

# MRA e-Newsletter

Mauritius Revenue Authority

**AUGUST 2023** 



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# **EDITORIAL NOTE**

#### Dear Readers,

We are delighted to welcome you to the August edition of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) e-Newsletter. This month, we are pleased to share some outstanding news about MRA's performance during the financial year 2022-2023, which reflects our commitment to serving the Republic of Mauritius efficiently and effectively.

During the last financial year, MRA achieved a remarkable milestone by collecting Rs. 137 Billion in revenue, marking an impressive 21.6% increase compared to the previous financial year.

Our success is attributed to several factors, with the dedication and competence of our exceptional team of employees at the forefront. Their unwavering commitment to MRA's vision and mission has been instrumental in achieving these remarkable results.

The strong partnership between taxpayers and the MRA is the cornerstone of our success. We have actively engaged with taxpayers through educational initiatives and effective communication, further strengthening this bond of trust.

Moreover, the MRA's mandate has been bolstered by the implementation of numerous financial assistance schemes, such as the Negative Income Tax, Self-employed Assistance Scheme, and Government Wage Assistance Scheme, which were introduced during the challenging times of the pandemic. Today, we manage new schemes, such as the Independent Allowance, Child Allowance, and Housing Loan Relief Schemes, demonstrating our commitment to the welfare of our citizens.

Looking ahead, we are excited to introduce MyRa, the Virtual Assistant, and expand our e-Appointment facility to streamline the e-filing process for Individual Income Tax Returns in 2023. These advancements are a testament to our commitment to making your interactions with the MRA as seamless and user-friendly as possible.

In conclusion, MRA's achievements in the past year and our ongoing efforts to enhance tax administration and taxpayer services demonstrate our commitment to our nation's prosperity and well-being.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership with the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Editorial team

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#### **Revenue Collection 2022-2023:**

# MRA COLLECTS RS. 137 BILLION: A 21.6% INCREASE



The Annual Press Conference of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) took place on Thursday, August 31st, 2023, at the MRA headquarters in Ehram Court, Port-Louis. Mr. Sudhamo Lal, the Director-General of MRA, highlighted the organisation's achievements, new initiatives and projects. This annual convocation with professionals of the media took place with the participation of MRA Management Team and members.

"MRA has reaffirmed its efficiency and effectiveness as a world-class revenue-raising authority, exceeding previous year's revenue collection by a growth of 21.6% for the fiscal year 2022/2023. In this period, MRA collected a total of Rs 137 billion, a significant increase from Rs 112.6 billion in 2021/2022." This was the gist of the information to which the population of the Republic of Mauritius keeps tuned .





Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA



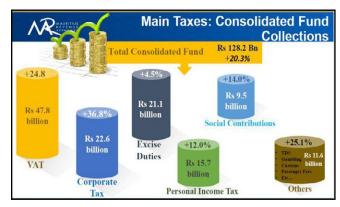
Out of the total collection, Rs. 128.2 billion was remitted to the consolidated fund, serving as a crucial resource for government financial activities that support public services, infrastructure development, social welfare programmes, and other national expenditures.

On the overall, tax collection, Mr. Lal stated: "Corporate tax generated Rs 22.6 billion, representing a substantial increase of 36.8% compared to the previous year's collections. Net VAT collections for the fiscal year 2022-2023 amounted to Rs 47,766 million, a growth of 24.8% over the previous financial year."

"Additionally, Rs 15.7 billion was collected under the Personal Income Tax (PIT), marking a 12.0% increase", Mr. Lal added.

The total receipts for the Solidarity Levy amounted to Rs 2.5 billion.

## Further details on Revenue Collection can be found below:





| Types of Taxes                         | 2021/2022<br>Actual<br>(Rs m) | 2022/2023<br>Actual<br>(Rs m) | B/A    |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
|  | A                             | В                             |        |
| Corporate Tax                          | 16,481                        | 22,552                        | 36.8%  |
| Personal Income Tax                    | 13,999                        | 15,677                        | 12.0%  |
| Tax Deducted at Source                 | 2,180                         | 2,949                         | 35.2%  |
| Value-Added Tax                        | 38,266                        | 47,766                        | 24.8%  |
| Customs duties                         | 1,528                         | 1,825                         | 19.4%  |
| Excise duties                          | 20,144                        | 21,055                        | 4.5%   |
| Taxes on Gambling                      | 1,930                         | 2,712                         | 40.5%  |
| Passenger Fee/Passenger Solidarity Fee | 613                           | 1,648                         | 169.0% |
| Special Levy on Banks                  | 1,028                         | 1,095                         | 6.5%   |
| Special Levy on Telecommunication.     | 148                           | 371                           | 150.7% |
| COVID Levy                             | 1,219                         | 118                           | -90.3% |
| Environment Protection Fee             | 326                           | 549                           | 68.1%  |
| Advertising Structure Fee              | 35                            | 43                            | 22.5%  |
| Social contributions (CSG)             | 8,349                         | 9,514                         | 14.0%  |
| Miscellaneous                          | 252                           | 277                           | 9.7%   |
| Total to Consolidated Fund             | 106,500                       | 128,152                       | 20.3%  |
| Other Social Security Contributions    | 4,714                         | 6,3 <mark>7</mark> 5          | 35.2%  |
| Other Agency Tax collections           | 1,399                         | 2,434                         | 74.0%  |
| Total MRA Revenue Collections          | 112,614                       | 136,962                       | 21.6%  |



The press conference also highlighted MRA's recent innovative projects, focusing on taxpayer convenience, good governance, integrity, and transparency. One such project, **e-Invoicing**, entails the generating of electronic invoices that must be validated by MRA before issuance. The e-Invoicing project is being executed in phases, with the first phase launched in June 2023 for software developers and solution providers. Subsequent phases target businesses with turnovers over Rs 100 million.

**e-Tax Account** was introduced as an interactive electronic communication system between MRA and taxpayers, streamlining correspondence and document retrieval. This system aligns with the MRA Taxpayer Portal and helps the taxpayers in accessing submitted tax returns, refund status, and payment records.

Looking ahead, Customs projects include equipping Customs Officers with firearms and defensive weapons to enhance safety and security during duty. Additionally, five scanners will be installed at the SSR International Airport's Arrival Hall to bolster security, improve border control, and expedite passenger clearance.



The MRA Annual Press Conference serves as a platform for MRA to communicate its achievements and strategic plans transparently. It underscores MRA's commitment to collaboration with taxpayers and the media.

Mr. Amick Teeluckdharry, Assistant Director of the Taxpayer Education and Communication Department, and also spokesperson of the MRA dwelt on the strong partnership between MRA and the various stakeholders such as the taxpayer's community and the local media with whom we are "Partners in Progress."

"Over time, our partnership with taxpayers has grown stronger and stronger." On this score, Mr. Teeluckdharry highlighted the vital role of the media in disseminating information effectively, citing the example of the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme's successful implementation during the COVID-19 lockdown with media support.



This Press Conference showcases MRA's dedication to innovation, transparency, and cooperation in its pursuit of financial excellence and socio-economic progress. It ended with an interactive session with professionals of the media.





#### MyRA: MRA Chatbot

Also intervening during this event, Mr. Mahmad Oozeer, Director, Operational Services Department, launched MyRA, a virtual assistant, meant, in the first place, to help individual taxpayers in the e-filing of their income tax return this year.





# INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURNS - e-FILING SEASON 2023

Individual Income Tax Returns e-Filing Season 2023



- 4,607 Returns received as at Thursday, 31 August 2023
- Deadline to submit Return: Monday 16 October 2023

The Individual Income Tax Returns e-Filing Season 2023 officially begun on 29 August 2023. The e-Filing exercise comprises the filing of Income Tax Returns by individual taxpayers, based on income derived during the period 1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023. This annual exercise is performed through the MRA website: www.mra.mu It concerns employees in the public and private sectors, as well as, self-employed individuals and expatriates.

The deadline for the submission of Individual Income Tax Returns for the e-Filing Season 2023 to the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is Monday 16 October, 2023. However, MRA is making an appeal to taxpayers not to wait for the last minute to submit their returns and effect payment if any. Moreover, those eligible for a refund will have their accounts credited promptly, if they file their returns early. To this end, taxpayers are requested to provide their correct bank account details. Those having to pay, may have recourse to the online direct debit facility available on MRA website. The credit card facility may be used for amounts not exceeding Rs. 25,000.

Self-employed taxpayers may opt for the simplified return in filing their returns, provided their annual revenue does not exceed Rs. 325,000.

#### **Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS)**

In view of offering a better service to taxpayers, MRA makes an appeal to all taxpayers to participate in a Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS) after submitting their Individual Income Tax Returns. The survey aims at receiving feedback from the public on the way they interact with MRA.

Taxpayers participating in the TSS will automatically qualify themselves for a draw which will be effected at the end of October 2023. Three cash prizes of Rs. 25,000, Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 10,000 respectively will be awarded to the first three winners.

#### Who should file a return?

A standard tax return should be submitted by every individual who, during the income year ended 30 June 2023:

- derived a net income which exceeded Rs. 325,000; or
- derived a gross income from business exceeding Rs. 2 million; or
- derived emoluments in respect of which Pay As You Earn (PAYE) has been withheld; or
- derived income which has been subject to Tax Deduction at Source (TDS); or
- had a chargeable income.

#### **Assistance for filing Individual Income Tax Returns**

**Helpdesk Unit:** MRA wishes to inform taxpayers that, for any assistance to file their return, they may phone the MRA hotline: 207 6000 during working hours.

**e-Appointment:** Taxpayers have the possibility to book a time slot on MRA website, on a particular day, at their convenience. Assistance to file their income tax return will be provided by MRA Officers through a WhatsApp Video Call on the day and time of the appointment.

MyRA: MRA has introduced MyRA, a Virtual Assistant, configured to help individual taxpayers on a 24/7 basis, on its website. Taxpayers will be able to use MyRA once they have logged through the taxpayer portal. MyRA will provide the most appropriate reply to questions that may be asked by taxpayers on issues related to Individual Income Tax.

**Short videos** on e-Filing may be accessed *here* 

## MRA: A dynamic mandate:

# FROM COLLECTING TAXES TO ASSISTING THE NEEDY

Since its inception in 2006, MRA has undergone continuous reform over recent years, expanding its mandate beyond tax collection to include the provision of financial assistance to the needy.

The organisation has consolidated a strong foundation by successfully implementing various recent financial assistance schemes to which new ones have joined, namely the Independence Allowance Scheme, the CSG Child Allowance Scheme, the Housing Loan Relief Scheme and Special Allowance/ Guaranteed minimum Income. These latest measures were announced in the Budget Speech 2023/2024.

The launching of the First Payments of Independence Allowance and CSG Child Allowance was made by the Honourable Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth at the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall in Port-Louis on Monday 31st July 2023, in the presence of Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of the MRA and a group of teenagers who have just reached 18. Most of them were accompanied by their parents.

#### **CSG Child Allowance**

A monthly CSG Child Allowance of Rs. 2,000 is being paid by the MRA, for the months of July 2023 to June 2024, to children aged up to three years. The application should be made on or before 30 September 2023 for children who were under the age of 3 years as at 01 July 2023, or within 3 months from the month in respect of which the child is eligible for the allowance.

| CSG Child Allowance<br>Statistics as at 30 August 2023 |               |  |
|--|---------------|--|
| Date implemented                                       | 1st July 2023 |  |
| Amount paid (Rs m)                                     | 91            |  |
| Number of beneficiaries                                | 22,970        |  |







#### **Independence Allowance**

A one-off Independence Allowance of Rs. 20,000 is being paid by MRA to eligible teenagers who have attained or will attain the age of 18 years during the period 01 January 2023 to 30 June 2024.

For those who have attained the age of 18 years between 01 January and 30 June 2023, the deadline to submit their application is 30 September 2023.

Teenagers who have attained or will attain the age of 18 years from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, are required to submit their application within a period of 3 months from the date they attain the age of 18 years.

| Independence Allowance<br>Statistics as at 30 August 2023 |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Date implemented  | 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023 |  |
| Amount paid (Rs m)  | 158                       |  |
| Number of beneficiaries                                   | 7,901                     |  |



#### **Housing Loan Relief Scheme**

Under the Housing Loan Relief Scheme, a monthly allowance of Rs. 1,000 will be paid for the months of July 2023 to June 2024 to individuals who have contracted a secured housing loan for an amount not exceeding Rs. 5 M. This financial allowance will provide relief to some 70 000 households. As at date, 33 996 applications have been received, and payment will be effected shortly.

## No application will be entertained after 30 September 2024.



## Special Allowance/ Guaranteed minimum Income (Awaiting approval)

A Special Allowance of up to Rs. 500 per month was introduced in January 2018 and was payable to a full-time employee to top-up the minimum wage and achieve a guaranteed minimum income of Rs. 9,000. For employees of Export Enterprises, the Special Allowance was up to Rs. 1,200.

The guaranteed minimum income has been increased and for the months of January 2023 to June 2023 it was Rs. 12,075.

The amount disbursed for the Financial Year 2022/2023 is Rs. 401 m and was paid to some 103,000 employees.

In the Budget 2023/2024, the Government announced the introduction of the "Revenue Minimum Garanti" payable to individuals who are in full-time employment. The guaranteed minimum income has been increased to Rs. 15,000 as from the month of July 2023.

The minimum wage for full-time employees in a non-export enterprise is Rs. 11,575. MRA is paying a special allowance of up to Rs. 1,425 monthly and the CSG income allowance of Rs. 2000 to bring their monthly guaranteed income to Rs. 15,000.

Full-time employees of a non-export enterprise deriving minimum wage of Rs. 10,875 are being paid a special allowance of up to Rs. 2,125 and the CSG Income Allowance of Rs. 2,000 to bring their monthly guaranteed income to Rs. 15,000.

| Statistics as at 30 August 2023 |        |  |
|---------------------------------|--------|--|
| Amount paid (Rs m)              | 202    |  |
| Number of beneficiaries         | 79,351 |  |

The timely implementation and disbursement of funds has been a testament to MRA's efficiency and proactivity to the welfare of the nation. This also reflects MRA's sustained commitment to social responsibility and economic progress. In fact, it is through such exemplary efforts that MRA continues to play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the Mauritian economy.

#### WCO virtual forum:

# MR. SUDHAMO LAL (WCO ESA VICE CHAIR): "PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IS CRUCIAL FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR REGION AND ORGANISATIONS"

The World Customs Organisation, East and Southern Africa, Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) hosted a virtual 'High-Level Engagement on Promotion of a Safe and Inclusive Working Environment' forum on 23 August 2023. Around 120 participants availed themselves of this virtual meeting, including officials from Customs administrations, WCO Regional Training Centres, Regional Economic Communities, the private sector, and other partners.

Mr. Sudhamo Lal, WCO ESA Vice Chair and Director-General of the MRA, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of the World Customs Organisation, Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, MRA Customs, and a host of Directors-General/Commissioners graced this WCO virtual forum.

This virtual forum forms part of the implementation of the Regional Strategy, dedicated to promoting gender equality and diversity among WCO members, stakeholders and partners. One of the key priority areas is fostering a safe, conducive, diverse, equal, inclusive and violence-free working environment. This is firmly founded on the Declaration of the Customs Co-operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs, endorsed by WCO members in December 2020.

In his opening address, Mr. Sudhamo Lal averred that "promoting gender equality and diversity is crucial for the sustainable development of our region and organisations. It fosters psychological safety, which is really essential for a happier, healthier workplace, leading to better performance."

Mr. Lal underlined that one of the strategic objectives for the region is to enhance integrity, professionalism and human capital development in Member customs administrations.

"To achieve this objective, we have recommended several measures for creating a safe, conducive, diverse, equal, inclusive and gender-based violence (GBV) free work environment", Mr. Lal added.



On another note, Mr. Lal dwelt on the laudable initiatives taken by the WCO. The international conference, "Women in Customs, Trade and Leadership", was organized in 2013 to address issues such as challenges faced by women traders and the need to engage women's organisations in discussions on international trade.

The Vice Chairperson of WCO ESA also stressed upon the 'Gender Equality Organisational Assessment Tool' to assist Customs Administrations in addressing gender equality issues as an integrated part of their reform and modernization agenda.

"Another achievement was the launching of the Virtual Working Group for Gender Equality and Diversity to provide a platform for members to exchange experience and good practices", he mentioned.

On this score, Mr. Lal pointed out that "the Mauritius Revenue Authority has endorsed these initiatives and we are fully committed to implementing them in our organisation."

Mr. Lal highlighted the following inclusivity policies, practices and standards:

- 1. The MRA Equal Opportunity Policy is used since August 2018.
- 2. HR Manual which sets out various welfare considerations for all staff, especially with regards to maternity leave and parental care for a new born baby for female staff.
- 3. MRA Code of Ethics which promotes our 'no gender discrimination' policy.
- 4. MRA Gender Statement contained in the Annual Reports from 2019/2020.
- 5. A 'Gender Committee' chaired by the Director, HRTD and comprising representatives of various departments as well as the MRA Staff Association to work on a Gender Policy for MRA.

To ensure a supportive environment for all MRA staff, the organisation has implemented a series of initiatives such as flexible working arrangements, an Employee Assistance Programme, mentorship programme for career growth, developing inclusive leadership training, reinforcing zero-tolerance policies against harassment, encouraging inclusive communication, and providing facilities to support work-life balance.

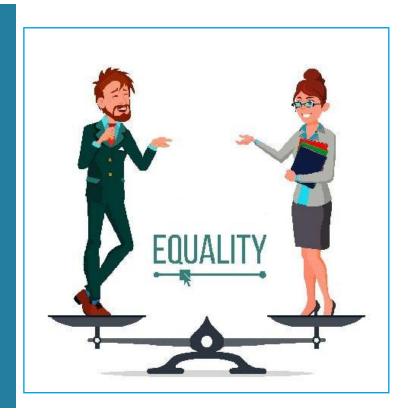
Below are some statistics to attest these initiatives:

- At MRA, the gender ratio has continued to decrease; from 1.49 in FY (Fiscal year) 2018-2019 to 1.22 in FY 2021/2022. This implies that more female staff have been recruited over the last couple of years.
- In earlier days, the number of women recruited for each Customs intake was very low and in some cases there were none. Today, the percentage of women in Customs has evolved significantly from less than 5% before the year 2000 to 11% in 2006 and 30% in 2023.
- Moreover, the scope of duties performed by lady customs officers has also broadened. Previously, lady customs officers were limited to duties at the port and airport mainly for searching for female passengers. But now the stereotype has been removed and lady customs officers perform duties at par with male officers in all aspects of customs operations and administration, including physical examination of goods, surveillance and enforcement operations, and K9.

According to Mr. Lal, it is primordial that Customs administrations strictly comply with ISO 45001 standards for health and safety at work. The WCO must also support customs administrations by coming up with tailor-made safety and health programmes adapted to each country, he added.

The meeting culminated with remarks from Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun Director, MRA Customs.





#### **Public Awareness:**

# MRA EMPLOYS AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO ITS COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) has since its inception set up a dedicated department, namely, the Taxpayer Education and Communication Department (TECD) within its organizational structure.

The TECD aims at promoting tax compliance through education. Its education strategy is multi-scaled, comprising education sessions for large taxpayers, SME's, the population at large and more importantly, secondary school students who are 'prospective' taxpayers and thereby inculcating a tax culture in the long run.

During the month of August, MRA organized three educational sessions to provide information and support to individuals and businesses. This initiative is in line with MRA's endeavor to create a new tax culture promoting compliance, tax avoidance and evasion, and preventing tax fraud.

#### **Educational sessions in businesses**

The Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) and the Business Mauritius solicited the assistance of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) to hold educational sessions on budgetary measures 2023/2024. These educational sessions provided a better understanding of tax laws, regulations, and compliance requirements.





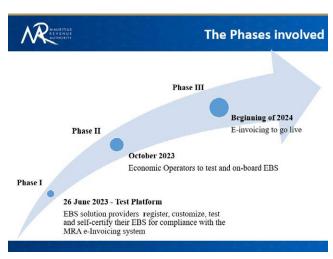
Mr. Dhanraj Ramdin, Director, Medium and Small Taxpayers Department, MRA, spoke on Voluntary Registration. "Subject to this Act, a registered person shall be allowed to take, as a credit against his output tax, the amount of input tax paid on goods and services acquired as from the date he has been registered," he pointed out.



Mr. Dhanraj Ramdin, Director, Medium and Small Taxpayers Department, MRA

Mr. Ramdin also apprised the attendees on the e-Invoicing project. He highlighted that "e-Invoicing is a process for generating invoices and associated documents in electronic file format which allows for transfer of billing information between the buyer, seller and tax authority".

This project is being implemented in a phase-wise approach as shown below.



In his presentation, Mr. Mahmad Oozeer, Director, Operational Services Department, at the MRA, spoke on the Prime à L'Emploi scheme. This scheme, he pointed out, was introduced in the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2022 with the objective of bringing young Mauritians and Mauritian women into the labour force. Under this scheme, a monthly Prime à l'Emploi of up to Rs. 15,000 for the first year of employment of 10,000 youths aged between 18 and 35 years and for women aged up to 50 years were provided to eligible employers.



Mr. Mahmad Oozeer, Director, Operational Services Department, MRA

Mr. Oozeer explained that the Prime à L'Emploi scheme has been extended in the Finance Act 2023 with the objective to bring women and persons with disabilities in employment. Under this scheme, a monthly "Prime à L'Emploi" of up to Rs. 15,000 for the first two years of employment will be provided to eligible employers. Qualifying employees should take employment between 01 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, he concluded.

Mr. Krishna Rambaksh, Section Head, Large Taxpayers Department, MRA, dwelt on the changes brought by the Finance Act 2023 to the Income Tax Act (Corporate Tax). Commenting on the manufacturing companies, he underlined that the "Investment tax credit of 15% over 3 years on new plant and machinery (excluding motor cars) has been extended up to 30 June 2026."



Mr. Krishna Rambaksh, Section Head, Large Taxpayers Department, MRA

#### **Education sessions in different schools**

MRA educates students about their tax obligations as future taxpayers. They learn about the different types of taxes, such as the income tax, value-added tax (VAT), and customs duties. This awareness helps to foster a culture of compliance and responsible citizenship.

| Statistics as at 30 August 2023          |                        |  |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Colleges                                 | Number of participants |  |
| Professor Basdeo<br>Bissoondoyal College | 125                    |  |
| Renascence College                       | 50                     |  |
| Loreto College of Rose-<br>Hill          | >100                   |  |
| Aleemiah College - Boys                  | 45                     |  |
| Le Lycée Mauricien                       | 45                     |  |
| Aleemiah College - Girls                 | 45                     |  |
| Professor Basdeo<br>Bissoondoyal College | 50                     |  |

These educational sessions contribute to a fair and efficient tax system in Mauritius. MRA thus encourages companies/colleges to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance their knowledge on tax and MRA's Financial Assistance Schemes.

Requests for educational sessions may be addressed to the Taxpayer Education and Communication Department. email address: **tecd@mra.mu** 

#### Educational Tour at the MRA - Instilling a tax culture



#### MRA in the Media:

### **RADIO/TV PROGRAMMES**



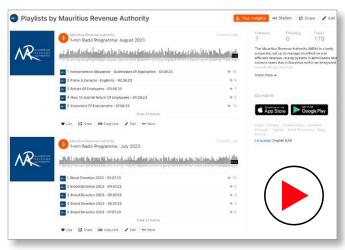
MRA has recourse to effective tools and platforms to interact with its stakeholders. These include: Twitter, Facebook, Taxpayer Mailing List, website, attending queries via mail and telephone, short explanatory videos uploaded on MRA's YouTube channel, communiqués and Press Releases, Radio/TV programmes, and daily one-minute radio programmes.

During the month of August, various topics such as the e-Filing 2023, CSG Child Allowance, Independence Allowance, Housing Loan Relief Scheme, etc. were discussed in the Media.

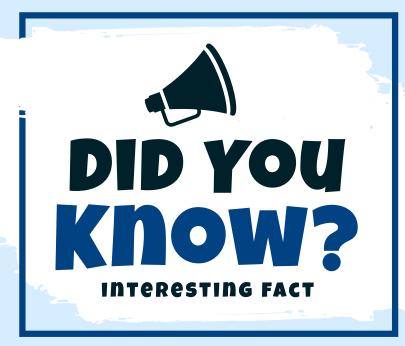
## **Rodrigues**

- **23** "One minute radio programmes"
- 1 "26-Minute Radio Programme" on CSG Income Allowance
- 1 "26-Minute TV Programme" on Independence Allowance and CSG Child Allowance

















The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is pleased to introduce MyRA your Virtual Tax Assistant and trusted companion for the Individual Income Tax Returns e-Filing Season 2023.

MyRA is not just a ChatBot - she's your virtual tax assistant crafted to provide seamless assistance to individual taxpayers in filing their Income Tax return.

MyRA is smart, intelligent, and uses cuttingedge technology to respond to your queries on Individual Income Tax.

MyRA can be accessed once you login to the Taxpayer Portal, on MRA website: www.mra.mu using your Username and Password.













Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius

T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 211 8099 | E: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu

