



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: EXHIBITION OF VERNISSAGE OF ARTWORKS –
WORKSHOP WITH SEN SCHOOLS BY ACTION
FOR ARTISTIC CREATIVITY**

**VENUE: CHATEAU DE MON PLAISIR, SSR BOTANIC
GARDEN, PAMPLEMOUSSES**

DATE: 15 APRIL 2026

TIME: 14:30 HOURS

Protocol

Mr. Rigg Needroo, Chairperson of the SSR Botanic Garden Trust;

The President, Mr Nishal Purbhoo, and members of Action for Artistic Creativity;

Esteemed artists from Mauritius and abroad;

Distinguished Guests;

Dear Educators;

And above all, my dear students and children.

Introduction

Bon après-midi, et merci pour votre invitation ainsi que pour l'occasion de m'adresser à vous en cette journée particulièrement significative.

Je tiens tout d'abord à féliciter **Action for Artistic Creativity (AAC)** pour cette initiative remarquable - une première de cette ampleur et de cette diversité d'activités.

Depuis sa création en 1985, votre plateforme s'est engagée avec constance en faveur de la promotion de l'expression artistique, de l'éducation culturelle et de la valorisation de nos talents.

Allow me to share that I had the opportunity to learn about this initiative during my recent meeting with Mr Nishal Purboo and members of AAC at State House.

Je note également avec satisfaction que l'ACA est affiliée à l'Association Internationale des Arts sous l'égide de l'UNESCO, ce qui témoigne de sa crédibilité et de son rayonnement international.

And given significance of the event being organized by AAC, I deemed it both essential and fitting to be present today, to convey my support for this commendable initiative.

Je salue également les partenaires et collaborateurs –notamment Smart Mauritius, Polytechnics Mauritius, les ministères et les acteurs des secteurs public et privé - pour leur engagement soutenu dans la promotion de la créativité artistique et le rayonnement culturel de notre pays.

I am aware that over twenty international artists are present, representing countries including Seychelles, Réunion, Madagascar, India, Russia, Poland, and Malaysia.

I therefore extend a warm welcome to all artists - local and international.

ACA International Artists' Camp 2026

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's live painting workshop with students with special needs, involving children from 12 SEN schools, places inclusion at the very heart of its approach and vision.

I understand that these activities also form part of a wider programme spanning over 8 days - the International Artists' Camp 2026 - bringing together artists, students, institutions, and cultural stakeholders within a vibrant and collaborative ecosystem.

This structured programme - from immersion and cultural exchange to artistic creation, and ultimately celebration through exhibitions and performances, reflects a well-conceived and impactful vision.

Your presence stands as a powerful testament that art transcends borders, forging connections that rise above language, geography, and background.

In this regard, Mauritius emerges as a natural crossroads of cultures - enriched by diversity, strengthened through coexistence, and distinguished by its openness to the world.

World Art Day

Today, we must also remind ourselves of the objectives of World Art Day, proclaimed by UNESCO in 2019, which underscore the essential role of art as a powerful instrument in advancing a more free, inclusive, and peaceful world.

Today's event is a clear reflection of this very spirit.

Mauritius is not only the sea, sand, and sun, but also our richness, resilience, creativity, and the unique diversity and harmony of our people.

This year's UNESCO theme - "A Garden of Expression: Cultivating Community Through Art" - and AAC's theme -"SPICES" - symbolising diversity, identity, migration, and cultural richness- therefore converge in a meaningful and beautiful way.

Both speak to diversity, identity, and cultural richness.

In our multi-cultural, multi-religious rainbow nation, this is not an abstract ideal, but a lived reality.

We must therefore collectively reaffirm our responsibility to protect, support, and elevate art as a living force that unites, inspires, and strengthens our shared humanity.

Presidency's Commitment

The Government Programme 2025-2029, which I presented to the nation last year, sets out a clear ambition to strengthen the cultural and creative sector.

We have declared our ambition to create a new pillar of our economy and develop a creative industry sector.

This vision is already being translated into action by government.

Drawing from my lifelong engagement in education and academia, I firmly believe that leadership is most effective when infused with a strong human dimension.

This is why at State House, we have also given this vision concrete expression, notably through the “Paint the Seeds of Hope” initiative, organised in December in collaboration with the Committee for the Promotion of National Unity and the NGO Roots Arts.

We brought together children from across the Republic, including children with disabilities, for painting and art therapy.

This aligns closely with initiatives such as this Artists’ Camp, which not only promote artistic excellence, but also contribute to social cohesion, youth empowerment, and community engagement

We are now preparing a second edition this year, and I warmly encourage your participation.

In parallel, I have also recently participated in initiatives that reflect the depth and richness of our “Mauritian-ism”, including:

- The “Atelier Art Pour Tous” exhibition featuring Chinese paintings by Mrs Eva de Gersigny, a centenarian who continues to inspire the population through her paintings.
- The recognition of the lifelong craftsmanship of Mr Suresh Ahotar of Ébénisterie du Nord, reflecting heritage, humility, and excellence across generations.
- The ‘Faces of Mauritius’ photo exhibition by the Media Trust, showcasing the talent of our local photojournalists.
- And the launch of the first Mauritius Arts and Culture Investment Summit.

Across all these engagements, one principle remains constant: inclusion through culture and empowerment through creativity.

This year marks the second year of my mandate as Head of State, and disability inclusion, in particular, remains central to my mission.

The Roundtable on Disabilities that I convened last year at State House, with the participation of UN representatives and the National Human Rights Commission, has already led to the establishment of an interministerial committee.

As President of the Republic, I reaffirm my support to all initiatives that harness the transformative power of creative expression to build a more inclusive, creative, and united nation.

Today's event resonates with the philosophy of the Presidency and AAC's mission- creativity and inclusion as the bedrock of a caring, sharing and compassionate society.

Closing

Avant mo terminer, laisse mo dire quelques mots a nou bann zanfan ek bann jeune ki la zordi.

-Mo bien content trouv zot ici, meme pendant congé lekòl.

-Mo saluer zot zefor ek zot devouement, ansam avek zot bann professeur.

- Moi meme mo ti enn professeur et mo koné ki c'est enn metier ki demande beacoup de patience et determination et l'amour

Nou ban zanfan ena enn potentiel extra-ordinaire pou fer enn difference dans nous sociéter ek amen zot contribution précieuse à travers zot bann talent, surtout artistique.

Anou continiyé promouvoir, célébrer ek encourage le talent et la créativité de nou ban zanfou pou enn meilleur l'avenir- As One People, As One Nation.

Mo souhaite zot bon courage et zot capave compte lor mo soutien.

Merci et bonne continuation.