



Statement

by the

President of the Republic of Suriname

His Excellency Desiré Delano Bouterse

at the

General Debate

66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York

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Please check against delivery

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Mr. President of the General Assembly, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,

Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon

Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. President,

May I join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

We are aware of your efforts in promoting the goals of the United Nations, and in acting as a bridge between the developed and the developing world. We pledge full support and cooperation as you steer the work of this session.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, for guiding us with much efficiency through the proceedings of the past session. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

To Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who stands once again at the helm of our organization, we continue to extend our support and cooperation.

We welcome our newest member, the Republic of South Sudan, to the family of nations.

Mr. President,

The United Nations was founded on the prime belief that collective action can serve our collective security. This steadfast principle becomes even more valid if we are to successfully address the many challenges that threaten world peace today.

In your inaugural statement as President, you referred to the enormous political, social, economic and environmental challenges facing the world.

I could not agree with you more.

-- Pandemics such as AIDS, malaria and NCD's;

-- threats related to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, human trafficking, illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons, and illicit drug trade;

-- risks posed by climate change; and

-- the continuing vulnerability of our women and youth.

All these perils call upon us to deepen our cooperation and strengthen our international institutions.

Although some citizens in developing countries enjoy good living standards, the realization of sustainable development in many of these countries remains unattainable.

Achieving social justice for all represents the most basic humanitarian challenge of our times. In order to move the world further along the path of compassion, solidarity and shared responsibility, this goal deserves our highest attention.

Mr. President,

As the world becomes more intertwined, the impact of climate change in one country or region is affecting the prosperity and security of others as well.

As responsible citizens of this precious planet, we must stand united behind the collective goal to preserve our world for current and future generations.

Our understanding of climate change suggests that our planet will undergo considerable changes over the next 50 years, impacting all areas of society.

For Suriname and its low lying coast line, this means a vulnerable exposure to a rising sea level, risking inundation of our fertile soil and fresh water reservoirs.

With 80% of Suriname's population living in the coastal area, our ability to produce food and guarantee food security will be in serious jeopardy.

For countries such as ours, it is therefore of paramount importance that the international community honors its commitments, and realizes a speedy implementation of the Cancun agreements on the Special Climate Change Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

We cannot afford that the upcoming Durban Convention on Climate Change fails to produce concrete agreements and targets on reducing emissions, which would lead to a halt or drastically reduce the rising temperature on the planet.

We owe this to our present and future generations. We call upon all parties concerned to reach an agreement.

Mr. President,

Suriname stands at a crossroads, now, regarding its efforts to attain sustainable development.

We resolve to promote an investment friendly environment, with prudent fiscal and monetary policies that are aimed at securing macro-economic stability in the medium and long term.

The main objectives of our development strategy are:

- Maintaining real economic growth and raising per capita income, while simultaneously promoting a more equitable income distribution.
- Further developing the mining sector as the engine of economic growth on the short- and medium term.
- Moving away from a commodity based economy, and focusing on the diversification of the economic structure and increased investment in other sectors such as, agro-industry, tourism, services, transport, infrastructure and housing.
- Investing in our human capital as our most important resource. In this context, Suriname will strengthen its national capacities to improve the utilization of our abundant natural resources for the benefit of its people.

Mr. President,

We are well aware that we cannot move forward in isolation. We recognize the strategic interest of international cooperation to complement national development policies.

In this process we are strongly committed to the objectives of such regional organizations as CARICOM and UNASUR.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the current international financial crisis - that is not of our own making - Suriname's present economic outlook remains favorable.

Improper management of this world crisis, however, will have negative consequences on our economic performance.

We are pleased with the decision of UNASUR for a complete restructuring of the international financial system, with the participation of all nations in the decision making process.

The time has come to bring an end to the practice of decision making by only a few with disastrous consequences for the majority of the peoples of the world.

For countries as Suriname, with small open economies, it remains of vital importance to continue on the path of prudent macro-economic policies and economic diversification.

Mr. President,

Since it is understood that sustainable development can only be attained in a safe environment, it is crucial to preserve international peace and security.

Armed conflicts, interference in domestic affairs of states, terrorism, and transnational crime - including drug related crime, illegal trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons- only derail our efforts to address the challenges we are faced with today.

Mr. President,

At the 66th session of the General Assembly, we are once again confronted with a reflection on the spirit of our Charter, related to the observance of international peace, security and development.

The theme for this assembly ***The Role of Mediation in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes*** is most fitting for this timeframe, since mediation can and should become one of the most effective instruments in international conflict resolution.

The failure to recognize and apply the principles of equity and justice in international relations has resulted in unacceptable situations.

These have brought about extreme poverty, further marginalization, ever increasing brutal forms of criminality and the destruction of the environment.

At the same time we increasingly bear witness to acts of war and intervention in many parts of the world. Such armed conflicts are sometimes preceded by a mandate of our very own Security Council, with disregard to the consequences of destruction, loss of lives and human suffering.

Suriname wishes to draw urgent attention to the stipulations of Article 33, Chapter 6 of the United Nations Charter, which in our opinion have not been exhaustively applied. This failure has resulted in an unnecessary continuation of violence on the African continent.

I also express concern regarding the situation in Somalia where severe famine has taken the lives of tens of thousands, and continues to be a threat to thousands more.

We must ask ourselves if the architects of the acts of war on that same continent - under the pretext of protection of human rights - could not better have used those precious resources in the fight against famine.

Furthermore, the Security Council should be a forum for dialogue and actions, fully responsive to current and future global challenges and should not be permitted to bypass the efforts of regional institutions, which aim to promote the peaceful settlement of a dispute.

In particular, when outbursts of violence occur, peaceful efforts should never be hindered nor neglected.

On a special note, Mr. President, it is of great concern that approximately eighteen months after the disastrous earthquake in Haiti, the recovery efforts on this island nation are stagnating.

We, therefore, call upon the international community to honor its pledges and continue to support the effort of the Haitian people to reconstruct their homeland.

Suriname reaffirms the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination, including the right to an independent State of Palestine, as endorsed by the United Nations in December 2010.

Suriname has answered to the plight of the Palestinian People and has taken the decision to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, worthy of becoming a full-fledged member of this world organization.

We also reiterate our concern about the persistence of the imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. These measures continue to cause hardship for the Cuban people and adverse effects on a just development of this country.

How many more resolutions need to be adopted before justice can be done to the people of Cuba?

Suriname once more calls on the member states of the United Nations to vehemently reject the unilaterally imposed embargo on this nation.

In closing, Mr. President,

The provisions and the spirit enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations remain valid as an instrument of promoting international peace, security and development.

As members we have the moral obligation to continue to live up to the provisions of this Charter, taking into consideration the demands of changing times in a changing world.

We must, however, ensure that unity and justice reign among all nations.

Thank you, Mr. President