

**SPEECH OF HON. DEEPAK BALGOBIN
MINISTER OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATION AND
INNOVATION**

**Signature of MoU
between
MRIC and UNDP Mauritius**

Conference Room 7th Floor, SICOM TOWER, Ebène
Monday, 7th February 2022
15.00hrs

- **Her Excellency Ms. Amanda Se-ru-ma-ga, Resident Representative of the UNDP for Mauritius and Seychelles**
- **Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Chairperson, MRIC**
- **Dr Prof Theesan Bahorun, Executive Director MRIC**
- **Ms Sandrine Valere, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Members of the Press**
- **All protocols observed**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good afternoon to you all.

It is a privilege for me to witness today the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNDP Country Office for Mauritius and Seychelles and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council operating under my Ministry.

In the new Covid-19 era, there is no doubt that close collaboration between institutions for the ever good of the society is of prime essence. Hence, I very much welcome and endorse this first official signing of a working agreement between the UNDP Mauritius and Seychelles Office and the MRIC.

This MoU stands as a strategic partnership between UNDP and MRIC to drive several key opportunities for technological and social innovation advancement in areas of national priority.

Concretely, through this MoU, I appreciate that the MRIC and the UNDP Country office for Mauritius and Seychelles have agreed to:

- i) Share data about the innovation ecosystem of Mauritius, Rodrigues and the other islands of the Republic of Mauritius;
- ii) Collaborate in exploration and solutions mapping exercises;
- iii) Collaborate in multi-stakeholder experiments and programmes;
- iv) Facilitate access to technical expertise and knowledge on thematic areas of mutual interest; and
- v) Participate in events organized by the other party.

My Ministry preconizes the adoption of a collaborative innovation strategy which transcends the traditional industrial and commercial notions and puts the benefit of the human being at the forefront. Through the MRIC, we aim at tackling the everyday societal problems using local talent and inventiveness. Today, grassroot innovation is the new mantra.

We strongly believe that this bottom-up approach will empower our people, create opportunities, generate wealth and contribute to the so much needed economic growth. In other words, the MRIC seeks to develop environment friendly and sustainable solutions to tackle the enduring societal problems using Mauritian-led novel approaches, novel partnerships, building on indigenous knowledge and data about what works and what does not work.

Such an approach is being currently put in practice through the National Innovation Challenge and the National Innovation Campaign, which we hope will provide its fruitful outcomes in the months to come.

I strongly believe that this strategic collaboration between MRIC and UNDP will not only strengthen our ongoing effort to promote key innovation, but it will also provide a new thrust for internationalization of the activities of the MRIC as well. Altogether these actions strengthen the position of Mauritius in the Innovation Landscape of the Small Island Developing States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from the various research and innovation grant schemes funded by the Government and operated by the MRIC, this Government has also laid the foundation for promotion of international collaboration by implementing supporting measures such as Tax Incentives, Innovators Permit and Sandbox licences which encourage companies investing on innovation to be eligible for multiple incentives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current MoU is yet another measure to explore regional and international collaboration and funding opportunities for the promotion of Research and Innovation in the Republic of Mauritius. It is with a sense of deep gratitude that this Government reckons the engagement of UNDP in the quest for bringing development and its concomitant benefits at local levels.

I wish both parties successful implementation of projects under this MoU and I
Thank you for your attention.