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President: Mr. Corneliu MANESCU (Romania).

Resumption of the twenty-second session

1. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 1643rd plenary meeting with which the General Assembly resumes its twenty-second session.

2. It gives me much pleasure to welcome the representatives who have come here to take part in our work. I take this opportunity to express the hope that, through our combined efforts, we will succeed in reaching fair decisions which will meet the aspirations of the world's peoples and serve the interests of international peace and security, in accordance with the ethics governing inter-State relations.

3. I should like to remind representatives that on 19 December 1967 [1642nd meeting] the General Assembly agreed to give further consideration to the following three items: item 28 (a) (Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament), item 64 (Question of South West Africa) and item 94 (The situation in the Middle East).

4. On that occasion the Assembly decided that the work of the session should be resumed when, after the necessary consultations, it was established that the conditions were appropriate for consideration of one of those items.

5. As a result of subsequent consultations, it was agreed that the conditions set by the General Assembly for the resumption of the twenty-second session were now present, and that the work of the session should begin today.

Organization of work

6. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I now invite the Assembly to decide upon the procedure it wishes to follow in carrying out the work of this session. Representatives have, no doubt, taken note of the document [A/7090] which lists the three items remaining on the agenda of this session in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly on 19 December 1967.

7. At the beginning of the session the General Assembly referred item 28 (Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons) to the First Committee, requesting it to report to the plenary.

8. As a result of consultations which I have held, I understand that Member States wish the Committee so to organize its work as to ensure that this item is given careful scrutiny on the basis of the relevant documentation. If I hear no objection, may I take it that the Assembly still wishes agenda item 28 (a) to be dealt with by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

9. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): With regard to item 64 (Question of South West Africa), I wish to inform the Assembly that the Chairman of the Afro-Asian Group, H.E. Ambassador Shahi of Pakistan, has conveyed to me the Group's request that the General Assembly begin its consideration of this item at once, on the understanding that plenary meetings of the Assembly and meetings of the First Committee will not take place at the same time.

10. I consulted as many representatives of Member States as I could during the short time at my disposal and I have reached the conclusion that it is generally felt that items 28 (a) and 64 should be discussed immediately, provided that the meetings on those two questions are not held concurrently. I should therefore like to consult the Assembly on this matter.

11. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

12. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Agenda item 94 (The situation in the Middle East) will of course, as decided earlier, remain before the General Assembly.

13. During the period which has elapsed since we interrupted our work another sovereign and independent State, Mauritius, has emerged as a result of the irreversible process of decolonization. As we all know, the State of Mauritius has submitted an application for admission to membership in the United Nations [A/7073] and the Security Council has unanimously recommended that its application should be accepted [A/7083].

14. I understand from the exchanges of views I have had with representatives of certain States and geographical groups that the Assembly wishes to decide now on the application of Mauritius for admission to the United Nations. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees with this procedure?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 99

Admission of new Members to the United Nations
(concluded)*

15. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I wish to draw the General Assembly's attention to the draft resolution on agenda item 99 which has been submitted by a number of countries [A/L.545 and Add.1 and 2].

16. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts this draft resolution by acclamation?

The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation [resolution 2371 (XXII)].

17. The president (translated from French): I declare the State of Mauritius admitted to membership in the United Nations.

The delegation of Mauritius was escorted to the place reserved for it in the General Assembly hall.

18. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I trust that I speak for all the Members of this Assembly in welcoming the young State of Mauritius to membership in the United Nations and in expressing to its Government and people our sincere congratulations and best wishes for their prosperity and for success in attaining their goals.

19. Mr. PARTHASARATHI (India): Mr. President, during the first part of the twenty-second session, my delegation had an opportunity to convey our greetings and felicitations to you on your assuming this high office and to salute your great nation as a bridge-builder and a pathfinder in Europe. Your masterly handling of the matters dealt with in the early part of the session has further confirmed us in our belief in your outstanding statesmanship and the dynamic and important role played by your great country in international affairs.

20. The resumed session has to consider important questions such as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the problem of South West Africa and the situation in the Middle East. My delegation has not the slightest doubt that under your able leadership the Assembly will be in a position to find adequate solutions to these intricate questions. We wish to assure you that my delegation will continue to extend the fullest co-operation to you in the performance of your tasks.

21. It is with great joy and pride that we welcome the emergence of Mauritius from colonial bondage to freedom and independence, and to its rightful place in this world body. My Prime Minister welcomed the independence of Mauritius with this message to the Prime Minister of Mauritius. She said:

"On the historic day of attainment of independence by your country, my colleagues in the Government of India and I send our warmest felicitations to the Government and the people of Mauritius. . . . I want you to know that you have our most sincere good wishes for your personal happiness and welfare. May the people of Mauritius prosper under your wise, dedicated and distinguished leadership. We look forward to an era of friendship and co-operation between our two countries."

22. The attainment of independence by any nation is always a matter of pleasure and of great emotional satisfaction to all freedom-loving countries. However, if I seek to express today the particular gratification of my delegation at the independence of Mauritius, it is due to the long-standing, close and indissoluble ties which have bound our two countries together in deep friendship and amity. These ties are deeply rooted in our similar cultural heritage, our colonial history and struggle for independence, our geographic proximity and above all our mutually cherished goals of freedom for all dependent peoples and universal peace.

23. My delegation, along with several others, has keenly followed the progress of Mauritius towards independence. We have had the occasion to express our feelings from the forums of the United Nations and to encourage the people of Mauritius to carry on the fight for freedom, undeterred by any setback. It is, therefore, not only with joy but with profound satisfaction that my delegation welcomes Mauritius to the comity of nations.

24. May I be permitted to reiterate my delegation's warm and sincere felicitations to the Government and people of Mauritius. We are confident that Mauritius, known for the spirit of enterprise and the courage of its people, will grow into a strong and prosperous nation under the outstanding leadership of its great Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, and that it will be a dedicated and active Member of the United Nations, wedded as it is to the principles on which this body was founded. We are equally confident that independent Mauritius will join our common struggle for freedom, peace and progress and will make a valuable contribution to the various fields of activity of the United Nations.

25. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) (translated from French): There can be no pleasanter duty for any delegation, and particularly for my own, than to welcome a new Member State to our great international family.

26. Mauritius's request for admission represents the culmination of the political evolution of that country which, having acquired independence, has clearly indicated that it wishes to play its full part in the concert of nations.

27. At a time when, in this troubled world of ours, certain basic values seem to be challenged, if not discarded, it is a source of pleasure and deep satisfaction to find once again that the principles of peace, tolerance, co-operation and mutual respect have not been advocated in vain.

28. Thus we are firmly convinced that Mauritius, by its tradition, its history and its culture, will make a contribution to our Organization the unique nature of which will in no way detract from its universal import.

29. Perhaps in an Organization such as ours one should not emphasize the quality of uniqueness, but we must admit that countries situated in the western part of the Indian Ocean have certain common attitudes, actions and reactions, which to some extent condition their participation in international life.

*Resumption of the debate of the 1630th meeting.

30. In so saying Madagascar is not attempting to act as a spokesman for anyone else; but the age-old and traditional relations which my country has enjoyed, first with the Ile de France and then with the island of Mauritius, give us some title to attempt to analyse the enriching phenomenon of diversity in unity.

31. These general considerations lead my delegation to pay a tribute to the people and Government of Mauritius, who have been able to rise above the circumstances of their past, harmonize them into a human and brotherly whole, and fully realize their desire for independence. That continuous and comprehensive growth has been made possible through the far-sightedness and determination of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister, who is held in great and friendly esteem in Madagascar, both among its leaders and among the Malagasy people as a whole.

32. For many years, Madagascar has followed with a sympathetic interest the policy carried out by Sir Seewoosagur with the backing of the Mauritian people, a policy aimed at development, social progress and national well-being.

33. Because the Malagasy Government shares the belief that priority should be given to the growth of democracy, to the welfare of the most humble as well as the most highly favoured without discrimination, with an overwhelming concern for justice and equity, my delegation would like to assure the representatives of Mauritius that they can count on its brotherly co-operation so that these same principles to which we are so deeply attached may prevail in our Organization.

34. At a moment of such historic importance for the Mauritian people, my delegation could not fail to mention the role of the erstwhile administering Power. The act which establishes the international sovereignty of Mauritius is clearly in the line of the liberal tradition which has been in evidence over the past twenty-years. We rejoice, and we hope that the same willingness and the same determination will be maintained whatever happens, particularly in those painful situations which are a constant appeal to our consciences and our sense of freedom.

35. Mr. BERARD (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, there is no need for me to say what a great pleasure it is for me to speak once again with you in the Chair.

36. At the Security Council's meeting on 18 April [1414th meeting] I had an opportunity to say how happy the French delegation was to welcome the independent State of Mauritius to our Organization.

37. Of course we are always happy when a new State comes to join our family of nations, but we rejoice particularly when that new State is one which is so closely linked to my own country by historical and cultural ties.

38. It has been 150 years since Mauritius ceased to have any political relations with France, but in that great island French is still the everyday language of a large section of the population, the language of culture among its élite, and the language of communication between its different ethnic groups. My country is particularly touched by this faithful adherence to our common culture.

39. For more than two centuries, the relationship between our two countries has been one of cultural exchange. Mauritius and, as the poet says, "its happy shores dazzled by the flames of a monotonous sun" have markedly inspired several of our greatest novelists and poets, and French literature has been enriched in turn by the contributions of many Mauritian writers, from L'évêque l'Homme to Malcolm de Chazal.

40. The Prime Minister of Mauritius, when he honoured us with a visit to our capital in October 1967, was kind enough to say that his country intended to co-operate with mine, especially in intellectual and economic matters, and that he wished to see agreements concluded between our countries strengthening the existing cultural and historical ties. My countrymen were particularly receptive to that statement, and it is the wish of France that the friendship and cultural co-operation between the two countries may continue.

41. From this rostrum, I should like to renew our warmest wishes for happiness and prosperity to the newly independent State of Mauritius, to its leaders and its people, and especially to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, its Prime Minister.

42. Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America): When the Security Council considered the application of Mauritius for membership in the United Nations just last week, the United States made it clear that we welcomed both the achievement of independence by Mauritius and its desire to participate fully in the work of this world Organization, with all the responsibilities, satisfactions and frustrations that United Nations membership entails.

43. Rather than reiterating the points made in our statement to the Council in support of the application of Mauritius, I should like to use this opportunity to extend a warm hand of friendship and welcome from the people and Government of the United States to all the people of Mauritius and to their distinguished Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, a leader who has commanded our respect for the important role he played in bringing his country to independence.

44. You, Mr. Prime Minister, represent a country whose population embraces diverse races, religions and nationalities. These diversities and your long history of dealing with them have provided that country with a wealth of experience with the problems, challenges, opportunities and richness which such diversities entail. We shall look to you to enrich us all by sharing that experience here at the United Nations.

45. We are gratified that you have joined us and we are determined to do all in our power, both as host country to the United Nations and as one of your fellow Members, to make your participation in this Organization enjoyable and satisfying. Our gratification and determination stem from a deep and renewed awareness of the meaning of independence for a former colony and of the importance which the concept of self-determination has under the United Nations Charter. Our gratification also stems from our realization of your determination to share responsibility

with all the other Members of the United Nations in seeking solutions to the world-wide problems which we face in common.

46. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): Canada was happy to be a co-sponsor when last week the Security Council in resolution 249 (1968) recommended that the General Assembly admit Mauritius to membership in the United Nations. Therefore the Canadian delegation has particular reason to welcome the decision taken today by acclamation by the General Assembly, because of the special ties which this new Member of the United Nations has with Canada, since both our countries are members of the Commonwealth and both are bilingual in culture and tradition.

47. As a new nation in the world community, Mauritius faces a great challenge in the task of development. My country recognizes the responsibility of developed countries to assist those in the process of development to resolve the difficulties confronting them. Canada, for its part, is prepared to continue making available, through its external aid programme, technical assistance to Mauritius.

48. Mauritius has before it also great opportunities to participate in the valuable work of this Organization for peace and international co-operation, and we are particularly happy that on this auspicious occasion, when this association of Mauritius with the world Organization begins, the distinguished Prime Minister of this new nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who has already contributed so richly to the political life and development of his country, should be present here in person, and I wish to express, on behalf of the Government and people of Canada, to the Prime Minister and to Mauritius our very best wishes for the future.

49. Mr. VAUGHAN (Barbados): It was a great honour and pleasure for the Barbados delegation to be a co-sponsor of the draft resolution [A/L.545 and Add.1 and 2] in accordance with which Mauritius has been admitted to membership of the United Nations.

50. After more than three centuries Mauritius, which has changed hands under no less than three imperialist Powers, has shaken off the shackles of colonial bondage and is now free. In the immediate circumstances in which it has occurred this is, by any standards, a great triumph, and we heartily congratulate the Government and people of Mauritius. Let me say too that my country, which became independent less than two years ago, shares to the full their aspiration and confidence in their ability to realize and maintain the ideals of the Charter of this Organization.

51. There are other respects in which my country is able to enter fully into the feelings of the Government and people of Mauritius at this hour. Mauritius is a predominantly agricultural country and, like Barbados, is tied to a sugar economy with all the problems and difficulties that such a nexus entails. It is not so densely populated as Barbados, yet it is a fact that economic and demographic pressures have, as in Barbados, contributed much to its constitutional development. Indeed, the same large-hearted, if somewhat self-willed, ruler who initiated a period of organic change in Barbados, went from there to Mauritius and effected a similar development. Above

all, though comparatively small in land mass and population, Mauritius brings to this Organization an enlightened example of the way in which people of different races, religions, languages and cultures can co-exist peacefully and strive harmoniously for the common goals of human dignity, progress and self-respect. No greater contribution can be required from a country seeking membership of this great Organization.

52. Admittedly, there have been other agencies which have contributed to this great result. We applaud Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for its co-operation in bringing Mauritius to independence. My Government is equally appreciative of the splendid work which is being done in the field of decolonization by the Committee of Twenty-Four and by other organs of the United Nations family. This places the struggle for independence by any colony within a wider ambit and gives to its people a clearer and nobler vision.

53. Mr. President, permit me once again to extend our warmest congratulations to the Government and people of Mauritius.

54. Mr. AKWEI (Ghana): Today, as the delegation of Mauritius takes its place in this great Assembly, the United Nations is once again adding another glorious page to the history of human freedoms and national independence.

55. On 12 March 1968 the Government and people of Ghana rejoiced with the Government and people of Mauritius on the accession of Mauritius to independent statehood.

56. Ghana, together with other members of the group of Commonwealth States, is gratified to have sponsored the resolution, which has just been adopted by acclamation, admitting Mauritius to membership in this world body. Now, as the current Chairman of the group of Commonwealth States, I take great pleasure and pride in welcoming Mauritius to membership of this Organization of equal sovereign States. Our pleasure derives from the conviction that this Organization has welcomed into its ranks the newest member State resolved to contribute its share to world peace and human brotherhood. Our pride springs from the happy outcome of the determination of the people of Mauritius in rejecting colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

57. This Organization cannot fail at this time to look back with pride on the role which it has played in exerting pressure on the colonial Power to accelerate the independence of Mauritius. Mauritius, with its rich and varied culture, the island whose exotic enchantment was sung by some of the poets of the Parnassian and Symbolist movements in French literature, has had a long history of contact with the peoples of many nations. Out of this long period of contact Mauritius has emerged as the meeting point of different races and civilizations and now provides a much needed example of inter-racial co-operation. This phenomenon alone is a good qualification for Mauritius' membership in the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations—Organizations which span different races and cultures.

58. Let us take renewed hope and confidence from the success of Mauritius that the racist territories of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and the oppressed people of South West Africa will also before long be ushered into the sunlight of freedom and independence. As Mauritius, with its multiracial society, joins this Organization we are encouraged in our resolve to exert every effort to eradicate the twin evils of colonialism and racism from the face of the earth.

59. The Ghana delegation welcomes the delegation of Mauritius as they take their seats for the first time in this Assembly. The representatives of Ghana pledge their fullest collaboration with the representatives of Mauritius in our work here. To the Government and people of Mauritius Ghana extends its warmest good wishes as they embark on the exciting but arduous task of nation building.

60. May the peaceful development and progress, on which Mauritius is already so happily launched, continue and expand to the satisfaction of its people and the advancement of world peace and prosperity.

61. Mr. OTEMA ALLIMADI (Uganda): The group of African States has bestowed on me the honour of extending to the newest Member of this Organization a very warm welcome to our midst. At the same time, and in the same representative capacity, I wish to extend to the delegation, the Government and the people of Mauritius our congratulations on having travelled successfully the very difficult road towards political independence, an experience which we in the liberated portion of Africa have every reason to commemorate.

62. We wish the Government and people of Mauritius the best of luck in all their endeavours to achieve their aspiration of national identity both at home and here in the family of nations. We extend to the delegation of Mauritius the friendly hand of co-operation in our joint deliberations in this Organization.

63. We hope that the General Assembly will in due course welcome to membership many countries which are not yet liberated; I have in mind countries from all regions of the world, including South West Africa and Rhodesia.

64. I wish also, on behalf of my delegation, to extend our sincere congratulations to the Government and people of Mauritius upon this historic occasion in the life of their country and, in a joyful spirit, to welcome the Mauritius representatives as the 124th delegation to be seated in this Hall.

65. Mr. BELOKOLOS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (translated from Russian): I should like, on behalf of the group of socialist countries, to express our sincere welcome to the new State Member of this Organization, Mauritius.

66. The birth of the independent State of Mauritius constitutes yet another success for the forces of the national liberation movement and proof of the invincibility of the people's struggle for freedom and independence against the system of exploitation imposed by colonialism and imperialism.

67. The people of Mauritius, who have been living under British colonial domination for more than a

century and a half, have followed the road taken by many other former colonial peoples who, after a long, stubborn struggle, have freed themselves from colonial slavery and joined the family of independent States.

68. We wish to express our most sincere satisfaction at the Mauritian people's success in their legitimate struggle—a success which brings even closer the final abolition of the shameful system of colonialism.

69. In welcoming today the admission of the State of Mauritius to membership of the United Nations, the socialist countries, which call and have always called for a speedy and complete end to colonial rule, wish to convey to the Government and people of Mauritius their sincerest wishes for success in the speedy elimination of the onerous consequences of colonialism, the consolidation of their nation's sovereignty and the building of a new life, with progress and prosperity for their development as an independent nation.

70. Allow me also to express our confidence and hope that the State of Mauritius, as an independent country and a new Member of the United Nations, will be making its contribution, together with the other independent States of Asia and Africa, to the work of our Organization in the strengthening of peace and friendship among peoples.

71. Sir John CARTER (Guyana): In congratulating the Government and people of Mauritius upon their achievement of independence and in welcoming them to membership of the United Nations, I speak on behalf of a nation whose people sprang from origins as diverse as those of the people of Mauritius. It is especially for this reason that we welcome Mauritius here today, for we believe that plural societies such as those that our two countries have in common represent the true hope of the world. Such societies are a living witness of the evil lies of apartheid. In the self-respect which they offer to all their people, regardless of racial or cultural origins, such societies are in the vanguard of that true freedom which some day will triumph.

72. We express to His Excellency the Prime Minister our warmest good wishes, and our confidence that our two countries will find many opportunities here at the United Nations to work together for the benefit of the international community and of ourselves.

73. Mr. PIÑERA (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as we renew our confidence in the spirit of fairness with which you guide our debates, we also wish today to welcome a country that is with us for the first time. In renewing my country's confidence in you, allow me also to extend a special welcome to your family, which is with you and supports you.

74. In the United Nations family vast geographical and historical distances are forgotten in our adherence to the principles which make us neighbours and even brothers. Such are Mauritius and Chile, perhaps the two lands most remote from one another on earth: Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, and Chile very near the South Pole. However, this immense geographical distance does not prevent Chile from feeling very close to Mauritius.

75. The United Nations, based on the exercise of the sovereign independence of States, is greatly enriched by the presence of a new independent country. It is all the more enriched because the State of Mauritius has harmoniously integrated aspirations derived from many diverse origins, religions and cultures. Nations gain autonomy by sharing needs and difficulties.

76. Mauritius has a rural population with the highest density in the world, and a rapidly rising birth rate. That is a direct challenge to the courage and unity of this new Member of the United Nations, which today sets us a new example.

77. This is not my delegation's first contact with Mauritius. A few weeks ago at New Delhi, at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, we had the honour to welcome Mauritius as a new member of that great body and to work with it on more than one committee in the defence of common views. For us, therefore, Mauritius is more than the 124th State Member of the United Nations: it is a country with which we have already worked and hope to continue to work in the defence of our common interests.

78. With deep emotion I welcome this new Member to the community of nations today; and I would add that Mauritius is joining this Organization at the culmination of its history. Its presence will bring even closer the long-sought universality of the United Nations, which expects a bold and original contribution from Mauritius.

79. I wish today modestly to convey the greetings of the Government and people of Chile to the people of Mauritius, so ably represented by their Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. Chile extends its most fraternal welcome to the rulers and people of Mauritius.

80. Mr. KJARTANSSON (Iceland): It is a great privilege to welcome Mauritius to membership in our Organization. I do so on behalf of those members of the group of Western European and other States that have not already spoken or are not going to speak individually for themselves. So many eloquent words have already been spoken that I believe I can limit myself to joining in the chorus of congratulations and good wishes. The advent of a new and independent State to the community of nations is always a joy. For me as a representative of an island country, it is a particular pleasure to welcome the distinguished Prime Minister and the delegation of another island nation. I wish to assure them that my country, as well as all the members of the group of Western European and other States, is looking forward to friendly and fruitful co-operation with them within this world Organization.

81. Mr. SHAHI (Pakistan): Mr. President, my delegation takes great satisfaction in the fact that you will be presiding over this resumed session of the General Assembly which is charged with the consideration of some of the most momentous issues that have confronted the United Nations. I shall have several opportunities, in due course, to state the views of my Government on the question of South West Africa and on the action to be taken on the draft non-proliferation treaty submitted to the General

Assembly by the two Co-Chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee.

82. On this occasion I should like to extend the sincere felicitations of my Government to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, to his Government and to the people of Mauritius on the unanimous admission of their country to membership of the United Nations. Speaking in the Security Council on 18 April last, I expressed confidence

"... that the Government of Mauritius will surmount the difficulties that confront new nations" in general "and will do its utmost to promote respect for human rights, a fundamental principle of the Charter... and one of cardinal importance to the governments of multiracial societies."

83. It is not necessary for my delegation to dwell at this moment on the many ties of history and culture that the people of Mauritius have in common with the people of Pakistan. With the achievement of independence by the island, these links are reinforced by the political interest of Pakistan in the preservation of the independence and sovereignty of Mauritius and in the promotion of the prosperity and welfare of the communities that constitute its people. Under Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's dedicated and inspiring leadership, we have not doubt that the people of Mauritius will realize their deepest aspirations.

84. It is my privilege and pleasure, on behalf of all the Asian States Members of the United Nations, to extend our warmest welcome to Mauritius as it joins our ranks and to express our best wishes to its people in their march along the high road of independence.

85. Lord CARADON (United Kingdom): We warmly welcome you, Mr. President, on your return to direct our deliberations, and all of us rejoice today in welcoming a new Member to the United Nations. Especially we of the Commonwealth welcome Mauritius to this world assembly of free nations.

86. In the Commonwealth we are proud of the equality amongst us. Now that Mauritius has become the twenty-seventh independent nation of the Commonwealth, we welcome it as an equal partner. We boast that amongst us there is no precedence and no privilege on grounds of age or size or geography or race or origin. The last shall be first and the first shall be last. It was President Nyerere of Tanzania who said:

"The Commonwealth binds together in friendship and likemindedness the astonishing variety of nations great and small, without distinction between them and without discrimination amongst them."

87. My country had responsibility in Mauritius for more than a hundred and fifty years. The people of the island have advanced to independence on a well-trodden road. They have advanced, as in other countries under British administration, through adult suffrage, through representative government, with the executive responsible to the elected legislature, and with an independent judiciary. There was eventually a series of constitutional conferences and then a final general election in which all the people were able freely to express their views before independence was achieved.

88. These are the methods which have been tested and tried in the Commonwealth, and I warmly acknowledge, in particular, the generous comment on that record made this afternoon by the representatives of Madagascar, Barbados and other States. It is on this broad road of free government that the peoples of the Commonwealth, a quarter of the population of the whole world, have advanced to nationhood.

89. We are glad, I am sure, that the Prime Minister of Mauritius, the Hon. Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, could be here to listen to the speeches of welcome today. He has long been an outstanding leader among his people. Twenty years ago he advanced with his party to win in the first elections held in Mauritius under adult suffrage. He has always been robust and positive and progressive, a happy warrior in the rough-and-tumble of democratic political life. To him most of all is due the credit for the courageous decision to go forward confidently into independence. He knows as well as anyone the difficulties and indeed the dangers which his country faces, and all of us will join today in wishing him and all his countrymen well, in the hope that under resolute leadership Mauritius will draw from its rich diversity strength and unity for the future.

90. We specially wish the Prime Minister well in his reconstruction and development programme. Many are giving practical support, including support through the Commonwealth Assistance Plan and the United Nations Development Programme. British aid will continue; in this financial year it stands at over 4,000,000 pounds.

91. On this happy day, all of us—French and English, African and Asian, East and West—have vied with each other in a competition of congratulation and a chorus of sincere good wishes. May our international unanimity be a welcome augury for the future of Mauritius, a future, so we pray, of unity and harmony and increasing good fortune.

92. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I have the honour and the pleasure to invite H.E. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of Mauritius, to address the General Assembly.

93. Sir Seewoosagur RAMGOOLAM: Mr. President, I should like to express to you and to all the distinguished representatives my cordial thanks for the admission of my country to the United Nations. My special thanks go to those Member States which have so generously sponsored and co-sponsored our application for membership. It is gratifying to acknowledge the wide response and welcome Mauritius has received from Members of the United Nations. By this act, you have given formal consecration to the accession of Mauritius to the status of a sovereign independent State. Although I come from a small country, my Government and the people of Mauritius are very conscious of the honour of belonging to this great Assembly, and we can assure you that we shall strive to uphold the great ideals which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and will play fully our part in the struggle for justice, racial equality, peace and understanding among nations.

94. This is indeed a solemn moment in the history of my country. I stand here in all humility, in the

midst of this great world community as the symbol of the hope of my people that through the effort of the United Nations mankind will really see the ultimate fulfilment and practical realization of the principles and purposes to which men and women in this august Assembly have dedicated themselves. In that grand and noble endeavour, we as a small nation will bring our contribution, however modest it may be, to the shaping of the destiny of a better world—a contribution which we hope will lead towards a new and broader world civilization in which man's essential needs will transcend considerations of national self-interest.

95. I also bring to you, Mr. President and distinguished representatives, the greetings and good wishes of my country which after successive periods of colonization by the Dutch, the French and the British, is now looking forward to an era of fruitful collaboration and partnership with all nations.

96. Mauritius has a rich historical background and it has in the past played a notable part in some of the great events which have moulded the course of history. Mauritius is a densely populated island, and over an area of 720 square miles live a population of almost 800,000. It is a view commonly held among some scholars that our island was visited by Dravidian seamen in pre-Aryan days, and during the time of their great awakening, the Arabs sighted Mauritius in the early part of the Christian era while plying between India and the Red Sea.

97. However, it was the Dutch who took formal possession of the Island in the 17th century and gave it its present name. But colonization proper was started earnestly by the French who succeeded the Dutch, and France has left its lasting imprint on the history of Mauritius. Such indeed has been the impact of French culture and civilization on the life of the people that even those who came from other lands have been profoundly influenced by it. The meeting of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and the West in Mauritius has enriched our precious heritage, and as I said in France during my last visit:

"Sovereign Mauritius will ally itself still more closely with France, as with the other countries from which our forefathers came. Thus this remote island in the Indian Ocean will become one of the most important meeting places of East and West."^{1/}

98. Towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in 1810, Britain conquered Mauritius. Because of the island's proximity with India, Mauritius was captured from the French with the help of Indian troops from Bengal, Madras and Ceylon. British power in the Indian Ocean became supreme after the annexation of Mauritius to the British Crown and British rule was to last until the accession of Mauritius to independence on 12 March 1968. In the course of European colonization of Mauritius, people from Africa and Asia came to its shores and they have all played a decisive part in the progress and development of the island. Ever since, the people of Mauritius have been trying to promote the maintenance of contrasted cultures within the framework of a wider community to which each group could contribute its own share.

^{1/} Spoken in French.

99. It is indeed true to say that although Mauritius has drawn its cultural inspiration from Africa, Asia and Europe, yet it has succeeded to a remarkable degree in evolving a distinct Mauritian way of life. The visitor to Mauritius is impressed by the fact that the average Mauritians have more in common with each other than with the native inhabitants of the land of their forbears. Indeed, it has been the privilege of my small country that its citizens have inherited the influence of the best traditions of the East and of the West. And this influence is noticeable in the works of our poets and writers as has just been pointed out by many speakers who have preceded me.

100. I spoke a little while ago of the basic principles of the United Nations and of its work for the oppressed peoples who have been struggling for the recognition of their rights to nationhood. We are all here pledged to this great ideal, and indeed all Member States have with great fervour and dedication been working to achieve these great ends we all hold in common. But it is still unfortunately true that in many areas of the world denial of human rights, hatred and violence are still raising their ugly heads, and human beings are being subjected to segregation from one another because of the colour of their skin or their ways of life which appear alien to the selfish outlook of a small minority. It is a statistical fact that more than half of the world's population is forced to live in conditions where human dignity and social justice have hardly any meaning. Even in some of the progressive countries which have been the bulwark of democracy, men of goodwill are constantly trying to find a formula by which the under-privileged can banish inequality and fear and aspire to a place in the sun.

101. We in Mauritius have a long tradition of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding, despite the occasional evil exploitation of our diversity. Our social customs and habits have transcended racial and cultural differences. Although much has been achieved in the past two years in the field of economic and social development, Mauritius, like other developing countries, is bedevilled by the rapid rate of population growth. As a sequel, unemployment is a cause of great anxiety, for the rapid increase in the birth rate is a constant and positive threat to our present standard of living. We are taking steps to contain this serious population explosion, and to counteract it a comprehensive programme of family planning is being launched.

102. Fully conscious of the seriousness of the problem, the Mauritian Government has embarked on the diversification of our economy. Great efforts are also being made to stimulate the production of tea, tobacco and food crops, and a number of manufacturing industries have been set up. We have also been giving

careful consideration to the possibilities of emigration as a means of easing our unemployment problem. In this respect I am glad to say that a large number of Mauritians who have emigrated to countries like Britain, Australia and Canada are actively contributing towards the development of those countries. I should like to add that Mauritian workers are efficient, intelligent and adaptable, and have proved to be an asset to those countries which have welcomed them. We all know that there are yet many large areas of the world available for settlement, whereas in other territories like Mauritius there is a serious surplus of human resources. It is precisely in this vital task of revolutionizing the social and economic set-up of Mauritius that my people are looking forward to a close and fruitful partnership with Member States of the United Nations.

103. Here, with your permission, Mr. President, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express the gratitude of my Government and my country for the help and assistance that have already come to us from these quarters and the various United Nations agencies; and I might add in this context how deeply indebted we are to countries like Britain, France, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and Pakistan, which have sympathized in a practical way with the problems we have been facing.

104. We are very much aware of the fact that economic stability and world peace depend so much on the understanding between individual groups at a national level, as well as in the field of international relations, and on the success achieved by many countries in their efforts to give a reasonable standard of living to their populations. It is in this great task of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor that we join our efforts to dedicate ourselves, together with other Member States forming part of this Assembly.

105. To conclude, allow me on behalf of my delegation and my country to renew our pledge to carry out our obligations under the United Nations Charter and our firm determination to stand by the great principles which inspire this comity of nations in its pursuit of peace and happiness.

106. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Prime Minister of Mauritius for his statement.

107. I should like to inform the Assembly that the flag of the new Member State will be hoisted at a ceremony scheduled to take place tomorrow at 2.45 p.m., in front of the delegates' entrance.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.