

**Speech by Hon (Mrs) L.D. Dookun-Luchoomun,
Minister of Education and Human Resources,
Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
20th Convocation Ceremony
(Conferment of Postgraduate Diploma under the GTES)
University of Technology Mauritius
Tuesday 08 November 2016.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning to you all.**

Allow me to express my utmost satisfaction for being asked to be present during this Graduation Ceremony. Today's Ceremony bears a special cachet since it celebrates the success of a first batch of trainees—exactly those whom I had the pleasure of addressing in February earlier this year when the training programme in IT under the Graduate Training for Employment Scheme was being launched. Obviously, therefore, I am extremely satisfied that this programme has reached successful fruition—that you, all 23 of you, have successfully completed the course and will now be awarded a Post Graduate Diploma.

Congratulations to you, including the 12 amongst you who have made it with Distinction.

Such a feat of completing a 600-hour programme in 6 months does send a strong message and I believe, it signals that, given a set of required skills, graduates have that in them that makes their foray into the world of work an exhilarating one. You have demonstrated that there is here no dearth of intellectual capacity nor a lack of willingness to learn the skills.

In fact, when your intellectual capital is coupled with relevant and required skills, there is no stopping the upward trajectory of your destiny.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also seize this opportunity to show my appreciation and congratulate all those involved in the project. As we all well know, the Graduate Training for Employment Scheme (GTES) launched by the Government last year, has as main objective the enhancement of the employability prospects.

We are very committed to fulfilling this promise to the nation. We are committed to understanding and addressing the root causes of mismatch between education and employment needs.

Agreed that this is a tough proposition. Expert opinion has it that, do what we will, the labour market because of its dynamism, its flexibility and its unpredictability, will always steal a march on education and training.

I obviously will not launch into the controversial debate about the role of Universities—whether they are supposed to be endowing people with work skills or act as Centers of Learning, whether they are to orient people towards being vocationally/ professionally upfront or be explorers of knowledge.

But one thing is certain: today, learning institutions have to facilitate the acquisition of soft skills, the out-of-the-box thinking that employers see as most contributory to their success.

And in this venture of providing skills that are in tune with the requirements of the evolving industry, learning institutions must be supported.

This GTE Scheme shows that they are. Obviously, then, the support and collaboration of industry, industry associations and employers can in no way be minimized. In fact, such active and enabling collaboration along with the backing of training providers like the

UTM is essential for the viability and sustainability of the GTES scheme.

Kudos, then, to the five main industry partners, namely The Ceridian Mauritius Ltd, Accenture, Agileum, Orange Business Services and the Enterprise Information Solutions, operating under the Rogers Group for having supported both the UTM and the Ceridian Learning Centre (CLC) in the development of this **Postgraduate Diploma in Information Technology**.

Dear Graduants,

I would be telling you nothing new if I were to say that ICT is the driving force of today's world economy. Societies the world over are placing a premium on Technology as a lever for Innovation. Japan, as you probably know, is already planning for the implementation of its Society 5.0 vision. Other countries as well are stressing the need to introduce ICT-induced transformational change in such areas as manufacturing, logistics, transportation, medical care, finance and public services.

Mauritius cannot afford to lag behind and, as you all know, one of the main objectives of the Mauritian government is to develop Mauritius into a knowledge, innovation and technology-based nation.

I will open a parenthesis here to indicate that, education being the driver of change and innovation, it is only natural that all reforms that are ongoing or that will be envisaged for the future will have to serve towards maintaining our competitiveness in a challenging international economic environment.

However, this environment does not present us with challenges alone but it also unleashes tremendous opportunities.

Hence, to capture these emerging opportunities, to attract investment and growth and create jobs, we need the ingenuity, skills and varied abilities of our people. That is why it is imperative that we develop a fresh approach to education where excellence and quality become the central pillars of the system.

I hardly then need to remind all present here that this element takes center stage in all of our education and training strategizing.

Dear Graduands,

I remember having read somewhere that “*The trophies on one’s shelf do not win tomorrow’s games*”. It will make a lot of sense for you to keep that in view because you are called upon to remain lifelong learners. The world changes so quickly and evolution in industry is so fast that we must be ready to prepare and equip ourselves with skills that may be required for jobs that would arise in the future and are not existing yet.

You have to continue to remain alive and relevant to the realities that this 21st Century is unfolding by constantly upgrading, even acquiring new skills and competencies.

As importantly, you should always remember that you are in competition not only with your neighbor next door but with thousands more across the world, some of whom could be better equipped than you.

In this regard, it’s not just a matter of being better at what you do. It is a matter of being different at what you do.

And I take it that, to be different, you do have what it takes to be more creative, more innovative as well as better able to develop and sustain a new mindset.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to reiterate my thanks to Accenture Mauritius, Agileum, Ceridian Mauritius, Enterprise

Information Solutions and Orange Business Services for having successfully collaborated towards making this GTES program a reality. I am confident that there will be such other collaborative ventures in the future.

I would also like to commend the Human Resource Development Council and the University of Technology Mauritius for the dedication towards the success of this project.

Sincere congratulations to you, dear graduands and wish you plenty of success in your future careers.

Thank you for your attention.