



# Republic of Mauritius

**REMARKS**

**TO**

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR BARACK OBAMA**

**PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**BY MR. SOOROOJDEV PHOKEER**

**APPOINTED AMBASSADOR OF MAURITIUS**

**ON THE**

**OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS**

**AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY**

**OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

**TO THE**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to present to you, Mr. President, the Letters appointing me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mauritius to the United States of America, as well as the Letter of Recall of my predecessor Ambassador Somduth Soborun.

I have the privilege to convey to you, Mr. President, the warm personal greetings of Her Excellency, Dr. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, G.C.S.K., C.S.K., President, and the Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, G.C.S.K., K.C.M.G., Q.C., Prime Minister, as well as the best wishes of the Government and people of the Republic of Mauritius.

The strong bilateral relations between Mauritius and the United States of America are anchored in our shared democratic traditions. The values and ideals on which the United States of America were founded have been a constant source of inspiration for Mauritius since our independence in 1968 and encourage us to continue working closely with your country to promote peace, respect for human rights, sustainable development, and to combat poverty in all its forms.

Mauritius and the United States of America already have a strong cooperation in the areas of strategic security, law enforcement and combatting maritime piracy. We share with the United States the common goal of ensuring that the Indian Ocean remains a peaceful and secure zone and are keen to engage with your country for this purpose.

Last year, Mr. President, you pioneered the first ever US-Africa Leaders' Summit which addressed issues of key importance to Africa, namely energy security, infrastructure development, investment and capacity building. We will continue to combine our efforts to support initiatives that aim at promoting and preserving peace and security in Africa and in the Indian Ocean region.

The recent renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Mr. President, is yet another hallmark of the strong commitment of the United States of America, under your leadership, to partner with Africa to advance its economic growth and prosperity. It is significant that you signed the AGOA Trade Extension into law ahead of the celebrations of the 239<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Independence Day of your Country. We thank you for this grand gesture of solidarity with Africa.

The confidence and predictability that this renewal has brought to the business community both in Mauritius and the United States cannot be underestimated. We will continue to value our trade relations with the United States of America and we look forward to working with the competent authorities of your country towards a future driven by productivity and creativity.

Our economic and trade relations are set to deepen even further under the existing Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), which provides the necessary framework to develop and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, and to promote small, medium and micro enterprises, with particular focus on women entrepreneurs.

We look forward to the early establishment of a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between our two countries, and in due course a Free Trade Area (FTA) between Mauritius and the United States .

At the United Nations, Mauritius and the United States adopt to a large extent the same stance on various pressing issues. We both consider certain fundamental values to be essential, including the promotion for human rights and democracy, the fight against terrorism, respect for rule of law and territorial integrity.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Mauritius is disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change, and will continue to partner the broader international community, including the United States of America, in the sensitisation campaign on the plight of these States. Mauritius will also look forward to increased collaboration with the United States of America in the fields of ocean economy, sustainable development and renewable energy.

I shall remain guided at all times during my tenure of Office as Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius to the United States by the highest sense of responsibility and integrity in the discharge of my duties in the mutual interest of both Mauritius and the Unites States of America.

Mr. President, allow me to convey my best wishes to you for your personal well-being and that of your family.

Thank you, Mr. President.