

United Nations

Nations Unies

UNRESTRICTED

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**ASSEMBLEE
GENERALE**

A/571
10 August 1948

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Summary and analysis of information transmitted

under Article 73 e of the Charter

Report of the Secretary-General

(Item 23 (a) of the Provisional Agenda of the Third Regular Session)

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED BY THE

GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS*

By letters of 28 July and 2 August 1948, the permanent representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations forwarded information transmitted by the Netherlands Government under Article 73 e of the Charter in respect of Curacao and Surinam.

Summaries of the information follow in the above alphabetical order. They are classified under the main headings which are contained in the Standard Form for the guidance of Members in the preparation of the information. Unless otherwise stated, the information relates to the calendar year 1947.

* This summary is also being laid before the Special Committee on Information transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
Curacao	3
Surinam	11

CURACAO

I. General Information (Optional Category)

A. — C. Geography, history and people

The territory of Curacao, also known as the Netherlands Antilles, consists of two widely separated group of islands. The first group, located off the coast of Venezuela, comprises the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. The other group, located about 180 miles east of Puerto Rico, comprises the islands of St. Eustatius, Saba, and the southern part of the island of St. Martin.⁽¹⁾ The total area is 995 square kilometers (450 square miles). The total population in 1947 was 148,530. The density of population per square kilometer was as follows: Curacao, 204.6; Aruba, 264.8; Bonaire, 18.5; St. Martin, 49.6; St. Eustatius, 30.9; Saba, 46.

The indigenous population may be divided into three groups: Roman Catholic, Protestants, and Jews. This distinction, in addition to being religious, is also social, cultural, and even ethnographic. The Protestant group has acquired a firm footing in official life, in the plantations, and in trade and industry. The largest population group, which the labourers constitute, is Roman Catholic. However, recent political development, and the creation of political parties, have overcome group distinctions.

The official language is Dutch. The colloquial language is "Papiamentu." However, in the islands of St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Martin, the English language is legally recognized and is used in the schools.

D. Government

The information transmitted contains a detailed description of the Government, including the powers of the Governor, the various executive departments, the legislature and the judiciary.

(1) Note by the Secretariat: The other part is French.

There are three political parties in the island of Curacao. Electors are male residents, over 25 years of age, with certain educational, income and property qualifications. The following electoral roll for 1937-38 shows the number and classes of voters:

	<u>Curacao</u>	<u>Aruba</u>	<u>Bonaire</u>	<u>Other Islands</u> ⁽¹⁾
Based on taxation	1,659	535	25	-
Based on property	-	-	-	118
Based on education	<u>511</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u>
Totals	2,170	553	31	148

Results of the 1937 and 1941 elections are stated. By 1941, the electorate had increased to the following totals: Curacao, 2,453 voters; Aruba, 1,267; Bonaire, 76.

In June 1946, a delegation presented a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, requesting constitutional reform. In November 1947, bills were introduced in the Netherlands Parliament to increase the autonomy of the Territory; and in January 1948, a Round Table Conference convened at the Hague, adopted seventeen resolutions which redefined the relationship between the metropolitan government and the Territory, and proposed several constitutional changes.

E. Human rights

The following human rights are listed in the information transmitted: freedom of religion, of the press, and of assembly; the right of petition; protection against arrest and search without a warrant.

II. Social Conditions

A. Social problems of race and cultural relations

There are no racial problems such as exist in other countries.

B. Labour and employment conditions

There is a great shortage of skilled labour and of domestic servants. The principal categories of wage earners are the workers in the oil industry, dock-workers, and the workers in the steel and building

(1) Note by the Secretariat: St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Martin.

industries. Average hourly wages in 1947 were: oil refineries, 0.85 to 0.90 guilders; (1) steel and building industries, 0.66 to 0.77 guilders; public works, 0.79 to 0.87 guilders; phosphate mines, 0.88 guilders; ports and docks, 1.25 guilders. The average work week is 45 hours.

There are four trade unions with two thousand members. The following labour legislation is in force:

- Contracts of Employment, 1941
- Employment of Children, 1939
- Workmen's Compensation, 1938 and 1941
- Hours and Holidays, 1932, 1939, 1941, 1943
- Labour Disputes, 1946
- Registration of Labour, 1945
- Accident Prevention, 1946

C. Public health and sanitation

The water works have five sea water distillation plants, each producing 250 cubic meters per 24 hours. Five more plants are under construction. In 1947, water was supplied to about 6,000 homes. The construction costs of the water supply for Willemstad and environs were about 5,000,000 guilders. Extension works will cost 2,000,000 guilders. In Willemstad, a partial sewage system has been established.

Total estimated public health expenditure for 1948 is 1,409,054 guilders.

There are 11 hospitals with 1,265 hospital beds, 78 doctors, 20 dentists, 120 nurses, 19 midwives, and 1 veterinary surgeon.

Courses of instruction are limited to those for dentists, nurses, and pharmaceutical chemists. In 1948, a course of training was initiated for medical analysts.

The summary of vital statistics is as follows:

a)	Number of deaths	1,013
	Rate per 1,000 population	6.8
b)	Number of births	4,907
	Rate per 1,000 population	33.3

(1) Note by the Secretariat: 1.88 guilders = 5s. Sterling = \$1.00 U.S.

- c) Number of deaths under
1 year 176
Infant mortality rate
per 1,000 live births 35.8

Diseases causing the highest mortality were:

	<u>Rate per 1,000 Population</u>
Diarrhea and enteritis (children under two years)	69.
Pneumonia	63.

Statistics of the causes of death in 1947 are not yet complete.

The above list gives the average.

The food of the population consists of meat, fish, vegetables, potatoes, rice, and flour, which form a fairly satisfactory diet. There is a great scarcity of fresh vegetables and fruit. These are mostly available in preserved form.

D. Housing conditions and programmes

In 1943, the Government issued a loan of 1,000,000 guilders, and in 1946, 2,000,000 guilders, at 3% interest, for housing for workers.

E. Welfare and relief

No information transmitted.

F. — G. Crime statistics and description of penal administration

Information transmitted but not summarized.

III. Educational Conditions

The educational policy is to provide equal opportunities for all students irrespective of religious belief. Curriculum for public and private schools is prescribed by law. Most of the private schools are Roman Catholic. Compulsory education will be introduced shortly.

There is a Commissioner of Parents established by law for every public school, to express its views on education. The cost of private and public education is borne by the territorial government. The education budget was 4,543,405 guilders.

Information on school buildings and other facilities, curriculum and language of instruction, was transmitted but is not summarized.

Scholarships are given by the territorial and the Netherlands Governments for study in the Netherlands. Pupils who can pay for such training are given free transportation.

Studies in vocational training, and apprenticeship of three to four years' duration are provided by the oil and petroleum companies at Curacao and Aruba. The Handicraft School of "Scherpenheuvel" and two Roman Catholic technical schools offer training as carpenters, joiners, furniture-makers, printers, tailors, mechanics, electricians, and agriculturists.

In 1947, there were 93 public and private schools with 26,409 pupils, distributed as follows:

	<u>Preparatory</u>		<u>Elementary</u>		<u>Secondary</u>	
	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Pupils</u>
Curacao	17	2,217	36	14,487	1	91
Aruba	4	451	17	6,841	-	-
Bonaire	2	178	4	1,067	-	-
St. Martin	2	107	3	524	-	-
St. Eustatius	1	37	2	201	-	-
Saba	-	-	4	208	-	-
Total	26	2,990	66	23,328	1	91

The Lago High School in Aruba, an American school, has a nursery school with about 75 pupils and a high school with about 350 pupils. The Venezuelan School, in Curacao, a three-year private institution, has 40 pupils. These get no Government subsidy.

There are 799 teachers, of which 352 are local and 447 imported; of the latter, 135 are from the territory of Surinam. The teachers include pupil teachers, who are exclusively Native women whom the Inspector of Education declares possessed of sufficient knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic and the Dutch language; fourth class teachers, who are certificated as assistant teachers in Curacao or Surinam; third class teachers, who hold a teacher's certificate from the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, or Curacao, and second and first class teachers, with supplemental qualifications.

The per capita expenditure⁽¹⁾ on education was 31 guilders. The pupil expenditure⁽¹⁾ was 172 guilders.

IV. Economic Conditions

Curacao is not rich in natural resources. Agricultural activity has greatly decreased owing to the transfer of labour to the oil refineries. There are no forests in the Island. The area in pastureland is small due to inadequate rainfall.

The 1948 appropriation for the Department of Agriculture is 816,400 guilders. The crops cultivated on an estimated 10,000 acres are kaffir corn, beans and peas, sweet potatoes, yams and vegetables. The Islands are largely dependent on imported foodstuffs. Aruba and Bonaire raise aloe to produce aloe-gum for export.

The latest census of livestock lists 5,064 cattle, 223 horses, 2,534 asses, 22 mules, 22,677 sheep, 76,880 goats, and 3,783 pigs.

Fishing does not meet the demand. Government encourages fisheries by granting loans. A soil programme has been drawn up by the Government. Farmers use the primitive method of hand-irrigation and some mechanical spraying. Use of agricultural machinery has recently increased under Government influence.

The Department of Agriculture runs an experimental farm on Curacao Island for both livestock and crops.

There are 120,400 acres of Crown land, 62,200 acres of which are leased for agricultural purposes for indefinite periods at 2 guilders per year. Other areas owned by operators total 104,100 acres; 1,000 acres are rented by workers. The land used for major export crops is 5,850 acres.

Lately, in Aruba, a concession to mine gold was granted to a Canadian company; in Curacao, a Netherlands company obtained a concession to mine phosphate. Phosphate production amounts to 74,000 tons

(1) Calculated by the Secretariat from the information transmitted.

annually. Gold mining in Aruba is still in the prospecting stage.

A rice-hulling plant was established in 1946. There is one oil refinery in Curacao and two in Aruba.

D. Standard of living

From the income tax payments it appears that the number of persons who had incomes between 1,700 and 3,000 guilders was 12,184 in Curacao, 3,035 in Aruba, and 67 in Bonaire.

Comparative retail prices of some items were as follows:

Item	Unit	Price in Guilders September 1939	Price in Guilders March 1948
Rice	$\frac{1}{2}$ kilogram	0.10	0.36
Fish	2 "	1.25	2.50
Sugar	5 lbs.	0.37 $\frac{1}{4}$	1.05
Cotton shirt	one	2.00	6.64

E. Communications and transport

In Curacao, there are four seaports; in Aruba, three. 8,295 ships, with a total registered tonnage of 37,200,600, entered Curacao in 1947, compared with 7,990 ships of 75,934,966 tonnage in 1946. In Aruba, 8,295 ships of 35,034,276 tonnage entered in 1947, as compared with 7,579 ships of 84,699,006 tonnage in 1946.

Three companies provide daily air transport.

There are 320 kilometers of main roads in Curacao; 240 in Aruba; and 52 in Bonaire.

Two telegraph companies operate in the Territory. There are 2,125 telephones in Curacao, 415 in Aruba, and 75 in Bonaire. Two Government radio stations, leased to a private concern, broadcast daily.

F. Public finance

The estimated expenditure for 1947 was 39,506,439 guilders; estimated revenue was 41,975,018 guilders. Chief sources of revenue were: import duties, 8,830,291 guilders; income tax, 4,406,966 guilders; surtax on corporation profits, (150%) 4,985,913 guilders. A schedule of income tax assessments is given. Incomes below 900 guilders are not taxed. Surtaxes begin with income of 3,000 guilders. A profit tax of 8 guilders for every 100 guilders is levied on corporations.

G. Banking and credit

Information is given on the number of banks.

H. International trade

The total value of imports for the first and second quarters of 1947 was 285,707,569 guilders; total value of exports for the same period in the preceding year was 512,795,997 guilders. Following are the principal items:

	<u>Imports</u> (First and Second Quarters 1947)	<u>Exports</u> (1946)
Food and beverages	22,400,685 guilders	4,339,900 guilders
Drapery and haberdashery	11,090,385 "	1,060,241 "
Machinery	5,166,766 "	988,521 "
Oil (petroleum) and oil products	214,973,690 "	495,225,240 "

Trade, which during the war was chiefly carried on with the United States and Latin America; is now being resumed with Europe.

About 25% of the imports (excluding oil imported from Venezuela) comes from Europe. Exports to Europe are about equal to those going to the United States.

In Curacao, for most goods the average tariff is 3% of the factory price. Import duties are levied on food.

Trade agreements concluded by the Netherlands Government on behalf of Curacao impose quotas on imports from certain countries. The export of specific goods is prohibited by decree, but permits are granted under certain conditions.

I. Development programmes

The Government is to undertake extension of the harbours and construction of new landing quays in Curacao and Aruba. The promotion of tourism and the building of a modern hotel will be financed, partly by Government and partly from private sources.

I. General Information (Optional Category)

A. - C. Geography, history and people

Surinam is situated on the north coast of South America; it is bounded on the east by French Guiana, on the south by Brazil, and on the west by British Guiana. The total area is 142,822 square kilometers. In 1947, the population was 181,984, with a population density of 1.27 per square kilometer as compared to 1.24 in 1946. These figures do not include the aboriginal Indians and Bushmen, estimated at 3,700 and 22,000 respectively. The total population figure is 207,684.

D. Government

The information transmitted contains a description of the Government, including the powers of the Governor, the various executive departments, the legislature and the judiciary. Discussions are proceeding which will establish Surinam as a self-governing territory within the framework of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In November 1947, bills were introduced in the Netherlands Parliament to increase the autonomy of the Territory; and in January 1948, a Round Table Conference convened at the Hague, adopted seventeen resolutions which redefined the relationship between the metropolitan government and the Territory, and proposed several constitutional changes. The Surinam constitution will be revised and the membership of the Legislature changed.

E. Human rights

Civil rights established by the Surinam constitution are: freedom of the press, assembly, religion, and education; and right of individual property.

II. Social Conditions

A. Social problems of race and cultural relations

The constitution guarantees equal rights to all inhabitants. Racial differences do not give rise to any serious social problems.

B. Labour and employment conditions

The Government is aiming at the application of the standards prescribed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in so far as local conditions permit, and as soon as it is economically justifiable.

It is stated that details concerning the principal categories of wage earners are not yet available. Normal working hours are 8 1/2 per day and 48 per week. The unemployed are about 1,500.

The Surinam Workers' Organization consists of 36 trade unions with a total membership of 12,000. The majority of the trade unions have acquired legal recognition through official approval of their rules. There are no employers' organizations.

Labour disputes are adjusted by a Board of Mediators which may also serve as a Board of Arbitrators. During 1947, nine disputes, involving 3,049 employees, were submitted to the Board.

The following labour legislation is in force:

- Contracts of Employment, 1947
- Workmen's Compensation, 1947
- Hours and Holidays, 1947
- Labour Disputes, 1946
- Accident Prevention, 1938, 1947

There is a serious shortage of farm labourers and skilled industrial workers due to the emigration of about 4,500 labourers to Curaçao and Aruba. In 1947, 919 men, 642 women, and 374 children emigrated to these islands.

C. Public health and sanitation

Health problems arise from overcrowding, lack of regular means of subsistence, absence of hygienic standards, and primitive sanitary conditions which have become acute since the war. One-third of the population live in the capital, and one-half of the population, which is of Asiatic origin, adheres to unhygienic customs.

The territorial health budget was over 2,000,000 guilders.⁽¹⁾ No contribution is made by the metropolitan government. Medical facilities

(1) Note by the Secretariat: 1.88 guilders = 5s. Sterling = \$1.00 U.S.

include 4 public hospitals, with a total of 463 beds. There are 3 infirmaries with a total of 369 beds, 3 leprosy infirmaries with a total capacity of 355 beds, and a private Roman Catholic hospital with 60 beds.

The Government medical staff includes 41 physicians and 283 male and female nurses. There are also 15 private physicians, 13 dentists, and 31 male and female nurses. There are 18 Government and private midwives.

There is a Government medical school for the training of doctors; nurses and midwives receive training at the Government Hospital; dentists, pharmacists, and chemist's assistants receive private training. There is no veterinary school.

The following summary of vital statistics is given:

	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>
a) Number of deaths	2,028	2,338
Rate per 1,000 population	11.3	12.8
b) Number of births	6,098	5,983
Rate per 1,000 population	34.2	32.8
c) Number of deaths under 1 year of age	152 61.8	- -
d) Diseases causing high morbidity:		

Estimated cases treated

Ankylostomiasis	10,000
Malaria	2,900
Framboesia	2,000

e) Diseases causing high mortality:

	<u>Number of deaths</u>	<u>Rate per 100,000</u>
Pneumonia	128	72
Tuberculosis	96	54
Diarrhea and enteritis	76	43
Malaria	46	25

The state of nutrition of the rural population is fairly good, except for anemia due to malaria and hookworm.

D. Housing conditions

In 1946, the Government began a scheme to construct 500 dwellings per annum. Although rural housing conditions are improving, there is a great housing shortage in the town.

E. Welfare and relief

Poor relief and medical care are provided by the Government. There is a Government home for the aged. Government subsidies are granted to homes for juveniles.

F. - G. Crime statistics and description of penal administration

Information was transmitted but is not summarized.

III. Educational Conditions

Special educational problems are difficulties in teaching Dutch, due to the diversity of other languages; absenteeism in the rural schools; and the lack of school buildings, particularly in the rural districts.

Both public and denominational education are financed by the territorial government. No financial or other assistance for educational purposes is received from the metropolitan government. Missionary societies administer 70% of the schools.

Information on curriculum and languages of instruction was transmitted, but is not summarized.

The Medical School offers the only opportunity for higher education in the Territory. At their own expense, students may attend secondary school in Curaçao, and obtain higher education in the Netherlands and the United States. Adult education is not yet a responsibility of the Department of Education.

The information states that no figures regarding literacy are available. In 1946, there were 26,024 students in the elementary schools. There were 573 local and 40 imported teachers. The private elementary schools employ 46 uncertificated teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio is 42:1. The per capita expenditure on education was 53 guilders, or 63 guilders if allowances for high cost of living are included.

IV. Economic Conditions

A. - C. Natural resources and production

The economy is agricultural, and bauxite is the principal mineral

resource of the Territory. Some gold is mined. Various kinds of timber are among the forest resources.

Following are the crop production figures for 1946 in hectares: rice, 16,925; coffee, 4,874; sugar, 1,344. The Government sees to it that only the surplus of rice is exported. Citrus fruit production was 21,470,500 oranges (38,000,000 in 1947), 4,400,000 grape-fruit, and 4,500,000 lemons, limes and tangerines.

The livestock census of 1943 showed 23,535 cattle, 3,319 sheep and goats, 4,735 pigs.

In 1946, the total production of timber was 140,000 cubic meters.

Fishing does not meet the domestic demand.

In the Nickerie district, the rice plantations, in an area of about 5,000 hectares, receive water from an irrigation system. Another system with a capacity to irrigate 15,000 hectares is under construction.

The use of agricultural machinery is beginning.

There is no agricultural school, but special teachers visit the farmers and discuss agricultural questions. There is an agricultural bank in each district, which makes loans, not exceeding 5,000 guilders, to farmers.

The production of bauxite was 1,744,600 tons.

There is one shoe factory with thirty electric machines, which produced 10,000 pairs of shoes in 1946 from imported raw materials. Two leather tanneries which still adhere to old methods produced 10,000 kilograms of tanned sole leather in the first eight months of 1947.

There is a cement stone works which can produce 8,600 four-inch stones a week, and a brick and tile works which, during 1946, produced 148,000 bricks and 16,000 roof-tiles.

A Government subsidized school trains hat plaiters. A small clothing industry exists, consisting of five factories, one of which can produce 1,800 shirts, 1,500 pairs of pajamas, and 3,600 pairs of underwear a week.

D. Standard of living

Taking 1938-39 as the base date, the price index of local foodstuffs

in January 1947 was 266.2, and in January 1948 was 270; imported foodstuffs was 240.2 in January 1947, and 270.2 in January 1948. The average retail prices of the principal foodstuffs in October 1947 were, in cents: rice, 20 per kg.; sugar, 27 per kg.; meat, 140 per kg.; saltfish, 116 per kg.; flour, 53 per kg.

E. Communications and transport

664 ships, with a total tonnage of 4,537,800 cubic meters, entered the ports of the Territory in 1947, as compared to 381 ships with 2,114,373 cubic meters in 1946. The one railway line, from the capital inland, is 173 kilometers in length. There is one airfield, which is used by the two companies providing air transport. The total length of main roads is 525 kilometers, of which 28 kilometers are surfaced. There is a telegraph station which provides local and foreign service. The capital has a telephone system. There is also a radio-telephone system.

F. Public finance

Total revenue for 1946 was 12,671,966 guilders; total expenditure was 12,670,193 guilders. Income taxes were the principal source of revenue.

G. Banking and credit

Information is given on the number of banks. Interest rates were reduced in 1944: for mortgage loans, from 7% to 5%; for promissory notes and for discounting drafts, from 8% to 6%.

H. International trade

In 1947, the total value of imports was 30,932,013 guilders; the total value of exports was 24,581,839. About 20% of imports came from the Netherlands, and about 58% from the United States. Of the exports, bauxite, shipped to the United States, was the principal item and represented 71% of total exports.(1)

I. Development programmes

Various plans are under consideration. They include establishment

(1) Note by the Secretariat: Percentages calculated by the Secretariat from information transmitted.

of banana plantations, restoration of cocoa production, construction of soap factories, and a cold storage plant. A plywood factory of 750 cubic meters per week capacity is under construction, and an orange juice extracting plant recently has begun operating.

The Netherlands Government has appropriated 40,000,000 guilders for economic reconstruction of the Territory, and to attract capital, the territorial government has decided to issue permits to foreign companies to facilitate transfers in foreign currency under certain conditions.