

**LAUNCHING OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME
ON
GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

**SPEECH BY HON PRAVIND KUMAR JUGNAUTH
PRIME MINISTER**

**TUESDAY 07 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 1000 Hrs
(*HON PRIME MINISTER TO ARRIVE AT 09 58 HRS*)**

**VENUE: SIR HARILAL VAGHJEE HALL
PORT LOUIS**

**Honourable Minister of Gender Equality
and Family Welfare,**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Participants,

Good morning,

I am pleased to welcome you to the launch of this training programme on gender mainstreaming.

We have here high-ranking public officers who, no doubt, already share Government's vision for placing gender equality at the heart of our work. But, to make continued progress toward gender equality, officers must be trained and supported.

As defined by UN Women, gender-equality training is a “tool, strategy, and means to effect individual and collective transformation towards gender equality through consciousness raising, empowering learning, knowledge building, and skill development”.

My office has worked on a strategy to sensitise and train officers on gender mainstreaming over the next

4 to 5 years. With the collaboration of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, and the Civil Service College, we shall ensure that we impart the necessary skills and knowledge to officers.

Public Officers need to learn about opportunities and mechanisms to translate their commitments on gender equality into improved practice, results, and impacts.

Gender equality is not a privilege, it is a right.

It is our duty to promote and inculcate a culture of gender parity and respect for women.

We still have a long way to go, even if we have achieved much on the path to gender equality in recent years.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Reports for Mauritius show an improvement in the overall ranking at 110th position in 2021 amongst 156 countries worldwide compared to 115 in 2020. This reflects an improvement due to the good standing of Mauritius on Educational Attainment, and Health and Survival indicators.

The 2021 figures from Statistics Mauritius show that women have charted their way in every sector of society. Mauritius has reached gender parity in the Public Sector with 50% female Senior Chief Executives, 43.6% Permanent Secretaries, 55.4% Deputy Permanent Secretaries, and 57.6% Assistant Permanent Secretaries. Remarkable progress has also been made

in the judiciary sector with 66.7% and 59.2% for Judges and Magistrates, respectively.

Mauritius is party to a number of International Conventions and Human Rights Instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Maputo Protocol, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Women's rights are human rights. Development has to be human-centered and gender equitable to be sustainable.

At the national level, there are different pieces of legislation that guarantee the fundamental equal rights of women, and criminalise acts that transgress these rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As participants of this training session, you will acquire the capacity to:

- promote the rights of everybody with gender neutral lenses;
- advocate in favour of gender policies; and
- support all women and men who are facing discrimination.

Today's platform is also an opportunity to share with the participants some of the concrete actions taken to advance our Gender equity agenda.

We have introduced a strategy of Gender-responsive budgeting to address the problem of gender gaps.

It was launched on a pilot basis, during the financial year 2016/2017. This initiative was later extended to all Ministries and funds allocated for “*Gender Mainstreaming in Government’s Programmes and Policies*”.

I would like to highlight some other significant measures adopted in line with gender equality goals:

- The Companies Act has been amended to make it mandatory for the Board of Directors of a public company to include at least one woman;
- The Employment Rights Act has been amended to allow payment of a remuneration to women workers reckoning less than 12 months of service during their 14 weeks of maternity leave;

- A Gender Equality Bill will be introduced to set a strong and comprehensive legal framework for gender mainstreaming in order to achieve **substantive** equality, that is, equality in practice; and
- Each Ministry and public-sector institution is required to publish a Gender Policy Statement in their Annual Report.

I have also, on numerous occasions, expressed my commitment to fight the scourge of domestic violence.

In November 2019, the High Level Committee on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence was set up under my chairpersonship.

The High Level Committee completed its National Strategy and Action Plan for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence which was launched in November 2020, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of violence against women.

This National Strategy is being implemented at the level of four Technical Working Groups with the following objectives:

- (i) **first**, change societal norms and beliefs that are against principles of gender equality and equity;
- (ii) **second**, priority support services for survivors while holding perpetrators accountable;
- (iii) **third**, identify and redress discriminatory practices that perpetuate gender-based violence; and

(iv) **fourth**, coordinated Monitoring and Evaluation.

I am monitoring the implementation of these strategies on a regular basis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This training on gender mainstreaming is one of a series of activities being implemented by the different Technical Working Groups in order to ensure that we adhere to the principles of gender equality and equity.

The High Level Committee has launched a mobile application for victims of gender-based violence, called *Lespwar*. When victims press on a panic button, police promptly detect their location through GPS and save them from the clutches of their perpetrators.

Let us all contribute to raise the status of women and give them the rights they deserve.

Your role is to assist in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming agenda of Government. I rely on your full collaboration and commitment to ensure that this objective is successfully achieved.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you all for your attention.
