

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY BRIGADIER  
DAVID GRANGER, PRESIDENT OF THE COOPERATIVE  
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
MERCOSUR SUMMIT, BRASILIA, JULY 17, 2015**

**Excellency, Madame Dilma Rouseff, President of the Federative  
Republic of Brazil;**

**Other Heads of State and Government of MERCOSUR;**

**Ministers of Foreign Affairs;**

**Heads of Delegation;**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Madame President,**

**The delegation of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana is  
delighted to be in Brasilia today. We share not only the warm  
hospitality which makes this country such a special place, but we  
are also happy to be part of this rich culture of cooperation**

**between member States and associate member States of MERCOSUR.**

**We thank President Dilma Rouseff, the Government and people of Brazil for their gracious welcome and for the excellent arrangements put in place for this conference. We are confident that the outcome will bear testimony to the hard work done by the Government of Brazil in its capacity as Pro Tempore Chair.**

**My presence here today is very special for me as it marks my first official engagement with the region since assuming the Presidency of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana just eight weeks ago. It is a demonstration of my government's commitment to the process of regional integration, to the promotion of friendly relations with all countries of the region and to the production of an economic system that will enhance the prosperity of the continent.**

**Guyana is a small state, one of the smallest on this continent. We are part of the mainland of South America. We have the distinction of being the only English-speaking country on the continent. We are fraternal members of the South American**

**family of nations. Guyana is committed to pursuing its continental destiny as an active member of MERCOSUR. Guyana, an associate member, brings diversity to this common market. Guyana is also a founding member of the Caribbean Community. Our presence here represents our dual commitment to both the continent and the Caribbean.**

**Guyana believes in integration. We are committed to the infrastructural integration of the continent. We are negotiating for a road access between Guyana and Brazil through a bridge link which has already been built. The construction of a highway will intensify trade and investments with Brazil and the other countries of the South. We are also examining the feasibility of a bridge between Guyana and Suriname to the East.**

**Madame President,**

**Guyana's strategic geographic location on the northern shoulder of the continent has the potential to allow easier and cheaper access to the larger markets of the Americas, Africa and the Caribbean. Guyana is a natural gateway to these larger markets. We are an asset to MERCOSUR. We will foster the development**

**of our country and this continent. The linking of our countries through roads, bridges, rail and other forms of air, land and sea communication will improve trade between the Caribbean and the continent. International trade is indispensable to economic integration and to MERCOSUR.**

**This conference is taking place at a propitious time in the evolution of the global economy.**

- From the North came the conquistadores and explorers 500 years ago. They created a new Atlantic mercantilist economic system.**
- From the West arose a new dynamic, ‘dollarised’ market-driven economic system which also gave rise to the Inter-American system of which we are all a part.**
- From the East, most recently, came an aggressive industrialist powerhouse of the ‘Asian Tigers’.**
- We are the South. This is our time! This must be our century! We will succeed, as the other regions have succeeded, however only if we are integrated, only if we are united.**

**Guyana shares with MERCOSUR the strong emphasis on issues that go beyond commerce. We recall the commitment of MERCOSUR to the promotion of democratic norms and institutions. We recall, also, the stance taken regarding breaches of constitutional order within its membership. We note the recognition that MERCOSUR has accorded to smaller States through mechanisms such as the Structural Convergence Fund.**

**Madame President,**

**Guyana subscribes fully to the ideals of democracy and constitutional order. We understand their importance to security and stability in South America. We embrace the principle of regional solidarity and the need to reduce political and economic asymmetries within the region. It is, therefore, in the interest of closer integration and in the spirit of solidarity that we appeal to MERCOSUR to continue its vigilance to safeguard the sovereignty and security of small states on this continent and to eliminate inequalities and controversies that separate them.**

**Violations of borders could degenerate into conflict and could derail integration. When borders which had been determined definitively settled by international agreements are disregarded by one State, other States may do the same. Chaos will ensue. This continent must be a 'zone of peace' if it is to progress.**

**In the case of the claim on the territory of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, we wish to make it clear that a full, perfect and final settlement was made in 1899- 116 years ago by an international tribunal.**

- Borders were demarcated;**
- Boundaries were delimited;**
- Maps were drawn; markers were set in stone;**
- The entire world recognizes our borders.**

**Guyana, never the less, has been obstructed in the development of its territory. In October 2013, a naval corvette forcibly expelled an unarmed exploration vessel from our waters. Investors have been intimidated; the economy has been paralyzed.**

**Decrees have been issued in 1968 and 2015 claiming a large portion of Guyana's Exclusive Economic Zone. These decrees are a 'fishbone' in the throats of our people. We are underserving of 50 years of unrelenting provocation and obstruction of our development.**

**Guyana is a small State of fewer than a million persons. We seek cordial relations with all States. We commit to:**

- mutual respect for each other's territory,**
- mutual non- aggression between States,**
- mutual non- interference in each other's internal affairs; and**
- mutual cooperation for peaceful co-existence amongst States.**

**Madame President,**

**Guyana will continue to contribute to the economic development of the peoples of the South American continent. If our strategic geographic advantage as a gateway is diminished, our contributions will be degraded.**

**Guyana reasserts its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States. The Commonwealth has issued a**

**statement expressing concern and support for Guyana's territorial integrity. The Caribbean Community has also expressed support for Guyana's territorial integrity. We call on MERCOSUR to consolidate the integration of this continent by recommitting its support to the territorial integrity of this small State.**

**The Cooperative Republic of Guyana wishes to once again, express our gratitude to the President, Government and people of Brazil for their hospitality. At the same time, we wish to convey best wishes to the incoming Pro Tempore Chair, Paraguay, in the execution of their mandate.**

**I thank you.**

**Muito obrigado!**