

**SPEECH BY
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**MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE
AND RESEARCH**

ON

THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNATURE

OF AN

MOU BETWEEN IVTB AND FREIGHT ACADEMY

ON

WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2009

**Mr. Afzal Delbar,
Director Freight Academy**

Mr. Roland Dubois, Director IVTB

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon

I am delighted and honoured to be invited today to address you on the occasion of the signature ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding between IVTB and the Freight Academy whereby IVTB will be the Certified Body for courses run by the latter. This, I believe reflects the close cooperation between Government and private organizations. Indeed, if one has to search for a factor that has played a major role in the growth and development of our economy and which is often taken for granted, it would be the fruitful partnership that has always existed between the public and private sectors.

It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction that the Freight Academy and IVTB are taking such keen interest in the promotion and development of logistics services so vital for economic success.

Logistics

Logistics is one of the most important function without which a business organization cannot succeed. Logistics services which include activities required for the transportation, storage, handling of production inputs and finished products from producer to consumer is an important competitive weapon for market success. The performance of the logistics services can be analysed in the context of the logistics supply chain. Swift and seamless delivery is the primary objective along the entire supply chain. In order to achieve this objective, the supply of logistics services must be undertaken in coordination with the supply of other interdependent logistics services in the supply chain.

For a country like Mauritius which is isolated from its main sources of raw materials and export markets, logistics play a crucial role in terms of timely procurement of inputs and quick delivery of goods. The drastic changes in the consumption pattern and the need to respond quickly to meet tight delivery schedules have exerted additional pressure on our domestic enterprises.

Logistics play a key role in the value chain of products and services. As you may be aware, logistics is a primary value-added activity that is able to attain and sustain competitive advantage. In the wake of rising production costs, increased consumers demand and shorter lead times, poor performance in the logistics supply chain could have serious repercussions on the competitiveness of our products. There is,

therefore, a need for highly qualified and well trained manpower to offer better professional services. I am happy to note that the Freight Academy as a vocational and professional training centre in the field of international trade services and freight, has emerged as the right partner to cater for the requirements of our business community.

Training

I understand that so far some 300 persons have benefited from courses offered in fields like Shipping and Freight Forwarding, Customs Clearance, Supply Chain Management, Trade Documentation and Import / Export Procedures by the Freight Academy. All these initiatives, I am confident, will contribute to alleviate the difficulties of our enterprises to compete challenge successfully on the international scene.

It is gratifying to note that the logistics community has until now offered high quality services to our business partners at appreciable rates although it has at times been affected by a constellation of unexpected events.

Synergy

Ladies and Gentlemen

Government for its part is committed to strengthen the synergy between the private and the public sector. It is the combined weight of both that would provide the necessary drive and open new avenue to sustain growth. My Ministry is bent upon creating the necessary conditions to assist enterprises to sharpen their competitive edge.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The challenge facing us to-day as a result of the global recession is that of maintaining our international competitiveness. These new compulsions have put enormous pressures on us and poor performance in just one aspect of our logistics supply chain could seriously affect the competitiveness of our exported products. As such an efficient and cost effective supply of logistics services have become primordial for our survival. The signing of MoU between IVTB and Freight Academy comes at an opportune moment and will give additional impetus to meet the shortage of professionals skills in the logistics field.

Liners

Fully conscious of the importance of logistics in the supply chain, I recently met all the shipping liners operating in Mauritius and got the assurance from them that they will collaborate fully to facilitate shipment of goods at both import and export levels at competitive prices. As you may be aware, the Freight costs have gone down by about 50% since January 2009 and domestic firms are benefiting from these advantages. I am also glad to inform you that the University of Mauritius intends to offer courses in Logistics Management. An MoU has already been signed between the University of Mauritius and Le Havre in this perspective. The private sector is also playing an active role in the promotion of a logistics culture and in this respect MEXA has signed an MoU with the University of Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This new IVTB / Freight Academy collaboration will help us move into the future with renewed energy, fresh resolve and new hope. I am certain that the efforts of these two partners will help our logistics industry to thrive and become a major player in the region. May I end on this note, by re-iterating my thanks to the Freight Academy and to every one linked in the realization of this project.

Thank you.

D. G.