

a



## **SPEECH**

**His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K., President of the  
Republic of Mauritius**

**EVENT: DUKE OF EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL AWARDS  
MAURITIUS - GOLD CATEGORY**

**VENUE: STATE HOUSE, REDUIT**

**DATE: 28 MAY 2025**

**TIME: 13:00 HOURS**

## **Protocol**

Honourable Deven Nagalingum, Minister of Youth and Sports

Honourable Karen Foo Kune-Bacha, Junior Minister of Youth and Sports

His Excellency Mr Goran Mandic, Deputy British High Commissioner to Mauritius

Mrs Mudaliar, Secretary to the President

Mr Ferhan Khan Juhoor, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports

Members of the National Award Committee

Distinguished Guests

Parents and dear Awardees,

Members of the Media

All Protocol Observed.

## **Introduction**

Good Afternoon.

It is both a great honour and a personal joy for me, as Patron of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Mauritius, to welcome you all to State House today to celebrate the laudable efforts and achievements of our Gold Awardees.

I have listened with great attention to Hon' minister Nagalingum, who has offered valuable insights into the history and significance of this programme, and the power it holds - around the world and in Mauritius-

to complement our formal academic education by nurturing values that cannot be reduced to an exam marksheet, a certificate, a diploma or a degree.

The international project we are celebrating today epitomizes perseverance, leadership, empathy, service, courage, and self-confidence.

It involves millions of youths all around the world, with diverse backgrounds.

I am particularly sensitive and appreciative of the fact that this project takes on board people with Special Education Needs.

I would like to join the minister to congratulate all our Awardees and all those who have shaped their journey.

I would also like to commend and congratulate the Ministry of Youth and Sports and all stakeholders for their efforts in ensuring the smooth running of this programme over the years.

### **President as Patron of the Award**

My Young Awardee Friends,

Before becoming the President of the Republic, I was a lecturer at the University of Mauritius and earlier, I have been the Minister of Education.

So, my whole life has been spent with the youth.

As the President of the Republic and new Patron of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Mauritius, I continue to keep connected with our youth, and extend to them all my support and encouragement.

This project provides me with a unique responsibility and an even deeper commitment be closer to their aspirations and dreams, because our youth and their talents and energies are the greatest assets for our society.

You can act as a powerful shield against the erosion of values in our society and play a catalytic role in mobilizing greater interest and involvement among our youth population.

So not only must I and all of us continue championing the vision it carries, but we must also ensure that it integrates into our wider youth development framework and brings sustainable, meaningful and life-long transformation.

### **Hopes and Anxieties**

This is all the more important as we live in a world full of hopes and anxieties – which is now shaped by new developments like Artificial Intelligence, climate change, digital economies, social transformations as well as tensions and conflicts.

This emerging new world order comes with new challenges and complexities for our youths.

According to the World Economic Forum:

“The world’s 1.2 billion young people – 16% of the global population – stand at a crossroads. They face a future shaped by relentless technological upheavals, economic turbulence and an evolving social fabric that demands more from them than any generation before. In a world more connected than ever, their struggles are both uniquely

personal and profoundly global.” (*World Economic Forum, March,2025*)

- Economic, social and environmental issues are putting our youth under unprecedented pressure.
- Youth unemployment remains a significant concern.
- Young people worldwide are facing a generational mental health crisis.
- Depression and Suicide are emerging as one of the leading causes of death among young people. Yet most cases remain untreated due to stigma, lack of access to care and insufficient mental health services.
- Unlike any previous generation, today's youth navigate a landscape where traditional challenges intersect with new digital-age pressures.

### **Bridge to a Better Future**

As you may be aware, our Government Programme 2025-2029 provides a bridge to the future, a better future, especially for our youth.

It is the Government’s intention to launch a Youth Empowerment Programme, with emphasis on self-awareness, self-reliance, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence.

Government will also promote cultural awareness, encouraging our youth to express their voices and explore their artistic paths.

You have already demonstrated outstanding and essential human skills that have led you towards winning an Award today.

I encourage you to take what you have learned and carry it forward into your careers, workplaces, communities and your lives.

This Award may be the end of this particular journey, but let it inspire you to begin a lifelong adventure in leadership and service.

### **Conclusion:**

As President of the Republic and as the Patron of the Duke of Edinburgh International Awards in Mauritius, I place my pride and confidence in you, and I am certain that both Government and youth can work hand in hand for a better and brighter future.

Today's celebration is a testimony of what a vibrant partnership between Government and youth can achieve.

And you all know that we can do much more together.

Enjoy your success, but remember that your mission is beyond this success.

Your mission should be to make this world a better place for yourselves and for future generations.

Thank you for your attention.