

**Mr. Dheerujall SEETULSINGH**

(Nominated by the Government of Mauritius)

**Date of Birth:** 21 November 1948

**Place of Birth:** Port Louis, MAURITIUS

**Current Position:** Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Mauritius since April 2001  
Chairperson, Sex Discrimination Division

**Previous positions held:** Judge, Supreme Court (1998-2001)  
Solicitor General, Ministry of Justice and Attorney General's Office (1994-1998)  
Chairman, Tax Appeal Tribunal (1984-1994)  
Head of Department of Law, University of Mauritius (1992-1994)  
Chairman, Stock Exchange Commission (1987-1992)  
Chairman, Cane Planters' and Millers Arbitration and Control Board (1982-1998)  
State Counsel to Principal State Counsel 1974-1984 –  
In charge of Human Rights Desk at Attorney General's Office

**Professional Qualifications:** B A Hons (OXON) Philosophy, Politics and Economics (1971)  
Barrister at Law of the Middle Temple, London (1973)  
Diploma in French Civil Law, King's College London, (1973)  
UN Fellowship in Human Rights 1984 at School of Oriental and African Studies

**Universities:** Jesus College, University of Oxford (1968-1971)  
King's College, University of London (1973)  
Government Legal Adviser's Course – Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London

**Inn of Court** Middle Temple, London

**Languages** Written and Spoken – English, French

Knowledge of national, regional and international human rights field and of both common law and civil law systems

### **BRIEF ON MR. D. SEETULSINGH**

Mr. D. Seetulsingh graduated from the University of Oxford, England in 1971 and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple Inn of Court, London in 1973.

Mr. Seetulsingh has had a long and rich career in the Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice as a legal practitioner in charge of the Human Rights desk. As such he interacted with regional and international organizations in doing research on human rights situations in Mauritius, in submitting information and preparing country reports for treaty bodies. He has been responsible for the implementation of various international human rights instruments, for the drafting of legislation with human rights components and for providing legal advice to Government on related issues. He has a hands-on practical experience in dealing with human rights.

As Head of the Department of Law at the University of Mauritius from 1992 to 1994, he contributed to publications, supervised law students' research work and organized an international Francophone Conference on human rights.

Appointed Solicitor-General in the Attorney-General's Office, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights in 1994, he prepared and presented the country reports to the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the African Commission on Human Rights. He was in charge of drafting legislation to protect women from domestic violence and to enhance protection of children in line with the international obligations of Mauritius. He drafted the Protection of Human Rights Bill which purported to create a National Human Rights Commission in Mauritius to further the protection of Human Rights. He also appeared in leading cases on human rights issues before the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, which is still the highest Court of appeal for Mauritius.

Mr. Seetulsingh chaired Committees on the sugar industry in Mauritius to enable stakeholders to have a fairer share of sugar and its by-products. He was in charge of setting up a modern Stock Exchange in Mauritius to help to democratize the economy by encouraging big companies to open their shareholding to the public at large when applying for listing on the Stock Exchange. He worked on the Chagos Archipelago dossier.

As Judge of the Supreme Court in Mauritius from 1998 to 2001, Judge Seetulsingh delivered leading judgments on human rights issues like right to a fair trial, right to bail, protection of the interests of minorities and other constitutional matters

Since 2001, Mr. D. Seetulsingh is the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission and its Sex Discrimination Division in Mauritius. His term ends in 2009. He has actively participated in the work of both the African Committee of national human rights institutions and the Francophone association of NHRIs. He has contributed to several Conferences on Human Rights and has fully supported the Government of Mauritius in encouraging it to sign the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He is fully conversant with the United Nations system in the area of human rights.

As Chairman of the NHRC he has an immense experience of dealing with human rights issues of police brutality, the situation in prisons and other complaints of human rights violations including sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The NHRC of Mauritius has a quasi-jurisdictional competence. As such it deals regularly with complaints against allegations of violations of human rights. Mr. Seetulsingh has an unparalleled record in investigation and resolution of human rights complaints in Mauritius. He lectures regularly on recent developments in human rights in different for a and is responsible for the wide dissemination of a human rights culture in Mauritius. He has worked closely with the regional office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights.

Mauritius is considered to be the meeting point of the leading civilizations of the world from Africa, Asia and Europe. It is an outstanding example of the peaceful coexistence among different civilizations and religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism). A human rights culture has taught the inhabitants to show respect for each other's creed, customs and origins.

Mauritius is held to be a leading example of a mixed legal system of common law and civil law origin inspired from British and French traditions. Some elements of Hindu Law and Muslim Law are also grafted on to the system.

Mr. Seetulsingh has acquired wide experience and understanding of the mixed legal system and of the spirit of cooperation between different cultures and religions. He is one of the leading proponents of intercultural dialogue and advocates the use of the local vernacular creole language to help disadvantaged children to have access to education.

He has made a worthwhile contribution to promoting the universality and indivisibility of all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in the democratic and welfare state which Mauritius upholds. As a citizen of Mauritius and as Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Mr. D. Seetulsingh defends freedom of expression and freedom of conscience and fights against discrimination.