



MAURITIUS

STATEMENT

by

**Dr. The Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam
Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius**

at the

**General Debate of the 60th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

**19 September 2005
New York**

Check Against Delivery

Mr President,

On behalf of my delegation and the Government and people of the Republic of Mauritius, I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of this Sixtieth Session of the UN General Assembly. We are confident that you would be able to discharge the responsibilities entrusted upon you. I want to assure you, Mr President, of my delegation's fullest cooperation during your tenure of office.

I would also like to convey my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Mr Jean Ping of Gabon for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the affairs of the Fifty-Ninth Session of the General Assembly. As Africans, we are proud of his exemplary stewardship.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation for the relentless and dedicated efforts of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in leading the Organisation, in these challenging times.

Mr President,

The very first words of the United Nations Charter: "*We the peoples of the United Nations*" are of overwhelming significance. It implies that people should be the primary beneficiaries of every resolution that we adopt and every programme that we launch.

As we engage this debate, we should ask ourselves the questions: "*Have we indeed put the peoples at the centre of all our deliberations and activities? Have we done enough to ensure that ordinary people, both men and women, young and old, benefit from all our initiatives and actions, collective as well as individual?*"

Mr President,

Last Friday, leaders of the world have renewed the pledge to save humanity from the scourge of war, fear, disease, famine and poverty by adopting the Outcome Document. The citizens of the world were witness to the sober promises we have made in it. They now wait, in earnest, to see concrete results.

We are therefore required to muster the collective political will to mobilize the necessary resources to fulfil those pledges.

The wealthy and powerful North should assist the less fortunate countries, which require assistance to help propel them into the orbit of irreversible sustainable social and economic growth. For its part, the South must devote energy and show creativity to engage in a common effort to attain social development and human security.

Mr President,

The spirit of teamwork and partnership which resulted in the successful outcome of the UN World Summit should allow us to adopt a fresh mindset that places the interests, security and welfare of our peoples at the centre of our socio-economic policies. This cannot be done without promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr President,

In our efforts to pursue people-centred development, we must put a premium on tackling those national and transnational issues that have a direct impact on people's welfare. Uplifting peoples from abject poverty and endowing them with appropriate means to lead productive lives are the best guarantees for long-term sustained social stability, which will, in turn, ensure prosperity and international peace. Poverty reduction and its eradication must therefore remain at the core of all development efforts towards a just and equitable order.

In my own country, only 3 months ago in line with our democratic tradition, the people voted overwhelmingly for change of government. Immediately upon assuming office, my government has formulated development strategies on the premise that economic and social policies must sub-serve the primacy of the people, in particular the poor. In fact, the fundamental principle of my government policy is putting the people first. My Government believes that the fullest possible participation of the people in the development process is the best guarantee for the success of any growth strategy. With this in mind, the first set of social decisions taken by my Government has been to expand the welfare state to cover free transportation to students and the elderly as well as restoring old age pension to all citizens. My Government's overriding objective is to ultimately make the economy work for the people and not the people work for the economy.

Mr President,

My delegation considers that assisting developing countries through increased Official Development Assistance (ODA) is crucial; but it is only a palliative, not a remedy. Aid without trade, would not only be unsustainable but would indeed be self defeating. Trade is and will always remain the recognised engine of economic growth and development.

Developing countries continue to face impediments in their efforts to attain sustained economic growth. Tariff and non-tariff barriers in developed countries combined with non-

implementation of commitments undertaken in respect of development finance and debt alleviation of developing countries, further aggravate the situation. We call on the international community to demonstrate the necessary political will to ensure that the Doha Development Round truly takes into account these concerns so as to reach a fair and equitable global trading system for the benefits of our people.

Mr President,

My delegation welcomes the particular attention given by the World Summit to the special needs of Africa. Whilst many countries in the world have made significant progress in lifting their people out of poverty, for many others, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, infectious diseases and the incidence of HIV and AIDS, unemployment and environmental degradation continue to take a heavy toll. My delegation therefore appreciates the resolve of the international community to address these issues and emphasises the need for the timely implementation of the measures.

Mr President,

Despite significant efforts which have resulted in peace in several parts of Africa, the continent continues to suffer from violent conflicts and humanitarian crises. The plight of displaced people, especially women and children in those conflict situations and in the refugee camps, needs to be urgently addressed. My delegation wishes to underscore the importance of enhanced measures to protect vulnerable groups, especially women and children, during and after armed conflicts.

Mr President,

In our own region, Mauritius continues to remain actively engaged in the reconciliation process in the Comoros. We are presently co-ordinating the preparations to host a Donor Round Table for the Comoros later this year. The importance of this meeting cannot be overstated. We urge the donor community to contribute to this process for the benefit of the people of Comoros.

Mr President,

The situation in the Middle East is seeing some tangible progress. We welcome the process of Israeli disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank and commend the efforts of Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict. We urge both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples to continue the much needed confidence building measures so as to achieve a just and lasting peace.

Mr President,

With regard to Iraq where innocent civilians are falling victims to violence on a daily basis, it is imperative that necessary support be provided to ensure the creation of a conducive environment for the Iraqi people to live in peace and security.

Mr President,

I spoke extensively on terrorism in the statement I made on 15 September 2005 during the High Level Plenary and I wish to reiterate my country's commitment to fully cooperate with the international community to fight the scourge of terrorism which has a direct and indirect effect on the life of ordinary and innocent people.

Mr President,

At a time when there is global consensus on the need to build a more secure world, it is a matter of the greatest regret that the 2005 Review Conference for the Non Proliferation Treaty failed to achieve a conclusive outcome. The proliferation of nuclear weapons poses a grave risk of fissile material falling into the wrong hands. This eventuality is too horrendous to contemplate. The devastation that could be caused by so called low-yield nuclear weapons is unimaginable.

Mauritius advocates the eventual complete elimination of all nuclear weapons based on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory disarmament regime. To demonstrate again its full commitment to non-proliferation and to international peace and security, Mauritius has recently signed the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mauritius welcomes the agreement reached in June 2005 in New York on a politically binding international instrument on the tracing of Small Arms and Light Weapons which will no doubt contribute in combating the illicit trade of these weapons in the world. This represents a significant step in ensuring that our peoples live in a safer world.

Mr President,

As regards to the reform of the Security Council, I wish to refer to my statement on 15 September 2005 outlining the position of Mauritius on this issue. We have a unique opportunity for substantial reform. It must not be squandered. It is imperative that Africa should find its rightful place in such a reform, as well as India, the world's largest democracy. A reformed Security Council should over and above reflect the present geopolitical realities to meet the aspirations of all our peoples.

Mr President,

The United Nations is a vital forum where states, large and small, wealthy and the less fortunate can have their voice heard. It also provides a framework for collective action on the basis of consensus partnership and mutual understanding.

I wish to reiterate the appeal I made, as Chair of AOSIS, at the Special Session on Financing for Development to our friends and partners to continue to assist the Small Island Developing States in their sustainable development efforts through the proper and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Mr President,

Regional cooperation is an important means for developing and strengthening the economy of developing countries. To this end, we have made modest but encouraging progress with respect to regional integration. Mauritius pursues an active policy of integration through sub-regional organisations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Indian Ocean Rim – Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). Whilst relations with our traditional development and trade partners continue to feature prominently in the foreign policy of Mauritius, we intend to take vigorous steps towards the development of strategic partnerships with Member-States of SAARC, ASEAN as well as the Latin American countries.

Mr President,

Allow me to reiterate before this Assembly our legitimate sovereignty claim over the Chagos Archipelago, including the Island of Diego Garcia which was detached by the United Kingdom from the territory of Mauritius prior to our independence in violation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 1960 and Resolution 2066 of 1965. The people of the Chagos Archipelago, who were evicted from the islands, are still struggling for their right to return to their birth place. We reiterate our call to the United Kingdom to pursue discussions with us for an early settlement of this issue.

Likewise, we also appeal to the French Government to expedite the process of resolving the issue of the sovereignty of Tromelin through dialogue in a spirit of friendship and trust that has always characterized our relationship.

Monsieur le Président,

Permettez-moi, de dire ici quelques mots en français, afin de marquer l'attachement et le respect de mon pays pour les cultures et les langues dans leur diversité. Certaines d'entre elles, dont le français, nous ont été léguées par l'histoire.

Dans toutes les civilisations, les hommes ont toujours œuvré pour leur mieux-vivre. Pourtant l'humanité souffre encore; cela est encore plus vrai, hélas, pour les pays en développement et, plus particulièrement, pour le continent africain.

L'avènement du troisième millénaire a vu un foisonnement de projets d'aide en vue d'améliorer le sort des faibles et des démunis. Les objectifs du Millénaire étaient de ceux-là; nous nous sommes engagés à réduire l'extrême pauvreté et la faim d'ici 2015.

La francophonie, comme énoncée en novembre 2004 lors du dixième Sommet tenu à Ouagadougou, s'inscrit dans ce même combat universel. Il s'agit de se réinventer; de sortir des sentiers battus; de dégager des pistes nouvelles afin d'atteindre, au plus près, nos objectifs.

A cet égard, nous nous félicitons de la contribution de la famille francophone dans cette démarche commune.

Mr President,

From this very rostrum, 37 years ago, when Mauritius acceded to the United Nations Organisation in 1968, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the then Prime Minister and father of the Mauritian Nation, firmly advocated for a secure, stable and just world and I quote:

“Men of goodwill are constantly trying to find a formula by which the under-privileged can banish inequality and fear and aspire to a better place in the sun ”
unquote.

Today these aspirations are more than ever valid as the comity of nations engages in the quest for freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom to live in dignity. Providing mankind with these freedoms remains the primary goal of the United Nations.

In this spirit, I wish to announce that my government has made a commitment in the Clinton Global Initiative to organise an International Conference on Poverty and Development.

Today, as we celebrate the sixtieth year of its existence, let us strive to become what we were always meant to be — a truly representative body of “*We the Peoples of the United Nations*”, acting in defence of their welfare and the advancement of their interests above all else. Mauritius pledges to fully play its part in this endeavour.

Thank you