

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

**The Award Ceremony of the
Innovator Hall of Fame**

Mauritius Research and Innovation Council

**Saturday, 3rd of June 2023
Le Meridien Ile Maurice, Pointe aux
Piments**

- **Honourable Sooroojdev Phokeer, Speaker of the National Assembly,**
- **Honourable Ministers, Private Parliamentary Secretaries and Honourable Members of Parliament,**
- **Mrs Sandrine Valere- Bolli, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry**
- **Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Chairperson of the MRIC**
- **The Board of Directors of the MRIC**
- **Professor Teeshan Bahorun, Executive Director of the MRIC**
- **The Jury Panel of the National Innovator Hall of Fame,**
- **Heads of Institutions,**
- **Participants of the National Innovator Hall of Fame,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good evening to you all.

Tonight, we gather to celebrate the brilliance, the creativity, and the vision of some of the most extraordinary minds in our society.

Your presence here marks the great interest you have for novel ideas and innovation for the betterment of the life of people.

Indeed, what differentiates humankind from other species is its ability to creatively put knowledge at use for the benefit of society as a whole.

And we are here this evening to honour those who have come out in their innovative drive during the past few years in the local creative landscape.

To celebrate:

- their audacity to challenge the norms,
- their dedication to pushing the boundaries of what is possible, and
- their unwavering commitment to creating a positive impact.

Albert Einstein said, "The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination."

These words encapsulate the essence of what it means to be an innovator.

It is the power to see beyond the limitations of the present and explore uncharted territories.

Innovation is the lifeblood of progress.

It is through innovation that we find solutions to even the most complex problems, improve our lives, and create a better future for generations to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Innovator Hall of Fame aims at recognising and rewarding the contribution of local innovators in sprouting development.

Last year, a similar competition organised by the MRIC, the National Innovation Challenge rewarded new and innovative ideas.

There were more than 100 ideas submitted and 22 finalists were rewarded to further develop their ideas and at the end emerged seven winners.

However, this year, the National Innovator Hall of Fame will reward those innovations which have already been put in place.

By organising this competition, our objectives are to:

- Recognise local outstanding innovators
- Fuel innovation and creativity among the local people
- Evaluate the level of innovation and creativity in the Republic of Mauritius.
- Catalyse the innovation culture in the younger generation.

Tonight, we will reveal the Best Innovators for both the Public and Private sectors in 4 categories, namely:

- SME
- Individual
- Public Organisation, and
- Non-Governmental Organisation

I am also being told that the jury, during its deliberation, have decided to award a special prize to one upcoming innovator.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The work being carried out by my Ministry and the Government, through the vision of our Honourable Prime Minister, is substantial.

We are taking a holistic approach towards innovation by considering all possible aspects in the ecosystem.

Mauritius maintained its top position in Sub-Saharan Africa and climbed an impressive 37 places from the 82nd position in 2019 to claim the 45th spot in 2022 on the Global Innovation Index published by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

This feat of national innovation is not the factor of chance but with the appropriate measures taken by the Government with the collaboration of all stakeholders.

As a country, we often underestimate our home-grown talents. This is one of the reasons why our younger generation are seeking better prospects abroad.

Through this initiative, we are valorising the Mauritian ingenuity and our indigenous talent.

It is hard to fathom the number of innovations emerging from our country as most of them are not recorded or popularised enough.

This shows that, we, Mauritians, have the capability to bring changes through innovation.

This drive for progress has been one of our reasons for success as a country for the past 55 years since independence.

However, we do recognise that the path to innovation is not an easy one and those who have undergone this journey have had to arm themselves with strength and courage, dedicate their time and financial resources, and more importantly, their brain

This is why we need to recognise and celebrate our local innovators.

And this has been materialised with the funding, grants and initiatives of the government, through my Ministry and the MRIC

Since last year, we have launched and brought to completion many initiatives linked to Research and Innovation:

For instance:

- We are continuously collaborating with international organisations to further enhance our knowledge and experience in Space Technology.
- We have organised a 3-day conference: Les Assises de la Recherche et de l'Innovation last year.
- Through this initiative we completed and made public the National Research and Innovation Roadmap.
- We have rewarded grassroots innovation through the National Innovation Challenge.
- We have organised RodNov in Rodrigues to inculcate the innovation culture in the Island.

By prioritising Innovation, Research, and Development, the Government not only stimulates economic growth but also addresses pressing challenges, enhances competitiveness, and improves the quality of life for our citizens.

Such initiatives ultimately pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all of us.

To all those who have participated in this competition, I wish to thank you. For having dared to come forward with your innovative ideas. You all are making a difference in the future of our country and will certainly inspire other innovators.

Congratulations to all of you!

May your passion continue to fuel your journey of innovation, and may your ideas continue to shape the world for the better.

Thank you, and enjoy this evening of celebration and inspiration!