

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

**National Online Discussions
with the
World Intellectual Property Organisation
(WIPO)
on the Global Innovation Index (GII)**

Conference Room, MITCI
Thursday 19th January 2023

- Mr Bheekoo, Acting Permanent Secretary of my Ministry
- Dr Sukon, Chairperson, Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
- Mr. Marc Sery-Kore, Director, Division for Africa, Regional and National Development Sector, WIPO
- Dr Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, Co-Editor GII and Head, Section, Economics and Statistics Division, WIPO
- Professor Bahorun, Executive Director, Mauritius Research and Innovation Council
- Heads of Institutions
- Representatives of Ministries, Institutions and other organisations
- Representatives of the Private Sector

Good morning to you in Geneva and Greetings from Mauritius!

I would like to welcome you all to the National Online Discussion on the performance of Mauritius in the Global Innovation Index.

I understand that this is the second meeting with the WIPO.

The 1st meeting was held on the 7th of November 2020.

At the very outset let me thank Doctor Sacha Wunsch-Vincent to have initiated this meeting following the conversation he had with officials at the Department of International Trade from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade.

The MRIC which operates under the aegis of my Ministry held a first meeting with relevant institutions in October last year. A core team was then constituted to discuss the issues to be presented and discussed with WIPO in relation to the innovation performance of Mauritius.

Two technical sessions were held at the MRIC on the 14th of November 2022 and on the 9th of December 2022, to brainstorm on the key information to be shared with WIPO today.

I personally chaired a meeting on Tuesday the 10th of January 2023 to drive the discussions from a national policy perspective.

This demonstrates that innovation is high on the agenda of the Government. The performance of Mauritius in the GII is an important factor considered by the Government to evaluate the country's progress toward an innovation-driven economy.

Mauritius ranked first in sub-Saharan Africa and 45th worldwide in the GII report 2022, that is:

7 places from the previous rank in 2021, and

37 places ahead of the 2019 edition where Mauritius ranked 82nd.

The previous GII rankings were:

2016 – 53

2017 – 64

2018 - 75

2019 – 82

2020 – 52

2021 – 52

2022 - 45

We look forward to improve our ranking with the collaboration of WIPO and the efforts that have to be done on our side to further improve the country's innovation performance in the GII.

One important measure was the Cabinet's decision dated September 2020 to request all institutions to submit data to regional instances for the GII ranking.

Being also responsible for the portfolio of Information, Communication, and Technology, I can assure you that no effort is being spared to improve the ICT infrastructure in the country while addressing other Emerging Technologies, this will be elaborated on later in the presentation to be made by the MRIC on national innovation measures.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank all the stakeholders present today.

You have been instrumental in supporting and collaborating for today's online discussion.

I wish to thank WIPO, particularly, Doctor Sacha Wunsch-Vincent for the guidance and support provided to Mauritius, in relation to innovation and suggested areas for improvement.

I look forward to the outcome of today's deliberations and reassure you that the recommendations emanating from the workshop will be given due consideration by my Ministry.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and thank you for your attention.