

**MAURITIUS SEVENTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**SECOND SESSION**  
**Debate No 8 of 1991**  
**Sitting of Friday 17 May 1991**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.00 am.

Mr Speaker, accompanied by His Excellency The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabé and the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and preceded by the Serjeant-At-Arms, bearing the Mace, and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, entered the Chamber of Assembly in procession.

Mr Speaker seated His Excellency to his right and the Prime Minister of Mauritius to his left on the dais and took the Chair.

The National Anthems of the Republic of Zimbabwe and of the State of Mauritius were played.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Mr Speaker:** Hon Members, it is my great privilege to welcome today, in our Legislative Assembly, one of the most distinguished sons of Africa. The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Your Excellency, there is no need for me to introduce you to the Parliamentarians here assembled to hear your address. The name of your country is familiar to us all, not only by reason of the prominent part it is playing for the promotion of justice and liberty which is common to us all, but also due to the long struggle it has sustained against the forces of colonialism and oligarchy and which today, places it in an outstanding position for the respect of all those who cherish the ideals of democracy.

Your Excellency, you have the floor.

*(Applause)*

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY**  
**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, COMRADE R. G. MUGABE**

**The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe:** Mr Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, Mr Iswurdeo Seetaram, The Right Hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Hon. Members of the National Assembly, Hon. Ministers, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to be among such a gathering of distinguished citizens of Mauritius this morning. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for according me this rare opportunity of addressing your National Assembly.

May I, at the outset, convey to you warm greetings from the brotherly people of Zimbabwe who have great respect and admiration for your people and country. This affinity between our peoples is hardly an accident. As you are aware, Zimbabwe and Mauritius are bound together by factors of geography and history. Africa is our common home and its bounteous resources give life to both our peoples. Both our countries have gone through dark periods of colonial subjugation and humiliation. We have also had great times of triumph as our countries attained their freedom and independence. Today, our two countries are bound together by a common commitment to democracy as a vehicle for the full realization of our people's hopes and aspirations.

You will agree with me, Mr Speaker, that democracy for both our countries was not an option, but a prerequisite for the unity and prosperity of our people. As you are aware, Zimbabwe,

just like Mauritius, is a nation of great diversity. We, like you, are a nation of many races, cultures and religions. Democracy was, therefore, our best hope for a stable future. It was our guarantee that all the various parts of our society would have equal participation and expression in the affairs of the nation. Moreover, our harsh colonial experiences could not make us desire any other form of government, but that which assured the full involvement of all our peoples in the shaping of their own destiny.

Mr Speaker, Parliament, as the most important institution of any democracy, has a central role to play in ensuring the stability and prosperity of the nation. As the highest law-making body in the land, it is the fountainhead of the nation's justice. It is the citadel of freedom without which no man, woman or child can be said to be truly free. It is, above all, a repository of the dreams, hopes and aspirations of a free people whose democratic right it was to elect its members.

But Parliament will only be relevant to the extent that it is responsive to the needs of the people that it represents. This can only happen if Parliamentarians keep abreast of developments in their own constituencies and provide leadership in tackling the pressing political, economic and social problems of the day.

In the dynamic world that we live in, Parliaments must also be agents of change. New ideas and viewpoints must never be shunned. They must be brought up, expounded and debated upon. After all, it is through these debates that the public we serve is exposed to them and educated on their pros and cons. But while Parliamentarians must be keen initiators and debaters of new ideas, they must also be at the same time masters at the art of compromise for, indeed, at the end of the day, it cannot simply be their personal interest or even of their constituency, but that of the nation as a whole, that must prevail.

Mr Speaker, your National Assembly has acquitted itself well in all these respects. It has been an indispensable force behind the peace, unity and stability that your nation has experienced since the attainment of your independence in 1968. Its prudent and foresighted economic policies have led to the unparalleled growth and prosperity that your country currently enjoys. Today, your country, Mauritius, has become a shining example in Africa of how an industrious people, given the proper direction and circumstances, can turn the tide of poverty around.

Mr Speaker, Hon. Members of the National Assembly, the history of Parliamentary democracy in Zimbabwe, as you know, is a brief one as it only dates back to the attainment of our independence in 1980. That notwithstanding, our country has made tremendous progress in the past 11 years in consolidating our hard-won freedom and independence. Today, we can say with pride that all our peoples, who at independence chose Zimbabwe as their home, have welded themselves into a single vibrant nation in which disunity and strife have no place.

But this is not to say that we have not had our share of turbulent times. We have from time to time had our own disagreements. But what family does not? The important thing is that, in the final analysis, we have discussed and resolved issues in the interest of the whole Zimbabwe family. Is not this what democracy is all about?

Mr Speaker, from its very inception, our Parliament has sought to redress the socio-economic disparities that prevailed in our country as a result of our colonial past. In this regard, great strides have been made thus far in the various sectors of our economy, particularly health, education and other social services. But much remains to be done.

As you are aware, the land issue was central to our liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. But due to constraints imposed on us by the Lancaster House Constitution that ushered in our independence, that issue had remained outstanding until about a year ago, when in accordance with the provisions of that Constitution, the constraints fell away at our tenth anniversary of independence. Following the amendments last year of the relevant provisions

of our Constitution, my Government will in the coming few months be introducing a draft Bill before Parliament that will seek to make more land available for resettlement purposes while at the same time providing a fair and reasonable compensation to its previous holders.

Significant changes are also taking place in the other sectors of our economy. My Government in the past year adopted a number of important economic measures under the Structural Adjustment and Trade Liberalisation Programme with the view to revitalising the productive sectors of our economy. These measures have opened up new possibilities for increased co-operation with our neighbours and other countries in the region. I am confident that our two countries will take advantage of these new opportunities to further enhance our already existing economic ties.

Other opportunities exist far afield. As you may be aware, in about a month's time, we shall be meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, for the regular Summit of the OAU. Central to our discussions will be the Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action so as to achieve collective self-reliance on the continent. This objective is both noble and timely, particularly in the light of moves towards regional economic integration in other parts of the world. Moreover, our own sub-region, through the PTA, of which both our countries are members, has already demonstrated the necessity and viability of such co-operation.

I am confident that our two countries will spare no effort in ensuring that the proposed Africa Economic Community becomes a reality by the year 2000.

Mr Speaker, our deep commitment to the democratic ideals of freedom and justice at home compels us to cherish the same in international relations. We are against domination of one nation or group of nations by another. We do not believe that might is right.

We are against foreign interference, military or otherwise, in the internal affairs of other States. We are committed to the rule of law as the best guarantee of world peace and prosperity.

Regrettably, cases of injustice and gross violations of basic human rights still persist in certain parts of the world. In our own sub-region, millions of people in South Africa are still denied the right to determine their own destiny only because of the colour of their skin. This situation continues to bring untold suffering to innocent men, women and children in that country. The need for an early solution to this problem cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised. In this regard, we welcome the important initiatives taken by South African President de Klerk aimed at opening dialogue with the oppressed majority of that country. We can only hope that they will soon bear fruit. In the meantime, it is imperative that all parties in South Africa co-operate to curb the current wave of violence in that country, if the gains made thus far are not to be reversed.

Further afield, the situation in the Middle East remains of serious concern to us. Although the Gulf Crisis is now over, peace will continue to elude that region unless the long-standing problem of Palestine is addressed. It is incumbent on the international community to show the same resolve and decisiveness on the question of Palestine as it recently did in the Gulf, lest it stands accused of applying double standards.

Mr Speaker, Zimbabwe and Mauritius hold common views on many other matters. We support your interests in the Indian Ocean. We commend the sterling efforts of your country at the United Nations aimed at the early realization of the goals contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. We stand ready to consider any other proposals and suggestions whose realization would enhance the security of our region.

In doing so, however, we do not lose sight of the fact that all our regional security arrangements would be of limited effect unless the larger objective of nuclear and general disarmament is pursued vigorously. Although the dangers of a nuclear war have receded with the current improvement in the international climate, the threat remains a real one. It is, therefore, important to us, the Non-Aligned countries, never to tire in our demands for nuclear and general disarmament. Our Parliaments can play an important role in sensitising our people in this regard.

Once again, I am grateful to you Mr Speaker and hon Members of the National Assembly, for this opportunity given to me to share a few thoughts with you. I wish you and your people a prosperous future.

Thank you.

*(Applause)*

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, your Excellency. Now the Rt. hon the Prime Minister has the floor.

**(11.23 a. m.)**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on your behalf and on my own as well, I wish to thank His Excellency, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabé, distinguished President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and eminent and respected Statesman for the gracious speech he has kindly agreed to deliver in our Legislative Assembly.

We have all benefited from his outlook of Parliamentary democracy as experienced in one of the most outstanding Republics of Africa. There is no doubt that this historic occasion will largely contribute towards the promotion of further understanding and co-operation between this House and the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe. I avail myself of this opportunity to wish His Excellency on behalf of the Parliament of Mauritius a very happy stay in our country. Thank you.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Prime Minister:** Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 21 May, 1991 at 11.30 am.

**Mr Uteem rose and seconded.**

At 11.25 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday, 21 May, 1991 at 11.30 a.m.