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REGIONAL PLANNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE  
OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SURINAME.

prepared by

Dr. J.H. Heezen-Antonius

with the assistance of

Dr. A.J. Zunder

## I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper we shall try to demonstrate how regional planning in Suriname has been developed and how it could contribute to national development. In that scope the following aspects will be taken into consideration.

First of all the need for regional planning in the scope of national development will be discussed briefly and some background information will be given about how the idea of regional planning in Suriname came into existence. Afterwards the regional concept will be elaborated. In particular a short description will be made of the different theoretically distinguished regional types. At a later stage this will be evaluated for the Surinamese regional divisions.

Also our point of view concerning national development will be brought forward. Regarding the fact that there exists a sphere of competition between growth of the National Product and the supply of basic needs to the population we shall make an effort to coincide these supposedly divergent developments.

After those preliminary chapters we shall deal with regional planning in Suriname in more detail. Special attention will be paid to the task of regional planning in Suriname, the regional sub-division, the organizational structure and the regional development plans and programmes.

Finally, the integration of regional objectives in national development in Suriname will be evaluated, with special emphasis on the restrictions, the possibilities, the recommendations for future action and the role of the human aspect in goal setting.

## II. THE NEED FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

Regional planning aims at formulating operational goals for the future development of a particular before hand identified region and at preparing and coordinating these goals by:

1. Coordination of national goals on the regional level;
2. Reflection of "regional reality" in national goals;
3. Control of the land use and the spatial allocation of activities;
4. Connection of the project level and the national goals by means of carrying out policy-oriented research on the specific needs of the population and the creation of well adapted organizational structures and the desired institutions.

Regional planning as an instrument in directing the developing process had been introduced when it became clear that important goals were not realised and that development was not equally distributed among the regions, but that what we might call "stronger" regions were at an advantage, while the weaker ones stagnated. These are amongst others the consequences of the fact that the macro-economist rejects the regional aspects in his macro-economic projections. Actually the macro-economist feels that the regional reflection of investment and activity is the responsibility of other disciplines. Taking this as a starting point, however, it would require a clear cut relationship between the "regional" and the macro-economic discipline.

Seen from the perspective of the above-mentioned issues, it is not surprising that in many countries some thirty years ago, macro models were built and the macro-economic projections were made while there was not even an institute for regional planning. In our country this also happened. The Bureau of Rural Affairs (B.R.A.)<sup>\*</sup> started only in 1955, while it was not until 1958 that it functioned as a department for regional planning.

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\* Dutch: Bureau Landelijke Opbouw (B.L.O.)

We may therefore conclude that the choice of a region for a certain investment project was based on too restricted a number of criteria. The marginal capital coefficient e.i.k. =  $\frac{I}{Y}$ , which indicates marginal productivity of investment, had the role of a mighty selector. We can then consider that concerning the financing of the total investments, one could suffice with the following model indicating saving deficit of the national economy.

National saving deficit and net current account of the balance of payments

1. Gross Domestic Product
2. Net Foreign Factor Incomes
3. Gross National Product
4. Gross National Savings
5. National Consumption
6. (4+5) = 3
7. Gross Investments
8. Gross National Savings Surplus (Net current account balance of payment).

This scheme undoubtedly exposes some important macro-economic variables. These variables, do not directly take into account regional implications or conditions. That means that when development goals are solely based on this model, implementation of the intended policy might come into danger. National goals are very closely related to a comprehensive developing point of view, which will be dealt with elsewhere in this paper. Above this we may add that more often than not, development goals are formulated only on the national level. The direct step from the macro to the project level, which was not unusual during the period behind us, is therefore also one of the explanations for the disappointing results in the field of planning. That is why one expects regional planning to solve all the above-mentioned problems. Because in regional planning the different sectors per region can

be co-ordinated, while also there is an opportunity for interregional planning.

Is the belief one has in regional planning justified? If the answer is yes, what then are the conditions within which regional planning has to operate in order to be successful.

We wish to stress once again that in our opinion, regional planning could indeed be an instrument for national development. Seen from the point of view from all factors involved in planning viz. the regional population, the enterprises operating in the region and organizations, and the government, it is necessary to clarify and co-ordinate the different needs and activities. The following example may illustrate this.

Suppose an industrial enterprise wishes to build a new firm somewhere in the country. Suppose also that the government expects the enterprise to solve part of the regional employment problems, when however, it is not known to what extent demand for labour from the side of the enterprise meets the regional supply for labour or one does not know whether from somewhere else labour is willing to migrate or commute then certainly there is a possibility of planning failure seen from the point of view of all the planning sectors.

In the following paragraphs we shall deal with a few aspects of regional planning in general and for Suriname in particular.

### III. THE REGIONAL CONCEPT

When one speaks of regional planning, one is always referring to a division of the country into regions. An ideal division could be when within the regions there exists:

1. More or less uniform problems to be tackled
2. A clear-cut social and economic inter-change system within the region, which means that from one (or more) centers development in the region is co-ordinated and sustained
3. A regional legal authority which is responsible for the regional administration. Within this authority there should be room for a department which is in charge of co-ordinating the development goals
4. A data collection system that will coincide with the chosen regional sub-division.

It will be clear that not all of those four characteristics of the ideal situation will occur somewhere in the world simultaneously. Mostly it is the last mentioned criterium which is the leading one, because of the urgent need for data.

In order to remove some of these problems on behalf of an efficiently organized regional planning system, the following typology could be adequate.

#### 1. Nodal Regions

Within areas one can distinguish between a centre and the periphery. The centre is characterised by economic growth and innovative capacity and it is there that administration is centralized. Between the central activities and those of the periphery there exists frequent relationships. The centre has much attractive power in regard with the periphery. This is between others exposed by the inward stream of migrants and activities out of the periphery.

Of course nodal regions could be identified on several levels. For example one has nodal regions on world, national, regional and even

local level.

The importance of the identification of this region is actually three-fold -

- a) The centre is able to stimulate economic development in its sphere of influence because of economics of scale. Also it has a welfare function for its surroundings;
- b) The centre is able to derive resources (human, financial and natural) from the periphery, because of which the latter stagnates in its social and economic development;
- c) The centre is able to penetrate its tentacles into the periphery, because of which, for the periphery important resources, e.g., agricultural land are derived from the periphery and used for say housing purposes.

When the nodal region is taken as a point of departure, then one has to take note of the above-mentioned effects, and try to re-direct the processes in the direction one regards desirable.

When the periphery is further sub-divided into other regions, then the following regions could be identified.

## 2. Resource Frontier Regions

Those regions possess natural resources of exceptionally high value. The extent, however, to which those resources could contribute to the development of the region is dependent on the purchasing capacity in the area and the extent to which decentralization of administration and power takes place.

## 3. Slowly Developing Regions

These regions possess some natural and other resources and for that reason they attract some migrants while also innovative impulses reach the region.

#### 4. Backward Regions

These regions do not possess resources of much importance, by means of which the local population can take advantage of given their level of technology.

We wish to put emphasis on the fact that although natural resources are important criteria in the above described regional typology it is not this criteria which is crucial. More important is the extent to which local population takes benefit of those resources because they have access to the necessary technology and know-how. That is why the manifestation of regions is not meant to be a picture of a particular point in time. On the contrary, grades in level of development of the different regions are the result of economic, social and political determinants. And these are the determinants in which we should get insight, in such a manner that developments in the regions are lead in the desired direction.

#### The Surinamese Reality

Although those theoretically distinguished regions could be useful guides in order to evaluate a countries regional division, it will be clear however, that for the Surinamese situation these proposals need some adaptation. This will be worked out at a later stage.



#### IV. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the foregoing chapters we already spoke about "economic development". However, regional planning and planning in general requires a clear definition of the direction the country has to develop because the following aspects are dependent on this concept:

- a) The choice of the spatial pattern together with the regional sub-division
- b) The nature of the data one wishes to gather in order to make sensible projections
- c) The nature of the projects, activities, organizations and facilities one wants to set up or create.

In short, the whole operational character and the success of a plan is dependent on a clear development concept.

In our concept national development consists of three main components, which are also globally reflected in the Governmental Declaration of our new Government after 25th February 1980.

##### 1. The Political and Legal Aspect

The extent to which the national government can decide on the exploitation of its natural and human resources

##### 2. The National Economic Aspect

A strengthening and diversification of the country's production structure, an increase of the domestic capital accumulation and the growth and just division of GDP

##### 3. The Social Aspect

Supply of basic needs (such as employment, reasonable income and health, education and housing facilities)

##### 4. The Human Aspect

This should also play a role in national development planning.

Concerning the first aspect mentioned we could say Suriname is still in the early stages because we still are dependent on Dutch foreign aid. Formally the CNNS (Dutch and a Suriname government representatives) were the final decision-makers on development projects. Our new Ministry however, has the intention to decrease the power of the CONS as a supergovernment, which will lead us to a new stage of more political self-reliance.

Concerning the second and third aspect mentioned, we feel that in order to facilitate both these aspects have to interact intensively with each other.

Given Suriname's development conditions, and we could in particular mention our energy potential, we are convinced of the fact that industrial development on an agricultural base could be the engine for resources of income, diversification of the economy, lifting up the educational level, making the service sector more productive, create a need for a capital-goods industry, stimulate the internal trade of goods and services by means of which prosperity and self-reliance of the nation is increased.

The following table (Table 1) may give some indications of the development of the Surinamese economy particularly the development of the country's saving are alarming. Our new Government also has the intention to stimulate the Country's domestic capital stock, in order to increase our self-reliance. In a final stage we should not be dependent for our national development solely on the Dutch foreign aid but, we should be able to finance our development out of our own efforts and means.

If we desire however, an industrialization policy to cooperate with a basic needs approach then we should at the same time take care of the fact that:

- a) The foundation of the industry, namely the agricultural sector becomes healthy. In the first stage of the process a

basic needs programme can be financed out of a part of the extra growth of production and productivity

b) In a later stage, the basic needs supply should contribute in its turn to an increase in productivity and in production, in particular expressed in human capital formation and initial coaching of formally weak enterprises, by means of organization, institution-building and supplying of means of production.

The new national goals of the Government of Premier Chin-A-Sen are the following:

1. To increase production in order to -
  - i) improve the balance of payments
  - ii) create governmental savings
2. To improve the employment situation
3. To improve the living conditions of the population with special attention to the rural population and the population of the interior
4. To increase national consciousness and self-reliance and develop a critical attitude
5. Re-organization of the administrative system in order to -
  - 1) direct the developments according to the development process
  - ii) to involve the population to a greater extent in the development process
6. Decrease the unequal income distribution
7. Decrease the dependency on foreign countries -
  - 1) Diversification of the economic structure
  - ii) more involvement of Surinamese know-how
8. To stimulate re-migration of the Surinamese population from abroad to their country of origin.

Our national development also has a spatial dimension. The Spatial Pattern is most consistent with our idea of national development.

## V. REGIONAL PLANNING IN SURINAME

### V.1 The development of regional planning in Suriname

#### V.1.1 How regional planning came into existence

Starting from 1958, as a consequence of the reshuffling of the different ministries, regional planning shifted from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Development.

So, originally (from 1955), this bureau was involved with purely local agricultural projects.

The main incentive for the development of those regional planning ideas was the fact that one regards the gap between the formulated (Dutch government financed) Ten Year Plan and the implementation of projects as severely undesirable.

That is why one considers regional planning as a part of general and prosperity planning. In the last resort, national objectives have to be reached, while regional planning is only an instrument. In order to reach those national objectives, natural and human resources are to cooperate in forceful production units. Large and small production units, however, are always spatially localised. Within the hierarchy of society's production units, the General and Prosperity planning has its orientation in the national production, while regional planning should deal with regional and local units of production.

In more detail the tasks of regional planning institutes were the following:

1. B.R.A. should make for each region an in-depth analysis of the regional production factors, which should lead to regional objectives, and are consistent with national objectives as well as with local production units.

2. B.R.A. should prepare regional plans for the different rural areas and is also responsible for the coordination of the agricultural projects.
3. B.R.A. should prepare land-use plans, and revitalization plans and plans for land reclamation. These plans should include indications of the best choice of land-use concerning urban expansion, agriculture, industry, water storage, environment protection, mining, etc.

Already at this stage a more balanced disparity of economic activity among regions had high priority and regional planning had a specific task in this.

One focussed attention on an optimal disparity of potentialities and poles, which could result in productive linkages.

Concerning the implementation of the rural projects, B.R.A. did much bargaining with different other ministries.

Yet one can not say the work of B.R.A. had a social and an economic developmental character. In practice the tasks comprise mainly technical jobs. Mention can be made of:

1. preparing soil maps
2. topographic research on behalf of
3. building roads, preparation of agricultural land, etc.

The more sociological surveys concern mainly the attitude of the rural population towards traditional working circumstances. Those surveys were done by a private consultant who did some research on the creole, hindoestani and javanese rural population.

#### V.1.2. The present tasks of B.R.A.

B.R.A. has the following tasks:

- a. to prepare social and economic development programmes for the different planning regions;

- b. to prepare global land-use plans based on these programmes;
- c. participation in the preparation of multi-annual programmes and annual plans;
- d. to analyse social and economic processes as they develop in time and space by means of doing social-economic and spatial planning research;
- e. to evaluate and coordinate projects within the framework of regional programmes and global land-use plans;
- f. to coordinate the implementation of the above mentioned plans;
- g. to advise the Minister of Development on matters like spatial planning and matters concerning land use.

A remarkable difference with the former situation is the fact that, as there is no operational legal base for implementation, namely task (e.) (coordinative task) of B.R.A. is seldom operative. Other differences are:

- the planning staff of B.R.A. has recently been mainly social scientific;
- B.R.A. is contrary to the central planning Bureau a governmental department.

### V.1.3. Regional and national planning

In the national development plans of Suriname that were prepared in 1963, a link has been established between regional and national planning. These should, as the plan calls for, be aimed at an optimal combination of production factors, infrastructure and services. The spatial ordering of the factors of production i.e. natural resources, the age composition of population, the present activities and the services, were the framework for plans and projects.

In neither of the five Year Plans (the first and the second till 1976) is regional planning even mentioned in the project planning process. The step from the national goals towards the projects were made while B.R.A. was excluded. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fishery was in charge of the implementation of agriculture projects in the framework of the agricultural plans. In 1975, a new period started in the sense that Suriname obtained its political independence and that the Suriname and Dutch government established a treaty in which Suriname would receive an amount of 2.7 billion Surinamese guilders within a period of 15 years.

New plans and ideas came into existence and Suriname was appointed, according to the treaty, to produce a long term plan (PSEO with annex) and the so called plans. In these plans also, some ideas regarding spatial development were brought forward as follows:

The spatial development and order should be consistent with the national objectives from the scope of increasing production, employment and disparity of prosperity. One expects this development to be led by means of growth-poles, with the creation at the same time of healthy and pleasant living conditions. The most suitable way of reaching this is by gathering as much as possible, knowledge of the existing productive potential, in order to create the opportunity to inter-relate the different sectors in the development process. This development conception is expressed in the development of West Suriname where a projected growth of the pole is being implemented. One expects to meet the objectives concerning disparity, prosperity etc. by these means.

However, in this strategy, the population, who is going to be the "carrier of the development process", shall be recruited in great quantities from somewhere else in the country and even from abroad. The choice of the new growth pole actually was not so much based on the population that was going to participate in the development process, but more on the availability of natural resources.

In what way is regional planning involved in the respective plans?

In the annual year plan 1976 B.R.A. was still mentioned as an organization with a task of coordinating national objectives. B.R.A. will not only be in charge of preparing the regional development plans and programmes but will also have a coordinating task of implementing rural projects with the Ministries which are involved with this implementation. The projects to be implemented by the Central Planning Bureau, however, were dictated from the Central Planning Bureau without intensive intervention of B.R.A. Annual Plan 1977 gave more or less the same picture. In Annual Plan 1978 the task of regional planning is not mentioned explicitly. But on the other hand one rejects the top-down planning approach and advocates for a bottom-up approach. By this it is meant that the different ministries can make clear their specific wishes and desires concerning plans, programmes, and projects, on the basis of which the Central Planning Bureau is able to compose their project lists. Policy is then translated regionally in the sense that in the last resort projects are implemented in the region. But an important task of regional planning viz. to analyse regional effects of the projects, is lacking.

In the Annual Year Plan 1979, more or less the same method has been followed.

In this paragraph we tried to advocate for a still more intensive cooperation, although there is already some cooperation concerning in particular the description of concentration areas. With the start of a new period since 25 February 1980, the new Ministry of Planning and Development Management regards this as one of their organizational changes they desired.



## V.2. Regional Sub-Division

The regional sub-division one aimed at during the initial period (1960) of regional planning, was based on the then usual regional plans. From that perspective, for some districts as a whole and for Albina in particular (a border town close to French Guyana) local centre c.q. area development plans were prepared.

Starting point in the early stage of regional planning was local centre development based on a global land-use plan, but in a later stage one tried to prepare regional development plans based on a social and economic development policy.

One introduced the idea that the country should be sub-divided on the basis of the natural resources criterion and the linkages between sectors and river basins.

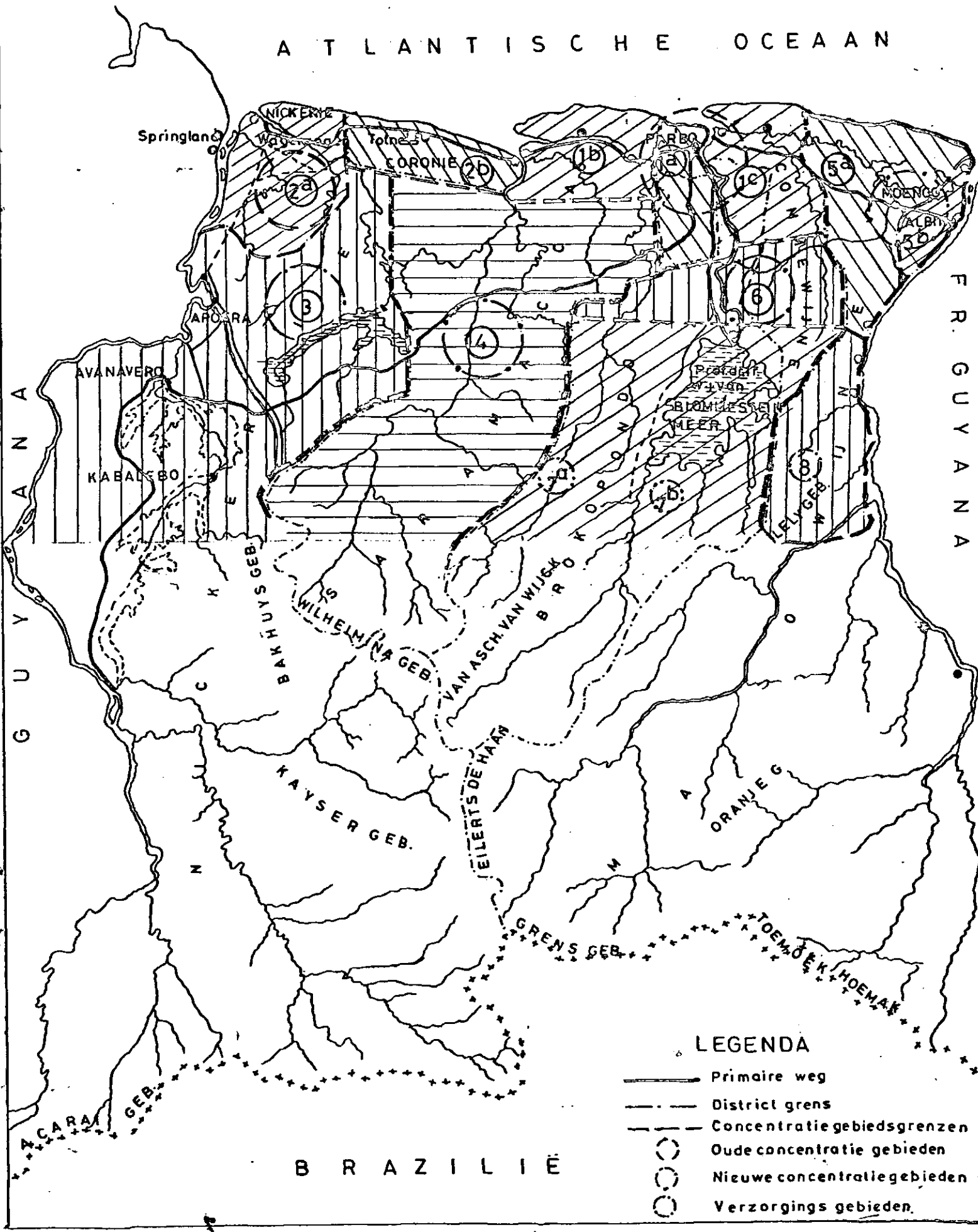
The following were distinguished on the basis of these criteria:

- a. North-Eastern Suriname in which mainly land and forest projects were initiated;
- b. Western Suriname with the available inventory.  
Western Suriname was qualified as one of the most important regional development areas;
- c. Central Suriname.

Parallel to our independence a new perspective plan was introduced i.e. the Multi Annual Development Plan of Suriname. One was convinced of the fact that regional development could be initiated by means of concentrated areas. These ideas were in fact related to "the growth pole concept" (F. Perroux) which briefly means that from a growth pole the wider surroundings of this growth pole could be developed in particular because of the specific infrastructural, innovative and stimulating influence which it has on its environment.

From this perspective "concentration areas" were projected as starting points from which regional planning ought to take place (see map).

# A T L A N T I S C H E O C E A N



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One could distinguish between:

1. Old concentration areas;
2. New concentration areas;
3. Welfare areas.

In every concentration area a growth pole was projected. An important criterion for division was however again the availability of natural resources. The old concentration areas are all localized in the young coastal plains and stem from the plantation agriculture period. The new concentration areas were almost all situated in the upper parts consisting of good soils in the "Zanderij formation", which is known as the "Forest belt".

The welfare areas are projected in the interior. Productive activities are the key activities; the poles will mainly have a welfare function.

Remarkable in this conception is however the fact that growth poles are projected in areas where there is presently no population or in an area which is very scarcely populated. One expected that the population from other areas, ideally from there where "population pressure" is "high", is willing to settle down in these new areas.

However one can seriously doubt the worthiness of the premises used. In a country as ours, with a small population we can not count on large population movements. Above that, in regional planning we should also take into account the remaining population in the area from which population is taken away and the population in areas in which insufficient measures are being taken.

Regarding the exact bordering of concentration areas, we could say that they were rather vaguely defined. A concentration area was not formed by an exactly defined area, but by a growth pole as a cluster of projects. The area up to which the influence of such a centre ends was in no sense determined.

In 1976 B.R.A. tried to change this situation; also, the regions were sub-divided in more detail. This led to six concentrated areas whereby Paramaribo as part of the coastal region became concentration area 1(a). More detailed elaborations took place later on.


As has been said before, there are some disadvantages attached to this approach of concentrated areas. It is possible from this point of view to work out in the framework of our development concept a more useful division based on, amongst others, the earlier mentioned regional concept.

An attempt in that direction is probably to take as the main division, except for concentration area 1, the border of our administrative regions, our district borders, as the point of departure.

It appeared that data on population and other activities are registered per district. We wish to add however that the data on the population of the interior are not adequate. In practice one helps one self by making use of countings occasionally done by private organizations. One other possibility is to change the administrative borders radically.

This will be however such an enormous task and will consume so much time that we do not consider this as an acceptable possibility, in the short run.

Taking this main division as a starting point, we now have to identify sub-regions. The following regions will be our point of departure.

- 
- a. Resource frontier regions;
  - b. Developing rural regions;
  - c. Stagnating regions;
  - d. Backward regions;
  - e. Nodal regions.

a. Resource frontier regions

The available resource frontier regions, that means regions that possess very important exploitable natural resources of high value concern mainly our bauxite and hydroelectric power areas. The way in which these areas will develop is not solely dependent on the richness of natural resources. Important is also to what extent the thereby used technology, which has to be imported, can create regional effects.

For instance the existing bauxite and hydroelectric areas did not bring forth the desired regional effects. The bauxite industry brought less diversification in the region than expected and with this industry related regional activities were limited to a few villages, housing mainly the employers of the operating industry. So we should be prepared to follow the developments in the new region of Western Suriname, with its hydroelectricity potential, very closely.

So when we have the objective to regionalize the effect of natural resources, then this will not happen automatically, but only by influencing on the national level. We could think of a fund consisting of the benefits of the natural resources, out of which the desired projects and activities in the region could be financed.

b. Developing rural areas

To these regions in fact belongs only our rice area in the coastal plains of the district Nickerie. In that district the rural population has been able to maintain their agricultural activities up to a certain level, despite population increases. We then consider that even small farmers have been able to grow in a steady way, with this constraint, and that also on a small scale some exodus out of the agricultural sector took place.

c. Stagnating regions

In this we can count five districts i.e. (Commewijne, Coroni, Marowijne and Para, Saramacca). Amongst others, in those districts

we consider an enormous migration to the city, with the result that not only the level of production decreases in the rural areas but also the complete living conditions deteriorate.

d. Backward regions

To these regions the interior of Suriname belongs, where the bush negro (descendants of former runaway slaves) and Amerindians are still living under rather original conditions and try to be self sufficient concerning food supply.

There are therefore few productive activities among these communities with few regional effects.

A different aspect is that the contact with the more prosperous parts of the country induced a migration stream to the coastal areas, in particular to the city of Paramaribo, because of which in Paramaribo we have to deal with additional serious employment and housing problems.

It also appears that their requirements concerning the demand for unskilled manual labour are increased in such a manner that enterprises, viz in the interior which could formerly rely on this labour force, sometimes gets labour supply problems on account of this.

e. Nodal regions

These regions become meaningful when they are considered in a wider environmental context. In our country we can distinguish the following nodal regions:

1. Paramaribo and suburbs, which is the trade and administrative centre of the nation as a whole, as well as a region which functions as a magnet because of the generally higher standard of living;
2. The growing nodal regions in the rural areas. This is the case in the district of Nickerie, where the town of Nw. Nickerie has been growing in an environment of expansion of the rice production;

3. The company towns have a function concerning a big company and its employees. The production entailed by this company is almost the only production basis of the town:
4. Villages located in rural areas with a welfare function of insignificant meaning.

Taking the regionally available resources into consideration (human, financial, natural) and the marketing possibilities of end products produced in the region, it is possible to make a still more further division based on the specific potentialities and needs.

### V.3. The organizational structure

As has been said before, B.R.A. was established in 1955, but functioned at that time only as an organization implementing agricultural projects. B.R.A. was part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries. In 1958, B.R.A. was added to the Ministry of Development in order to prepare regional planning next to the Central Planning Bureau.

From 1963 onwards, B.R.A. collaborates with a Central Planning Bureau Director, under the Minister of General Affairs (the Prime Minister). Since 1969, B.R.A. was taken up again by the Minister of Development. From that time it worked in close collaboration with the Soil-Mapping Department.

Nowadays, B.R.A. is in charge of regional planning. Physical planning is at this moment still a task of the physical planning Department, of the Ministry of Public Works, although in future, part of these tasks will be transferred to the Regional Planning Department B.R.A., collaborating under the present Ministry of Planning and Development.

Recently B.R.A. was only involved in the preparation of regional plans and incidentally with the preparation of annual plans concerning the description of the different concentration areas. One could hardly speak of a coordinating function concerning plan preparation as well as plan implementation. Although there are contacts with the ministries which have to assist regional planning by means of data supply and making clear their plans and intentions. However, there was no interchange between on the one hand the Central Planning Bureau, the ministries on the other and B.R.A. in between.

Further on, the preparation of the plans was done by private consultants because of a lack of adequate staff which are in fact available but because of better salaries prefer working at private enterprises.

In the near future, with out new Ministry of Planning and Development Management, some structural changes will take place. In the new structure B.R.A. will really have a coordinating task vertically (national planning-versus implementation) as well as horizontally (sectoral integration).

The planning council is, after revision of the planning act, which is now not in operation, going to function actively. The Planning Council will include the representatives of the main functional groups, which are the trade unions, government representatives and representatives of private enterprises. These representatives will have the opportunity to give their opinion on matters concerning the development policy.

Further on regional planning departments will coordinate the implementation of the plans in the different districts, and not solely from the desks in Paramaribo. These departments will be in charge of all vertical and horizontal linkages, including the district councils, consisting of representatives of the population in the districts.



#### V.4. The regional plans

The first B.R.A. publications in the field of planning, mainly concerned centre development plans for the different districts.

These plans (for <sup>†</sup> five districts) were solely oriented on centre development including the necessary services.

They all had more or less the same set up. A description was made of the living conditions in the respective districts. After that one indicated the future land use by land-use plans.

The indicated developments of the different sectors were based on the availability of a "Labour pool" and of natural resources. Based on these descriptions one was able to project the future social and economic land use. A few years later B.R.A. planning staff expressed their dissatisfaction concerning the results of these plans. They planned for a better planning method, in which social and economic development processes are taken into account.

Between the period 1960 and 1970 there were few activities concerning the preparation of plans.

In 1960 there appeared a "Pre-advice concerning the area plan of Brokopondo" and in 1968 a "Development programme for the Coronie district and its surroundings."

The Brokopondo pre-advice embraced mainly questions about the hydroelectric power generation, the so-called "Afobakka dam". Not only transmigration of the bush negro villages got some attention but also directives were given to the sectoral productive development and the development of the social services.

The Development Programme of Coronie describes the agro-technical development, again based on potentialities.

After 1970, for almost all districts, except the one for Brokopondo and Saramacca, which are being prepared, at the moment regional development plans were drawn.

Also use has been made of private consultants in order to prepare the regional plans.

The following characteristics of the plans could be summarized:

Not in all of the regional plans, regional objectives were formulated.

Objectives were implicitly taken up in the texts, but were nowhere formulated explicitly. Only in the Para area plan general national objectives were taken as starting points and in the regional development plan of Eastern Suriname national objectives were regionalized. Most of the plans only refer to development possibilities. Agricultural production plans therefore play an important role. It is not surprising then that the human factor in the plans is more or less neglected. However, especially in the Commewijne Plan one tried to go one step further, by formulating a few specific projects and even elaborate two projects in more detail namely the "LOC", which is now being implemented, and the SINABO regional development centre project. The plan also gives some measures such as soil-credit and rent policy.

In the regional development of Pad van Wanica one tried to give and analysis of the problems besides giving "possibilities". Their solutions to these problems, however, are worked out in detail only for the technical part (drainage, road-building). In the regional development plan for Eastern Suriname, at least in the objectives, one took the human factor into account. One spoke of the "expected economic activity on behalf of the (local) population". But the Patamacca set up of the oilpalm plantation was, although profitable and suitable, not completely in accordance with the needs of the local population.

On the regional planning of Western Suriname different reports were presented. In 1979 there appeared, however, the final report. This report is almost completely oriented on, together with the Centre "Apoera" the bauxite and hydro electricity potentialities. For these sectors one worked out some economic effects such as cost price analysis and profitability of the mining activities and the aluminium plant. For the other sectors a few "possibilities" were described.

## VI. REGIONAL PLANNING AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### VI.1 Steering possibilities by Means of Regional Planning

As has been said previously, regional planning has multiple tasks. Regional planning has, however, in particular, the aim to successfully implement the national development policy in the regions. To what extent has this happened in the period behind us and what were the constraints?

We already observed that relationships and cooperation between regional and national planning were not optimal throughout the years. We can divide this steering possibility into two aspects:

1. Substantial steering possibilities
2. Institutional steering possibilities

The first item means that national, regional and sectoral objectives are consistent with each other; the institutional aspect means that this consistency is not incidental or ad hoc, but institutionalized concerning the plan preparation as well as the plan implementation.

If we once again follow the way in which the organization structure of planning and the role of regional planning in that occurred, we may say that the period between 1958-1976 can be indicated as a period in which there were some institutional steering possibilities B.R.A. prepared area and regional plans and was in charge of the co-ordinating of rural projects. We could not speak, however, of substantial steering possibilities because the area and regional plans initially lack social and economic development goals, and later on, only had development goals restricted to the development of natural resources. There was no consistency between national, regional and local objectives, amongst others, simply because of the fact that national objectives did not offer a comprehensive evaluation framework for regional and local objectives.

In the period after 1976 up to nowadays, we actually recognize neither institutional nor substantial steering possibilities.

Noteworthy, however, is the fact that from 1978 on, the desires and wishes of the different ministries (bottom-up approach) were taken up at the preparation of annual plans. Yet the project lists are prepared at the Central Planning Bureau, which is up to this moment, connected with the financial authorization of the CONS (Commission of Surinamese and Dutch Government Representatives), while the implementation is in the hands of the ministries with hardly any B.R.A. intervention. On the other hand B.R.A. produced regional plans of which implementation could not be enforced.

From this perspective, we consider regional planning as a means for steering national development with the condition that there exists substantial and institutional structures which guarantee steering possibilities.

## VI. 2. Regional Planning and Future National Development

From the foregoing paragraphs, one may draw the conclusion that national development can be realized by means of regional planning when a few criteria are met. These are:

### 1. The Political/Ideological Criteria

The objectives which are to be reached should not be contrary to the ideology of the Government that is in power. Once the development concept of the administration has been declared it should be made operational for national and regional planning.

The new Government in general, the Ministry of Planning and Development Management, in particular, have a clear concept in mind which covered also the mainlines of the national development concept as explained in this paper.

The approach in which the establishment of a production base has to be accompanied by the supply of basic needs, in which the human factor plays an important role has to be related to our regional objectives. Seen from the perspective of the above-mentioned, in future ideas reflected by the Government will be a stimulating condition for the chosen national development.

## 2. The Substantial Criterion

Concerning this criterion it is of utmost importance that regional and national development goals are consistent with each other. However, the translation of these regional goals to the project is not an easy task. Given the new political period, in which intensive cooperation will be possible in any case conditions will be created for a cooperative climate.

## 3. The Institutional Criterion

Of course, it is self evident that the possibility for implementation of policy should exist.

Also in this case we expect the Ministry of Planning and Development Management to take the appropriate measures. Mention can be made of the revision of the Planning Act, and the structure of our new Ministry of Planning and Development Management.

VII. REGIONAL PLANNING; CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES;  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

To what extent are countries as Suriname able to really "exercise regional planning"? To what extent are there constraining factors which are to be considered as data and therefore not to be influenced immediately. We could mention:

1. Manpower Problem

How could we fill all necessary functions in practising regional Planning?

Suriname has already because of its small scale concerning some functions and regions, shortage of expertise. Furthermore, we have the problem of low salaries of civil servants. Consequently, one has to handle carefully with its qualified personal. Probably job and region rotation will be a solution but most of all, there is an urgent need for training and re-training of personnel.

2. Connected to this, there is a problem of decentralization of regional planning to the districts, which is also related to manpower problems. As mentioned earlier, use can be made of a manpower rotation system.

Concerning the possibilities for regional planning in Suriname, we would like to refer to what we called substantial and institutional steering possibilities. When these conditions are met, actually a favourable planning environment is already created.

Schematically our recommendations are reflecting the following scheme (see next page): -

a) Vertically two columns can be distinguished

The institutional part by means of which the implementation of policy is established and the particular organization get their necessary authority, and the substantial part by means of which all the different steps are consistent with each other.

# Regional Planning frame work

