

**Speech of Hon. Deepak Balgobin
Minister of Information Technology,
Communication and Innovation
*Republic of Mauritius***

20 Years of Accenture in Mauritius

Tuesday, 28th June 2022 @ 18.00hrs,
13th Floor, Nex Tower, Ebene Cybercity

- **Mr. Charles Cartier, Managing Director, Accenture Operations Mauritius,**
- **Ms Shalini Jugessur, Managing Director, Accenture Technology,**
- **Miss Sandrine Valere, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,**
- **Staff of Accenture,**
- **Members of the Press,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good evening to you all and thank you for the warm welcome.

First of all, Happy 20th anniversary to Accenture and your whole team!

It is a great honour for me to be here among you to celebrate this important milestone for Accenture and for all your 4000 employees in Mauritius.

Today, you are also celebrating the achievement of your employees and all those youngsters who are building a career within your organisation.

As we say, success never comes in a day. It comes with a clear vision, strong determination and with hard work.

Accenture has, in time, grown into a sparkling organisation and has known how to steer its way among the leading companies in the ICT sector in Mauritius.

Your 20 years of operation has undoubtedly enriched the business ecosystem in Mauritius. In fact, you are among the first few

international companies to rise up in the Cybercity some two decades ago.

ICT Sector

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order for Mauritius to achieve the goal of being transformed into a digital hub in the Indian Ocean – Africa region, we need more operators of the caliber of Accenture to drive the ICT economy forward.

Furthermore, there is a need to align all business objectives along a common strategy, which is not going to be without challenges.

This is where the Government is acting as a facilitator and a catalyst. It is ensuring that the regulatory and institutional set up are most conducive for economic operators to thrive for the benefit of all.

The ICT sector has been very resilient as demonstrated by its robust growth rates over the pandemic period in 2020 and 2021.

The sector has been growing at a rate hovering around 5.9 and 6.5% and has been constantly offering job opportunities to our youth. Today, more than 30 thousand persons are employed in the ICT sector.

The industry, by its very nature, is characterised by rapid evolution and together with captains of the industry we are keeping pace.

We have established an ambitious e-Government agenda which seeks to digitalise the public services offered. This digital

transformation implies the redesign of the tools and methods used in the machinery of the public sector at large.

A reliable and high connectivity is key to realising this vision.

A new Government Intranet System will now be able to serve 500 Government Sites and this will also include 160 secondary schools across Mauritius and Rodrigues. Which means that all secondary schools will now be connected with High Speed Connectivity in the coming weeks.

In line with the digitalisation of Government Services to better satisfy the needs of all citizens and businesses, my Ministry is currently completing numerous projects.

To enhance the quality of life of our motorists we have already embarked onto the Smart Parking project. This will enable drivers to buy and use e-Parking coupons through their smart phones, instead of the usual paper coupons.

We have also made available a digital safe for every citizen. MoKloud, which is an online platform, will give them access to the electronic format of their birth certificate, marriage certificate, digital vaccination pass, amongst others.

The Driving Licence and the Certificate of Character will be available through the MoKloud Platform in the near future.

My Ministry is also in the process of implementing an Intelligent Virtual Assistant, commonly referred to as an AI Chatbot solution, to be integrated to the national Government portal and the websites of Ministries/Departments. The Chatbot will revolutionise

the citizen's experience by responding to queries and will interact with citizens in *Kreol Morisien*, English and French.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, the backbone of a vibrant ICT ecosystem lies in its connectivity.

The Government of Mauritius and the private sector are joining their efforts to put in place the necessary infrastructure for businesses to operate effectively and efficiently.

Our island is currently connected to three submarine cables. Our international connectivity is expected to be reinforced with a fourth cable, T3, by mid-2023.

This endeavour will, no doubt, stimulate competition among Internet Service Providers and can further bring down telecommunication costs and services for households and businesses alike.

Regarding inland connectivity, Mauritius has achieved 100% FTTH (Fibre to the Home) deployment to all households since 2017 and mobile coverage (3G/4G) stands at 99%. Therefore, the country is fully covered with fibre and mobile network.

Last year we have seen the setting up of 5G services in the regions of Bagatelle, Reduit, Trianon, and Ebène. We foresee the rolling out of 5G across the whole island in the near future.

In addition to consolidating the local and international connectivity, there is also a need to improve delivery of ICT services and

encouraging innovation through the optimal use of emerging technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Alongside the very interesting promises that the ICT sector hold for our country, cyber threats constantly lurk around in parallel, unfortunately. Apart from having an ever-resilient cyber defence mechanism, it is important to have a responsive legal cyber set up.

Accordingly, my Ministry has introduced the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021, precisely, to cater for contemporary threats and issues.

With this new law, we have an increased protection of the Mauritian cyberspace and we aim at positioning the country among the top secure nations with this forward-looking and proactive law for our citizens or rather netizens.

As a matter of fact, with all our efforts, Mauritius is currently ranked first in Africa and 17th in the world on the Global Cybersecurity Index 2020 of the International Telecommunication Union.

We have implemented a series of measures to consolidate our cyberspace to reach this score and we are putting in place new initiatives to increase our security and resilience including our global ranking.

These initiatives include the National Cyber Incident Response Plan to handle incidents of critical nature and the Mauritius Cyber Threat Information Sharing Platform (Maushield) which has been

developed to share information on the techniques and tactics of cyber-attacks with organisations.

And with these measures our ambition is to be ranked among the top 10 countries of the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks to all these facilities and communication infrastructures, ICT is one of the few sectors in Mauritius which has been able to stand up to the effects of the pandemic and which has also been able to mitigate to some extent its impacts on other sectors of our economy.

This is why it is necessary to further consolidate the pillars of the ICT sector by adopting new and emerging technologies.

In that respect, my Ministry has now set up the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council (METC) after the enactment of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Act 2021 to scrutinize our business environment and propose recommendations to push new and emerging technologies in our industry.

The METC plans to organise a regional workshop on Artificial Intelligence by the end of this year to encourage the adoption of emerging technologies in the country.

This will be a Public/Private initiative and we will welcome onboard participation from the Private sector.

We rely on players like Accenture to keep the digital economy up to quality and performance standards.

One of the major challenges that are standing on our way when it comes to ICT, more particularly in the area of new and emerging technologies, is the availability of skilled resources.

To address this issue, our public universities are increasing the uptake of the cohorts for first degrees in ICT.

In partnership with the private sector, tailor-made university degrees in ICT are being run for students willing to join ICT firms.

I am also informed that the Accenture Academy in collaboration with the University of Mauritius and the HRDC has welcomed more than 300 graduates who have upskilled with a master's degree in IT.

I commend this initiative of Accenture to contribute in the capacity building of our youth.

In the same line, as from next month, the Digital Industries Academy will be dispensing short courses in Data Communication, 5G, Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity to provide skilled resources for around 1000 professionals.

The Academy will also set-up an Incubator for high-end ICT product development and will partner with telecommunication providers, banks and international players to provide mentoring and financing to 50 incubatees.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Ministry will pilot the development of the 5-year Mauritius Digital Transformation Blueprint in collaboration with Ministries and

Departments, ICT operators and Associations and other stakeholders.

Once formulated, the blueprint will be the guiding north-star for the ICT sector and will usher in the age of the digital economy.

Dear Friends,

Once again, I would like to thank Accenture for its very remarkable contributions to the Mauritian ICT landscape and to the economy in general.

Congratulations for your 20 years of doing business in Mauritius.

My wish for you:

May you continue to bloom and blossom and that the next 20 years be even more fruitful and bring success and continued growth to Accenture in Mauritius.

I thank you for your attention.