

**Launching of New Government Portal
by Hon Deepak Balgobin**

Hennessy Hotel, 08 September 2020 at 11:00

Miss Sandrine Valère, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,

**Representatives of Ministries, Parastatal bodies, and other
Government institutions,**

Members of ICT organisations and of the private sector,

Members of the press, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be with you today on the occasion of the launch of the New Government Portal.

In the era we are now living in, this Portal is poised to become an important gateway for all our citizens but also an essential component for the promotion of our country to foreigners.

As such, the Government Portal is the entry point to the websites of all Ministries, departments and parastatal bodies and also the preferred means to access Government e-Services.

Dear friends,

As you are aware, the current Government websites date back from 2013 at a time where the ICT landscape was much more different.

Allow me to make some comparisons.

From 2013 to date, Internet has become pervasive and most of our citizens now have broadband Internet at home. Similarly, a majority of our citizens own a smartphone and use it to access the Internet.

Consequently, this remarkable progression in adoption of new technologies has transformed the way Mauritians consume content on the Internet.

Today, we live in a world of interactivity, of videos, and where websites offer personalised experiences to visitors.

You will therefore agree that it was high time for us to update our Governmental websites to fully comply with the latest web standards while making sure that the information provided is timely and relevant.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The new government portal has been designed for all Mauritians: for the general public, students, businessmen, etc., but also for foreigners so that they can rapidly obtain information they need

In other words, the new portal will allow the Mauritian Government to better communicate with all.

Allow me now to give you some concrete examples on how we have innovated.

I am sure that you will remember that the previous website only provided information about the island of Mauritius.

I am proud to say that the new portal, in addition to Mauritius, now has extensive information on Rodrigues, Agaléga and, very importantly, the Chagos Archipelagos. We felt that it is important for all citizens of our Republic, specially the young generation, to be aware of our varied history and culture but also our sovereignty.

Here is a second example of how we have innovated.

One criticism which was often made in the past concerning the Government website was that information was scattered onto many

pages. For example, someone wanting to get information about, say, agriculture had to navigate to the website of the relevant ministry, then maybe, a specific department or a parastatal body of that Ministry, etc. This was a complex and error-prone endeavour.

On the new portal, information is categorised in various topics, such as :

- Agriculture
- Arts and culture
- Business and industry
- Technology and innovation
- Education and training
- Energy and utilities
- Public finance
- Gender and family
- etc.

And, consequently, someone willing to know every Government initiative for, say, once more, agriculture, only has to consult the relevant topic. From that topic, links are provided for additional information.

Moreover, reckoning with the fact that people tend to use search engines, the portal offers an enhanced search capability which allows visitors to access the exact information they are looking for in record time.

Of course, we have made sure that the search is carried out topic-wise rather than organisation-wise.

Dear friends,

As you are well aware, Government also has an Open Data Portal where machine readable data is provided for mobile applications developers and innovative solutions providers.

In the new portal, under each topic, direct links to the Open Data Portal are provided for easier access. My wish is for our entrepreneurs to create more useful apps and solutions for our citizens and we are giving them the data to do so.

Another useful feature for the public is the Government Directory which is always accessible just by pressing the menu button on the top-left corner of any webpage. This comprehensive directory gives the contact details of all Ministries, departments, parastatals bodies and all essential hotlines.

In other words, it is impossible to get lost on the new portal despite the large number of pages it contains.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In today's world, a video can have a much greater impact when communicating a message. It was therefore very regrettable that the previous website could not support videos.

Consequently, with the new portal, we took the decision to (1) allow the embedding of videos on any web page, and (2) provide for the possibility for events to be live streamed.

This increased adoption of videos will surely have a positive impact on the way Government communicates with its various stakeholders.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me now to turn to another innovative aspect of the new portal which is **MoMoris**.

Quoting from MoMoris itself, it is about “**Ansam nou avanse**”.

It is about the fact that “We are all proud to be Mauritians”. We want our citizens to stay tuned to what's happening in our country and participate in helping build a better Mauritius, together.

MoMoris has a number of useful features.

One of them is the “**Activities**” section, subtitled “*Vine participe ansam ar nou*”. There, citizens will know what are the many activities organised by Government throughout our country for our population.

People will also be made aware of all ongoing campaigns such as the one on “Sekirite Routiere” or on “Mo Anrezistre Mo Voter” as well as awards like “Fierté nou pays”.

In the previous version of the Government website, these information were present but scattered across many pages.

As from today, they are all found on **MoMoris**.

Another interesting feature of MoMoris is the photo contest, “*Mo fier mo moris*”, where people will be able to submit photos to be featured on the portal. A selection panel will choose the best photos to showcase, with full attribution of course.

Mauritius is full of talented people and MoMoris will allow them to reach all our population as well as members of the Mauritian diaspora.

Dear friends,

The new portal also features a comprehensive list of Public Notices which includes the latest announcements, tenders, scholarships, communiqués and vacancies. This shows our commitment towards simplifying the life of people.

We have also created a special section in Public Notices for Rodrigues.

You will also notice that we have also updated the look and feel of the websites of different Ministries and departments. Our intention, in addition to complying with the latest web standards, is to make information more accessible for our citizens and visitors from abroad.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The formidable task of revamping all our websites took months where teams across various Governmental departments and parastatal bodies collaborated. This collaboration started at the beginning of the year, continued during the confinement period and has been growing *crescendo* since.

The staff of the National Computer Board, which operates under the aegis of my Ministry, and which is responsible for **govmu.org**, worked with their colleagues from the Central Information Systems Division of my Ministry and the Government Information Service operating under the Prime Minister's Office, to come up with a new portal. Staff members from other departments also offered their valuable contribution.

The process the team adopted was based on examining the way visitors used the existing website and ensure that all the information frequently looked for could become better organised and more useful.

In addition, for several months, visitors of the portal were invited to submit their feedback on how the Government portal could be improved and many of the feedback received were incorporated in the new portal.

You will remember that the previous portal only worked well on large screens and members of the public using their smartphones had a lot of difficulties. I am happy to say that the new portal works equally well across the multitude of devices used by our people, from small phones to the largest monitors. Enhancing the User Experience (UX) has been a driving force that has permeated the development of the new portal.

This was not an easy feat.

I wish to thank all those involved. All of them worked hard to make this new portal a reality.

At this point, I also offer my thanks to the staff of all other Ministries and departments who also participated in this migration.

As a lot of the work was done internally, we can now contemplate the future with greater confidence because of the web development skills acquired by all our staff.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are in the middle of a transition. The websites of most Ministries and departments have been migrated to the new technology.

Our staff have followed best practices such as the **Agile Methodology** which promotes incremental development.

Some websites have not been migrated yet. But I expect these remaining websites, especially those of some parastatal bodies, to be migrated in the weeks to come.

Furthermore, you will also agree that the content of any website needs to be constantly updated and this is true for the new portal as well.

There is always a better way to offer information in order to make it more relevant. We also recognise that there will always be new web technologies which will continue to emerge.

Therefore, our portal will continue to evolve over the coming years.

Naturally, as we have been doing for the past months, we will continue to welcome suggestions from the public at large on how we can make the portal better... **because your opinion counts.**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Before ending, allow me to, once again, thank all of those who have worked hard to make the new portal a reality. I wish plenty of success to this new Government portal.

Thank you for your kind attention.

(Pause)

I am now honoured to officially launch the New Government Portal.