

Workplace Investigations

Revenue Authorities in Africa

Intensify Integrity

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) in collaboration with the World Customs Organisation and WCO A-CIP (Anti-Corruption & Integrity Programme) hosted a workshop entitled “*Workplace Investigations*”, from Monday 23 to Friday 27 October 2023, at the Auditorium of the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC), Le Chaland, Plaine Magnien.



The five-day workshop accommodated some 30 participants, directly involved in the conduct of workplace investigations, both from local and foreign Customs/Investigatory Authorities in French-speaking African countries namely Madagascar, Comoros, Djibouti, Burundi, Mali, Niger, Côte d’Ivoire, Tunisia and Burkina Faso. Officers from the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance, the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC), and the Mauritius Revenue Authority also participated in the workshop and provided an insight on workplace investigations from a cross-functional perspective.

The kick-start of the programme was given by Dr. the Hon Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, during the opening ceremony held on Monday 23 October 2023, in the presence of Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Jean-Christophe Leneutre, Programme Expert at A-CIP, Management Team of MRA and eminent personalities.

In his keynote address, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development expressed his sincere gratitude to the World Customs Organization (WCO) for the valuable support it has provided to the Republic of Mauritius. *“The partnership between Mauritius and WCO has contributed significantly to the growth and efficiency of the economic landscape of our country”*, Dr. the Hon Renganaden Padayachy said.



He acknowledged that through various initiatives, capacity building programmes and knowledge sharing platforms facilitated by the WCO, Mauritius and many other member countries have been able to strengthen their customs procedures, improve risk management and effectively combat illicit trade.

The Honourable Minister highlighted that *“GDP growth in 2022 in the Republic of Mauritius was 8.9%, with a projection of 6.8% in 2023, and a medium-term objective of 5%, leading to a reduction in inequalities with a Gini coefficient having gone from 0.420 in 2015 to 0.304 in 2022”*. He stated that inflation rate was reduced from 10.8% in 2022 to 6.5% in 2023, coupled with a drop in unemployment from 9.2% in 2020 to 6.4% in 2023.

He affirmed that a reduction in public debt from a historic level going from 92.1% in 2021 to 79.7% in 2023, below the budgetary anchor point of 80%, set by the IMF, and the ambition to reach 60% renewable energies by 2030. *“And as we collectively strive to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive future, our partnership with the World Customs Organization stands out as a key pillar in achieving these goals”*, he stated.

[Keynote Address by Dr. the Hon Renganaden Padayachy,](#)



[Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development](#)



Mr. Lal, the Director-General of MRA highlighted that this workshop represents a commitment to regional cooperation and collaboration, and that it provides a platform for networking and sharing experiences, which will undoubtedly lead to stronger ties among customs authorities. He underlined that the challenges MRA faces, such as trade facilitation, revenue protection, and combating illicit trade, are often shared and therefore, the

bonds forged will extend beyond interactions during the workshop and will serve as a foundation for future cooperation.

Mr. Lal: ‘We are guardians of fiscal integrity’

“Our responsibilities extend far beyond mere revenue collection. We are guardians of fiscal integrity, ensuring that individuals and businesses meet their tax obligations fairly and transparently. We need to promote good governance, uphold the values of accountability, justice, and ethical conduct so as to enable economic growth and foster a business environment where honest enterprises can thrive”, he stated.



[Speech by Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, MRA](#)

Andrea Hampton, Manager of the Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme (A-CIP) at WCO: ‘Ability to influence, impact and promote organisational change, through know-how sharing’

Through teleconferencing, Mrs. Andrea Hampton thanked the Mauritius Revenue Authority for its continued support, not only for this event organized by the WCO Training Centre, but also for its multiple contributions to the activities of the A-CIP Programme and the WCO.



She appealed to the participants, to influence, impact and promote organisational change, particularly in matters of internal affairs. She encouraged them to participate actively and constructively in a spirit of sharing points of view, perspectives, knowledge, experiences and solutions, to build collective know-how together. She expressed her pride for the A-CIP Programme to be associated with this initiative.



[Speech by Mrs. Andrea Hampton, Programme Manager, A-CIP Capacity Building Directorate](#)

Mr. Vivekananda Ramburun, Director of Customs: ‘The WCO’s guidance has been fundamental in the fight against corruption and enhancing integrity in Customs’



Mr. Vivekananda Ramburun stated that public’s perception on Customs was very low some 30 years ago, but with the implementation of robust integrity programmes, benchmarked with international standards, today MRA is ahead, in terms of good governance and organisational integrity. He admitted that WCO’s guidance has been fundamental in fighting corruption and enhancing integrity in Customs.

“Digitalization and automation of customs services have been key factors that have paved the way for enhancing integrity of customs officers in view of fighting corruption, and bold reforms and modernization have been necessary to improve that perception”, he added.

Mr. Ramburun underlined that MRA has a pool of WCO Recognized Experts on Integrity, and are ready to share their knowledge and skills with counterparts from other African countries.



[Speech by Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs Department](#)

Mr. Rajeev Gobin, Officer-in-Charge at the Internal Affairs Division stated that the mission of his team is to provide assurance to the Board of Directors as well as the society at large that the integrity of MRA employees is a priority. *“This objective is achieved by conducting administrative investigations in an efficient, systematic and ethical manner. It is an essential tool to ensure compliance, prevent illicit activities and protect the economic interests of our nations”*, he added.



The training was facilitated by four WCO accredited experts in Integrity from the Internal Affairs Division of MRA, supported by Mr. Jean-Christophe Leneutre, Programme Expert at WCO A- CIP.



[Introductory Note by Mr. Rajeev Gobin, Officer in Charge,
Internal Affairs Division](#)