Mrs Diop, resource person;

Officers of this Ministry, of the National Women Council and the National Women Entrepreneur Council

A very good morning to you all

I am pleased to be associated with today’s activity being organized by the Gender Unit namely ‘Enhancing the Capacity Building of Officers on Project Write-Up’.

This initiative forms part of the decision which has been taken to enhance the abilities of our officers, through the provision of specific and targeted types of training. Ultimately it all aims at providing our clients with an improved service delivery.

Last year some of you have benefited from a series of capacity building programmes:

- Awareness campaigns on Gender Concept;
- on the impact of climate change on women;
- on motivational skills and effective public speaking;
- on management development programmes;
- on first aid amongst others.
• Workshops on the various Human International and Regional Human Rights Instruments such as
  - CEDAW;
  - SADC Protocol on Gender and Development; and
  - the African Union Frameworks on Gender and Development have also been organised.

• You have also undergone training on the various services and facilities offered by different stakeholders, specially those engaged in our One-Stop Shop Project.

• Today’s training focuses on “Enhancing the Capacity Building of Officers of Project Write-Up.”

• The techniques will be imparted to you by Mrs Diop, who is known to you all.

• The issue of women’s empowerment through implementation of projects for income-generating activities has, since the Ministry’s creation, been one of our priorities.

• Various causes account to the feminization of poverty.

• The Government of the Republic of Mauritius has committed itself to various international and regional Conventions and Treaties which include inter alia the:
• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
• the Beijing Platform for Action;
• the Millennium Development Goals, and;
• the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, that recognize gender equality as a fundamental human right.

- Through this Project Write-Up skills programme, we hope to enhance your skills and knowledge on project formulation, implementation and follow-up. We want you to come forward with projects/programmes aimed at empowering women for improving their livelihoods and also encourage women to set up projects by themselves.
- This is one of the components that we are developing to enable women to compete on an equal footing with men.
- If we want to bridge gender gaps, it is essential that women be given every opportunity to develop their potentialities.
• There exist nowadays several schemes and programmes that can help women and children to come out of precarious situations and integrate mainstream development.

• For instance, you all know that the Ministry has been implementing the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress.

• Since 2009, a total of 129 projects submitted by NGOs and non-state actors, have been approved to the tune of more than One Hundred and Eleven million rupees.

• In a bid to encourage women to set up enterprises, the Development Bank of Mauritius provides a Booster Loan Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs. It finances the setting-up of small enterprises in the manufacturing, agricultural, agri-business, handicraft, tourism, ICT or services sectors.

• On another level, “Corporate Social Responsibility” focuses on areas pertaining to socio-economic development. Registered companies are required to pay 2% of their book profit towards programmes that contribute to social and environmental upliftment of the country.
• Financial assistance is also given under the **Decentralised Cooperating Programme** of the European Union to NGOs for the implementation of projects aimed at eradicating poverty.

• As you can see there are a number of programme out there that women can tap into. However, skills are required when it comes to writing their project.

• This is where you come into play. With the adequate tools, you will be able to assist more effectively the clients.

• As you are all aware, this Ministry’s mandate, amongst others, is to empower women socially, economically and politically.

• We are responsible for the implementation of programmes and projects at the different levels but also to assist women to develop projects which contribute to their welfare.

• As officers of this Ministry, you must continuously update your skills and knowledge.

• This ministry will help you in this endeavor. But there are some things that you need to do on your own.

• For instance, a toolkit has been provided to participants. It comprises of copies of compendium pertaining to information on International and Regional Human Rights Instruments as well as
pamphlets on the services and facilities offered by various stakeholders.

- I expect all of you to read them, own them and apply the concepts that are contained therein in your daily interactions with your clients, working to meet local need and foster stronger, more sustainable communities.

- I trust that today’s training will enable you to provide assistance to women in identifying their own needs and develop and deliver projects to meet those needs.

- You should commit fully to quality service as opposed to routine performance.

- As officers of this Ministry, I would urge you to make a difference. Think out of the box and enhance your skills.

- I look forward to receiving feedbacks on this training as well as on the subsequent work that you will undertake following this Capacity Building Programme.

- We are empowering you to empower others.

- This training programme is one outcome of the re-engineering of our policies and programmes for enhanced service delivery. It should become a constant process. It is only at this cost that we, as
the ministry as the national gender machinery, will provide a more customized and responsive service to our womenfolk.

- With these words, I have the pleasure to declare the training officially open.

I thank you for your attention.