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

## Award Ceremony –
## Girls & Boys in ICT

## Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency

## Thursday, 20th of July 2023

## The Core Building, Ebene

- **My colleague, Honourable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology,**

- **Vyankoj Mulloo, Officer in Charge, Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency,**

- **Representatives of Ministries and Departments,**

- **Dear Teachers and Students,**

- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning to you all.

## Intro

Today, we gather to celebrate the brilliance and creativity of our young minds.

The evolution of our livelihood has fundamentally been closely linked to creativity.

I seize this opportunity to congratulate students and educators who have participated in the **Girls in ICT** video competition as well as our young boys for the **Bootcamp in Coding and Robotics**.

**Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

ICT is a rapidly growing sector that is transforming the world in numerous ways.

The emergence of digital technologies such as digital automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Augmented Reality, 3D printing, and other Emerging Technologies have changed the way we work, play and live.

As various sectors of the economy continue to use and depend on these new digital technologies, the legacy skills as well as existing ICT skills are becoming obsolete at a rapid pace, calling for the need to constantly learn, unlearn and relearn.

Thus, this increases the demand for **New Digital Skill set.**

In this era, it is of upmost priority of any caring Government to empower its citizens to have at least the fundamental digital competencies to meaningfully engage in life.

In this context, my Ministry restructured the formerly known National Computer Board to a new institution branded as the Mauritius Digital Promotion Agency and the MDPA Act was voted in Parliament last month.

The new institution has been attributed with new functions that are in line with the Government's strategy to promote and boost digitalisation in Mauritius, and to ensure that our country remains competitive and relevant in the global digital landscape.

## ICT Sector – Statistics for Girls

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

ICT is essential for the sustainability of our economy, our society, and our future. And women and girls are making remarkable headways in this field which holds immense potential for a brilliant future.

That is why I am personally committed to promoting our young minds in ICT.

I believe that the young generation has the potential to achieve greater heights in this sector and I am determined to create an environment where this translate into reality at the soonest.

We are already making significant progress. In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of students studying ICT.

In the latest ICT report published by Statistics Mauritius, last year

- nearly seven thousand (6922) students opted for ICT at School Certificate level,

- More than eight hundred (844) at Higher School Certificate, and

- Four thousand (4,370) students chose ICT at Tertiary Level.

These numbers have increased by one to two percent compared to 2021.

However, there is still more work to be done. Together, we can create a future where girls are equally represented in ICT as compared to boys and together, we can build a more inclusive and equitable digital world for all.

## ICT Sector - Future Jobs

Knowing how to answer your emails, to access a company's file on Google Drive, or to tweak a website's code are all digital skills that are increasingly sought after in today's job market.

Keywords such as HTML5, iOS, Android and Mobile App are words that are very recurrent on online jobs.

To be able to work on such applications, you need to have good coding skills.

Digital skilling does not only limit itself to coding. Several sectors such as marketing, customer service, retail, managing, writing and selling are all jobs associated to digital skills. And we are starting as early as primary schools!

In view to inculcate the concept of coding to children, the MDPA initiated the CHILD project (Children Innovative Learning and Design) which aims at enabling primary children to perform scratch coding using their creativity.

**The Competition**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The theme "Digital Skills for Life" has been retained by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for this year's edition of Girls in ICT.

For this year's edition, the MDPA, in collaboration with my Ministry and the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, organised a Short Video Competition for girls at secondary level.

Following the successful edition of ICT bootcamp for Girls last year, I recommended that the same event has to be organised for boys.

I am pleased that the Coding & Robotics boot camp for secondary school which was organized for the boys registered 282 students.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank Honourable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, our Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for supporting our initiatives.

## Conclusion

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before ending I wish to congratulate the winners and participants in this competition.

I would also like to challenge the Girls and Boys, equally, to dream big and to never give up on your dreams.

The world of ICT is waiting for you for an exciting and fulfilling journey !

**I thank you all for your kind attention.**