

**Embassy of India
Paramaribo**

[Bharat Bhawan ITEC Day celebration 2024]

13 September 2024

Ambassador's Remarks

Good evening! Subh Sandhya, Namaskar.

Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, Ambassador Albert Ramdin

ITEC Alumni, Friends of India and Members of the Diaspora

Friends from the Media, Ladies & Gentleman,

Thank you all for joining us today here at Bharat Bhawan to celebrate the 60th Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation- ITEC DAY, which falls on 15th September.

India's approach to Development Partnership has been shaped by the need of developing countries. Despite our resource constraints, we share our developmental experiences and technical expertise with our partners in the spirit of "VasudhaivaKutumbakam".

Since its inception of the ITEC programme in 1964, ITEC has become as a flagship initiative of India's development partnership by providing training and scholarships over 225000 professionals and officials from 161 partner countries, particularly from the Global south. These training programmes are imparted in some of the best institutes in India and range from one week to 51-week programmes ranging from agriculture to food security, economy to finance, engineering and technology to industry, public administration to policy making, history and culture etc. numbering nearly 300 courses covering 12000 slots annually. ITEC serves as an instrument of capacity building and a platform for professional networking.

Suriname is a valuable ITEC partner country having access to about 45 slots every year. Over 500 participants from Suriname have benefitted and enhanced their skill set by attending these fully-funded training programmes. I take this opportunity to thank all ITEC alumni for their feedback and experience sharing that enriched our development partnership model that takes into account the priorities and needs of our partners. I hope the youth of Suriname will be encouraged to participate in upcoming ITEC courses given experience of ITEC alumni.

Our ties are deep rooted in our shared history and culture. Our connections go back to the day when first Indian- Contraki landed on the shore of Suriname in 1873. After establishment of diplomatic relations in 1977 and thereafter, our mutual understanding and trust as well as convergence on various global and multilateral issues based on the shared vision of peace and sustainable development. Bilateral relations have grown from strength to strength over this period and gained further positive momentum with high-level exchanges last few years.

Our development partnership is not limited to ITEC training but also includes other developmental projects funded bilaterally as well as under India-UNDP funding mechanism. Notably, the construction of a Center of Excellence in Information Technology and renovation of an indoor sports facility in Nickerie, building resilience to flood response through building their meteorological infrastructure, quick impact projects, setting up a passion fruit processing facility are at different stages of implementation and discussion. India's approach to development is mainly human-centric and is marked by Respect, Diversity, Care for the future, and Sustainable development. Our Prime Minister underscored in Uganda in 2018 that "Our development partnership will be guided by your priorities.... We will build as much local capacity and create as many local opportunities as possible".

In my view, four Ds connect us; namely: Diversity, DE-colonization, Developmental need and Diaspora presence in Suriname. Our societies shared the value of the cultural diversity, democracy and believe in peaceful coexistence with harmony for progress. We are overcoming from our colonial past and got independence in 1947 and 1975 through DE-colonization. Thereafter, setting aside the impact of colonial past, we are stepping ahead on the path of development. Feel proud that Indian diaspora an all-weather bridge between India and Suriname that is well integrated in Surinamese society and contributing immensely in nation building and development of Suriname.

We felt in home away our home soon after our arrival in Paramaribo on 13th August. We are deeply touched by the warmth and hospitality accorded to us that is really a testament to the strong cultural affinity. I had the opportunity to present my letter of credence to Hon'ble President Santokhi on 26th August and had brief discussions covering wide range of matters of mutual interest. Thereafter, I have interacted with a cross section of our Surinamese friend in Paramaribo, Wanica and Nickerie.

I looked forward to receive yours love and supports. In fact, the ITEC Alumni and the KIP alumni who are the un-christened Ambassadors of India in the community at large and hope to work to build on the strengths of our friendship. Thanks to Minister Ramdin Saheb for your gracious presence and seek your guidance in my diplomatic journey!

Thank You.