

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER,  
SIR ANEROOD JUGNAUTH, GCSK, KCMG, QC**

**Dinner in honour of the Diplomatic Corps**

**Monday 12 December 2016**

**Le Meridien Hotel, Pointe aux Piments**

**Hon Deputy Prime Minister,**

**Hon Vice Prime Ministers,**

**Hon Ministers,**

**The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Excellencies Ambassadors, High  
Commissioners and Heads of Missions,**

**Heads of International and Regional  
Organisations,**

**Members of the National Assembly,**

**Members of the Consular Corps,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Evening.

Lady Sarojini joins me in extending to you a very warm welcome to our annual end of year diplomatic gathering.

I always look forward to this dinner as an opportunity to look back over events that have occurred during the year and to reflect on the direction in which the world is evolving.

Addressing you on this annual occasion gives me the opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the Republic of Mauritius to democracy, the rule of law and a civilized world order.

We are a small islands nation but we very much value our democratic traditions and stand guided by the rules and principles of international law.

Mauritius is a staunch advocate of participatory diplomacy.

We will continue to work closely with like-minded nations who aspire to a fairer, more equitable, safer international environment and that relentlessly commit and endeavour for a more sustainable world where stability and a civilized order will prevail.

With humility and resolve, we will value add our contributions to advance the ideals of longstanding global peace and security.

Mauritius will continue to make its way in international affairs, driving an active diplomacy which remains perennially focused and engaged on interactions with our bilateral, international and other parties.

The status of our relations and the links of Mauritius with the world remain of sterling standing.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

By many counts, 2016 has been an eventful year.

First of all, 2016 has witnessed its toll of natural disasters and weather extremes from New Zealand to Haiti and from Italy to Fiji. Calamities have always drawn our attention and we should stand up to the difficulties posed by climate change.

Likewise, the massive exodus of migrants fleeing war-torn zones, persecution and despair, continue to highlight the urgent need to not only address the root causes of mass migration, but also the persisting inequalities within and among countries.

We have also continued to witness despicable terrorist attacks which call for more concerted actions among nations if we are to succeed in leaving a more secure world as legacy to future generations.

From many perspectives, the events in 2016 in several parts of the world have also been an awakening for leaders, political and social scientists on the new realities of global politics and new aspirations of people. Brexit, for example, caught the international community by surprise and proved even the best of international analysts wrong.

At the same time, the will of the people expressed through Brexit or more recently through the outcome of the Italian Constitutional referendum are examples of democracies at work.

## **Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

In the region this year, democratic principles were further consolidated through the holding of successful elections in the Seychelles and Comoros.

Further from our shores, in the United States, the American People elected their 45th President. I have conveyed our congratulations to President-elect, Donald Trump and I look forward to meet him at the earliest opportunity after he assumes office.

Mauritius will continue to see in the USA a major partner for peace and security and for trade through the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

## **Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

As I said earlier, the present time is more than ever warranting us to promote solidarity and collaboration amongst states

Only such solidarity and collaboration can help us advance on the UN 2030 agenda for SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063 which focus on how best to ensure equitable and inclusive socio-economic development.

My Vision 2030 Economic Mission Statement espouses that same imperative which is people centric.

My philosophy is to have an integrated approach for the promotion of sustainable development that reflects our desire for shared prosperity for our people, for the region and for greater partnership among nations.

It is in this spirit that Mauritius also welcomes the recent adoption of the COMESA 2016-2020 mid-term Strategic Plan and the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan 2013-2017.



As a Small Island Developing State, highly vulnerable in the face of Climate Change, Mauritius is comforted by the clear message of global commitment to reverse global warming. Mauritius welcomed the agreement on the Paris Treaty at COP 21 and was amongst the first countries to ratify the Treaty. We equally welcomed the adoption of the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol to curb the use of greenhouse gases and motivated, along with the World Bank, the convening of a special meeting on Oceans in the margins of COP 22.

Mauritius will continue to strongly pursue Climate Action along with the other Sustainable Development Goals.

Mauritius is hosting the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub that will build capacity for accessing and managing climate finance.

We were pleased to welcome last week members of the Steering Committee to prepare for the long term operation of the hub.

Let me thank Australia, not only for being an active member of the Steering Committee of the Climate Finance Access Hub, but also for having provided an initial outlay of 1 million Australian dollars for kick starting the operation of the hub.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am equally appreciative of the various initiatives that aim at supporting Africa in its development, amongst which, the India-Africa Forum, the Forum on China-Africa cooperation or the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

The status of our relationship with Asia remains pregnant with our historical and cultural longstanding bonds.

Asia as ever remains close to our heart and a valuable partner in our sustainable development.

And the relations we enjoy are growing from strength to strength.

Year 2016 has seen a rich, vibrant and successful India-Mauritius collaboration. During the weekend, we were graced by the presence of India's Defence Minister on our soil and this visit consolidated our bonds further.

Both countries have signed this year the Protocol for Amendment of the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Capital Gains. This illustrates clearly our resolve to combat tax evasion and to enhance the repute of our jurisdiction.

Also, a historic agreement has been signed between the two countries whereby India is providing grants to the tune of 12.7 billion Mauritian Rupees for the financing of major infrastructure projects.

The launching of one of them, the Metro Express, will coincide with the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Republic in March next year.

China also remains an important development partner and a friend for Mauritius. The China-Mauritius relationship has been consolidated with the visit of China's Foreign Affairs Minister in end-January, the opening of a branch of the Bank of China in Mauritius in September and the holding in November of the 10<sup>th</sup> Joint Sino-Mauritian Commission in Beijing, which was led by our Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the Mauritian side.

Both Mauritius and China have agreed to pursue collaboration to advance initiatives aimed at facilitating connectivity between Asia, Europe and Africa.

Similarly, the bilateral relations between Japan and Mauritius have been boosted through a Japan Embassy in Port Louis whose grand opening is scheduled for early next year.

We welcome Japan in the midst of our diplomatic community and we look forward to a new era of enhanced and fruitful collaboration.

We also look forward to strengthening relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia as part of growing our relationship with Asia as with the Middle East.

My Government took the decision to set up a Mauritius Embassy in Riyadh with a view to reinforcing our relations with Saudi Arabia as well as other Gulf Countries. I am informed that the Embassy would be operational before the end of this month.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade returned from Brussels this morning after attending ACP-EU meetings.

The European Union and its member-states have remained key development partners and contributors to the social and economic fabric of Mauritius. We trust that this relationship can be further advanced through a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and clear directions on the evolution of the ACP-EU relations post Cotonou.

As part of the European Union, the United Kingdom has been an important partner for Mauritius. The visit of the Rt. Hon Lord Mayor of the City of London earlier this year helped open up new areas of cooperation including financial services.

As the UK now puts into action its decision to pursue its development path outside the EU structure, we remain confident that we can continue to have a productive relationship.

**Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,**

La France reste aux côtés de la République de Maurice à chaque étape de son développement.

Les élections présidentielles de 2017 seront sans nul doute suivies de près par la population mauricienne et nous sommes convaincus que cette étape démocratique sera franchie dans les meilleures conditions.

Durant cette année nous avons reconduit l'Accord-cadre de coopération entre Maurice et l'Ile de la Réunion pour une période de cinq ans.

La signature de la convention cadre INTERREG en octobre est un grand pas pour rapprocher davantage nos deux îles.

Je salue les efforts de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie et du gouvernement malgache pour le bon déroulement du XVIème Sommet de la Francophonie auquel j'ai participé le mois dernier.

**Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

Last but certainly not least, let me turn my attention to Africa. Everyone is already aware of the cardinal principles underlying our Africa Strategy and the development of Special Economic Zones.

We were privileged this year to have the visit of the President of Madagascar as our Chief Guest for the National Day. We were also honored by the visit of the President of Comoros and the Minister of Trade of Botswana, amongst others.



We look forward to the launching of the African Economic Platform by the African Union in March next year in Mauritius. Our decision to host this launch is part of our wish to have more high level events in Mauritius.

One such high level event was the 23rd Congress of the International Council of Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) held in Mauritius in May this year where we were honoured by the presence of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, whom we thank heartily for his excellent stewardship of the United Nations.

**We congratulate his designated successor Mr Antonio Guterres from Portugal.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Africa is a big Continent and we do not always have the resources to engage fully with all countries

outside the ones where Special Economic Zones are being planned, namely in Ghana, Senegal and Madagascar.

However countries in the neighbourhood like Seychelles and Comoros and others like South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire and Ethiopia remain high on our agenda.

Already, the meeting of Mauritius-South Africa senior officials this year has opened up new opportunities for cooperation in various sectors, amongst which the support of the South African side for the setting up of a pharmaceutical village.

Whilst I have wanted to recognize the various countries that have helped Mauritius on its development path and continue to do so, it would be amiss of me not to refer to the various regional and international organisations that have always been

present, amongst which the UNDP, the Agence Française de Développement, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Indian Ocean Rim Association. Thank you for the contribution that you make to Mauritius.

### **Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

I could not end without referring to the Chagos Archipelago. The case has been well ventilated. So I will simply reaffirm the commitment of my Government to pursue all efforts to complete the decolonisation process of Mauritius, thereby enabling Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

Mauritius is deeply grateful for the invaluable support it has received from numerous countries around the world, both individually and at the level of multilateral groupings such as the African Union,

the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and the ACP Group, in its efforts to complete its decolonisation process.

Mauritius counts on the continued support of the international community for the adoption of a resolution at the level of the United Nations General Assembly seeking an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

### **Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

At the start of my address this evening, I said that 2016 had been an eventful year marked by some unpredictable happenings.

I believe that the thinking that has shaped our world this past decade is changing. The benefits of globalisation seem increasingly being challenged. Many of the reactions we have witnessed are

motivated by fear, fear of being left out, fear of losing what we have, fear rooted in uncertainty about the evolution of a world which is constantly changing.

If we deal with this in isolation, there will be no solution. Yet again, we must rely on our solidarity to tackle emerging issues.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me conclude by saying how happy we are that the cultural heritage of Mauritius, both tangible and intangible, are being acknowledged at international level. We are honoured by the inscription of 'Bhojpuri Geet Gawai' at the UNESCO.

On this rejoicing note, Lady Sarojini and I would like to convey to you all and to your respective families our best wishes for 2017.

We also present through you our season's greetings to your respective Heads of State and Government and to the people of your countries.

I thank you heartily from the bottom of my heart for your kind attention.