

Mrs Seewooruthun, PS of my Ministry

Mrs Boodhoo, Director of the Tourism Authority

Mr Rochecoute, Chairman of the Tourism Authority

CI Mohesh, Head of the Police du Tourisme

Commander National Coast Guard

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

I am delighted to be here among you for the launch of the first patrol craft belonging to the Tourism Authority. I thank you all for your presence on this special occasion which sets the stage of a strategy which is designed to ensure the safety and security of any person engaging in sea- based activities. I wish to stress that our top most priority is to ensure the security of tourists in our country during their stay. Any act of violence against a tourist is one too many and amounts to an unpatriotic act.

As tourism grows, so will the number of tourists who will wish to take part in various activities at sea. As the marine environment is a favorite with tourists, it is our responsibility to equip ourselves with means to respond to any emergency situation at sea. We want all tourists who wish to do so to have no fear about conducting any activity at sea and to cherish memorable experiences of their activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our marine space is a great asset of our tourism industry. While skippers and pleasure craft operators are being provided with the necessary training to reduce the risks of accidents at sea, the escalating number of nautical activities indisputably calls for frequent monitoring efforts to ensure compliance with rules, regulations and standards.

The Tourism Authority which is the Regulator strives to provide a rules- based industry with standards and norms which are internationally recognized, it still must keep abreast of new

developments in technology and innovation. In order to instill confidence in all tourists and users about the safety of activities, the Tourism Authority has officers who monitor them and, in case of any breach, enforce the Regulations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since we have the ambition of continuing to be a dream destination capable of attracting the high net worth individuals and affluent millennials we decided that the Tourism Authority needed to procure its own seagoing asset to be able to function independently. As you have heard, the craft is a CE certified Beneteau Barracuda 8, which cost just over Rs 4 million. It forms part of an elite class of versatile craft which can be used for various purposes including monitoring and sea surveillance. The craft is destined to be deployed around the island and may also be transferred on trailer by road from one area of operation to another.

My ministry which has demarcated swimming zones, boat free zones, Ski lanes, Snorkelling Zones and speed limit Zones to avoid

accidents at sea and to protect sea users, including swimmers, from risk of accidents will rely on this craft for an effective monitoring of these zones.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This new all-weather patrol craft will be of great help not only to the Tourism Authority but also to the National Coast Guard as well. It provides possibility for joint operations with the National Coast Guard to target core problems related to safety at sea. The craft may also assist in Search and Rescue operations thus giving a helping hand to the National Coast Guard. It will enable Tourism Enforcement Officers to display a more prominent presence at Flat Island, Gabriel Island and other sensitive marine areas.

This patrol craft gives operational autonomy to the Tourism Authority. It will have on board Enforcement Officers of the TA but also of Police officers posted at the 'Police du Tourisme' who will be in a position to contravene for speeding and other matters which

are outside the ambit of the Enforcement Officers. They will also have powers of arrest.

The Tourism Authority is in the process of procuring more of such seagoing assets to ensure overall coverage of the shores of Mauritius in a drive to boost up the reputation of Mauritius as a safe and secure tourist destination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy that we have reached thus far but we have more to do. For example, I have instructed the Tourism Authority to include in the training of skippers a language component. It is my view that skippers must have a working knowledge of the languages mainly spoken by the tourists who visit us. I have in mind languages like Hindi, Mandarin, Arabic, German, Italian and Portuguese. Language versatility will enhance the image of the destination.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je tiens à préciser la détermination du gouvernement et de mon ministère a une politique de zéro tolérance en ce qui concerne les actes de violence contre les touristes. Il est impératif que chacun de nous comprennent et apprécie l'apport du tourisme à notre économie et à la qualité des vies de mauriciens.

Merci