



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE & COOPERATIVES
(Business and Enterprise Division)

Event :	Greening the Mauritian Tourism Industry
Venue :	Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel, Port Louis
Date :	Monday 29th August, 2016 @ 18 hrs

- Hon. Alain Wong, M.S.K, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management
- Mr. Bissoon Mungroo, President of l'Association des Hotels de Charme
- Mr. Darmanjaysingh Towokul, Vice Chairman National Productivity and Competiveness Council
- Distinguish Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening,

1. It's a pleasure to be among you today to speak about a mission that has to be a major concern in the lives of every resident of this planet which is to "Go Green"! Greening the Mauritian Tourism Industry is geared towards creating awareness on the fact that our small properties and tourism businesses reduce their negative impacts on the environment and the community while maintaining a profitable operation.
2. It is such a laudable initiative of the Association des Hotels De Charme (of my Friend Bissoon Mungroo), Switch Africa Green with the support of European Union to help African national to transit into an Inclusive Green Economy. We are here to address the challenge of transforming our island into a



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sustainable one through direct (or indirect) use of renewable energy projects and technologies.

3. The Tourism industry in Mauritius has been expanding quite rapidly on the global front offering numerous economics benefits. We are the classic example of a country dependent partly on the tourism industry. But, being part of the African continent have to make sure that Africa makes a difference on the World Map.
4. At the level of the Ministry of Tourism some major steps have been taken to make a difference on the vast tourism Market. The government is proposing an Eco-Label Grant Scheme. It is managed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) set up by the Board of the Mauritius Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications, the Mauritius Tourism Authority, the Mauritius Standards Bureau, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.
5. The Scheme is open to local tourism businesses. It will enable them a certification to MS165. Such a certification allows tourism operators an Eco-label. The aim of having the Eco-label to tourism businesses will enhance the corporate image of the company; bring more competition; diversify the market, improve the standing with staff, partners and clients; increase business efficiency; help creating compliance with environmental laws and regulations; improved environmental



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performance; maximize efficient use of resources and minimize waste.

6. As we all know tourists make their decisions after being influenced by accounts of trips from friends and family, as well as by media and marketing campaigns, and perceptions of value for money.
7. Ladies and Gentlemen, the mission to boost our tourism sector is to unlock our full potential. One way of doing it is to opt for a sustainable economy driven by energy revolution that is renewable energy and energy efficient innovation and also technological and commercial advancements powered by a dynamic entrepreneurship sector.
8. It is widely known that SMEs make an important contribution to the tourism industry.
9. As the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, we are working in making eco-entrepreneurs a reality. Firms must realize that to become market leaders they need to look at the practices of good performers. Economic benefits are often accompanied by some negative environmental and social impacts. For a self-sustaining tourism industry, we must mitigate against some impacts like degradation of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, and leakage of revenue away from the local communities that service the industry.
10. When I speak about the negative impacts from hotels and tour operators, I am stressing on the fact that they may be inadvertently contributing to these negative impacts due to



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wastage as a result of inefficient operations. I have in mind – Energy consumption, waste generation and water consumption. We are bound to ensure the conservation and preservation of our natural and cultural heritage

11. At the level of the government we are aware of the importance of going more into a green economy. Hence, entrepreneurs who start a business in renewable and green energy easily get a SME Development Certificate from the SMEDA. With such a certificate they are entitled to an SME Financing Scheme loan with the following advantages:

- (i) An interest rate of 3.4%,
- (ii) A maximum of 90% financing with a maturity of up to 10 years,
- (iii) A moratorium of up to 2 years on principal repayment and
- (iv) No personal guarantee – Security will be restricted to fixed and floating charge on the assets of the company

12. MyBiz the One Stop Shop for SMEs launched last year, provides a grant of up to Rs 10 000 for carrying out the feasibility study of a proposed project including that of Green Energy.

13. So, we are laying the stones for a sustainable consumption and production patterns. The National Institute for Co-operative Entrepreneurship (NICE) has been training many entrepreneurs particularly women on the making of Eco-bags. I must tell you that I was agreeably surprised when some of



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them have started making eco-bags in their living room and even exporting to Reunion Island! I guess that's a way of building our "*Nation d'entrepreneurs*" considering a sustainable point of view.

14. Coming to the tourism sector, I believe that we can do more for a powerful change. In fact, the transformative power of tourism is massive. This is simply because when the tourism supply chain cascades deeply into our national economy, with very significant participation by smaller players.

15. Considering the high vulnerability to climate change particularly the impacts on islands compared to mainland areas we are bound to opt for sustainable tourism and sustainable economy.

16. In the government programme 2015-2019, a series of measures were announced that would further take Mauritius on a climate resilient and sustainable development pathway:

- (i) An amount of Rs 3.5 billion to cater for optimal water resources harnessing storage, supply and drastic reduction in losses
- (ii) Establishment of National Renewal Energy Agency with more ambitious renewable energy target,
- (iii) Establishments of a Land Drainage Authority
- (iv) Introduction of a new Climate Change Bill at the National Assembly



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17. We do want to take our tourism industry to greater heights but we must focus on inclusive economic growth and better life. Our visitors always enjoy the splendor of our offerings; they like the warmth and smile of our people and they are impressed by our cultural diversity.
18. Now is the time for change, ladies and gentlemen. We need incentives that drive change like new market access and rolling out of renewable energy technologies. Such incentive can enable us advance energy security which leads to immediate cost savings and ensure more dependable service to tourists.
19. Presenting Mauritius as a destination where we cater for our environment and our pairs will give a firm signal to the world. It will enhance tourism magnets and strengthen the competitiveness of our destination.
20. I firmly believe that helping our tourism businesses to grow, by providing incentives to install renewable energy technology and by investing in iconic attractions (We are even talking about a film city by Omnicane nowadays), we will support job creation in the private sector, implement our responsible tourism mandate and enhance the visitor's experience.
21. We all know that there is a pressure on national electricity grid and the critical requirement of energy security in tourism



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operations. Hence, there is an urgent need for the tourism sector to consider more energy efficient solutions.

22. I take this opportunity to encourage everybody to embrace sustainability in our economy. We have to diligently work together to sustain our Tourism industry to ensure that it remains viable and long lasting.

23. Thank you