SPEECH

His Excellency Mr Dharambeer Gokhool G.C.S.K.,

President of the Republic of Mauritius

EVENT: National Engineers' Day

VENUE: Gymkhana Club, Vacoas

DATE: 13 September 2025

TIME: 19:00 Hours

Protocol

Hon. Osman Mohamed, Minister of land Transport

Professor John Chudley, Chair of the Engineering Council (UK)

The President and members of the Institution of Engineers, Mauritius,

Distinguished Members of the Council of Registered Professional

Engineers of Mauritius

Members of Academia, Industry, and Government,

Fellow Engineers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocol observed

Introduction- A celebration of National Service and Excellence

Good Evening

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to join you today, as Patron of the Institution of Engineers, Mauritius (IEM) for this celebration of the **National Engineers' Day 2025.**

I am grateful to Mr. Prayag, the VP of I.E.M for providing us a historical backdrop to the creation of IEM and for highlighting the different projects being implemented to raise the quality and standard of engineering education as well as for improving the prospects of employment opportunities and capacity building.

I commend your vision for making of Mauritius a Regional Education Hub for Engineers meeting the highest international standard and would like to express my appreciation for all the efforts being undertaken in that connection by the IEM team.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we gather not only to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of engineers, but also to reflect on the crucial role that this profession plays in shaping the destiny of our societies. Throughout history, engineers have stood as the **architects of progress, the builders of resilience, and the guardians of innovation.**

From the design of bridges and power plants to the **advancement of artificial intelligence** and climate-smart infrastructure, you, our engineers, are at the forefront of development. You are not just problem-solvers - you are **visionaries**, crafting solutions that ensure the prosperity, sustainability, and dignity of our people.

IEM and CRPE

The **Institution of Engineers, Mauritius (IEM)** occupies a special place in the nation's history. Since its early creation in 1948, by 12 visionary leaders and their peers who recognised that **engineering was not just a profession but a responsibility**- a commitment to safeguard society by ensuring that only qualified, ethical, and accountable engineers provide engineering services.

That vision gave birth to the **Council of Registered Professional Engineers (CRPE)** in 1966, established by an Act of Parliament following a motion initiated by IEM members.

The CRPE was created under the **RPEC Act of 1966** as the sole authority to register professional engineers in Mauritius and to formally protect the title ***"Registered Professional Engineer"*** (RPEM).

Over the decades, I understand that the IEM and CRPE have worked in complementary ways: IEM nurturing professional solidarity, lifelong learning, and ethics; CRPE safeguarding the legal and regulatory framework. Together, they have shaped the identity of engineering in Mauritius and elevated its contribution to national development.

By holding firm to its **Code of Ethics**, IEM has consistently promoted integrity, fairness, collaboration, and professional excellence. This is a proud heritage, and one that positions engineers not only as service providers, but also as **trustees of public confidence and protectors of national welfare.**

ACHIEVEMENT

Allow me here to commend the **Institution of Engineers, Mauritius**, for its recent achievement in becoming a **Provisional Member of the Washington Accord.** This recognition is a giant step forward in placing **Mauritius firmly on the global engineering map**.

It opens the door for the **international recognition of our engineering qualifications** and offers Mauritian graduates and professionals unlimited opportunities to contribute at the highest level worldwide. Yet, this **is only the beginning**.

The ultimate goal is to attain **full signatory status**, a milestone that will certify Mauritius as a provider **of World-Class Engineering Education**. To achieve this, every stakeholder-government, academia, industry,

regulators, and the engineering profession-***must collaborate with vision and unity.***

Together, through this exemplary collaboration, we can elevate Mauritius to the forefront of Africa in Engineering Education and ensure that our engineers are recognized with pride and respect across the globe.

I understand that there are a few procedural/administrative issues relating to the associated accreditation criteria and accreditation process of the profession that need to be addressed to facilitate IEM to attain the signatory status of the Washington Accord.

The VP Mr. Prayag and myself have some exchanges on this matter and I intend to use my good offices and work together with the relevant institutions to help find a way forward.

The Global and National Context

We are celebrating National Engineers' Day at a time of great transformation, both globally and nationally.

At the global level, humanity is confronted with multiple crises:

- **Climate change/global warming**.
- **Technological disruptions** from Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, and robotics that are redefining the very nature of work and society.
- **Energy and water crises**
- **Food insecurity**
- **Geopolitical shifts and tensions**

At the national level, Mauritius is undergoing a bold transition. The **Digital Transformation Blueprint 2025–2030**, which I had the honour to launch on 26 May 2025, has set forth a vision to position Mauritius as a **Hi-Tech Intelligent Island**, where technology empowers people, strengthens democracy, and creates inclusive opportunities.

Engineers, by virtue of your skills and vision, are at the **centre of this transformation and can play a catalytic role**. You are called upon to lead, innovate, and ensure that Mauritius navigates the challenges of the 21st century with courage, creativity, and responsibility.

Engineering and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

At the **World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development 2025**, celebrated earlier this year, I emphasised how deeply intertwined the profession of engineering is with the achievement of the **United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. That message is equally urgent today.

The **SDGs are not abstract goals**; they are engineering projects waiting to be implemented. ***Without engineers, the SDGs remain promises.*** **With engineers, they become reality**.

National Challenges and the Role of Engineers

In Mauritius, we face specific challenges where engineers must take the lead:

1. **Energy Transition and Climate Adaptation**

We must urgently **reduce our reliance on fossil fuels**. Engineers are central to designing solar farms, offshore wind energy systems, and wave energy projects. **Our infrastructure** must be engineered to **withstand rising seas, extreme rainfall, and cyclones.**

2. **Urbanisation and Smart Infrastructure**
   As our cities expand, engineers must design transport systems that reduce congestion, promote green mobility, and integrate smart technologies for efficiency. Waste management, drainage, and housing systems must be designed not for today but for the Mauritius of 2050.
3. **Water Security and Food Systems**
   Engineers can transform agriculture through precision farming, smart irrigation, and water recycling technologies.
4. **Digital Transformation and Industry 4.0**
   The new frontier is digital. Engineers must embrace AI, robotics, and automation to design smarter, greener, and more efficient systems. Industry 4.0 requires not just coding skills but engineering foresight-integrating cyber-physical systems that serve the people.
5. **Infrastructure Integrity and Public Safety.**
   Recent concerns about **the Cluny Reservoir** and **substandard drains and roads** serve as stark reminders*: **poor engineering costs lives, livelihoods, and trust***. Engineers must uphold the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.

Ethics and Professional Responsibility

This brings me to one of the most critical issues: **Ethics**.

The IEM Code of Ethics is clear: engineers must not abuse their authority, must uphold the law, must protect professional reputation, and must treat colleagues in allied professions with respect.

In practice, this means that:

- **Transparency and accountability** must govern all national projects.
- **Standards** must never be compromised for short-term gain.
- **Integrity** must remain the cornerstone of every decision.

When engineers fail, the cost is borne by society-whether in collapsed roads, **failed reservoirs, or unsafe housing**. But when engineers succeed with integrity, the **nation thrives**.

Bridging the Skills Gap and Continuous Professional Development

We face a paradox. Each year, Mauritius produces engineering graduates, yet there is **a significant mismatch** between the **skills** they acquire and the **demands of industry**. This gap poses a major challenge for the development and progress of various sectors, including infrastructure, manufacturing, and technology.

I am happy to learn that you have elaborated a CPD strategy.

By investing in CPD, mentorship, and lifelong learning, we ensure that Mauritian engineers remain competitive not only nationally but also globally.

Women in Engineering – Unlocking Untapped Potential

Another area where we must act decisively is **gender representation** in engineering.

Globally, women account for **only 10–20%** of the engineering workforce. In Mauritius, **only 22.3% of engineering students** in higher education are female. This represents a significant loss of potential talent.

The barriers are real-persistent stereotypes, lack of mentorship, and environments that sometimes fail to support women engineers. But **these barriers must be dismantled**.

I call upon the IEM, CRPE, academia, and industry to:

- Actively mentor and support women engineers.
- Promote female role models in engineering.
- Create inclusive environments that value diversity.

By empowering women in engineering, Mauritius will unlock a **reservoir of innovation, resilience, and leadership**.

The Global Voice of Small Island States

Mauritius, though small in size, can exert a **mighty influence** by championing ethical digital standards, sustainable technologies, and responsible engineering.

As a **Small Island Developing State** (SIDS), we can lead the way in:

- Advocating for climate tech financing.
- Promoting responsible AI deployment.
- Building alliances in the African Union, Commonwealth, and Indo-Pacific on digital governance.

Engineers, with your expertise and networks, are Mauritius' **ambassadors of Innovation and Sustainability**.

A National Call for Action

On this **National Engineers' Day 2025**, let me extend a call to action:

- **To Engineers:** Uphold integrity, pursue excellence, and innovate boldly.
- **To Academia:** Align curricula with emerging industry needs and nurture well-rounded engineers.
- **To Government:** Continue to support engineering with enabling policies, investment in CPD, and promotion of STEM education.
- **To Industry:** Partner with academia and IEM to mentor, train, and employ the next generation of engineers.
- **To Women and Youth:** Step forward and claim your place in engineering's future.
- **To IEM:** Continue to champion professionalism, ethics, and lifelong learning.

Conclusion- Engineers as Architects of a Better Mauritius

Ladies and gentlemen,

The **challenges before us are immense**, but so too are the **opportunities**.

As Patron of the Institution of Engineers, Mauritius, I stand proud of your achievements, and I urge you to carry forward **this noble profession with courage and creativity.**

Let us commit that in Mauritius:

- No child is left behind in the digital revolution.
- No community is left vulnerable to poor infrastructure.
- No opportunity for innovation is wasted.

Engineers are not merely the **architects of infrastructure**-you are the **architects of our future**, the stewards of our planet, and the guarantors of our national resilience.

As we celebrate National Engineers' Day, let us rededicate ourselves to building a Mauritius that is **innovative, inclusive, sustainable, and proud of its engineers**.

The future is not something **we await**- it is something we **engineer**.

Thank you for your attention.

I wish you all a very enjoyable evening of celebrations.

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