**AN EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMME WITH ARGO PROJECT**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE TWO-DAY SEMINAR FOR STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS**

**AT SVICC- PAILLES**

**MINISTER’S SPEECH**

(*10 JULY 2014).*

A very good morning to all of you. I have the immense pleasure of welcoming you to this morning, to the two-day seminar which has been organized to give you a platform for discussion on the Argo project and for sharing of your experiences with Captain Peter Flanagan, Dr Carol Young and your peers.

I would like, first and foremost, to extend my heartiest thanks to Captain Peter Flanagan of the Lady Amber Research Vessel for having aligned with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in initiating the ARGO PROJECT in our schools.

Captain started to work collaboratively with our Ministry since 2012. Now he is at his 3rd visit. Without his unflinching support the Argo project would not have been possible in our schools. I would like to place high on records his invaluable contribution.

On the other hand, my thanks goes to Dr Carol Young, UNESCO expert in climate change, as well.She has kindly accepted to come a long way from New Zealand to extend her collaboration for the sustainability of the ARGO Project and to give you a better insight on the use of real-time data that your floats are providing to you dear students.

The broad-scale global array of temperature/salinity profiling floats, which are known as Argo, has already grown to be a major component of the ocean observing system. Argo is a standard to which other developing ocean observing systems can look to. Argo offers ideas on various topics such asinternational collaboration, development of data management system and the way scientists think about collecting and handling data.

Our Argo school Project which focuses on an integrated global observation, has brought on board some 80 secondary schools, state and private including 2 from Rodrigues. These schools have already registered forthis very innovative Programme with Lady Amber Research Vessel which currently deploys floats around Indian Ocean for the Mauritius Oceanographic Institute. It also does deployments of Argo floats and Drifters for NASA in the South Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

Our registered schools have their floats bearing their and deployed in the Atlantic oceans since 2012 and 2013. In all 40 floats and 10 drifters have been allocated to Mauritian schools, which receive real-time data, like readings of water temperature, movement of current, velocity, salinity of water and density, to enrich the present curriculum in science subjects, mainly Marine Science, chemistry, physics, biology and other related subjects like Geography and Agriculture.

These schools can study climate change and climate prediction and get information on tsunami and earthquake as well. The information is received via satellite and may be interpreted by different departments as appropriate at school level.

The Argot Project has been promoted with a view to broaden our present school curriculum and to inspire our young people to become future scientists, to better prepare them for job opportunities related to the blue economy and to ensure their holistic development. Our students will know more about the oceans when they will get the opportunity to be on placement on the research vessel for few weeks hopefully.

An awareness campaign on the ARGO Project has already been carried out among Rectors, Educators and students by Captain Peter Flanagan in 2013, when he was at his 2nd visit.

This week workshops have been organized with all collaborators to boost up this project. We are indeed lucky to have Dr Carol Young who will coach you on the use of real-time data as she is a UNESCO expert in climate change. She has developed a diversity of educational programmes and materials for SIDS to be used alongside with the readings from our floats.

Moreover, with a growing population, there are certainly new and emerging challenges that are probable to affect sustainable development in Mauritius. The need of collaborative partnerships is essential to bring innovation and new ideas.

Also, it is a way of sharing techniques, skills and data thus increasing knowledge capacity. In so doing, performance is improved and education is disseminated in a better and modern adaptive way to sustainable development.

The contribution of Dr Carol Young will be of utmost importance for us as she will also address climate change which can be predicted by real-time data.

On this note, I would like to end. I strongly believe that this seminar will be very enriching for all participants and more awareness on the interpretation of real-time data, will be created. I am confident that in the long run, the Argo project will open new avenues to our Blue economy within a Sustainable Development framework to promote the growth of Mauritius.

I thank you for your attention.

I have now the privilege to declare seminar open. I wish you all plenty of success in your endeavour!

***Dr. the HonourableVasantK.Bunwaree,***

***Minister of Education and HR***