14th Francophonie Summit in Kinshasa
Dr Ramgoolam highlights the threat of maritime piracy

Mauritius is taking steps to start trial of a first batch of captured pirates and is contributing actively to all international initiatives to deal with the issue of maritime piracy and the threat it represents to human security and trade, the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, said in his address at the Fourteenth Conference of Heads of State and Government of French-speaking countries held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The Prime Minister was, from 12 to 20 October 2012, on a three-leg mission which took him to the Democratic Republic of Congo, France and the United Kingdom.

Among other issues, the Kinshasha Summit also surveyed the peace and security situation in various parts of the Francophonie world, particularly Guinea Bissau, Madagascar and Mali. During discussions on Madagascar, Dr Ramgoolam intervened to appeal to both parties to the dispute to find a workable solution in the higher interests of the Malagasy people and in the spirit prescribed by the SADC-negotiated Roadmap.

The main theme of the Summit was “Francophonie, enjeux environnementaux et économiques face à la gouvernance mondiale”. The Summit also discussed other themes of topical relevance to Mauritius, namely “Gouvernance Démocratique et Droits de l’Homme”; “Langue Française, Diversité Culturelle et Education”;
and “L’Afrique dans la Francophonie et dans la Gouvernance Mondiale”.

At the Summit, there were calls for “La Francophonie Economique” to prevail and to use French as a language of commerce, business and trade in all international negotiations. The Summit examined and discussed several other issues, including challenges regarding poverty alleviation, the Millennium Development Goals, ways and means to financially support the development of greener economies in line with Rio+20 Declaration, and the development of national strategic plans for the preservation of environmental resources.

During the Summit, the Prime Minister had meetings on bilateral issues with a number of important personalities, including French President François Hollande; the President of Gabon, Mr Ali Bongo Odimba; the newly-elected President of Tunisia, Mr Moncef Marzouki; the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr Stephen Harper; the President of Guinea, Mr Alpha Condé; and the President of the Republic of Congo, Mr Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

In UK

In London, the Prime Minister, in the presence of Professor Philippe Sands, Q.C. and the Solicitor General, took note of progress made in the collaboration between our London legal team and the lawyers representing Mr Olivier Bancoult in the case of the Judicial Review lodged by the latter in the Administrative Court in London regarding some specific questions relevant and common to the Marine Protected Area Arbitration case and the Bancoult Judicial Review case.

In France

During his visit in France, the Prime Minister met the French Interior Minister, Mr Manuel Valls. Discussions focused on bilateral relations between the two countries, in particular, cooperation on security matters, including the renewal of an agreement signed in 2008. It was also agreed that France would continue to assist Mauritius to increase its potential in terms of security, namely through advanced training for the Police Force.
6th Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention
Prime Minister Asks for Change of Focus, Oriented Towards the Youth

The three-day Convention, hosted by Mauritius from 26 to 28 October 2012 and organised by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in collaboration with the Indian High Commission, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, and the Global Organisation for People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), focused on the theme Shared Roots, Common Destiny. It was attended by over 800 delegates from South Africa, Reunion Island, the US, the UK, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India and Mauritius.

In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister asked for a change of focus of the PBD oriented towards the youth to ‘whom the future belongs and who represent our best assets’. He called for an enabling environment for a greater flow of young people from and to India. ‘With time, these flows can become a catalyst for institutional partnerships, strategic alliances and innovation. Getting the youth of both India and of the Diaspora to know each other better and to learn from each other is the foundation on which the future of PBD rests’, said Dr Ramgoolam.

The Prime Minister spoke of the historical privileged ties of friendship and fraternity between Mauritius and India, with both countries sharing the same vision on a wide range of issues. He stated that a sustainable partnership between India and the Indian Diaspora requires that the PBD matures and evolves with time on the basis of the lessons learned while retaining its core element which is reconnecting communities and generations.

For his part, the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Mr Vayalar Ravi, stated that Mauritius is a role model for all developing nations in the areas of governance, social and economic progress and is a vibrant multiracial society that celebrates the diversity of different faiths, languages and ethnic backgrounds. Mr Ravi said that India is proud of Mauritius which through the spirit of openness and democracy has found the path to economic growth and progress. ‘Our present bilateral relations are dynamic, intimate, based on mutual respect, trust and benefit’, he added.

PBD Mauritius 2012 witnessed several pre-Conventions, plenary sessions and discussions on various issues of interest and relevant to the Indian Diaspora namely...
culture, education, business, tourism, academia, science and technology, among others.

The conference ended with a valedictory address by the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Rajkeswur Purryag, on 28 October at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. Mr Purryag highlighted the relevance of the conference, particularly in establishing vibrant links and contact between people sharing profound values and common interest. He stressed the prominent place that India has in the hearts of the Mauritian people not only as the land of our forefathers but also because of the unerring support and assistance provided by India to Mauritius throughout history.

**Recommendations**

The conference led to a number of recommendations such as the setting up a PIO University in Mauritius, the extension of PIO Card facilities to Indian diasporas in Francophone countries as well as to people of Indian origin of up to the fifth and sixth generation living abroad, new models of cooperation to address several imbalances to trade, engaging youth in PBD activities as well as scholarships for Indian Diaspora youth in Indian universities. The recommendations will feature in a document that will be presented prior to the 11th edition of the main Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to be held in Kochi, Kerala, from January 7 to 9 in 2013.

**Public Sector**

**2013 PRB Report Released**

The 2013 Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report on the review of the Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Service of employees in the public sector was approved by Government and released on 9 October 2012.

Government has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations, in toto, with effect from 1 January 2013. The Report covers around 84 000 employees and 25 000 public service pensioners and is estimated to cost an overall amount of Rs 4.6 billion for its implementation.

Officers unsatisfied with the Report will be able to make representations within a given time frame. An Errors, Omissions and Clarifications Report will be released before 28 February 2013.

The 2013 PRB Report is the seventh one issued by the Bureau. The last report was published in 2008 followed by the Errors and Omissions Report in June 2009.
Health Infrastructural Projects
Regional Hospitals Equipped with Several Units

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is putting in place several measures to respond to the needs of patients for a quicker, more accessible, more quality responsive and sophisticated health care service delivery. As such, several units have been inaugurated in the different hospitals, namely a Cardiac and Intensive Care Unit at Victoria Hospital and a Chemotherapy Unit and an Accident and Emergency Unit at SSRN Hospital.

Extension of Cardiac Unit and Intensive Care Unit at Victoria Hospital

The Cardiac Unit and Intensive Care Unit at Victoria Hospital, Candos, has been extended since 19 October 2012. Implemented to the tune of some Rs 110 million, the new facility is among a series of health infrastructural projects aimed at providing better patient care to the population.

The unit has two floors. The ground floor, dedicated to the Coronary Care Unit, comprises seven beds to cater for patients with acute coronary problems. The first floor houses the Intensive Care Unit with some 11 beds. An additional Catheterization Lab, where Coronary angiography and angioplasty are performed, will be set up soon.

Chemotherapy Unit at SSRN Hospital

Another major infrastructural project is the opening of a Chemotherapy Unit at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital (SSRN) in Pamplemousses. This facility has been set up by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in association with SOLARIS, a non-governmental organisation. The Unit comprises 16 beds. To make the Unit fully operational, medical officers and nursing officers have been trained to meet the needs of cancer patients.

The philosophy behind the opening of such a unit at SSRN Hospital is to bring the chemotherapy service to the doorstep of patients who have to travel from the north to Victoria Hospital for treatment. From 1992 to 2008, there has been a substantial increase in cancer in Mauritius, and it is estimated that in the coming 20 years 3000 new cases will be diagnosed. More than 30% of cancers are preventable.

New Accident and Emergency Department at SSRN Hospital

The extension of the Accident and Emergency Department (AED) at SSRN Hospital aims to offer all services required in a modern and more conducive environment.

Estimated at a total project value of Rs 76.4 million, this first phase which is the extension of the AED will provide a wide range of services on the spot for emergencies round the clock. Dedicated rooms have been provided, namely additional services for ECG department, minor operation theatre and autoclave room. The new building has a more spacious waiting room which can accommodate some 150 patients at a time.

The new wing provides new facilities for cardio-respiratory resuscitation and doctors and nurses have been trained to carry out this delicate task. Provision has also been made for an Emergency Operation theatre where immediate surgery can be carried out, thereby reducing the risk of serious complications and even deaths. The observation room will have a full time Medical and Health Officer for monitoring patients under observation. Furthermore, the new Department is designed to respond to mass casualties at any time. In line with customer care service, trained Health Care Assistants will be permanently posted to channel and guide patients.

Works at Dr Jeetoo Hospital

The Catheterization Lab of the New Dr Jeetoo Hospital will be operational soon. At the same time, the new in-patient block has made provisions for a 6-bedded coronary care unit with a Catheterization Lab and a 23-bedded post-intensive ward.

For more quality health care service delivery
French Government Extends Rs 2.5 Billion Loan for Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project

The Government of Mauritius and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) signed on 3 October 2012 in Port Louis a loan agreement to the tune of euro 62.5 million (around Rs 2.5 billion) for the funding of the Rivière des Anguilles dam project.

The dam, with a storage capacity of 14 million cubic metres, will be set up across the Rivière des Anguilles, which is the main river within the southern catchment area of Mauritius. It will cater for some 200,000 inhabitants in that region and is intended to address the potable water supplies in the southern part of the island on a 24-hour basis up to the year 2050.

The loan has been granted at a fixed preferential interest rate of 2.9%. The signatories were the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Xavier-Luc Duval and the Ambassador of France in Mauritius, Mr Jean-François Dobelle.

The objective of the project is to harness surface water resources to ensure sufficient regulated flow to meet the present and future water demand of the southern region of the island, through the South Districts Water Supply system of the Central Water Authority. The new dam will also cater for irrigation purposes.

Currently, the Southern Districts water distribution system relies essentially on three sources, namely: groundwater from underground aquifers; surface water resources from the Rivière du Poste; and surface water resources from Mont Blanc system which comprises a river barrage on Rivière Patates, a small dam on Rivière des Galets and Fowdar springs.

In his address at the signing ceremony, VPM Duval pointed out that since the coming back of the AFD in 2006 after an absence of ten years, the agency has already provided an envelope of approximately euro 526 million to finance various projects in Mauritius.

The projects relate to support for budgetary programmes, capacity building for businesses, energy efficiency and sustainable development programmes, provision of water for irrigation in Rodrigues as well as for small planters in Mauritius, infrastructure projects such as the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road, wastewater sector and capacity building. In addition, technical assistance has been extended to several sectors of the economy.

For his part, the French Ambassador, Mr Dobelle, recalled that the signing of the loan agreement represents the firm commitment of the AFD into helping Mauritius address the challenges in the water sector for the coming years, in the wake of the recent drought situation affecting the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir.

World Habitat Day 2012

World Habitat Day was celebrated on 1st October this year. The theme for this year Many Homes, One Community stressed the vital role that decent and affordable housing plays in community stabilisation and development.

To mark the event, the Ministry of Housing and Lands organised two competitions at the primary and secondary school levels respectively, aimed at creating awareness among young people on the importance of adequate housing for everyone.

It is recalled that in Mauritius, around 88.8% of households are house owners. The percentage varies from 93% in rural areas to 83% in urban regions. In a bid to ensure affordable housing for all, Government has initiated various schemes such as grants for casting of roof slabs, serviced plots of land to lower middle income groups, building site leases, sale of ex-CHA sites to beneficiaries, integrated social housing projects and emergency houses for victims of natural calamities.

World Habitat Day, an initiative of the United Nations, is commemorated each year since 1985 on the first Monday of October. Its main objectives are to encourage reflection on the state of towns and cities and the basic right of all to adequate shelter as well as to remind the world of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat.
Certificate of Character Replaces Certificate of Morality

The Certificate of Character Act 2012, passed by the National Assembly on 17 July 2012, came into operation on 10 October 2012. Certificates of Morality are henceforth termed Certificates of Character.

Applications from the general public will be made in the same way as it is currently being done except that they should be accompanied by an application fee of Rs 100.

It is recalled that under the previous Certificate of Morality Act, persons who had been convicted of serious offences listed in the Second Schedule to the Act and including amongst others, Murder, Child Trafficking, Offences under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Dangerous Drugs Act, were not eligible to a certificate. Under the Certificate of Character Act 2012, a certificate will be issued listing out any previous conviction(s). Save for exceptional circumstances, the DPP will not issue another certificate in the name of a person within a period of 3 months following the issue of a certificate to that person.

Termination of Pregnancy
Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012 Comes into Force

The Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012 which allows the termination of pregnancy in specific cases came into operation on 15 October 2012. The implementation of this new legislation will be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

According to the Act there are four specific circumstances as laid out under the law where women will be able to terminate a pregnancy. These are:

- When the continued pregnancy will endanger the pregnant person’s life
- The termination is necessary to prevent grave and permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant person
- There is substantial risk that the continued pregnancy will result in a severe physical or mental abnormality of the foetus which will affect its viability and compatibility with life
- The pregnancy has not exceeded its 14 weeks and results from a case of rape, sexual intercourse with a female under 16 years or sexual intercourse with a specified person which has been reported to the police.

The termination of pregnancy will be allowed only in a prescribed institution which provides all necessary infrastructure in terms of Operation Theatre, recovery room, ward for admission and a stay, as well as all required equipment in relation to the Operation Theatre.

World Food Day 2012
Cooperatives, an Instrument to Fight Hunger

The Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden (SSRBG) hosted from 12 to 14 October 2012, an exhibition cum sales of agricultural products activities in the context of World Food Day 2012.

The focus this year was on “Agricultural cooperatives: key to feeding the world”, in recognition of the role cooperatives in improving food security and contributing to the eradication of hunger.

The exhibition at the SSRBG included a Salon de la Pomme de Terre, free tasting of potato dishes, alternative ways of eating potatoes and new technologies in the agricultural sector, amongst others.

World Food Day was proclaimed in 1979 by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation and has since been commemorated on 16 October each year.
The Mauritius Salt Intake Study Report 2012 was the subject of a one-day dissemination workshop held on 1st October 2012 at Domaine Les Pailles in the context of World Heart Day. The Report provides the much needed baseline data on salt intake in the Mauritian population to help develop a national strategy for decreasing salt intake in the population.

The study, conducted in mid-May 2012 concurrently with the University of Mauritius, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute from Australia and the National Public Health Institute of Finland, has revealed that the salt intake in the population is higher than is generally recommended. The overall age-sex standardised mean salt intake was estimated at 7.9 g daily, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that the level of daily salt intake be less than five grammes per day.

The study indicates that salt intake was higher among men. There is also no significant difference in salt consumption between the urban and rural regions.

According to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, reducing salt consumption in the population is considered as a ‘best-buy’ to improve health conditions of the community at large. In this respect, he says, the Ministry will develop dietary salt reduction strategies in line with the WHO recommended policies, under three main areas, namely: food production, that is the development or manufacturing of products with the lowest possible content of salt; changes in environment to ensure that consumers are able to choose the healthiest foods through appropriate labeling; and health promotion and consumer education amongst the different target groups of society.

The theme chosen for World Heart Day 2012 by the World Heart Federation was Cardiovascular Disease Prevention among Women and Children. The focus is on protecting the hearts of women and children through heart-healthy actions.
The global economy as well as challenges facing developed and developing countries were key issues which were highlighted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, on 1st October 2012 at the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In his statement, Dr Boolell said that the world is living through unprecedented times and the challenges of an economic crisis now loom large. All developed and developing nations face growing uncertainties about economic prospects, he observed, adding that serious concerns about the global economy arise just after global prosperity had reached heights never reached before.

According to the Minister, countries which may be more seriously affected by the crisis are those that had the least responsibility for their cause, in particular developing countries faced with challenges ranging from climate change to youth unemployment.

It is imperative that the UN General Assembly play a crucial role in the debate for globally coordinated solutions, emphasised Dr Boolell. He also welcomed the reaffirmation of the mandate of UNCTAD at Doha. UNCTAD must continue to serve as the focal point of the UN system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues, he said.

The Minister underlined the importance of greater regional cooperation and the need for pooling resources and coordinating policies. He appreciated the recognition at Rio+20 that Small Island Developing States present a special case and welcomed the appointment of the High-Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda.

Dr Boolell urged the international community to support the full implementation of the road map in Madagascar and provide the Transition Government with the means to ensure a speedy return to constitutional rule and democracy.

On the question of rule of law, the Minister said that it must be supported at national and international levels, and that nations, especially small ones, must have avenues to peacefully resolve disputes with other States. The Minister recalled that the United Kingdom excised part of Mauritian territory prior to independence and had refused to enter into talks in good faith over that dispute, while keeping the issue out of the International Court of Justice. The decolonisation of Africa has not been completed, said Minister Boolell.
Technology
Mauritius and India Sign Contract Agreement on e-Prison Project

A contract agreement relating to the e-Prison project to be implemented at the Mauritius Prison Services was signed on 5 October 2012 at the Prime Minister’s Office in Port Louis between the Commissioner of Prisons and the Director of the National Informatics Centre Services Inc (NICSI), India.

The e-Prison project, at an estimated cost of Rs 5 million, aims to create a centralised database of all prisoners’ records including conviction and medical details. It will have the following features: biometric authentication of each prisoner, computation of sentence, controlled registration of inmates and a centralised query based system for prisoners. Besides keeping a track of earnings paid to detainees, the system will monitor prisoners on Parole and will generate Management Information System reports.

The contract agreement is as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Mauritius and the NICSI of India aiming at developing cooperation in IT between the two parties which was signed in March 2010.

Government gave its approval in September 2012 for the implementation of the project through the NICSI which will be responsible for the software application customisation, development, installation, training and handholding. The project duration will be around 26 weeks.

It is recalled that the Prison Services are undergoing major reforms, namely the construction of the Melrose Prison with a capacity of 780 detainees; the rehabilitation of detainees and capacity building; the finalisation of a 10-year strategic plan for the MPS to make it more consistent with international norms and the renewal of a legislative framework.

Judiciary
Mauritius and France Sign Agreement on Judicial Training

The Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies (IJS) and l’Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature Française (ENM) signed on 1st October 2012 in Port Louis a cooperation agreement to promote the exchange of expertise and experiences in various fields of the judiciary. The agreement was signed in the presence of the Attorney General, Mr Yatin Varma, the Chief Justice, Mr Bernard Sik Yuen, and other personalities from the judiciary.

The agreement covers exchange programs for magistrates under training or internship in the jurisdiction where ULS and the ENM are proposing to host annual workshops for judges and future judges of both countries, and exchange programs of stakeholders/experts to ensure teaching assignments within their respective training, particularly in comparative studies on legislation, litigation and the development of best practices.

It also provides for the participation of judges and future judges at international conferences, seminars and workshops organised by either country.

Established under the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Act 2011, the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies is entrusted with the responsibility, among others, to ensure the continuous training and professional development of judicial and legal officers, law practitioners, as well as police and public officers operating on the legal scene.