

*Ministry of foreign affairs, regional integration and international trade*

# **THE DIPLOMAT**



# **NEWSLETTER**

## **Fight against piracy**

### **Minister Boolell meets Ambassador Winkler**



Ambassador T. Winkler, Chair of Working Group 2 on Legal Issues of the Contact Group on piracy off the Coast of Somalia and Ms C.P.Hansen, Head of Section, Department of International Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, were in Mauritius on 11-13 January 2012 to advise and assist in the drafting Post-Trial Transfer Agreements with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland. Amb. Winkler was accompanied by Ambassador Alessandro Mariani, Head of the European Commission (EC) delegation in Mauritius.

He had a meeting with Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, with the Director of Public Prosecutions,9th Floor,

R.Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis, the Honourable Attorney General, 5th Floor, R.Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis, and with the Honourable Chief Justice and the Honourable Master and Registrar, Supreme Court, Port Louis.

According to Minister Boolell, maritime piracy off the Somali Coast has become one of the biggest threats to regional peace and security. Piracy has become a lucrative business. The average ransom paid has increased from around \$150,000 in 2005 to \$5.4 million. A solution to the scourge of piracy in the Indian Ocean requires political stability in Somalia, thus addressing the root causes of piracy is the key to a long-lasting solution to piracy. Despite its limited resources, Mauritius is committed to combating piracy which is a threat to regional and international peace and security. Negotiations are to start with the Somali authorities for the repatriation and transfer of sentenced pirates.

The Piracy and Maritime Violence Act was enacted in the National Assembly on .13 December 2011. Handover guidelines for the transfer of suspected pirates are being prepared by the Office of the DPP and the Police Department with the assistance of the UNODC. This document sets out the procedures to be followed by warships apprehending pirates who may be transferred to Mauritius for eventual prosecution.

Moreover, with the assistance of UNODC, Capacity Building Programmes have been conducted in various fields such as revision of legislation, training of investigators and prosecutors, the Police Department and the Prisons Department. During their incarceration in Mauritius, suspected and convicted pirates would be kept in a separate ward. Upgrading works are being carried out to accommodate some 20 pirates for the time being and are expected to be completed by the end of February.

As a short-term measure, the European Union has approved the release of funds to the tune of 2 million Euros under the EDF/IRCC to kick-start the implementation of the Regional Strategy and Action Plan. The Indian Ocean Commission is expected to set up a Counter Piracy Unit in the Seychelles with a view to having better co-ordination on the activities of countries in the region on piracy issues as well as exchanging information. Mauritius has been invited to nominate a representative for secondment in Seychelles.

## **Trade with the US**

### **Arvin Boolell launches 5<sup>th</sup> TIFA Council Meeting**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council Meeting, takes place on 16-17 January 2012 at the Intercontinental Hotel, Balaclava, Mauritius. Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, proceeds to the launching of the event on Monday 16 January 2012.

A high level US delegation led by Ambassador Demetrios Marantis, Deputy US Trade Representative (USTR) and Florizelle Liser, Assistant USTR for Africa, including representatives of the US Department of State, USTR Office and USAID East Africa Trade Hub are in Mauritius for these negotiations. Mr Anundpriya Neewoor, Secretary for Foreign Affairs (SFA) heads the Mauritian side.

The TIFA Council is an important process that helps to pave the ground for bilateral cooperation. It is considered as a stepping stone to enhanced bilateral cooperation such as a Free Trade Area. Mauritius is among the few African countries having signed a TIFA with the US. The Governments of Mauritius and USA are called upon to meet, at least once a year, at the level of the TIFA Council alternately in Port-Louis and Washington. The purpose of the TIFA Council meeting is to review progress in the implementation of TIFA Work Plan and set the agenda of work for the coming year.

The TIFA was signed in September 2006. The TIFA includes provisions for the establishment of a bilateral Trade and Investment Council that will meet annually to monitor trade and investment relations, identify opportunities for expanding trade and investment, and identify important issues and challenges that the two countries need to address. The first official meeting of the TIFA Council took place on 5-6 February 2007 in Mauritius.

Technical work pertaining to the TIFA has been carried out on the basis of a Work Plan agreed between both sides. The Work Plan consists of 14 areas of cooperation namely trade and investment promotion in competitive sectors, enhancing private sector linkages, coordinating on

AGOA implementation, promoting Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), enhancing trade in services, trade in fish and seafood sectors, strengthening agri-business linkages, amongst others.

Over the last year, discussions between the two sides focused on agri-business linkages, ICT services, renewable energy and IPR protection and enforcement. Both sides are also engaged in the negotiations of a Bilateral Investment Treaty which will provide the requisite legal security to US investors and help attract more FDI from the US into Mauritius. Mauritius also benefited from some capacity building projects from the US in the field of agri-business linkages, participation of Mauritian companies in events organized by the US.

***Profile of Demetrios Marantis, Head of US Delegation for TIFA Council Meeting:***



Demetrios Marantis serves as Deputy USTR, nominated for this position by President Barack Obama, and confirmed by the Senate on May 6, 2009. He is responsible for U.S. trade negotiations and enforcement in Asia and Africa. He also leads USTR global initiatives on trade and development, labor, and the environment. He holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and an A.B. in Public and International Affairs from Princeton University.

Demetrios Marantis recently served as Chief International Trade Counsel (Majority) for the Senate Finance Committee. In this capacity, he advised Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D - MT), as well as members and staff of the Finance Committee and Democratic Caucus, on trade and economic issues. Mr. Marantis joined the committee in February of 2005 after serving as Issues Director on the Kerry-Edwards 2004 presidential campaign. Prior to the campaign, Mr. Marantis spent two years in Hanoi as Chief Legal Advisor for the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council where he provided technical assistance on international trade matters.

Between 1998 and 2002, Mr. Marantis served as Associate General Counsel in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative where he negotiated provisions of international trade agreements - including the U.S.-Singapore and U.S. Chile Free Trade Agreements - and represented the United States in WTO dispute settlement proceedings, including the U.S.-Mexico dispute on telecommunications. Mr. Marantis also worked for five years in the Washington, D.C. and Brussels, Belgium offices of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld.

## **Bilateral relations**

### **Turkish delegation held consultative meeting in Port Louis**



A Turkish delegation comprising of Mr Hakan Karabalik, Head of Department, Ministry of Economy of Turkey, and of Sertaç Güner, Trade Expert at the same Ministry, was in Mauritius on 11-12 January 2012 for discussions on a Framework agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation. The Mauritian side was led by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr Anund Neewoor and comprise representatives from relevant ministries and Private sector including Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, MEXA amongst others. Mauritius signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in September 2011, at the initiative of Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

The objective of the framework agreement is to enhance economic cooperation as well as foster trade between the two countries. The agreement covers different areas of cooperation including Agriculture, Education, Science and Technology. It also covers provisions on trade facilitation and trade promotion. It will provide a platform to identify areas of investment and create greater economic synergies between the two countries. The Turkish side also discussed preparations for the proposed visit of their Minister of Economy H.E Zafer Caglayan, to Mauritius this year, before paying a courtesy call on Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell in the afternoon of 12 January 2012.



***IN BRIEF***

- A brainstorming session on Migration will be launched by Minister Boolell on 18 January 2012 at the Hennessy Hotel, Ebene. Mauritius is the current Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and will host the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GFMD in November 2012.
- The African Union (AU) Summit will be held in Addis Ababa on 23 – 30 January 2012.
- Negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement with Tunisia will start on 19-20 January 2012.
- A debriefing session on the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 9 January 2012.