



MAURITIUS

STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

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Mr. President,

May I, on behalf of my delegation, and in my own name, extend to you Mr. President, our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. I assure you of our fullest support and cooperation in the daunting tasks that lie ahead of us. Your election Mr. President is a befitting recognition of your country, in its sustained efforts to consolidate peace and security particularly in your region. It is also a personal tribute to your engagement and rich experience in international politics and diplomacy.

Allow me also to extend through you Mr. President, our sincere appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa for the effective and efficient manner in which she conducted the business of the sixty-first session.

May I also seize this opportunity to pledge my delegation's support to our new Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his efforts and approach in charting out a vision for our organization that would respond to the needs and aspirations of the twenty-first century.

Mr. President,

International peace and security constitute the bedrock of our organization. We have come a long way since 1945 in securing peace and security in many parts of the world. However, a lot remains to be accomplished in order to have a conflict-free world. Conflicts in some parts of Africa continue to remain a major source of concern to us. We are seriously preoccupied by the situation in the Middle-East. The trail of violence and death continues to plague the Middle East. In order to give peace a chance to have a grip in these regions, and manifest its positive effects in the day to day life of citizens, we need to redouble our efforts and explore all possible avenues to achieve peace, stability and security in the larger interests of the citizens of these countries.

The fragility of the Middle East situation, in particular the question of Palestine needs a holistic approach, one which would *inter-alia* include the linkages embedded in the socio-cultural, political, economic and security issues in the region. The distress caused by the frequent closures of border crossings and other infrastructures that have shut down economic activities in the Gaza strip is another severe blow to the population. In this context, I should once again like to reiterate our full support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, side by side with the state of Israel.

As regards Darfur, we welcome the hybrid UNAMID force which is expected to assume the peace keeping and peace building operations there. We call on the concerned parties in the conflict to demonstrate their real commitment and resolve to engage fully in the search for a lasting peace.

In Somalia, in spite of the serious efforts to contain violence during the last six months, the situation remains highly volatile. In this context, I would like to add my voice to the call made by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré to the UN Secretary-General to consider the possibility of deploying a UN Force to assist the African Union Support Mission in Somalia.

Mr. President,

The world today is confronted with the growing threats of terrorism be it home grown, cross-border, regional or international. This scourge should be confronted with all the means at the disposal of the international community. We also believe that more effective and efficient mechanisms should be put in place to lay hands on the financiers of terrorist organizations.

The United Nations remains the bedrock in the fight against terrorism. Mauritius has lent and will continue to lend its fullest support to the numerous initiatives and resolutions of the UN on counter terrorism.

We are happy to note that the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism has already entered into force as from July this year.

Mr. President,

The twenty-first century is a world of interdependence with the national frontiers between peoples and countries falling faster than we had envisaged. It has brought about the interface and interaction between peoples from different parts of the globe. We are today living in a world intertwined with inter-religious and inter-cultural predicaments.

Mauritius as you are aware, Mr. President, is a multiracial and pluricultural society. Unity in diversity is the solid foundation on which we have built the framework for the peaceful co-existence of peoples of different faiths and cultures. Cultural diversity, understanding and respect of different faiths and religions are today part and parcel of the Mauritian society.

We warmly welcome the convening of a High-Level Dialogue on Inter-religious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace in October 2007 at the UN Headquarters for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion. We will certainly be part of this dialogue. Furthermore, we reaffirm our determination to support all initiatives that promote a culture of peace and tolerance. We are also happy to note that the UN has recently adopted Resolution A/61/L.62 to observe and celebrate the International Day of Non-Violence on 2 October each year in recognition of the Great Apostle of Peace and Non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr. President,

Mauritius is a strong advocate of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. So much so that the founding fathers of our Constitution ensured that human rights figure prominently therein. Since independence in 1968, we have persistently endeavoured to place our citizens at the core of all forms of human rights and have ensured that they enjoy all political and civil rights irrespective of their status, colour or creed.

We have enacted several legislations and we continue to enhance our legislative and institutional framework for further protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have set up the National Human Rights Commission, the Sex Discrimination Division, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children and the Human Rights Center to ensure and promote compliance with fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and the international instruments on human rights.

Mauritius is party to all major international and regional human rights treaties. We continue to extend our unwavering support to the United Nations in the promotion and protection of human rights. As a member of the Human Rights Council, we are lending our fullest support to make it more effective, efficient and relevant in the eyes of the world.

Our quest for the universal respect of Human Rights demands that the perpetrators of massive violations be brought to justice promptly.

Mr. President,

Impunity gives rise to violations.

We have just such a situation in Myanmar.

We cannot but admire the Buddhist monks of Myanmar and the courage of Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi whose party had won a democratic and fair election in 1988 only to be removed from office by a military coup.

She has now spent eleven of the last seventeen years under house arrest.

And now, the legitimate stirrings of the people's will are being brutally repressed in blood, as we are speaking here at the UN.

It is our duty to let the people of Myanmar know that the free nations of the world stand by them.

But we need to do more than just stand by them.

The time has come for the most stringent sanctions to be taken against the military junta that has proven again and again that it is totally impervious to good sense and common humanity.

Mr. President,

I am proud to say that in 1997 as Prime Minister I took the decision to stop buying rice from Myanmar.

I applaud the decision of the President of the United States of America to apply sanctions. All of us should do the same. The military junta must be sent a clear message: that the free world will not tolerate gunning down people who are demanding freedom and justice.

Mr. President,

While you have made "Responding to Climate Change " the thrust of the General Debate, Secretary-General Ban ki-moon has qualified climate change as the "defining issue of our era". We cannot agree more with you. Climate Change affects all of us. Indeed, if it is not addressed head on, it will have irreversible consequences and devastating effects on the very survival of human beings and habitability on the planet earth. We all have a stake in addressing Climate Change and global warming.

We commend the laudable initiative of the Secretary-General in calling the High-Level Event on Climate Change on 24 September. We remain confident that the strong message that has emanated from this High-Level Event will provide the necessary impetus and political will and act as a catalyst to the Bali meeting later this year. However, in our approach to finding a global solution to climate change we should avoid making those who bear the least responsibilities in the greenhouse gas emissions and who are yet the hardest hit, pay the price on the same scale as others who have led to the accentuation in global warming as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. Mauritius on its part remains committed to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities."

The rise in sea level constitutes a danger that threatens most of the low lying Small Island Developing States. These states have limited capacity to withstand the negative effects of natural disasters and external economic shocks. Their sustainable development becomes more trying and rigorous in the light of their inherent vulnerabilities.

Mitigation and adaptation capabilities of countries may vary depending on the level of their economic development. Small Island Developing States, face in their adaptation choices, fundamental constraints of inadequate data and technical capacity, weak institutional capacity and limited financial resources.

In this respect we call for the full and effective implementation of commitments, programmes and targets adopted in the Barbados Programme of

Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS. A special SIDS Fund to enable the development and implementation of adaptation measures in the same manner as the Special Fund for the Least Developing Countries under the GEF umbrella, and regional climate observational systems to better monitor climate variations associated with global warming and sea level rise need to be set up.

While it is true that if the present pace of climate change goes unchecked, the face of the world may change drastically in the next hundred years with devastating effects for the future generations. It is equally true that underdevelopment, poverty, hunger and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis in the developing world are the present challenges that require the immediate and undivided attention of the world as laid down in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Mr. President,

The 2007 Millennium Development Goals Mid-term Report underscores that "the MDGs will be attained only if concerted additional action is taken immediately and sustained until 2015". Africa unfortunately, in spite of serious and strenuous efforts, continues to lag far behind on the MDGs.

Mauritius for its part is on track to meet all the MDGs by the year 2015. Nonetheless, since my government took office in 2005, we have allocated considerable resources in our national budgets for the empowerment of the poor and the social upliftment of the vulnerable groups. The development challenges of Mauritius, therefore, go well beyond the achievement of the MDGs.

In order to improve the prospects for attaining the MDGs, it is essential for donors and development partners to honour their undertakings and commitments made at the 2002 Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development. In this respect, we hope that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in 2008 will provide the much awaited response from the concerned parties to adequately address international commitments on financing for development.

In our efforts to find ways and means to alleviate and ultimately eliminate poverty in our sub-region, Mauritius jointly with the Southern African Development Community will be hosting an International Conference on Poverty Alleviation and Development in April 2008.

Mr. President,

While there is no denying the fact that globalization in its wake has led to economic growth in the world including developing countries, it is also true that many countries, specially the most vulnerable ones are unfortunately not reaping the benefits of globalization. This is especially true for LDCs, lower and middle

income countries and countries in transition which continue to face huge difficulties to integrate the globalizing economy.

We call for a new global strategy that would create an enabling economic environment for development requiring greater coherence between the international trading, monetary and financial systems. We, therefore, reaffirm our dedication to the establishment of a New International Economic Order with "Globalisation with a human face" whose benefits will be more widely shared.

Mr. President,

More than six years after the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, this pandemic still remains a "Global crisis requiring Global actions". The negative impact of HIV/AIDS on human resources in the 25 to 45 age group, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa is simply overwhelming. The alarming rate with which the HIV/AIDS pandemic is ravaging innocent lives in our societies has far reaching implications on our socio-economic development. It undermines efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Mauritius is merely 0.2%, of which 20-30% are among vulnerable groups, such as prison inmates and intravenous drug users. Our policies are geared towards containing the level of contamination specially by combating transmission via sharing contaminated needles. We are providing substantial funds for the development of a Needle Exchange Programme and a Public Awareness Information and Communication Campaign on HIV/AIDS.

Monsieur le Président,

Si chaque année, à pareille époque, chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement, nous convergions vers cette auguste assemblée, c'est parce que nous croyons en la vertu de la diplomatie multilatérale.

Tous, ici présents, nous sommes sincèrement préoccupés par les tensions multiples qui traversent le monde.

Tous, j'en suis sûr, nous souhaitons apporter notre pleine contribution à la recherche de solutions pratiques, viables et à long terme.

Nous sommes tous animés par la même volonté de gérer nos différends dans le dialogue et la compréhension; de signaler les dérives de la mondialisation; et de participer, au décollage et à l'expansion des économies de nos pays.

Nous reconnaissons et nous saluons, Monsieur le Président, l'immense rôle que l'ONU joue sur la scène internationale, rôle qui demande à être renforcé continuellement.

Le champ d'action de la diplomatie s'est considérablement élargi ces dernières années.

A travers le levier des relations internationales, l'ONU a les moyens et le devoir de favoriser une coopération fondée sur la prévention des conflits et une gestion efficace et étroite des catastrophes naturelles.

Mais l'ONU présente quelques lacunes dans sa structure et son fonctionnement et nous souhaitons que des réformes y soient apportées dans les plus brefs délais.

Mr. President,

We continue to follow with keen interest and participate actively in the ongoing reform process of the United Nations, particularly on the question of the reform of the Security Council, the revitalization of the General Assembly, the System Wide Coherence, the Mandate Review and the Management Reform. For us a meaningful reform of the United Nations passes first through a comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council.

In the 2005 Summit we expressed our resolve to support early reform of the Security Council with a view to making it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent. We have spoken sufficiently on this subject and these should not remain as mere words and intentions. My government welcomes the decision of the Open Ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council which has decided *inter alia* to start inter-governmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. We are convinced that the inter-governmental negotiations should be results-oriented and elements-based.

Mr. President,

Mauritius remains committed to the African common position which calls for two permanent seats and five non permanent seats for Africa in a reformed Security Council. We continue to support the legitimate aspirations of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for a permanent seat. Mauritius reiterates that a permanent seat to India in the UN Security Council is long overdue. India's contribution on a weighted scale to peace keeping and peace operations and the provision of bilateral aid and trade at the regional and international level is significant.

As the largest democracy and secular state, India is a living example of peaceful co-existence of major religions, cultures and faiths. India can be a source of inspiration as well as a testing ground for the outcome of the forthcoming United Nations High Level Dialogue on Inter-religious and Inter-Cultural understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

Mr. President,

In 1965 when the Constitutional Conference for the granting of independence to Mauritius was convened, the Chagos Archipelago, amongst many other islands, formed an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and should have remained as such in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Resolutions 1514 of 1960 and 2066 of 1965. The Resolution 1514 of 1960 *inter alia*, states:

“Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

The excision of the Chagos Archipelago by the colonial power at the time of our independence constitutes a dismemberment of our territory in total disregard of resolutions 1514 of 1960 and 2066 of 1965. Furthermore, it is also a violation of the Charter of the United Nations itself.

We therefore, once again, reiterate our request to the United Kingdom, to engage into bilateral dialogue with us as soon as possible with a view to enabling us exercise our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

On the question of our sovereignty over Tromelin, we note the progress registered at the recent Mauritius-French joint Commission.

The United Kingdom and France, two permanent members of the UN Security Council are two major and important economic, trade and development partners of Mauritius. We fully appreciate their continued support in the development of our country. We have been striving to reach an amicable agreement on these issues but we cannot compromise on our territorial integrity and our sovereignty over those islands.

Mr. President,

To conclude I should like to reaffirm my country's full faith in the United Nations. It remains the only organization that offers us hope for peace and security for a better world for future generations.

I thank you for your attention.
