

## Statement Minister of Spatial Planning and Environment Marciano Dasai

Honorable delegates, esteemed colleagues,

As we gather at UNEA-6 to address the pressing challenges of our time, it is paramount to recognize the urgency of the triple planetary crisis facing our world today. The nexus of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution know no borders and pose unprecedented challenges to the sustainability of our planet and the well-being of all its inhabitants.

The theme of this year's assembly, "Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution," resonates deeply with Suriname's commitment to global environmental stewardship. We recognize that concerted efforts on the international stage are crucial to mitigate the impacts of these crises and ensure a sustainable future for all.

Suriname is not only the most forested country with 93% forest cover but also a biodiversity hotspot and a sanctuary for countless species, stands as a testament to the importance of preserving our natural heritage. Our lush pristine rainforests are full with an astonishing array of flora and fauna, underscoring the critical importance of preserving these ecosystems for future generations. Our commitment to conservation is evident, yet we acknowledge the threats posed by illegal activities such as logging and mining, which endanger our rich biodiversity.

Additionally, Suriname is rich in hydrologic resources, with abundant water sources often referred to as 'white gold.' Our rivers and waterways not only sustain diverse ecosystems but also serve as vital sources of livelihoods and sustenance for our people. However, we recognize the need for responsible management to safeguard these precious resources for future generations.

Despite our environmental riches, Suriname faces significant and complex challenges, including a high debt burden and vulnerability to climate change impacts. The burden of a high debt-to-GDP ratio, standing at 140%, exacerbates our vulnerabilities.

While our commitment to responsible forest management has preserved much of our natural heritage, we confront threats from illegal mining, air pollution, and inadequate waste management. Moreover, the specter of climate change looms large, while Suriname has contributed minimally to the climate crisis, and the country acts as a carbon sink, we rank among the top 10 vulnerable coastal nations. We are acutely

aware of our responsibility to address these challenges while balancing development needs with environmental preservation. We are at a critical juncture, where our commitment to sustainable development must be unwavering.

To navigate this juncture, Suriname recognizes the necessity of international cooperation and support. The path forward demands concerted efforts on multiple fronts. Sustainable financing and capacity building are essential pillars of our response, enabling us to implement robust strategies that safeguard both our environment and our economic prosperity. Failure to secure such assistance may force us into unsustainable practices, including forest depletion for short-term gains such as mining that will not only degrade our lands and forest, but also our fresh waterways.

In light of these challenges, as we speak Suriname is actively engaging with stakeholders, including NGOs, civil society, and international organizations, to chart a path towards green development. Our forthcoming green development strategy will serve as a comprehensive framework to guide sustainable decision-making, ensuring alignment with our international obligations and fostering inclusive and equitable development for all our citizens.

As we embark on this journey, Suriname calls upon the global community to join hands in solidarity and cooperation. Together, let us forge effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle the triple planetary crises and safeguard the future of our planet for generations to come.

Thank you.