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ADDRESS BY

HONOURABLE Y K J YEUNG SIK YUEN, G O S K,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF MAURITIUS

**LAUNCHING OF THE
E-JUDICIARY SYSTEM**

SUPREME COURT

PORT LOUIS

THURSDAY 4 APRIL 2013

To-day we are launching the e-filing and case management system [EFCM] of the Judiciary of Mauritius. This is an important milestone in the overall project of Modernization of the Judiciary. EFCM is expected to bring about a marked improvement in the quality of the justice delivery system.

The introduction of the EFCM is, however, not a stand-alone initiative. As a matter of fact, it is but one of a number of initiatives taken by the Judiciary under the label of e-judiciary so as to avail itself of the full potentials that IT can bring for the optimization of our court cases management system. Indeed, e-judiciary already comprises three other features which have been with us for a number of years now:

Firstly, a website for the Supreme Court providing information on the organization and activities of the Judiciary and, more importantly, making available to the legal community and society at large in real time judgments delivered by the Supreme Court and by each and every other court of the land;

Secondly, the digital recording system with intranet connections for the record of court proceedings;

Thirdly, the CCTV at the Bail and Remand Court for the handling and monitoring of remand cases without the need for suspects to be brought to Court. This system will be extended to hear witnesses who are abroad during the trial of pirates held in Mauritius.

But the EFCM stands out as the most important aspect of e-judiciary so far because its main objective is to provide a justice system which is efficient in dispensing justice within a reasonable time. The system contains many advantages which are bound to enhance the capacity of the Judiciary to reach the set goal. As a matter of fact, the e-filing and case management system features numerous improvements in case management which have been tailored to meet our special needs. It will not only significantly speed up Court processes, but will also enable our legal practitioners to handle greater caseloads more efficiently and rapidly.

With the new system, attorneys will be able to lodge a case at any time and at any place without the inconvenience of having to wait for the opening hours of the Supreme Court and queue up to pay the required fees. The e-filing and case management system has, therefore, the enormous advantage of considerably reducing the number of man-hours, now rendered unnecessary, which were formerly spent on queuing and waiting to effect time consuming legal processes before cases are filed and streamlined for hearing.

The introduction of the e-filing and case management system is part and parcel of a package of reforms undertaken within the Judiciary for a few years now with the assistance of the Investment Climate Facility for Africa [ICF] and the support of the Government of Mauritius. The prime aim was and remains the enhancement of the investment climate in Mauritius through the establishment of a justice system capable of resolving civil and commercial disputes effectively and speedily and which is attractive to investors. The other two parts of the project have already been implemented, and quite successfully I am pleased to say, with the setting up of a special division of the Supreme Court devoted to commercial cases only and a Mediation Division.

Let me recall at this stage that the e-filing and case management project has necessitated an investment of 3,600,000 USD. And we are thankful to the Investment Climate Facility for Africa and the Government of Mauritius which have generously contributed respectively 75% and 25% of the amount. Implementation of the project started in January 2010 with **Mauritius Network Services** [MNS] as the consultant for the development of the system assisted in this enterprise by its strategic partner Crimson Logic from Singapore. The project was meant to be completed in September 2011. However, due to the complexity and difficulty in transforming our specific rules of procedure and legal processes within the parameters of technology, the development of the programme took longer than projected resulting in the delay encountered.

Today we are in a position to operate the system after taking time to ascertain its reliability and conformity with our rules of procedure and its capacity to cater for all the possible scenarios and incidents in the normal and foreseeable life of a typical court case through probing and thorough testing.

The system will be operational at the Commercial Division of the Supreme Court as a start. We do not expect any major bug or error that would hamper the smooth running of the system. But should a few come up they will promptly be attended to and corrected so as to enable us to extend the system to other divisions of the Supreme Court, with the exception of the Family Division and the Criminal Division, in three months time. These divisions as well as all the subordinate courts will be taken on board in phase II of the Modernization of the Judiciary programme for which ICF has already signified its agreement to be our continued financial partner.

At this juncture I wish to commend the number of persons both inside and outside the Judiciary for their invaluable contribution to the project which involved redefining the whole process of case filing and case management. They have given valuable assistance to the IT developers who had to meet the difficult and challenging task of defining the electronic parameters of our justice system requirements while keeping in mind the cost structure necessary to meet the running costs of the system. Their contribution has been crucial to enabling the consultant to come up with an application which tallies with the needs and exigencies of modern litigation in Mauritius.

As the system goes live, I would call upon the legal profession and users to show compassion and understanding if teething problems are encountered. We count on your assistance and cooperation to ensure the smooth operation of the EFCM so that we all can be proud of having contributed to the modernization of our justice system

Thank you for your attention.

