

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Suriname aligns itself with the statement delivered by GRULAC and wishes to highlight several national considerations that we believe are important for the successful outcome of COP17.

For Suriname, implementation of the Convention must remain firmly grounded in national circumstances and ecological realities. Countries face land degradation, drought, and ecosystem pressures in very different ways. Our policies, indicators, and implementation tools must therefore allow sufficient flexibility to reflect these differences while maintaining our common ambition under the Convention.

Suriname also wishes to emphasize the importance of prevention alongside restoration. Restoration of degraded land is essential, but preventing degradation before it occurs is equally important. For countries that still maintain extensive healthy with intact ecosystems, protecting these areas represents a strategic investment in resilience, biodiversity, water security, and sustainable development. The future Strategic Framework should therefore provide balanced attention to both restoring degraded landscapes and maintaining healthy ones.

As a Small Island Developing State, Suriname further underlines that vulnerability cannot be assessed solely on the basis of land area or traditional dryland classifications. Drought, changing rainfall patterns, freshwater stress, saltwater intrusion, coastal pressures, and ecosystem degradation can have significant national consequences even where affected areas are relatively small.

For this reason, monitoring systems, indicators, and reporting arrangements must be fit for purpose. They should be capable of reflecting national and subnational conditions, allow the appropriate use of national data, and avoid creating disproportionate technical and administrative burdens for countries with limited institutional capacity.

Ambition must also be matched by the means of implementation. Developing countries require adequate, predictable, and accessible finance, technology transfer, capacity-building, scientific cooperation, and appropriate data and monitoring tools. These are essential if commitments agreed internationally are to result in practical action at national and local levels.

Suriname also supports stronger synergies among the Rio Conventions. Climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and water insecurity are deeply interconnected. Greater coordination should help countries reduce duplication, improve coherence, and develop integrated programmes that deliver multiple environmental and development benefits.

Finally, Suriname believes that international cooperation under the UNCCD should remain practical, inclusive, and implementation-oriented, with particular attention to the circumstances of vulnerable developing countries and Small Island Developing States.

Thank you.