

Opening speech - Webinar by Shiv Khera

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

15 00hrs – 29th April 2020

First of all, a good afternoon to Mr Shiv Khera and to all those who are watching this webinar. It's a pleasure for me to join you today to launch this event. COVID-19 has changed our world. Strict confinement rules have been put in place by Government in order to limit the spread of the virus. Apart from those working in essential services, the rest of us has had to make huge adjustments to our habits. Thanks to the pervasiveness of technology, we can now work remotely and also learn online.

Technology, throughout the world, is being used as an enabler to allow for novel ways of doing the things we usually do. For example, communication tools are allowing us to work both remotely and collaboratively. We have all been using email at work for years. But the lockdown has made real-time communication platforms very popular.

We are all now comfortable having a meeting using Zoom. This is true at my Ministry as well where important meetings are being done through video conferencing. Technology is allowing essential work to be done. Other important uses of technology include e-learning, e-commerce and the provision of e-services by Government.

The government, through Mauritius Telecom, has invested massively to make Mauritius one of the few countries in the world to be 100 percent covered with Fibre-to-the-home. 90% of our population is today subscribed to the Internet and the majority has broadband Internet with high bandwidth.

Mauritius, being an island, relies on undersea optical fibre cables to provide Internet connectivity for all. Today, Mauritius relies on two cables: SAFE & LION. This year, there will be a third cable, called METISS, to increase the resilience of our infrastructure, increase total bandwidth & redundancy and to provide for more competition, which can only benefit our population. A 4th cable, IOX has also been announced. With this level of resilience, a number of new services become possible, such as having datacenters in Mauritius.

I wish to thank you, Mr Shiv Khera, for sharing your knowledge and experience with us. To all those following this webinar, have a nice learning experience and I hope you can make the most of it. Thank you to Wazaa FM for this initiative.

I now officially launch this webinar by Mr Shiv Khera.

Thank you for your attention.