

## JOINT COMMUNIQUE

### **JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT TO GUYANA BY HIS EXCELLENCY CHANDRIKAPERSAD SANTOKHI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME**

1. At the invitation of His Excellency Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname, paid a four-day visit to Guyana from August 17-20, 2021. His Excellency President Santokhi was accompanied by First Lady Mrs. Mellisa Santokhi-Seenacherry, H.E. Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, H.E. Parmanand Sewdien, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, H.E. Raid Nurmohamed, Minister of Public Works, H.E. Albert E. Jubitahana- Minister of Transport, Communication and Tourism, H.E. David Abiamofo, Minister of Natural Resources and representatives of the State Oil Company and private sector of the Republic of Suriname.
2. In their review of the relations between Guyana and Suriname since their last meeting in November 2020 in Paramaribo, their Excellencies Presidents Ali and Santokhi noted that the Guyana/ Suriname Strategic Dialogue and Cooperation Platform (SDCP) has provided added impetus to the enhancement of cooperation between their two countries and is indeed proving useful to their collective goal of furthering the development of their peoples through mutually beneficial cooperation.
3. Their Excellencies received reports of the meetings and consultations held by the various working groups under the SDCP. They noted with satisfaction the collaboration and coordination initiatives in Foreign Policy Coordination and Political Dialogue; Environment; Security; Health; Infrastructure and Transportation; Agriculture; Investment, Trade and Enhancement of the Private Sector.
4. Their Excellencies expressed satisfaction with the progress to implement initiatives geared to improve the unhindered movement of people and goods across the Guyana/Suriname border. They noted too the coordination of the policies of Guyana and Suriname in matters of hemispheric and regional significance including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, combatting crime, enhancing security and the Agri-Food Systems Agenda of CARICOM.
5. They directed that strategies be developed to hasten the implementation rate of other cooperation activities under the SDCP. They further directed their respective Foreign Ministers to closely monitor the execution of the activities under the SDCP.
6. The Presidents underscored the importance of enhancing bilateral and multilateral security cooperation between Guyana and Suriname and expressed their support for the initiation of practical measures towards this end, in the context of maintaining peace and stability in both countries.

7. Both Presidents agreed to initiate discussions between their Ministers responsible for legal affairs towards the conclusion of a mutual legal assistance agreement and an extradition agreement.
8. Their Excellencies expressed satisfaction at the signing of the historic Air Services Agreement on December 7, 2020, between the two countries and the progress made towards the realization of the construction of the Corantyne River Bridge, both of which they believe will improve interconnectivity, not only between Guyana and Suriname, but with the rest of the Caribbean and South America, and further afield, and thereby remove obstacles to increased trade, the growth of the tourism sector and the unimpeded movement people, goods and services between Guyana and Suriname.
9. The two Presidents noted that based on responses to the issuance of invitations from both Governments for expressions of interest in the construction of the Corantyne River Bridge several reputable international companies responded, eight of which have been selected, after joint evaluation, to submit proposals for its construction by October 2021. The two Presidents exchanged views on the concessions to be granted in relation to the project, the creation of a development zone in the vicinity of the bridge on both sides and a management structure to oversee its construction. For this purpose, a meeting will be convened within two weeks with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Public Works to initiate discussions on a comprehensive investment framework.
10. Their Excellencies noted that the oil and gas sector of Guyana and Suriname held the promise of transformational development opportunities for both countries and agreed that taking advantage of the emerging synergies in the sector was of utmost importance to both accelerate and deepen the prospects engendered by the development of hydrocarbons offshore. In that regard, they discussed a possible framework for joint actions/**strategy**, joint ventures and the promotion of local content to maximize the benefits from the sector.
11. The Heads of State took the opportunity to further expand their views on the initiatives aimed establishing strategic economic and investment linkages between Guyana and Suriname to take advantage of possible savings from the avoidance of duplications in the areas of infrastructure to facilitate the production of electrical energy from natural gas to promote manufacturing and the creation of petrochemical industry as well as the refining of natural resources such as bauxite; and the exportation of surplus clean electrical energy.
12. Within two weeks **a working group will be established to pursue** concrete proposals for a joint gas strategy (inclusive of gas-to-shore infrastructure and the establishment of a plant to generate electricity from natural gas) and a Sub-regional development strategy.
13. They emphasized that coupled with the construction of the Corantyne River Bridge, the creation of a joint frontier development strategy focused on East Berbice in Guyana and Nickerie in Suriname were components that were pivotal to an over-arching strategy aimed at harnessing the natural resources and human capital assets of Guyana and Suriname to accelerate the prosperity of both countries and their peoples. They therefore directed that a new working group on oil and gas is created and convened.

14. The two Presidents noted that the agricultural sector offers similar strong opportunities for enhanced growth and development through increased cooperation and coordination in terms of production and market access to Europe and North America – utilizing the respective experiences and strengths in those two large markets.
15. They noted that the same approach would be beneficial by promoting their two countries as a twin tourism product and engaging Brazil in a trilateral programme to boost their tourist industries. They agreed to an early discussion in pursuit of this initiative.
16. The Presidents discussed the issuance of SK fishing licences to Guyanese fisherfolk and agreed that both Ministers responsible would work towards the issuance of fishing licences in that category by January 1, 2022 keeping in mind the established quota on the Surinamese side.
17. They noted that advantage should be taken of the Inter-Guiana Games and Inter-Guiana Cultural Festivals for increasing people to people contact. They further acknowledged the importance of strengthening the collaboration between universities.
18. Their Excellencies engaged with representatives of the private sector of Guyana and Suriname and supported moves to establish a Guyana/ Suriname Business Council. They applauded the healthy partnership between the two private sector groupings and their efforts to advance the commercial relations between Guyana and Suriname.
19. Their Excellencies discussed priority issues on the CARICOM agenda including regional food security and controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine inequity, vaccine hesitancy the resulting economic and social shock engendered by the pandemic and the security and stability of the region.
20. They expressed sadness at the recent assassination of His Excellency Jovenel Moise, the then sitting President of Haiti and reiterated their Governments' solidarity with the people of Haiti as they seek to overcome the many challenges facing their security, and the stability and development of their country. They supported the request of the Haitian Government for United Nations support in the investigation of the assassination. Further, the Presidents underscored the need for the region to continuously work collectively, guided by the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society, to strengthen and safeguard democratic governance and to strenuously condemn political violence.
21. In the wake of the recent devastating 7.2. magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti, Their Excellencies reiterated solidarity with the Haitian Government and its people for the unfortunate loss of lives and considerable material destruction. Both leaders underscored the urgency of coordinated regional relief and recovery efforts and are awaiting the outcome of the assessment by the Haitian authorities concerning the critical areas of need.
22. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the further strengthening of the Caribbean Community and to working with their Colleague Heads of Government of CARICOM towards the full implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. They welcomed the new Secretary-General of CARICOM, Her Excellency

Dr. Carla Barnett who assumed duties on 15 August 2021, and expressed their appreciation for the outstanding service of the former Secretary-General, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, CCH.

23. Their Excellencies acknowledged the roles of PROSUR and CELAC in bringing the Latin American and Caribbean region closer together and providing an enhanced voice for the region in international fora on issues of interest and concern, including peace and security, climate change and sustainable development.

24. Their Excellencies agreed to collaborate in their preparations for COP 26 in Glasgow. They noted that as two high forest, low deforestation countries there is much scope for advancing the joint positions and interests of Guyana and Suriname at that most important Summit and beyond. Particular emphasis was placed on the wider area of REDD Plus, including low carbon development and forest management, forest conservation, land reclamation and general climate change mitigation initiatives. They agreed that an expert mission to Suriname would be led by the Honourable Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, Vice President of Guyana, given his experience, international visibility and profile in the areas of the environment and climate change mitigation to advance the agreed bilateral agenda regarding the development of a joint strategy for environmental services and climate change.

25. They agreed to convene a trilateral Summit with the President of Brazil, in Suriname, at a mutually agreed date to discuss strategic collaboration in light of the potential offered by oil and gas industry in both countries

26. Their Excellencies were pleased to witness the signing by their respective Ministers of the *Protocol concerning the Trade in Fresh Agricultural Produce between the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Suriname* and the *Agreement on the establishment of services in the field of health care between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Suriname and the Ministry of Health of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana*.

27. In concluding their discussions, both Presidents expressed their full satisfaction with the results of their dialogue. They further expressed their convictions that the several far-reaching decisions taken to advance cooperation on bilateral, regional and international matters were testimony to the political will which they both shared for a new paradigm in the relations between their countries; driven by their vision for the sustained economic and social development of Guyana and Suriname and the enhancement of the living standards for all of their peoples.

28. His Excellency President Chandrikapersad Santokhi expressed also on behalf of First Lady Mellisa Santokhi-Seenacherry and the members of his delegation, gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, First Lady Arya Ali, and to the Government and people of Guyana for the hospitality afforded him and his delegation during his Official visit and extended an invitation to His Excellency President Mohamed Irfaan Ali to pay a visit to Suriname at a mutually convenient time.

**Paramaribo, 19 augustus 2021**

**COMMUNICATIE DIENST SURINAME**

