

**Speech of Hon. Deepak Balgobin,  
Minister of Information Technology,  
Communication and Innovation  
On the occasion of the launch of 5G service by  
Mauritius Telecom**

**Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebène  
16.30hrs**

**Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Mr Sherry Singh, CEO of Mauritius Telecom,  
Mrs Claire Paponneau, Deputy Chief Executive of Mauritius  
Telecom,  
The Officer in Charge of the ICT Authority,  
Distinguished guests,  
Members of the Press,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good afternoon to you all.

There is a famous Chinese proverb which goes:

*“When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.”*

Like the winds of change, progress demands that we do not stand still. There is a new revolution coming in new services, new capabilities and new industries, because of 5G.

It will change things radically.

It will transform the way we communicate and the way we live.

In a new age of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing and the Internet of Things, 5G will create new opportunities to stimulate social and economic development.

This technology is spreading rapidly across the world. According to the expert-created website Lifewire, latest statistics show that, as of February 2021, over 30% of the world's countries have access to 5G. Some estimates forecast that by 2025, we will reach 3.6 billion 5G connections.

We are not the first in adopting it, but in Africa but we might stand to benefit the most.

The launch of 5G services is an important landmark and milestone in the development of the vision of this Government to digitalize our economy. A vision which is dear to our Honourable Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

Provision for the deployment of 5G in the country have been made in the Government Programme 2020-2024. This Government is dedicated to implement its vision, its programme and also make it easier for our citizens to evolve in this new technology-driven, network-driven and internet-driven society.

The foundations for the introduction of 5G have been laid with a strong international connectivity backbone. Today Mauritius is connected to three submarine cables, the SAFE (South Africa Far East), the LION/LION2 (Lower Indian Ocean Network) and the METISS (MEltingpoT Indianoceanic Submarine System). A fourth submarine cable, which will be Mauritius Telecom's third cable, is on the way and is expected to be operational in the horizon 2022-2023.

Fibre connectivity across the island, Fibre-To-The-Home has been deployed to every doorstep since end of 2017 by MT, which means that fibre coverage has already reached 100%. As for Mobile connectivity, the figure for coverage stands at almost 100%.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

5G is synonymous to new capacity in terms of connectivity. We are now talking of speeds in excess of 100 Megabyte per second even Gigabyte connectivity is possible with these new bandwidths provision.

5G marks a significant difference from the 4G networks which we are very much comfortable with. It is expected to support many other uses beyond mobile broadband.

The advent of 5G in Mauritius will overcome the shortcomings of the current 3G/4G technology. Its potential will definitely have a spillover effect on all the services currently being dispensed by our public and private institutions to our citizens.

High data upload and download speeds in the order of 10 to 20 gigabits per second will be possible with 5G. The number of devices supported per square kilometer is expected to reach as high as one million. The latency with 5G is very low, that is, the response time or the time between a click and a response, could be as low as 1 millisecond.

I am informed by MT that its 5G service will initially cover the Ebène Cybercity, Bagatelle and University of Mauritius regions on a pilot basis. These regions are quite active in terms of business activity, commercial activity, and host even a student community where the demands are ever increasing for bandwidths.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The world is living a terrible nightmare with the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic that seems to last for a long while. In this new normal spirit, connectivity, online collaboration, digital services and emerging technologies are the lifeblood of today's business.

My Ministry strongly believes in the new paradigm shift towards emerging technologies. And that's why we have introduced the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Bill a few weeks back in the National Assembly, which will set up the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council soon.

The Council will have the mandate to scrutinize the business environment and spearhead the introduction of new and emerging technologies to push forward all sectors of our economy.

Mastery of 5G is also critical for our country to overcome productivity constraints and, as a result, upgrade the Mauritian economy. The capacity to capitalize on possibilities presented by innovative technologies and business models is critical in igniting new engines of economic growth in the country.

To deal with rising traffic and address security issues, the future of telecommunications and computer infrastructure, which connects billions of people and trillions of devices, will demand more efficient technology. This revolution will be based on a universally agreed-upon definition of 5G, as well as associated standards and service characteristics.

Just imagine this. 5G technology will serve as a game changer as more smart services with direct impact will be made available for the well-being of the people.

Eventually 5G will enable us to deploy MORE for LESS, Faster Speeds, More Connections and a more Responsive experience for the benefit of the population.

To conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to say that 5G is a Technology which Mauritius must embrace for the future of our Nation.

And with these words, I wish to commend Mauritius Telecom for this bold move.

**Thank you for your attention.**