



**PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE**

*(Government Information Service)*

Port Louis — Mauritius

GIS/349

21 July 2011

Sir,

**Freedom of Information Laws**

Please refer to your letter dated 26 April 2011.

2. In reply to a Parliamentary Question on the introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill, Dr the Hon. Prime Minister made a statement at the National Assembly. An extract thereon is enclosed for your information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Hurry'.

**(J. Hurry)**

Director, Information Services

Mr Maja DARUWALA  
Director  
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative  
B -117, Second Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave  
New Delhi 110-017  
INDIA.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/154) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if Government proposes to introduce a Freedom of Information Bill and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of the substantial problems that have arisen in countries, which have already adopted the Freedom of Information Legislation, Government is looking at all the implications of such a piece of legislation.

Many fundamental issues have to be considered, namely -

- (a) the impact on the working procedures of the public service;
- (b) the public interest issues;
- (c) the applicability to both public and private sector institutions, whose activities affect large sections of the public;
- (d) data preservation, exemption, compliance and non-compliance issues and preservation of sensitive commercial information, bearing in mind the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2004;
- (e) intellectual property issues, and
- (f) the cost implications of implementing such a system.

The House will appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this is indeed a complex issue, and all its implications have to be carefully studied before bringing any draft legislation to the House.

Mr Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C. who is looking into the reform of the media law, has also been requested to look into this matter as well when he is looking at media law in general.