



**Statement by the  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Suriname**

**H.E. Lygia Kraag- Keteldijk**

**at the  
General Debate of the Sixty Second Session  
of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address this gathering today and on behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Suriname I extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, for having been entrusted the task of leading the work of the General Assembly during this Sixty-second Session. We pledge our full support and cooperation as we collectively continue our work on the many challenges the world is faced with today.

Allow me to salute your predecessor, Madam Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for guiding the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations and for her dedication and commitment towards the strengthening of multilateralism.

To the newly appointed Secretary General of the Organization, His Excellency Ban Ki Moon we pledge our support in furthering the ideals of the Charter towards sustainable development, international peace and security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. President,

The current international scene predominantly speaks about the devastating effects of climate change, also the recent findings of the "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change" have confirmed the warming of the climate system, and clearly linked it to human activities.

The effects of climate change will be felt in all parts of the world. However, the impact will be worse in small and vulnerable states.

Suriname is a low lying coastal country, and the majority of the population is concentrated in the coastal zone, where most economic activities including fisheries, agriculture and industries are located. Sea level rise would therefore be catastrophic for our country.

Taking into consideration the national interest to exploit the natural resources, it is imperative for a country to find a sound balance between economic development and the preservation of the environment.

Therefore, the Government has declared a substantial part of our land area as nature protected area, including the Central Suriname Nature Reserve, which has been designated as a World Heritage site by the UNESCO. Since the majority of our land surface is covered by tropical rainforest, Suriname thereby contributes significantly to counterbalance the effects of global warming.

A global threat however, justifies a global action and the responsibility to provide an adequate answer lies with all of us.

We call on the international community and development partners to increase their efforts and to continue their technical and financial support to developing countries to safeguard the world environment for current and future generations.

Mr. President,

The Government of Suriname remains committed to realizing by 2015 the targets set forth in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This commitment is expressed in our policy documents. Not only do we accept the challenge to realize the MDGs, but also the commitment towards our people, to realize sustainable economic and social development in every part of the country, including the remote areas in the interior that are mainly populated by indigenous peoples and maroons.

The Republic of Suriname places great importance on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those of indigenous peoples. With the historic adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People recently, Suriname joined the international community in giving recognition to the rights of indigenous peoples.

I wish to note that in recognition of the position of indigenous peoples as natives, the Republic of Suriname has recently declared August 9<sup>th</sup>, being the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, a national holiday.

The Surinamese society which is multi ethnic, multi linguistic, multi cultural and multi religious, attaches great importance to tolerance and mutual respect and therefore I commend the High Level Dialogue on Inter Religious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, which will start tomorrow.

I would like to recall that slave trade and slavery are among the worst violations of human rights in human history, particularly given their scale and duration. We call on the international community to continue supporting the initiative of the Caribbean Community to honour the memory of all those who suffered as a result of slave trade and slavery.

Mr. President,

The United Nations is the supreme institution, to advance multilateral diplomacy. Suriname will continue to advocate for the strengthening and updating of the multilateral system, in order to adequately address global issues in the area of inter alia environment, energy, water, peace and security.

Suriname adheres to the rules of international law. In this context the Government of Suriname respects the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal, which was constituted to establish a maritime boundary between Suriname and Guyana pursuant to Annex VII of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Award, which includes a finding of jurisdiction to consider the Parties' maritime delimitation claims, establishes a single maritime boundary between Guyana and Suriname that differs from the boundaries claimed by each of the Parties.

Suriname is pleased that the rules of international law have brought an end to a longstanding dispute.

In closing Mr. President, I reiterate my country's commitment to achieve the objectives of the United Nations, upholding the Charter and the rules of international law for contributing towards a genuine global partnership.

Thank you.