



General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

18th Meeting

Wednesday, 5 October 1994, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

General debate

Address by Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth (Mauritius): Let me say at the outset how pleased I am to see you, Sir, presiding over the General Assembly at this session. In addition to being a well-deserved tribute to you personally and to your country, your presidency is a distinct honour and privilege for Africa. Your task will definitely not be easy but we are confident that your wisdom and broad experience will help guide our Organization in discharging its leadership role in world affairs. I hasten to pledge to you my delegation's full cooperation and active participation in the deliberations ahead.

Let me take this opportunity to say how welcome the leadership provided by Ambassador Samuel Insanally was during the past session. We commend him for the clear vision and diligence with which he steered the work of the Organization.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, equally deserves appreciation for having carried out his responsibilities with sagacity and serenity despite the complex and sensitive nature of the issues that have retained our attention this past year.

It is also my distinct pleasure to associate myself with all those who have extended a hearty welcome to non-racial democratic South Africa within the fold of the Assembly. The end of apartheid in South Africa also underscores the end of colonialism on the African continent. However, there still remain a few areas where the process is not complete, but I firmly believe that it will not be long before we can boast of a totally free world. In this regard, I should like to say that, with respect to the question of the return of the Chagos Archipelago to the sovereignty of Mauritius, we have continued to pursue a positive dialogue with the United Kingdom and that some progress has been registered.

The United Nations of today is perceived differently from what it was less than a decade ago. The fabric of international relations is undergoing profound transformation. There is now more latitude and scope for international cooperation and partnership than ever before and the United Nations is increasingly becoming the focal point for such cooperation on a number of fronts. The numerous activities in such fields as peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, humanitarian relief, election monitoring and supervision undertaken by the Organization during the past few years indicate that its leadership and potential to play an active role on the international scene have been recognized.

But we should all accept the obvious reality that

the United Nations, despite its potential and goodwill, does not have the material capacity nor can it muster the financial resources to attend to every potential or actual crisis situation. While it has become evident that solutions to the present-day crises cannot but be evolved within the framework of international cooperation, such cooperation, however, is still lacking or, where it does exist, is but lukewarm in substance. That is why, despite the end of super-Power rivalry which, in theory, should have eased tensions the world over, conflicts and tensions have continued to flare up. Though the international community does mobilize itself, albeit with disastrous delay at times, to address such situations, peaceful solutions remain elusive. Is it because our agenda in addressing these problems is not always the same? Coming from a small island State where our priorities remain the economic progress of the country and the constant improvement of the quality of life of our citizens, I harbour the dream that we, leaders of the international community, can still bequeath to future generations a world which thrives on peace. On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization can we not pledge and dedicate ourselves to that goal and recommit our efforts to that end?

It has, it seems, become fashionable to question whether the United Nations system is well adapted to the new changing situations that confront us and whether it is equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. But we often forget that we are the United Nations.

My delegation believes that the United Nations, given its universality, should inevitably continue to have a central and important role in the universal management of our society. But to be able to do this satisfactorily there is an urgent need not only to revitalize the Organization, streamlining its agenda, but also to overhaul its structures, bringing in more transparency in its internal operations and taking on board the aspirations of the developing countries which, after all, constitute the majority of our world.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the ongoing deliberations in the open-ended working group on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. It is our hope that the wide spectrum of views expressed so far on this subject, though seemingly divergent, would eventually converge to

become a consensual approach that would render the Council more transparent and democratic.

The review of the membership of the Council should be such as to make it functionally effective and as widely representative of the membership of the United Nations. But it should also, I reiterate, be the product of as large a consensus as possible to preserve its credibility. In this context, while considering an increase in the permanent membership of the Council, one should not be biased in favour of the economic giants of this world alone. The developing countries have a legitimate right to be represented on the permanent slate of the Security Council, for our concerns are different from those of the industrialized and developed countries. The African and Latin American continents should imperatively have their share of the responsibility incumbent on the Council. We have no doubt that those called upon to represent these two continents as permanent members will have significant contributions to make in the interest of the world at large. While we do not favour too radical a reform, we believe that the decisions of the Council should be arrived at by consensus rather than through veto power. Such decisions would obviously be more easily acceptable to the international community. However, the present veto system should be maintained for some time to come.

It is a fact that the United Nations has been playing a more active role in world affairs and has been assuming greater responsibilities in the fields of peace-keeping and mediation in conflicts in a number of countries. But the restructuring exercise needs to address other levels of our Organization as well, so as to embrace the development dimension of international relations. In this respect, one should not shy away from a possible review of the United Nations Charter itself, but the process, we believe, should be gradual and consensual. A strengthened and reformed United Nations should be able to contribute positively to the fulfilment of the vision of its founders.

It is opportune here to remind ourselves of what, as far back as 1945, the then United States Secretary of State reported to President Truman on the result of the San Francisco Conference. He said:

“The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where

victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace.

No provisions that can be written into the Charter will enable the Security Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and jobs."

Almost half a century later, we find an echo of the same sentiment when our Secretary-General states that

"the development imperative is as much a priority for the United Nations as the imperative of peace. ... There can be no sustainable development without peace. There can also be no real peace without development."

We fully subscribe to those views and would go even further to say that international peace and security, as well as an equitable and conducive environment and the redress of the asymmetrical international financial and trading relations, are necessary prerequisites for the sustainable development of all countries in the world, especially the developing ones.

In this respect, the plight of Africa is well known to the world community. The causes of its ills and of its weaknesses are well documented. While the disease has been diagnosed, the cure is not yet in sight.

Africa needs a new order with a clear vision of hope that will ensure its gradual integration into the international economic and trading systems. Its marginalization, deliberate or accidental, must be stopped and reversed.

The issue of human rights continues to be the subject of varying perception. We believe that human rights are indivisible, and therefore we hold the view that a revised and reformed United Nations should concentrate equally, if not more, on economic, social and cultural rights by promoting international cooperation for development.

May I be allowed here to quote the example of Mauritius? Since the last decade, the rapid strides we have been making in the economic field have been accompanied by consistent progress in the social and cultural fields, as well as in the strengthening of the democratic framework. Basic rights and freedoms,

such as freedom of speech, of association and of movement, and the holding of general elections at regular intervals of five years with the free participation of political parties and individuals are an integral part of our culture. Our experience exemplifies the synthesis that is being achieved through economic development, which brings dignity to the population; social development, for the protection of the weaker sections of the population; and the strengthening of all democratic institutions, for the evolution of a harmonious society.

The report by the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Development" is therefore timely and will no doubt place the issue of development in its different aspects in a prominent place on the international agenda. The Secretary-General needs to be commended for this interesting report, which highlights the multidimensional nature of development. The report has been further enriched by the constructive proposals contained in the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 adopted on 24 June 1994 in New York. I commend this Declaration as an important contribution by the developing world to the debate on the report.

Let our world, both developing and developed, take advantage of the new environment. And let us commit ourselves to reducing poverty, hunger and illiteracy in the world; commit ourselves to ensuring a steady and increasing flow of financial resources, as well as transfer of technology, to the developing countries; and commit ourselves to comprehensively tackling the debt problem. Only through such commitments and shared responsibilities and action in an increasingly interdependent world will it be possible to stop the further marginalization of a large number of developing countries and help integrate them in a just and equitable international economic, financial and trading system.

Next year will witness the establishment and setting up of the World Trade Organization, which is expected to contribute towards the development of an integrated, more viable and durable multilateral trading system. I take this opportunity to exhort the members of that organization to adopt positive measures so as to ensure that the developing countries, this time, secure a fair share in the expected growth of the world.

Genuine fears have been voiced by a number of developing countries, especially small island States, that are vulnerable to natural disasters and suffer from the disadvantages of being far from their sources of supply of raw materials and foodstuffs and the markets for their export products. It is feared that the results of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) will adversely affect their trade, especially the trade preferences from which they benefit in the context of contractual agreements entered into with a group of developed countries, principally with the European Union.

My own country stands to be affected both as an exporter and as a net food-importing country. We therefore appeal for steps to be taken, as provided for in the Final Act of the GATT Uruguay Round, to provide adequate compensation for any such loss. I should like here to stress the need for the preservation of the existing preferential trade regime of the Lomé Convention of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group and the European Economic Community.

Any attempt to bring in new issues concerning the multilateral trading system, including the World Trade Organization, would not be appropriate at this juncture. In this regard, it would serve no useful purpose for the developed and the developing countries to adopt confrontational positions while dealing with such sensitive issues as the "social clause and the trade regime" and "trade and the environment". My country for one will resist the inclusion of any clause that may appear as a disguised protectionist measure.

However, I also believe taking as an example my own country, where worker's rights are protected by the Constitution, that internationally recognized labour standards and norms and the legitimate rights of workers should be respected. This is important if man is to be at the centre of development. The enjoyment of these rights, and the observance of labour standards, should be encouraged in all countries, without, of course, losing sight of their respective levels of socio-economic development, or the development needs and objectives of developing countries.

I am happy to state, in that context, that my Government recently introduced legislation to ensure that workers participate in the management of

enterprises and become shareholders in the sugar sector where they are employed. This is being done in the context of a new social order based on partnership, and it is meant to favour the democratization of the economy.

This leads me to the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held next year. In our view, all these conferences are geared towards one simple goal: to better the lot of mankind, and in so doing, to enhance human dignity. It is our sincere and cherished hope that these summit meetings and conferences will contribute to the debate on the Agenda for Development and will encourage a better understanding of the nature and complexity of the development problems facing the developing world. May these conferences come up with reasonable and concrete proposals, backed by a clear commitment of resources for their implementation.

It is true that the end of the cold war and the disappearance of ideological conflicts have significantly altered the geopolitical configuration of the world. They have modified the nature of international relations, with strategic economic alliances replacing military ones in a world still in search of a new order – which thus far has remained elusive.

In such an uncertain and volatile situation, where the survival of the fittest and of the most competitive is the order of the day, small and economically vulnerable countries need assurances with regard to their security and continued economic development and social progress. In this respect, renewed attention is being given, in different parts of the world, to regional cooperation and integration.

We believe that the salvation of small and weak economies depends on the successful implementation of regional cooperation and integration programmes. We view regionalism as an important complement to multilateralism, especially when open regionalism does not lead to exclusiveness. I therefore appeal to the international community to fully support the successful implementation of regional cooperation and integration programmes, especially the nascent ones

in Africa.

In our own region, organizations such as the Indian Ocean Commission, the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States and the Southern African Development Community are useful vehicles for economic cooperation and integration among member countries and help to strengthen our economies.

Political stability, good governance, respect for basic human rights and freedoms are prerequisites to economic development. It is therefore the duty of the international community to ensure movement in that direction. We have, however, failed by not responding quickly enough to the agony of Rwanda, and, as the Secretary-General has stated, we have acquiesced in the continued loss of lives. The serious plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Rwanda remains a major source of concern. We should redouble efforts and commit ourselves to urgently addressing such human catastrophes of epic proportions, which, if left unattended or if tackled timidly, may very well spill over into neighbouring countries of the region and affect them adversely.

I had the opportunity to state my country's position on this issue at the recent Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Tunis, where I warned that Burundi was sitting on a powder keg that risked explosion unless the international community acted in earnest to contain the problem. Though the situation has eased to a certain extent, due mainly to *Operation Turquoise* and to the commitment of troops from OAU member States, the region still remains fragile. Countries which have the resources must come to the fore and fully assume their responsibility to prevent a recurrence of this tragic episode.

My country, for its part, besides its interventions in international forums and its modest contributions in cash and in kind, played host to the dialogue between the President of Zaire and the President of Rwanda, which culminated in the signature of an accord with respect, mainly, to the refugee situation.

I should like to use the opportunity of speaking before this forum to appeal to my brothers in Angola, Liberia and Somalia and elsewhere in Africa, where pockets of tension exist that can flare up into unnecessary conflicts, to apply peaceful means to

resolve and iron out their differences.

It would be fitting here to flag Mozambique as an example where dialogue has prevailed over armed struggle, and where, in a few days' time, the people will be exercising their freedom of choice to elect those they wish to govern the country. Similarly, it is a matter of satisfaction that the constitutional problem in Lesotho has been resolved peacefully and through constant dialogue. In that respect, I should like to commend the efforts deployed by my brothers, Presidents Mugabe, Masire and Mandela.

I wish the same fervour could be demonstrated by others who are active in the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, where countless lives continue to be lost, where human suffering has crossed the limits of endurance, where the population seems to have resigned itself to a fate imposed upon it by the warring factions. Are we not responsible enough, human enough, to resolve the problems besetting that region, the more so as conflicts like those which have plagued Northern Ireland and the Middle East over decades, and which appeared unsolvable, are being addressed resolutely, and with positive results?

Indeed, the positive developments in the Middle East mark a turning point in the inter-State relationships in that region and augur well for peace and stability. It is my fervent wish that the spirit of moderation and compromise that has made it possible for positive results to be achieved in the ongoing negotiations will continue to prevail and helps open other avenues for peace to be restored in the entire region.

Let us, leaders of the world, on the eve of the fiftieth year of our Organization's existence, take inspiration from the positive trends that have emerged in the Middle East, from the successful transition in South Africa as a result of peaceful negotiations, and commit ourselves to resolving conflictual situations — historical as well as current — through dialogue. In this regard, let me make an earnest appeal to Pakistan and to India, countries equally dear and near to us, not to internationalize their differences but to address them bilaterally through peaceful means. We should like to encourage both Governments to resume their

dialogue in a spirit of trust and compromise, in the higher interests of their countries and peoples, and indeed in the interest of the entire region.

I am gratified to learn that in Sri Lanka, following the installation of the new Government, a dialogue has been initiated between the parties in conflict. This is indeed a commendable move.

Such positive efforts can only be beneficial to the international community, for the peace dividends that will thus ensue will permit the world to tackle, with undivided attention, the agenda of economic and social development, in order to make the world a safer place in which to live. That is why we continue to hope for speedy positive developments in such places as Fiji, where equality of citizenship is yet to prevail.

Another issue that remains a major preoccupation of my country is the question of disarmament. Next year, the Conference to review the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will take place. Mauritius has made its position amply clear on this issue. Any extension of the NPT should be linked to progress on nuclear disarmament and the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, as well as the establishment of a negotiating framework within which the discriminatory nature of the Treaty should be examined. We have stated in no uncertain terms that the world cannot be divided permanently into countries permitted to have nuclear weapons and countries not permitted to have them. A treaty perceived as making such a decision permanent is bound to fail and cannot be expected to last.

Without the convincing support of the NPT members, we may fail in our endeavours to make the world nuclear-weapon-free. The recent dispute between a Member State of the Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency clearly indicates that the NPT is not infallible. Equally alarming is the trading in enriched uranium and plutonium, in stark contradiction of the objectives of the Treaty. As long as there are nuclear-weapon States, there will be an urge for other States with nuclear potential to acquire such weapon-grade material, thus putting the world community in jeopardy.

Mauritius would like at this point to welcome the efforts for the conclusion of a treaty to make all of Africa, a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is our earnest

hope that the exclusive club of nuclear-haves, principally the permanent members of the Security Council, will do everything to permit the emergence of such a zone and the conclusion of the treaty.

(spoke in French)

As Acting President of the Conference of Heads of State or Government of French-speaking countries, I should like to say a few words in the French language, which brings together this community of dialogue and cooperation numbering 47 countries with more than 400 million inhabitants. Since 1986, the highest officials of these countries, which are found on the five continents, have been regularly holding summit meetings to review those problems that affect the francophone world and seek together for solutions to global problems.

My country thus had the honour of hosting the Fifth Summit of the Francophone World last October. It may seem surprising to some that a country member of the Commonwealth whose official language is English should have been selected to host such a Summit and thus to become the spokesman of the francophone group for a two-year period. In fact, for us Mauritians, this is in no way unusual, since we live with our cultural and linguistic diversity in perfect harmony. Indeed, Mauritian culture is the result of a synthesis worked out through history. We live in a society that integrates the linguistic, religious and social contributions of Europe, Africa and Asia. The theme of "Unity in Diversity", which inspired the work of that Summit, is very dear to our country. All the segments of the Mauritian nation participate in creating a national identity while preserving their ancestral cultures. This message of unity in diversity, based on the recognition of difference and on human solidarity, is even more relevant in the difficult and complex situation in today's world.

The Heads of State or Government wish the francophone world to cooperate more closely with regional and international organizations that are working for democracy, peace and the development of the world – first and foremost, of course, is the United Nations. We have adopted a series of resolutions to promote this new partnership. It is, moreover, in this context that we had the pleasure of welcoming the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali,

to Mauritius. During the Summit, we were able to intensify a dialogue that we have been maintaining since then by various means. However, we hardly had time to acquire the means to implement our own resolutions when events began to move rapidly in the francophone world.

Indeed, on the day following the Mauritius Summit, our brother Melchoir Ndadaye, President of Burundi, was brutally assassinated. The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations were immediately notified. Then the situation deteriorated in Rwanda, and once again we notified these two international forums. Given the lack of action during the first few days, we welcomed France's intervention for strictly humanitarian purposes, which allowed numerous lives to be saved.

In addition to their concern regarding the Great Lakes region, the countries of the francophone world are deeply moved about the situation in Haiti. We have been following developments in that country very closely, and we were gratified to note that positive steps have been taken towards re-establishing democracy. We are awaiting with great impatience, and in the interest of the Haitian people, the return of legitimate power to this country, a country that has suffered so much in the course of its recent history.

The francophone world, for its part, has adopted numerous resolutions aimed at securing for the Francophone community a more dynamic presence internationally. It will thus be able to make a contribution in the specific fields of its competence. I should like, in particular, to cite a resolution endorsing the Secretary-General's report, which is rightly entitled "An Agenda for Development". This resolution spells out those themes which the francophone world would like to see taken into consideration in the agenda and which will be put forward by our representatives within the United Nations during the preparatory stages.

At the Rio de Janeiro Summit, later in Vienna, then in Barbados and in Cairo, and tomorrow in Copenhagen and in Beijing, the countries of the francophone world are consulting on the major problems the United Nations has inscribed on its agenda. This is being done to arrive at common positions for meeting the great challenges of development.

Such concerted action is essential for the harmonious development of our world at the dawn of the third millennium; hence we are called upon to make a specific contribution to illustrate that spirit of humanism that motivates the francophone world.

The Mauritius Summit succeeded in situating the francophone world in a more political and more diplomatic context. The francophone world has an original and positive message to spread through the world, a message of liberty, solidarity and sharing. I am most pleased to have conveyed it to you.

The President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf on the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.