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Statement of the Republic of Suriname  
at the High Level Segment of the 52nd session of the  
Commission on Narcotic Drugs

presented by H.E. Minister Chandrikapersad Santokhi,  
Minister of Justice and Police  
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Honorable Chair of the High -Level Segment of the Fifty-Second Session of the  
Commission on Narcotics Drug, Esteemed Ministers,  
Delegates and observers,

I bring you greetings from the Government of the Republic of Suriname, and express its heartfelt appreciation to the Commission for the organization of this high level meeting and by giving my country the opportunity on this occasion to present its view on the world drugs situation, its threats and challenges and its view for ahead.

Mr/Madame Chair,

In our today's interdependent world we are facing a wide range of threats, varying from the illicit production, consumption and trafficking of drugs to the fight against terrorism. During the last decades these threats have assumed proportions that have, in many ways, affected our security and have caused tensions in many fields.

In this respect, I have to express my concern that in many instances the drug problem is causing adverse consequences to the health and safety of our citizens and in fact undermining the social fabric of our societies, and is also threatening the rule of law of many nations.

In tackling the drug problem, we have experienced that in most cases the causes of the relevant dangers are intertwined and in varying degrees affecting both, developing as well as the developed countries.

In order to address the drug problem in general, countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region have undertaken many initiatives and actions within the framework of the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and sub-regional organizations, like the CARICOM.

These activities have mostly resulted in identifying new approaches, launching new ideas and measures and agreed to exchange information and experience.

My government has taken an active part in various international meetings to address the latest drugs situation that have resulted in the adoption of several policy declaration, and most recently, the Santo Domingo Declaration and Action Plan, which is a comprehensive and integral security strategy for the Caribbean to eliminate the threats and to strengthen security in close cooperation with the UNODC.

As a responsible member of the International Community, the Republic of Suriname has addressed the drugs phenomenon in many ways.

It was in this spirit that my Government organized an International Anti-Narcotics Conference in October 2006, during which the Paramaribo Declaration was adopted by the many participants. This declaration contains a number of commitments and guidelines that in fact provide elements of a national and regional strategy to combat drugs - and drugs related crimes.

The Republic of Suriname attaches great importance to the multilateral approach followed as of now to combat the drug problem and is of the view that only in a coordinated manner, with shared responsibility; we could be able to tackle the great danger to our community.

Suriname very much supports the commitments of the Special Session of the United Nation General Assemble on drugs (1998) and has taken several measures to implement the UNGASS decisions in conformity with international law on national level but also on regional level.

In the past decade Suriname has been confronted with serious international drug crime. Lying in between the producing countries in South America and the consumption markets in the USA and Europe, Suriname, as many other countries in our region, was used as a transit country for cocaine. Abusing our relative inaccessible hinterlands for cocaine droppings with small airplanes; at one point in time no less than ten international drug criminal organizations were operating in Suriname, which are now dismantled.

This international drug crime had a negative impact on the socio-economic environment of Suriname. More hard drugs became available at the local market, increasing drug abuse and resulting in more drug dependents, particularly among young men in the prime of their growth and career. International drug crime also corrupted many government officials, created illegal overnight wealth of some individuals in the society, but had led to distortion of the formal economy.

Suriname's response to the drug problem is embedded in its National Drug Master Plans. In addition to this Suriname has designed and is implementing the policy plan on security

and legal protection, which is an integral action plan comprising of all security measures which should be taken integrally and in a coherence manner in the whole sector of the security, legal protection and law enforcement. Because, Mr Chair, the drugs enforcement policy cannot be implemented effectively and successfully, when the drugs strategy is not an integral part of the national security strategy and also when this is not integrated in the national security strategy.

In the area of fighting international drug crime in the past decade Suriname increased its cooperation with countries in the Caribbean, Latin American region, and the USA and EU countries. The cocaine droppings have been reduced to almost to zero. The dismantling in 2003 of one of the largest ecstasy laboratories in the Caribbean was another major success of our fight against drug crime.

Suriname signed and ratified almost all UN and Inter-American conventions related to the drug problem. Data collection and research led to identification of high risk and vulnerable groups. Demand reduction programs resulted in greater awareness among the population about the dangers of drug abuse. Treatment facilities adopted minimum standards of care.

It is Suriname's strong belief that international anti-drug bodies play a major role in unifying national, regional and international strategies to fight jointly international drug crime. In the past decade Suriname has been working closely with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS), which resulted in many visible successes. And now we are welcoming the involvement of the UNODC in the Caribbean to maximize the efforts of the Caribbean nations based on the principle of shared responsibly.

In the next decade the international drug policies will be affected by a changing environment compared to ten years ago. Financial crises will place a bigger burden on available budgets for international cooperation. New drugs will pop up, new routes and methods of drug trafficking will be developed; new criminal organizations and criminal strategies may become involved in drugs and other types of crime and that high technology may be utilized in the production and the trafficking of drugs . It is clear that countries, more than before, will not be able to fight the drug crime alone.

Therefore Suriname pleads that adequate international information systems will be developed for better control of international drug criminal organizations, drug transshipments, drug trends etc. Monitoring and evaluation of the actual status of drug control, in countries and in regions, should be an integral part of international policies. Capacity building and institutional strengthening must be the backbone of multilateral cooperation programs.

Looking ahead to the next decade international drug crime will still pose a serious threat to the national security of countries, to the democracy of states, to the stability in specific regions, and to the wellness of populations around the world. Therefore Suriname calls upon regional and international bodies – whether from a socio-economic perspective, a health perspective, a security perspective, or a judicial perspective – to join hands in fighting drug abuse and drug crime. A unified global approach is the only answer to the global drug problem. Drugs is a global problem and its calling for a global response; drugs is an international threat which is demanding for an international approach. Let the international drugs strategy be a part of the international security strategy and your national drugs strategy be an integral part your national security strategy.

My country, mr. Chair, looks forward in participating in all efforts and measures taken at the local, regional and global level, that can contribute to the reduction /elimination of the dangers related to the drugs problem and will take its responsibility in this and will act according the UN policy, strategy based on the principle of shared responsibility and other international standards and principles, and will therefore support the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action.

I thank you.