



Address by the Head of Delegation of the Republic of Suriname

**H.E. Ambassador Henry L. Mac Donald
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Suriname to the United Nations**

**at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16 July 2015**

Please check against delivery.

Your Excellency Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia,
and President of the Conference,

Your Excellency Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Heads and Members of Delegations

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Mr. President,

1. I bring you greetings of H.E. Desire Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname and the assurances of the Government of Suriname's commitment to poverty eradication. With this commitment in mind he proposed to the global community during his address to the 65th Session of the General Assembly in 2010, a rethinking of the concept of poverty eradication. In Surinamese he advocated to "Broko a pina; Tik yu gudu", which means, "Break with poverty, pursue your wealth". In this people centred vision, government should focus on integration of economic activities and the strengthening of human capital, aimed at seriously improving the deployment of our productive capacities in fulfilling our basic needs. The emphasis should be on the well-being of people rather than on their poverty i.e. on their potentials and talents rather than their problems.
2. In the context of sustainable development, the closing inequality gaps became a high priority for Suriname, and special emphasis has been placed on improving education and our socio-economic realities. In this regard primary education is now free of charge, for all children in Suriname. In addition, we have started a large scale after school programme with the aim to enhance the conditions for better learning. Affordable and accessible healthcare, including combating HIV and AIDS. A universal medical insurance has been established, including providing health insurance to senior citizens and children below 16 years free of charge. Since non-communicable diseases have now become the highest cause of death in Suriname and in the Caribbean region, we are developing policies and programs to fight these diseases, which are leading to decreased productivity. In addition legislation has been adopted establishing a national minimum wage and a national pension floor for all workers.

Mr. President,

3. These investments were all possible, since Suriname has been experiencing modest economic growth in the recent past. This was in turn due to prudent macro-economic policies and windfalls in global mineral markets.
4. But at a time when Suriname needs to continue with these positive developments, we are confronted with slowing growth, as a consequence of developments in the global economy. As we speak mineral prices are falling. On top of this negative impact to our domestic revenues, our access to concessional financing has been restricted. International Financing Institutions and the United Nations decided that Suriname has graduated and that we are now a high middle income country, based on GDP per capita, as the only measurement for our development status. In relation to this issue, Suriname supports the recognition, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, of the special challenges of Middle Income Countries, including the encouragement to Multilateral Development Banks to explore ways to ensure that their assistance best addresses the opportunities and challenges presented by the diverse circumstances of these countries. Such challenges in the case of Suriname are related, among others, to sensitivity to external shocks due to its small size and economics of scale, other structural gaps in the economy and society, including dependency on commodities in the agricultural and mineral sectors, low value addition, and vulnerability to climate change and related natural disasters.

Mr. President,

5. Two days ago, The President of Suriname was re-elected for a new 5 year term and a new administration will soon be put in place. At this occasion and in relation to the current fiscal constraints, the President-elect reiterated our primary responsibility for our own development. In this regard, effective use of our domestic resources will be among strategies to be implemented with the highest priority. Suriname maintains its view that within this interdependent world we will continue to build on our strengths as the main driving force for the achievement of our development agenda.
6. However Suriname realizes that domestic resources alone will not be sufficient to support the pursuit of well-being of its population. An international enabling economic environment, including coherent and mutually supporting world trade, monetary and financial systems, and strengthened and enhanced global economic governance is needed to support national development efforts.
7. Suriname remains committed to the global processes in this context and cognizant of the opportunities and challenges for participation in regional cooperation frameworks, such as CARICOM, UNASUR and CELAC, as well as opportunities arising beyond borders. We continue to explore cooperation mechanisms with bilateral and multilateral donors and financing institutions in our pursuit of sustainable development.

Mr. President,

8. As an active member in the Group of 77 and China, Suriname has advocated strongly for holding this conference before the Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which will be held in September in New York. In our view an ambitious FfD outcome will provide opportunities for success in the implementation of the agenda and its goals. Although the FfD and Post-2015 tracks in our view are independent in their own right, Suriname recognizes the linkages, especially with the Means of Implementation of that agenda.

9. Suriname also shares the view that the post 2015 Development Agenda presents the opportunity to end poverty worldwide in this generation. Underscoring that the global community has the means to do so, a people centred approach, with specific attention to the most vulnerable in society will be paramount in this endeavour. 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.

Mr. President,

10. Suriname recognizes further that the FfD outcome could provide leverage for an ambitious outcome of the 21st Conference of the Parties of the Climate Change Convention to be held in Paris, France later this year. As a country with a low lying coastline, and with 80% of the population residing in the coastal zone, the negative effects of climate change have a direct impact on our development. We therefore look forward to a new global agreement, including significant reduction of global greenhouse gases emissions as well as commensurate financial resources, including through further operationalization of the Green Climate Fund, to assist developing countries to mitigate and to adapt to climate change adequately.
11. Suriname has a centuries' long dedication to protect its natural resources, in particular its forest resources comprising well over 90% of our total land area. We intend to increase the percentage of protected area - now standing at 13% - to a higher level. Suriname is indeed a country providing substantial carbon storage and annual carbon absorption, and thus delivering key ecosystem services to the world. We recognize the responsibility to continue to deliver these ecosystem services provided by the Amazon Rainforest. In this regard, the Government of Suriname is currently implementing the Readiness Plan for a REDD+ program.

Mr. President,

12. A renewed global partnership for development should lead to strengthening of the institutional framework for global economic governance, by increasing voice and participation of developing countries, including in international cooperation on tax matters.
13. Consideration should further be given to enhanced means of implementation to developing countries, in particular financing for development, capacity building and transfer of technology, fulfilling the Official Development Assistance commitments, providing market access, support debt sustainability of developing countries. There will be need for balanced financing resources combining public and private, international, national and local financial and non-financial means.
14. There is also need for further integration in regional production networks and into global value chains. Suriname understands the opportunities for the involvement of the private sector, in particular national entrepreneurs and micro small and medium enterprises as well as the employment of innovative public-private –partnerships in the pursuit of sustainable development. We are equally aware of limitations of the private sector's involvement in the most important sectors for sustainable development such as health, education and infrastructure, where possibilities for profit margins are limited.

Mr. President,

15. We have learned that developing countries must make special efforts to strengthen economic interactions among themselves, complimentary to ties with their traditional trade partners in the North. We must concentrate on making special efforts and give substance to south-south

trade. This is an important consideration for setting a new stage for global sustainable development. Suriname reaffirms the principle of South-South cooperation as an important vehicle to advance sustainable development and achieve greater unity and solidarity among the countries of the South. Our focus on and support for regional and south-south cooperation should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of north-south and triangular cooperation. In contrary it is our view that developed countries should honor their commitments and obligations.

Mr. President,

16. There is need for meaningful partnerships, including with civil society and with relevant international organizations to advance sustainable development. Over the years Suriname has built a strong tripartite tradition involving trade unions and the private sector in the elaboration of decisions regarding socio-economic development. We are also improving the relationship with and involvement of civil society and the major groups in issues of importance to them.
17. Further, Suriname always ranks youth involvement among its highest priorities. In Suriname we have created the Youth Parliament, an institution of elected young people by themselves, which advices and monitors the Government on policies related to youth development.

In conclusion, Mr President,

18. Suriname wishes to congratulate you and the international community with the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. We specifically welcome the dedicated attention and sections devoted to science, technology, innovation and capacity building as well as to data, monitoring and follow-up. In this regard we suggest strengthening statistics technical cooperation and training activities and strengthening public administration, particularly in support of implementation and accountability and monitoring framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
19. Suriname considers the establishment of an intergovernmental follow-up process for the FfD process, which will also follow-up on the Means of Implementation for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its links with the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as well as the establishment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism as the legacies of the Addis Ababa Conference. The agreement on the tax committee also makes this conference a landmark meeting and gives it a legendary status.

Finally, Mr President,

20. Allow me to express through you my gratitude to the Government and the People of Ethiopia for hosting this conference and for the hospitality accorded to my delegation, since our arrival in Addis Ababa.

I thank you, for your kind attention.