

**Opening Statement of Ambassador Marjaana SALL
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius**

"4th EU-Mauritius Political Dialogue"

Monday 18 January 2016 at 09 : 40

Le Maritim Hotel, Balaclava

Honourable Ministers

Dear Colleagues

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me first thank the Honourable Etienne Sinatambou, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for hosting the 4th EU-Mauritius Political Dialogue. The dialogue could not take place in 2014 and 2015, and I welcome today's high-level meeting in the presence of many Honourable Ministers.

- The Political Dialogue is an important part of the EU relation with the Republic of Mauritius: it is based on Article 8 of the **Cotonou Partnership Agreement** (2000-2020) between the EU and its Member States and Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) group of states.
- It adds a **political dimension** to our **development** and **trade and economic cooperation** which is embedded in the Cotonou Agreement.
- The dialogue provides us with a real opportunity to :
 - exchange views and define common actions on global issues such as **Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals, Regional Economic Integration** and **Peace and Security**,
 - set common objectives towards **poverty alleviation, sustainable development** and the **gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy** as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement
 - and discuss about our **future partnership** which should be a partnership "**beyond development aid**" reflecting new opportunities.

- The European Union and the Republic of Mauritius have had a longstanding partnership for 40 years covering Development Cooperation, Trade relations, Business and Foreign Direct Investment, Education, Scientific and Cultural exchanges.
- Mauritius has been one of the countries which have benefited most from the EU-ACP cooperation and the EU has been closely associated to the development and diversification of the economy of Mauritius. In the recent years, the EU has been providing significant budget support in favour of the economic and social reform programme of Mauritius.
- The EU welcomes the ambition of Mauritius to evolve from the current upper middle income country status to a high income country. The EU stands ready to assist the Government in achieving this vision with various interventions. Our bilateral support under the 11th European Development Fund will focus on **tertiary education** and **research and innovation** in line with the Government priorities to improve the human capital base in the country, and contribute to unlock growth. There are also other funding opportunities under the regional

programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean in support of **Regional Economic Integration** and **Sustainable Management of natural resources** which are priorities for Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The first EU-Mauritius Political Dialogue took place in 2011, and we firmly believe that today's event is a sign of the maturity of our partnership.
- Today, we aim to hold discussions on our current and future partnership and to exchange views on domestic, regional and international developments, and on the way we can **work together** to address global challenges. The agenda is broad and encompasses a variety of topics of common interest such as **Peace and Security**, **Migration**, **Regional Economic Integration**, **Trade**, **Climate Change**, **Sustainable Development Goals**, and **our Future Partnership**.
- I am glad that several EU Member States accredited to the Republic of Mauritius (resident and non-resident) have joined me for the Political Dialogue. This shows the

importance we attach to the dialogue with the Government of Mauritius, and the quality of our relations.

- I am looking forward to our fruitful discussions.
- Thank you for your attention.