Speech of the Hon (Mrs) Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud
Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Workshop on the theme of:
Engaging with NGOs for the Promotion of Gender Equality
1 October 2015 at 9.30 am, Gold Crest Hotel, Quatre-Bornes

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has for the last decades established partnerships with various NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which are engaged in addressing women’s empowerment and gender equality issues.

In many international and regional forums, the need for NGOs and CSOs to complement the actions of Government through strategic partnerships has repeatedly been highlighted.
This complementarity is vital if we want to bring transformational change whilst working towards women’s empowerment and gender equality.

In Mauritius, the collaboration between my Ministry and NGOs/CSOs started with the advent and mobilisation of women’s groups in the 1970s. Just to name a few, the Self-Help Women’s Associations and the Mauritius Alliance of Women have been at the forefront of the struggle to empower young girls and women. The advocacy and solidarity amongst these women’s movements have indeed led to the empowerment of women in many walks of life.

Over the years, the partnership between the Government and CSOs has been extended to other Women’s Organisations which deal with women’s issues. These include the Mauritius Family Welfare and Planning Association as well as Regional Committees and Women’s Associations affiliated to the National Women’s Council. These Women’s Associations have increased from 150 in 1985 to some 1,200 now. Along the process, other NGOs such as Gender Links, SOS Femmes and Women in Networking (WIN) have emerged on the social front.
I strongly believe that linkages with NGOs and CSOs should be further strengthened and consolidated.

It is, therefore, within this perspective that in March this year my Ministry had organized a one-day forum with NGOs working for women’s empowerment and gender equality. And that was in the context of International Women’s Day and its objective was to help develop a road map for the “Future that Women want Post-2015”.

The outcome document of that forum and two other workshops held successively with representatives from the public and private sectors was handed over to the Deputy Prime Minister on 8 March. A copy was also handed over to the Hon. Prime Minister.

One of the salient points which arose during the forum of 4 March 2015 was that there should be regular interfaces between NGOs and the Ministry to enable them to be updated on emerging issues in the field of women’s empowerment and gender equality.
We are pursuing our efforts in sustaining the capacity-building of our stakeholders, NGOs included.
The recently set up “Women in Uniform” Association which brings together women of different professions wearing uniforms such as those working at the Mauritius Revenue Authority, Mauritius Police Force, Mauritius Prisons, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, women from the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life and Mauritius Post Office have also been sensitized on gender equality issues.

Today, we are meeting NGOs for the second time this year. We have among us this morning some NGOs with which the Ministry has recently engaged with.

Mrs Bali and Ms Ah-Nien will explain to you how we intend to proceed in order to make the most of the workshop today.

The Ministry will strengthen the strategic alliances established with you and will look forward to your full engagement and support in the foreseeable future.

We urge you to make optimum use of our Women Centres. These are venues where you can organise activities, hold your meetings while the Ministry can mobilise more women to attend your gatherings.
Thank you for your attention.