

**Celebration of World Day for Decent Work organized by the State and Other Employees Federation on Thursday 7 October at 09.30 at Unity House**

I am privileged to be invited to address you on the occasion of “**World Day for Decent Work**”. Thank you Mr. Chadien and members of the State and Other Employees Federation for this invitation.

The COVID-19 crisis has uncovered the huge decent work deficits that still prevail in 2021. In particular, the crisis highlights the vulnerability of millions of working people and the lack of social protection coverage. At the same time, many small businesses are operating in precarious situations and global supply chains are often too weak to be sustainable.

With more than 200 million jobs lost to the pandemic, another hundred million still at risk and large numbers of unemployed people – the vast majority of whom are women – simply dropping out of the labour market, the World Day for Decent Work will call on every government to develop jobs plans.

Job creation is central to the New Social Contract, along with rights, social protection, equality and inclusion. This is absolutely central to recovery and to building the resilience needed globally to deal with the pandemic and other existential threats.

Decent work must be at the centre of government actions to bring back economic growth and build a new global economy that puts people first. Governments must have one overriding priority, **and that is jobs**. They need to recommit to full employment, thus providing the basis for economic security and social justice.

Decent jobs are an outcome of tri-partism or social dialogue where governments, employers and workers, usually represented by their unions, have set the regulatory and legislative framework that establishes what rights, social protections and enterprise incentives are in place.

Thus there is need for Government, trade unions and employers to get around the table to set ambitious targets to create and retain jobs as a matter of urgency. And then they need to meet those targets by ensuring the creation of climate-friendly jobs.

I would like to address one crucial precondition for achieving inclusive and sustainable growth, and that is decent work for all, women and men and young people.

Decent work is crucial for each individual worker. But ensuring labour rights is very beneficial for responsible employers. Decent work increases productivity, competitiveness and economic stability. It creates a win-win-win situation – for workers, for employers and for societies.

**For states**, the Global Deal concept means ratifying and respecting the ILO's core conventions, including the right to organise, the right to negotiate, and recognising social dialogue as an essential part of the democratic form of government.

**For employers and companies,** it means respecting these rights in practice, taking their social responsibility and being prepared to negotiate agreements locally, regionally or globally.

**For trade unions,** it means cooperating and bearing in mind their social responsibility when they negotiate, but also contributing to the overall development of the country.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, our written Constitution explicitly protects the fundamental rights of all its citizens. Adopting Decent Work as a national objective is therefore fully in line with the spirit and letter of our Constitution.

In fact, decent work has always been at the heart of our national economic and social strategies. Much emphasis has been laid over the past years by Government on the creation of decent and productive employment, which is considered central to efforts made towards poverty reduction as a means of achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

Mauritius has always followed the **UN Sustainable Development Goal No.8 - Decent work and economic growth** – by promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The country has raised the level of its ambition of seeking a brighter future for its people by elaborating and finalising the Second Generation of the Decent Work Country Programme (2019-2023) with the collaboration of the International Labour Organisation.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Tri-partism and social dialogue have helped to boost Mauritius economic competitiveness and contribute to the country overall progress. I, therefore, take this opportunity to thank trade unions for their support while at the same time looking after the rights and welfare of the employees.

I conclude by congratulating the state and other Employees Federation for organising this event.

Thank you for your attention