



**Statement by H.E. Albert R. Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
International Business and International Cooperation of the Republic of
Suriname, on the occasion of the 54th Regular Session of the General
Assembly of the Organization of American States, 26-28 June 2024,
Asuncion, Paraguay**

Chair of the General Assembly, Minister Rubén Ramírez Lezcano,
congratulations on your election as the President of this 54th General Assembly,
Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro,
Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Nestor Mendez,
Colleague Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Head of Delegations,
Permanent Representatives,
Permanent Observers and representatives of international organizations,
Hardworking staff of the OAS General Secretariat,
Ladies and gentlemen,

- This 54th edition of the General Assembly is convened in the old and great city of Asuncion. Many important historic events started here, and I expect that our deliberations and decisions will only add more value to this city.

Mr. Chair,

- Global and regional developments give cause for serious concern in maintaining peace and security which are essential in fostering prosperity and sustainable development.
- The OAS as oldest regional organization has an important role to play in facilitating constructive collaboration within the international and regional community.
- Bound by our geographic presence in this hemisphere, and with reference to

the OAS principles, we must remain vigilant and assertive to adapt to changing circumstances around us.

- The core principles of the OAS are our common denominator: without peace and security, rule of law and democracy are not possible, without which, sustainable development and prosperity cannot be achieved, without which, again maintaining peace and security becomes a challenge. It is imperative therefore that we focus on all components of the cycle, for which we need strong and viable institutions and bodies, befitting for the time we live in and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

- Security- as understood within the context of the OAS of being multidimensional in nature – is an indispensable pre-condition for sustainable development and economic growth.
- Digital advancements (such as social media platforms and Artificial Intelligence technology) bring countless opportunities on the one hand, but it also carries challenges associated with misuse, as this has the potential to disrupt economies, destabilize countries, and thereby compromise democracies.
- Our dedicated actions to these emerging challenges, must be prioritized and resources should be allocated, with strong coordination between member states and relevant Inter-American system and global institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

- The OAS can only be effective and politically relevant if we as member states remain committed to the purposes and principles of the Democratic Charter and the Interamerican Convention on Human Rights.
- And, the framework in which we try to do this, is a free and democratic one, because history has taught us -and is still teaching us- that this provides the

best context, the best framework for groups and individuals to achieve their potential.

- The threat to democracy used to come from strong military groups and elites, who took power away from elected officials and established dictatorships. Regretfully events of yesterday in Bolivia are a stark reminder of this reality.
- This threat has diminished, but at the same time there are other threats, which undermine democracy and the rule of law, and consequently hamper development. Transnational organized crime and the drugs mafia, with its impact on all in society, are clearly a major one, not only threatening our democracies, but also impacting our development gains.
- As a member of the OAS, we actively act on thematic areas such as: women's rights, and the rights of indigenous people. Important are also the rights of our children and youth.
- Furthermore we have made use of jurisprudence of the Inter American Court of Human Rights in executive decisions (in regards for instance to condemnation of impunity), which is indicative of the importance of these rulings made by the court in the governance of our states.

Mr. Chairman,

- Within the hemisphere several institutions were established to support member states in addressing systemic and other challenges. We have to leverage these resources in a coherent way. And the OAS should be able to provide direction, focus and policies, while others come in with funds and projects.
- Many issues on the agenda remain, while new challenges present themselves. In the meantime, the OAS as an organization has shrunk and its capacities have been stretched.
- The review of the organization, currently underway, could provide solutions to remedy this challenge, but this will certainly require political will and

financial commitments from all member states.

- Suriname is part of the Project Steering Committee of the current review, demonstrating our commitment to contributing to the process and our commitment to the Organization of American States.

Mr. Chairman,

- Suriname is on the brink of a significant economic breakthrough, as major investments are underway in offshore oil and gas mining. These positive developments position Suriname to play a leading role in the regional energy market, influencing not only the energy sector, but also its own economy.
- Being strategically positioned, Suriname is ready to enhance its role as a central hub within the Caribbean and South American regions. By leveraging our abundant natural resources including oil, gas, bauxite and fertile agricultural land, we aim to strengthen economic ties and facilitate trade within the regions.
- In light of these developments, we too have to be very considerate in our actions, to maintain our commitments towards sustainable development, taking into account external factors (such as climate change, the required environmental standards and other global compliance systems).
- Suriname is in a unique position, geographically part of the South American continent and historically and culturally part of the Caribbean, adding to the political, cultural and economic diversity in the Americas, and as such is committed to continue to play a meaningful role in the inter-american system.
- CARICOM has assumed a lead role in one of our sister countries in terms of securing freedom and democracy. We call on all our brothers and sisters in the western hemisphere to lend their support to our sister nation Haiti
- Suriname is a member of the Working Group on Haiti and is taking great interest in supporting this founding member of the OAS and fellow CARICOM

country on their path to peace, security and political stability.

Mr. Chairman, in summary:

- It is imperative that we promote unity and inclusivity in the region while recognizing our diversity. We need to unite over those topics which we share in common; sustainable development, multidimensional security, democracy, rule of law and equality, and human rights.
- At the same time, we should recognize our unique needs and priorities per subregion. For this we need a strong, focused institutions that can deliver on what is the agreed mandate of the member states.
- In conclusion, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the excellent arrangements put in place by our gracious host. We thank the people and government of Paraguay for the extended hospitality.
- We look forward to welcoming you for the next General Assembly in the Caribbean region, when Antigua and Barbuda will have an opportunity to reciprocate with Caribbean hospitality.
- Thank you