

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC SURINAME,
HIS EXCELLENCY RUNALDO RONALD VENETIAAN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS BY
THE AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRIA,
HIS EXCELLENCY HANS-PETER GLANZER,
17 FEBRUARY 2009**

MR. AMBASSADOR,

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO WELCOME YOU AND TO ACCEPT YOUR LETTERS OF CREDENCE AS AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME.

AS YOU JUST MENTIONED, THE RELATIONS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES HAVE IMPROVED IN RECENT YEARS, IN SUCH FIELDS AS EDUCATION, HEALTH AND TOURISM. WHILE WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR RESULTS IN DUE COURSE, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT OTHER FIELDS OF COOPERATION ARE STILL WAITING TO BE EXPLORED.

ON BILATERAL LEVEL, COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT MAY CREATE VERY WELCOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH OUR COUNTRIES. SURINAME IS OVER NINETY PERCENT COVERED BY TROPICAL RAINFOREST THANKS TO OUR LONG HISTORY OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST EXPLOITATION. WE LOOK FOR THE BEST OPTION TO MAKE GOOD USE OF THIS RESOURCE. IN THIS RESPECT, IN 2008 SURINAME HOSTED THEIR COUNTRY-LED INITIATIVE (CLI) "ON FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT" IN PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS IN APRIL 2009, IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT THE DISCUSSION ON HOW TO GIVE COUNTRIES EFFECTIVE INCENTIVES TO RESTORE OR PRESERVE THE FORESTS WHILE STRIVING FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND GROWTH.

WE HAVE NOTICED THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM). AS A MEMBER OF CARICOM, WE WELCOME THE EFFORTS MADE BY AUSTRIA TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION IN THIS REGARD. THE FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE IS VALID. THIS WILL SERVE OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC WELFARE.

MOREOVER, CONCERTED ACTION TO COPE WITH THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO ALL COUNTRIES IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION. THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME AND OTHER CARICOM MEMBER STATES EXPERIENCE SERIOUS THREATS TO LIFE IN GENERAL AND TO THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIES IN PARTICULAR. THE ENGAGEMENT OF AUSTRIA IN THIS FIELD IS THEREFORE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

MR. AMBASSADOR,

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCES IN YOUR ENDEAVOURS TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. YOU MAY REST ASSURED OF THE SUPPORT OF MY GOVERNMENT IN THIS REGARD.