

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

**Seminar on World Intellectual Property Day 2024
IP and the Sustainable Development Goals
Building our common future with innovation and
creativity**

Caudan Arts Centre, Caudan Waterfront, Port Louis

Friday, 26th of April 2024 at 09h30

- **Mr Doonunjoy Dassaye, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,**
- **Dr Kaviraj Sukon, Chairman of the MRIC,**
- **Professor Theesan Bahorun, Executive Director of the MRIC,**
- **Heads of Institutions,**
- **Mauritian and Overseas Speakers,**
- **Dear Participants,**
- **Members of the Press,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning to you all.

First and foremost, I wish to commend the MRIC in driving this initiative and for organizing this important seminar today.

This year's theme highlights the pivotal role of Intellectual Property (IP) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It reminds us that at the heart of the SDGs lies innovation, creativity, and the knowledge economy — elements that are intrinsically linked to IP.

It's rights not only protect the creators and innovators but also foster an environment where new ideas can flourish, contributing to all 17 SDGs.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to both local and international speakers from India, Europe and the USA who have accepted our invitation to participate in this event and contribute their perspectives and extensive global experience.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Let us reflect on the essence of Intellectual Property.

It encompasses a wide array of creations of the mind, including :

- inventions,
- literary and artistic works,
- designs,
- symbols,
- names,
- and images used in commerce.

IP rights grant creators and innovators the exclusive rights to their creations, encouraging them to invest time, effort, and resources into developing new ideas and solutions.

As we know, Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint for a better and more sustainable future for all.

The 17 interconnected goals address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

Achieving the SDGs requires innovation, creativity, and collaboration across sectors and borders.

So, what is the link between Intellectual Property and the SDGs?

IP Rights serve as catalysts for innovation and creativity, driving progress towards the SDGs in several ways, including:

- Encouraging Innovation,
- Fostering Collaboration and Technology Transfer,
- Promoting Access to Essential Goods and Services, and
- Preserving Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Heritage.

We can therefore see that from the development of green technologies for mitigating the impacts of climate change, to innovations in healthcare that promise a healthier future for all, IP Rights are the foundation upon which these transformative ideas are built.

They provide a framework that ensures creators and innovators share their inventions with the world while receiving the recognition and rewards they deserve.

This, in turn, drives further innovation and contributes to a sustainable and prosperous future for everyone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we delve deeper into discussions during the seminar today, let us keep in mind that the journey towards sustainability and prosperity is a collective endeavour.

It requires the participation of all sectors including Government, private sector, academia, and civil society.

Equally important is the inclusion of communities from every corner of the country.

Mauritius has been actively working towards integrating IP with SDGs as part of its broader strategy to foster innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development.

However, inventors in Mauritius, like those in many Small Island Developing States, face several challenges regarding the protection of IP and the commercialization of their inventions and creations.

These challenges, like funding and financial support, can hinder the innovation ecosystem's growth and impact the country's ability to achieve the SDGs.

Addressing these challenges would not only benefit inventors but also contribute to Mauritius's economy.

I am happy to say that the Technology Transfer Office of the MRIC, operating under the aegis of my Ministry, is already engaged in addressing these challenges for the benefit of the Mauritian economy.

This office works to identify promising research results and IP that could have commercial potential and helps to bring these innovations to market by facilitating partnerships between academia and industry.

It also provides a range of services, including support for identification of IP, assistance in filing of industrial designs and patents, advice in the management, licensing, and commercialization of IP.

In this matter, I am also pleased to know that the MRIC has set up a collaborative agreement since last year with a specialised law firm in India to provide such assistance to Mauritian inventors.

Through this collaboration, several inventors have benefitted from support allowing them to register and obtain protection for their IP, as Industrial Design, Patent and Trademark.

In addition, the Technology Transfer Office in conjunction with the MRIC's Research and Innovation Grant Schemes, also provides support for entrepreneurship and innovation aimed at fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate the World Intellectual Property Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to harnessing the power of IP for sustainable development.

I urge each one of you to view today not just as an opportunity for discussions, but as a call to action.

Let us use our discussions to forge new partnerships, to share knowledge and best practices, and to commit to using IP as a tool for achieving the SDGs.

The path towards a sustainable future is filled with challenges, but with our combined efforts, creativity, and innovation, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

Let's make this World IP Day 2024 a turning point in our journey towards building our common future with innovation and creativity.

On this note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.