



MAURITIUS COUNTRY CORRESPONDENT

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The MRA successfully hosted the ATAF Technical Seminar 2013

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) successfully co-hosted with the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) with the support of OECD and the IMF a technical seminar from 15th July to 19th July 2013. The event which brought together a large number of officials from different African countries working in Tax Administration was held at Le Meridien Hotel. The theme was on Managing Tax Compliance. The various sessions held during the five days considered ways for Tax Administrations to find a balance between taxpayer service and enforcement activities.

Speaking on the occasion as Chief Guest during the opening ceremony of the seminar, the Chairman of the MRA emphasised the importance of capacity building for revenue officials for an efficient tax administration and elaborated on the recent recruitment of young graduates at MRA for conducting tax audits and hence improving tax compliance. On his part, the Director General of MRA explained the technological changes implemented by the Authority for providing quality and improved services to taxpayers. He said that when electronic facilities were launched in 2007, only 1.2% of individual tax returns were received electronically. In 2013, the MRA has received 92% of returns electronically and that e-filing of individual income tax returns is now universal in Mauritius.

The resource persons who were from the IMF and OECD shared their knowledge and experiences on the topic of the event with the delegates and there was an active participation in the various interactive sessions. On the closure of the seminar, it can be said that the participants returning to their country have not only brought the Mauritian hospitality in their briefcases but also ideas for sharing and implementing same in their respective tax administrations.

The Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal

The Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal Act was enacted in June 2013. The purpose of the Act was for the establishment of a Tribunal known as the Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal to speed up decisions on appeal in replacement to the Assessment Review Committee.

The Tribunal shall consist of a Chairperson, one or more Vice-chairpersons and such other members not exceeding 10 in number and will come into operation shortly.

MRA awarded the 3rd prize under the Best Tax Stamp Programme

The MRA was awarded the 3rd prize in the category of Best Tax Stamp Programme during the Fourth Tax Stamp Forum which was held in Vienna in June 2013. Organized by the Reconnaissance International, the forum saw the participation of 55 countries and the nominees were classified into three categories: the best design, the best new innovation and the best tax stamp programme. The award received is recognition for the secure excise stamps for cigarettes and accompanying track and trace system.

The year 2008 was an important landmark for the MRA in its fight against counterfeit products, in particular cigarettes, when the Tax Stamp programme was introduced for the first time. With the coming into operation of this measure, all packets of cigarettes manufactured in or imported into Mauritius for sale locally compulsorily need to be affixed with a tax stamp. In 2011, some new security aspects were incorporated on the Tax Stamp for better detection, control and prevention of counterfeit cigarettes. In the near future, the tax stamp will be extended on locally manufactured and imported alcoholic products.

First edition of Taxpayers' Week at MRA

In the context of its 7th Anniversary, the MRA, apart from organizing the annual Blood Giving event, launched the first edition of Taxpayer Week early in July 2013.

To mark the Taxpayers' Week a series of activities were organized by the Authority. These included:

- An interactive session with students from tertiary institutions in Mauritius on the theme Promoting Tax culture
- Twitter competition with tweet message in 140 characters on the theme Why Pay Taxes? with the possibility for the winner to win an i-pad and other corporate gifts
- an open day at the MRA with the opportunity for the general public to have a better view of its services