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**Getting to zero: Mobilizing Parliaments to act on climate action**

**GUYANA'S POSITION ON CLIMATE ACTION**

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Madame President and colleagues,

Good morning.

It is a privilege to be afforded an opportunity to lend my voice and my country's voice to this important discourse on climate change.

The climate crisis has issued us an ultimatum: either we take immediate steps and drastic action or subject ourselves to an infernal global disaster. Indifference and inaction equal nothing short of destruction. Already, we are far behind in limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The coming decade therefore must be the decade of decisive action. Climate change affects us all – rich, poor, developed and developing States – but its effects are more severe on the poorest and most vulnerable – especially SIDS and low-lying coastal states. For us, it is a question of survival.

Immediate action is needed on three fronts:

First, all countries must set more ambitious goals to reduce emissions, and we must honour, to the letter those ambitions. All countries have an obligation to act but the world's foremost polluters have a greater duty to institute steeper emission cuts.

Second, the pledge of US\$100B per annum, made one decade ago, to support climate action must be met. Dishonoured pledges are a recipe for disaster.

Third, forests constitute a powerful arsenal in the fight against climate change. Forest-rich countries must be provided with the incentives necessary to keep their forests intact and reduce deforestation and forest degradation. Mindful that deforestation contributes 16% to annual global emissions and in recognition of the ecosystem and climate services provided by forests, it is imperative that we finalise the rules for carbon markets and REDD+ so as to properly value tropical forests and the climate services which they provide.

**A little about Guyana**

Guyana by far remains a net carbon sink by a significant margin where the 18 million hectares of largely intact forests in Guyana sequesters approximately 154 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. The forest provides this

important ecosystem function as one of nine countries of the amazon – Guyana also has some of the highest forest cover on the earth along with one of the lowest deforestation rates.

The country is also part of the Guiana Shield which stores about a fifth of the worlds fresh water and about 18% of the worlds tropical carbon. It also has extremely high levels of biodiversity and endemism – with about 4% of all known animal species and even more bird species.

Therefore, Guyana is already playing its part in addressing and will continue to do so.

We will maintain our forests – almost the size of England and Scotland combined, storing 20 gigatons of carbon – a global assets.

We will work with local communities in conserving, protecting and sustainably managing our forests, biodiversity and freshwater supplies.

We will decouple economic growth and emissions through a progressively cleaner energy mix with the aim of reducing our carbon emissions by 70% by the year 2030.

We will invest in low carbon opportunities for jobs, ecosystem services and social inclusion through and expanded Low Carbon Development Strategy

Our government and our Parliament will continue to aggressively enact laws and regulations, promulgate and implement policies on climate change and promote low carbon development in every area of national life.

The time for talk is over. The time for action is now. It is but a question of survival. Act now or continue on the road to definite perdition!