



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR WINSTON LACKIN,
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SURINAME, ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 6TH GEF
ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATED MEETINGS.
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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Suriname delegation, sincere thanks to the Global Environment Facility and its professional executive team for the organization of this conference. And beautiful Vietnam: Thank you for your warm welcome!

We are grateful for the opportunity for interacting and connecting with our fellow nation states on solutions to a global and critical problem.

Before the industrial revolution, the world CO₂ emissions stood at 273ppm. Today 400ppm looks inevitable and by the end of this century in the “business as usual scenario”, we may approach 750ppm.

Over time, massive economic evolution has occurred; politically and socially humanity has made great developmental progress. But this progress has come at a huge cost. Human activity has collectively raided the heritage of creation for supplies of clean water and clean air, and supplies are running low.

The community of Earth is beginning to understand that it is not MONEY that makes the world go around; it is OXYGEN. It is not SHIPS that move trade; it is WATER.

Today our global leadership comes from international institutions such as the United Nations Security Council, the G-7, the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, ASEAN and the Davos summits. But the “business as usual” development will continue to destroy our environment.

We are fortunate that some countries still hold on to the precious, intact forests and rivers on which the planet relies for replenishing the air we need to continue economic activities. It is a responsibility we hold on behalf of humanity. These countries confront head-on the theme of this Assembly, that “business as usual guarantees disaster”.

If we are going to avoid disaster, humanity needs stronger global environmental leadership, based on the principle of common, but differentiated responsibilities, and making suitable use of our respective capabilities.

A de facto leadership does exist—those countries where deforestation has been kept at bay and which are absorbing more carbon than we produce. The GEF presents us with an opportunity to work together to resist and turn back the tide. The forest –covered countries are standing with a unique stewardship of the lungs of the Earth.

Suriname therefore, today calls on our fellow HFLD countries, to accept the responsibilities of global rescue and restoration, by taking on the role of environmental leaders.

Suriname's land mass is approximately 93% forested, the highest ratio of intact forest remaining in the world. Our neighbors, Guyana and the French territory of French Guiana, and our friends further afield, like Panama, Peru, Bhutan, Belize, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Gabon and Zambia understand the forces which threaten our forests every day.

That is to say, like us, they are fighting for the improvement of their people's lives, against a barrage of interventions.

Suriname as a representative of the "HFLD-11" if you will, invites you to join us in driving a new world leadership, one that strives for environmental development alongside economic development.

Let us start the discussion about the role of our collective ecological services to the world, and take back control of our futures. Suriname is willing to serve as venue for this discussion.

Humanity needs us to do this. The world needs OXYGEN in its lungs to function. There is only so long we can hold our breaths and hope for a change to fall from the sky.

THANK YOU.