

## MRA hosts the 13<sup>th</sup> ATAF Country Correspondent Conference

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) hosted the **13<sup>th</sup> ATAF Country Correspondent Conference** from Thursday 11 to Friday 12 May 2023 at the Regional Training Centre (Mauritius), Customs House, Mer Rouge. Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development was the Chief Guest to the function. The ATAF Country Correspondent Conference is an annual meeting of ATAF's members. The objective was to further strengthen the efficiency of tax administrations in Africa to support the socio-economic development. Collaborative dialogue on tax administration was at the center of the deliberation and it was a fruitful experience for the participating countries.



*Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy launched the opening ceremony of the 13<sup>th</sup> ATAF Country Correspondent Conference*

In his keynote address, Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy explained: *“despite our economic specificities, Mauritius has fully supported the ATAF and its African counterparts in their move towards international tax cooperation. We have equally voted for the resolution on global tax rules that have been passed at the United Nations General Assembly.”*

The Minister underlined that *“in order to generate solid revenue growth and enhance the well-being of our nation, we need to build effective and efficient tax administrations. International tax cooperation is equally vital for the development of a country.”*

The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, he mentioned, is closely working with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to smoothly implement the two-pillar solution, including the Global Minimum Tax.

Membership to the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) is a pre-requisite with a view to improving our tax system, increasing its accountability, enhancing domestic resource mobilization and ultimately assisting in fostering inclusive economic growth. On this score, the Minister observed that *“whilst much work has been done in the field of illicit financial flows and base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS), important challenges for our continent remain. This is why cooperation among the ATAF member countries is of paramount importance.”*

To be a world class Revenue Authority respected for its professionalism and efficiency, MRA has indeed set a whole synergy to implement innovative measures to ensure tax compliance. Dr. Padayachy underlined that *“the MRA has an important role for the benefit of the Mauritian people and economy. While Mauritius went through the worst crisis of its history, MRA has ensured business continuity and has actively supported the implementation of the government strategy”*. The Minister emphasized the key support schemes such as the Wage assistance scheme and the Self-employed assistance scheme which were introduced by the Government to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. The swift operationalization of these historic measures allowed Mauritius to fully recover from the crisis. He applauded the MRA for the prompt implementation of these schemes and the Ministry of Finance is more than ever determined to provide all the necessary support to the MRA, he added.

Dr. Padayachy pointed out that the MRA registered a peak in revenue collection of more than 23% when comparing the second semester of 2021 and 2022. More precisely, tax revenue collected has risen from Rs 51.38 Billion for the period July 2021-December 2021 to Rs 62.97 Billion for the period July 2022-December 2022. These figures, he mentioned, clearly validate the concrete economic resilience of Mauritius as well as the tangible effectiveness of the government's strategy and its institutions to protect our people and businesses.

Speaking about macroeconomics, Dr. Padayachy affirmed that *“the Mauritian economy is performing well and will further expand. Likewise, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate is amongst the highest in the world”*.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) itself revised Mauritius' GDP growth for 2022 upward by 36 percent, from 6.1 percent to 8.3%. In its latest National Accounts published, Statistics Mauritius has set a growth of 8.7% for 2022 and forecasted that the GDP for 2023 will further increase by 5%. This robust growth is visibly driven by investment, said the Minister, while the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached 27.7 billion rupees in 2022, compared to 18.5 billion rupees in 2021, signifying a surge of 50%.



[Speech by Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padavachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development](#)

Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Rajeshsharma Ramloll, Solicitor General, members of the Management Team of the MRA and delegates, namely Mr. Duncan Onduru, Executive Director of CATA, Mrs. Mary Baine, Deputy Executive Secretary, ATAF, ATAF's Country Correspondents and ATAF's Directors and Secretariat Staff were also present.

In his address, Mr. Sudhamo Lal underlined that Mauritius has a long-standing engagement with ATAF. He recalled that the first General Assembly of ATAF was hosted by Mauritius in 2011 and Mauritius was one of the five founding Signatories to the ATAF agreement which officialised the establishment of the Organization. For three consecutive mandates, Mauritius occupied the positions of Member to Vice Chairman of the ATAF Council. For the past 11 years, the MRA has been an active partner in the capacity building initiatives of ATAF, and both organizations have collaborated in various endeavors in the tax landscape.

Mr. Lal emphasized that the MRA has hosted various seminars and workshops and even cohosted two Executive Masters in Taxation Curriculum Workshops. The MRA was also among the first fifteen countries to have associated with ATAF to initiate the African Tax Outlook (ATO) annual publication project. ATAF has set up three Technical Committees, the Value Added Tax (VAT), Exchange of Information (EOI) and Cross Border Transactions (CBT) committees to undertake focused work on specific areas requiring more engagement from tax administrations. Mauritius is also a member of the ATAF VAT and ATAF EOI Technical Committees. On this score, he added that *“Mauritius has always maintained a close relationship with ATAF as MRA believes in its mission and vision, and MRA will continue to support ATAF in all its endeavors towards the attainment of its goals.”*

For Mr. Lal, the presence of ATAF Country Correspondents at this conference is a testimony of the commitment ATAF member countries have pledged to ATAF's vision and mission. Country Correspondents, no doubt, play a critical role in the fulfilment of ATAF's objectives. ATAF, he said, has largely contributed to building the capacity of African Tax Administrations. Its country programmes have led to the reviewing of business structures and procedures, training many tax auditors, implementing Automatic Exchange of Information, and setting up exchange of information units and transfer pricing units in many countries.

The Director-General of the MRA underscored that " *some member countries have even collected millions of US dollars of tax, thanks to ATAF's technical assistance which was provided to them in reviewing their legislation*". Mr. Lal highlighted that ATAF is also a key player in the OECD Inclusive Framework and the UN Committee of Experts. " *ATAF will continue this battle and reach new milestones and the role of Country Correspondents is crucial in ensuring the attainability of these goals,*" he concluded.



## [Speech by Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of the MRA](#)

### ATAF

The African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) is a pan-African network providing a platform for intra-African collaboration and peer-learning between tax administrations. It was established in 2009 to boost efficient and effective tax administration to improve the living standards of the people of Africa. It aims at enhancing tax systems in Africa through exchanges, knowledge dissemination, capacity development and active contribution to the regional and global tax agenda.

ATAF focuses its work on two key areas: technical assistance and research. For instance, ATAF's capacity building measures also include online courses and the establishment of a Master's programme. Currently, ATAF has 38 member countries.

Speaking during the opening ceremony, Mrs. Mary Baine, Deputy Executive Secretary, ATAF mentioned that " *Mauritius, as a country, may not be big in size but the big heart of its people, its wealth in natural beauty and cultural diversity are un-matched.*"

From its inception, she added, ATAF prioritized tax reform, in addition to national capacity building initiatives. ATAF is guided by its firm belief that effective tax policy is critical for global and Africa's development agenda. This is the reason behind ATAF's recognition as a primary partner on taxation in Africa.

ATAF, according to Mrs. Mary Baine, has steadily demonstrated capacity and zeal to contribute to the realization of the global development agenda contained in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Mrs Baine dwelt on the main priorities of the conference relating to tax reforms, taxation of the digital economy, and international tax transparency. She observed that "the world of tax has become more complex and dynamic over the last 10 years, with an increasing focus on transparency, digital taxation, technology, collaboration, and social and environmental issues.

The Country Correspondent Conference (CCC) brought together representatives from the 42 members of ATAF, and it was an excellent opportunity for ATAF to share its plans and vision for the future with its member countries, while clarifying expectations from both sides for optimal results. Through this conference, ATAF aims to enhance communication, engagement, coordination, and collaboration.



[Speech by Mrs. Mary Baine, Deputy Executive Secretary, ATAF](#)