

The Government of Mauritius has taken note of the statement made to the UK Parliament on 16 November 2016 by the UK Government concerning decisions it has purportedly taken to the effect that:

(a) the Chagossian community will not be allowed to resettle in the Chagos Archipelago;

(b) a £40 million package will be funded over the next 10 years by the UK Government to support improvements to the livelihoods of the Chagossians; and

(c) the US presence in the Chagos Archipelago under current arrangements with the UK will continue until 2036.

The Government of Mauritius reaffirms that the Chagos Archipelago has always formed and continues to form an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and that it does not recognise the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

The Government of Mauritius wishes to reiterate that it does not also recognise the legality of the actions that the UK has purported, or is purporting, to take in respect of the Chagos Archipelago as they are in breach of international law. This includes, but is not limited to, the unilateral decisions purportedly taken by the UK Government with regard to resettlement in the Chagos Archipelago and the continuation of the UK-US agreement in respect of the Chagos Archipelago until 2036.

The Government of Mauritius considers that the UK has acted in blatant breach of the letter and spirit of the Award delivered on 18 March 2015 in the case brought by Mauritius against the UK under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, inasmuch as the UK has failed to fully involve Mauritius, as required by the Award, in the renewed use, until 2036, of the Chagos Archipelago for the purposes for which it is currently being used.

The Government of Mauritius notes with concern that the fact that the statement is completely silent both on the discussions that were intended to take place between Mauritius and the UK on the completion of the process of decolonisation and on sovereignty, as agreed in New York last September and the clear obligations of the UK under the UNCLOS Award is very revealing of the UK Government’s approach to the rights of Mauritius and the plight of Mauritians of Chagossian origin.

The Government of Mauritius protests strongly against the unilateral decision of the UK Government aimed at denying Mauritian citizens of Chagossian origin their legitimate right of return to the Chagos Archipelago.

The Government of Mauritius also reiterates that the denial of the right of Mauritians in general, and those of Chagossian origin in particular, to settle in the Chagos Archipelago is a manifest breach of international law and outrageously flouts their human rights.

While any financial assistance could provide some relief to Mauritians of Chagossian origin, no amount of money and no public apology by the UK Government can make

lawful what is unlawful, or dilute the rights of Mauritius under international law and as reflected in the various resolutions of the United Nations. The Government of Mauritius remains fully sensitive to the plight of Mauritians of Chagossian origin and supports their relentless struggle to remove all obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights.

The Government of Mauritius will relentlessly pursue its initiatives in conformity with international law to complete the decolonisation of Mauritius, thereby enabling Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

In light of the above, and in view of the purported unilateral actions of the UK, Mauritius would be fully justified in taking forward the completion of the process of decolonisation, which is now on the agenda of the current session of the UN General Assembly, with a view to putting the matter before the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.