



**STATEMENT
BY THE
MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OF THE REPUBLIC
OF
SURINAME**

**HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. GREGORY A. RUSLAND**

**THE 14TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Check against delivery!

*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Suriname to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 320, New York, NY 10017 Telephone 212-826-0660
fax : 212 980-7029 email: Suriname@un.int*

Mr. Chairman, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's also a pleasure for me to address the 14th session of the Commission on sustainable Development. Suriname aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa, speaking on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

The importance of the availability of energy for sustainable development has been stressed during the past couple of days of our meetings. Therefore, I would like to concentrate my contribution on the situation in Suriname, a CARICOM country on the north coast of South America.

In the multi annual year plan 2006-2011 of the Government of Suriname special attention is paid to the availability of energy as part of our efforts to realize the MDGs, by 2015. Reliable energy supply and its affordability are key issues in this respect. Like most other countries we face the challenge to provide the government's energy company with a rate that will allow it to manage the company, but at the same time we have to make energy affordable to every citizen in Suriname. Special attention is paid to the most vulnerable groups in our society, including single women with children.

Mr. Chairman,

Suriname has at the moment, the availability of app. 125 MW of energy which is sufficient for the current demand. However, our goal to increase production and thus economic development requires a strategy for increased energy availability. Our estimates are that by 2024 an additional 300 MW will be needed.

Our goal therefore is towards the expansion of the hydroelectric facilities. Currently, app. 75 % of our electricity needs is covered through hydro-power. With the expansion we will have an additional reliable source of energy that will allow us to control the related costs of production and thus the electricity rates.

An additional challenge for the government is to supply electricity to the villages of indigenous peoples and maroons in the interior. Our current method is through the use of diesel generator sets. However, we have started a project building small hydro electric facilities which will deliver different benefits in terms of the reliability and the environment.

Also, experiments are being carried out in the area of wind and solar energy in especially the small villages.

Mr. Chairman,

Suriname has the availability of small reserves of fossil fuels, which are being exploited by the Staatsolie Company owned by the Government. We have built a refinery, with a capacity of app. 7,500 barrels per day. Studies will be finalized by the end of this month for an expansion of the capacity to app. 12,000 barrels per day. We will then be able to fully supply the current needs of the population as far as oil products are concerned.

We are also investing in the further exploration of oil by our own company. A couple of multinationals have production sharing agreements with our Staatsolie Company for offshore exploration activities. Companies active are Mearsk, Occidental and Repsol YPF, whereby 3D seismic evaluation will be done this year and hopefully we will be in the position for evaluations through drilling by 2007.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Suriname is trying to solve the energy questions before us in such a way that would enable us to meet the demands for sustainable development. Our efforts include the responsible use of the environment and we also pay special consideration to the situation of the local population in areas of activities. We are convinced that in cooperation with the international community we will be able to take those decisions that will enable us to reach the desired goals.

Finally, another matter Mr. Chairman, we would like to inform the committee that in the past couple of days, the southern part of Suriname has been struck by extra rain, which resulted in floods, as we have not seen before. Of the app. 37,000 people living in the area we estimate that 20,000 had to leave their homes. Mitigating this disaster requires a major operation and we are in the process of acquiring the necessary funding and technical assistance. We have received support from several organizations and countries and would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our gratitude on behalf of the President and the People of Suriname to the United Nations for their assistance already granted.

Thank you.