

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

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
WORKSHOP**

ON

GREENER AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY

**Wednesday, 29 July 2009
at 09 30 hrs**

La Cannelle, Domaine Les Pailles

Hon. Lormesh Bundhoo, Minister of Environment and National Development Unit

Mr. Claudio Caldarone, Resident Representative of the UNDP

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

Mr. Omaduth Jadoo, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and NDU

Mr. Smail Alhilahi, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO

Resource Persons

Participants

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to all of you.

I am delighted to be among you on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Workshop on Greener and Sustainable Industry organised by my Ministry. Allow me, at the very outset, to extend a very warm and cordial welcome and convey my thanks to all the participants and all the resource persons, among whom, some have traveled a long way to be here.

I also want to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Environment and NDU and UNIDO and UNDP for their support in the organisation of this workshop.

Sustainable Development

In fact, the idea to have this workshop was mooted after Mauritius hosted the International Textiles Manufacturers Federation Conference (ITMF) last year on the theme of “A Green and Sustainable Textile and Clothing Industry Responding to Climate Change”. The Conference highlighted the growing concerns for sustainable development, the increasing demand for eco-friendly products in our main markets and the need for enterprises to opt for cleaner production.

To-day sustainable development has become a global movement. The World Commission on Environment and Development has aptly defined sustainable development as a mode of development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. We have to leave to posterity a world that is safe to live.

The mode of production for and consumption by an ever-increasing population has put severe stress on our resources and the environment. Intensive agricultural and industrial activities coupled with unbridled

competition have engendered economic and production systems that continue to adversely affect the planet. The signs are already here. Global warming, climate changes, flood, drought and depletion of resources can only be reminders of the adverse impact of human activities. At the global level actions have been initiated under the Kyoto Protocol to avert further deterioration of the environment. Governments, therefore, are required to take concrete measures.

The United Nations 2005 World Summit has referred to the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillar of sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

In recent years, we have witnessed the elaboration of a number of international standards for eco-friendly products. The ‘Cahier des Charges’ of buyers now increasingly includes compliance with such standards. The demand for eco-friendly products is increasing at a rapid pace. And this trend is likely to continue.

So far, a limited number of our enterprises, in particular export oriented ones, are familiar with sustainable production and are certified to some of the standards. It is clear that those enterprises which are not able to comply with the exigencies of the buyers will encounter greater difficulties in marketing their products. We, therefore, have to assist our enterprises to

better understand the challenges of sustainable production, the market trends for eco-friendly products, the main product standards and the technical requirements for such standards and the support available to meet these standards.

Today fair trade, organic products, eco-labeling, cleaner production and carbon credit have become common place in the business sector. There is no doubt that we are moving towards a mode of production and consumption that will incorporate sustainability.

This concept has gained prominence in developmental policies of countries worldwide due to challenges emanating from the depletion of natural resources, emission of greenhouse gases and volatility of energy costs. Major international conferences including UN World Summits have been organised to come up with action plans to bring back economies on the path of sustainable consumption and production.

At these conferences, experts were unanimous that there is need to integrate sustainable development in the social, economic, environmental and cultural developmental strategies. It is considered imperative that we do not leave as legacy to future generations a world where global warming, droughts, floods and Tsunamis become irreversible calamities. Recent natural calamities can

only be a reminder of the extent of degradation of the environment as a result of human activities.

We have to encourage more of our enterprises to embark on this movement.

Workshop

Ladies and Gentlemen

The objective of the present workshop, therefore, is to sensitise our enterprises on the emerging issues related to sustainable production and to develop their capacity to respond to the new market requirements.

The theme of the workshop is part of the broader concept of sustainable development.

In respect of industrial development, sustainable production has never assumed such importance as it is now. Never before has so much attention been given to Green production and Green products. In fact, the new economy is the Green economy with emphasis on energy efficiency and reduction of carbon intensity. We can recall that during the International Textile Manufacturers Federation Conference, the representative of the world renowned Mark and Spencer was most straightforward in calling and reminding that buyers are placing a premium on Green and Clean products. The law of the market and imperatives to have a clean environment,

therefore, dictates that we leave no stone unturned to nurture a greener and sustainable industry.

MISR

The creation of a new Ministry for Industry, Science and Research last year was a clear signal from the Government that science and technology must contribute towards a new model of sustainable development.

It is in this context that as announced during the opening ceremony of the MID exhibition, my ministry is launching to-day itself the first Science Portal of Mauritius at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre.

My Ministry is concerned about the impact development on our sustainability and the role science , research and innovation (STI) can play on development issues both from the economic and social angles.

We are also very attentive to the emerging technical and non technical barriers to trade and in this context compliance with environmental norms and standards is emerging as a critical requirement .

MSB

Ladies and Gentlemen

That is why my Ministry is engaged in the promotion and implementation of schemes that address this growing concern for the protection and preservation of the environment.

In this respect institutions like Enterprise Mauritius and the MSB have a key role to play. EM is already implementing Energy Audit projects with regard to energy efficiency within enterprises .

For its part ,the MSB as the body responsible for the development and promotion of standards has recently drawn up a four-year strategic plan to position the Bureau as a Centre of Excellence in standards and conformity assessment services. The Bureau has as its mandate to provide support to stakeholders to face the challenges of globalization through the provision of market-driven standards, Metrology and internationally recognized conformity assessment services.

In pursuit of its diversification strategy, the Bureau now operates a National Management System Certification Scheme which constitutes in certifying organizations to MS ISO 9001:2008 (Quality management system), MS ISO 22000:2005 (Food safety management system), MS ISO 27001: 2005 (Information security management system) and MS 133 Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP). MSB also implements the Mauricert scheme.

It is in line with this strategy that the Mauritius standards bureau is today launching its Environmental Management system certification scheme, which will enable it to certify organizations to MS ISO 14001: 2004.

The Scheme

The EMS Certification scheme brings and integrates caring for the environment within the strategic orientation orientation of enterprises.

Industrial sector

Sustainability of the industrial sector also demands that we move from a resource-led economy to an innovation-led economy. We need therefore an entrepreneurial society with innovative ideas and a business community that can constantly innovate, adopt creativity and incorporate sustainability in their business model to differentiate their products and ensure continued competitiveness in the global arena. Knowledge, information and innovation

will be also determinant factors to sustain growth in the industrial sector. Without innovative practices we will not be able create value addition and undertake product differentiation which are now essential factors as we no longer enjoy trading preferences. With innovation we will be able to ensure that sustainable development will rely on increasing productivity share in GDP. Indeed, moving to an innovation-led economy will produce wealth, employment and societal well-being in a sustainable way.

I am convinced that Mauritius can successfully move into a next phase of industrial development propelled by an entrepreneurial and innovation led model of development where creative potential and knowledge of our people our people can propel a new paradigm shift. Undeniably, science and technology will be crucial factors to spearhead a next phase of industrial development where technology and knowledge intensive industries allow Mauritius to achieve higher levels of economic growth. We need advancement in information and communication technologies to further sustainable development through social and economic transformation. I believe that ICT will play an increasingly important role in building the social capability, which is the level of general education and technical competence essential to apply knowledge for sustainable development.

National Initiatives

Government is conscious of the need to project Mauritius as a clean production base. As a small island economy confronted with a number of inherent constraints, we have to leverage on factors to develop a brand image synonymous with sustainable production which will enable us to gain a competitive edge. We are striving to protect our natural environment so that our attractiveness as a Green Island is not eroded with time. We must demonstrate unflinching commitment in promoting cleaner production, enhanced efficiency in the use of energy and minimisation of waste, among essential conditions to promote sustainability in the economic development process in Mauritius. We should also focus on the **3-R's principle namely, Reduce, Re-use and Recycle.**

In its quest to build a Green future for Mauritius, Government has established the Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Fund which focusses on the the preservation of local natural resources to achieve sustainable development and adapting to climate change; harnessing all potential for local sources of renewable energy to reduce dependency on imported fossil fuel and energy management programmes amongst others. This Fund is the first of its kind in Mauritius and we need to take advantage so that in the medium to the longer term, our environment remain an asset for our developmental efforts. The MID concept is along term commitment of Government to improve the

nation's energy portfolio and security to endorse sustainable development and to address the threats of climate change.

We are grateful to UNIDO and UNDP for its support in the elaboration of a Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Programme for Mauritius. After an evaluation mission in Mauritius, UNIDO will come up with modalities and an action plan for implementation of this project. The Programme will also involve the establishment of a National Cleaner Production Centre that will facilitate the transition to cleaner production. I am confident that this Centre will play an important role in contributing to environment protection through promotion of cleaner production processes in our industries. The experience already gathered by UNIDO in other countries where similar Centres have been set up will be extremely vital to Mauritius. I am glad to note that UNIDO and UNDP has invited Directors of Cleaner Production Centres of three countries to share their experience during the workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Conclusion

This workshop has brought together well known professionals dealing with issues related to sustainable development. I will exhort enterprises present as well as public officers to take advantage of their presence. This workshop is just a beginning in the process to support our enterprises to adopt environment friendly production processes. I am confident that the National Cleaner Production Centre, to be established with the assistance of UNIDO, will drive this process.

Allow me to end by thanking again all the stakeholders who have contributed in the organisation of this workshop, the resource persons and the UNIDO which is standing by our side at this crucial stage of our development process.

I have the pleasure now to declare the workshop open.

Thank you