

Speech of Honourable Deepak Balgobin
Minister of Information Technology,
Communication and Innovation

UTM 34th Convocation Ceremony
Thursday 24th November 2022 at 14:00 hrs

School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering
&
School of Sustainable Development and Tourism

UTM, La Tour Koenig

- **Mr Raj Makoond, President of UTM,**
- **Dr Dinesh Hurreeram, Director General of UTM,**
- **Members of the Board of Governors and of the Academic Council of UTM,**
- **Miss Nikita Peeroo, Registrar,**
- **Heads of Schools,**
- **Heads of Departments,**
- **Academic and non-academic staff of UTM,**
- **Dear Graduands, Families and Friends,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning to you all.

Today is indeed a day of great joy and celebration!

You have all reached a crucial milestone in your life.

One which, I have no doubts, required hard work, sacrifices and determination.

And you had it all.

All I can see from here is proud and smiling faces.

Dressed up in your beautiful gowns, you will be, in a few minutes graduated from one among the most important Higher Education Institutions in Mauritius.

Stand up straight and chin up.

It is your time to shine.

I, too, have been where you are right now.

A few years back.

And it always gives me tremendous pride and honour to be back to UTM, my Alma Mater, standing today, in front of you for your convocation, as a Minister.

I share in your pride and joy and that is why I always accept UTM's invitation without hesitation.

Dear Graduands,

It is a time to find the necessary inspiration for the life that lies ahead of you.

We recognize the hardship and effort each one of you have put in to attain the success that is yours today and I am confident that you will raise the flag of this University a bit higher every day.

This milestone that you have achieved is not the end of the race but the beginning of the race of life. It is a moment when one door closes and another opens into a whole new world of opportunities and possibilities.

Irrespective of where you go, hard work is always noticed and rewarded, even though not always immediately.

I always say, that there are the two things we are likely to remember the most.

You will remember days like this one.

You will remember the day you started your first job.

The day you fell in love.

The day you launched your first app, your first website.

You'll remember the day you get married or the day your child was born.

But the days you remember are created by all the days you paid less attention.

everyday deserves all of you!

It is important for you to be present in the day you are in.

You will face many challenges in life that could be difficult to tackle, but then this

is why we have friends, and most probably friends you have made at University.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There has been substantial investment into XR technologies (Extended Reality) and the Metaverse over the past year globally. The growth of immersive technologies within industries has been almost universal, spanning education, the automotive industry, real estate, and tourism.

ICT is today's driving force of the world economy and one of the main objectives of the Government has been to develop a knowledge, innovation and technology-based nation.

Without any doubt, Covid-19 was a severe threat to many sectors in Mauritius and around the world.

However, at the same time, it speeded up some novel trends as we responded to this difficult period with an increased focus on innovation.

In fact, even before the pandemic, there were many signs that digitalisation is a must.

Covid-19 only accelerated this shift, forcing us to adopt new and emerging technologies to improve productivity and respond to the needs of our citizens.

And surely, it will only grow in the coming years!

This, again shows the commitment of this Government, under the Prime ministership of the Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, to work for an ever-better quality of life of our people.

If we want to become highly competitive in the present innovation era, we have to keep promoting an influential digital and innovation eco-system.

It is my Ministry's endeavour to design, develop and implement relevant strategies and initiatives to cater for all sections of the society.

I therefore commend the School of Innovative Technologies and Engineering for leading the path to become a full-fledged faculty of prominent renown. Today, UTM is providing quality education and training geared towards sustained capacity building for the increasing technology-driven and enterprise-based developments.

On the other hand, the School of Sustainable Development and Tourism has been a key player at the national level, offering multi-disciplinary courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including doctoral studies in diverse areas of interest such as

- Tourism,
- Climate Change,
- Disaster Management,
- Sustainability,
- Communication and PR,
- Applied Social Sciences, among others.

Dear Graduating students,

Do remember along your journey that every aspect of life requires critical reasoning along with the ability to think clearly.

These are the skills that you have acquired during your studies, so apply them wisely.

Remember that the Degrees you will receive today are only paper qualifications. The Degree's real value will depend on how you apply the knowledge you have received to make a difference in your life.

The personal skills and societal values that you have cultivated along the way, if well applied, will perfect you into becoming the all rounded, well-groomed and responsible individuals that Mauritius and the global community needs.

As the saying goes, "***Change is the only constant thing in the world.***"

We must always prepare and be ready to face and accept change as the norm in our lives.

So, as you leave the University today, you will experience constant change everywhere you go.

You should use the skills that you have gained from your University experience to deal with and overcome any challenges that you may face.

This is now the time to use your knowledge, skills and talents to make a difference in your life and the lives of others.

I wish you all the best on your journey into the future as you search for opportunities to help you reach your full potential.

Thank you and congratulations once again!