

## **PRESS COMMUNIQUE**

### **Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG)**

The ESAAMLG is a group of eighteen countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa, including Mauritius, which was set up in 1999 to combat money laundering in the region.

By joining this group, the member countries have agreed to participate in an ongoing programme of Mutual Evaluation which is done in accordance with Mutual Evaluation Procedures approved by the ESAAMLG Council of Ministers. These procedures are reviewed from time to time by the ESAAMLG Council of Ministers.

Mauritius underwent a prior evaluation in 2007 and its anti-money laundering (AML) and combating the financing of terrorism (CFT) regime was assessed on a set of procedures that were established in 2004.

The current evaluation is being undertaken on the basis of a new set of procedures established in 2013. This mutual evaluation started with a desk review exercise in October 2016 and reviewed our legislative and institutional framework for combating money laundering and terrorism financing with focus on actions taken between August 2008 to June 2017. The evaluators also carried out an on-site visit to Mauritius between 5 to 16 June 2017.

Subsequently, a first draft report was submitted for comments. Mauritius provided extensive comments on the Report and a delegation of senior technical officers also participated in a discussion on the Report at a Task Force Plenary meeting held in Arusha, Tanzania in April 2018. However, when the post plenary version of the report was received, a number of shortcomings regarding the quality and consistency as well as some procedural irregularities were noted.

Consequently, in accordance with the Mutual Evaluation procedures, the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance expressed his concerns to the President of the Council of Ministers and shared same with other Ministers of the Council.

In fact, Mauritius has never requested for the rejection of the Report, but only that the Report be not adopted in its present state, and it be discussed at the forthcoming meetings of the ESAAMLG Task Force and Council of Ministers to be held in Seychelles in September 2018.

On 30 June 2018, the President of the ESAAMLG Council of Ministers acceded to the request of Mauritius.

It should be noted that:

- (i) The draft Report is **CONFIDENTIAL**;
- (ii) The final version will be made available in the public domain;
- (iii) The final Report will base its conclusion on the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting Terrorism Financing measures that were in place as at 16 June 2017;
- (iv) The Report will provide recommendations on how the system that was in place as at June 2017 could be further strengthened;
- (v) Mauritius is fully committed to continue its engagement with ESAAMLG;
- (vi) A number of legislative reforms to further enhance the framework to combat money laundering and terrorism financing in Mauritius and in the region are being made; and
- (vii) AT THIS STAGE, IT IS PREMATURE TO COMMENT ON THE FINDINGS OF THE REPORT AND ALL SPECULATIONS WILL MERELY CAUSE UNNECESSARY PREJUDICE TO THE MAURITIUS FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR.

*Ministry of Financial Services  
and Good Governance*

*13 July 2018*