

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

**WORKSHOP ON CRIME  
IN ALL ITS FORMS  
AND CRIME PREVENTION**

**MONDAY 21 DECEMBER 2009 AT 09 30 HRS**

**Conference Room, UTM La Tour Koenig**

Dr S. Reddi, Chairman, UTM

Mr D. Fokeer, Director General, UTM

Heads of School

Associate Professor Bezuidenhout of South Africa

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

I am delighted to be here to-day to launch this first workshop on crime in all its forms and crime prevention.

I am in your midst by virtue of the responsibilities of my portfolio, which apart from Industry, also covers Science and Research.

### **Theme**

The theme of this Workshop - *Crime in all its forms and Crime Prevention*- is extremely important and interesting as it deals with an issue which directly concerns the safety and security of society and its people. I am also pleased to note that during the workshop, participants will have the opportunity to examine the theme from various angles, namely the causes

and impacts of crimes as well as the various types of crimes, including financial and cyber crimes

I understand that this is a first initiative of its kind and I want to congratulate UTM and Miss Ramsseur for this endeavour. I am happy also happy to note that we have an expert from South Africa, Associate Professor Bezuidenhout who is going to be the key speaker at the Workshop. Let me extend special welcome to you Professor and I have no doubt that your contribution will be most valuable and will help us look at the issue from novel perspectives.

## **Crimes**

Crimes in societies is not a new phenomenon. As a matter of fact there is no society that can boast of being crime free. Also, no modern, civilised society can be indifferent to crimes. It is the most basic responsibility of any Government, every Government, to keep the public safe. Law abiding citizens, their families, and the wider community have a right to expect to be safe in their homes and on the streets.

We all know that crime is a reality and there is always an element of fear whether we are on the roads, at home or at work. Crime can range from petty crime to more horrific murders and to white collar and cyber crimes.

While ordinary crime appears easily recognizable, offenses committed by business people, financiers, corporations and professionals often seem remote, complex and obscure. If we ask the question what is crime and how extensive is crime, it is not easy to obtain unequivocal and uncontested answers. Without rigorous and sustained research and analysis, none of these questions is capable of delivering satisfactory answers.

Crimes, if not tackled, can cause irreparable harm to the very foundation of societies, the quality of all lives of our citizens.

In a small island like Mauritius where there is no division between town and country, crimes can easily reach out to every part of the island with devastating effects. They can create a feeling of powerlessness, insecurity and undermine the law and order situation.

The prevalence of crimes can also undermine the authority and integrity of our Police and our Law Courts. Disorder and violence can become a fact of daily life in the island.

But it must be noted that the crime rate in Mauritius is low compared to industrialized countries as well as to African countries. But there is a high need to further decrease the crime rate. And the government is committed to provide a high degree of safety and security to both citizens and visitors.

### **Respect and Responsibility**

Because of their far-reaching, detrimental impacts of crimes on society and its well-being, it is imperative that there is proper understanding of the many factors which contribute to the spread of crimes. The available statistics about crimes are not exhaustive and detailed enough because there has been little research in the subject and we still lack expertise to analyze crimes. Very often we depend on conjecture and the explanations are impressionistic and not grounded in scientific evidence and hard facts. We are also not sure that the recording of crime is done properly. These shortcomings need to be addressed in order to refine strategies for tackling crimes more effectively.

Crimes continue to remain a major concern in our society. Two major questions are often being asked these days: What are the causes crimes and what can be done to tackle crimes in an effective and lasting manner?

One of the causes associated historically with crimes relates to the neglect of children as a result of female employment in the 1980s, in the wake of industrialization and the rise of career women. Some blame parents, single parents, teachers, priests, television, unemployment, poverty, affluence, lenient courts, consumerism, recession, and so on. Most damaging of all has been the dramatic decline in personal responsibility. Many people now believe that they are no longer wholly responsible for their actions. It's someone else's, or something else's fault - the environment, society, the government. As a society I feel sometimes we are in danger of being overrun by values which eat away at people's respect for themselves, each other, their homes and their neighborhood.

Over the past years the citizens of Mauritius have been experiencing higher standard of living and hence acquisition of assets brought by high rates of economic growth. Yet economic prosperity and globalization is also associated with higher rates of crimes.

The prevalence of crimes is also attributed by some to police methods which are termed as more repressive and less rehabilitative.

It is also argued that, better policing methods, better parenting, improved social amenities and full employment can be some of the remedies for crimes.

Prevention of crimes is thus of crucial importance for our economic development but paradoxically development, modernization bring in its wake new crimes.

To sustain our tourist industry we need to make it safe as tourist destination.

Secondly another important sector of the economy is ICT and the government has carefully assembled the infrastructure for a large, state-of-the-art cyber complex. However one major obstacle to the evolution and expansion of this sector is cyber-crime in various forms such as Theft of Information Services, Communications in Furtherance of Criminal Conspiracies, Telecommunications Piracy, Electronic Money Laundering, Electronic Vandalism and Terrorism, Sales and Investment Fraud, Illegal Interception of Telecommunications, Electronic Funds Transfer Fraud.

The setting up of the **Computer Emergency Response Team in 2008** gives a signal of the gravity of the problems associated with cyber crimes in the island.

The island is already *engaged in a lot of international financial business of a highly competitive nature and as such minimising if not eradicating financial crimes* (e. emarketing scams, investment or pension fraud,

financial abuse of the elderly, identity theft among others) *is of utmost priority if the country does not want to lose jurisdiction at the international level.*

Domestic violence against women, particularly spousal abuse, was a problem, according to the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, and Family Welfare; attorneys; and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Alcohol or drugs was a contributing factor in nearly 70 percent of these domestic violence cases.

The government is strongly committed to provide a high degree of safety and security to both citizens and visitors. A number of measures are being taken to deal with the problems at the source tackling drugs and alcohol problems, domestic violence, installing cameras, and education. We must make Mauritius safe for all but we also need to combat crimes to sustain our economic and social development.

To do so, an in-depth study on all aspects of crime is vital to know the source of the problems and how to deal with at the grass roots. At the same

time such a study will also help in planning resource allocation (given that there is more emphasis on sustainable development), providing management information, identifying crime series, designing and evaluating crime prevention schemes as well as informing participants in partnership approaches (neighbourhood watch schemes and local authorities for example).

## **Government Measures**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me highlight that combating crime in all its forms and crime prevention stand very high on our agenda. The Police Force has been completely reorganised in order to reinforce its institutional and operational effectiveness. In this context a series of measures have been taken to deal effectively with crime. These include the following:

- the structure of the CCID and its mode of operation have been reviewed to ensure effective crime investigation and detection.
- two new units have been created under the CCID, namely the Cybercrime Unit and the Robbery Squad to combat cybercrimes and larcenies, respectively.

- a Cyber-crime Protection and Prevention Committee has also been set up
- Field Intelligence Officers have been posted to various divisional CIDs with a view to gathering and disseminating information on crime in their respective region as part of the intelligence-led policing strategy.
- A Counter-Terrorism Unit has been established at the Prime Minister's Office as from August 2009 with the objective to act as the nodal agency of the Government in the prevention of, and combat against, terrorism and related matters, both locally and internationally.
- Border control has been improved at a cost of Rs 76 million to facilitate the flow of tourists and businessmen.
- A National Coast Guard Commando Unit has been set up to undertake specific mission in the maritime environment.
- The Central Firearm Index Database has been operationalised to improve control of firearms.
- Modern techniques are now being used by the Police, such as the *portrait robot* for identification of suspects. Video recording system for interrogation at the MCIT.

- A CCTV System has been introduced at Flic en Flac in April this year and it is being extended to Grand Baie and Port Louis which will be operational by May 2010. Another CCTV Street Surveillance Project for the region of Quatre Bornes covering the main road from St Jean to Candos is underway. With the introduction of the CCTV system at Flic en Flac, criminal offences have decreased by 75 percent in the region compared to previous years.
- A twin-engine Advanced Light Helicopter with a grant from India of Rs 307 million has been acquired to significantly enhance the operational capabilities of the Police in terms of maritime surveillance, and deployment of commandos in anti-piracy operations
- A Defender Fast Patrol Boat donated by the US Authorities will be available to the Police Force as from January/February next year.
- A new Digital Radio Police Communication System with more than 3000 terminals is also being implemented and will be connected to all units/branches and Police Stations of the Force.
- Police is having greater recourse to DNA in investigations as it is one of the breakthroughs for modern policing and for solving

crime. The Forensic Science Laboratory has been provided with necessary resources in terms of equipment and personnel.

- An additional 900 Police Constables are being recruited as part of our programme to improve security and reinforce law and order.
- Emphasis is laid upon on human resource development so as to have a competent, committed, motivated and developed Police Force that the country needs. Police Officers must learn and be trained on the latest technologies and master the new tools. Since 2005, over 700 Police Officers have followed specialized training courses abroad in a wide range of fields, namely investigative methods, combating drug trafficking, terrorism, fight against money laundering, ballistic, graphology and cybercrime. Some 60 courses have been run at the Police Training School for the benefit of around 7800 Police Officers.

Our legislative framework has been continuously reviewed. We have passed the Firearms Act in 2006, the Dangerous Drug (Amendment) Act in 2008, the Judicial Provisions Act in 2008 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (the one concerning internal obligations) in 2008.

The Police Department is in the process of formulating a National Policing Strategic Framework with the objective to reorganize resources, processes and systems within the organization. It will give a new vision and direction to the Police for the next 5 to 7 years or so. For the first time, a comprehensive National Security Strategy is being prepared to consider new and emerging security challenges and threats for the country.

The Police reforms undertaken by Government are starting to yield positive results. Thus, the overall crime rate has declined from 5.4 percent in 2007 to 5.2 percent in 2008. It is expected to decline further from 5.2 percent in 2008 to 4.9 this year. Government will ensure that this trend will continue in the years to come as we aim at a crime free society wherein people in general can enjoy a safe, peaceful and secure lifestyle.

Much has been accomplished ;a lot more needs to be accomplished. This requires new ideas, new perspectives, new methodologies and more out – of-the –box –thinking.

I hope this workshop will provide the opportunity for a very frank exchange of views among all stakeholders with the guidance of our visitor on this multi-faceted problem of crimes. We hope that an agenda for crime research will emerge both for the short and long term. My Ministry will wait with great interest a first report and from there we can push for

collaborative research so that we cut down further the rate of crimes and make the island free of crime.

This is indeed a tall order but we should strive towards this goal.

I now have the pleasure of declaring this workshop open.

Monday, December 21, 2009