

**Speech of The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth,
GCSK, KCMG, QC,
Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence and Minister for Rodrigues at
the
Opening Ceremony of The Regional Training Workshop On ‘Marine
Spatial Planning’**

**08 October 2018 – 10 h 45
Voilà Hotel Bagatelle, Mauritius**

IOC Coordinator for Africa, Mr Mika Odido,
Representative of Nairobi Convention
Secretariat, Dr Jared Bosire,
Representative of Indian Ocean Commission,
Representative of the UNDP,
The Director General of the Department for
Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones
Administration and Exploration,

Senior Representatives of the various
Ministries and Departments,
Delegates,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to all of you

It is my pleasure to address you at this opening ceremony for the Regional Training Workshop on ‘Marine Spatial Planning’ which is being organised by the IOC of UNESCO, in collaboration with my ministry.

Allow me to extend at the outset a warm welcome to all the foreign delegates, participants and international experts and wish you a pleasant stay in Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand that during this workshop, all the participants will have an opportunity to be apprised of a very important topic concerning our maritime space; that is, Marine Spatial Planning which is commonly being referred to as MSP. You may be aware that MSP is becoming an imperative for coastal states and more so during the recent years with the sharp increase in economic activities all throughout our Maritime Zones.

Mauritius is no exception when it comes to the need for Maritime Spatial Planning. Fully aware of such an imperative, my Government in fact agreed in 2017 to the elaboration of a Marine Spatial Plan for the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Mauritius.

The main purpose of the plan would be to elaborate and embark into a strategy for the development of our oceanic industry in accordance with national policies and our engagement for the preservation, protection and improvement of our marine environment as testified by Government's Vision 2030.

As would be agreed by the experts, present in our midst, Marine Spatial Planning is indeed an excellent strategy to advance the development of oceanic resources and to combat climate change issues.

It is my understanding that MSP will also contribute to the effective management of marine activities and to the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. This undertaking would rely much on the creation of a framework for consistent, transparent, sustainable and evidence-based decision making.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mauritius has been promoting key maritime sectors such as tourism and recreational activities, seafood, aquaculture, port infrastructure, shipping and marine renewable energy in a view to consolidate and strengthen its economic diversification.

As a result, Mauritius has been facing an increasing demand for marine space. No doubt, there is an added pressure on our marine environment. We are conscious of the sensitive and complex nature of the marine environment and the detrimental effect of activities, if not properly managed.

Therefore, the expansion of the ocean economy needs to be accompanied by improved management of the coastal and marine environment. Hence the requirement for a well-designed MSP that minimizes the conflicting use of maritime space.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

MSP, I am told, is known to be a long haul process with ‘no one measure fits all’. It is a fairly adaptive process and the task of elaborating a first Marine Spatial Plan for the EEZ of Mauritius has been entrusted to my Ministry, through the Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration.

In that respect, a Coordinating Committee involving all relevant stakeholders, including NGOs, has been set up at the level of my Ministry. This Coordinating Committee has begun its work with the conduct of a questionnaire survey to gather base information on maritime uses and to subsequently prioritise its action.

Three thematic working groups have been identified: New Economic Development Activities; Sustainable Development Goals 14 (SDG 14) and Mainstream Biodiversity Projects. These working groups are currently actively involved in the elaboration of the Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to briefly refer you here, to two other important projects which the Government of the Republic of Mauritius is presently pursuing for the development of its ocean economy and which has direct bearing on marine spatial planning.

The first one relates to the establishment of an Electronic Platform for the Ocean Observatory. This platform will portray the multi-uses of the maritime space and offer a direct graphic interpretation on maritime activities for concerted decision. The first phase of the project is completed.

The second one relates to the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Management Area. It is being undertaken under the framework of the GEF-UNDP demonstration project to support the management of the Joint Zone. Here also, I understand a major component will be to elaborate a comprehensive Marine Spatial Plan. The elaboration of the Marine Spatial Plan is also in line with the implementation of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals which have been adhered to by the Government of Mauritius.

This of course includes our commitment for Target 14.5 of SDG 14 which makes provision for the conservation of at least 10 per cent of our coastal and marine areas by the end of 2020.

In my view, Ladies and Gentlemen, the key components of an MSP should include clear objectives, stakeholder participation and defining the geographic boundaries. But foremost, a comprehensive MSP requires the availability and analysis of high quality geospatial data originating from reliable sources.

In this regard, the collaboration among local, regional and international stakeholders is essential for the success of the MSP process.

I am confident that a well thought MSP can only be a harbinger of wealth to the population of our countries and of health to our marine environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the IOC-UNESCO and its partners for the organisation of this workshop. I am confident that the outcome of this Regional Training Workshop will help the team of experts present today in their task.

My concluding message to you is to work towards making our ocean a healthy one. We must encourage international and regional collaboration to achieve this important mission.

With these words, I wish you a constructive training workshop.

I have now the pleasure to declare the Regional Training Workshop open.

Thank you for your attention.