

**1<sup>ST</sup> REGIONAL JUDICIAL COLLOQUIUM ON MARITIME CRIMES**  
**ORGANISED BY THE**  
**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME**  
**GLOBAL MARITIME CRIME PROGRAMME (UNODC-GMCP)**  
**OFFICIAL LAUNCHING CEREMONY**

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**SPEECH BY HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH**  
**PRIME MINISTER**

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**FRIDAY 29 JULY 2022 AT 0900 HRS**

**VENUE: LE MERIDIEN HOTEL,**  
**POINTE AUX PIMENTS**

**Colleague Ministers,**

**Honourable Maurice Kamga, Judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea,**

**Honourable Judges and Magistrates,**

**Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy,**

**Representatives of the UNODC,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Good morning.**

I would like to thank the UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme for organising in Mauritius, the First Edition of the Regional Judicial Colloquium on Maritime Crimes, and for the opportunity given to me to attend the launching ceremony.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all, and let me say a special “thank you” to Honourable Maurice Kamga, Judge of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, who is amongst us today.

Honourable Judge Maurice Kamga served for 13 years as the Legal Secretary of the International Court of Justice and, in that capacity, was in charge of the

advisory proceedings on the 'Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965.'

We are proud and fortunate to have you here in your capacity as consultant with the UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme, and under your guidance, the Judicial Colloquium promises to be fulfilling for everyone.

Participants will address the issue of maritime crimes in the Indian Ocean West Region. Indeed, the trend of these crimes is systematically evolving, and regional resilience will be a reality only if all actors involved in the criminal justice chain are conscious of the threats and are adequately equipped to forestall them.

Sentences imposed must have a deterrent impact so as to send a loud, powerful, and unequivocal signal to all perpetrators. Coordination and cooperation with neighbouring countries is vital for achieving our goal.

In collaboration with the UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme, Mauritius is presently involved in various projects as one of the beneficiary countries focusing on maritime security in the Indian Ocean.

We are grateful to the US Embassy, the Indian Ocean Commission, and the European Union for supporting these projects.

The increasing number of drug seizures in Mauritius is testimony to the commitment of my government and to our endorsement of the zero-tolerance policy. However, the fact that drug trafficking at sea is transnational in nature renders the investigation quite complex as information is often required from other jurisdictions.

I would like to seize this opportunity to extend my thanks to all neighbouring countries for their cooperation, which have been very helpful in many circumstances.

Mauritius continues to spearhead the fight against drug trafficking and other maritime crimes.

Our National Coast Guard detect illicit activities using its surface and air assets to safeguard the Exclusive Economic Zone and prevent drug trafficking into Mauritius. Maritime surveillance relies on patrol vessels and various craft located around the island.

Coastal areas and lagoons are monitored by afloat patrols and beach patrols. Continuous surveillance is carried out by Coastal Surveillance Radar Stations around the island. The surveillance is monitored currently through tools such as Sea Vision and feed of Vessel Management System.

The National Coast Guard is planning to upgrade its surveillance systems and procure additional craft and ships to bolster its capability in the near future.

Intelligence-Based and Coordinated Operations are carried out using a Maritime Intelligence Cell that targets illegal activities at sea. Coordinated deployment of ships and aircraft has resulted in very successful operations recently.

Additionally, our Customs department has acquired two Fast Interceptor Boats, two Rigid Hull Interceptor Boats, and one patrol boat which are tailored to patrol along the coast and outside the harbour.

These boats facilitate intervention and surveillance on matters pertaining to drug trafficking and other contraband activities. Customs makes use of Vessel Tracking System for gathering of information regarding vessels real-time positioning, better targeting and scheduling of appropriate actions essential for Enforcement.

We shall continue to be relentless in our endeavours and the need to uphold accountability is our priority.

We are proud that our jurisdiction was selected to launch this first Edition of the Regional Judicial Colloquium. We appreciate the active involvement of the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and the crucial

role it played to make today's event happen. It is only in the spirit of unity that we shall win the fight against maritime crimes.

In 2016, under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crimes, the Prosecutor's Network Forum was launched. Senior prosecutors from Mauritius regularly participate in this forum to discuss mechanisms on cooperation and exchange between prosecution offices.

In May 2022, national coastguards, Mauritius Police Force, investigators, the Forensic Science Laboratory, prosecutors, and magistrates from Mauritius participated in the simulated trial organised by the UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme.

Mauritius was one of the first three countries selected for the exercise based on its robust legal system, its adherence to the rule of law, and its unwavering commitment to the fight against maritime crimes.

Given the niche area, unless the region has prosecutors and judges who are well versed in maritime laws, the success of prosecutions and legal finish will be unlikely.

The Judicial Colloquium forum should establish a mechanism for a pool of experts from the region to act in a co-ordinated manner, sharing experiences and know-how in this field.

I understand that the judges and magistrates present had closed preparatory work sessions for the two last days, and I am confident that their discussions were productive and enlightening, especially those pertaining to stateless vessels, interceptions on the high seas and concurrent jurisdictions.

The synergies among the regional and international agencies such as UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme, INTERPOL, the European Union Naval Force, the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre, and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre must be applauded. Their synchronised approach is proof that coordination and collaboration must be at the heart of all operations at the national, regional, and international levels.

Once again, I would like to thank the UNODC-Global Maritime Crime Programme delegation and all its international partners. I wish you all the best for your successful deliberation during this Conference.

I am pleased to officially launch the First Edition of the Regional Judicial Colloquium on Maritime Crimes.

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