

**Speech for The Right Honourable Minister Mentor,  
Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues  
On the occasion of the handing over ceremony of  
hydrographic charts of Rodrigues and Le Morne**

**Conference Room, Prime Minister's Office  
Friday 8 February 2019 – 14 h 30**

**The Minister of Housing and Lands,**

**The Minister of Ocean Economy,**

**His Excellency, the High Commissioner of  
India,**

**The Commissioner of Police,**

**The Commanding Officer of INS Sarvekshak,**

**The Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,**

**Director, Continental Shelf and Maritime  
Zones Administration and Exploration,**

**Commanding Officer, National Coast Guard,**

**Respected Officers,**

**Representatives of the Media,**

**Good afternoon to all of you**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this landmark event marking the completion of the nautical surveys carried out since December 2018 by the Indian Naval Ship Sarvekshak and the handing over of hydrographic Charts for Rodrigues Island and Le Morne region in the southeast of Mauritius.

Let me first of all thank the Indian Government for its continued support in the conduct of hydrographic surveys in our maritime zones and the assistance extended to set up a Mauritian Hydrographic Unit and building capacity of our institutions including the skill development of Mauritian hydrographers.

Since 2009, Indian Navy vessels have also been carrying out, at the request of the Government of Mauritius, surveillance and joint patrolling of our Exclusive Economic Zone, as deterrence to piracy and illegal fishing, and also providing valuable Outer Island support.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Moreover, the Government of India has provided assistance for the procurement of various assets for the Mauritius Police Force, including the Offshore Patrol Vessels CGS Barracuda, CGS Valiant and CGS Victory, and ten Fast Interceptor Boats.

I can proudly commend the current Trident Project financed by the Government of India, which entails the construction of new Headquarters for the National Coast Guard along with amenities and facilities. These would indeed considerably upgrade the capability of the NCG to meet future challenges and no doubt is another vivid example of the fruitful collaboration between our two countries.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I seize this opportunity to reiterate our deepest gratitude to the Government of India for its precious support in the successful Joint Submission by Mauritius and the Seychelles of the Extended Continental Shelf dossier to the United Nations. Indeed, India contributed directly by carrying out two major bathymetric surveys in the region of the Mascarene Plateau which ultimately allowed Mauritius and Seychelles to substantiate the Joint Submission.

I am also very grateful to the Government of India for the assistance extended to our Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration for technical support regarding surveys in the region of Rodrigues.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am informed that the last Hydrographic survey for Rodrigues was undertaken more than 150 years ago. The new survey and its related data being remitted to us this afternoon will be of paramount importance in charting out the future development of Rodrigues. In fact, hydrographic data is a critical asset for any activity at sea and in coastal areas.

Every human activity conducted in, on or under the sea depends on knowing the depth and the nature of the seafloor, the identification of any hazards that might exist and an understanding of the tides and the currents. Obtaining and disseminating this hydrographic knowledge is the role of hydrographers. Their work is the most fundamental of all the enablers required to develop and sustain the Ocean Economy.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, Mauritius is determined to make of the Ocean Economy a new pillar for wealth creation.

Considered as one of the last frontier for economic expansion and diversification, the maritime domain which in the case of Mauritius represents an Exclusive Economic Zone of nearly 1% of the world's oceans, provides our country with a true potential for marine living and non-living resources.

But we need to be careful and responsible. That's where hydrographic data will help us to take the best decisions for sustainable development of our coastal and marine resources.

The hydrographic information gathered would contribute towards the implementation of our national ocean database and the elaboration of a Marine Spatial Plan, both of which are currently being undertaken by the Department for Continental Shelf, under my Ministry. Indeed, these will facilitate the assessment of our marine and coastal resources and contribute towards the sustainable use of our maritime zones.

More so, bathymetric data collected would be very beneficial for research purposes and emergency planning such as tsunami modelling studies, enhancing tsunami inundation maps and consequently, in the development of evacuation strategies in the event of a tsunami.



**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The conduct of hydrographic surveys, as we can see, is indeed a necessary requirement for us to be able to gauge our ocean capacity and carefully plan and phase the development of our ocean economy.

Once again, I thank the Government of India for providing us with the technical and technological support, valuable data, resources and logistics that we require to move ahead on our socio-economic agenda.

India has been accompanying us all the way on our journey towards shaping a bright future for our country and our people. That is one of the reasons we affectionately refer to India as Mother India.

I thank you for your kind attention.