Prime Minister addresses Commonwealth Business Forum in Malta

The efforts of Government are geared towards engineering a second ‘economic miracle’, the one that will further diversify the country’s economic base into a regional development powerhouse to deliver greater prosperity for the nation.


In his address Prime Minister Jugnauth recalled Mauritius aims to operate as an intellectual capital hub from which highly skilled and highly qualified professionals can join forces with their counterparts on the African continent to ensure that a sustainable supply of multidisciplinary expertise is available to support the realisation of in-land and regional development projects.

Financial and professional services have become major economic activities that are impacting in a significant manner, not only on the individual economies of nations, but also on the global financial and labour markets, he underlined. In Mauritius some 19,000 professionals employed in this industry are the greatest contributors, on a per-individual basis, to the Gross Domestic Product, he added.

The Prime Minister outlined that such a diversification strategy is underpinned by high investment levels, cutting-edge business expertise, an adequate supply of quality employment, alignment on global standards of economic performance, inclusive development policies, greater equity and social justice, and embedded business ethics and good governance. On that score, Government firmly believes in investing in human capital and increasing the quality and supply of skilled professionals, he said.

Speaking on our proximity to Africa, Sir Anerood Jugnauth emphasised that Mauritius is able to participate fully in the economic development of the continent while adding that regional integration is an important pillar of our economic policy.

“By virtue of our membership of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, Mauritius is actively implementing its respective integration agendas as well. A number of private Mauritian entities are already providing their services on mainland Africa”, he said.

The Prime Minister also attended the launching of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. The Hub, which will be hosted in Mauritius, will help build capacity of Commonwealth Small and Climate Vulnerable States to access climate finance with regional support.

During the Retreat organised to enable Heads of Government exchange views on global issues, the Prime Minister raised the issue of Mauritius sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago with particular reference to the UNCLOS Arbitral Award.
A workshop on 'Research and Development for a Sustainable Ocean Economy' to allow the Mauritius Institute of Oceanography (MOI) to take cognizance of the scientific requirements, in terms of data, services and trainings, of various actors, investors, communities and stakeholders to start or to support the sustainable development of mariculture activities in Mauritius was held on 23 November 2015 at Le Meridien Hotel in Pointe aux Piments.

An initiative of the MOI, the workshop was attended by around 100 participants from the private sector, the public sector including ministries and parastatal bodies as well as NGOs and regional partners such as representatives from the Indian Ocean Commission and the United Nations Development Programme.

Present at the opening ceremony, the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands, Mr Premdut Koonjoo, stated that research and development will be crucial for the development of the ocean economy as the next phase of our socio-economic development will be driven by technology and innovation.

The Minister added that research and development is the backbone of a globally competitive, knowledge-driven economy since it helps develop new products and services that drive growth, create jobs, and improve the national welfare.

He stressed that the MOI is required to bring about a significant shift from academic to applied research to be able to take up the challenges and meet the expectations of stakeholders.
Mauritius and Australia to cooperate in Marine Renewable Energy

A study will be conducted by the Australian firm Carnegie Wave Energy Limited and a funding proposal of about AUD $ 990,000 was endorsed for the project. In this context, Mauritius and Australia signed an agreement on Assessing Wave Energy and Micro Grid in Mauritius on 24 November 2015 in Port Louis.

The agreement which reiterates the emerging cooperation between Australia and Mauritius in developing the Blue economy, was signed by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo and the Australian High Commissioner in Mauritius, Mrs Susan Coles, in the presence of the Chief Operating Officer of Carnegie Wave Energy Limited, Mr Greg Allen.

It is a follow up to a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Mauritius Research Council in June this year with focus on three key areas. They are namely: the delivery of a renewable energy roadmap for Mauritius, including technical, commercial and financial feasibility of high penetration renewable energy; the assessment of the Mauritian wave energy project; and the design of a microgrid powered desalination plant in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

In his address Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo welcomed the initiative of exploring Wave energy in collaboration with the Australian Government as part of the Blue economy vision. He underlined that, in its endeavour to achieve a high investment-high employment economy as envisioned in the Budget 2015-2016 and in the Economic Mission Statement, Mauritius is strategically contemplating how best to create viable economic and entrepreneurial activities within its 2.3 million square kilometres of Exclusive Economic Zone.

He stated that Mauritius looks up to Australia as a partner in our new Economic vision. Australia will see more and more benefits with its partnership with Mauritius as the latter turns into a vibrant regional hub for trade, financial and business services.

For her part the Australian High Commissioner recalled that access to clean, renewable energy is critical for Mauritius and other small island states and is key to unlocking economic prosperity.
Prime Minister’s mission to the United Arab Emirates

The Prime Minister, Sir An-errod Jugnauth led a delegation comprising, among others, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands, Mr Showkutally Soodhun, and the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance, Institutional Reforms and Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mr Sudarshan Bhadain, to the United Arab Emirates, from 21 to 22 November 2015.

The mission to the United Arab Emirates aimed at promoting Mauritius as a safe destination for investment and tourism. During his visit, the Prime Minister met the Chairperson of Emirates Airlines, Sheik Ahmed Al Maktoum, with whom he discussed a number of issues pertaining to employment opportunities, and reduction of airfares.

Discussions between Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and the Emirati Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and for Federal National Council Affairs, Dr Anwar Mohammed Qarqash, focused on the issuance of visa for Mauritian nationals, and investment opportunities in the financial services, bunkering, smart cities, and real estate, among others.

Regarding technical assistance to Air Mauritius, Emirates Airline will be sending an expert to assist the local airliner in the elaboration of a strategic plan with a view to tapping into Africa’s potential. Furthermore, on the reinforcement of the code share of Air Mauritius, Emirates Airline has agreed to increase the annual minimum guarantee from Euro 4.5 million to Euro 12 million.

Following a request of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Dubai authorities have agreed to waive visa requirements for all Government officials with effect from December 2015 and thereafter consideration will given for this waiver to be applicable to all Mauritians.

The Emirati’s government has agreed to provide the required expertise to devise the master plan and the design for the new administrative city, to be known as Heritage City, as part of the Highlands Project. The Heritage City will be put up on a plot of land of an extent of 336 arpents situated on the left of Bagatelle Dam.
Identifying avenues of cooperation in the field of port development was the main focus at a meeting held on 5 November 2015 at the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) between members of a delegation from the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and members from the MPA.

The delegation led by the Minister of Shipping, Mr Shajahan Khan, was on a visit to Mauritius on 4-5 November 2015. The aim of the visit was mainly to assess our port performance; evaluate actions that were taken to improve port efficiency; take stock of measures implemented and facilities provided for bigger and deeper draft vessels; as well as port development projects and their implementations.

The meeting of the MPA was held especially since Mauritius has embarked on a modernisation programme aimed at transforming Port Louis harbour into a major regional logistics and maritime hub. Discussions were led for the Mauritian side by the Chairman of the MPA, Mr Ramalingum Maistry, and the Director General of the MPA, Mr Shekur Suntah, and by the Minister of Shipping, Mr Shajahan Khan, and the High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Mr Abdul Mannan Howlader, for the Bangladesh side.

The Director General of the MPA pointed out that the Mauritian Government is committed to developing its maritime economy, seeing it as an important driver of economic growth and is keen to create new opportunities across all sectors. He added that the harbour of Port-Louis will be called upon to play a crucial role in transforming the macroeconomic fundamentals of Mauritius.

Mr Suntah highlighted that port development will focus on several major activities, namely bunkering, seafood, and transshipment. With regards to transshipment, the MPA is planning to improve the Terminal by strengthening the existing structure to handle 8,000 TEUs capacity vessels, extend the quay structure to accommodate two large capacity vessels, and extend the hardstand area to increase the capacity of the Terminal.

By 2025 with the new projects, a capacity of one million containers will be available at the Terminal. At present, 250,000 containers are being accommodated in the Terminal.

The Mauritian Government is actively promoting Port Louis harbour as a bunkering port in the region. With over 30,000 vessels passing Mauritius annually, the economic potential to develop the island as a bunker supplier and hub is significant.

The positioning of Mauritius as a seafood logistics hub and the development of a new fishing port is also high on Government’s agenda.

For his part, the High Commissioner said that Bangladesh can be a development partner having export commodities, while adding that Mauritius can be used as a linking port between Bangladesh and Africa.

He added that in the field of fish processing, Bangladesh is very efficient and can share its expertise with Mauritius.
Wrap-up workshop on Illegal Fishing and Marine Resources Management

A two-day wrap-up workshop for the project “Combatting Illegal Fishing, Marine Resources Management and Strengthening Quality of Fish Products” opened on 19 November 2015 at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy in Pointe aux Sables.

Organised by the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands in collaboration with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the workshop provided the platform to present the outcomes of the collaboration between the two countries and to discuss the findings of the various components of the project which have been implemented.

The project was funded to the tune of Rs 45 million and a further Rs 10 million following an addendum to the Agreement and planned for period 2012 to 2014. Initially valid for a period of three years, it was extended up to December 2015.

The main objectives of the project were to establish a National Plan of Action against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and assist in the implementation of the plan, and capacity building in this aspect; strengthen competence in marine resources assessment and management as well as in quality control of fish and fish products.

The bilateral cooperation agreement with Norway comprised various project components which have been implemented. Out of the 13 project components, the major achievements within the ambit of the Project include:

- Launching of a National Plan of Action to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing;
- Successful acoustic surveys and trial fishing using new gear on the banks of Nazareth, St. Brandon for identification of unexploited stocks.
- Training and capacity building in Stock assessment, vessel monitoring system, hydro acoustic survey and fishery policy and planning.
- Drafting of regulations for the Competent Authority seafood (Regulations for aquatic animal feed and aquatic farming)
- Drafting of the new Fisheries & Aquaculture Bill.

The project agreement, signed in April 2008 between the then Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security, and NORAD under the Bilateral Cooperation Programme, was financed for the sustainable utilisation of marine living resources in the waters of Mauritius through the implementation of various components.
**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME**

The Youth Employment Programme which provides for the placement and training of unemployed youth, aged between 16 and 30, in order to promote the development of necessary skills in the labour force is being extended to the civil service and other Government bodies. Under the Programme, some 1,000 unemployed youth are being placed in the civil service and other Government bodies as from November 2015 for an initial period of one year.

**Mauritius participates in TISA negotiations**

Mauritius participated in the 13th Round of the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) negotiations. The TISA is the framework document setting out the principles and the various disciplines that would govern trade in the Services Sector among participating countries. It contains provisions relating to the basic principles of non-discrimination, such as the Most Favoured Nation Treatment and the National Treatment Clauses, in addition to the provisions on transparency, domestic regulations, dispute resolution, the treatment of monopolies and the exclusive service suppliers. The Annexes to the framework document contain measures affecting trade in specific sectors within the services cluster, such as financial services, tourism, telecommunications, etc.

**Code share arrangements between Mauritius and Japan**

Mauritius is signing a framework on code share arrangements with the Government of Japan. The Agreement will enable Air Mauritius to code share with the partner airlines of Japan, such as Hong Kong Airlines and Malaysia Airlines, to market points in Japan. The conclusion of the framework will enhance connectivity between Africa and Asia through Mauritius as announced in the Economic Mission Statement, and the air corridor would be an opportunity for Air Mauritius to tap the traffic between Asia/South East Asia and Africa.

**International Day Against Violence Against Women 2015**

Several activities were organised in the context of International Day Against Violence Against Women 2015, commemorated on 25 November. The theme for this year was “From peace in the home to peace in the world: make education safe for all”. The slogan retained by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare was “kontign to langazman kont violans”. The activities organised, include –

(a) an awareness programme on “Gender-Based Violence at the Workplace”;

(b) an exchange programme via video conferencing between Groupement de Cooperation Sociale et Medico-Sociale of Reunion Island and NGOs working on domestic violence in Mauritius;

(c) a National Campaign on Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women; and

(d) the launching of a Directory of Service.