Earth Day 2015

Speech by

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Bon Accueil Sports Complex

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Dear Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

It gives me much pleasure to address you this morning on the occasion of the Earth Day which is celebrated each year on the 22nd of April. Its celebration started in the United States of America in 1970 by Senator Gaylord Nelson to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet. Earth Day celebration reminds us to reinforce our go green attitude for the earth.

This year, the theme to mark Earth Day is ‘It’s Our Turn To Lead’.

We have today opted to celebrate this event by a silent march which provides us with a platform to think together of our
vulnerability. This has been the manifestation of our inner conscience to do more and to correct the mistake of the past. Let us work together for protecting the Mother Earth. Divine communion with Mother Earth brings us in touch with the need to bring about beneficial changes. What a divine gift God has given us to live our life on such a wonderful and sacred place, this planet we call our home.

Our presence here today in such a big number is also testimony and a clear indication of our determination and commitment to turn the page and start anew. Let me count on you.

That is why I started 2015 by symbolically planting a tree at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic garden. This symbolic gesture is an UNWRITTEN AGREEMENT that I have with my Ministry and with Mauritius with regards to saving and protecting our endemic plants as well as recreating the Mauritian environment. You have surely read that a century ago, Mauritius was covered with a dense forest and God Bless, I will attempt to recreate this pristine environment of ours by planting as many trees as possible in the forthcoming years.

The 2015 Earth Day theme is a call from Mother Earth to each of its inhabitants for concrete and concerted actions.
To commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Earth Day, more than one billion people around the world are taking part in the event. From Beijing to Cairo, Melbourne to London, Rio to Johannesburg, New Delhi to New York, communities everywhere are voicing out their concerns for the planet, and take action to protect it.

Any small action can contribute to a huge impact in terms of conserving natural resources, using less energy and generating less pollution and waste. We just have to do our part. Hence, for a greener Mauritius, my Ministry is encouraging each and every Mauritian citizen to adopt eco-friendly practices by numerous initiatives such as:

- solar water heaters to reduce electricity consumption
- rain water harvesting system to save water
- recycling and promoting composting in schools through the School Waste Segregation Project
- Setting up of endemic gardening school
- Distribution of decorative and medicinal plants to promote a green attitude and encourage the public to discover the virtues of medicinal plants and the richness of our local biodiversity
• Implementation of a Sustainable Consumption and Production programme to attain a more sustainable lifestyle, and preserve our natural resources.

Before concluding my speech, I would like to mention that the goal of Earth Day is not only to establish a clean and green environment but also the creation of an environment of decency, quality and mutual respect for all human beings and other living creatures. Since our birth, just like our mothers, Mother Earth has cared for us and provided us with all the requirements for our wellbeing and our sustenance. May I remind you that like all mothers, Mother Earth is also a symbol of immense love, care, giving and warmth towards her children. Sadly, we have not looked after this Mother of ours. We take ourselves for aliens and we can do whatever we want—even to the point of destroying ourselves for our own greed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mother Earth is calling out to us for help and it is now our turn to save her. Let join forces together for a common and noble cause.
I therefore urge all my fellow countrymen, women and children to contribute towards a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius for our present and future generations.

Ce gouvernement, sous la direction du Premier Ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, croit en son peuple dans le sens de la responsabilité citoyenne. Donc, informer, communiquer et éduquer la population constituent mes priorités, entre autres.

La protection de l’environnement est plus que l'affaire de tous, **C’est notre devoir sacré.** Cela demande juste un peu d’effort et une bonne dose de volonté. Ainsi, nous pouvons assurer notre bien-être and celui de nos enfants.

Rien n’est plus important que d’assurer la protection de nos familles à la maison. Les atrocités perpétués ces derniers temps dans notre petite île démontrent qu’on ne pourra pas rester les bras croisés. La sécurité de nos familles, surtout de nos enfants est une responsabilité morale et religieuse. L’environnement ne s’arrête pas à la nature, la biodiversité, l’eau, l’énergie, le changement climatique. L’environnement, c’est apprendre à se protéger. L’environnement est le sens du partage, pour la postérité.

Merci.