

Brief on Courtesy Call of Mrs Irada Zeynalova, Ambassador of Russia to Hon. Minister Gondeea, OSK, Minister of Arts and Culture

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Mauritius, Mrs. Irada Zeynalova, paid a courtesy call on Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK, Minister of Arts and Culture on Monday 09 December 2024 at the Ministry's Office in Port Louis.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss enhancing cultural ties and exploring avenues for collaboration between Mauritius and Russia. Ambassador Zeynalova expressed her gratitude for the productive dialogue, which underscored the mutual commitment to deepening bilateral relations through cultural exchange.

A key focus of the discussion was the proposed inauguration of the *Year of Russia-Mauritius Cooperation* in 2025, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of cyclone Gervaise. The Ambassador highlighted the historical significance of this event, recalling the invaluable support provided by Soviet sailors in 1975 at the invitation of late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. To commemorate this milestone in the two nations' friendship, a documentary is being produced, celebrating the shared history and solidarity between Moscow and Port Louis.

Ambassador Zeynalova also outlined several initiatives aimed at enriching the cultural landscape of Mauritius, including Russian ballet and theatre masterclasses, donations of Russian classical literature in multiple languages, and the introduction of Russian language courses. Additional discussions included offering scholarships for Mauritian students to study in Russia at no cost and organizing a *Day of Children's Books* on the island.

Emphasizing the transformative power of culture, the Ambassador stated, "Culture connects countries, and we believe working together is the best way to foster development in our relations." She reiterated the importance of the Ministry's support in actualizing these initiatives, underscoring cultural cooperation as a vital pillar in strengthening the enduring ties between Russia and Mauritius.