

**Address by the Hon. Deepak Balgobin, Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation on the occasion of the Joint Launching of a Commemorative Postage Stamp and First Day Cover – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 15 00hrs.**

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**Her Excellency, Dr Kate O’Shaughnessy, Australian High Commissioner,**

**Miss Sandrine Valere, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation,**

**Mrs Usha Brijmohun, Chairperson of the Mauritius Post Ltd**

**Mr Devendranath Choolhun, Chairperson of the Stamp Advisory Committee,**

**Prof. Theeshan Bahorun, Executive Director of the MRIC,**

**Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and from the Prime Minister’s Office,**

**Members from the Press,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good afternoon and welcome.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the first diplomatic relations between Mauritius and Australia.

This Golden Anniversary is an opportunity for us to emphasize on the quality of the relations between our two countries and to enhance all aspects of it.

Our diplomatic relations are characterised by deep understanding and mutual trust as we keep with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges to strengthen and expand our “unique ties”.

As such, our bilateral relationship was nurtured by friendship and also with a long-term collaboration in various sectors, such as the Blue Economy, Ocean Economy, Education, Maritime Security and the Health Sector.

On top of these ties, our people-to-people links are underpinned by Australia’s large Mauritian diaspora and alumni of more than 30,000.

Australia and Mauritius also share a rich philatelic history. The Postal Museum and Reference Centre at the Mauritius Post have securely kept the first air mail carried during the inaugural flight of Qantas to Mauritius in 1952.

We are proud to launch today a joint stamp issue which is a momentous occasion to celebrate this special relationship between our two countries.

This first issue of a commemorative stamp is a joint one by Australia Post and Mauritius Post, which is also a rare feature.

It comprises a "*postage paid envelope*" which is being issued by Australia Post today itself, while Mauritius Post is issuing a "*new stamp and First Day Cover*" concurrently today.

They both carry a common design, printed by both Post Offices, and feature the National Flowers of our two countries, the endemic Trochetia of Mauritius the green and gold of the Golden Wattle of Australia.

Our First Day Cover floral motifs represent our two countries' rich and diverse flora.

The colours of the Trochetia, endemic to Mauritius, reflect the vivacity of the Mauritian society while the green and gold of the Golden Wattle, are Australia's national colours.

The public can get this new commemorative stamp at the Mauritius Post for Rs 33.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the High Commission of Australia in Mauritius, Australia Post staff, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade as well as the Mauritius Post for this memorable joint issue.

Excellency, your presence is a celebration of our warm bilateral friendship over the past five decades.

We are deeply grateful for the support of good friends such as Australia.

Let's celebrate our special history as we open a path for it to continue along for the next 50 years.

Thank you.