

## **Address by Hon Anerood Jugnauth Prime Minister of Mauritius to the thirty seventh Session of the General Assembly –15 October 1982**

Mr. President,

I bring to the General Assembly and to the United Nations the greetings of the people of Mauritius and of their newly elected Government. I wish to convey to the President my warmest congratulations on his election to preside over our deliberations. I am confident that under his wise and able leadership the Assembly will, in the superior interests of mankind, give concrete shape to the aspirations of the peoples of the world.

I seize this opportunity to express to his predecessor, Mr. Kittani, our warmest appreciation for the highly impressive manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the previous session of the Assembly.

It is indeed a moment of intense emotion for me to address the Assembly for the first time in my capacity as the head of a new Government overwhelmingly mandated by the people of Mauritius to take the destiny of the country firmly in hand, to make it play the role it should play in mankind's search for enduring peace in the world and to make it contribute its share, however modest, to the eradication of all forms of injustice at home and abroad.

I wish here to record our appreciation of the work done by the Secretary-General. It takes great courage, Mr. Secretary-General, to undertake on behalf of humanity the difficult tasks that your office carries with it. The international community has seen you at work in the past year in some of the most trying situations, where your tact, your moderation and your perseverance have inspired universal admiration. The year ahead, unfortunately, does not promise to be any easier for you than the year that has elapsed. In your first report on the work of the Organization you have focused on the need for an urgent review of the United Nations and, in particular, of mechanisms set up for collective action for inter-national peace and security. You have argued for a more forthright role for your office of Secretary-General and you envisage for the Security Council a kind of diplomatic early-warning system. Finally, you say you would like to see more concrete follow-up action to debate in the Assembly. Many of the proposals you have made could be put into effect immediately if the political will of Member States was galvanized for the purpose. You can therefore rest assured that my delegation will cooperate fully with your office and with the other Member States for an early implementation of any resolution arrived at in respect of the reorganization envisaged.

It is a matter of deep regret that the principle of the universality of United Nations membership does not yet actually prevail. Unilateral action and exclusive alliances have in fact not been disowned. Spheres of influence and considerations of balance of power, regrettably, continue to actuate the policies of many nations, despite the fact that they fail to produce the desired results. Added to this is the considerable and formidable interference in the internal affairs of many countries, the powerful making their presence felt in many ways, relentless in their endeavour to enlarge their spheres of influence. Countries like Mauritius, which have only recently acquired freedom, have a strong

attachment to the United Nations and inevitably a special stake in its functioning. I have come here to reiterate my country's deep commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter.

I believe that we come here not to save face but to save and protect life. We come here not to deliver speeches only and then make our exit but to make action follow our words. We come here not as a matter of mere formality and to pay lip service to the ideals of peace and justice but to show how serious we are in our intentions to work for the superior interests of the whole of mankind. We come here not out of selfish motives but to show how willing and prepared we are to forgo a little bit of our own ego for international good in a spirit of compromise, so that the world may live and the human race survive. We come here not to add to problems but to find solutions satisfactory to all parties. We come here because we believe in man and in all the inherent good there is in him which, if it prevails, will be the safety valve of the human race.

What is urgently needed is a unified view of the world's resources and the world's experience and of man's power of invention. The change we desire, the change which must come, is one not of pace, quantity or manner but of the basic quality of what man is and can be. We all need to make earnest and well-considered efforts to subdue and check national ambitions and rivalries in the superior and wider interest of the preservation of civilization and the survival of humanity.

It is in the context of what I have just said that I invite representatives present here to bear in mind the human dimensions of the issues we shall be deliberating upon. The average man does not ask for much; he is not interested in leading a life of frivolous affluence and frenetic consumption. We are gathered here to give substance to the yearnings of the average man, to give voice to the wishes of the voiceless, for that is the primary responsibility of those who govern. The great tragedy of the present situation is that the world order as it now exists has been unable to satisfy the basic universal aspirations of man —dignity, peace and security.

In June the people of Mauritius gave an overwhelming mandate to those whom they perceived to be the champions of the dignity of man. We have given a solemn undertaking to our people to defend the oppressed and the weak and we will be true to that undertaking. It is equally in this spirit that we want to add our voice to that of this concert of nations in our denunciation of all forms of injustice and to work to better the lot of suffering mankind.

The major and continuing threat to the dignity of man comes from the prevailing economic order, characterized by built-in self-perpetuating inequality, which results in an unjust distribution of the world's limited resources. Year by year the inequality grows, the injustice of the system becomes ethically more revolting and at the receiving end deprivation and misery become more unbearable. It is patent that this system cannot be allowed to continue. Change may be too gradual in the developing countries for our liking but we realize that it can come only out of patient dialogue. We are today faced with the Herculean task of restructuring an economic order, which has been shaped by four centuries of colonialism. This cannot be done quickly, it cannot be done painlessly, but it has to be done and it will be done. The real question before us is whether we want to continue frittering away our energies in useless disagreements and quarrels or whether we want to look seriously into the future of mankind and act to make people really prosperous.

Both the rich and the poor nations have pressing unparalleled problems, which cannot be solved independently. The present crisis is a crisis of international structures. The present system needs fundamental institutional reforms, based upon the recognition of a common-interest and upon mutual concern in an increasingly interdependent world. New vitality and urgency have to be imparted to the North-South dialogue. The very survival of both developing and developed countries depends on the success of this dialogue. We have to moderate the shrillness of the demands made, as well as the obdurate arrogance with which those demands have so far been rejected. I believe that we have in the Lome Convention given the world a small but significant example of what cooperative North-South relations could be like.

My Government also calls upon the members of the international community to direct its efforts to the equally important transformation of the international order relating to the oceans. The traditional legal order in that field has been eroded by technological and political developments and must be replaced by a new legal order which would permit the exploitation of the ocean space—the largest and most valuable region of our planet—in the interests of all mankind. After many years of intense and very complex negotiations, in which over 150 States have regularly participated, the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea has produced a Convention which ought to be hailed as a triumph for mankind in laying the foundation for international cooperation in the use of the oceans.

All the major industrialized Powers played a very active role in the shaping of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which largely reflects their interests, concerns and preoccupations. It is on account of this that we fail to appreciate the attempt being made by certain major Powers to scuttle the Convention by their decision to opt for a mini-treaty among like-minded States, a mini-treaty which inevitably will create new areas of tension in inter-national relations likely to lead to a situation which endangers international peace and security.

We call upon all States to sign the Convention in order to make the concept of the common heritage of mankind a reality. The Convention on the Law of the Sea should be treated as a special convention and we urge the major industrialized States to forgo their fears about the precedent-setting nature of this Convention. All States should embark on this enterprise in a spirit of trust and good will.

Quite apart from its determination to work with other countries of the third world for the elimination of the poverty curtain that divides our planet into a world of the affluent and a world of the poor, Mauritius militates against the equally pernicious division of the world into two hostile camps dominated by the so-called super-Powers, which, in their pursuit of world domination, threaten the security of States the only concern of which is the social and economic development of their people, free from external interference. Mauritius is committed to a policy of active and determined non-alignment. We intend jealously to project and guard our hard-won independence; we intend to condemn unequivocally all aggression, all forms of imperialism and all hegemonistic ambitions. We aspire to a world of true interdependence of genuinely free and equal States, whose relations are based on cooperation rather than on confrontation.

The Government of Mauritius, in pursuit of its policy of strict non-alignment and in conformity with General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI), the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, will work with other peace-loving members of

the international community for the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean. During the years which have elapsed since the adoption of the resolution, we have witnessed the expansion of the Ocean's geopolitical dimensions and the conversion of this intended zone of peace into a zone of war and mobilization for war, with all the attendant dangers for the countries of the region.

The Ocean has gradually expanded beyond its own waters; it is now linked to the States of South-East Asia and to developments in West Asia and the Middle East. The so-called modest communications facility in Diego Garcia has been converted into the formidable and horrendous nuclear base which threatens the security of all Indian Ocean States, and there has been a scramble to secure port facilities along the so-called arc of crisis, that is, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian peninsula and the vital Persian Gulf area.

With the alarming increase in a foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean, the fervent hope of the States of the region for the holding of the Conference on the Indian Ocean has receded. Mauritius and the other States of the region are not hoodwinked by the tactics and ploys adopted by some States, which are designed primarily to cause confusion, postpone indefinitely the holding of that Conference and create a smoke-screen to hide their warlike designs. We solemnly appeal to all the members of the international community to give their full support to the United Nations so that the Conference on the Indian Ocean can take place in the very near future. We also call upon the foreign military Powers present in the Indian Ocean to exercise mutual restraint and to initiate a gradual and balanced withdrawal of their forces from the region, which would then be open exclusively to commercial navigation. It is our conviction that the security of the sea-lanes in the Ocean can best be protected by the States of the region.

At this juncture I should like to dwell on an issue which affects the vital interests of Mauritius; I mean the Mauritian claim of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, which was excised by the then colonial Power from the territory of Mauritius in contravention of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2066 (XX). This dismemberment of Mauritian territory, the violation of our territorial integrity, has been made all the more unacceptable by the fact that one of the islands of that very Archipelago, Diego Garcia, is now a full-fledged nuclear base, which poses a constant threat to the security of Mauritius and to that of all the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the very Ocean declared to be a zone of peace by this Assembly in 1971.

I solemnly appeal to the peace-loving Members of the Organization to extend all their support to the legitimate Mauritian claim of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. In helping Mauritius to regain its national heritage, the United Nations will be living up to its own principles and proclaiming loud and clear that it expects its resolutions to be implemented by its Members. As the Diego Garcia issue involves two fundamental principles of the United Nations, namely respect by the administering Power for the territorial integrity of its colony, and the right of peoples to live in peace and security, I venture to say that the return of the archipelago to Mauritius will bring the Organization the respect that is so indispensable to its continued existence.

Times are bad, very bad. The world economy in fact teeters on the brink of a depression that could be wider and deeper than that of the 1930s. For the weakest national economies, and therefore for hundreds of millions of people, little short of catastrophe

looms. Such a situation, wherein the world is perilously poised on the brink of an economic precipice, is not conducive to peace. An extended recession, excessive interest rates, highly unstable exchange rates, widespread protectionism—all these constitute threats to peace in a world of inescapable interdependence. Our political and economic systems should provide conceptual space for the reality of an interdependent world economy. Regrettably, the search for the world economic recovery that is so desperately needed remains stalled and we drift towards the abyss of economic disaster.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, we shall participate fully in the North-South dialogue and, indeed, have great expectations of progress resulting from that dialogue, but we believe that much can also be achieved through South-South cooperation. The island States of the southwest Indian Ocean are actively engaged in promoting cooperation at the regional level. We hope in the near future to set up an Indian Ocean commission, which will provide the institutional framework for cooperation among the States of the region. It is no mean measure of our firm belief in the concept of an interdependent world economy that we are already looking beyond the immediate present to the day when the grouping of the southwest Indian Ocean States can be associated with other regional groupings.

Violations of human rights constitute another serious threat to the dignity of man. In too many countries do people live under constant threat of arbitrary arrest, torture, disappearance and execution after trials that are a travesty of civilized norms of justice. We unequivocally condemn all violations of human rights wherever they occur, under whatever social or political system they occur.

We have a special abhorrence for *apartheid*. A system so inhuman, so immoral, would be unimaginable but for the shameful fact that it exists. This odious system of institutionalized racism will eternally tarnish the claim of our epoch to a place of honour in the history of civilization. We have a duty to our brothers in South Africa. We also owe it to ourselves to eliminate all vestiges of this iniquitous system; otherwise the judgment which posterity will pass on our times will be indeed very harsh, and deservedly so.

We believe that freedom is indivisible, that peace is indivisible. One of the first foreign policy decisions of my Government was formally to recognize ANC. Mauritius will stand by ANC in its hard struggle to secure the emancipation of the people of South Africa; ANC can depend on the unflinching support of the people and Government of Mauritius.

We shall give the same unconditional support to SWAPO in its struggle for the decolonization of Namibia. It is unacceptable that the Republic of South Africa should continue in its illegal occupation of Namibia in defiance of the basic tenets of international law and of international opinion. This defiance has to be opposed by united and determined action. We should not permit economic considerations to hinder our action when the basic norms of universal morality are being trampled upon, and we should vigorously condemn the tactics adopted by the South African regime, tactics designed to modify the terms of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Mauritius, moreover, sees no linkage between the presence of Cuban troops in Angola and the withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia and demands that the South African regime should no longer be allowed to invoke such a linkage to delay the accession of the Namibian people to independence.

We in Africa will, we hope, soon be rid of the last vestiges of colonialism, and the emancipation of the South African people will inevitably be accomplished in the near future. Racist domination in southern Africa is the major, immediate problem we face, but it is by no means our only problem.

I should like to impress upon the Assembly that the African peoples want to dispel the image that the African continent is only a rich source of raw materials and nothing more; nor is it fertile ground for the manoeuvres of outside Powers and it is now determined not to tolerate such manoeuvres. Africa calls upon all outside Powers to keep out and to let Africans get on with solving their problems. Naturally, the genuine and objective assistance of well-meaning countries in the solution of these problems is not to be ignored, provided there are no sinister ulterior motives. We in Africa are in urgent need of technology, of capital, of know-how. We welcome the transfer of technology, but we shall not tolerate conflicts and rivalries, which are alien to our culture and mode of life encroaching on our continent. Our problems, both economic and social, call for the concerted, sustained effort of all of Africa. Our greatest challenge is the maintenance of African unity and the consolidation of our independence.

I come now to an area relatively distant from Mauritius. The issue at stake, however, is close to the heart of every Mauritian. The PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people has our unreserved support; our identification with the Palestinian cause is total. We believe that peace in the Middle East will remain elusive until Palestinian aspirations are fulfilled. Mauritius has studied the various peace proposals with great attention and we are ready to give our backing to any peace plan put forward that is acceptable to the PLO.

We call upon all those who can do so to bring pressure to bear on Israel to stop forthwith its aggression against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples. Prospects of peace in the area suffered a severe set-back with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the unspeakable, cold-blooded carnage of innocent civilians in Beirut.

The fratricidal war between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran drags on, to the satisfaction of those who would wish to see the third world in a perpetual state of turmoil and underdevelopment. We call upon both parties to the conflict to cease hostilities and to stop the death and destruction this war is inflicting on the peoples of Iran and Iraq.

This war has led to the postponement of the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. This postponement comes at a time when our movement is faced with problems requiring immediate solutions. Afghanistan, a member of the movement finds itself under foreign occupation for the third year. It is imperative that foreign forces withdraw from Afghanistan, that all foreign interference in its internal affairs cease and that its non-aligned status be restored.

The conflicts, the inequalities and the injustices of the world scene could easily lead us to be disheartened at the precarious state of the world. But we cannot allow ourselves to be disheartened, for that would be an abdication of our responsibilities towards our children and towards posterity. An important aspect of my Government's socialist creed is faith in the innate goodness of man. Man fights the forces of evil and darkness, conscious that, however long and arduous the struggle may be, the victory of good over evil is assured.

I believe that the Charter is the concrete embodiment of one of the instances where good has triumphed against tremendous divisive odds. The Charter is our yardstick by which are judged the acts of nations. I can assure the Assembly that my Government's actions find their inspiration in the Charter.

The world has always faced one crisis or another, but today's crisis is deeper and more far-reaching. No thinking, sensitive and right-minded nation can remain silent. But it is not enough merely to speak out: we should speak out when the occasion for speaking out comes, but, above all, we should act, because the occasion for action is here and now.

On behalf of the people of Mauritius and on behalf of their newly elected Government, I pledge our continuing and unflinching support for the United Nations and our respect for its Charter.