

INTERCONTINENTAL TRUST e-NEWS

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Intercontinental Trust Ltd

COVID-19 latest updates

COVID-19 – Lockdown in Mauritius

The COVID-19 outbreak is a human tragedy and has a growing impact on the global economy. In Mauritius, the first cases of the COVID-19 were reported last week and the government has instituted a lockdown period of 14 days on the country since Friday 20 March 2020 in a bid to contain the pandemic which will eventually help in flattening the curve.

During the lockdown period, all our employees will be working from home. We would like to highlight that our Work-From-Home facilities have been tried and tested for a number of years already and that these are fully compliant with our data privacy and data security protocols.

ITL has released communiques about the current situation in Mauritius and if you have not received these, you may still access our latest newsflash by clicking [here](#).

Stay home, Be safe!

Alternatively, should you like to subscribe to our mailing list, please send us an e-mail on subscribe@intercontinentaltrust.com

COVID-19 – Important Communiques from the Local Authorities

Further to recent announcements made by the Government with regard to the national confinement, the Mauritian Authorities have subsequently taken a number of proactive measures as described in their communiques, including the following:

Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA)

Penalty and interest waived for late filings

The facilities for the electronic submission of tax returns and electronic payment of any tax due remain available on MRA website (www.mra.mu) and no penalty or interest for late submission/payment will be charged to taxpayers who are unable to submit returns or effect payment of tax in due course.

For any query, you may liaise with your contact person at ITL or send an email on headoffice@mra.mu

Customs

The core services of MRA Customs are operational in Mauritius and in Rodrigues Island with a skeleton staff to ensure the smooth running of various services including clearance of goods and outgoing passengers. Facilities for the electronic submission of Customs Declarations, including electronic payment of duties and taxes, are available on the Customs Management System.

Wage Assistance Scheme

The Wage Assistance Scheme (WAS) has been implemented by the Government to ensure that all employees working for companies operating in the private sector and that are adversely affected by the COVID-19 are duly paid their salary for the month of March 2020. Private sector companies may apply for the WAS once the payment of salaries has been made to all employees but if an employer is facing cash flow issues, he may apply forthwith to the Mauritius Revenue Authority for assistance to pay the salaries for March 2020.

The WAS entitles companies operating in the private sector to receive in respect to its wage bill for the month of March 2020, an amount equivalent to 15 days' basic wage bill for all of its employees drawing a monthly basic wage of up to MUR 50,000. The refund per employee is subject to a minimum of MUR 4,850 and is capped at MUR 12,500.

The full communiques can be accessed below:

MRA Communique for COVID-19: [here](#)

MRA Wage Assistance Scheme: [here](#)

Financial Services Commission (FSC)

Flexibility on regulatory filings

In its communique issued on 20 March 2020, the FSC reassured that it will continue to engage with its licensees and market participants primarily via remote technology and ensure smooth running of business. Anticipating the delays that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing, the FSC will also show flexibility towards companies which may face challenges in meeting their forthcoming reporting obligations including regulatory filings. The FSC will consider, on a case to case basis, such measures that may alleviate the immediate regulatory burden for financial institution during these challenging times.

Important updates will be posted on FSC's website: www.fscmauritius.org

The full communique can be accessed [here](#)

Registrar of Companies

Ongoing services for incorporation and filings

The Registrar of Companies (ROC) has issued a communique dated 23 March 2020, declaring that the Corporate and Business Registration Department will maintain its online facilities in respect of online incorporation and online filing. However due to the limited resources presently available, users may experience delays with regard to acknowledgement and approval.

For any query, you may liaise with your usual contact person at ITL.

Stock Exchange of Mauritius (SEM)

Extension of deadline for publication of Financial Statements

The deadline for publishing the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019, which should have been on 30 March 2020 will be extended by 1 month until 30 April 2020.

Finance & Economy

Bank of Mauritius adjusts Key Repo Rate to 2.85%

At its meeting on 10 March 2020, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of Mauritius decided to slash the Key Repo Rate (KRR) by 50 basis points, bringing it down to 2.85% per annum. The Committee discussed economic and financial developments at the global and domestic levels to make their decision. Policymakers intend to support domestic activity as the coronavirus outbreak is expected to have a significant impact on consumer and business confidence, which can potentially dent domestic spending and investment. In this context, the bank revised down its growth projections to 2.6-2.8% in 2020 (previously seen at 4%). Meantime, the headline inflation forecast was set at 1.5% in 2020, as both headline and core inflation have remained low.

For more information about the KRR, please visit the BOM [website](#)

International Benchmarks

Democracy Index 2019: Mauritius a “Full Democracy” and ranks 1st in Africa, 18th worldwide

The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index 2019, released in January 2020, ranks Mauritius 1st in Africa and 18th worldwide.

In this year’s report, which covers the period 2018-2019, a total of 165 independent states and two territories (covering almost the entire population of the world) were assessed. The Democracy Index made the assessment according to five criteria, namely: electoral process and pluralism; the functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties. Based on the scores obtained, each country / territory has been classified into either one of four regime categories: “full democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid regime” and “authoritarian regime”.

Mauritius attained an overall score of 8.22 points and is qualified as a “Full Democracy”. Only 20 countries worldwide belong to this category and Mauritius is the only country in the African region to be classified as a “full democracy”. Others in this category include the developed OECD countries of Europe and North America, two Australian countries (New Zealand and Australia) and three Latin American countries (Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica). It is noted that Mauritius ranks ahead of the France (20th), United States (25th), India (51st) and China (153rd). The three countries at the very top of the Index are Norway (9.87 points), Iceland (9.58) and Sweden (9.39).

In the Sub-Saharan Africa region, Mauritius leads the top 10 list and is followed by Botswana (7.81), by Cabo Verde (7.78 points) South Africa (7.24) and Ghana (6.63), Lesotho (6.54) Namibia (6.43), Senegal (5.81), Madagascar (5.64) and Malawi (5.50).

The full Democracy Index 2019 can be accessed from the [EIUS’ website](#) after registration.

The Africa Prosperity Index

The Africa Prosperity Report provides a comprehensive and holistic picture of prosperity across the African continent. It assesses whether each nation has an inclusive society with strong institutions, an open economy, and empowered people who are healthy, educated and safe. Based on the Legatum Prosperity Index, this report has been developed as a practical tool to help identify what specific action needs to be taken to contribute to strengthening the pathways from poverty to prosperity globally. It consists of 12 pillars of prosperity such as health, education, and social capital, built upon 65 actionable policy areas (elements), and is underpinned by 294 indicators.

The Africa Prosperity Index 2019 report ranks Mauritius 1st as the most prosperous country in Africa (as it has been for the past 10 years). The island country has been a model since independence in 1968, and today tops the continent in six pillars, including Governance, Enterprise Conditions, and Education. This rating reconfirms the position of Mauritius as a destination of choice in the African region.

The top five performers in the whole ranking are the Mauritius in first position, followed by Seychelles, Botswana, Cabo Verde and South Africa.

The full report can be accessed [here](#)

Human Freedom Index 2019

The 2019 Human Freedom Index report published by the Fraser Institute ranks Mauritius 1st in Sub Saharan Africa and 50th worldwide. A total of 162 countries participated.

The index measures the degree to which the policies and institutions of countries are supportive of human freedom, understood as the absence of coercive constraint. This fifth annual index uses 76 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom in different areas such as Rule of Law, Security and Safety, Religion, Expression and Information and Freedom to Trade Internationally, amongst others.

In the Sub-Saharan Africa region, Mauritius topped the list (50th worldwide) and was followed by Cabo Verde (52nd worldwide) and Botswana (60th worldwide).

At the global level, the top five countries by ranking order were (1) New Zealand (2) Switzerland (3) Hong Kong (4) Canada (5) Australia.

The rankings of some other major countries are Germany (8) United Kingdom (14) United States (15) Japan (25) Italy (32) France (33) Mexico (82) India (94) Brazil (109) Russia (114) and China (126).

The 2019 Human Freedom Index report is available [here](#)

2020 Henley Passport Index and Global Mobility Report

The 2020 Henley Passport Index and Global Mobility Report is a unique publication that offers exclusive insight into mobility and migration patterns, bringing together commentary from leading scholars and professional experts on the major and emerging trends in global and regional mobility today.

Mauritius ranks 2nd for the African region and 32nd worldwide with a score of 146, behind the Republic of Seychelles (29th worldwide with a total score of 151).

You may read the full report [here](#)

For any additional information please contact us.

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