



## **Statement**

**by the**

**PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SURINAME**

**H.E. DESIRÉ DELANO BOUTERSE**

**at the**

**General Debate**

**65<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York**

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*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](mailto:Suriname@un.int)*



Your Excellency Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly

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

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Suriname I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to preside over this sixty-fifth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I am pleased to see Switzerland, one of the newest members of this Organization occupying this high office, especially since your country has a longstanding and constructive record regarding international neutrality and respect for the international order.

I am convinced that your diplomatic experience, as well as your well known in-depth knowledge of current international issues will enable you to successfully discharge of the important responsibilities of your office. As one of the Vice Chairs of this Assembly, Suriname pledges its full support to your work-agenda for this session.

I wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his unwavering efforts in steering the work of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly.

I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon for his leadership and guidance of this Organization throughout the past years of crisis and turbulence.

Mr. President,

It is a great honor for me today to address this General Assembly, as a leader who recently received the mandate from the Surinamese People to realize sustainable economic and social development through our own efforts and with the support of all friendly nations.

Twenty seven years ago I had the honor to address this august gathering. I then stated that *"by the same token, we are dismayed by the fact that, in spite of the presence of the Organization on the international scene for almost four decades, its lofty goal of creating an international order based on respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes seems today to be elusive as ever"*.

At present we can conclude that things have not fundamentally changed.

The challenge we are facing is striking a proper balance between full recognition of the sovereignty of the individual member states of the United Nations and the apparent need for global governance regarding the global issues that endanger the very survival of our planet and its inhabitants. We are not there yet!

It has become obvious for Suriname that this balance can only be achieved when participants in the international arena refrain from using military force and/ or economic coercion. Mr. President, we have even experienced that States abuse their own legal system to force their political will on another nation.



Restricting ourselves to the Caribbean region, the Republic of Suriname is deeply concerned about the persistence of the imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba for almost half a century aimed at changing developments of that nation's political, economic and social roadmap. These measures of coercion cause unnecessary hardship and have severe effects on the rightful development and wellbeing of the Cuban people.

Suriname therefore joins the member states of the United Nations which since 1992 have consistently been calling in vain for the rejection of the unilaterally imposed embargo against Cuba.

As is the case on the national level, the international community will only prosper when all values protected by the rule of law are distributed equally notwithstanding the asymmetry that characterizes international relations.

Mr. President,

My country finds itself at a crossroad in its history. The electorate gave its leaders a mission to create a society in which everyone participates, and everyone shares in what the country has to offer, meeting their basic material means, and in which solidarity prevails. The aim is the creation of a just society in which people are able to develop themselves to their highest potential, and become international role models and leaders in areas in which our society excels. No one will be left behind in this task of nation building.

My Government pledges not to waste, but to protect our national inheritance and assets for future generations and the world. Moreover, we will seize every opportunity to generate greater national wealth.

We will devote special attention to groups who in the past have had limited scope for development. In this regard, I refer to our indigenous peoples and our countrymen living in tribal communities. Our intention is to gradually break the cycle of their isolation and considerably improve their quality of life.

When we look at the many national challenges facing us, it is clear that our task is not going to be an easy one. In almost all sectors of the economy and society, we have suffered enormous neglect, and there has been a decline, stagnation and reversal of national growth. As a result, today, many segments of our society have become desperate and hopeless. We therefore need a bold, new visionary approach to give our people what they justly deserve as co-owners of this nation that is endowed and blessed with so many riches.

However, we need to overcome two huge challenges that, since colonization, have haunted and blighted our national destiny as a people. First, we must dismantle any lingering remnants of the colonial police state which blocks and obstructs the establishment of a free, democratic, constitutional state based on the pillars of an independent judiciary, a Government free of corruption, a legislature that acts in the interest of the people, and a free and independent press that is committed to the honest dissemination of information.



Another major challenge we face is the transformation of our society from an economy which is merely a source of profit for foreign interest groups into one that is based and built on a healthy interdependence. Suriname needs a new national economic approach created by Surinamers and for Surinamers.

Mr. President,

We realize that we are part of the global community which as a result of technology is gradually turning into a global village, fostering intensive relations both in a negative and a positive sense.

Despite all the resources and knowledge at our disposal we are still faced with what seems an insurmountable challenge to rid the world of extreme poverty, to ensure adequate education for our children, to stem the tide of infectious and other diseases or to take responsible decisions on environmental sustainability.

We have to recognize that with today's interdependence many challenges transcend national borders and that the ability of countries, in particular developing countries, to make progress on many of the international development goals, does not merely depend on domestic policy choices. An international enabling environment in this regard is of increased significance.

Climate change is a global threat that will affect developing countries in a most devastating way. Suriname with its low lying coast belongs to the top ten countries which will be seriously affected by sea level rise. This is ironic because we are not culpable to the excessive levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere but are about to take a heavy brunt.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, global biodiversity loss is high. So high, that 2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations in order to attract attention for this global problem. In this respect Suriname could serve as an example for the world as its laws to save forest and biodiversity date back from the middle of the past century. We are proud to state her today Mr. President, that Suriname is rightly called the greenest country on earth for its 90% forest cover!

Having said this Mr. President, it is ironic that a country as Suriname with such a good environmental track record is overlooked and the world's efforts are concentrating on countries that are using their resources unsustainably thereby sending the wrong message globally!

We believe that we should tackle this problem head on starting at home, moving towards our immediate neighbors and from there to the sub-region of South America and the Caribbean, thus creating a substantial force at the world forum dealing with the ill effects of climate change .

It seems that the standing forest and the wealth of Suriname's biodiversity are being taken for granted by the global community as there are no structures in place to provide incentives to continue on the path of sustainability. Despite that, we promise that our choices for development will duly respect a proper balance between nature and development.

Mr. President,

Various high level meetings were organized to address issues of common concern such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, the negative effects of climate change, arms proliferation, the effects of the global



economic and financial crisis, transnational organized crime and its associated ills.

At this time Mr. President, it is necessary to draw the special attention of all participants of this General Assembly to the issue of non-communicable diseases which is of great concern to all of us.

The initiative of CARICOM leaders, subsequently endorsed by the Commonwealth, to organize a high level meeting of the General Assembly in 2011 to address the rising incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases is very important. It highlights the ever growing need for the international community to join forces in addressing this global barrier to development.

Although non-communicable diseases are currently not a part of the indicators for assessing progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, they undoubtedly have a negative impact on the MDGs.

We can no longer ignore this emerging health crisis, which disproportionately impacts the poorest people, pushing them further into poverty and deprivation.

Therefore the global development agenda needs to include measures to address this problem, if we do not wish to jeopardize the accelerated achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

Mr. President,

We are aware of poverty and extreme human suffering resulting from natural disasters.



We express our empathy to the peoples of Haiti, Pakistan, China, Chile and all other where major weather patterns wreaked havoc.

Suriname is of the opinion that all nations should effectively and adequately contribute to the alleviation of the dire needs of our fellow citizens of the world. These people deserve more than expressions of sympathy; they deserve that promises made to them are kept.

Finally Mr. President, distinguished audience,

We want to share our thoughts on the structural causes of poverty and the resulting ill effects on societies. My Government believes that education related to survival skills and production is the only way to effectively eradicate poverty. Money given to poor people for the sake of one's own conscience is an absolute waste! Therefore we ask ourselves the question whether we should continue with the phraseology of "fighting poverty" or instead start talking about pursuing wealth!

Therefore the slogan of my Government in our *lingua franca* is: **"Broko a pina, tek yu gudu!"** which means **"break away from poverty, by pursuing wealth"**!

Thank you Mr. President!