Seychelles President’s State Visit to Mauritius reinforces excellent bilateral cooperation ties and people-to-people links

The long-standing friendship ties, converging interests as well as shared values, and people-to-people connections, were accentuated during the four-day State Visit to Mauritius effected by the President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr Danny Antoine Rollen Faure.

The Seychelles President led, from 26 to 29 October 2017, a 23-member delegation comprising the Minister for Family Affairs, Secretaries of State for Cabinet Affairs, and, for Presidential Affairs, and Members of the National Assembly.

The State Visit enabled both Mauritius and Seychelles counterparts to highlight their excellent relations and to embark on new avenues of cooperation by signing five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in different sectors. The visit was also marked by pledges from the two countries to preserve land and marine environment and...
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State Visit’s Core Events

During his stay, President Faure, paid a courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Dr Ameenah Gurib-Fakim at the State House, Le Réduit. National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth on 27 October 2017 at the New Treasury Building, Port Louis. These meetings were followed by a joint press statement during which the five MoUs and the agreed minutes of the 12th session of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission on bilateral cooperation, held on 23 October 2017 at Senior Officials’ level, were signed.

The joint press statement

In his joint press statement, the Mauritian Prime Minister spoke about Government’s commitment to promote the socioeconomic development of the region, interregional trade and the creation of a single market so as to consolidate the strong existing bilateral relations and create more opportunities for Mauritius and Seychelles.

Common concerns which both countries, as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), share pertaining to climate change challenges were highlighted by the Prime Minister. He also recalled the various ongoing collaborations on pressing issues affecting SIDS and the common endeavours of Mauritius and Seychelles in the fight against maritime piracy and drug proliferation in the region and their adherence to SMART-FISH, a joint fisheries surveillance programme.

As regards the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the Prime Minister said it is necessary for the two countries to adopt a common stand on the IOTC to ensure that the fishing industries are protected. He announced that in respect of the joint management of the Extended Continental Shelf, Seychelles will host the Secretariat, while the CEO will be recruited from Mauritius.

Moreover, Prime Minister Jugnauth expressed gratitude to the Republic of Seychelles for their unflinching support on the Chagos Archipelago dossier at the United Nations and urged for their continuous support.

For his part, President Faure qualified Mauritius-Seychelles bilateral relations as vibrant, expansive and mutually beneficial. The common commitment and the synergy between the two countries have been taken to new heights with the development of a more strategic partnership, he remarked. This will ensure that Mauritius and Seychelles become more secure, the population more prosperous and the region better, he added.

The Seychellois President also reiterated his resolution to advocate for initiatives that nurture collaboration and collective actions.

Signing of MoUs

The five MoUs for reinforced Mauritius-Seychelles collaboration are:

He was invited for a tête-à-tête and a working session with the Mauritian Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and
• Cooperation in the field of management of operations and staff training between the Mauritius Prison Service and the Seychelles Prison Service;

• Twinning between the island of Rodrigues and the City of Victoria;

• Collaboration between the Seychelles National Human Resource Development and the Mauritius Human Resource Development Council;

• Health cooperation for the recruitment of Mauritian doctors by Seychelles; and

• Recruitment of Mauritian teachers and other specialists in the education sector to work in Seychelles.

President Faure moreover visited the Aapravasi Ghat UNESCO World Heritage Site, the EON Reality Mauritius Regional Headquarters and Entrepreneur School, in Ebène, and Le Morne Cultural Landscape and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The programme of visit included courtesy calls on the Seychellois President by the Chief Justice of Mauritius, the Speaker of the National Assembly, and the Leader of the Opposition.

President Faure also attended a State Banquet hosted in his honour by the Mauritian Prime Minister at Le Méridien Hotel, in Pointe aux Piments.
An Interim Storage Hazardous Waste Facility (ISHWF), to the tune of Rs 215 million, with an on-site laboratory equipped with sophisticated equipment for the characterisation and testing of hazardous wastes, was inaugurated on 12 October 2017 at La Chaumière, Bambous.

The ISHWF, developed over 4.5 hectares, has been put in place in line with Government’s strategy to discharge its responsibilities with regard to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements adopted by Mauritius on effective control of hazardous wastes.

The aim of this facility is to receive hazardous wastes that cannot be disposed locally. It will also help in the management of hazardous wastes which are inspected, tested, repackaged and labeled prior to collection and storage, and subsequently exported for recovery and disposal at licensed facilities.

It comprises three storage buildings for hazardous wastes and one quarantine and packaging building; one administration and laboratory block; one workshop and consumable stores; a platform to accommodate a maximum of seven containers for hazardous waste export; a weighbridge; and contaminated surface water and roof storage ponds.

Laboratory and industrial chemical wastes (acids, alkalis, heavy metals, spent organic solvents, organic sludges), paint wastes, obsolete pesticides, pharmaceutical wastes, waste gas cylinders and waste aerosols will be stored at the ISHWF.

A disposal fee of Rs 100 per kg of hazardous wastes and an additional of Rs 2500 for quantities exceeding one tonne has to be paid for the disposal of hazardous wastes at the facility. The fee is intended to encourage generators, in particular industries, to put in place waste prevention and recycling measures.
Construction works of a Grade Separated Junction on Motorway M1 at Deschartres Street to the tune of about Rs 321 million has started since 13 October 2017 and is expected to be completed by December 2018.

The project will contribute to improve traffic flow along M1 at Place d'Armes and alleviate traffic congestion at the entrance of Port-Louis Centre by providing an access for vehicular traffic from the South.

The Grade Separated Junction will also redistribute the traffic flow to and in the city with the forthcoming Ring Road Phase 2 and Metro Express project. The contract for the design-build/turnkey and completion of the project has been awarded to the joint venture Transinvest Construction Ltd – General Construction Company Ltd.

It comprises, namely a flyover along the Motorway M1(southbound); redevelopment of the Place d'Armes; a third lane from Place d'Armes to Caudan; the review of the urban traffic flow in Port Louis; and the introduction of the intelligent transportation system using smart technology to control traffic lights more efficiently.

In this context, a Traffic Modelling Unit has been set up to address issues of traffic interference, especially for the implementation of several infrastructure projects. The Unit comprises the Korea Expressway Corporation, the Mauritius Research Council, and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.
Mauritius signs COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area to boost intra-regional trade

Mauritius has signed the Agreement establishing a Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) among the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, and the Secretary General of the COMESA, Mr Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya, on 9 October 2017 at Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebène.

The Tripartite agreement was launched in June 2015 in Egypt for the creation of an integrated market for 26 Member/Partner States from COMESA, EAC and SADC as a means to unlock sustainable development in Africa.

The agreement is expected to enhance regional and continental processes by bringing some 632 million people together in a common market. The emergence of a common market will usher a new dynamism to the economy and allow private sector to benefit from new market access, particularly in the industrial manufacturing sector and the Freeport.

Moreover, the Tripartite FTA will offer substantial business opportunities to Mauritian economic operators and boost the level of foreign direct investment into the region. It will also help promote socio-economic development of the region and free movement of goods and services so as to encourage intra-regional trade.

Mauritius will also sign two other major free trade agreements namely the signature of a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement and Free Trade Agreement with India and China respectively in view of promoting trade and integration.

Mauritius hosts 4th General Assembly on Animal Genetic Resources

The 4th General Assembly on Animal Genetic Resources in the SADC region was held in Mauritius from 9 to 12 October 2017.

The objectives of the General Assembly were to: formulate joint interventions for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of Animal Genetic Resources in South Africa; discuss and agree on ways to fast-track the implementation of supported initiatives, especially those on transboundary breeds; and validate the report on the Regional Regulatory Framework for the Exchange, Use and Conservation of Animal Genetic Resources in Southern Africa.
A new fire station project at Rose Belle, which is in line with Government’s development strategy for Mauritius, will be the 11th station for the country upon its completion.

The Rose Belle Fire Station project, to the tune of Rs 100 million, will be constructed on a plot of land of 4,200 m² vested by the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands. The work is expected to start in October 2017 and will be completed in around 18 months.

With the setting up of this Fire Station, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services (MFRS) will be able to help the public more regularly and it will contribute to safety in the region.

The project consists of the construction of a two-storey building with reinforced concrete structure of a total area of 1,619 m², comprising four appliance bay, offices, technical documentation room, fitness and wellness area, conference room, rest room, kitchen, dining room and customer service area.

The new fire station project will include a customer care office, decentralisation of Fire Safety services, community Fire Safety and Emergency preparedness, enforcement of statutory fire safety requirements, community disaster training and disaster management. It will provide backup mainly to the airport in case of any major accident as well as to Mahebourg, St Aubin and Curepipe stations.

Several projects related to the MFRS are expected to be carried out at Goodlands and Montagne Blanche and new lorries to the tune of Rs 200 million will be acquired by the MFRS. The lorries will be equipped with high volume water pumps to be used in emergencies caused by flash floods and major outbreaks of fire in the near future.
The new quay, an important milestone in the development of Port Louis Harbour, was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, on 2 October 2017 at the Port Louis Harbour, Terminal III, in Mer Rouge.

In his address on the occasion, the Prime Minister stated that with the completion of this major development project, the Mauritius Container Terminal (MCT) is now a leading container port in the region with a total quay length of 800 metres, thus positioning Port Louis Harbour as the deepest port in the South West Indian Ocean.

According to Mr Jugnauth, maritime transportation and sea connectivity have a crucial role to play for the country and as its principal gateway, Port-Louis Harbour is handling about 99.5% of the total volume of external trade that is about 7.3 million tons of cargo annually.

The project, he added is a giant leap ahead to attract major players of the shipping community and capture a bigger regional container transhipment share of the market to make the Port Louis Harbour the most preferred maritime gateway in the Indian Ocean.

Moreover, the Prime Minister announced the construction of an Island Container Terminal opposite the MCT with capacity of over 1.5 million TEUs to cater for the expected boom in container traffic. It will comprise a breakwater of about 2 kms long, land reclamation of about 60 hectares, a navigation channel dredged to 18 meters deep to handle the largest container vessels in existence, a container terminal over an area of 40 ha together with a quay of 1 km long.

In this regard, the Mauritius Ports Authority is undertaking a Techno Economic Feasibility study for the project which is being financed through a grant from the African Development Bank.

The extension and strengthening of the Quay has necessitated an investment of Rs 6.5 billion. The project was partly financed by the Agence Française de Développement to the tune of Rs 1.4 billion, through a grant of 3.0 million Euros from the European Union Infrastructure Trust Fund and the remaining Rs 5.0 billion was injected by the MPA.
Implementation of Strategy Document for Special Education Needs in Mauritius

The new Policy Framework and Strategy Document on "Inclusive Education for Children with Special Education Needs in Mauritius: Concept to Reality", prepared in the wake of the Nine Year Schooling Reform, and as announced in Budget Speech 2016-2017 will be implemented as from next year.

The Document, which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4, advocates a shift from the Social Model to a Rights-based model of disability for learners with Special Education Needs.

The Strategy Goals include:

(a) the setting up of a Research Coordination Committee, comprising representatives of teacher education institutions, institutions of higher learning, hospitals and resource centres, to ensure quality in research, materials, and equipment developed for the purpose; and

(b) building home-school partnership through appropriate training of parents, empowering and involving parents in the teaching-learning process, and facilitating the creation of congenial environment for learning in schools/colleges/institutions and at home.

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The platform also served for the validation of the report on the Regional Regulatory Framework for the Exchange, Use and Conservation of Animal Genetic Resources in Southern Africa.
The four new generating units installed at the St Louis Power Station are operational as scheduled, and without any cost overrun.

The plant is equipped with modern features optimised for low emissions, waste heat recuperation exhaust gas boilers, waste incineration, and two 45-metre high exhaust stacks.

The carbon dioxide emission is low and the noise level is 55 decibels, which is within the environmental standards. The new Power Station has a total capacity of 67.4 MW.

On the occasion of the World Food Day commemorated on 16 October 2017, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security organised several activities, namely an agricultural fair at Domaine Les Pailles; exhibitions on the history and the evolution of the sugar and the crop sectors; and sale and exhibition of agricultural machinery.

The theme chosen for the World Food Day 2017 by the Food and Agriculture Organization is “Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development”.

In the context of the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of Independence of Mauritius, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security also organised mini agri-tech fairs and exhibitions at regional levels; open days at the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority, and experimental farms of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute; talks and conferences on the agricultural sector; and trails and nature walks in national parks during the period November 2017 to February 2018.