



## **SPEECH**

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

**EVENT: Closing Ceremony of the University of Mauritius  
Model United Nations (MUN) Conference**

**VENUE: Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium,  
University of Mauritius**

**DATE: 19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**TIME: 14:00 HOURS**

## **Protocol**

Honourable Shakeel Mohamed, Minister of Housing and Lands

Dr. the Honourable Mahend Gungapersad, Minister of Education and Human Resource,

Honourable Mrs. Anishta Babooram, Junior minister of Health and Wellness

Professor (Dr) Mohammad Issack Santally, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius

The Ag. Registrar of the University of Mauritius

Mr. Sarat Lallah, Chairman of Mauritius Telecom

The Secretary General and Deputy Secretary of the MUN Conference

Respected members of the Management and Faculty,

Delegates,

Distinguished Guests,

All Protocol Observed

## **Introduction**

Good afternoon and thank you for your invitation.

I am very happy to be in your midst. At a place where I have spent most of my life as an Academic and Dean of Faculty, before acceding to the high function of President of the Republic in December 2024.

During my career at UoM and other Universities, I have always enjoyed my interactions with the student community, and even today, I look forward to opportunities to mingle with students.

Since assuming office, I have welcomed many students at State House, and I have also come to UoM on several occasions.

So, thank you for giving me one more opportunity.

### **Closing Ceremony**

It is with immense pleasure that I address you at the closing ceremony of the University of Mauritius Model United Nations (MUN) Conference.

Today's event marks the culmination of what, I am certain, has been a remarkable and enriching three-day experience for you all - during which the ideals of diplomacy, international relations, and global governance have come to life in the most dynamic and engaging way possible.

Through this MUN Conference, the University of Mauritius has demonstrated the importance of fostering a culture of dialogue and cooperation, the very foundation of the UN, a multilateral forum, and I quote:

**“one place on Earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity.”**

A place where “peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet” will guide collective action.

In a world increasingly fragmented by ideological, cultural, and national divides, it is imperative that we come together to find solutions to global challenges.

This event achieves precisely that noble ideal, by engaging students in the noble pursuit of global solution through the practice of multilateralism.

Allow me, therefore, to commend and congratulate the University of Mauritius, the Student Union, and the Political Science Society for their dedication and exemplary efforts in bringing together young minds from across disciplines and backgrounds, fostering reflection of the highest intellectual and civic value.

## **Education**

Dear Delegates,

As you may be aware, this is the second year of my mandate as President of the Republic.

I continue to draw deeply from my lifelong experience - not only as a former Minister of Education and Human Resource, but also as a university academic.

By holding this MUN event, you are helping to redefine and reposition education and its purpose.

Education cannot be confined to the four walls of classroom, cannot be limited to textbooks, examination scripts, assessments, certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Education must act as a transformative force, not merely as preparation for life, but as life itself - a life-long and life-wide, continuous process of discovery and rediscovery, through which identity is shaped, judgment refined, and meaningful citizenship cultivated.

Education must nurture critical thinking, ethical judgment, creativity, emotional intelligence, civic responsibility, and informed agency.

**In the powerful words of Martin Luther King Jr:**

**“Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education”.**

### **Diplomacy and Dialogue**

Today, we live in an era defined by profound interconnectedness, complexity, and rapid change, where challenges such as climate action, human rights, public health, artificial intelligence, volatile labour markets, and global security demand informed dialogue and collective responsibility.

Learner engagement in global governance has never been more critical.

Diplomacy and International relations are essential to deal with transnational challenges like climate change, pandemics, poverty and conflicts.

• **According to the International Shield Organization:**

**“diplomacy is not merely a means of reaching agreements but the primary tool for building political, economic, and cultural**

**partnerships across borders, contributing to global stability that ensures the welfare and prosperity of future generations.”**

The MUN must be seen as preparation towards that goal.

### **Mauritius and Diplomacy**

Mauritius has long championed the principles of cooperation and peace on the international stage.

As a Small Island Developing State, we understand the value of diplomacy, dialogue, and partnership. We also understand that no single nation can address the pressing global challenges of today alone.

Despite being a small island nation, we have a strong tradition of contributing to the international community. We have consistently supported initiatives promoting peace, security, human rights, and sustainable development.

We have also played an active role in regional and international organizations, such as the African Union and the Commonwealth, promoting democracy, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

The epic fight for our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and the massive support we have garnered from the international community, are a living testimony of the quality of our diplomacy and international relations.

The debates, resolutions, and negotiations that have taken place over the last few days must have ignited in you a strong commitment to solving global problems through multilateral collaboration.

I am sure that the MUN deliberations have provided you with informed perspectives for responsible action, guided by the principles of multilateralism, interdependence, and our shared pursuit of peace, justice, humanity, and sustainability.

### **Mauritius' Role in Global Affairs**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we reflect on the importance of youth leadership, allow me to highlight the role that Mauritius plays in global affairs.

Mauritius continues to uphold the United Nations' vision of promoting peace, security, cooperation among nations and the advancement of human rights through active engagement in multilateral diplomacy

As Head of State, it is my conviction that diplomacy is most effective when infused with a personal and purposeful dimension - one that responds with vision to the exigencies of a rapidly evolving world.

In this context, diplomacy and dialogue must attend to the human dimension: empowering our youth, advancing education, celebrating culture, and fostering social inclusion - the very foundations upon which our resilience, progress, and international standing rest.

It is in this spirit that, in July last year, I convened a Round Table Forum on Disability Inclusion and Empowerment, alongside representatives of

the United Nations in Mauritius, the National Human Rights Commission, and civil society.

The deliberations and recommendations from this dialogue have already led to the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee on disabilities- demonstrating how inclusive engagement can shape meaningful public policy and advance the rights of all citizens.

Mauritius must continue to exemplify how even small nations can make a meaningful impact on the global stage through committed cooperation.

Looking ahead, we must remain steadfast in recognizing that our nation's strength lies in the talent and vision of our youth.

Through forums like this Model United Nations Conference, we are cultivating the next generation of leaders to advance both national and global priorities.

### **Building Global Leadership**

Some of you may already be considering careers in diplomacy, international law, or public policy.

Others may be inspired to pursue entirely different paths.

Yet, I hope that what all of you have collectively gained from this conference is a deeper understanding of the nuances of the world we live in and the responsibilities that come with leadership.

Leadership is not simply about titles or power; it is the ability to bring people together, inspire change, and make a positive difference in the lives of others.

I am certain that you all have learned how to engage in meaningful discourse, build consensus, and approach problems with a mindset focused on cooperation, not division.

I am also confident that each of you has the potential to make a lasting impact in your respective fields - whether in government, civil society, the private sector, or beyond.

As you move forward in your academic and professional journeys, always remember that true leadership is about lifting others up and contributing to the greater good for humanity.

## **Conclusion**

On this optimistic yet realistic note, allow me to extend my deepest congratulations to every delegate who has participated in this Model United Nations Conference.

I have no doubt that you will continue to make a significant impact in the years to come.

I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers, faculty members, and sponsors for their effort in creating a platform for dialogue, learning, and growth that will resonate for years to come.

My hope is that conversations that began in this auditorium will continue, and I am confident that our young leaders will be at the forefront of driving the change we need to see in the world.

Together, through cooperation, diplomacy, and the shared pursuit of peace and prosperity, let us build a better world for all- As One People, As One Nation, As One Humanity.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Merci et bonne continuation.