

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME,
HIS EXCELLENCY RUNALDO RONALD VENETIAAN,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTERS OF CREDENCE
BY THE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND HIS EXCELLENCY ILPO ILMARI MANNINEN
ON JULY 11, 2008**

MR. AMBASSADOR,

IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME YOU IN SURINAME AND TO ACCEPT YOUR LETTERS ACCREDITING YOU AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND TO OUR COUNTRY.

YOUR ACCREDITATION AS THE FIRST FINNISH AMBASSADOR HAS SPECIAL MEANING FOR US AS IT REFLECTS THE DESIRE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONS WITH SURINAME. WE ALSO WELCOME THIS FASE IN THE RELATIONS WITH FINLAND, WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY WILL OFFER US THE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE WAYS AND MEANS TO BROADEN AND INTENSIFY OUR SCOPE OF COOPERATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES AND THE ACTUAL STATE OF AFFAIRS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, THERE ARE MANY POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION, BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AS WELL, WHICH WILL BENEFIT BOTH OUR COUNTRIES.

IN RECENT YEARS FINLAND HAS MADE TREMENDOUS STEPS FORWARD IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, THUS BECOMING ONE OF THE TOP-RANKING COUNTRIES IN EUROPE IN AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION.

SURINAME SHARES WITH FINLAND MANY CONDITIONS, AND VALUES FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH RIGHTLY ARE MAKING OUR PEOPLES PROUD. SURINAME IS ALSO PROUD OF ITS SOCIAL REALITY OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT ETHNICAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS, AND THIS HAS BECOME EXEMPLARY WITHIN AS WELL AS OUTSIDE OUR REGION. SUSTAINED MULTI CULTURALISM IS PART OF OUR BEST PRACTICES. WE CONSIDER THIS AN ASSET IN THIS TIME OF GLOBALIZATION WHEN XENOPHOBIA AND THE LIKE SOMETIMES PROVE TO BE A TEMPTATION HARD TO RESIST.

AS YOU ARE AWARE, SURINAME HAS A HIGH FOREST DENSITY AND A LOW DEFORESTATION RATE. WE ATTACH GREAT VALUE TO THIS NATURAL RESOURCE FOR OUR COUNTRY AS WELL AS FOR MANKIND. HENCE WE JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN DEFINING INSTRUMENTS FOR PROPER USE OF THE FOREST. FORESTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMY OF FINLAND. GIVEN THAT FORESTS AND THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY ARE OF IMPORTANCE TO OUR RESPECTIVE ECONOMIES, WE WELCOME THE VIEW YOU HAVE JUST EXPRESSED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF BILATERAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF FORESTRY

AMBASSADOR,

I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL SUCCEED IN FURTHERING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, AND YOU MAY REST ASSURED OF THE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME IN YOUR EFFORTS TO THAT END.
