

Address of the Chairperson, National CSR Foundation on the occasion of the signing of the MoU with the University of Mauritius in the Council Room on Monday 18 march 2019 at 10.00 hours.

The Vice Chancellor, University of Mauritius
Members of the Council of the National CSR Foundation
The Secretary General of the National CSR Foundation
Staff of the University and the Foundation
Ladies and Gentlemen

First, let me congratulate the Vice Chancellor for being conferred the honours on the occasion of the National Day Celebration 2019. This state recognition for work done in the field of research, science and Education goes a long way towards placing both the Vice Chancellor and the University of Mauritius as an important stakeholder and partner in the development of the country... and I am proud that the University of Mauritius and the National CSR Foundation are today signing a Memorandum of Understanding for a structured collaboration between academics and practitioners in finding the best strategies for the harmonious development of our society.

Let me, now, say a word on the National CSR Foundation

The setting up of the National CSR Foundation was announced in the 2016-2017 Budget Speech. It was incorporated in December 2016 with the aim of bringing greater transparency in the use of CSR funds and better outcomes for the vulnerable segments of our society.

The main objective is to undertake programmes and projects in 10 priority areas for the benefit of individuals and families enlisted under the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) and of vulnerable groups.

Other key functions are:

- (i) To establish and update a register of Non-Governmental Organisations;
- (ii) To request and examine call for proposals;
- (iii) To monitor and evaluate projects and programmes; and
- (iv) To serve as a platform for coordination and communication among all stakeholders.

New responsibilities were entrusted to the National CSR Foundation as from January 2019

- (i) The National CSR Foundation is now the central body to receive and allocate public funds to Non-Governmental Organisations; and
- (ii) The National CSR Foundation approves, based on our guidelines, requests from Private Companies concerning the reduction of an amount not exceeding 25% of CSR funds to be remitted to the MRA.

The National CSR Foundation has a funding strategy which rests on the core philosophy of promoting social inclusion and equity, adopting a rights-based approach and a social investment model for funding which implies funding for results and outcomes.

The aim is to ensure that funds are directed towards interventions that are impactful and effectively contribute to improve the quality of life of the vulnerable segments of the population.

As at date, the National CSR Foundation has funded projects as follows:

- (i) Under a First Call for Projects in 2017, we approved 231 proposals from 173 NGOs for an amount of Rs 203 million.
- (ii) Under its General call for proposals launched in 2018, we have, as at date, approved 275 projects for an amount of approximately Rs. 294 million.

All projects funded under the first call for proposals have been systematically monitored and mentoring support has also been provided to enable the organisations to address problems encountered during the implementation of projects.

This brings me to our collaboration with the University of Mauritius.

In a bid to creating a solid institutional structure that will effectively attain its vision for an inclusive and equitable society, the National CSR Foundation has prepared a strategic plan underpinned by 4 strategic goals and 7 key drivers, one of them being an Evidence Based Approach.

The idea is to carry out research to understand current and emerging social challenges with a view to designing policies and strategies that will be more impactful.

In this context, the National CSR Foundation is pleased to engage in a collaborative partnership with the University of Mauritius by way of our Memorandum of Understanding.

The University of Mauritius has carried out a number of initiatives with the civil society in the past. However, we believe these were done on an ad hoc basis. This MoU will enable both parties to proceed in a more structured, coordinated and systematic way.

In the first instance, the National CSR Foundation will work with the University of Mauritius collaboratively on the following:

- (i) Impact Evaluation of Programmes/Projects funded by the National CSR Foundation;
- (ii) Capacity Assessment and Training Needs Analysis in the NGO sector; and
- (iii) A study on Early Childhood Care (Creche) Services at the Community level.

These studies are meant to inform future policies of the National CSR Foundation in an aim to effectively impact on the harmonious development of our society, in partnership with the civil society and in the best interest of ALL our beneficiaries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is much work ahead and, in advance, I wish to express my gratitude to all those who will extend a helping hand in the thinking, implementation and evaluation processes.

Thank you
Chairperson, National CSR Foundation
18 March 2019