

**Speech of Honourable Deepak Balgobin,**

**Minister of Information Technology,  
Communication and Innovation**

**Girls in ICT  
Awards Ceremony  
Mauritius Digital  
Promotion Agency**

Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2024

Caudan Arts Center

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- **My colleague, Honourable Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah, Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare,**
- **Mr Doonunjoy Dassaye, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,**
- **The Board of Directors of the MDPA,**
- **Members of the Jury Panel,**
- **Chairpersons, Directors and CEOs,**
- **Teachers and Students,**
- **Esteemed Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning to you all.

## **Intro**

1. The promotion **of Girls in ICT** awareness campaigns globally is making significant strides, including Mauritius.
2. Last year, Statistics Mauritius recorded nearly the same number of men and women working in the ICT sector in large companies. (9,225 males and 9,105 females)
3. One would tend to think that Mauritius is paving the way in many sectors in Africa, even in gender equality in the ICT sector.
4. Initiatives being taken over the years are crucial in bridging the gender gap in the Tech industry, encouraging more young women to pursue careers in ICT.

5. The international **Girls in ICT Day** as declared by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is celebrated annually and this year it aims to encourage empowerment and leadership development for a more equitable future in **STEM** subjects (*Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths*).
6. Digital technologies are an essential pathway to gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.
7. Encouraging more girls to enter the ICT sector helps to build a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and economic growth in the region.

## **The 3D Printing Bootcamp**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, we are not only recognizing the outstanding efforts of the participants but also the transformative potential of **3D printing technology** in our society.

It is a new concept in Mauritius and in the beginning, the technology has been used to produce small parts, but now it is being used to even build houses.

The importance of 3D printing outspreads beyond mere technological advancement.

It is about community empowerment as it enables smart production and most importantly reduces waste.

In view to enable the integration of this emerging technology in all spheres of our economy, it is important to encourage the youth to embrace 3D designing.

In line with this ideology, the **MDPA** has been actively conducting awareness sessions in various secondary institutions.

The **3D Printing bootcamp** has been crafted not only as a means to learn 3D Designing but to encourage:

- team spirit,
- tackle complex challenges as a team
- and to come up with the desired result.

## **Award Ceremony**

**Dear Students,**

Today's award ceremony is a testament to the hard work, creativity, and dedication that each of you have demonstrated.

The designs and prototypes that have been developed during the sessions are not just impressive in their technical execution;

they also represent a glimpse into the future — a future where 3D printing plays a pivotal role in solving real-world problems.

The skills that you have acquired during the bootcamps will be very helpful when you shall embrace your career paths.

I was pleased to learn that in addition to the bootcamps, career counselling sessions were also organised in 10 secondary schools.

These sessions enabled student girls to have a brighter insight on career opportunities in the ICT sector.

I was made aware that **868** students benefited from these sessions and hopefully will opt for ICT in their career path.

**To the talented girls present here today,** I want to say this:

The world of ICT needs you.

Your ideas, your creativity, and your unique perspective are invaluable.

Do not be discouraged by the challenges that may come your way.

Instead, see them as opportunities to make a difference, to pave the way for others, and to contribute to the shaping of a future that is equitable, inclusive, and innovative.

## **Innovation in Government**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In our efforts to support innovation, the Government under the leadership of our Prime Minister is leaving no stones unturned to foster environments where emerging technologies can prosper.

The betterment of our society lies in the adoption of innovation.

In line with our vision, my Ministry is presently working on the preparation of a **five-year Blueprint** with the aim to maintain a continuous dynamism and expansion of the ICT sector.

This **blueprint** will pave the way for the sector to become more competitive and generate more wealth and employment.

Besides the strategies that will be implemented, it is important to start the ground works for our youth to become innovative nomads.

This bootcamp is a shining example where knowledge has been shared freely, creativity encouraged and the seeds of innovation planted in young minds.

## **Conclusion**

**To the award recipients,** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each of you. Your achievement today is a testament to your commitment to excellence and your ability to innovate.

You have set a high standard, and I am confident that you will continue to make significant contributions to the field of 3D printing and beyond.

However, while we celebrate these individual successes, it is important to acknowledge that every participant is a winner.

**In closing,** I wish to thank the Ministry of Education, for supporting our initiatives, as well as to the Rectors of colleges, Jury members, and Sponsors who have made this event possible.

Once again, congratulations to all of our award recipients.

As you move forward, may you continue to break new ground and inspire others, especially the young women who are looking to pursue a career in the field of technology.

Let us all remain committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every girl has the opportunity to explore, innovate, and lead in ICT.

**Thank you for your attention.**