

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

Network Event by ATCOMM

**Bisou Rooftop Bar, Lux Grand Bay
Wednesday, 30th November 2022 at
18.30hrs**

- **Honourable Bobby Hurreeram, Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development**
- **Mr Olivier Fayolle, CEO of The Bee Equity Partners Ltd and Chairman of ATCOMM,**
- **The Board Members of ATCOMM,**
- **Mr Sebastien Dalais, CEO of ATCOMM,**
- **Chairpersons, CEOs, CTOs and Directors present this evening,**
- **The ATCOMM Team members,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good evening to you all.

Thank you to our host - ATCOMM - for this networking event and for bringing together such a prestigious audience from various business sectors, especially from the ICT sector.

I also wish to congratulate you for achieving your 25th year of operations and for your contribution in the telecommunication sector in Mauritius and the region.

I am sure that the path has not been an easy one but you have been able to face the challenges and have continued to make progress in this highly competitive environment.

Your portfolio is quite impressive being one of the six licensed and active ISPs (Internet Service Provider) in Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government, through my Ministry, is poised to support stakeholders in our ICT sector to create and strengthen a national ecosystem for sustainable development.

We have placed innovation and the digitisation of public services at the heart of the political and economic agenda.

Digital transformation is a crucial stepping stone in the transformation of our country. It is not only about digitising a single process or adopting a new technology. It's about accelerating business activities, bringing public services online, accelerating Government processes, to mention just a few.

This is why new measures and policies are constantly being implemented to enable a conducive environment for business.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is gratifying to see broadband access growing rapidly in Mauritius.

Connectivity plays the main role in this digital transformation. Mauritius is wholly covered with Fibre and mobile connectivity. There was a total of

1.8 million internet subscriptions in 2021 according to the ICTA and there were 1.91 million mobile phones, which corresponds to an average of 1.5 per person.

Deloitte, in its 2022 Telecom Industry Outlook, highlighted that the telecom sector globally continued to make progress in augmenting its network capacity with additional fiber and wireless deployments to meet the constant demand for higher-speed networks in 2021.

You will agree that faster mobile and fixed wireless connections create new opportunities for bundled service offerings and business models for service providers.

With ever-expanding options for high-quality communication and internet services from telecom, cable, wireless, and satellite internet providers, Mauritian citizens and businesses can today enjoy enhanced flexibility in purchasing and consuming services.

I have tremendous faith that the public and private sectors will continue to work together to invest in and to roll-out the necessary infrastructure to improve further our connectivity.

Government at all levels will prioritize deployment of technology to strengthen public institutions and support businesses in the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must make sure that we do not just bring broadband to the people, but that we do so responsibly.

That we preserve “Cyber-Peace” and deliver cybersecurity in a world that is always connected, and always online.

The Government has taken several steps through policies and legislation as well as international cooperation and collaboration to fight cybercrime in the country.

The Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act voted in Parliament last year provides for a modern framework aligned with the Budapest Convention on cybercrime. On the other hand, the Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius (CERT-MU), which falls under the aegis of my Ministry, has prepared a Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Policy.

The objective is to determine and identify critical systems and accordingly recommend the mobilisation of resources to counter the effects of possible attacks on those targets.

In addition, we have also launched the MAUSHIELD platform in September (2022) for sharing cyber threat information and intelligence which can be used by private organisations to improve their cybersecurity posture, minimize risks and prevent cyber-attacks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Space exploration and the innovation it entails are essential drivers for opening up new domains in space science and technology for Mauritius.

Our experience with the first Mauritian nanosatellite MIRSAT1 triggered new partnerships and developed capabilities and knowledge for our young generation.

As a non-Governmental entity, the ATCOMM Space Project, which involves the hosting of a LEO Ground Station to track Low Earth Orbit Satellites in our region, is without any doubt one to be acknowledged and applauded. And let me tell you, according to Bloomberg, in 10 years, low-to-Earth small satellites and satellite emerging technologies, will be to Government and Businesses what IT is now essential.

Dear Friends,

The telecommunication sector has always been on the cusp of change and 2022 has been a year that has amplified that position.

It has been able to keep pace with the shifting landscape of post-pandemic life.

As it always has, the challenges in the telecom sector is changing quickly and the challenges continue to evolve.

With careful planning and foresight about lessons learned in the wake of the Covid Pandemic, network operators and ISPs can set their sights on a promising 2023.

So, let's be bold and dream big!

Let's work together to develop programmes and projects that will ensure that ICTs deliver an even better quality of life for our citizens.

Let's build a better digital future for all.

I thank you for your attention.