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European Union – Republic of Mauritius

Joint press release

4th EU-Mauritius Political Dialogue: Discussions focus on the future partnership

The 2016 Political Dialogue session between the Republic of Mauritius and the European Union as provided for under Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement was held today in BalACLava.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Honourable Etienne Sinatambou, and the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, H.E. Marjaana Sall, accompanied by representatives from eight Member States, held discussions on the current and future partnership between the EU and Mauritius.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Honourable Etienne Sinatambou, in his welcoming address highlighted:

"The strong bilateral relations between Mauritius and the European Union are founded on the core principles of democracy, rule of law, upholding Human Rights and mutual understanding, respect and trust. We have experienced, over the last forty years, an exemplary North-South partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of countries through the Lomé Conventions and the present Cotonou Agreement. This Partnership has provided a solid foundation for the economic development of Mauritius"

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

- "Today we held discussions on our partnership and on the way we can work together to address global challenges such as Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals, Regional Economic Integration, and Peace and Security. The EU stands ready to assist the Government in achieving its vision to evolve to a high income country. Our bilateral support under the 11th European Development Fund will focus on tertiary education and research and innovation in line with the Government priorities to improve the human capital base in the country, and contribute to unlock growth. There are also other funding opportunities under the regional programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean in support of Regional Economic Integration and Sustainable Management of natural resources which are priorities for Mauritius."

The EU and Mauritius underlined the quality of their longstanding partnership, and reaffirmed the strong economic and cultural ties between them.

The Parties exchanged views on issues of common interest such as the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), Peace and Security including the fight against Terrorism, combating Corruption and promoting Good Governance, addressing the effects of Climate Change, the Sustainable Development Goals and Regional Economic Integration amongst others. They agreed to explore ways to work together in addressing these **global issues**.

The Parties reviewed the **political and economic situation** in Mauritius and in Europe. The EU confirmed its commitment to continue to support the Government in achieving its ambition to evolve from the current upper middle income country status to a high income country. The EU bilateral support under the 11th European Development Fund will focus on **tertiary education** and **research and innovation** in line with the Government priorities to contribute to transforming Mauritius into a knowledge-based and innovative society.

They highlighted the importance of **regional integration and trade** for Mauritius economic development. They acknowledged that the European Union remained an important external partner for Mauritius. The European Union commended Mauritius for the interim **Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** signed with the European Union in 2009 and confirmed its willingness to continue providing assistance to Mauritius for the implementation of the agreement. They agreed to consider the possibility of the deepening and widening of the interim EPA, leaving the possibility for other ESA countries to join when they are ready. Mauritius reiterated its commitment to conclude a full and comprehensive EPA with the EU.

Both sides also discussed the impact of the EU Free Trade Agreements on the ACP-EU Partnership.

They underlined the historic **climate agreement** brokered in December 2015 and exchanged views on the implementation of commitments taken in Paris. The EU also took note of the participation of Mauritius in the Switch Africa Green programme and stated that it will continue to support climate action in Mauritius and build resilience in Small Island Developing States.

The parties also discussed **international security threats** and its impact on the region. The European Union announced that Peace, Security and Regional Stability were among the priorities addressed under regional cooperation.

The two sides reviewed issues relating to Good Governance and the fight against Corruption. The EU expressed appreciation on the determination of Mauritius to combat Corruption and encouraged it to continue consolidating Good Governance.

The Parties re-affirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Fisheries partnership agreement and to the curbing of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing with a view to ensuring sustainable exploitation of Fisheries resources. They also focused on the need for capacity building in this area.

They discussed the future of EU-Mauritius partnership in the context of the **Post Cotonou Agreement** that will come into force after 2020. The Parties expressed their confidence on

the future of their consistent Partnership within a new Framework to be negotiated. Mauritius highlighted the importance of Food Security and safety and the evolution of the Mauritius Sugar Industry within this Framework. Both sides agreed to work towards a higher value added Partnership focusing on areas of mutual interest.

Both Parties reiterated their commitment to regular Political Dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Honourable Etienne Sinatambou led the Mauritian delegation comprising five other Ministers, namely the Honourable Ravi Yerrigadoo, Attorney General, the Honourable Mahen Kumar Seeruttun, Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security, the Honourable Sudarshan Bhadain, Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, the Honourable Premdut Koonjoo, Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, shipping and Outer Islands and the Honourable Raj Dayal, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management.

They welcomed the significant progress of their partnership and reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of Good Governance, Democracy and respect for Human Rights which are the essential and fundamental elements of their relationship.

The Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Marjaana Sall, led the EU party. She was accompanied by the representatives from eight Member States, namely: Ireland, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Croatia, Austria, Portugal and Finland.

Background:

The European Union-Mauritius partnership not only covers development, investment or trade, but also an increasingly close cooperation in the areas of maritime security, science and innovation, and migration. It is based on the shared principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as fostering international peace and security.

Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement sets out the specific modalities for a regular, comprehensive, balanced and deep political dialogue. Contrary to past practices, the political dialogue under Cotonou covers a broad range of topics, essentially “all aims and objectives” laid down in the Agreement. As such, Article 8 seeks to focus the dialogue on specific political issues of mutual concern, including the regular assessment of progress regarding respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance.

The 1st EU-Mauritius Political Dialogue took place in 2011.

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