



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: ROUND TABLE ON THE WASHINGTON ACCORD
APPLICATION (IEM/EAB)**

VENUE: STATE HOUSE

DATE: 08 MAY 2026

TIME: 10.15 HOURS

Protocol

Mrs. Devina Ramma, Secretary to the President;

Mr. Cyparsade, Ag. Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research,

Distinguished Representatives of Government and Regulatory Bodies,
Esteemed leaders of Higher Education Institutions,
Respected members of the Institution of Engineers Mauritius and the Engineering Accreditation Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Introduction and Purpose

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this important round table discussion on the application by the **Institution of Engineers Mauritius (IEM) and the Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB)** for signatory status of the **Washington Accord**.

This meeting is both timely and strategic. My hope is that the outcome of this round table results in a programmatic roadmap to achieve the signatory status of the Washington Accord.

Alignment with National Strategy

Only a few days ago, the **National Strategy for Higher Education, Science and Research 2025–2035**, was launched and it places strong emphasis on internationalisation, quality assurance, and the global recognition of our qualifications.

As the Strategy clearly states, Mauritius must align its educational standards with international benchmarks to enhance academic quality, strengthen credibility, and **position itself as a trusted global education hub.**

It is precisely within this national vision that today's discussion finds its full relevance.

A Strategic National Endeavour

The initiative taken by the IEM/EAB is not an isolated technical exercise. It is a strategic national endeavour.

It speaks directly to our ambition **to transform Mauritius into a knowledge-driven economy**, capable of attracting talent, fostering innovation, and competing globally.

Significance of the Washington Accord

The **Washington Accord** represents one of the **highest international benchmarks for engineering education.**

Moving towards full signatory status is therefore not merely about accreditation. It is about trust. It is about international standards and recognition.

And it is about ensuring that **our graduates can stand shoulder to shoulder with their peers** anywhere in the world.

Progress Achieved So Far

Mauritius has already made significant progress.

Becoming a Provisional Member in 2024 was a milestone achievement; one that places our country among a very small group on the African

continent. It reflects the commitment, professionalism, and **vision of the IEM/EAB** and all those who have contributed to this journey.

And I would like to recognise and pay my tribute to all those who have contributed towards this remarkable achievement.

The Road Ahead

But as we all know, **the pathway ahead requires sustained effort.**

Achieving full signatory status will demand robust systems, strong institutional collaboration, and unwavering adherence to international standards.

It will also require clarity of roles among our key institutions: the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the Council of Registered Professional Engineers (CRPE), and our universities, working in coherence and in partnership.

Role of Government and Strategic Support

In this context, the role of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research will be pivotal in accompanying and facilitating this national effort.

The Ministry's leadership will be instrumental in fostering alignment across institutions, encouraging the full engagement of our Higher Education Institutions, and ensuring that this initiative is firmly anchored within our broader strategy for internationalisation and quality enhancement.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that **the pathway to full signatory status** entails specific technical and operational requirements, including capacity building and international peer engagement.

These will require appropriate and sustained support.

It is therefore my considered view that this initiative merits careful consideration in the context of the forthcoming Budget 2026–2027, as a strategic investment in strengthening the global standing and credibility of our tertiary education system.

Significance of This Round Table

This is why today’s round table is so important.

It offers an opportunity to bring all stakeholders onto a common platform to develop a shared understanding of where we stand, what is required, and how we move forward together.

Because ultimately, this is a collective national project.

Expected Benefits

The benefits are clear.

At the academic level, it will strengthen the quality and credibility of our engineering programmes.

At the professional level, it will enhance the mobility and employability of our graduates.

At the national level, it will reinforce our positioning as a regional education hub, capable of attracting international students, generating economic value, and contributing to our broader development agenda.

Broader National Significance

But beyond these tangible outcomes, there is also a deeper significance.

Engineering lies at the heart of the challenges we face as a nation: from climate resilience to infrastructure, from water management to digital transformation, from renewable energy to food security.

The standards we set today will shape the engineers who will design the solutions of tomorrow.

We therefore have a responsibility, not only **to meet international benchmarks** but to ensure that our system is forward-looking, purpose-driven, inclusive, and aligned with our national priorities.

Acknowledgements

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like **to commend the Institution of Engineers Mauritius and the Engineering Accreditation Board** for their leadership, their dedication, and the voluntary commitment that has driven this initiative thus far.

I also wish to thank all stakeholders present today for your engagement and your continued support.

Conclusion and Opening

Let this round table be one of constructive dialogue, shared responsibility, and clear direction.

The journey to the Washington Accord is not just about reaching a destination in 2030.

It is about building a system that is resilient, credible, and globally respected. It is also about making the **right collective choices: policy,**

institutional, and financial, to ensure that this ambition is fully realised.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

With these words, I have much pleasure in declaring this round table open.