Prime Minister
Republic of Mauritius

Message

My Dear Students,

On 12th March 1968, the Mauritian nation was born. It is now 46 years since we have been shaping our own destiny.

I would like you to imagine what our country was like in 1968. Most of the population was uneducated and poor. There was no free health care, child mortality was high, and very few youngsters of your age could afford to have access to secondary schooling. The situation was so overwhelming and looked so hopeless that even Nobel Prize laureates had written us off completely. They said our country was doomed to fail.

Now take a look around you today! You have at your disposal facilities that were unthinkable - even in the wildest dreams of your grandparents - for school boys and girls of your age at that time. In fact most girls were never sent to secondary school in those times. The task of building our country from the conditions we inherited at the time of Independence to its current state of development was monumental. It took vision, hard work, courage, perseverance and an unflinching belief that we can overcome all the obstacles in our way.

It is these strengths of character ingrained in our people which have undoubtedly contributed to the strides of progress we have achieved so far.

My wish is that you too, will have the opportunity over your school years, to develop your own vision of your future, discover the rewards of hard work, the courage of persevering against all odds and always carry an unshakeable belief in a better future for yourself and for our country.

My Young Friends,

Education is also about making each of us better human beings. I wish you to clearly understand and realise what your duties are, what are your rights and your responsibilities. That is why I have started a new Citizenship Program for students at Form 4 level and, indeed, I expect more and more students to take part in the different activities organised by the National Institute for Citizenship Education.
As we look back at the defining moments of our history, we realise that the founding fathers of the country had placed education at the very core of their vision. For Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Father of the Nation, education was the key to our future success. In 1977, he made access to secondary education free, in a totally indiscriminate way. I am sure you will find it hard to believe that even that foresighted decision was virulently criticised by reactionary forces!

It has been my firm conviction that we must live in a country where not a single student is left behind. Any one among you should have the means to attain her or his goals and to fulfil her or his ambitions. This is why my Government has implemented free transport for students and is continuing to provide financial support for students of low income families to enable them to pursue higher education, explore and develop their talents and skills in fields of their choice and in line with the needs of a global economy.

My Young Friends,

While you develop your potential in school, I also wish that you come to take ownership of the Maurice Ile Durable vision and make its realisation, part of your mission. I would therefore like to see more of you join the MID clubs in your schools. It is essential that you are empowered to make informed and critical choices about your lifestyle and on the sustainable development path of the country.

I wish to seize today’s opportunity to reiterate my commitment to continue to create an engaging learning experience for all of you. My Government will always place a high premium on education and training as a vital driving force behind national development.

My wish is that after your tertiary education, you contribute to taking our country from strength to strength. Let there never be any doubt in your mind that personal effort and perseverance will take you far – no matter how and where you started from. Look at the new CEO of Apple, Mr Satya Nadella: from very humble beginnings in India, he is today heading one of the giants of the information technology industry!

We will continue to invest in education to unleash the pent up power of creativity that is within every single one of you.

The anniversary of our Independence is an occasion to celebrate. Let it also be an opportunity, for you, to commit yourself to our common vision and to making our future even more brilliant and promising.
I would like to conclude by sharing with you an excerpt from Abraham Lincoln’s letter to his son’s teacher:

Quote:

“In the school teach him
It is far more honourable to fail
than to cheat...
Teach him to have faith
in his own ideas,
even if everyone tells him
they are wrong...
Teach him to be gentle
with gentle people,
and tough with the tough.”

My Dear Students,

Always remember: You are the future you want to be!

Long live the Republic of Mauritius!

Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP
Prime Minister

07 March 2014
Le Premier Ministre
République de Maurice

Message

Mes chers petits amis,

Aujourd'hui est un grand jour – car cela fait exactement 46 ans depuis que notre pays a obtenu son Indépendance. Le 12 mars 1968 notre drapeau national flotta, pour la toute première fois, au Champ de Mars à Port-Louis. C’était l’avènement d’une nouvelle page de notre histoire.

Il est primordial que vous connaissiez l’histoire de notre pays – notamment les conditions difficiles dans lesquelles vos arrière-grands-parents ont vécu avant l’Indépendance.

La grande majorité d’entre eux était pauvre. Très peu de citoyens avaient accès à l’éducation. Il n’y avait pas de service gratuit pour la santé et le taux de mortalité à la naissance était élevé. A l’époque, seules les familles aisées avaient accès à l’électricité. La plupart des enfants devaient étudier à l’aide de lampes à pétrole ou de bougies.

Mes chers petits amis,

Le 12 mars est un jour spécial où nous devons réfléchir sur le progrès accompli depuis notre Indépendance et réfléchir sur notre société future.

Nous avons la chance de vivre dans un pays où règnent la paix, la stabilité et l’harmonie. Il y a très peu de pays où l’on côtoie au quotidien les cultures des plus grandes civilisations au monde. C’est enrichissant pour chacun d’entre vous de connaître la culture de votre camarade de classe et de partager la votre avec vos amis.

Mes chers petits amis,

Vous représentez l’avenir de la République de Maurice. Dans quelques années, c’est vous qui allez être appelés à diriger notre pays. Il est donc essentiel que vos parents, enseignants et les autres membres de votre entourage, inculquent en vous des valeurs universelles telles que le patriotisme, le civisme, la discipline, l’honnêteté et la solidarité.

Nous avons également la responsabilité de protéger et d’améliorer notre environnement car il en dépend de la qualité de vie des générations futures. On dit souvent que ce sont les enfants qui font l’éducation de leurs parents ! Je suis certain qu’à travers les bons gestes
favorisant la préservation de l'environnement que vous apprenez à l'école, vous êtes déjà un exemple pour les membres de votre famille.

Notre République a besoin de citoyens responsables et entreprenants pour continuer à avancer sur la voie du progrès et de la modernité.

N'oubliez jamais que l'on ne réussit qu'à travers l'effort et la discipline. Et il est essentiel que nous prenions conscience de l'importance du sens d'appartenance à la nation mauricienne.

Mon Gouvernement a pris une série de mesures pour vous encadrer dans votre éducation et assurer votre épanouissement personnel. Nous avons facilité l'accès à l'éducation pour que chaque enfant puisse avoir l'opportunité de réaliser ses rêves. Depuis 2005, vous bénéficiez du transport gratuit et mon Gouvernement continue d'augmenter le soutien financier aux enfants venant de familles à revenus modestes.

Vous avez tous du talent et le potentiel pour réaliser vos rêves. Je suis convaincu que vous saurez saisir votre chance et donner le meilleur de vous même pour avoir un avenir brillant.

Soyons fiers de notre patrie !

Vive la République de Maurice !

Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP
Premier ministre

07 mars 2014