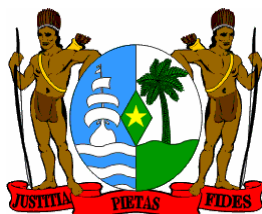


**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**



**ADDRESS BY
THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, TECHNOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME**

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. CLIFFORD P. MARICA

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT
OF THE
12TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
NEW YORK, 29 APRIL 2004**

(Check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Suriname, to join in the expressions of gratitude and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman and other members of the bureau and to say that Suriname's delegation is pleased to see you guiding the affairs of this august body.

Mr. Chairman,

The discussions of the last week focusing on the progress of the commitments made at the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the priority areas water, sanitation and human settlements clearly showed that the obstacles and constraints which we encounter in the implementation, requires an immediate response on the way forward.

The internationally agreed targets and goals on sustainable development can only be achieved if both the developing and developed countries, together with all stakeholders, translate decisions into concrete actions. Although we recognize that an integrated approach is required to effectively address the issues on water, sanitation and human settlements the focus on this statement will be on water.

The Government of the Republic of Suriname recognizes water as a driving force for sustainable development and poverty eradication and as indispensable for all live on earth. The strong dependence on the availability and quality of water resources for meeting the basic human needs, health and food security, health of ecosystems and all economic and social activities is increasingly making us aware of the necessity to efficiently and effectively manage and use our water resources.

Being part of the Amazon region we consider ourselves very blessed to be the owner of a considerable percentage of the world's freshwater resources in addition to the high percentage of pristine rainforest and the unique ecosystems unlike most countries on earth. This provides us with the opportunity to contribute to conservation at an exceptional scale. In accordance herewith, we have established several protected areas as part of the commitments made under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention. Together these areas are covering about 14% of the total land surface of Suriname.

Despite the richness of freshwater resources and the relatively small population Suriname has, the benefits are yet to be enjoyed nation-wide. Mainly in the semi-urban areas and rural areas it remains a challenge to provide the infrastructure and maintain access to adequate drinking water facilities. Due to geographical aspects, we cope with enormous financial and operational costs to improve the infrastructure for the provision of water, water supply networks and maintenance.

The Government has made efforts to improve the situation in the water supply sector. On the bilateral level various programs and projects have been implemented which each focussed on increasing the production capacity and the institutional strengthening of the water institutions.

Furthermore two plans were developed which separately focus on improving water supply systems in the semi-urban and rural areas and a plan of action for the coastal area aimed at the integration of activities including the abovementioned programs and projects. Both plans should be implemented by the year 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

In this process we realize that much more need to be done. Currently the Government is being confronted with an increasing amount of water pollution as a result of inadequate solid waste management and the use of chemicals in industrial and agriculture activities. This is threatening the livelihoods of in particular local communities in the interior.

Therefore, we recognize that fundamental reforms of water governance are needed not only to achieve efficiency in the operation of water supplies and sanitation systems but also to sustain the protection and conservation of our water resources and to adjust our water policies accordingly. Integration of these policies into the approaches and activities of sustainable development is crucial.

In this regard we urgently need to build human capacity and strengthen the coordination of our institutional frameworks. Awareness raising of water issues is essential for the decision-making process and will contribute to an effective participation of all stakeholders at all levels. Public-public and public-private partnerships on the national and international level provides for opportunities to address capacity needs which can contribute to an effective water resource management. The importance of the availability of updated and reliable data is also recognized.

We all are aware of the large investments that are required for achieving the agreed targets. Accelerated actions have to be taken in mobilizing and allocating financial resources at the national and international level and use it in the most efficient way in line with our national policies and priorities. This will enhance real progress of the implementation of water policies in Suriname.

Mr. Chairman,

We are determined to continue our efforts to mobilize our national capacity for sustainable management of our water resources. With the support of the international community they will be developed taking into account conservation activities and best practices which will enable us to meet the targets of our international commitments.

I thank you