In his message to the Nation on 12 March 2016, the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, called on the citizens of the Republic of Mauritius to show a sense of responsibility, discipline, solidarity and national unity. He also warned that any actions aiming to put at stake the future of the country will not be tolerated.

‘It is with a lot of pride that we celebrate our National Day because as a nation we come together behind the National Flag in patriotic fervour. The Mauritian Nation has accomplished a journey of 48 years of Independence and 24 years as a Republic’, stated the Prime Minister.

On that note, he emphasised the importance to look at the past to see how the country has fared, what progress has been achieved and when true progress has been attained.

Independence, observed Sir Anerood Jugnauth, is obviously a great moment in the life of a Nation as there is new hope. He also recalled that the country is presently on the right track to being propelled towards a new developmental level and enumerated on some future projects, namely: Airport City; Heritage City; JinFei Economic and Cooperation Zone; Port development; and launching of the Air Corridor between Africa and Asia with Mauritius and Singapore acting as the two Hubs.

Speaking about the Air Corridor, the Prime Minister said that this will rapidly pave the way to open new tourist markets for our country as well as create new business, trade and investment opportunities. He expressed confidence that this year we are on the right track to build a new future for our country with job creation opportunities as well as enhanced standard of living and purchasing power for the people.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth moreover stated that the fight against social exclusion remains a priority and the situation as regards law and order as well as road safety is being closely monitored.
The President of the Republic of Madagascar, Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina, was on a four-day State Visit to Mauritius from 10 to 13 March 2016. He was also the Chief Guest of the Government for the celebrations marking the 48th anniversary of Independence and 24th anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius.

During his stay, the President of the Republic of Madagascar accompanied by Mrs Voahangy Rajaonarimampianina, paid a courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Dr Ameenah Gurib-Fakim. On 11 March 2016, the Malagasy President had a working session the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth at the Treasury Building in Port Louis. It was followed by an exchange of Memoranda of Understanding/Agreements between both parties.

The following agreements were signed: a Memorandum of Understanding on the setting up of Special Economic Zones in Madagascar that lays down the modalities for the development of the Zones; and the General Framework Agreement and the Agreement for a Joint Commission.

The General Framework Agreement aims at enhancing the existing friendly relationship, strengthening the historical ties, promoting and supporting cooperation in various sectors, namely, agriculture, trade, fisheries, tourism, transport, education, research, culture, environment, energy, health, innovation, information and communication, defence and security, migration and development, and justice. A Joint Commission that would be co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of both countries, would oversee the implementation of the Agreement.

Afterwards, the two leaders made a joint press statement. While addressing the media, Sir Anerood Jugnauth stated that Mauritius and Madagascar will enter into a new era of cooperation and work in close collaboration in the fields of agriculture, textile, maritime, communication and technology, among others.

According to him, the signing of these agreements constitutes the first step towards the deepening of the bilateral relations, adding that the visit of the Malagasy President bears testimony to the excellent relations between the two countries which are founded on fundamental values such as friendship, trust and cooperation.

He further outlined that both countries have always worked towards the promotion of democracy and added that this visit will enable to review the existing relations and identify new areas of cooperation in view of bringing these relations to new heights.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth pointed out that since the setting up of diplomatic relations between the two countries in August 1968, Mauritius and Madagascar have concluded several bilateral agreements in the fields of investment, culture, air services and small and medium enterprises.
He elaborated on several projects agreed between both parties, namely the setting up of special economic zones, encouraging more investment between the two countries, the waiver for short stay visa in Madagascar and Mauritius respectively and also the expansion of economic and commercial exchanges.

Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina also announced the setting up of an office for trade and investment in Mauritius as well as the possibilities of mutual visa exemption between the two countries which are under negotiations. These initiatives, he said, will further encourage more investments between the two countries both from the private and public sectors.

Mauritius will import 500 tonnes of onions from Madagascar as from this year, and Madagascar proposes to open an investment and trade office in Mauritius, he added.

For his part the Malagasy President recalled the friendly and the strong bilateral ties that bond both countries are being further reinforced with the signing of the three agreements.

Both Madagascar and Mauritius will work towards further deepening the existing links mainly in the areas of agriculture, renewable energy, the fight against terrorism and piracy, tourism, and political stability in the region amongst others.

It is recalled that during discussions, the Prime Minister and the Malagasy President agreed, amongst others, to pursue consultations and efforts to promote the economic development of Mauritius and Madagascar; foster closer cooperation between the Malagasy Ministry of Defence and the Prime Minister’s Office on matters regarding defence; initiate preliminary discussions on the proposed Convention in the field of Judicial and Legal Services; and collaborate further in the fields of sport, education, food security, industries and research, renewable energy, and agriculture.

The Malagasy President also had working sessions with members of the Indian Ocean Commission and the Indian Ocean Rim Association in Ebène. He also met the Chief Justice, Mr Keshoe Parsad Matadeen; the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee; and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Paul Bérenger.

On 12 March 2016, the Malagasy President visited the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site in Port Louis, the Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile Ltée (CMT) at Pointe aux Sables, and the Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar, in Floréal. Mr Rajaonarimampianina afterwards proceeded to the Socota Phoenicia technopole in Phoenix and in the evening, the Malagasy delegation was at the Champ de Mars to attend the official celebrations marking National Day.

On the last day of his State Visit, the Malagasy President had a working session with the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications, Mr Xavier Duval at The Oberoi Hotel, Pointe aux Piments and visited Le Morne Cultural Landscape before proceeding to the airport for his departure.
National Day Celebrations

[Various images of the celebration, including people in traditional attire, a stage with performers, flags, and a crowd watching]

Independence Day Celebration

Government Information Service, Prime Minister’s Office, Mauritius
The Financial Services Commission, Mauritius (FSC Mauritius) and the Financial Services Authority Seychelles (FSA Seychelles) signed in early March at the FSC House in Ebène, a Memorandum of Understanding regarding Mutual Assistance and Exchange of Information.

The signatories were the Chairperson of the FSC Mauritius, Mr Dharam Dev Manraj and the Chief Executive of FSA Seychelles, Ms Jennifer Morel.

The MoU sets forth the Authorities’ intent with regard to mutual assistance and the exchange of information for the purpose of enforcing and securing compliance with the respective Laws and Regulations of the jurisdictions of the respective Authorities.

It aims to further strengthen cooperation and collaboration between the two Authorities given the increasing international activity in the financial market and the corresponding need for mutual cooperation and consultation among financial regulators in view of ensuring compliance with and enforcement of their financial laws and regulations.

It is recalled that the FSC Mauritius has so far signed 3 Multilateral MoUs, 2 Regional MoUs, 25 MoUs regarding supervision of Alternative Fund Managers Directive Entities, 23 MoUs with Foreign Authorities and 6 MoUs with Local Authorities. An E-Learning System (ELS), aiming at strengthening professional and personal development and providing universal access to learning solutions to Officers in the Civil Service, was launched on 17 March 2016 in the Lunch Room of the National Assembly in Port Louis in the presence of the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Mr Alain Wong Yen Cheong. The ELS’s website was also launched on that occasion.

Designed by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the ELS has as objective to allow public officers learn at their own pace and convenience to enhance their knowledge and skills. It is recalled that an E-Learning System is basically a web-based programme designed to facilitate learning and training through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The ELS platform

From the homepage http://training.civilservice.govmu.org/ Government officials can access courses by logging in using their usernames and passwords.

The ELS provides Public Officers with a vast array of short and practical online courses and complements traditional face-to-face courses. The courses offered are amongst others: budget preparation and execution; stress management; an introduction to the Social Register of Mauritius; ethics, performance management system; occupational safety and health; service resilience awareness, environment sustainability; basic ICT security; integrated vector management; and gender equality.

At the end of each course, there is a self-assessment feature, where some multiple-choice/short answer questions are set to test the candidates understanding of the courses. Candidates are entitled to a certificate of achievement after successful completion of the course.

An ELS Committee has been set up to receive and analyse requests for adding/deleting courses on the platform.

The ELS can be accessed at: http://training.civilservice.govmu.org/
International Women’s Day 2016: Prime Minister promises electoral reform to ensure better women representation in National Assembly

The Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth has pledged his commitment for an electoral reform during the mandate of the present Government to ensure better women representation in the National Assembly.

Sir Anerood was speaking at the official ceremony organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to mark International Women’s Day, celebrated on 8 March.

The theme chosen this year: ‘Championing Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’.

The Prime Minister called for bold, innovative, decisive, sustained and collective actions to deliver successfully on the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 5 which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

“We must cement our commitments to empower women and girls; we must ensure that our future policies and strategies are shaped by a greater gender analysis,” he stressed.

‘Our task ahead is about addressing gender inequalities through the implementation of far-reaching and gender responsive policies and programmes.’

Furthermore, he listed out the measures that have been initiated to contribute towards the implementation of SDGs including goal 5.

The measures include:

- New opportunities in terms of SME development where women will be key drivers of socio-economic endeavours.
- Skilling and reskilling which will directly benefit women who wish either to start an economic activity or join the labour market.
- The revamping of Women Centres across the country into Women Empowerment Centres.
- The strengthening of laws to deal with violence and abuse against women and children.

For her part, the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mrs Marie-Aurore Perraud, underlined that women and girls continue to face a multitude of barriers to gender equality.

“It is critical that we flag out some of the gender gaps in the field of education, health, employment, leadership and economy, that still undermine women’s and girls’ full potential,” she affirmed.

It is noted that during the official ceremony, the ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Award’ was launched.

The Award, to be held on annual basis, is open to the private sector with a view of encouraging enterprises to demonstrate how far and how effectively their respective policies, programmes, projects, and activities are gender responsive.

A cash prize of Rs 100,000 will be awarded to the best ‘Corporate Gender Champion’.
MOU TO FACILITATE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REGARDING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

A Memorandum of Understanding to facilitating policy implementation for the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality was signed on 9 March 2016 in Port Louis by the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, and the National Women’s Council.

The document provides an overarching framework that sets out the parameters within which the Gender Unit and the National Women’s Council are to operate to empower women for the attainment of gender equality as well as to address prevailing gender gaps.

As a result, the MoU clearly defines the respective roles of the Gender Unit as the policy formulation entity and the National Women’s Council as the implementing body, with regards to women’s empowerment programmes.

The objectives of the MoU are, among others:

- to enhance the capacity of the Gender Unit to play its role as the National Gender Machinery more effectively and get more involved in its policy advisory function;
- to strengthen the National Women’s Council’s ability and capacity to implement policies in favour of women; and
- to enable women’s associations to participate in, and have influence over, policy making processes, thereby upscaling their overall empowerment.

The signature of the MoU was part of activities organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare on the occasion of International Women’s Day 2016, celebrated on 8 March.

Other activities included a national campaign around the slogan ‘egalite zom/fam: nou l’obzektif’ (Let’s achieve gender equality); networking for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment on 10 March at the Institut Français de Maurice in Rose-Hill; national celebration of International Women’s Day on 13 March at Trianon Convention Centre; and launching of a Business Hub for Women Entrepreneurs on 1st April in Phoenix.

The theme chosen this year is: ‘Championing Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’.
A safe and secure maritime environment is a prerequisite for the achievement of a Second Economic Miracle and to meet the pledges in the Vision 2030 of the Government, stressed the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, on 12 March 2016 at Caudan Waterfront during the induction ceremony of 10 Fast Interceptor Boats.

He underlined that one of the top-most priorities of the Government is to provide resources to the Police to assist in the fight against crime while adding that with the Fast Interceptor Boats, the Mauritius Police Force, through the National Coast Guard (NCG), will enhance surveillance, intelligence and presence in the maritime domain.

Speaking about maritime safety and security, Sir Anerood Jugnauth recalled that the vast size and largely unregulated nature of the waterways have made the maritime environment an attractive theatre for transnational crimes. Sea piracy, drug and human trafficking, smuggling and sea-borne terrorism have increased considerably in the last few decades. The situation has further aggravated due to global proliferation of small arms, thus adding to the maritime vulnerabilities, he said.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister announced that the NCG will soon be equipped with two Waterjet Fast Patrol Vessels namely, CGS Victory and CGS Valiant which will respectively be ready by the end of this year and by next year. A brand new Dornier aircraft is also being constructed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and is expected to be completed by June this year.

The 10 Fast Interceptor Boats will also be deployed for life saving search and rescue missions around the main land of Mauritius and around Rodrigues where one of these boats will be permanently stationed in the first instance.

These state-of-the-art vessels in terms of capabilities, can function in a diverse manner for defence, interception of high speed vessels, coastal patrol, effective surveillance, anti-smuggling, anti-poaching activities, search, rescue and fisheries protection amongst others.

The boats have a top speed of 35 knots (63 kmph) with a cruising speed of 20 knots (36 kmph), along with an endurance of over 200 Km. The Fast Interceptor Boats of a length of 14.5 metres each are fitted with most advanced navigation and communication equipment, including weapons.

The contract between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and Goa Shipyard Limited for the construction of the 10 Fast Interceptor Boats was signed on 4 April 2014 for a total sum of 6 millions USD under the credit line agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Export-Import Bank of India.
Mauritius hosts the 2nd International Workshop on the Standard Operating Procedures for Digital Forensics


Present at the opening ceremony, the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, and acting Attorney General, Mr Nandcoomar Bodha, stated that the response to the huge volume of constant hacking and online fraud is the sharing of experiences and intelligence, common policy and determination.

According to him, today’s increased interconnected world, which is becoming more reliant on modern technology, brings higher risk of theft, fraud, and abuse, as well as expands the vulnerability to cyberattacks such as corporate security breaches, spear phishing, and social media fraud. “Complementary cybersecurity and law enforcement capabilities are critical to safeguarding and securing cyberspace”, stressed the Minister.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mr Etienne Sinatambou, and the Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, Ambassador Marjaana Sall, were also present at the opening of the three-day workshop, organised jointly by the Council of Europe and the Attorney General’s Office under the Global Action on Cybercrime (GLACY). The GLACY is a collaborative project of the European Union and the Council of Europe which aims at supporting countries worldwide in the implementation of the Budapest Convention, the first international treaty on crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks.

For his part, Minister Sinatambou, announced that his Ministry is spearheading the elaboration of a National Cybercrime Strategy with a view of making the cyberspace more resilient to cyberattacks, while addressing the shortcomings in the existing legal framework and enabling law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to tackle cybercrimes as well as carrying out prosecution in an effective way.

During the workshop, a presentation of a Draft Standard Operating Procedure Manual for digital forensics was scheduled to enable participants to discuss and agree on an effective manual which will contribute in the proper conducting of digital forensic investigations.

Mauritius was the first African country to ratify, on 15 November 2013, the Budapest Convention whose main objective is to pursue a common criminal policy geared at the protection of society against cybercrime, especially by adopting appropriate legislation and fostering international co-operation.

Following the accession to the Convention, Mauritius was selected by the Council of Europe and the European Union to participate in the GLACY project where the country has benefitted from assistance in key areas of cybersecurity such as the harmonisation of legislation, judicial training, law enforcement training and capacity building.

This second workshop is a follow-up from the 1st international conference held in Strasbourg, in connection with the Octopus Conference, which is a Council of Europe’s Project, based on voluntary contributions and aimed at assisting countries worldwide to implement the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and strengthening data protection and rule of law safeguards.
World Water Day marked by an Exhibition on ‘Water and Jobs’

A three-day exhibition on the theme “Water and Jobs” kicked off on 22 March 2016 at La Marie Water treatment plant to mark World Water Day 2016. The exhibition was organised at the initiative of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities in collaboration with several ministries and departments.

Several activities were organised by the Ministry and the Central Water Authority to mark World Water Day 2016, including open days held at La Marie and Pailles water treatment plants, Midlands dam and Midlands hydro power plant from 22 to 24 March 2016.

A rally and a tree planting exercise were held on the banks of Rivière Rempart at Palma/Beau Songes on 24 March 2016, with the participation of students from SSS Palma, SSS Bambous, SSS Sivananda and other stakeholders.

A mural fresco competition was also organised on the boundary wall of the Cascavelle reservoir, open to upper secondary school students. Six teams participated in the competition.

The first prize was awarded to Swami Sivananda SSS. The second prize went to Collège du St Esprit while Quatre Bornes SSS bagged the third prize.

CO-OPERATIVE TRUST LAUNCHES NEW SCHEMES FOR SUGAR CANE PLANTERS

The St Antoine Planters Cooperative Trust is implementing four new schemes for the benefit of sugar cane planters cultivating not more than 6.5 hectares of land and falling within the factory area of the former St Antoine Sugar Factory.

Three schemes provide for grants for: the purchase of sprayers; the purchase of fertilisers; and for cutting, loading and transport of sugarcane. The fourth scheme relates to the mending of access roads to fields of eligible planters.

The new schemes are operational since March 2016.