

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2010**

## **EDITORS' NOTE: First Issue of Education News**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Education News*.

With the creation of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, the tertiary education sector has taken a new direction. As we embark on the challenging mission to make Mauritius a knowledge Hub, the need for information sharing is being felt more than ever. Therefore, this newsletter's core mission is to capture and reflect the world of science, research and technology based on projects, issues and activities of institutions falling under the aegis of this Ministry.

Through the window of this monthly online newsletter, we aim at creating awareness and encouraging thoughtful consideration so as to allow you to participate in our endeavours towards greater achievements.

In the first online publication of *Education News* we are going to have an overview of major events which took place in July 2010.

If you have any feedback about this issue, or would like to submit news items, please send your mails at [abedacee@tec.mu](mailto:abedacee@tec.mu).

Enjoy your read!

Sincerely,

Dr. Aansa Bedacee  
Editor

### **Inside this issue:**

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## FRUITFUL MISSION TO INDIA



The mission of the Mauritian delegation to India to attract foreign students and renowned institutions to Mauritius has been successful.

Headed by the Hon. Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, the Mauritian delegation was in India from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to participate in the Times Boutique 2010 and to meet potential investors and renowned tertiary education institutions.

At the Times Education Boutique held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010, 536 persons visited the Mauritian Pavillion named “Study Mauritius” out of which 138 students have shown their interest to our 9 participating education providers to study in Mauritius next year.

Moreover, the multiple meetings with potential investors and renowned institutions resulted in obtaining scholarships for Mauritian students, getting renowned professors to act as mentors to Mauritian researchers and receiving proposals for the setting up of private post secondary education institutions in Mauritius.

## LARGEST GATHERING OF RESEARCHERS & PhD HOLDERS



300 researchers and PhD holders attended the first and largest meeting specifically dedicated to research and innovation in Mauritius.

Organised by the Tertiary Education Commission, the Researcher's Meeting took place on 29 July 2010 at the Cyber Tower.

This event came at a time when the need is being felt in various quarters for the generation of new knowledge and new products and services, crucial to the enhancement of the socio-economic need of the country. Dr. the Honourable Rajeshwar Jeetah who chaired the meeting, laid emphasis on the importance for our researchers to work together for innovation as well as for academic excellence.

It is envisaged that the fruitful collaboration of researchers will positively impact on our lives in different ways, such as through improved medicines, more efficient and sustainable energy resources, new technology, etc.

## UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS TEAMS UP WITH NOBEL LAUREATES



3 Nobel Prize laureates in Chemistry participated in the International conference on Pure and Applied Chemistry (ICPAC 2010) held in Mauritius from 26 to 30 July 2010.

Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry in 2009, Professor Ada E. Yonath, best known for her pioneering work on the structure of ribosome travelled to Mauritius to deliver plenary lectures at the four-day conference whilst her counterparts Nobel Laureates Prof. Roald Hoffmann (1981) and Prof Aaron Ciechanover (2004) participated as International Advisory Members. The Conference was specially dedicated to “Chemistry for sustainable development”, a subject which is highly relevant to the vision of the Mauritian Government.

About 150 international participants and 50 local scientists attended the conference which involved plenary lectures, oral and poster presentations, workshop and symposia.

According to Associate Professor Ponnadurai Ramsami, Head of Department of Chemistry at the University of Mauritius and member of the Organising Committee, “The participation of Nobel Laureates in our conference can play an important role in promoting research in Mauritius.”

Very often, the World's scientific and thought leaders quietly slip in and out of our little country without attracting attention but leave behind a knowledge legacy for our up and coming scientists.

## MEETING WITH BUSINESS ANGELS

### 1<sup>ST</sup> INVESTORS (BUSINESS ANGELS) FORUM

Many innovative ideas and research projects die due to lack of money. Perhaps an angel is needed!

In this context, the first Business Angels' Forum was organized by the MRC to enable Investors to meet and explore investment opportunities with innovators having commercially viable ideas. This initiative will also encourage Mauritian innovators to come forward with their innovative ideas for a business.

The Business Angels' Forum was officially launched by Dr the Hon Rajeshwar Jeetah on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at 15h30 at Four Points by Sheraton in Ebene.

Approximately 30 prominent personalities from the business community participated as 'Business Angels' in the forum which was opened to researchers of the academic world as well as to the public in general. The MRC received 80 proposals from interested participants, some of which were highly innovative. Project proposals cover a wide range of sectors including Agribusiness & food industry, IT & Engineering; Textiles and Tourism. The selection of the best projects was performed by an independent evaluation committee based on criteria which include the innovative aspect, feasibility, validity, market opportunity, competitive advantage and growth potential.

It is envisaged that this forum may lead to the transformation of innovative ideas conceived in Mauritius into commercially viable business enterprises and partnerships.

## INCREASING ACCESS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION

University is not just for successful HSC school leavers! Now, people with SC can make the decision to get into higher education through foundation programmes.

The Government has agreed that all Publicly Funded Institutions with awarding powers will now offer foundation programmes as part of their curriculum.

The entry requirements for the foundation programmes are a Cambridge SC (with at least 4 credits including English) and 1 'A' level at HSC.

It is also possible for mature students over 25 years of age to get access to Tertiary Education. The requirements are SC (with at least 4 credits including English) and at least 3 years of relevant working experience.

## VIRTUAL CLASSROOM FOR REAL LEARNING

On 15 July 2010, 12 students started their Bachelor of Business Administration Programme (BBA) at the Mauritius College of the Air through virtual learning.

This has been made possible through the Pan-African E-Network Project which is a joint initiative of the Government of India and the African Union aiming at imparting education to 10,000 students in African Countries.

The BBA degree is run by the well-reputed and accredited University of Madras and instead of attending lectures on a campus in South India, Mauritian students are required to be present in the Learning Centre of MCA which is linked to satellite technology. The learner in Mauritius not only sees and hears and interacts in real-time with the Tutor but can also interact with learners from other African countries, namely, Tanzania, Ivory Coast Somalia.

One of the major benefits of using virtual classroom is that travel time and expense can be reduced or eliminated. The MCA intends to multiply its links with other universities, thus expanding the array of courses run under the Pan-African E-Network Project.

## CARAVANE DE LA SCIENCE



The Caravane de la Science was launched on 21 July 2010 at Bel Air Rivière Sèche. Organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre Trust Fund, the Caravane de la Science is a series of science based programme destined to travel to schools, community centres and other public places around Mauritius to conduct science activities to keep the population abreast with the developments in Science and Technology for a better life.

The objectives of this programme are to communicate science and technology in the community; promote public understanding of science issues and supplement the school curriculum in a non-formal, interactive and fun way. The main benefits of the Caravane de la Science will be an increased awareness and understanding among the community on the important role that Science and Technology plays in our life and hence aiming at a scientifically literate country.

## ARTISTS' WORKSHOP

A 10-day workshop brought together professional artists, staff and Art students from the Mauritius Institute of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, University of Mauritius, University of Technology Mauritius and Charles Telfair Institute.

This project was organised by the MGI and National Art Gallery to commemorate the Battle of Vieux Grand Port. Launched by the Honourable Mookhesswur Choonee, Minister of Arts and Culture, the workshop was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> July 2010 in the Art Gallery of the Fine Arts Building of MGI. Out of 30 proposals received, 20 were selected and each selected artist received a sum of Rs 25000 to realise her/his project. Cash Prizes will be awarded to the 3 best entries.

Art works created during the workshop will be exhibited at Pointe Canon, Mahebourg, Open Air Theatre, from 30 July to 30 August 2010.