



Republic of Mauritius

**78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK**

*Theme: Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity: Accelerating action on
the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace,
prosperity, progress and sustainability for all*

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT

BY

**THE HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
PRIME MINISTER**

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2023

**Excellency Mr Dennis Francis,
President of the General Assembly,
Excellency Mr Antonio Guterres,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Heads of State and Heads of Government,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Good morning.**

Mr President,

May I begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the 78th session of the General Assembly. I also wish to convey my appreciation to His Excellency, Mr Csaba Korosi for his sterling leadership of the 77th session of the General Assembly. United Nations Secretary-General His Excellency Mr Antonio Guterres also deserves our gratitude for his inspiring and commendable initiatives in furthering the objectives of our Organisation.

Mr President,

It is a matter of great pride to see a fellow islander preside over the proceedings of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly especially at a time when the world is faced with a myriad of inter-locking challenges amidst conflicts, climate chaos, inequality, and hunger.

Let me assure you, **Mr President**, of the commitment of Mauritius to the principles that the United Nations stands for, and the hopes and aspirations that we all have in the United Nations. Mauritius is firmly committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as a member of the United Nations.

Let me also seize this opportunity to express to the Governments and peoples of the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Libya our solidarity at this tragic moment.

Mr President,

Your theme this year could not be more timely.

It is about how we can together restore confidence in our shared future: confidence between People and Leaders, confidence in our institutions, and among countries. Unless we urgently begin to rebuild this trust, it will prove impossible to tackle the challenges we have to face.

No country, no matter how powerful or wealthy, can succeed in tackling current challenges on its own. Our fate and fortunes have never been so closely linked.

Indeed, the world is at a critical inflection point as it faces unprecedented and interlocking crises with the multilateral system being under greater strain.

The ICT revolution has increased connections and complexities to our daily lives. The list of problems is daunting: from a lingering COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, declining biodiversity, food and energy insecurity, cyber-crime, terrorism, large scale migration, gender inequality, a general pushback against human rights, to inadequate development financing, increasing debt burdens and geopolitical crises.

Our national borders are no match for these challenges. Effective multilateral response is the only way to address geopolitical challenges and rescue our Common Agenda. We have to give new direction to Multilateralism and to the United Nations. We need to restore trust in multilateralism.

As Leaders of the world, we should lead by example, show our unwavering commitment and honour the promises made. More importantly, we need to uphold fairness and justice.

In this regard, **Mr President**, finding consensus on crucial priorities like poverty eradication, renewable energy, education and women empowerment is paramount. The Sustainable Development Goals serve as our guiding compass on this journey. In a world marred by inequalities, our commitment to uplift the marginalised and empower the vulnerable must remain steadfast.

We must ensure inclusivity where every individual, feels safe and secure. Our society's strength lies in its diversity.

An efficient education system is vital in order to achieve such inclusivity. Everyone will need to possess an evolving pool of knowledge, skills and capacities or else we will have a two-speed world deepening inequalities and exacerbating global instability. We need to build an integrated system of lifelong learning and ensure equity, access and inclusion in relevant curricula. We should work together towards harnessing digital

tools and increase investment in education so that it is recognized as a global public good.

The surge in health challenges, from non-communicable diseases to global pandemics like COVID-19, underscores the importance of global unity. By fostering cooperation, sharing resources and expertise, we can ensure universal access to highest standard of healthcare, in order to protect the vulnerable and strengthen our global resilience.

Mr President,

Scaled up action to reduce emissions to align with goals set forth in the Paris Agreement is becoming imperative. Even within the 1.5 degrees celsius goal, SIDS are facing an existential threat. Exceeding this threshold would be catastrophic.

To secure a sustainable future, we must collectively phase out fossil fuel usage and hasten the just transition to sustainable energy sources, targeting net-zero emissions globally by 2050.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report has already warned that further delay will mean missing "a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all".

SIDS, like Mauritius, wrestle with coastal erosion, marine pollution, and coral bleaching.

Sea-level rise and climate-related disasters loom large. Mauritius is facing a rise in sea level of 5.6 millimetres annually, almost twice the global average of 3.3 millimetres. These compounding challenges heighten our inherent vulnerabilities and imperil our sustainable development objectives.

Mr President,

As Leaders, it is our duty and responsibility to save the planet for our future generation.

Mauritius is spending about two per cent of its GDP on environment and climate-change related policies. Our Climate Change Act serves as the cornerstone of our commitment to fulfilling our obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement, and other related instruments on climate change. In order to build our resilience, Mauritius has

implemented a series of adaptation measures such as coastal rehabilitation, mangrove propagation and flood management programmes. We have also formulated a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for low carbon strategy (NAMA)

Mauritius is also committed to implementing a series of adaptation and mitigation measures aimed at reducing its Greenhouse Gas emissions by 40% and achieving 60% of energy production from green sources by 2030.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of our National Determined Contributions, a total of USD 6.5 billion is required. Despite the economic constraints, we have been able to commit USD 2.5 billion. Our challenge is to secure the remaining USD 4 billion.

Indeed all SIDS need adequate and predictable support including climate finance from the international community. We call on international financial institutions and development partners to ensure that access to climate finance by SIDS is simplified and made easier.

We look forward to the swift operationalisation of the Loss and Damage facility agreed upon at COP27. This facility represents hope for those in urgent need and cannot remain a mere promise.

Developed countries must urgently deliver on their promise made 14 years ago at the Copenhagen conference to provide climate finance of USD 100 billion per year. As it is, this amount is no longer sufficient, so there is a need to make the scale of climate finance commensurate with the challenge through the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.

Mr President,

We urge International Financial Institutions to recognize that GDP per capita is not the sole measure of a country's development, we call on the international financial institutions and development partners to use the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) developed by the UN as a tool in further integrating SIDS' vulnerability into their decision making.

SIDS are hopeful that the Fourth SIDS Conference in Antigua and Barbuda will deliver a more focused, measurable and fully resourced Programme of Action that is tailored to the circumstances of SIDS.

Mr President,

We look to the Summit of the Future in 2024, to address issues of financial stability, promote financial inclusion and debt sustainability and embrace sustainability. We call for an inclusive and equitable global governance and not a “finance divide”. Mauritius believes firmly that the SDG Stimulus and the Bridgetown Initiative can accelerate progress towards the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Mr President,

The UN report, *SIDS in Numbers 2017*, projects that Mauritius will become a water-stressed country by 2025, barely two years from now. It is my Government’s top priority to ensure the continuous supply of clean and safe water to every citizen. We will continue to invest in water storage capacities to face the effects of climate change and achieve long-term water security.

Mr President,

The ocean, on which we are all dependent, is a critical reservoir of marine biodiversity. Mauritius welcomes the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and I am pleased to inform that Mauritius has signed this Agreement. This historic legally binding instrument is a victory for multilateralism and international law and a game changer towards the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. We encourage all countries to sign and ratify the Agreement so that it can enter into force as soon as possible.

In the same vein, Mauritius reiterates its invitation to States, NGOs, and other stakeholders to support the Marine Protected Area which Mauritius will be establishing around the Chagos Archipelago.

We also look forward to the finalisation of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, and ensure its effective implementation.

Mr President,

Democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights are fundamental values which every country must respect and abide by.

The instability in some parts of Africa is detrimental to progress. Upholding the rule of law is essential for restoring faith in governance, fostering stability, and enabling sustainable progress on the continent. Peaceful transition of power through democratic means is the only way to ensure peace, development and prosperity.

Mr. President,

We proudly welcome the admission of the African Union as a member of the G20.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian People and reiterate our unwavering support for the two-state solution as we recognise its potential to bring lasting peace and stability to the region. We commend the recent step taken to seek an advisory opinion from the ICJ and hope that the Palestinian people will be able to live in freedom in their own state.

Mr President,

As we navigate through an increasingly complex path, it is crucial that we adapt our global institutions to effectively address the challenges of the 21st Century. The United Nations Security Council has a vital role to play in maintaining international peace and security. However, it no longer reflects the realities of the modern world. Urgent reform of the United Nations Security Council and the revitalisation of the General Assembly are essential to strengthen the United Nations for future generations.

Mr President,

Amidst the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the international community must relentlessly pursue peaceful dialogue. We commend African nations and other mediators for their vital role in this regard.

Mr President,

It is now 4 years since the International Court of Justice gave its Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius prior to its independence. The ICJ made it clear that the Chagos Archipelago is an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and invited the colonial power to withdraw its administration from the Archipelago as rapidly as possible. Ever since, the Government of Mauritius made a strong commitment to implement a programme of resettlement in the Chagos Archipelago for Mauritian nationals, in particular those of Chagossian origin who have suffered historic injustice by being forcibly removed from

their birthplace. We are hopeful that soon they will be able to resettle in the Chagos Archipelago. Indeed, Mauritius and the UK have started negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, on the basis of international law. We hope that these talks will lead to the completion of the decolonization process of Mauritius and enable Mauritius implement its resettlement program.

We also appeal to France to resolve the dispute over Tromelin, which forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, in the spirit of friendship that characterises the relations between the two countries.

Mr President,

We are at a crossroads. We do not want to be judged by the next generation for having been complacent. Let us seize this opportunity to re-commit to forge ahead the future we want for us and for our future generations.

I remain confident that we will discover the common purpose needed to restore trust in our shared future.

I thank you.
