



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: Workshop on Education, Awareness, and Whistleblowing
Initiatives to Combat Drug-Related Offences**

VENUE: Lecture Theatre, FCC Headquarters, Reduit Triangle, Moka

DATE: 10 March 2026

TIME: 09:30 HOURS

Protocol

Mr. Titrudeo Dawoodarry, Ag. Director-General of the Financial Crimes Commission;

Dr. Fayzal Sulliman, the Chief Executive Officer of the NADC,

Distinguished Representatives of Law Enforcement Agencies and Regulatory Authorities,

Members of Civil Society,

Students and Youth Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

Good morning.

Thank you for inviting me to today's workshop and giving me the opportunity to make an address.

THE DRUG ISSUE

This workshop, as you are aware, is organised jointly with the National Agency for Drug Control, in the context of the commemoration of our National Day, concerns an issue that affects not only Mauritius, but the entire global community: the growing and dangerous nexus between **drug trafficking and financial crime**.

Today, drug networks operate through sophisticated financial systems and complex channels, supported by latest technologies, resulting in illicit laundered revenues that undermine legitimate economic activity and threaten the integrity of our financial system.

They also put in danger the very fabric of our democratic society, undermine institutions, contribute to the proliferation of corruption, violence and crime, destroy lives and result in untold sufferings for families and societies.

Yesterday, I visited the Mauritius Prison Service in the context of International Women's Day Celebration.

There are 221 women currently in custody in our prison institutions, half of whom are foreign nationals from 26 different countries, many detained for drug-related offences.

I am happy to note that this workshop brings together key stakeholders whose contributions in our national efforts in the war against drugs can play a catalytic role.

These facts and figures remind us that drug trafficking is not only a criminal enterprise. It is also a human tragedy that affects individuals, families and communities across borders.

It also compromises the credibility and the reputation of our country in the international arena, endangering the flow of investment, international assistance and trade relations.

Government priority

While the drug problem is not a new phenomenon, over the recent past, there have been significant increases in drug trafficking and drug consumption.

That is why Government has identified the drug problem as one of its major priorities and has taken significant steps to reinforce its institutional framework.

A number of bold initiatives have already been taken by Government to deal with the drug scourge.

- A National Agency for Drug Control (NADC), that brings together various public bodies that will combat drug trafficking, provide rehabilitation and support families of victims of drug- abuse, has been put in place.
- A National Drug Control Commission (NDCC) has also been established as a high-level body under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), comprising the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and other Ministers,

- ✓ To set national objectives and goals, and determine policies and priorities with regard to drug control issues;
- ✓ To oversee the overall coordination of all drug control activities in Mauritius for greater collaboration and synergy among stakeholders; and
- ✓ To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan and the National Action Plan for HIV and AIDS.

The Whistleblower Protection clause, as outlined in the NADC Act, provides legal safeguard, enables secure, immediate reporting and ensures timely, effective responses to drug-related threats.

It also prohibits retaliation against individuals who report drug trafficking in good faith.

It may also be important to envisage a reporting hotline linked directly to enforcement and intelligence agencies, and a support hotline for individuals and families facing distress.

Government's intention to introduce a Freedom of Information Act will further enhance access to information, transparency and accountability.

The Drug Users Administrative Panel (DUAP) established under the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act 2022 which became operational in April 2024, represents an important shift from a purely punitive approach to a more rehabilitative one.

It aims to divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system and towards healthcare and rehabilitation.

Government also intends to introduce new legislation in respect of trafficking, consumption and treatment of drug addicts to cater, inter alia, for differentiated treatment of traffickers and consumers.

FCC and ADSU

To combat financial crimes and organised criminal networks, the establishment of the Financial Crimes Commission, under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023, represents a major reform in our national governance architecture.

The Commission is mandated to detect, investigate and prosecute a broad range of financial crimes, while also serving as a central authority for asset recovery and prevention initiatives.

Recent figures illustrate the scale of the work being undertaken by the FCC.

The Commission is currently handling **over 1,500 investigations involving fraud, corruption and money laundering**, with assets under investigation estimated at **around Rs 20 billion**.

These figures remind us that financial crimes are not abstract concepts. They have real consequences for economic stability, institutional credibility, and public trust.

Similarly, our law enforcement agencies continue to intensify their actions against illicit drug trafficking.

In recent months, operations carried out jointly by the **Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit** have led to several significant drug seizures, including heroin seizures worth **over Rs 31 million at the SSR International Airport**.

In another operation, nearly **27 kilograms of suspected cannabis valued at more than Rs 32 million** were intercepted through coordinated customs enforcement.

These results demonstrate the determination of our institutions to protect our borders and dismantle illicit networks.

But the fight against financial crime and drug trafficking cannot be carried out by a single institution. It requires a whole-of-government approach.

That is why the Financial Crimes Commission, the Mauritius Police Force, the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Financial Service Commission, the Bank of Mauritius and the DPP's office **must** work in close coordination.

EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

In the recent past, it has been observed that Government response to drug trafficking is gaining in effectiveness.

However, since we are faced with a formidable national challenge, the fight against drugs requires a comprehensive, co-ordinated, multi-pronged approach and the contribution of civil society organisations, educators, community leaders and the media is indispensable.

Public awareness and engagement, ethical leadership and community vigilance are essential components of an effective national response.

One of the most effective tools in the fight against drugs and financial crime is education, awareness and public engagement.

Prevention must begin early.

Young people must understand the dangers associated with drug use, but also the broader consequences of criminal networks that exploit vulnerable individuals.

The pedagogical leaflet that will be launched today is therefore a commendable initiative.

By equipping educators and trainers with practical tools to guide discussions with students and the wider public, this initiative contributes to fostering a culture of awareness, responsibility and ethical decision-making among our youth.

When young people are informed, empowered and supported, they become our strongest allies in building a safer and more resilient society.

Protecting our youth from the dangers of drugs is not only a public health priority.

It is a national responsibility.

In this context, media can play a vital role in national awareness campaigns and mobilise public support in combating drug abuse.

I am happy to note that it brings together key stakeholders whose contributions in our national efforts in the war against drugs can play a catalytic role.

The presence of such a diverse group of stakeholders at today's workshop clearly reflects this shared commitment.

NATIONAL DAY AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

This Workshop, focusing on Education, Awareness, and Whistleblowing Initiatives to Combat Drug-Related Offences is being organized in the context of our National Day celebrations.

National day celebrations provide a unique opportunity to take stock and recognize progress achieved in various sectors of the society; it is also an opportunity for reflections and introspection about unrealized priorities.

The workshop is therefore timely, opportune and commendable.

As we celebrate our National Day under the theme **“In Peace, Justice and Liberty,”** we are reminded that these values must be actively protected.

- Peace cannot exist without security.
- Justice cannot prevail without integrity.
- And liberty cannot flourish without institutions that command public trust.

The fight against financial crimes and drug trafficking is therefore not only a law- enforcement challenge.

It is a national endeavour that calls for **unity, vigilance and responsibility from all sectors of society.**

CONCLUSION

Before concluding, I wish to commend the Financial Crimes Commission and the National Agency for Drug Control for organising this workshop and for bringing together stakeholders from across government, civil society, academia and the media.

Your efforts contribute to strengthening collaboration, enhancing awareness and reinforcing our collective commitment to combating financial crimes and drug-related offences.

Let us continue working together to ensure that Mauritius remains a nation where **integrity prevails, institutions are respected, and the future of our youth is protected.**

In our fight against the drug scourge, let us all work together

“As one people, as one nation”

I wish you fruitful discussions and every success in your deliberations today.

Thank you for your attention.