



STATEMENT

by

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President of the Republic of Suriname

on the occasion of the General Debate
of the
78th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

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- President of the General Assembly,
- Secretary General of the United Nations,
- Excellencies,
- Heads of Delegations,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good day!

Mr. President,

- I am proud to observe that this august body, is under the dedicated leadership of our Caribbean sister nation Trinidad and Tobago, and that a distinguished citizen and experienced diplomat of that country is at the helm of the 78th Session of the General Assembly.
- Mr. President, this is my fourth statement to this global body, and since then, I'm afraid to conclude, that not much has changed for the better, regarding the essential elements of peace, prosperity, and climate in our world. On the other hand, the challenges and crises have increased and deepened.
- I do not need to mention these crises, because we all know them and repeat them every single time we speak to an international or regional audience. The more important and relevant matter at hand is: what do we do about it?
- We make promises, not often kept! We express noble goals, but the delivery is poor! This cannot go on; business as usual cannot be our mantra.
- No country, is spared the effects, of these crises, especially, developing countries, like my own country Suriname.
- And **no country**, can solve these challenges alone.
- It is worth mentioning, that we humans, are responsible for these crises,
- and must take responsibility for them, and we must provide collective leadership,
- to solve these problems effectively.

- A new approach to conceptualizing our relationships, is needed, to address these crises adequately. A new kind of multilateralism, that is more just, effective and forces us to unite. One that will demonstrate respect and commitment to international law and cooperation.
- Therefore, it is of utmost importance to transcend national interests and look to our shared global goals.
- **We must put aside ideological differences, to constructively deliver, for our people's prosperity and our planet's protection.**
- We simply, cannot expect durable solutions in a rapidly changing world, if we do not alter our approach.
- Mr. President, as world leaders, we have stressed, that upholding firm commitments, to international principles and international law,
- the principles of the United Nations Charter, and effective multilateralism
- are a condition, sine qua non, to address these global challenges, and threats.
- The role of the United Nations, in defense, and upholding these principles, through dialogue, constructive engagement, and concrete action remains crucial.
- Therefore, a **STRONG, DETERMINED, AND UNITED** “United Nations” is a must!
- Mr. President, the multiple global and national crises, such as the debt burden, domestic effects of climate change, the financial-economic downturn following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of the raging war in Ukraine, have put tremendous pressure on the implementation, of the SDGs.
- Limited financial and technical resources had to be allocated, for many emergencies. Just to make sure that no one was left behind. Mr. President, let us remember, that building resilience, and leaving no one behind, is not a choice.
- Let me restate that for small developing countries, with low-lying coastal areas, the fiscal pressure due to other crises beyond our doing, is a real and daily problem.
- However, I remain of the view that the earmarked transformation, envisioned by the 2030 Agenda, remains both possible and essential.

- Mr. President, food security, is a significant challenge.
- And just a few days ago, in Cuba, I stressed the importance, of science, technology, and innovation, to increase food production, and optimize the inputs, needed to make agriculture more productive.
- And during my visit, I personally experienced the negative impact of the longstanding embargo. An embargo that does not achieve what it was meant for.
- The CARICOM Food Security program, is an example of reducing the Region's Food Import Bill, by 25% by the year 2025 and promoting local production to modern technology.
- Mr. President, the reach and impact, of digital technologies, will only continue, to increase in the coming years, and it is crucial, that the benefits, of this innovation, are leveraged, to ensure an accessible, transparent, safe and secure, digitally transformative environment.
- To implement this comprehensive strategy in a coherent manner, my country has recently adopted a National Digital Strategy 2023-2030.
- Mr. President, the political, humanitarian and security environment in Haiti is deteriorating. While I appreciate the efforts made so far to assist in finding an immediate solution, much more political efforts need to be made to translate the intentions into tangible actions.
- The people of Haiti are looking to the regional and international community for assistance.
- At the same time, the Haitian stakeholders, which are divided into opposing groups, must demonstrate the will to dialogue and reach a consensus for a way forward in the shortest possible time.
- Mr. President, another Climate Conference, of the Parties, COP 28, is on our doorstep, as we are amidst, the reality of the increased intensity, of the devastating global impact, of climate change.
- It is regrettable, to admit, that despite some efforts, the world, is still far, from reaching the required level, of emissions, to prevent irreversible damage, to our global environment and society.
- And we are bearing the brunt!
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- While Suriname, is currently experiencing, exceptionally high temperatures, resulting in challenges, with regard,
- to the availability of drinking water,
- inland areas, are increasingly flooded, by heavy rainfall.

- Consequently, the people living in remote parts of our vast interior, are deprived of work, education, basic utilities, and food security is under threat.

- As one, of the only three carbon-negative countries, Suriname remains committed, and continues to play its part in protecting the planet through national actions but also through engaging, in strategic international public, and private partnerships, that will contribute,
- to remaining carbon negative for now and for the future.

- We cannot go to Dubai in less than two months and hear the same analyses, the same stories, the same policies, the same speeches with noble goals, the same promises

- ... and after that, nothing happens. Ladies and gentlemen, it takes too long to make the required decisions that will have a meaningful impact and improve our living conditions.

- We need easier access to climate financing to implement mitigation and adaptation policies; we must walk the talk regarding loss and damage.

- We must join efforts that call for compensating highly forested countries for the so-called "removal" credits, as these countries have acted as carbon sinks for the whole world without compensation.

- Mr. President, many of us have raised the urgent and comprehensive reform, of the international financial architecture, as the foremost critical issue, to address the economic, financial, and environmental challenges, faced by developing countries.

- An integral part of this reform process must include discussing new ways to classify countries. We all should contribute to the proposed Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.

- Mr. President, Suriname, is at the cusp of promising commercial development of newfound oil and gas resources.

- These developments and capital generation will allow us to provide for our population a social, health, and education system that will facilitate increased production in other sectors, creating a sustainable future for the next generations.

- Over the past three years, Suriname has undergone financial and economic reform, whereby the citizens had to sacrifice in many ways.
- Coupled with the COVID pandemic, the climate change impact and the effects of the war in Eastern Europe, and a high debt burden, the impact on the people was even worse.
- I want to assure the international community that my Government is committed to remaining a carbon-negative country, with an enormous biodiversity pool and a low deforestation level.
- During the Amazon Summit, held last August in Belem do Para, Brazil, we and seven other countries have committed to better management of the Amazon region. We committed to even stopping deforestation by the year 2030.
- We are committed to applying high international environmental standards to minimize the impact on the environment.
- We do this to finance our committed transition to an economy primarily based on renewable, non-carbon-based energy generation by 2060.
- I announce, with a certain degree of pride, that we recently registered our carbon credits for the first time on the UNFCCC registry. This was done with our own, albeit restricted, capabilities. We shall see how the market responds to these new resources.
- All these commitments are made to contribute to saving the planet and life on Earth. I call on all heavy polluters to start with this process as well. And not to try to manage, tax, or punish environmentally friendly production in developing countries, which are the least responsible for the climate crisis.
- **Real change must also come from the Western world.**
- In closing, Mr. President, together, let us harness our collective strengths, knowledge, and determination, to create a world, where resilience and inclusivity, are not just aspirations, but realities.
- Only through joint efforts, can we build a future, where no one is left behind, and where the Sustainable Development Goals, become a shining beacon of hope, and progress, for all.
- We owe this, to the current and future generations.

- I appeal to all of us, to work constructively and collectively, towards a better, and new world order, and to recommit to the original goals of the Charter of the United Nations.
- I thank you. May God bless you all!
