

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

**Launching of “Breast Cancer Care”
Mobile App**

Lecture Theatre 2, University of Mauritius Campus, Réduit
Wednesday, 23rd February 2022

- **My colleague, Hon. Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare,**
- **The Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Mauritius**
- **Dr Avinash Ramtohol, Managing Director of Oracle Corporation Mauritius**
- **Aashish Russean, President of the UoM Oracle Club,**
- **Dear Students,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Afternoon to you all.

There is an African proverb which says, “*You don’t have to be tall to see the moon*”. Just like you did! You, the software engineers from the UoM Oracle Club, the developers of this innovative mobile application which is going to help detect breast cancer. You have believed in an idea and made it happen today. You have used your research and knowledge acquired at university level for the sake of medical advancement in our country.

And for this, dear students, I wish to thank you. You are today an inspiration for other young people to lead, to innovate, to thrive, and to reshape our country as you are going to be the future digital innovators our country needs.

Breast cancer, as per the World Health Organisation, is among the three common types of cancer among women in Mauritius, besides colorectal and ovaries cancer. Around the world, about 1 in 8 women will develop invasive breast cancer during her lifetime. I am sure, that almost everyone in this room knows someone who has been affected by breast cancer.

This alarming statistic is in no way meant to scare you, but instead help us understand the importance of knowing what breast cancer is and how being aware can save a life.

This Government, under the able leadership of our Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth and through the Ministry of Health and Wellness is continuously putting lots of efforts to raise awareness on breast cancer and of course, we can still do more. This mobile application that you have developed will empower more women and even men to detect breast cancer early, which today is the closest we have to a cure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mobile phones are changing the way we relate to the world. Beyond just devices, mobile represents not only a channel, but an entirely new digital lifestyle. We are moving past smartphone and tablet definitions to discover the bigger picture of what comes next.

The use of mobile technology and mobile apps is pervasive in our daily lives for completing a variety of daily tasks. Recent advances around the

world in the development of mobile apps are consistent with the rapid evolution of smartphone features. Therefore, maximizing the utilisation of advanced smartphone functionalities has paved the way for the delivery of health care services such as online face-to-face visits, consultations with physicians, remote monitoring and also prevention.

In this digital age, when you can apply for a job, take a course, pay your bills, order a pizza - by tapping your phone, the Internet is not a luxury, it's a necessity. You cannot connect with today's economy without having access to the Internet.

It has never been so timely for the digital transition of our society, which has so much accelerated with the pandemic. This Government, led by our Prime Minister, is continuing to build on the progress we've made over the last years, rebuilding our economy and making it even stronger, progressive, resilient and inclusive, continuously fighting this global pandemic together.

With a high mobile penetration rate in Mauritius, pervasive connectivity, and the constant generation of data have enabled us to leverage further digital technology. The sector has grown by 5.9 percent in 2020 and has shown positive figures with respect to broadband penetration at 123 percent and mobile penetration at 151 percent. Today, at a time when people expect more from Government, we are offering some 100 e-Services which can be accessed through the Government Portal.

The Internet has the potential to enhance educational quality in a variety of ways by providing access to a multitude of information, knowledge, and educational resources, expanding chances for learning both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, this Government is investing in the deployment of WIFI connectivity in 155 secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Dear Friends,

With the efforts of one and all, we are moving forward to adapt, innovate, expand and reach out for new opportunities and make our country safer and stronger than ever before.

I wish to thank the extraordinary young developers from the Faculty of IT for coming up with this B-Care Examine Yourself mobile app. You are smart, passionate, and ready to seize the future.

Congratulations to you and to your mentors!

Your success is their pride today and later in life when they will witness how you have moved heaven and earth and built up a success story.

Keep up the good work and let's make sure we're leaving the kind of country we want for the future.