

**ADDRESS BY HON D. GOKHOOL,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION & HUMAN
RESOURCES**

**INAUGURATION CEREMONY
OF
THE CENTRAL FLACQ PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Thursday, 30 April 2009

At 10 00 hrs

**Central Flacq Public Library
Opposite Flacq District Court, Central Flacq**

Hon Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land
Transport and Shipping

Hon Rajendrakumar Mungur, Parliamentary Private Secretary

Mr R.K. Choony, Chairman of Moka Flacq District Council

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to congratulate and pay tribute to those noble minds who have decided to put up a Library in Flacq. I would like particularly to congratulate Mr Choony, the Chairman and members of Moka Flacq District Council as well as the Chief Executive for this laudable initiative.

Strategic Location

Central Flacq, apart from being my Constituency, is also a strategic location where people from different parts of the country including a sizable student population, converge daily for various reasons: economic, professional and cultural. In fact, Central Flacq has come to represent a microcosm of our Mauritian panorama and it offers a full range of public and private sector services.

With the creation of this library, the District Council is further extending the services available to the public in general and student commonly in particular.

This is in line with Government policy to instill in the population, particularly, the most vulnerable groups of the society, a sense of discovering pleasure in reading and widen their knowledge in different fields. Apart from our National Library and national archive and a full range of libraries in our school system, Government is also taking steps to make library facilities available to the larger community. It is in this context that Government has recently introduced legislation to convert the existing Centre de Lecture de d'Animation Culturelle into the Centre de Lecture Publique into the Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle (CELPAC) in order to encourage and promote reading through artistic, cultural and educational activities especially among those persons for whom access to library activities is practically inexistent.

Our ambition is to develop a strong, and vibrant National Reading Culture.

Library Facilities

A library is a knowledge centre and plays a key role in shaping the future of a society. At a time when the country has the ambition to become a knowledge-based society, the setting up of this library could not have been more timely and more opportune. Like all libraries, it will help to democratize access to knowledge and empower our citizens. My wish is that this library plays an active role in promoting a national reading culture. Reading is a powerful medium not only for sharing knowledge but also for building national character and culture. As it is said – exercise is to the body, is what reading is to the mind. “La Lecture est à l’esprit ce que la nourriture est au corps. En effet, e livre est un outil magique qui permet d’une grande ouverture sur le monde du réel aussi bien que l’imaginaire :.

Books have always represented one of the greatest wealth of human civilization and the creation of a library is one of the most precious investment a society can make in favour of the present and future generation.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a special appeal to teachers and parents. As you are aware, we are living in a digital society where today's generation prefer the digital culture to reading and writing and our children spend more time watching television, browsing the net, downloading games or films, text messaging and listening to audio and e-books. Research has shown that this digital culture is impacting adversely on the reading habits of our children creating learning disabilities and poor language skills. Children with poor reading skills end up receiving poor grades, get often fail to develop to their full potentials. Our children need help to develop to their full potentials. Our children need help to develop the ability to read so that they can comprehend subjects better at school and improve the overall academic performance. But for this happen, both teachers and parents should inspire the children to develop a love for reading right from the early age.

I would also recommend that the library develops special children reading corners and enlist the support of experience resource persons to inculcate in our children a love for reading.

I have no doubt that this library will play a decisive role in enriching the artistic and cultural development of Central Flacq and the surrounding region. I once again congratulate Mr Choony and his team for this very laudable initiative.