Prime Minister in France
Reviving strong ties

The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, was on official visit from 31 August to 5 September 2010 in Paris, France, on invitation of the French President, Mr Nicolas Sarkozy, for the ceremony of the Revival of the Flame at Arc de Triomphe.

Dr Ramgoolam was received by President Sarkozy at the Elysée on 31 August 2010. Discussions centred on bilateral issues, namely the recent signature of the framework agreement pertaining to the economic, environmental and scientific co-management of Tromelin Island, the assumption by Mauritius of the chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Commission and a possible visit of the Mauritian Prime Minister to Reunion Island to reinforce economic and trade cooperation ties between the two islands.

The growing menace of piracy for Small Island States of the Indian Ocean, the Mauritian standpoint as regards Madagascar and the proposal to establish a permanent mediation office at the seat of the Mauritian embassy in Madagascar, the contribution of the Agence Française de Développement to local development through the
signature of a financing agreement of 125 million euros in 2010 were among other issues raised. The extension of French assistance to the fields of penitentiary services and security was also discussed.

After the meeting with President Sarkozy, the Prime Minister participated in the ceremony of the Revival of the Flame at Arc de Triomphe to mark the bicentenary of the battle of Grand Port. Mauritians living in France were also present to commemorate that special occasion.

On 1st September, Dr Ramgoolam had a working session with the French Prime Minister, Mr François Fillon, at Matignon. Topics raised included the consolidation of the trade and economic ties with Reunion Island, joint Franco-Mauritian tourism promotion, enhanced cooperation in the health, tertiary education and sustainable development sectors, as well as enhanced collaboration in major infrastructural projects.

France intends to provide its support and know-how to Mauritius for the setting up of a management centre for natural disasters. Moreover, France will deepen cultural cooperation with Mauritius through the Institut Français de Maurice, and by providing support in the setting up of a philharmonic orchestra and a national art gallery.

During his visit, the Prime Minister also met former French Finance Minister Alain Madelin, and Professor Benhamou of the Délégation Interministérielle à l’Education Numérique en Afrique.

**INFOTECH 2010 draws record crowd**

According to the National Computer Board (NCB), a record number of over 70 000 people visited the 17th edition of Infotech, surpassing the previous record of about 65 000 registered at last year’s edition.

From 26 to 29 August, thousands of visitors converged to the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre in Pailles where the Information and Communication Technology event. Infotech, was being held. Organised anually by the NCB, Infotech aims at creating awareness on emerging technologies and providing business opportunities in the ICT sector.

The theme for this year’s edition was Intelligent Mauritius, in line with government’s programme to convert Mauritius into a regional ICT hub with full broadband islandwide connectivity and to narrow the digital divide.

The new feature of Infotech 2010 was the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) space dedicated to showcase ICT tools, products and services for SMEs. Entrepreneurs were provided information on potential applications of ICT for effective business solutions. Infotech 2010 also included the usual ICT exhibition and shopping zone with on display a wide array of products and services, namely 3D-Notebook, home theatres, flat screens, 3D TV, latest handsets and mobile software, multimedia tablets, as well as website creation. Exhibitors also organised demos to enable visitors to appreciate the features and understand the functionalities of their products.

In addition, Infotech 2010 hosted the ICT Career Fair intended to sensitize on career opportunities in ICT and Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) sectors. The Fair offered a meeting platform between jobseekers in the ICT sector and ICT companies presently recruiting staff. Some 13 companies participated in the fair with presentations and conferences on job prospects and responsibilities. A BPO Demo Space was also on site with live demonstrations to showcase BPO operations.
**Euro Zone Crisis**

**Rs 12 billion Resilience Programme for local economy**

In the face of the Euro zone crisis affecting the global economy, a Rs 12 billion restructuring package for long-term resilience was presented on 13 August 2010 by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Pravind Jugnauth. The programme embodies some 100 policy measures to boost vulnerable strategic sectors of the Mauritian economy.

**Withstanding the current crisis**

The new package entitled “Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme” (ERCP) follows the Additional Stimulus Package (ASP) presented in December 2008 and will last till December 2011. It will be implemented with the participation of industries, enterprises, banks and non-bank financial institutions and will have as central thrust to support enterprises and industries to withstand the current crisis and prepare them for global competitiveness and long-term resilience.

The ERCP will comprise measures to foster restructuring and deleveraging of viable enterprises and allow firms to usher in a new business culture by diversifying their exports into non-euro based markets as well as providing short-term “breathing space”, especially cash flow problems and financing requirements to firms.

**Package to cover seven pillars**

Total financial resources mobilised under the new package will comprise funding as follows: Rs2 billion from government, Rs2 billion from acceleration of projects in the Public Sector Investment Programme, Rs3 billion from public sector institutions including Rs2 billion from the Bank of Mauritius, and Rs5 billion from the private sector.

Seven pillars will be covered by the package. They are mainly: industry and enterprise restructuring; deleveraging and restructuring of the tourism sector; supporting the creation of new financing instruments; fast re-skilling and re-employment of retrenched workers, with focus on retrenched women workers, acceleration of public infrastructure projects, protecting consumers and modernising regulations to improve competitiveness.

**Main Measures**

**Industry and Enterprise restructuring**

- Setting up of a Restructuring and Competitiveness package, replacing the Mechanism for Transitional Support to the Private Sector (MTSP), to ensure that viable firms are more efficient, productive and competitive

- Creation of a new Private Equity Fund with a seed capital of Rs 300 million with the contribution of the Government and Banking sector

- Government to set aside Rs 500 million from the Save Jobs Recovery (SJR) Fund to finance various supports under the ERCP
Introduction of two new instruments under Leasing for Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) to support SMEs

**Support to SMEs**

- Contribution of SMEs to additional financing reduced from 25 percent to 5 percent and banks to restructure existing debt and reduce debt service of SMEs to ensure their viability
- Increase in Government’s guarantee of bank’s fresh financing from 50 percent to 75 percent
- Development Bank of Mauritius to write off for some 1,140 small businesses

**Tourism**

- Presentation of a Blueprint to transform Mauritius into a Duty-Free Island and tap fully visitors from China, India and Russia and develop new tourism products
- Diversifying into non-euro markets to attract more tourists and investment of Rs 500 million to promote Mauritius as a high end tourist destination
- Increased seat capacity on all Air Mauritius routes for the year 2010/2011

**Rodrigues**

- Extension of the subsidy on air travel to Rodrigues to the end of December 2011
- Blueprint for Duty-Free island will include Rodrigues

**Sugar Industry**

- Reduction of the Global Cess over a period of two years starting in 2010
- Additional concessionary funding of not more than Rs 1.5 billion by the Bank of Mauritius so that small and medium planters receive at least 80 percent of the estimated net MSS price as from their first sugar consignment
- Funds amounting to Rs 100 million in the factory closure planters Funds to be used to modernise the small and medium planter sector and regroup planters
- Some 68 million euros to be invested by sugar entities to ensure that employees having accepted offers of the Voluntary Retirement Schemes receive their plots of land by mid 2013

**Re-deployment of Retrenched Workers**

- Setting up of a Support Unit for Re-employment of Employees (SURE) to monitor retrenchment and support workers from the time they are laid-off till they find employment
US – AFRICA
9th AGOA Forum Focuses on New Strategies for a Changing World

Mauritius participated in the 9th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum held on 2 and 3 August 2010 in Washington DC, United States. The focus was on new strategies for a changing world. The Mauritian delegation was headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell.

The Forum was preceded by a meeting of the African Ministerial Consultative Group on 1st August. The purpose was to articulate the position of Sub-Saharan Africa on the various items for discussion at the Forum.

Plea to extend AGOA and Third Country Fabric derogation

For Mauritius and other AGOA beneficiaries, there were important issues that had to be addressed, in particular the timeframe of both AGOA, which is set to expire in 2015, and the Third Country Fabric derogation, which is expected to come to an end in 2012.

As such, a strong plea was made to the US to extend AGOA and the Third Country Fabric derogation beyond the set termination dates. Mauritius strongly negotiated for the alignment of the validity periods of the Third Country Fabric derogation with that of the AGOA. Discussions during the Forum focused, amongst others, on New Strategies to Expand the US-Sub Saharan Africa Trade; Supporting US Trade and Investment in Africa; Strategies for Improving AGOA Business Opportunities; and, Unlocking Productivity and Attracting Investment.

In a report submitted to US authorities, African Ministers also had the opportunity to put across their concern that extending AGOA benefits to highly competitive suppliers of garments would adversely affect the apparel industry in Africa. They proposed that the US should adopt an Earned Import Allowance Programme whereby US importers would have the right to import garments duty free from LDCs outside Africa equivalent to the volume of garments imported from Africa.

Framework for partnership

African Ministers adopted a decision based on a proposal from Mauritius to simplify and improve the rules of origin requirement for canned tuna. Other proposals were made at the Forum namely:

- AGOA should be recognised as a framework for partnership and therefore be extended on a long-term, sustained and predictable basis
- Priority agriculture products of export interest to African countries which are currently excluded from AGOA should be accorded duty free and quota free status
- The US should fast-track the approval process for agriculture products from Africa

Periodic US-Africa Summit to pave way for structured dialogue

Minister Boolell intervened as a panellist on the theme “New Strategies for Improving AGOA Business Opportunities”. The Mauritian representative proposed the holding of a periodic US Africa Summit for a structured and fruitful dialogue at the highest political level to promote US-Africa political, economic and trade relations.

African Ministers welcomed the proposal and agreed to pursue the matter at the level of the African Union.

About AGOA

The African Growth and Opportunity Act was signed into law on 18 May 2000 as Title 1 of The Trade and Development Act of 2000. The Act offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets.
Workshop on DNA Evidence in the Criminal Justice System

A Workshop on DNA Evidence in the Criminal Justice System was held on 6 August at La Cannelle, Domaine les Pailles. Judge Arthur Tompkins from Hamilton, New Zealand, who is a District Court Judge and member of the Interpol DNA Monitoring Expert Group, was the resource person for the workshop. The topics covered were namely: Forensic DNA, Forensic DNA Evidence in the Courtroom, DNA Databanks- A Survey of global legislative trends and related issues and Future Issues in Forensic DNA.

“The holding of the Workshop on DNA Evidence in the Criminal Justice System is in line with Government’s vision to undertake a bold scientific approach to criminal investigation”, said the Attorney General, Mr. Yatin Varma, at the opening ceremony.

The Workshop, organised by the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), is also in line with recommendations made by the Interpol DNA Monitoring Expert Group. Participants included members of the Judiciary, the Law Society, the Law Reform Commission, police officers concerned with criminal investigations and technicians of the FSL.

Mrs. G.M. Madhub-Dassyne, Ag. Director of the FSL, for her part said that the FSL was in the process of completing the DNA Population Statistical Database and with these confirmed statistics, the police will be able to submit DNA evidence in court. The FSL has been dedicating a significant effort in educating and training the police in regard to the process, the capabilities and the limitations of forensic DNA analysis.

This Workshop provided an opportunity to members of the Judiciary to appreciate the process, the capabilities and the limitations of forensic DNA analysis, and be able to understand the interpretation of DNA evidence in the administration of justice so that everyone is subjected to a fair trial.

The DNA testing facilities at the Mauritius Forensic Science Laboratory in casework are fully operational since 2007. The DNA section of the laboratory is the newest and most supported in terms of equipments, training plans, standard operating procedures and general quality assurance.

The DNA Testing facilities at the FSL have been fully tested and validated. But the Power of this new Forensic Investigation tool lies in the ability to instantly search the Database of known criminals against DNA Profiles obtained from biological material left on the Scene of Crime. Now with the necessary legal framework, the FSL is currently developing the DNA Population Database for the statistical interpretation of DNA evidence, thus adding weight to it, and then we will be building the DNA Database of serious offenders and all Mauritians with a criminal record as well as setting up a DNA database for unidentified and missing persons as provided for in the DNA Identification Act 2009.

The laboratory is equipped to analyse DNA from a range of sources including blood, semen, saliva, hair roots, vaginal cells, mouth swabs and bones. To date, DNA testing has been carried out on 347 cases to include cases of murder, rape, paternity testing, larceny and dead bodies’ identification.
Renewable Energy
Feasibility Study on Electricity Generation from Coconut Oil and Waste Vegetable Oil

The Mauritius Research Council (MRC), in collaboration with the Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC), is embarking on the second phase of the project on the ‘Use of coconut oil and waste vegetable oil as substitutes to diesel’ which is in line with the Maurice Ile Durable vision to promote sustainable development in Mauritius and Agalega. To that effect, a feasibility study will be conducted as from September on a generator of 60 KVA at Ebène pumping station, which will be run on coconut oil, diesel and waste vegetable oil for a period of seven weeks.

During the course of the study, the Mauritius Standards Bureau will assess the generator’s performance with the new form of energy and with regard to the engine wear and tear through lube oil analysis. Emission levels will be measured by the University of Mauritius while the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping will measure parameters such as opacity, smoke density and temperature of exhaust gases. Technical staff of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development and the University of Mauritius will also be trained on engine conversion and generator maintenance.

The long term objectives of the project are to transform Agalega into a sustainable island with regards to its energy requirement by significantly reducing its use of imported fossil fuel. It would also propose environmentally friendly solutions for the disposal of waste vegetable oil used by large consumers including hotels, fast food chains and hospitals in Mauritius, eventually leading to a reduction in the use of imported fossil fuel.

Agalega would benefit from the implementation of the project both environmentally and socio-economically. Reduction in diesel import will entail less risk of oil-spillage during transportation of the fuel from Mauritius to Agalega. It will also help offset about 33 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually and reduce the threat to quality of underground water since coconut oil is cleaner, renewable and biodegradable. It is estimated that every year about 15 000 litres of coconut oil will be available for fuel in Agalega, hence saving about 8.3% of costs of diesel imports.

Phase I of the project launched in 2007-2008 on the use of coconut oil and waste vegetable oil as biofuels for transportation has shown that coconut oil is an excellent substitute to diesel. In Mauritius, several hotels, fast food chains and hospitals are keen to use these fuel substitutes in the transportation sector and for electricity generation.

Pure coconut oil has recently been used successfully in Vanuatu, a Pacific island State, as an alternative to petroleum for automotive diesel engines.
**ICT Statistics 2009**

**Steep increase in number of internet subscribers**

The Central Statistics Office published in August 2010 the latest issue of the Economic and Social Indicators on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) statistics. The document includes indicators relating to ICT infrastructure and access, ICT usage and contribution of ICT sector to the economy.

**Internet subscribers**

The report reveals that the number of Internet subscribers has soared by 43.4%, from 199,500 in 2008 to reach 286,000 in 2009.

The steep increase results from a 70.8% rise in the number of mobile Internet subscribers to 179,000 in 2009 against 104,800 in 2008 so that it now accounts for some 62.6% share of the total Internet subscribers. Over the same period, the number of fixed Internet subscribers went up by 13% from 94,700 in 2008 to 107,000 in 2009. There were nine Internet service providers in 2009.

**Mobidensity**

Regarding mobile cellular subscriptions, the Mobidensity, that is the number of mobile cellular phones per 100 inhabitants, registered an increase of 4.7%, reaching 85 in 2009 from 81.2 in 2008. It is to be noted that the total number of mobile cellular subscribers went up by 5.2% while the number of short message service sent exceeded, for the first time, the 1 billion mark.

**ICT access**

The ICT statistics also give data collected through the continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey (CMPHS) conducted in 2006 and 2008. They show that while the percentage of households with fixed telephone dropped to 73.6% in 2008, the percentage of households owning computers and those having Internet access are up at 29.9% and 16.6% respectively. The CMPHS presented a rising trend in the use of ICT by individual with an increase in the number of people using computers and Internet.

**Contribution of ICT sector to the economy**

The Economic and Social Indicators also gives the latest figures for ICT usage in the educational sector and in business. Primary schools providing Internet access to students for study purposes rose up to 19.9% as at end of March 2009 from 6.0% in 2008. The number of secondary institutions providing Internet access to its students was up 95.7% against 93.6% in 2008. Concerning business, in 2009, the percentage of establishments having website was 48.3% compared to 43.9% in 2008, and those using Internet/Email reached 92% in 2009 against 90.4% in 2008.

In 2009, the ICT sector pursued its expansion with the operation of seven additional companies employing more than 10 persons, a 2.1% up in growth rate and a 9.9% increase in the number of employees.
### ICT Statistics 2009

#### Internet subscribers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Internet subscribers (include dialup, fixed and mobile broadband connection subscribers)</td>
<td>199 500</td>
<td>286 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Internet subscribers – fixed</td>
<td>94 700</td>
<td>107 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Internet subscribers - mobile</td>
<td>104 800</td>
<td>179 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of broadband connection subscribers</td>
<td>157 300</td>
<td>254 300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of narrowband Internet subscribers (dial-up)</td>
<td>42 191</td>
<td>31 620</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

#### Mobile cellular subscriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of mobile cellular subscribers</td>
<td>1 033 300</td>
<td>1 086 700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of calls from mobile cellular telephone (in million)</td>
<td>660.2</td>
<td>1 079.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of calls from mobile cellular telephone (in million)</td>
<td>1 350.3</td>
<td>1 564.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Short Message Service (SMS) sent (in million)</td>
<td>854.6</td>
<td>1 122.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ICT access (Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with fixed telephone</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with computer</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of households with Internet access</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of persons aged 12 years and above using computer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of persons aged 12 years and above using Internet</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Contribution of ICT sector to the economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishments in the ICT sector</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in the ICT sector</td>
<td>11 250</td>
<td>12 360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value added in the ICT sector (Rs Million)</td>
<td>12 389</td>
<td>13 929</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real growth rate</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Gross Domestic Product</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Mauritius is in the process of reviewing its air traffic services policy on the Mauritius-China route. The aim is to create more visibility on the Chinese market. This also includes the fine tuning of the destination product to make it more attractive and responsive to the specific needs of Chinese tourists.

The above information was given by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in reply to a parliamentary question on 10 August 2010.

The Prime Minister also revealed that discussions have been held between Mauritian authorities and representatives of the Hainan Airlines Company Ltd, which is the largest privately-owned air transport company and the fourth largest airline in terms of fleet size in the People’s Republic of China.

The possibility of the company operating direct flights between China and Mauritius, especially during the Chinese travelling peak seasons between October and February, was evoked. A representative of the company has shown a keen interest in the proposal and intends to visit Mauritius shortly.

Talks are moreover being held with the national air carrier, Air Mauritius, to explore the possibility of introducing direct flights to Shanghai.

Presently, there are no direct flights between Mauritius and mainland China. Air Mauritius is operating only three weekly flights on the route Mauritius - Hong Kong with the result that seat capacity during peak periods is lower than demand.

Chinese tourists, especially, from the South East Region have to fly through Hong Kong in order to travel to Mauritius. The number of Chinese tourists visiting the country annually has been around 8 000 in the past few years. This figure represents a low percentage of the potential of the Chinese market, with some 40 million Chinese tourists travelling abroad every year.

An Air Services Agreement between Mauritius and the People’s Republic of China exists since May 1995. This Agreement, inter alia, provides that each party can operate up to 14 weekly frequencies for passengers and cargo.
Environment

Workshop on Laws to Ensure Sustainability

A workshop on ‘Enforcement of Environmental Laws, organised by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development was held on 12 and 13 August at Domaine Les Pailles. The workshop is in line with Government’s efforts to promote effectiveness, efficiency and enforcement activities and laws to ensure environmental sustainability and improve environmental quality and health.

Around 50 representatives of enforcing agencies participated in the workshop which served to raise awareness on the provisions of the Environment Protection Act 2002 (EPA 2002) and on other environmental legislations pertaining to district environmental pollutants. It looked into unclear responsibilities of enforcement and overlapping functions and enhanced coordination and synergies among the agencies and authorities. Discussions also focussed on means to strengthen the existing enforcement and compliance mechanism within the EPA 2002 and other associated environmental laws.

Other issues on the agenda were environmental laws and enforcement, enforcement of common environmental offences, legislation on coastal and marine pollution, legislation on water and water pollution, as well as legislation on hazardous wastes, solid wastes and bare lands.

In his opening address, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Mr Devanand Virahsawmy, called upon the enforcing agencies and authorities to adopt an effective compliance strategy and enforcement programme which would contribute to improve environment and public health, reinforce the credibility of environmental protection efforts and the legal systems that support them and bring economic benefits to both individual facilities and to society as a whole.

To address new development challenges, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has already taken a number of initiatives such as the development of a new National Environment Policy, the development of a framework on Integrated Coastal Zone Management and on Environmentally Sensitive Areas, the implementation of a National Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme and the implementation of coastal protection and rehabilitation works.

New Building Legislation to Focus on Energy Efficiency

A half-day workshop on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Agence Française de Developpement (AFD), funded project on ‘Removal of barriers to energy efficiency and energy conservation in buildings in Mauritius’, was held on 12 August 2010 at La Cannelle, Domaine Les Pailles.

An initiative of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, the UNDP/ AFD project served as a platform for the formulation of a new Building Control Bill by the end of the year to replace the existing Building Act which dates as far back as 1919, and no longer meets the exigencies and challenges faced by the construction industry.

The project is also in line with government’s ongoing efforts to promote the efficient use and conservation of energy in buildings and will enable the implementation of energy efficiency measures. It will incorporate to the extent possible use of renewable energy in the design of building construction. Besides, it will help in developing compliance mechanisms, codes and training materials for capacity building.

Some 60 participants mainly professionals from the construction industry, engineers, architects, project development managers and consultants from across the public and private sectors attended the workshop in a bid to come out with inputs to develop the new building legislation. The law will provide the framework for the enforcement of measures relating to new building regulations and codes in all sectors of economic activities, namely industry, commerce, housing, health and education.
Industrial Relations
Commission for Conciliation and Mediation Officially Launched

The Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, which is called upon to play a pivotal role in the provision of conciliation and mediation services for the resolution of labour disputes in the public and private sectors, was officially launched on 9 August 2010 in Port Louis by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Mr Shakeel Mohamed.

On the same occasion, a manual on the functional structures of the Commission considered as a practical guide to useful application in resolving disputes was also launched.

Following the enactment of new legislations, namely the Employment Rights Act 2008 and the Employment Relations Act 2008, and their coming into effect in February 2009, the Industrial Relations Commission was replaced by the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation. All disputes, whether from the private or from the public sector, are now reported to the President of the Commission. All parties concerned are recommended to follow the relevant procedures as laid down in the Employment Relations Act before reporting a labour dispute to the Commission.

The Commission for Conciliation and Mediation is an entity operating within a legal framework whereby employers, trade unions and employees are assisted through conciliation and mediation techniques to regulate their own labour relations and resolve their disputes. It has also as main challenge to promote industrial peace and avert unnecessary labour disputes by fostering workplace cooperation and worker participation by way of social dialogue. The Commission is presently chaired by Professor Ved Prakash Torul.

Since its establishment in February 2009, the Commission has dealt with 295 labour disputes, and helped to resolve 205 labour disputes, out of which 56 are pending. Thirty-four labour disputes have been referred to the Employment Relations Tribunal.