

## PRESS RELEASE

### Agreement on the Short-stay Visa Waiver and on Mutual Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports

The Agreement on the Short-stay Visa Waiver and on Mutual Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports between Mauritius and Switzerland was signed on Tuesday 26 October 2010 at 1500 hours in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

H.E. Ambassador A.P. Neewoor, GOSK, CSK, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, signed the Agreement on behalf of Mauritius and H.E. Mr. Rudolf Baerfuss, Ambassador of Switzerland accredited to Mauritius based in Pretoria, South Africa, was the signatory on behalf of the Swiss authorities.

Our Embassy in Brussels was mandated by the Ministry to negotiate the Agreement between Mauritius and Switzerland which was concluded and initialled on 10 March 2010.

It will be recalled that Mauritius and the European Community signed a Short-stay Visa Waiver Agreement on 28 May 2009 which allows citizens of Mauritius to enter and stay without prior visa in the territory of EU Member States within the Schengen Area for a maximum period of three months during a six-month period.

The Joint Declaration of the Agreement between Mauritius and the European Community called upon Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein to conclude bilateral agreements similar to that signed by Mauritius and the European Community.

Under the combined effect of both Agreements that Mauritius signed with the European Community and has concluded with Switzerland respectively, Mauritian nationals will be able to travel without a visa to the 25 European Union Member States and Switzerland, and stay for a maximum period of three months with multiple-entry facilities within a six-month period.