

Minister's Speech

LAUNCHING OF THE CHILDREN FILM FESTIVAL *Saturday 20th June 2009*

Dr The Hon Vasant Kumar Bunwaree

Mr Ragen, Permanent Secretary

Mr Christian Nayna, Chairman of MFDC

Mrs Ramyead, General Manager of MFDC

Ladies & Gentlemen

Good afternoon

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this afternoon on the occasion of the Launching Ceremony of the Children Film Festival.

First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to my colleague Hon Vasant Kumar Bunwaree Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources for his valuable help and support for making this event successful.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as per record held at the Mauritius Film Development Corporation, this is the 4th Edition of the Children Film Festival being organised in Mauritius. The Festival is scheduled to run for 9 days in 9 different regions giving the children the opportunity to watch 6 different well-known films, all of animation types.

Apart from providing entertainment to children, the films are inspirational in nature and are meant to shape the Childrens` perceptions in a positive way. It is therefore the duty of MFDC to take initiative to come up with such festival in order to acquaint our children with those films and stories which will create positive impressions in order to make them more productive/responsible citizens of tomorrow.

I can say that in a country like Mauritius, where the population is largely youth, film is very significant both as a learning tool in our classrooms; as an engine of growth for our economy; and as a medium of communication for cultural understanding, tolerance and inter-cultural communication. Film is therefore, one such area which the MFDC and my Ministry are committed to support by investing time and money as it can realise enormous benefits since it has a lot of spin-offs.

Last week I got the opportunity to watch 5 films produced by our local filmmakers during the launching of the Mauritian Film Festival and I can say that I am quite impressed. I would encourage those filmmakers to consider making fiction films for the benefit of our Mauritian Children. Those films that will be screened during this festival can only nurture and inspire local filmmakers to produce films to children in Mauritius.

Let me remind you that the entertainment industry across the world constitutes one of the major economic sectors contributing substantially to income and employment. We have a long way to go to establish ourselves but we must all share the vision of creating a dynamic film/image industry in Mauritius. Our youngsters must be encouraged to be part of this development and they must realise that opportunity of employment exists in this field. The audio visual sector, in fact, "est appeler a se developper rapidement a Maurice".

Ladies and Gentlemen, being Minister of Industry, Science and Research, I will always support any programme and initiatives of the Corporation that fall within the ambit of my Ministry. The Government believes that we have a reservoir of talents and potentialities that need to be fully exploited for the benefit of the film industry. In that perspective the MFDC will soon come up with projects that will involve children participation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources for having put at the disposal of the

Corporation a sum of Rs 2 M from the knowledge Development and Art Fund. This sum will be put at the disposal of our local filmmakers during the next local film competition which will be launched shortly.

Wishing you all a happy evening and a happy festival.