



Statement

by

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Please check against delivery!

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary General,

Heads and Members of Delegations

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate H.E. John Ashe on his well deserved election as President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly.

President John Ashe, you bring honour to your country Antigua and Barbuda, and the Caribbean.

With your renowned expertise in the field of sustainable development, you are well prepared to effectively lead our deliberations in an excellent manner on the theme of this Assembly - "The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage".

I would like to assure you and your staff of the support and cooperation of my delegation and myself, during your Presidency.

I also take advantage of this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor H.E. Vuk Jeremic for his leadership of the 67th Session of the General Assembly.

Furthermore, I commend Secretary-General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, for the manner in which he has been managing the affairs of the United Nations, with the many challenges concerning peace and security in several parts of the globe.

Mr. President,

Once again the world has been confronted with the evil scourge of terrorism; this time in the sister nation of Kenya.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, I express deepest sympathy and condolences to the President, Government and people of Kenya, in particular to the bereaved families that have lost their loved ones.

Best wishes go out for a speedy recovery of the wounded. We must assure that those who have committed this heinous crime will not escape justice.

Mr. President,

Setting a new stage requires much effort at the national as well as the international level, to urgently achieve the ultimate goal of improving the standard of living of our peoples and realizing sustainable development of our countries.

The Millennium Development Goals are an important first step towards addressing some of the worst socio-economic conditions facing approximately 40% of humanity.

They are generally targeted at reducing the worst manifestations of underdevelopment.

In our view, success of the Millennium Development Goals depends on two sets of simultaneous actions. First, by a reorientation of national responsibilities; and second, of equal importance, is the reorientation of the responsibilities of the international community.

Such reorientation will enable us to chart a more meaningful path for achieving the various goals and meeting the targets of the MDGs, and moving towards the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

This is particularly relevant if we take into account the MDG Report of 2013 which produces some rather interesting facts such as:

- Most developing countries are performing well in meeting the targets;
- Developed countries have committed themselves to goal number 8, by making their pledges for aid viable and effective. The conclusion, however, is that the developed countries are well behind in their performance in achieving the targets.

Official Development Assistance is in constant decline, and agreements within the context of the WTO to improve access to international markets, concluded in 2001, are stalled during the DOHA Round.

This stalling has proven to be so harmful that dealing with market access on behalf of the poorest nations has been left out in the subsequent agendas.

Furthermore, the on-going financial and economic crisis is having, as we all know, detrimental effects on developing nations to the point that ODA is drastically declining. It is obvious that a number of large developing countries mainly in Asia, as well as some countries endowed with natural resources in Africa and South America, have experienced substantial economic progress. Statistics, however, should not distract us from the fact that inequality is rampant and that almost 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty, and do not have access to affordable and adequate health services, while millions of children are still denied their right to primary education.

Mr. President,

We have learned the important lesson that developing countries are obliged to undertake adequate measures to strengthen economic interactions among themselves, in addition to ties with their traditional trading partners in the North.

We must give substance to South - South cooperation. This is an important consideration for setting a new stage for global sustainable development.

In this context, foreign direct investment is considered a factor of vital importance.

Mister President,

It is encouraging to note that a number of countries, including Suriname, have been upgraded from Low Income to Middle Income status by International Financial Institutions and United Nations Agencies.

Our efforts in developing prudent macro-economic and appropriate fiscal policies, combined with our initiatives to diversify our economy, and the sacrifices borne by our people, have led to this improved status.

Applying per capita income as the major indicator for determining our development status has, however, manoeuvred us into a position where we have lost access to necessary concessional loans and grants.

The conclusion can be drawn that our people are being punished for their ability to overcome some of the obstacles that have made them less fortunate in the past.

Mr. President,

Within this interdependent world we will continue to build on our own strength as the main driving force for the achievement of our development agenda.

Furthermore, we believe that building upon national strengths, within the context of participation in sub-regional and regional cooperation frameworks, is in our view the right way forward in finding proper solutions for our development. On the basis of what has been achieved on a regional level, a global approach might become more feasible.

Mr. President,

Suriname shares the view that the Post 2015 Development Agenda should be based on a people centered approach, with specific attention to the most vulnerable in society, in particular women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

In doing so, we emphasize the fact that we should strike the right balance between our positive macro- economic situation and the micro situation that is in dire need of improvement.

Mr. President,

We are in the course of developing policies and programs to fight Non Communicable Diseases that have led to decreased productivity. NCDs have now become the highest cause of death in Suriname and other countries in the region, as well. There is special emphasis on improving education and bringing it closer to our socio-economic realities.

We intend to work closer with relevant international organizations such as PAHO / WHO, and UNESCO to accelerate matters in this respect.

The Government of the Republic of Suriname also attaches great importance to issues concerning youth. In this regard, I can mention a large scale after school programme with the aim to enhance the youth's better learning.

The successful experiences in regional cooperation mechanisms such as CARICOM as well as the one that is being considered in UNASUR, are clear examples of how youth can contribute to the connectivity between our peoples and the enhancement of unity.

Mr. President,

Taking into account global processes and cognizant of the opportunities and challenges for CARICOM and UNASUR, the Post 2015 Development Agenda should emanate from an inclusive, inter-governmental process. This process should be directed towards:

- the continuation of the eradication of poverty;
- a people centred approach, combining economic activities with the social needs for education and healthcare that promotes the welfare and well-being of all; and
- Integration of economic and social activities and strengthening of human capital.

Global warming has a direct negative impact on the development of Small Islands Developing and Low lying Coastal states, including Suriname.

Suriname shares its grave concern regarding the state of the global climate and the stalled UNFCCC process. The Government of Suriname strongly recommends to this august assembly, to face these challenges by making them part of the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

In setting the stage for development goals beyond 2015, we cannot ignore the various threats to international peace. International peace, security and human rights are indispensable in creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.

Suriname is very aware of the fact that national sovereignty and national security are seriously affected by the indiscriminate use of violence in fighting terrorism and other forms of transnational organized crime.

In addition, challenges related to armed conflicts, poverty, food, environment, education, public health, migration and energy require increased collaboration.

In this respect, partnership among governments, international and regional organizations and civil society as well, is a must.

We applaud the South American and Caribbean nations for their efforts towards regional peace and stability. Their willingness and capacity to further dialogue and persuasion is a better way for achieving and maintaining peace, rather than the use of violence and military intervention.

We are proud to belong to a region that has proclaimed itself as a nuclear weapons free zone.

Mr. President,

We express the hope that a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will get more substance allowing the peoples of both countries the prospect to peace and prosperity.

Suriname maintains the position that the multilateral process within the United Nations should prevail in finding a peaceful solution for the crisis in Syria.

Mr. President,

The Cuban people have the right to participate as a full member of all regional organizations, and we strongly urge that all obstacles that have prevented their full participation so far are removed, including the outdated and inhumane unilateral economic, financial and commercial embargo.

With regard to the Republic of Haiti, the international community tends to loose attention for the necessary follow up activities to get Haiti back on its feet. We once again call upon the international community to fulfil its commitment.

In closing Mr. President, I take advantage of this opportunity to inform this distinct audience that, exactly thirty days ago,

Suriname has taken over the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Union of South American Nations, UNASUR - a young and vibrant regional body.

We pledge that Suriname, during its Presidency, will further the goals of UNASUR, contributing to international peace and security and sustainable development.

I thank you.