



**Statement**

**by**

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

**on behalf of H.E. Desiré Delano Bouterse  
President of the Republic of Suriname**

**General Debate  
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*Please check against delivery!*

President of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Kutesa  
Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

My statement today is made on behalf of the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Desiré Delano Bouterse.

Mr. President,

We want you to be assured of our support in these turbulent times of international politics. Your task will not be an easy one.

We pay tribute to your predecessor Ambassador John Ashe, for his excellent leadership during the 68<sup>th</sup> Session.

We also wish to empower Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his endeavors to steer the ship of the United Nations through the rough waves of shifting economic forces and rapidly changing political arenas, in an environment where violence and intolerance - whatever the root causes - seem to prevail. Whereas interdependence, self – determination and non-interference should be the guiding principles, we are faced with an incredible desire for domination in the name of undefined, so-called 'national interests'.

Mr. President,

Small and vulnerable states like Suriname and its sister nations in the Caribbean, are almost bedazzled by the inconsistent and downright opportunistic arguments used by the powers that be.

We have looked at some of the arguments used to invade Grenada, and we have compared these to the arguments used to justify military involvement in the Ukraine. What a similarity!

We have carefully studied the reasoning behind the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state, and we made the comparison with the stand against the alleged annexation of Crimea.

We tried hard to understand the value of a referendum in the case of the Malvinas, and the value given to the referendum held in Crimea.

Mr. President, States with our level of media, military and economic vulnerability, cannot but feel extremely uncomfortable with the custom made slogans, void of any genuine moral value, which are only meant to force our minds into precooked recipes.

We express our sincere wish that the United Nations develops the muscles needed to restructure and democratize itself and to move away from restrictive veto powers towards inclusive legal institutions that can effectively apply and monitor the adherence to the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

We see this as the only way forward to achieve the ultimate goals of peace and sustainable development, even for the smallest members of the international community.

The real proof of civilization is total respect for the seemingly insignificant members of any social entity. Let us, then, become truly civilized!

Mr. President,

In sharp contradiction to the turbulence and challenges mentioned, we want to draw the attention of this august body to Latin America and the Caribbean which, relatively speaking, is a unique area of peace and tranquility.

It is important to answer the question: Why is this region showing us the way forward?

From a military point of view, it is an area in the world that is nuclear free. The Treaty of Tlatelolco has proven to be an effective instrument to monitor and maintain Latin America and the Caribbean, free from nuclear threats.

Furthermore, it is important to note that at the political level, interdependency has become the driving force of both multilateral and bilateral relations. Small and large states alike interact on the basis of established treaties and the principles of mutual respect, mutual concern and mutual benefit. UNASUR, CELAC and CARICOM in particular, have played an important role so far in furthering this cause.

The third and certainly the most important factor that guarantees durable peace in our region, is the implementation of people-oriented socio-economic policies. We have seen these programs develop in Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and my own country Suriname, to mention a few.

The emphasis on policies and programs related to health care, education, youth and sports is rapidly changing the image of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We invite the world community to take note of these positive realities in functioning democracies, as they translate into regional integration processes with nothing less than a bright future.

Looking at the positive picture at the national level, we must also address the challenges of dealing with all forms of transnational organized crime in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Suriname fully supports all initiatives that have been deployed to face these challenges.

Mr. President,

Having said this, we must assess two areas of concern that we as a nation face today.

Economically speaking, the latest report of the IMF indicates that Suriname has reached an average per capita income of approximately USD 10,000.

Our GDP is primarily based on the mining sector, where gold mining and the production of crude oil and its derivatives represent 33% of same. This sector is responsible for 90% of our total export revenues.

We are aware of the fact that the nature of this sector is extractive and, as such, subject to depletion. In order to make the economy sustainable, the government has developed the policy to ensure that the revenues from the non-renewable sectors are invested in developing our human capital in order to bring the capacity of the Surinamese people to its full fruition in the interest of themselves and of the entire nation.

In order to have this policy materialize, President Bouterse has announced at the onset of his term, a Social Contract that has been substantiated in the following program: **the legal framework to guarantee a minimum wage, health care coverage for every citizens and pension for the elderly.**

In the past four years, Suriname has implemented new programs to promote advanced education at all levels, including afterschool care programs for primary and secondary students as well as scholarship programs for higher education. Furthermore, legal instruments are being prepared with a full safety net, preventing drop-outs.

A variety of programs are also being designed and executed to make public health more accessible to all segments of society. The construction of new hospitals, the decentralization of health centers and the expansion of emergency room services have been either put into place, or are in the pipeline.

In the same vein, various programs have been developed to combat the incidence of NCDs in close cooperation with other CARICOM member states. Our ultimate goal is that these initiatives will become part and parcel of the PAHO and WHO future programs.

With regard to the imminent threat of the spreading of the Ebola virus, the government has entered into close consultations with neighboring countries, the sub-region and the global community to design and implement programs to coordinate and cooperate effectively in preventing the spread of this deadly virus.

Mr. President,

As a matter of course, we can only sustain the above-mentioned initiatives within an appropriate fiscal discipline. We are forced to strike the right balance between economic growth, socio-economic concerns and respect for our natural environment.

In doing so, Suriname has been classified as an upper middle-income country with an improved ranking in the United Nations Human Development Report of 2013.

However, this classification limits our access to concessional financing, which contradicts our aspirations and endeavors to sustain the above-mentioned achievements. Honestly speaking, we are experiencing this as a punishment for doing well. A classification solely based on statistics, and not on our socio-economic reality, can never serve the objective of sustainable development aimed, at human development. We call upon the multilateral and bilateral funding institutions to adapt their policies to this approach.

Mr. President,

There is another area of prime interest we want to draw your attention to. Suriname's territory is covered by more than 90 percent with forests, which annually absorb 8.8 million tons of carbon, while our annual emissions are 7 million tons of carbon. Suriname thus absorbs 1.8 million tons of carbon *more* than it emits on a yearly basis.

While many countries work towards becoming carbon neutral, Suriname already qualifies as a carbon negative country.

With an annual deforestation of 0.02 percent, and having dedicated 13 percent of its national territory to preserving and protecting our vulnerable ecosystems, we are thus generating a national and global asset.

In stark contrast to these positive realities, Suriname, paradoxically, has become one of the most vulnerable countries in the world as a result of climate change.

At the recently held Climate Summit 2014, Suriname indicated that sea level rise will:

- severely damage or destroy our coastal ecosystems, including most of our arable land;
- damage or destroy over 40 percent of our GDP;
- damage or destroy the homes of over 80 percent of our population;
- damage or destroy our world heritage designated capital; and
- endanger the way of life of most of our cultures, living along the coastal and river shores.

Changes in rainfall patterns and rising temperatures are already leading to:

- increased health risks and associated costs
- decrease in hydropower production, and
- reduced access of river pathways

Mr. President,

It is disturbing to experience the serious lack of international commitment to support us in taking the proper measures to avoid the pending disasters.

We therefore must join hands with similar vulnerable countries who have a strong framework and history of respect for ecosystems.

We call upon the rest of the world to become pro-active in their support of the measures that we are compelled to take and to raise the respective issues on the international agenda.

Mr. President,

Suriname wants to emphasize the need for a fundamental restructuring of the United Nations, in order to make our organization better equipped to effectively deal with the international issues at hand.

Once again - we present the experience of Latin America and the Caribbean as a shining example of how durable peace could be achieved.

Within this context, the economic blockade against the Cuban people may be considered as a regional anomaly that must end now.

The role of women in achieving sustainable development- both at the level of civil society and at the level of political leadership - has proven to be an important factor in the creation of an atmosphere of tolerance and the choice for dialogue, instead of resorting to violence.

We must continue to encourage our women - comprising more than half of the world population - to persist in their struggle for participation and inclusion, and share in the load of responsibility for peace and sustainable development.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Suriname is ready and willing to play its humble part in helping to find workable solutions for the global issues at hand.

We reiterate our commitment to all human rights; to a policy of interacting responsibly with the natural environment in our quest for sustained economic growth, as well as our commitment to peace through dialogue.

I thank you.