

**GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE WHO-
GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE**

SPEECH

BY

**HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

**TUESDAY 19 APRIL 2022
AT 15 00 HRS**

VENUE: JAMNAGAR, GUJARAT

**Your Excellency Shri Narendra Modi Ji,
Prime Minister of India,**

**Your Excellency Dr. Tedros Adhanom
Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World
Health Organisation,**

**Your Excellency Shri Sarbananda Sonowal,
Honourable Union Minister of AYUSH and Ports,
Shipping and Waterways,**

**Your Excellency Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel,
Honourable Chief Minister of Gujarat,**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this Ground Breaking Ceremony for the establishment of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine.

I would like to thank all the organisers, the Government of India and especially Shri Narendra Modi Ji, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, for kindly associating Mauritius with this very important event.

Since time immemorial, naturally occurring products such as plants and minerals have been used in the treatment of diseases.

The use of herbal remedies transmitted through generations to cure the sick is still prevalent today.

The World Health Organisation recognises that traditional medicine is the sum total of the knowledge, skill, and practices based on the beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures.

We have reached a critical moment in the use of herbal medicinal products. Many people worldwide rely on them for at least some part of primary healthcare.

In view of the significance of natural products and traditional medicines, measures have to be taken to protect public health and address challenges associated with effective monitoring of the safety of all herbal medicines.

There could not be a more opportune time to set up this Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, than now.

The Centre will compile evidence and data for the formulation of policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks for safe, cost-effective, and equitable use of traditional medicines.

At the very outset, allow me to commend His Excellency Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, for his vision to set up the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine. The Centre will no doubt contribute significantly towards harnessing the potential of traditional medicine.

I would also wish to emphasize that this important institution would not have seen the light of day without the contribution of the Government of India for its financial support to the Centre's establishment, infrastructure, and operations.

We are extremely grateful to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the Government of India, and the Indian People for this generous contribution.

We appreciate that the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, the very first and only global outpost of the WHO on traditional medicine, will be an accessible, eco-friendly and interactive facility showcasing global traditions and modern scientific advances in traditional medicine.

Excellencies,

Let me seize this opportunity to remind you that the practice of Indian traditional medicine in Mauritius dates back to the arrival of the first indentured immigrants from India in the early 19th century. The practice became part of our tradition and maintained its importance in the treatment of common ailments.

Indeed, this prompted the recognition of Ayurveda in the late 1980s. Mauritius introduced the Ayurveda and Other Traditional Medicine Act in 1989. Our country thus became one of the rare countries outside India where the practice of Ayurvedic Treatment is duly regulated.

I must point out here that soon after the adoption of the legislation, Mauritius hosted the First International Ayurveda Conference in 1990 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka.

On this note, I wish to express our gratitude to the Jamnagar Gujarat University for offering scholarships to young Mauritian students who were admitted to the Bachelor in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery programme in the early 1990s.

Excellencies,

Ayurvedic medicine started to be used officially at two medicclinics in Mauritius as from 2004. With the good response and increasing demand for such therapy, new outlets were later opened. Presently

we have six dedicated public clinics that provide Ayurvedic services and medicine to our people.

In Mauritius, Ayurveda clinics are run not only by the Government, but also by NGOs as well as the private sector. Additionally, the Ayurvedic Unit at the Ministry of Health and Wellness of Mauritius ensures training in Ayurvedic practice.

Many in our country recall the visit to Mauritius in April 2016, of Shri Yesso Naik, then AYUSH Minister, during which a proposal was made for the Observance of Ayurveda Day. The Government of India subsequently accepted our proposal. The First Ayurveda Day was celebrated in Mauritius in October 2016.

The Ayurveda Day has now become an annual celebration in Mauritius. It provides an opportunity to raise awareness and sensitise the population on the benefits of Ayurvedic medicines, treatment, and plants.

Shri Modi Ji,

You will recall your State Visit to Mauritius in March 2015 during which our two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the strengthening of cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine and Homeopathy including the setting up of an AYUSH Chair.

Much progress has been achieved towards the establishment of an AYUSH Centre of Excellence, including a state of the art AYUSH Hospital in

Mauritius. I am pleased to announce that 12 acres of land have been identified at Cote D'Or city, in the centre of Mauritius, for this purpose.

The estimated construction cost of the project is around 15.2 Million USD, to be funded by the Indian Government. We are highly indebted to the Government of India for its continued support in the development process of Mauritius.

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by highlighting that traditional medicine is increasing its prominence in the world of modern science. Some 40% of approved pharmaceutical products in use today are derived from natural substances, and this underscores the

vital importance of conserving biodiversity and sustainability.

The potential for the sustained development of Ayurveda is immense. In this regard, Mauritius is committed to working with the WHO and partner countries like India.

I have no doubt that refocusing on the traditional ways of healing will enable us to mitigate and cure various diseases and ailments that are afflicting the whole of humanity in today's stressful world.

I thank you for your kind attention.
