

**H E Mrs Marjaana Sall, Ambassador of the European Union
to the Republic of Mauritius**

**AFRITAC South Regional seminar - Integrity in Customs
Administration**

Closing Session at 12.15 hrs

Friday 7 April 2017

Ebène

**Mrs Effie Psalida, AFRITAC South Coordinator and Director
of Africa Training Institute**

Resident Advisers of AFRITAC South

**Participants from the Eastern, Southern African and Indian
Ocean region**

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to be with you today for the closing session of this regional seminar on integrity in customs administration.

I am glad that so many participants from the region could attend this seminar on such a crucial topic. Integrity is important not only for customs administration but for the public service in general.

I would like to congratulate AFRITAC South and its staff for the initiative, and for giving me the opportunity to address you today.

I am pleased to share with you the European Union perspective on integrity and good governance.

The European Union and its Member States are engaged in the promotion of universal values of democracy, good governance, rule of law and human rights for all - across the full range of partnerships and instruments, including through development cooperation.

The European Union is working on a new development policy called the '*European Consensus for Development*'. This new policy is firmly grounded in the belief that **inclusive societies and accountable, democratic institutions are preconditions for sustainable development and stability.**

We mainstream good governance in our projects. Fight against corruption represents a considerable part of our cooperation.

Corruption remains one of the biggest challenges for all societies. Many countries around the world suffer from deep-rooted corruption that hampers economic development, undermines democracy, and damages social justice and the rule of law. Estimates show that the cost of corruption equals more than 5% of global GDP (2.6 trillion US dollars, according to the World Economic Forum) with over 1 trillion US dollars paid in bribes each year.

Although the nature and scope of corruption differ from one state to another, it harms societies as a whole as it impinges on good governance, sound management of public money and competitive markets. Indeed corruption directly affects business and trade. It generates delays in processing of imports and exports, can cause significant economic losses, increase the cost of doing business, affect competitiveness of a country's firms and scare away foreign investment.

Moreover, organised crime groups use corruption to commit other serious crimes, such as trafficking in drugs and human beings.

Corruption also undermines trust in democratic institutions and weakens the accountability of political leadership.

The fight against corruption is therefore the fight for a better business enabling environment and democratic societies and paves the way for inclusive growth.

Since 2011, the European Commission implements a Communication on "*Fighting Corruption in the EU*".

This communication was the basis for EU support to anti-corruption policies in order to strengthen good governance and democratisation as part of its development policy.

In order to achieve this goal, the European Union follows a partnership-based approach, engaging dialogue with partner countries' governments and civil society, EU Member States and other donors.

The European Union has endorsed the 2017-2018 G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan to improve public and private sector transparency and integrity, implementing our stance of **zero tolerance against corruption, zero loopholes in our institutions and zero barriers in our actions.**

Ladies and Gentlemen

The European Union works closely with **Africa** for good governance.

One of the components of the Africa - EU partnership is to ensure a transparent, democratic and accountable environment contributing to reducing fragility, fostering political stability and effective governance, and enabling sustainable and inclusive development and growth.

Of particular interest to you would be the 11 million euros '*Pan-African Financial Governance Programme*' which was adopted in 2014.

This programme supports harmonised approaches and builds standards of public finance systems through Pan-African organisations active in the four areas of budget cycle, namely: Tax policy and administration, Budget reforms, External audit, and Legislative oversight.

At **global** level, the European Union and its member States are determined to work with partner countries to promote sound policy environments for implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

We will support state capacity to formulate and implement national development policies and to increase accountability and responsiveness to citizens.

I would like to seize this opportunity to emphasize excellent working relationship with, AFRITAC South, as evidenced by my presence here today.

The European Union is also the lead donor to the AFS located here in Mauritius, with almost EUR 20 million of funding for Phase I.

The EU is currently working on its financial support to IMF/AFRITAC South for Phase II, for countries and regional stakeholders to continue benefitting from these important training and capacity building initiatives.

I firmly believe that participants here today, who are part of the customs administration, have a crucial role to play in the fight against corruption. Customs is the chief enforcer of trade policy, has an important role in export promotion and is one of the major tax collection agencies of the central government. Not only must customs perform these duties effectively, it must do so with minimal interruption in trade flows: In open economies, volume and speed of international trade is critical. Therefore the consequences of corruption in customs can be daunting.

Today's seminar is of key importance. I hope that you will return to your countries better equipped to increase transparency and to fight any attempts which might affect the integrity of the customs services.

Thank you for your kind attention.