

# **Speech of The Hon (Mrs) L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun**

## **Reception in honour of laureates**

**His Excellency Mr Prithvirajsingh Roopun, President of  
the Republic of Mauritius**

**Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister**

**Dear Laureates and Parents**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Morning to all of you.

It is with great pleasure that I am in your midst this morning. I extend my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you. Allow me to congratulate not only you, the laureates of the 2023 edition but also your family members, educators and those who have supported you on your journey to this remarkable achievement.

Today, we gather here to celebrate the culmination of years of unwavering dedication and hard work, demonstrating

that wilful sacrifices do yield fruitful outcomes. Indeed, today, you are reaping the rewards of your efforts.

As you prepare to embark on your professional careers after completing your studies, I am certain that many of you have already contemplated and thought through your chosen path. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that, in our modern era, employment in a particular organisation may or need no longer be a lifelong commitment. Over time, your interests and skills will evolve, presenting you with new avenues and opportunities for personal growth.

My fundamental advice to you is to remain open to change.

Do not fear to embrace new experiences and to remain agile and flexible in your approach.

Dear laureates, we must recognize that the ongoing albeit subdued Covid-19 pandemic has brought about significant disruptions, plunging economies into turmoil. You were among the students who had to adapt to changes in teaching and learning methods. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge the silver lining ushered in by this challenging situation.

From an educational standpoint, the pandemic has triggered the advent of remote learning at primary and secondary education levels. All of you have been through the moments of the pandemic, when we had to close down schools for the safety of one and all. However, you can all testify to the fact that schools may have been closed, but education never stopped. Overnight, educators had to resort to digital means to ensure that learners did not suffer educational setbacks. Likewise, at the tertiary education level, online learning became a prominent feature. As you are well aware, the universities you may currently be attending or will attend have also adopted these practices to ensure the continuity of the teaching and learning process. The pandemic has undeniably underscored the necessity for alternative approaches to education.

Dear laureates,

Returning to the career paths you will embrace, it is essential to recognise that the world of work has undergone substantial changes. The economic model, as we have known it, has gone through a major transformation. One evident consequence is the emergence of the "work-from-

home" model, which demands adjustment and a change in mindset. With confinement and limited mobility, employees are now compelled to think globally while working locally, collaborating with colleagues from remote geographical locations. Furthermore, you must have observed how certain manufacturing entities have had to adapt and reinvent themselves. Hence, it is extremely important for you to build in agility and flexibility in your way of doing things. Let us bear in mind that scalability and resilience are the watchwords heralding our new economic era, for the world has not yet bid farewell to crises. In fact, it is now imperative that we equip ourselves to face future challenges.

Moreover, it is worth noting that employers today seek talent with particular soft skills. The world of work continues to attach immense value to these skills, commonly referred to as people skills. Communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are recognised as the most crucial skills for an organisation's success and profitability.

And this is where the education you have received plays an instrumental role. We in Mauritius have always placed a heavy premium on acceding to the strong social demand

for education. Because it is a fundamental human right, you can appreciate why, our Prime Minister has, in a spirit of equity and fairness, made it a point for education to be accessible to all. Hence, the policy for tertiary level education to be being free and universally accessible. Obviously, our prime Minister did not stop at that! And now, as from January 2024, a new landmark will be set in the pre-primary subsector that will be free as well. *La boucle est boucle*, we have completed the circle of free education and the State will spare no means to provide the quality education that you and our youth at large deserve.

Dear laureates,

It is certainly good to strive for excellence and be recognised, the cream of the crop. By achieving such recognition, you become role models and a source of inspiration for those around you.

On the other hand, a University education will posit new challenges to you. You are more likely than not to see a cross-fertilisation of ideas—not just intellectual ones, if we go by the cultural diversity of the student population of modern-day universities. So, it becomes urgent for you to

seize the opportunity to create new networks, to establish new friendships and engage in non-traditional ways of thinking.

You are certainly going to be judged for your adaptive faculty and versatility.

However, the most significant quality by which you will be judged ultimately lies in something else—your sense of humility, your understanding that knowledge must be accompanied by wisdom. Always remember to remain humble in your success, compassionate in your thoughts, and humane in your actions. Your judgment should not solely be based on your ability to deliver, but also on your comprehension of and respect for your fellow human beings, as well as your compassion for the underprivileged. Above all, ensure that you steadfastly tread the path of righteousness and find contentment only when your life stands for something meaningful.

Dear laureates,

Our country is in dire need of the talent, knowledge, and skills that you possess. For those of you who plan to go for studies overseas, I earnestly appeal to you to return to

Mauritius after completing same. Trust me when I say that there is a lot going for this country. Be optimistic about the future, a future whose foundations are being laid today and you are bound to be instrumental in buttressing the whole enterprise. And this, we can only do together. Together, let us strive to propel Mauritius towards attaining high-income status and greater economic prosperity. I am confident that your contributions will help us achieve this objective.

Enjoy every moment of your life, find joy and happiness in your studies, build networks, collaborate, share, and maintain an open mind. I now urge you to go forth and make your country proud, just as you have made your parents, relatives, teachers, and friends proud.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

May you all achieve great success. Thank you for your kind attention.