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We will be successful if we work together, Government and private entrepreneurs, for the larger benefit of this country. There is no Government side, no private sector side; there is a nation and it is the Republic of Mauritius, Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth said in his address on 6 May 2015 at the inauguration of the YU Lounge, a private terminal at the SSR International Airport.

According to the Prime Minister, Government will promote the development of enterprises and be the catalyst to the success of business enterprises, to the efforts of all men and women who wake up in the morning with the ambition and willingness to forge ahead.

The Prime Minister stated that the actions of the Government should be seen as a clear message to investors, local and international, that we want Mauritius to be known as a model and a reference as regards business practices, transparency, good governance and accountability.

Sir Anerood underlined that one of the important roles of Government is to create the necessary environment to make businesses more profitable,
to ensure that resources used and capital employed yield better returns and that this in turn leads to the required employment opportunities and economic growth for a sustainable and prosperous Mauritius.

The Prime Minister also emphasised on Government’s commitment to deliver on results and his belief that if the whole nation puts itself to work arduously, the dream of a second economic miracle can become a reality.

Mr Nirvan Veerasamy, co-founder of the Veling Group which operates the YU Lounge, for his part pointed out that Mauritius is a preferred destination of upscale tourism and that lately, a real growth in the business aircraft market has been noted.

Yearly, between 200 and 300 private jet aircrafts land in Mauritius. For Mr Veerasamy, once a plane is here, it becomes a captive market and gives us the opportunity to add value with services such as maintenance and this puts Mauritius in a position where we are ahead of the other regional airports.

The YU Lounge

The YU Lounge, an exclusive arrival and departure lounge, has been designed for discerning passengers travelling on commercial airliners and private jets wishing to travel without stress, by avoiding queues and getting priority service. It also offers passengers availing this service the added convenience of completing all immigration related formalities from the comfort of the lounge itself.

It also operates a business jet hangar which can accommodate 4 Falcon 900 or 2 Global express, for individual clients or corporate companies.

An insectarium has been set up at the Natural History Museum-Nature Gallery in Port Louis by the Mauritius Museums Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Conceptualised and designed locally, the insectarium houses some 200 insects comprising butterflies, wasps, beetles, bees and moths. It was inaugurated on 19 May 2015 in the context of International Museum Day.

This year’s theme for International Museum Day was Museums for a sustainable society. It highlighted the role of museums in raising public awareness about the need for a society that is less wasteful, more cooperative and that uses resources in a way that respects living systems.


Created in 1946, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) established International Museum Day in 1977 to increase public awareness of the role of museums in the development of society. ICOM is an international non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with UNESCO. Within the United Nations, ICOM has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. It is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals on a global level.
Setting up of a One-Stop Shop to boost entrepreneurship

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) represent some 40 percent to GDP and employ over 280,000 people in some 108,000 establishments. Government wants to boost entrepreneurship and foster conditions in which the rapid-growth companies of the future can thrive. Consequently, a One-Stop Shop to provide support, financing and information as well as the delivery of all permits and licences that SMEs require to start and grow their businesses is being set up at SICOM Tower in Ebène.

This One Stop Shop, managed by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), houses several Units, namely General Business Development Services Unit; Licensing, Permits, Clearances and Registration Unit; Productivity Improvement, Certification, Capacity Building and Research and Development Unit; and Incubator and Industrial Estates Facilities Unit, amongst others.

Prior to the setting up of the One-Stop Shop, the Small and Medium Enterprises Bank (SME Bank) was launched to provide seed capital to entrepreneurs without any need for personal guarantee. An amount of Rs 10 billion will be made available to the Bank over the next five years, starting with a share capital of Rs 200 million and a line of credit of Rs 2 billion from Government for its first year of operation.

Moreover, in line with the Government Programme 2015–2019 to promote SMEs as the main engine of growth, Government has announced the construction of industrial parks for SMEs in various parts of the country. Subsequently, 100 Arpents have been earmarked under the MSPA–Government deal.

The One-Stop Shop houses the following Units:

(a) the General Business Development Services Unit will carry out a screening exercise to determine the requirements of SMEs, provide appropriate information to potential entrepreneurs, and assist in the drafting of business plans;
(b) the Licensing, Permits, Clearances and Registration Unit will be responsible for issuing required permits and clearances;
(c) the Productivity Improvement, Certification, Capacity Building and Research and Development Unit will provide facilities relating to improvement of products, identify training needs and arrange for capacity building;
(d) the Incubator and Industrial Estates Facilities Unit will identify and prepare space and other physical infrastructure that may be required for the start and development of an enterprise;
(e) the Specialised Business Development Services Unit will be serviced by business consultants to provide technical assistance for project development and growth;
(f) the Export, Trade Promotion and International Markets Unit will be responsible to explore potential exportable products and markets; and
(g) the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will oversee all activities being conducted under the One-Stop Shop and take immediate remedial action on any bottleneck/constraint that may occur.
Government intent on bringing functional changes to the transport system

The above statement was made by the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Mr Nandcoomar Bodha on 18 May 2015 at the Octave Wiehe Auditorium in Réduit at the launching of an intercollege debate competition on public transport organised at the initiative of Rose Hill Transport Holdings Ltd (RHT Ltd).

According to the Minister, the challenge to make the public transport system as modern as in other countries, and the issues of road safety and congestion have to be tackled. In regards to the bus industry, he stated that it can be booming if the three pillars, namely the National Transport Corporation (NTC); companies like the RHT Ltd; and individual bus owners work towards customer satisfaction and provide the same quality of transport under the same rules and regulations.

The public transport system, said Mr Bodha, can be improved by new buses, new bus shelters and an electronic system for transport planning. He announced that the NTC will be launching a tender for 500 new buses over the next five years which will be assembled in Mauritius. Moreover, around 200 bus shelters will also be set up around the island.

**Smart Line project**

Another innovative measure is the setting up, as a pilot project, of a smart line on Line no 4 from Curepipe to Quatre Bornes for the NTC, with an initial provision of 30 new smart buses. RHT Ltd will be implementing a similar project on Line no 1 (Rose Hill to Port Louis).

**Intercollege debate competition**

John Kennedy College won the debate competition which saw the participation of three other colleges, namely the Bon et Perpetual Secours College; Ebène State Secondary School (Boys); and Ebène State Secondary School (Girls).

Students had to deliberate on ‘The safety of student transport service is mainly the responsibility of the students and the parents’. Each team comprised three students and each participant in the winning team received a sum of Rs 10 000, a shield and a certificate of participation.

The bus transport system needs to be modernised
A new institution for the sustained promotion of the use of renewables for electricity generation, the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA), will be set up. Creating an enabling environment for the development of renewable energy and working closely with the International Renewable Energy Agency and the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) to promote the renewable energy agenda, will be MARENA’s principal objective.

This was announced by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, Mr Ivan Collendavelloo, on 7 May 2015 at the closing ceremony of a workshop for the ‘Removal of Barriers to energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation in Buildings’ project, held at La Cannelle in Domaine Les Pailles.

Mr Collendavelloo, in his address, expressed his determination to facilitate the implementation of renewable energy projects, adding that he will strongly canvass this position of Mauritius at the forthcoming COP 21 meeting in Paris. The energy sector is called upon to see new dynamics, he said, while highlighting that industries, hotels, office buildings and commercial malls need to set up their own renewable energy plants with storage capacity for their own use. In a bid to improve energy efficiency, Mr Collendavelloo added that provision has been made for a study on street lighting.

Referring to the ‘Removal of Barriers to energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation in Buildings’ project, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities said that in spite of several setbacks and hurdles, the effect of the project has gone beyond its initial targets and beyond energy savings in buildings through specific and durable project achievements at the policy level. These include the energy efficiency labelling of electrical appliances, the Grid Code and Feed-in-Tariff for small scale producers of electricity and the setting up of the EEMO.

The Workshop

The workshop aimed at providing a platform for discussion among participants on the project’s key deliverables, lessons learned and good practices, and moving beyond the project.

Several presentations were made, namely a summary on the achievements of the project; the findings of the terminal evaluation which was carried out at the end of the project; awareness campaigns and activities undertaken by the EEMO; the Grid code for Small Scale Distributed Generation (SSDG); and the status and implementation of the Building Control Act.

The Project

The ‘Removal of Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Conservation in Buildings in Mauritius’ project is a United Nations Development Programme-implemented, Global Environment Facility-financed project launched in 2008 with the goal of sustainably reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a transformation of the building energy efficiency market in Mauritius.
Mauritius undertakes to set up a National Spatial Data Infrastructure

A National Spatial Data Infrastructure Technical Training Workshop, organised by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in collaboration with the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), to assist the Government in developing and establishing a National Spatial Data Infrastructure, was held from 18 to 22 May 2015 at Gold Crest Hotel, Quatre Bornes.

The National Spatial Data Infrastructure will provide a general enquiry framework to enable government staff, industry, and citizens at large to readily access a range of geo-spatial information. It will also act as a tool for analysing, and determining solutions to the needs and requirements of national development objectives. It is expected that the National Spatial Data Infrastructure will contribute to several economic benefits for the country: a reduction of administrative costs as well as more efficiency and coherence in decision-making, especially in circumstances like flashfloods, cyclones, landslides and sea surges, amongst others.

The RCMRD, an inter-governmental organisation with contracting member States in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa with programmes oriented towards the provision of different services and applications and capacity building initiatives in natural resource development and environmental management, is assisting Mauritius in the setting up of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands, Mr Showkutally Soodhun, in his address at the opening ceremony, stressed on the crucial importance of an appropriate and effective land administration system for sustainable development as well as the need to harness all the efforts and build up capacity to cope with the emerging needs and challenges.

Recalling that the Land Administration, Valuation Information and Management System (LAVIMS), which provides a comprehensive national integrated set of spatial data for effective land use planning, is in place in his Ministry, Mr Soodhun said that LAVIMS has moved the technology forward, from a paper-based system to a modern state-of-the-art digital system. “LAVIMS acts now as an important instrument which paves the way for the establishment of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure,” he added.

The Vice-Prime Minister also highlighted the necessity, in establishing a National Spatial Data Infrastructure, for a strict protocol on data production and sharing to be put in place with all the stakeholders involved in management of spatial data in Mauritius. Consequently, the adoption of a policy and a corresponding framework will facilitate the sharing of Geographic Information System data and will improve access to computerised mechanisms such as sharing platforms to facilitate the use of data, standard for data format, exchange and metadata.
Radiation Protection: Mauritius Hosts 1st Regional Coordination Meeting

Mauritius hosted the First Regional Coordination Meeting for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Technical Cooperation Project on “Strengthening Technical Capabilities for Patient and Occupational Radiation Protection in Member States” at Voila Hotel in Bagatelle from 18 to 22 May 2015. Launched in 2014, the project combines two thematic safety areas: Radiological Protection in Occupational Exposure and Radiological Protection in Medical Exposure.

The main objectives of the meeting were the sharing of experiences among the national project coordinators and the elaboration of a regional work plan for 2015-2016 to meet the common needs of the African region. The IAEA also assisted the project coordination of every participating Member States in developing a realistic country work-plan for 2015-2016 in line with the agreed regional work plan for the project.

During the meeting, some 30 participants, both local and foreign, reviewed the current situation in the participating Member States, evaluated the implementation and impact of the previous regional project on occupational radiation protection, and identified the regional priorities in line with the international basic safety requirements.

Reinforcement of radiation safety practice in the workplaces

The overall objective of the IAEA project is to strengthen occupational radiation protection while ensuring a harmonised approach in working with radiation sources, including industrial and human health applications. The national systems for the protection of health and safety of workers who are occupationally exposed to radiation must to be strengthened in the participating countries to ensure compliance with the IAEA International Basic Safety Standards and related safety guides.

In the recent years, there have been several incidents leading to over-exposure of workers managing radioactive sources or subject to occupational exposure, giving evidence that there is a need to reinforce radiation safety practice in the workplaces across the countries of the region. Moreover, the requirement to implement a Radiation Protection Programme at end-users facilities is not fully met. Human health applications involving radiation sources require special attention considering the high number of workers involved and the risks related to new medical technologies.

Workshop to sensitisise NHDC Housing Estates syndics on their functions

Syndics of the National Housing Development Company Ltd (NHDC) Housing Estates have been appointed to manage and ensure necessary maintenance and repair work to the common areas of the estates. The first workshop aiming at sensitising some 70 syndics on their roles and responsibilities was held on 21 May 2015 at the University of Mauritius, Réduit, in the presence of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands, Mr Showkutally Soodhun.

The workshop on rights and obligations of syndics at NHDC Housing Estates was organised by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in collaboration with the NHDC. Topics discussed included the contribution to common fund as well as the role of syndic and illegal activities at NHDC Housing Estates. Participants were also invited to share their experiences and problems, and come up with remedial proposals and solutions.

Generally, a housing estates needs a syndic, but the syndic does not have to be a professional. It can be one of the owners. It is appointed by the homeowners grouped in an association – Copropriétaires - to look after the management and maintenance of all the common areas of the estate. The syndic can sanction actions that are necessary to preserve the integrity of the estates, especially in cases of illegal constructions, by contacting the relevant authorities such as local authorities and the Ministry of Housing and Lands. It is also responsible for calling a General Assembly of the owners twice a year.

It is recalled that Government disburses a total sum of Rs 1.2 million monthly, by contributing Rs 200 for each of the 6 247 NHDC families, so as to ensure that all syndics run smoothly. Moreover, rehabilitation works including waterproofing, rehabilitation of sewerage disposal system and water reticulation networks, to an estimated cost of Rs 443 million, are being carried out to improve housing conditions on 59 sites.

In addition to Government’s contribution to syndics, all NHDC owners should make a proportional contribution to the maintenance and operation of the property complex amounting to Rs 50 per family per month.
Social entrepreneurship is an innovative concept whereby entrepreneurship principles are applied to organise, create and manage a venture to bring about social change. The first edition of the Social Entrepreneurship Award, organised at the initiative of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, in collaboration with the State Bank of Mauritius (SBM) and the NGO Trust Fund, will be held in September this year.

The Social Entrepreneurship Award was launched on 21 May 2015 by the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, in the presence of the Chief Executive of SBM, Mr Jairaj Sonoo, at the seat of the Ministry in Port Louis.

The Social Entrepreneurship Award is a Business Plan competition for Non Government Organisations (NGOs) which aims at unlocking the potential of NGOs to create social value through social entrepreneurship ventures. The projects will be assessed along the following criteria: Idea Generation and Opportunity Recognition; Social Value Creation; Organisational Capacity and Sustainability.

The three best projects will be rewarded, in September this year, with a cash grant of Rs 1 million each, disbursed over a period of three years as follows: Year 1 - Rs 500 000, Year 2 - Rs 300 000 and Year 3 - Rs 200 000.

In her address, Minister Jeewa-Daureeawoo underlined that this award is held with a view to implement the concept of social entrepreneurship within the NGO sector, adding that this initiative represents an opportunity for NGOs to ensure the economic empowerment of their beneficiaries and at the same time diversify their income base and move from dependency to sustainability.

She recalled that nowadays the challenges of NGOs lie in their capacity to effectively respond to their dual bottom line: mission accomplishment and financial sustainability. One innovative approach of enabling NGOs to reconcile this dual bottom line is to permeate the concept of social entrepreneurship in the NGO sector, she said.

The Minister appealed to NGOs to view social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to broaden and diversify their income base to mark the paradigm shift from dependency to sustainability.

For his part, Mr. Sonoo pointed out that this award will help raise awareness of social entrepreneurship as a concept among social actors and encourage them to develop socially innovative ideas to address social problems. It will also be an excellent opportunity to showcase successful models to social entrepreneurship projects in the NGO sector.

Government is stepping up efforts, through three training programmes, to help job seekers enhance their employability. These programmes, the Youth Employment Programme, the Back-to-Work Programme and the Dual Training Programme, are meant to address the needs of employers as well.

The Youth Employment Programme is open to persons aged between 16 and 30, to enable them to obtain training/placement for an initial period of one year, with the possibility of permanent employment upon satisfactory performance and ensure that appropriate training is provided to promote the development of necessary skills.

On the other hand, the Back-to-Work Programme aims to facilitate women above the age of 30 to find employment in private enterprises or with individual employers and help them integrate or re-integrate the labour market by undergoing a training programme designed to enhance their entrepreneurial skills as well as strengthen interpersonal and communication skills.

As regards the Dual Training Programme, it aims to address the issue of skills mismatch and ensure the availability of skilled labour. The programme includes a mix of practical on-the-job experience, and classroom studies covering both diploma and degree courses.
WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: Workshop to sensitize African Parliamentarians

A three-day World Trade Organisation (WTO) Regional Workshop aiming to sensitize African Parliamentarians on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement which contains provisions for faster and more efficient customs procedures through effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues, kicked off on 4 May 2015 at the Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebène.

The Agreement redefines the conventional approach to special and differential treatment and contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area. A joint initiative of the WTO in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the workshop aimed to sensitize participants on the work of the WTO and on the state of play in the negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda. Around 22 African Parliamentarians and Members of the Indian Ocean Commission and the East African Community were present for this meeting.

In his opening statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr Etienne Sinatambou, recalled that today the WTO with 160 members accounts for some 98% of the world trade. Yet, Africa has only 3% of that share and this is what we have to change by getting to grips with the rules and regulations, learning about the state of play and getting to see how others are taking advantage of the rules and regulations of the mechanisms of the WTO, stressed the Minister.

Citing the 2015 Report of the World Heritage Foundation which ranked Mauritius 9th globally on trade freedom with a score of 88.4 surpassing many countries of the European Union and even the USA, the Minister stated that Mauritius, engaged in continued process of reforms since its accession to the WTO, is not solely interested in ranking high in indices but rather believes that reform is one of the sine qua non conditions for its economy to thrive.

Trade Facilitation Agreement

The Agreement, concluded at the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference held in Bali in December 2013, is the first Multilateral Agreement finalised since the creation of the WTO in 1995. It is expected that implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will further remove impediments to trade in Mauritius and will lead to elimination of cumbersome non-tariff barriers in our export market. Mauritius is therefore fully committed to implement the Agreement.
The Youth Excellence Award which aims to reward outstanding performance of young people in various areas of youth development and promote high youth achievers as role models to inspire other youth will be held in October. The 8th edition of the Award was launched on 13 May 2015 in Port Louis in the presence of the Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr Yogida Sawmynaden.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in collaboration with SICOM, the Award is an opportunity to acknowledge outstanding performance of young people in the social, economic, cultural and artistic development of society.

Open to young people aged between 16 and 29 years, individuals as well as teams (not exceeding seven participants), participants should submit a “Project Description” in the form of a dossier detailing their achievements in the following fields of interest: Leadership and community work; Art and design; Instrumental music (Modern and traditional); Preservation of the environment; and, Information technology for social development.

The project should depict an achievement which is ongoing and should already have been in existence for a minimum of four months from the date of submission of the entry form.

Three prizes will be awarded for each category. Winners will be rewarded with a cash prize of Rs 25 000 and a Trophy. The first runner up will get a cash prize of Rs 15 000 and the second will get a cash prize of Rs 10 000 and a Shield.