

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

***Reception for 2016 HSC Laureates
18 May 2017***

Protocol

It always gives me immense pleasure to be in the midst of young persons who are full of aspirations and hope for the future. Obviously, some of you undoubtedly feel that you are at important crossroads in your life. Indeed you are at a most exciting stage in your education as you put secondary schooling behind you and move on to the tertiary sector.

Let me take the opportunity now to warmly congratulate you all on your outstanding achievement. My warm appreciation also goes to your parents who are certainly highly delighted for you and relieved that you have most successfully completed your secondary education with the highest of distinctions.

Such success has to be recognised, celebrated and rewarded. This is why I recognise the efforts of all those who, directly or indirectly, have provided the necessary support, the right environment and the appropriate expertise needed to guide you along the path of success. Obviously, I have to applaud the efforts of your parents and family whose tacit and explicit support has encouraged you, boosted you and helped you perform to the best of your abilities.

I also wish to commend the Educators who have been instrumental in guiding and inspiring you and also all the Rectors and staff in your schools who ensured a conducive environment so that you were able

to concentrate on your studies in an environment that catered for your all- round development.

I have absolutely no doubt that all these persons have contributed in one way or another to inspire you to great heights and have helped you to remain focused as regards your career aspirations, goals and objectives in life.

Dear Laureates and Parents,

It is gratifying to have today with us our esteemed Prime Minister. He has always demonstrated an understanding of issues that are central to the concerns of young persons. And, especially, he has always felt a high degree of empathy for youth in general. I have been working close to him for a number of years and I can vouch for the fact that he strongly believes that attention must begin the apprehensions of youth. This explains the prominence he has constantly been giving to policies pertaining to youth.

Thank you Prime Minister for honouring our youth and sharing with them your vision of the type of society you would wish to construct with them and for them.

Dear Laureates,

The excellence you have demonstrated in your studies, quite naturally, makes you feel that you now have the world by the tail.

Probably so, yes.

But, for all the pride and self-satisfaction this excellence has brought, it should not preclude another realisation. another reality.

The reality is, in fact, that this is just the beginning of your journey.

Your first and this will be followed, I hope by many more success

The journey is long, probably highly demanding, most likely challenging and definitely rewarding. But the reward will depend upon your state of mind, your attitude.

Take the classic case that we all talk about in our modern times.

It is a truism that rapid technology-induced transformations are causing a new situation to arise whereby we all have to come to terms with the assertion that certain jobs of the future have yet not been invented. Equally important, it should come as no surprise to us that, practically all of you are going to be called upon, in one lifetime, to change jobs several times.

This and the associative responsibilities that such job-changes bring posit new types of challenges.

They imply that you have to be ready to adapt and master new skills whenever needed. Some, if not most of you may probably end up working in fields different from those which you would have read for. Like I stated earlier, this is even truer today with the advances being made in communication, digitisation and technology. This is a world phenomenon and insular Mauritius will be spared. These are things you have to keep in view.

Of course, I am sure this adaptation would be well within your wheelhouse, within your capability. But just remember that, in a changing environment, in an ethos that has a changing set of norms, we cannot afford to be heavy-footed.

Sharpness in responsiveness is of crucial significance.

So, go ahead with an open mind. It is imperative that you all make judicious choices in terms of higher education courses. Do make it a point to consult-- if you haven't as yet--the updated "List of Priority Fields of Study" that the Tertiary Education Commission has come up with.

In parallel, always be on the lookout for innovations and transformations that are going on in this world.

If you can give a free rein to your entrepreneurial proficiency, this will be even better.

Allow me here a brief remark on entrepreneurship. Most world economies are built on entrepreneurship and it be good for you to be aware of what it is all about.

Its' worth noting that Government has already put in place numerous facilities for those who envision themselves as entrepreneurs. These facilities are definitely called upon to be sustained and added to by new measures in the near future.

So, after your studies you could also take advantage of these.

Dear Laureates,

I have noted that whenever the conversation turns to the idea of an eventual return to Mauritius after the completion of studies overseas, the average response from Laureates is , “ *Most definitely*” or “*Oh yes, I intend to come back and serve my country.*” However, except for some, this is a commitment unfortunately not always met.

Obviously, I would have loved to see less of a brain drain taking place, especially keeping in view the great number of projects and programmes that are either on-going or planned for the further development of our motherland and the country need its best brains.

But I also realise that in a context of increasing regionalisation and internationalisation, more and more would-be professionals like you will continue find work and live in countries other than the ones in which they are born.

But I am also convinced that many of our future Laureates and other students will increasingly opt for studies in local universities and Higher Education Institutions. Already, these are attracting more than 1500 foreign students from some 71 countries. We are also working a lot on improving the quality of the programs on offer. And very soon,

now, the Higher Education Bill would be adopted and give a new booster to the Higher Education sector.

So, rest assured that our education landscape as a whole is changing—and changing rapidly-- in Mauritius with a view to increasing and improving the services we provide to all our learners. And that comprises all levels, with stage up to the Higher education and training levels.

Let me end on this note by wishing you great success in your future endeavours in whichever fields of studies you would have opted for.

I am deeply convinced that you will embark on your higher education studies with the same enthusiasm as you have revealed during your secondary schooling.

I wish you all Good luck.