

INVESTING TODAY, TRANSFORMING TOMORROW

Unlocking **Human Capital** as
the engine for growth in Suriname

PHASE 2

JUNE 8-10, 2026

PARAMARIBO, SURINAME

EDUCATION:
THE PATH OUT OF
POVERTY, TOWARD
GROWTH AND
PROGRESS



EVENT DETAILS

PHASE 2 | 8, 9 & 10 June 2026

Royal Ballroom - Torarica Resort

National Vision and Strategic Plan

Theme: Education: the pathway out of poverty, toward growth and progress

A nationally supported strategic forum that brings together international experiences from Phase 1, national expertise, and insights from Surinamese stakeholders to work toward a ten-year national vision for human capital development, supported by a five-year action plan that will serve as a roadmap for implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Suriname stands at an important turning point in its development. The country has a unique opportunity to make choices that will shape the prosperity, opportunities, and resilience of both current and future generations. The central question is where Suriname should invest now to enable sustainable growth and broad-based development for all Surinamese people. In a rapidly changing world, sustainable progress will depend less and less on natural resources and increasingly on the knowledge, skills, creativity, and resilience of people.

The event is structured in two phases:

Phase 1, which has already taken place, provided insight into international experiences and lessons in the areas of education reform, labor market development, and investments in human capital. Building on these insights,

Phase 2 focuses on the Surinamese reality: the challenges the country faces today, but above all the opportunities and possibilities to jointly build a sustainable future.

Together, these two phases will contribute to a shared national vision and a concrete roadmap to develop education and skills development into the core of Suriname's future.

8:00 A.M. - 09:00 A.M.

Walk-in and registration

9:00 A.M. - 09:15 A.M.

Official opening

9:15 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.

Opening Speeches*Ms. Adriana La Valley, IDB Country Representative**H.E. Lalinie Gopal, Minister of Youth Development & Sport**H.E. Dirk Currie, Minister of Education, Science & Culture***National Vision 2035 & Human Capital**

This keynote and panel discussion will explore Suriname's long-term vision for human capital development and the country's aspirations for a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future by 2035. It will reflect on how to build an education and skills development system that leaves no one behind, supports lifelong learning, and empowers teachers as key drivers of transformation. The keynote will also emphasize the importance of partnerships as a foundation for change, bringing together government, the private sector, international organizations, civil society, communities, and families to create a future-ready education and skills system that equips all learners with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world and contribute to Suriname's sustainable development.

10:00 A.M. - 11:15 A.M.

Keynote**(30****min)****Speaker:***The President of the Republic of Suriname,**H.E. Jennifer Geerlings-Simons***Panel****(30****min)****Panel members:***H.E. Lalinie Gopal, Minister of Youth Development & Sport**H.E. Dirk Currie, Minister of Education, Science & Culture**H.E. Marinus Bee, Minister of Internal Affairs**Raj Jadhnanansing, Deputy Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor*

Moderator: Mr. Jason Menso, Deputy PS Ministry of Youth development and Sport

Q&A (15 min)11:15 A.M. - 11:45 A.M. **Break**

Inclusion

Suriname's linguistic and cultural diversity is a unique strength that should be reflected in its education system. At the same time, ensuring that children with disabilities can fully participate in learning remains essential to achieving equitable educational outcomes. This keynote and panel session will explore how schools and education systems can embrace multilingualism and inclusive education to support the learning and development of every child. Discussions will focus on effective approaches for teaching in multilingual contexts, strengthening foundational literacy and learning, removing barriers faced by children with disabilities, and creating learning environments where diversity is valued as an asset. By placing inclusion at the center of education policy and practice, Suriname can build a system that enables all learners to thrive and contribute to the country's future.

11:50 A.M - 12:50 P.M.

Keynote (15 min)

Speaker: *Ms. Ismene Krishnadath, Language Expert*

Panel (30 min)

Panel members:

Ms. Sharda Ganga, Director of Foundation Projekta

Ms. Marjorie Struiken-Brondenstein, Head of Bureau for Special Education

Mr. Juljo Cruden, Child Psychologist

Ms. Annelot Themen, Child Psychologist

Moderator: *Ms. Nesty P*

Q&A (15 min)

12:50 A.M - 1:50 P.M.

Network lunch

Civic Society, Employments and Entrepreneurship: skills to succeed

1:55 P.M - 2:15 P.M.

Youth Voices

This panel will explore how education shapes the personal and professional trajectories of young people and leaders in Suriname. Through reflections on the challenges they faced during their educational journeys and transition into adulthood, participants will discuss the skills and opportunities that helped them succeed as employees, employers, entrepreneurs, and active citizens. Framed through the lens of Gross National Happiness, the panel will highlight

how education can empower individuals to reach their full potential, contribute to cohesive and prosperous communities, and support Suriname's long-term development and well-being.

Speakers:

Mr. Tosh van Dijk, athlete and entrepreneur

Mr. Will Toppin, entrepreneur

Ms. Ivani Julen

Moderator:

Ruiz Kartoredjo

2:20 P.M - 3:05 P.M.

Idea

Incubator

Building on the day's sessions, participants will work in roundtables to exchange perspectives, identify priorities, and develop recommendations on the following four topics:

- School Safety & Well-being: Early Intervention and Preventive Care
- Parental Involvement & Home Environment
- Education for Remote & Rural Communities
- Talent Development & Excellence Programs

3:05 P.M - 3:25 P.M.

Break

Facilitator preparations for plenary reflection

3:25 P.M - 4:00 P.M.

Plenary Reflection Day 1

4:00 P.M - 4:15 P.M.

Closing

Mr. Enrique Ralim, PS Sport of Min. of Youth Development & Sport

8:00 A.M - 08:45 A.M.**Walk-in and Registration****08:45 A.M. - 09:05 A.M.****Opening***Opening Performance***Continuing learning pathways
(Permanent Education)
including TVET**

This keynote and panel will examine ongoing and potential reforms to strengthen continuous learning pathways and lifelong learning in Suriname and better align skills development with the country's economic and social priorities. Creating a fair system where Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) also gets the recognition it needs is an essential part of it. The discussion will explore how government, education institutions, employers, and communities can work together to modernize programs, create seamless transitions between education levels, and ensure that learners develop the competencies needed for a changing economy. Panelists will also reflect on practical strategies to expand access, improve quality, and create stronger connections between learning, employment, and entrepreneurship at every stage of life.

9:10 A.M - 10:10 A.M. Keynote (15 min)**Speaker:** Ms. Maaret Viskari, Director, HAMK Global, Finland**Panel (30 min)****Panel members:***Ms. Marie Levens, Education Expert**Mr. Hans Lim A Po, Director FHR Lim A Po Institute for Social Studies**Ms. Sefanja Pierpont, Education Expert**Ms. Dorethy Hoever, Education Committee the National Assembly (DNA)***Moderator:** Ms. Sherida Mormon**Q&A (15 min)****10:10 A.M - 10:40 A.M.****Break**

Teacher Policy & Quality: What should a teacher look like, what standards should they meet and how do we get there?

This keynote and panel will explore what the teaching profession could look like in Suriname and how the country can prepare and support teachers to meet the evolving needs of learners and society. The discussion will examine the knowledge, skills, competencies, and professional standards teachers need to foster foundational learning, critical thinking, digital literacy, inclusion, and lifelong learning, as well as the policies required to strengthen teacher recruitment, development, and retention. Ultimately, the session will address how to invest in teachers—the most important in-school factor for learning—to foster Suriname's human capital development and future prosperity.

10:45 A.M - 11:45 A.M.

Keynote (15 min)

Speaker: *Mr. Ivan Fernald*

Panel (30 min)

Panel members:

Mr. Josua Graanoogst, School leader

Mr. Marcelino Nerkust, Former Union President

Mr. Robby Holband, Member Supervisory Board IOL

Ms. Hilde Neus, Dutch language expert

Moderator:

Ms. Gita Jhinkoe- Rai (RC- OPW-Adek)

Q&A (15 min)

11:45 A.M - 12:45 P.M.

Network lunch

Technology integration in education

This presentation demonstrates how digital transformation in education reduces teachers' workloads and makes independent study more accessible for students. It will also examine the comprehensive framework of smart education, ranging from internet connectivity and energy supply to a dedicated Surinamese digital platform. The presentation illustrates how these tools enable to create equal opportunities for the 10 to 15% of the population residing in the remote interior, where school dropout rates remain a significant challenge due to logistical and infrastructural constraints. By establishing smart classrooms, high-quality education can be extended to every child across Suriname.

12:45 P.M - 1:05 P.M.

Presentation

Speaker: Ms. Wu xiao fei Candice, Chief Strategy Officer of Huawei Central America and Caribbean Region

1:10 P.M - 1:55 P.M.

Idea Incubator

Building on the day's sessions, participants will work in roundtables to exchange perspectives, identify priorities, and develop recommendations on the following four topics:

- School Leadership & Governance
(Subtopic: Legal Framework & Legal Basis)
- Reforms in General Secondary Education (Grades 9 and 10)
- Education Funding & Efficiency
(Subtopic: Education Infrastructure & School Buildings)
- Reforms in Vocational Education

From insight to action: Tackling the key challenges in Suriname's education system

This interactive consultation session invites participants from across the education sector to collectively reflect on and respond to the key findings emerging from the recent survey on the main challenges facing Suriname's education system. Together, the most pressing issues identified will be examined, experiences and perspectives will be shared, and practical pathways forward will be explored. The input and insights of the education sector are invaluable in shaping the priorities and recommendations that will guide future reforms.

2:00 P.M - 3:00 P.M.

Consultations with the education sector

Moderators: Ms. Yvonne Pelswijk & Ms. Dionne Sumter

3:00 P.M - 3:20 P.M.

Break

Facilitator preparations for plenary reflection

3:20 P.M - 3:50 P.M.

Plenary Reflection Day 2

3:50 P.M - 4:05 P.M.

Closing

Ms. Gracia Ormskirk, PS General Education of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

8:00 A.M. - 08:45 A.M.

Walk-in & Registration

8:45 A.M. - 09:00 A.M.

Opening***Entrepreneurship & Innovation eco system:***

During this session, we will explore how to broaden the foundation of our economy through sustainable sectors and transform this into an effective tool for poverty reduction. Entrepreneurship, innovation, and private sector development can contribute significantly to economic diversification and job creation. The discussion will focus specifically on the policies, skills, and support systems required to foster a dynamic and enabling entrepreneurial environment. One principle remains central throughout: without quality education and targeted skills development, true innovation cannot exist.

9:05 A.M. - 10:05 A.M.

Keynote

(15

min)

Speaker:

*H.E. Andrew Baasaron, Minister of Economic Affairs,
Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation*

Panel (30 min)**Panel members:**

Mr. Vishal Jadnanansing, CEO C. Kersten en Co.

Ms. Xiomara Simons, OCW

Mr. Etienne Etman, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor

Ms. D. Pokie, Minister of Social Affairs and Housing

Moderator:

Ms. Laquisha Lont, Board member of VSB Young Management

Q&A (15 min)

10:05 A.M. - 10:20 A.M.

Break

10:20 A.M. - 10:50 A.M.

Entertainment

How do we implement the National Qualifications Framework? (NQF)?

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), approved in 2024, has the potential to serve as a cornerstone of a transparent, flexible, and future-oriented education and training system that supports lifelong learning and human capital development. However, a framework alone cannot drive transformation unless it is effectively implemented and integrated across education, training, and labor market systems. This keynote and panel will bring together diverse and complementary perspectives to explore the policies, institutions, partnerships, and implementation strategies needed to operationalize the NQF, connect formal, non-formal, and informal learning, and clarify where different educational pathways belong within the framework. The discussion will examine how the NQF can strengthen skills recognition, support smoother transitions between education, training, and employment, and build a unified lifelong learning system. Panelists will also reflect on how the NQF can ensure that qualifications remain relevant to the needs of both learners and employers, strengthen pathways between education and work, and ultimately contribute to Suriname's long-term development goals.

10:55 A.M. - 11:55 A.M.

Keynote (15 min)

Speaker: Prof. Frank Jabini

Panel (30 min)

Panel members:

Mr. Manuel Veldkamp, Sec. SNTA

Ms. Seeta Jaipersaud, Director NOVA

Ms. Leanda Zeldenrust, private

Ms. Joyce Lapar, Director SAO

Moderator: Ms. Loraine Vreden

Q&A (15 min)

12:00 P.M - 12:20 P.M.

FHR: Transition Research for Education in Suriname Presentation

This presentation will introduce the findings and recommendations of the study on Suriname’s transition toward a modern education system. It will explore key priorities for reform, including improving educational quality, strengthening teachers, modernizing infrastructure and systems, and enhancing links between education and labor market needs. The session will highlight how these reforms can support better learning outcomes and contribute to Suriname’s long-term development.

Speaker:
Ms.. Huo Ching Yang, Program Director FHR

12:25 P.M - 1:10 P.M.

Idea Incubator

Building on the day's sessions, participants will work in roundtables to exchange perspectives, identify priorities, and develop recommendations on the following four topics:

- Digital Transformation & AI in Education
- Educational Innovation Through Public-Private Partnerships
- Student Participation & Youth Voices
- Educational Data, Transparency & Public Reporting

1:10 P.M - 1:30 P.M.

Break

1:30 P.M - 2:00 P.M.

Plenary Reflection
Facilitator preparations for plenary reflection

2:00 P.M - 2:20 P.M.

Closing
H.E. Gregory Rusland, Vice President of the Republic of Suriname

2:30 P.M - 3:30 P.M.

Network lunch