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1. THE SURINAMESE TERRITORY

1.1 Land and Sea Area

Suriname has a land area of approximately 164,000 sq. km. It is not possible to calculate the land area precisely, because Suriname's boundaries have not been fully established and the coastline fluctuates constantly due to tidal action. Legislation passed on June 11, 1978 extended the territorial sea adjacent to Suriname to 12 nautical miles (1 nautical mile equals 1,853 km), reckoned from the 0-meter isobath (baseline), while the exclusive economic zone was extended to 200 nautical miles (i.e., more than 370 km). In total, the coastal waters, Suriname exercises certain exclusive economic rights, such as fishing and mineral rights. The territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone occupy approximately 128,500 sq. km, an area almost 79% of Suriname's land area.

1.2 The Boundaries

1.2.1 THE SEAWARD BOUNDARY

The northern boundary of Suriname is the Atlantic Ocean and, therefore, is subject to the International Law of the Sea. The seaward boundaries of the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone are formed by lines compass points equidistant from the nearest point on the 0-meter isobath (baseline). In other words, the outer boundary of the territorial sea is 12 nautical miles distant from the baseline, while the seaward boundary of the exclusive economic zone occupies an area of 200 nautical miles distant from the baseline. The delineations between the Surinamese territorial sea and those of its neighbors must be established by bilateral agreements, which use the principle of equity to draw boundaries, where possible by means of an equidistance line. Such a line is determined by taking points equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines of both contiguous coastal states.

According to Suriname, the eastern seaward dividing line between Suriname and French Guiana is formed by an equidistance line with a direction of 20° east of true north, reckoned from the mouth of the line (closing line) connecting Galibier on the Surinamese coast to Les Hébards on the French Guiana coast. France has never objected to this definition. The seaward dividing line in the west, however, raises some problems. As the full width of the Corantijn River is in Surinamese territory—irrespective of the water-level fluctuations—the equidistance line method cannot be applied. Therefore, in 1958, a Dutch-British-Belgian commission established a point on the west bank of the Corantijn River (the so-called Kayser-Phipps point, 1° 59'53" north latitude - 57°08'51" west longitude) as the most northern point on Suriname's border with Guiana, as well as the point of demarcation for the seaward dividing line between both countries. This boundary is formed by running a line from the Kayser-Phipps point in a direction 10° east of true north, substantially parallel with the channel of the Corantijn River.

1.2.2 THE EASTERN BOUNDARY

The boundary in the Merwede River between the islands of Fontiel (French Guiana) and Soekemondaim (Suriname) was established by the Treaty of September 30, 1915. The middle of the river at normal water level was designated as the dividing line. With the exception of the islands of Longa Tabi and Bilikavoko, which belong entirely to Suriname, and the island of Bastin Tabibi, which is part of the French territory, the islands in this part of the river were assigned to the Netherlands or to France, depending on which side of the dividing line the largest part of their area lay. The eastern border in the Merwede River north of Paramaribo has not yet been agreed upon. Through the arbitration of Czar Alexander III, the Lawa River was decided to be a continuation of the Merwede River. However, the boundary of the division between Suriname and French Guiana is still to be determined.

1.2.3 THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

The international agreement of May 5, 1905 (signed in Rio de Janeiro, approved by the law of July 11, 1908, and ratified on September 15, 1908, in The Hague), established the boundary between Suriname and the Federal Republic of Brazil. The watershed between the basin of the Amazon in the south and the basin of the watercourse that flows through Suriname "between the French and British borders" towards the Atlantic Ocean in the north delineate the southern border. Between 1935 and 1938, 60 boundary marks were placed along this 597 km, watershed to delineate the border.

1.2.4 THE WESTERN BOUNDARY

By virtue of an agreement reached on 1798/1800 between the two acting Governors, Cornelis Baremburg Berbice and Jean-Frederic Suriname, the west bank of the Corantijn River, from the source to the mouth, has been established as Suriname's western boundary.

2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Even though Suriname is part of the South American continent, it maintains strong trade relations with the United States of America (USA) and the countries of the European Common Market (EC), particularly the Netherlands. Trade with the Caribbean islands and Latin America is not diverse. Imports from the Caribbean consisted primarily of some $150 million of petroleum products from Trinidad and Tobago, about 24% of total imports for 1979. Imports from the Netherlands dropped from $140 million in 1972 to $125 million in 1979. Suriname's principal exports are bauxite, alumina, aluminium, timber and wood products, rice, bananas, and shrimps. In 1981, Suriname exported the largest share of its bauxite, alumina, and aluminium to the USA, shrimp to Japan and the Caribbean (i.e., hulled but unpolished) and bananas to the EC. Revenues from the export of bananas amounted to $13.3 million in 1981, 20% from England and 30% from Italy.

The Caribbean import of rice and wood products. Many other products are exported to the Netherlands. These goods (e.g., vegetables) are exported in small shipments.
FISHERY

1. FISHING GROUNDS

Suriname’s fishing grounds are located in the coastal waters and the shallow coastal waters off the coast in the eastern part of the country.

- The Marowijne River
- The Commewijne and Suriname rivers
- The Nickerie and Courantyne rivers

In addition to the above, the lagoons and mudflats along the coast are also fished by small-scale fishing boats.

2. 3. TYPES OF FISHING

The two types of fishing practiced in Suriname are small-scale commercial fishing and industrial fishing. Small-scale commercial fishing is predominant in the interior and the coastal waters, whereas industrial fishing is practiced in the coastal waters.

3. 2.1 Small-scale Commercial Fishing

Small-scale commercial fishing is divided into 5 groups: coastal fishing, estuary fishing, river fishing, mangrove fishing, and shrimp fishing.

4. 2.1.1 COASTAL FISHING

Coastal fishing consists of both small-scale and industrial fishing. In small-scale fishing, the catch size is usually less than 200 kg. The catch is marketed directly to the consumer.

4. 2.1.2 ESTUARY FISHING

Estuary fishing is carried out in rivers and their estuaries. The catch is usually marketed directly to the consumer.

4. 2.1.3 RIVER FISHING

River fishing is carried out in rivers and their tributaries. The catch is usually marketed directly to the consumer.

4. 2.1.4 MANGROVE FISHING

Mangrove fishing is carried out in mangrove areas. The catch is usually marketed directly to the consumer.

4. 2.1.5 SHRIMP FISHING

Shrimp fishing is carried out in coastal waters. The catch is usually marketed directly to the consumer.

5. FISH PROCESSING

The main methods of processing fish in Suriname are drying, freezing and smoking. Before processing, the fish is usually cleaned and filleted.

6. ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

Suriname’s fisheries provide a natural resource. About 35% of all fish caught are brought to market. This percentage, which amounts to some 2,000 tons per year, is about 10% of the potential catch, which is estimated at 20,000 tons per year. The area of development is still vast, and the potential for production is still unexploited. Only in the coastal area is the shrimp sector actively planned on a large scale. International markets for shrimp include the United States and Japan.

7. PROBLEMS IN THE FISHERY SECTOR

Shrimp fishing is the most important activity in the Suriname fisheries. However, only about 10% of the catch is marketed directly to the consumer.

8. GOVERNMENTAL DOCUMENTS (Suriname)