

**SPEECH BY THE JUNIOR MINISTER OF FINANCE
HONOURABLE DHANESHWAR DAMRY**

**On the occasion of the opening of launching of the preparation of the first
Country Climate and Development Report for Mauritius**

3rd February 2025

Honourable Rajesh Bhagwan, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

Mr. Sjamsu Rahardja, World Bank Resident Representative

Delegates of the World Bank

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols observed

Good morning

1. Thank you for having me at the opening ceremony of this consultative workshop.
2. The launching of the preparation of the first Country Climate and Development Report for Mauritius is a laudable initiative and serves the purpose of the people of Mauritius to protect its environment.
3. On behalf of the Government of Mauritius, I would like to thank the World Bank for spearheading this important initiative, another milestone in our long-standing partnership.
4. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and perhaps the last generation that can do something about it before irreparable damage sets in. We, the present generation of Mauritians, are the trustees and custodians of the rich natural wealth of Mauritius.
5. Allow me to humbly submit that the Mauritian nation is gradually but surely adopting behavioural change towards climate. What better testimony than the engagement of each and every one of us in the resolution of the

Wakashio oil spills! Now, let's make that environmentally conscious behaviour part of our day to day life!

6. We have a single mission: to protect and hand on an environmentally sustainable planet to the next generation. And here in this room this morning, our purpose is to protect and hand on an environmentally sustainable Mauritius to the next generation.
7. Two weeks ago, the President of the Republic outlined this government's program 2025-2029 "A Bridge to the Future" under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Climate change has been placed at the forefront of our agenda. The undertaking to include the rights of nature in our constitutional and legal framework demonstrates this government's commitment to fostering sustainability and climate change adaptation.
8. We acknowledge our climate vulnerability. We have experienced the devastating effects of cyclones. Risks associated with more intense or more frequent cyclones cannot be ignored. We have also experienced flooding, the effects of which have been aggravated by the outgoing government's lack of investments in infrastructure. Flooded homes, disrupted agriculture and coastal erosion all serve as stark reminders of the urgency of action.
9. Fighting climate change requires cooperation and will power. Mauritius comes with a clear commitment to the way forward. The government program "A Bridge to the Future" outlines our plan to address climate change. The core measures include.
 - One, the elaboration of sound climate policies and governance practices, including the development of a coherent and holistic strategy and the evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional, regulatory and legal framework to face the climatic risks and adaptation.
 - Two, the setting up of a Regional Centre for Research and Education on Climate Change and Socio-Ecological Transformation, which will act as a platform for the region to discuss and act on challenges posed by climate change and ecological threats.
 - Three, leverage our foreign policy to advocate for greater access to Climate Finance. And

- Four, introducing the concept of “Green” budgeting and integrate the need to address issues associated with climate change in the budgeting process.

10. Dear friends, I believe that the Country Climate and Development Report for Mauritius will provide thought leadership and insights into high impact actions, costs and policy roadmaps for climate adaptation and climate finance.

11. Regarding climate finance, at the COP 28, the World Bank Group committed to increasing its climate finance from 35% to 45% of total lending for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2025. In this regard, we urge the World Bank Group to channel more resources namely concessional financing towards Small Island Developing States so as to reinforce their climate adaptation and mitigation capacity.

12. Additionally, we would like to express our disappointment with the present criteria for accessing climate funds. Financing institutions have adopted a GDP-based approach that does not capture the complexity and risks of climate change for small islands like ours.

13. We seek Climate Justice. We request the World Bank to allocate more weight to vulnerability in its allocation of developmental finance. Such a change in focus could be a game changer for Mauritius and small island developing states, whose climate finance needs are momentous.

14. An important part of the GDP of Mauritius comes from sectors reliant on nature. I do not think that we have data on the impact of climate crisis on the economy of Mauritius?

15. Can you imagine the impact of coastal erosion on the tourism industry? On jobs and the local supply chain vendors? On the inflow of foreign currency, foreign reserves and balance of payments? On our GDP?

16. Time is running out. Mauritius needs to mobilize finance. As a matter of fact, the climate adaptation measures contained in the Nationally Determined Contribution are estimated at USD 6.5 billion, in the ratio of one third local mobilization and two thirds international mobilization.

17. Thus, I will urge the private sector to see opportunities through challenges and to unlock the green economy and blue economy as important growth

pillars. Please make strong commitments to ESGs to protect, conserve, restore and sustainably manage terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.

18. Speaking of ESGs, we are well aware that ESGs impact macro-economic stability and macro-financial stability. They impact the sovereign's capacity to respond to environmental and social challenges and climate risks. In fact, the latest Moody's ratings of January 2025 make reference to ESGs.
19. The Government is engaging with the World Bank to make climate policy choices that will hopefully offer growth opportunities driven by technological innovation, sustainable investments and a dynamic private sector.
20. For a moment, let's analyze global trends. Clean energy is boosting economic growth. Clean energy accounted for 10% of global GDP growth in 2023. Why is this not the case and can this become a possibility in Mauritius?
21. This is no time for politics. However, it pains me to remind you that the previous government brought down the contribution of renewable energy from 20% to 17% and failed present and future generations - totally unacceptable! The reason for bringing this up is for everyone to measure the magnitude of the tasks ahead!
22. Private sector colleagues, let me reiterate and emphasize the government's pledge to sustainable energy as the foundation of energy security and sustainability!
23. Going back to global themes, the blue economy contributes 4% or approximately USD 7.2 billion to the GDP of India with a maritime economic zone of about 7,500 square kilometres. The blue economy is another growth pillar for Mauritius with its 2,000 square kilometres of maritime economic zone.
24. For the green economy and blue economy to take off and succeed, green finance and blue finance need to be available, accessible and affordable.

25. In that context, I am pleased to advise that the Ministry of Finance has been working on the Mauritius National Green Taxonomy as an enabler of green finance.
26. Likewise, we are all aware of the role of carbon credits in finance. And I am agreeably surprised of the interests and emergence, albeit nascent, of green carbon and blue carbon in Mauritius. I believe that we should explore these financing mechanisms further.
27. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance has been receiving technical assistance in the implementation of green budgeting for climate resilient and environmentally sustainable measures.
28. Now, with so many partners in the room, I'd like to make an appeal to each and every stakeholder to engage with this growth friendly government. Talk to us. Discuss your initiatives. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will be an enabler and a multiplier for climate resilience and environment sustainability.
29. In the spirit of rebuilding public trust and confidence, I would like to share that I am privileged to be part of a credible and competent economic team under the leadership of the Prime Minister. It's a great learning curve.
30. The Prime Minister's economic leadership succeeded in maintaining our credit rating with Moody's despite inheriting a catastrophic economic situation from the previous government.
31. Therefore, have no doubt in this government's commitment and resilience under the leadership of the Prime Minister to climate change. So, I wish the World Bank's team a successful mission in Mauritius.
32. Before I end, I would like to summarize as below: -
- One, we owe it to our beloved Motherland and generations present and future, to preserve and build a legacy of climate resilient and environmentally sustainable Mauritius.
 - Two, amidst all challenges, green economy, blue economy, green finance, blue finance can diversify our economic base and becoming new growth pillars of national income and jobs. And

- Three, climate resilience and environmental sustainability are important for macro-economic stability and macro financial stability.

33.To conclude, I will make a call to action. DARE TO DO!

34.Long Live Mauritius! Thank You!