

## WCO Regional Workshop on e-Commerce Enhancing Customs Efficiency in the Digital Era



The **Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA)** launched a World Customs Organisation (WCO) Regional Workshop on e-Commerce for the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region on Tuesday 28 May 2024. The workshop is scheduled from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 at the Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) in Plaine Magnien. Participants from the Eastern and Southern African countries, including MRA officers, are attending the workshop.

The event, organized with the financial support of the Customs Cooperation Fund of China (CCF/China), aims at addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the rapid growth of cross-border e-Commerce. It was graced by the Acting Director-General of MRA, Mr. Dhanraj Ramdin as Chief Guest, in the presence of His Excellency, H.E. M. ZHU Liying, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China, as Guest of Honour, as well as the Director of the Customs Department at the MRA, Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun and Mrs. Vyara Filipova, Senior Technical Officer at the World Customs Organisation.

### The Impact of e-Commerce



Mr. D. Ramdin warmly welcomed delegates and expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for funding this significant workshop. He also thanked the WCO for choosing Mauritius as the host country, and for providing accredited experts to facilitate the workshop. Mr. Ramdin emphasized e-Commerce's transformative impact on global trade, particularly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. He pursued that this surge in cross-border trade of physical

goods has revolutionized business and consumer interactions, offering broader choices and advanced shipping, payment, and delivery options. e-Commerce has significantly boosted the global economy by driving new consumption trends, creating jobs, and fostering innovative trade methods with the account-based system, as recommended by WCO called 'Framework of Standards on Cross-border e-commerce', that may be implemented by MRA for conducting international business.

## Customs Challenges

Mr. Ramdin highlighted the challenges posed by the exponential increase in small e-Commerce consignments for Customs authorities worldwide. Customs officers with traditional customs processing methods, are struggling to cope with the sheer volume of transactions, he said. Managing this trend effectively requires international standards and best practices, emphasizing quality information, risk management, innovative revenue collection, and enhanced cooperation among stakeholders, Mr. Ramdin added.



## [Keynote Address by the Chief Guest, Mr. Dhanraj Ramdin, Ag. Director-General MRA](#)

## Global e-Commerce: Insights from the Guest of Honour, H.E. M. Zhu

H.E. M. Zhu praised Mauritius for its role in fostering trade between Asia and Africa, highlighting recent agreements that ease trade between China and African nations. Looking forward to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit, he affirmed China's commitment to working closely with Mauritius Customs and commended the organisation of the workshop. Underlining online commerce, Mr. Zhu noted



technology's impact on global trade, with China leading efforts to streamline cross-border transactions. Advocating for fair regulations to inspire trust in online transactions, he emphasized China's willingness to collaborate with other nations to ensure equitable access to online trade. The workshop is seen as an opportunity for customs agencies to collaborate, reflecting China's dedication to enhancing global cooperation in online trade, he added.



## [Address by Guest of Honour, H.E. M. ZHU Living, Ambassador](#)

## Strategic Initiatives and Secure Practices in Mauritian Trade and e-Commerce

Mr. Ramburun, the Director of the Customs Department at MRA highlighted trade's vital role in the global economy and the growing impact of technology and e-Commerce in the 21st century. He outlined



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Mauritius Customs' strategic efforts to reduce duties, facilitate e-Commerce, and streamline trade processes, enhancing economic development despite Mauritius' small size. He stressed the importance of secure trade practices and reaffirmed Mauritius Customs' commitment to supporting businesses through advanced information and guidance, urging proactive collaboration for secure transactions. Mr. Ramburun appealed to stakeholders to optimise the importation process of small commodities through advanced data.



[Address by Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director, Customs Dept](#)

## Facilitating Global e-Commerce: Objectives and Collaboration



Mrs. Vyara Filipova, Senior Technical Officer at WCO, expressed her honour and gratitude for the opportunity to be part of this highly commended workshop. She acknowledged the importance of coordinating with host countries to facilitate e-Commerce effectively, noting that Mauritius, currently serving as the vice-chair of the East African Region (EAR), plays a significant role in these efforts. Mrs.

Filipova extended her thanks to the Chinese Ambassador for his support and contributions. She outlined the primary objectives of the workshop, beginning with the dissemination of information on WCO initiatives aimed at securing global trade. Over the course of the workshop, participants will delve into eight key topics, including safety and security in e-Commerce. The second objective is to provide a forum for the sharing of information, thereby promoting the growth and efficiency of e-Commerce. She expressed her appreciation to Mauritius for hosting the event and to China for their generous donations, emphasizing the collaborative spirit necessary for advancing global e-Commerce and securing international trade practices.



[Address by Mrs. Vyara Filipova, Senior Technical Officer, WCO](#)