

**Online address of Hon ( Mrs) L.D. Dookun -Luchoomun  
Vice Prime Minister  
Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and  
Technology  
InnovED 2023 Award**

## **Protocol**

Good morning to you all.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be with you, although virtually, on the occasion of this Award Ceremony that celebrates the final stage of the presentation of a portfolio of some 68 Projects for this year's edition of InnovED.

Allow me at the very outset to extend my greetings and a warm welcome to the host of students, Educators and other distinguished guests who are with us on this occasion.

As we all know, the very notion behind the InnovED is to encourage our young and not-so-young learners to develop a culture of innovation, ie, to engage in a kind of thinking that demarcates you from others, a process that throws into relief a high degree of creativity.

We all know how important such creativity-based innovation will prove to be given the unknown, imponderable challenges of the future. We now commonly use the trendy acronym of VUCA to define that world – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

And because of instantaneous communication and globalisation, the future is already here, presenting new

unpredictabilities, new challenges that are already hard to navigate!

The themes of this year around which your projects had to be articulated themselves are an indication of that. Virtual Reality, Healthy Lifestyle, Waste Management, Blue Economy, Inclusive Education, AgriTech, FinTech—these are themes that are already looking towards the future and have had their inception in our present!

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** even this online Ceremony would not have been a reality a few years ago. The Pandemic has given rise to a new way of thinking and responding to crises. Sir Winston Churchill insisted that we should never let a Crisis go waste. Certainly, in the world of Education, across the world, ways and means had to be

sought to face the disruption caused. The crisis was not allowed to go waste, that's for sure! Today's recourse to online conversation becomes thus a typical spin-off that is itself innovative in nature!

## **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

One of the stated objectives of the InnovED Project is to empower students to become future innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

Indeed, the link between innovation and society is inextricable: we always talk of societies being dynamic, always evolving. But what is behind such evolution? It is invariably the introduction of new, often novel, ideas or concepts and more often

than not, these ideas and concepts are 'disruptive'.

How many would dare challenge the status quo? How many would even imagine challenging well-established routines? And yet, we must be disruptive if we want our society to evolve, if we expect business models to change, if we insist on organisations, especially learning organisations, having to review their processes.

Mind, you, Innovation, disruptive as it may be, is not exclusively technology-based or technology-dependent albeit it does play a significant role.

In fact, it is when we rethink and revisit issues, when we move out of our comfort zones, when we question our existing assumptions that the concept, the ‘ *bien-fonde*’ of InnovED becomes more clearly understood.

Our youth, you young men and women, are, as budding adults, expected to address societal challenges, promote the modern day buzz, namely, sustainable development, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

All efforts in these directions will ultimately result in a positive impact on our society as a whole.

At the end of the day, it is your creative and innovative capabilities that will make your tomorrow more livable.

Therein lies the value of this InnovEd Project participation. By engaging in your several projects, you have indeed shown that you have the capacity to ‘think out of the box’, a highly positive sign for the future.

My Ministry has systematically been in favour of an active participation of our schools as well as all other learning institutions in such highly creative intra- and extra-mural activities. They fit in well and are aligned to the reform agenda that has been unfurled since 2016.

That being said, I am confident, dear students, that by participating in this edition of the InnovED, you would have

drawn a lot of lessons that are likely to guide you in your lives as adults.

In the first place, and here I am thankful to the NPCC, you would have noted that, given the breadth of the themes, you have been encouraged to explore a range of ideas. Certainly, you rejected some that were bounced about in your team; others you kept for later consideration; yet others you were keen to experiment and take risk with; and at least one that you steadfastly clung to—and that became your Project.

Further, you would have also keenly reflected on the presentation of your ideas, whether through the imagistic means or otherwise.



And therein lies a fundamental skill that you will have to depend upon as part of your growth-- the skill of generating ideas, identifying opportunities, and proposing creative solutions.

Another important lesson that you would have drawn by working on your project is that you have to bring value to whatever you undertake. You will agree that, if one embarks on an enterprise that ultimately brings or adds no value, there is absolutely not reason to engage in it.

But I would wish specially to highlight the one other skill that stresses the significance of **Teamwork**

I guess we all know the benefits arising from working in teams: mutual support and reinforcement, extra motivation and

increased personal engagement. We all know that, as individuals we can go faster but in a team, we certainly can go further. Believe me when I say that this forms the very basis of work in our present times. The days are relatively speaking behind us when individuals awaited their eureka moment. Today that moment is collective.

I would strongly suggest you hang on to all the positives that have arisen from your participation in the InnovED Project, but more particularly the last one. We have come to a point in our education process where we cannot operate as self-centred learners. It is definitely more gainful for you to actively engage in a collective manner in your studies. Peer support and peer sharing are priceless values that must be both

encouraged and safeguarded and I expect all teachers to actively encourage this kind of cooperative learning for learners to achieve their learning goals.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** before I conclude, let me extend my congratulations to the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council for setting yet another milestone and adding yet another feather to your nest through a smooth and highly successful organisation of this year's edition of InnovED.

I must say I was very positively struck by the highly structured lead-up to today's Award Ceremony. I especially like the idea of appointing a School Innovation Champion responsible for establishing a smooth interaction between the school and the

NPCC, the participation in an online quiz, the appointment of Subject Experts for the theme-wise assessment of the participating teams, the extra coaching undertaken during the Creation and the final team presentation before a Jury Panel.

We can really say that the InnovED project has come of age and has given each and every Team the opportunity to tell their innovative and creative story.

Well done all of you.

Congratulations to the Facilitators and Awardees of the day. But congratulations are also in order for all members of the different Teams without exception for having given their very best.

Keep up the good work.

And rest assured of my Ministry's active collaboration in NPCC's future ventures.

**Thank you for your attention.**