

**Speech of Honourable Ashit Kumar Gungah, Minister of Industry,  
Commerce and Consumer Protection, during the 168<sup>th</sup> Annual  
General Meeting of the MCCI, Thursday 30 March 2017**

**Honourable Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and  
International Trade,**

**Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives,**

**Mr Fareed Chuttan and Mrs. Rajwantee Ramrukheea Permanent Secretaries of my  
ministry**

**Mr. Currimjee, President of MCCI**

**Mr. Jaddoo, Secretary-General of MCCI**

**Members of Diplomatic Corps,**

**Officials of the private and public sectors**

**Distinguished Guests**

A good morning to all of you

It is with immense pleasure that I am in your midst on the occasion of the 168th Annual General Meeting of the MCCI. This important event has always provided the opportunity for the Chamber to take stock of its achievements and forge ahead with new re-orientations.

**Everyone associated** with the Chamber has displayed passion and commitment to serve the interests of its members and of the country. There is no doubt that the able leadership of the President of the Chamber has been a determinant factor in this endeavor.

Ladies and gentlemen

Mauritius is blessed to have a highly respected and dynamic private sector. Government is glad to have the MCCI as a valuable partner in promoting development in various sectors such as Commerce, Industry, Financial Services, Tourism and Education. **We are proud** when you represent the interests of the country in regional and international fora through enlightened and strategic ideas.

**Going down memory lane**, we recall that entrepreneurs showed tremendous faith in the early years of the industrialization process of the country. The journey travelled by the forerunners of the industry has been remarkable. Many industries have even crossed the frontiers of the local market and have solidly implanted their business ventures in the region and even beyond. Today we are proud that the industry is highly diversified. Another remarkable feature of the industry is that it has placed the 'Made in Moris' label as products of choice for our consumers. Many of the enterprises have proved that they can be innovative with differentiated products.

**Mesdames et Messieurs**

Nous sommes conscients que vous travaillez dans un contexte difficile. La compétition auquel est confrontée nos entreprises s'est accrue considérablement au fil des années avec la mondialisation et la libéralisation du commerce au niveau régionale et internationale. La compétition s'est avérée d'avantage compliqué pour nos entreprises suite à la libéralisation du marché émanant de l'enlèvement de tarifs douaniers au niveau du COMESA et du SADC. Le climat économique à l'échelle globale est moins favorable pour le quotidien de nos démarches économiques. Nous devons faire face à un taux de croissance mondiale prédit à 3.4% pour 2017 par le FMI et qui empiète sur le pouvoir d'achat des consommateurs. Le BREXIT a surgi comme un défi incontournable pour notre pays.

C'est une réalité que vous devez confronter avec la même perspicacité que vous avez démontrée avec succès jusqu'à présent.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This Government believes that the industry sector can thrive only through a conducive business environment. We must endeavour through all means to reduce and even eliminate administrative hassles on the way of our enterprises. We must improve our ranking in the World bank ease of doing business index. In this context, a public and private sector committee has been set up by this Government is exploring all avenues for business facilitation.

Ladies and gentlemen

Business facilitation means also the digitalisation of our procedures. In this context, my ministry is taking measures to facilitate commercial procedures with less time consuming and more eco-friendly. An E- Platform will be set up for businesses applying for permits and licences. The National Single Window was launched in January 2016 for processing of export and import

permits. Last year, I focused on the import permit procedures which had been computerized and am happy to announce that all our export procedures will be finalized by end of April. It's a major step for e-trading.

The Price fixing Unit at my ministry is embarking on a fully computerized system. Importers of controlled-price items for example such as milk and pharmaceutical products will be able to submit data and documents online to the department and price fixing will be communicated online. This Platform will undoubtedly help to reduce business processing time will be more eco-friendly. In the same vein, in the bunkering sector, operators can apply and receive approval for their importation after only 2 hours after their application.

E-commerce platforms are evolving very rapidly. More and more traders are focusing on online sales. And more consumers, particularly the youth are being influenced by online purchase. We can buy nearly everything in front of our PC. I can understand your concern about it. But we have to adapt to changes in the methods of purchasing.

Recently, during a half-day workshop organised by my ministry, some recommendations have been made to review and update our legislations. It is a very complex matter. In fact, we will have to protect local consumers against some international traders which are not registered in our country, with no physical address and representatives in Mauritius.

### **Mesdames et Messieurs**

L'importance du secteur domestique à l'économie est indéniable. Nous devons conjuguer nos idées pour l'avancement du secteur. Il y a une entente parfaite entre le Ministère et la Chambre. Je souhaite qu'ensemble nous travaillions pour bâtir des édifices nouveaux pour le secteur. Dans

cette perspective je vous assure de mon soutien. Sur ce Mesdames et Messieurs, je vous souhaite  
une journée fructueuse.

Merci de votre attention.

**A.K.G**