

The Prime Minister reiterates his full support to the MRA



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) celebrated the International Customs Day (ICD) on Wednesday 26 January 2022. This year, the World Customs Organisation (WCO) retained the theme “Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem” in view of encouraging the Customs community to operate in a fully digital environment by creating an operating model that captures and exploits data from across the trade ecosystem.

This event also marked the inauguration of the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) at le Chaland, Plaine Magnien by the Prime Minister, Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

The ICCC is a one-stop-shop for the clearance of air cargo. This modern building, located in the vicinity of the SSR International Airport, will house along with the customs services, several clearance agencies under one roof, namely:

1.	The Dangerous Chemicals Control Board Ministry of Health & Wellness
2.	The National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office and Pesticides Regulatory Office Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security
3.	The National Plant Protection Office Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security
4.	The Veterinary Service Division Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security
5.	The Government Pharmacist Ministry of Health & Wellness
6.	The Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
7.	The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection
8.	The Public Health and Food Safety Office Ministry of Health & Wellness

The main objectives of the ICCC are to facilitate trade, reduce cargo dwell time and help in the combat against drug trafficking and money laundering. This new concept is in line with the recommendation of the World Customs Organization's (WCO) for a Coordinated Border Management (CBM).

The building is unique in its genre with a modern eco-friendly architectural design encompassing "green" concepts such as use of solar energy, maximum use of natural lighting, and rain-water harvesting systems. This building is equipped with the necessary facilities and amenities for a more effective interaction with the trading community.

This includes:

- a modern office space for better interaction between government authorities and stakeholders;
- a detention cell (to be used by Customs Anti-Narcotics Section);
- a sniffer dogs (K-9) compound;
- a CCTV control room; and
- a canteen/cafeteria and other welfare amenities.

The ICCC also comprises a Conference Centre equipped with multimedia facilities. It is located adjacent to the main building and aims at hosting conferences and seminars.

It is to be noted that the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) was done on the occasion of the International Customs Day on Sunday 26 January, 2020 by the Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.



In his opening address, the Prime Minister commended the role of MRA Customs and Customs administrations worldwide, which like other essential government services, have operated 24/7 during the COVID-19 pandemic and national confinements. “Customs Officers had to take timely and decisive measures to ensure supply chain and business continuity”, he added.

He reiterated his unwavering support to the MRA. He congratulated the MRA for the unprecedented seizures of different types of drugs and psychotropic substances worth more than Rs 5 Billion during the past 5 years.

In his address, Mr Lal, Director-General of the MRA, highlighted the efforts of the MRA in the ranking of Mauritius to the 5th position worldwide in the last World Bank Ease of Paying Taxes Index. He added: “During the COVID-19 lockdown, the MRA assisted directly or indirectly around 450,000 employees and self-employed persons. In the tourism sector, the financial support to some 43,000 persons has continued until December 2021. In terms of the schemes which are still on-going, I would like to mention that the MRA is effecting some 42,000 monthly payments under the Negative Income Tax whilst some 850 SMEs

are being refunded salary compensation every month so that around 18,000 employees can benefit from higher salaries”.

He recalled the recent atypical discovery by MRA Customs of a new born and alive baby covered with tissue paper inside the toilet bin of an Air Mauritius flight from Madagascar, on the 1st of January 2022. He congratulated the Customs officers who saved the life of the new born on account of their timely, meticulous and in-depth rummage exercise.

Mr. Ramburun, Director, Customs, in his speech, highlighted the 2 new customs projects. The first one being the e-Duty free certificate which is an online platform to expedite the application of duty remission on motor vehicles for eligible persons and the second project is the e-Courier platform that will enable Courier operators and members of the public to submit simplified declarations and effect payment online to clear courier consignments

He also congratulated the 17 awardees of the WCO Certificate of Merit and thanked them wholeheartedly for their outstanding contribution.

To mark the 15 years of the setting-up of the MRA, the Prime Minister, Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth launched a commemorative magazine entitled “MRA: Positioned to meet challenges ahead”.

