

WORKING TRIP TO RODRIGUES

08 to 11 April 2025

The Ombudsman, Mr Harry Ganoo, G.O.S.K and his delegation comprising of Mr Amarnath Ramtahul, Senior Investigations Officer and Mrs Geetika Devi Kissoon-Sungsam, Investigations Officer effected a visit to Rodrigues from 08 to 11 April 2025. The objective of the mission was twofold: to monitor the progress of ongoing investigations and to strengthen collaboration with the Administration in order to enhance the delivery of public services.

➤ Meeting with the Island Chief Executive on 11 April 2025

The Ombudsman met the Island Chief Executive, Mr Jean Claude Pierre Louis, O.S.K. Discussions revolved primarily around ongoing investigations, complaints trends and reinforcing our working relationships with the Administration. Mr. Pierre Louis, O.S.K. assured our Office of the Administration's commitment to ensuring that the public receives good public service.



The Ombudsman highlighted the major issues observed during his visit, namely:

- (i) The lack of enforcement/ inspection once a Building permit is issued has given rise to illegal development and encroachment on other properties. The Island Chief Executive explained that this situation was due to the shortage of staff and the Chief Commissioner's Office is already aware of this situation and is currently working to find a solution to the issue.
- (ii) There are cases of Officers being assigned higher duties for years, without the vacancy being filled.
- (iii) The need to implement a standard procedure such that all letters or applications received from members of the public are acknowledged in line with the provisions of the Ombudsman Act 1969.
- (iv) The delay in completing the Stadium at Roche Bon Dieu. The ICE informed that the project falls under the purview of the Commission of Youth and this has been delayed on account of various significant operational problems. However, a decision has been taken to render the football ground operational for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the region - albeit not as a full-fledged stadium.
- (v) The lengthy procedures in issuing State Land Leases and demarcation of road reserves in Lease Agreements.

➤ Meetings with Departmental Heads

A total of 25 cases were pending prior to our visit to Rodrigues. In this context, Departmental Heads of the different Commissions were invited for further clarifications in cases under investigation.



We appreciate the constructive approach taken by the Departmental Heads. Their involvement in addressing complaints has been essential in driving our objectives forward and ensuring the effective resolution of grievances.

➤ **Working sessions with members of the public and complainants**

Prior to our visit, the public was informed well in advance through a Communiqué dated 27 March 2025, specifying the available time slots during which they could visit us. From 09 to 11 April 2025, our delegation received a total of 20 members of the public, either presenting new complaints or seeking updates on existing ones. Among them, several new cases were promptly registered on-site, while those with valid complaints were advised to follow statutory procedures and submit their concerns to us in writing.



➤ Working Session on 11 April 2025

On 11 April 2025, a working session was conducted with 17 Senior Officers, including Departmental Heads, from the various Commissions. During the session, participants were informed of the Ombudsman's responsibilities in promoting good governance, human rights, and accountability within the public sector.

They were briefed on the relevant provisions of Chapter IX of the Constitution and the Ombudsman Act 1969, with particular emphasis on the role, functions, and powers of the Ombudsman. The importance of public authorities and Officers responding to correspondence from members of the public within the prescribed timeframe in the best interest of the service was also highlighted.

Officers were further encouraged to implement a Customer Service Charter to foster public trust through clearly defined processes and procedures. They were advised that such an initiative would support a culture of fairness and continuous learning, while promoting greater accountability, transparency, and improved communication between the Administration and service users.



The Ombudsman encouraged open dialogue to find solutions in the interest of the public. He also urged Officials to treat the public with care, empathy, and respect, and to address requests promptly.

Participants expressed appreciation for the session and thanked the delegation.



Group photo of the delegation with the participants

Feedback from participants

- *How effective was the campaign in increasing your awareness of the services provided by the Office of the Ombudsman?*

A significant majority (70.6%) rated their awareness at Indicator 5. This shows that the campaign was effective in enhancing awareness among participants.

- *How likely are you to share the information you learned from this campaign with others?*

94.1% of respondents indicated a high likelihood (4 or 5) of sharing the information they learned, which reflects positively on the campaign's impact.

- *Has this session been beneficial to you to improve the quality of service delivery during the performance of your duties?*

All participants rated the session positively (4 or 5), indicating that most felt the session contributed to improving the quality of service delivery.

A high percentage of positive responses across all three questions indicates that the campaign was well-received and effective.

Specific feedbacks

- *To touch all public officials not only heads of section if possible.*
- *The sessions concerning law in connection with your Office should be done more frequently*
- *Reaching a larger number of public officers*
- *Explaining certain terms such as notification of appointment in layman's terms. Using examples/cases/scenarios to explain procedures & the course of investigation*
- *To be more regular*
- *To be implemented at Commission level*
- *It was very interesting & informative. More campaigns should be done in Rodrigues*
- *Frequent sessions. A sub-office to be contemplated in Rodrigues for wider exposure.*
- *Sessions with all staff. Not only with Head of Sections.*
- *Open an Office in Rodrigues*
- *How to tackle problems from the public. To offer effective service to the public*
- *The training was fruitful. But the level of attendance is too low.*
- *More regular sensitisation campaign at lower grades officer.*

In summary, the visit to Rodrigues had positive outcomes at different levels. It offered reassurance to complainants that their grievances were being duly addressed and helped reinforce cooperation with the Administration to improve service delivery. Additionally, the distribution of 100 pamphlets during the trip was significant in advancing our outreach and public engagement efforts.