

**Speech of the
Hon. Mrs. Leela Devi Dookun Luchoomun, GCSK,
Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science &
Technology
The Launching of the Digital Proficiency Course**

Hon Deepak Balgobin, Minister of Information Technology, Communication, and Innovation;

Mr. Dhurma Ashdeo Soburrun, Chairperson, Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency;

The Executive Director & Staff of the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency;

Representatives of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication, and Innovation;

Dear students;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning to all of you.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today as we proceed with the launch of the Digital Proficiency Course. This initiative, as you know, is led by the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency, a key player that operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication, and Innovation. However, it is also a collaborative one, involving the Ministry of Education as well.

Quite understandably, therefore, this Course will not simply aim at improving the digital skills of the population at large but will also target the young school-going population in a bid to equip them with the essential skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the digital age. Indeed, it is vital for our learners to have a firm grounding in digital literacy that will, through sound consolidation, enable them to navigate the digital world with confidence and competence.

That is why digital literacy is today seen as an essential life skill. The lack of it can limit job opportunities –in fact, this represents a threat to what we today call the employability factor. Conventional wisdom now has it that, through the development of automation technologies, including robotics and AI, many jobs are likely to become obsolete or will require fewer human workers.

We don't have to look too far to see the number of tasks that are readily automatable in banks, at the airport, office administration, and in the domains of manufacturing as well as logistics and maritime shipping. If we go by the 2022 OECD Report, 80 per cent of jobs of the future have as yet not been created and 75 per cent of these will be related to information technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By fostering digital literacy, we are preparing our youth to be active participants in the digital economy, capable of leveraging technology to solve complex problems, innovate, and contribute to societal progress.

In short, we are investing in the future for greater efficiency gains!

Allow me, friends, to point out here that this Digital Proficiency Course has a precursor, a forerunner.

You will recall that, for quite some time, there was the universal ICT programme, known as the Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) course that served the purpose of promoting basic digital literacy. It certainly served its purpose. However, the ever-changing technological landscape necessitates adaptation and an evolving response. Accordingly, the IC3 programme is now being re-imagined, even revamped, to meet the demands of the new normal. And this new normal is made up of previously unheard-of features like the increasing reliance on the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The lesson this carries is that we have to go through an attitudinal shift.

Digital literacy can no more be seen in a restrictive manner it goes much beyond the mere ability to use a computer or a smartphone. In fact, it encompasses a broad range of skills, including problem solving and the ability to evaluate and create information using digital tools.

At this juncture, Ladies and Gentlemen, I deem it important to highlight that our several actions related to the large-scale spread of digital literacy are all part of the roadmap for Digital Mauritius 2030. We all want Mauritius to be the Intelligent Island that it is destined to be. If we look around ourselves, we would see the major digital headway made in so many fields—banking, business,

medical. You name it. Even the bureaucratic processes have now been smoothed through such apps as Mopass and Mokloud.

It is therefore only natural to say that the world of Education has a cardinal role to play in the fulfilment of the Digital Mauritius 2030 agenda.

As we all know, ICT has its roots deeply embedded in our educational reform agenda, calling for a comprehensive overhaul in the way our children learn in the context of 21st-century education. A Technology-enabled Learning strategy stands as a cornerstone in our quest to propel our national education system into the future, ensuring we remain at the forefront of global teaching and learning innovations.

One flagship initiative in this enterprise is the Early Digital Learning programme, which champions equity and inclusiveness by equipping all children with digital devices regardless of their geographical location.

Alongside, a comprehensive digital curriculum is being developed as is a repository of resources, including Open Education Resources, that will be accessible to all Educators and students.

Obviously, we are placing a premium on the continuous professional development for our teachers to empower them to seamlessly integrate technology into their pedagogy.

TEL should therefore be recognised as not just an add-on but an essential leverage for learning and development. For, among the numerous benefits, we can successfully create an educational environment that is responsive, resilient, and adaptable to global changes.

Here, I am glad to say our policy is closely aligned on UNESCO's 3 C's that make digital education accessible, relevant and effective for all learners. The 3 C's stand for Connectivity, Content and Capacity Building.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's launch of the Digital Proficiency Course is a testament to the concept of partnership and collaboration. Indeed, the collaboration between the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication, and Innovation and my Ministry is a

shining example of how teamwork can add immense value to the opportunities and learning services offered to our country's youth.

Through this collaboration, we aim to cultivate a new generation of Mauritians who are tech-savvy, inspired, self-motivated, autonomous lifelong learners, responsible citizens with a strong value base, and productive contributors to society. The Digital Proficiency Course is a crucial step in this journey, especially in the context of a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Allow me here to commend the remarkable efforts of the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency for their visionary initiative.

To the students who will be embarking on this journey, I encourage you to embrace the opportunities that the Digital Proficiency Course offers. The skills and knowledge you will gain will not only prepare you for the workplace but also empower you to be active participants in shaping the future of our nation. Remember that learning is a lifelong journey, and the digital world offers endless possibilities for growth and innovation.

Together, let us continue to work towards a brighter future, where every Mauritian youth is equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in the digital age.

Let us build a society that is resilient, adaptable, and forward-thinking, where technology is harnessed to create opportunities for all.

Thank you.