

**ADDRESS BY HON D. GOKHOOL,  
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE  
AND RESEARCH**

**Launching of Annual Mauritius  
Short Film Competition 2009-08-20  
and  
First Mobile Phone Film Competition**

**Thursday 20 August 2009  
at 14 30 hrs**

**La Petite Canelle, Domaine Les Pailles**

Mr S. Ragen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Science and Research

Mr C. Nayna, Chairman, MFDC

Mrs Kamla Ramyead

Board Members

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon and welcome. I thank you all for your presence and it gives me great honour and immense pleasure to be with you for the launching of the:

1. The Annual Mauritian Short Film Competition 2009
2. The First Mobile Phone Film Competition

### **Competition**

The competitions are being launched today by the Mauritius by the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) in collaboration with my Ministry and that of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. Allow me at the very outset to present the apology of my colleague - Hon Vasant Bunwaree, Minister of Education, Culture and HumanResources.

Before I elaborate on the two competitions being launched, allow me to briefly mention that today's event forms part of the overall strategy of Government -

- (a) To diversify and modernize our economy by developing new pillars;
- (b) To tap new sources of investment; and
- (c) To create new opportunities for employment to promote creativity and innovation.

Government's aim is to transform our economy into a knowledge based economy, a digital economy. After the Cabinet reshuffle in September, this overall strategy is being pursued.

MFDC comes under my Ministry's responsibility. Its mission is to develop a local film industry – Une Industrie du Cinema.

MFDC was created in 1986. We must admit that we are still a very long way from achieving its mission. The mission remains the same, but we need to review our strategies. My Ministry believes that MFDC has a bright future and has huge potentials.

With the combination of talents, technology, creativity and innovation, we can create a vibrant local film industry. This is our ambition and we have already taken a few important steps in this direction:-

1. Launching of Professional Training for our artists;
2. A Short Film Festival;
3. A Children Film Festival; and
4. Meeting with local stakeholders of the film world

In line with Government Programme, a new legislation is under preparation which aims to give a new boost to the cinematography industry.

The Annual Mauritian Short Film Competition 2009 is yet another opportunity for us to discover new talents, skills and creativity of our local filmmakers and potential ones.

The main objectives of this competition are:

1. To promote local production of films in view of the creation of a Mauritian Film Industry
2. To create awareness of new types of job in the film sector
3. To establish contacts between local filmmakers and the decision makers of the Industry
4. To promote creativity and discover new talents.
5. To sensitise the development of quality broadcast films for promotion both in Mauritius and in foreign countries.

Last year this competition was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts and Culture and had as theme ‘nou pei nou fierte’ to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the independence of Mauritius. There was a resounding response of some 50 entries which were recorded and out of which 5 best scripts were retained and financed for production to the tune of Rs 100,000 per film.

I can say that the 5 films produced are of good quality as I had the opportunity to view all of them during the Mauritian Film Festival which was organized recently by MFDC from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

This year, following the workshop I had with the filmmakers on 23 July 2009 and as per their valuable inputs and feedback, we have decided to make the competition open by not restricting it to any particular theme or context. This will indeed enable our participants to think more globally and develop a broader sense of creativity and imagination.

Unlike the precedent year whereby only 5 best scripts were selected for production to the tune of Rs 100,000 each, this year we are going to select 10 best scripts and Rs 150,000 will be allocated for production of each of the 10 films.

This has been possible, Ladies and Gentlemen, due to the financial support and personal commitment of my colleague minister Hon. Dr Vasant Bunwaree who has kindly put at our disposal, through the Human Resource Development, Knowledge and Arts Fund of his Ministry a fund of Rs 2.2 million for this year's competition.

This once again shows that we have at heart the development of the industry and no stone is left unturned to go forward to consolidate the film making industry. It also clearly demonstrates the vision of this Government to develop the film industry in Mauritius and I can tell you that I will always support any programmes and initiatives of MFDC that fall within the ambit of my Ministry.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us all hope that with this annual event, it can sail the film business to new height of success, pushing it off our coast into deeper waters, reaching new horizons and disseminating a new culture of filmmaking.

While I understand that few of the films produced last year did cross the borders to go to other countries, nominated at International Film Festivals – I am confident that this year our local filmmakers will improve upon their already acquired experience to produce even better quality films to reach new boundaries. It is only when our local made films are recognized and purchased that the local film industry will develop as it will generate revenue for further investment.

The second competition being organized by the MFDC in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources is about making a short film of 1-2 minutes using a mobile phone with camera.

The whole idea of such competition is that since the last few years, the development in mobile phone technology has been astounding. Since the addition of video and camera features, the mobile phone has become a creative tool for filmmakers and visual artists alike.

Therefore, if we are to achieve a culture of inclusiveness that empowers all human beings and provide for opportunities to blossom we must begin with young people. The creativity and talent of our youth should find expression in a constructive, healthy and positive manner. This is the reason why the MFDC is organizing this mobile phone film competition. Visual images are powerful means for young children to participate in and make sense of their world.

It is hoped that the idea of a mobile phone as a new creative tool will attract many to participate in an adventure involving cinematic art and the associated images.

The main objectives of this competition are:

1. To promote creativity and discover new talents
2. To make this new generation think and be able to tell quick story
3. To provide a new language and a new way of thinking

4. To incite the interest of the new generation in cinematographic language
5. To promote local production of films in view of the Mauritian Film Industry

The competition will be in two categories: categorie A - Children of 12-15 years and categorie B – Children of 16-18 years and will have as theme Family/Friends/Pets/Nature and Incidents of life.

At the end of this competition the MFDC will organize a mini film festival to showcase these productions around the country and to negotiate with Mauritius Telecom for the broadcast of the films through Video on Demand (VOD).

### **Training Workshop by Mr David Russell**

I am pleased to announce that MFDC has established contacts with Mr David Russell of Ozma Productions, Australia. He has submitted a proposal to run a two-week Master Class on directing on paper” The Art of the Story Board”. Consultation has been held with some film makers and arrangements are underway for conducting this Workshop.

David Russell is one of Hollywood top Concept Illustrators and Story Board Artist. He has worked on over 80 productions in close collaboration with celebrated film makers like Steven Spielberg – Georges Lucer, Peter Weir and Baz Lyrhmann. His name is associated with memorable sequences of major films like Star Wars and Batman.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am one of those who believe and advocate that competition is in fact essential if anyone wants to attain excellence. I, therefore, encourage the maximum of people to show interest in participating in the above competitions. We believe that Mauritius has a reservoir of talents and potentialities that need to be fully exploited for the benefit of the film industry.

Thanking you very much for your kind attention.

