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STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

H.E. GINMARDO KROMOSOETO

ON THE OCASSION OF THE

JOINT HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF COP AND CMP, UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE, DECEMBER 8, 2010, CANCUN - MEXICO

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, EXCELLENCY FELIPE CALDERON,

HONOURABLE HEADS OF STATES,

PRESIDENT OF THE 16TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, EXCELLENCY PATRICIA ESPINOZA,

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, MRS. CHRISTIANA FIGUERES,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO FOR THE HOSPITALITY SHOWN TO US IN THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY OF CANCUN, AND ALSO TO THE SECRETARIAT OF THE UNFCCC FOR THE EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION OF THIS IMPORTANT MEETING.

MADAME CHAIR,

ONE YEAR AFTER COPENHAGEN, WE ARE MEETING HERE IN CANCUN TO CONTINUE OUR NEGOTIATIONS AND DEBATES ON A GLOBAL RESPONSE TO ADDRESS THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. AS WE ALL KNOW, CLIMATE CHANGE HAS BECOME THE MAJOR ISSUE OF THIS CENTURY. IT IS NOT ONLY AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE, BUT PRIMARILY A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE, WHICH SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

MADAME CHAIR,

WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING THE IMPACTS OF THE ACCELERATING CHANGE IN THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ALL OVER THE WORLD.
SURINAME, AS PART OF THE RICH AMAZON RAINFOREST REGION, POSSESSES AND MAINTAINS ONE OF THE LARGEST STRETCHES OF PRISTINE TROPICAL RAINFORESTS ON EARTH, AND IS ONE OF ONLY ELEVEN COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE WHICH CAN BE CATEGORIZED AS A "HIGH FOREST, LOW DEFORESTATION COUNTRY".

FOR SINCE THE EARLY 1950S, SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION HAVE BEEN ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN MY COUNTRY. AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE, 13% OF OUR LAND IS FORMALLY CLASSIFIED AS PROTECTED AREAS, OF WHICH THE CENTRAL SURINAME NATURE RESERVE, SOME 1.6 MILLION HECTARES LARGE, HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE.

SURINAME IS CONVINCED THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT GLOBAL CLIMATE REGIME, THE INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF INTACT TROPICAL NATURAL FORESTS AS CARBON SINKS AND A SOURCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, MUST NOT BE DISREGARDED.

MY COUNTRY HAS PUT A LOT OF EFFORT IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND FOREST CONSERVATION, AND IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENTS ON REDD+. SURINAME, THEREFORE, STRONGLY ADVOCATES THAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY SHOULD ADEQUATELY COMPENSATE THOSE COUNTRIES, WHICH FOR DECADES HAVE UPHELD AN EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD IN CONSERVING THEIR FORESTS, AND IN PROMOTING AND APPLYING SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT.

MADAME CHAIR,

SURINAME WITH ITS LOW-LYING COASTAL ZONE, WHERE 80% OF ITS POPULATION LIVES, IS HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. DIFFERENT STUDIES ON THE IMPACT OF SEA LEVEL RISE ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, HAVE CONCLUDED THAT WITH A SEA LEVEL RISE OF ONE

METER, THE POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF SURINAME WILL BE SEVERELY IMPACTED.

SURINAME IS CURRENTLY ALREADY EXPERIENCING CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS, WHICH HAVE ALREADY RESULTED IN FLOODS, COASTAL EROSION, SALT WATER INTRUSION AND LAND DEGRADATION.

THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME THEREFORE AIMS TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE BY DEVELOPING A NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN AND STRATEGY. BUT TO IMPLEMENT SUCH ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION PLANS, ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE OF EMINENT IMPORTANCE, WHICH WE, AS A DEVELOPING NATION, WOULD LIKE TO PRIORITIZE FOR INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH, EDUCATION AND OTHER SECTORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF AND SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES TO THE ADAPTATION FUND UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

MADAME CHAIR,

FOR SURINAME, ADAPTATION IS A DEVELOPMENT ISSUE, AND WE THUS URGE FOR AN IMMEDIATE BALANCED ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES BETWEEN ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION. WE URGE FOR AN INSURANCE-BASED MECHANISM TO ADDRESS PERMANENT LOSS AND DAMAGE AS A RESULT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

WE ARE AT A CROSS-ROADS, SEARCHING FOR ROBUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR OUR COMMON DEVELOPMENT. IF WE ARE TO SAFEGUARD OUR PLANET FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES TO REDUCING THE ATMOSPHERIC CONCENTRATION OF CARBON DIOXIDE FROM THE CURRENT LEVELS TO 350 PPM TO AVOID CATASTROPHIC EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND KEEP GLOBAL TEMPERATURE RISE WELL BELOW 1.5 °C.

MADAME CHAIR,

I CALL UPON EACH AND EVERYONE OF US TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A BALANCED OUTCOME IN CANCUN, AN OUTCOME THAT SHOULD NOT COMPROMISE OR PREJUDGE THE OBJECTIVE WE ALL STRIVE FOR, NAMELY A POLITICAL COMMITMENT FOR AN INTERNATIONALLY LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT AND A SECOND COMMITMENT PERIOD FOR THE KYOTO PROTOCOL.

I THANK YOU