Launching of Mauritius National Identity Scheme
New ID Card paves the way for the digitisation of Government services, says PM

“Technological advances are reshaping industries, government and individuals, and one cannot stand idle and let the world pass by. Mauritius is an open economy, and hence the need to adopt the latest technologies”.

This statement was made by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, at the launching of the new National Identity Card on 17 September 2013 at the Cyber Tower 1, Ebène. The Mauritius National Identity Scheme (MNIS), estimated at Rs 1.1 billion, is a cornerstone project that will offer Mauritians a modern, more secure and efficient NIS.

The Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction that Government has embarked on a project which was long overdue as the present ID card dates back to 1986. He rejoiced that Mauritius ranks first in the Digital Opportunity Index and the Digital Readiness Index in sub-Saharan Africa. Talking about theft and fraud, Dr Ramgoolam said that they are growing concerns the world over and that security has to be enhanced. He recalled that the current ID card can easily be tampered with, and hence the
need to keep security in the forefront while embracing innovation.

With an efficient and secure system of identification and authentication, the MNIS paves the way for the modernisation and digitisation of Government services by providing the infrastructure for streamlined and reliable Citizen to Government transactions, said Dr Ramgoolam. The scheme, which is a clean, robust and highly secure system for citizen identity, offers citizens a more efficient and secure system of identification and authentication for different Government and non-Government services.

The Smart ID card which is made of robust polycarbonate material has a 10-year warranty. It will carry data such as photo of the person, ID number, surname, first name, surname at birth, gender, date of birth and signature. At the back, the card will have a barcode, card control number, ID number and date of issue. Encrypted information in the chip will include civil data such as ID number, surname, first name, surname at birth, gender, date of birth, as well as residential address, fingerprints minutiae, and digital certificate.
The MNIS Project

The MNIS is set to provide new national ID cards to all citizens of the Republic of Mauritius of 18 years and above, and involves the setting up of new digital infrastructure for reliably storing citizen records and implementing the use of the new electronic ID card in e-Government services. The project is spearheaded by the Prime Minister’s Office, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and a consortium of experts from Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, which is an entity of the Government of Singapore.

The distribution exercise will start as from 1st October 2013. The conversion will be done by age group as per the established calendar. The number of people by age group is as follows: between 18 to 22 years (92,000); 23 to 33 years (211,000); 34 to 44 years (200,000); 45 to 55 years (205,000); and 56 years and above (237,000).

Registration procedures

A person applying for the new card must report to one of the 10 Conversion centres across the island and bring along the following documents: birth certificate, marriage certificate, old ID card and proof of address. The new ID card can be collected two weeks following the registration date. Four additional National Identity Card centres will also be operational at Mahebourg, Goodlands, Rose Hill and Port Louis to cater for anyone who will turn 18 years old and those citizens living abroad but are coming to Mauritius after the conversion period. The conversion exercise will end in September 2014.

Ten mobile vans will be operational across Mauritius for disabled persons who are registered at the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, and for big firms which have expressed the wish to have the conversion done at their workplace. The conversion phase which kicks off in Rodrigues in January 2014, will be carried out at Port Mathurin and La Ferme.

In case a card is lost during the conversion period, it has to be reported to the police within seven days. The card holder should call at the NIC centre to deactivate the card and apply for a new one. The fees for the replacement of lost card are as follows: first application Rs 350, second application Rs 700 and third and consequent applications Rs 1,000. Any application for lost identity card for persons aged 60 and above, or in receipt of invalid’s basic pension is Rs 200.
Higher Education
Inauguration of the Université de Mascareignes and of the Bel Air Campus

The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, inaugurated the Université de Mascareignes at Camp Levieux, Rose-Hill, and the Bel Air Campus, a Study Centre of the Open University of Mauritius, on 2 and 12 September 2013 respectively.

Dr Ramgoolam recalled that the tertiary level enrolment has gone up by 8.0%, from 45,969 in 2011 to 49,625 in 2012, adding that education is key to unleashing the potential of the people, which in turn leads to better socioeconomic conditions as well as the social and economic progress of the country.

Government, the Prime Minister said, is investing massively in the sector and has earmarked Rs 810 million for the construction of modern campuses in Pamplemousses and Montagne Blanche. However, investing in education, he underlined, is not just about costs, as the value of education goes far beyond the amount of Government spending: It is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and that is why education will remain a priority on Government agenda.

It is recalled that In view of transforming Mauritius into a Knowledge Based Economy by 2022, the Tertiary Education Sector is now propelled by the Tertiary Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013-2025 which was launched in August 2013, with the ultimate objective of developing the knowledge sector as a new pillar of the economy and increasing its current contribution of 2.7% of Gross Domestic Product to about 10% by 2025.

"The setting up of these two entities reflects Government’s policy to ensure equity and democratise access to higher education, transform Mauritius into an education and training hub in the region as well as increase participation in tertiary education from the present Gross Tertiary Enrolment Rate of 46.6% in 2012 to about 72% by 2015. Another major objective is to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of access and infrastructure and offer a wider range of learning opportunities through distance education and lifelong learning programmes."

This was the gist of the speeches the Prime Minister made on the occasion.
The Bel Air Campus of the Open University of Mauritius

Located on the ex-DWC premises in Bel Air, the new campus offers a wider range of learning opportunities through distance education and lifelong learning programmes. It consists of three full-sized lecture halls and several average-sized classrooms which can serve as many as 600 learners.

The Open University of Mauritius, established in July 2012 and located at Réduit, has taken over the former Mauritius College of the Air, set up in 1971. Its first campus, situated on the ex-premises of the MBC in Forest-side, was inaugurated last April.


The Open University of Mauritius has linkages with the Commonwealth of Learning, the International Council for Open and Distance Education and the African Council for Distance Education. It has also successfully forged working relationships with prestigious universities like Stockholm University and UNISA.

Université de Mascareignes: Fourth Public University

Created last year, the Université de Mascareignes is the fourth Public University. It has taken over the functions of the Institut Supérieur de Technologie, Camp Levieux, and the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management, Pamplemousses.

The Université de Mascareignes incorporates a dimension of the French system of education and offers programmes in both English and French, based on the ‘Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD)’ structure. It benefits from a ‘Protocole de Collaboration et de Partenariat’ with the University of Limoges.

The tertiary institution comprises a Faculty of Sustainable Development and Engineering, a Faculty of Business and Management and a Faculty of Information and Communication Technology. Programmes include Information, Communication and Technology; Accountancy, Banking and Financial Services; Business Information Systems; Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Concepts of Sustainable Development Technologies and Renewable Resources/Energies.

A second campus of the university was inaugurated on 2 September 2013 by the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, Dr. Rajeshwar Jeetah.
The Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly

The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, was in New York from 23 September to 2 October 2013, where he participated in the 68th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the Clinton Global Initiative and the Socialist International Presidium.

The Prime Minister was accompanied, amongst others, by Dr A. Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Ambassador J. N. Meetarbhan, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the UN and the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

The theme of this year’s General Debate of the General Assembly was The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage.

In his address to the General Assembly on 28 September, the Prime Minister pointed out that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be guided by the vision of eradicating extreme poverty, empowering more women, providing wider opportunities to young people for education and jobs, improving health care, as well as the supply of water and food. Moreover, he impressed on the fact that climate change should be one of the top priorities for the Global Agenda as no country, still less the Small Islands Developing States, is safe from natural disasters and the damaging effects of climate change.

Dr. Ramgoolam urged that the post-2015 Development Agenda should include a road map for an interconnected world economic system, bearing in mind the specifications of some countries and regions. He also underlined the need for the UN to take the lead in formulating a global vision for the oceans and stated that Mauritius has already launched a national dialogue on the promotion of the ocean economy as one of the main pillars of development.

Coming to geo-political issues, the Prime Minister upheld the peaceful restoration of democracy in Egypt while expressing the unreserved condemnation of Mauritius of the act of terrorism perpetrated in Kenya. He also raised the issue of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, deploring the fact that the UK has shown no inclination to engage in any process that would lead to a settlement.

In the margins of the UNGA

In the margins of the General Assembly, the Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with Dato’ Sri Mohd Bin Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malaysia, with whom he discussed about the possibilities to concluding a cooperation agreement with the Malaysia Industry Government Group for High Technology which is driving the economic transformation of Malaysia.

He also had a brief meeting with Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, on bilateral issues, and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest with Mr Laurent Fabius, Foreign Minister of France.

The Prime Minister attended the 9th Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative on the major theme: “Mobilising for Impact”. Amongst the various special sessions, he attended “The Conversation between President Barack Obama and President Bill Clinton” and “Mobilising Youth Around the World”.

Dr. Ramgoolam also attended a meeting of the Presidium of the International Socialist. In his statement, he commented, amongst others, on the situation in Syria and Egypt, highlighting the need for respect of international law and the democratic process, as well as on alleged spying activities being carried out against sovereign States in the conduct of their domestic and international communications.
**Bilateral Cooperation**  
**China Grants Loan for Development Projects**

**Mauritius has obtained an interest-free loan of RMB Yuan 50 million, (approximately Rs 250 million) and a grant of RMB Yuan 1.05 million (around Rs 5.25 million) from the Government of the Peoples’ Republic of China for the funding of development projects.**

The agreements were signed on 12 September 2013 in Port Louis by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Xavier-Luc Duval and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Peoples’ Republic of China, Mr Li Li.

The interest-free loan of Rs 250 million repayable over a period of four years will be used partly to finance the Culture House project which will accommodate the National Archives and the National Library to be set up at the Jin Fei Economic Zone at Riche Terre. The loan will also finance the setting up of a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centre in Mahebourg.

As for the grant of Rs 5.25 million, it will be used for the supply of fifteen teachers from China to teach Mandarin to some 2 300 pupils in the primary schools in Mauritius to promote exchange cooperation between Chinese and Mauritian youth.

Vice-Prime Minister Duval underlined that the two agreements will further enhance friendly relations between Mauritius and China and will bring the economic and technical cooperation to new heights. According to him, both countries will build on this foundation to achieve higher development goals through established and innovative modes of cooperation including a mutually beneficial transfer of capital, technology and business opportunities.

For his part, Mr Li Li highlighted the promising trend to further strengthen cooperation in cultural exchange, education and tourism. The agreements, he said, will give a new dimension to the cooperation between China and Mauritius.

He also expressed the interest of the Chinese Government to assist Mauritius improve its infrastructure needs. Mauritius, he added, acts as an important economic hub between China and Africa in terms of facilitating investment flow into China and vice-versa.

It will be noted that official China-Mauritius cooperation dates back to 1972 and Mauritius has obtained over Rs18 billion in the form of grants, interest-free and commercial loans to implement key infrastructure projects, such as the airport, roads, housing, closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera and the sewerage system.
**Mauritius-Seychelles**  
**Signature of Framework Agreement on Security and Crime Combating**

Ensuring security and combating crime are important issues for both Mauritius and Seychelles, hence the signature, on 6 September 2013, of a Framework Agreement on Security and Crime Combating aiming to promote closer partnership between the two countries in security matters. The signature ceremony was preceded by a bilateral meeting between both Ministers whereby issues of common interest and of cooperation were discussed.

In his statement at the signature ceremony, Minister Boolell said that the Framework Agreement, which consolidates further Mauritius-Seychelles privileged bilateral ties, represents a first since collaboration at the level of security is crucial for the fight against piracy. He pointed out that collaboration already exists between the Mauritius Police Force and that of the Seychelles to work together to combat all forms of insecurity.

Mauritius and Seychelles, Dr Boolell said, also share complicity at regional and continental levels, especially at the level of the Indian Ocean Commission, the IOR-ARC and as members of the COMESA and SADC, and aim to work together so that the region progresses.

**BEC Schools Launch Photovoltaic Project to Promote Clean Energy**

A photovoltaic project to the tune of Rs 125 million was launched on 24 September 2013 at Notre Dame de Lourdes RCA School, Rose Hill. The project is being implemented by the Bureau d’Education Catholique (BEC) in all its 39 schools, both primary and secondary.

In his address at the official launching, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Utilities, Dr Rashid Beebeejaun underlined that while the Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Fund has contributed Rs 17.5 million to the BEC photovoltaic project, Government will in the future invest some Rs 4 billion to sponsor renewable energy projects throughout the island.

**Workshop on the Export of Construction Services to Africa**

A half-day workshop on the Export of Construction Services to Africa was organised on 26 September 2013 at Gold Crest Hotel, Quatre Bornes, by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) in collaboration with Enterprise Mauritius with a view to promote and assist contractors and consultants to seize opportunities for construction available on the African continent.

The CIDB is a statutory body which has been set up to bridge the gap between Government as a facilitator and the stakeholders of the construction industry. One of its main roles is to implement Government policy relating to the construction industry, as well as promote and assist in the export of services relating to the construction industry. It also regulates and registers providers of construction works and construction services.
Launching of Waste Segregation Project in Tertiary Education Institutions

The Waste Segregation Project in tertiary education institutions, which aims at promoting the concept of sustainable development at all levels of society, was launched on 26 September 2013 at the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM), Pointe aux Sables.

The project endeavours to inculcate the concept of waste sorting and recycling as well as contribute to resource conservation in line with the project of Maurice Ile Durable. It involves the integration of the principles of sustainable development into different learning situations. It will also help sensitise and promote the three R’s related to waste, that is, reduce, reuse and recycle.

It is estimated that some 1200 tons of solid wastes are collected daily by local authorities and these consist mostly of organic wastes which represent around 60% of the total waste generated.

Circular Migration: Agro-industry Operators Fly to Italy for Training

Thirty operators from the Agro-industry sector have, under the Circular Migration project, been selected for a two-week training programme from 7 to 19 October 2013 at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari which is Italy’s centre of excellence in research and training for sustainable agriculture.

The project, a pilot activity, consists of capacity building of Mauritian growers and processors engaged in the agri-business sector. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies-Directorate General of Immigration of Italy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in Mauritius and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) mission to Mauritius.

In addition to an exposure to agricultural and agro-processing technologies suitable for SMEs, the training will encourage farmers in Mauritius and Rodrigues to add value to their products by adopting new strategies to differentiate their commodity products for local and export markets (certification, niche products).

Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade

Climate Change as a Public Policy Challenge – the focus of a Panel Discussion

A panel discussion on Climate Change as a Public Policy Challenge, aiming at enabling fruitful exchange of ideas and enriching the ongoing national debate on climate change, was held on 26 September 2013 in the Lunch Room of the National Assembly, Port Louis.

The event, organised by the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, in collaboration with the Mauritius (LSE) Society Trust Fund, brought together some 80 participants from different Ministries and departments, the private sector as well as Resident Diplomatic Missions in Mauritius and United Nations bodies.

Resource persons for the panel discussion included Dr Robert Falkner, Associate Professor in International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and Baroness Kishwer Falkner of Margravine, Member of the House of Lords of the British Parliament.

Two presentations were also on the agenda namely, ‘Maurice Ile Durable (MID) with focus on challenges relating to Climate Change’; and, ‘Climate Change Policies in Mauritius - The Challenge’.
International Year of Statistics 2013
Launching of Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics Mauritius launched on 23 September 2013 at the Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebène, a Code of Practice for Official Statistics and an Interactive Statistical Data Portal, two invaluable tools for producers of statistics. The official logo of Statistics Mauritius was also unveiled on that occasion.

These initiatives are in line with a series of activities being organised by Statistics Mauritius in the context of International Year of Statistics 2013 which is being celebrated worldwide to increase public awareness on the power and impact of statistics in all aspects of society.

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics, is applicable to all producers of official statistics who must in turn guarantee the standards of statistics produced. The Code sets the standard for developing, producing and disseminating official statistics in Mauritius. It represents a set of 15 key principles and indicators of good practice intended to improve the quality, relevance and credibility of official statistics, and ensure that the statistics are of high standards. After its implementation, a compliance assessment will be carried out once every three years to monitor the progress achieved.

As for the Interactive Statistical Data Portal, developed in collaboration with the African Development Bank, it will serve as an interactive tool that enables users to compile their own tables and graphs while also allowing them to view pre-selected indicators from various time periods by country or regions using a variety of charts and maps.

Mauritius, 1st in Africa in the Global Competitiveness Report 2013-14

Mauritius ranks 1st in Africa and occupies the 45th place worldwide according to the world Global Competitiveness Report 2013-14 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) entitled: Strengthening Recovery by Raising Productivity, which was released on 4 September 2013.

The country is presently the highest ranked in the sub-Saharan region after having moved nine places from its previous ranking at the 54th position in the previous Global Competitiveness Report, despite the fact that this region continues to face the biggest competitiveness challenges of all regions.

The 2013-14 report which assesses 148 economies across the world, based on 12 pillars of competitiveness, justifies Mauritius’ success by attributing it to several factors which have been determining for the country to record a fairly good performance in all the indices.