



Integrated Country Strategy

SURINAME

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Approved: April 3, 2022

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The May 2020 national election was just the beginning of an historic period for Suriname and our bilateral relationship with the nation. The new Santokhi administration, friendlier to the U.S. government, immediately began seeking – and received – high-level engagement including a first-ever visit by a Secretary of State to the Republic of Suriname. The nation also seriously pursued, and received, an agreement with the IMF to battle a significant economic downturn that began before the COVID-19 pandemic. It also began to see off-shore drilling producing very promising results and offering a not-too-distant wealthy future. Post, recognizing that the depth and breadth of engagement and activities with Suriname would skyrocket, in July 2021 inaugurated a Bilateral Dialogue with Suriname to assist the nation with its financial and economic stabilization, expand economic opportunity and prosperity for both nations, fight corruption, provide humanitarian assistance, bolster security capabilities, and increase law enforcement cooperation. Advances in these areas are critical to battle the massive debt and corrupt contracting practices left by the prior government and exacerbated by COVID-19 that continue to threaten political stability and institutional efficacy. The new government requires a high level of assistance to bridge the gap between the current economic situation and the eventual revenues.

In addition to helping Suriname stabilize its economic and financial situation, establishing Suriname as a more cooperative partner in the region remains a priority. Promotion of the rule of law, law enforcement cooperation, and security cooperation rise to a high priority and subsume the former citizen security line of effort. These priorities align with the Santokhi Administration's stated objectives.

- Stabilize the economy and expand economic opportunity and prosperity;
- Strengthen rule of law/administration of justice, law enforcement cooperation and security cooperation; and
- Establish Suriname as a more cooperative partner in the region.

Suriname wants to expand military and law enforcement cooperation with the United States – goals held by both of our governments and a welcome move after nearly a decade of limited

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cooperation in these areas. The new government has also declared strong support for the rule of law and a commitment to democracy and human rights in its foreign relations.

The Government of Suriname faced pre-existing challenges with capability and capacity issues, but now struggles to consistently provide basic services such as education and health care, and to investigate and prosecute crimes. Additionally, the lack of effective governance in its remote border regions challenges its sovereignty there and facilitates transnational criminal activity within the country.

Suriname's offshore oil and gas industry, though extremely promising, remains aspirational. Should Suriname be able to transition from exploration to production, it will take several years for commercial production and revenue to become a major support to government budgets. Gold production, once again on the upswing due to gold's increased value, is simply not sufficient to replace bauxite production as the prime economic driver.

Ensuring respect for human rights and full enjoyment of economic opportunities among the breadth of Suriname's population will require the advancement of marginalized communities and strengthening of civil society. The Embassy will work to bolster efforts to ensure such marginalized communities (including those gathered around gender, age, physical abilities, sexual orientation/expression, or religion) have tools, skills, and knowledge to play active parts in society and in the economy.

Traditionally, Suriname has never looked to the United States as its primarily international interlocutor. As a former Dutch colony, it maintains strong familial, cultural, and economic ties to the Netherlands, although bilateral political ties were strained until the Santokhi Administration came to power. Suriname will continue to look to its Caribbean neighbors and CARICOM for support, but is increasingly trying to balance its relationship with CARICOM and the PRC with improved ties with the U.S., the Netherlands, and France. Suriname enjoys significant support from the PRC and India. Each provides financial and infrastructure support, as well as full scholarships for Surinamese students to study at their universities.

The Surinamese do, now, look first to the United States for law enforcement training and military-to-military programs that enhance the professionalism of these institutions and enable them to combat financial crimes and strengthen governance over border regions.

Surinamese media enjoy press freedom but suffer from limited resources, a lack of training, government preference to use its own media entities almost exclusively, and occasional intimidation from illicit actors and powerful figures. The Embassy will continue to engage the media and government officials on U.S. government policy priorities and seek opportunities for training to enhance the freedom, quality, and professionalism of reporting.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Rule of Law and citizen security are no longer significantly threatened by transnational criminal organizations and other cross border threats

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Expanded capacity and enhanced professionalism of Surinamese law enforcement and military increases cooperation, interoperability, and information sharing resulting in a reduction in criminal activity within and emanating from Suriname.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** A level playing field for American citizens and U.S. interests is ensured through increased support to anti-corruption efforts and capacity building that improves administration of justice.
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** The impact of non-criminal threats – poor healthcare system, environmental hazards, etc. – on lives, the economy, and society, are mitigated through support to governmental and non-governmental actors and robust American Citizen Services.

Mission Goal 2: A resilient Surinamese economy preserves its biodiversity while profiting from its natural resources responsibly

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Through sharing of best practices, Suriname takes advantage of its oil and other natural resources in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Expanded entrepreneurship and access to U.S. markets and investors increases bilateral trade ties in non-extractive industries.

Mission Goal 3: Public opinion supports U.S. policy initiatives and encourages Surinamese government cooperation on regional issues

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Increased access to U.S. educational programs and sharing of pedagogical best practices develops leaders with an affinity for American values.

- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Greater (or more frequent) public recognition of our bilateral shared values by opinion makers sees the Surinamese government more confidently involved in supporting U.S. regional and international policies (e.g., responding more to an increasingly pro-U.S. population).

Mission Goal 4: Historically marginalized communities realize their equal opportunity to engage and succeed in society

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Increased collaboration among civil society actors, confident in their ability to advocate effectively, ensures governmental transparency and accountability.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Better trained Surinamese police and security forces safeguard the rights of women while conducting operations, detentions, and arrests.

Management Objective 1: Increased interagency representation and resultant funding facilitates broader bilateral cooperation

Management Objective 2: The Embassy develops and maintains an environment that promotes equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion, and improves the quality of life and morale for the staff at post, leading to increased productivity and serving as an example of the strength through diversity

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Rule of Law and citizen security are no longer significantly threatened by transnational criminal organizations and other cross border threats

Description | The safety of U.S. citizens and the advancement of democracy and rule of law are under threat by a variety of problems including Transnational Criminal Organizations, corruption, medical emergencies and disease, misinformation, and the actions of other nations. Money laundering, the transshipment of narcotics, illegal logging, IUU fishing, animal poaching, and other crimes weaken border protections and pose a threat to the rule of law, economic and political stability, and citizen security by strengthening criminal organizations. Corruption, misinformation, and internal and external malign actors threaten political stability, hamper the resurgent respect for democracy, and diminish civil society institutions which serve as a firewall for justice.

Objective 1.1 | Expanded capacity and enhanced professionalism of Surinamese law enforcement and military increases cooperation, interoperability, and information sharing resulting in a reduction in criminal activity within and emanating from Suriname.

- **Justification** | Increased professional understanding and shared practices, advanced through bilateral engagements and training opportunities, will encourage further collaboration between our nations' law enforcement communities, helping combat trans-national crime that impacts residents and institutions in both nations.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on American's security and well-being and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 3.4: Counter transnational criminal organizations and illicit networks
- **Risks** | The risks of not achieving the objective includes an increase in transnational criminal organizations operating across the borders of Suriname, jeopardizing the safety and security of multiple nations. A method of mitigating the risk is strengthening Surinamese civil society to ensure continued rule of law.

Approved: April 3, 2022

Objective 1.2 | A level playing field for American citizens and U.S. interests is ensured through increased support to anti-corruption efforts and capacity building that improves administration of justice.

- **Justification** | Corruption corrodes public institutions and safety, allowing criminal elements to operate more freely and without fear of the rule of law. In addition, it dampens investment, leading to slower economic development and increased reliance on criminal activity.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 3.3: Prevent, expose, and reduce corruption and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 1.2: Counter corruption and impunity to strengthen democratic institutions
- **Risks** | The risk associated with not achieving this objective is a backsliding of transparency and liberal democracy in Suriname. Mitigating this risk would require ensuring public and elite support for such viewpoints.

Objective 1.3 | The impact of non-criminal threats – poor healthcare system, environmental hazards, etc.. – on lives, the economy, and society, are mitigated through support to governmental and non-governmental actors and robust American Citizen Services.

- **Justification** | Cross border threats, such as environmental hazards, can cause death or damage, and lead to a destabilization of society, allowing room for criminal actors to operate more freely.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1: Renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Goal 3: A secure hemisphere and Goal 5: A climate-resilient hemisphere
- **Risks** | The largest risk of not achieving this objective is the loss of life, which can be mitigated with advance education and communication of ongoing risks.

Mission Goal 2 | A strengthened Surinamese economy preserves its biodiversity while profiting from its natural resources responsibly

Description | Suriname's fastest route to short-term prosperity is the exploitation of its oil and natural resources; however, these industries are not necessarily able to sustain long-term prosperity and, in some respects, conflict with responsible environmental stewardship. While ensuring transparent policies for international investors, Suriname must develop policies that see just profits from resource extraction shared throughout society. The economy must not rely solely on the extractives sector and commodities like timber for prosperity but should seek to diversify to create a long-term, sustainable base of local entrepreneurs and businesses able to compete in the international market.

Objective 2.1 | Through sharing of best practices, Suriname takes advantage of its oil and other natural resources in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

- **Justification |** While oil and gas finds off shore could provide much needed economic stimulus to Suriname, it is vital to ensure extraction does not damage the environment and that profits are shared equally. This will help the economy flourish while protecting the environment and the people.
- **Linkages |** 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2.2: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and opportunities for communities around the globe and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 5.1: Promote a clean, resilient, and secure energy future and Objective 4.3: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- **Risks |** A main risk of not achieving the objective is that the wealth expected from the oil and gas finds will not be shared with society, which can be mitigated by strengthening efforts to combat corruption and increase social transparency.

Objective 2.2 | Expanded entrepreneurship and access to U.S. markets and investors increases bilateral trade ties in non-extractive industries.

- **Justification** | While oil and gas finds promise future wealth, relying on such income can have adverse environmental impacts and lead to a society dependent on one sector. Increase entrepreneurship ensures prosperity is spread out, allows increased trade with the U.S., and offers a hope for self-sufficiency for multiple segments of society.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 2.1: Promote a global economy that creates opportunities for all Americans and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 4.3: Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- **Risks** | A risk associated with not achieving this objective is that the local economy will lack diversity to weather oil shocks and other issues. This can be mitigated by increasing awareness of Surinamese market among U.S. importers and investors.

Mission Goal 3 | Public opinion supports U.S. policy initiatives and encourages Surinamese government cooperation on regional issues

Description | Communicating to Surinamers the shared values between our nations will help boost ties between our nations. Highlighting the support, partnership, and cooperation between our nations and people will further generate a sense of mutual respect and understanding, which can serve as a safeguard against influence by malign actors. By strengthening our mutual bonds with multiple sectors of society, including opinion makers, journalists, educators, community activists, the business community, civil servants, political leaders, and opposition and government officials, we increase support for U.S. positions and policies in regional and international fora.

Objective 3.1 | Increased access to U.S. educational programs and sharing of pedagogical best practices develops leaders with an affinity for American values.

- **Justification** | Education reform is a key to ensuring curriculum and materials

promote not only academic success but positive impressions of the U.S. and our bilateral relationship.

- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding and support for the values and policies of the United States and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 4.4: Strengthen health and education systems and improve inclusive access and objective 6.3: Expand connections between U.S. and foreign institutions, organizations, businesses, and people, leveraging spheres of influence to achieve foreign policy goals
- **Risks** | The risk associated with not achieving this objective is that universities and methods from more malign nations will be seen as the only option for advancing Surinamese society through education. To mitigate that risk, we would need to ensure a vibrant dialogue within society of expectations for education.

Objective 3.2 | Greater (or more frequent) public recognition of our bilateral shared values by opinion makers sees the Surinamese government more confidently involved in supporting U.S. regional and international policies (e.g., responding more to an increasingly pro-U.S. population).

- **Justification** | By voicing a greater public affinity for our shared values, public sentiment can provide support for increased partnership between our governments.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 1.5: Enhance foreign publics' understanding and support for the values and policies of the United States and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 6.2: Build support for U.S. positions and leadership in multilateral and regional institutions
- **Risks** | The risk of not achieving this objective is the creation of a public discussion counter to or not considering U.S. values. This can be mitigated by developing dual-track discussions both with the public and within policy circles.

Mission Goal 4 | Historically marginalized communities realize their equal opportunity to engage and succeed in society

Description | Democracy requires the full participation in society of everyone. While Suriname is rightfully applauded as a diverse nation with many ethnicities and religious communities historically living together peacefully, there are fringes of society whose voices are often quieted or left unheard. Individuals with disabilities need appropriate access to buildings and facilities along with proper educational opportunities to ensure they can be productive members of society. Women need to be fully welcomed into all business sectors to further develop a diverse and creative economy. When prosperity and opportunity flow to rural communities throughout the nation, society is more cohesive. Proper legal protections and increased tolerance from society can ensure the safety of members of the LGBTQI+ community and their allies. Policies around issues such as economic development and education can only be improved by ensuring indigenous and Maroon communities are involved and active in the process. Awareness of mental health practices can help to end teen suicide and domestic violence and save lives. Efforts such as these not only ensure equal opportunity, promote tolerance, and strengthen democracy, but also highlight American values.

Objective 4.1 | Increased collaboration among civil society actors, confident in their ability to advocate effectively, ensures governmental transparency and accountability.

- **Justification |** A strong civil society leads to not just better governance, but increased protections of and value afforded to human rights of marginalized groups, allowing fuller participation in society by all population segments.
- **Linkages |** 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 3.1: Promote good governance and defend strong, accountable, and resilient democracies that deliver for their citizens and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 1.1: Support efforts to restore and strengthen accountable, resilient, and inclusive democracies that deliver for their citizens
- **Risks |** The risk of not achieving this goal, a less active civil society unable to

advocate for good governance and transparency, can be mitigated through efforts to instill such viewpoints within government actors.

Objective 4.2 | Better trained Surinamese police and security forces safeguard the rights of women while conducting operations, detentions, and arrests.

- **Justification** | By working to ensure the law enforcement and military sectors of the state respects human rights, particularly those of women, we help protect the lives and health of women and families and reduce barriers for their participation in society. Countering domestic violence and ensuring female arrestees are not mistreated because of gender, not only protects their health but strengthens society and the family structure.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 3.1: Advance equity, accessibility, and rights for all and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Objective 3.2: Build safe communities through violence prevention and intervention, including a focus on gender-based violence
- **Risks** | The risks of not achieving this objective are both the injuries that can be sustained, both mental and physical, to poorly-treated women and the moral erosion of state authority. These risks can be mitigated by supporting resources for at-risk women.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1 | Increased interagency representation and resultant funding facilitates broader bilateral cooperation

- **Justification** | An expanded Embassy Paramaribo, featuring enhanced collaboration among interagency partners and increased USDH and LE staffing, provides a secure platform from which we can deepen our collaborative efforts with our Surinamese counterparts in various ministries and agencies.
- **Linkages** | 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Goal 4: Revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and institutions and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Management Objective: Equip a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic workforce with modern and secure tools and infrastructure to support resilience and ingenuity in operations
- **Risks** | The risk of not attaining this objective is limited interaction with the government of Suriname on the ground in the country, which can be mitigated through increased virtual connections with regional or DC-based staff and expertise.

Management Objective 2 | The Embassy develops and maintains an environment that promotes equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion, and improves the quality of life and morale the staff at post, leading to increased productivity and serving as an example of strength through diversity.

- **Justification** | By modeling U.S. values of equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workplace, staffing, purchasing, contracting, grant making and program development, we advance efforts to demonstrate the power of the American democratic model. A culture of equal opportunity for staff ensures heightened staff morale, lessens attrition, and improves recruitment efforts by ensuring the best employees are recruited, mentored, and promoted based on skill. By following in-house management best practices when dealing with external suppliers and contractors, we demonstrate the importance of government and fiscal transparency and the rule of law and practice what we preach, enhancing our credibility.
- **Linkages:** 2022-2026 DoS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1: Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce and 2022-2026 WHA Joint Regional Strategy Management Objective: Equip a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic workforce with modern and secure tools and infrastructure to support resilience and ingenuity in operations
- **Risks** | The risk involved in not achieving this objective is limiting internal expertise and understanding of cultural issues that would hinder advancement of U.S. policies. It is difficult to mitigate against this risk.