



National Instituut voor Voedselveiligheid Suriname

National Institute for Food Safety Suriname

## **SURINAME'S DRAFT MODERNIZED FOOD LAW STARTS ITS PARLIAMENTARY JOURNEY WITH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS PRIOR TO BEING TABLED FOR EXAMINATION BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.**

On Tuesday, June 18, 2024, the National Assembly of Suriname, led by the chairperson of the Committee of Rapporteurs, Mrs. Ch. Dijksteel, MPH, MS Bioethics, along with the committee members, began preliminary discussions on the proposed new food law for Suriname. These discussions were meant to offer initial stakeholder input on the modernized text prior to it being officially tabled and reviewed by the National Assembly of Suriname. During this inaugural session, representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries (LVV), Health and Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation (EZOTI), the Bureau of Public Health (BOG), and the National Institute for Food Safety Suriname (NIVS) gathered to share their views and insights.

During the session, various important issues related to the draft food law were discussed. A central topic of discussion was the way certain food regulatory functions identified in the law would be managed, in view of the current work of some government institutions performing these functions in the interim, such as the Bureau of Public Health (BOG) and EZOTI. Certain food regulatory functions identified in the law, including the registration and recognition of food businesses (Article 3), food recalls (Article 7), and the control and supervision of compliance with food safety regulations (Article 8) are meant to be implemented solely by the newly created food safety competent authority: the National Institute of Food Safety of Suriname or NIVS, even if they are currently performed by other partners, partially and in the interim. The representatives of the government institutions emphasized the need of clarification of functions between government organisations, to ensure that no unnecessary administrative burdens and costs be imposed on businesses, and to avoid duplication of regulatory functions.

During the discussions, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture or LVV and the NIVS reminded participants that, according to the NIVS Act (S.B. 2021 no. 19), the newly created National Institute for Food Safety Suriname (NIVS) is the sole authority responsible for food safety. This means that all powers related to food supervision will be eventually transferred to the NIVS, in accordance with Article 28:1 of the NIVS Act. The institute will leverage the experiences and developed procedures of existing government organizations to formulate its own protocols and collaborate with existing institutions where necessary.

The food regulatory functions described in the draft modernized food safety law will therefore be solely managed by NIVS and the Food law will be a necessary complement to the NIVS Act, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of food producers and other partners in the food system of Suriname.

Chairperson Dijksteel concluded the meeting by thanking the stakeholders on behalf of the Committee of Rapporteurs for their contributions, emphasizing the importance of this proposed new food law as a necessary tool that enables the NIVS to effectively carry out its mandate, bringing Suriname in the concert of nations that are equipped with a modern food safety legislation aimed to enhance the protection of Suriname consumers and to contribute to increasing the trust in Suriname food products, domestically and internationally.