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Statement by

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of the Republic of Suriname**



on the occasion of the
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Suriname, H.E. Desiré Delano Bouterse, the Government and the People of my country, I wish to congratulate you and the international community with the convening of this Summit and the adoption by acclamation by world leaders of its outcome document "**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**".

I take the opportunity to thank the President of the 69th General Assembly, H.E. Sam Kutesa, for his guidance of the process to shape the global agenda for the coming 15 years. I would like to also thank the co-facilitators, H.E. David Donaghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland, and H.E. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya, for their able leadership and tireless efforts in leading the intergovernmental negotiations, which resulted in the outcome document.

We welcome the fact that the **2030 agenda for Sustainable Development** has made provisions to include the unfinished business of the MDG's.

We also welcome the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the focus for the next 15 years on people, planet and prosperity in this agenda. We endorse the goals and targets and the integral role of peace and partnerships in this regard.

Mr. President,

For the past five years, closing inequality gaps in my country have become a high priority in the social contract between President Desiré Bouterse and the people of Suriname.

Suriname has therefore placed special emphasis on improving education, health and our socio-economic conditions. In this regard primary education is now free of charge, for all children in Suriname. In addition, we are implementing a national after school programme with the aim to enhancing the conditions for better learning. We further established a universal medical insurance program, including the provision of health insurance to senior citizens and children below 16 years, free of charge. Since non-communicable diseases are leading to decreased productivity and now have become the highest cause of death in Suriname and in the Caribbean region, we are developing policies and programs to fight these diseases, including by promoting healthy life styles. In addition, legislation has been adopted establishing a national minimum wage and a national pension floor for all workers.

Mr President,

Declining prices in international commodities markets present an enormous challenge for my government to continue this development path.

Our objective is therefore to accelerate the transformation from a basic mineral and agricultural commodities producing country to a diversified economy. In this context emphasis will be placed on increasing value addition to the natural resources at our disposal as a nation and on developing other sectors.

Despite all these efforts towards achieving sustainable development, we cannot ignore the challenges we face to realize these objectives, especially as a middle income country. In this regard, we support the recognition in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, of the special challenges of Middle Income Countries. We welcome the encouragement to Multilateral Development Banks to explore ways to ensure that their assistance best addresses the opportunities and challenges of these countries.

Mr President,

Climate change is a major threat for my country. We are particularly vulnerable to climate change because of our low-lying coast where 80 percent of our population resides and major productive sectors operate.

Suriname has set an example to the world that we can be carbon negative. My country has maintained a forest cover of well over 90% of its total land area and a deforestation rate of 0.02 percent. To continue our efforts in conserving our forests and to increase our contribution to the world, Suriname is currently implementing the Readiness Preparation Plan (RPP) for REDD+.

Suriname looks forward to a successful outcome of the 21st Conference of Parties of the Climate Change Convention, to be held in Paris later this year. Our commitment and objective is to continue our tradition of protecting our environment. We are ready for partnerships, in particular related to cooperation within the context of adaptation and mitigation, which will lead to maintaining the global environmental benefits of our efforts.

Mr. President,

A revitalized global partnership for development is of paramount importance for successful implementation of this new agenda on the ground. This requires bringing together governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors, including youth.

Suriname reaffirms South-South cooperation as an important vehicle to advance

sustainable development and achieve greater unity and solidarity among developing countries

My government supports the people centered approach in the sustainable development agenda, with special attention to the most vulnerable in society: the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, children, women and youth.

Every effort possible needs to be made to invest in increasing their active involvement and opportunities in society, including in productive sectors. In particular gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and respect for all human rights should be ensured as well as the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

In this context, my government shares the view that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents the unique opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce inequality.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

Success and a better world will depend on ALL of us, individually and collectively. As Secretary General Ban Ki-moon recently so rightfully stated: *"We cannot have a Plan B, because we don't have a Planet B"*. Therefore, we have to be bold and strong in our political and financial resolve, since failure is not an option.

I thank you.