

**Address of Hon L.D Dookun-
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**Minister of Education and Human
Resources, Tertiary Education and
Scientific Research**

Launching Ceremony: Quality Assurance Framework

26 June 2019

World Hindi Secretariat

**Distinguished guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen,**

It gives me much pleasure to be in your midst this morning on the occasion of the Launching Ceremony of the Quality Assurance Framework and I would like to start by congratulating the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division for their commendable effort to produce a framework that sets out parameters, benchmarks and

quality standards in secondary education. It is my fervent conviction that this Framework will undoubtedly give a new sense of direction to secondary schools through the structuring of quality assurance initiatives and the outline of a roadmap for school improvement.

There is absolutely no doubt that, over the years, but especially since our accession to the status of an independent state, our education system has undergone significant change. Traditionally, it has been said that education systems across the world rest on four pillars: these are Access, Equity, Relevance and Quality. The equity dimension was translated into action through the advent of Free education. This was followed

by increased access and curricular relevance.

And today we have moved into the era of promoting and sustaining quality in our school system. This is in line with the Vision of my Ministry which aims at creating the next generation of forward-looking and innovative leaders contributing to the transformation of the Republic of Mauritius into a high ranking, prosperous nation.

And it is also in line with the international commitments we have taken vis-à-vis the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) that itself matches the 2016-2025 framework of the African Union 2063 Agenda. Our international commitment also goes towards the attainment of the

Sustainable Development Goal for Education, the SDG 4 that enunciates that Member States have to

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.”

Quality assurance becomes then a priority concern for my Ministry in the dispensing of quality education to our children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The education reform we started in 2017 aims at providing opportunities to all learners, no matter what their ability level. Encouragement and diversified learning approaches have to be provided for academically weaker students while the

bright ones should be given opportunities to stretch themselves.

But all- repeat all- have to be equipped with a new set of skills to face oncoming challenges, be these economic, social or emotional.

You will concur that high quality learning opportunities for all students can only occur if students are motivated and know the standards they are expected to achieve. And teachers can only provide these if they too are motivated and well prepared and know the standards of pedagogy and professional conduct they are expected to adhere to. School leaders, in turn, should have high aspirations for students and teachers and demonstrate leadership that is instructional and empowering.

Obviously enough, these call for a greater degree of accountability from the education system as a whole

Quality improvement and especially sustaining quality is a never-ending task since education itself is so dynamic a process. It demands constant attention being paid to the quality of the physical learning environment as well as the quality of the processes involved in teaching and learning. As reiterated in the budget speech 2019-2020, the government is committed to make our education system a modern and inclusive one. And, as we well know, a number of projects have been earmarked to provide a more conducive learning environment for our learners.

Thus, new modern infrastructure has been provided and upgrading of these remains high on the government agenda. Curriculum reforms have taken place at all levels of the sector; ICT-mediated learning and access to digitized material are now a reality among our student community.

Inclusiveness also means an education system that fully caters for weaker students. Accordingly, funds have been earmarked to provide focused support to students of the Extended Programme. This will equip these students with the socio-emotional competencies they need to achieve the desired outcomes of education.

Schools, we all know, have a responsibility to foster not simply the cognitive skills of students but also their social and emotional development. This is commonly referred to as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) that enables students to manage their emotions, demonstrate empathy, and sustain healthy relationships. We are all aware of how important such skills are in, for instance, countering disruptive behavior.

It is then obvious that we need to pay deep attention to what obtains within the classroom set up.

This is where capacity building and CPLD, that is, Continuing Professional Learning and Development of our teachers and administrative school staff becomes a pre-requisite so that levels of educational delivery

remain high. It is my earnest conviction that quality assurance policies should unremittingly support professional learning communities.

In this regard, the setting up of an Academy of Teachers will further strengthen the professional development of School Leaders and educators, helping them to keep abreast of changes in the education sector, both at national and international levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The quality assurance mechanism is meant to secure internal efficiency and monitor the quality of education dispensed in schools. This is achieved when schools and the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division

work collaboratively together, with the latter providing the needed guidance and relevant support.

Let me spell it out more clearly:

Quality Assurance will focus on the following major strands in the course of its functional exercise:

- (i) It will concentrate on five school domains: ***Student Attainment, Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management, School Ethos and Climate and School Infrastructure***
- (ii) Benchmarks will be used to assess the quality of the educational service and its conformity with national norms and standards

- (iii) Schools will engage in an internal review to identify areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement
- (iv) An external evaluation will be carried out following which schools will be given the necessary assistance to devise school improvement plans.

Ladies& Gentlemen,

This is all very challenging. But perhaps the biggest challenge is to ascertain that our schools own the Quality Assurance process—that it is not seen as an external imposition. Rectors will obviously play a key role in facilitating this process. The first step will accordingly have to be to create and maintain a quality culture within the school.

It is today absolutely vital for schools to work on and present their self-evaluation reports, including a clear demonstration of the extent to which they have proved to be sticklers to their SIP, that is, their School Improvement Plans. This is all the more fundamental at a time when my Ministry insists upon schools operating in an ecosystem where transparency and accountability are central.

By establishing an internal quality assurance mechanism Rectors, together with Educators, will be engaged in a number of crucial activities:

- Reflecting, as I stated above, on the progress made in relation to the targets spelt out in their **School Improvement Plan**.

- Sustaining areas of good practice that can be spread across the school population and shared with their external stakeholders.
- Planning for improvement and development.

Undoubtedly, this is not always an easy task. But I am confident that, with the support from zonal directorates and dedicated Quality Assurance Officers, schools will embark successfully on their improvement journey.

Let me end with a quote from one of Abdul Kalam's book;

The result of the education process is to foster creativity. This comes from the environment in schools and each

*teacher's capability to ignite the minds
of students.*

With these words, ladies and gentlemen, I
now have the pleasure to launch the Quality
Assurance Framework.

Thank you