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PRESS RELEASE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Republic of Mauritius applauds the Judgment handed down today by a Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). The Tribunal has confirmed that it has jurisdiction to delimit Mauritius' maritime boundary with the Republic of the Maldives in the region of the Chagos Archipelago. In so doing, it has also confirmed, by its 8-1 Judgment (with only the Maldives-appointed judge dissenting) that the Chagos Archipelago is an integral part of Mauritius' territory, that the 2019 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is dispositive of the matter, and that the United Kingdom has no territorial rights in respect of the Chagos Archipelago.

The Special Chamber overruled all the jurisdictional objections raised by the Maldives. These were premised on questions it raised about Mauritius' sovereignty over the Archipelago, in the light of the unfounded claim by the United Kingdom.

Speaking after the Judgment, Mauritius' Prime Minister, H.E. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said: "We are grateful to ITLOS for confirming the ICJ's determination that the Chagos Archipelago is an integral part of Mauritian territory, and that the United Kingdom has no territorial rights or claim in respect of the Archipelago. Both of the world's leading international courts have now ruled that Mauritius is the undisputed sovereign over the Chagos Archipelago. ITLOS will now proceed to delimit our maritime boundary with Maldives, on the basis that the Chagos Archipelago is a part of our territory."

Mauritius commenced the proceedings on 18 June 2019 to secure a delimitation of its maritime boundary with the Maldives. The Maldives urged ITLOS to decline to exercise jurisdiction, on grounds that the legal status of the Chagos Archipelago remains undetermined because the United Kingdom continues to claim sovereignty over the Archipelago as a colonial possession. In today's Judgment, ITLOS emphatically rejected that argument. It ruled that the ICJ Advisory Opinion resolved the question of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago when the Court determined, without a single dissenting vote on the merits, that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always been an integral part of Mauritius. The ICJ further ruled that the UK's administration of the Archipelago is a wrongful act of a continuing character which must be brought to an end as rapidly as possible.

Prime Minister Jugnauth said: "The judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is clear and unequivocal: Mauritius is sovereign over the Chagos Archipelago. The UK must now bring itself into full compliance with international law – it must

immediately terminate its unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago, which the International Court of Justice and now, today, ITLOS have determined to belong to Mauritius.” The Prime Minister added that the departure of the British colonial administration would have no implications for the US military base at Diego Garcia, which Mauritius is committed to maintaining.”

Prime Minister Jugnauth also said: “In a few days the United Kingdom will assume the Presidency of the Security Council, and has announced that the focus of its month long presidency will be Human Rights. Given its continuing refusal to allow Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, or the former inhabitants of the Archipelago to return, we call on the UK to announce, during its presidency, that it will proceed to give effect to the 2019 ICJ Advisory Opinion and UNGA Resolution 73/295 and bring itself into compliance with international law, as determined by the International Court of Justice, and now by its sister court, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and respect the human rights of the former inhabitants who wish, as Mauritian citizens, to return to these islands .”

For further information please contact Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul (jkoonjul@yahoo.com).

The full judgement is available at itlos.org