‘Our cultural diversity should be a source of strength and pride and we must think in terms of a nation’. This was the gist of the message of the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, on 20 December 2012 at the closing ceremony of the National Institute for Civic Education (NICE) pilot project at Pointe Jérôme Training Centre.

Dr Ramgoolam, who was the guest of honour at the closing ceremony, said that the NICE pilot project is all about nation building, adding that it is a much broader project which will now become part of the national landscape in view of the huge success it has garnered. He emphasised that the project is very dear to him and it aims to lay the foundation for a better Mauritius and to transform the society.

Speaking about discipline, he said that there is too much indiscipline around and that the careless attitude of the population must change. The Prime Minister said that the mindset needs to be changed at a very young age, while highlighting that there is a need to educate and instill a sense of responsibility and discipline in people.

The NICE Pilot Project, which was held from 11 to 20 December 2012, was launched at the Sir
Abdool Raman Osman State College in Phoenix by the President of the Republic, Mr Kailash Purryag.

In his address, the President said that the future of the country is in its youth and it is important to educate and empower them so that they can carry out their roles as proud Mauritians. He highlighted that the NICE programme has been developed with the aim of anchoring core Mauritian values among the youths and engage them in positive activities for their personal development.

**NICE Pilot Project**

The NICE Pilot Project is in line with Government Programme 2012-2015 to nurture proud and responsible citizens by furthering the Nation Building process and nurturing citizens who are filled with pride in national identity.

The project aims to:

- Enhance the harmony and unity amongst its people, considering the diversity of its population.
- Anchor core Mauritian values amongst the youths who are increasingly exposed to external influences in the face of globalisation.
- Engage the youths in meaningful activities, so as to inculcate healthy habits and to widen their horizon towards positive development.

Around 200 Form IV students of both gender aged 15 to 16 years in state and private secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues participated in the programme. The pilot project was held from 11 to 20 December 2012.

From 11 to 15 December 2012, the activity-based programme was held at Sir Abdool Raman Osman State College and the gymnasium of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Phoenix. The participants were then placed on 17 and 18 December in an organisation to enable them familiarise themselves in a core sector. The programme ended its activities with a two-day residential seminar at the Pointe Jérôme Youth Training Centre on 19 and 20 December.

The programme revolved around four themes: individual, community, society and country. The component ‘individual’ comprised leadership, creativity, healthy lifestyle and entrepreneurship skills. The theme ‘community’ included unity in diversity and promotion of harmonious living. Another component ‘society’ related to discipline, societal norms and responsibility whereas the theme ‘country’ focused on history, democracy and nation building.

A Tracks Programme was also organised in the second week of the pilot phase during which students were sent for placement in several organisations/companies in different fields such as hospitality, environment, technical/vocational training, IT/Media, agriculture, SMEs, public service, uniformed services and social services.
President’s Message to the Nation
Main focus on education, national unity and social stability

Every child should have access to education and there is a need to adopt quality education and a lifelong learning process, which are essential for the nation’s future and the prospective development of the country.

This was one of the themes highlighted by the President of the Republic, Mr Rajkeswur Purryag, in his end of year message to the Nation on 25 December 2012. Mr Purryag qualified education as the bedrock of a modern society as it is the only asset in terms of resources that has made the country reach new heights, stressing the role of parents in this process.

He also appealed to the youth, who are the future of the country, to demonstrate more discipline in their everyday life.

The President called for the consolidation of national unity and social stability, which according to him, is at the core of a good society and will further help steer the country on the path to more prosperity, higher standards of living, and a more just society.

‘It is a fact that today Mauritius has gained international recognition and has made tremendous progress on both the economic and social front owing to the above factors, and without which the country would not stand where it is today’, said Mr Purryag.

He also expressed concern over the issue of absolute poverty in the country and he reiterated Government’s commitment into eradicating absolute poverty through a series of actions with the support of the private sector, the corporate social responsibility programme and the civil society. He was confident that with the support of all stakeholders, further progress will be made so as to help those families who live a life of deprivation to integrate mainstream society.

Judiciary
Mauritius hosts 3rd Legal Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

“Deepening Culture – Africa legal Cooperation: The New China-Africa Strategic Partnership” was the main theme of the 3rd Legal Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) which was held on 6 December 2012 at the Grand Baie International Conference Centre. Some 250 participants from the legal profession from Africa, China and Mauritius were present.

The Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) is a platform established by China and African Countries for the promotion of collective consultation and cooperation mechanisms for the development of our respective countries.

Through this partnership, the African and Chinese legal professionals are given a platform to exchange views, share experience and learn from each other. The objective is to enhance mutual understanding and co-operation in the legal and judicial fields. Besides creating the opportunity for exchange purposes between African and Chinese judges, lawyers and prosecutors, the partnership aims to promote awareness of legal reform issues.

In his speech, the Attorney-General, Mr Yatin Varma stated that the Forum should draw up standards commonly accepted by all partners and foster legal co-operation among them.

“This partnership should aim at promoting the rule of law and building contacts between legal communities in China and Africa. The rule of law assists economic development by providing certainty and contributes to social stability by protecting citizens against injustice”, he emphasised.

As acknowledged at the 2nd FOCAC Forum, in Beijing, in September 2010, a steady and reliable legal framework between China and Africa was an urgent need to support economic and trade relations.
“Mauritius has a traditionally deep rooted respect for the rule of law and is now co-operating with a leading institution in the field of international arbitration to open a dedicated and state-of-the-art regional Centre for international arbitration”, announced the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, on 10 December 2012 at the official opening of the Mauritius International Arbitration Conference 2012, held over two days at the Intercontinental Hotel, Balaclava.

The Prime Minister recalled that Mauritius adopted in November 2008 state-of-the-art legislation based on the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law, adapted to best serve the interests of international users, and concluded in April 2009 a Host Country Agreement with the Permanent Court of Arbitration of The Hague pursuant to which the PCA has appointed a permanent representative in Mauritius.

The Mauritius International Arbitration Conference 2012 was jointly organised by the Government of Mauritius, the UNCITRAL, the PCA, the International Centre of Settlement Centre of Investment Disputes (ICSID), the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Council for Commercial Arbitration and the London Court of International Arbitration. Some 300 participants, local and international attended the Conference.

The conference featured panels consisting of international and regional leaders in the field. During the two-day event, panels under the chairmanship of the heads of the co-hosting institutions considered current and emerging issues in international arbitration under the theme An African Seat for the 21st Century. Discussions centred on the critical examination of various aspects of the role of the courts as well as on arbitrator appointments and challenges, sovereign debt issues in investment treaty arbitration, and the management of regulatory risk.

International Arbitration Project

The event marks the successful continuation of the dynamic project launched in 2010, by the Government of Mauritius to create a new platform in the region for international commercial and investment arbitration.

As part of the project, Mauritius:

- Adopted state-of-the-art legislation based on the UNCITRAL Model Law, adapted to best serve the interests of international users (November 2008).
- Concluded a Host Country Agreement with the Permanent Court of Arbitration of The Hague pursuant to which the PCA appointed to Mauritius its first overseas representative (April 2009).
- Hosted the inaugural Mauritius International Arbitration Conference (December 2010).
- Cooperated with the London Court of International Arbitration to open a dedicated and state-of-the-art Centre for International Arbitration.
- Successfully bid to host the 2016 Congress of the International Council for commercial Arbitration (June 2012).
Health Issues

Reinforcement of prevention and control strategies against vector-borne diseases

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has put in place several measures to intensify the surveillance for any potential outbreak of chikungunya, dengue and malaria in the country.

To that effect, a new protocol has been introduced for testing the population as well as incoming passengers showing signs and symptoms of infections caused by arboviruses such as chikungunya and dengue from endemic regions such as the Indian subcontinent, part of Africa or even European countries where these infectious agents are present.

The new protocol makes use of the blotting paper technique where blood samples are collected on a special protein saver card from finger pricks. These cards are then sent to the Central Health Laboratory where analysis is carried out on the same day.

This new protocol ensures that infected individuals are diagnosed faster and taken care of without undue delay. Around 150 Health surveillance officers in different Health offices have already been trained on this new protocol.

Measures put in place

The two main pillars of prevention and control programme for mosquito-borne diseases are disease surveillance and vector control. As regards disease surveillance, it is being reinforced through active case detection. Surveillance of incoming passengers has been reinforced. From January to October 2012, a total of 214,470 incoming passengers have been visited for malaria; 219,749 for chikungunya and 278,788 for surveillance purpose.

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has also adopted the Integrated Vector Management strategy. Strategic orientations for mosquito control include: environmental interventions for eliminating breeding places; use of chemicals; intersectoral collaboration; use of protective materials including bed nets, health education and awareness campaigns; capacity building; community participation; enactment and enforcement of new legislation; and vector surveillance.

As regards law enforcement, as at mid-December 2012, 2,670 notices were served, 2,644 were complied with and 13 contraventions were established. Statistics show that one indigenous case of chikungunya and 13 imported cases of dengue have been detected as at 21 December 2012. A total of 917,709 premises were visited and treated with insecticides used for larviciding.

Mega Blood Donation

1,825 pints of blood collected

A total of 1,825 pints of blood were collected during the mega blood donation organised by the Blood Donors Association and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life on 20 December 2012 at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building in Port Louis.

To make blood donation convenient, the Ministry has adopted a policy of going towards people rather than wait for them to come to hospitals for blood donation. Hence, mobile caravans are being provided to collect blood all over the country. In Mauritius, 100% of donated blood is tested for infections like HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis.

Blood safety measures are also maintained at all times. To that end, a haemovigilance system has been recently introduced to reduce or to remove adverse reactions associated with transfusion of blood products and help our National Blood Transfusion Service to further improve the quality of blood products.
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are now going to be empowered to develop the concept of “Social Entrepreneurship”.

This is one of the main recommendations of the National NGO Policy launched on the 5 December 2012 at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre of Bell Village by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, together with several stakeholders. The event coincided with the celebration of International Volunteer Day.

This Policy Paper aims at strengthening the partnership between government, the NGO sector and the private sector by elaborating a clear vision, objectives and key guiding principles upon which this partnership is to be developed and managed in the context of the present global challenges and financial crisis.

The National NGO Policy has been crafted on the concept of social entrepreneurship and principles of good governance. Social entrepreneurship is a concept whereby entrepreneurial principles are applied to organise, create and manage a venture to bring about social change. Social entrepreneurs typically measure performance in terms of the impact their interventions have on society. Social entrepreneurship displays three key characteristics: sociality, innovation and market orientation which are deemed as hallmarks of social initiatives.

The Policy Paper addresses the following: definition and legal framework of NGOs; clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations of various stakeholders; capacity development to enhance management and governance structures for effective service delivery and pursuit of professionalization of NGOs; partnership and networking building; financing and funding concerns taking into account the CSR initiative of the corporate sector; and social entrepreneurship development as a key strategy to ensure sustainability in the NGO sector. Greater accountability and transparency are also expected from NGOs today vis-à-vis national and international providers of funds and the beneficiaries alike.

Non-profit entities

Currently, more than 8 000 non-profit entities are registered with the Registrar of Association and they include associations, Youth clubs, Parent Teachers Associations, Senior Citizens Associations.

The Mauritius Council of Social Services (MACOSS) which is an umbrella body has under its ambit some 300 NGOs whereas some 500 NGOs are accredited with the National CSR Committee. The NGO Trust Fund supports some 100 NGOs annually. NGOs are a heterogeneous group and it is recognised that there are no parameters for classification for NGOs yet.

25 NGOs receive Rs 21.7 m under Special Collaborative Programme for Women and Children

Some Rs 21.7 million have been made available to 25 eligible Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in 2012 to fund approved projects under the Special Collaborative Programme for Women and Children in Distress.

The objective of the Programme, set up in 2009, is to provide financial support to NGOs, Community Based Organisations and Non-State Actors to implement projects focused on enhancing the livelihoods of women and children in distress and creating opportunities for their integration in the mainstream of development.

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Ms Mireille Martin, presided over a cheque handover ceremony in the context of the Programme at the seat of the Ministry in Port Louis on 31 December 2012. Nine NGOs received cheques totalling up to Rs 7 250 019.

The areas of intervention covered by these NGOs under the programme include empowerment and capacity building of women and children in distress, transport facilities for disabled children, training in serigraphy, catering, tailoring, pastry, handicraft and ICT, setting up of nursery care centre for vulnerable children as well as refurbishing of specialised care centre.
**Environment and Sustainable Development**

**Capacity-building Parliamentary Seminar**

A two-day Environment and Sustainable Development Parliamentary Seminar, aiming to ensure the reinforcement of technical capabilities of parliamentarians whose roles are perceived as decisive in the formulation and in the evaluation process of the setting up of development policies, was held on 13 and 14 December 2012 at Le Victoria Hotel, in Pointe aux Piments.

The seminar was organised by the Mauritius National Assembly in collaboration with the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie and the Institut de l’Energie et de l’Environnement de la Francophonie – a subsidiary of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

Presentations focused, amongst others, on the concept of sustainable development and national strategies of sustainable development; commitments of Rio+20; consumption patterns and sustainable production; and sustainable development challenges in small island states.

Participants were from francophone States of the Indian Ocean region namely Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion/France and Seychelles. Members from the Commission ‘Cooperation and Development’ of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie as well as parliamentarians dealing with the subject ‘Environment and Sustainable Development’ in their respective parliaments also participated in the seminar.

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**Primary Education**

**15 613 pupils pass 2012 CPE exams**

The Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) 2012 results were made public on 12 December 2012. Out of 22 697 pupils who took part in these exams, 15 613 have passed.

As from this year, results in terms of percentage are presented in a new way so as to reflect the figures of the total number of passes of pupils from the same cohort.

Pupils belonging to the same cohort are those who joined Std I in the same year. It is to be noted that some pupils passed CPE after six years and others after seven years of primary schooling.

To get the real figure of passes for a specific year, those factors will be taken in consideration as a number of repeaters do pass their exams on second sitting, and hence the percentage of pass of the cohort would be considered as the official figure.

For 2012, 18 015 candidates took the CPE exams on first sitting and 76.44 % passed.

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**Senior Citizens Associations benefit from grants by Government**

A ceremony for the grant of subventions to senior citizens associations was organised jointly by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the Senior Citizens Council (SCC) at the Octave Wiehe auditorium, Réduit, on 12 December 2012.

There are at present over 635 senior citizens associations in Mauritius and 60 in Rodrigues that benefit from such subsidies totaling Rs 1,155,745. Associations with up to 49 members perceive an allocation of Rs 1 210 per month, whereas those with 400 members or more get Rs 3 020 per month.
Mauritius hosted on 4 December 2012 the 3rd Regional ACP (Africa Caribbean and Pacific) Fish II Programme Monitoring Workshop and Training in Monitoring and Evaluation which was held at Preskil hotel in Mahebourg. Representatives from the eleven participating Fisheries Administrations, Regional Fishery Organisations and Regional Economic Communities in Southern Africa were present.

The objectives of the workshop were threefold, namely to collectively monitor ongoing ACP Fish II projects in Southern Africa, identify and implement corrective actions; describe the revised ACP Fish II monitoring and evaluation system, complete Project Evaluation Grids and score indicators accordingly; and expose participants to selected fishery realities in Mauritius.

Participants at the three-day workshop comprised the focal points for the ACP Fish II Programme from the fisheries administrations of Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland and Zambia, and representatives from Southern African Development Community, Indian Ocean Commission, the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission and Benguela Current Commission.

ACP Fish II Programme

ACP Fish II is a demand-driven programme financed by the European Commission under the 9th European Development Fund geared towards strengthening fisheries management in ACP countries. The Programme aims at contributing to the sustainable and equitable management of fisheries and which, by extension, will assist these countries in their efforts towards poverty alleviation and improved food security.

Over €3.3 million have been allocated to implement 32 national and regional fisheries and aquaculture projects in the Southern African region. To date, 16 of these projects have been completed, while five others are ongoing, and the remaining 11 projects are at different levels of development. The Programme adopts a participatory approach through which ACP countries are involved in identifying, formulating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects.

In Mauritius, under Components 1 – Policy formulation – and 2 – Research, the Programme has already provided support for the formulation of the Fisheries Master Plan, the elaboration of a study on the abundance and presence of Bigeye tuna in the Mauritian EEZ, and the development of the Fisheries Information System to improve the management of the sector.

The country also hosted the ACP Fish II Value Chain Analysis workshop in July 2012, which aimed at strengthening the capacity of fisheries administrations to plan and implement intervention to maximize the value adding of fish and fish products through the application of the value chain approach.
Workshop focuses on data protection, cloud computing and social networking

The need to safeguard privacy by understanding the impact of latest technologies on their personal data was the focus of a one-day workshop on Data Loss Prevention Software, Cloud Computing, Social Networking and Forensic Investigation which opened on 17 December 2012 at Le Maritim Hotel in Balaclava.

Organised at an initiative of the Data Protection Office of the Prime Minister’s Office, the workshop saw the participation of data controllers, data processors and data subjects.

Several presentations were on the agenda namely: Cloud Security in Government; Cloud Computing, Social Networking and Online Behavioural Advertising; Forensic Detection Tools on Data Breaches; Clearwell - IT forensics; Deepsight Threat Con; Data Loss Prevention Software – Mauritius DPO Template; Bhumishq Data Centre & Cloud Services from a Data Protection Perspective – Sharing the Experience; and, The Role of ISACA (Information Systems Audit & Control Association) in promoting Data Privacy through Information Systems.

In his address, the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Mr Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum, said that today we are living in a world where computer speed is growing so fast that security and privacy issues have become the most important concerns of the ICT sector. “Technology is being used to transfer huge databases of information electronically within a fraction of a second”, he noted.

The Minister also stressed the need for protecting personal, sensitive and confidential data, which he said, has become the primary concern of all organisations to maintain confidentiality, availability and integrity of information. “All enterprises are required to take the appropriate measures to ensure data security and protection wherever data is being used and/or stored either across networks, storage or endpoint systems”, added Mr Pillay Chedumbrum.

Green IT Award presented to young people

The Green IT Award Ceremony held on 6 December 2012 at La Cannelle, Domaine Les Pailles, rewarded winners of a Green IT essay Competition as well as participants having successfully completed the Foundation Certificate in Green IT from BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

The Green IT essay Competition, organised at an initiative of the National Computer Board, had as objective to sensitise students on Green IT. The Competition saw the participation of 19 students from 16 secondary schools. The first winner was presented with a cash prize of Rs 10 000, while the second and third ones received Rs 6 000 and Rs 3 000, respectively. As regards the training from BCS, 36 participants were presented their Foundation Certificates in Green IT.

Green ICT

Green ICT refers to the approach in reducing the energy and other resources consumed and the emissions and other waste produced across the ICT lifecycle – from manufacture, procurement and use of ICT in an organisation to its re-use. It aims to improve environmental sustainability of organisations. More specifically, Green ICT as applied to the use of ICT resources aims to: reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions during ICT use, and reduce environmental impact of disposal of ICT waste products.

In addition, Green ICT also explores how ICT applications can be used to help other sectors conserve and optimise energy usage.

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World Aids Day
Towards the path of an AIDS-free generation

A workshop focusing on the theme “Getting to Zero” - Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination, and Zero AIDS Related Deaths was held on 1st December 2012 at Gold Crest Hotel, Quatre Bornes, in the context of World Aids Day. It saw the participation of around 70 medical and paramedical staff as well as representatives from non-governmental organisations.

Organised by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the objective of the workshop was to discuss about strategies implemented to reduce the risk of new HIV/AIDS infections, discrimination and deaths related to the disease. Figures reveal that in Mauritius, the HIV prevalence is 0.97%. From 2006 to 2010, around 540 cases were detected annually with a monthly average of 45 cases. In 2011, the total number of cases registered was 401 compared to 568 cases in 2010. The monthly average cases for 2011 were 33 and in 2012, there was a further decrease to 27 cases monthly. As at September 2012, 5,433 cases of HIV and AIDS had been detected out of which 1,114 were females.

Measures to create an AIDS-free generation

Several measures have been taken with the objective of creating an AIDS-free generation. The strategy includes condoms, counselling and screening; and places special emphasis on four other interventions: treatment as prevention, Needle Exchange Programme, Methadone Substitution Therapy, and stopping the transmission of HIV from Mother to Child.

Other measures comprise the creation of the National AIDS Secretariat under the Prime Minister’s Office; the promulgation of the HIV and AIDS Act in 2007; scaling up of the HIV Counseling and Testing services; decentralisation of treatment and care for People Living with the virus; update of antiretroviral treatment protocol to include the new generation of drugs; conduct of Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveys every two years; reinforcement of the Prevention of mother to child transmission programme; and introduction in 2006 of the Methadone Substitution Therapy and Needle Exchange Programme.

Furthermore, a new multisectoral HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2012-2016 has been elaborated in collaboration with all major stakeholders including several ministries, Non-Governmental Organisations and the private sector under the guidance of the National AIDS Secretariat.

As regards women who are very vulnerable to contracting the disease, tailor-made programmes targeting women to address the issue of HIV and AIDS are being implemented with the collaboration of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, and other stakeholders.

A Stigma Index study is being also being conducted by the National AIDS Secretariat and the findings of the study will shed more light on stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.