

[Check Against Delivery]

**Remarks to be delivered by the Honourable Dr
Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and
Social Security, during the High-Level Session for the
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Organisation for Migration (IOM)
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Esteemed Colleagues

Director-General

Chair, thank you for giving me the floor and allowing me the opportunity to participate in today's important event. It is timely that a global call for solutions to the climate impact on human mobility is the focus of this year's high-level event. It is also noteworthy, as highlighted in the Director General's Report that migration due to weather-related disasters now exceeds that caused by conflict and violence.

Developing countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS, and low-lying coastal states, like Guyana, have viewed climate change as an existential threat to our survival for years.

Climate-change induced migration will have implications on international peace and security. Hence, Guyana having a non-

permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the period 2024-2025 will advance the issues of climate change, food insecurity and conflict within the Security Council, from a SIDS perspective.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Climate Change 2023 synthesis report, "Reducing future risks of involuntary migration and displacement due to climate change is possible through cooperative, international efforts to enhance institutional adaptive capacity and sustainable development." A tangible solution would be to implement and support the Sustainable Development Goals, but Developing countries need access to concessionary financing and official development assistance (ODA) to aid in climate change mitigation efforts even as they endeavour to get their economies back on track after the disastrous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to build resilience against future shocks.

Thus, there is a need for political consensus toward bold action backed by direct climate finance, not repurposed funds, to impact adaptation/mitigation efforts against the climate crisis and its role in causing involuntary migration. Guyana has consistently made the call for support to those small developing countries that are disproportionately affected by the vagaries of climate change. In this regard, the IOM can be instrumental in

developing the appropriate response, in collaboration with states.

The Government of Guyana (GoG) is committed to a green economy and policies which support this vision include the Low Carbon Development Strategy, the Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the National Integrated Disaster Risk Management Plan, and the National Adaptation Strategy to Address Climate Change in the Agricultural Sector. Guyana has also made progress in implementing adaptation and resilience building actions principally through interventions to the drainage, irrigation and sea defence systems to reduce the risks of flooding. Guyana has accessed external finance to support the implementation of these actions from several sources including through the Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Norway, the European Union and multilateral arrangements.

Guyana has pioneered an overarching framework for planning and implementing climate resilience actions, in several areas including on human mobility, through its LCDS 2030, which prioritizes the implementation of Guyana Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan (CRSAP). The LCDS 2030 is supported by sectoral policies including the National Integrated Disaster

Risk Management Plan, the National Strategy for Agriculture in Guyana, and the Sea and River Defence Policy among others.

Through the recent sale of forest carbon credits earning Guyana US\$150 million in 2023, a significant percentage of these resources have gone towards strengthening Guyana's climate adaptation systems.

Guyana's flagship LCDS 2030 will not reverse the damage already done to the environment by the major polluters nor reduce involuntary migration caused by the climate crisis- now, but this model which will be shared with the world at the upcoming 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28), where the stakes could not be higher, provides the robust bridge needed to ensure the planet, our only home, wins.

In the face of rising sea levels, devastating natural disasters, and dwindling resources, extreme weather conditions, food and water insecurities, changes in disease transmissions and vector ecology, we must recognize that the consequences of climate change are not confined to a single region or a specific group of people. They reverberate across continents, displacing communities, uprooting lives leaving countless individuals in search of safety and stability.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this high-level segment ensures that climate crisis stays in focus as it is now the leading cause of involuntary migration. This global phenomenon knows no borders, respects no boundaries, and affects us all. It is a crisis that requires a unified response, that transcends individual nations. We cannot ignore the moral imperative that lies before us. It is time to forge a global solution that addresses the root causes of climate-induced migration.

I thank you.