

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

to the

COP21 HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

delivered by

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Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, at the outset I wish to congratulate, on behalf of the President and Government of the Republic of Suriname, the President and Government of France for hosting this historic gathering on an critical matter for our people, our lives and our economies. I salute the commitment and leadership of the Cop21 President, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius and I want to extend our thanks as well to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and his team for the excellent efforts undertaken so far.

As a Caribbean and South American nation and as part of the “Caribbean Community”, the “Small Island Developing States”, the “Alliance of Small Island States” and the “G-77 plus China”, Suriname is encouraged with the demonstrated commitment of all present here, and we underscore the statements made or to be made by those partners. We also align ourselves with the statement made by Ecuador on behalf of CELAC.

Madam President, the Republic of Suriname, is a country on the north-eastern part of South America, with a low lying coastal area of approximately 4.000 sq. miles.

Approximately ninety percent of Suriname is forested, making it one of the greenest countries on Earth. Mr. President, the world recognizes the critical role of forests in battling climate change, to reduce emission and remove carbon from the air. For this reason Suriname joined the Redd Plus initiative. To strengthen the objective of the 1.5 degree Celsius and the important role of forests in our

mitigation efforts, it is imperative that a REDD PLUS mechanism is anchored in the 2015 Climate Change Agreement.

Madam President, Suriname, is in the top ten of countries with the highest ratio of water resources per capita, a country where conservation of nature was happening long before any conservation convention came into existence. The country has nature reserves, nature parks and Managed Resource Areas, which are protected by law.

The Central Suriname Nature Reserve, 1.6 million hectares of pristine forest representing one-tenth of our landmass, is preserved for the world and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, serving to preserve the biodiversity, facilitating environmental research, education and awareness as well as maintaining the culture of those living in and around these preserved areas.

But, Mr. President, it should be emphasized that in our low lying coastal area, 90% of our population lives and works; it is also the area where 95% of our agricultural production takes place, and where we have the majority of our social and productive infrastructure and where our economy operates.

This circumstance creates increased vulnerabilities because of sea level rise and the increase of the sea surface temperature. We are prone to the “slow on-set impacts” of climate change result in changing weather patterns, coastal erosion, salt water intrusion, the degradation of our complex ecosystems, and loss of arable land, to name a few consequences.

To continue in a sustainable manner the Government of Suriname continues to put in place the required legislative, institutional and financial framework. It is also in this context that Suriname has submitted its INDC's under the Convention, with a special focus on adaptation and mitigation policies.

Mr. President, Suriname is carbon negative in its footprint and a carbon sink to the world and we will continue contributing to the reduction of the global temperature rise and building national resilience.

However, these efforts require support, in terms of financial and technical assistance and it is therefore imperative that we get access to maximum financial resources to build institutional and human capacity and implement programs and projects to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Financial resources which

should be easy accessible, equitable and concessional to identified vulnerable economies.

In closing, Mr. President, today we all have come to the realization that inaction and delay is not an option, and that each of us must bear the responsibility of working together, to tackle the impact of climate change while balancing sustainable growth with an environmentally friendly development path.

Our exercise today is not just about politics, not just diplomacy and certainly not only about symbolism, it primarily about creating the fundamentals of a new economic paradigm fostering solidarity, equity and equality.

Mr. President, Suriname looks forward to the completion of a comprehensive Climate Change Agreement that is fair, transparent, inclusive, legally binding and ambitious enough to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius or even less.

An objective less than this will harm us all, now or later. Thirty years from now we may conclude that we lost an historic opportunity here in Paris to demonstrate historic and collective responsibility to save this world. Let this not be the burden for future generations to bear.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, as we are taking a forward looking approach at the historic gathering, let us then also ACT with the future in mind.

I thank you.