

**60th Anniversary Celebration of New Devton College on
Thursday 18th August at 10.30 a.m**

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you this morning to share your joy and excitement at the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the New Devton College. I am grateful to the Management for their invitation and the opportunity to deliver this address.

When Mr. Navinchandraduth Poonith founded the college in 1962, his mission was to educate responsible, lifelong learners so that each student possesses the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of work and values to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world.

Faithful to this mission, the college strives to provide an environment conducive for the proper learning and development of its students in order to meet the challenges of the coming decades. Since its creation, the management has invested significantly in improving the school infrastructure and providing educational facilities such as modern laboratories, computer rooms and a highly resourced library.

Such investment contributes to develop pupils who become critical thinkers, with an understanding of the importance of life-long learning. Sixty years have elapsed and lots of students have been moulded and are now interacting with different professions in our society

You will definitely learn more about New Devton College by going through the magazine which will be launched in a few minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen

Academic performance is a good indicator but not the only one to assess the performance of an establishment. While comparing performances we need also to bear in mind the levels of intake.

I should like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the pioneers who contributed to make the future of this country brighter than what it might have been, by setting up private secondary schools in the country at a critical stage of its economic and social development. They have been an effective tool of social and economic empowerment for vast numbers of Mauritians at a time when the economy was still narrow-based.

The pioneers who established private secondary schools were men and women of strong dedication, who took the risk to fill up the void in which those who had been left behind by the elitist public and confessional schools, were finding themselves. They were the Obeegadoos of Trinity College, the Bhujoharrys of Bhujoharry College, the Pattens of Patten College, the Balgobins of Eden College, the Roys of Mauritius College, the Venkatasamys of New Eton College, the Jeetahs of Prof Bissoondoyal College, the Khadaros of Darwin College, the Chan

Lam of London College, the Bolakees and Chamroos of Universal College, the Sanmukhiyas of Modern College, the Bunwarees of Ideal College, the Napals of Cosmopolitan College, the Chellappoos, Bhugalooos, Luchmuns, and many others.

Sadly, many of the educational establishments which saved a full generation of Mauritians by imparting education when the latter had nowhere else to go to are now extinct. Some private establishments, including New Devton College, are still around despite the era of free education at the secondary level which came into play from 1976 and the competition from the better equipped state secondary schools. It can be said however that private secondary schools of the 1950s and the 1960s have played a critical role to help this country reap fully the benefits of our education system.

It is universally recognized that Education is a fundamental human right and a major driver of human and economic development. It strengthens personal integrity and shapes the societies in which we live. Access to education is crucial in order to enable the youth to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies that are required for employment, social inclusion and active citizenship.

Education is not only important for economic growth and prosperity. Education is also critical in promoting peace and social cohesion. We should not forget that ignorance leads to fear, fear leads to hate, and hate leads to violence.

We must not forget that the most potent way to empower the youth is through education. Not just any kind of education, but the right kind of education which trains them to be scientific, logical, open-minded, self respecting, responsible,

honest and patriotic. They need quality education that prepares them for future opportunities.

Government's aim is to transform Mauritius into an international higher-education hub catering for the needs of the region, especially those of Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and Asia. Leveraging its tradition of excellence, stability and pleasant living environment, Mauritius holds the trump card to become the new regional hub for world-class education services.

What education is needed for the future is a concern of the government and in this perspective the government wishes to give a world class education to the children. The government aims at ensuring that there are enough quality educational institutions in order to prepare the Mauritian children to meet these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen

On its happy 60th anniversary, I wish New Devton College the very best for the next 40 years to become a centenarian. To the rector, the teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, I congratulate you for your fantastic effort in nurturing our young boys and girls in whom we trust the future of Mauritius