



## Republic of Mauritius - European Union



### Joint Press Release

*13 June 2019*

### **7<sup>th</sup> Mauritius - EU Political Dialogue: Reaffirming a solid partnership between the EU and Mauritius geared towards the future.**

In the framework of the 2019 Political Dialogue between the Republic of Mauritius and the European Union, the discussions on key areas of importance for the partnership between the EU and Mauritius were held on 13 June 2019 between Honourable Nandcoomar Bodha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, accompanied by Honourable Mahen Kumar Seeruttun, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Honourable Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms and Honourable Dharmendar Sesungkur, Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance and H.E. Marjaana Sall, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, accompanied by representatives from eight EU Member States – the British High Commissioner, the Ambassadors of France and Poland, the Deputy Heads of Missions and Counsellors from Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain and Ireland.

The representatives of Mauritius and the EU discussed the current state of play and the future of Mauritius-EU relations. They reaffirmed on this occasion their determination to continue building a solid partnership geared towards the future based on shared values and common interests.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha in his welcoming address highlighted:

*"In a fast changing world with important transformational shifts, the EU is more than a key political, economic and development partner of Mauritius. The EU remains, indeed, a safe anchor and vital link for a modern and forward-looking and sustainably resilient Mauritius. Our Dialogue today is not only to reaffirm the high premium we place on our relationship with the EU, but also to discuss ways and means to elevate it, going beyond the logic of traditional development cooperation. We are, indeed, confident that the EU, within the ACP-EU*

*framework and beyond, will back the ongoing efforts being deployed by Government to invest in human development, research and innovation, all of which are the cornerstone of a modern and an innovation-driven economy and inclusive society."*

In her opening statement, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, H.E. Marjaana Sall said:

*'The EU and Mauritius have a long-standing relationship and we are keen to further partner with Mauritius in its ambition to become a high-income country, develop into a knowledge and innovation based economy, and become a hub for investment in Africa. The EU-Mauritius partnership is now firmly geared towards the future and we stand ready to be the leading partner of the sustainable modernisation agenda of Mauritius in all its dimensions. Only by acting together and by strengthening our cooperation in international fora, we can respond to global and regional challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change, or maritime insecurity'.*

The representatives of Mauritius and the EU confirmed their commitment to a regular and results-oriented Political Dialogue held in line with Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. They expressed their willingness to strengthen their political partnership even more in the context of the new framework that will replace the Cotonou Agreement in 2020. They exchanged on their respective priorities for Post-Cotonou negotiations and agreed on the need to pay attention in the future framework to the specific vulnerability and fragility challenges faced by Small Island Developing States.

With a view of identifying areas of future cooperation, the Government presented the key trends in Mauritius and the region, as well as the new sectors of growth and the areas where the cooperation between Mauritius and the EU has an added value, in particular in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The EU reaffirmed its willingness to support the Mauritius goal of developing into a knowledge and innovation based economy, reaching high income status and becoming a trade and investment platform for Africa. Currently, the EU is supporting innovation, education and job creation in Mauritius in the context of a bilateral programme of EUR 7.9 million, while additional financing from the regional, thematic and Intra-ACP envelopes amounting to more than EUR 50 million is used to support Mauritius in various sectors, ranging from agriculture and climate change, through gender and human rights, to business environment and cybersecurity.

Mauritius and the EU agreed to promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core. They agreed to act as 'partners for multilateralism' and continue to explore areas for a closer collaboration in international fora and by strengthening regional institutions (including IOC, SADC, COMESA).

The representatives of Mauritius and the EU exchanged views on governance, rule of law and human rights. They underlined the importance of three bills that were prepared with the technical assistance of the EU (Children's Bill, Adoption Bill and Gender Equality Bill). They also discussed non-discrimination and freedom of expression, as well as LGBTI rights. Mauritius provided an update on various reforms, in particular in the field of taxation and anti-money laundering, where there is an ongoing dialogue and where the EU can provide technical assistance. Mauritius also provided information with respect to electoral reform, financing of political parties, access to information and criminal justice. The two sides exchanged on how to strengthen the mutual legal assistance between Mauritius and the EU Member States.

The representatives of Mauritius and the EU took stock of the progress achieved under two dedicated policy dialogues established to complement the annual Political Dialogue and

deepen their partnership. They discussed the results of the second Policy Dialogue on Gender held on 6th May 2019 and pledged to take further the joint efforts of EU and the Government to place gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment at the top of their agendas. They also referred to the importance of the fight against climate change as their shared goal and agreed to step up efforts and coordination in the context of the Policy Dialogue on Climate Change.

The representatives of the Government and the EU discussed the EU-Mauritius trade relations, including encouraging developments and prospects for deepening the ESA Interim Economic Partnership Agreement. They exchanged on how to increase business opportunities, trade exchanges and investment flows. Mauritius presented the progress of its Africa Strategy while the EU expressed its interest in working together with Mauritius and support it in line with the Africa-EU Alliance on Sustainable Investment and Jobs.

The two sides exchanged views on ways of improving ocean governance and on the progress towards achieving their respective commitments taken at Our Ocean Conferences in Malta and Bali. They exchanged on the opportunities for further cooperation with regard to the sustainable use of oceans and development of blue economy noting a key place of EU-Mauritius Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement. They discussed the involvement of the EU as one of the key security providers in the Indian Ocean and took stock of the progress achieved in the regional cooperation in the field of maritime security.