“THE PROMOTION OF CRUISE TOURISM IN THE INDIAN OCEAN”
Col. Andre Ciseau, Secretary General, PMAESA
WHAT IS THE “VANILLA ISLANDS”?  

The ‘Vanilla Islands’ is a marketing concept that was created in 2010.

Tourism professionals agreed that the promotion and development of Reunion, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros and Mayotte as a tourist destination could only be achieved through the pooling of resources and expertise.

‘Vanilla’, a natural gastronomic ingredient commonly shared by the islands of the Indian Ocean was ideally chosen to launch a brand that would help build the notoriety of these destinations and promote them internationally.
THE CONCEPT OF THE “VANILLA ISLANDS”

The Concept was a major tourism challenge set by representatives (tourism professionals) of countries of the Indian Ocean.

The “Vanilla Islands” project aimed to pair up the islands; by uniting and enhancing the assets of the islands countries for a shared tourism development.

This not only allowed for the creation of new products (combined destinations and cruises) complementing those already existing but also to meet the expectations of new customers.
THE VANILLA ISLANDS MEMBERS

Reunion - The Accessible Magic…

Seychelles – *The unique archipelago of 115 islands*..

Madagascar – *One of the richest fauna of the world*…

Comoros – *A piece of heaven at the heart of the Indian Ocean*…

Mayotte – *A stunning lagoon to see*..

Mauritius – *A tropical paradise*…
INITIATIVE & OBJECTIVE OF VANILLA ISLANDS?

REINFORCING AND FACILITATING COUPLINGS
Initially, to strengthen tourism initiatives (transport and partnerships) which already exist between the islands and facilitate the implementation of bilateral initiatives between the others.

The objective – to make the multi-faceted diversity of the Indian Ocean more dynamic.
In this respect, there are pairs such as – Mayotte-Madagascar, Réunion-Maurice, Réunion-Seychelles, Réunion-Madagascar, etc.

Each destination has its specific features – the upmarket tourism of Mauritius offered by its hotels and tourism services, the green tourism of Réunion, and the fact that the Seychelles is made up of many islands, to name but a few. There are also assets shared by the “Vanilla Islands” – Creole heritage, the beauty of the landscapes, the foreign languages, the mix of cultures (Francophone, Anglophone and Creole)…
DEVELOPING THE REPUTATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

The “Vanilla Islands” project benefits the member island countries: making them better known on the international market - Tourist Offices initially focused on the differences and specific features of the cultural and natural heritage of each region.

The idea was to facilitate Inter-island tours, in terms of transport, entry formalities on the territories and partnerships between hoteliers. The Indian Ocean Pass, already used by Air Madagascar, with unlimited trips within the regional network at a flat rate, constitutes the working base for the Tourist Offices.

Based on the same model, in 2010, inter-regional products and flight routes were developed by the same Company between France and Moroni, Réunion and Nairobi, Anjouan and Nosy Be, etc.
DEVELOPING THE REPUTATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN (Cont.)

Visiting several islands on a single trip reduces the environmental impact and helps protect the remarkable but fragile local ecosystems.

The “Vanilla Islands” concept also makes sense from a historical and geographical point of view. Solidarity between the islands has become the watchword for relaunching the economy and creating jobs in the tourism industry.

Pooling each of the island’s resources and assets, rather than competing with one another – this is the new context! The initiatives and budget of the “Vanilla Islands” project, were carried out in early 2011 were unveiled on 3rd and 4th December at the Enjoy Indian Ocean fair in Madagascar.
BUILDING THE BRAND NAME OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

Building the reputable flavour of the Indian Ocean Islands will undoubtedly attract more tourists. This is why ‘Vanilla Island’ flagship events have been created in each of the islands:

- International Tourism Fair (ITM) in Madagascar
- Kreol festival in Mauritius
- Seychelles Carnival
- Liberté Métisse Festival in Reunion
- Heritage and Culture festival in the Comoros
- Mayotte Lagoon Festival

Unity is strength:- mass participation of all the islands attracts a lot of media coverage therefore helping raise awareness of the area.

Ecotourism, golf, heritage, scenic beauty, culture and above all the mixed local population, all contribute to the promotion of inter-island tourism.
PORT VICTORIA REDEVELOPMENT & EXTENSION CONCEPT

- Proposed Cruise Ship berthing point, in line with the Victoria Water Front Project.
- Bridge access from the commercial port.
- Ex-Coast Guard Site.
- Proposed reclamation, for future container storage.
THE “VANILLA ISLANDS” AND CRUISE TOURISM

IT'S SIMPLY ABOUT PROMOTING THE UNIQUE BEAUTY & CHARM OF THE ISLANDS.....
Cruise Tourism is one of the major target of the Vanilla Islands.

Intense marketing campaign to sell the Vanilla Islands destinations - Participation at various international Trade Fairs, Expos, Tourism Forums and Road Shows, etc.

Creating maximum visibility of the Indian Ocean region.

Showcasing the diversities of the Islands.
THE “VANILLA ISLANDS” AND CRUISE TOURISM (Cont..)

- Enticing more Cruise Liners to visit the Indian Ocean destinations.
- Ensure close collaboration with all stake-holders and partners driving the Cruise Tourism Industry in the Indian Ocean region.
- Participate actively with Orgs such as PMAESA, PIOI, CIOA, COI etc. in building human developments & capacities, facilitating studies, linking Tourism Ministries/Entities – in understanding the Cruise Tourism better and aligning synergies to a solid common marketing platform.
- Blending the array of cruise excursions, the Islands have to offer, with its cuisines, traditions & cultures, nature and charm of the locals as ‘the’ complete marketing package to cruise visitors.
The continual increase in the number of cruise ship calls highlights the success of the combined efforts of the Vanilla Islands.

More passengers/crew leads to more spending in the national economy:

* E.g. Port Victoria, Seychelles:

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<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of SHIPS</th>
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<td>2018</td>
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* Cruise ship calls: 31% increase from 2017 to 2018
* PAX: 67.7% increase and Crew: 38.5% increase
CRUISE TOURISM ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE VANILLA ISLANDS (Cont..)

- Seasoned Liners are positioning bigger vessels of their fleet to cruise the Region.
  
  **E.g. 1)** Costa Croisiere moved from M.V. Costa NeoRomantica last season (2017/2018) to Costa Victoria this Season (2018/2019) and has scheduled Costa Mediterranea for the upcoming season (2019/2020).

  **2)** Aida started last season with AIDA Aura and this season positioned AIDABlu.

- Cruise ships with LOA of up to 294M are regularly being featured on the Indian Ocean cruise itineraries (*Queen Victoria and Queen Elisabeth of Cunard Line and MSC Musica of MSC*).

- More local service providers are getting involved in the Cruise Tourism Industry (*Taxis, Excursions, Tour Guides, Commission Agents, Craft Vendors, Bars, Restaurants, Hotels etc.*)
The Vanilla Islands has established a dynamic communication system. All members are kept abreast of updates through its weekly newsletter, news feature on its website, amongst other direct means.

Actively involved in an ongoing study to assess the true economic benefits/gains derived from Cruise Tourism in the Indian Ocean Region and how best to sustain this ever-growing industry.

Ensuring that the current facilities of the Islands (port/airport/hotels/marinas/moorings etc.) are at par with what is being marketed internationally.

The sharing/exchange of information (e.g. Cruise Statistics)
THE VANILLA ISLANDS – TAKE THE CHANCE NOW!

“...When you cruise around the Indian Ocean, you can visit authentic tropical islands and sail aboard amazing ships. You’ll meet friendly locals living in protected natural areas. From white sandy beaches to UNESCO’s World Heritage sites, you’ll find yourself in totally unique natural surroundings. Your holidays in the Vanilla Islands will give you a change of scenery and leave you totally relax” - it never fails!
KEEP CALM and LOVE the VANILLA ISLANDS
THANK YOU