

SURINAME

First of all I would like to thank you Chairman and the organization for making it possible for me to attend this meeting. I am really grateful for that. It means a lot to me.

With regard to the progress that Suriname made in the fight against corruption I can say the following;

I remember that the last time that I was here I mentioned that Suriname had a draft anti corruption act in which provisions are stipulated that are related to the OAS Convention against Corruption. I also mentioned that this draft was sent to the parliament of Suriname for approval.

Today I must say that the draft is still in parliament and has not been approved yet. But that does not mean that nothing is being done with regard to the combating of corruption. One of the important actors in the fight against corruption is the Office of the Attorney General. And I can say that this office takes the combating of corruption seriously, and I know that because I am part of that office. I am in charge of the **anti-corruption desk** at my office. Nowadays the fight against corruption takes place on the basis of our current criminal legislation. My office has prosecuted over the years with success several cases of public officials who in the performance of their duties showed corruptive behaviour. The most important case regarding combating corruption was the investigation and prosecution last year of a **former Minister of Natural Resources** who in the line of his duties committed corruptive offences, like fraud. He was sentenced and is now in jail. With the success of this case we also gained the trust of society, because we showed that we do not only prosecute the "little man", but that we also go after the "big fish" if there is enough evidence. I must notice that in order for my office to prosecute this case parliament first of all had to pass a law namely the law regarding the **Indictment of Political Officials**, such in accordance with article **140 of the Constitution of Suriname**.

I must say however that the current criminal legislation **is not adequate** enough to combat all forms of corruption, for example the violations of the rules relating to the public procurement of goods by high public officials only to facilitate a good friend. According to our draft this kind of behaviour is punishable. That is why I also look forward to the approval of the draft anti corruption act by the parliament of Suriname.

I have further more noticed that the NGO's in Suriname have not yet made the fight against corruption their issue. I hope that this will happen soon and perhaps the OAS can assist in this, because I think that the NGO's have a very important role to fulfill in combating corruption when it comes to create awareness by the people for the destructiveness of corruption for the whole society.

Thank you
Garcia Ramcharan-Paragsingh
Expert of Suriname