

**Ministerial Roundtable on
“The role of digital technologies during
and after the COVID-19 pandemic”**

ITU Digital World 2020

22 October 2020 at 15:00

Introductory statement

Mauritius is a Small Island Developing State and relies a lot on air, maritime and Internet connectivity to the world so that its economy flourishes. Today, the Information & Communication Technology sector is the third pillar of the economy after tourism and financial services.

As you all know, during this COVID-19 pandemic, major sectors suffered dramatic downfalls and any enterprises, including large airline companies, closed business. Consequently, a rise in the unemployment was noted. One of the few sectors which is resisting is the ICT sector and, so far, the number of jobs lost is quite limited.

This can be, no doubt, explained by the adoption and, subsequently, the dependence of a large number of organisations, including governments, on technology solutions to continue operating despite the pandemic. Countries which had invested in digital technologies and which had put in place adequate policies concerning the use of technology were advantaged. The Government of Mauritius had already prioritised the digitalization of society as a whole as an important vector for added efficiency and for the optimal delivery of services to citizens. It is clear today that Digital Transformation, in full accordance with sustainability and the preservation of the environment, is one of the only ways forward.

In retrospect, COVID-19 has been an eye opener on how the traditional way of doing business needs to be reviewed. This new normal is going to guide, not only large corporations, but also our governments, SMEs and even our individual citizens on how things need to be conducted.