

## Presentation of Mrs.Ingrid Bouterse – Waldring, First Lady of the Republic of Suriname

To the High Forest, Low Deforestation Conference On Climate Finance  
Mobilization in Paramaribo, Suriname

February 13, 2019

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to Suriname.

It is my distinct pleasure to be here with you on this historic High Forest, Low Deforestation Conference on Climate Finance Mobilization. Please allow me to extend special recognition and appreciation to the United Nations and their support to the Republic of Suriname in hosting this conference on climate finance.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda focuses on leaving no one behind and as such, forms the basis for my involvement at different levels of society. It compels me to promote the well-being of infants, elderly and other vulnerable groups in coastal areas as well as the interior of our Republic.

The prevention of exclusion of these vulnerable groups, by supporting local initiatives, including economic empowerment, community development, early childhood development and education for all, is paramount to me. For example my organization, the Bureau of The First Lady, has committed to implement various social initiatives and is constantly focusing on projects aimed at: ICT education through the establishment of multimedia labs for secondary and high schools, promoting reading projects for youth, advancing the wellbeing of persons with disabilities by making available necessary tools, focusing on ECD through the celebration of Children's Day and other activities for the children, and social activities for the elderly.

We often invite groups, institutions, foundations and schools to inform us about the circumstances in which they work while to contributing to further development of our society. Furthermore, I join events or activities that focus on the development and education of children/teenagers. Events touching women's issues is also one of our main interests, especially women from remote areas. With my presence as the First Lady, my personal message, and through informal conversations, emphasis is given to motivate and inspire as much as possible.

At the moment we are passionately working on a project called 'Palmentuin Waka Pasi and More'. This is located in the centre of Paramaribo. Waka Pasi literally means walking past in our local language. It is a craft market specially designed for women from Paramaribo and nearby districts as well as remote areas. The women will be offered a safe place to sell eco-friendly handicrafts and many other products in order to stimulate self-reliance and women entrepreneurship.

Besides these programmes and activities my bureau also gives attention to deprived neighborhoods and other districts. These areas tend to have the most community problems socially and financially. On a daily basis several donation requests are received, that vary from renovating houses of the low income groups, to supporting people with strong social needs.

Today we recognize the global challenges linked to climate change and to persistent poverty in our countries especially the high forestation, low deforestation countries.

More frequent intense, and disastrous weather events can be expected. They all impact the base of our national development. This is emotionally heartbreaking for our vulnerable communities, our families, our women and children, our less fortunate, our indigenous communities.

The HFLD countries must mobilize their respective governments and their strategic partners to create a global consensus platform. This is a requirement not only to raise the targeted USD100 bn per year for climate finance. More importantly, we need to make effective use of applying these funds to our poverty alleviation within a framework of days, as opposed to months.

I believe that the HFLD countries have a moral responsibility to globally raise awareness of the climate finance challenges.

The humanitarian crisis within our HFLD countries presents strategic opportunities of working in partnership with our international development partners. Ladies and gentlemen, in the fight towards poverty reduction I recognize the importance of the availability of funding.

However I want to strongly call for an improved and faster method of accessing climate finance. Every day I am interacting with painful human suffering of women and children. The time for practical solutions is now!

In closing I would like to reiterate my ongoing commitment to bring solutions for the areas with social issues and keep on working hard on poverty alleviation because everyone deserves equal chances to develop themselves.

Thank you.