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*Brussels, 27 November 2020/OACPS:* A well-known colleague and previous deputy Dean of the Committee of Ambassadors (CoA) of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, H.E. Mr Sutiawan Gunessee officially rejoined his colleagues as he was presented at the Special Session of the CoA on 24 November 2020.

Ambassador Gunessee was a member of the Committee of Ambassadors on two previous occasions, having served first as Prime Secretary and then as Minister Counselor from 1982 to 1994. He returned in 2001 as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mauritius to Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece and Permanent Representative of his country to the European Union and the ACP Group, a function he occupied until 2011.

It was in this capacity that he had the honour of chairing the CoA of the OACPS, the Group of SADC Ambassadors in Brussels and the Working Group of ACP Ambassadors on the prospect of the “Future of the ACP Group post-2020”.

Ambassador Gunessee also served as Chair of the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Ambassador Spokesperson Group in the context of the negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA).

A seasoned diplomat, H.E. Gunessee has also held a range of senior positions in his country, notably as Chairman of the Mauritius National Negotiating Committee on the Post Lomé IV Convention, Chairman of the US-Africa Growth and Opportunity Act Sub-committee (AGOA) in charge of operationalizing AGOA and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mauritius Fund for Africa.

Conveying greetings and best wishes from the Head of State and Government of his country, he reiterated their strong commitment to the OACPS and assured his colleagues that he and his mission would do all possible for the organization to progress, especially at this difficult time.

During his presentation, Ambassador Gunessee pointed out that it was during his chairmanship in 2002/2003 that the Georgetown Agreement was first amended and expressed his satisfaction to see the progress since then and looked forward to charting the path forward with the new, revised Georgetown Agreement.

While commending his colleagues for their valuable work, under difficult circumstances on the post-Cotonou Agreement, he remarked that, “These are difficult times in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The world would never be the same again. It is both a game changer and accelerator – what we do together will make a difference, and therefore our unity and our working together will be most important.”

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