

Plenary of the Second World Summit for Social Development

draft Statement to be delivered by the Mauritius delegation

Mr. President,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1995, the world met in Copenhagen for the first World Summit for Social Development.

Much has changed since that first Summit,

The triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution poses an existential threat.

The world is becoming more unequal. The ever-widening social gap, demographic shifts, rapid technological transformation, all call for renewed and firm commitment to social progress.

It is therefore apt that the United Nations General Assembly, through Resolutions 78/261 and 78/318, has convened us to this Second World Summit for Social Development.

For Mauritius, for all Small Island Developing State (SIDS), social inclusion, the eradication of poverty and full and decent employment for all are not abstractions.

They are essential to our survival.

We SIDS have a small landmass. Limited Resources. High vulnerability to climate disasters.

Our economies depend on tourism and other ocean-related activities which are overly vulnerable to global crises and debt pressures.

We must find sustainable, long-term solutions to reduce poverty, create decent jobs, and build an inclusive society, in line with SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities) through inclusive and transformative policies.

In the Government Programme 2025–2029, the commitment of the Government to the people of Mauritius is to build a fair, inclusive, and sustainable economy based on merit and opportunity for all. Our 2025/26 Budget, themed *“From Abyss to Prosperity: Rebuilding the Bridge to the Future,”* supports this vision through three main pillars: Economic Renewal, A New Social Order, and Fiscal Consolidation.

Poverty Eradication (SDG 1)

Mauritius has a strong record of targeted social protection and poverty reduction. The Poverty Eradication and Social Integration Programme (2016–2017) adopted a multidimensional approach — improving access to decent housing, education, skills

development, and healthcare for vulnerable households. Moreover, successive national budgets have since introduced transformative measures such as the National Minimum Wage, Negative Income Tax Scheme, and a Monthly Subsistence Allowance to guarantee basic income security for all citizens.

Our second Voluntary National Review, which we presented in July 2024, highlights that social protection coverage expanded from around 20 in 2021 to 31 percent in 2024, reflecting major progress in reaching those most in need. Through the Social Register of Mauritius, assistance now targets vulnerable families, people with disabilities, and communities in Rodrigues, Agalega, and other outer islands. In the 2025/26 budget, Rs 90 billion are being directed toward social inclusion and protection — demonstrating that even as Mauritius strengthens fiscal sustainability, poverty eradication remains at the core of its development agenda.

Decent Work and Economic Empowerment (SDG 8):

Mauritius continues to advance a people-centred growth model with employment creation, productivity, and social justice at its core. Our VNR 2024 confirms that unemployment has declined while female labour force participation and youth employability have improved through targeted skilling programmes and entrepreneurship support. The Government is investing in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, the blue and green economies, and innovation-driven sectors that create sustainable, high-value jobs.

The minimum wage policy and collective bargaining mechanisms have enhanced income equality and improved working conditions, while reskilling and training programmes ensure that the workforce is future-ready. Our emphasis on lifelong learning and women's economic empowerment reinforces progress toward inclusive, productive, and decent work for all.

Social Inclusion and Equity (SDG 10):

Social inclusion is at the heart of the national mission and the “Leave No One Behind” commitment under the 2030 Agenda. Our country has maintained universal access to free education, healthcare, and basic utilities, while increasing investments in digital inclusion and social housing to reduce inequalities.

Through the Disability Empowerment Unit, the Government has enhanced allowances, improved workplace accessibility, and strengthened employment incentives for persons with disabilities. Programmes such as the e-Social Security System, free public transport for students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and entrepreneurship support for women and youth demonstrate Mauritius' inclusive, rights-based approach to development.

The budget 2025/26 highlights the creation of a Climate Finance Unit and investments in resilient infrastructure, which yield strong social dividends — safeguarding livelihoods, promoting green jobs, and reducing vulnerability to disasters, particularly among low-income groups.

Mr. President,

We cannot reduce poverty without creating jobs. We cannot sustain jobs without inclusion. We cannot achieve inclusion without strong social protection and dignity.

All this is being put into practice in Mauritius through the Government Programme and Budget priorities. We have committed a fair share of the national budget to that objective. We need to go beyond our domestic commitment to build for the future.

This is our national call. This is a call that resonates for all SIDS.

We need the sustained support of the international community through predictable, accessible, and concessional financing for social development and resilience.

This Summit can be a turning point, and lead to that world where poverty nears elimination. Where all hold a decent job. Where social inclusion is the foundation of our collective future.

Mauritius will contribute to that realization, by example. By sharing experiences, and working hand in hand with all partners: governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and academia — to make this shared vision a reality.

Inequality is not destiny. The path to a more just and inclusive society is a matter of collective engagement and political will.

30 years after our first Summit, it is time to tread that path.

Thank you.