

**5th Edition of the Open Africa Championship Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu on Saturday
18 November 2023 at 09:00 at Côte D'or National Sports Complex**

Hon. Vikram Hurdoyal, Minister Agro-industry and Food Security

Hon. Zahid Nazurally, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. Luchmun, President of Mauritius Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation

Lovers of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

I am very happy to see over 750 athletes from 14 countries including elite of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu practitioners, enthusiasts, and promising young athletes who have responded present to the 5th edition of the Open Africa Championship.

Thank you Mr. Luchmun and members of the Mauritius Brazilian Jiu-jitsu Federation for this invitation and organisation.

No doubt, this championship will showcase the skill, sportsmanship, and cultural diversity within the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu community. It will provide a platform to expand the reach of this martial art across the globe and reinforcing cooperation platform for athletes from around the world to compete and represent their respective countries.

Ladies and gentlemen

A healthy society is the best society in many ways. This is the universal truth. Sports are directly linked to some very basic elements of a good society like health, education, upbringing, patriotism, socialisation, communication, among a host of others. Today, when our young people are under the influence of drugs and other unhealthy activities, sports can liberate them.

Sports offer enormous benefits and can point young people in the right direction. Thanks to sport, young people acquire a positive body image because they provide a feeling of competence and a physical effect on the metabolism.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and other martial arts aim to develop the body and mind, thanks to technique, concentration and moral values. They require not only physical strength, but also great mental strength.

Encouraging people to practice any form of martial arts will give them the opportunity to express their needs and to use their energy and talents. They will learn some core values that are very important to society.

These values include **Respect, Excellence, Friendship and Discipline.**

Respect is the number one thing in martial arts, because it is not just respect for the instructor, it is respect for your opponent and your peers. Respect includes respect for yourself and your body, for other people, for rules and regulations, for sport and for the environment.

Excellence means doing the best you can, on the field of play or in your professional life. The important thing is not winning, but taking part, making progress and enjoying the healthy combination of body, will and mind.

Friendship is at the heart of any sport event. It encourages you to see sport as an instrument for mutual understanding between individuals, and between people all over the world. As a Chinese saying goes: “**Making friends through martial arts**”.

Discipline is also a benefit of martial arts because you have to follow instructions if you want the desired results, and correct techniques.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Government of Mauritius is fully aware that the development and promotion of sport, whether at the community or professional level, is essential for a more resilient Mauritian population.

Given the low levels of physical activity and the high prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, the Mauritian government has recognized the need to place greater emphasis on sports and physical activity for all.

This very place where we are meeting today, that is the Côte d’Or Sports Complex, bears testimony to Government’s effort in the promotion of sports and physical activities.

The complex has hosted many regional and international events.

I wish to salute the Mauritius Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation for presenting this 5th Edition of the Open Africa Championship in collaboration with the Sport Jiu-Jitsu African Federation and the Sport Jiu-Jitsu International Federation.

This championship promises to be a thrilling and captivating experience for all involved.

I will therefore conclude by expressing my sincere gratitude to all those who have long loved and supported traditional martial arts. May this 5th Edition of the Open Africa Championship Brazilian Jiu-jitsu be a great success!

Best of luck to all the athletes and I leave you with that saying of Nelson Mandela
“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand”

Thank you for your attention