

**STATEMENT
BY
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P.C., K.C.M.G., Q.C
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
AT THE
FIFTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNGA
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Mr. President,

It gives me immense pleasure to address the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly under your able leadership. Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you our wholehearted congratulations on your election as the President of the present session.

I wish to assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout your tenure of office. I also wish to convey my thanks to His Excellency Dr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for the remarkable manner in which he conducted the work of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan also deserves our gratitude for his inspiring and commendable initiatives in furthering the objectives of our Organization.

Mr. President,

We are happy that the Swiss Confederation and Timor-Leste have joined us as the newest members of the United Nations family. Timor-Leste stands out as a shining accomplishment of the United Nations system to uphold the right to independence of a nation in adverse conditions.

Mr. President,

The terrorist atrocities of 11 September will never fade from our collective consciousness, and the agony and the pain of the day are still with us. The sophisticated infrastructure of the terrorist organizations that was utilized to inflict that monstrosity must be dismantled at any cost. We owe it to ourselves and to the generations that will come after us to mobilize all our energies and efforts to never let that happen again, anywhere.

Mauritius is committed to remain fully engaged in the global coalition against terrorism, and we shall continue, together with other States, to take all measures, nationally, regionally and internationally, so that the scourge of terrorism is never inflicted on unsuspecting civilians and countries. We are alive to the chilling reality that no country is or ever will be safe until the war against terrorism is finally and completely won.

We condemn cross-border infiltration; it must stop and must be made to stop.

Mr. President,

The threats posed by international terrorism have heightened the need for collective action to preserve world peace and security. While we combine our efforts to wage a war on terrorism, we should, at the same time, continue to work towards global disarmament and a complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction within a specified time frame. My delegation reiterates its appeal for the early convening of a conference on nuclear disarmament.

The term of Mauritius as an elected nonpermanent member of the Security Council will end in December this year. During its tenure on the Council, Mauritius was instrumental in the establishment of an ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It has made positive and constructive recommendations that have been endorsed by the Security Council.

Mr. President,

In contrast to previous years, when the General Assembly listened to a litany of horror stories out of Africa, I am happy to note that substantial and positive developments are taking place on the continent. There is a new dawn in Africa and the stark realization that, without enduring peace and stability, there will be no sustainable development.

We congratulate the African leaders who have spared no effort in the search for African solutions to African conflicts and crises. The Pretoria Agreement between Presidents Kabila and Kagame represents a major breakthrough for the peace process in the Great Lakes region. We are aware that the implementation will be difficult. We are, however, confident that the international community will provide all necessary assistance to the leaders in the region for a smooth implementation.

With the positive developments in Angola, the successful general elections in Sierra Leone, the settlement of the boundary problem between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the progress made in the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, there are clear signals that some of the major conflicts in Africa are being successfully resolved.

As Africa embarks on the road of peace, we wish to underscore the crucial role played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community in their relentless search for negotiated settlement of the conflicts in our respective subregions. There is cause for optimism, and it is gratifying that the days of doom and gloom for Africa are on their way to extinction.

Our region, the Indian Ocean, which has witnessed some turbulent times recently, is again poised for stability and development. We applaud the return to constitutional rule in the Comoros and the consolidation of democratic institutions in that country. We also welcome the formation of a Government of national reconciliation in Madagascar and the efforts under way to undo the damage caused by the recent crisis there. Mauritius will be closely associated with the countries of our region to further enhance regional cooperation.

Mr. President,

The launching of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in July this year was indeed a historic and emotionally charged occasion. The birth of the African Union heralds a new era of political, economic and social transformation for our continent. The continent is more than ever determined to shape its destiny and to tackle comprehensively the burning problems of poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment that have debilitated millions of Africans over the years. The African Union has raised expectations that we, as leaders, are committed to honour. The African Union will be able to respond in a positive manner to the challenges confronting it, as well as maximizing the opportunities for the improvement of the lives of peoples of the continent. In that context, the decision of African countries to take responsibility for peacekeeping on the continent needs to be encouraged. Since the burden of peacekeeping must be equitably shared, I am pleased to announce that Mauritius will contribute to the United Nations civilian police for service in post-conflict operations.

Mr. President,

Along with the launching of the African Union, the home-grown New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is another chapter in the unfolding of the success story of the African continent. NEPAD commits Africa to building a strong and enduring culture of democracy, respect for human rights and accountability for the continent.

Indeed, the African Peer Review Mechanism is a credible mechanism to promote the prospects of internationally recognized norms and standards of good governance.

Mr. President,

The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) marks a watershed in mankind's quest to put an end to impunity and to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity, for genocide and for international crimes. The ICC is the single most important institution of this millennium, and it is the duty of the international community to fully support it.

Mr. President,

In May this year, during the special session on children, Mauritius had the opportunity to join the international efforts to pave the way for effective protection for every child in every part of the world. The children who addressed the gathering uttered words of great significance that no one can, or should, ever forget. The future is theirs, and it is for them that we ought to ensure the sustainable development of our one and only planet. My country will ensure that the principles, goals and actions discussed during the special session are integrated in our various child welfare programmes.

Mr. President,

The Middle East is still not at peace. The death toll rises every day, but we are encouraged by the signals being sent by both the Israelis and the Palestinian leadership. Our vision of the Middle East is to see the early establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel on the basis of agreed and secure boundaries. The Palestinians also need to have State machinery that observes the fundamental norms of a democratic system, with responsibility and accountability on the part of the leaders. They alone have the absolute right to elect their leaders when elections are held in January 2003.

We appeal to the Iraqi authorities to comply fully and unconditionally with Security Council resolutions with respect to allowing the arms inspectors to fulfil their mandate.

Mr. President,

Small island developing States are a particularly vulnerable group of countries by virtue of their inherent natural and structural constraints. The World Bank; the Commonwealth; the United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held recently in Johannesburg, South Africa, have all recognized that those constraints, if not addressed effectively, could undermine the trade and development prospects of these countries, leading to their further marginalization. We look forward to specific and concrete recommendations for action in this regard at the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization scheduled to be held next September in Mexico.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development addressed the fundamental question of what kind of world we want for ourselves and for generations that are yet unborn. The recent devastating floods in Europe and Asia, as well as the droughts in many parts of Africa, particularly Southern Africa, where there are more than 13 million people in danger of famine, are a stark reminder of the fragility of our planet's ecosystem. The World Summit on Sustainable Development has made the whole world conscious of the havoc that nature may cause unless drastic measures are taken immediately to redress the ecological imbalance.

Monsieur le President,

Le neuvieme Sommet de la Francophonie que le Liban accueillera le mois prochain et qui se tiendra sous le theme du " dialogues des cultures" parmettra sans nul doute a la communaute

francophone de favoriser le partage entre différentes cultures dans le but de maintenir la paix, la sécurité et la démocratie.

Mr. President,

Mauritius reaffirms its legitimate sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including the island of Diego Garcia, which was detached from the territory of Mauritius by the United Kingdom prior to our independence. We renew our call to the former colonial Power, the United Kingdom, to accelerate discussions with us for an early settlement of this issue.

The persons of Mauritian origin who were displaced from the Chagos Archipelago continue to claim redress for the serious human rights violations that they endured. We support their efforts to seek redress.

We also call on the French Government to work towards the resolution of the dispute concerning Tromelin Island, over which Mauritius has sovereignty.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Mauritius reiterates its conviction that the United Nations system remains the best guarantee for international peace and security. The framework within which the United Nations organizes the collective security of States may not be perfect, but it is at least one that is tested and has served us relatively well for more than 50 years. Working on the basis of the neutrality of rules and principles is far preferable to the haphazardness of expediency. We also should not be unmindful of the linkages which exist between different situations, and that is why we urge the international community to observe the principle of equality of treatment in all cases.

I thank you for your attention