

**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 6<sup>Th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.**