

**MAURITIUS FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Debate No 18 of 1982**  
**Sitting of Tuesday the 24 of August, 1982**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 10.00 am.

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber, Assembly House, Port Louis, at 10 am, pursuant to notice.

Mr Speaker, accompanied by Her Excellency The Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi and the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr Aneerood Jugnauth, and preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the Mace, and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, entered the Chamber of Assembly in procession.

Mr Speaker seated Her 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 India and of the State of Mauritius were played.

Address by Her Excellency The Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

**Mr Speaker:** Her Excellency Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, is doing our country exceptional honour in paying us a visit for the third time. It is equally a great honour that Shrimati Indira Gandhi is doing this House today by favouring us with her company. It is therefore, a great honour and a great privilege for me to welcome this great and able parliamentarian and to invite her to address this Assembly. Madam –

**The Prime Minister of India:** Hon. Speaker, Prime Minister and distinguished Members of the National Assembly.

C'est toujours un grand honneur de prendre la parole devant l'auguste législature d'un pays autre que le sien. Je remercie Maurice de m'avoir accordée une fois de plus ce privilège.

Le Parlement constitue le corps institutionnel de tout gouvernement représentatif. Il incarne la volonté libre d'un peuple libre. Il joue le rôle du gardien de la liberté et garant de la justice. C'est dans le Parlement que le peuple repose tous ses espoirs et toutes ses aspirations. Les élections sont le processus par lequel nous choisissons et nous changeons nos gouvernements d'une manière pacifique et en civilisée. Il incombe, donc, au Parlement de veiller à ce que ces options suivent de près les idéaux de la nation.

Your recent elections have brought a large number of young people to this Parliament. We, in India, have also made special efforts to give the young their legitimate share of authority and responsibility. Demographers tell us that compared to affluent countries, the young of developing ones form a greater proportion of the population. The real majorities in the world are the young and the poor. It was once said "*si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*". Science has altered that. Youth does not lag behind in knowledge, in science, in technology or other spheres, nor does age necessarily hamper activity.

Mauritius has many religions and races. India is a multi-religious society which, over the ages, has assimilated many cultures. That is a relevant and practical reason for us to choose democracy which allows and indeed helps diverse elements to keep together and gives to each of them the opportunity of equal participation and self-expression. The importance of constant discussion is to find ways in which to adjust competing claims in a spirit of give and take.

An institution or a system endures only when the people recognize it as capable of dealing with their difficulties. Our institutions must prove themselves effective instruments of changes, must convince the public that they can and are solving basic problems.

Our peoples have suffered long years of neglect and colonial exploitation. Independence opened wide the gates, not for miracles, but for economic development and cultural renaissance. Freedom is the first cause. It is the foundation for a nation's self-respect and for citizens to be able to work and grow to full stature. But to have meaning for the people, it must manifest itself through tangible social and economic benefits. Mahatma Gandhi gave us a talisman. He said that in assessing any act, we should think whether it would benefit the poorest and the weakest. Jawaharlal Nehru gave concrete shape to a scheme of economic regeneration whose aim was technological modernization and self-reliance without alienation from our heritage. Planning in India has brought about significant changes. Yet development is not as simple as we thought. The solution of problems, and many have been solved, the remarkable increases in production in agriculture and industry, the growth of science and technology and the expansion of social services, all these have given rise to new and more complex problems. While democracy at home is a constant challenge, generating demands and expectations, the highly competitive nature of international functioning considerably aggravates the situation for us and makes our task very much more onerous.

Mauritius and India think alike on many matters. Our allegiance to parliamentary institutions and democratic development is obvious, and there are other bonds. A sizeable part of the Mauritian population originally came from India. That was not in the best of circumstances but they remained to labour hard and to help in the development and progress of this beautiful country. The Indian Ocean washes our shores. We share its benefits and its dangers. This proximity influences our perceptions in respect of regional and global problems.

Sages in ancient India spoke of the oneness of the world but never before has this holistic concept so strongly affected the minds of men and women in all parts of the world – not yet of everyone, but of a fast growing number. They fear that no longer can war or pollution be limited to selected areas. The movement for peace now transcends national boundaries, class distinctions and even political ideologies. It does not get the hearing it deserves. Repeated calls made by the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean for the elimination of power bases, and the U.N. resolution favouring the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace are disregarded. We, who love humanity and this earth and are concerned for their survival in peace and beauty, must persevere with our efforts. Joint efforts to draw attention to our problems, to forge greater cohesion amongst developing countries, to lessen tensions, to work for the settling of disputes through negotiations have to be concerted and strengthened. We must continue to raise our voices to keep our area free from outside forces. India has consistently and firmly spoken up on this issue on all occasions. We support Mauritius legitimate demands in the Indian Ocean and express our sympathy and deep concern for the Ilois people.

Each passing year with its increasing troubles shows that the policy of non-alignment, to which India and Mauritius are both dedicated, has become more significant for the promotion of world peace and stability. The non-aligned must avoid conflicts among themselves and must consolidate the unity of our movement. We must also give our full support to the movement for disarmament, beginning with the limitation of nuclear armaments.

Close to you is a country whose policies are an affront to all the values we hold dear. South Africa refuses to give up the pernicious doctrines of apartheid and racist domination, denying freedom to the majority of its own people as also to those of Namibia. The Government and the people of India have consistently and firmly condemned the atrocities on the blacks and coloured people of South Africa. We have supported the cause of the African National Congress, of SWAPO and other liberation movements in Southern Africa. This is another

sphere where we strive, with common efforts, in cooperation with the Front-line States, to end these abhorrent policies of racialism and colonialism.

Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the massacre of thousands of innocent civilians in total defiance of world opinion have caused great anguish to us. We have advocated and do now plead for a just and comprehensive settlement of the West Asian crisis, ensuring the vacation of aggression by Israel and restoration to the Palestinian people of their right to a homeland. India is totally opposed to military interventions and presences, and favours political solutions to the various current crises.

Economic disparities between and within nations create explosive situations. At the U.N. and in various summit and other conferences, we and others have spoken of a New International Economic Order, which can redress longstanding inequalities. Industrially advanced countries ignore the worldwide consequences of growing economic disparities between nations. Unfortunately we also have elements in our countries and outside which would like us to neglect such differences within our own societies, regardless of likely distress and national disturbances. A continuing dialogue between developing and developed nations as also greater cooperation and exchanges among developing countries themselves are essential. Mauritius and India should create new dimensions of cooperation in trade and technology.

In a democracy, every election is a renewal. Elections are revolutions without violence and bloodshed, showing that the ballot is no less potent than the bullet. Every revolution, whether peaceful or violent, releases long suppressed expectations. Much is expected of you, the newly elected legislators of Mauritius. I know your burdens are heavy, but your shoulders are young and strong. There is no substitute for toil. A poet has said, "In the heart of today, lies the word of tomorrow. The builders of joy are the children of sorrow". The objectives you outlined at the polls were socialism and secularism. Let your secularism be one, as in India, that gives equal respect and protection to all religions and customs, one which allows the personality of each group to develop without in any way eroding national unity and strength. Let your socialism bring about necessary changes with harmony and goodwill.

There are no universal models for democracy or for socialism. Each people must evolve its own patterns and find its own solutions. In India, democracy took root because of our own traditions of rural self-government. Our village councils date back three thousand years. They decided major and minor issues of law and social management. There is a story of an assembly of the Sakyas, of which the Buddha's father was chairman. Devadatta, Buddha's cousin, shot a bird with an arrow. Wounded, it fell in Buddha's lap as he sat meditating by a lotus pond. His gentle touch and care revived it. In council, Devadatta claimed the bird as his. Buddha, when called upon to answer this plaint, questioned the elders. Does the bird belong to the killer or to the one who gave it life? Since, there was no ready statute related to such a problem, Buddha's claim was accepted. The dead bird belonged to the killer, the live to him who saved it.

Let your laws be for enhancing life. Look around the world for good ideas but adapt them to your own needs, as the bee collects nectar from various flowers but produces its own honey.

I bring to you, Sir, and to the elected representatives of this House, the regards and the warm support of the Indian people.

I thank you once again for the privilege of being with you.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is another historic day for Mauritius. I should like, on your behalf, and on my own as well, to express our vote of thanks to the Prime Minister of India for having given us a gracious address which has benefited all of us and, I am sure, laid once again the foundation for further understanding and cooperation between this House

and the Prime Minister of India. We wish her a very, very happy stay in this country. Thank you, Sir.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 31 August, 1982 at 11.30 am.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

At 10.45 am, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 31 August 1982 at 11.30 am.