

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Niermala Badrising, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Suriname at the Signing Ceremony of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, New York, 22 April 2016

His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,
President of COP21, Her Excellency Ms. Ségolène Royal,
Executive Secretary, Mrs. Christiana Figueres,
Distinguished Excellencies,
Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as we bring the Paris Declaration to life, it encourages us to reflect on the importance of the sustainable use of our natural resources. It is of great significance that the global community, represented by a great number of world leaders and high representatives, has made a start to realizing the promises of protecting this planet, our common home.

In this regard, Mr / Mme Chair, the Republic of Suriname reiterates its desire to maintain for future generations its rich cultural and natural resources, and especially its forests. The forests of Suriname cover about 94% of our land and form a reservoir of 11 Giga tons of carbon, which absorbs more than 8 million tons annually. Calculations have revealed that our forests absorb 1.8 million tons of carbon more than we generate each year, resulting in a net carbon capture per capita of 3.3 tons out of the Earth's atmosphere.

Suriname is proud of its status as a significantly carbon negative country. It is in this spirit that the government continues to be committed to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases. One of the key policy tools in this regard, is the enactment and enforcement of a comprehensive Forestry Act to promote sustainable management of our forests. The implementation of a REDD+ Readiness program is an important part of this strategy.

Setting another stage to our green development policies is the newly adopted Energy Bill, which enables us to chart out specific renewable energy strategies.

Suriname recognizes, however, that realization of these aspirations requires many more resources than are available to us. In this light, Suriname became a member of the Green Climate Fund in December 2015.

SURINAME

My country has a low-lying coast and our population, fertile soils and our production sector are at risk of sea level rise. Hence, the government is urging and insisting that technical and financial support mechanisms in the context of existing financial frameworks, particularly under the Convention, needs to be developed to assist developing countries like Suriname.

This will enable us:

- to implement adaptation and mitigation policies and programs;
- to compensate for loss and damages;
- to provide for technology; and
- to safeguard food production and food security.

Nothing less will be required to indeed ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In this regard, for instance, to attain a more effective forecast of climatic events through the gathering and analysis of weather data, my government recognizes that a National Climate Institute is required.

Mr / Mme Chair,

In accordance with our culture and traditions, Suriname has historically always shown respect for Mother Nature. Our resolve in the fight against the impact of climate change, by becoming a party to the UNFCCC in 1997, was thus a logical step. Suriname has continued this commitment by protecting ecosystems and establishing nature reserves, which now make up almost 13 percent of our national territory.

In signing the Paris Agreement today, Suriname renews its pledge to the global commitments. And while we congratulate the world with the signing of the Agreement by a great majority of the Parties to the Convention, we call upon all to make haste in acting on the written commitments, so that we can leave our children and future generations a world that is safer, healthier and more prosperous.

I thank you.