

**SPEECH BY HON. S. SOODHUN
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE**

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON
JEWELLERY SECTOR AND THE WAY FORWARD**

**ORGANISED BY
ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS & MAURITIUS CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

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**LA CANNELLE
LE DOMAINE LES PAILLES**

**ON
27 MAY 2010 AT 9.00 HOURS**

**Mr. Amedee Darga, Chairperson, Enterprise
Mauritius**

**Mr. Mahmood Cheeroo, Secretary General,
Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

**Mr. Prakash Beeharry, Chief Executive Officer,
Enterprise Mauritius**

Participants

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The jewellery sector is one of the important economic pillars, providing employment to more than three thousand persons and earning export revenue of some Rs 2 billion.

Like all other economic sectors, this sector has to constantly reinvent itself in order to remain competitive and maintain a market share in the global jewellery trade. This is a great challenge, as the jewellery trade is already dominated by more developed countries such as the USA and Asian countries which benefit from the advantage of

advanced technology and high level, skilled professionals.

I therefore, thank Enterprise Mauritius and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the organization of this Brainstorming Session to assess the progress of the jewellery sector in Mauritius, to examine the challenges facing it and to devise a clear road map to sustain its development. This is a really laudable initiative.

I expect that the manufacturers and exporters from the jewellery sector will seize this opportunity to share their experience and participate actively in today's session, conducted by Mr. Fareed Jaunbaccus, Consultant from DCDDM and come up with meaningful proposals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The production of jewellery in Mauritius has mostly been carried out by small local enterprises, using traditional methods and models. These enterprises are not adequately equipped in terms

of equipment, knowhow, design capability, marketing and managerial skills to face a more competitive environment.

Jewellery production is a fast evolving activity in many parts of the world and requires constant innovation, creativity and quality improvement. We have to achieve “**haut de gamme**” production, adopt the latest technologies and acquire new skills to enable the sector to be competitive and for branding of the ‘Made in Mauritius’ jewellery. There is a need to encourage greater participation

of artists, designers, enterprises and artisans and put their creative talent to the use of the sector.

In this respect, I consider that it is a high priority to develop our professional capacity by increasing training opportunities and developing new skills. We expect that the newly established Fashion and Design Institute will introduce programmes to encourage craftsmanship and innovation.

It is very important for the jewellery associations and other stakeholders such as MCCI

and MEXA to maintain a constant dialogue in order to identify the needs of the sector.

I wish to express my appreciation for the positive work being undertaken by the Jewellery Advisory Council and invite them to continue to reflect on the upgrading of the sector.

I have taken good note of the proposals of the Council for the recruitment of a consultant to assist in the re-engineering of the School of Jewellery and introducing new courses such as

training in Computer-Aided-Design and stone setting; the organisation of a local jewellery fair; and curbing of fraudulent importation of gold and jewellery. I will give all my support for the implementation of these proposals.

As the international jewellery trade is highly competitive and dynamic, it is extremely critical for the Mauritian jewellery sector to find appropriate export markets. In this respect, Enterprise Mauritius has proposed participation in three Jewellery fairs this year. The first one was held in Italy in January. It is expected that more exporters

will take advantage of the next fairs known as Las Vegas Jewellery Fair to be held in June and the Bijorca Fair in France to be held in September 2010.

I would also like to inform you that investors from Middle East and India have shown interest in the Government project of developing the new Highlands city. It would therefore be pertinent to consider the setting up of appropriate infrastructure like those in Dubai, Turkey and Singapore for the sale of jewellery in the new city.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am informed that jewellers are concerned about certain issues, such as security. I wish to point out that the Prime Minister has already expressed his determination to take strong measures to reinforce security. Government is also implementing measures to install CCTV cameras in public places for the security of the public.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am looking forward to the outcome of this important brainstorming session. I expect that all

the stakeholders present here today will agree on a **national strategy** to create a high class jewellery manufacturing sector.

I wish to reiterate that my Ministry will provide all the necessary assistance and technical support for the implementation of the strategy.

I now have the pleasure to declare the brainstorming session open.

Thank You

