

Speech By
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer
Meea
Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives

on the occasion of
176th Annual General Meeting of
Mauritius Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Thursday 27 March 2025

at
09.30 hours

Caudan Arts Centre
Caudan, Port Louis

Honourable Dhananjay Ramful, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade;

Honourable John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen, Minister of Commerce & Consumer Protection;

Mr. Charles Harel, President of MCCI;

Dr. Drishtysingh Ramdenee, Secretary General of MCCI;

Members of Diplomatic Corps;

Senior Officials of the Public Sector;

Captains of Industry;

Members of the Press;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning to you all!

I am pleased to be in your midst this morning on the occasion of the 176th Annual General Meeting of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. At the outset, I wish to thank the Chamber for inviting me to be part of this august assembly. Indeed, it is an occasion for me, in my capacity as Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, to share my thoughts with you on some important issues that have a bearing on industrial development and which, I believe could be the gateway towards higher economic progress. Let me also seize this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to MCCI for its unwavering commitment and unflinching support in advancing the industrial and commercial agenda of Mauritius, ever since its establishment in 1850.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, I feel proud and honoured to be amongst you today, the more so, that I have been associated for a long time with the private sector as part of my

professional career. I must say, that my work experience has been a learning journey and I am fully aware of the fundamental importance of the private sector in the socio-economic development of the country. Whilst, I acknowledge that private-sector led activities are the driving forces of economic growth, I wish to highlight that Government remains the pacesetter and facilitator to make things happen.

On a personal note, let me inform you that I fully understand the challenging context within which industry operators have to evolve and their expectations from Government to successfully anchor their businesses on a resilient pathway. Let me tell you that I am a very open-minded person and I believe in dialogue so that we can come up with innovative ideas that could be translated into policies and strategies for enhanced economic prosperity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since I assumed Office in November 2024, I made it a priority to hold discussions with all private sector associations, including MCCI, to be aligned with the realities of the business environment and ensure that we, as policy makers, create the necessary enabling conditions, which are primordial for businesses to thrive. At the level of my Ministry, we are fully assuming our role as policymakers, by reflecting on ways and means to bring about a manufacturing renaissance in line with the objectives set in the Government Programme (2025-2029).

Indeed, my Ministry is fully conscious that it has to act promptly and this is why “Les Assises de L’Industrie 2025” was organised in a very short span of time, in February 2025, bringing all stakeholders together, to brainstorm on the current status of the manufacturing sector and propose key measures to ensure its long-term viability. I must say that the event was a success as the discussions were of high level with experienced speakers and moderators bringing in their

valuable inputs and at the end of the day, we came out with a set of recommendations that would guide us on our future course of actions.

Let me inform that my Ministry has gone through the recommendations and we have noted that some of them could be translated into quick-wins while others would be implemented on a medium to long-term basis. In this vein, I wish to apprise that my Ministry will soon submit its proposals, mostly inspired from “Les Assises de L’Industrie 2025”, to the Ministry of Finance in the context of Budgetary exercise 2025-2026.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, the manufacturing sector remains an important pillar of the economy, contributing significantly to Gross Value Addition, gainful employment and substantial foreign exchange earnings. It is very unfortunate that, over the last decade, such a vital sector has been left on its own with little consideration on creating a conducive ecosystem likely to foster its sustained development.

I am of the view that, at this juncture, bold and decisive actions are warranted to uplift the manufacturing sector to new growth pedestals. First and foremost, there is a pressing need to reverse the declining export trend and low level of FDI inflows in the manufacturing sector. Further to my interactions with various stakeholders and representations made during “Les Assises de L’Industrie 2025”, there has been a clarion call for the establishment of a new Support Institution, under the fold of my Ministry, to undertake investment and export promotion for the manufacturing sector. We have taken good note of this proposal and my Ministry will soon take up this matter with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the promotion of the manufacturing sector is given its due consideration for higher economic gains.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we embark on a new era of re-industrialisation, I wish to underscore that the African continent remains a major playing field for our manufacturing enterprises, yet to be fully exploited. The emergence of a burgeoning middle-class population in rapidly developing African countries, offers wide scope for expansion of our market outreach, by tapping into new export opportunities, particularly arising from the African Continental Free Trade Area. We are already on the right track as evidenced by South Africa, which is now, our number one export destination.

At the level of Government, we see Africa as a land of promise. In this vein, we have reconnected with our friends on the Continent as demonstrated by the successful mission of the Honourable Prime Minister at the African Union Summit held in Ethiopia in February 2025. The time is propitious to make a much bigger impact on the African market by increasing our supply of goods which is recognised for their high quality and affordability. In this perspective, Government is working on a new Strategy with the bold determination to conquer the immense trade potential of the African market.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also apprise that at the level of SME and Cooperatives Divisions of my Ministry, we are also moving fast to bring about a new dynamism to support SMEs and Cooperative societies, that have unfortunately been left behind by the previous Government.

It is a fact that SMEs are the most vulnerable in times of economic difficulties and they are the ones to be supported in the very first instance. My Ministry is being proactive in assisting SMEs and this is why I have requested SME Mauritius Ltd to be more present on the ground to address promptly any bottlenecks impeding on their operations. Moreover, as mentioned in the

Government Programme (2025-2029), my Ministry is working on amendments to be brought to the SME Act 2017 to make the legislation more attuned to the realities of the day.

In the same vein, the regulatory framework governing Cooperative societies will be reviewed to modernise the sector in line with the models prevailing in France, India and Malaysia. My Ministry is also pursuing efforts to assist Cooperative societies to upgrade their delivery capabilities through implementation of projects and programmes geared towards product development, export readiness, sustainable practices and technology uptake.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude my speech, I wish to reassure the business community that Government remains committed to elevate the manufacturing sector to new heights in line with our objective to become a high-income economy. Indeed, this is the right time to think ahead the curve by formulating new ideas that could be embedded in a bold Policy Document, likely to drive us on the highway of industrial development. In this context, I wish to inform that my Ministry is in the process of crafting a new Industrial Strategic Plan, to chart out the future course of action for the next five years so as to re-invigorate industrial growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With these few words, may I now end by conveying my best wishes to the President, the Secretary-General, staff and all Members of the Chamber for another productive year ahead.

Thank you for your kind attention.

S.M.A.A.M