

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

ON

**THE OCCASION OF THE
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD COMPETITION**

ON

31 JANUARY 2009

**AT CYBER TOWER, EBENE
AT 18 45 HRS**

**My colleagues Hon Ministers,
Members of Parliament
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen**

Good evening and welcome to the very first edition of the
award ceremony for the “Business Excellence Award” Competition
being organised by my Ministry.

Landmark event

As the new Minister of Industry ,Science and Research, I am deeply
honoured to be associated with the holding of this prestigious event
for the Corporate Sector.

I am sure it has been an exciting journey for all participants and
organizations who have contributed towards the realization of this
event .

I sincerely thank and congratulate all those who have been on our
side acting as assessors, members of the Jury and who have
contributed towards the conception and implementation of this
project.

I can say that you will be for ever known as pioneers of a competition which Government has organized for the first time for all business sectors. I also wish that this tradition is perpetuated for the benefit of those who are the torchbearers of excellence.

This is indeed a landmark event when we shall be recognizing and rewarding excellence.

May I remind you that a few weeks ago, a Brand Development Grant of Rs 1 m each was awarded to 5 enterprises to support their Brand Development Strategy by Enterprise Mauritius. Another project contributing to our drive towards excellence.

Let me congratulate all the participants for your faith and confidence in business excellence.

I wish every one of you nominated for this award the very best of luck this evening.

This is a fantastic achievement and well worth celebrating..

Rationale for a Business Excellence Award Competition

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Business Excellence Award Competition has been built on a comprehensive set of criteria ranging from

- Vision and strategic planning,
- leadership skills,
- human resources empowerment to
- marketing
- financial management
- use of information technology, and Innovation

Enterprises will emerge from this competition as Business Role Models. They will inspire other enterprises to make the best use of economic and assessment tools to promote productivity and competitiveness.

We want all enterprises to aim at a culture of excellence in their business practices and to continuously improve their goods and services to reach world standards..

Why? Because the world has been undergoing major transformation since a number of years, mainly as a result of trade liberalisation and globalization replacing preferences and protection.

To-day there are at least five overarching inter-related and changing dynamics which are reshaping global manufacturing: **Global Value Chains, Technology exploitation, Intangibles like branding and design, People and Skills and Low Carbon Economy.**

It is clear that the business environment has undergone fundamental transformations, affecting both global and local business operations.

I do not need to tell you that these are tough times for business. As the global credit crunch continues to impact companies, industries and households across the world; we need bold new thinking and approaches to tackle the global crisis.

You are under tremendous pressure to raise productivity, reduce costs, enhance quality, move up- market, upgrade their products and reduce response time.

In this era of openness, business enterprises have to stand on their own feet as trade preferences and tariffs protection regimes are being dismantled. They have also to deal with new market conditions which now include the second generation issues like TBT(Technical Barriers to Trade).

Challenges

These challenges have to be addressed. The pursuit of excellence is not only an essential condition for success of our **enterprises** in this highly competitive business environment but is also a matter of our survival.

Our captains of industry have shown resilience and tenacity. We are deeply proud of them. In these tough times, it is important not to talk ourselves into thinking that it is all doom and gloom. Remember your creativity, imagination and entrepreneurial flare are essential to help the country get through the storm.

The government will stand by you and we will continue to create the right conditions to support you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From a national perspective, the performance of each enterprise is a contributor to our economic well-being. It is obvious that the sum total of the income of individual enterprises constitute the national income. The ability to expand our national income and for that matter our GDP per capita inevitably hinges on the competitiveness of our enterprises.

We want to see our enterprises notch higher level of income and create more employment and wealth for the country. However, in a globalised market, the pathway of an enterprise is fraught with

challenges. The question, therefore, is how to negotiate your journey along such a pathway?

Like a long distance runner, an enterprise has to weigh up weaknesses and strengths, reassess its strategies in a changing environment and take corrective measures to strengthen its sinews in order to attain its objectives.

I believe time has come to establish a National Business Observatory to scan on a regular basis the international business scene and identify trends and developments of interests to Mauritius. Enterprise Mauritius ,together with the Corporate and the Academic community will have to work on this proposal. This arrangement will provide useful Research and Business intelligence support support to the business community.

Development of new competitive factors in Mauritius

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is no doubt that the strategic option for Mauritius lies in the adoption of business excellence at all levels to achieve sustainable growth and strengthen competitive positions.

Business excellence involves moving in the realm of being the creator of new products and services. It involves constantly improving existing products and services. It implies compliance to

social and environmental norms as well as adherence to rules of Good Governance.

Business excellence should become the DNA of the new Generation enterprises.

Innovative and Quality

During the recent International Textile Manufactures Federation(ITMF) conference held in Mauritius, it was also clearly spelled out that Green technology is now assuming paramount importance. We must explore and apply concepts and tools to go in line with our ambition to make of Mauritius “ Une Ile Durable.” Innovation and innovative practices and superior quality should become the norms in our business practices.

A country like Singapore, hailed as a success story Asia, moved, in the 90's, from labour-intensive industrialization to enterprise development industrialization. Since then it has experienced a new wave of industrialization articulated on Innovation.

Allow me here to quote from its Innovation Manifesto. Quote: *The manager's role is to facilitate and allow his staff to optimize their innovative capability. By instilling a sense of purpose and creating the broad framework and safe environment in which the staff could operate, new ideas, experiments and change become the norm*

rather than the exception. Supervisors must move from “Managing resources” to “leading” and “inspiring people”. Leadership skills must be honed for the New Economy. Unquote.

Role of Government

Ladies and gentlemen,

Government, on its part, has a vital role to play to create the propitious environment. In this context, fundamental economic reforms undertaken since 2005 have provided greater resilience to the economy. Alongside, new measures are being taken to strengthen the economy. In respect of the industrial sector, the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME development Fund of Rs500 mn has been set up to foster competitiveness. Under this Fund, some 50 projects have been formulated for consolidation, modernization, expansion and diversification of the manufacturing and SME sector.

An additional stimulus package with an allocation of Rs. 10.4 billion was introduced in December last to shore up the economy. This package focuses on infrastructure development, promotion of private sector investment, building human capacity and supporting vulnerable sectors.

We have reorganised Enterprise Mauritius to enable provision of a wider range of services on more efficient lines. New measures have been taken to boost marketing efforts in countries like Australia, the Scandinavian countries, Russia and India through appointments of trade representatives, adverts for greater visibility to our products, and establishment of direct ties with buyers.

My Ministry is finalizing its New Industrial Strategy which will lead to the implementation of a number of measures that foster innovation, enhanced support services, greater synergy with the academia, and accentuated marketing support, among others.

A policy framework on integration of Science, technology and Research with industry is also being finalised. We also propose to undertake a Feasibility Study on the setting up of a Science and Technology Park in Mauritius. I believe that we need a model geared to propel a technology and innovation-led industrial development in line with the concept of business excellence.

New phase

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world has entered into a new era. We are engaged in a new phase of our economic development. Industry remains one of the strongest pillars of our economic and social development. It will remain the engine of growth for many years to come.

Government, Corporate sector and the Civil Society must reckon that time have changed. A new Business culture of Superior Performance, Excellence, Innovation ,Social Responsibility and Sustainability is redefining the contours of the new industrial landscape.

Together as partners we can better shape the destiny of the country to become a newly industrialised nation that thrives on attributes of excellence. This Business Excellence Award Competition comes at the right time. It will trigger awareness, knowledge, and insights and foresights.

We stand on the threshold of a new era where the challenge of Excellence beckons us all as a nation.

Lets us unite and move the nation to its next level of prosperity for all.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me once again to congratulate this year's award winners, wish good luck to all the participants and welcome all those who will participate in next years' edition of the Business Excellence Award Competition.

Thank You

