



**JOINT DECLARATION**  
**BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME**  
**AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC**  
**IN RELATION TO CROSSBORDER COOPERATION IN THE FIGHT**  
**AGAINST**  
**THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Government of the Republic of Suriname and the Government of the French Republic;

**Emphasizing** the bonds of friendship that unite their countries and peoples, within the framework of the internationally accepted principles and on the basis of mutual respect, understanding and shared interests;

**Acknowledging** the substantial progress made in the cooperation between the two countries;

**Expressing concern** over the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic with its far reaching social-economic impact;

**Recognizing** the efforts by both countries to manage and contain the further spread of the disease;

**Recognizing also** the urgent situation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic in the border areas between both countries and the need to cooperate on all levels to mitigate the effects of this pandemic in both countries;

**Referring** to the various bilateral consultations between the Surinamese and the French Delegations to exchange information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in the border areas;

**Expressing** the mutual determination to enhance the cooperation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in the border area between the Republic of Suriname and the French Republic (French Guiana);

**In this regard**, joint cooperation will be implemented in the areas such as health, education, sanitary measures, movement of persons and goods, security and surveillance on both sides of the Marowijne River;

**Expressing further** the intention to establish a bilateral mechanism for consultations and joint action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic;

**Recalling** that due to the health situation, the border between French Guiana and Suriname has been closed for the movement of people since March 2020; re-opening will take place through consultations between the French and Surinamese authorities when the pandemic situation allows it.

#### **DECLARE:**

Both sides will work towards increasing the cross-border cooperation in the border area of the Marowijne and Lawa rivers in all areas relating to the management and containment of the further spread of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Due to the closing of the border, authorities from both sides have decided to enhance the border control, along the Marowijne and Lawa rivers;

Both sides will exchange data with names and contact details of bilateral partners, at different levels, in order to facilitate the exchange of information regarding security and health issues.

#### **Security and Management of the movement of persons and goods**

Exchange of information and intelligence sharing on the movement of people and goods on the Marowijne and Lawa rivers;

Continue with the procedure established by common agreement for the exchange of goods on a regular basis;

Exchange of information between the designated law enforcement agencies of Suriname and the French counterpart, in line with mutual agreements;

Facilitate joint surveillances on the Marowijne and Lawa Rivers and exchange of information on the implementation of security measures in both countries.

## **Health**

Facilitate concurrent epidemiological/fact finding missions and sharing of relevant data of these missions in the designated area;

Regular exchange of health information concerning the personal health profile and health status of persons in the designated area taking into account national regulations;

During the period which the border is closed, health authorities will facilitate mutual assistance for individuals in urgent and vital need when care cannot be provided by local authorities for cross border healthcare;

Due to the health situation, and during the pandemic-period, health authorities will set up a procedure under the control of relevant political authorities.

## **Education**

Acknowledge the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), specifically SDG 4 "Quality Education", in which both countries ensure that all girls and boys complete equitable and quality primary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;

As a consequence of the measures undertaken to control and manage the spread of COVID-19, including the closure of the air and maritime borders, normal movement of persons for all purposes is discontinued, which impacts the education process;

However, in the spirit of good neighborliness both sides endeavor to facilitate an orderly resumption of the education process, specifically in the border area-dependending on the COVID-19 situation;

A review of the situation will take place at the end of September 2020.

## **Legal/ Illegal Immigration Control**

To provide safe conduct, a common policy needs to be determined to prevent the illegal crossing. Permission will be granted for vital reasons such as familial and health issues;

To cross the border easily exceptions can be created for:

1. Police teams preparing for common missions
2. Medical teams from hospitals of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni and Albina who organize the health-chain on both sides

Establishment of a joint checkpoint on either side of the border;

Between the Surinamese and French sides joint-patrols can also be done separately, in 2 boats, taking into account the COVID-19 measures;

On the basis of the existing cooperation between the relevant law enforcement authorities on both sides, it is proposed to strengthen existing protocols in this respect and to reinforce them separately in view of the situation in the Marowijne and Lawa area and the economic development in both countries.

### **Post COVID-19 Cooperation**

Maintain an effective border control, especially between the neighboring cities of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni and Albina, with controls in relation to the pandemic;

Both sides commit to improve and strengthen the management and control of the border, through, among others, the use of relevant technology and law enforcement;

Finalize the negotiations about the boundary demarcation on the Marowijne and Lawa rivers (section 1 to 3), aimed to be signed during a high-level meeting by the end of the year;

The Declaration between both countries to settle the joint management of the Marowijne and Lawa rivers, as well as the joint development on both sides of the border that will accompany the Protocol between the Republic of Suriname and the French Republic to further settle the border in a part of the Marowijne and Lawa Rivers, in addition to the Convention of 1915, will entail broad cooperation between the two sides;

The Surinamese side is in the process of preparing a draft text of the Declaration which will be presented to the French authorities for their consideration in due course;

Proceed to the finalization of the translation, in due course, of the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement between France and Suriname and aim to sign this instrument during a high-level meeting before the end of the year;

Restart the exchanges about the trans-border FR/SR card and finalize the negotiations, in due course.

### **Environmental Cooperation**

Both sides reaffirm their will to address illegal mining and enhance their cooperation against illegal trade of goods, located on the banks of the Marowijne and the Lawa rivers, intended for the supply of illegal gold miners mainly located in the French Guiana zone;

Surinamese authorities reiterate their commitment to not renew the authorizations for mining when they expire, to not issue new licenses and will work towards improving the enforcement of the current license conditions;

Our partnership in addressing illegal gold mining is aimed at improving together the living standards of the population of the border area and the environmental situation, such as the quality of water;

Acknowledge that both Suriname, since August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018, and France, since October 10<sup>th</sup> 2013, are party to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and wish to strengthen their cooperation in the environmental field, taking into account that the objective of this Convention is to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds;

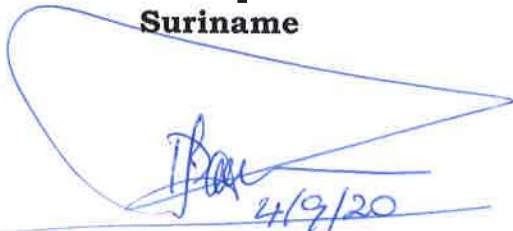
Both sides reiterate their concern over the use of mercury in the mining sector for the environment. In this regard they agree to identify ways of cooperation and partnership, including the sharing of best practices for environmentally friendly mining.

**CONCLUDE :**

Both sides shall, in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, meet periodically in common agreement between both countries, at any other moment if circumstances justify it.

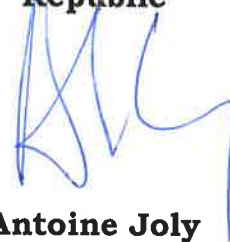
Signed in St. Laurent du Maroni on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2020.

**For the Republic of  
Suriname**

A blue ink signature of Albert R. Ramdin, written over a horizontal line. The date "4/9/20" is written in blue ink below the signature.

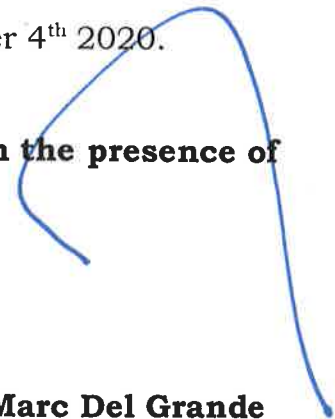
**Albert R. Ramdin  
Minister of Foreign  
Affairs, International  
Business and  
International  
Cooperation**

**For the French  
Republic**

A blue ink signature of Antoine Joly, written over a horizontal line.

**Antoine Joly  
Ambassador  
Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary in  
the Republic of  
Suriname**

**In the presence of**

A large, stylized blue ink signature of Marc Del Grande, written over a horizontal line.

**Marc Del Grande  
Préfet de la Région  
Guyane**