

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

25th Anniversary of the Centre for Information
Technology and System (CITS), University of
Mauritius

Thursday, 1st December 2022
Lecture Theatre 2, Academic Complex, UoM

- **Professor Sanjeev Sobhee, Vice Chancellor, University of Mauritius**
- **Professor Issack Santally, Pro-Vice Chancellor Academia**
- **Mr Heerun Goolap, Chief of Facilities and Services**
- **Mrs Sharda Issur-Goorah, Registrar,**
- **Mr Roshan Halkhoree, Director, Centre for Information Technology & Systems (CITS)**
- **Deans of faculties and Directors,**
- **Staff of UoM,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning to you all.

First of all, thank you for the invitation and for making me part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Centre for Information Technology and Systems (CITS).

I wish to congratulate the entire team of CITS and the University of Mauritius for reaching this remarkable milestone.

This is indeed a day to celebrate all your achievements and progress.

And also, to recognize the dedication of the CITS Team throughout these years who have been building up the IT eco-system of the University for both staff and students.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the current context, providing ICT access and e-Services to the population has become crucial if not vital.

The ICT sector has become the third pillar of the economy in less than 16 years. Throughout these years, emphasis has been laid on the “Innovation” aspect which is, in accordance with the vision of the Government to position Mauritius as a “Regional ICT Hub”.

We strongly believe in the potential of Innovation and Digitalisation to take our economy to the next level of development and the foundations have already been laid down.

And this goes along with the vision of the Government to make a “Smart and Intelligent Mauritius” which will be instrumental in the transformation of the country into a high-income economy and an all-inclusive knowledge driven information society.

The ICT sector is believed to be the most dynamic industry in the world and in Mauritius. And we are stepping into the fourth industrial revolution with **digitalisation** spreading across the economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since we live in the “world of information”, Information Technology has become part of our daily lives. It is recognised that digital technology has revolutionised the way businesses are improving school systems, student activities and teaching practices as well as the educational sector in Mauritius.

The global health crisis has brought all of humanity to a virtual standstill. COVID-19 pandemic prompted for an urgent need for tools and technology to support activities in the new business and education environment.

The use of computer and the internet has increased the quality of education. It has helped improving school systems, student activities and teaching practices.

The role of Information Technology became more significant especially for online learning.

The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted Universities, including UoM, to use Google Classroom, Moodle, Google Meet and Zoom applications to meet the instructional needs of Academics and Students for online teaching.

It is recognized that ICT can lead to an improved student learning and better teaching methods.

I am informed that the CITS had played a critical role during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the continuity of operations at the University.

Government, through my Ministry, is giving full support to the implementation of sustainable policies that promote the IT sector resulting in benefits to its citizens.

It is concluded that the tremendous advancement in Computer Technology, Software Engineering and Telecommunications, as well as the resultant radical changes and advances in the techniques of data and information processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination in Mauritius within a decade, is no doubt a revolution.

Emerging Technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Robotics, Internet of things, FinTech and Big Data are also expected to assist in the digital transformation process.

We need to harness the real potential of digital technologies.

- METC

This is why my Ministry has set up the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council (METC) after the enactment of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Act 2021. The objective of the Council is to

scrutinize our business environment and propose recommendations to push new and emerging technologies in our industry.

- Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act

On the other hand, apart from having an ever-resilient cyber defence mechanism, it is important to have a responsive legal cyber set up to counter the increasing number of cyberthreats.

Accordingly, my Ministry has introduced the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021, precisely, to cater for these issues. With this new law, we have an increased protection of the Mauritian cyberspace.

- High Speed Internet Connectivity

We are also currently implementing high-speed connectivity in colleges. Currently, more than 500 sites have high-speed internet connectivity to the Government Online Centre.

These sites will include the deployment of High-Speed Connectivity in 160 secondary schools across Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is hoped that in the coming years, the technological landscape and innovation ecosystem of the country will be significantly transformed through the investments we are initiating today.

To sustain the growth of the ICT sector in Mauritius, the right focus is to exploit Emerging Technologies with

- a state-of-the-art infrastructure,
- Digital Government applications,
- persuasive innovations,
- strong talent management compiled with a Cybersecure and Cyber resilient environment,

which is the right formulation of this Digital Mauritius strategy.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish once again congratulations to the CITS for their 25th Anniversary.

I wish you all the very best for the coming challenges!

Thank you for your attention.