

**International Customs Day 2025:**

## **The World Customs Organisation (WCO) honours Customs Officers**

- **The Junior Minister of Finance launches four new MRA projects**

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) celebrated International Customs Day (ICD) 2025 on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, under the theme: “*Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity*”. The Junior Minister of Finance, Honourable Dhaneshwar Damry graced the event by his presence at the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre in Plaine Magnien.

The Honourable Dhaneshwar Damry remitted WCO Certificates of Merit to ten deserving officers from the Customs Department, one from the Internal Audit Division and one to Chairperson of the Port Users Council. As per tradition, the WCO Certificate of Merit honours stakeholders who demonstrate outstanding commitment to the promotion of the vital role that the Customs Department plays across the world.



## Mauritius must emerge at the forefront of digitalisation

In his keynote address, Honourable Dhaneshwar Damry, highlighted two key enablers for enhancing efficiency: the digitalization of customs operations and the development of human resources. He expressed his satisfaction that Mauritian customs has already begun its digitalisation initiatives, which promise to improve service efficiency significantly.

## MRA unveils several projects during International Customs Day

The Honourable Minister launched the e-Tariff Platform to modernize Customs procedures in Mauritius, facilitating trade by giving economic operators easy access to Customs Tariffs and guidance on importing/exporting. This system reduces delays in obtaining information on goods classification and applicable duties. The project falls under the EU-WCO HS Africa Programme, which aims to enable partner African countries to implement and apply HS 2022 in a timely, uniform, consistent, and coordinated manner.

The e-Certificate of Origin, another digital tool launched by the Honourable Minister, addresses inefficiencies associated with paper certificates of origin, including delays and the risk of tampering. The digital issuance and verification of certificates reduces administrative burdens and streamlines workflows, enabling businesses to benefit from faster processing times and lower overall compliance costs.

In response to the significant increase in e-commerce transactions, MRA Customs has also extended the e-Courier System to all members of the public. This system allows online shoppers to file their own simplified declarations and pay duties and taxes through mobile applications, ensuring a quick, easy, and secure process for importing e-commerce consignments intended for personal use.

To keep pace with the digital era, MRA Customs has also implemented the integration of a scan-to-pay option into customs procedures, marking a significant step towards a more efficient and user-friendly mode of payment.

The Minister underscored that these new projects have the potential to transform Customs, as digitalisation can play a vital role in combating corruption, enhancing revenue collection, and eliminating trade bottlenecks. *“Technology can be a game-changer for Customs. Digitalisation of customs will be a multiplier in the fight against corruption, on the improvement of revenue collection and the reduction of bottlenecks.”* The Minister suggested some improvements for MRA Customs. *“The World Bank’s Logistics Performance Indicator 2023 Report ranked Mauritius’ Customs 90<sup>th</sup> out of 139 countries. In*

comparison, India ranked 47<sup>th</sup> and South Africa ranked 31<sup>st</sup>. Let's pledge to bring the Mauritius customs to rank in the top half globally. The Top 50% in the world. In addition to its economic mandate, Customs owes a societal obligation. The fight against drugs, a scourge that has plagued Mauritius. We are at war against drugs! You are soldiers on the front", the Hon. Minister emphasised.

The Honourable Dhaneshwar Damry stated that the government's goal is to restore confidence and trust among Mauritians and investors. He further added, "We are committed to reducing public sector debt to sustainable levels below 83.4% by June 2024. Additionally, we aim to tackle rising inflation, particularly food inflation, which has increased by 33% since 2021. For Team Mauritius to meet its objectives of reducing debt and inflation, we require robust revenue generation." He highlighted that "this is where Team Customs is essential, as each member plays a vital role in ensuring a consistent flow of income. As you work to boost revenue collection, it is critical to avoid the bottlenecks that can hinder trade."



In his address, Mr. M. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General of the MRA, highlighted the importance of International Customs Day (ICD) as an annual tradition that honours the noble values of the Customs profession. He commended the relentless dedication of Customs Officers around the globe, emphasizing their vital role in facilitating trade and ensuring border security. By observing this day, MRA acknowledges the commitment



of these officers who invest themselves to maintaining the integrity and excellence of the Customs service, ultimately contributing to the economic and social well-being of nations.

Mr. Lal underlined: "Customs plays an important role in facilitating trade and protecting the economy. As frontliners, Customs Officers also risk their lives in protecting society from illicit drugs and narcotics, arms and ammunitions, and other dangerous goods that threaten the lives of our citizens."



The Director-General further emphasized that MRA is fully committed to supporting the Government's economic reforms and development initiatives. As a humble servant of the nation, MRA is dedicated to advancing the country in alignment with its motto: "*Partners in Progress.*"

Innovation, continuous service improvement and the constant development of human capital have been key drivers behind MRA's achievements, including the implementation of government policies and initiatives. In this regard, Mr. Lal pointed out that MRA has made notable progress in areas such as revenue collection, electronic tax return filing, and its relentless efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking.

Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director of the MRA Customs Department, emphasized the crucial role and accomplishments of Customs Officers. He revealed that, during the Financial Year 2023-2024, Customs Officers seized drugs with a market value of over Rs 1.1 billion and other contraband worth approximately Rs 53 million. These statistics exemplify the dedication of Customs Officers to maintaining border security, preventing harmful substances from entering the country, and keeping illegal goods away from our communities.



Mr. Ramburun shared insights into the department's strategic vision for the future. "*We are building a more resilient customs system that is prepared to face future crises,*" he underlined.

The International Customs Day was also attended by officers from international organisations namely, Mr. Badr Mouhcine, Head of Programmes - EU-WCO HS and Rules of Origin Africa Programmes, and Mr. Marios Vitos, Press and Information Section at the Delegation of the European Union to Mauritius and Seychelles.



## WCO Certificate of Merit Awardees

SN	NAME	POSITION	SECTION
1	Mr. KEDOO, Abdool Satar	Team Leader	Assessment
2	Mr. BUDOSY, Suriadeo	Technical Officer	Seaport Operations
3	Mr. DOOKHORUN, Suraj Prakash	Customs Officer II	Surveillance and Enforcement
4	Mr. PURYAG, Gulshan	Customs Officer II	Surveillance and Enforcement
5	Mr. NAWRUTTUN, Ashveen	Customs Officer II	Surveillance and Enforcement
6	Mr. RAMCHURN, Yeswant Kumar	Customs Officer II	Customs Anti-Narcotics
7	Mr. CHINAMUN, Kannen	Customs Officer II	Customs Anti-Narcotics
8	Mr. SANASSEE, Rajiv	Customs Officer II	Customs Anti-Narcotics
9	Mr. SHIBNARAIN, Poornanand	Customs Officer I	Customs Anti-Narcotics
10	Miss NUMA, Marie Jenny Caren	Customs Officer II	Customs Anti-Narcotics
11	Mr. SADAFUL, Krit	Team Leader	Internal Audit Division
12	Mr. DELBAR, Yousouf	Director	MCL Freight Services Ltd