



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR SATCAM BOOLELL
AMBASSADOR OF MAURITIUS TO THE HOLY SEE***

24 April 1997

Mr Ambassador,

I offer you a warm welcome as you present the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mauritius to the Holy See. The sentiments which you have expressed are deeply appreciated, as well as the good wishes which you have brought from His Excellency President Cassam Uteem and the Government. I gladly reciprocate with the assurance of my prayers for the well-being of the people of your country.

You have kindly referred to the cordial relations existing between Mauritius and the Holy See, and I am confident that your mission will strengthen the bonds which unite us in the pursuit of the progress of the human family. With profound respect for different cultures and civilizations, the Church seeks to promote understanding and foster effective solidarity between peoples and nations. She does so above all by contributing to the formation and development of the human spirit, and by striving to enkindle in people a zeal to work selflessly and responsibly for the common good.

Each nation has its own specific contribution to make in building up and strengthening a civilization of peace. Living at one of the crossroads of the world, Mauritians embody values and traditions of both East and West, and they have admirably shown that people of different races and cultures can indeed live together peacefully and productively. The Catholics of Mauritius too play an active role in the life of your nation. Inspired by the dynamism of their faith, a dynamism which I was privileged to witness at first hand seven years ago when Divine Providence enabled me to visit your country, they are extensively involved in education and in charitable services on behalf of the

needy. In all her activities, the Church seeks to promote understanding and harmony among different ethnic and religious groups, convinced that only peace and cooperation can bring the development and progress for which people yearn.

This is also the motivation behind the Church's presence in the international community, where her activity is aimed at fostering dialogue between nations in order to bring about true and lasting peace in the world. Steadfast commitment to integral human development remains an essential element of this peace, for there can be peace only when everyone has a just share in the benefits of progress. There is an intrinsic connection between development and respect for human dignity and human rights. Development in fact cannot be limited solely to the material sphere but must be centred on the genuine fulfilment of the person. An economic system that would turn people into mere means of production and profit could never satisfy their deepest aspirations for a better life. Here we see that there is a moral dimension to development, which requires that absolute respect be given to all the demands that derive from the order of truth and good proper to the human person (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 33).

Moreover, the legitimate development to which every country aspires cannot be pursued irresponsibly, at the cost of the natural environment. Entire regions of the globe are threatened by excessive exploitation of natural resources and by inadequately controlled pollution. Nations and individuals have a moral duty to protect the common patrimony of animal and plant life, and to avoid contaminating land, sea and air. Recalling the great beauty of your own Island nation, I express the hope that the international community as a whole will implement without delay the policies needed in order to ensure that the legacy of a healthy natural environment is handed on to future generations.

Mr Ambassador, at the beginning of your mission as Representative of your country to the Holy See I offer you my good wishes and assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Expressing once more my esteem for the people of Mauritius, I invoke abundant divine blessings upon Your Excellency and the entire nation.

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