



SPEECH

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

**EVENT: RECEPTION FOR ALL LAUREATES - HSC BATCH
2025**

VENUE: STATE HOUSE

DATE: 07 SEPTEMBER 2026

TIME: 10:30 HOURS

Protocol

Dr. the Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, and Mrs. Ramgoolam;

His Excellency Mr. Robert Hungley, Vice President of the Republic, and Mrs. Hungley;

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

Distinguished guests,

Dear Laureates,

Members of the media,

All Protocols Observed.

Introduction

Good morning and welcome to State House.

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

These are the words of Mother Teresa, and I would like to begin my address today by reflecting on these inspirational words on this very special occasion.

Every year, as you know, we gather at State House to celebrate our Laureates, and to share some reflections which, we hope, may be useful to you as you embark on the next phase of your educational journey and, indeed, beyond.

I thank the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Minister of Education and Human Resource for their thoughtful messages, and I join them in extending my warmest congratulations to you, as well as to your parents, families, friends, teachers and schools.

With your permission, I shall share a few thoughts with you.

Before I do so, allow me to mention that my attention has been drawn to a suggestion that today's event could have been held earlier, as some of our laureates may have already travelled overseas.

Nevertheless, we felt that, given that we have two groups of laureates, including those who have been awarded scholarships under the merit and social criteria, it was important that all laureates be celebrated together, in an inclusive spirit.

This reflects our continued commitment to equity and inclusion.

Talent exists in every background, and when opportunities are made available, that potential can flourish.

This is what we want to celebrate by bringing both groups of laureates together on one platform.

Among you are also the first female laureates from traditionally all-boys schools and male laureates from historically all-girls schools.

This gives us another important reason to celebrate together, in a spirit of equity and inclusion.

May I also add that our thoughts go to all those who worked hard but did not make it to the Laureate list. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Today is therefore not only a day for celebration, but also an occasion for some serious and purposeful reflection.

Transformation

As you are all aware, we are living in times of great and unprecedented challenges, many of which are unfolding before our eyes.

In such a context, the impression is sometimes created that the world is heading in the wrong direction and that everything seems to be falling apart. This perception is also fairly strong in our own society.

But is this really the whole picture?

As Head of State, it is one of my main responsibilities to remain in touch with our population and to feel its pulse.

I interact with thousands of people of all ages and from all backgrounds.

I meet them at State House; I also go out to meet them across the country.

I meet tourists and official visitors who continue to praise the beauty of our country, the diversity and hospitality of our people, the strength of our institutions and the vibrancy of our democracy.

These are our strengths.

It is not all a catalogue of pessimism, doom and gloom.

There are also signs of hope, although they are not always sufficiently recognised or underscored.

Resilience and Perseverance

We have our problems and challenges, but we also have a proven record of resilience, perseverance and, importantly, the ability to transform difficulty into opportunity.

I want to assure you that we belong to a great country, and that we have many reasons to be proud of what we have achieved.

And together, we can build an even better and more prosperous future for all.

You will now be embarking upon a new phase of your educational journey.

Some of you will continue your studies in Mauritius; others will leave our shores to pursue your education and careers abroad.

You stand at the very threshold of a future filled with challenges and opportunities. Your priorities and choices can make a great difference to you, to your family, to your friends and, ultimately, to our country.

You have already demonstrated great confidence in your potential.

I therefore want you to undertake further studies with a “CAN-DO” mindset.

Believe in your potential and your dreams. Treat mistakes as learning opportunities. Do not become a prisoner of your textbooks; learn a new skill, learn a new language.

Meet new people. Build networks.

Lifelong and Life-wide Learning

Above all, do not let your curiosity go to sleep.

I want to share with you something that I have always shared with my own students, in my capacity as a former academic:

“The illiterates of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”

- Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*

Always remain on the lifelong learning curve.

Drawing on my own lifelong experience as an educator, I can tell you that education is about much more than qualifications and degrees.

In an age of IQ and AI, we must also value emotional and spiritual intelligence, character, resilience, empathy, and the ability to respect, understand and care for others.

The years ahead should therefore expand not only your knowledge, but also your values, your judgement and your sense of the contribution that you can make - as Mauritians and as global citizens.

A Globalised Society

We live in a global village which is more connected than ever before.

Broaden your educational horizons. Explore your career opportunities.

Be alert, flexible and adaptable. Wherever you are and whatever you do, let Mauritius remain in a corner of your heart.

And keep our quadri-colour flying high.

We are immensely proud of your achievements, and we know that you will be proud ambassadors of our country and role models for those who will come after you.

May you continue to believe in yourselves and strive to become the best version of yourselves in this new phase of your lives – and thereafter.

End Note

My dear Young Friends,

As your President and as a former educator, I cannot leave you without sharing a simple but wonderful philosophy of life that comes from a classroom incident.

The teacher asked a simple question to the students:

“In one word, write down what you would like to be in life when you grow up.”

There were many interesting answers, but the teacher chose to read out the answer of one student who had put down just one word.

“Happy.”

Be successful, but don't forget to be happy.

On this note, I congratulate you once again and wish you the very best in all that you do.

Thank you for your attention.