



SPEECH

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

EVENT: OPENING CEREMONY – IGF 2025

**VENUE: PLENARY HALL- IGF, OSLO
NORWAY**

DATE: 24 JUNE 2025

TIME: 11:30 HOURS CEST / 13:30 HOURS MUT

The Prime Minister, Government, and People of Norway,

Hon' Mrs Karianne Oldernes Tung, Minister of Digitalisation and Public Governance

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocol Observed.

Greetings to organisers, delegates and participants to IGF 2025 from the Government and people of the beautiful Small Island State of the Indian Ocean-the Republic of Mauritius-also referred to as “Stella Clavisque Maris Indici”, meaning - “The Star and Key of the Indian Ocean” because of its strategic location.

The recent agreement between the Government of Mauritius and UK, over full sovereignty to be exercised by Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, including the island of Diego Garcia, has once again put Mauritius in the limelight. I thank all friendly countries who supported us in our struggle.

This historic agreement has opened the doors for new hopes for a better future for the people of Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With its history of over 350 years, visited by the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, successively, colonised by the French and the British, with its early development, shaped by slaves and indentured labourers, brought from different parts of the world, Mauritius gained its independence in 1968 and acceded to the status of Republic in 1992.

With the support of a diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnic population-often referred to as a mini United Nation-combined with inspirational leaders, imbued with democratic values, Mauritius has been able to transform its mono crop economy, based exclusively on agriculture to a diversified economy, with tourism, manufacturing and global business as its main pillars, with per capita income of some US Dollars 13,000.

We are today on the threshold of a new phase of our development, where digital technologies and AI will be the main driver for economic growth and shared prosperity.

On 26th May, I launched the Mauritius Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025–2029-a bold declaration of our collective commitment to building a modern, inclusive, citizen-centric, sustainable, responsible and resilient society.

Mauritius is committed to building an ethical, citizen-centric Internet/AI ecosystem, anchored in safety, transparency, respecting Human Rights and aligned with internationally recognized AI frameworks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of the exponential growth of AI and its far-reaching implications—economic, technological, political, social and cultural—this IGF conference with its overarching theme of Building Digital Governance Together with focus on Digital Trust and Resilience, Sustainable and Responsive Innovation, Universal Access and Digital Rights and Digital Co-operation, could not have been more timely.

Its multi-stakeholder approach provides the ideal platform for sharing of ideas on the Internet and AI and its future, keeping in mind what best serves the interest of humanity at large.

We need the signposts of where we are and where we are heading in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, where the costs of development can be much higher than its benefits. We must collectively aim to avoid a digital divide.

I have no doubt that this conference will come up with valuable insights, proposals and recommendations to guide internet policies and practices for the benefit of all.

Mauritius stands in solidarity with all countries advocating for a multi stakeholder, human-centred, and rights-based Internet governance model—one that ensures no voice is erased, especially those of the most vulnerable components of our societies-our children, people with special needs and our elderly

And also, no country is side-lined and that we can come together, work together to build Digital Governance together.

I thank the organisers for their warm hospitality and wish the conference fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.