



Republic of India



Republic of Mauritius

**First Session of High Powered Joint Trade Committee
New Delhi**

1st – 3rd August, 2022

**Agreed Minutes of the
1st session of India- Mauritius High Powered Joint Trade Committee
held at New Delhi from 1st to 3rd August, 2022,**

The 1st session of India- Mauritius High Powered Joint Trade Committee(HPJTC) was held at New Delhi from 1st to 3rd August, 2022,

2. The Indian delegation was led by Dr.Srikar K Reddy, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of the Republic of India. The Mauritian delegation was led by Mr. Narainduth Boodhoo ,Director, Trade Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Government of the Republic of Mauritius. The composition of the Indian and Mauritian delegation is at Annex-I.

3. The Indian co-chair in his opening remarks highlighted that India and Mauritius share a special and unique relationship with shared history, ancestry, culture, tradition and rich people-to-people ties. He stated India has always been one among the top trading partners of Mauritius and Economic cooperation is one of the key pillars of our bilateral relationship. He further stated that Mauritius is a key strategic partner in our neighbourhood and an important element of our Africa Policy.

4. The Indian co-chair observed that our long standing economic connection touched a new high with the signing of the landmark CECPA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement) in February 2021, which entered into force on 1st April 2021 and that we are proud to recognize that India-Mauritius CECPA is the first such trade agreement with an African country, and the first trade agreement to be signed by India in the last decade (since 2011). He observed that the conclusion of the CECPA agreement also bears

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testimony to India's recognition of importance of Mauritius as a springboard for Indian trade and investment into Africa.

5. As regards our bilateral trade, the Indian co-chair shared that the total merchandise trade between India and Mauritius rose to USD 786.72 million in 2021-22 from USD 690.02 million in 2019-20 and that while the imports rose from USD 27.89 Million to USD 71.87 Million, the exports rose from USD 662.13 Million to USD 714.85 Million during the period.

6. In his opening remarks, Mr. Narainduth Boodhoo, Director, Trade Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Government of Mauritius thanked the Indian Government for the warm hospitality. The Mauritian co-chair stated that the CECPA also marks a new step in the partnership between India and the African continent. The joint economic initiative will enable India to use Mauritius for the expansion of their businesses into continental Africa. It will, therefore, help Mauritius emerge, as a "hub for Africa". He also invited Indian entrepreneurs to set up manufacturing facilities in Mauritius and take benefit of preferential market access accruing from Mauritius being a member of many RTAs such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), SADC, COMESA, and the India-Mauritius CECPA. This will also help create regional supply chains between India and Africa in many sectors and also substantially enhance our bilateral trade.

7. Thereafter, both sides adopted the agenda and discussions were held session-wise.

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Incorporation of the General Economic Cooperation (GEC) and the Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) in the CECPA

8. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the fact that despite the challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, talks have progressed on the conclusion of the General Economic Cooperation (GEC) Chapter and Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) under the CECPA, through a virtual meeting held between our two sides in November 2021.

9. Both sides acknowledged that the inclusion of the General Economic Cooperation (GEC) Chapter in CECPA will facilitate and promote, all forms of economic cooperation beneficial to the citizens of the two sides along with expanding the ambit of our economic cooperation to new sectors of mutual benefit.

10. After fruitful discussions in the matter, the Mauritian side handed over diplomatic note notifying its agreement to the proposed amendments to the India-Mauritius CECPA, to incorporate the Chapter on General Economic Cooperation and the text of the Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM), which are made an integral part of the Agreement.

11. The Indian side informed that the process for inclusion of the GEC Chapter and ATSM are in final stages of internal legal procedures and hopefully, the inclusions would be notified through diplomatic channel within a month.

Extension of the validity period of the Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs)

12. The Indian side informed that with a view to facilitate full utilization of the TRQs, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Department of Commerce, Government of India has issued Public notice no. 04/2015-2020 dated 20th April, 2022 to the effect the TRQs (on all the specified HS codes in



Annex 2 of India-Mauritius CECPA) for the current year 2022-23 shall be considered on First come, first served basis, without any end date for the application. A copy of the above Public Notice of DGFT dated 20th April, 2022 was also shared with the Mauritian side for information. The Mauritian side were happy to note the amendments and observed that this would help in better utilization of the TRQ. The Indian side informed that TRQs have already been allocated for a number of products such as Beer, Sugar, Pineapples, litchees, Rum amongst others.

Implementation of GEC and Exchange of focal points and setting up of a team of experts from both sides

13. The Indian side observed that the areas of cooperation envisaged under the GEC Chapter will enable enhancement of export competitiveness and enlarging the existing scope for collaboration, inter-alia, in the fields of Investments, Financial Services, Textile, Small and Medium Enterprises, Handicrafts, Gems and Jewellery, Information and Communication Technology, Film Production, Space Technology, Blue Economy, Port Infrastructure, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals & Bio-technology, Competition Policy, Renewable Energy etc. In the light of the multifarious areas of cooperation envisioned under the GEC Chapter, the Indian side suggested that based on the specific requests received from the Mauritian side, the Indian side will constitute a team of experts led by representatives from the concerned line Ministry with members from Department of Commerce and Ministry of External Affairs and any other relevant organization. For realization of the expected outcomes, the Indian side agreed to consider the Action Plan for implementation of the GEC Chapter that would be shared by the Mauritian side at the earliest.



14. For the GEC Chapter to be implemented expeditiously, the Mauritian side proposed to proceed in a priority-wise manner. In this regard, it was suggested that focus be given initially to the following specific sectors/areas of collaboration, namely:

- Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical sector
- Setting up of the Indian SEZ in Mauritius

15. For discussions relating to the Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical sector, both sides will facilitate exchanges between the relevant stakeholders. A virtual meeting will be organized in August 2022 tentatively to kickstart discussions on these sectors.

16. Regarding the setting up of an Indian SEZ in Mauritius, the Mauritian side will circulate the list of incentives offered to manufacturing companies set up in Mauritius as well as details of how Mauritius positions itself as the platform for investment in Africa.

17. The Indian side agreed to facilitate discussions in this regard between the relevant stakeholders and Economic Development Board, Mauritius.

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) on qualifications by professional bodies

18. The discussions with regard to implementation of provisions related to Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on Professional Qualification under India-Mauritius CECPA were led by Ms. Manisha Meena, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry from the Indian side and Mr. Narainduth Boodhoo, Director, International Trade Division from the Mauritian side. Indian side was also represented by the representatives from professional bodies in

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Accountancy services (Institute of Chartered Accountants of India), Nursing (Indian Nursing Council), Medical services (National Medical Commission), Veterinary services (VCI) and Company Secretariat services (Institute of Company Secretaries of India).

19. The Indian side highlighted that with the entry into force of the CECPA, contact details between some of the professional bodies have been exchanged and initial dialogue have already taken place between some of them regarding the curriculum, qualification criteria etc. There is need to take the discussion further, on exchange of information, gap analysis and way forward.

20. The Mauritian side indicated that there is a shortage of professionals in Mauritius in the ICT, Financial Services, Film production, Engineering, Health and Quality of life, Tourism/Hospitality, Ocean Economy etc., and sought cooperation of India in the following areas:

- MRA or similar type of arrangements in professional services
- Training and capacity building of various professionals in Mauritius.
- Supply of professionals to meet the shortage in Mauritius.

21. Furthermore, a list of professions where there is a shortage in Mauritius was shared with India and it was agreed to share additional information so as to facilitate the movement of professionals from India to Mauritius.

22. The representative of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India informed that Mauritius can utilize the eMigrate Portal where employers, as an organization or as an individual from any location outside India, can register in eMigrate portal through the concerned Indian Mission and get facilitated in the process of recruitment of Indian manpower. It was informed that the details may be seen at <https://emigrate.gov.in>.

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23. Extensive interactions were held by both the sides with very valuable inputs from the representatives from the professional bodies with regard to establishing equivalence in certification, skills and licensing requirements; mechanism for training/skilling/education of Mauritians; exploring collaboration/cooperation arrangement between MSDE and its counterpart in Mauritius on developing skill-sets, etc,. Exchange of Doctors/Experts/Medical Students; exporting services of Indian veterinary professionals to Mauritius; capacity of the Indian side in providing products like cattle feed, animal vaccines and sheep/goat meat; cooperation in the CGCSA (Corporate Governance, Compliance, Secretarial and Advisory) Services; cooperation in forensic accounting, banking sector, insurance sector, wealth management, derivatives, amongst others, were also discussed .

24. Mauritian side informed that they are aiming to develop Mauritius as a Medical hub for the region and in this respect would require capacity building in Health and Quality Services. The Mauritian side invited Indian Hospitals/ Clinics dealing with super-specialty health services to consider opening branches in Mauritius.

25. Mauritian side also expressed their interest to have collaboration on education, training and skill development through online mode for the professions which are in short supply in Mauritius.

26. After fruitful discussions on the subject, it was agreed that

- (i) Both sides will exchange focal points for initiating a dialogue on MRA/MOU including recognition of qualifications, training, capacity building, and other areas of cooperation in professional services between the relevant bodies.



- (ii) For those Professional bodies where the contact details have already been exchanged, a way forward and timeframe for conclusion of MRAS/MOU will be decided through regular meetings held virtually.
- (iii) India will identify and consult the relevant bodies for exploring cooperation on areas where Mauritius faces shortage of professionals/skilled and semi-skilled workers. Further, details will accordingly be shared.

Customs Cooperation Agreement

27. The Indian side stated that they are open to the Mauritian proposal for a Customs Cooperation Agreement. The Mauritian side was requested to share the draft Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement (CMMA) text through diplomatic channels, for consideration. It was clarified that Customs Cooperation Agreements or Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreements (CMAAs) mainly facilitates investigative assistance and intelligence sharing, along with cooperation in additional areas such as capacity building, data sharing, etc. Therefore, the Agreement as well as its implementation is confidential in nature. Traditionally, Department of Revenue, Govt of India has negotiated CMAAs independent of trade agreements. The Mauritian side agreed to share the draft Agreement text through diplomatic channels.

28. It was agreed to hold a virtual meeting at the end of August, 2022 to initiate discussions on the Agreement. The Indian side stated that the date for such a meeting may be finalized through diplomatic channels.



Bilateral recognition arrangements of equivalence on SPS and TBT measures

29. The Indian side referred to the detailed email sent to the Mauritian side on 31st August, 2021 forwarding inter-alia, the following:

- (i) Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011
- (ii) Food Safety and Standards (Import) Regulations, 2017
- (iii) Copy of letter dated 17th August, 2021 from Department of Fisheries, Govt. of India addressed to Republic of Mauritius with reference to sanitary requirement for export of canned Tuna and other farmed Fish/fish products, to India
- (iv) Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations, 2018

It was also clarified that with regard to the SPS/TBT requirements in respect of Tropical Fruits (Litchees and Pineapples), the Mauritian side were informed vide the above email that

- as per Chapter-II, Clause 3(7) of Plant Quarantine (Regulation of import into India) Order, 2003, for any commodity to be permitted for import, a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) to be conducted based on technical information provided by NPPO of exporting country, as PRA is pre-requisite to identify plant bio-security risk associated with import of agricultural commodities and identification of appropriate Phytosanitary measures to address such risks.
- after detailed PRA, which is based on International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) brought out by International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and as per the requirement of WTO-SPS Agreement, a commodity will be regulated in PQ Order, 2003 for import.



- accordingly, NPPO, Mauritius may be requested to submit Pest Risk Analysis(PRA) request and Technical Information authenticated by NPPO, Mauritius in the requisite PQ form -23 and in PQ form -24 (attached therewith) as per the requirement of Chapter-II, clause 3 (7) of PQ order, 2003 for conducting PRA.

A copy of the email dated 31st August, 2021 forwarded by the Indian side were again shared with the Mauritian side. Both sides agreed to address any other SPS/TBT issues through virtual meetings during this year.

Negotiations on additional market access

30. Both sides had a preliminary discussion on additional market access. Representatives from the line Ministries present from the Indian side responded to the queries from the Mauritian side with regard to the preliminary views of the Indian side on tariff reduction/ elimination sought by the Mauritian side. The Mauritian side requested Indian side to consider its request to offer concessions on tariff lines of its export interest, especially in Textiles and Medical Devices sectors. After discussions, both sides agreed to review the lists and share revised lists for consideration, by the end of August 2022. Both sides agreed to hold a virtual meeting in September 2022 to take forward the discussions on market access with an aim to conclude the negotiations by the end of the year 2022.

31. The discussions were conducted in a warm and cordial atmosphere reflecting the close and friendly relations between the two countries.



Both sides decided to convene the next session of India-Mauritius High Powered JTC to discuss the implementation and other issues relating to India-Mauritius CECPA in 2023 in Mauritius at a mutually convenient date finalised through diplomatic channels.

Done and signed at New Delhi on the 3rd August, 2022, in English.



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