



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS TO THE UNITED NATIONS
MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES

10 May 2024

Dear Executive Secretary,

Mauritius has taken note of the United Kingdom's update on Agenda Item 5 of the 28th session of the IOTC on the status of its membership of the IOTC.

It will be recalled that at the 27th Session of the Commission, the UK took a commitment to clarify before the end of last year the status of its membership to the IOTC. It is a matter of regret that it has so far not done so and now, with its recent letter still does not provide an exact date by which it will do so.

While it is correct to say that talks between the UK and Mauritius are ongoing, there is no indication as to when these talks will conclude, nor is there any guarantee that they will lead to an agreement.

In any case, the conclusion of an agreement is not necessary for the UK to clarify its status, since as a matter of international law, as recognized by the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the Chagos Archipelago is an integral part of the territory of Mauritius. It is therefore clear that Mauritius is the only coastal State that can represent the Chagos Archipelago in the IOTC. This is further supported by the advice provided by the FAO Legal Counsel on 6 May 2022 in relation to Agenda item 4 of the 26th Session of the Commission, which confirms that the United Kingdom is not entitled to be a member of the IOTC as a coastal State.

As a matter of fact, as the UK has pointed out in its letter, the talks between Mauritius and the UK concern the **exercise** of sovereignty and not sovereignty *per se*.

Be it as it may, Mauritius is prepared not to press for a decision on this issue at this session of the Commission but will definitely seek one at the next session of the Commission unless UK clarifies the status of its membership by then.

I should be grateful if you could kindly circulate this letter to the members of the Commission for their information.

Yours Sincerely,



**Jagdish D. Koonjul, G.C.S.K, G.O.S.K
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Delegate to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission**

**Executive Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission**

Cc: Chairperson of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission