

Statement of Jay Anania
Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Suriname
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 13, 2012

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to appear before you today. I am grateful for the confidence that Secretary Clinton has placed in me, and I am deeply honored by President Obama's nomination to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname.

I am extremely pleased that my wife Lourdes and parents Joan and Edward are with me here today. Lourdes and I have shared the challenges and pleasures of the Foreign Service since 1984, and we served together during six overseas postings. I could not have reached this stage in my career without her love and support. I would also like to recognize my mother, Joan, whose own foreign affairs career was cut short by the discriminatory policies that applied to women in the 1950s. Thankfully, this particular policy no longer exists, and women no longer have to resign from the Foreign Service if they decide to marry. She first inspired me to consider a Foreign Service career. My father also set a positive example of public service with his U.S. Army and Department of Defense civilian career.

While representing the United States abroad in such diverse places as Mexico, Jordan, Cuba, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Hong Kong, and

currently in Iraq, I have drawn on my experiences as an American to encourage people to see that working together helps make progress possible. Although countries cannot immediately change the legacy of centuries, a commitment to human rights, decency, and a shared future by all sectors of society without regard to ethnicity or religion can help a nation in its efforts to overcome legacies of the past.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Suriname – one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse countries in the world. The ancestors of Suriname’s people hail from various regions, including some where I have served, and their religious beliefs also reflect much of the world – Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and the oldest continuous Jewish community in the Americas. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the many communities of this remarkable nation.

My first priority would be protecting the safety and welfare of Americans in Suriname – both private citizens and the official community. If confirmed, I will work with the Suriname government to adopt policies and promote development that increases American investment and tourism between our two countries.

If confirmed, I also plan to work to strengthen democracy and transparency in government. Suriname has made real progress in the 21 years since the reestablishment of civilian rule, and in 2010 Suriname held its fifth consecutive

free and fair national election. It is very much in the United States' interest that Suriname remains a stable democratic partner, and if I am granted the opportunity to serve there, one of my highest priorities will be to advance that goal.

The United States, Suriname, and other nations in the region share a vital interest in protecting the rule of law. People cannot feel secure if they do not have a legal system they can count on. Close cooperation between duly constituted law enforcement in both countries, and strengthened law enforcement capabilities, are important shared interests. Suriname has made progress in its battle to stop trafficking in persons, arms, and narcotics. Suriname stands to benefit greatly from bilateral and regional assistance under several U.S.-sponsored programs, including the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) – a multi-year, multi-faceted initiative that complements the Central American Regional Security Initiative and the Merida Initiative in Central America and Mexico. Under our CBSI partnership with Government of Suriname and other Caribbean neighbors, Suriname will receive significant assistance to improve port security, provide technical training to its law enforcement officers, combat money-laundering and financial crimes, and develop biometric screening measures for its ports of entry. Suriname remains a key partner for the United States in our efforts to promote citizen security in the Caribbean.

The Administration is working to protect the global environment and to combat the dangers posed by pollution and the risks of climate change. An important part of this effort is working cooperatively with other countries around the world. Some of the people of Suriname, heirs to a wonderful rainforest and other natural areas, see eco-tourism as one way to demonstrate that these environments are worth protecting from destruction by clear-cutting or illegal logging or mining. If confirmed, I will work hard with the Surinamese to help protect their wonderful natural environment, a goal that I firmly believe is in both the interest of the United States and of the people of Suriname.

Suriname is a land of significant natural resources, from bauxite and gold to untapped petroleum reserves. Free trade is a key part of the economic engine that drives progress and growth, and it is in our interest to increase our trade and economic ties with Suriname.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Suriname, working with you and your colleagues in Congress on behalf of the Administration, while also working closely with the government and the people of Suriname in a genuine spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.