

International Labour Organisation

(visio-conference)

Intervention by **Hon. Callichurn Soodesh,**

Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development & Training

Thursday 2nd July 2020

Your excellencies,

Good morning to all of you.

First of all, I thank the organisation for giving me the opportunity to intervene today in the context of the Global Summit on Covid19 and the World of Work – Africa Regional Event.

Allow me to give you an overview of how we tackled the consequences of the pandemic in my country.

Mauritius reported its first cases on March 18th 2020. It recorded 335 positive cases and 10 deaths as at 1st of June. The Government has successfully implemented a range of sanitary measures to contain the spread of the virus.

As at date, we have only five active cases, all of which are imported ones due to the influx of repatriates.

Your excellencies,

I wish to inform my colleagues that since the very beginning of the lockdown, when the economy came to a halt, our government being fully aware of the economic situation looming ahead, decided to support the local industries and businesses. Hence, government came up with an array of measures with a view to sustaining the economy, preserving jobs and safeguarding the livelihood of both workers and self-employed in the informal economy.

A Wage Assistance Scheme was introduced to subsidise wage in the private sector up to 50% for the month of March. Subsequently, for the month of April and May, government subsidised salary in the private sector up to a maximum ceiling of approximately 625 USD.(Rs 25,000).

An amount of approximately 195 million USD was disbursed to that effect which benefitted approximately 270,000 workers.

Regarding the informal sector, a Self-Employed Assistance Scheme was introduced and implemented for 187,000 persons as from 16 March 2020. Under the scheme, a financial support was granted through the Mauritius Revenue Authority to self-employed individuals who were unable to work or carry out their business during the curfew period.

Hence, self-employed individuals benefitted from a financial support of an amount of 60 million US dollars.

Mauritius has lifted the sanitary curfew on the 1st of June. The government however decided to extend **the Wage assistance scheme and** the self-employed assistance scheme in the tourism and related sectors, which are still heavily affected, for the month of June 2020.

Since we do not have an overview as to when the economic activities will pick up in the tourism sector, Government is closely monitoring the situation and is

currently working on tailor-made schemes for the workers and self-employed persons in that sector.

A general provision has been made in Budget 2020-21 to meet the related expenses.

Your excellencies,

So far, our government has successfully managed the crisis on the sanitary front and with its prompt intervention, avoided a social crisis. Let's work together as a continent to overcome the dark days lying ahead and pray for a remedy the soonest possible.

I thank you for your attention.