

**Hon. (Mrs) L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun.**  
**Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary**  
**Education and Scientific Research**  
**MIE Graduation Ceremony**  
**Octave Wiehe Auditorium,**  
**Reduit**  
**14 July 2016**

**Good Morning to you all.**

Few occasions bring as much gratification and a sense of fulfillment as a graduation ceremony does.

***I know. I have been there!***

This is a defining moment in the life of a person precisely because it symbolizes a sense of achievement. And with achievement comes a tremendous sense of pride, of having worked towards a goal and having made it despite the difficult moments, despite the odds sometimes.

## **Dear Graduates,**

I feel privileged to be in your midst today, to share this moment of happiness and pride.

Right at the outset, therefore, I would like to congratulate you on your success, and also extend my congratulations to your family members and close ones who have stood by you during your studies.

It is also heartwarming for me to see new entrants in the domain of teaching. Many of you here have taken the decision to pursue teaching as an important step up in your career.

I certainly hope the choice has been a well-considered and a thoughtful one and not by default.

You are certainly aware—and I do not intend to frighten you out of your wits here—that, for the teaching profession has lost the status, used to enjoy in the past. In the past, teachers were the ones to enjoy the community and the neighbourhood turned to for matters requiring an understanding of the written or printed word. Theirs was the voice of reason, the voice that was respectfully listened to.

Today, unfortunately, we are going through a phase where teaching is considered as just another job.

This is precisely where perhaps the most pressing and demanding challenge arises. You, as graduants who have opted for this profession voluntarily, who look forward to a satisfying career, you have to invest

yourselves with the duty and responsibility of refurbishing the image of the profession. You will have to give the schools to which you will be posted their 'lettres de noblesse'.

Be the trail blazers. Show that you have what it takes to make of teaching a rewarding experience- rewarding both for your learners and for yourselves.

Let me share with you what the reform programme of my Ministry has in mind. We intend to give a new fillip, a new thrust to teaching.

For one thing, we intend to attract the best qualified and most motivated candidates to teaching. That's young persons like you!

In fact we are ambitious enough to wish to attract the top 30% of graduates to the

teaching profession. But we also intend to design new career paths for teachers so as to provide greater opportunities for their professional growth.

## **Graduants,**

When the global community met at the UN in September last, one of the most important items on its Summit agenda was the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, also known as the Global Goals. You are doubtless aware that Global Goal 4 relates to Education—and one of its targets reads thus,

*“By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States”*

I dare say we are lucky that, in Mauritius, we haven't compromised on the qualification issue. Practically the entire teaching force is fully qualified. We have always invested in pre-and in-service training, as well as in professional development programs to ensure that, in addition to qualifications, teachers equally possess the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to teach effectively.

But I also need to remind you that, such is the dynamic nature of teaching that you have to be constantly on your toes, constantly re-inventing yourself.

Never forget that once our children move towards the upper classes, they are able to generate knowledge for themselves from different means, including the technology-

based media. It becomes then incumbent upon you to realise that you can no more be mere knowledge providers: rather, you have to be systematically one step ahead of your students.

You will therefore understand me when I say that wishing our students to be lifelong learners cannot be a one-way or one-sided affair. **You** will as well have to practice what you will preach.

And for you, it will not merely be a question of lifelong learning but also demonstrating the willingness to teach by using innovative pedagogies.

Dear Graduates,

Now is perhaps the time for you to reflect on a fundamental question: what does it mean to be a teacher? This question pertains to

your role, your identity and to your own self. You probably will not have a readymade answer right away. Nevertheless, it is a question that I want you to cogitate on as you make your way back home after this graduation ceremony. Let me share with you the following fact: the only people on earth to whom parents entrust their children are you teachers. This is extremely important the parent know that you are the one who will help their children develop their potentials.

Nowadays, the use of the textbooks and eliciting the right responses from students are just some of your roles and responsibilities. You are probably aware of some of your own teachers who delivered what we call “*des cours magistraux*”, *des envolées quelques fois lyriques qui surestiment le pouvoir de la parole*.

This may all be very fine but, -- and that's the crunch-- how much learning has effectively taken place?



You will have to think if you will merely practice frontal teaching technology and digitization?

Graduating is a word that denotes growth, moving from one level of intellect and ability to another.

As a teacher, you have entrusted yourself with the responsibility to enable learning to take place, to enable your students to be curious, to develop the questioning spirit.

Asking the question “why” is all about exploration and discovery.

Remember that nothing is cast in stone today: today’s orthodoxy may well become tomorrow’s heresy.

So, as you progress in your career choice as teachers, remember the context has changed.

To educate is to make others learn, to train young minds to ask the right questions and seek answers. The answers may not necessarily be those that you expect—but,

then, it is not so much the answer as the thinking process behind the answer that matters.

And that is what you have to help develop.

**Graduants**, I am insisting upon this faculty because this is central to the development of your learners today. Remember that our Mauritian students have to be able to hold their own against their peers in other parts of the world.

We want our children to familiarize themselves with what have been called the ‘Deep Learning’ skills—or more commonly, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. Our learners have to develop their critical faculty, their problem-solving and communication skills along with a whole set of competencies that will allow them to face and overcome as yet unpredictable challenges.

And it takes inspired teachers to be able to do that. It takes inspired teachers to, in turn, inspire students.

I know that I can trust you.

And I know that you will not let me down.

Today, through the reform process, through the capacity building enterprise of teachers, through the inculcation of the notion of accountability for learning, we are in fact investing in the future of our country.

I love to insist upon this. It is the **whole person development** that is the centerpiece of the reform.

Rest assured that everything is being put in place for the success of the reform. The support structures are already there and properly keyed up.

What we need now are agents in each school to implement this vision and to take the learners to a different level.

This is where I turn to you as the young generation of teachers, entrusting you with

the responsibility of not only making the reform work, but also, of shaping the future of the learners.

It is your responsibility as transactional leaders in the classroom because we owe it to all of our children.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen, Graduants,**

Let me end on this note. I wish you well in your profession and it is also my fervent hope that, as you make your way along your professional track, you create opportunities for special moments of epiphany that only teaching can bring.

Congratulations once again and all the very best for a long and fulfilling career.

***Thank you for your attention.***