

Minister's Statements and Speeches

THE MAURITIUS COMMERCIAL BANK FOUNDATION

(AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. XIV OF 2023)

(31.10.2023)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I first of all wish to thank the hon. Members from both sides of the House who have intervened and contributed to the debates on the MCB Foundation (Amendment) Bill (No. XIV of 2023). This indeed demonstrates their keen interests and the keen interest generated on the matter of education and human capital development and the importance that this scholarship has. It provides to our students the possibilities for higher education, eliminating barriers and constraints for our high achievers. Indeed this scholarship, Mr Speaker, Sir, will give the opportunity to our young high achievers to acquire new knowledge, new competencies, new skills that will allow them to contribute positively to the development of our country or any other place where they decide to reside.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the most important things that we have to bear in mind is that when a young person gets the opportunity to go abroad to study, to develop his competencies, along with this new set of skills, knowledge that he acquires, he should also develop very important values. We have been talking about honesty, we have been talking about a lot of good characteristics.

*Mr Speaker, Sir, knowledge, c'est le savoir mais avec le savoir, devrait aussi venir le savoir-faire et le savoir-être. Ces bourses permettent certainement à nos jeunes d'acquérir de nouvelles connaissances mais en même temps, il devrait aussi permettre à ces jeunes de développer les valeurs requises et ces valeurs sont tellement importantes parce que nos jeunes quand ils iront ailleurs, ils seront nos ambassadeurs. Ils vont démontrer les traits de l'île Maurice. M. le président, je suis entièrement d'accord avec l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad quand il vient dire que ces bourses doivent être, bien sur le base de – il a utilisé les termes de méritocratie, de la transparence, de la redevabilité, *accountability, transparency and meritocracy.**

I would like here, Mr Speaker, Sir, to draw his attention that all scholarships, may they be those given by the Government of Mauritius or by donor countries, whenever they pass through the Ministry of Education, the students are selected on the basis of meritocracy, transparency and accountability. This is the way we function at the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, I was saying earlier – *le savoir, le savoir-être et le savoirfaire*.

M. le président, l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad a parlé des gens qui ne savaient comment se comporter, qui ne savaient comment se présenter vis-à-vis des jeunes et s'il est à raison de dire que les gens doivent démontrer leur savoir-être, il faut aussi qu'on souligne l'importance, surtout sur les *high achievers*, que quand ils vont ailleurs, acquérir les connaissances, ils doivent aussi faire montre des valeurs qui leur sont passées. Je parle ici des valeurs telles que l'honnêteté, la gentillesse mais aussi très souvent attribuée aux jeunes qui sont très performants, les valeurs de l'humilité. They have to be humble. And this is what we as adults, we as Members of the Parliament, we as Educators, we as Heads of Institutions, should implicitly pass on to our children, to your young students. Humility, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a very important value and I think this is something we should underline and this is something that we should definitely ask our young students to acquire as they move on for their higher studies.

As mentioned earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendments brought to the Bill tonight will widen the choice of fields of studies of the scholars to meet the demands of the new economy, to meet the demands of the new pillars of the economy but also to make Mauritius more competitive, not only on the regional but also on the world scene.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the contribution of my colleagues and I have noted with satisfaction that there is consensus for enlarging the fields of studies in light of the development in the world of work, in the future of work but I will also draw the attention of my colleague, hon. Dr. Gungapersad, on the fact that when Bills are drafted, they are drafted by the State Law Office and there is a general rule of interpretation where it is clearly stated that the words importing to a masculine shall include the feminine and the neuter. Hence, we would not move for any amendment of the legislation but I would also draw the attention of the House on the fact that the trend today is to use the word 'her' to include both masculine, feminine and neuter. This is the new trend but this being said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not be moving for any amendment to the legislation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the Attorney-General's Office, the officers of my Ministry, the Chairperson and Members of the

MCB Foundation for their commitment and their contribution to bring the amendments to this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having said so, I would like to commend the MCB Foundation (Amendment) Bill (No. XIV of 2023) to the House.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.