**E-Government Project**

**Registrar-General’s Department services go online**

E-government in Mauritius has taken yet another leap forward, with the completion of the second phase of the Mauritius eRegistry Project (MeRP) of the Registrar-General’s Department (RGD). Online services at this Department are available to the public as from the end of June 2015 and henceforth the public can also submit documents for registration and retrieve registered documents online. The facility for effecting payment online will be available shortly.

A common Application Programme Interface (API) stack has also been developed to allow businesses to integrate their flows with the RGD system thus adopting a clear “Transact Once Replicate Everywhere Philosophy”.

The eRegistry Project, jointly funded by the Government and the Investment Climate Facility for Africa to the tune of around Rs 170 million, has been implemented in two phases over a period of two years. It has enabled the RGD to have an integrated system for its customers by harnessing the latest technologies and solutions that can provide integrated workflows and options for businesses, professionals and members of the public to conduct transactions with the RGD online.

The first phase pertained to the modernisation of the RGD through the implementation of the eRegistry software system whereby most of the automated tasks are being implemented and services provided through sophisticated software tools. The integrated eRegistry System comprised of the following facilities: Integrated cashier and registration module; Integrated search engine for registered document (movable); Taxation module; Reporting engine; User and security administration module; and Digitisation of Land Archive (immovable).

On the other hand, the second phase of the MeRP focused on transforming the services to electronic mode. The key objective was to provide the RGD and stakeholders an electronic dashboard through which they could perform the following tasks: eSubmission of documents; ePayment of fees; eRegistration; eSearch; and eDelivery of registered documents.
The e-Government Project

The eRegistry project is in line with the e-Government Strategy Paper 2013-2017 which rests on three main pillars: Empowering Citizens; Networked government; and Collaborating with Business. The aim is to increase the participation of citizens in decision making processes, ensure transparency and accountability in Government operations and improve the convenience of citizens and businesses in their interactions with the Authorities.

A number of measures are being implemented to boost the e-Government concept and in its bid to transform service delivery through digital self-service channels, Government is providing some 66 e-Services on the Government Portal. Major projects in the pipeline relate to e-health and e-education.

The e-Government Strategy Paper 2013-2017 is expected to thrust Mauritius in the Top 50 leading countries as measured by the UN e-Government Index by 2017 and lay the groundwork for the countries transformation into a High Income Country by 2022. Policies in the area of social media, data sharing, Open Source Software, Open Government Data are being pursued diligently coupled with the adoption of e-payment, m-payment and digital signatures for a more transparent and accountable delivery of public services.

Municipal Elections

Alliance Lepep makes clean sweep

The Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Council elections were held on 14 June 2015. The Alliance Lepep, which comprises the Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM), the Parti Mauricien Social Democrat (PMSD) and the Muvman Liberator (ML), emerged victorious capturing all the 120 seats in contest in the five municipalities.

Some 395 000 persons were called to vote in these elections. However, a high number of voters (around 65% of the total number registered) abstained.

Each of the 30 wards returned four candidates as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>No. of Wards</th>
<th>Total No. of Councillors</th>
<th>No. Of Electors</th>
<th>No. Of Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Louis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>113 720</td>
<td>38 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beau Bassin - Rose Hill</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>77 710</td>
<td>27 570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatre Bornes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58 917</td>
<td>21 528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacoas - Phoenix</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>83 389</td>
<td>31 984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curepipe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61 229</td>
<td>21 671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The new President of the Republic was elected following a motion presented at the National Assembly by Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth on 4 June 2015.

In his address, Sir Anerood stated that the election of Dr. Gurib-Fakim as President of the Republic will certainly go down in history as another landmark in his Government’s relentless pursuit to place women in their rightful place in the Republic of Mauritius.

He recalled that the recent appointment of the first woman as Speaker of the National Assembly and now the election of the first woman as President of the Republic constitute major milestones in the journey towards greater gender equality and empowerment of women in the country. The elevation of Dr Gurib-Fakim to the highest office of the State will surely give a high profile voice to women in the public sphere and in the democratic life of our country, he added.

According to the Prime Minister, Dr Gurib-Fakim is one of the leading figures in the local academia whose reputation has gone well beyond our shores. She is no doubt one of the best and brightest minds this country has produced and her impressive professional career is a perfect illustration of the triumph of hard work, courage and determination. She is a perfect role model and source of inspiration for our youth, stressed Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Hailing from the scientific community, the Prime Minister said, Dr Gurib-Fakim owes allegiance to no political party, but only to the State and to the people of this country. For him, the new President will bring to the presidency added respect and prestige along with the decades of scientific rigour and discipline, thus giving a new dimension to the function.

Dr Gurib-Fakim started her career in 1987 as Lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Mauritius. Later she served as Dean of the Faculty of Science and Pro Vice-Chancellor from 2004 to 2010. She was until recently the Managing Director of the Centre for Phytotherapy and Research and Professor of Organic Chemistry with an endowed chair at the University of Mauritius.

She has served in different capacity in numerous local, regional and international organisations as well as authored or co-edited 26 books and several book chapters. She has authored numerous scientific articles and lectured extensively across the world within the field of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

She has been elected Fellow of the Linnaean Society of London in 2007; Fellow of the Islamic Academy of Science, Jordan in 2009; Fellow of the African Science Institute in 2010 and Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences in 2013. She received the 2007 L’Oreal-UNESCO prize for Women in Science and Laureate of the National Economic and Social Council. She is recipient of the African Union Commission Award for ‘Women in Science’ for the Eastern African Region in 2009.

Dr Gurib-Fakim was elevated to the Order of the Commander of the Star and Key by the Government of Mauritius in 2008 and admitted to the Order of the Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the Government of France in 2010. In 2013, she received the Honorary DSC (Doctor Honoris Causa) from the prestigious Université Pierre Marie Curie of the Sorbonne, Paris, France. In April 2014, she was elected on the Governing Council of the African Academy of Sciences as the Regional Representative of the East African Region.

On the occasion of her swearing-in as President of the Republic, she was elevated to Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean.
THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY - SNAPSHOTS

[Series of images showing moments from the swearing-in ceremony.]
PM announces the setting up of a second cardiac surgery centre and a new cancer centre

We are setting up a second cardiac surgery centre and investing in a new cancer centre which will be equipped with state of the art equipment and logistics, announced the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, at the opening of the 5th Meeting of Ministers of Health of Small Island Developing States of the World Health Organisation (WHO) African Region which was held on 24 June 2015 at Le Meridien Hotel in Pointe aux Piments.

According to him, there is a major challenge looming ahead to keep under check the incidence of non-communicable diseases. He recalled that Mauritius has geared itself towards addressing the ills associated with non-communicable diseases. We are investing in sophisticated health facilities to respond to the increasing demand for surgery and treatment, he said.

With regards to emerging infectious diseases, the Prime Minister stressed on the importance to remain vigilant and added that it is vital that the network of surveillance against communicable disease be strengthened.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth rejoiced that maternal and child health indicators have reached levels comparable to those of developed nations while highlighting that premature morbidity and mortality associated with infections, parasitic and water-borne diseases have dramatically decreased.

For his part, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Anil Gayan, stressed on the importance to have resilient health systems in order to rapidly detect, respond to and prevent global public health threats. He expressed the wish to enlist the support of the WHO in providing expertise and guidance to enhance surveillance systems and laboratory services, build early warning and alert systems, and train health workers so that they can deal with major public health threats.

5th Meeting of Ministers of Health of SIDS

Mauritius hosted the 5th Meeting of Ministers of Health of Small Island Developing States from 24 - 26 June 2015. The meeting was attended by some 50 local and foreign participants from five member countries namely Cape Verde, Comoros, Mauritius, Sao Tome & Principe, and Seychelles. Ministers of Health of the participating countries as well as the WHO Regional Director were present.

The main objective of the meeting was to allow Member States to exchange views and experiences, and monitor achievements made towards the Health Millennium Development Goals. Other objectives include: to measure the progress made in the implementation of declarations and recommendations from the 4th SIDS meeting; to share new developments on common challenges related to health governance and health in all policies, NCDs, Human Papillomavirus and financial sustainability of health systems; and to identify new areas of collaboration and ways of strengthening SIDS networking.

Mauritius presides the Vanilla Islands Organisation

Mauritius has assumed the Presidency of the Vanilla Islands Organisation as from 10 June 2015. The Organisation, which groups the South West Indian Ocean Islands, comprising Reunion Island, the Seychelles, Madagascar, Mayotte, the Comoros, Maldives and Mauritius, aims at increasing the visibility of the island destinations.

The concept of the Vanilla Islands Organisation is along the same line as the Caribbean region, whereby travellers may benefit from twin and multi-destination packages and an authentic destination product from the region.

The islands within the Organisation are promoted as complimentary destinations where visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy a diversified product, namely a beach product in Mauritius, Seychelles and Maldives; hiking in Reunion Island; and ecotourism in Rodrigues, the Comoros and Mayotte.

The Municipal City Council of Port Louis
9th Indo-Mauritian Committee
MoU on Hydrography extended for five years

The extension of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India in the field of hydrography for a further period of five years was the focus of the 9th session of the Indo-Mauritian Joint Committee on Hydrography which was held at the Ministry of Housing and Lands in Ebène from 29 June to 01 July.

Signed in October 2005 for a period of five years, the MoU provides for cooperation in the areas of hydrographic surveys and production of navigational charts, exchange of data, supply of equipment, exchange of personnel and assistance through provision of technical expertise and capacity building, among others. It was automatically renewed for a further period of five years up, expiring on 23 October 2015.

The 9th Indo-Mauritian meeting took stock of the achievements over the past years and evaluated the 112 requirements for surveys and other assistance from various local stakeholders namely the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management, the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Island, the ports authorities, among others.

There has been a number of positive outcome for Mauritius since the signature of the MoU namely the completion of some 27 hydrographic surveys in Mauritian waters, the production of seven navigational charts comprising of mainland Mauritius, Agalega Islands, Cargados to St Brandon and Rodrigues Island, capacity building programmes and assistance in the setting up of Hydrographic Unit under at the level of the Ministry, which since November 2013 has been developing hydrographic surveying and nautical charting in Mauritian waters.

A National Ocean Council to make the ocean economy an important industry to sustain economic diversification, job creation and wealth generation is being set up.

The Council, in line with Government Programme 2015-2019, will coordinate technical cooperation and assistance provided by international institutions and foreign experts in the formulation of a National Ocean Policy Paper. It is expected to drive a Government-private sector working group to assess and promote economic activities, capacity building, marine good governance, as well as other developmental needs of the individual sectors of the ocean economy.

In addition, assessing the provision of modern logistics, infrastructure and services for the development of the maritime and shipping industry as well as formulating a new action plan for the shipping industry that will include developmental opportunities for the maritime training academy, the flagship registry, super yachts, ship repair, and ship maintenance and refurbishment, also falls under the mandate of National Ocean Council.
An envelope of around Rs 1 billion in favour of Mauritius for the development of the Port area in Port Louis has been endorsed by the Agence Française de Developpement (AFD). The loan is combined with a grant of around Rs 48 million.

The financing agreement was signed on 25 June 2015 in Paris by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, on behalf of the Mauritian Government.

Intervening on the occasion, Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo, highlighted that the transformation of the port is a major component to strengthening the economy so as to achieve the second economic miracle and is in line with the vision of the Government to make of the Port Louis Harbour a modern bunkering hub in the region.

The Minister wished that AFD, as a major development partner, continues to play an active role in the on-going economic diversification programme of Mauritius. He also spoke on the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for Mauritius in Africa, particularly in Madagascar, Ghana and Senegal whereby AFD expressed interest to support Mauritius in this ambitious regional initiative, in particular through Special Purpose Vehicles to be set up to develop these areas.

Port Development

The port area in Mauritius will undergo a major development in the coming years as it will be extended by seven kilometres. It will comprise of new facilities including a modern fishing harbour, bunkering facilities, a marina, a cruise port, new spaces for containers, docks and more efficient handling equipment and various logistics warehousing and distribution, including the free port.

The funding will partly be used to acquire sophisticated equipment for the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd in its modernisation process. It will also be used to expand the dock at the Mauritius Container Terminal so as to enable and facilitate bigger carriers to embark and disembark goods in a shorter period of time.

Mauritius receives AFD’s financial assistance to modernise the port

Mauritius collaborates with OECD in tax matters and exchange of information

Government policy is firmly centred on promoting foreign and domestic investment. In this context, Mauritius signed on 23 June 2015 in Paris, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, the most powerful single instrument for international tax co-operation.

Mauritius is the 87th jurisdiction to endorse this Convention and it is recalled that in Berlin last October, Mauritius joined 50 other jurisdictions in committing to implement automatic exchange of information and to begin sharing financial account information automatically by 2017 and 2018. With the Convention, Mauritius is moving forward to turn that commitment into a reality. The Convention will provide the legal basis for Mauritius to undertake tax information exchange, as well as other forms of cross-border cooperation, across its large network of trade and investment partners.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Mauritius, and the OECD was represented by its Secretary-General, Mr Angel Gurria.

In his address, Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo highlighted the importance of this event which he said bears testimony to the determination of the Mauritian Government to develop further and ensure that our jurisdiction of an International Financial Centre is more credible and transparent. Mauritius is rated as largely compliant by the OECD and its financial services market is well regulated and stable, he added.

For his part, Mr Gurria commended Mauritius on its ongoing commitment and progress on tax transparency while assuring OECD’s support in the country’s implementation of automatic exchange in line with the global standard.

It is recalled that in November 2013, Mauritius was rated by OECD as ‘largely compliant’ – the second highest rating possible. The country has demonstrated its ongoing dedication to improving its framework by addressing the Forum’s recommendations, making further changes to its tax information exchange regime, which were reflected in the OECD’s 2014 supplementary report.
Mauritius hailed as the best performing economy in Africa


Published on a biennial basis, the Africa Competitiveness Report highlights areas that require policy action and investment to ensure Africa’s sustained growth. The Report, which is the result of a long-standing collaboration, leverages the knowledge and expertise of the African Development Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank Group, and the World Economic Forum to present a joint vision to inform policies that can help Africa transform its economies.

The fifth edition of the report which rates 38 economies in Africa is based on data from the Forum’s Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) focusing on three key areas of economic activity namely: agricultural productivity; services sector growth; and global and regional value chains.

The Report highlights that Mauritius ranked 39th among the 144 economies assessed worldwide, remains the most competitive economy in Africa particularly with the reforms upon which the country has embarked since 2006 with regards to the conducive environment for the financial services sector and the labour market and in the areas of infrastructure, health, primary education as well as in macroeconomic performance.

Mauritius has a high share of service exports in transport, other business services, and other commercial services relative to its level of development. The Report remarks that this is perhaps not surprising given the government’s commitment to developing its service export sectors.

However, it notes that high unemployment rates among youth with secondary and tertiary education even in countries that do well on educational attainment, such as Mauritius and Tunisia, indicate a mismatch between the education system and the needs of employers.

According to the Report, so as to increase competitiveness, economies like Mauritius who are currently transitioning to the innovation-driven stage, need to put in place a skilled workforce and a business environment that is supportive for innovation and adaptive to new technologies.

The continent’s top performers, Mauritius and South Africa, ranked 39th and 56th, respectively, come in above the Southeast Asian average—an improvement since the last Report when they ranked below that comparator region. They also rank above the emerging market economies of Brazil and India.

Mauritius, the region’s current best-performing economy, is among the few countries to register the largest improvements in competitiveness and data suggest that it has made impressive strides toward improved competitiveness on the back of the wide-ranging structural reforms.

Renewal of AGOA for further period of 10 years

The United States House of Representatives on 25 June 2015 adopted the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015, thereby renewing the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) preferences for a further period of 10 years to 30 September 2025. Consequently, AGOA-eligible countries, including Mauritius, now preserve their preferential access to the US market for the next ten years.

Pilot project on Impact-Based Forecasting and Warning Services

A pilot project on the Impact-Based Forecasting and Warning Services will be implemented by the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS), with the technical support of the World Meteorological Organisation. The main objective of the project is to provide timely and accurate information on the impact of hydrometeorological hazards and events in a form that the public understand and take action to protect lives, livelihood, and property.

In developing the impact-based forecast and warning, the MMS will engage with partners for access to exposure, and vulnerability data and information, such as ground cover, run-off, topography, roads and other infrastructure, time of day and traffic conditions, among others. Such data will allow the MMS to forecast the risks of impact and issue warnings targeting those exposed to the hazard.
As the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) to launch its 2050 Pathways Calculator, Mauritius’ greatest challenge remains how to cut emissions while meeting energy demand and sustaining a reasonable socio economic and low emissions sustainable development.

The launching of the Mauritius 2050 Pathways Calculator was held on 17 June 2015 at Westminster House, Floréal. The project has benefitted from technical assistance of the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

As a SIDS with limited resources, the energy dependence of Mauritius on imported fossil fuels stands at around 85%, representing over 20% of its total import bill. Government aims to increase the share of sustainable renewable energy sources by at least 35% in the total energy mix by 2025. The three main sources of GHG emissions come from production of electricity, the transport and the manufacturing sectors. With the 2050 Pathways Carbon Calculator, policy makers now have a tool to consider feasible energy demand and supply pathways for reducing emissions of GHG, by the year 2050 while still pursuing high levels of economic growth.

In his address at the official launching on 17 June, the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management, Mr Jayeshwur Raj Dayal, stated that the 2050 Pathways Calculator will help Mauritius devise feasible strategies, options and policies, and explore environmentally sound technologies to mitigate climate change. It is an important decision making instrument in developing low emissions strategies while promoting sustainable development for the coming decades, he added.

Mr Dayal also announced the finalisation of a grant proposal for submission to the Global Environment Facility to the tune of USD 1.6 million for a Low Carbon Development Strategy and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions with a view to mainstreaming low emission development pathways in the institutional framework and into core development plans, policy, and strategies for Mauritius.

Statistics show that Mauritius’ contribution to global emissions of GHG stood at around 0.01% last year. However, according to the World Risk Report 2014, it is ranked as the 14th country with the highest disaster risk and ranked 7th on the list of countries most exposed to natural hazards. The country has thus to be fully prepared to adapt to impacts of climate change as well as do its utmost possible efforts to mitigate climate change.

### The Calculator

The 2050 Pathways Calculator, developed by the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), allows countries to answer the fundamental questions of how far emissions could be reduced and energy needs be met. The UK DECC has assisted Mauritius mainly in terms of capacity building on the formulation and use of the 2050 Pathways Calculator.

The Calculator has an interactive internet-based interface accessible which allows users to explore different scenarios of GHG emissions up to 2050, based on decisions taken today or in the coming years. Given that by 2050 local energy demand may increase threefold, this tool will further allow to determine the extent to which renewables could meet future energy demand; understand the contribution of individual behavioural change; estimate the quantity of future fossil fuel imports; identify the most feasible pathways to meet emission reduction targets; and explore scenarios to reduce emissions as the country moves towards the next level of economic development.
Workshop to study the Energy Efficiency Building Code Compliance Scheme

An Inception Workshop on Consultancy Services for the Development of an Energy Efficiency Building Code Compliance Scheme (EEBCCS) was held on 16 June 2015 at La Petite Cannelle in Domaine Les Pailles. The objective was to take forward the project on 'Removal of Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation in Buildings and Industry'.

Discussions during the one-day workshop focused on the following: project history and institutional framework in Mauritius; approach to developing the EEBCCS; approach to developing MS Excel-based software tool; and, approach to the review of the existing architectural specifications and construction methods.

At the opening ceremony, the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Mr Nandcoomar Bodha, recalled that the smart city concepts will encompass energy efficiency and conservation and better architectural design. The time is appropriate for energy efficiency and conservation to become a must in the way we design, implement and crosscheck most of our new architectural buildings, he underlined.

Currently, the construction industry contributes about 6% of GDP, representing about Rs 30 billion. According to Minister Bodha, the industry is a huge one and will be an important pillar for the development process of Mauritius in the years to come. He, moreover, highlighted the need for regulation, capacity-building, and professionals who can be the assessors and the auditors of tomorrow in the construction industry. A major part of the industry is not regulated and there is no enforcement, he stated, adding that we need to have a safer Mauritius and a building industry which is at par with what we have on the international front.

The Project

The project aiming at removing barriers to energy efficiency and energy conservation in buildings and industry, signed in 2011, is under implementation. Funding is being provided by the Government of Denmark under the SIDS-Dock mechanism, with support from the UNDP Country Office. The main objectives of the project are to assist in Energy Audit Management and development of an EEBCCS.

While the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities is responsible for the implementation of the project, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, for its part, is responsible for the development of additional codes and regulations for energy savings in buildings and stimulate energy saving services and technology in the building sector. These include the development of an EEBCCS, software development, training, examination and certification of energy compliance assessors for the EEBCCS and organisation of workshops for dissemination of information to the construction industry and the public in general.

SIDS-Dock

SIDS-Dock is an initiative among member countries of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to provide the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with a collective institutional mechanism to assist them transform their national energy sectors into a catalyst for sustainable economic development and help generate financial resources to address adaptation to climate change.