



Address by

H.E. Mr. Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory, G.O.S.K

Acting President

of the

Republic of Mauritius

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates

It is a matter of great pride for Africa to see you presiding over the 74th Session of the General Assembly.

We wish you a very successful tenure and assure you of the full support of Mauritius, as you steer the work of this august Assembly.

We also extend our congratulations to H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, our Secretary General and to the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés for their leadership, hard work and dedication during the past year.

Mr. President,

We commend your judicious choice of the theme “Galvanising Multilateral effort, quality education, climate action and inclusion” for this year’s meeting.

Indeed, Mr. President, this is a critical year for sustainable development and climate action.

Mr. President,

Climate change continues to disrupt national economies and affect lives. Economic growth is slow and uneven. Income inequality is on the rise. Achieving quality education is still beyond our reach. Official Development Assistance, humanitarian aid to those most in need, especially in least developing countries and SIDS are on the decline.

No substantial progress has been achieved on building peace, justice and strong institutions.

Mr. President,

To compound an already troubling situation, emerging issues such as new conflicts, rising tensions between major global powers, rise of extremism, migration and refugee crisis, and the flipside of technology are further upsetting our capability to live up to our pledge and make significant progress in implementing the SDGs.

Mr. President

The devastating effects of Cyclone Idai in Southern Africa and Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, the desolation left in the wake of wildfires in California, the sweltering heat of the hottest months that we have recently recorded throughout continents and the latest ice cap melts in Greenland point to an alarmingly dangerous and desolate future for our planet.

While the poor and vulnerable are the hardest hit, no single country is immune from the devastation and havoc that rising temperatures and global warming are creating in the lives and livelihoods of communities.

Millions of people are already at risk of being pushed into poverty as a direct consequence of climate change by 2030.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its latest report “Global Warming of 1.5°C” gives us an apocalyptic picture that compels us to act now. Last week’s worldwide youth demonstrations calling for action “NOW” cannot fall on deaf ears.

We need to renew and strengthen our commitment to limit global warming at 1.5°C. To this end, we need to considerably increase financial resources and live up to the Paris pledges.

In Mauritius, Government has embarked on the development of low carbon emission transport and will soon be launching the light rail transit system in addition to implementing a massive greening programme to enhance our carbon sink capacity. We also intend to double the percentage of use of renewable energy by 2030.

Mr. President,

Small Island Developing States are particularly threatened by the dangerously intensifying impacts of climate change.

The mid-term review of the Samoa Pathway has clearly demonstrated that its implementation faces similar hurdles as that of the 2030 Agenda, the most important of which is funding and means of implementation.

More responsive and targeted partnerships are essential to address specific problems that SIDS face in order to achieve tangible and measurable outcomes.

SIDS like Mauritius, which through their own efforts have reached the Middle-Income Country status, now face new challenges in accessing concessionary financing and grants.

To exacerbate this situation, our efforts to diversify our economy and develop our international competitiveness in areas such as financial services are often met by an uneven playing field in which we are faced with arbitrary classifications. This, despite our strict adherence to international rules and norms.

Lest we address these issues upfront, unsurprisingly countries like Mauritius will be a victim to the Middle-Income Country trap.

Mr. President

Beyond goodwill and expressions of support, focused action is required to achieve the targets set in the 2030 Agenda for ensuring inclusion and opportunities for all so that no one is left behind.

Despite our limitations, Mauritius is very much on track to achieve most of the targets of the 2030 Agenda, particularly in the areas of eradication of poverty, gender equality and quality education.

Mr. President,

Exclusion in all its forms hinders development and often sets countries on unsustainable paths of development, plagued by social and economic instabilities. Global economic growth is uneven and often fails to reach the regions that need it most. This conceals the stark reality that inequality within and between States is widening.

We need to urgently address these challenges and overcome perceptions of unfair distribution of economic benefits.

We must provide a level playing field across borders. Developed and developing countries alike must address the deep-rooted causes of inequalities between States such as the dynamic of financial flows between them, their uneven exposure to climate change and the very unequal way that they stand to benefit from technology.

Mr. President,

The health of our oceans continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Progress towards the conservation of the world's oceans has been too slow. Ocean acidification and unsustainable fishing pose major threats to our oceans and marine resources.

Mauritius is committed to make its contribution through the enforcement of the ban on plastics, sustainable fisheries policies and other related measures.

We are equally deeply committed to the BBNJ process towards the development of an internationally legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the High Seas.

Mr. President,

Piracy, drug smuggling, human trafficking, marine pollution and pillage of marine resources remain issues of serious concern in our part of the Indian Ocean.

These threats have attained alarming proportions and if left unattended would pose serious security risks to the stability of the region and beyond.

As Chair of the Indian Ocean Commission, Mauritius has for the last two years, convened meetings at Ministerial level to reflect on ways and means to collectively address growing maritime threats in the region.

We also hosted this year the meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia, which is at the forefront of combating piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean is not only a regional challenge but has far wider ramifications requiring national and regional commitment together with the support of the international community. Mauritius continues to be engaged with the countries of the region and the international community in this regard.

Mr. President,

Fighting radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism by developing effective counter-narratives require cooperation and proper coordination among all member States. And this can only be achieved through the multilateral path.

The interdependence between countering terrorism and promoting sustainable development is increasingly recognized. Terrorism and extremism feed on grievances and exploit development challenges, such as inequalities, poverty and marginalization.

By building more resilient and inclusive societies, we can withstand terrorist ideologies and those who espouse them.

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force has an extremely important role to play in providing technical assistance and capacity building to Member States to strengthen their ability to prevent and counter terrorism.

Mr. President,

Global security has never been so fragile as it is now since the end of the cold War.

The potential for violent conflicts is palpable amid the rising tensions in many regions, particularly in the Middle East.

Escalation of tensions on economic and trade issues, withdrawal from international treaties, increased weaponization of outer and cyber space, as well as the proliferation of arms, have further accentuated the risks to global security.

This new “normal” threatens the world’s ability to find global solutions to problems at a time when the world most needs unity and collective action.

Mr. President,

Our continent, Africa, has made considerable strides in the area of governance, peace and security which are prerequisites for sustainable development. A peaceful and secure Africa is fundamental to a peaceful and secure world.

The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area in July this year represents a major step towards the realization of a vision for an integrated, prosperous and people-centered Africa.

The success of this project can only be guaranteed by addressing the causes of conflict in the region.

We therefore appeal to the international community to step up its effort in that regard.

Mr. President,

The Israeli Palestinian peace process is agonizingly stalled. The prospects for the legitimate Palestinian aspirations for sovereignty and statehood is becoming more distant. The suffering of the Palestinian people is further exacerbated by the expansion of settlements, demolition of their houses, closure of key crossings and a decrease in humanitarian aid.

Yet, giving up hope for a resolution to this protracted conflict should never be an option.

A peaceful future in the Middle East rests on the two State solution.

We appeal to the United Nations and the major players to step up their efforts to support a negotiated, just, comprehensive and long-lasting two-State solution.

Mr. President,

We welcome the progress achieved by the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Security Council Reform, which has laid the foundations towards the fulfilment of its mandate. We urge the IGN to redouble its efforts to advance the reform of the Security Council to make it more representative and reflect the realities of our time.

Mr. President,

The UN General Assembly has always played a central role in addressing decolonization.

It goes to the credit of the General Assembly that a large number of colonies gained their independence as a result of its committed action.

Yet that work is not complete, regrettably. There remain some remnants of colonization which need to end.

One such situation is that of Mauritius, which suffered from an unlawful excision of its territory before its independence in 1968.

In the Advisory Opinion rendered pursuant to the request by the General Assembly in Resolution 71/292, the International Court of Justice has found that the Chagos Archipelago was an integral part of Mauritius at the time of its detachment, and that in view of its unlawful excision, the decolonization process of Mauritius was not lawfully completed upon its accession to independence.

The Court also concluded that the United Kingdom's administration of the Chagos Archipelago is an unlawful act of a continuing character and should be brought to an end as rapidly as possible.

The General Assembly promptly adopted, with an overwhelming majority, Resolution 73/295 on 22 May 2019.

This gives practical effect to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and demands that the UK withdraw its colonial administration from the Chagos Archipelago unconditionally within a period of no more than 6 months.

The resolution also recognizes the right of return of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago who were forcibly removed by the United Kingdom, a point to which Mauritius is strongly committed.

Mr. President,

We therefore expect that, given its commitment to the rule of law and respect for the ICJ and the UN, the United Kingdom will give effect to the findings of the Advisory Opinion and withdraw its administration from the Chagos Archipelago unconditionally by 22 November 2019, as requested by the General Assembly.

We also look forward to the report of the Secretary General on the overall implementation of Resolution 73/295.

Mr. President,

Mauritius is deeply grateful to all Member States for the overwhelming support they gave in favour of that Resolution.

This is a testimony to the great importance that Member States attach to the need to complete the decolonization of Mauritius and their respect for international institutions, including the International Court of Justice, and the rule of law in international relations.

We look forward to Member States' continued support and cooperation with the United Nations so that our decolonization can be rapidly completed and a programme for the resettlement in the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritian nationals, in particular those of Chagossian origin, can be implemented by Mauritius.

Mr. President,

As regards to the Island of Tromelin which also forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, we call for the early resolution of the dispute over the island in the spirit of friendship that has always characterized the relationship between Mauritius and France.

Mr. President,

We are living in an increasingly complex environment. The challenges confronting mankind require greater collaboration, coordination and commitment.

A principled and effective multilateral system offers a unique platform to tackle global and local challenges that appear to grow in scale and complexity.

The celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN next year should be an opportunity for us to reaffirm our strong commitment to the UN ideals and the UN Charter's entrenched principles of sovereign equality and respect for the territorial integrity of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that we all have a role to play. Young people, women, the private sector, civil society, developed and developing countries alike must come together to address our common concerns.

Thank you for your kind attention.