

Address of Hon (Mrs) L.D.Dookun-Luchoomun

Vice Prime Minister

**Minister of Education, Tertiary education, Science and
Technology**

Award of certificates under the e-VBAB Project

Protocol

**Shri Sevala Naik Mude, Additional
Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs of
India;**

**HE, Smt. K. Nandini Singla, the High
Commissioner of India;**

**Shri D. Porpathasekaran, Director
(Technical), TCIL;**

**Shri Garika Tejeswar, Under Secretary
(Central & West Africa Division), Ministry
of External Affairs of India;**

Shri Hukum Singh, Section Officer;

**Dr Om Varma, Chairman of Open
University Council and members of the
Council;**

Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Director General OU;

**Officials of the High Commission and my
Ministry;**

Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and gentlemen;
Good afternoon to all

We are all of us gathered here today for a notable and highly pleasant task. Indeed, 21 of our students, recipient of the scholarships under the e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB), will be handed their course certificates.

This is a proud moment for the recipients as much as it is a proud moment for Mauritius to be one of the 22 African Countries participating in the e-VBAB project.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Education has always been a cornerstone of progress and development. Through knowledge, societies evolve, economies

flourish, and individuals rise above their sometimes narrow circumstances. Mauritius and India have always placed a premium on education and the e-VBAB scholarship scheme is a testimony to both of our nations' unwavering commitment to investing in our youth's future in as human capital.

By now, you are all fully aware of what the e-VBAB project, the scholarship scheme initiated and launched by the Government of India in October 2019, is all about. I will spare you the minute details. Suffice it to say that the e-VBAB project is a ground-breaking one, offering an unparalleled opportunity for Mauritian students to pursue higher education in Indian institutions of repute. I am told these are 27 premier Indian Higher Education institutions, a number that is very likely called upon to increase.

These scholarships, I am told, cover various disciplines, including STEM, humanities, arts, and social sciences.

The purpose is obvious: the e-VBAB project ensures that our students can contribute to diverse sectors and drive innovation across various industries by focusing on a wide range of fields.

But there are other benefits as well.

This is a transformative endeavour that seeks to empower learners through education, technology, and international collaboration.

No doubt, the skills and knowledge gained are definitely essential for a modern workforce. But, in addition, the e-VBAB project leverages the power of technology to foster global connections and allow our learners to access lectures, study materials,

and interactive sessions from reputed Indian faculties and institutions through dedicated e-learning platforms.

The harvest reaped by our Mauritian learners is certainly most munificent. The evidence is there to prove that: after all, they have been exposed to the thousands of classes delivered online!!

In addition, through the e-VBAB Network Project, a lot of cultural exchange and international understanding will have been encouraged. I am well placed to say that Indian HEIs offer a diverse and vibrant academic environment and by engaging with Indian scholars, fellow students, and different cultures, our students would have broadened their global perspectives. Such cross-cultural interaction strengthens the

acquisition of skills needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

As we all know, since December 2022, India has assumed the Presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20). The Presidency has been placed under the theme of “***Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam***”, *ie, One Earth, One Family, One Future*”. You will appreciate that the theme acted as a pointer indicating the need for unity and progress in addressing critical global challenges.

It is precisely this philosophy, this ‘mantra’ that aptly defines India’s relationship with the Global South, particularly Africa.

We all know that India has had a long history of cooperation and solidarity with Africa, dating back to the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles. But, unlike other models dictated by geopolitical concerns, the Indian model is based on mutual respect, equality, and demand-driven assistance.

That is also true for the bond between Mauritius and India.

And Education is one of the cornerstones of the bond.

I recall here the words of Shri Modi in his video address to the G20 Education Ministers' Meet that took place last month and which I had the opportunity to attend. He referred to Education as the foundation upon which our civilization has been built.

And here he recited a Sanskrit Shlok, which, translated, means

'True knowledge gives humility, from humility comes worthiness, from worthiness one gets wealth, wealth enables a person to do good deeds, and this is what brings joy',

India has always been by our side where education is concerned--but not in a big brotherly manner –

I won't even talk of handholding but rather of standing shoulder to shoulder, helping build 'people-to-people' ties.

We have a history of a passel of Mauritian students who went on to be the alumni of prestigious Indian Universities. Many of them have occupied and continue to occupy key positions and enjoy an equally prestigious status in their professional occupations.

Such is the Indo-Mauritian alliance that has been carved – and this Project follows the that well-trodden path.

It is also worth noting that the e-VBAB project aligns closely with our government's vision to promote an inclusive and knowledge-based society. By investing in education and providing equal opportunities to all, we aim to create a generation of skilled and well informed individuals who can drive our nation's development and prosperity. They are the leaders, innovators, and agents of positive change—and this Project will serve as a reinforcement and sustainment ingredient.

We are also lucky that, in Mauritius, learners have historically been self-motivated, avidly

pursuing knowledge and skills as part of the lifelong learning process.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India for their unwavering support and commitment to this national endeavour. Thus, through the e-VBAB project, India has invested a lot in scholarships, infrastructure, and technology to ensure its success in Mauritius. If nothing else, this educational collaboration between our nations testifies to the deep-rooted friendship and shared values that bind us together.

I urge all stakeholders, including students, parents and Educators to avail of this extraordinary opportunity presented by the e-VBAB project.

Let us join hands and embrace the transformative power of education to unlock the immense potential of our youth and other workers. The impact of the e-VBAB project is clear, with results and achievements being absolutely tangible.

Together, we can shape a brighter future for Mauritius, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. Let us continue to support and expand this initiative, ensuring our students have the tools they need to succeed in an ever-evolving, complex and volatile world.

May the e-VBAB project pave the way for a prosperous Mauritius by foregrounding the consolidation of our knowledge base.

I thank you all for your kind attention.