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

INAUGURATION OF THE e-VBAB LEARNING CENTRE
by the Open University and the High Commission of India

Venue: Open University of Mauritius
Lecture Theatre

Wednesday 6th April 2022
at 11.30am
The Honourable Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice-
Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education,
Science and Technology

Her Excellency Mrs Nandini Singla, High Commissioner of
India to Mauritius

Members of the Diplomatic Corp,

Mr Meetook, SCE of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary
Education, Science and Technology

Mr Naik Mude, Joint Secretary, Central and West Africa
Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Mr Duva-Pentiah, Chairperson of the Board of the Open
University of Mauritius

Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Director-General of the Open University of
Mauritius and Chairman of the MRIC

Distinguished Guests,

All Protocols observed,

Good morning to you all.

It gives me great pleasure to participate in today’s inauguration
ceremony of the e-Vidya Bharti Arogya Bharti (e-VBAB) Learning
Centre at the Open University of Mauritius.

On the 7th October 2019, and on behalf of the Government of Mauritius,
my Ministry signed the agreement with Government of India for the
implementation of the e-VBAB project.
Here, I would like to thank the Government of India for including Mauritius in this laudable project. This shows the commitment of the largest democracy in the world to contribute to the development of other countries, especially those in the African continent.

Let me congratulate the members of the staff of the Open University of Mauritius for implementing the project successfully. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is beyond our control, the shipment of the equipment was delayed and thus resulting in the deferral of the setting up of the lab.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This project that aims at connecting the world in order to create more opportunities for all and reduce inequality of opportunities and outcomes has been well crafted. From the development of the curriculum, delivery of online courses and supervised assessment to meet the required standards and contribute to students’ success.

E-VBAB project is in line with our Government’s endeavours to ensure that opportunities remain open regardless of one’s starting point in life.

I am confident that students will be able to make the most of this highly laudable project especially when we know that the half-life of skills and knowledge has shrunk. Therefore, we must accelerate the pace of acquiring skills.
In fact, technological changes are increasing rapidly. Unicorns are emerging at a record rate. The average lifespan of global companies has shrunk too.

Today, it is evident that companies that are able to survive for several years, usually change their products and services almost entirely every few years. Consequently, the demand for certain skills will be dynamic and short-lived. Workers will need to have strong foundational skills that they can build on to continually learn new skills and pivot to new growth areas.

Technology, particularly digitalisation, has reduced physical distances. Companies and individuals can now transcend physical boundaries to tap into new, global markets. There are more opportunities; but competition is also more intense and borderless. We need to have unique value propositions that meet the demands of the markets.

I am sure that the wide range of courses offered freely under the eVBAB project will help learners to acquire new skills.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to note that together with the computers, the lab that will be inaugurated today also contains two PTZ (Pan, Tilt and Zoom) HD Cameras that are connected to the system and is controlled locally and from remote location as well. The cameras with wireless Microphones and USB Controller help to ensure that the teaching and learning process takes place as if both students and tutors are in the same room.
Let me congratulate all the students who will be receiving their certificates today after having successfully followed the courses under the e-VBAB project.

I thank the team in Mauritius and in India who are endeavouring to ensure the smooth running of the e-VBAB project.

I would like to reassure the support of my Ministry to this project.

I wish you all the best.

Thank you for your attention.