



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION
AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

No. 5/2026 (18570/46/142 V28)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and with reference to the letter dated 7 May 2026 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives in relation to agenda item 5 of the 30th Session of the IOTC scheduled for 11-15 May 2026 in Malé, Maldives, has the honour to state as follows:

The Republic of Mauritius specifically denies that the Republic of Maldives has any interest in the status and governance of the Chagos Archipelago.

The sovereignty of the Republic of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, can no longer be disputed since:

- (a) under international law, the Republic of Mauritius is sovereign over, and is the sole coastal State in respect of, the Chagos Archipelago in its entirety, including Diego Garcia, as authoritatively decided by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in the maritime boundary delimitation dispute between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Maldives in its Judgments of 28 January 2021 and 28 April 2023;
- (b) ITLOS, in its Judgment of 28 January 2021, stated with regard to the legal status of the Chagos Archipelago, that the sovereignty of the Republic of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago can be inferred from the determinations made by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 regarding the decolonisation of Mauritius;
- (c) the ICJ, in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019, determined that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always formed an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius, and was unlawfully detached from Mauritius prior to its accession to independence;
- (d) the UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 73/295 of 22 May 2019, confirmed that the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius, and demanded that the United Kingdom withdraw its colonial administration from the Chagos Archipelago unconditionally within six months of its adoption; and
- (e) in the Agreement of 22 May 2025 between the Republic of Mauritius and the United Kingdom, it is unequivocally stated that the Republic of Mauritius is sovereign over the Chagos Archipelago in its entirety, including Diego Garcia.

In an exchange of letters of 22 May 2025 between the Republic of Mauritius and the United Kingdom, the latter has agreed that on the entry into force of the Agreement on the Chagos Archipelago, it would no longer be in a position to claim membership of the IOTC as a coastal State.

In respect of the averment of the Republic of Maldives that it is not appropriate for issues related to the Chagos Archipelago to be discussed within the auspices of the IOTC, the Republic of Mauritius recalls that Article IV of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission provides that Members and Associate Members of FAO, or States that are not Members of FAO but Members of the United Nations, or any of its Specialized Agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency, can become members of the IOTC only if they are, *inter alia*, “coastal States situated wholly or partly within the Area [of competence of the Commission]”.

Article XXIII of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission provides for the settlement of any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of the Agreement by the Commission. Any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of Article IV of the Agreement has not been excluded from the purview of Article XXIII. Accordingly, the Commission is entitled to discuss issues relating to the Chagos Archipelago if there is a dispute on whether the criteria for membership of the IOTC as a coastal State have been met by the United Kingdom.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would be grateful if this Note Verbale could be annexed to the report of the 30th Session of the IOTC and posted on the website of the IOTC.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission the assurances of its highest consideration. *ve*

Port Louis, 12 May 2026

**Secretariat
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Victoria
Seychelles**

