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PARIS, FRANCE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

HON. RAPHAEL G. C. TROTMAN, M.P.

MINISTER of GOVERNANCE of the COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC of GUYANA

Mr. President, I greet you on behalf of H.E. President David Granger and the Government and people of the green land of Guyana.

Allow me to congratulate the Government and people of France for hosting this 21st Conference of the Parties, and for the excellent arrangements which have been made for our work here in Paris. In the midst of extreme adversity you have triumphed.

Recalling the brutal attack on French soil just weeks ago, Guyana once again extends our condolences to the Government and people of France and we unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism.

We assemble here in the face of global challenges, not the least the existential threat of unchecked climate change. No longer an issue of the future, it is one of the greatest threats facing humanity today. COP 21 is an opportunity for humanity. Paris must deliver an Agreement which is legally binding, based on the principles of the Convention, and which provides the resources for transformative action that will allow us to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Mr. President, Guyana is committed to developing a Green Economy. Our abundant rainforests have, over the years, been conserved and sustainably managed. We are proud to say that we have among the lowest deforestation rates and highest forest carbon storage per capita in the world. In 2009, in a pioneering partnership with the Kingdom of Norway, Guyana formulated and commenced implementation of a low carbon development strategy and a REDD Plus initiative.

Mr. President, not only is REDD Plus the most cost effective mitigation tool, but it is also impossible to achieve a target of 1.5 or even 2 degrees without the contribution of the world's forests. We join with others in urging that the 2015 Agreement include a REDD Plus mechanism and a provision for the resources to implement it.

In the context of our pursuit of a green economy, our country has embarked on a pilot initiative to create Guyana's first Green Town. We hope, with adequate support, to transfer lessons learned to other urban centres in a truly bottom-up, and country driven approach to green low emission development. We are also working to develop new sources of renewable energy, including hydropower.

Guyana is extremely concerned at the low level of ambition in emission reduction targets necessary to stabilize global emissions. Among the lowest emitters in the world, Guyana developed and submitted an iNDC ahead of the October 1 deadline. We are disappointed that aggregate targets and actions pledged in iNDC's still take us to almost 3 degrees warming. This is unacceptable, as it will spell disaster for small island and coastal low lying developing states like Guyana, where most of our population and infrastructure exist at or below sea level. The Paris Agreement must serve to protect us. In this regard, we join with the many other vulnerable countries in calling for commitments for medium and long-term emission reduction pathways that are consistent with a 1.5 degree goal.

Given the current low level of mitigation ambition and the severe impacts that face vulnerable countries in the medium and long term, we cannot over-emphasize the importance of adaptation as a key element in the new Agreement, with adequate resource provisions to support implementation of national adaptation actions. We support including a mechanism for loss and damage in the new Agreement.

We further urge that the special vulnerabilities of SIDS be explicitly recognized in the context of adaptation support, that such support be commensurate with our growing needs and be provided in a form that recognizes the capacity constraints of SIDS.

Mr. President, the critical role of support in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement cannot be over-emphasised. Developed countries must continue to take the lead in providing scaled up, sustainable, new, additional and predictable climate finance to developing countries using the 2009 pledge of US\$100 billion per year as a floor. It is also imperative that we recognize that both SIDS and LDC's face particular capacity constraints in accessing financial resources. The Paris agreement must include a commitment to improve access, including direct access, for these countries.

COP 21 will long be regarded as a crossroad in history. The outcome of these negotiations will chart the kind of future that succeeding generations will inherit. Let us leave Paris with an ambitious, balanced, equitable, legally binding Agreement that provides for the poor and the wealthy as equally as it provides for the strong and the vulnerable among us. Future generations will look back and ask – did we, in 2015 in Paris, do the right thing. Let us not fail them.