

**My colleague Hon. Sunil Bholah, Minister of Business,
Enterprise and Cooperatives**

Mrs Hélène Echevin, President of the MCCI

Members of the diplomatic corps

Officials of the public sector and Private sector

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning

I am very pleased to be amongst you today on the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Thank you for extending an invitation to me.

Mauritius has been facing economic and social stagnation until the recent past. For social stability, economic development and social upliftment are required.

In that perspective, achieving sustainable growth and bringing Mauritius to a high-income country are very bold and challenging objectives. Government on its own cannot achieve these objectives unless there is a synergy between the private and the public sectors. Government is acting as a development partner for the private sector. We are making all efforts possible to facilitate business, keeping in view the exigencies of a highly competitive international situation in which we have to operate.

For example, recently, we have had the case of CMT which was considering to delocalize from Mauritius for a destination where the costs of production are much lower. We do realize the implications of such a decision, not only for the economy but also on employment. Indeed, job creation is one of the biggest challenges countries worldwide are facing. Government, being conscious of the terrible not to say disastrous consequences of

CMT leaving the Mauritian soil, reacted promptly and took the necessary decisions to resolve the issues that our industrialists were facing.

Ladies and gentlemen

As you are aware, the Government is presently working on the roadmap to achieve the Second Economic Miracle and realize Vision 2030. In this context, the Right Honourable Prime Minister is personally chairing the Joint Public-Private Sector Steering Committee on a regular basis.

With the increase in international competition and challenges facing Mauritius, systems at my Ministry are being reengineered to ensure that processes and procedures are smooth and less cumbersome. The overall objective is to accelerate trade liberalization and the ease of doing business.

In this context, my Ministry has removed another eight items from the list of controlled goods over the past year, whereby imports permits are no longer required for these items.

In line with the e-Government strategy, my Ministry has started implementing the Single Window Project known as the Mauritius Trade Link, which has now become an imperative economic operating tool, resulting in unnecessary red tapism, bureaucracy and form-filling are reduced, if not eliminated.

Moreover, with the globalization effect, we should ensure a fair trading environment for the benefit of our population and local enterprises, while maintaining quality standards. There is a need to review, to update and to bring new regulations in some sectors.

The holding of trade fairs and exhibitions were adversely affecting businesses and the owners of shops and traders were facing unfair competition. The regulations governing these activities had to be overhauled and, since last month, my ministry has come up with a new set of regulations which provides an equal level playing field between local operators and organizers of trade fairs and exhibitions. The new regulations spell out more stringent measures so that trade fairs are held in a more organized manner and for the benefit of consumers.

Lastly, I will touch upon another sector which needs redress namely the importation and sale of second hand motor vehicles.

I have received numerous complaints from the general public and representations from the stakeholders on the importation of damaged vehicles and alleged fraud in this sector.

My Ministry is will soon come with a new regulatory framework incorporating more restrictive conditions for the importation and sale of such types of vehicles.

Ladies and gentlemen

To conclude, my ministry is strongly committed to continue the reform process and to innovate in order to further enhance the framework within which industrialists and the business community evolve.

I am confident that the collaboration that has been instilled between the public and private sectors is providing a new impetus to the economic and social development of the country.

I thank you for your attention.