

**Speech by Hon (Mrs) L.D.Dookun-Luchoomun**  
**Minister of Education & Human Resources**  
**Tertiary Education and Scientific Research**  
**Award of Certificate Ceremony**  
**28 April 2016**

**A very Good morning to you all.**

As usual, it is always an honour for me to address young awardees and their close relatives on the occasion of a Graduation Ceremony that celebrates their success. This success is a reflection of your commitment to your training but it is also a torchlight illuminating the many occasions that will be part of your lifelong learning process.

I wish therefore to convey my congratulations to every single one of you. I must also commend your parents and your trainers as well as the staff of MITD for their support and contribution.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This Award Ceremony is an apt reminder of the changing perception usually entertained about Technical and Vocational Education and Training. The world of TVET, we know, has for long been playing second fiddle to the world of academia. But today, technical education has become vital for the country's development.

You, the nearly one thousand-strong body who will graduate today, show very clearly that this perception has been absolutely erroneous and unwarranted.

You have chosen to challenge pre-conceived notions.

You have chosen not to be defined by the prejudices of the past.

Rather, you have opted to equip yourselves to be employable and operational the moment you enter the world of work --- and that is the

oxygen upon which the world of technical and vocational education depends to gain and uphold its ‘lettres de noblesse’.

Today we all realise the significance of skills development. I would really like you to reflect on what has rightly been stated in one edition of the *African Economic Outlook*’—and I quote,

*“The development of relevant skills facilitates the application of new technologies, increases individuals’ employability and enterprises’ productivity and competitiveness”*

**Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Graduants,**

Today the landscape of TVET has evolved – and evolved drastically. Today’s world demands a move away from just the possession of low level skills. Important as these are, they now have to be supplemented by an educational option in which lifelong learning skills play a primary role. The plumber, the electrician, the mechanic – all of them are expected to be literate and problem solvers as well as continually building up their store of knowledge.

My Ministry is fully alive to these new realities. And the several sectoral reforms embarked upon in both General and Technical education are a testimony to that.

As you all know, we are engaged in a wide reform, taking from pre-primary sector to tertiary education, passing through, primary, secondary, TVET sector. Thus, the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education will lay a strong foundation for further learning, catering for the diverse interests and learning needs of all children. The overall reform is also geared towards empowering students to adapt to the changing economic landscape.

In this context, a strong technical stream in secondary schools will encourage a positive uptake by students and bring the teaching of

technical education at par with what obtains in the General education stream.

Furthermore, pathways will be established with articulation of TVET with secondary and tertiary education.

I repeat that our aim is to establish TVET as a recognised and prestigious mode of quality learning. Accordingly, existing MITD Training Centres will be transformed to provide high-quality technical and vocational training, with state- of- the- art facilities.

New training centres will also be set up to meet the skills need of a growing and diversified economy.

A case in point is the MITD Cote D'Or Training Centre that will be operational as from mid-May this year. This previously dedicated Pre-vocational Education centre is being converted into a model Vocational Training Centre, equipped with the latest technology. It will accommodate a total of 60 full-time trainees in four trades pitched at National Certificate Level 3, namely, Plumbing, Electrical Installation Works, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning and Fabrication of Aluminium and UPVC openings and we are having the support of Singapore expertise to make sure that everything is done according to high standards.

Another case worth mentioning is the new training centre at Petit Bel-Air that is expected to become operational in 2018 and will cater for a total of about 720 trainees annually.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I must also highlight the new institutional addition on the technical education landscape. You must certainly have heard of the three Polytechnics that will be set up at Montagne Blanche for courses in the Tourism & Hospitality sector, at Ebene for the Information & Communication Technology sector and at Pamplemousses for the Health sector.

All these changes and transformations, dear graduants, should mean a lot to you. I would want you to remember that, as the country takes an upward economic trajectory, the requirement for skilled workers will be the norm rather than the exception.

Illustratively, the development of the Smart Cities Project will result in an increased demand for skilled workers in the building and other allied trades. We should not forget the creation of new Pillars, as the ocean Economy which will require a new set of skills and this is exactly at what we are aiming through the re-strengthening of the TVET sector. And I hardly need to say much about the Tourism sector that employed over 28, 000 people in 2015 or, again, the tapping of trained labour in the hospitality sector for cruise ships.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

At a time therefore when we are witnessing a growing number of government initiatives to boost our economy, it is definite that the demand for skilled labour is not likely to subside in the future. I am confident that the MITD will therefore live up to its mandate of imparting the skills needed to drive our country's economic growth and

social development and to boost the SME sector per the government vision and initiatives taken of the ministry responsible of this sector.

Let me once again congratulate all the graduating trainees as well as the MITD Board and staff for making today so special for all of you.

Godspeed to you, graduants, in your careers.

***Thank you.***