Statement by H.E. Mr. Albert R. Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of the Republic of Suriname, at the High-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, New York, 21 September 2020

Mister President of the General Assembly, Mr. Volkan Bozkir, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Colleague Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname, I wish to congratulate you and the international community with the 75th anniversary of our United Nations.

When the UN Charter was signed in San Francisco in 1945, the membership stood at 51. The world was still reeling from the effects of successive World Wars, the collapse of the League of Nations and the collapse of empires.

Mr. President,
As the only legitimate global organization for all peoples, the United Nations is firmly anchored on the principles of sovereign equality for all nations, respect for territorial integrity, political independence, and the right to self-determination of peoples as enshrined in the founding Charter.

Achievements have been many, including the waves of decolonization that expanded the membership and altered the world. Successful peacekeeping missions and transition mandates, and the global push to eradicate the scourges of poverty, disease and violence. Women and girls today are being placed in the center, and human rights are enjoyed by a growing proportion of the world’s population, as well as the commitment to save our planet.

Mr. President,
Over the last 75 years, the UN membership has grown to 193 States - all sovereign and entitled to an equal vote in the General Assembly. As the membership has grown, new challenges have arisen and old challenges have remained. As a result, the organization’s...
agenda has continued to widen – on climate change, migration, non-proliferation and sustainable development objectives. The world, rather than embodying a world of peace and equality, has instead seen growing socio-economic inequality, poverty, hunger, armed conflict, terrorism, climate change, mass migration, and many pandemics of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Least developed countries are falling behind, and middle-income countries are caught in the same trap. Climate change poses an exceptional and existential threat to many, but particularly to small island and low lying coastal developing states.

Mr. President,

After 75 years we have reached a crossroads. As the world order is changing, multilateralism – coordinated work between states to achieve a common goal and promote a dialogue between different countries – is now at the forefront. This exchange of views and information, but collective action as well, helps to eliminate the kind of misunderstandings that lead to uncertainty and disorder. Now is the time to ensure that the youngest generations are active participants in the creation of our future. We do this, by not only giving youth a voice and a platform, but by listening and understanding what the leaders of tomorrow expect from the leaders of today.

However, the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the corresponding Sustainable Development Goals have come under pressure because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused an unprecedented global triple crisis: health, economy, and finances. These challenges we are facing today because of the COVID-19 pandemic, compel us to embrace multilateralism even more. Jointly addressing the multi-faceted impacts, the economic, social and health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and interventions that mitigate risk and promote resilience or recovery for high-risk populations could help improve our long-term response to the pandemic and prepare more effectively for future public health emergencies and other global threats.

In these challenging times the landscape of finance has changed drastically. The economic and financial shocks associated with COVID-19, such as disruptions to industrial production and falling commodity prices, are disrupting economic growth and threaten sustainable development. Therefore, Mr. President, financing for sustainable development must be at the center of our preparedness and resilience. As developing countries strive to meet the demands of the crisis response, a viable solution on debt is of vital importance. The developed partners should uphold the agreed eight pledges for Financing for Development.

I ask special attention for the small and vulnerable nations in the world. We must strive to leave no one behind, to protect our planet, to promote peace and prosperity, to prevent conflicts, to abide by international law, to build trust, and resolve to reform our institutions to remain effective bodies in the service of the peoples of the world.
None of this can be achieved without a multilateral system. Only through multilateralism, only through collective action and dialogue can we hope to achieve our goals as an international society. Only through a reinvigorated multilateral effort can we ensure our future. We need a commitment to a new multilateralism.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the former eight Secretaries General for their sterling efforts in furthering the mandates provided by the membership of this organization. From our first Secretary General, Trygve Lie, to Ban Ki-moon and António Guterres, Suriname expresses appreciation for their service to humanity.

Thank you.