

**Operation COSHARE**  
**Singing of Implementation Agreement and Launch ceremony**  
**Speech of Mr. Ashit Gungah, Executive Director, NPCC**  
**Thursday 2 September 2021**

Mrs Ahmed, PS of Ministry of Industrial Development  
Dr. Kofi, Director ILO Country Office for the Region (who is following us on line)  
Mr. Sujoy Busgeeth, Chairman of the NPCC and NPCC Members,  
Mr. Avinash Gopee, Chairman of the Tourism Authority,  
Mr. Lindsay Morvan, Director of the Tourism Authority,  
Representatives from ILO and PAGE present among us,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning,

On behalf of all our partners and on my own, we welcome you all at the NPCC today for the signing ceremony of the Implementation Agreement of operation Co-Share.

Operation Coshare is a mnemonic of ‘Covid-19 Occupational Safety & Health and Resource Efficiency’ and will be deployed with a view to: first: position Mauritius as an attractive and Covid-19 safe tourist destination, following opening of borders, and, secondly: to rapidly get back to normalcy.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The spread of COVID-19 continues to have a profound impact around the globe, making it difficult to balance personal safety and work priorities.

According to an UNCTAD report published on 30 June this year, the crash in international tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic could cause a loss of more than **4 trillion US\$** to the global GDP for the years 2020 and 2021. **This is indeed a major concern.**

Mauritius has not been spared with the closure of borders and a drastic fall in the number of arrivals.

According to the World Bank - Mauritius Productivity Study report, published in June 2021, revenue losses from COVID-19 has been large and widespread. These losses were particularly pronounced in the hotels and restaurants sector where 96% reported drops of revenue and the average loss amounted to three quarters of monthly revenue.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Tourism contributes up to 24% of our GDP and is one of the largest employers in Mauritius with more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs. Coupled with the ripple effect on other sectors that are closely linked to it, the impact on our economy has been harsh.

Although these might leave us feeling helpless, in reality there are a lot of things upon which we have power, even during **trying** times. Redirecting our energy towards these things can only help us deal effectively with this situation.

This is how operation COSHARE has been developed. In fact, recently, the NPCC implemented 2 ILO projects. viz., Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprise – SCORE project, prior to the lockdown in 2020 and subsequently the COVID-19 Occupational Safety and Health Project in ten SME's just before the second lockdown in March 2021. Based on our experience with these 2 projects, we approached the ILO to develop a national project to support a reopening that gives priority to the health and safety of workers, travellers and host communities and at the same time help the tourism sector to safely continue in business.

I am particularly thankful to the ILO for having immediately responded to our request. The ILO garnered the support of different partners including PAGE – i.e Partnership for Action on Green Economy, the UNEP – i.e United Nations Environment Programme and other UN agencies to get the necessary funding to implement the project in Mauritius. The project has been developed with the Technical Assistance of Mr Jens Dyring Christensen, Senior Enterprise Specialist, and responsible for SCORE in the region and Mr Kalyan Ganesh, ILO Expert who has been working with NPCC on ILO projects since 2019.

On our side we contacted the Ministry of Tourism. I am thankful to the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Steven Obeegadoo, and my good friend Mr Salim Joomun, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry who promptly bought into the

project which is today culminating into the signing of an Implementation agreement with the Tourism Authority.

In the build-up of the project, we had focussed meetings with stakeholders including the Tourism Authority, Airports of Mauritius Limited, l'Association des Hoteliers et Restaurateurs de l'Ile Maurice and l'Association des hôtels de charme amongst others. I must admit that the discussions enabled us to better understand the situation on the field and also broaden our perspective of the project. On behalf of the Council, I convey my deepest thanks and gratitude to you all.

More specifically, we have observed that several organisations are conscious of the risks at hand and have already implemented sanitary and safety protocols based on International Best Practices. While we commend the efforts underway, your support is very much required to make these efforts mainstream across the sector.

We have therefore set up a project steering group with concerned stakeholders to coordinate our intervention and ensure that resources are optimally deployed.

Ladies and gentlemen, the tourism sector is the lifeblood of the Mauritian economy. Mauritius is on the world map of a most preferred tourist destination. It is the dedicated duty of one and all to sustain this realisation.

Operation Coshare will thus be implemented in two phases. The first phase, as mentioned earlier will deal with implementing COVID 19 Occupational Health and Safety while the second part will focus on implementation of resource efficiency projects.

During uncertain times managing resources productively will surely impact the bottom line but more importantly it will reduce stress on the environment. Sustainable practices will contribute to make our tourism sector more resilient. The sector can consequently continue to grow and create more wealth for the benefit of our people.

I wish to end with a word of thanks to the Chairperson and members of the Project Steering Group as well as to all the trainers in the programme. Your dedicated contribution is vital for the success of the project.

Thank you.