22nd meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

ADDRESS BY

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- Monsieur le Président de la séance,
- Madame la Secrétaire Exécutive de la Convention cadre des Nations-Unies sur le changement climatique,
- Mesdames et messieurs les chefs de délégations,
- Distingués délégués,
- Mesdames et messieurs,

C'est un grand honneur pour moi de m'adresser à cette prestigieuse assemblée. Permettez-moi, tout d'abord, au nom de ma délégation et en mon nom personnel, d'exprimer ma profonde gratitude au gouvernement du royaume du Maroc pour l'accueil très chaleureux dont nous avons fait l'objet dès notre arrivée dans cette très belle ville de Marrakech. Nous sommes réunis dans un cadre très propice pour discuter d'un sujet primordial : La sauvegarde de notre planète et des générations futures. Nous nous retrouvons, de nouveau à Marrakech, après 15 ans. Nous avons effectué depuis, un long parcours avec du progrès, certes encourageant, mais aussi marqué par la dégradation accélérée de notre climat qui nécessite impérativement des actions collectives et urgentes pour faire face aux défis. Monsieur le président, la République de Maurice vous accorde son soutien indéfectible pour qu'ensemble nous puissions atteindre les objectifs de la COP 22.

Monsieur le Président,

Permettez-moi de continuer en anglais.

The Republic of Mauritius wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered by Maldives on behalf of the '*Alliance of Small Island States'* (AOSIS), by Mali on behalf of the '*Africa Group'*, and by Thailand on behalf of '*Group 77 and China'*.

Mr. President,

Climate Change is not only a global threat but a real danger for vulnerable nations such as Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and countries in Africa. All the climate indicators have turned red and are showing signs of worsening. Despite their negligible contributions towards global warming, vulnerable countries like ours are among the most regular victims of climate change impacts. For instance, you would recall that a few weeks ago, we all witnessed the chaos and devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew in the Caribbean regions. I seize this opportunity to convey, on behalf of the government and people of Mauritius, our profound solidarity to the people of Haiti. Such extreme climatic event is yet another reminder to all of us here on the urgency to act now. Small countries like ours are so much at risk that we may, within a short span of time, lose all of our hard-earned development due to extreme climatic events.

I would like to remind you that according to the 2016 *World Risk Report*, Mauritius is ranked 13th on the list of countries at high risk of becoming the victim of a disaster resulting from an extreme climatic event. Air temperature in my country has already increased by up to 1.1 degree Celsius over the last few decades while sea level is rising at an accelerated rate of 5.6 mm per year. In both cases, these figures exceed the global

averages. A reduction of 8% in the annual precipitation has also been observed over the last 50 years. The width of our beaches, on which a large chunk of our economy depends, has reduced by some 10 metres over the last 8 years. These observed climatic changes are also having serious repercussions not only on water, agriculture and fisheries, but also with respect to livelihood of our vulnerable communities. Projections for Mauritius are even bleaker. It is projected that water supply by 2030 may not be sufficient to satisfy projected demand, while agricultural production may decline by as much as 30%.

Mr. President,

In light of the above, we have reacted very promptly by mobilizing a considerable amount of resources to build our resilience. According to the Public Expenditure Environment Review report released by the UNDP in March this year, Mauritius is investing more than 2% of its GDP annually on climate change measures, that is, roughly USD 230 million. The amount invested has been rising over the last years. It is sad to observe that funds which could otherwise have been used in addressing poverty alleviation and improving quality of life are instead being injected to address climate change.

This year, our national budget has also provided for a series of measures in the fields of renewable energy, sustainable transport, smart agriculture, ocean economy and effective water resource management. These announced measures would no doubt contribute profusely to both aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

As regards the renewable energy sector, provisions for investment in solar photo voltaic systems of up to 15 megawatt and production of electricity through ocean waves and offshore wind are being considered. Furthermore, government is also supporting a Deep Ocean Water Application Air-Conditioning system project which is an innovative low-carbon technology that lowers building cooling costs. This process would help to reduce some 13 megawatt power which amount to an annual reduction of around 40,000 tonnes of CO_2 emissions.

In order to optimize on the decreasing rainfall trend and more frequent intense rainfall occurring in a short lapse of time, Mauritius is investing massively in the construction of new dams to sustain demand. These measures are quite bold but may not be sufficient against climate change. However, we still require the support of the international community and means of implementation to achieve the adaptation and mitigation objectives spelt out in our *Nationally Determined Contributions*.

In view to enhance resilience in our region my government is willing to engage with our partners on constructive consultation for concrete actions. We are working closely with neighboring countries in the Indian Ocean region as well as in Africa to share our good practices and lessons learnt on issues such as vulnerability reduction and adaptation. In that context, Mauritius had the opportunity to host an African Ministerial Conference on Ocean Economy and Climate Change in September this year. The conference highlighted the importance of oceans for small islands states and coastal countries of Africa which heavily rely on their oceans to feed their people and on how this valuable asset is being threatened by the impacts of climate change. One of the key outcomes of the conference was

that we need to include oceans and coastal areas among the priority targets in our *Nationally Determined Contributions*, in particular actions designed to foster the resilience of oceans and coastal areas as well as favour a climate-smart ocean economy.

Additionally, Mauritius will also host the ***6th session of the Africa Regional Platform and the 5th High Level meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction*** from the 22nd to 25th November 2016. It will allow countries of Africa to develop a common position in view of the forthcoming Global platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Cancun next year. It will be a great pleasure to welcome our brothers and sisters from Africa in our small island on this occasion.

Mr. President,

SIDS as well as countries of Africa, in spite of their vulnerable nature, they have always demonstrated leadership when it comes to finding global solutions to address climate change. You will recall that Mauritius was among the first countries to ratify the Paris Agreement on April 22. However, to keep moving forward we will require technical and financial support of the international community and development partners to pursue the adaptation and mitigation goals set in our *Nationally Determined Contributions*.

As much as we would all agree on the urgent need for mobilization of financial resources to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts, the fact is that we also have to face rigid bureaucratic procedures to access climate finance schemes which are delaying the

implementation of urgently needed adaptation and mitigation measures. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to wait any longer, as each passing day is putting our people's lives in danger.

I believe that the same determination and commitment which prevailed at the COP 21 should continue to be the driving force for the implementation of provisions of the Paris decisions and the agreement. We need to urgently translate into reality the pledges made by parties. We should by all means endeavor to achieve this objective.

Mr. President,

It is my ardent wish that the pledges made in the context of the Paris Agreement are effectively implemented. I believe that vulnerable countries party need to have facilitated access to financial resources in order to enhance resilience. Developed countries party should consequently upscale their financing to the tune, of at least, 100 billion USD by the year 2020. But as at date, we are unfortunately very far from the announced pledges.

Allow me to conclude by quoting Benjamin Franklin. I quote: *"Well done is better than well said"*, end of quote. Our focus must now be shifted towards implementation of our pledges and commitments.

On this note, I wish to thank you all for your kind attention.