



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: WORKSHOP ON PREVENTING FINANCIAL
 CRIMES- THE ROLE OF RECTORS**

**VENUE: MRA INTEGRATED CUSTOMS CLEARANCE
 CENTRE, LE CHALAND, PLAINE MAGNIEN**

DATE: 10 JUNE 2025

TIME: 09:27 HOURS

Protocol

Mr Titrudeo Dawoodarry, Acting Director-General of the Financial Crimes Commission

Mrs Aneeta Ghoorah, Ombudsperson for Children

Ms Laura Jaymangal, Executive Officer of Transparency Mauritius

Mr Devendre Gopaul, Acting Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Education and Human Resource

Mrs Lallmohamed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resource

Senior Officials and Representatives of the Financial Crimes Commission

Senior Officials and Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource

Esteemed Rectors,

Distinguished guests

All Protocol Observed

Introduction

Good morning.

It gives me immense pleasure to be with you this morning at this important workshop jointly organised by **Education and Preventive Division** of the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource.

Allow me to begin by commending both institutions for this initiative, which reflects the Government's and our Republic's unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and integrity across every sector of our society.

For such a culture to prevail, it is imperative that we come together and unite our efforts in the fight against crimes in all its forms, in particular financial crimes.

Let us be clear: the fight against financial crime is not the sole preserve of law enforcement or regulatory agencies. It is a **collective responsibility**. And in this national endeavour, you hold a unique and powerful position.

Therefore, the theme of today's workshop: **“Preventing Financial Crimes: The Role of Rectors”** is both timely and strategic.

It places the spotlight on you, our rectors and school leaders, not just as custodians of academic excellence, but **as architects of ethical character and responsible citizenship**.

Financial crimes encompass a broad spectrum of unlawful activities:

- **Corruption & Bribery** in both public and private sectors;
- **Money laundering**, which hides the proceeds of illicit activities;
- **Embezzlement** and misappropriation of funds;
- **Fraud**, including in procurement, pensions, and social benefits;
- **Illicit financing**, especially of drug trafficking and organised crime;
- **Bribery**, collusion, and abuse of power for private gain.

Financial crimes are no longer isolated infractions; they have become **systemic threats** to economic stability, social justice, and institutional trust. They are sophisticated, often transnational, and deeply rooted in systemic loopholes.

These crimes do more than violate laws. They corrode public trust, undermine democratic institutions, erode the rule of law and exacerbate inequality.

When they go unchecked, financial crimes divert resources from public services, from schools, hospitals and infrastructure and into the hands of a few.

They rob nations of resources meant for public good. They entrench inequality. They distort competition.

Financial Crimes in the 21st Century: A Threat to National Integrity and Development

And in the Mauritian context, we have witnessed how financial crimes are often intertwined with other serious societal threats, notably the financing of drug networks and organized criminal groups.

These threats are no longer distant or abstract. They are real, persistent, and often find their roots or their resistance, within our communities, our homes, and yes, within our schools.

If we want to build a society where fairness, accountability, and justice prevail, then the fight against financial crimes must begin in our **classrooms**, with the active engagement of our educators and educational administrators,

The Role of Education in Preventing Financial Crimes

As I said earlier, the fight against financial crime is not the sole preserve of investigators, auditors, or prosecutors. It is a collective responsibility.

Education and advocacy, in particular, can be two of the most powerful tools in the long-term prevention of financial crimes. Why?

Because education shapes minds and mindsets.

It builds character and personality.

It provides the moral compass to decide between good and evil.

Because rectors and teachers do not merely impart knowledge, it is in your classrooms and your corridors that values are formed.

It is in the choices students make under your guidance that ethical reasoning is developed.

And it is through your leadership that a culture of integrity, ethical behavior, and civic responsibility can be embedded in the daily life of our schools.

By the time financial crimes are committed, damage has already been done. The real opportunity lies upstream in our classrooms, in our codes of conduct, and in the everyday moral choices our students observe and internalize.

UNESCO's famous quote "Wars begin in the minds of people" can be reformulated as follows:

The fight against corruption can start in the minds of our youth.

That is why the Global Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment Initiative has identified educational institutions as pivotal arenas for ethical transformation.

It is no coincidence that the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** has consistently supported the inclusion of anti-corruption education in school curricula.

The Role and Mandate of the FCC

The **Financial Crimes Commission**, established under the FCC Act of 2023, is now the apex national institution tasked with the detection, investigation, and prosecution of financial crimes.

But its mission goes far beyond enforcement.

Under **Section 5 of the FCC Act**, the Commission is also mandated to:

- Promote **prevention campaigns**;
- **Review practices and procedures** in public bodies to strengthen integrity;
- Develop systems that eliminate opportunities for corruption and fraud;
- And importantly, **assist in enhancing the school curriculum** so that children and young people are made aware of the dangers of financial crimes.

The FCC's **Education and Preventive Division (EPD)** plays a central role in this preventive work.

This multidisciplinary team composed of experts in finance, education, communication, auditing, law, and media is responsible for engaging civil society, institutions, and, critically, our schools.

Today's workshop is part of that broader strategy and you, as Rectors, are pivotal actors in this national movement.

Strengthening the Regulatory Ecosystem: The Contribution of the Financial Services Commission (FSC)

Ladies and Gentleman,

Before I proceed further, allow me to also acknowledge the vital role played by the Financial Services Commission (FSC), our regulator for

non-bank financial services and the global business sector in the fight against financial crimes.

As Mauritius continues to position itself as an international financial centre of repute, the FSC stands as a key pillar in safeguarding **financial stability**, enforcing **regulatory standards**, and **upholding investor confidence**.

This is done through the implementation of a robust **Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT)** framework, in full adherence to international norms and standards.

One of the FSC's strategic objectives is to align its regulatory and supervisory practices with international best practices, particularly those established by global standard-setting bodies like FATF.

Through its membership in international organisations, the FSC ensures that Mauritius remains a **jurisdiction of repute, stability, and compliance** in the global financial arena.

The FSC works in close alignment with the **Financial Crimes Commission** and other institutions to monitor compliance, detect anomalies, and strengthen risk management across sectors—particularly in areas vulnerable to abuse such as cross-border transactions, money laundering, and illicit fund flows.

Its work, though regulatory in nature, intersects significantly with national efforts on ethics, transparency, and financial literacy.

And as our economy expands, so too must our collective capacity to ensure that growth is underpinned by trust and integrity.

As you may recall, **Mauritius was placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list in 2020**—a designation that reflected

international concerns about gaps in our anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing frameworks.

While this was a sobering moment for our nation, it also became **a turning point**.

Through collective efforts across government, regulators like the FSC, enforcement bodies like the FCC, and civil society, Mauritius implemented a bold reform agenda and was **delisted in 2022**.

This experience reminds us that **integrity is not a one-time achievement—it is a continuous commitment**.

And it reinforces why workshops like today's are so essential: to embed ethical principles upstream, in our schools, where national character is shaped.

Rectors as Leaders of Integrity

As Rectors, you are not only responsible for academic excellence.

You are leaders of values, guardians of school culture, and influencers of future citizens who shape the moral and ethical tone of your schools.

You supervise teaching staff, manage resources, enforce discipline, but above all, you inspire the next generation.

You are our nation's role models .

If **integrity and ethics** are to take root in a student's character, they must first be visible in their leaders.

Your leadership can serve as the first line of defence against unethical behaviour.

You are uniquely placed to:

- **Foster a culture of honesty and accountability** in your schools;
- **Model ethical leadership** through your decisions and actions;
- **Raise awareness** among staff and students about the dangers of financial crimes, including corruption and the financing of drug activities;
- **Identify early warning signs** of abnormal behaviour among students and initiate appropriate guidance and intervention;
- **Encourage open dialogue** about integrity, fairness, and responsibility.

Let us be clear: integrity does not emerge in isolation. It is cultivated in environments where values are taught, discussed, challenged, and reinforced.

Schools are such environments.

And you, dear Rectors, are their stewards.

You are the **frontline stewards of public trust in education**.

When a school tolerates cheating, casual dishonesty, or a “**get away with it**” mentality, it lays the foundation for future corruption.

But when a school teaches transparency, responsibility, and accountability - through example and structure - it plants the seeds of national integrity.

By embedding ethical reasoning and financial vigilance in the DNA of the educational journey, we are not just preventing crime, we are **building character**.

The Integrity Roadmap for Secondary Schools

The FCC’s initiative to develop an “**Integrity Roadmap**” for secondary schools is therefore visionary.

Such a roadmap will not only set ethical expectations but provide practical tools and policies to promote transparency and accountability within educational institutions.

I urge you, as school leaders, to participate actively in shaping this roadmap.

Let it reflect not only rules and sanctions but also inspiration, mentorship, and opportunities for positive student engagement.

Integrity must be woven into the fabric of school life through curriculum enhancement, extracurricular initiatives, community projects, and school governance structures.

Let us create systems that reward honesty, discourage misconduct, and empower students to speak up when they witness wrongdoing.

This workshop is more than a training session.

It is a declaration that the education sector stands united in the fight against financial crime.

I call upon all Rectors present here today to view this not as a one-off event, but as the beginning of a sustained partnership between our schools and the Financial Crimes Commission.

I am confident that the multidisciplinary expertise within the FCC, spanning law, finance, auditing, communication, and education will be of great support to our schools as we build this culture of integrity together.

The long-term vision is clear:

- A Mauritius where integrity is not an exception but the norm.
- Where our children learn that values are more important than valuables.
- Where the youth reject corruption not out of fear, but out of conviction.

Let us ensure that **today's classrooms produce tomorrow's patriots, ethical leaders, whistle-blowers, and citizens who act with courage and conscience.**

Conclusion: A National Imperative

To all Rectors present, I salute your service.

You carry a sacred responsibility - not only to educate the young minds but to shape characters and personalities.

Let us embrace that responsibility with renewed purpose.

If we are to build a resilient and prosperous Mauritius, the fight against financial crimes must become a **whole-of-society effort** with our schools at its core.

When we teach our children that honesty matters more than shortcuts, that respect is earned and not bought, and that money has meaning only when gained rightfully, we are safeguarding our republic.

Together, let us ensure that integrity is not **an abstract concept** but a daily practice - in every school, every classroom, and every life we touch.

Let this workshop mark not the end of a conversation, but the beginning of a **movement for integrity in education.**

Together, let us ensure that the classrooms of today produce not only **the professionals of tomorrow**, but also the patriots, the whistle-blowers, the honest citizens, and the ethical leaders and torchbearers of Mauritius.

Thank you. I wish you **a fruitful, reflective and empowering workshop.**