

## Mauritius advocates capacity enhancement to bolster e-commerce capabilities of developing countries



Port Louis, 1 March 2024 - The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr. Maneesh Gobin, participated in the Working Session on e-commerce at the 13<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi on Thursday 29 February 2024.

The Mauritian delegation significantly contributed to the discussions spearheaded by New Zealand's Minister of Trade and Export, Mr. Todd McClay, showcasing its active engagement and commitment to the dialogue. Minister Maneesh Gobin and Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady, assisted Minister Todd McClay during the session.

The Mauritian side stressed that while the primary mandate of the WTO is to establish trade rules and improve market openness, it should also give due attention to industrial and technical capacity building in developing countries so that they can raise their export-readiness and their competitiveness in global markets.

The WTO ought to forge strong partnerships with regional organisations and Development Finance Institutions to design and implement tailored programs aimed at empowering countries facing capacity deficits.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade made the point that trade rules and market access will be meaningless if countries do not have the capacity to produce and export.

Electronic commerce was first introduced in the WTO at the Second Ministerial Conference in May 1998 when WTO members adopted a Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce. This declaration urged the WTO General Council to establish a work programme to examine all trade-related issues arising from e-commerce.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade**