

## DE PRESIDENT VAN DE REPUBLIEK SURINAME | SPEAKING NOTES

### COP 16— OKTOBER 2024

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Madam President of COP 16,  
Your Excellency Gustavo Petro, President of the Republic of Colombia,  
Secretary-General United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres,  
Excellencies,  
Esteemed Heads of Delegations,  
Fellow custodians of our planet's precious biodiversity,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today in the heart of Cali a city alive with the beating of nature's music we gather as leaders and protectors of a heritage we must strive to protect.

I congratulate President Petro for offering this beautiful country with an abundance of bio-diversity to host the COP 16.

Mr. President, what we discuss and present here, we must echo with a clear and consistent voice also in Azerbaijan during COP 30.

I stand before you grateful and honored to echo the deep call of "Paz con la Naturaleza" — Peace with Nature.

I praise the hard-working efforts of the Presidents of COP 15 and COP 16 whose leadership has lighted our path toward a shared vision of harmony.

To our kind host the government of Colombia your warm welcome manifests the very spirit of "Peace with Nature" reminding us that we are all connected bound by a shared duty to protect our planet.

Suriname a nation where the Amazon's green landscape develops in its pure form has long heeded the call for conservation.

With 93% of our land covered in vibrant green forests we proudly hold the title of the world's most wooded and carbon-negative nation.

Our promise of protection is not merely an aspiration; it is woven into the very fabric of our identity.

In the coming week Suriname will be the host of the International Bio-Plateau Conference on Transboundary Basins in the Guianas, another initiative to protect our environment, our eco-systems and safeguard our biodiversity.

As the first nation in our region to align our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with the decisive goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework we stand as a beacon of bold change.

Our forests the lungs of our planet are not mere carbon sinks; they are where life originates protecting many species and providing valuable ecosystem services.

We have not only saved our natural heritage, but have also used its power for sustainable development.

Through REDD+ initiatives and the new launch of ITMOs into the carbon market, we demonstrate that conservation and economic growth can go hand-in-hand.

Our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is a testament to our commitment to inclusion and sustainability.

We recognize the deep wisdom of our indigenous and tribal communities the true guardians of our forests.

Their traditional knowledge and practices are woven into our conservation plans ensuring our efforts are effective and equitable.

Yet despite our determined commitment we face a tough battle.

The weight of debt the scars of the pandemic and the growing crises, of climate change and biodiversity, loss risk, damaging our hard-won progress.

We stand at a crossroads where our best efforts may only be enough with the solidarity and support of the global community.

Nelson Mandela once said "It always seems impossible until it's done".

Let us draw strength from his words turning seemingly impossible challenges into opportunities for collective action.

We pledge to collaborate with international partners, mobilize resources and implement sustainable solutions that safeguard our forests and ensure a resilient future for Suriname and the world.

In the words of the great Mahatma Gandhi, "The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs but not every man's greed".

Let us heed his wisdom choosing the path of sustainability over that of exploitation ensuring that our actions today pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

Let us leave this conference not with only words but with a renewed sense of purpose a shared commitment to action and a collective embrace of "Peace with Nature".

Together let us make the impossible possible securing a future where humanity and nature dance in harmony and the symphony of life continues to echo through the ages.

Thank you! Muchas Gracias!

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