



**STATEMENT BY  
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ADOPTION OF THE  
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF MAURITIUS**

**AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**(THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014)**

**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address the Human Rights Council on the adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Mauritius.

On 23 October 2013, the Council's UPR Working Group examined the Human Rights Report of Mauritius and we received 150 recommendations from seventy countries. Mauritius accepted 114 of them at the adoption of the Draft Report by the Working Group and informed that it will submit its views on the remaining 36 recommendations before the adoption of the UPR Report by this session of the Council.

In this respect, after close consultations with all relevant stakeholders, we have submitted our views to the UPR Secretariat on 03 March 2014. The document is now available as an addendum to the Report of the UPR Working Group on Mauritius.

In addition, we would like to inform the Council that Mauritius shall submit an Interim Mid-term UPR Report to the Human Rights Council before its next UPR review.

Mr. President,

Before we move into the substance of the issues that had been raised by several delegations in the meeting of the UPR Working Group of the Council in October 2013, let me reaffirm the unrelenting commitments of the Government of Mauritius to uphold the highest standards of human rights at national level and to engage effectively in the universal promotion and protection of human rights.

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, who led the Mauritius delegation to our UPR review in October last, underlined that-

- The priority of the Government of Mauritius is to provide its people with a quality of life based on human dignity, equality of treatment, economic empowerment and social justice.

- We continue to build our nation where the welfare of our citizens remains at the very core of development.
- Mauritius has always endeavoured to foster its development based on the universal values of democracy, good governance, the rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Mauritius has adopted an inclusive approach in addressing human rights issues including relevant stakeholders such as the national human rights institutions, non-governmental organisations and the civil society in both mainland Mauritius and in the island of Rodrigues.

Mr. President

During our UPR Review, recommendations, *inter alia*, related to domestic violence; racial discrimination; review of legislations on child protection; increased protection for the disabled; improvement of human rights situation of working migrants as well as accession and ratification to certain international human rights instruments. Please rest assured that Mauritius values highly those recommendations and serious consideration is being given to them while we pursue further our efforts to promote and protect human rights of our citizens.

As already highlighted during our review the National Human Rights Action Plan 2012-2020 addresses most of those recommendations. The Action Plan lays a lot of emphasis on the strengthening of international cooperation in the field of on human rights, greater realization of social economic and cultural rights, the strengthening of women's rights as well as safeguarding the rights of vulnerable persons including elderly persons, children and persons with disabilities.

Mr. President

Allow me equally to highlight a few of the actions that Mauritius has taken in the following fields:

- On the issue of disabilities, we have adopted measures to implement a policy of inclusive education with a view to addressing the previous lacuna relating to the education of disabled children. The aim is to achieve parity in the government funding for disabled and normal children. Once such parity is achieved, Government shall withdraw the reservation made on Article 24.2(b) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions of Mauritius is also in the process of reviewing its Policy Paper and Plan of Action on Disability in the context of the Post-2015 Disability inclusive Development Agenda of the United Nations.
- Last month, the Government of Mauritius has set up a steering committee at the level of the Ministry of Information Communication and Technology to constantly monitor the report and foster collaboration amongst the stakeholders on the Online Child Sexual Abuse Reporting Portal so as to reengineer the online child sexual abuse filtering mechanism.
- As regards protection from domestic violence, an Advisory Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the Law Reform Commission to reinforce the legal framework for the protection of victims of domestic violence.
- As regards the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, we wish to reiterate that Mauritius being a small and densely populated island with limited resources, has not yet adopted a policy or laws to grant refugee status to foreigners. However, cases of demand for refugee status and political asylum are being treated on a case by case basis. The assistance of friendly countries and relevant agencies are requested for their settlement. For example, in 2008 Mauritius provided assistance to 6 foreign nationals by facilitating the

United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to process their resettlement programme in the USA.

- With regard to the proposal to accede to the Optional Protocol of the ICCPR, we wish to reiterate that all death sentences imposed have been commuted to sentences of penal servitude for life. The Constitution has not yet been amended to prohibit the imposition of death sentences as amendment of the Constitution cannot be effected unless it is supported by votes not less than three quarters of the members of the National Assembly.
- As regards the recommendation relating to Mauritian citizens of Chagossian origin who were shamefully evicted by the United Kingdom from the Chagos Archipelago which forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius, my delegation wishes to point out that the long-standing struggle of Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and the right of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago, as Mauritian citizens, to be resettled in the Archipelago are indissociable. The Government of Mauritius will continue to press for the early and unconditional return of the Chagos Archipelago to the effective control of Mauritius, whilst firmly supporting the right of return of Mauritian citizens of Chagossian origin and other Mauritians to the Archipelago. As for the question of reparation to the victims, Mauritius is of the view that this should be addressed by the United Kingdom which had forcibly removed the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius.

Mr. President

I wish to reiterate that our Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, caste, colour, sex, religious beliefs, place of origin and political opinions. In addition, a number of legislative measures have been adopted to warrant effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, to maintain a conducive environment for equal

opportunities for all and to sustain a cohesive and harmonious society in our multi-racial and multi-ethnic island state.

Mr. President

Mauritius fully subscribes to the principles established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We respect the principle of universality of human rights and consider human rights to be indivisible with economic, social and cultural rights as important as civil and political rights. The manner in which all rights are attained and implemented must nevertheless take into account specific national circumstances and our multi-ethnic makeup. Mauritius shall build on its achievement in human rights even as it addresses the recommendations made to it.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its gratitude to the support extended to us during our second review, and I humbly submit, Mr. President, that the report on the outcome of the UPR of Mauritius be adopted by this august Council.

I thank you.