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UNDP supports the digitalisation of Small and Medium Enterprises in Mauritius.

The project shall address pressing issues to create a level playing field for SMEs, bring the right information to aid decision making and empower human resources to boost business velocity.



From left to right: Mr. Dev Appalswamy, Director of Capacity Development, Corporate Services and Operations, NPCC; Mr. Ashit Gungah, Executive Director, NPCC; Dr. Tony Muhumuzi, Senior Economist and Officer in Charge, UNDP Mauritius; the Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives; His Excellency Mr. Shuichiro Kawaguchi, Ambassador of Japan; Mrs Bibi F.A. Raman-Ahmed, Permanent Secretary; and Mr Sujoy Busgeeth, Chairman NPCC. Photo: Jean-Yan Norbert @UNDP Mauritius

The launching ceremony for the 'Enterprise Go Digital' project was held on 04 March 2022 at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower in Ebène. The event was organised by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office and the Government of Japan. The launch was attended by the Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives; His Excellency, Mr. Shuichiro Kawaguchi, Ambassador of Japan; Dr. Tony Muhumuza, Officer in Charge, UNDP Mauritius and Seychelles; and Mr Ashit Gungah, Executive Director, NPCC.

Supported by the UNDP with financial assistance from the Government of Japan, the 'Enterprise Go Digital' project is part of UNDP's inclusive and multi sectoral response to COVID-19 through digital transformation and capacity development. The project will enable SMEs to keep up with the pace of technological change in the global economy and enhance productivity. The aim of this project is to strengthen the resilience of SMEs in the current COVID-19 crisis by providing funding for the implementation of digital solutions. The project shall address pressing issues to create a level of playing field for the SME ecosystem; bring the right information to aid decision making; and empower human resources to boost business velocity.

Digitalisation: The Way Forward

During the event, Mr Ashit Gungah, Executive Director of the NPCC, explained that the economy is experiencing a non-stop digital revolution. He stressed that *"digitalisation is key to boosting productivity, which is the main engine of prosperity and income."*

Dr. Tony Muhumuza, the UNDP Senior Economist representing the UNDP Resident Representative, acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on businesses and emphasised the role of digitalisation in building forward better during these times: *"We are operating in unique times that call for reorientation of businesses. Digitalisation offers a range of opportunities for SMEs to improve performance and spur innovation."*

In his speech, His Excellency Mr. Shuichiro Kawaguchi, Ambassador of Japan, highlighted the importance of SMEs to Mauritius' economy: *"Small and Medium Enterprises are drivers and game changers in the economic development of the country."* He mentioned that it was therefore crucial to use digital solutions to help them turn the challenges brought by the pandemic into opportunities.

The Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, emphasised that *"the 'Enterprise Go Digital' project is fully aligned to the requirements of a solid economic architecture."* He added that it was crucial for SMEs to rethink their business models and use technology to cope not only with the pandemic, but also future similar economic shocks.



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English Goal 17 Partnerships for the goals