

## The Combat against Drug Trafficking: 38 Drug Enforcement Agency Officers Trained



A Three-Day US funded Training on ‘Combating Drug Trafficking’ culminated with an award of certificates to 38 participants who successfully followed the course. The ceremony was marked by the presence of Mrs Judes E. DeBaere, Chargé d’Affaires, US Embassy, Mr Val Penascino, Regional Security Officer at the US Embassy, Mr. R. Olson, DEA Country Attaché, Mrs Dassyne, Director, FSL, Mr Bhoojoo, Deputy Commissioner of Police, ADSU, Mr V. Ramburun, Director of Customs, Mr Maunikum, Director, Human Resources & Training, MRA, Senior MRA officers and participants.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) organised the training from 26 to 28 April 2022 at the Training Academy, Custom House, Mer Rouge in collaboration with resource persons from the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the US Embassy in Mauritius.

The aim of the training is to enhance the skills of Law Enforcement Officers in the identification of precursor chemicals and dangerous drugs, collect evidence and exploit information, and employ operational skills to combat drug trafficking. The participants from

Mauritius Police Force (MPF), Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), DPP's Office and the MRA Customs actively participated in the sessions. This training will enhance the synergy and the effective collaboration among sister agencies in the fight against drug trafficking. It was a continuation of a course on 'Narcotic Investigation' held in February 2018 by the DEA.

In her keynote address, Mrs Judes E. DeBaere, Chargé d'Affaires of US Embassy thanked the Mauritius Revenue Authority for having generously accepted to host the training at the Training Academy, Custom House. "The DEA and U.S. Government as a whole will continue to work to assist all nations in the East Africa region to combat drug trafficking. Through initiatives such as this training we will increase maritime border security and strengthen investigative capabilities. The skills you take home with you will have an immediate impact on the streets of Mauritius", she added.

In his closing address, the Director of Customs, Mr V. Ramburun, expressed his deep gratitude to the US Government and the US Embassy for its unflinching support in building the capacity of enforcement agencies in Mauritius. In this endeavour, Mauritian Enforcement Officers were trained on Narcotics Investigations in February 2018. MRA customs officers are also given the opportunity to attend training courses at the U.S. funded International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana.

Mr V. Ramburun highlighted that during the past five years, MRA Customs officers have detected dangerous drugs worth more 5 billion rupees. "We are leveraging on state of the art equipment to further enhance the operational capabilities of our officers. Body scanners which are speedy and accurate have been procured and are now operational at the airport. We are already getting promising result. In fact, two drug mules of Nigerian origin, one lady aged 46 years and a man aged 36 years were arrested on 20 April 2022. 119 pellets consisting of 2.5 kg of heroin worth 37 million MUR was recovered from them by having recourse to the newly installed whole body scanner. A drug loo to facilitate the hygienic recovery of pellets is also operational at the airport and thus reduces lengthy and delicate procedures previously put in place", he added.