

STATEMENT
by
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and Regional Cooperation of the Republic of Mauritius
at the
Fifty-Ninth Session of the
United Nations General Assembly
28 September 2004
New York

Mr. President,

I bring you the greetings and best wishes of the Government and people of Mauritius. Mr President, it is also a matter of pride and honour to see you preside over this *premier* institution of the world. This honour is not only a recognition of the contribution of your country, Gabon, in world affairs but also a great moment for our continent, Africa. We are confident, that with your wide experience and vast diplomatic skills, you will steer successfully the work of this Assembly. My delegation pledges its full support to you during your tenure.

My delegation would also like to place on record our gratitude to your distinguished predecessor, H.E. Mr. Julian Hunte, for his able and excellent leadership of the 58th Session of the General Assembly. As fellow islanders, we have derived great satisfaction and pride from his unequalled stewardship. He has assumed and discharged the high responsibilities of President of the Assembly with commitment, dedication, vigour and great diplomacy. We thank him for his service to the world community.

Allow me also to commend the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his relentless efforts and determination to ensure that our Organization continues to play its role effectively in the international arena.

Mr. President,

This session of the General Assembly is taking place as we prepare ourselves to tackle and face major challenges and developments over the next twelve months. Of particular importance to Small Island Developing States, like my own, the year 2005 will begin with two major events - the International Meeting for the Full and Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which will be hosted by Mauritius and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Japan.

Ten years after Barbados, Small Island Developing States continue to face practically the same challenges in their drive to achieve sustainable development. Their small size, fragile ecosystem, geographic isolation, and limited resources compounded by the threats of climate change, rising sea levels and natural disasters make them particularly

vulnerable. While it is a fact that many developing countries face the increasing pressures posed by the combined force of globalization and trade liberalization, such pressures are even more exacerbating for the SIDS. Their small markets and the limited market access for their produce constrain them most in their efforts to integrate smoothly the global economy. They also suffer from natural vulnerabilities, such as hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis.

The devastation caused by the recent series of hurricanes in the Caribbean islands demonstrates the extent of our vulnerability. It is true that these vulnerabilities have been recognized in a variety of international fora but such recognition has yet to crystallize into concrete actions in favour of SIDS. The precarious situation of SIDS is of direct concern to the international community as a whole.

May we then, Mr. President, resolve to take bold initiatives to implement meaningfully the Barbados Programme and the related emerging issues to enable SIDS build resilience and capacity and integrate fully in the global economy? Similarly, in the multilateral trading system, we expect the emergence of an environment conducive to enabling SIDS to improve their competitiveness, market access and the diversification of their economies. We, therefore, expect the WTO to come up soon with the Work Programme on Small Economies.

As a small island developing state, Mauritius is indeed honored to host the International Meeting. The International Meeting should not only be a collective gathering to reflect on the specificities of our concerns. Rather, it should be a landmark in the history of the major UN Conferences with deliverable outcomes and the necessary means for their implementation.

We in Mauritius are leaving no stone unturned to make of the event a truly historic and memorable one. It is important that the entire international community participates in that meeting which let me point out is a meeting on SIDS and not for SIDS alone.

Monsieur le Président,

La démarche principale des petits Etats insulaires en développement est effectivement basée sur le développement durable eu égard à la problématique des ressources limitées de ces pays. Comment donc ne pas saluer à cet égard la décision du Gouvernement du Burkina Faso, qui abritera le prochain Sommet de la Francophonie, d'avoir choisi comme thème majeur de ce Sommet " L'Espace Solidaire pour un Développement Durable"

Notre préoccupation pour le développement durable, qui fût la base même du Sommet mondial de Johannesburg, est encore plus forte aujourd'hui dans le contexte mondial de la globalization.

Il n'y a certes que quelques pays insulaires en développement qui font partie de la Francophonie, mais nous osons espérer que ce Sommet pourra renforcer davantage la nécessité de trouver au niveau de la communauté internationale, les moyens d'aides aux

pétits états insulaires, qui pourront devenir en eux mêmes les modèles de développement durable.

Mr President,

Africa, home to 34 of the world's 48 poorest countries, remains an enormous challenge for the United Nations. The deadly spread of HIV and AIDS continues to claim a devastating toll on the continent, particularly in Southern Africa. We in Africa are committed to further democratize our societies and give our people a rightful voice in the decision-making process. That is why at the continental level we are doing all we can, despite our scarce resources, to consolidate the African Union, and make it central in our collective bid to grapple with the development concerns of our region. We have in that perspective come up with our own home-grown programme, the NEPAD to attain the ultimate goal that we have fixed for ourselves – the total integration of Africa.

Mr. President,

Since we launched the African Union Peace and Security Council last May we have received encouraging support from some of our development partners. I should like to use this platform to urge the international community to support the African Union in this field to enable it to come to grips with the conflicts that continue to divert our attention and meagre resources from our development efforts. The African Union has amply demonstrated that it means business in addressing the issue of conflicts on the continent and any assistance it gets from the international community can only help it achieve its goals. But let me hasten to say that the African Union's involvement in these peace processes should not distract the UN Security Council from its primary responsibility to maintain peace and security in Africa. Indeed, the Security Council should not allow itself to be perceived as being selective in its approach with regard to conflicts in various parts of the world. Experiences in the Great Lakes Region and in West Africa have shown that combined efforts of the Security Council and the African Union can bring tangible results.

Before I leave this aspect of my statement, let me refer to the unjust treatment that continues to be meted out to the Saharawi people who are still struggling for their right to self-determination. It is the duty of this world body to ensure a speedy conclusion of this matter. In this regard, my delegation reiterates its support for the Settlement Plan and any other political initiative acceptable to the parties concerned that will help take the process forward for a durable and sustainable solution. The Saharawi people deserve this commitment from us.

Mr President,

As this august Assembly is aware, Mauritius has always favoured a bilateral approach in our resolve to restore our exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago which prior to independence from the UK was unlawfully detached from our territory, in violation of UN Declaration 1514 and UN General Assembly Resolutions 2066, 2232 and

2357. Such bilateral approaches have unfortunately not yielded any result so far and certain recent regrettable unilateral actions by the U.K. have not been helpful.

Mr President,

While we shall continue to favour a settlement of this matter through dialogue, we shall use all avenues open to us so that we can exercise our full sovereign rights over the Chagos Archipelago. This Assembly should also note that this issue has a tragic human dimension. Before Mauritius acceded to its independence, all of the inhabitants of the Chagos were forced to leave the land of their birth, where they had lived for several generations. The plight of those inhabitants must now be comprehensively addressed.

In the same vein, my delegation looks forward to the resumption of dialogue with the French Government over the Tromelin issue.

Mr. President,

Mauritius is a firm believer and is indeed a keen player in regional co-operation and integration, not as an end in itself but as a sure means to enable us to integrate the global economy. We consider regional cooperation as a necessary step to enable Africa to benefit from globalisation. We have therefore, spared no efforts to promote regional cooperation.

Since the early 1980's we, in Mauritius, have been playing a pro-active role in advancing the objectives of the Abuja Treaty. Mauritius is a very active member of the COMESA and SADC among others. As the new Chair of SADC, we look forward to working very closely with all our fellow Member States in advancing the objectives of the organization, promote community building through regional integration and aligning national policies to regional co-operation so that they stay on course in the globalisation process. We will also endeavour to forge strong relationship between SADC and its development partners as well as with other sub-regional, continental and multilateral organizations.

Mr. President,

After the failure of the WTO Ministerial Conference at Cancun, the successful outcome of the July 2004 General Council meeting has come as a ray of hope to put back on track the trade talks. The package of framework and other agreements that the WTO members approved will greatly enhance the chances for a successful completion of the Doha Development Round negotiations. We, therefore, welcome the decision adopted by the WTO General Council to fulfill the development dimensions of the Doha Development Agenda, which places the needs and interests of developing and least developed countries at the heart of the Doha Work Programme.

In this context, let me make an appeal for a meaningful synergy to be established among the development agencies and other UN institutions, including the Bretton Woods

institutions, in order to ensure that developing countries increase their share of world trade as a necessary pathway to prosperity.

Mr. President,

The situation in the Middle East remains extremely preoccupying for all freedom-loving nations and peoples. We keep on speaking of the need for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East without realizing that each year the peace and security situation in the region is getting worse. Over the past year, all we witnessed were more targeted assassinations, increased terrorist acts, daily recriminations from both sides and an expansion of settlement activities. The illegal construction of a wall by Israel in the Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory have worsened an already complex situation.

Almost two years ago the Road Map called for “a final and comprehensive settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict by 2005.” The year 2005 is at our doorstep and we are still grappling with how to put the derailed peace process back on track. We believe that the Road Map remains the only viable option for peace in the region. We call on both Israel and Palestine to exercise maximum restraint, undertake confidence-building measures and create the appropriate environment with the help of the Quartet to implement the Road Map.

My delegation believes that what is needed today is not a wall, but a political solution and a renewed commitment from the international community that would resolve the conflict altogether. Only the creation of the much-awaited Palestinian State, existing side by side with Israel with secured and recognized borders can bring peace and stability to the Middle East.

Mr. President,

The political process in Iraq reached an important milestone last July with the handing over of authority for governing Iraq to the Iraqi Interim Government. My delegation believes that the holding of national elections early next year as required by Security Council Resolution 1546 (2004) will give the people of Iraq a unique opportunity to take the destiny of their country in their own hands. However, the current security situation in Iraq is very disturbing. My delegation condemns all acts of violence which can disrupt Iraq’s political and economic transition. The international community must be fully engaged in its efforts to rebuild a safe, democratic and peaceful Iraq.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the potential threat posed by nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, it is a matter of serious concern that we still have not been able to find common ground to initiate a process leading to complete disarmament.

Significant differences still persist among Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We once again appeal to all Member States to translate their stated commitments to the cause of disarmament into action.

Mauritius supports and implements fully the international disarmament treaties such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention and has always supported various UN resolutions which tend to consolidate these regimes, including Resolution 1540 which focuses on non-proliferation issues.

Along with our fight against weapons of mass destruction, we should also stay the course against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which have been the weapons of choice in recent conflicts, particularly in Africa.

Mr. President,

Terrorist acts continue to create fear and havoc among peaceful nations and lead to loss of lives, particularly among innocent civilians including women and children. We should reflect on the effectiveness of the international response against terrorism. It is becoming increasingly evident that the war against international terrorism cannot be won by military might alone. Several reports of this august Assembly have already amply demonstrated that woes such as poverty, social inequality, unemployment and illiteracy constitute breeding grounds for terrorism. Genuine international cooperation is needed to comprehensively address the root causes of terrorism.

Mr. President,

Allow me to share some thoughts with respect to the future of our Organization.

The world emerged from World War II resolved to ensure peace among nations. The United Nations was born with this vision firmly in mind. More than half a century later, in full recognition of the drastic and far-reaching changes that have transformed our world, there is full consensus for a reform of our Organization.

There is indeed general agreement that the current structure of the Security Council needs to be reviewed to reflect the new realities of the world. We firmly believe that a greater commitment has to be demonstrated by every member of the Organization in order to reach an agreement on a reformed Security Council based on wider representation, transparency and equitable geographical distribution with the inclusion of developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America as Permanent Members. Here we should like to reiterate that India fully deserves to have that status. In this respect, I need to underscore the need for small island States which are scattered in all the oceans of the world to have an adequate voice in the Council.

It is therefore our sincere hope that the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General will make concrete and practical recommendations to make the UN more credible and responsive to the expectations of

people in every corner of the globe. The High-Level Plenary Meeting, which would be held next year, would also be an opportunity for us to take stock of progress made in respect to the goals set in the major UN Conferences and Summits.

Mr. President,

Mauritius continues to be an active supporter of the United Nations in its role to save succeeding generations from war and suffering and to promote social progress and better standards of life. Mauritius believes that a strengthened United Nations, evolving within the framework of a credible multilateral system, is the only effective instrument at the disposal of the International Community to bring order and ensure coherence regarding international economic, social and environmental policies.

I thank you for your attention.

