

## MRA hosts its 14<sup>th</sup> Integrity Advisory Committee (IAC)



The Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), Mr. S. Lal, chaired the 14<sup>th</sup> Integrity Advisory Committee (IAC) on Friday, May 27, 2022. The IAC is a platform where the MRA enters into a dialogue with its stakeholders with a view to enhance its anti-corruption policy and integrity promotion program. The MRA Whistleblowing Policy, the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund, and the OECD Review of Confidentiality of Information were the main themes on the agenda.

The Chairperson welcomed the Committee Members, namely, Mr. Sanjeev Sharma, CEO, Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants (MIPA), Mr. Allen Sandrazie, President of The Mauritius Taxpayers Association (MTPA), Mr. Ameene Khodabux, MSK, Treasurer of Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS), Mrs. Doorga Ram-Gopal, Project & Research Officer, Transparency Mauritius (TM), Mrs. Nafeeza Mulung, Learning and Advocacy Manager, Mauritius Institute of Directors, Mrs. Rooma Narrainen, Head of Advocacy, Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

Mr. Lal stressed on the COVID-19 impact on the different players of the economy, and the MRA was no exception. However, the MRA adapted and continued to offer its services without any major disruption. For instance, the MRA uses digital transformation and aligned business processes to improve operational efficiency to meet organisational goals. Digitalisation has led to the creation of virtual workplace, which enabled the "Work from Home" scheme at the MRA.

During the two lockdowns, the two financial assistance schemes, namely, the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) and the Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS) were fully implemented by officers working remotely and without the need for the beneficiaries of those two schemes to come to

the office to make applications and collect payment. He also explained that the MRA IT Department has developed the necessary platforms in house for the processing of SEAS and GWAS applications in a few days just after the lock down announced by the Government and all transactions are effected electronically including payment.

In the Customs Department, a Central Control Room has been set up with cutting edge technologies to monitor activities in respect of the examination of containers. A Risk Management System decides which container will be examined and who will conduct the examination. In addition, it is the Supervisor in the Control Room who gives approval or release of goods.

Mr. Lal concluded that automation at the MRA not only brings facilitation but also integrity and removes opportunities for corruption to occur.

The Committee took note of the implementation of a new whistle-blowing policy at the MRA for use by all its employees, stakeholders, and members of the public. This policy is in furtherance of the Authority's desire to affirm its commitment to organizational integrity and to intensify the fight against tax crimes, fraud, corruption-related offences, drugs, smuggling of goods, money laundering, and other misconduct or malpractices.

The Committee was apprised on the implementation at the level of the MRA of the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund. Its background, mechanism, rates applicable, benchmarking and gratuity payment were the main issues covered. Finally, the global standard on tax transparency and exchange of information to fight against tax evasion, tax base erosion, banking secrecy and opacity in general was shared with the Committee.

The members of the IAC applauded the work of the MRA and its commitment to delivering its services effectively and efficiently.