

**Speech of Hon. (Mrs) L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun.
Minister of Education and Human Resources,
Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
MITD Graduation Ceremony
September 15, 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all. Especially for you, young graduates, it is certainly one of the best mornings of your lives. Indeed, we are gathered to celebrate your success, a success that is as much due to your hard work, perseverance and commitment as it is due to your parents and friends whose support and solicitude has been unflinching.

Obviously, therefore, it gives me immense pleasure to be present here and to address you, on the occasion of this Graduation Ceremony.

My warm and sincere congratulations to each and every one of you. Kudos and credit also go to your parents and your trainers. I never fail to mention the staff of MITD who have significantly contributed to the success of so many of their graduates through their long and unflagging contributions.

This is the second graduation ceremony of MITD for the trainees of the 2015 cohort. When I see this large number of trainees graduating today, I cannot help considering that things are genuinely evolving in Mauritius.

And the evolution is also in mindsets.

There was a time when the perception people had of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was not a very positive one. We can only be pleased that there has been a systematic change being brought to this perception. Internationally, too, it is interesting to note

that the skills needed for successful competition in the global market of today are those related to the technical/vocational sector.

So what does this mean for us in Mauritius?

It means that we must encourage more of our youth to pursue their education and training in technical and vocational fields. I believe that you, dear graduates, need to be commended for your decision to choose the TVET stream and thus equip yourselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance your employability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Ministry is doing its fair share by spearheading many policy thrusts in the sector. As you all know, we are engaged in a system-wide reform, covering all sub-sectors, ranging from the preprimary to tertiary education, passing through the TVET sector.

And this reform has been well-thought through, with the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education laying a strong foundation for further learning and catering for the diverse interests and learning needs of all children.

We do not want to have any child left behind. On the contrary, we want to empower all of our students. We want them to not only successfully adapt to the changing economic landscape but also be holistically developed.

Now, more than ever, it has become important to translate into reality the four pillars that Jacques Delors defined as the foundations of education-- **learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together.**

This, you will agree, has major implications for the TVET sector.

Hence, my Ministry has embarked on a major mission of reviewing the education and training system so as to ensure, among other things,

that TVET becomes an alternative pathway valued by the different stakeholders, including gifted and talented students.

The emphasis is obviously on improving the quality and relevance of MITD training programmes and providing a more attractive pathway to students. In fact, the outcome indicators that are used to measure quality in skills systems are student participation and completion, progression, employment and the level of satisfaction of both the students and the employers.

What then is being done?

- The National Certificate Level 3 programmes pitched at semi-skilled level are being reviewed in a phased manner to the higher level National Certificate Level 4 which is itself pitched at skilled-worker level.
- The curriculum review is on and is being carried out in consultation with experts from industry to ensure that the programmes respond to the needs of industry.
- In the same vein, the collaboration of the Academie de la Reunion, the Institute of Technical Education of Singapore, and relevant institutions in Germany is being solicited for the benchmarking of TVET curricula, upgrading of training equipment and capacity building of MITD trainers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To give a new thrust to Technical and Vocational Education, existing MITD Training Centres will be transformed to provide high-quality technical and vocational training, with state-of-the-art facilities. Some of these will undergo expansion to meet the skills need of a growing and diversified economy.

New training centres will also be set up, with the new training centre at Petit Bel-Air being a case in point. This Centre will become

operational in 2019 and will cater for a total of about 720 trainees annually.

Another training centre in the West is being envisaged .

We are also securing the collaboration of Singapore's Institute of Technical Education –for the development of a Model Vocational Training Centre.

As you can see, these measures will lead to increased access to training and they are very much in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-4) for education, which is, 'Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot pass over two more significant features of the TVET landscape. One is the legal setup. As announced in the Budget Speech 2016/2017, the legal framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training will be reinforced to give a new boost to the TVET sector while a Skills Development Authority will be set up as an independent regulator for this sector

And the second relates to the provision of Polytechnic Education as a much needed addition to our TVET landscape. Three Polytechnics are expected to become operational in 2017 at Montagne Blanche, Pamplémousses and Redit. .

Dear Graduates,

The reform and transformation of the TVET system are important if we want our country to take an upward economic trajectory. This is where you come in strongly because you have the relevant cognitive and technical skills and competencies.

The certificates you will be receiving today will inevitably open up new avenues for employment as well as access to higher level training.

Training institutions like the MITD will continue to live up to their mandate of imparting the skills needed to drive our country's economic growth and social development and to boost the SME sector.

But I also need to remind you of one basic and inescapable fact: the country will also need workers who, despite being well- skilled, would still have to accept to go through a systematic re-skilling process.

Hence, in the face of changing technology, you must continue on your learning to acquire new knowledge and skills so as to ensure your life-long employability.

And, who knows, I may again be here, delivering another Graduation Speech as you receive new diplomas!

Graduates, Congratulations again to all of you. Congratulations as well to the MITD Board and staff for making today so special for all of you. I wish you plenty of success in your careers.

And a final word of thanks and appreciation to all of our partners and collaborators, particularly the private sector and the press for their great support.

Thank you for your kind attention