**Speech of the Honorable Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives,**

**Mr. Soomilduth Bholah**

**Business Continuity and Resilience Planning (BCRP)**

**Programme Launching**

**NPCC Training Room, Ebène**

**18 November 2020**

His Excellency, the British High Commissioner to Mauritius, Mr. Keith

Allan;

The Permanent Secretary of my Ministry, Mrs Ahmed;

The Chairman of the NPCC, Mr. Sujoy Busgeeth,

The Executive Director of the NPCC, Mr. Ashit Gungah,

Council Members,

Mr. Kalyan Ganesh, the lead Consultant

Representative of participating companies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

I am very pleased to join you this morning for the launching of the e-course on “Business Continuity and Resilience Planning” – a free training and support programme offered by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) with the collaboration of the British High Commission in Mauritius.

The importance of business resilience has been brought into even sharper focus by the COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic has had a catastrophic effect on people, businesses and economies around the world. According to the International Labour Organisation, it is clear that the operational and business resilience of many companies will be challenged drastically in the coming months, and beyond.

Whether companies can navigate through the storm caused by COVID19 will depend largely on business resilience planning and execution. A strategic, systematic approach to strengthening the resilience of a company’s business model is key. Ultimately, resilient companies increase their chance of survival during COVID-19, which will test to the

limit their ability to maintain operations and also gain an advantage in the post-crisis economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the speed at

which it spread, caught many companies off guard. Historically, companies have been primarily concerned with their operations and have overlooked resilience planning. Though it may be easy to be wise after the fact, there will be lessons to learn which will stand companies in good stead for future disruptive events.

Business resilience planning enables companies to adapt to a ‘new normal’ when disruptions occur, maintaining business operations while protecting their employees, data, revenues and reputation. Ultimately, however, it is best done in calmer times.

The time for rethinking business continuity and resilience is NOW. With a bleak economic outlook or in case of any major occurrence, a readied plan will allow companies to adapt quickly to disruptions, maintain continuous business operations and safeguard people, assets and brand equity.

This is why I believe that the training course on the “Business Continuity and Resilience Planning” comes at a very opportune time. BCRP will help in imparting the knowledge on advance planning and preparation undertaken to ensure that an organisation will have the

capability to operate its critical business functions during emergency events. Events can include natural disasters, a business crisis, pandemic, workplace violence, or any event that results in a disruption of the business operation. Resilient organisations are best placed to survive an economic slowdown and ride out uncertainty.

I am aware that the NPCC has put in place several projects to accompany local companies through this challenging phase. The #morisienprodiktif campaign and the Enterprise Productivity Solutions (EPS) as well as the series of webinars are a few among the initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Mauritian economy is presently heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nearly all sectors of the economy have witnessed a slow-down in activities. The manufacturing sector is an important pillar of the Mauritian economy and contributes 12% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This sector is currently facing difficult challenges and the government is doing everything to limit the negative impact of the pandemic on exports and the manufacturing sector. The second wave of COVID-19 is affecting the country's main export markets including the UK, France and other European countries.

Therefore, it is imperative to assess the situation from time to time and implement measures to curb down the effects. The Government has put in place a host of measures with regard to

manufacturing companies. They include: the extension of the Trade Promotion and Marketing Scheme to Africa, Japan, Canada, Australia and the United Arab Emirates until June 2022; the Economic Recovery Program which provides reimbursement for the cost of freight up to 60% instead of 40%; a Special Relief Fund of Rs 5 billion; exemption from port

fees from July to December 2020; the 15% extension of the Investment Tax Credit to all manufacturing companies for a period of three years; and the DBM Wage Loan Assistance Scheme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres remarked at this year's virtual UN General Assembly, marking the 75th anniversary of the UN, "Covid-19 is not only a wake-up call, it is a dress rehearsal for the world of challenges to come." Collaboration is vital to battle a virus that respects no boundaries, no race, no community. We have learned many lessons, and keeping an open mind will help us learn many more. We have reasons to be hopeful.

COVID-19 is a call to action for unity. We will rise by lifting each other up. On this note, let me also extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the British High Commission for its

precious collaboration in implementing the BRCP Program. I wish all participants all the best.