



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: LAUNCHING OF LEARN-AI.SCHOOL INNOVATION
CHALLENGE**

VENUE: PAUL OCTAVE WIEHE AUDITORIUM, REDUIT

DATE: 08 SEPTEMBER 2025

TIME: 10:00 HOURS

Protocol

Honourable Ministers

Mrs. Devina Ramma, Secretary to the President

Senior Officials and Representatives of Ministries

Esteemed Collaborators and Sponsors

Respected Leaders and Colleagues of our Education, Technology and Industry Institutions

Teachers, Mentors and dear Students,

Distinguished Guests,

Members of the Media,

All Protocol Observed.

Introduction

Good morning.

Thank you for your presence at the official launch of the Learn-AI.School Innovation Challenge.

I have listened with attention and interest to the previous speakers and in particular to the initiators of this laudable initiative-DoraCrea and Dayforce.

Let me start by congratulating the team which has worked very hard to make this project a reality; the sponsors who are supporting this project.

Let me also commend the students and colleges who have come forward to participate in this innovative project. A special thought for the trainers who will accompany the participants.

It is highly encouraging to note that, despite the heavy academic workload in the third term, we have received over 90 entries from Lower Six students across both public and private colleges in Mauritius.

I also understand that, in certain colleges, Rectors themselves will be mentoring their students, which is laudable.

This is a pilot project, and given the level of interest of students, it is our determination to make this initiative sustainable by broadening its scope of participation next year.

Digital Transformation

This event comes at a defining moment in our nation's journey.

The world is racing towards digital transformation. We are in a digital era, and AI is the driving force that is disrupting and transforming societies.

Artificial Intelligence is one of the most transformative forces of our time. It is already changing the way we work, learn and communicate. Around the world, nations are moving rapidly to prepare their people and their economies for the AI revolution.

We face many challenges and many priorities, and the choices we make today will shape the country we leave for the next generation.

Mauritius is at a crossroads. Mauritius cannot and must not be left behind.

Digital Blueprint and AI Revolution

We don't need to be ICT experts and have expertise in AI to engage in this digital revolution.

We simply have to come to terms with the fact that life to-day and tomorrow will be shaped by digital technologies and then knowledge and application of AI is no longer an option; it is an indispensable survival tool.

I myself do not have an ICT or AI background, but I have come to realise that we can no longer imagine a world without AI.

We must be prepared to learn the basics and scale it up. This is my message to you and to the nation.

The mainstreaming of AI in our ethos and culture is no more a question of why or when; it is a matter of how quickly.

That is why Digital Transformation is a strategic priority for the Republic of Mauritius.

As President of the Republic, I have decided to engage fully in this drive for digital transformation

In May this year, I had the honour of launching the **Mauritius Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025–2029**.

That document sets out a vision for a Hi-Tech, Intelligent Island: one that is innovative, resilient, inclusive and ethical. At the heart of this vision lies the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence.

We must recognise and weigh both the opportunities and the risks of AI. AI can help us improve societies and in particular such sectors like healthcare, education, agriculture and public services.

But if misused, it can also spread misinformation, entrench bias, and undermine trust. The challenge is to ensure that AI remains human-centric, ethical and inclusive.

In July, I had the honour of representing Mauritius at the **Internet Governance Forum** in Norway, where the central theme was AI Governance.

It was a timely opportunity to engage with global leaders, experts and civil society on how to ensure that AI is developed and used responsibly, ethically and inclusively.

Our message was clear: Small Island States like Mauritius may be modest in size, but we have a voice and a responsibility in shaping the global digital agenda.

We must also avoid digital divide.

These are challenges that you will need to keep in mind and come with innovative Smart Digital Solutions (SDS) which are user and eco-friendly, value-enhancing and sustainable.

The Blueprint provides us with a road map, and I invite all participants to read the Blueprint.

Government is not only talking but it is also walking the talk.

The Ministry of IT and Innovation implementing the Blueprint and a dedicate Inter Ministerial Team has been set up to ensure the close monitoring and timely implementation of various projects.

Youth Engagement and Creative Genius

Our credibility abroad depends on what we do at home.

Initiatives like Learn-AI demonstrate that Mauritius is not a passive observer. We are already preparing our young people to engage with AI critically, creatively and responsibly.

To our young students, this is your moment.

Bring your curiosity, your imagination and your courage. Unleash your creativity. AI must not replace your creativity. It must amplify it.

Use this platform to imagine a more sustainable agriculture, a safer society, more inclusive classrooms and more responsive services.

I call on you to unleash the Mauritian creative genius, that unique blend of resilience, resourcefulness and innovation that has always defined our people.

Partnerships and International Credibility

This project adopts a multistakeholder, collaborative approach and underpins a nation-building ethos.

This project reflects our strength as a nation.

The Office of the President, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mauritius Telecom, Dayforce, Doracrea and other partners have come together to make Learn-AI possible.

This reflects what was clearly underlined in the **Government Programme 2025–2029**: the power of **Public-Private Partnership**.

No single institution can meet these challenges alone.

Government provides vision and access, the private sector brings innovation and resources, civil society connects with communities, and our youth provide the creativity and energy.

Such collaboration shows that Mauritius, though small in geography, credibility will not be built by speeches alone, but by projects like this where partnership is genuine, inclusive and results oriented.

This project is located within our education system and the education community because education is the most powerful weapon to change the world.

The project, as I said earlier, is on a pilot phase and we shall ensure it is scaled up and sustained.

Closing Reflections

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The AI revolution is not in the future; it is already here.

Our responsibility is to ensure that our young people are not passive consumers of technology, but active creators of solutions.

Let us be bold, let us be prudent, and let us be united in this journey. Learn-AI is a small beginning, but it can grow into a movement that shapes our education system and strengthens our nation.

Last but not the least. This project has been inspired by the philosophy propounded by John Fitzgerald Kennedy in the 1960s:

“Ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country.”

Let us make this project yet another showcase of the Mauritian creative genius.

It is now my honour to officially declare **LEARN-AI.School Innovation Challenge** launched.

Thank you.