

**Hon (Mrs.) L.D.Dookun-Luchoomun  
Minister of Education and Human Resources,  
Tertiary Education and Scientific Research**

**Award Ceremony for Trainers and Facilitators  
(Educators)  
05 August 2016**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am indeed very pleased to be here today for this Entrepreneurship Education (EE) Certificate Award ceremony.

As you know, the debate on the Budget is currently on and the call of the National Assembly is not one to be ignored!

But I deem it equally important for me to be present in your midst today – and this for a simple reason: I believe that people who show strong commitment to their tasks, who believe in sharing their know-how, have to be recognised.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I would like first and foremost to recognise and acknowledge the support of Microsoft Indian Ocean Islands and French Pacific who, right from the word go, had expressed a willingness to support the Ministry in making ‘Enterprise Education’ a reality in schools.

By coming up with the Build Your Business (BYB) Programme and undertaking the initial training of 40 facilitators, Microsoft sent a clear signal. The signal was that of its willingness to support an endeavour in a manner that was **sustainable**.

And that is indeed the sort of partnership my Ministry will always be looking for. We are not keen on having one-off projects that are a mere flash in the pan and then happen to peter out and fall by the wayside.

Nor do we envisage to have programmes in schools that do not strengthen the capacities of those who are the front-line implementers—the Educators.

The good thing about the BYB is precisely the fact that a strong channel of communication had been maintained among all those involved—Microsoft, the NPCC, the Ministry and schools—and there has been a regular tracking of new requirements and the changes needed in processes.

So I say congratulations and thank you to Microsoft Indian Ocean Islands and French Pacific.

The same goes to the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, the NPCC that has been instrumental in tailoring and enhancing the Program .

Naturally, I cannot not recognise and demonstrate my appreciation for all the Educators both those present here and others in schools, who have, over the last few years, shown their dedication towards a programme they have come to believe in.

It is you, the Trainers and Facilitators, that have made the progression possible from 17 Schools covering **868** students in 2014 to the current state of 92 schools covering more than **3000** students. Obviously, you had to be accompanied and continuously supported.

But you would have seen the positive results that emerge when experiences are shared and when some form of hands-on training is provided.

Thanks to a large extent to you, the piloting phase has proved positive and it is now expected that the program will now enter all secondary schools as from next year.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to take a couple of minutes to give you the larger picture behind Entrepreneurship **Education.**

As most of you probably know, the current BYB is basically about a 15-hour programme that enables Lower VI students to develop competencies and learn the appropriate approaches, should they decide to become entrepreneurs in their own right.

At a time when Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are coming to play a major role in our economy, launching personal businesses certainly appears as one of the right directions to take. We want to prepare our youth and young adults to become entrepreneurially -minded individuals and succeed in an entrepreneurial economy.

But we are not restricting ourselves to A-level students. We all recognise today that Entrepreneurship is a key driver of our economy since it encourages innovation and enhances employability---- ultimately impacting on positive chances for increased social mobility.

But above all, it is part of a **lifelong learning process**, and throws into relief an innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century syllabus.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It has practically become a platitude to state our children need to develop skills and competencies that will be of huge support to them once they start operating in a constantly evolving work environment.

So often, we hear of such terminology as ‘skills mismatch’, ‘outdated skills’ ‘incongruous/ incompatible competencies’ and ‘bad fit’, among others. The ‘in’ thing nowadays is to talk of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, or, as the literature terms it, the **deeper learning** skills. These are skills that relate to ability to communicate, to become critical thinkers and problem solvers, to work collaboratively in teams, engage in problem solving and the like.

One recalls here the enunciations of Jacques Delors, President of UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the 21st Century in his report submitted to UNESCO in 1996. Entitled "***Learning: the Treasure Within***", the report stressed the four pillars that are the foundations of education –“ **learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together**”.

So, in a broad manner, the foresight and farsightedness of that Commission come to mind today.

True it is that there will always be some form of a mismatch between the competencies on offer and the demand of employers. A perfect fit would be a utopia. But what we can work towards is developing those skills in our youth that will make them “EMPLOYABLE” in the future, skills that will enable them to learn, unlearn and relearn.

And our changed context is such that if such skills are not part of a person’s baggage..... well, an empty sack cannot stand upright, as the saying goes!

And that is where Entrepreneurship Education comes in useful. It goes beyond introducing the world of real business into the classroom. Rather, it helps to inculcate such soft skills as creativity, initiative-taking and the

taking of calculated risks, working in teams, leadership, and decision making.

With this perspective in view, Entrepreneurship has been introduced in secondary schools and is being now offered as an optional subject for Form 4 students

Dear Educators

Today eight (8) of you will be awarded with the Trainer Certificate while twenty-six (26) others will be awarded with the Facilitator Certificate. To many people, such a Certificate may not mean much—but to you, I know it means a lot.

I congratulate you for making sure that you successfully share with others what you deeply believe in. It has often been said that, “Education is such a treasure that, the more you share, the richer you become.”

As, individually, you embark further on your role as trainer or facilitator, remember that you are creating an enabling environment that will make a difference in the lives of our young learners.

In such an environment, there is no such thing as a "use by" date. If anything, you can only constantly add to it and thereby provide some sign board indicating destinations you want to facilitate your learners to reach.

Let me end on this positive note and congratulate you all, Educators, Microsoft, the NPCC for believing in this Program that carries all the traces of a highly successful joint venture.

***I thank you all for your kind attention.***