



**Statement by the
Permanent Representative of the Republic Of Suriname**

His Excellency Sunil Sitaldin

at the

**United Nations Conference on the Midterm
Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the
Objectives of the International Decade for Action,
"Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028**

General Assembly

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, my delegation wants to acknowledge and recognize the leading role of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan, in co-hosting the first UN conference on Water since 1977.

Mr. Chairman,

It is lamentable that, despite joint efforts, billions of people still lack access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic hygiene needs.

The global community has recognized the importance of access to safe drinking water and basic hygiene by including this as a target of MDG 7 to ensure environmental sustainability.

The goal was to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

However, progress related to the MDGs was not uniform across the world. In fact, many developing countries did not reach the goal !

Fast forward to the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, we are now at the midterm point since the global community agreed to this ambitious agenda in 2015.

It is clear that we are far from reaching the goals set for SDG 6, and it is unlikely that these goals will be met by 2030, based on the current progress rate.

We need more than just emphasizing the importance of SDG 6!

We need commitment and action on the ground!

The policy of the Government of Suriname, like many other developing countries, is always aimed at safeguarding the availability of good, healthy, and affordable drinking water for our people.

However, we cannot do it alone. The need for enhanced international finance, support in technologies, innovative and sustainable solutions to grant access to these basic needs, is much needed, especially for rural communities.

Lack of data, and tools to support the SDGs, especially goal 6, remains a serious challenge.

If we acknowledge that the water crisis is a global crisis, and not one to be addressed only at national level, then a global approach, strong commitment and global solidarity is required.

As we convene this week to evaluate the progress made in implementing the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation, the crucial question before us is **not** whether we will take increased actions towards achieving our goal.

Rather, we must consider how quickly and how determined we will undertake these actions on a global level.

Mr. Chairman,

Although Suriname is blessed with large amount of freshwater per inhabitant, we still experience significant water-related challenges, that recur annually.

I am pleased to report on some of the national initiatives and achievements in Suriname related to water. These include:

- At policy level: The establishment of the Directorate of Water within the Ministry of Natural Resources, as well as an Integrated Water Management Department.
- A Water purification project carried out in which surface water, from the Suriname river, is purified, providing access to healthy drinking water to almost 500 households;
- Collaboration with the IDB to improve and optimize the drinking water supply in the urban areas;
- Collaboration with a bilateral partner, namely the Kingdom of Belgium, for purification of water; we applaud the support of the Kingdom of Belgium in assisting us to grant access to drinking water for disadvantage communities in the hinterlands of Suriname;
- With the support of UNICEF-WASH, drinking water systems in some villages have been rehabilitated;
- With the support of UNDP, an Integrated Water Resource Management project was carried out, to increase resilience to climate change.

Suriname is looking forward to more international cooperation and support for its water and sanitation related activities and programmes.

In closing Mr. Chairman,

Water has always been a critical public good, and it is therefore our collective responsibility as policymakers, NGO's, and citizens to protect and sustainably manage our water resources, as well as promote innovation that improves access to safe and healthy drinking water for mankind.

Thank you.