was prepared on the basis of the objectives set forth in the IICA-IDB agreement (ATN/S-4064-RE) and the terms of reference for the hiring of national consultants.

The report covers the work carried out between 01-07-1993 and 10-6-1994, and includes the following:

- a review and analysis of secondary data and information,
- analysis and interpretation of survey data collected by the project and from other sources,



- conclusions and recommendations, and
- proposals.

The report is divided into six chapters, as follows:

- **Chapter 1** is the introduction. It presents the justification for the study, and gives a historical overview of the contribution of women to agricultural production and development at several stages in history.
- **Chapter 2** discusses the importance of the agricultural sector to the national economy, in terms of GDP, export earnings and employment. An overview of national food production, food- production policies and food security is given.
- **Chapter 3** discusses agricultural policies, including policies on land tenure, credit, technology generation, and agricultural training and education. The impact of rural development policies and programs on agricultural development and infrastructure is also discussed. Policies directed at rural women and women food producers and their effect on small-scale farmers are also analyzed.
- **Chapter 4** gives an overview of the contribution of women to the agricultural sector and female employment in the sector. A reassessment of female employment in the agricultural sector is presented.
- **Chapter 5** provides information on women food producers at the level of the farm unit, as well as on the socioeconomic characteristics of small-scale agricultural production systems. The results of the survey conducted for this study, as well as of other farm surveys are presented.
- **Chapter 6** elaborates on the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Detailed proposals are presented for future development policy actions designed to improve the status of women and enhance their productive role in the agricultural sector and in rural areas in general.



## **II. NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT**

It is clear from the previous chapter that women in Suriname have always played an important role in the agricultural sector as field laborers, farmers and marketing agents. They still play a vital role in food production, especially in subsistence farming in the interior. Therefore, their contribution to economic and agricultural production at the regional and national levels should not be underestimated.

In this chapter, a brief analysis of the agricultural and food production sector of Suriname is presented.

### **A. The Role of the Agricultural Sector in the Economy**

The agricultural sector of Suriname is the second largest contributor to the GDP and to foreign exchange earnings in the economy; its share is for the period 1980-1990 is estimated at between 10 and 20 per cent. Over the last ten years, the importance of the sector in generating employment has fallen steadily, as a result of the many constraints on agricultural production and the national macroeconomic situation. In spite of the decline in job creation, the agricultural sector must still be regarded as very important. With the deteriorating economic situation, it is expected that more and more people will be looking for employment in the sector, as urban employment opportunities have become scarce, and food has become expensive.

#### **1. Contribution to GDP**

The economy of Suriname is primarily based on the mining and processing of bauxite and its derivatives (alumina and aluminum), which together account for 15 per cent of GDP, and approximately 70 per cent of merchandise exports (FAO 1990c:22). In spite of the drop in the price of bauxite on the world market, the bauxite sector is still the main contributor to GDP and to the country's foreign exchange; it is followed by agriculture, which contributes a fairly significant share of the total Gross Domestic Product. During the period 1980-1990, the share of the agricultural sector in the total Gross Domestic Product rose from 8 per cent to around 12 per cent.

Table II.1 shows the contribution of the various sectors to the GDP between the years 1975-1991.

Between 1975 and 1991, the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP rose from Sf. 58.5 million to Sf. 378.0 million (Meerjaren Ontwikkelings Plan 1993), despite a sharp drop in the supply of inputs and poor maintenance of the necessary physical infrastructure.

The importance of the agricultural sector lies not only in the sector itself but also in its wide involvement and backward and forward linkages with many sectors of the economy.

**Table II.1. Gross Domestic Product at factor cost (millions Sf. at current prices). Suriname 1975-1991.**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forestry and Fishing	58.5	204.2	233.9	310.7	378.0
Mining and Quarrying	90.6	62.5	79.7	91.4	88.9
Manufacturing	152.3	200.9	292.3	318.5	306.5
Gas, Water & Electricity	22.5	89.3	116.8	107.9	143.7
Construction	33.9	117.9	177.9	193.4	242.9
Trade, Restaurants & Hotels	142.4	311.5	514.2	572.5	585.7
Transport, Storage & Communication	48.3	138.0	166.5	180.5	192.5
Finance Institutions & Insurance	45.7	204.3	287.8	624.0	691.0
Housing, Other Real Estate & Business Serv.	36.3	134.1	253.1		
Public Administration & Defence	118.4	472.6	514.0	527.1	677.5
Personal, Social & Other Community Services	13.1	33.8	35.1	34.6	31.9
Less:					
Imputed Bank Service Charges	27.0	134.3	209.0	216.5	259.4
<b>Total GDP</b>	<b>735.0</b>	<b>1834.8</b>	<b>2482.1</b>	<b>2744.1</b>	<b>3079.1</b>

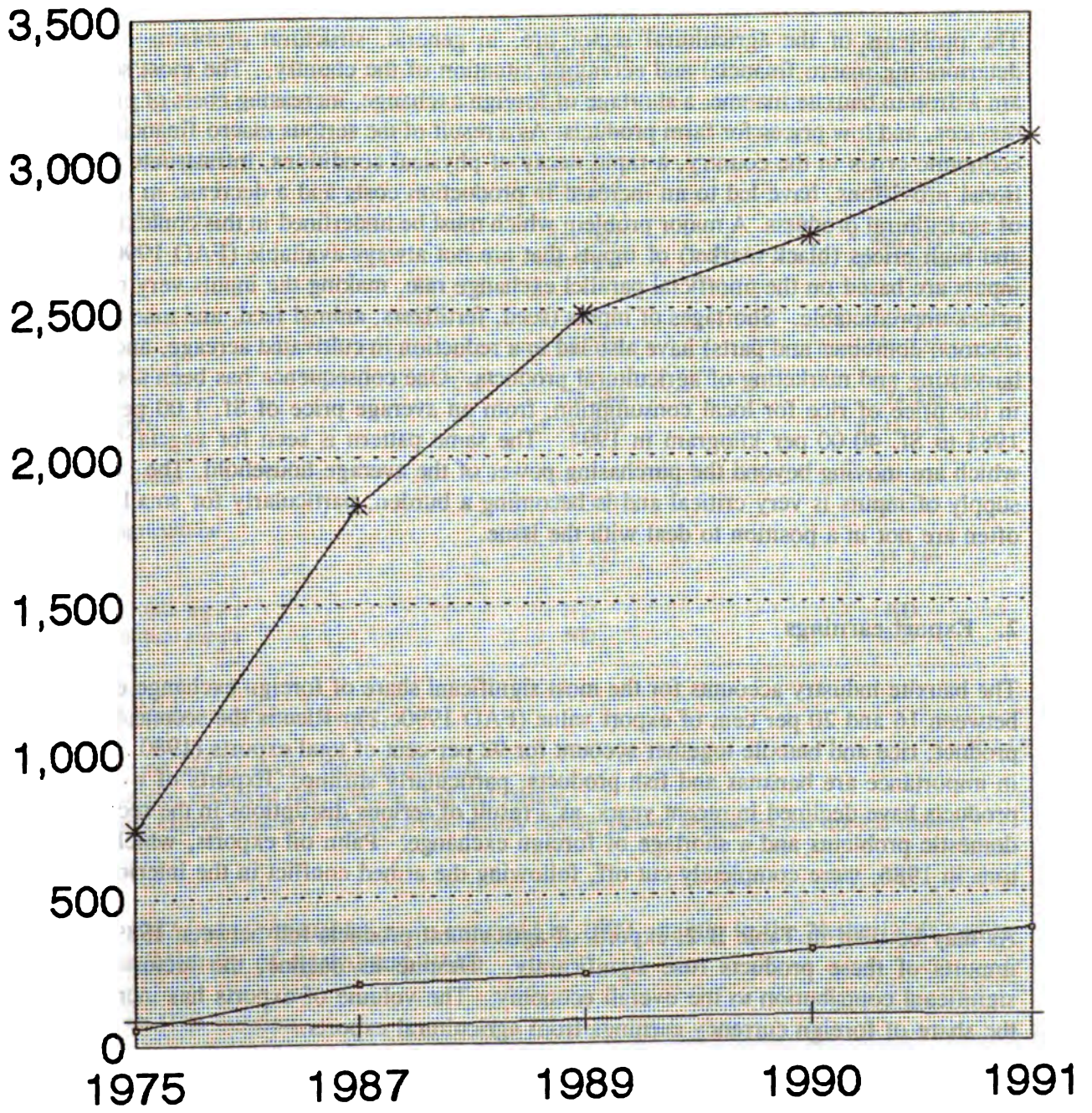
Source: General Bureau of Statistics (National Accounts).

Agricultural GDP, made up of crop, vegetable and fruit production, livestock and fisheries, accounted for about 20 per cent of GDP, and for 15 per cent of exports in 1992 (Lahmeyer International, SOGREAH and SUNECON 1992:30).

The most important crops for the GDP are rice and bananas. Fish and shrimp are also important. The contribution of the fisheries sector has increased over time.

The line graph on the following page shows the contribution of the main sectors of the economy to over-all GDP.

**Gross Domestic Product at Factor Cost**



1: Agric., 2: Mining, 3: GDP  
—•— Series 1 —+— Series 2 —\*— Series 3

in million Sfl.



### ***Problems encountered in recent years***

The problems of the agricultural sector are, in general, structural problems caused by the deteriorating macro-financial and economic situation of the country. The most serious causes are a drop in bauxite income, a shortage of foreign exchange, increasing costs of production and services, and low prices for farm products. As a result of the serious macro-financial and macro-economic crisis in the country, a rapid decay of physical conditions, infrastructure and institutional provisions, have led to an increase in production costs and a decrease in the production of agricultural products. A major problem which must be underlined in this context is the supply and high prices (black market) of inputs that are not always available (FAO 1990c). Prices of inputs are based on the unofficial parallel exchange rate, making the inputs very costly and the prices unpredictable. Shortages of inputs (seed, fertilizers, animal feed, and machinery such as tractors, combines and parts) have also led to a reduction in cultivated acreage, and hence in the harvesting and marketing of agricultural products. One consequence has been a steep increase in the price of rice for local consumption, from an average price of Sf. 1.00 per kilogram in 1985 to Sf. 40.00 per kilogram in 1994. The same pattern is seen for vegetables and meat, which are moving beyond the purchasing power of the average household. The problem of the supply of inputs is very critical and is becoming a burden, particularly for small farmers who often are not in a position to deal with the issue.

### **2. Export earnings**

The bauxite industry accounts for the most significant share of foreign exchange earnings, i.e., between 16 and 20 per cent of export value (FAO 1990c:1). Rice is the second largest export product; rice and bauxite together account for 92 per cent of total exports (1980 figures). Next in importance are bananas and fish products, particularly shrimp. Exports of wood and wood products have declined in recent years, as a result of serious disruptions in the sector caused by domestic problems and a shortage of foreign exchange. Palm oil exports, which totalled 663 tons in 1986, were completely cut off, following the armed conflict in the interior.

As may be seen in Table II.2, exports of agricultural products fell between 1989-1990, while imports of these products rose significantly. Despite its decline, the sector still makes a significant contribution to the overall economy. The volume of exports has increased, as has the share of foreign currency earnings from agricultural exports.

In 1992, agricultural exports amounted to approximately Sf. 120 million, 20 per cent of the total value of exports. The share of agriculture in exports was approximately 11 per cent. In 1987, it accounted for approximately 16 per cent of total exports (Warwick Research Institute 1993). The largest crop was rice, with a total export value of Sf. 51 million, banana exports amounted to Sf. 17 million, and vegetables, groundnuts and roots totalled Sf. 2 million (Meerjaren Ontwikkelings Plan Suriname 1994-1998).

**Table II.2. Total agricultural trade by products, thousands of US dollars. Suriname 1989-1990.**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT (1989)</b>	<b>AMOUNT (1990)</b>
Imports of goods and non-factor services	439 264	468 081
Exports of goods and non-factor services	536 987	468 651
Trade Balance	+977 23	+ 570
Imports of agricultural products*	47 776	58 728
Exports of agricultural products*	78 586	74 486
Agricultural balance	+ 30 810	+ 15 758
Traditional agricultural exports**	67 389	63 240
Non-traditional agricultural exports***	11 197	11 246
Imports of agricultural inputs	ND	ND
Exports of agricultural inputs	ND	ND

Source: IICA, Agricultural Situation Report.

\* Agricultural (crop and livestock), fisheries products.

\*\* Traditional exports consist of rice, bananas, fish and shrimp.

\*\*\* Non-traditional exports consist of tropical fruits (mainly citrus), various vegetables and tropical flowers.

ND: No data.

Compared to 1987, more vegetables were exported in 1990, mainly to the Netherlands and to French Guiana (Ministry of Agriculture 1992).

According to an IDB mission:

Exporting has become extremely difficult, not only because of the required permit, but mostly because of the retention agreement, whereby part of the earnings in foreign exchange must be sold to the Central Bank, depending on the product, at a significantly lower rate than that offered on the parallel market, while foreign exchange for inputs can only be obtained on the expensive parallel market (IDB 1993:13-14).

The absence of a clearly stated production policy, economic instability and the aforementioned retention agreement work together to seriously obstruct exports (IDB 1993:14).

### 3. Employment

The Government of Suriname considers employment as a priority objective in its development recovery program. In July 1988, the Ministry of Labour was entrusted with the responsibility of formulating employment promotion policies and coordinating the production sectors, such as agriculture, trade and industry, finance and public works, in employment promotion activities. Unemployment is in most cases a problem affecting youth and women. The "informal sector" of the economy is for many households an important source of extra income.

It is currently estimated that nearly 40 per cent of the economically active population in Suriname is either unemployed or underemployed (MOP 1994-1998). As may be seen in Table II.3, there has been a decline in the labour force in the formal production sectors and an increase in jobs in the service sectors. The public sector is the largest source of jobs, and showed significant increases during the period 1988-1990 (MOP 1994-1998).

Table II.3. Employment by sector. Suriname 1988-1992.

Sector	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Primary Sector	17 345	17 109	16 729	16 850	16 600
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries	12 426	12 177	11 933	12 000	11 750
Forestry	1 650	1 650	1 560	1 560	1 500
Mining Industry	3 269	3 282	3 236	3 290	1 500
Secondary sector	15 065	15 312	14 840	14 880	3 350
Industry	10 007	10 492	10 464	10 500	14 500
Construction	3 100	2 900	2 400	2 400	10 150
Electricity and Water	1 958	1 920	1 976	1 980	2 500
Services Sector	65 082	65 117	66 648	66 630	60 200
Trade and Tourism	11 534	11 443	11 659	12 000	8 350
Transport & Commerce	3 774	3 761	3 601	3 600	3 350
Commercial Services	2 403	2 353	2 499	2 500	2 550
Civil Services	43 000	43 341	45 000	44 530	42 300
Other Services	4 371	4 219	3 889	4 000	3 650
Total	97 492	97 538	98 217	98 360	91 300

Source: ABS, 1992 Estimated SPS.



In December 1990, the labour force was estimated at about 135 000 workers between the ages of 15 and 60, or 30 per cent of the total population. The 15-29 age group makes up approximately half of the labour force. The number of the employed was estimated at 100 000, and about 35 000, or 26 per cent, could be considered unemployed. The unemployment rate rose from 15 per cent in 1982 to 26 per cent in 1990, and it appears that the situation has worsened over the last few years.

The most recent census was conducted in 1980; because of the lack of recent official data regarding the participation of the economically active population in economic production, only unofficial estimates are used by the General Bureau of Statistics as indicators of the employment structure (FAO 1990c).

In the Structural Adjustment Program, priority will be given to the serious unemployment situation, with emphasis on the implementation of production projects. The role of the private sector will also be strengthened in this process.

In the context of the Structural Adjustment Program, the following measures have been proposed:

- \* Creation of a Social Investment Fund (SIF), for the purpose of promoting production projects and providing support for small enterprises,
- \* Creation of an Export and Marketing Board, in order to provide incentives for exports,
- \* Promotion of vocational training,
- \* Establishment of a Board for the Promotion of Cooperatives (MOP 1994-1998:33).

Within the agricultural sector, the highest levels of employment are in the rice, banana and palm-oil subsectors, as shown in Table II.4.

**Table II.4. Distribution of jobs in the agricultural sector. Suriname 1992**

	Total	%
Agriculture (crops)	8000	66
Livestock	1700	14
Fisheries	2300*	20

Source: Ministry of Labour, Statistics.

\* Rough estimate, excluding 700 jobs in the fisheries sector.

According to available figures for 1992, about 12 000 people are employed in the agricultural sector (MOP 1994-1998). The last Agricultural Census, conducted in 1980, shows a total of 22 600 farmers; it is estimated that about 10 000 of these were engaged in farming full-time, and about 12 600 were part-time farmers, according to the Ministry of Agriculture's definition. Rice farmers -about 3000 in number- make up the largest single group of full-time farmers (Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Census 1981).

As a consequence of socioeconomic and employment conditions, which caused an acceleration of the already high rate of rural-urban migration, there has also been an increase in the rate at which full-time farmers become involved in off-farm work. The total number of smallholders with off-farm employment in agriculture appears to be small. In general, most smallholders with off-farm employment work as semi-skilled employees in lower- and middle- level technical and administrative positions in the construction industry, the service sector and, most of all, in the government sector (Institute for Research and Continuing Education 1992:159).

## **B. National Food Production**

As a result of the economic crisis facing the country, the food production sector is presently in a weak position. The steep increase in production costs brought about by the steady increase in the exchange rate and the unequal power relations of the different parties involved in the market (small farmers, merchants, middlemen, contractors and government), has led to a drop in the numbers of small farmers, traditionally involved in vegetable and fruit production and marketing. Since food production is the main activity of women farmers, they have faced many constraints on their work. This chapter describes the overall situation in the food production sector and the changes which have taken place during the crisis.

With respect to domestic food production, Suriname is reasonably self-sufficient in rice, vegetable, roots and tubers. However, for the second staple food source, the country is totally dependent on imported wheat, meat (chicken) and dry milk, although it has the capacity to produce all of these items except wheat (IDOS 1992:183). Contributing to this situation is the highly dependent character of the economy, which is very open. In colonial times, the consumer sector depended heavily on imports of several commodities (foodstuffs) from abroad (especially from the Netherlands and America). During the 1950s and 1960s, policies were geared more towards the importation of consumer and luxury goods and less towards encouraging domestic food production. The situation is steadily worsening as a result of the recent liberalization policy, which encourages increasing imports of consumer and luxury goods. Table II.5 shows the cultivated areas of the country, by crop and by tons of production.

**Table II.5 Areas cultivated and volume of production, by crop. Suriname 1987-1989**

Crop	Area cultivated (ha)		Production (tons)	
	1987	1989	1987	1989
Cereals	71 155	69 520	271 600	260 895
Maize	230	107	415	196
Cassava	275	170	3 837	1 995
Other groundnuts	45	34	429	178
Peanuts	640	518	488	410
Urdu	243	125	192	88
Other pulses	80	55	48	40
Vegetables	1 491	1 202	15 891	15 583
Sugar cane	2 523	2 495	48 796	48 492
Bananas	1 761	2 076	43 204	45 943
Oil palm	6 173	6 128	1 990	13 953
Coconut	1 292	1 308	10 130	11 270
Total	85 908	83 738	397 020	399 043

Source: Ministry of Agriculture 1992.

In 1985, 74 890 hectares were planted in cereals, with a total production of 299 485 tons. From 1987 to 1989, the area planted in cereals decreased from 71 155 to 69 520. Official figures (Ministry of Agriculture 1990) show that this trend has continued during the 1990s. During the period following the war in the interior, total production of oil palm increased from 1990 in 1987 to 13 953 in 1989; however, from 1989 to 1992, the outbreak of the disease known as spear-rot caused a sharp drop in production.

### *Structure of production*

In Suriname, crop and livestock production are undertaken on farms of different sizes and types. There are three main categories of enterprises, namely:

1. estates and large farms
2. medium-sized farms
3. smallholdings

1. Estates are large private and parastate enterprises with highly mechanized systems, mainly geared towards production of single crops (rice, bananas), and private estates engaged mainly in production of rice or beef cattle. They require hired labour. Estate crops are mainly produced for export.

2. Medium-sized farms produce both for export and for the domestic market. In the district of Nickerie, for example, medium-scale farmers generally grow rice for export. Medium-sized farms are mostly engaged in mixed crop farming and animal husbandry.
3. Smallholdings are family operated, with little or no mechanization, and are mainly engaged in the production of staple crops, although they may also have some livestock. Smallholdings are either family-owned or leased from the government. Management and most of the manpower are supplied by family members.

A distinction must be made between single-crop smallholdings geared towards production of rice for export and rainfed smallholdings which mainly focus on small-scale production of a variety of commodities for the domestic market and the family household, such as beans, plantains and citrus and other fruits. Table II.6 shows the food-production structure of Suriname.

**Table II.6 Structure of food production. Suriname 1994.**

Crops/livestock	Estate farms	Large farms	Medium farms	Small farms Trad/Modern	
Rice	x	x	x	x	x
Bananas	x	x			
Palm-oil	x				
Vegetables			x	x	x
Peanuts				x	x
Plantains		x	x	x	x
Roots				x	x
Pulses			x	x	x
Citrus and other fruits		x	x	x	x
Dairy and beef		x	x	x	x

Note: Small farms are those with an area of less than 12 hectares.

Smallholdings represent the largest number of agricultural enterprises in Suriname, and produce a variety of food commodities (IFAD 1992).

### 1. Food crops

Rice, vegetables and wheat, along with roots and groundnuts, make up the basic food basket of the country. With the exception of rice, which is mainly grown on highly mechanized farm enterprises, most of the other staple food items are produced on small farms. The participation

of women in the production of these crops is very obvious, and is essential for small-scale production, because of their crucial role in nearly all types of field work. Women also play a vital role in the marketing of food crops.

#### **a. Major crops**

The major crops (such as rice) are grown both for the domestic market and for export. Vegetables are mainly produced for the local market, but small quantities are exported. Most of the major crops are grown on highly mechanized agricultural enterprises and, to a lesser extent, on medium-sized farms. Because of the high prices of rice, many women food producers in the interior (Maroon women) are now cultivating rice (highland dry rice) for home consumption. Because there are very few rice mills, however, the women experience many constraints in the processing of rice.

#### ***Rice***

The main export product is rice, which is highly mechanized. Rice is cultivated on the best irrigated lands; it takes up about 70 per cent of the total cultivated area, and is the main crop planted by most small-scale farmers (1980 figures). In recent years, due to the limited availability of farm equipment and inputs, yields have been low, and there has been a significant reduction in cultivated area. According to a report of the State Rice Commission (1988), 87 per cent of the rice farms (4800) have an area of less than 6 hectares. Farms of between 6 and 12 hectares account for another 9 per cent. The State Commission defines all rice farms smaller than 12 hectares as small farms (FAO 1990c).

As a result of developments between 1960 and 1970, many women who had been involved in rice production were forced to produce other food crops (such as vegetables and roots). Many left farming to become wage earners, while others remained unemployed.

It is important to mention that up to the early 1960s, women's contribution to the production of rice was considerable and not to be underestimated. The growth of the rice industry, whose contribution to the national economy increased rapidly after the 1960s, discouraged from women continuing their participation in this sector. Because of the trend towards commercialization, men become more involved in the cultivation of this cash crop.

#### ***Bananas***

Bananas are grown on government-owned estates operated and managed by SURLAND, a parastate corporation. Three banana plantations covering a total area of about 1750 hectares have an average annual production of 42 500 m and an average yield of 24.6 m/ha. Bananas exports total about 37 000 m annually. There is no smallholder production of export bananas

in Suriname. Plantains are grown in relatively small quantities for local consumption by smallholders on a planted area of about 350 ha (IDOS 1992:152).

### *Palm oil*

Palm-oil is produced on three government-owned estates. The production level was 38 000 m in 1985, but due to internal disturbances and an outbreak of a disease (spear-rot), there was a drop in production. Palm oil exports had reached 2800 m in 1984 and 1985, but fell to zero in 1988 (IDOS 1992:153).

### **b. Other basic food crops**

In addition to rice, vegetables, root crops and other groundnuts are important components of the basic diet. Especially in the interior, root crops such as cassava make up a major part of the basic menu.

### *Vegetables*

Vegetable production is primarily a smallholder activity, and has been steadily increasing in recent years; it is therefore considered a very important sector. An estimated 3000-4000 producers, mostly part-time small-scale farmers, are involved in this sector. Because of increasing domestic demand and the growing export trade (see Table II.7), official figures show the value of vegetable imports to have fallen from Sf. 8.4 million in 1982 to Sf. 2.9 million in 1987 (IDOS 1992:154). A wide variety of vegetables are produced on fairly small plots; these include tomatoes, green beans, long beans, cabbage, eggplant, okra, peppers, sopropo (bitter melon) and others. Seventy-seven per cent of total vegetable production is estimated to come from the Kwatta area, west of Paramaribo, but small cultivated areas are also found in other parts of the young coastal plain (Saramacca, Santo Boma, Houttuin, Lelydorp and Commewijne), particularly on the sandy ridges (IDOS 1992:154). Table II.7 shows vegetable production in selected years.

**Table II.7. Vegetable production in selected years. Suriname 1987-1992.**

Area	1987	1989	1990	1991	1992
Cultivated area (ha)	1 491	1 202	1 687	2 112	1 800
Production (tons)	15 891	15 583	23 153	33 122	32 725
Prod. value Sf. 1000	31 782	35 826	82 731	106 761	206 491
Exp. veg. (tons)	937	1 879	2 061	ND	ND
Exp. value Sf. 1000	1 293	1 466	1 331	ND	ND

Source: MOP, Ministry of Agriculture.

ND = No data.

The main vegetables produced are tomatoes, cabbage, bora, long string bean, callaloo, eggplant and peppers. The contribution of the vegetable sector to the total value of agricultural production rose from 6.5 per cent to 26 per cent during the period 1980-1990 (Ministry of Agriculture, Division of Planning and Development 1992:19).

### *Peanuts*

Peanuts are generally a smallholder crop, and are grown mostly on small plots (0.5 hectare or less), on sandy ridges of the young coastal plain. Production has shown a slight increase in recent years. Planting and harvesting are usually carried out manually. Yields are relatively low, below 1 m/ha on average, although with a full range of inputs, yields of 1.5 m/ha can be obtained (IDOS 1992:154).

Among peanut producers, who are mostly women of Indonesian and Maroon extraction, full-time farming is more common than among the other categories of small holders. This can be explained by the fact that a substantial number of peanut producers are elderly. This is particularly true of the Javanese women producers, and less so of the Maroon producers. Another consideration is that most of these producers have limited access to off-farm employment in the Saramacca and Commewijne areas where peanuts are grown.

The annual area planted in peanuts ranges between 400 and 600 hectares, while annual production varies between 350 and 550 m of dry unshelled peanuts. Domestic demand for peanuts is estimated at 1,200 m/year, and over 400 m were imported annually between 1983 and 1986 (IDOS 1992:154). The lack of financial incentives, of inputs (insecticides) and of new and improved seed have led to a drop both in area planted in peanuts and in yield; hence, there is now a significant shortfall in supply (IDOS 1992:154). Peanuts (butter) were exported in the past, and could be resumed. Table II.8 shows the areas planted in vegetables and peanuts and the increase in production, particularly of peanuts.

### *Pulses, soya beans, root crops and other ground crops*

The most important of these crops is urdi, which is grown on small plots. Soya beans, mostly for consumption as a vegetable, are grown by ethnic Javanese (mostly women). Yields are in the order of 800-900 kg/ha (IDOS 1992:154).

Root crops and other ground crops are grown in the interior, and constitute the basic food basket of the population in that region (Amerindians and Maroons). Cassava production is very important and is produced as a staple for the local market and for agricultural industries. Other crops, such as ginger and pomtayer, are produced in smaller quantities, but also for the market and for agricultural industries.

**Table II.8. Areas planted in vegetables and peanuts. Suriname 1980-1990.**

District	Vegetables		Peanuts	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Marowijne	18	2	8	ND
Commewijne	77	84	42	94
Wanica	314	936	9	11
Saramacca	381	586	147	433
Coronie	ND	8	ND	5
Nickerie	11	33	ND	ND
Para	81	41	2	5
Brokopondo	ND	ND	ND	ND
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>1690</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>548</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture 1992.

ND = No data.

### **c. Minor crops**

Minor crops consist of traditional agricultural crops which are produced in small quantities. These crops are important for the basic diet, however, inasmuch as they include sugar, coffee and cacao, which were formerly planted on large farms (plantations). At present, these commodities are very expensive, and are largely imported.

#### ***Coconuts***

Coconuts are grown on a total area of about 1250 hectares, with the largest area being a 650-hectare plantation in the Coronie district. There are about 340 part-time farmers in Coronie, on units averaging about 2 hectares. The coconut trees are old, and there has been no deliberate replanting; new trees are regenerated mostly from fallen nuts.

Coconut yields are reported to be up to 1 300 nuts/ha, but not all of these are collected. Harvested yields are about 7000-8000 nuts/ha (IDOS 1992:153). The processing of coconut oil was at one time an important activity, but has become less so now, except among small-scale producers. It is reported that there is an estimated stock of coconut oil at Coronie of about 30 000 liters.



## ***Maize***

Maize is produced, mostly for human consumption, on a total area of about 185 hectares. Yields average about 1.6 m/ha, usually on small plots in the interior and in small areas of the coastal plain. A substantial volume is imported, however; between 1980 and 1986, annual imports averaged 22 500 m. An effort is being made to increase production for import substitution. According to experiments, reasonable yields would be in the order of 3-3.5 m/ha (IDOS 1992: 155).

## ***Sugar cane, coffee, cacao***

These crops are currently produced in small quantities. Sugar cane is produced by one State-owned plantation, and the production is used for domestic rum. Coffee and cacao are produced on one State-owned plantation and one private plantation. Substantial volumes of these products are imported.

### **d. Recent problems in food crop production**

The rapid deterioration of the physical and institutional infrastructures has led to an increasing scarcity of essential production inputs, such as agrochemicals, machinery and spare parts. Most of these inputs have to be imported. Moreover, due to the fact that these inputs are not always available when needed, local production of food crops has stagnated, volume of production has fallen and domestic food prices have risen. As a result of this situation, many farmers have been abandoning their fields, as they are faced with a cost/price squeeze and their market position deteriorates. Another significant problem in this context is the constant fluctuation of the exchange rate on the local market, which has also contributed to increases in the prices of locally produced food items. In order to play a more active role in the provision of inputs, the Government has set up an Input Commission for the vegetable and fruit sector. The Agriculture Bank, the Federation of Agricultural Labourers (FAL,) the National Federation of Agrarian Cooperatives and the Union of Vegetable and Fruit Exporters all participate in this effort.

## **2. Livestock production**

Suriname is considered to be almost self-sufficient in all livestock products except milk and other dairy products. Livestock production consists of cattle, swine and chicken. Since 1991, there has been an obvious decline in the production of livestock; this is due to the high cost of imported raw materials (concentrated feed and others) and the high and constantly fluctuating exchange rate. Chicken and pork are particularly expensive food items at present.

Table II.9 shows the trend in livestock production between 1987 and 1992. Between 1987 and 1991, livestock production increased. During the period 1987-1992, the gross value of

production rose from about Sf. 121 million to Sf. 346 million, at an average annual growth rate of 24 per cent. The value of production, at 1987 fixed prices, rose by 42 per cent, and at current prices, the increase amounted to 88 per cent (MOP, 1994-1998). Between 1990 and 1992, the value of production at fixed 1987 prices fell by 26 per cent; however, there was a further increase in the nominal value of production. High off-farm prices of cattle caused consumer prices of beef to increase during the years 1986-1994 (MOP 1994-1998).

Some 2500 people depend on this subsector for a living. The production of beef cattle is generally undertaken by larger-scale farmers, while dairy farming is practiced mostly by small-scale farmers. Smaller livestock, such as sheep and goats, are raised on small farms. More than 50 per cent of chicken production is carried out by a few large-scale entrepreneurs, but small farms also raise chickens (IDOS 1992:156). Small-scale livestock are usually raised on units managed by a part-time farmer, with much of the farm work carried out by family members, often the farmer's wife and children. Milking is mostly done by women. Most of the milk is sold to private dairy companies, while some is used for household consumption. In recent years, production has not been sufficient to meet domestic demand. The decline in the level of production is the result of the increasing cost of imported raw materials, including feed and other inputs, especially for the poultry subsector. Milk and meat are currently the most expensive food items.

### **3. Fisheries**

The fishery subsector in Suriname consists of two types of operations, namely, large-scale export-oriented shrimp fishing, and small-scale fishing. Large-scale fishing is financed by foreign (Korean, Japanese) and Surinamese investors, and fishing operations are mainly carried out with foreign trawlers with Surinamese, Japanese and Korean crews. Small-scale operations consist of fishing for brackish-water shrimp, kwi-kwi, catfish and others.

According to the IFAD Report for 1990, the fishery subsector is now the second largest contributor to the agricultural sector, and accounts for Sf. 36 million, or 22 per cent, of the agricultural GDP.

The main export market is the Netherlands, where there is a large Surinamese population. There is a small export trade to Guyana and French Guiana, and there is a market for smoked fish in the Caribbean. This has contributed to the high and increasing cost of fish on the domestic market. Approximately 700 fishermen find employment in small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fishing takes place in fresh, brackish and coastal waters, and is usually carried out as a family business (IDOS 1992: 158). The men do most of the fishing and marketing of the final product, while the women are responsible for preserving and processing and further treatment of the catch. Sometimes (especially during the peak period) women also take part in fishing and marketing. In the case of dried shrimp and smoked fish, it is mostly women who are in charge of processing and marketing the product.

**Table II.9. Livestock production. Suriname 1987-1992.**

Description	1987	1988	1990	1992
Grasslands (1000 ha)	27	30	29	29
<b>Livestock</b>				
Cattle (1000)	76	84	92	95
Swine (1000)	19	21	32	31
Poultry (1000)	5301	6185	8384	5955
<b>Slaughtered</b>				
Cattle (tons)	1339	1513	2243	2637
Swine (tons)	1293	1334	1650	1449
Other livest. (1000)	7	8	10	8
Poultry (1000)	7951	9277	12576	8932
<b>Slaughtered value</b>				
Cattle Sf. 1000	16068	24208	33645	65925
Swine Sf. 1000	12284	20010	21450	34921
Other livest. Sf. 1000	140	240	250	320
Poultry Sf. 1000	57247	92770	120730	174174
<b>Dairy</b>				
Milk Sf.1000	11250	13680	18040	20541
Eggs Sf.1000	24054	21760	33550	50000
Prod. value Sf.1000	121043	172668	227665	345884

Source: Ministry of Agriculture 1993.

Production costs for fishing and transport of products to Paramaribo are very high, and are estimated at about Sf. 2000 per month (IDOS 1992:158).

### C. Government Food Production Policies

Government food production policies over the years have not resulted in a balanced development of the food production sector. In some areas, the Government has provided basic services to farmers. However, it has mostly been the rice farmers who have benefitted from these services. Since rice is a cash crop, these farmers have a guaranteed market and easier access to credit. Not enough attention has been paid to small-scale farming, which is the main food production subsector, and in which women play a crucial role, particular in the interior, where they are mainly responsible for food production. This section discusses government policies in general, as well as those specifically addressed to food production and food security.

## **1. Agriculture and pre-crisis production policies**

Following World War II, two major developments took place in agriculture in Suriname which involved both the coastal and the interior regions. Between 1950 and 1970, government policy was aimed at the promotion and protection of the small-scale sector, i.e., the domestic crop sector. Programs were implemented to promote the modernization of small-scale farms (especially rice farms), and increase employment in this sector. In order to boost production, especially of rice and fruits, the Government established a number of agricultural enterprises, and agricultural research was strongly supported and promoted by the former colonial power. The modernization of the small-scale (rice) sector was promoted by the Government through large-scale investments in land reclamation and land settlement projects, along with other projects, such as irrigation systems, which resulted in some positive developments, namely:

- The total land area used for agricultural purposes increased from 45 331 in 1959 to 87 600 ha in 1981. Between 1959 and 1981, the total area devoted to small-scale farming increased from 23 543 to 33 256 hectares (IDOS 1992:141). However, most of the increase in arable land in the aforementioned period went to large-scale mechanized rice farms (50 hectares and over, the average size being 500 hectares). The statistics show that during the 1950s and the 1960s, about 80 per cent of the population of Suriname was economically dependent on the agricultural sector, while the average income in this sector was one-fifth of the average national income (Morenc 1988).
- There was considerable development of capital-intensive fisheries and small-scale fisheries in the coastal region.
- The transportation system was modernized, leading to changes in the marketing of agricultural products (IDOS 1992:141-142).

This policy, coupled with other industrial developments (bauxite mining, development of large-scale infrastructures), affected small-scale farming in several ways, such as the following:

- The disappearance of small-scale farming around Paramaribo from 1970 onwards,
- The almost complete disappearance of the flourishing poultry farms,
- The creation of a monopoly in the distribution of agricultural products, which is now mainly controlled by a few middlemen who fix prices, thus lowering incomes, especially of the smallest farmers (IDOS 1992:141-142).

The above-mentioned trends, together with the economic liberalization policies implemented, led to an increase in food imports in recent years. In addition, increased investments in rural services -education, health, electrification, potable water supply and others- contributed to an improvement in the standard of living in rural areas, in terms of welfare and well-being. Government agricultural policy is also aimed at the diversification of crop production, while

supporting traditional exports (rice, bananas, palm oil, fish). There are plans to develop certain other subsectors, such as the production of soya beans for cattle fodder, as well as edible oils, peanuts for local consumption, agroindustrial activities, and several types of tropical fruit crops. Attention is also being given to improving the fishery subsector, particularly small-scale fishing. The current agricultural development policy is based on concepts of significant public intervention in the agricultural sector, as reflected in the national price policy, and Government involvement in a number of parastate enterprises in all segments of the agricultural sector. The recent decline of the economy has led to some changes in this policy (FAO 1990). For the time being, the focus is on removing certain fundamental bottlenecks in the agricultural sector, such as:

- the lack of farm inputs and tools;
- the lack of adequate support services, such as agricultural research, extension and marketing; and
- the general deterioration of infrastructure works (mainly irrigation and drainage systems).

## **2. Agricultural policy and structural adjustment**

Under the Structural Adjustment Program to be implemented in 1994, it is expected that agricultural policy in general will be aimed, on the one hand, at the promotion of exports and import- substitution activities, and, on the other hand, at alleviating poverty. The policy statement also stresses gender-sensitive programs, and focusses on promoting the active participation and integration of women in the various projects and programs to be carried out. This change in the policy on women needs to be supported both by governmental (e.g., the Women's Bureau) and by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The problems arising from the deterioration of the agricultural sector will be addressed through the implementation of key support programs, including the following:

- technical assistance programs and facilities,
- improvements in the institutions responsible for drainage systems and physical infrastructure,
- improvements in the institutions and physical infrastructure pertaining to agricultural research, extension and training,
- introduction of new crops and of environmentally sound and sustainable cultivation methods,
- privatization of agricultural extension services,
- privatization of parastate enterprises in the agricultural sector,
- implementation of a special credit program, the Smallholder Support Project (SSP), for the development of the small-scale local food production sector (MOP 1994-1998). Forty per cent (US\$ 4 million) of the cost of this program is to be financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and 60 per cent (US\$6 million) by the Dutch

**Government.** However, since the Structural Adjustment Program is not yet underway, few improvements have been made in the socioeconomic infrastructure of small-scale agriculture.

### **3. Food security**

The economic crisis has seriously affected food production and food security. Policy is geared towards guaranteeing the supply of staples such as flour, oil, sugar, salt, milk and pulses, through imports by the Surinam Central Import Company. In recent years, the food situation of the country has deteriorated considerably. Malnutrition among women and children is becoming a serious problem for the Government. Since most food items and raw materials have to be imported at high prices, due to fluctuating exchange rates, the prices of foodstuffs are rising beyond the reach or purchasing power of most of the population. The national food production sector is facing many constraints due to the unstable total economic situation.

In 1989, the FAO Nutrition Country Paper on Suriname stated that despite the shortage of certain basic foods, the number of daily calories available for consumption had increased substantially over the past twenty years, from 2066 in 1961-1963 to 2658 kcal in 1985, and had remained essentially at the same level during the 1980s. This was attributed primarily to the large consumption of rice, which is grown locally; approximately half the available calories (53 per cent) and protein (49 per cent) were provided by cereals (Bureau of Statistics and the National Food Commission 1992). A rough estimate of the food supply in 1988 showed that for a total population of 398 998, the food available met the WHO estimated per capita requirements for calories, protein and fat at the national level. However, since this estimate offers no insight as to the distribution of and access to food at the household level, or the availability of food in the interior and in certain specific rural districts, it does not provide a complete picture of the situation throughout the country. Rice is the main staple food. In the coastal areas, the second staple food is wheat, consumed in the form of bread and roti, or noodles. The third major food item is the group of roots and tubers (and plantains), among which cassava is the most important. For the people from the interior, this is the main ingredient for cassava bread and kwak.

As regards food security and food protection measures, in 1990, the Government (specifically, the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture) established the Food and Nutrition Committee, which included the participation of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce and the Bureau of Statistics. According to its terms of reference, the Committee has the following responsibilities:

- to identify high risk groups,
- to set up a Nutrition Surveillance System,
- to initiate activities to promote and improve the nutritional well-being of the population,
- to discuss and advise on the establishment of the National Nutrition Board.

One major field requiring attention was found to be the domestic crop sector, which is essential for food security. Product quality and transport and marketing systems must also be improved.

Statistics show that 38 per cent of the population's calorie intake comes from imported food items. To reduce this percentage, the Food and Nutrition Committee has identified 4 projects for implementation, as follows:

1. Substitution of part of the wheat flour used in breadmaking with locally produced (rice) flour,
2. Promotion of the production and use of roots and tubers,
3. Promotion of the production and use of local pulses and beans,
4. Development of the cultivation of herbs and spices.

The general objective of this policy is to contribute to the discussion and formulation of a food and nutrition policy and to develop a tool that can be used for guaranteeing food supplies and food security (Food and Nutrition Country Paper 1992).

Up to now, households have been receiving the most important food items (rice, oil, sugar) through a rationing system whereby consumers are issued special cards. This system includes a special consumer package of essential food items, which are distributed to family units upon presentation of their consumer card. The distribution system ensures that each family is able to obtain a (limited) supply of essential items. In the context of the Structural Adjustment Program, a Social Catchnet (*Social Vangnet*) is to be developed, in order to support poor families. The new system will be addressed specifically to the so-called *kwetsbare groepen* (the poor) in society (Ministerie van Planning en Ontwikkelings Samenwerking 1992).





### **III. AGRICULTURAL SECTOR POLICIES**

The main objective of the agricultural development policy is to contribute optimally to the increase of the National and sectoral welfare and stable development of the agricultural sector and the rural areas. This main objective can be realized through extension of a modern, dynamic and efficient agricultural, which is market oriented and can offer products that can compete on the national and export markets, both in price and quality. How directions and efforts to reach this goal will be elaborated in this chapter.

#### **Introduction**

Due to its important role in national development the agricultural sector is one of the most important sector for the Surinamese Government. The FAO/WCCARD Report of 1990 stressed this concern as follows:

In outlining its policy guidelines to the Government, the Ministry of Agriculture draws attention to the decreasing levels of agricultural production and real income since 1981, as well as such factors as declining productivity and competitiveness, low quality standards, deterioration in the physical infrastructure, falling living standards, reduction in research efforts, under-utilization of existing capacity, decreasing farm incomes, the poor performance of some parastate enterprises, the increasing use of migrant labour and poor maintenance of machinery and equipment (FAO 1990c:18).

Reference is also made in the document to the political and economic circumstances which gave rise to these problems, such as the war in the interior and the shortage of foreign exchange. Earlier policies have tended to focus on the sectoral development of export products (rice and bananas), and less attention has been given to the specific structural problems and needs of small scale food production units. Policy has never made any distinction between female and male farmers and women as producers have never received the attention they properly deserve. The main attention of policy was geared towards the mechanized and capitalized development of export crops for the earning of foreign currency for the State revenues. These crop are mostly cultivated in the Western region (Saramacca, Coronie, Nickerie) of Suriname. In so far, agrarian policy have never identified the so-called target groups in the population agriculture. Attention regarding women in agricultural production, has been required for particularly the participation and contribution of women in the domestic food production sector. In section B of this Chapter policies and programs towards women will discussed and further elaborated.

Table III.I draws attention to the various efforts that have been made at the policy level to address these problems and to attain the goals of agricultural and rural development.

Table III.I identifies the policies and programs towards women, and summarizes their major characteristics as well their orientation in terms of farm size and gender. As can be seen, in the majority of agricultural policies women have not been directly considered. On the contrary women's policies, have in the past paid little attention (in terms of programs and projects) to

women's role as producers and agricultural workers. The following sections will discuss in more detail these agricultural policies and their impact on gender. The agricultural policies are presented first followed by a review of the programs and policies directed specifically to women. In the final section the Impact on small farmers and gender is analyzed.

## **A. Policies on Land Use and Ownership, Credit, Training, Research, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development**

### **1. Land tenure policies**

Concerning access to land, agrarian legislation recognizes the equality of men and women, but in practice women have no real access to this resource. Beneficiaries of land allocations are, in general, "heads of household", a category associated with men (FAO 1993:33).

From a strictly legal point of view all land belongs to the State and currently it is estimated that approximately 90 percent of all the land in Suriname is owned by the State (FAO 1990c). This system dates from colonial times, rooted in the feudal systems and have undergone little changes during the years. In the plantation society, all land was registered as State land and was given to the planters *in allodiale eigendom en erfelijk bezit* (long-term lease). The same system was applied by the Dutch in their homeland and in their colonies, such as Indonesia.

Land availability was never considered as a major constraint to agriculture, but long administrative procedures (up to seven years) resulted in the unauthorized occupation of land by farmers in certain areas. In recent years the allocation of land has become a sensitive political issue. However, Government handling of land question over the years has given people ownership rights over land, in the form of *allodial* property (commonly referred to as "privately owned land"), long-term leases, normal short-term leases, preliminary rights to use lands, and concessions.

Maps and titles to private lands are registered and posts are used for indicating boundaries. Long-term leased lands from the Government can be mortgaged, inherited, leased sold (usually for about the same price as full ownership). Short-term leases may be released by heir, but the land cannot be used for collateral except by the Peoples Credit Bank.

#### **a. Patterns of land tenure**

According to the different purposes of land tenure, the Government made a distinction between:

- agricultural land,
- industrial land,
- construction land (for housing and building), and
- recreation/sport land (Ministry of Natural Resources 1981).

**Table III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname, 1945-1993**

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
1. LAND POLICY	LAND REFORM ACT (1982)	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	IN RELATION TO MEN, A FEW WOMEN HAVE TITLE ON LAND
(a) Private and Ownership	State and Government lands in the hands of Corporations, individuals and Organizations (cooperatives and farmers)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Agricultural production is geared towards export. Mostly rice farmers involved
(b) Long-Term-Lease	State and Government lands Parastatal (estates) for rice, bananas, palm oil and sugar. Also leases and sub-leases from private holders	No	No	Yes	No	No	Most of the fertile land is in the hands of these estates, and privately owned large farms. Production is mainly geared toward export "women are excluded"
(c) Rented	Domain (Government) land lease or rented to people for agricultural purposes or for housing and building	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	People, particularly women experience difficulties in obtaining a piece of land and to put allocated land into proper use
(d) Domain (Government) land and Communal ownership	In the interior no land titles are granted only user rights can be obtained	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	In the Interior the people have traditional claims over most of the land

(cont'd) Table III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname 1945-1993

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
II. CREDIT FORMAL SOURCE OF CREDIT		YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	IN REALITY ALL LOW INCOMES GROUP FACE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING LOANS
(a) The Landbouw Bank (L.B.B.)	The Agricultural Bank (L.B.B.) was established in 1972, with headquarters in Paramaribo and six sections in the main Agricultural areas, provides credit to small, medium and large farmers. Their policies are in favour of small farmers.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	The impact of the L.B.B. on the agricultural sector is considered to be positive. Women like men have equal rights and access to credit facilities. However, only a few women have applied for loans.
(b) Commercial Banks	Usually work with high interest rates and are completely focussed on high turnover commercial activities.	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	The interest rates are very high. Credit is hardly available, due to the distorted financial situation in the country.
(c) Credit Cooperative Banks	There are few (2) Conditions for granting a loan are not very different from those of the Commercial Banks. They also operate on a Commercial base	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	The best organized cooperative credit Union is the AVKC, which has formed a federation with 55 organizations since 1993
(d) Informal Credit	The kasmonie-system, money lenders, friends and families are also providing small amounts of money to people	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	It seems to be a positive alternative source of credit for "poor people and small entrepreneurs"

(cont'd) Table III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname 1945-1993

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
III. RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY.	RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY STARTED IN SURINAME AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY WITH EXPERIMENTS FOR THE CULTIVATION OF RICE	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	THERE ARE MANY CONSTRAINTS ON THE LEVEL OF TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY
(a) The Agricultural Experiment Station	Established in 1903, became an independent Department of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1919, provide in research, etc. improvements of crops etc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	In generally only large farmers have benefitted from the programs mostly rice farmers
(b) CELOS; STIPRIS; SNRI STINAPA and the Technology Faculty of the University of Suriname	These institutions are carry out research programmes and experiments. They are functioning independently from the Ministry of Agriculture.	No	No	Yes	No	No	There are various long-term plans. At present no coordinated integrated Agricultural Research programmes in collaboration with the Experiment Station has been devised.

(cont'd) Tabel III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname 1945-1993

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
IV. TRAINING AND EXTENSION	RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY STARTED	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	
(a) Extension and Agricultural Information Unit	The first programmes started between 1952 and 1962. At this moment there are a few programmes in implementation geared towards small farmers in agriculture.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Much attention is paid to small farmers, particularly on the level of agricultural Training programmes. "Women are also involved".
(b) Home economics 4H	Provides in training in home economics to rural women, women farmers and also in youth work	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	The home economics section is facing a lot of difficulties in carrying out programmes for rural women
(c) The Sociological Research Section	The section has in the past carried out farmers surveys. In 1992 a research project on "Women in Agricultural Production" started and still is in implementation.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Due to limited financial means, transportation problems etc. the section is not functioning adequately.
(d) NGO's and Women's group Training Programs	A few organizations are very active in the rural areas and in the interior e.g. The Pater Albrinck Stichting, the Moravian Brotherhood Church, and the NGO's of some Women group in the rural areas of Commewijne and Para (Wanica)	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Most emphasis is laid on productive projects. "Women are the main focus of attention" in most of these projects.

(cont'd) Table III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname 1945-1993

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
V. RURAL DEVELOPMENT							
(a) Land Settlement Programs	Land reclamation distribution to guarantee farmers enough land for production	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	These programs were more in favour of medium and large rice producers
(b) Infrastructural and Social-Economic Development Programs	The government set up various programs after World War II, to open-up isolated areas and bring development in rural areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	improvements on the various levels has brought some changes in the rural areas. However socio-economic conditions are "far from the ideal situation"

(cont'd) Table III.1 Agricultural and rural development policies and programs, Suriname 1945-1993

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION	ORIENTATION BY SIZE OF PRODUCER			GENDER ORIENTATION		COMMENTS
		SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	WOMEN FARMERS	OTHER WOMEN	
VI. WOMEN POLICIES	SINCE 1985, THIS PROVISION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	POLICIES IN THE PAST HAS BROUGHT LITTLE POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE OVERALL POSITION OF WOMEN.
(a) Home economics 4H		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	At present programmes are aimed at generating income for women.
(b) Social and Welfare Programs	In some parts of the rural areas improvements generally regards health, education and social facilities	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	In most of the rural areas the social economic conditions of women are still "unsatisfactory"



Agricultural land includes the largest percentage with a total area of about 170 000. In the allocation of land the Ministry of Natural Resources faced some problems with regard to the use and the purpose. These problems have to do with a serious lack of the necessary civic and technical infrastructure in the different areas for the performance of agricultural activities.

Table III.2 Shows the distribution of land according to the forms of allocation.

**Table III.2. Land tenure patterns. Suriname 1981.**

Tenure	Area	Percent
Private	37,000	21.7
Rented from private owner	3,600	2.1
Long-term lease from Gov.	46,500	27.4
Rented from Gov.	26,200	15.4
Other forms of occupancy (1)	57,000	33.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: 1981 Agricultural Census.

(1) Domain (Government) land and communal ownership.

According to the Agricultural Census of 1981, 93 per cent of the recorded farms were of 10 hectares and less. Two-thirds of the cultivated area is in the hands of large farms, i.e. those above 10 ha. These comprise Government controlled estates for rice, bananas, palm oil, sugar and cattle; and also privately owned, mostly rice- growing farms.

After two years lease or rent from the Government, the lease holder has the right to sell or rent the land to another person. However based on the requirements that it will be cultivated according its purpose and that the rent will be paid annually. In the case of free land (*vrij land*) which meant that the land is not yet allocated, everyone has the right to apply for it. The above described right to sell or to rent lease land from the State to others, contributes to a lot of speculation in land. Another concern for the Government is the high number of absentee land owners (most of them are living in Holland). Due to the increasing need for more agricultural land, the Government plans or propose to take steps in the future to tackle this problem, because it is becoming a serious bottleneck in the distribution of land. There are many people who really needed land and are not in the position to buy it from private speculators.

In the interior no land titles are granted since all land is public domain, with user rights granted to the population of Amerindians and Maroons. Although the land is formally owned by the Government which can lease it to applicants, Maroons and Amerindians have traditional claims over most of the land in the interior. Many Maroon families are interested in obtaining land title

and request the Government to lease the land, so they may use it as collateral for obtaining credit.

**b. Land reform of 1981**

A Land Reform Act, in the form of a decree known as Legislation with Relation to Land Reform in Suriname, was introduced in 1982 (FAO 1990c:15). The main objective of this Decree was to guarantee households access to enough land for housing, industrial and agricultural purposes.

It was hoped that for the agricultural community, the Land Reform Act would have contributed to reducing the highly skewed distribution of land in the rural areas. However, the operation of the legislation did not achieve the objective for which it was enacted, for the following reasons:

- **The procedures followed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.** When looking at the procedures followed by the Ministry of Natural Resources for leasing out land, one has to establish that there is an arbitrary way of land allocation. Above all, after eight years of implementation of the Decree, no simple form has been prepared for granting land for agricultural purposes (IDOS 1992:150).
- **The inefficient and ineffective land registration system.** The inefficient and ineffective system of land registration, which is highly linked to political interests and results in persons applying for land going through outdated and time consuming bureaucratic procedures, which in many instances take years and a lot of money and influential contacts to be successful.
- **Lack of information on the availability of free land.** The applicants have hardly no information on the availability of free land (land which is not yet allocated by the State) and whether it is fertile and well located (distance to markets and social services).
- **Unavailability of fertile land.** Most of the fertile land in the coastal area seems to be already allocated, but often not for productive use but is held for speculatively purposes. People without sufficient financial means experience difficulties to put allocated land into proper use due to high costs of land reclamation and even land rehabilitation, which is respectively Sf. 20 000 and Sf. 8000 per ha (IDOS 1992). Due to the high prices for food commodities, more and more people are now in need for a piece of agricultural land to grow their own food. The issue of land allocation is a very sensitive political one, because of the many interests (speculation, political loyalty) involved with it.

Despite all the negative aspects, the Land Reform Act is still considered to be a positive aspect in the land distribution system. At this moment it is still being implemented and is referred to in the allocation of land by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

### **c. Inheritance practices**

**It is very important to underline that by Law women and men share equal rights in Suriname when it consider inheritance.**

**In the case of a divorce, a woman has the same rights as her ex-husband, under the inheritance laws (property land or a house). If legally married the woman and the children (regardless of sexes) born within the marriage, have the same rights contrary in the case of a common-law relationship. In the case that there is no will women in a common-law relationship with children in their charge, do not have the same rights as in the case of a legal marriage. For example, in a common-law relationship, will in the case of a husband's succession, the properties be shared among the relatives (brothers and sisters of the husband) and the children born in this relationship (they will get a smaller share). The woman will get nothing. The same situation holds in case of leased or rented land from the State, whereby the land will be divided among the relatives of a deceased partner and his or her children, who always will get the smallest share.**

**In the situation of a marriage in the event of death of for example the husband, the woman inherits half of the land (whether leased or rented land from the State) plus a share of one child. The rest of the land will be shared among the children born within the marriage. The children raised outside the marriage cannot claim rights on property.**

## **2. Credit policies**

**The proclamation of A Decree C 11 (1981) abolished the transaction incompetency of married women. According to this decree married women no longer need the authorization of their husbands to conclude financial transactions, for instance in opening a bank account or requesting a loan. However, in reality all low-income groups face difficulties in obtaining loans or buying land due to the fact that they cannot meet the conditions required by banking policy or Commercial Banks and the high interest rates.**

**Legally, there are no restrictions on access to credit based on gender. Banking institutions do not explicitly discriminate against women. However, for the low-income classes it is not easy to get loans. Poor women seeking a loan have virtually no access to financial services because the demands from small entrepreneurs, male and female, are not met by the lending policy of the commercial banks. Their policy is preferential to large firms and the interest rates 11 to 12 per cent for a loan are high.**

**When married both men and women have the same rights and access to credit facilities, they both have to sign for a loan. In case of a single women with children the problem can be complicated, due to the conditions required. A primary condition in both cases is a letter of guarantee ("business title on the land" received from the Ministry of Natural Resources, that the land has been officially allocated). It often happens that farmers do not have an official "title**

to land" from the Ministry of Natural Resources, which indeed is a serious obstacle to obtaining a loan from the bank. In the case of a single women farmer the banks mostly consider it a high risk to supply her with a loan (due to her uncertain monthly income and the fact that she has no guaranteed source of income). Another requirement is the preparation of a business plan. Many farmers (male and female) are not able to meet those requirements. Furthermore, the financial sector is completely focused on high turnover commercial activities. For small scale farmers it is difficult to find credit for a long term investment.

Due to the critically distorted financial situation in Suriname, the banks would not be interested in providing small loans for any productive purpose. An IDB mission which conducted an assessment study on the Micro Enterprise Sector in Suriname in 1993, reported the following:

The financial sector in Suriname is at the moment in a very unconventional situation, with banks charging extremely negative real interest rate. With an inflation of (conservatively) estimated 120 per cent in 1993, the banks have still been able to capture long term savings from the population for only 3 to 6 per cent. Money is in very short supply and most loans are given at present for trade activities because of their higher turnover and lesser risks (IDB 1993:8).

The commercial banks in Suriname have always played an important role in making loans to farmers. Their relative importance has increased during recent years. The agricultural share's in total commercial bank lending rose from 5.7 per cent in 1973 to 17.5 per cent in 1983. In 1983 this percentage increased further to 20 per cent. At the same time the actual amount of approved loans grew to an annual rate of 30 per cent from Sf. 8.2 million to Sf. 121.4 million (1983) and Sf. 178.8 million (1987) (IDOS 1992:176).

In general it is mostly large and medium-sized enterprises which have access to commercial banks based on their capitalization and commercial approach to farming.

#### **a. Formal sources of credit**

Formal sources of credit are the Landbouwbank, the commercial banks, the People's Credit Bank, the Cooperative Banks and some farmers organizations. They generally work on a commercial basis.

#### ***Landbouwbank (LBB)***

The LBB (the *landbouwbank*) an agricultural credit institution, which was established in April 1972, provides credit to smaller farmers. With headquarters in Paramaribo and six sections in the main agricultural areas, between 1985-1987, agricultural lending was Sf. 40 million annually. An average of 48 per cent was used for rice, 4 per cent for livestock, 4 per cent for horticulture and 1 per cent for fisheries. About 16 per cent was used for other agricultural

enterprises, including vegetables, fruits, and mixed farming, with the remainder for other lending to the agricultural sector (IDOS 1992:176).

The importance of the *Landbouwbank* has increased during recent years. The outstanding loans are according to figures of 1994 Sf .3.7 million. The interest rate is at this moment 12 to 16 per cent annually. The impact of the Landbouwbank on the agricultural sector is considered to be very positive. Its major function is geared towards the promotion of the development of agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries. At this moment small farmers have outstanding loans from the bank. It is stressed that women and men have equal rights and access to the credit facilities of the bank. However, only a few women have applied for loans. Due to the fact that there is no data disaggregation to the sex, the number of male and female farmers who have obtained for loans during the years is not known. According the Landbouwbank the main constraint experienced in providing loans to small farmers is the lack of an official title to land from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Another constraint is the low interest rate that is requested for a loan by the small farmers. Since the bank is operating on a commercial basis, the proof of title to land (guarantee letter) is considered to be essential. At present the Bank do not dispose of facilities to obtain in foreign lending. Due to this problem, the bank cannot apply for foreign currency to import inputs for the agricultural sector. Up till now the Government, as was agreed in 1972, has not provided in any financial guarantee to the Landbouwbank.

### ***Commercial banks***

In 1988 the small and medium-sized farmers received about Sf. 13.6 million in loans from the Commercial banks. The banks have reported default rate of only about 2 per cent. Collateral requirements may include house, land, machinery (such as combine harvesters and tractors), and cattle; guarantors may also be used.

Interest rates on loans vary from about 12-17 per cent, and various savings schemes are available. The current interest rate on savings is 3 per cent. **Legally there are no restrictions to have access to credit based on gender.** However, for women as well as their male counterparts, in the low-income groups, credit facilities are hardly available. It can be assumed that in general women experience some serious constraints in receiving loans. One main problem is the difficulty to meet with the collateral requirements of the banks.

#### **b. Other sources of credit**

Small-scale farmers who do not have an official "title on land" are faced with serious obstacles to obtaining a loan, since having a "business title " on land is a primary condition for lending money. A large number of small scale producers are not able to meet this condition. On the other hand a few small farmers are willing to take the risk to give their land in pledge. For these farmers the only possibility to invest in their enterprises are borrowing small amounts from relatives, money lenders, friends or religious organizations. An important source of loans is the

*kasmonie* system, a system which generates money from the members on a monthly base. This system regulates and controls the money distribution according to agreements which have been made by the people involved. Furthermore there are some NGOs, and credit cooperatives that will provide loans to small entrepreneurs. The best organized cooperative credit union is the *Algemene Vereniging voor Krediet Cooperatives (AVKC)*, a federation of 55 organizations begun in 1963. However, conditions for granting a loan do not differ very much from those of the commercial banks, since they also operate on a commercial base.

### **3. Technology generation and transfer**

At the present time, the situation with regard to technology generation and transfer in Suriname is far from ideal. There are many constraints experienced in the transfer and generation of appropriate technology. The constraints are ascribed to the deficiencies of the various service sections involved, due to the inadequate physical infrastructure and the severe lack of expertise at the various levels.

#### **a. Technology generation**

The history of technology generation and research in Suriname, be said to have started at the end of the seventeenth century when the first experiments for the cultivation of rice took places. With the establishment in 1903 of the Agricultural Experiment Station (Agricultural Research in Suriname 1986), which in 1919 became an independent department of the Ministry of Agriculture, there has been an increased development in technical skills and in agricultural management, improvements in cultivation methods and crop protection of some important crops such as rice, paddy, bananas, peanuts, plantains, sugar cane and oranges.

Until the early eighties the Agricultural Experiment Station provide crucial contribution to research on crops, cultivation methods, improvement of the crops, disease and plague control etc. The main objective was to maintain and increase the collection of crops that are economically important. Therefore, research on crops, vegetables (beans, cabbage, tomatoes etc) citrus, was promoted on a more intensive base. In the light of improving and increasing livestock production, grassland and forage research should be conceived as another important objective for attaining the goals of agricultural development.

There are other institutions which in collaboration with the Agricultural Experiment Station carry out some research programs and experiments. These institutions are institutions/foundations which are functioning independently from the Ministry of Agriculture and include: CELOS (*Centrum Voor Landbouwkundig Onderzoek in Suriname*); Stipris (*Stichting Proeftuinen Suriname*); SNRI (*Stichting Nationaal Rijst Instituut*); and STINAPA (*Stichting Natuur Parken Suriname*).

The Experimental Station of the Ministry of Agriculture is currently experiencing some serious difficulties which considerably hinder its operation. The problems it faces are:

1. On the level of research, there is great uncertainty with respect to the various research projects, both those currently underway and those in the preparatory stage.
2. The organizational structure is inadequate, and does not allow for effective and efficient cooperation between the various sections or disciplines.
3. The serious shortage of inputs, materials, transportation and facilities make it difficult to provide adequate service in the field.
4. Relationships with other institutions and foundations are not clearly defined, and hence there is a lack of cooperation with them. There is an urgent need for an integrated national research body, bearing in mind the increase in agricultural exports and domestic production (Brochure, *Landbouwproefstation* 1993).

Little attention has been paid to the development and transfer of processing technologies, marketing of agricultural products and the needs of women food processors. Also there is no relationship between research, on-farm practices and extension services.

#### **b. Technology transfer and extension services**

Agricultural extension started in Suriname after the implementation of agricultural research, around 1910. It was around 1950 when real agricultural extension work in the modern sense started by the Dutch Government which in cooperation with the Americans, developed a rural development program for Suriname (IDOS 1992:173). The program was implemented between 1952 and 1962 and the American extension approaches were used with moderate success. After the termination of this program, and the end of external funding of extensions, the program deteriorated quickly.

In the period 1969 and 1974 the Dutch Government financed and assisted in the development of an integrated program of farming enterprises management (*landbouwbedrijfsontwikkeling*).

After that the development of extension stagnated even though some attempts have been made by the Surinamese Government but with little positive results. Regarding research programs and projects, various long-term plans but with little systematic research program have been applied. At present, no coordinated agricultural research program has been devised.

Agricultural extension currently is organized on three levels (see Appendix 2, Institutional Structure of the Ministry of Agriculture). At the national level, the Deputy Director of Agriculture is responsible for all agricultural extension work for which the Agricultural Information Unit is responsible. This unit consists of:

- the Agricultural Extension Section, which is responsible for the training and support of field extension officers as well for identifying problems in the areas;
- the Agricultural Education Unit, which is responsible for planning and organizing appropriate training activities for field extension staff and farmers;
- the Home Economics/4H section, which is responsible for producing training material and provide training to rural women in home economics and also youth work;
- the Sociological Research Section, which has the responsibility for conducting sociological studies (farmers surveys) in the rural environment and extension service, and to advise on the implications of the results of such studies (IDOS 1992:174).

At the regional level, the country is divided into three regions, each headed by a regional coordinator with responsibility for all agricultural activities in the region and who reports to the Deputy Director of Agriculture. Each region is further divided in a number of rayons, a subdivision of the jurisdiction extension aids may operate as demonstration plot assistants and help in the maintenance of infrastructure. Field extension officers usually work part time and use the majority of their working time on inputs distribution and gathering of statistical data. Most of their time is spent on noneducational activities. The educational level of most of the extension officers, is very low. Generally speaking they have less than secondary school education, sometimes two or three standards of primary schooling. The lower level extension workers have had no vocational training in extension, in most instances they are more or less experienced farmers (IDOS 1992:174). Interesting to note is that of the 118 field extension officers only 4 are women.

#### **4. Agricultural training and education**

There are no primary and secondary agricultural schools in Suriname. Agricultural education is provide at the higher Technical School (the Natin) and at University level. Prior to the sixties agricultural education was provided at the primary and secondary school levels in the rural districts. Developments taken place after 1960s and particularly with easy access to higher education and white-collar jobs providing higher status in society, the interest for agricultural education decreased and the provision of training in agriculture was stopped. The interest of students for higher agricultural education is in general extremely low. Of the total number of 600 students who are registered at the Natin (*Natuur Technisch Onderwijs*), only 100 are following training in technical skills; namely mining, forestry, hydrology, agriculture and livestock. Of these 100 students, 49 are involved in an agricultural education of whom 22 are specialized in agriculture and 27 in livestock. Of the 4 female students, 3 are following the agriculture training and only 1 follows the livestock training. Table III.3 shows the number of female and male enrollment in higher Technical Agricultural Education between the years 1988 and 1993.



**Table III.3 Female and male students enrolled in higher technical agricultural training. Suriname 1988-1993.**

School Year	Female students	Male students
1988-1989	2	14
1989-1990	0	8
1990-1991	0	9
1991-1992	1	8
1992-1993	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>45</b>

Source: Natin 1993.

Of the 100 female students, 4 are enrolled in agricultural training, 77 are following the medical technical course and 19 are trained in administrative education. Recently, The Ministry of Agriculture and several NGOs are promoting a policy to stimulate agricultural education among younger schoolchildren.

At the present time, the Agricultural Information Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture has school gardens program, which is being implemented in primary schools for the stimulation of younger children's interest in agriculture. Usually women farmers, except from the Hindustani women (due to their cultural traditions) do not have problems in accepting extension services from men. However, as said before female extension officers are a few in number.

## **5. Rural development policies and programs**

Rural development consists of various programs, including physical infrastructure, improved transport, drinking water, management, educational and health facilities and supply of energy. The arrangements for rural development are scattered among various Ministries, namely the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

With the creation of the new Ministry of Regional Development and Decentralization the responsibility for rural affairs has shifted to this new Ministry. However, it is not clear what specific activities involved nor has there been an overall rural development plan.

During the 1960-1970 period some important improvements were made in the physical conditions of some of the rural communities, nevertheless socioeconomic conditions remained unsatisfactory. However, they did have some significant impact on certain rural areas as distinct from the hinterland/backward interior. In fact the introduction of modern large scale production operations in several sectors of the economy, together with the systematic opening up of isolated

rural areas by means of roads and expansion of the infrastructure, created the conditions for modernization of agricultural production at a relatively rapid rate (SWI jrg 8 no 1 1991:19). In view of efforts geared at the development of the interior, the Government will with the support of Holland carried out some projects which embodied the overall development of the interior people.

Currently there are about 30 NGOs both from the interior people as well as other which are implementing various programs and activities in the rural areas and in the interior in order to bring socioeconomic development to these areas. The two main NGOs working in the interior are the Pater Albrinck Stichting (de PAS, Roman Catholic) and the Women group of the Moravian Brotherhood Church (EBG), which in the past and up till now has carried out several programs, including rural extension, primary schools, clinics and small hospitals.

There are also a few farmers organizations in the rural areas such as the National Livestock Breeder's Association, which is one of the oldest farmer's organization in Suriname. This organization is the only one which has a direct formal relationship with the Government. The Agrarian and Farmer's Federation (FAL) also has close relations with the Government for permits for vegetable export and input imports. The overall picture is a small minority of active and proper functioning farmers organizations and cooperatives.

#### **B. Policies Directed at Rural Women and Women Food Producers**

National policies and agrarian policies in particular had never made any distinction between the sexes and never had defined target groups with respect to the socioeconomic conditions and agricultural development of the production units of specific groups. With respect to the economic and productive role of women in agricultural production, it can be stated that past policies have had little positive effect on the status of women as food producers. Not only institutional and Government factors, but also cultural factors and influences has obstructed an enhanced development of women's multiple roles in the farm household and in community.

The proclamation of the International Year for Women in 1975 stressed the importance of actions aimed at the improvement of women's overall situation and position in society.

During the Decade for Women (1975-1985), several actions were undertaken by the Government to improve the situation of women in the country.

In 1981, the establishment of a Bureau for Women's Affairs was the first step for a better coordinating of all Government efforts regarding the integration and participation of women in the National development process (IDOS 1992).

**Table III.4. Women's programs in Suriname, 1975-1993**

INSTITUTIONS, PROGRAMS & PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	TYPES OF PROGRAMS				PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES				EMPHASIS		COMMENTS
		WELFARE	RE-PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	ANIMAL HUSBANDRY		AGRICULTURE		MARKETING	OTHERS	RURAL WOMEN	URBAN WOMEN	
				PRE-HARVEST	POST-HARVEST	PRE-HARVEST	POST-HARVEST					
I. Public institutions - Min. of Agriculture - Rural Project - Research Project	Home economics/4H section set up in the 1960s for the welfare of rural women  Research on Women in Agricultural Production started in 1992 and still underway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Because of serious economic problems, these sections of the Department of Agriculture are facing many obstacles and therefore are not operating satisfactorily.

Table III.4 (cont.)

INSTITUTIONS, PROGRAMS & PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	TYPES OF PROGRAMS		PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES					EMPHASIS		COMMENTS
		WELFARE	RE-PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	ANI-MAL HUSBANDRY	AGRICULTURE		MARKETING	OTHERS	RU-RURAL WOMEN	UR-BAN WOMEN	
					PRE-HARVEST	POST-HARVEST					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Public institutions</li> <li>- Min. of Internal Affairs</li> <li>- National Women's Bureau</li> <li>- Violence Against Women</li> <li>- Min. of Social Affairs</li> </ul>	<p>Since 1985, in charge of policies geared towards women. Responsible for the implementation of policies and programmes formulated by the monitoring group of the Ministry of Internal Affairs</p> <p>Started in 1993.</p> <p>Implementation of social programmes: social, financial and medical support</p>	Yes	Yes						Yes	Yes	<p>Until now, no adequate proposals have been formulated. Some improvements have been made in the legal and civil status of women. The situation of women is still unfavourable.</p>

Table III.4 (cont.)

INSTITUTIONS AND PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF PROGRAMS		PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES					EMPHASIS		COMMENTS	
		WELFARE	REPRO-DUC-TIVE ACTI-VITIES	ANIMAL HUS-BANDRY	AGRICULTURE		MAR-KET-ING	OTH-ERS	RURAL WOMEN	URBAN WOMEN		
					PRE-HAR-VEST	POST-HAR-VEST						
Min of Labour -Credit program for employment promotion	Special credit funds to encourage women entrepreneurs and producers began in January 1994	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Min of Health -Breast feeding project	Started in 1993, to promote the health and welfare of mothers and children	Yes								Yes	Yes	Due to the deteriorating economic situation in the country and the bad financial situation of poor women, special measures should be taken to address the problem of malnutrition among these women.

Table III.4 (cont.)

INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF PROGRAMS						EMPHASIS			COMMENTS	
		WEL- FARE	REPRO- DUC- TIVE ACTIV- ITIES	PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES			RURAL WOMEN	URBAN WOMEN				
				ANI- MAL HUS- BAND- RY	AGRICULTURE					MAR- KET- ING		OTH- ERS
					PRE- HAR- VEST	POST HAR- VEST						
NGOs -PAS -Women's Fel- lowship of the Moravian Church -NVB -PVU -ASA -NGO Forum	For over 10 years, these NGOs have been active in the field of agricul- tural production, and social and cul- tural work in the rural areas and in the interior.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The various NGOs have not succeeded in implementing an integrated overall de- velopment program for the rural areas and the inte- rior.	
International agencies - UNIFEM - IFAD - IICA - IDB - DUTCH EMBASSY - BELGIAN EMBASSY - EEC	These agencies pro- vide funds for small-scale produc- tion projects and technical support in the setting up of projects.	No No No Yes	No No No Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes No No Yes	Yes No No Yes	Yes No No Yes	Until now a few women's groups/organizations have made use of the funds pro- vided by international agencies. More women's groups and institutions are expected to apply for funds.	

Table III.4 (cont.)

INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF PROGRAMS				PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES				EMPHASIS		COMMENTS
		WEL- FARE	RE- PRO- DUC- TIVE AC- TIV- I- TIES	AGRICULTURE		MAR- KET- ING	OTH- ERS	RU- RAL WO- MEN	UR- BAN WO- MEN			
				ANIMAL HUS- BANDRY	PRE- HAR- VEST					POST HAR- VEST		
Farmer organi- zations : FAL - NAFEDCO	Women's participa- tion in these orga- nizations is mini- mal. Women are more active in church and social organi- zations.	No No	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes			Yes Yes	No	In general, women have only minimal participation in these organiza- tions, which are male-biased and are not gender- sensitive.	
Cooperatives	There are more than 40 cooperatives active in produc- tion as well as in marketing. There is a women's coopera- tive in Marowijne	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No	No positive chan- ges have been made in the work of these organi- zation as regards women farmers.	

An important objective was to change the structures which influenced the negative status of women in the country in order to obtain a proper access of women to a greater variety of educational opportunities, better facilities of health, housing and social services, nutrition, child care etc. Also actions were promoted to improve and activate the participation of women in the labour process.

In 1982, the National Advisory Council for Women's Emancipation was established. In this Council, several women's organizations and sections of other Ministries involved in women's affairs were represented. The main task of this Council was to advise and to formulate recommendations on policy level. However, due to political reasons, most organizations for women did not participate in the Council, while the organizations which were represented were not capable to formulate adequate policy proposals.

After a change of Government in 1985, women's affairs became the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In 1987, a National Center for Women, was established by the newly installed Government. This institution was given the task to implement the policy as formulated by a Monitoring Group which was installed in the same year to develop the necessary structures and formulating policy concerning women in general.

Until now the National Center for Women has not been functioning adequately. The reactivation of the National Bureau for Women's Affairs and that of the Monitoring Group, have until now not succeeded in the implementation or formulation of actions aimed at resolving women's problems in the country.

With respect to the legal and civil status of women some improvements have been made, but nevertheless women still do not have the same opportunities and choices as men, if it regards access to education and training facilities, employment, land, capital and production means.

From 1980 onwards, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly women's organizations, started to develop micro-enterprises for women in the country. Most of these projects failed, due to the lack of organizational and managerial skills and the difficulties of small female entrepreneurs in obtaining a loan from commercial banks (IDB 1993).

With respect to rural women, it must be recognized that notwithstanding the work of some NGOs, such as the Progressive Women's Union (PVU), the National Women's Movement (NVB), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Pater Albrinck Stichting (de PAS) and the Women's Fellowship of the Moravian Church (*Vrouwenbond EBGS*), up to now no integrated development strategy for the strengthening of socioeconomic position and status of women in the rural areas and the interior has been developed. In government rural development programs, attention was merely restricted to the development of the health, housing, social services, infrastructure etc in specific rural areas, which indeed contributes to a certain extent to the social well-being of the rural woman household and the opening of the



isolation of the farm households Nevertheless, these developments have not resulted in the empowering and strengthening of women's productive role in production activities and in equally relations between the sexes.

Regarding specific attention addressed towards rural women in general, the Ministry of Agriculture, specifically the Agricultural Information Unit which has a section of Home Economics, was one of the few institution which in the past has paid considerable attention to the social situation of the rural women. The Home Economics Section has with some success implemented several activities focussing on home maintenance. However, less attention has been paid to the role of women in production and income generation. Activities were mostly focussed on; sewing, child care, home maintenance, subsistence agriculture, hygiene, food processing and preservation. In recent years the activities of the Home Economics Section are more geared towards the economic development of women, namely the setting up of activities for the generation of incomes. Due to a severe lack of cadre, transport and materials (tools, demonstration equipment) the Home Economics Section suffers a lot of constraints in the implementation of activities and therefore has not been able to functioning effectively.

#### **Agencies and programs that support rural women**

- **The National Women's Center** is a governmental mechanism for women in the country, located within the Ministry of Home Affairs. An Inter Ministry Committee which was established in 1992 and chaired by a special Staff Member of the Ministry have the task to formulate, implement and monitor Government policies to improve the situation of women in the country.
- **The Home Economics/4H section**, which is located within the Ministry of Agricultural maintains a staff of trained personnel to teach and advise rural families, especially women and young adults on a wide variety of topics pertaining to family health and welfare and to cost-saving devices and techniques in the operation of a home. In the past and up till now the section have several programs in implementation in some rural districts (Coronie, Nickerie and Commewijne).
- **PAS** is an NGO linked to the Roman Catholic Church which has agricultural projects in operation in the interior (the Marowijne/Sipaliwini area). The Pas has facilitated several programs for the support of interior women, such as sewing, alphabetization training and agricultural support schemes.
- **The Women's Fellowship of the Moravian Brotherhood Church**, which, like PAS, has some agricultural projects in operation, specifically addressed to the promoting of production among women in the interior (Brokopondo area). An important goal of actions is the marketing of agricultural products to the local markets.

- **The YWCA** has operated since 1978 in the rural districts. They provide training courses related to health and welfare. They also created a credit union for rural women, which directly provides small loans for women with remarkable results in Saramacca and Nickerie.
- **The National Women's Movement**, with headquarter in Paramaribo, has as its main objective the establishment of productive projects in both the rural as the urban areas, financed by National or International funds. The following production projects are already underway: a local fruit processing plant in Commewijne for preserving and sweetening fruits for the local market and for export; a vegetable-growing project for women in the surroundings of Paramaribo, and a fruit- preserves project in Paramaribo.
- **The Progressive Women's Union**, which started in 1974 with several actions addressed to women's backward position and role in society, has achieved success in the legal sphere, has recently installed a foundation for the promotion of agricultural production among women in the district of Commewijne. Linked to this project is a food processing unit for the processing of peanuts and other agricultural products (cassava), and a nursery for the propagation of planting material.
- **ASA**, an NGO that is active in the rural areas, has as its primary goal the improvement of the socioeconomic position and situation of rural women. In April 1994, the findings of a study conducted at the beginning of the year on the daily activities of rural women in Jarikaba (a rural community in the district of Saramacca) was published.
- **Women's organizations and community groups**, a few of which are also providing some activities for women in the rural areas. The activities are more on the level of home maintenance; sewing, handicraft, cooking and cultural traditions.
- **Other NGOs.** There are about thirty NGOs operating in both the rural districts as in the interior. The goals of almost all n.g.o's operating in the rural areas are primarily geared towards the agricultural development of the small farm units including, agriculture, livestock, fishery and food processing. A few NGOs have undertaken activities in the areas of home industry; sewing and handicraft. With the installation of the Forum N.G.Os, an umbrella organization of more than 30 NGOs in 1993, the intentions has been to coordinate and structure all activities, programs and projects of the various operating NGOs in the country. Some successful efforts have already resulted in the National registration of all NGOs and the areas they are operating.
- **Farmer organizations and cooperatives.** There are virtually no quantitative data on women's participation in the various farmer's organizations and cooperatives. However, based on casual observations one can say that women are not active in these organizations. Women tend to be more active in church and other religious organizations. Nevertheless, there is one Women Cooperative in the district of Marowijne (East

Suriname), which has been very successful in providing women farmers of inputs and marketing their agricultural products.

Almost all the abovementioned agencies, NGOs, women's and other organizations have problems, such as a lack of available resources and a lack of trained permanent personnel. Most of these organizations are working on a voluntary basis. Notwithstanding the fact that these organizations know of each other existence, there is no structural cooperation or even exchange of information.

- **International Agencies.** The Embassy of the Netherlands and the Embassy of Belgium also provide funds for small-scale production projects. Particularly, NGOs (such as NVB, de PAS, ASA) have received financial means to carry out activities and projects. Other important International Agencies, such as the IICA, the IDB, the IFAD, the FAO and UNIFEM, can also give support for the promotion and development of productive projects which aim at the strengthening of women's role and position in production. This includes as well technical and logistical assistance in project preparation, development and implementation.

In the framework of the Structural Adjustment Program (see Chapter II) efforts have been undertaken to enhance the overall development of small entrepreneurs (male and female) in the various sectors of the economy. The Ministry of Labour has been charged with implementing a special program known as the Social Investment Fund (SIF), in order to provide small entrepreneurs with loans.

For the strengthening and empowering of small farmers, IFAD will implement a special agricultural credit program which will also provide loans to farmers for the acquisition of production inputs including small farm machines. In both mentioned programs women as a target group will get special attention. The IFAD program is expected to start in January 1995.

### **C. The Impact and Benefits of Agricultural Policies for Small-scale Farmers and Rural Women**

Due to the emphasis on export crops and large scale developments in the subsectors rice and bananas, policies in the past have benefitted more the large scale and medium-scale farmers and in less extent the small rice farmers. Since, women as producers will not be founded as managers of these enterprises, policy in so far had not paid much attention to them. The view is held that the present administrative structure of the public agricultural sector, with responsibilities scattered among several ministries and no integrated development program, has hindered the implementation of policies pertaining to women's issues in the rural areas. Nevertheless, farmer initiatives have contributed to a degree of self-sufficiency in domestic food crops and livestock production.

The needs of women in rural areas differ from those of women in city of Paramaribo. Since most of the women in these areas have low levels of education and have less access to facilities (economic as well as social and cultural) their situation is for most of the time unfavorable. For a greater part the needs of rural women are associated with proper access to food, electricity, potable water, social and health care and production means such as land, inputs, credit facilities, transportation and the marketing of their products. From the foregoing discussion it was clear that Government policies in the past have had little impact on the overall situation of rural women and women food producers particularly. The work of particularly church organizations, NGOs (PVU and NVB) and some women groups has resulted in an increasing awareness of a number of rural women of their problems, needs and potential. The work of these organizations, which promoted the development of agricultural production among women, resulted in income-generating projects for women in the rural district of Commewijne, Brokopondo and in Marowijne (Oost-Suriname).

Recently public institutions, as well as NGOs, community and farmer organizations, women's groups and church organizations have begun to shift their focus from welfare to production-oriented activities. Also, more emphasis is being placed on the issue of gender in program planning. However, since this is a new area in the study of women, a lot of campaign for the development of gender consciousness, especially among Government officials, extension officers, women's groups, farmer organization and cooperatives have to be promoted. The impending economic adjustment program has the potential to encourage and sustain a more collaborative approach, since there is a strong appreciation of the difficulties which this program is producing for all women throughout the country. Since land is one of the main means of production means, special attention must be paid to the effects of agrarian land policy on small farmers and rural women.

### **Access to and control over land**

In the Agrarian Land Legislation Act there is no form of discrimination with respect to gender. In fact, women and men have equal rights but, usually women encounter many constraints in the access to and control over land. Compared to men the total number of women who have a title to land is negligible as it is less than 1 per cent according the Ministry of Natural Resources. The exact number of women and men having a title to land is not available because there is no data registration according to sex.

The 1981 Agricultural Census, for instance, does not report the total of women and men farmers with holdings in the different rural areas. A study of women farmers in the Wanica-Para districts (Defares/Ministry of Agriculture 1992) shows that the farms (mostly family holdings) operated by women are usually less than 1 ha, have problems of cultivation and are marginal in terms of capital, use of land and mostly specialize in short-term quick-return subsistence food crops; roots and vegetables.

The constraints women normally experience in gaining access to and control over land lie in the **ideological**, the **traditional** and the **socioeconomic** spheres.

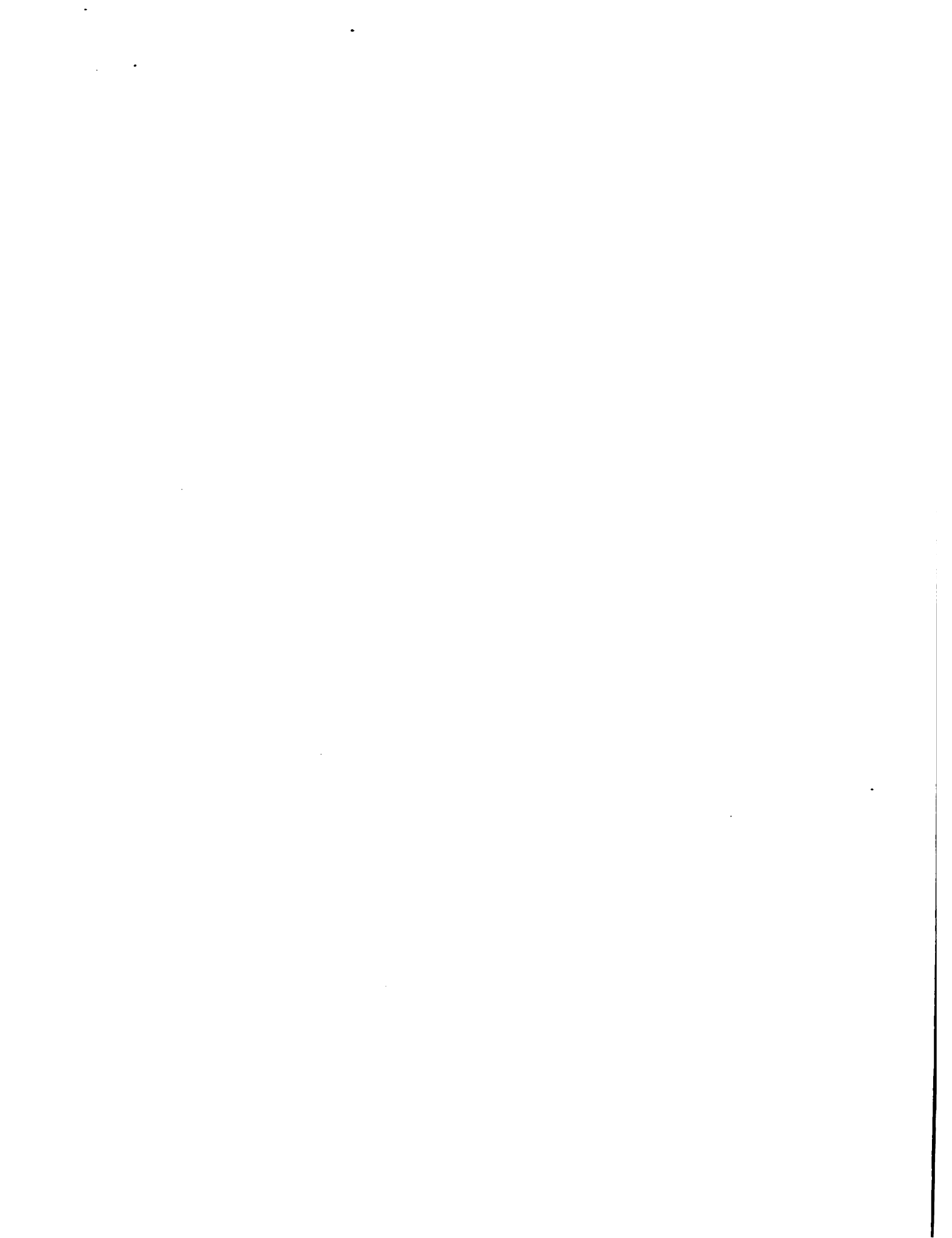
The **ideological** sphere has to do with tradition, cultural and religious attitudes, norms and concepts about the role and position of women: a woman has a certain role and position in the household and traditionally in many cultures, property of land is a man's right. Land is considered (especially in the East Asian culture) to be a status symbol, an important factor for the gathering of wealth and property.

As regards **traditions**, in the cultures of the Maroons and the Amerindians, where subsistence agriculture prevails, land is feminized in the sense that the earth is considered to be female and the land belongs to women; they are responsible for the maintenance of food supply and security. Traditionally it is women who are in charge of agriculture. Among the Maroons, there is a matrilineal society and land is bestowed to the women. When a woman marries, her husband is expected to cut or clear the piece of land for her (his wife and family).

The **socioeconomic** sphere has more to do with socialization, the persisting societal norms and values of women's role in the household and within the farm household, such as child care and home maintenance. Because of the stereotyped notions of these roles, women are usually not viewed as food producers.

In the sphere of **administrative bureaucracy**, the views of Government officials (mostly men) in key positions, where decisions are taken on land allocation and distribution, represent a serious obstacle. These officials normally do not perceive women as producers and this makes it often difficult for a women to gain access to land. Women themselves feel ignored due to the many bureaucratic rules and instructions (they are unfamiliar with the land allocation procedures and conventions), and limitations encountered in the various fields of endeavour (home, community, land legislation which do not encourage women to obtain a title on land).

In the effort to promote the economic recovery of the country, and hence, to foster production in the various sectors, special attention will be given to the allocation of land to small farmers. Government policies have recognized and respected the cultural traditions of minority groups, and, in general, have been directed at farm families, without making any distinction between husband (male) and wife (female). In other words, policies have not focussed on gender relations within the farm family and the rural household, or on gender roles and relations in the performance of various agricultural tasks. This study is intended to persuade Government to impose changes in traditional concepts/policies and cultural traditions.



#### **IV. THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

As mentioned above, most women in the rural areas are in charge of agricultural activities, production as well as marketing. In the interior for example women's contribution to agriculture is crucial for the maintenance and existence of the family. In this Chapter the contribution of women to the National Agricultural Output as well as other aspects relevant to women's employment in the sector will be further reviewed.

##### **Background**

Women represent 50.6 per cent of the total population of Suriname which was estimated at 404 000 in 1992 and 29 per cent of the total labour force. The rates of female unemployment have increased from 20.8 per cent in 1986 to 26.2 per cent in 1989 (Bureau of Statistics 1992). Unemployment is mostly a problem of younger women. In the period 1986-1992 the percentage of women seeking employment was 28%, while unemployment among women increased with 37% in 1992 (Ministry of Labour 1992). Figures show that women accounted for 40 per cent of the economic active population in 1992 (Bureau of Statistics 1992). Data of the General Bureau of Statistics (1992) show that during the past five years an average of 22 per cent of the economically active urban women were unemployed. There is a lack of proper data and information regarding female employment and unemployment in the rural areas. Most female employment in the rural areas will be found in the agricultural (traditional) sector, which is an important source of income for most rural people.

The majority of women in the rural areas are living in the districts of Wanica, Nickerie and in Commewijne. Also there is a concentration of women living in the interior, in Marowijne, Sipaliwini and the Brokopondo districts. Table IV.1 shows the number of men and women living in the various districts by age group 18-81 years. The data do not give an indication of the number of women by ethnic groups in the different districts. This information is unavailable.

During the last years rural poverty has increased, particularly among the people of the interior. The poorest people of Suriname are living in the interior and in some parts of the rural areas. The number of people without incomes is rising. For Brokopondo the percentage was 47.5 per cent; for Marowijne, 54.7 per cent, and for Coronie (a rural district), it was 30.7 per cent (IFAD Suriname General Identification Mission, Main Report 1990). It was estimated that 66 per cent of all Surinamese illiterates are women. Because of socioeconomic and cultural reasons that keep women in the home and on the farm, it can be assumed that most of the illiterates are women living in those areas.

**Table IV.1. Total male and female population aged 18-81, by district. Suriname 1991.**

<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>MEN</b>	<b>WOMEN</b>
Paramaribo	65 196	68 118
Wanica	21 970	20 967
Nickerie	10 322	9 569
Coronie	998	827
Saramacca	4 098	3 681
Para	4 126	3 673
Commewijne	6 808	6 086
Marowijne	2 329	2 537
Sipaliwini	4 897	7 665
Brokopondo	1 297	1 764
<b>Total</b>	<b>122 041</b>	<b>123 887</b>

Source: CBB 1991.

### **A. Female Employment in the Agricultural Sector**

As was clear from the previous chapter, women in Suriname have always played a role in agricultural employment. In this section we will look deeper into the various employment aspects and trends as they have affected women in general. Recently the general trends is towards a scarcity of jobs in the formal sector and an increase of employment in the informal sector including small scale farming, food vending and taxi driving.

#### **1. Employment and trends**

Notwithstanding the economic crisis of the eighties, which caused an increase in unemployment among women, a rapid decrease in real family incomes has forced a lot of women to seek employment in mainly the informal and traditional sector, including street vending and small-scale agricultural production. In general women have a sub-ordinate position at the labour market, both in terms of the number of working places and kinds of jobs. Table IV.2 shows the number of female and male employees in the various age groups at the labour market.

It is interesting to note the increase in employment of men and women in the 60-65 age group (officially retired), which is probably due to the low pensions received by these people. Despite the overall economic situation, there has been a slight increase in the employment of women in the service sector (public services and trade). The economic crisis of the 1980s has also had an impact on the status of women in several other ways:



- There has been an increase in the number of women who are the sole supporters of their households. It is estimated that this group accounts for 25 per cent of women in the lower classes.
- Jobs are scarce, and female unemployment -except in the service sector- rose from 21 per cent in 1986 to 26 per cent in 1989. A 1992 study shows that most open working places are those related with technical occupations in the industrial sector, where the employment of women is negligible (Ministry of Labour 1992).

**Table IV.2. Total male and female wage-earners, by age. Suriname 1988-1990.**

AGE GROUP	MALE			FEMALE		
	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990
15-19	2 062	2 166	2 689	731	521	685
20-24	9 365	8 236	5 547	3 282	3 910	4 206
25-29	9 786	10 138	10 589	5 260	6 220	6 034
30-39	12 292	13 455	13 783	9 242	9 746	10 423
40-49	9 566	9 306	9 581	5 463	6 373	6 766
50-59	6 620	6 346	5 715	3 377	4 220	3 109
60-65	682	749	1 513	363	195	549
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 373</b>	<b>50 396</b>	<b>49 417</b>	<b>27 508</b>	<b>31 249</b>	<b>31 818</b>

Source: Ministry of Labour 1993.

There is no up-to-date information (quantitative and qualitative) on the exact number of women working in the different sections of the economy. Nevertheless, it is commonly known that most female wage-earners are employed in the services and the public sectors. Compared to men, fewer women (no exact figures are available) have jobs in the production sector (mining, forestry, transportation, manufacturing and large-scale agricultural production). Most of the women who are involved in production activities are to be found in the traditional sector (subsistence food production and food processing), where they are responsible for most field work, as well as for the preparation and marketing of food commodities.

Trends in the post-war period show that despite the decline in female participation in the agricultural sector (during the 1960s and the 1970s) brought about by the large-scale modernization of agriculture, male migration and new educational opportunities in the city, women have taken over a number of farms and are now farm owners and managers.

Employment within the agricultural sector may be classified in the categories of official employment (in modern large-scale and medium-sized parastate enterprises) and traditional

employment (on small-scale farms and in food-processing micro-enterprises). In the formal production subsectors, labour is organized according to certain conditions, and is based on a labour contract/agreement which provides for medical and social support, special leave and other benefits. On the family farm unit, the work force has little access to social and health benefits, and family labour is generally unpaid labour.

In agriculture, namely in the coastal plain women share responsibilities with men in agriculture and many of them are part-time farmers. The activities of women are integrated in the extended family labour on the farm and are mostly considered to be part of their reproduction work. In the interior, except from land clearing and land preparation women are responsible for all activities in subsistence production. In the formal sphere of agricultural production there is a number of women who have employment in the parastate enterprises (banana, palm oil, fish and shrimps industry) and are involved in different kinds of production activities. Depending on the nature of these activities, a distinction may also be made by seasonal and wage labourers (full-time workers). Most of the work the women are involved in can be defined as unskilled labour for which they receive less pay than men. In the informal sphere, at the micro level (cottage industry), a number of women are employed in small-scale food processing and preservation. The number of women that participate in food processing and preservation, handicrafts (agri-industry) is not available and difficult to estimate, but it is increasing as a result of the economic crisis in the country and the unavailability of formal jobs.

Figures on the participation of women in the agricultural sector during different historical times are not available. However, the employment of women in the agricultural sector in Suriname during the whole history is still visible and is of considerable importance for the development of the sector and the national economy.

## **2. Occupations**

A household survey conducted by the Bureau of Statistics in the first half of 1992 gives an indication of the employment status of women as shown in Table IV.3 on the next page.

In 1992 13 673 people reported self-employed activities as their main economic activity. Of this group, 3 630 or 11.3 per cent were women (General Bureau of Statistics 1992). As shown in Table IV.3, most female workers are generally wage employees. "Own account" workers is the second largest category. In the self-employed category there has been a slight increase, from 9 per cent in 1986 to 11 per cent in 1990 (Bureau of Statistics). Most female employees can be found in the Service Sector; Public Service, Teaching, Nursing, Commerce and other services. Women employees are under represented in functions on policy and executive level, craft manufacturing and Transportation and other related occupations. Most of the work women are engaged in the Service Sector can be described as unqualified and have low paying. There are some women part-time farmers, who are also engaged in other occupations (mostly in the Government sector).

**Table IV.3 Main economic activities of the work force. Suriname 1992.**

Main econ. activity	Male		Female		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Employer	1 815	3.0	484	1.5	2 299	2.5
Own-account worker	10 043	16.9	3 630	11.3	13 673	14.9
Wage-earner	46 706	78.5	27 709	86.4	74 416	81.2
Unpaid fam. worker	363	0.6	242	0.8	605	0.7
Member of prod. coop.	121	0.2	0	0	121	0.1
Unknown	484	0.8	0	0	484	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>59 532</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,065</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>91 597</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: General Bureau of Statistics, Paramaribo.

Regarding the agricultural sector, there is little information on the working conditions of female factory workers, field labourers, landless field labourers in the parastate enterprises and in the fishery sector. In the agricultural sector a distinction can be made between salaried workers (the female labourers in the parastate enterprises, the field labourers, seasonal labourer) and unpaid farmers (particularly women and children working on the household farm units). Generally in the small family farm wages are not received by the family members. Mostly women contribution is normally not conceived as an agricultural input or a substitution for family income. Women are also occupied in trade, handicrafts and services, where they bring the products to the market and seem to control half of the small businesses, especially in foodstuffs and agriculture products (fruit, vegetables, etc.). The clear division of labour by sex and age has made women also responsible for domestic tasks.

The lack of suitable employment in the formal sphere has encouraged women to seek alternative employment opportunities. Therefore, the agricultural sector is foreseen to be one alternative source of employment. For rural women the problem is much more complicated because of their limited skills and education level and the lack of employment in the formal sphere of rural economy. Due to migration of men and the increasing prices for food stuffs it is expected that more and more rural women will spend considerable time in farming.

## **B. Reassessment of Female Employment in the Agricultural Sector**

Data on women in agriculture in Suriname are incomplete and not directly available. The shortcomings in this regard can mainly be attributed to the fact that for many years, official statistics included no information on the female agricultural labour force. Socioeconomic studies of the agricultural sector have usually focussed on the production structure in general, and less

attention has been paid to the role and participation of women within the farm enterprise. However, since agricultural labour remains the main source of income for the majority of rural women, greater attention should be given to the continuing and substantial contribution of women in agricultural production.

The lack of adequate data on the exact number of women employed in the various fields of the agricultural sector makes it very difficult to estimate accurately the percentage of the female economically active population that works in agriculture. Because of the fact that women farmers usually do not view themselves as producers and income earners, it is difficult to establish the level of their participation. A socioeconomic study of women farmers in the rural districts of Wanica and Para (Ministry of Agriculture 1993) reported that although women devote considerable time to farming activities, a large number of them do not see themselves as producers or farm managers. This should be taken into account in any estimate of women's contribution to farm labour. It is therefore necessary to reassess the role of women in the agricultural sector, particularly in the context of strengthening their production potential and thereby their social and economic welfare in the rural areas.

The agricultural census of 1981 reported a total of 17 016 farm operations from 0.5 hectare up to 1 000 hectares and larger. The number of small farms (0.5 to 10 hectares) was 15 803. Table IV.4 shows that these small-scale operations cover a total of 18,948 plots (16 825 + 2 123) over an area of 33 860 hectares. The conclusion is that many small farmers have more than one plot.

**Table IV.4. Distribution of farms by size. Suriname 1981.**

Size (ha)	Number of plots		Area	
	Total	%	Total	%
Less than 5 ha	16 825	82.8	21 590	20.3
5-10	2 123	10.4	11 270	10.6
11-20	836	4.1	8 070	7.6
21- 100	414	2.0	10 270	9.7
More than 100	130	0.6	55 090	51.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 328</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>106 290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture.

For the reassessment of female employment in agriculture, the only reliable data that can be used are those provided by the agricultural census of 1981, which reported a total of 42 720 women (see Table V.1.) and 49 257 men involved in agricultural activities. These figures include all persons between 10 and 65 years of age living on the farms. It is interesting to compare the official estimate of the number of women working in agriculture with the census figures on the rural female population. According to the 1980 population census (CBB 1980), the total female

population living in rural areas was 81 090; this would mean that only 53 per cent of the female population was engaged in agricultural activities. The official estimate of the female agricultural force includes only those women who were salaried employees and those women working on the family farm who either described themselves as agricultural workers, or were so described by their male companions. Thus, many women who actually were agricultural workers would not have been enumerated. As stated previously, many women actually engaged in agriculture do not recognize their agricultural labour as work, but simply consider it an extension of their household duties. Undoubtedly, the official estimate of the female agricultural labour force is underestimated.

In order to reassess the official figures on the contribution of women to agriculture, a distinction must be made between the interior region and the coastal plain. Of the total 81 090 women living in the rural areas in 1980, 22 417, or a little over one-fourth, were Amerindians and Maroons living in the interior of the country. Agricultural activity in these cultures is primarily a female activity, and it is well known that all women from the age of 10 years and over are all involved in agricultural production. The subsistence level of living conditions in the interior, and the lack of any other alternative sources of employment for women (not men) leave little other choice. Any estimation of female participation in agriculture in the interior region would be closer to 100 per cent of all women over 10 years old. Excluding female children under 10 years old,<sup>1</sup> the female agricultural work force in the region would be 75 per cent of 22 417, or 16 813.

Studies conducted in the coastal region (Defares 1993; IICA/IDB 1994) also indicate the importance of female participation in farming in this area. The level of unpaid, unenumerated participation, however, is less certain on large farms than on small ones (under 10 hectares); hence, a reassessment of the size of the female work force must take this into account. If participation is restricted to females over 10 years old, and it is assumed that there is an even distribution of women among all farms in the coastal zone, then the number of rural women participating in agriculture would be 36 083<sup>2</sup>. This is approximately 60 per cent of the population of 58 673 females in the coastal region in 1980. According to these estimates, the number of women working in agriculture in Suriname would be 52 896, or 65 per cent of the female rural population, rather than the 53 per cent shown in the agricultural census. Recognition of the high rate of female participation, and adaptation of the agricultural census so as to show this fact, would facilitate agricultural programs and project design and enhance their impact on productivity and rural poverty. A comparison of the above figures to the Agricultural Census of 1981 clearly shows that the female economically active population in the agricultural sector of Suriname has increased over the last ten years and that the census underestimated the real numbers.

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<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that 25 per cent of the female population is under 10 years old.

<sup>2</sup> Female rural population in the coastal zone x (1 minus the percentage of females under 10 years old) x the percentage of farms under 10 hectares = 58 673 x .75 X .82 = 36 083.



## **V. WOMEN FOOD PRODUCERS**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the situation of women farmers at the micro level in the farm unit will be discussed. Production and family structures will be discussed, bearing in mind the survey results and the findings of other relevant socioeconomic studies. Firstly, the most important socioeconomic characteristic of small-scale production units and small-scale farming will be analyzed in order to gain more insight into the participation and contribution of women within these units.

### **Background**

Small-scale agricultural production was introduced in the late nineteenth century by the colonial Government, in order to provide manpower for the plantations and to populate the country. The introduction of East Indians in 1873 and of Javanese in 1890 was one of the instruments used to meet the Government's goal. These immigrants made use of the opportunity to rent land (1 to 2 hectares) from the Government and became smallholders (SWI 1991:39-40). Due to the low incomes generated in this subsector and the little support by the Government after 1945 small farmers are nowadays to a great extent dependent on added incomes from other sectors.

Smallholders are now experiencing more difficulty in gaining access to land, production means and marketing of products. The deterioration of small-scale farming started in 1945 and has become increasingly worse. Contributing to the relatively low incomes in small scale agriculture is according to Morenc (1988) the "false integration" of small-scale agriculture in commercial agriculture and the market economy after 1945. It made small-scale farmers for a great part unable to provide the production means (inputs) and made them dependent on external resources. The unequal power relations among the different parties in the marketing chain of small scale farmers, merchants and middlemen in agricultural inputs, the Government and the moneylenders create an unfavorable barter of goods complex or arrangement: an increasing dependency on production means, low prices for agricultural products, and an increase in the prices for agricultural inputs and equipment (SWI 1991:39-40).

The period between 1945-1980 was one of great Government involvement in large scale agriculture. Attention was largely focussed on large scale mechanization and production for export. Policies then favored farmers with capital, and in particular for the cultivation of rice (SWI 1991:40). With the introduction of mechanization of rice cultivation many small farmers turned to cultivating vegetables and fruits and rearing of cattle. The development of mixed farming contributed to a reduction in the cultivated area of vegetables in the district of Wanica during the seventies (SWI 1991:41).

In the eighties the commercialization of agricultural products contributed to specialization, particularly fruit and cattle. They were encouraged due to the high demand prices. Another cause

of the fall in the cultivation of vegetables was the relatively low demand at the small domestic market and the failure of the export trade (SWI 1991:41).

### A. Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Small-scale Farm Production System

In 1985, almost 85 per cent of the 17,000 farm operators were classified as part-time, with only 15 per cent full-time. There are about 16 000 farm operators at this moment, with the majority having a second or main source of off-farm income (Ministry of Agriculture 1986). From the following table it can be seen that most small farmers (female and men) are operating on holdings of 0.5 ha to 2 ha. Small farms are mostly engaged in a mixed-cropping system of vegetables, roots, groundnuts, fruits, citrus and some dairy cattle.

Table V.1. Agricultural census. Suriname 1981.

Farm size	No of farms	Farmer Population		Type of Labour	
		Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time
>0.5	3 471	9 462	8 746	683	8 371
0.5 -1	1 866	5 823	4 835	328	5 399
1 - 2	3 995	12 385	10 164	631	10 753
<b>Subtot &gt;2</b>	<b>9 132</b>	<b>27 670</b>	<b>23 745</b>	<b>1 642</b>	<b>24 505</b>
2 - 3	2 141	6 685	5 895	472	6 199
3 - 4	1 482	4 512	4 018	354	4 186
4 - 5	1 229	4 070	3 606	356	3 860
<b>Subtot.</b>					
<b>2- 5</b>	<b>4 852</b>	<b>15 267</b>	<b>13 519</b>	<b>1 182</b>	<b>14 245</b>
5 - 10	1 873	6 320	5 456	613	5 678
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 857</b>	<b>49 257</b>	<b>42 720</b>	<b>3 437</b>	<b>44 428</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture 1981.

According to the Agricultural Census of 1981 (see Table V.1), the total number of women whose households directly derive incomes from agriculture was 42,720, the total number of women or dependents (i.e. number of people from the households). These households represents 15 857 farm enterprises from 0.5 ha to 10 ha with a total of 18 948 plots (see Table VI.4). Some of these farmers own more than one plot. A total number of 3437 full-time and 44 428 part-time male and female farmers were reported as employed on the farms. Since, the data was



not further desegregated by sex, the exact number of male and female full-time and part-time farmers are unknown. The group of landless field workers, female hired labourers and female factory workers in the banana, palm oil, rice and fishery industries are not included in the figures. Neither do the figures reflect the total number of the economically active female population in the subsistence production in the interior. Furthermore, we cannot deduce the number of female and men farmers who own farms, a number which is unknown. The Agricultural Census of 1981 also do not give any insight in the division of labour tasks according to gender.

As mentioned above, smallholdings are family-owned and family-operated enterprises, geared towards small scale production of rice, beans and pulses, root crops, plantains and vegetables as well as dairy beef and pork. The produce is almost exclusively sold on the domestic market. Small quantities of vegetables, root crops and fresh fruits are exported to Europe and French Guyana, by private operators not all directly involved in the production of these crops (Lahmeyer International/Sunecon 1993).

## **B. Description of Small Production Units**

Based on earlier studies and the aforementioned data, small production units may be described as follows:

- Farms are owned and operated by a family and depending on family labour;
- A high percentage (35 per cent) of farm operators have part-time non-farm employment and an average educational level of 7.1 grades of formal education;
- Production is financed by family members rather than by funds obtained from credit financing institutions;
- The farm family becomes impoverished, because of the unpredictable nature of their income; an adequate pricing policy to encourage agricultural production is needed;
- There is a shortage of inputs and farm equipment, which are scarce and costly;
- Farm production must be sold at low prices;
- There are difficulties with transportation and marketing services;
- There are problems with irrigation and the lack of suitable arable land; and
- Decisions regarding choices of production alternatives are primarily made on the basis of personal references and personal expertise of the farm owner and family members involved in production, rather than on the basis of the economic aspects of production (IDOS 1992).

## **Findings**

The study on rural women as food producers in Suriname involved 150 women representing the five major ethnic groups living in the country, namely, the East Indian (Hindustani), Creole, Javanese of the coastal region, and Amerindian (or native) and Maroon women producers of the

interior. The last two groups carry out agricultural activities mainly as subsistence production. Due to the specific character of the interior and the cultural customs and production patterns of the people living in those areas, a different method was used to collect the information.

Participatory observation was used as well as special meetings and discussions. This methodology gave a better insight into women's daily situation, problems, needs and role in subsistence production. Especially discussions with women producers resulted in a wealth of information on women's multiple roles in the tribal households and in the community. Two appendices on this topic are added to the report on Technology and Marketing.

In the following sections, the situation and participation of 105 rural women food producers in small scale production systems will be analyzed and discussed. The findings from the regional divisions (rural districts) and three ethnic groups (East indian, Javanese and Creole women) provide a basis for a comparison among them. For the rural areas the information was gathered by the use of questionnaires. Of the three ethnic groups in the coastal area, 105 (35 of each) women were selected, who cultivated one of the crops in the study; vegetable, cassava and peanuts.

The agricultural districts studied were Saramacca, Commewijne, Wanica and Paramaribo (for detailed socioeconomic and geographical information on the districts, see the appendices to the report on Technology and Marketing).

From the survey of the 105 women food producers in small-scale farming systems in the districts of Saramacca, Commewijne, Wanica and Paramaribo, it was found that the main characteristics of the small-scale farm systems in study were as follows:

- **Agricultural production was usually carried out on lease holdings with areas of between 0.4 and 2 hectares.** As shown in Table V.2, of the 105 female farmers, 70 respondents were operating on leased land from the Government. This was particularly the case in Saramacca where 26 of the 43 holdings (see Table V.2) were Government-leased lands.

In Saramacca, export crops -mainly bananas- were being produced on parastate plantations. The former sugar, coffee and citrus plantations in Commewijne were still in operation, despite the drop in the production of these products. A small section of the former plantations was under lease to a women's NGO, which is currently producing for the domestic market. In Wanica, small-scale farming is the dominating economic activity. In all districts studied, commercial farming was combined with some production for consumption.

**Table V.2. Characteristics of small farms. Suriname 1993.**

	Size of farm				Land ownership					
	Average (in ha)	No. of farms			Privately owned	Rent	Lease	Family land	Squatting	Other
		0.4 to 2 ha	2 to 10 ha	10 & Over						
<b>Total</b>		47	49	9	15	3	70	10	5	2
<b>Javanese</b>		16	19	-	1	2	32	-	-	-
<b>East Indian</b>		15	15	5	7	1	22	1	3	1
<b>Creole</b>		16	15	4	7	-	16	9	2	1
<b>Saramacca</b>		11	26	6	6	2	34	1	-	-
<b>Commewijne</b>		15	7	-	2	1	19	-	-	-
<b>Wanica</b>		6	10	1	-	-	13	-	3	1
<b>Paramaribo</b>		15	6	2	7	-	4	9	2	1

Privately owned land was the second largest category, as it included 15 farms, 7 of which were located in the district of Paramaribo and 6 in Saramacca. Most Javanese and East Indian women -32 or 91.4 per cent, and 22 or 62.8 per cent respectively- were working on leased land. A higher percentage of Creole women -19, or 54.2 per cent- were performing production activities on privately owned, family and squatting land. An explanation for this may be that in former days after the indentureship system, particularly the East Indian and Javanese migrant families made use of the opportunity to rent or lease land from the Government. The land the Creole women are working on nowadays is in most cases part of the plantation land which was inherited by a number of the former slave families after the emancipation of slaves in 1863.

- **The average size of plots was 1.07 hectares (See Table V.3-Appendix III).** Most land obtained by female farmers was under the 1.07 hectares. The average distance from house to plots is for 95 of the farms less than 2 km. Usually, the plot is close to the farm house. In some cases the Creole women who are engaged in farming on family land and squatting on land away from their house have to walk 2 to 3 kilometres. Fifty-two of the women respondents transported their produce from the field to the house, by walking and holding the products in their hands, while 35 are carrying the load on the head walking and another 32 women are carrying the load on their back to the house. In 26 of cases the women respondent used a hand-cart for transporting the produce.
- **Agricultural production was geared towards small-scale production of rice, vegetable, cassava, peanut as well as some dairy and livestock production.** Produce was almost exclusively sold on domestic markets. Table V.4 (see Appendix 3 for figures on production for home consumption and for sale). The figures show that the largest quantities of produce were sold, while smaller quantities were used for home consumption. The bulk of annual production consisted of vegetables, including callaloo, bora, eggplant, okra, tomatoes, peanuts and cassava. The price of peanuts is currently very high and is rising

rapidly due to the high demand on the market. In addition, as shown in the table, Saramacca has the highest annual production of cassava (24 480 kg) compared with Commewijne and Wanica, with annual production of 3515.50 and 250.00 kg respectively.

Most Javanese women grow mostly peanuts, probably due to the fact that it constitutes the main protein of their basic diet. Looking at ethnicity it is interesting to note that the East Indian women are involved with vegetable production and cultivation of orange, melon, paw paw). They also produce large amounts of cassava and coconut for marketing. It is interesting to note that contemporary Creole women are not only involved in the production of cassava which is traditionally the main crop but also in the cultivation and marketing of vegetables. This was formerly not the case. The information further shows that East Indian, Creole and Javanese women are all very involved in the production and marketing of vegetable and cassava. Creole women tend to be more geared to production for self-consumption, but trends show that in the future more and more Creole women will be involved in commercial agriculture.

**Table V.4. Plot size and distribution. Suriname 1993.**

	No. of plots	Plot size and distribution				
		Distance between house and plots				
	AVG plot size in ha	No. of plots				
		under 2 km	2 to 4 km	4 to 10 km	10 & over	
<b>TOTAL</b>		1.07	95	4	4	2
Saramacca		1.07	42	-	-	1
Commewijne		1.20	23	-	-	-
Wanica		0.94	12	2	2	1
Paramaribo		1.06	18	2	2	-
		-	-	-	-	-
Javanese		1.10	35	-	-	-
East Indian		0.59	30	1	2	2
Creole		1.53	30	3	2	-

- The average number of people living on farms was 5 (see Table V.5). This information is interesting because generally one would expect rural households to be large extended family units. Secondly, figures from the Bureau of Statistics (Household Survey 1990) indicate that the average number of people living in the households of Paramaribo and Wanica was 5, a figure which is consistent with the findings of the survey.

The total number of people living on the farms was 549, made up of 280 males and 269 females. The number of people in the 15-55 age group was 309, or 56.2 per cent of the total number of farm family members. Of these, 144 or 26.2 per cent of the people living in these households were under 15 years old. As regards the heads of households, 69, or 65.71 per cent of the farm households, were headed by men, and 36, or 33.33 per cent, were headed by women. It is striking to note the high percentage of male heads of household (23.81 per cent) in the Creole families, in view of the prevailing perception that these families are usually headed by women.

**Table V.5. Family characteristics. Suriname 1993.**

	Avg. no of people on the farm				% of families whose head of household is		
	Total	Adults between 15 and 55 yrs		Over 55	Under 15	Male	Female
		Males	Females				
Total	549	153	156	92	144	65.71	33.33
Saramacca	209	60	64	36	47	27.62	12.38
Commewijne	118	36	29	24	29	15.24	6.67
Wanica	96	28	27	13	28	11.43	9.52
Paramaribo	126	29	36	19	40	11.43	4.76
Javanese	161	52	42	39	27	21.90	10.48
East Indian	192	56	62	17	56	20.00	13.33
Creole	196	45	52	36	61	23.81	9.52

- The average age of the women farmers was 47. Table V.6 shows that the average age of the women respondents was 47. Thirty-four, or 32.3 per cent, of the 105 women respondents were heads of households; 86.4 per cent were responsible for operating the farm all year long, while 13.59 per cent were operating the farm for periods of between 1 and 6 months. The largest age group consists of the category 50-55 years; 77 respondents, or 73.3 per cent, were between 40 and 60 years old or older. In general, the percentage of participation of the women surveyed increases with age. This may reflect the decreased opportunities to enter occupations other than farming. Furthermore, Table V.6 shows that 18 of the 34 female heads of households, or 52.94 per cent were married; 58.25 per cent of the married women were responsible for operating the farm all year long, while 13.59 per cent were operating it for periods of between 1 and 6 months. Married women made up the largest category of women in the survey, namely 76. Of those, 55 were in the

15-55 age group, and 21 were over 55 years old. Of these married women, 27 were Javanese, 31 were East Indian, and 18 were Creole. There were only 3 single women in the survey, and 14 women were living in a common-law relationship. The survey population included 10 widowed women and 2 divorced women. **It is clear from these findings that many of the female respondents in the sample were farm managers and operators.**

**Table V.6. Characteristics of respondents. Suriname 1993.**

	Average	Average level of education					Head of Household		Responsible for running farm	
		Not Stated	Primary	Secondary	Vocational	Non-Formal	No. of	(%)	All Yrs (%)	From 1 to 6 mth (%)
Total	47	-	-	-	-	-	34	100.00	86.40	13.59
Single	35	-	-	2	1	-	1	2.94	2.91	-
Married	47	3	43	21	-	9	18	52.94	58.25	13.59
Widowed	54	-	7	1	-	2	10	29.41	9.71	-
Common-law	45	-	-	2	-	-	4	2.94	1.94	-
Divorced	39	-	7	2	2	3	1	11.76	13.59	-

- **As regards schooling, most of the women farmers had attended primary school. The education of the women interviewed was almost exclusively at the primary level, and not necessarily complete. Of the 105 respondents, 57 or 54.29 per cent had been to primary school, and 28, or 26.6 per cent, had attended secondary education. Of the 57 women who had a primary school education, 43, or 75.4 per cent, were married. The total number of respondents who had a non-formal education was 14, or 13.3 per cent. Officially, most of the respondents had had access to education, but due to socioeconomic circumstances and the state of the infrastructure (poverty and transportation problems), many of them had not been able to complete primary or secondary education. At the district level, it was found that 39 women in Saramacca had attended primary, secondary and non-formal levels. For Commewijne, the figure was 21 women; for Wanica, it was 17, and for Paramaribo, it was 22 women. Based on this information, it can be said that most of the women respondents had received some formal education.**

In the following section, we will discuss the different aspects of women's participation in production, in order to identify and analyze similarities and differences between the various regions and the ethnic groups involved. Also, a comparison will be made to assess how far the findings of this study coincide with similar and previous observations and studies conducted in Suriname.

### **C. The Contribution of Women to Production: Activities and Types of Work**

Women play a vital role in food production, especially in subsistence production. Food production involves several activities such as: land preparation and clearing, planting, weeding, pest and disease control, harvesting, selecting storage of seeds and transportation. Most of these activities are done by women. The gathering of firewood and fetching water is also women's work. In many rural districts these tasks take several hours a day, because of the long distances from the plots.

In the coastal plain women share responsibilities with men in agriculture and many of them are part-time farmers. The activities of women are here more integrated in the extended family labor on the farm and are mostly considered as part of their reproduction work. In the interior women tend to be very mobile and economically independent. Agricultural activities take place on plots, often miles/kilometres away from the villages (home-place). The system of slash-and-burn "shifting cultivation" is traditionally more geared towards family subsistence than towards the market. Subsistence farming is not considered to be an economic activity that generates incomes for a living.

Mostly, women farmers in the interior do not consider their labor as an activity with an economic value. Producing food products is their responsibility and it is the main basic requirement for the maintenance of the tribal household and community. Therefore they spend most of their time to producing food, which is very time-consuming and labour-intensive.

In most cases, women in the interior have 2 or 3 plots (the average size of which is usually unknown, but from observations, range from 1 to 2 hectares). Usually they cultivate roots, groundnuts, peanuts, bananas, melon, pine apple, corn, rice, and some vegetables (okra, pepper, green leaves, tomatoes). Their system of planting is geared towards short-term rather than prolonged utilization of the land. Small tracts of rain forest of 1 hectare are cleared by slashing and burning the vegetation. The more fertile areas close to the rivers are preferred. The food crops are cultivated in a multiple cropping system of cassava, nappie, ginger, tannias and vegetables. Chemical fertilizers are rarely used and has not been a part of their tradition, furthermore fertilizers now are expensive and unavailable. Except from simple hand tools, no other inputs are used. The cleared tracts are used for a succession of two or three food crops production, after which they are abandoned, due to diminished fertility, for a period of 10 to 15 years. Many women food producers (especially the Maroon women) are now planting rice (rainfed rice) for their own subsistence. Except from some chicken, there is no livestock production in the interior, because it is not common to the cultural traditions and diet menu. Fish and wild meat have been the traditional sources of meat protein of the interior people.

#### **Activities of family members in small-scale production systems in the coastal areas**

As mentioned earlier, women on small-scale farm units in the coastal areas have various responsibilities and roles which involve different activities in both the productive as well in the reproductive and social sphere. Women's contribution in these fields of activities is of vital

importance for the maintenance and development of the farm unit. A great part of their contribution to the farm economy is informal, is not recognized officially, and therefore is not supported by institutional policies or measures.

In analyzing women's activities in the rural districts of the coastal plain, we found that farm work was the main activity of 102 women in the study, in the age group 15 to 60 and older. In the case of men, the figure is 59. On the other hand, 23 women indicated that work outside the farm was their principal activity, compared with 72 men. Furthermore, 206 family members indicated they had secondary activities, such as work on the farm (45), work outside the farm (14), domestic work on the farm (140) and studies and other work (7). Production-oriented work on the farm was done by 71 women, predominantly in the age group 40-60 years. Only a few (11) men in the same age group participated. Of 190 family members, 95 women and 95 men indicated they were students or were involved in activities other than farming. This group was mainly under 15 years old (students) and constituted 144 family members.

Domestic work as a secondary activity was mostly carried out by the female population, namely 86 women as compared to 54 men. Mostly women were in charge of work in the field and in the farm household. This conclusion can be applied to all the ethnic groups involved in the study. It was found that men were more often engaged in work outside the farm.

As regards the different activities regarding reproduction, Table V.7, Division on Labour on the Farm (see Appendix IV) gives an indication of the percentage of both women and men on the farm who participate in the various tasks involved in maintenance of the household.

Except for activities such as gathering of firewood, house and furniture repairs, and transport of children, which are mostly men's tasks, all other activities such as preparing food, washing clothes and cleaning the house were carried out by women. Traditionally, in all cultures women's main responsibility is in the domestic work from which her position and status as house wife and mother is determined. Less attention is paid to her role and contribution to productive work on the farm. The study found that in all cases women carried the primary responsibility for domestic labour in the households, whether men were present or not, and that men or male children were only marginally involved, if at all. In only 9 of the cases studied there were male family members involved in preparing food and only 4 were in charge of the children. Male children helped with productive work and repairs and female children with both domestic and productive work. Mostly young children are helping with tasks such as fetching water, cleaning the yard and gathering fire wood. Processing activities such as the baking of cassava bread and the preparation of peanut sauce, are almost done entirely by women without any help by men.

Table V.8 (Appendix V) presents a picture of the participation of family members in agricultural production on the farm. In almost all production activities, from pre-harvesting to post-harvesting and marketing, women's participation is of great importance to the total farm output. In general, the small farm unit produces various crops and women are continuously involved in activities. The activities are diversified and labour-intensive. Women's participation in growing vegetables, land preparation, crop care, purchase and use of chemicals, harvesting and post-



harvest activities, is more substantial than that of men (see Table V.8). The fact that women play such a part in the purchase and use of fertilizers and chemicals is noteworthy. Actually, 65.7 per cent of women in vegetable production and 33.3 per cent in cassava production and 30.4 per cent in peanut production participate in decision making. This applies to all ethnic groups. The respondent's participation in activities pertaining to the three main crops -vegetable, cassava and peanut production- was higher than that of the other women and men in the household. On the whole, these women were more active than other family members.

The findings of a socioeconomic study (Defares 1993) on the role and contribution of women in the agricultural sector which was conducted in 1992 (between 1 September and 31 December) were similar to those described above. The study involved 142 women in the 16-72 age group. Though this sample represented a specific rural area in Suriname, the findings are applicable to other rural areas insofar as it concerns the problems, needs, potentials and structural problems of women farmers. Any differences might be more on the level of ethnic and cultural circumstances regarding the role and position of women as producers and housewives, the level of sociogeographic variations (soils, physical and technical infrastructure) and the socioeconomic position of women in the different regions. From the study in two rural districts (Wanica and Para) and several field observations conducted in 1991 in East and West Suriname (the interior), it was found that the most important characteristics of women farmers in the areas studied were the following:

- Nearly all women farmers in the two coastal districts were engaged in a variety of farming and marketing activities, and produced much of the food their families consumed.
- In general terms, female farming, especially in the coastal area, was usually on holdings of less than 2 hectares (sometimes 2 to 5 acres), except in the interior, where production was carried out on larger plots (rotating crops). Women's contribution was mainly restricted to activities such as planting, weeding, seeding, harvesting, packaging and marketing of the products. Only a part of the land is generally cultivated because of irrigation and drainage problems. In many rural districts these tasks involve several hours a day, especially when they must travel long distances to their farms.
- The farms operated by women were in general marginal in terms of capital and land/labour resources, and largely reflected the economic insecurity of the households.
- Most of the women did not have a title to the land. The results of the survey showed that of the group of 142 women, only 19.4 per cent had title to the land. In cases where women owned land, this was generally the result of inheritance or they had received permission to cultivate the land, and in some cases they had obtained it through Government land allocation or reform programs.
- The majority of the women farmers were engaged in mixed farming (vegetable, fruit and cattle production). On the other hand, a small number of women were engaged in the

cultivation of export-oriented cash crops, such as bananas, palm oil (in the parastate enterprises).

- In the interior, women were for the most part involved in food production, roots, peanuts, pulses, other groundnuts and some vegetables. Most women cultivated short-term subsistence crops marketing only small surpluses. Especially in the Marowijne area (East Suriname) women farmers have increasingly become very involved in the cultivation of cash crops.

The three types of agricultural systems identified by Boserup (1970) in 1970, with respect to women farmers, can, with some variations based on Surinamese circumstances, also be applied to the situation in Surinam, as follows:

- \* **The female farming system, characterized by slash-and-burn communal land ownership, may be found in the interior among the Amerindian and Maroon populations.**
- \* **The male farming system, based on land ownership, settled production patterns, and the use of modern agrarian equipment. Field labor is done almost entirely by hired labor; if women contribute to farming at all, it is during harvest time or at other peak periods. This system is mostly to be found on farms where cash crops such as rice, vegetables and bananas are cultivated.**
- \* **The mixed farming system, which may be found in most rural districts of Suriname, shares some of the characteristics of the male farming system. Most of the field labor is done by family members, and women take part in tasks such as weeding, transplanting, harvesting, selecting, bundling and packaging.**

### **Categories of women producers**

According to the types of agricultural systems and the degree of female participation in agricultural production, the following three categories of women farmers in Suriname can be identified:

1. **Women food producers in the interior (Amerindian and Maroon women) who produce primarily for their own family: agriculture is geared towards home consumption, and surpluses are marketed where transportation and access to market facilities are available. Due to commercialization trends and contacts with the coastal area, a number of women farmers in the interior (the Sipaliwini area) are becoming very involved in commercial farming. Their access to market facilities and transportation makes them market-oriented and competitive;**
2. **Women farmers in the rural (coastal) districts (Hindustani and Javanese women) who are mainly engaged in production and processing for the market, and participate in production as part of the family labour force, and**

3. **Creole women farmers, who are becoming more involved in the processing and preservation of agricultural products, as well in the marketing of these products. A number of Creole women are also involved in the cultivation of agricultural products. Due to transportation problems and marketing constraints, the agricultural surplus is marketed to neighbors, consumers and middlemen. Nevertheless, these women make a significant contribution to family income and home consumption.**

#### **D. The Contribution of Women to Family Income**

**In general, the contribution women make to family incomes through agricultural production is greatly underestimated, and has never been considered a substantial part of family earnings. Ignorance about women's participation in field activities and the belief that their production activities are merely part of their daily reproductive work has contributed to women themselves not perceiving their work as productive or income-producing.**

**Annual incomes generated by the various kinds of smallholding vary substantially. The differences have to do with the type, composition and orientation (subsistence or market farming) of production. On all types of farms, operations are determined by factors such as the number of able-bodied workers in the household, local availability of contracting services for land tillage, availability of inputs and reliability of the input supply, and market perspectives. Farm incomes are also highly dependent on the physical, technical and social infrastructure (irrigation, drainage and transportation) accessible to the farm unit. The many problems faced in production result in a great number of small-scale farmers having a second job in another sector (mostly government). In 1986 it was estimated that only 15-20 per cent of all smallholders obtained their incomes solely from farming (IDOS 1992).**

**Due to the economic crisis in the country, real incomes of workers fell by 53.4 per cent in the period 1987-1993 (Ministry of Labour 1993). The poverty line was estimated to be Sf. 10 000 per month for a family of five (Ministry of Labour 1993). At present it is difficult to make an accurate estimate of incomes earned on small-scale family farm units. The unstable economic situation and the fluctuating foreign exchange rate make the situation unpredictable. Average wages in agriculture stand at Sf. 7.25 to Sf. 10.00 per hour. Hourly wages on family farms are between Sf. 6.25 and Sf. 7.50.**

**According to figures for 1986 (Ministry of Agriculture), the majority of vegetable growers earn annual incomes of between Sf. 6000 and Sf. 9000, whereas smallholders primarily involved in the production of beans and pulses earn between Sf. 6000 and Sf. 15 000, with an average income of Sf. 9000, given that two crops are produced per year on about 0.75 hectares of land per crop (IDOS 1992:160).**

**Figures provided by the General Bureau of Statistics (1989) show that 62 per cent of the female employed population in the districts of Paramaribo and Wanica had a monthly income of Sf. 900. Little is known of the incomes earned by women on family farms or how these incomes**

are distributed and spent. Usually, they do not earn a fixed income. All the money generated by the sale of products is usually invested directly in the household (food and clothes). Generally, women and men are not willing to give precise information on the amount of money they earn. Table V.9 shows the frequency distribution of stated primary and secondary activities of family members between the ages of 15 and 50. Activities are aggregated in terms of those that produce income and those that do not produce income, and allow for a general assessment to be made of the significance of the contribution made by women to family incomes.

**Table V.9. Activities of family members. Suriname 1993.**

	PRIMARY ACTIVITIES 1			SECONDARY ACTIVITIES 2		
	INCOME-PRODUCING		NON-INCOME-PRODUCING 3	INCOME-PRODUCING		NON-INCOME-PRODUCING SECONDARY ACTIVITIES
	ON FARM	OFF FARM		ON FARM	OFF FARM	
MEN	23%	42%	35%	15%	3%	83%
WOMEN	51%	13%	36%	7%	4%	89%

As can be seen, income production within the family unit is definitely a responsibility that is shared by men and women. Sixty-four per cent of adult female family members have an income producing activity as their primary activity, compared to 65 per cent of male family members. The situation is almost the same in terms of their dedication to non-income producing activities (studies, etc.). Most family members are involve in a non-income producing activity, such as domestic duties. The findings show that more men than women have a secondary income producing activity (18 per cent of men compared to 11 per cent of women), and among those that do, work on the farm is much more important than off-farm labour. Within the family unit, there is a pronounced tendency for men to work off-farm, with almost twice as many men working off-farm as on-farm (42-23 per cent). Women, on the other hand, tend to remain working on the farm, and there are four times as many women working on-farm as off-farm (51-13 per cent). An explanation for this can be that traditionally rural women are not supposed to work outside the house. Culturally, she (particularly the Hindustani women) is bounded to the rural household and during the years not many rural women get the opportunity to be involve in off-farm activities. On the other hand, due to their lack of proper education and moreover the limited availability of suitable employment outside the farm, one can expect the rural women to be more involved in on-farm than off-farm employment.

Table V.9. on page 85 compares the participation by gender and off- and on-farm activities for primary income-related activities. As can be seen, while 58 per cent of family members work on the farm as their primary activity, 42 per cent work off-farm. This indicates the importance of off-farm sources of income for the small farm family. From the aforementioned sections it was already clear that small scale farming in Suriname, had and still faced many constraints in

the macro-financial and production sphere. The increasing economic recession after 1980 had worsened the situation. The many uncertainties and low incomes in the agricultural sector, forced many small scale farmers to seek off-farm employment.

**Table V.10. Off-farm and on-farm activities by gender. Suriname 1993.**

	ON FARM	OFF FARM	TOTAL
MEN	.18	.32	.50
WOMEN	.40	.10	.50
TOTAL	.58	.42	1.00

As can be seen from Table V.10, women are relatively more involved in farm activities than men are, providing .40/.58, or 69 per cent of family member participation. Men on the other hand, provide .32/.42, or 76 per cent of family member participation in off-farm employment. The relative profitability of farming compared to off-farm sources of labour and the time dedicated by each of the family members to these activities, are important considerations in any definitive statement regarding the contribution of women to family income. Restating the above, 58 per cent of family income originates from the farm, of which women provide 69 per cent of this income source; 42 per cent of the family income originates from off-farm employment of which men provide 76 per cent. On the whole, men provide 50 per cent of the family income and women provide the other 50 per cent.

### **E. Allocation of Female Labour**

In analyzing the allocation of female labour, it is important to make a distinction between productive, reproductive and social activities. Furthermore, it must be clear how these different activities are interrelated with each other and are integrated with activities of the various members of the farm household. Also important in this context is the time allocated to the different activities of women compared to that of the other members of the household. Women farmers spend a considerable amount of time in production activities. They usually start work at 6 a.m. and finish at 18 p.m. In the interior, women walk long distances (1 to 2 hours) to their plots, where they sometimes stay for several days, especially during harvest time.

A socioeconomic study (Defares 1993) shows that women in the rural districts of Wanica and Para spend an average of 5 hours in the field (during harvest time they spend longer hours). They get up at 5 a.m. and go to bed between 10 and 11 p.m. The time spent on the different production activities depends on the crops cultivated and whether production is for family consumption or the market. Looking at the daily schedule during the peak seasons, women in

the coastal areas normally work 7 to 8 hours in the field during harvesting and an average of 5 hours in the reproductive area.

The survey findings show that in domestic activities, such as preparing food and taking care of children, women spend an average of 14.97 hours a week on food preparation and an average of 40.21 hours a week on child care. Javanese and Creole women spend most of their time on child care. Javanese women spend an average of 60.65 hours on child care, while Creole women take charge of the children an average of 62.96 hours a week. East Indian women spend an average of 13.94 hours a week on child care. Less time is spent on paying bills and transport of children. This is usually a man's responsibility in all ethnic groups.

Leisure time is mostly spent listening to the radio and watching television. In general the women respondents were not very active outside the home. Only 27 women of the sample participated in monthly meetings of an organization, mostly a church group in the community.

#### **F. Women's Participation In and Access to Decision Making, Credit, Land and Training: Problems and Limitations**

Women's participation in and access to the various dimensions of agricultural production is to a large extent influenced by cultural traditions and norms in the farm household and the rural community. Culturally, most rural women, regardless of ethnicity and religion, have a subordinate position within the household. In most cultures, women are bound by the traditional rules and duties of their families which often prevent them from acting independently. Since women fulfill an important role in production, it becomes more and more necessary that they should also be involved in all aspects of agricultural production and development of the farm unit.

##### **1. Decision making**

As is in many Caribbean agrarian systems, men are mainly responsible for decisions regarding the timing and nature of operations concerning rice, bananas, sugar cane and other commercial crops for export, and of the breeding and sale of cattle. Regardless of the fact that women are in charge of most of the work (sowing, weeding, harvesting and marketing) in small family farm units, the distribution of task is usually determined by the husband or any other male relative (FAO 1993).

The sociological study on women farmers in Suriname, conducted in the area of Wanica and Para (1993) shows that in nearly 60 per cent of the cases decisions are made jointly, but in about 25 per cent of the cases it is the woman who takes the decision. The study reports that women's role in decision making must not be underestimated, despite the fact that it is mostly the man who runs the farm, the woman is responsible for many of the work done on the farm, which is for most the case in the rural areas.

**Decision making** has to do not only with the way in which production activities are in but also with the way in which profits and benefits are used and invested. In measuring the role played by women within the farm unit, it is important to establish who has control over the resources and distribution of the earnings from these resources. Table V.11 shows how decisions concerning farm production are made and how women participate in them.

**Table V.11. Participation of women in decisions relating to production on the farm. Suriname 1993.**

<b>DECISION</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>ONLY MEN (%)</b>	<b>ONLY WOMEN (%)</b>	<b>SHARED MEN &amp; WOMEN (%)</b>
	100	100	100
<b><u>TYPES OF INPUTS</u></b>			
Inputs-crop production	27.6	35.2	31.4
Purchase mach/equip	14.2	19.5	27.6
Crops to be planted	18.1	39.4	38.1
Livestock to be raised	5.0	14.3	16.2
Products to be sold	14.2	36.2	39.5
What markets	15.2	30.5	34.3
Price of goods	15.2	40.0	24.8
Use of goods	6.7	5.7	9.5
Farm management	12.4	35.2	46.7
Use of profit	9.6	33.3	47.6
Organization of prod.	13.3	37.1	42.9
Hiring farm labour	9.6	22.9	17.1

Table V.11 shows that in most decisions women's participation is crucial, though many decisions are shared by men and women. Decisions regarding inputs, what crops are to be planted, what products are to be sold and the price of goods are, in most cases, made by both men and women. For products to be sold, for example, in 36.2 per cent of the cases, women take the decision alone. In 14.3 per cent of the cases, men make the decision. In 39 per cent of the cases, it is a joint decision. (The other categories, and the cases when there was no response are not included.) Regarding the use of profits of production, it is interesting to note that 33.3 per cent of the women make the decision, as compared with 9.6 per cent of the men. Concerning the organization of production, 37.1 per cent of the women decide alone, compared to 13.3 per cent of the men. In 47.6 and 42.9 per cent of the cases, respectively, these

decisions are shared by both. From the standpoint of ethnic background, it appears that the Javanese and Creole women take decisions alone, especially concerning crops to be planted, products to be sold, what markets to use, price of goods and the hiring of farm labour. Among the Hindustanis, almost all decisions are shared. This is especially interesting because it is usually believed that in this culture, the husband or son is in charge of all important decisions. In general, decisions regarding use of family's income is a shared decision, but in most decisions in the social sphere, women play a more active role (50 per cent and over) than men. Particularly for expenditures such as clothing, food, and various household activities, it is the women who decide. In this study, we found that there is a high participation of women in the decision-making process on small farms. Nevertheless, the underestimation of their contribution to farm production limits her influence in decision-making in the farm household, the rural community and society in general. This has repercussions on the family's quality of life.

## **2. Credit**

Because most women lack collateral, such as land, they usually have little access to credit. In many cases, they must rely on their relatives and friends or other money-lenders who are not always available to provide credit. Women need credit, for example, in order to purchase land, tools and fertilizers, or to start a new business. Generally banks have tended to underestimate the productivity of women farmers and their ability to repay loans. FAO studies and others show that repayment rates by women's groups have been excellent. In Bangladesh for example, some progress is being made, where over 8000 women's group have been organized into credit and marketing cooperatives since 1987 with very satisfactory credit ratings (FAO's Plan of Action, 1990). One of the conclusions of a FAO study of credit schemes in Africa was that in order to make credit more useful to women, loan packages, particularly those aimed at female-headed households, should include financing for labour and land preparation (FAO 1990).

With respect to the Suriname case, it should be noted that women farmers (small farm producers) are usually reluctant to borrow money from the banks or credit cooperatives. Generally they do not want to take the risk of borrowing, particularly when they lack a fixed monthly income which indeed is an important condition for repayment. Secondly they do not know how to apply for a loan. From the survey findings it was found that in 90 per cent of the cases women farmers make use of their own financial sources (mostly previous sales or family savings). Taking into account the financial difficulties of the country, the requirements of the banks and the high interest rates, it can be said that for small producers in Suriname credit is difficult to obtain.

## **3. Land**

Land is a basic requirement for producing staple food crops. Nevertheless, the fact that abundant land is available in Suriname, it is very difficult for small producers (women and men) to obtain a piece of land. Access to agricultural land in Suriname is bounded to several factors (political



as economic) which are considered to be a constraint for the development of agriculture. Not many women have a title to land. However, women farmers acknowledge the fact that land is an essential condition for production and the development of the food producing sector.

Women and men have the same right to apply for a piece of land. But, from discussions with policy planners and officials of the Ministry of Natural resources and Agriculture, it comes out that until now few women have exercised their rights for obtaining land. It is said that women are unfamiliar with the bureaucratic rules and have difficulties in understanding the procedures for land allocation. There is a lack of information regarding land allocation and access. Research and observations have shown that the land women own is usually obtained through inheritance or rent (from relatives or neighbors). Because most women do not have a title to land, they experience problems in the access to credit facilities and other financial sources.

The results of the IICA/IDB study of rural women food producers show the following regarding the above. Table V.12, gives an overview of the names on legal contracts and titles regarding the 105 women informants.

The study shows clearly that women's access to land is mainly through spouses or male relatives. This seems also to be the case of ownership. This has usually been acquired through marriage or inheritance from a spouse. Of the 105 farms, 70 farms or 67 per cent are leased from the Government. Forty-eight or 69.6 per cent of these lease holdings are in the name of the male companion, compared to 3 or 4.3 per cent in the name of the woman respondent. Only 1 or 1.4 per cent is in the name of a respondent living in a common-law relationship and 1 or 1.4 per cent is in the name of a single respondent (other status). One farm or 1.4 per cent is in the names of both male and female respondent. 9 farms or 13 per cent are in the name of the woman's family and 5 or 7.2 per cent in the name of the man's family. The total number of respondents having a title with their name on the contract of land is only 6 or 5.7 per cent. One married woman owned her land and 5 others had a contract leasing the land. Of the five women 3 are married, one is living in a common-law relationship and one is single.

In the district of Saramacca 69.6 per cent of the plots the women work on are Government lease holdings in the name of the male family member. Regarding ethnicity, we see that of the 35 Javanese owned farm, women are the owners of 4 or 11.2 per cent. The four women have their names only on the contract of Government lease land. Of the four women 3 are married and one lives in a common-law relationship. The remaining 31 Javanese land holders are men.

There were 35 Hindustani farms surveyed. No Hindustani woman in the survey had a title in her name to land. All farms were in the name of her spouse. Three women were working on lease land of their family, one woman worked on family owned land and 2 women worked on squatters land. Of the 35 Creole owned farm only 2 women had their names on the contract of land. One woman was married and the other was single. Ten Creole women were performing agricultural activities on land that belongs to their family.

**Table V.12. Signatures on contracts by type of holding (in %). Suriname 1993.**

	NAMES ON CONTRACTS AND TITLES (PERCENTAGE)						
	BOTH (%)	MALE (%)	RESPONDENT			RESP. FAMILY NAME (%)	MAN'S FAMILY NAME (%)
			OTHER STATUS RESP. (%)	MARRIED (%)	COMMON-LAW (%)		
Own	7.1	71.4	-	7.1	-	14.3	-
Rented	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	-
Family Land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lease	-	10.0	-	-	-	50.0	40.0
Squatting	1.4	69.6	1.4	4.3	1.4	13.0	7.2
Other	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-
	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	-

We conclude that few women are owners of agricultural land and that until now agrarian legislation has not made any efforts to resolve the principal barriers which hinders women in the access and control over land.

#### **4. Training**

Smallholders, particularly women food producers, generally have poor access to agricultural information and extension services. For example, agricultural training often focus on improving export crops, where male farmers predominate, whereas training with respect to subsistence crops and small livestock, where women farmers mostly dominate is of less interest. In fact, as studies show, most training programs for rural women still emphasize domestic skills (home economics/LHK), rather than agricultural skills, though both are relevant and need to be combined.

Studies and field observations recognize that rural food producers make a crucial contribution to agricultural production. Therefore it is essential to enhance their participation through projects and programs that systematically bring them into the mainstream of rural activities and rural developments. The partial study on women farmers in Wanica and Para (Defares 1993) found that women represent approx. Fifty per cent of the smallholder in these districts (which was 1400 in december 1992) but only few of them (5 per cent of the 142 informants) received some extension services.

Women farmers indicate that there is an obvious need for agricultural training on various levels regarding plant propagation, cultivation methods and techniques, crop varieties and the use of fertilizers to increase efficiency and crop production. Also women producers acknowledge the

need for more skills and experience in the field of handling and using farm equipments/tools/machines and in the marketing of the produce.

The following Table (V.13) give us an indication of the involvement of women in agricultural training and assistance programs.

**Table V.13. Women who have received training or technical assistance, and areas in which such training is desired. Suriname 1993.**

	<b>RECEIVED TRAINING/ ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>WANT TRAINING/ ASSISTANCE</b>
No. of respondents	1	105
Areas of training:		
Seed Selection/Production		34.3%
Use of fertilizers/pesticide		35.2%
Post harvest storage		26.7%
Marketing	1%	23.8%
Feeding & Grazing		23.8%
Farm management		31.4%
Packaging		25.7%
Processing		23.8%
Other		10.0%

Only one of the 105 women in the sample has received training, namely in marketing. The Ministry of Agriculture offers some extension services, but these are usually limited to giving advice. Little assistance is offered in the cultivation or marketing of food crops or vegetables. In almost all districts the farmers depend on their own resources for inputs (e.g. fertilizers). However, it is clear that female food producers need training in agriculture. Of the total sample 34.3 per cent would like to receive training in seed selection and production, while 35.2 per cent is interesting in a training in the use of fertilizers and pesticides. From the above information it is obvious that for almost all crops, particularly vegetable a significant percentage of women use fertilizers namely 65.7 per cent. Seven Javanese, 16 East Indian, and 16 Creole women would like to follow a training in the use of fertilizers. Furthermore a significant number, 16 East indian and 17 Creole women in the survey found a training in farm management essential. It is important to stress the high number of women who would like to participate in courses regarding different aspects of production in agriculture.

The results of this study made clear that of the 105 women respondents 56 or 53.3 per cent know the extension officer of their district, Of these group, 51 or 48.5 per cent were visited by an extension officer of the Ministry of Agriculture. Most of these women farmers (30), are from the district of Saramacca. This is the area where most commercial farming is taken place and were women plays a significant role in the agricultural production and marketing of the farm produce.

The Ministry of Agriculture is at this moment preparing a program for women producers in plant propagation, grafting, nursery management and marketing. Training will be provided in the different rural districts. Due to the high costs and transportation problems the implementation of the program in the Interior will be delayed.

## **5. Organization**

In general, it was found that few women food producers belonged to farmer's organizations and cooperatives. Table V.14 shows the involvement of women in both production-oriented and social and/or religious organizations. Of the total sample, 55 women were involved in an organization. Forty-one women (40.9 per cent) were active in church activities. In Saramacca, 6 women were members of farmer's organizations, while in the other districts, no women were members. The main types of groups in which women participated were church and social clubs (such as the YWCA). Participation in social groups was only reported for Wanica and Paramaribo. At present, there are a few women's NGO programs being implemented in the interior (East Suriname and Brokopondo) and in the districts of Commewijne and Paramaribo. These programs deal with the growing of peanuts, vegetables and fruits for home consumption, and for sale on domestic and export markets, in an effort to generate both employment and income.

## **6. Problems and limitations faced by women**

In general, the main limitations faced by small-scale farming systems in Suriname have been caused by:

- the pattern of development plans followed in the past, which generally favored certain groups (the large estate holders), the multinational corporations and other foreign interests, and paid very little attention to the role of women as small farmers;
- the fact that small-scale farming never received the attention it deserved in terms of access to land and irrigation water; with respect to land, the problems have more to do with costly improvements, i.e. clearing, reclamation, restoration, irrigation, and drainage, etc.;

**Table V.14. Organizations operating in area surveyed. Suriname 1993.**

TYPE OF ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN AREA SURVEYED	REGION					% PARTICIPATION				
	TO-TAL	SAR-AMA-CCA	COM-ME-WIJ-NE	WA-NI-CA	PAR-AMA-RIBO	TO-TAL	SAR-AMA-CCA	COM-ME-WIJ-NE	WA-NI-CA	PAR-AMA-IBO
<b>PRODUCTION, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS</b>	55	yes	yes	yes	yes	100	38.2	30.9	9.1	21.8
-Farmer Organizations	6	yes	no	no	no	100	100.0	-	-	-
<b>SOCIAL &amp; RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS</b>										
-Social Clubs	3	no	no	yes	yes	100	-	-	33.3	66.7
-Church Clubs	41	yes	yes	yes	yes	100	31.7	41.5	9.8	17.0
-Community Groups	1	no	no	no	yes	100	-	-	-	100.0
-Other	5	yes	no	no	yes	100	40.0	-	-	60.0
<b>WOMEN'S PROGRAMS</b>										
-Productive	-	no	yes	no	yes	-	-	-	-	-
-Reproductive	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	-	-	-	-
-Social	-	yes	yes	yes	yes	1	-	-	-	1.0

- inadequate technical organization and implementation capability of contractors for land-improvement projects;
- inadequate agricultural support services (credit, marketing, technical assistance).

All of these factors have contributed to impact negatively or adversely on small farmers.

The problems of women in production are not much different from those of small-scale male farmers. The constraints women experience have more to do with the persisting attitudes and prejudices about women's multiple roles in the farm household and on the farm whereby no distinction is made between productive and reproductive roles. Because of the fact that women's reproductive role and function have always been highlighted, the female role as a producer in agriculture is acknowledged. From the previous Chapters it is clear that during the past there were no agricultural plans which favored small scale farming and production. Moreover, women within these units were not conceived to be producers or farmers.

The constraints of women are mainly experienced on the level of the civic and technical infrastructure and the socioeconomic, cultural and legal structure. In general most of the limitations in small scale production units are related to bureaucratic (administrative) bottlenecks, the unequal relations in the market place and political decisions that hinder the development of the small scale agriculture. It can be said that woman suffered most from the existed attitudes and ideas concerning the expected role and status of her performance in the household and in the farm enterprise, which made that she can develop herself optimal.

Concerning the marketing constraints no Government support is provided. The women of the Marowijne area (in East Suriname) organized themselves in a cooperative which developed a formal cooperation with a large Farmer Organization named the FAL (Federation of Agricultural Labourers) for the purpose of efficient marketing their products.

Table V.15 presents an overview of the main problems encountered by women involved in production. The most urgent problems that need to be solved are:

- \* the unavailability of inputs (for 68.5 per cent of respondents),
- \* poor drainage and irrigation (24.7 per cent),
- \* high cost of packaging (19 per cent),
- \* effect of plant and animal diseases and natural disasters (19 per cent).

**Table V.15. Principal problems faced by female respondents. Suriname 1993.**

	NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SURVEY	PERCENTAGE
<b><u>PRODUCTION PROBLEMS</u></b>		100.0
Unavailability of inputs	73	68.5
Poor drainage/irrigation	26	24.7
Packaging costs	19	19.0
Diseases/natural disasters	20	19.5
Pest/Animal damage	16	15.2
Unavailability of transportation	12	11.4
No access to land/market	13	12.3

The unavailability of inputs is a serious constraint in Saramacca. Of the 43 respondents in this district, 30 said that for them it was the most important and urgent problem. Small-scale farming in Saramacca is almost entirely market-oriented, and inputs are therefore an urgent necessity. It is interesting to note that only 12.3 per cent of the women surveyed considered lack of access to land or markets to be a serious problem. In general, East Indian women considered land to be an important component because farming is a commercial activity for them. The unavailability of inputs is a serious obstacle faced daily by all women.

In spite of all the problems they face, rural women food producers continue making a significant contribution to production, and can no longer be ignored. As the findings of the study show, they are now and always have been key actors in small-scale agricultural production.

## **7. Women food producers: Perceptions regarding socialization and gender roles**

In this section, we discuss the ideas women themselves have about what are appropriate roles for men and women, their ambitions for their children and considerations about farming and business. There is a clear preference for boys rather than girls to become farmers. Daughters and sons should continue as farmers, as farming is profitable and supplies domestic food needs. The women who wanted their daughters to continue in farming would prefer for them not to be involved in agricultural chores. The following reasons were given: "The work is too hard," and "It is difficult to keep on going". Boys are more involved in agricultural work because, in general, the female sample believed that "boys are physically stronger than girls".

Due to changing traditions and norms in society, women farmers often believe that it is better for young girls and boys to get a good education in order to find a "good occupation" in society. Most of the respondents (53.33 per cent) wanted their children to become professionals; 42.86 per cent of the female sample said it was up to the children themselves to decide or to choose what to become in society. Fifty-six of the respondents (53.33 per cent) considered farming to be a business, because "it provides a living and it can be profitable if all necessary conditions are met".

Nevertheless, for 49 of the women farmers (46.77 per cent), farming is not a business; according to them, "mostly, it meets a basic need, namely, food for the survival of people and the family. Due to the many constraints faced in production, it is difficult for small-scale women food producers to operate on a commercial basis".

The findings show that of the 105 respondents, 48 (45.7 per cent) had been farming for more than 20 years; of these, 13 were in the group aged 50 to 55, 20 were 55 and older, and 7 were in the 45-50 group. The remaining 8 women were between 30 and 45 years old. The general lack of confidence in farming as an income-earning activity is reflected in the fact that most women and men wanted their children not to be full-time farmers, but to have another occupation (profession) as their principal activity.





## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study on women food producers in rural areas focused on the participation of women in agriculture in Suriname, and identified the factors that affect their participation and contribution. An analysis was made of national agricultural policies and rural development strategies and programs, in order to identify their main objectives, and determine how they affect women in their role as small-scale farmers. The study showed that women in Suriname participate at all levels of agricultural production. They are labourers, farmers, marketers and professionals. **At the policy level, the study revealed existing gender-blind approaches which ignore the importance and value of women's participation and the effect of gender roles and relations on agricultural production. The study underscored the urgent need for change in the attitudes of agricultural policy makers and planners, who need to be more gender sensitive.**

### **A. Conclusions**

Because of the lack of significant data on women in the agricultural sector in Suriname, it has been difficult for years to identify their exact role in production, their position in the farm unit and household, and their contribution to the agricultural output of small-scale production systems.

The study shows that women play an important role in the food- production sector of Suriname, and make a significant contribution both to production and to the marketing of agricultural products. The study provides insight into the situation of women producers of all ethnic groups in the country, and highlights their crucial role in both the productive and the reproductive/social spheres of the farm household and the rural community. The similarities and differences among women are shown with respect to their various responsibilities and the many roles they fulfill. It is clear from the findings that regardless of ethnic background, women food producers contribute significantly to the agricultural output of small-scale farming systems. At present, they are the key actors in the further development of such farm units. This study makes a set of findings available at the local and regional levels which can be used as a basis for actions to be taken on the issues raised.

Women food producers experience many problems and face many constraints and uncertainties in their daily lives. To a great extent, the constraints have to do with the persistent social and cultural traditions and attitudes about the place of women in society, and with the bureaucratic rules of the state apparatus. Up to now, however, only a few structures and support systems have been in place, and not enough resources have been allocated to alleviate the unstable and weak position of women in agricultural production. The findings of the study show that in general, women do not own farms nor do they participate in production-oriented organizations or cooperatives because of male bias and beliefs.

Despite the crucial role women play in ensuring a steady supply of food to their immediate household, to the rural community and to the country as a whole, their contribution is still not being given the recognition it deserves. Nor is it adequately recorded in national statistics or GDP estimates. Because agricultural planners and extension workers are generally not aware

of the significant part played by women in agricultural production, as well as in non-agricultural tasks, the many roles of women in the farm household have never been properly recognized or appreciated. Planners that are sensitive to gender issues in agriculture are needed in order to change the approach of the state apparatus and ensure that policies that take into account the true role and situation of women are formulated. The position of women in agricultural development must be strengthened through specific support programs (e.g., training programs and credit facilities) and through a concerted effort to change attitudes and approaches towards the participation of women in production.

It is clear from the findings that NGOs play a key role in providing support services to small farmers, particularly women farmers. These organizations need help in revising their programs in order to address the needs of women. Some of these NGOs are contributing significantly to the development and strengthening of income-generating activities for poor women and farmers.

Some of the issues raised by the findings need urgent attention. Some of these are: the lack of direct access to land by women, since most women access land through men; the limited availability of appropriate support services; the scarcity and high prices of inputs, a matter which has implications for women's incomes; limited access to training and extension services; limited access to marketing and transportation services; the excessive work burden, and the uncertain minimum income of women in production.

It is hoped that the study has contributed to a greater awareness of the important role and contribution of women in the food- production sector of Suriname and that it will lead to a better understanding of the many roles fulfilled by women, as well as of their position within the farm household and in the rural community.

## **B. Recommendations**

Structural transformation of institutions and new priorities in the allocation of scarce resources are urgently needed in order to bring about positive changes in the situation of women producers in Suriname. Existing legislation also needs to be reviewed with a view to removing injustices regarding the access of women to resources and their status in agriculture. Special attention should be given to legal issues affecting women and their access to land and support activities.

As regards future prospects for the socioeconomic development of rural women, short-, medium- and long-term programs and projects should be promoted with a view to improving the status of women in the farm household and solving the problems they encounter in their different fields of endeavour. Attention should be paid to the different spheres (technical, socioeconomic, cultural, legal and bureaucratic) in which the various activities of women take place. Bearing in mind the findings and recommendations of this and other research and studies, gender-oriented action models should be introduced which will give women greater opportunities to participate fully, and on an equal footing with men, in programs and projects aimed at their socioeconomic advancement and empowerment in both rural and national life.

The following points should be considered in strategies to improve the welfare and well-being of women food producers in agricultural production:

- 1) An overall development strategy is needed to coordinate the actions of all relevant ministries, NGOs, farmer's organizations and cooperatives. These are important instruments to meet the goals for women in rural and agricultural production and development.
- 2) An agricultural census should be conducted. The census data should be broken down by gender, and should cover the many roles of women in the household and the farm unit. The census will be useful in agricultural planning, policy formulation and program implementation.
- 3) Appropriate systems of training for women in agriculture should be set up.
- 4) Support services in agriculture should be improved, and special emphasis should be placed on the entrepreneurial and agricultural activities of women. Among others, the following services should be included: agrarian extension services, improvement of civil and technical infrastructure of the farms, construction services, marketing and transportation.
- 5) Gender awareness and sensitivity workshops and seminars should be held for agricultural planners, farmer's organizations, cooperatives, extension officers, community grassroots organizations and government officials.
- 6) Income-generating activities in agroforestry and handicrafts for tourism (souvenir industry) should be promoted.
- 7) Agroprocessing activities should be promoted, with a view to developing cottage industries to supplement family incomes.
- 8) The transfer of simple, efficient and cheap food-processing technologies should be promoted, in order to lighten the burden of women's work in production.
- 9) Centers for the transfer of new appropriate agroprocessing technologies should be set up.
- 10) Producers in the interior should be encouraged to raise goats, sheep and chickens, in order to improve the family diet and to promote the production of fertilizers for a sustainable production system.
- 11) An infrastructure for the distribution of inputs, farm equipment and machines to small-scale farmers, including women food producers in remote areas, should be set up. In addition, information on extension services, training programs, agricultural production issues and developments should be disseminated.

- 12) **Literacy courses for in the interior and coastal regions should be promoted, in order to enable them to obtain and use information on how to improve their access to land, inputs, credit facilities and agricultural training programs.**

## **C. Proposals**

### **Project Profile (1)**

**Title:** Development of a data-collection system and a data base on women farmers and their participation in and contribution to agriculture and development.

**Definition of underlying problem:** Due to the limited availability of data and information on women in agriculture, the contribution made by women to the agricultural output of the farm unit is not recognized and is not mentioned in official statistics and agricultural development programs. For years women have been excluded from active participation in agricultural development programs and projects. Findings of research studies have shown the crucial role women play in the production of the small-scale family farm unit. However, up to now, agricultural policies have mainly been geared towards large farm enterprises and women still do not get the attention they deserve.

**Goal:** To contribute to a gender perspective in agricultural policies, programmes and projects, and assist in planning and formulation of agricultural policies.

**Specific objectives:** To achieve national development goals by supporting women food producers in their agricultural work, and thereby raise awareness of gender issues and the true situation of women.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. A data-base for the agricultural policy planning system that is based on gender analysis and gender planning.
2. Improvement in the overall situation of women food producers in the rural and agricultural setting.
3. Improved quality of life of the rural household.

**Activities:**

1. Research and studies on the role and status of women in the various sub-sectors of the rural and agricultural economy.
2. Development of a comprehensive on-going programme of gender training for agricultural policy-makers, planners, technical officers and extension officers.
3. Review of existing agricultural programmes and projects in terms of gender sensitivity.
4. Re-designing of current and planned programmes and projects.

**Expected duration:** 2 years

**Estimated cost:** (US\$)

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Research costs
- Training material
- Technical assistance
- Transportation
- Production of information
- Bulletins and reports
- Workshops
- Miscellaneous (15%)

**Implementing agency:** The Women's Bureau, IICA and the Ministry of Agriculture.

## **Project Profile (2)**

**Title:** Institutional strengthening of agricultural institutions, the Extension Service and the Agrarian Information Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Definition of underlying problem:** The Extension Service, which is a section of the Agrarian Information Unit, is not performing satisfactorily, and therefore cannot meet the requirements for an optimum service to farmers. There is a lack of supporting structures, such as cadres, transportation, financial means, materials and equipment. This results in poor service to farmers.

**Goal:** To revamp the Extension Service, in order to enable it to provide support to small-scale farmers, particularly women.

**Specific objective:** To improve the efficiency of the Information Unit, and make extension services available to women producers. To promote a special programme designed to attract and mobilize more women to become extension officers.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Re-organization and strengthening of the Agrarian Information Unit.
2. Improved working relations between extension officers, field workers and farmers.
3. Improved mechanism for the distribution of agrarian information and services.
4. Development of training packages for courses on planting materials, cultivation techniques, postharvest handling and marketing of agricultural products.
5. Promotion of gender awareness among planning staff, extension officers, field workers and NGOs concerned with agricultural development.

### **Activities:**

1. Up-grading of training for extension officers, field workers and planning staff of the Agrarian Information Unit, in connection with the collection and distribution of information, targeting small farmers and placing special emphasis on giving women farmers access to services, facilities, training, credit, land and cooperatives;
2. Preparation and reproduction of training material for distribution to extension agents and farmers, and production of audiovisual materials.
3. Promotion of research on cultivation techniques, crop varieties, plant propagation, postharvest handling and marketing, and simple and efficient production procedures;

4. Elaboration of an integrated development strategy through the Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs and farmer's organizations for the distribution of farm inputs, machines and planting materials.

**Expected duration:** 2 years

**Estimated cost:** (US\$)

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Preparation of training packages
- Establishment of nursery
- Training
- Technical assistance
- Miscellaneous

**Implementing agency:** Ministry of Agriculture



### **Project profile (3)**

**Title:** Agro-processing activities.

**Definition of underlying problem:** Due to the absence of small-scale agro-processing centres at the cottage-industry level (home industry) to equip women with the necessary skills and tools for agro-processing, the Home Economics Section of the Ministry of Agriculture is the main instrument for actions in that direction. However, the Home Economics Section does not have the capacity to provide such services, and therefore needs technical assistance and financial support.

**Goal:** To improve the Home Economics Section by setting up the necessary social infrastructure to enable the Section to help NGOs, women's organizations and cooperatives to set up programmes and projects for the transfer of appropriate technologies and know-how in the area of agro-processing and food preservation.

**Specific objective:** To develop and improve agro-processing activities at the micro (cottage-industry) level and promote income-generating activities among rural women.

#### **Expected outputs:**

1. Reduction in post-harvest losses and expansion of cottage industries.
2. Development of technical packages for the production, postharvest handling, and marketing of agricultural products.
3. Improvement of efficiency and introduction of simple technologies for the processing and marketing of agricultural products (rice, peanuts, cassava and vegetables).
4. Establishment of a better equipped and more modern Home Economics Section in the Ministry of Agriculture.
5. Improvement of services pertaining to home maintenance and home management for rural households.

#### **Activities:**

1. Training of cadres in new appropriate technologies in food processing.
2. Training courses in small-scale agro-processing for rural women.
3. Training in appropriate harvesting, postharvest handling and processing, distribution and management of production.

4. Training in basic accounting and management of commercial activities; raw materials, processing, labour, wholesale and retail prices of finished products.

**Expected duration:** 2-3 years

**Estimated cost:** (US\$)

Type of expenditure

Estimated cost

- Training materials
- Training equipment
- Setting up of pilot demonstration units
- Technical assistance
- Training

**Implementing agency:**

Ministry of Agriculture/Ministry of Internal Affairs and the NGOs Forum.

## **Project Profile (4)**

- Title:** Basic training in agricultural skills and know-how.
- Definition of underlying problem:** Up to now, there have been no special training programmes in basic agricultural skills and know-how (planting materials, cultivation, use of fertilizers, gaining access to land, credit, technical information, assistance and funding), especially for case of small-scale farmers. Such a programme could be of great help in incorporating rural women into the process of agricultural and rural development.
- Goal:** To mobilize women to participate in agricultural training, and identify their needs at both the production and the community level.
- Specific objective:** To increase the involvement of women in agriculture and home economics training programmes, including aspects of health, nutrition and literacy.
- Expected outputs:**
1. Increased access for women to agricultural training programmes and to land, credit facilities and new and efficient production technologies that can help lighten their work burden.
  2. Increased numbers of women participating full-time in programmes designed to highlight their productive role, and help quantify their contribution to productive and reproductive activities.
  3. Increased domestic food supply and improvements in subsistence production of food.
  4. Improved quality of rural life.
  5. Increased awareness and consciousness among women of their vital role in and contribution to rural and agricultural production.
- Activities:**
1. Training courses.
  2. Workshops and field visits to women farmers and farm enterprises.
  3. Distribution or dissemination of training materials, inputs, brochures and audiovisual material.
  4. Setting up of pilot demonstration projects (plants) for agricultural training.
- Expected duration:** 2 years

**Estimated cost: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Training materials
- Preparation of training packs
- Technical assistance
- Transportation

**Implementing agency:** Ministry of Agriculture/NGOs (PAS, etc.) and IICA.

## **Project Profile (5)**

- Title:** Setting up of nurseries for planting material and trees (citrus).
- Definition of underlying problem:** Because of the lack of nurseries, planting materials are scarce and expensive.  
In recent years, there has been an increase in the demand for planting material, due to the increase of subsistence farming and home gardening.
- Goal:** To mobilize women to take part in training activities so that they will be able to start their own nurseries to produce planting materials and generate income.
- Specific objective:** To increase the production of planting material, in order to bring down prices and increase food production.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Improved planting materials and increased production of various crops and fruits (especially citrus).
2. Lower prices for planting materials and decrease in imports of such materials.
3. Increased fruit production and lower prices for fruits.
4. Effective mechanisms for the production and distribution of planting materials.
5. Increased participation of women in production of planting materials, with a resulting increase in income and jobs.

### **Activities:**

1. Training courses on plant propagation, grafting, nursery measurements, etc.
2. Workshops and field visits.
3. Dissemination of training materials.
4. Establishment of pest- and disease-free nurseries for planting materials.
5. Importation and reproduction of improved varieties of planting materials of selected fruits, vegetables and flowers.
6. Establishment of organizational structure, through farmers' organizations, for the distribution of farm inputs and planting materials.

**Expected duration:** 3 years

**Estimated cost: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Imports of plant materials
- Preparation of techn. packs
- Establishment of nurseries
- Training
- Technical assistance

**Implementing agency: IICA/Ministry of Agriculture**

## **Project Profile (6)**

**Title:** Training of local women's groups and NGOs to promote women's participation in rural production.

**Definition of underlying problem:** Rural women need to be more directly involved in the rural development process. A special training programme is required to help train women's groups, NGOs, farmers' organizations, grassroots organizations and cooperatives to be promoters of rural development and organize their own groups. These people need training in literacy, home improvement, sanitation, nutrition and other activities related to food production.

**Goal:** To mobilize women to participate in rural development programs, identifying and drawing attention to their needs at the community and national levels.

**Specific objective:** To recognize women's effort and potential in production, create income-generation opportunities, and give them access to training and to new technologies and management skills.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Increased interest of women in obtaining information about rural life and their own community.
2. Increased awareness of women regarding their problems and needs, so that they will be encouraged to work on solutions.
3. Community and rural development.

### **Activities:**

1. Workshops and field observations/studies.
2. Training in literacy, nutrition, home maintenance, agriculture, etc.
3. Setting up self-help groups to gain access to credit, land, inputs and social services.

**Expected duration:** 2 years

**Estimated cost: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Training materials
- Audiovisual materials
- Training centre
- Technical assistance
- Transportation
- Equipment
- Secretarial and
- Administrative assistance

**Implementing agency:** NGOs, local women's organizations, farmer organizations, grassroots groups, cooperatives



## **Project Profile (7)**

**Title:** Small business organization and management

**Definition of underlying problem:** Most small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs consider farm organization and management a problem in operating their enterprises. Most of them do not have the necessary background and training to develop an appropriate management plan. The absence of a plan is a serious constraint when applying for credit or loans.

**Goal:** To give small farmers (men and women) the required skills and knowledge in business organization and management to operate the farm unit as a commercial enterprise.

**Specific objective:** Development of an overall organizational infrastructure for small farm management.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Strengthening of the position of small-scale farmers through better business organization and management.
2. Improved farm structure and production.
3. Increased access to credit, loans, inputs, land, etc.

### **Activities:**

1. Mobilization of small-scale farmers to receive training in business management.
2. Preparation and reproduction of training material.
3. Setting up of mechanisms, through farmer organizations, NGOs and cooperatives, for the distribution of training programmes and materials.
4. Organization of workshops.
5. Development of training programmes in basic management and marketing techniques for small farms.

**Expected duration:** 6 months

**Estimate of costs: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Training materials
- Technical assistance
- Transportation
- Miscellaneous

**Implementing agency:** Farmer organization, cooperatives and the Ministries of Agriculture and of Trade and Industry.

## **Project Profile (8)**

**Title:** Handicraft development.

**Definition of underlying problem:** In the rural areas, both on the coast and in the interior, many women are involved in producing handicrafts. Javanese women on the coastal plain produce items such as baskets, floor mats, bags and flowers. In the interior, women make spoons, forks and calebas from wood and other materials. Because they lack technical know-how and management and marketing skills, women are not able to further develop their skills and experience in this field.

**Goal:** To develop and enhance skills and experience of women engaged in handicraft production.

**Specific objective:** To develop and promote income-generating activities in the souvenir business.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Strengthening of the financial position of women.
2. Development of the creative potential of women and promotion of small-scale industry.
3. Promotion of income-generating activities and marketing of handicraft products.
4. Creation of incentives for the souvenir industry.

### **Activities:**

1. Training of local women's groups and NGOs.
2. Production and distribution of training materials.
3. Technology transfer and assistance.
4. Promotion of activities related to the handicrafts industry.
5. Improvement of the socioeconomic status of women and strengthening of their financial position.

**Expected duration:** 1 year

**Estimated cost: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Preparation of training packages
- Training facilities
- Training material and equipment
- Technical assistance

**Implementing agency:** Forum of NGOs and the Ministry of Agriculture

## **Project profile (9)**

**Title:** Marketing services for agricultural products

**Definition of underlying problem:** Because of the limited marketing services available, many smallholders, particularly women, face difficulties in marketing their products. This results in spoilage of produce, low prices for farm products, low wages, and shortage of inputs. As a result, many small-scale farmers produce small quantities and therefore have low incomes.

**Goal:** To develop an infrastructure to support the marketing of agricultural products.

**Specific objective:** To improve the marketing of agricultural products of smallholders and thereby contribute to the expansion of production and the improvement of prices.

### **Expected outputs:**

1. Improved marketing services for small farmers.
2. Increased yields and production.
3. Higher prices for farm products and improved quality of products.
4. Development of a marketing and transportation structure for farm products.
5. Strengthening of the market position of small farmers.

### **Activities:**

1. Development of an infrastructure of support services for the marketing of agricultural products of small farmers, especially women food producers.
2. Setting up of farmer groups.
3. Organization of course to provide training in marketing techniques.
4. Dissemination of information on marketing and other services linked to marketing.

**Expected duration:** 2 years

**Estimated cost: (US\$)**

**Type of expenditure**

**Estimated cost**

- Training courses
- Training materials
- Production of marketing information bulletin
- Transportation
- Technical assistance

**Implementing agency:**

**Farmer organization, cooperatives, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture.**

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix I**

#### **Dutch Government requirements for the repayment of development aid**

The Dutch Government's requirements for the repayment of development aid (balance-of-payments support) to Suriname are based on the IMF standard measures for the deregulation of distorted economies in developing countries.

In brief, these measures consist of the following:

- 1) Reduction of imports, particularly capital goods;
- 2) Expansion of export production, especially in agriculture, forestry and mining;
- 3) Devaluation of the Surinam guilder;
- 4) Raising of prices of consumer goods to limit present patterns of consumption;
- 5) Reduction of income earnings and of minimum incomes;
- 6) Reduction of Government expenses in the services sector, i.e., health, education, social services, and others;
- 7) Increase in rates of utilities (water, power, gas) and transportation services;
- 8) Reduction in Government personnel;
- 9) Liberalization of State (parastate) enterprises;
- 10) Privatization of State (parastate) enterprises.

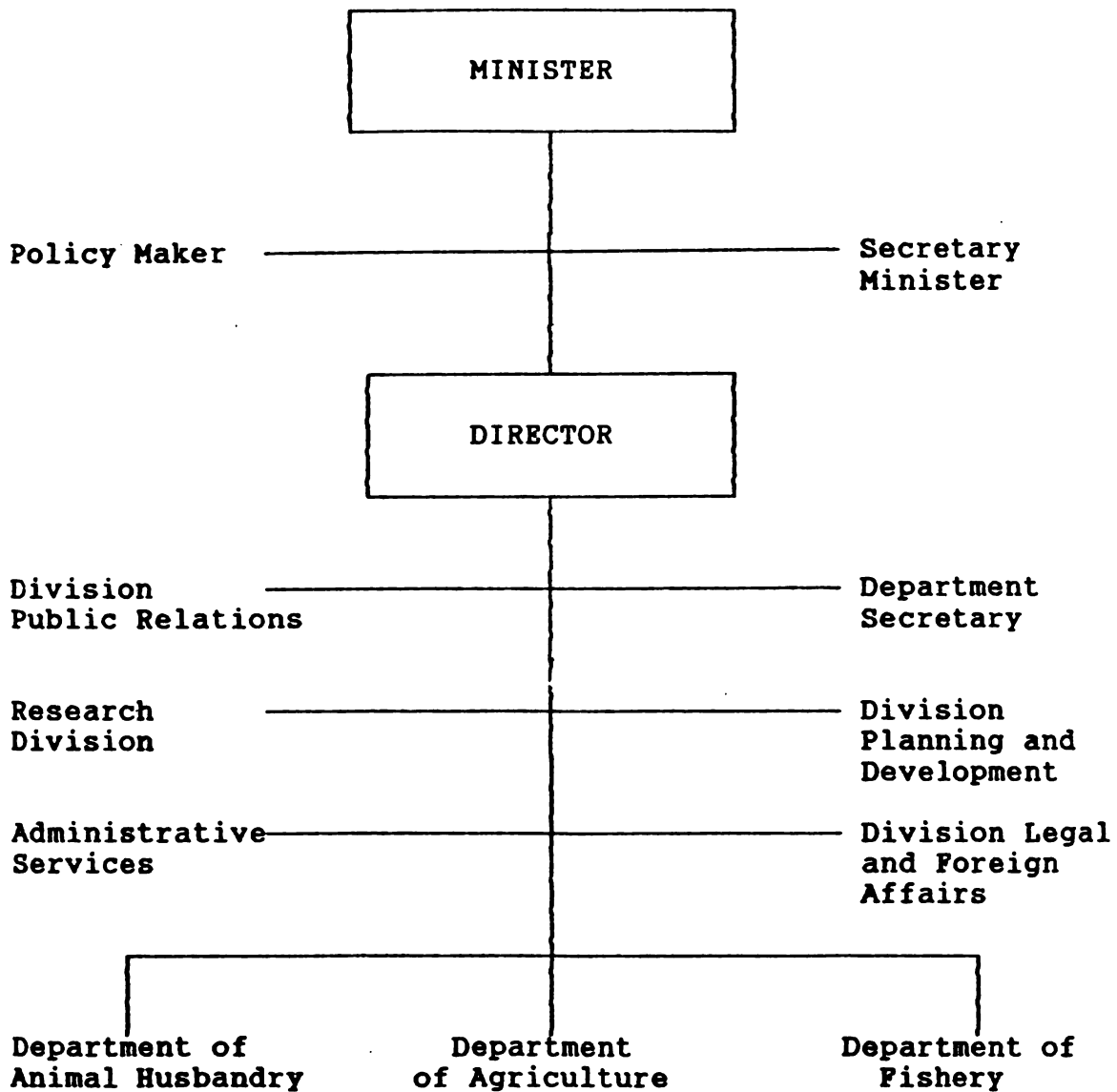
In the framework of economic deregulation, these are some of the measures envisaged in a structural adjustment program designed to ensure the recovery of the Surinamese economy.

From: A Program for the Recovery, Growth and Adjustment of the Surinamese Economy



**Appendix II**

**Organization of the Ministry of Agriculture,  
Animal Husbandry and Fishery, Suriname**





### Appendix III

**Table V.3. Agricultural production and destination according to district, Suriname 1993.**

	SARAMACCA		COMMEWIJNE		WANICA		PARAMARIBO	
	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PROD. SOLD (KG)	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PROD. SOLD (KG)	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PROD. SOLD (KG)	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PROD. SOLD (KG)
PRODUCTION PRINCIPALLY FOR OWN CONSUMPTION AND SALE								
Soya bean	813.00	745.00	207.00	204.00	-	-	-	-
Mung bean	124.00	110.00	175.00	160.00	-	-	-	-
Bitter bean	10.00	-	-	-	10.00	3.00	222.00	100.00
Red pea	-	-	-	-	800.00	790.00	-	-
Peanut	24.480.00	19.636.00	3.515.50	2.749.00	250.00	200.00	-	-
Cabbage	4.100.00	3.980.00	4.100.00	4.015.00	-	-	5940.00	5820.00
Callaloo	58.00	0.00	70.00	60.00	1.740.00	1.115.00	53.494.00	52.602.00
Bitter greens	840.00	680.00	80.00	70.00	2.000.00	1.990.00	-	-
String bean	616.00	305.00	-	-	1.000.00	-	1.400.00	1.120.00
Bora	4.910.00	4.209.00	6.887.00	6.753.00	25.390.00	24.330.00	828.00	334.00
Eggplant	17.870.00	17.581.00	2.735.00	2.620.00	2.610.00	2.425.00	749.00	605.00
Okra	31.200.00	30.950.00	500.00	490.00	1.450.00	1.415.00	-	-
Tomato	3.507.50	3.305.00	535.00	500.00	19.099.00	19.016.00	40.00	-
Cucumber	1.530.00	1.470.00	5.200.00	5.000.00	500.00	490.00	-	-
Pumpkin	2.950.00	2.262.00	305.00	270.00	1.230.00	-	-	-
Shallot	49.00	48.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hot pepper	8.093.00	7.760.00	-	-	1.850.00	1.510.00	-	-
Sweet pepper	30.00	0.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Green banana	47.200.00	46.000.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plantain	54.640.00	51.800.00	9.070.00	8.465.00	1.800.00	1.300.00	-	-
Orange	20.660.00	18.800.00	5.520.00	5.900.00	-	-	-	-
Pineapple	-	-	-	-	-	-	200.00	150.00
Grapefruit	-	-	1.590.00	1.500.00	-	-	-	-
Citrus	-	-	16.385.00	16.000.00	200.00	110.00	-	-
Carambola	1.000.00	950.00	520.00	500.00	1.200.00	1.175.00	-	-
E. Indian bean	-	-	-	-	500.00	480.00	-	-
Pomegranate	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.600.00	600.00
Melon	6.750.00	6.420.00	1.200.00	1.050.00	-	-	-	-
Paw paw	-	-	-	-	4.000.00	1.950.00	-	-
Corn	2.000.00	100.00	550.00	240.00	7.000.00	6.950.00	-	-
Sweet potato	-	-	1.225.00	1.205.00	-	-	50.00	25.00
Nappi	-	-	-	-	-	-	260.00	130.00
Cassava	50.002.00	47.040.00	8.380.00	7.815.00	14.390.00	7.200.00	14.457.00	7.675.00
Coconut	35.000.00	34.500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table V.3 (Cont.)

	JAVANESE		EAST INDIAN		CREOLE	
	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PRODUCTION SOLD (KG)	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PRODUCTION SOLD (KG)	ANNUAL PRODUCTION (KG)	PRODUCTION SOLD (KG)
<b>PRODUCTION PRINCIPALLY FOR SELF CONSUMPTION AND SALE</b>						
Soya bean	1,020.00	949.00	-	-	-	-
Mung bean	24.00	20.00	275.00	250.00	-	-
Bitter bean	-	-	-	-	242.00	115.00
Red peas	-	-	800.00	790.00	-	-
Peanuts	23,306.00	18,096.00	3,365.00	3,330.00	1574.00	1,159.00
Cabbage	1,400.00	1,365.00	12,700.00	12,420.00	40.00	30.00
Callaloo	-	-	-	-	55,362.00	53,777.00
Bitter greens	-	-	2,300.00	2,280.00	620.00	460.00
String bean	-	-	2,000.00	1,480.00	1,016.00	435.00
Bora	2,507.00	2,455.00	25,760.00	24,968.00	9,748.00	8,203.50
Eggplant	1,535.00	1,511.00	20,700.00	20,305.00	1,729.00	1,415.00
Okra	-	-	33,150.00	32,855.00	-	-
Tomato	1,822.50	1,700.00	21,275.00	21,085.00	84.00	36.00
Cucumber	-	-	7,200.00	6,940.00	30.00	20.00
Pumpkin	505.00	462.00	1,000.00	880.00	2,980.00	2,330.00
Shallot	49.00	48.00	-	-	-	-
Hot pepper	208.00	195.00	9,260.00	8,840.00	475.00	235.00
Sweet pepper	-	-	-	-	30.00	0.00
Green banana	-	-	47,200.00	46,000.00	-	-
Plantain	6,230.00	5,575.00	53,090.00	50,990.00	6,190.00	5,000.00
Orange	25,180.00	24,900.00	101,000.00	99,300.00	-	-
Pineapple	-	-	-	-	200.00	150.00
Grapefruit	1,590.00	1,500.00	-	-	-	-
Citrus	16,385.00	16,000.00	-	-	200.00	110.00
Carambola	520.00	500.00	2,200.00	2,125.00	-	-
East Indian bean	-	-	500.00	480.00	-	-
Pomegranate	-	-	-	-	1,600.00	1,000.00
Melon	-	-	1,200.00	1,050.00	6,750.00	6,420.00
Paw paw	-	-	4,000.00	1,950.00	-	-
Corn	250.00	0.00	9,000.00	8,850.00	300.00	240.00
Sweet potato	-	-	1,200.00	1,190.00	75.00	40.00
Nappi	-	-	-	-	260.00	130.00
Cassava	42,417.00	39,765.00	11,800.00	11,305.00	33,012.00	18,660.00
Coconut	-	-	135,000.00	134,500.00	-	-

Appendix IV

Table V.7 Division of labour in the farm. Percentage family member who participate in productive and reproductive activities, Suriname 1993

REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES	INDIAN		JAVANESE		ETHNIC GROUPS				DISTRICTS										
	MEN		MEN		EAST TIMOR		CREOLE		SARAWAKI		COMETINE		MUNICA		PARAMARIBO				
	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.	O.S.	WSP.			
Preparing food	9.5	3.2	1.1	94.2	21.8	1.1	12.5	7.2	90.7	12.5	2.7	100%	0.3	1.7	80.2	0.1	82.6	2.4	3.2
Gather firewood	13.3	0.6	2.3	28.0	1.7	14.3	1.8	3.1	16.3	1.8	7.3	0.9	-	13.3	11.8	14.6	13.0	-	4.8
Carry water	3.8	0.5	0.0	65.7	17.7	2.1	10.7	1.0	3	10.7	2.7	48.1	13.9	11.7	47.0	-	30.4	-	-
Wash clothes	76.1	7.9	1.1	40.0	17.7	85.7	10.7	3.1	69.0	10.7	-	81.1	0.3	3.3	76.5	-	82.6	2.4	-
Iron clothes	65.7	0.5	0.4	71.4	2.6	48.6	3.1	1.1	55.0	12.5	0.9	77.3	0.3	-	64.7	-	73.9	-	-
Clean house	79.0	9.1	2.3	85.7	14.5	1.1	74.3	6.2	79.1	12.5	1.9	86.4	0.3	-	80.2	9.7	65.2	4.9	1.0
Child care	45.7	7.9	3.4	57.1	19.4	1.1	51.4	1.6	41.9	10.7	2.7	27.7	5.5	1.7	79.6	12.9	52.2	2.4	-
Shopping	65.7	2.4	5.7	51.4	1.7	25.3	71.1	11.8	71.1	-	10.0	77.3	5.5	16.7	51.9	-	52.2	4.9	14.5
Repair house & furniture	1.9	1.2	33.0	5.7	-	31.6	4.7	10.6	4.7	1.8	29.0	-	2.8	31.7	-	29.2	-	-	19.4
Sew/ mend clothes	33.3	4.9	-	42.9	4.0	1.1	50.1	2.1	50.1	-	0.9	97.1	0.3	-	41.1	6.5	47.0	2.4	3.2
Pay bills	36.1	1.0	19.3	14.3	1.7	36.3	34.9	11.3	34.9	6	22.7	26.4	5.5	13.3	29.4	2.2	20.0	43.5	16.1
Clean yard	63.7	0.9	18.6	71.1	6.4	5.3	40.0	7.2	49.0	-	0.2	48.1	5.5	13.3	70.6	-	8.3	52.2	4.9
Tend garden	42.8	1.0	6.8	42.9	-	34.3	66.5	6.2	66.5	7.1	2.7	50.0	2.0	6.7	51.9	-	6.3	21.7	2.4
Transport child/others	2.8	1.2	1.1	5.7	5.2	7.0	4.7	1.0	4.7	3.6	2.7	-	-	3.3	-	0.3	4.3	-	-





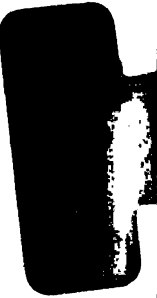
### Appendix V

**Table V.8. Participation of family members in agricultural production, by type of crop and activity. Suriname, 1993.**

ACTIVITIES	VEGETABLE			CASSAVA			PEANUT		
	WOMEN		MEN	WOMEN		MEN	WOMEN		MEN
	RESP.	O.W.		RESP.	O.W.		RESP.	O.W.	
1. Purchasing/Preparation of pltg. mat.	45.7	-	8.9	42.9	1.8	8.2	25.7	-	1.8
2. Land preparation	58.1	1.2	17.6	48.6	17.7	13.2	30.5	4.3	7.5
3. Planting	46.7	1.2	13.6	48.6	17.7	13.2	34.3	7.3	7.5
4. Crop care	68.6	1.2	19.3	44.8	14.6	31.4	33.3	6.7	21.4
5. Purchase/use of fert. & chemicals	65.7	1.8	20.4	33.3	11.0	11.7	30.4	7.3	9.3
6. Harvesting	65.7	3.0	20.4	45.7	17.7	17.1	34.2	9.1	8.9
7. Post-harvest	52.4	3.0	16.8	27.6	8.5	10.0	32.4	8.5	8.9
8. Marketing	46.7	3.0	15.0	35.2	12.8	12.5	32.4	9.1	8.2

ACTIVITIES	RESPONDENT		
	VEGETABLE	CASSAVA	PEANUT
1. Purchasing/preparation of pltg. mat.	48	45	27
2. Land preparation	61	51	32
3. Planting	49	51	36
4. Crop care	72	47	35
5. Purchase/use of fertilizers & chemicals	69	35	32
6. Harvesting	69	48	36
7. Post-harvest	55	29	34
8. Marketing	49	37	34





PROGRAM FOR THE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL  
POLICIES VIS-A-VIS WOMEN FOOD PRODUCERS  
IN THE ANDEAN REGION, THE SOUTHERN CONE  
AND THE CARIBBEAN

This Program, executed by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) under Technical Cooperation Agreement ATN/SF-4064-RE, covered 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The first phase was implemented in 1992-1993 in six countries in Central America, under the auspices of the Council of Central American Agricultural Ministers in its XII Ordinary Meeting in March 1992. Results were published in the book *Mujeres de Maíz* (IICA/IDB 1995).

The second phase was carried out in the Andean Region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela), the Southern Cone (Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) and the Caribbean (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname), by request of the First Ladies during their Summit Meeting on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women held in Geneva, Switzerland in February 1992.

Three documents were prepared for each country presenting the technical results from the four areas of research of the Program: a) assessment of the participation of women in the agricultural sector and their contribution as food producers on small-scale farms; b) analysis of agricultural policies and programs and their effects on rural women as food producers; c) evaluation of the technology used on small farms by women in food production processes; and d) analysis of the role of women in processing and marketing farm food products.

Other Program activities included the elaboration of regional comparative documents, the formulation of policy proposals and related actions, national and regional seminars for discussion of Program recommendations, and the publishing and distribution of the final results.