



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED GOALS
AND COMMITMENTS IN REGARD TO EDUCATION**

**“Current global and international trends and challenges and their
impact on education”**

**Statement
by
Delegation of Mauritius**

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Mr. President, Colleague Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to address this esteemed Forum, especially at a time when establishing the link between Education and Development has come to be so challenging.

At the very outset, Mr. President, a few words about the Internationally Agreed Goals in relation to Mauritius. Mauritius is well on the way to achieving the Internationally Agreed Goals in the field of Education. Our history of free education for all up to full time undergraduate studies at our major University and compulsory education up to the age of 16 have been instrumental in opening access to all. Other measures have been taken to favour access, equity and fairness in the system: books are freely given to all pupils at primary level; free transport is available for all students, while children whose parents are recipients of social aid receive some form of social assistance. There are no gender gaps or disparities in enrolment at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Common to some countries, girls outperform boys both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Mr. President,

The Mauritian education system is driven by the vision of promoting “Quality Education for All and Human Resource Development Base to transform Mauritius into an Intelligent nations state in the vanguard of global progress and innovation”. If on the one hand, we want to position the country as an ECD Hub, on the other hand, overarching objective is to transform Mauritius into a Knowledge Economy. This explains why our education policy rests on 5 major pillars, namely, widening Access, improving Quality, increasing Relevance, promoting greater Equity and ensuring learning Achievement for All.

Mr. President,

I will today stress 4 major pre-requisites to be borne in view by virtue of the positive impact they have on education as a whole.

First, all education systems need to come to terms with the issue of Inclusion. Pro-poor policies are fundamental so as to implement inclusive measures. Programs must be worked out that take on board those coming from underprivileged areas and pockets of poverty as well as those having Special Education Needs. We need to be sensitive to the plight of the poor and commit ourselves to eradicate absolute poverty using education as leverage. The empowerment of the poor is a sine qua non to ascertain they have the sustainable means to break the cycle of poverty. This is in line with the profoundly humane philosophy that learning achievement – Learning for All – has to be independent of whether learners have a socio-economic disadvantage or any form of disability. Our educational policies should balance increased competition with social justice. Hence, the importance of offering “second chance” programs to those who, through no fault of theirs, have been left on the wayside.

Secondly, Mr. President, developing and emerging economies must place a premium on multi-stakeholder consultations prior to developing educational policies. Platforms have to be created where stakeholders are listened to. Our Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 was the result of a consensual debate. It was the subject of intensive national consultations followed by peer reviews by both the World Bank and the EU prior to finalization.

Again, our decision to introduce the mother tongues – “Kreol Morisien” and “Bhojpuri” – in our curriculum followed the same path.

And, Mr. President, it is especially important to listen to the voice of the Youth. It is not enough to have as we usually do, a Youth Forum on the margins

of International Conferences. I would propose that multilateral and Inter-Governmental Organisations like UNESCO envisage a Conference devoted exclusively to the often unheard and suppressed voice of young people, our most important customers.

Thirdly, Mr. President, we should all aim at the holistic development of learners. Our countries have to make a dramatic shift towards inculcating the 'soft skills' right from an early age. Establishing an equilibrium between the purely academic pursuits and the overall value-based education is cardinal. This will ensure the cementing of the much needed virtue of multi-culturalism and, especially, inter-culturalism that are at the heart of learning to live together and therefore the mainstay of our developing societies.

Mr. President,

A final word on the challenge to usher in a digital revolution in our schools. If today so many of our schools are facing a problem of absenteeism, of truancy, of indiscipline, it is primarily because of the conservative insistence on a dull and dreary frontal teaching. Today, changes in the digitised world enable us, developing and emerging countries, to leapfrog the digital divide to transform traditional forms of classroom transactions and teaching – learning processes.

These are opportunities that we can miss out on only at our own costs.

Hence, the challenge is basically two fold: sustainability and empowerment without which the goal of any educational provision would never be fully met.

Thank you, Mr. President.