

**Statement by H.E. DESIRE DELANO BOUTERSE
President of the Republic of Suriname**

**delivered on behalf by H.E. Ginmardo Kromosoeto, Minister for
Environment, Spatial Planning, Land and Forest Management
at the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
June 21, 2012**

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Your Excellency, President of the Conference,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The members of the United Nations, at the First United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, committed themselves towards the transfer of new technologies, the availability of financial resources to developing countries and the adoption of agreements on the sustainable use of our forests as well as three Rio Conventions on: Climate Change, Biological Diversity and Combating Desertification and Drought.

Now today, 20 years later our conclusion is that realization stands at a disappointing low level, presenting us old and new challenges, even greater, and leaving us in agony of serious doubt regarding our own ability to be creative and to bring the necessary solutions to dangers threatening our own survival as a species!

Notwithstanding the fact that in the last two decades some developing countries have made progress in becoming important economic players in the world, we must express our disappointment that the disparity at all levels between countries has increased, because of our reluctance to act correctively based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to recall that we pledged to reach by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals. Sadly the records of our achievement in this regard are disappointing.

It is fitting to pause for a few seconds to remember all those who have perished in the twenty years since 1992 as a consequence of environmental pollution and natural disasters, unsafe drinking water, curable diseases, and for the unspoken horror of those who live their daily lives in extreme poverty and hunger.

The Government of Suriname firmly reaffirms its political commitment to sustainable development, in assessing progress and gaps in the implementation of agreed commitments, and in addressing new and emerging challenges to advance the global sustainable development agenda.

Suriname is classified amongst the greenest countries with a forest coverage of over 90%. By law we have protected 15% of our territory, including nature reserves and multiple-use management areas. Furthermore we are taking bold steps in replanting our mangrove forests to protect our vulnerable coastline and by so doing, contributing to the mitigation of the consequences of Global Warming.

The Amazon Basin is frequently linked to the issue of climate change and as a further step in our commitment to sustainable development it is with due pride that I inform that a national from my country will occupy the post of Secretary General of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, ACTO.

We furthermore welcome the decision mentioned in the outcome document to phase out the use of mercury in small scale artisanal gold mining, which is a priority in our national policies.

We also welcome the decision to organize a world conference on SIDS in 2014.

We affirm that we will participate actively in the processes to design SDGs, a financial framework for sustainable development and the high level forum within the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Suriname has made great strides in achieving important economic growth in recent years through prudent macro-economic policies and the sustainable use of its natural resources. This achievement has led to the classification of Suriname as a middle-income country. The same applies to other Caribbean countries as well. It is unjustifiable and we therefore disagree that our positive growth figures have led to decisions by industrialized countries and financial institutions, denying us access to concessional financial loans.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Suriname is committed to follow the path of incorporating principles of sustainability in its efforts to development, through responsible use of its natural resources.

In this endeavor due consideration is given to the interest of indigenous and tribal communities living on its soil, through dialogue and inclusion.

Our efforts however are being hampered by actions of some international actors, whom through the use of their financial resources, are often influencing national NGOs and groups, to take positions contrary to the national interest.

Accountability as one of the fundamentals of democracy should be applied to NGO actions. Their accountability should not only be to the one that provides the financial means, but above all to the community as a whole which feels the impact of their cause.

Excellencies ,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The present state of our world and the enormous challenges confronting us demand to break away from the paradigm 'business as usual'.

We must firmly keep hold of our belief that we can and should join forces and continue to make the necessary difference by agreeing on united ways forward, as we acknowledge the urgency of the task set for us.

The Government of Suriname congratulates the Government and People of Brazil for hosting this august gathering for the second time giving us opportunity to exchange views on our achievements, shortcomings and failures over the past 20 years.

The outcome of this Rio+20 meeting may not fully respond to our expectations. We must however not forget that the eyes of our peoples are focused on us to deliver solutions to actual needs of our time!

Finally Mr. President,

I wish to inform that yesterday, for the first time in its history, the Republic of Suriname suffered the effects of a storm. The delegation of Suriname at this Rio+20 meeting takes this opportunity to express its votes of solidarity with those affected.

Thank you Mr. President.

Thank You