

**CELEBRATING 251 YEARS
OF THE MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE**

Thursday 26 July 2018

14.00 HRS

Venue: IGCIC

SPEECH

BY

**The Hon Mentor Minister
Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC**

**Commissioner of Police,
Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry,
National Security Adviser,
Deputy Commissioners of Police,
Divisional Commanders,
High ranking officers of the Mauritius Police Force,
Distinguished guests,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

A very good afternoon to all of you

My presence in your midst today is testimony of my profound commitment and willingness to ensure that our Police Force operates efficiently and provides quality services within the legal parameters in accordance with international policing norms and standards as well as the expectations of the citizens of the Republic of Mauritius.

With the 251st anniversary of the Mauritius Police Force looming near, it is more than important not to lose track of our vision for a modern, professional, responsible and accountable Police Force.

As former Prime Minister and presently as Minister responsible for Defence, I am fully conscious of the various aspects of Policing as well as the challenges facing the Police, particularly in a dynamic and multi-cultural society like ours.

At this juncture, we should be constantly reminded that the reputation of our country largely depends on the effectiveness of our security and safety systems.

It is no secret that since the beginning of its mandate, the present Government has remained committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, fighting all forms of crimes and corruption and other unlawful activities which would otherwise plague our society and threaten our social harmony.

The zero tolerance approach to fight the entry of illegal drugs is but an epitome of this Government's determination to eradicate the drug scourge.

As I stand in front of you today, my resolve, my insistence and perseverance towards achieving this Government's vision of making Mauritius a better and safer place remain unshattered.

After having been at the helm of the country for so many years and having contributed immensely in its development, it is a legitimate wish from my part to leave as legacy, a strong Police Force capable of efficiently and effectively meeting the challenges of today as well as upcoming challenges. Therefore, it is my duty to ensure that you live up to the expectations of our citizens and are endowed with the capabilities for accomplishing your mission as Police Officers.

For this reason, when I stand up in Parliament to respond to questions, I never hesitate to speak out my mind in no uncertain terms.

In this breath, therefore, I wish to remind all of you that you are duty bound to serve the country with the commitment and dignity your mission requires.

Distinguished Officers,

I am very much conscious of the fact that the Police has shown that it can deliver as expected. This is evidenced by the record amounts of illegal drugs seized; the number of hardened and prolific criminals arrested and convicted and the prompt response to save lives and properties during emergencies, among others.

I have in mind some instances where Police Officers have displayed an exemplary sense of courage and taken laudable initiatives, sometimes at the expense of their lives, to preserve the life and ensure the safety of others. Some vivid examples are:

- the intervention of Officers of Roche Bois Police Station who assisted a pregnant lady in delivering her twins;
- a Police Officer from Port Police who put his life at risk in rescuing a man who accidentally fell into the seawater; and
- Police Officers posted to the Anti-Robbery Squad who successfully apprehended armed malefactors who initially fired at them.

Having recognized the good job done, I believe that organisations like the Police Force only grow if they are able to identify lacklustre areas which sap their image. Any failure to identify and acknowledge areas of improvement is likely to undermine organisational effectiveness and even their legitimacy.

On this score, it is imperative that the Police, in a democracy like ours, are capable of accepting criticism, identifying shortfalls, and drawing lessons in order to bring corrective measures.

I am not immune to the criticisms levelled against the Police. While some are frivolous and unfounded, others are real wake-up calls for enhanced effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

In addition, they also shed light on undesirable and unethical Police conduct which necessitates firm and decisive actions. I am expecting the Commissioner of Police to come up with additional and bold measures to deal with errant Officers who are non-compliant with established rules and procedures.

We are in a democratic State which also cherishes the principles of good governance. It is therefore the responsibility of each and every member of the Force to put on an immaculate conduct and behaviour as individual actions impact on the overall image of the Police.

Integrity, honesty, moral values and ethical standards should be leitmotifs in the Police Force. I am not going to tolerate any departure from established norms and standards.

As Minister of Defence, I will be adamant on the strict adherence to these fundamental principles across the Police strata. Deviant behaviour should cease forthwith.

To you the Senior Officials of the Police present here today, I would strongly implore that you display a higher sense of commitment and leadership. I expect you to be resourceful and serve as role models to your junior staff. As guardian of discipline, you should bolster ethical conduct and ensure that no attempt, whatsoever, is made to soil the reputation of the Police Force.

Discipline and commitment are the bedrock of any successful Police organisation. Your inspirational and visionary leadership in whichever Division you are serving should be the fetters that bind the entire organisation together.

The present Government is sparing no efforts in its endeavours to modernize and professionalize the Mauritius Police Force and enhance its human resource capability. It has been doing so in myriad ways as evidenced by the budgetary allocations to the Police and the implementation of several projects aimed at combating crimes, such as the Safe City Project, building the human capital through the setting up of a Police Academy and the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment.

I am very much confident that the Police will become more efficient with the implementation of the projects I just mentioned.

The promotion offered to as many as 1335 Police Officers under the present Government - which you all know was long overdue and many of your colleagues had been penalized - was one of the ways to unleash the potentials of Police Officers. I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that new promotions are to come shortly. I can assure you that the upcoming promotion exercise will favour merit at all levels of the Force.

I will hasten to appeal to all Officers of the Force on the urgent need to keep pace with the latest developments in the different areas of policing. Maintaining the status-quo must never be on your agenda.

To that end, Police will have to acquire new knowledge and skills and benefit from every opportunity for their own personal development.

I can assure you that you will have the full support of this Government as well as my personal support in all your efforts to continue displaying your willingness to build a strong and resilient Police organisation. You will appreciate a number of projects have been implemented so far with a view to improve your working conditions and general well-being. Indeed, new Police Stations have been constructed with the required amenities. And in a bid to protect you from false complaints while at the same time ensuring a human rights compliant organisation, all Police Stations have been equipped with CCTV Cameras. In the same vein, Police Officers have been provided with modern personal safety equipment.

The speed of intervention both on land and at sea has been increased through the acquisition of new fleets of vehicle and state-of-the-art vessels.

On another note, this Government is doing its utmost to facilitate policing activities through a series of measures aimed at regulating the way Police go about in its business. Procedures are being streamlined and the Police and Criminal Justice Bill is under preparation at the State Law Office.

On the other hand, Police Officers have been provided with the mechanism which allows for their voices to be heard through the unprecedented development, whereby Police Officers have now the right to unionize.

Dear Officers, policing is a noble profession. In this modern era, there is no place for amateurism.

You should not only be the masters of your undertakings but you should be able to work SMARTER. This entails a shift from the traditional ways of policing and moving away from routine and complacency. This much needed paradigm shift will no doubt enhance your ability to foresee future threats and policing challenges and also forecast your actions.

May I point out that during my recent visit to Singapore when I was accompanied by the Commissioner of Police and other senior officials, we have had very fruitful visits and working sessions with a number of public security and enforcement institutions there to have an insight into their effectiveness.

We have seen how the use of innovative technologies has contributed effectively in ensuring security and safety in Singapore which has one of the lowest crime rate in the world.

I am confident that we can learn a lot from the experience of Singapore on its policing methods and the use of advanced technologies to deal with safety and security issues. All this can inspire us in our endeavours to effectively deal with law and order issues in our country. In this respect, the Singapore authorities are very much willing to extend their support to Mauritius. We are pursuing very closely to take full advantage of that support.

Distinguished Officers,

Before concluding, I will again emphasize that all your efforts should be geared towards creating a safer Mauritius, while at the same time upholding the credibility and image of the Police. The legitimacy of the Police Force and the respect you earn from the community hinge on your ability to work in the best interest of the organisation. You should at all times be professional in all your actions and offer quality services to our citizens and visitors alike.

I trust you will live up to those expectations. As I said earlier, this Government will continue to support you in every step you make as long as you stay on the righteous path.

I wish the Mauritius Police Force the very best and
Happy Celebrations on your 251st Anniversary.

Thank you for your kind attention.