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“You can’t have everyone being a star player”

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“Emotional intelligence - a prerequisite for any leader today - is becoming a compass”

“The tide is shifting!”

Saira Easton,
Leadership and Personal
Transformation Coach at Sigma



**If I slow down,
will I lose the race? ””**

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE- FOSTERING GENDER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Training by -Allyson Marie Reneau

DATE : SEP 09, 2025
TIME : 9:00:AM - 1:00PM
VENUE : ROYAL GREEN, MOKA

FOR REGISTRATION: registration@mindinitiatives.com

MEET THE TRAINER

Allyson Marie Reneau

Harvard Graduate | Space Policy Expert |
Global Speaker | Champion for Women &
Youth Empowerment



Ms. Allyson Marie Reneau, a Harvard graduate, international space consultant, resilience expert, and entrepreneur. Allyson is a global figure in leadership development with a story that captivates and inspires. A mother of 11 biological children, she earned her Master's degree in International Relations from Harvard—graduating summa cum laude—with a thesis that went on to influence NASA's return to the Moon and became a #1 Amazon release. She has held internships at NASA Headquarters, the FAA Commercial Spaceflight Office, and

the U.S. Naval War College, advising governments and corporate leaders worldwide on leadership, resilience, and innovation. Featured on NBC's Today Show, ABC, CBS, FOX, and major global publications, Allyson is a true testament to tenacity and leadership in action. Allyson has been invited to speak in over 20 countries including the UK, Japan, France, India, Rwanda, Turkey, the USA, Canada, and many more., and is celebrated for her insights on visionary leadership, resilience, innovation, and diversity.

NEWS

ANURAG SRIVASTAVA,

HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA TO MAURITIUS

“We will soon operationalize a local currency settlement system between our two countries”

- “We are poised at the cusp of a historic transition and it will deliver a Viksit Bharat, a developed India, to our citizens by 2047.”

Speaking at a reception held in Trianon to mark the 78th anniversary of India’s independence, High Commissioner Anurag Srivastava highlighted the breadth of India-Mauritius relations, from green development and maritime security to education and cultural ties. He talked about the elevation of bilateral ties to an enhanced strategic partnership and outlined projects that will take that partnership “to even greater heights.”

RUDY VEERAMUNDAR

The High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, Anurag Srivastava, reaffirmed the breadth and depth of the bilateral partnership between the two countries on the occasion of India’s 78th Independence Day, highlighting new initiatives in development, security, education, and economic cooperation. Speaking at a reception held at the Trianon Convention Centre on Friday evening, the High Commissioner described Mauritius as a country that celebrated India’s independence “with as much fervour as India itself,” and one that continues to share a relationship rooted in history and sustained by mutual aspirations.

Historical Resonance and Personal Reflections

Mr. Srivastava opened his address by recalling the moment of India’s independence in 1947, when Mauritius joined the celebrations with flag-raising ceremonies, free cinema shows, prayers, and community events. “Celebrating our Independence Day in Mauritius is truly special for more than one reason,” he said. On a personal note, he added that the occasion marked exactly eight months since his arrival in Port Louis. “In these eight months, I may say that there has never been a dull moment. Mauritius has lived up to my expectations both professionally and personally, and my time here has been truly enriching and fulfilling.”

Enhanced Strategic Partnership

A major highlight of the year was the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March, at the invitation of Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam. The visit – Prime Minister Modi’s first to Mauritius in a decade – resulted in the elevation of ties to an “enhanced strategic partnership,” which Mr. Srivastava described as “adding a new chapter to our special relationship.”



The strategic partnership now covers almost every possible sector – from maritime security and capacity building to education, science and technology, and healthcare. “Perhaps the most visible demonstration of India’s commitment to this relationship is our people-centric and green development partnership,” the High Commissioner said.

Development Projects and Green Transition

India has supported 38 projects in the past year, including 34 new community development initiatives, two area health centres, and the flagship Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation. “We are confident it will soon emerge as a centre of excellence in the region,” Mr. Srivastava said.

Green development being an important part of this partnership, the High Commissioner drew attention to the recent handover of the first batch of electric buses to Mauritius. “This was a reaffirmation of a joint commitment to energy transition and to a greener planet. These buses, which you may have seen on the roads, are reducing carbon emissions, lowering running costs for the National Transport Corporation, and enhancing commuter experience. I encourage you to take a ride on them,” he remarked.

Further commitments include the delivery of 90 additional electric buses and the replacement of water pipelines under the first ever Indian rupee-denominated line of credit. Mr. Srivastava also noted that infrastructure developed by India in Agalega had played a crucial role in providing support

during cyclones, when India supplied relief material as the “first responder” to assist Mauritius.

Economic and Financial Connectivity

On the economic front, India has facilitated visits by delegations from the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. “This gives us confidence in attracting Indian investment in sectors such as the blue economy, renewable energy, healthcare and IT,” the High Commissioner said.

Financial and digital connectivity are also advancing. Following the 2024 launch of India’s UPI and UPI-enabled services in Mauritius, both governments are now working to make digital payments “totally seamless.”

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Mr. Srivastava added that “we will soon operationalize a local currency settlement system between our two countries. This will greatly help importers and exporters on both sides by reducing reliance on third currencies.”

Joint Satellite and Maritime Security Cooperation

A symbolic project of scientific and technological cooperation is nearing completion: the joint India-Mauritius satellite, which is expected to be launched in the coming months. “India and Mauritius are traditional and long-standing partners in maritime security, facing common challenges such as drug trafficking, illegal fishing and environmental pollution,” Mr. Srivastava said.

He also confirmed India’s support for the establishment of a new Mauritius Police Academy, a national maritime information-sharing centre, and the refit of the coast guard ship CGS Barracuda. “Our security and maritime cooperation will be strengthened further,” he said.

Education, Training and Cultural Cooperation

Education has been one of the cornerstones of bilateral collaboration since independence. This year, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Secondary School celebrated its 50th anniversary, a milestone that Mr. Srivastava described as historically significant: “MGISS is the first project implemented through Indian assistance. It was the vision of the founding father of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who knew the importance of free and universal education and its role in nation building.”

Other institutions established with Indian support include the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, the World Hindi Secretariat, and most recently, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation. “These are all iconic institutions which showcase India-Mauritius collaboration in capacity



building and, if I may say, in nation building,” the High Commissioner observed.

Training and exchange programmes have also expanded. In the last 12 months, 372 Mauritians travelled to India for fully funded training opportunities. 89 Mauritians received scholarships, and 58 young people joined youth programmes. “My first event here was the send-off for six Mauritian youth who participated in our Republic Day Camp as part of the NCC Youth Exchange Programme,” he

recalled.

Last month, the High Commission even hosted a reception for Mauritian alumni of Indian institutions, which included President Dharamveer Gokhool, who studied at Delhi University in 1965. “Our people-to-people bonds remain the firm foundation of our ties,” Mr. Srivastava stressed.

Diaspora and People-to-People Ties

Mauritius sent its largest delegation to



Our Independence Day is a reaffirmation of the hard-fought values that have built the world’s largest democracy

date – more than 300 delegates – to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas earlier this year. The High Commissioner noted that the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) programme in Mauritius has expanded rapidly, with Prime Minister Modi personally handing over cards to President Gokhool and Prime Minister Ramgoolam. “We like to believe that our strong people-to-people connect, which represents the *Khoon ka Rishta* of some years ago, is now an unbreakable *Dil ka Rishta*,” Mr. Srivastava said, highlighting both the ancestral ties and the bonds of affection linking the two countries.

Shared Vision for a Developed Future

In his concluding remarks, the High Commissioner situated the bilateral relationship within India’s long-term national aspirations. “Our Independence Day is a reaffirmation of the hard-fought values that have built the world’s largest democracy. Today, these values fuel 1.4 billion dreams. We are poised at the cusp of a historic transition. A transition that can make opportunities and prosperity a reality for billions of people. And it will deliver a *Viksit Bharat*, a developed India, to our citizens by 2047,” he said.

He also stressed that India’s vision is outward-looking, stating that “we share the same vision of progress and prosperity with our friends and partners. Because, as the Prime Minister says, what India dreams for itself, we wish for the world”.

Mr. Srivastava concluded by thanking Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Deputy Prime Minister Paul Bérenger, ministers and officials of the Government of Mauritius, and all “friends and well-wishers of the relationship” for their commitment to strengthening India-Mauritius ties. He also acknowledged the role of Indian public sector undertakings in Mauritius, including Indian Oil, State Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Bank of Baroda, and others. Special thanks were extended to the Mauritian Police Band for providing the evening’s music.

“Together we will take our partnership to even greater heights,” he said, closing with the words, “Thank you, Jai Hind.”

COVER STORY



SAIRA EASTON,

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION COACH AT SIGMA

If I slow down, will I lose the race?

- **“It’s scary for a lot of people to step back”**
- **“It’s our light, not our fear, that scares us”**
- **“No one gives you the rule book on how to be a manager”**
- **“Emotional intelligence - a prerequisite for any leader today - is becoming a compass”**

What was intended as a straightforward one-hour interview soon unfolded into something different: an invitation to pause, to step back and let go, to acknowledge a journey that began long before us, in the footsteps of previous generations. It became a voyage inward — an exploration of the self through a lens free of judgment. “People don’t change from what they see on the surface. They change from something hidden inside, something that needs to be released or processed,” reflects Saira Easton, leadership and personal transformation coach at Sigma, in an interview with Bizweek.

TEXT: RUDY VEERAMUNDAR
PHOTOS: BRADLEY RAMBHOJUN

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Saira, thank you for welcoming us at your place. Let's start by how you would describe your professional journey.

My professional journey has been extremely rich, with accelerated moments. I was born in the UK to Mauritian parents; I did my schooling and education in Birmingham, earned a business degree... Quite quickly after graduation, I fell into London, started off at Thomson Reuters as a learning and development assistant. Within a few years, I became a learning and development manager, moving to Geneva, looking after 150 sales managers for Europe, Middle East and Africa.

At that time, I was probably one of the youngest managers in the Swiss office, and got used to that step change that you must suddenly make. No one gives you the rule book on how to be a manager, and given I was quite young still, I had plenty of ideas, projects that I'd carry through, but not always that executive execution that you needed to make things happen. Because I was extremely determined, I accelerated quickly, and I found my way, bumping off corners along the way. I had an incredibly rich experience traveling around Europe, Middle East and Africa, understanding different cultures, understanding what leadership was from quite a young age.

I remember that at that point, when I was about 25, my manager said, 'you need to go and do your coaching diploma, because everyone in this role has to have that as a specialist skill.' I remember going to London, and in the class, everyone was about 50 plus. They were experienced coaches, and I thought, my goodness, I don't have any experience. How can I coach people? In the end, I was one of two people, out of 30, who got a distinction, and I realized, at that point, that I love coaching. I think I'm a coach. What happened between having no prior experience and seeing everyone in that class who was already coached, but needed extra diplomas, etc., was what coaching was about.

It triggered you then...

Yes. It's probably the first time that I've gone back to that moment and thought, 'that's when something happened.' It wasn't the traveling around the world. It was in that room, when I was massively intimidated from the start, thinking I didn't have any experience, but then I got that result saying, 'you've got a distinction, and hardly anyone did.' It came down to this distinct, unshakable passion I had inside to help people see who they were.

Did you expect you would end up with a distinction?

No way! I just wanted to pass. You had to come up with your own coaching model. It was like a few months' program, so lots of training in between. You had to take people and practice, and then you had lots of live coaching and facilitation experience and feedback, and for the final assessment, I remember I was coaching, and you had people watching, making assessments. So, do you ask the right questions? Like journalism. Do you mirror the things that need to be mirrored? Do you reflect it back in a way that is non-judgmental, but constructive? Can you see the unseen, that's not in the words, but hidden in the body language and the tone? Can you have the courage to pinpoint that which doesn't want to be seen, knowing that at the heart of that lies the seed of transformation?



People don't change from what they see on the surface. They change from something that's hidden inside, that needs to be released or processed."

Why do you need the 'courage' in coaching?

To see the unseen, and smoke it out. Because that is almost always where the seed of transformation lies. People don't change from what they see on the surface. They change from something that's hidden inside that needs to be released or processed. That could be something, a fear. It is mostly fear, but within the fear is mostly something incredible. They say it's our light, not our fear, that scares us. Our light, not our darkness, that scares us. So, it's our brilliance that we're scared of. We don't realise that. 1% of humanity is living their brilliance. They have the courage to touch it and say, 'I am great, and I deserve to be here doing incredible things.' That should be all of us. But it's about 1% of us. And why are the 99% of you not getting there? Because the fear of our brilliance is so huge. It's masked by deep conditioning that tells us, 'don't step out of the tribe, don't step out to be different.'

I teach this a lot in class, because a lot of what I'm trying to do in Mauritius is to break deep conditionings that hold us into limitation. We call

it self-limiting beliefs, but what I'm trying to help people understand is that we can look at this neutrally, in a non-judgmental way. Humans used to exist in tribes. If you strayed out of the tribe, you risked your life. How were you going to survive without the tribe to help you live, to help you have shelter? You were dependent.

In Mauritius, we were a small island, too. Tribes, here, can be even tighter, and the legacy of tribes can be stronger. What it manifests now is like: 'Why are you wearing that thing? That's not what we wear. Why are you speaking like that? Why are you trying to aim to be higher than that? That's not who we are. We don't do this. We don't deserve that. That's not for us.' There are so many verbal barriers that we have been conditioned to. Those conditionings, underneath it all – and this is why they're so strong – we think they're to keep us alive.

Do these insecurities or unwritten social norms shape the way people live and limit their freedom to fully express themselves in society?

Yes, I believe so. 100%. It's nothing else but that. It's like the big setbacks we've had. Why did we have those big setbacks in the first place? We are driven by what we think, but we can only see about 10% of what we think. The rest of it is subconscious.

Another big piece of the work I'm doing in Mauritius is raising what I either call consciousness or just awareness of what we really think. What are our thoughts? To know that, we need to know how we feel too, and that's a huge piece. It is like unlocking the capacity to recognize what we feel, and putting words behind our emotions. This concept of emotional intelligence, which is prerequisite for any leader today, is becoming a compass. We must know how we feel because it's guiding so many of our thoughts, which influence what we're doing at any moment. We need to understand how our teams and our organization feel. Otherwise, if we're driving huge transformation and change in this illusion that everyone's fine, the right thing is not going to happen.

From your experience and your time in Mauritius so far, how would you describe the general mood

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and well-being of people here? Do you feel that, overall, things are going well?

It's funny. We want to think we're fine. We want to put on a smart outfit, put on our blazer and give the illusion that everything's fine, and that is a good thing to do in terms of what we need to keep an aspiration of hope and an energy of optimism, of positivity... What we also need to do is acknowledge the truth of how things really are. What I also try to bring a lot into training is awareness of stress, pressure, resistance, and how they're shaping, again, how we feel, what we think, what we do. I think what really needs to be acknowledged is the speed of the evolution that we're in right now.

It's much more than coaching...

I mean, when Eddy (Eddy Jolicoeur) and I go into a classroom, there's two of us with our two different energies. We hold space. We don't call ourselves trainers. We call ourselves facilitators. When we're holding that space within both of our skills, we're allowing people to meet themselves, and then, with our experience, we're helping to shape people's encounter of what needs to be seen and what needs to change. It's not therapy in the traditional sense. It comes with the same goal to help people see themselves, but linked to the business agenda, which is to help them shape how they can best contribute and add value to the country. We need people in Mauritius to reach their real potential, to be their best.

I was in a class yesterday with HR recruiters, and their head office is in America. I said to them, 'I want to see you put Mauritius properly on the map. I want these guys from the U.S. to see that you do more than recruitment.' You must do more than tick the boxes of the operational tasks you're being given. What is going to make them look to Mauritius and say, 'I'm going to keep investing here. I'm going to grow here because the talent here can offer something that can't be offered in the other parts of the world.' We need to raise our value contribution beyond the operational. We need to and we can. That's where my focus is.

You can compare us with, say, India, Philippines, countries in Africa, Kenya... We're more than just English and French and technical ability. We have something that is our fusion of cultural strengths that can give us a different competitive edge. I said to this class, 'look at the rate of evolution we went through. From sugarcane monocrop to global business diversity across the country in 40 years or something. If we can transform ourselves, when we're going through that process, we're hitting curbs and feeling the pain, the growing pains. But if we can have the courage to put ourselves through that, we have the courage to grow tremendously more.' This is where I see that we're at.

We're chasing goals and we are hitting milestones. But we won't survive by force, logic and pushing alone. We need to step back. We can stop going linear and we can see what else we can add that is unique, different and innovative.

Where is our Mauritian edge?

Our Mauritian edge lies in our ability to transform quickly. We've survived as a multicultural nation, taking the best of India, Africa, China and Europe together. Look at the global conglomerates in



Mauritius. The ER, Rogers, etc. It's a combination now. We've fused different cultures of different continents into one culture. That brings with it what we call cognitive diversity, diversity of strengths. On top of this, our island sort of mentality, which can limit us in some ways, can also be to our advantage. We've learned to survive. There is a fierce and deep determination about Mauritians. If you look at any Mauritian that you meet abroad who say that they're studying, these are incredibly hardworking, studious people. We have ambition and focus, and sometimes, that can play against us. We can end up with burnout, and that notion of sacrifice, which I bring up a lot as well in class.

I grew up with my dad doing three jobs, night shifts, day shifts, weekends. It's near impossible for a human. That's the typical immigrant Mauritian. We need to measure all this drive and ability and

capacity we have, but balance it in a way with compassion and self-awareness, to find out how we manoeuvre to hit the point that matters.

You said something interesting about these linear types of thinking process. We don't often realize that we are in this linear process and that we need to stop and create. When you are in your sessions or classes, does everyone accept that they need to stop before being able to create?

Well, it's a good question because it's not an easy thing to accept straight away. I think people have got, especially in Mauritius, by-measures of success. What I mean is, if you're an executive, the illusion is that you've got there through doing everything right and achieving great things. Sometimes, stopping means admitting you don't know everything right now.

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This is where ego comes in...

Yes. Ego and fear. So, you know, the ego at that point in time is driven by a fear of insecurity. If I admit I must stop and look at the big picture, then does that make me look weak to my followers, to my competitors? If I slow down, will I lose the race? Will I go under? So, these are real fears.

How do you respond when people ask you: 'If I slow down, will I lose the race?'

If you slow down, you can accelerate further than anyone and anything. If you don't, you'll crash. In business, that's the point in time we're at right now. Navigating different cultures, navigating generations, navigating unknowns, means you're going to have to run on answers you don't have yet. It will demand a level of intuition. Intuition is not instinct and intellect. It's a level beyond. You can access intuition, but you must step back.

Let's imagine I'm one of the executives in your training – a successful entrepreneur who has moved across sectors from money to textiles, finance, and tourism. I say to you: 'Saira, I agree. I accept that I need to step back.' Now that I've stopped, what comes next? What is the process I should follow?

Again, good question. I almost wish people would ask for help on the steps to take to step back, because we need to help people do it. It's a scary thing for a lot of people to step back. Because the first thing that happens is that you'll have to let go of control. People sometimes need help to be able to let go.

I think of a coaching situation that I have currently, someone who's under a lot of pressure, who's an executive on the C-suite level, and who doesn't look like someone who has ever been able to let go in their career so far. Not letting go has so far reaped incredible rewards. So, people think, 'well, that is the formula. If I just keep going, don't let go, that's what success does.' But, like I said, there's a level. If I think of this recent coaching session, the goal was to help this guy let go. I was supposed to go straight into the exercises, and I thought, 'this guy's not ready.'

I shared the science with him. What's happening in your body? What's happening in your mind? How does it feel? Why are you, as a human, not different from anyone else? I therefore allow him to see it objectively, without guilt and shame. Guilt and shame are heavy, inhibiting barriers. We can't let go when we're feeling that 'I'll be a failure if I let go.' You help the person understand the tremendous pressure they're under. What's happening in the nervous system: the two sides of the parasympathetic nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system, one revs you up, one calms you down. The only control mechanism we have is our breath, and this is where I bring in my yoga teaching.

When you meet these people, is it often the case that they've already reached a stage of burnout without even realising it?

Again, a good question, because burnout is so subtle. The only problem is, they should have let go. Just feel the energy. I said that one of the most obvious signs is the lack of smile. When people can't pause and laugh heartily, then they've been locked for a long time.



Mauritians are known for their smile, which has long been our trademark as a nation. Personally, I feel we are losing that smile. From your perspective, do you see this as well?

Yes, absolutely. It's funny that, as you said that, the word that jumped in my head was 'akorite' (solidarity). If I look back, I often bring up our grandmas, our grandparents, and use them as references. Back when we lived together in that tribe setting, we depended on each other, there were tensions, but there was also tremendous love and vulnerability, because one person was weak here, one person was strong there, and it was accepted. You'd help me, I'd help you. Neighbours knew each other. That kind of co-dependency that we had, but with a sense of responsibility and respect, gave us this kind of space for incredible compassion for one another, and a kind of sense of 'we're in it together.' When you feel you're in it together, when you're going through tough times, you can smile. You can let go, because you're held up by the nest of society, and that's what we've lost.

That's why I said executives can't let go sometimes without someone there to help them remember what it is to let go, to hold them. I said that when we're in a classroom, I see that we're holding people. We're holding space so that they can let go again. And this is probably the biggest missing piece, that I think businesses have failed to see so far: we're not going to be able to continue accelerating without being able to know how to let go. Without letting go, you can't access intuition.

Again, from a scientific perspective, think of that sabre-toothed tiger running after the caveman or cavewoman. All they can do is fight, flight, freeze. And that's our response survival mechanism. I take this into a meeting scenario. In the meeting, one person gets defensive, angry at the news. They're in fight. One person freezes, their eyes are wide open, they're feeling nervous, they don't say anything. They're in freeze mode. One person is fidgety, they just want to get out of that place, they're in flight mode. That meeting, that thing being discussed, is the tiger that may kill them.

Who in that meeting room can then go, 'You know what, boss? I don't agree with that. I hear

where you're coming from, but I think that thing we did before, if we add this with that, it would actually achieve a different outcome?' Courage to be controversial with your seniority, thinking way outside the box because you can think about the past and future at the same time, being able to feel confident in yourself because you're not threatened... That's intuition. But that fight, flight, freeze person cannot access that level of thinking, because they're trapped in survival.

I go into many workplaces in Mauritius, and I say to the leaders, 'look at people in your meeting room. Who's in this mode? Who's in that mode? What mode are you mostly in?' And most people go for the fight. And I say, 'yeah, absolutely, because you got to where you are by fighting. So why would you stop fighting now?' Well, we're told to fight, especially women, to get to the top. We're told to fight even harder. Be like a guy. Use force. In fact – and this is a sensitive area – I speak to a lot of women who say that women are their worst enemies in the workplace. Well, I'm not surprised because some of these women have been taught to fight their way through. They are, in some way, at risk of losing their real edge, their intuition, their compassion, their creative ability, their strategic thinking, their intuition, their ability to hold space and people, and take them with them. That's the real superpower of an executive woman.

I sometimes say that in Mauritius, we're a bit like where we were in the UK in the 80s with women. In the 80s, there were shoulder pads and blazers. I remember there was a movement to stop breastfeeding if they were a mom. They went straight to formula. There was this idea of, 'we'll just move into logic, push emotions aside.' I think societies will go through trends, but what I'm hoping is that we don't have to follow the same trend. We can shortcut the trend if we see what's really happening and we decide to do things differently. I said that the advantage we have in Mauritius is our agility, because we're small. If we see that something works better, we can also be trendsetters. That's why Mauritius has developed quickly. Because we're able to be agile to put a new thing in place, and the cycle follows. So, there are certain trends we have to become honest and aware about.

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THRIVING IN A DIVERSE AND EVOLVING WORLD :THE RESILIENT AND VISIONARY LEADER

By Allyson Marie Reneau

Harvard Graduate | Space Policy Expert | Global Trainer |
Champion for Youth and Women Empowerment.



COVER STORY

SAIRA EASTON,

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION COACH AT SIGMA

“Meritocracy is coming in as a business prerequisite”

- **“Fairness means getting the best talent, in the best position, whatever that talent is, whoever that talent is.”**
- **“Leaders are not able to get by without being utterly authentic, having deep integrity, strong values, compassion, along with innovative, structured thinking, and resilience.”**
- **“You can’t have everyone being a star player, because you’ll have no one doing their day job.”**



Bizweek interviewed Saira Easton on 31 July, just before recent developments in Mauritius stirred public debate over nominations and appointments. While the timing is coincidental, her reflections on energy, perspective, and the need to step back appear strikingly relevant to the questions being raised today. She speaks of a society at a crossroads, where perceptions, brain drain, and toxic leadership collide with a growing demand for meritocracy, fairness, and authenticity. In that sense, her message goes beyond leadership coaching – it touches directly on the broader shifts shaping Mauritius at this very moment.

R.V.

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Like everyone else, you must read the news, be it through traditional media or on social platforms. From your perspective, is society at a crossroads where constant exposure to digital content has become a form of escapism, particularly for young people? Does this point to a deeper issue in how we engage with information, and if so, what should be done?

We are in the heart of change. So, yes, we are at the crossroads, and what we do now matters significantly. Brain drain is real. The common thinking, and perception – because it's a perception – is that life is better elsewhere. It's not really about money. We must work on changing that perception. In the class, yesterday, something came up about the glass ceiling, and someone was saying, 'well, you know, we don't think we can apply for this type of company, this role in this company, because our type of person won't get that job.' And I said to them, 'that is a perception.' There are two aspects. One, there is self-limitation when thinking of yourself. There's no one stopping you from saying you could do that role. That's your voice.

But then the other side is that we're also in a very fortunate space, where truth is prevailing. What I mean is that things like meritocracy are coming in as a business prerequisite. We're called into coaching scenarios where the person we're coaching may have been someone who didn't necessarily have the capacity, and was there based on maybe someone they knew, but can no longer survive in that role without the true capacity. And we're being asked to coach that person to find out if they can keep them or not. That kind of thing wasn't happening before. It's happening now because the business cannot exist without having the best talent in place. And that is a saving grace for true meritocracy, truth, and creating opportunities in Mauritius. The tide is shifting, and we are there right now. We're there not necessarily because of a sociological, compassionate ideology that we must be fair to everyone. It'd be nice if that's where it was driven from, but it's being driven from money. So, still by survival, but coupled with that is fairness. The truth is that we're not going to be able to get ahead without being fair. Fairness means getting the best talent in the best position, whatever that talent is, whoever that talent is.

Another message I deliver when I coach supervisors or at team leader level is, 'I want you to be acting, and thinking, as an executive, right now. This isn't a narrow hierarchy of roles anymore, where you can just wait for the next position to happen. Your generation is going to create new positions.'

I said to that team, 'think of what the U.S. head office wants, the executives in there. Be creating a solution for that now, outside of your day-to-day job, or even within your day-to-day job. When you begin to do that, you'll create new posts, new opportunities.' And that's the message for young leaders today. It is not that there's opportunities abroad, but that you need to make opportunities happen here. The fortunate reality is that the executives see that too. Ego doesn't have the same amount of space it used to.

Another wave that's coming in, in that we're being called in to address it, is toxic leadership. Toxic leadership is just not surviving anymore, which is a great and amazing thing. Leaders are not able to get by without being utterly authentic, having deep



integrity, having strong values, having compassion, along with that innovative, structured thinking, and resilience. So, it's a tall order for a leader today.

We're calendarizing for next year now, because the need for leadership has just risen. It's incredible because, in terms of marketing, I just write stuff I like to write on LinkedIn. I don't do that much marketing. But we keep getting requests. I think what we started to understand is that what we're doing isn't obvious, and isn't being done very much yet. We're going to the heart of things.

We started off with leadership development. It's widened to deep talent management, culture and values, and then leadership. So, where people have asked for leadership now, we're asking, 'how strong is your foundation? How strong are people living the values of your company? Do they know what values in action look like? What behaviours are required to meet those values?' And we're now putting in that step first. And then we're going another step further for some companies, and saying, 'what does your talent management look like? How do you assess where your team really is in terms of, not just performance, but potential?

We've designed tools, frameworks, to help companies assess every talent from a performance potential perspective, and map them. Rather than just throw out these generic reward recognition schemes, which is nice, but with very little sustainable gain, we've developed one-on-one conversations for every single category of talent. So, if you're a manager, there's a talent concept called the nine-point grid. In the bottom left corner, there are the low potential, low performance. When you start to recognize, based on the values and behaviours you're looking for, that you've got someone there, that must be addressed with clarity, objectivity, and honesty. Don't just let them carry on there.

Then, on the flip side, you've got the high potential, high performance. That's your star player. How are you going to get them to drive innovation, and retain them in a way that motivates them, because they will be on the flight path, straight away to the next job, if you cannot think of a way to motivate them that goes beyond money. Then you've got most people, that are in the middle, who are your

average performers, average potential, and they're your core players. They're people who you need to keep. You can't have everyone being a star player, because you'll have no one doing their day job. We have these guidelines on how you address that person, one on one, to get under the surface of what motivates them day to day. How can I make sure that you stay happy, that your hygiene factors, the money, the time off, the training that you might need, the support you might need, is there. So, it's generating conversation points.

We've got a huge program that's coming through, for one company, where we've gone through the assessments, and now we're training leaders on how to manage talent. So, we did a first bit, which was giving them leadership training. Then we went in the company, did all the talent management stuff, assessment, and framework. Now we're going to go through the same sets of leaders and teach them how to manage the talent using these one-on-one conversations.

Rather than pull this person in and just talk about performance, they're able to see the difference with a developmental conversation that looks at this person and asks them more subtle things to help carve their desire to stay in that job, and to grow in that job. That is an essential step, again, that we cannot afford to miss in Mauritius. So even though we know we're talking about retention engagement, what we really need is those conversational pointers and deep coaching skills. No leader can get by without coaching skills now. Simple questioning and listening. Curiosity. That's not telling them, 'do this, do this, do this.' It's a bit of mentoring, but after that you have stopped, stepped back, asked curious questions, and allowed that person to see what they really need, to envision where they want to go. Then you can mentor.

That skill is lacking. Instead of throwing out loads of retention engagement, more surveys, more award ceremonies, more team buildings – things we're spending so much money on – teach that person how to ask questions and listen. That's all you need to do.

(Part II of this interview will be featured in the next issue of Bizweek)

INTERVIEW

JAMIE SIMMONDS,

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE ACCESS BANK UK LTD

“We view Mauritius as a vital part of our expanding international footprint”

- **“We can provide appropriate support and reinforce this resilience at a time when other international banks may decide to step back for a certain period of time”**

“We view Mauritius as a vital part of our expanding international footprint,” says Jamie Simmonds, CEO of The Access Bank UK Ltd. With the expertise and knowledge of its staff, the Bank aims to build on opportunities beyond Southern and Eastern Africa, opening up markets for AfrAsia Bank’s clients in MENA, Paris, Hong Kong, Malta, the UK and other OECD countries. At a time when some international banks may choose to retreat, Jamie Simmonds believes Access Bank can provide the support needed to reinforce resilience and unlock growth.

Mr Simmonds, what motivated Access Bank UK and Access Holdings to acquire a majority stake in AfrAsia Bank at this particular time?

Established as a wholly owned subsidiary of Access Plc in 2008, The Access Bank UK Ltd is responsible for the international expansion of the Group outside of Africa. Over the past years, we have sought out strategically important locations in which to develop the Bank and expand our footprint. The UK covers Sub-Saharan Africa and Dubai, giving us a gateway into the MENA Region, Paris provides us access to Francophone African countries, while Hong Kong grants us access to a trade corridor into China and more broadly Asia, and Malta provides us with coverage across Europe, together with North Africa.

We were therefore looking to ensure we could develop Trade Finance across Southern Africa, and Mauritius, with its mature financial services and legal systems, was our primary target location. When the AfrAsia Bank opportunity presented itself, the values and cultural fit made it an ideal opportunity for us to take discussions forward and proceed to completion with the purchase of a controlling interest in the Bank.

How does this acquisition align with Access Bank Group’s broader ambition to build a pan-African banking network with international reach?

It provides us with further coverage in our ever-developing international reach – to ensure that our customers, no matter where they are in the world, have easy access to our relationship-based service and expertise to meet their needs and support their businesses. We see this as a key enabler of our broader strategy to build a global banking group that is not only commercially successful, but also aligned with international best practices and the evolving expectations of regulators, stakeholders and the communities that we serve.

You’ve described Mauritius as a “reputable financial centre.” Can you elaborate on how Mauritius fits into Access Bank’s long-term international strategy?

We view Mauritius as a vital part of our expanding international footprint, offering valuable experience and a proven track record in the Mauritian and broader African markets; regions where we have historically had limited presence.



With AfrAsia Bank maintaining its brand and leadership, how will Access Bank UK work with the current management to ensure continuity while driving growth?

Given that there are many common and shared values between the two banks, we firmly believe that there will be many synergies in the future. For instance, we both share an unwavering commitment to sound governance, regulatory compliance and sustainable growth. By combining our capabilities, we are well positioned to unlock these synergies,

foster innovation across markets and enhance the financial resilience and diversity of our institutions.

What are the immediate priorities following the acquisition, in terms of integration, innovation, and operational alignment with Access Bank Group?

I would say communication, communication and communication. Indeed, it is vital that we all have the same understanding of the new landscape and of our roles within the new structure to ensure that we deliver the full potential of the two institutions. We value open and honest communication to ensure

INTERVIEW

that we listen to the concerns, address issues, and celebrate successes as well as great ideas. As such, it is vital that we all play our respective parts as we move forward to fulfil our shared vision and attain our objectives. Create the shared vision and achieve the goals.

Access Bank has long positioned itself as a key player in Africa's economic transformation. How does this acquisition contribute to deeper financial integration across the continent?

There is no doubt that the African continent is growing rapidly and has an abundance of natural resources. Over the years, it has increasingly built local capabilities to ensure it can become more self-reliant. In line with that growth, Access Group is positioning itself as a significant regional bank to help Africa maximise its potential. In respect of The Access Bank UK Ltd, we provide a global reach through the delivery of Trade Finance and Wealth Management solutions. Given the positioning of AfrAsia Bank over the past few years, it has a critical role to play in expanding these ambitions.

Do you see Mauritius playing a more strategic role in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) through financial services and investment facilitation?

We can see the benefits of this type of arrangement, and as it develops further, our aim is to work out what type of value-added service we can bring to the table.

AfrAsia Bank has been a trusted partner for entrepreneurs and investors in Southern and Eastern Africa. How do you plan to strengthen that role with Access Bank's continental reach?

We intend to build on the successful positioning of AfrAsia Bank in these markets by offering an expanded network of international contacts and support mechanisms with our counterparties and business partners. In the long run, with the expertise and knowledge of our staff, we will be able to build on opportunities outside of Southern and Eastern Africa, and open up markets for AfrAsia Bank's existing client base in MENA, Paris, Hong Kong, Malta, UK and other OECD countries.

What opportunities do you foresee to support African SMEs, fintechs, and high-net-worth individuals through a stronger Mauritius-Africa axis?

The answer applies to personal, business, b2b, as well as SMEs, fintechs and HNIs. We have a first-class Asset Management division offering bespoke asset management and wealth management solutions, and we will be looking at how these can be harnessed alongside the current Private Banking and Wealth Management solutions developed by AfrAsia Bank.

With the global economy facing ongoing volatility, how will this transaction position Access Bank and AfrAsia Bank to attract international capital into Africa?

As we are all aware, there is currently a good deal of global uncertainty. Whilst tariffs, together with the global interest rates, leave an inevitable impact on core African markets through such mechanisms as exchange rate issues and inflationary pressures, we do however observe strong resilience. Our in-depth knowledge of these markets means that we can provide appropriate support and reinforce this resilience at a time when other international banks may decide to step back for a certain period of time.

As we work with AfrAsia Bank to further develop their Trade Finance offering within our moderate risk appetite, we see them as also being able to play an increasingly positive role in this space.

What role do you see for Mauritius as a bridge between African markets and Asia, particularly in the context of trade, investment, and offshore structuring?

Mauritius has always had a strong relationship with India, and we already have extensive relationships with a number of Indian companies who provide services and finished goods into a number of African countries. As such, we see considerable scope to increase these activities through AfrAsia Bank working in close collaboration with The Access Bank UK.

How will you balance rapid innovation – especially in digital banking and AI – with the growing need for regulatory compliance, cybersecurity, and ethical banking?

We embrace and include AI in our future plans to ensure that we maintain a competitive edge and are able to deliver the service and products that our customers require. However, we are firmly grounded in the view that people buy people, and we are very proud of our relationship-based service. This has enabled us to develop deep, meaningful and long-term relationships with our customers, so that we support them in the good times as well as the challenging times, and that we grow with them as their businesses succeed. We therefore see AI as an enabler to undertake more of the mechanical workstreams, freeing up our dedicated and experienced staff to spend more time to add more value in face-to-face interactions with our customers. We will of course be looking at how we can harness technology to improve processes, procedures, and speed up global delivery across time zones. We are fully committed to sustainable and ethical banking and will not do anything at all that compromises our beliefs in this area in any way. We have recently upgraded our main operating system to ensure that it is state of the art, and we are constantly testing for cybercrime resilience. In addition, we also have a strong track record with our regulators to ensure that we uphold the highest standards of regulatory compliance at all times.

There is increasing investor appetite for ESG-compliant projects. How is Access Bank Group working to align banking operations with sustainable finance principles?

We have a strong ESG policy that governs how we act and do business – we are committed to sustainability and good governance practices, and will only deal with ethical counterparties, as well as in ethical markets. Wherever possible, we endeavour to limit our impact on the environment, whilst promoting a healthy and inclusive culture.

Given tightening global monetary policy and increased risk aversion, how is the Group managing liquidity, credit risk, and long-term portfolio stability across regions?

We have a moderate risk appetite and refuse to chase transactions for the sake of yield. As mentioned, we are a relationship-based bank, and we believe in building long lasting relationships with our customers. This enables us to really understand their business and evolving requirements. We have a strong credit policy, a robust team and a solid governance model throughout the business, which



With the expertise and knowledge of our staff, we will open up markets for the existing clients of AfrAsia in MENA, Paris, Hong Kong, Malta, UK and OECD countries.

are supported by our operational risk and compliance functions, with all credit risk analysis and proposals originating in-country. We are pleased to note that this also applies to the way that AfrAsia Bank has developed.

IBL Ltd remains a minority shareholder. How do you view their continued involvement, and what does this partnership bring to the table in terms of local market knowledge and governance?

We are very pleased that IBL has maintained a passive stake within the Bank, and we understand how this fits with their values and "Beyond Borders" strategy. We look forward to continuing our positive engagement with them as we develop this exciting opportunity and add value to both companies, as well as our customers, and the economy of Mauritius

From a client perspective, what changes, if any, can stakeholders expect in AfrAsia Bank's service delivery, product portfolio, or market focus?

We will be looking at ways in which we can enhance our products, channels and service delivery to ensure that we maximise the strengths of both banks for the benefit of all our customers. As a result, we will be opening up new markets through our international coverage and network for AfrAsia Bank customers, thereby providing them with greater access and opportunities for their businesses.

What metrics or benchmarks will you use over the next 12 to 24 months to evaluate the success of this acquisition?

For us, success means continuing to deliver a high level of service to our customers, ensuring our staff are engaged and aligned with the goals and objectives of the enhanced banking group, while maintaining a strong and healthy relationship with our local regulators. Together, these elements will support the Bank's ongoing profitability and sustainable growth.

Finally, what message would you like to convey to clients, partners, and regulators in Mauritius and the region as Access Bank UK begins this new chapter with AfrAsia Bank?

We are excited and privileged to have been given this unique opportunity to invest in AfrAsia Bank and Mauritius. As we bring a wealth of experience and a solid past performance track record in international markets, we look forward to working with the team to build an even stronger and more successful bank to benefit all stakeholders, including the country of Mauritius.



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NEWS

FT AFRICA SUMMIT 2025

A New Vision for Africa in a Changing World

The Financial Times has announced the 12th edition of its flagship FT Africa Summit, taking place on 21–22 October 2025 at The Peninsula, London.

Under the theme “Africa in a Changing World,” the summit will convene African Heads of State, policymakers, CEOs, investors, and next-generation entrepreneurs to explore the continent’s global role in a period of geopolitical and economic uncertainty, and technological change. This year’s high-level speaker line-up includes Mahmoud Ali Youssef, Chairperson, African Union Commission; Ronald Lamola, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa; David Moinina Sengh, Chief Minister and the Chief Innovation Officer, Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone; Vera Daves de Sousa, Minister of Finance, Angola; Mohamed Mansour, Chairman, Infinity Power; and Mike Sangster, Senior Vice President Africa, TotalEnergies, alongside ministers and business leaders from South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Egypt, Mauritius, Kenya, and Senegal. The dramatic changes to America’s foreign policy in Donald Trump’s second term and his upending of the decades-old global trading system present challenges, uncertainties and risks for Africa as other outside powers intervene. The threat to Lesotho’s economy from tariffs underlines the potential peril for some African states. But there are also opportunities for the continent as America prioritises trade and investment over aid.

From policy shifts in Nigeria, Angola and South Africa to advances in fintech, AI and digital infrastructure, the 2025 summit will examine how African countries are embracing innovation and economic transformation. The summit will also spotlight Africa’s hoped-for transition to renewable energy and also industrial expansion, and the rising influence of youth-led entrepreneurship in shaping sustainable, inclusive growth.

The discussions will be facilitated by senior editors from the Financial Times and will feature insight-driven dialogue across geopolitics, tech, energy, infrastructure, trade, investment and finance.

FT Africa editor David Pilling said: “Now in its 12th year, the FT Africa Summit offers a vital platform to examine Africa’s role in a rapidly changing world. This year’s agenda brings together leaders and innovators to explore how African nations are approaching diplomacy, digital growth, and development priorities in bold new ways.”

FT foreign editor Alec Russell added that “South Africa’s hosting of the G20 summit in November underlines Africa’s elevated role on the global stage - but it also comes at the end of a testing year for the continent. The FT summit provides a forum for candid dialogue on Africa’s knotty geopolitical challenges and also fresh



thinking on the quest for investment and innovation.” Hosted in London, the FT Africa Summit has become a key platform for debate and connection between Africa and the world, offering direct access to international investors, development institutions, and a broad network of African and global stakeholders. It continues to serve as a valuable forum for conversation and exchange, connecting perspectives from across the continent and beyond to help shape the global narrative around Africa’s future.

A Wave of Appointments on Public Bodies Boards

Several appointments were made, this week, on the Boards of important public bodies, for a period of three years. For the board of the Competition Commission of Mauritius (CCM), the

term of office is 5 years, except for the Executive Director (3 years). Ms Bibi Nabiihah Juman, nominated on the Board of the CCM, declined the nomination.

Central Procurement Board

Name	Designation
Ms Bojanala BAICHOO	Chairperson
Mr Dev Anand AUKLE	Vice-Chairperson
Mr Muhammad Sadruddin DIWORE	Vice-Chairperson
Mr Paul Tristan Sydney BEESOO	Member
Mr Raymond Richard NAUVEL	Member
Mr Ravindranath NUNDLALL	Member

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal

Name	Designation
Mrs Vidya MUNGROO-JUGURNATH	Chairperson
Mr Benjamin Mathieu MARIE JOSEPH	Member
Mr Ashis Kumar HOOLASS	Member

Procurement Policy Office

Name	Designation
Mr Prem Anand SEETOHUL	Director
Ms Priya BALGOBIN	Member
Dr Moussa E. ALLYBOKUS	Member

Competition Commission of Mauritius

Name	Designation
Mr Jangbahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola Roopchand SEETARAM	Chairperson
Mr Sandiren Jaganaden REDDI	Vice-Chairperson
Mr Thierry CHELLEN	Commissioner
Ms Bibi Nabiihah JUMAN (declined)	Commissioner
Mr Vipin NAUGAH	Executive Director

AIR MAURITIUS

FIRST QUARTER PROFITS OF MUR 252.7 million FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026

The Board of Air Mauritius met and approved the first quarter (April to June 2025) results for Financial Year 2025 / 2026 on 14th August 2025. The national carrier reported a net profit of MUR 252.7, which represents the company’s best first quarter results over the past nine years.

This profit was achieved amidst several operational challenges. Amid intensifying competition on various routes, one A330-900neo wide-body aircraft was out of service for 8 weeks out of the 13-week period of the first quarter. A total of 24 AOG (Aircraft on Ground) incidents were also recorded for Air Mauritius’ fleet, which resulted in major cash outlays for maintenance and disruption costs.

Despite this, Air Mauritius witnessed a continued increase in passenger revenues from MUR 5.6 billion (EUR 112.4 million) to MUR 6.0 billion (EUR 115.4 million). The number of passengers carried during the first quarter increased by 0.8% to reach 403,127 as compared to 399,840 in the corresponding period of 2024.

Arrival of an additional ATR 72-600 aircraft
Air Mauritius also announced the arrival of an additional leased ATR 72-600 aircraft, named “Les Mascareignes,” which marks a significant milestone in the strengthening of Air Mauritius’ regional operations. The aircraft will leave Toulouse next week and start its regional operations initially to Rodrigues, and subsequently to Reunion. This ATR 72-600 aircraft, which replaces an ATR 72-500, has been specifically modified for Air Mauritius, with flexible cargo handling and special transport capabilities to allow for the carriage of stretchers and medical evacuation equipment, especially on the Rodrigues route. Air Mauritius will take delivery of a third leased ATR 72-600 aircraft by the end of September 2025, in replacement of another ATR 72-500 aircraft. The ATR 72 fleet will then comprise of one ATR 72-500 and three ATR 72-600 aircraft.

PRESS RELEASE

U.S.-Africa Trade Desk Announces Landmark Cotton Export from North Carolina to Mauritius, Signaling New Era of Bilateral Trade



In a powerful demonstration of how U.S. agriculture is helping to reshape global supply chains, the U.S.-Africa Trade Desk (USATD) today announced the successful export of 300 tons of premium-grade cotton from North Carolina to Mauritius. The deal marks a significant milestone in strengthening economic ties between the United States and Africa under the renewed U.S. drive to grow agricultural exports and promote reciprocal trade partnerships.

"This is more than a cotton shipment. It's a symbol of what's possible when U.S. farmers, African manufacturers, and trade facilitators work together toward shared prosperity," said William Fanjoy, Senior Trade Advisor at USATD. *"The Trump administration has placed agriculture at the heart of its foreign trade strategy. Thanks to support from the U.S. Commercial Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this deal supports that vision and sets the stage for a surge in mutually beneficial commerce."*

The high-quality, ethically sourced cotton will be used by Mauritius's thriving textile industry, renowned globally for its sophisticated knitwear and apparel exports. By sourcing directly from American producers, Mauritius enhances the integrity and traceability of its supply chains, while the U.S. cotton industry benefits from new, long-term market opportunities.

"We're delighted Mauritius will be importing high-quality cotton from the United States for its vital textile industry," said U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius, Henry Jardine.

He added, *"expanding trade increases prosperity for both our countries."*

Mauritius, ranked among the most economically open and politically stable nations in Africa, is uniquely positioned to serve as a springboard for U.S. agricultural commodities and products into the broader African market. This export deal reflects a broader strategic push to recalibrate trade dynamics by prioritizing transparency, capacity-building, and co-investment.

"This shipment represents a win for American farmers, a win for African industry, and a win for free and fair trade," said Nezihi Aslankeser at Cotton Council International (CCI). *"We are proud to support partnerships like this that align with global demand for sustainable and high-quality fiber."*

CEO of Firemount Textiles Ltd, Mauritius, Mr. Soma added, *"We are proud to be the first official partner in this important initiative with USATD. By incorporating premium U.S. grown cotton into our denim jeans, destined for American consumers, we are expanding our global footprint while meeting the highest quality standards expected by the U.S. retail market."*

The U.S.-Africa Trade Desk plays a pivotal role in operationalizing this new trade diplomacy, serving as a bridge between U.S. suppliers and African buyers, while advancing infrastructure development and compliance systems that enable seamless cross-border commerce.

August 8, 2025 – Washington, D.C.

About the U.S.-Africa Trade Desk

The U.S.-Africa Trade Desk (USATD) is a U.S. company driving the evolving two-way trade between the United States and the African continent. USATD's mission is to facilitate a new era of commercial partnership—one that strengthens U.S. supply chain continuity and expands access to global markets for U.S. and African producers. Through strategic sourcing, rigorous compliance systems, and demand-driven execution, USATD ensures the seamless flow of high-quality goods into and out of the United States, benefiting both American producers and consumers and serving as the connective tissue between U.S. producers and retailers and vetted African suppliers and retailers. This integrated approach ensures that U.S. agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors have access to scalable, secure, and cost-effective sourcing alternatives—while empowering African businesses to meet the rigorous standards of the U.S. market. USATD is not just a bridge between continents—it is a stabilizing force in global commerce that brings tangible economic benefits to U.S. households and African communities alike.

NEWS

MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

Key Rate unchanged at 4.50 per annum

At the 75th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting held on Wednesday 13 August 2025, the decision was unanimously taken to keep the Key Rate at 4.50 per cent per annum. Following the meeting, Dr Rama Krishna Sithanen, the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius (BoM), held the customary press conference to explain the decision.

The Governor noted that, despite announced breakthroughs in trade talks, the international trade ecosystem was still uncertain and the fallout of new tariffs on growth and inflation across markets and regions remained highly unpredictable. *"On the domestic front, growth prospects are highly delicate and surrounded by downside risks. Inflation has been on the rise recently, although on account of some transient factors. Upside risks to the inflation outlook dominate,"* he added.

Although the IMF, in its World Economic Outlook Update July 2025 report, revised its growth projections upwards from the April 2025 reference forecast, from 2.8 per cent to 3.0 per cent for 2025, it highlighted that uncertainty over the magnitude and impact of the trade shock persists. As for global inflation, the IMF projects it at 4.2 per cent in 2025 and 3.6 per cent in 2026. Notable upside risks to the global inflation outlook could arise from widespread trade protectionist measures, fragmentation of global value supply chains, and currency manipulations to preserve external competitiveness.

Crude oil prices have broadly stabilized since June 2025, reversing earlier gains from supply disruptions as a result of the conflict in the Middle East region. Oil prices are expected to settle under the US\$65 per barrel mark for the rest of 2025, but uncertainty over the effect of tariffs on demand persists. Global food prices moved up in June 2025, amidst concerns about the repercussions of trade developments on production and demand. By contrast, freight rates retreated across the last two months, reflecting softening demand as frontloading pressures dissipated.

The ongoing uncertainty has prompted many Central banks towards the route of caution. Since the beginning of 2025, a vast majority of policy rate decisions have been to stay put. The US Fed has so far refrained from taking any policy action in 2025, holding its policy rate steady in the range of 4.25 to 4.50 per cent at its July 2025 meeting; the ECB lowered its policy rate by 25 basis points in June 2025 to 2.00 per cent, but kept the status quo at its July meeting, and the BoE lowered its policy rate by 25 bps to 4.00 per cent at its August 2025 meeting, but indicated the likely ending of its monetary policy easing cycle soon.

Domestic Economic Developments

On the domestic front, real GDP growth was lower at 4.2 per cent in 2025Q1, compared to 5.2 per cent in 2024Q4, dragged down by contractions in the 'Accommodation and food service activities' and 'Construction' sectors. Other sectors registered positive growth. On the demand side, consumption expenditure was the main driver of growth in 2025Q1, while investment spending remained lacklustre.

Incoming data for tourist arrivals suggest that the 'Accommodation and food service activities' sector bounced back in 2025Q2. Mauritius welcomed 658,909 tourists in 2025H1, up by 2.1 per cent compared to 2024H1. On this trajectory, it is likely that the target of 1.4 million tourists for this year will be met. Reflecting the improvement in arrivals, gross tourism earnings increased to Rs47.4 billion, and are forecast to reach around Rs97.0 billion for the year.

Looking ahead, both domestic and trade policy



uncertainty are expected to weigh on the economic outlook. The negative effects of further changes in global trade policies and the impact of fiscal consolidation measures will have ramifications on key sectors of the economy. Whereas the Bank had projected GDP growth for 2025 to be within a range of 3.0-3.5 per cent at the May MPC meeting, latest developments and lingering uncertainty point towards GDP growth of around 3.0 per cent for this year.

The unemployment rate increased from 5.7 per cent in 2024Q4 to 6.0 per cent in 2025Q1. Growth in wages moderated to 6.6 per cent in 2025Q1 compared to double-digit growths recorded in the previous four consecutive quarters.

Headline inflation edged up for the fourth consecutive month to 3.1 per cent in July 2025. Y-o-y inflation remained high at 5.2 per cent. The increase in inflation largely reflected the impact of budgetary measures, which include higher taxes on demerit goods and additional excise duties on cars. CORE inflation, which measures underlying inflationary pressures in the economy, has remained relatively sticky, upheld by higher prices of services and wage increases.

The current account deficit as a ratio to GDP widened to 5.1 per cent in 2025Q1, from 4.8 per cent in 2024Q1, reflecting primarily a larger deficit in the goods and secondary income accounts, as well as lower surplus on the services account. On a calendar year basis, the current account deficit is projected to improve to 6.2 per cent of GDP in 2025, from a deficit of 7.0 per cent of GDP in 2024, as higher surpluses in the services and primary income accounts are expected to mitigate the impact of the widening trade deficit. An overall balance of payments surplus of Rs9.3 billion is expected in 2025.

The Mauritius IFC continues to attract healthy financial flows as global cross-border investment activities remain resilient despite the challenging global conditions brought about by the growing global uncertainty amid US new tariff policy.

The Gross Official International Reserves (GOIR) of the country remain comfortable, providing adequate buffers against potential external shocks. The GOIR stood at US\$9.7 billion as at end-June 2025, representing 13.2 months of import cover, compared to USD 8.2 billion at end-June 2024. The GOIR has risen while the Bank has started to refund the external borrowings contracted during the Covid pandemic.

Foreign Exchange Market

From 03 January to 11 August 2025, banks purchased a total amount of US\$4.6 billion on the domestic FX market, that is, about US\$866 million more than for the same period of 2024. They also sold US\$4.8 billion to the market over this period, approximately US\$972 million more than in 2024.

Significant inflows were seen from the accommodation and financial sectors during the last week of June 2025. Holders of FX disposed of FX mainly to meet end of financial year requirements, but also benefitted from favourable market movements with the appreciation of the Euro against the USD. However, USD remained under pressure with increased demand from importers seeking to benefit from the appreciation of the rupee against the USD.

Between 07 May and 05 August 2025, the rupee exchange rate appreciated by 0.42 per cent against the US dollar, but depreciated by 2.66 per cent against the euro, and 0.56 per cent against the Pound sterling.

Financial Stability

Risks to financial stability are expected to stay at a moderate level for the rest of 2025. The banking sector remains resilient to an array of potential adverse events, propelled by its strong capital and liquidity buffers complemented by the robust prudential regulatory regime. It holds strong solvency buffers, with a Capital Adequacy Ratio of 21.8 per cent in March 2025.

The assessment of risk to financial stability from the household sector indicates a marginal increase in the second quarter of 2025. The indebtedness of the household sector went up slightly to reach an estimated 39 per cent of GDP in June 2025. Still, the capacity of households to service their debt obligations remains healthy.

The financial soundness of the corporate sector is broadly stable, though some sectors exhibited vulnerabilities, notably in the agro-industrial and construction segments. Nonetheless, debt sustainability in the sector is sound.

The banking sector continued to support the economy with sustained credit flows. Credit to the corporate sector went up by 10.1 per cent, while household credit rose by 12.3 per cent in June 2025. The quality of the credit portfolio of the banking sector remained broadly sound, despite a rise in the NPL ratio to 3.6 per cent in March 2025, from 3.4 in December 2024. Banks held sufficient provisions to cover for potential losses, with a coverage ratio of 62.5 per cent.

NEWS

Five Ways to Create Trusted E-commerce Sites

E-commerce is the future of business in Mauritius. Digital transactions, contactless and QR code payments, and the use of popular apps like Juice by MCB, POP by Bank One, blink by Emtel, and my.t by Mauritius Telecom are all on the rise. Mirroring that, more cases of online scams and fraud are reported than ever. For Uways Kureeman, Country Head and Managing Director at Peach Payments, businesses can put their clients at ease by following a few clear guidelines.

In early April 2025, a consultative meeting brought together key stakeholders—including the Consumer Association of Mauritius, the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), and the General Retailers Association—to discuss how best to regulate e-commerce for improved consumer protection.

Just weeks later, on 23 May, the Mauritian Cabinet gave the green light to draft the Fair Trading (e-commerce) Regulations 2025. The aim? To put in place a well-structured, enforceable framework that ensures safer online transactions for all.

It was swiftly followed by the government's new ICT blueprint, unveiled on 26 May, which places strong emphasis on "digital skills for all." It's a clear signal that Mauritius is not only embracing digital transformation, but also making sure its people are well-equipped to thrive in this new era, safely and confidently.

And the timing couldn't be better.

According to figures released by MCB earlier this year, 2024 saw a 13% increase in digital transactions. Contactless payments jumped by 19%, while QR code payments skyrocketed, doubling over the past year. With popular apps like Juice by MCB, POP by Bank One, blink by Emtel, and my.t by Mauritius Telecom making digital payments easier than ever, it's no surprise that Mauritians are leaning into the convenience of online transactions.

Looking ahead, Statista forecasts e-commerce revenue in Mauritius will grow at an annual rate of 7.15% between 2025 and 2029. User penetration is also expected to climb from 23.3% in 2025 to nearly 27% by 2029. Clearly, e-commerce is not just a trend, it's the future of business in Mauritius.

But as with any digital leap, there are risks. Almost 850 cases of online scams and fraud were reported in 2023 alone, highlighting the urgent need for merchants to build their credibility and trustworthiness with online consumers.

For Uways Kureeman, Country Head and Managing Director at online payment gateway Peach Payments, "building trust is key to success. Consumers are understandably wary about handing over their banking and payment details to brands they are unfamiliar with. Peach Payments supports the government's efforts to build trust into the ecosystem

and work with merchants to contribute positively to the e-commerce environment in Mauritius."

Below, he details five ways businesses in Mauritius can make their websites more trustworthy and put their clients at ease:

1. Show your good intentions

One of the best ways to build trust on an e-commerce site is displaying trust badges and seals. Some of these include the use of Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificates, antivirus and other security badges, money-back guarantee badges and third-party endorsements. Use a reliable payment gateway, displayed in the footer of your page, to offer customers the peace of mind needed to share their payment details with you. Consider having a Security section on your About Us page, listing the different levels of security you and your service providers, such as your delivery partner and payment gateway, offer.

Also, make sure you feature all relevant product information such as size and weight specifications, shipping information, and your company's contact information, such as addresses and phone numbers.

2. Professional looks matter

It is not only about stocking the right products or offering a valuable service, but presenting it professionally. As much as you want to avoid certain areas because you don't feel safe there when visiting in person, the look and feel of your e-commerce site can have the same effect. One way to overcome this is to use well-known e-commerce building tools such as Shopify, Wix or WooCommerce to help lend credibility to your site.

3. Reinforce trust with reviews and communication

Once you've covered the basics, consider the ways you can reinforce and build on your customers' trust through reviews and peer-reviews. Showcasing global trends, one study by PowerReviews found that 79% of consumers specifically seek out websites with product reviews, while the Local Consumer Review Survey 2025 notes that 62% of consumers check at least two to three review



sites before making a decision.

But it's not just about selling the product and getting strong reviews. The next step is post-sale support. Contacting customers after they've received a product opens up a line of communication that not only creates more trust, but allows immediate feedback.

4. Personalise customer service

One of the quickest ways to lose a customer is using the same generic response to numerous queries or complaints on social media. Having reliable and reassuring customer service that enables a customer to query an issue can build more trust than a generic reply.

Also, provide customers with a variety of payment and shipping options, so they have a choice of

their preferred way of paying for and receiving your products or services.

Include general information about the company and mini biographies of key people in your About Us page, so customers can get to know you and your staff – and know they're dealing with a legitimate business.

5. Detailed and transparent policies for when things go awry

When a customer wants to return a product they're unhappy with, don't make them struggle to find out how to do it or how long, if at all, a refund policy is applicable. It is critical to be transparent with customers regarding the shipping details, delivery information, and returns and refund policies. All of these policies need to be visible and easily accessible on your website.

DEBRIEF

« ONE LIFE ONE TREE »

C-Care sème l'espoir à chaque nouvelle vie

Plus de 5 000 arbres ont été plantés à Maurice et en Ouganda dans le cadre de One Life One Tree, l'initiative écologique de C-Care. Depuis 2019, le groupe accompagne en effet chaque naissance avec un geste rempli de sens : planter un arbre pour chaque enfant venu au monde dans ses établissements. Lancée à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de l'environnement, cette initiative est menée en partenariat avec Friends of the Environment dans le cadre de la Citadelle Native Re-vegetation Project.

L'édition 2025 s'est tenue en mai à La Petite Montagne, à La Citadelle, un site actuellement en pleine restauration écologique. À cette occasion, plus de 60 parents accompagnés de leurs enfants, ainsi qu'une trentaine de volontaires de C-Care, se sont réunis dans une ambiance conviviale et engagée.

« Chaque arbre planté symbolise une naissance, une famille, un espoir – mais aussi un engagement concret en faveur de la nature et de la régénération des écosystèmes », souligne Hélène Échevin, CEO de C-Care. « C'est un petit geste, mais chargé de sens. Nous avons la responsabilité de créer un avenir meilleur pour les générations futures. Il nous rappelle que chacun peut faire sa part, en toute simplicité. Je remercie tous les parents, les bébés – et nos collègues – qui ont fait le déplacement. »

À travers One Life One Tree, C-Care rappelle que chaque moment compte et que chacun peut contribuer à bâtir un futur plus durable. En conjuguant soin, engagement et responsabilité, l'initiative illustre cette conviction profonde : prendre soin de la vie, c'est aussi prendre soin du monde dans lequel elle grandit.



Journée Santé Communautaire

LUX* Belle Mare accueille plus de 200 habitants de Flacq

LUX* Belle Mare a organisé, en collaboration avec le ministère de la Santé et du Bien-être, le Conseil de district de Flacq et Cœur de Ville, sa toute première Journée Santé Communautaire, le samedi 26 juillet, sur le parking de Super U Flacq. Cette initiative sociale, faisant partie du programme Circle of Care, réaffirme l'engagement indéfectible du resort en faveur du bien-être de la communauté.

200 habitants de la région ont pu bénéficier de dépistages essentiels – tension artérielle, IMC, taux de glycémie, etc. – ainsi que de consultations médicales personnalisées, d'examens de la vue en collaboration avec Optissimo, et de séances de conseil et d'orientation, en cas de besoin, vers les structures de soins adaptées.

Une attention particulière a été accordée à la santé des femmes, avec des dépistages du cancer du sein et du col de l'utérus dans un environnement sûr. La collecte de sang organisée en partenariat avec la Thalassaemia

Society a quant à elle vu la participation de 82 donateurs. « Chez LUX, nous croyons qu'un accès simple et bienveillant aux services de santé peut faire toute la différence. Ces initiatives de proximité permettent de créer un lien de confiance et d'encourager le dépistage précoce pour une meilleure qualité de vie », a déclaré Sheila Malloo, directrice générale de LUX* Belle Mare.

« Nous sommes convaincus que le bien-être communautaire dépasse largement le cadre de l'hospitalité. Il s'agit de sortir de nos murs et d'avoir un impact là où le besoin se fait le plus sentir. La forte participation et les retours positifs que nous avons reçus confirment toute la pertinence de ce type d'initiative », a pour sa part déclaré Ashish



Modak, Chief Operating Officer – EMEA de The Lux Collective.

Campagne Shell

La fidélité de Barlen Mootveerene récompensée d'un SUV Škoda

Vivo Energy Mauritius, détentrice de la franchise Shell à Maurice, a conclu sa grande campagne « Un SUV Škoda à gagner avec Shell », organisée du 21 mars au 6 juin à travers l'ensemble des stations-service Shell de l'île. À l'issue de cette opération, Barlen Mootveerene a été tiré au sort pour remporter un SUV de la marque Škoda.

Employé dans le secteur du transport, M. Mootveerene a confié sa stupeur à l'annonce qu'il avait remporté un Škoda Kushaq flambant neuf. « Sur le moment, j'ai cru à une plaisanterie, mais dès que j'ai réalisé que c'était vrai, j'ai explosé de bonheur », raconte ce père de famille, utilisateur fidèle des produits et services Shell depuis plus de trente ans.

Le ticket gagnant a été validé à la station Shell

de Floréal, un hasard surprenant pour cet automobiliste qui fréquente habituellement les stations-service de Shell Surinam ou Labourdonnais à Port-Louis. « Je dépense au moins Rs 2500 tous les deux jours dans mes stations habituelles, mais Floréal, j'y passe très rarement. C'est vraiment un coup de chance incroyable », s'étonne-t-il. Bien qu'il possède déjà un véhicule, il compte utiliser ce cadeau inespéré pour les escapades familiales le week-end. « Je vais en prendre le plus grand soin, comme je l'ai toujours fait avec mes véhicules », assure-t-il.

La remise officielle du prix s'est tenue en présence de nombreux autres gagnants du dernier tirage, ainsi que d'autres heureux participants aux tirages intermédiaires. Trois membres du programme de fidélité Shell Club

ont chacun remporté une smart TV TCL Google de 85, 75 et 55 pouces respectivement à l'issue des tirages organisés en avril, mai et juin derniers. 78 autres participants sont repartis avec un Bluetooth Car Set BMW.

Pour Fouad Khfifi, Managing Director de Vivo Energy Mauritius, ces campagnes s'inscrivent pleinement dans l'engagement de la marque envers sa clientèle : « Chaque année, nous lançons des campagnes innovantes avec des récompenses exceptionnelles. C'est notre façon de remercier nos clients pour leur fidélité et de renforcer les liens avec eux. À l'image de notre grand gagnant du jour, nous avons la chance de compter de nombreux clients fidèles, et nous sommes fiers de pouvoir les récompenser en retour de leurs visites régulières dans nos stations ».

Lancement inédit à Maurice d'un jet oral portable à eau ozonée

Le Centre de Chirurgie Esthétique de l'Océan Indien (CCEOI) et Eauzonnet introduisent à Maurice le jet oral à eau ozonée, un dispositif innovant dans le domaine de l'hygiène quotidienne.

« Notre objectif est d'offrir une solution qui s'intègre naturellement dans le quotidien, pour une expérience d'hygiène plus pure. L'utilisation de l'eau ozonée permet une approche douce et naturelle de la prévention, en s'éloignant des produits chimiques agressifs au profit d'une relation plus harmonieuse avec notre corps et notre environnement », a déclaré Raphaël Bax, directeur du CCEOI.

Ce dispositif se distingue des hypodermes classiques et des produits d'hygiène dentaire traditionnels par plusieurs innovations clés. Fonctionnant exclusivement avec de l'eau du robinet transformée sur place grâce à l'ozone, ce jet oral agit comme un agent nettoyant puissant mais doux, sans besoin de rinçage.

« Nous sommes ravis de collaborer avec le CCEOI pour introduire cette solution véritablement innovante et éco-responsable à Maurice », a affirmé Tanguy Le Texier, directeur général d'Eauzonnet à Maurice. « Notre engagement commun en faveur du bien-être naturel et de la responsabilité environnementale se reflète pleinement dans ce produit, fruit de plusieurs années de recherche sur les bienfaits de l'ozone. »

A noter que le jet oral à eau ozonée est disponible depuis juin 2025, exclusivement au CCEOI.

DEBRIEF

TERRATROUPE

Le 6e art entre en scène au Creative Park de Beau-Plan

Depuis début août, le groupe Terra propose à ses employés des cours de théâtre, les mardis, animés par Benjamin Gilot, Cultural Project Manager au sein de Novaterra, mais aussi comédien et professeur de théâtre. Baptisé Terratroupe, ce projet s'inscrit dans la démarche de bien-être et d'inclusion du groupe, et promet une aventure créative enrichissante pour les collaborateurs.

« Le théâtre est ici utilisé comme un véritable outil de développement personnel : pour améliorer la communication, stimuler la créativité, renforcer la cohésion d'équipe, apprendre à gérer ses émotions et gagner en confiance », explique le Cultural Project Manager de Novaterra.

Les collaborateurs du groupe ont ainsi rendez-vous, chaque mardi, depuis le 5 août, au Creative Park de Beau-Plan, pour redonner au 6^e art toutes ses lettres de noblesse. Deux séances d'initiation ont eu lieu les 8 et 15 juillet, précise Benjamin Gilot, qui souligne que le programme comprend des exercices de diction, d'analyse de texte, de duos comiques, et débouchera peut-être sur un spectacle en fin de période d'essai.

Le lancement de la Terratroupe par Terra vise à renforcer la cohésion d'équipe, encourager la créativité et développer la confiance en soi de ses collaborateurs, renchérit Frédérique Perpétu, Sustainability and Reporting Lead de Terra.

« Nous essayons toujours de trouver de nouvelles façons de favoriser le bien-être de nos collaborateurs. Pour cette nouvelle initiative 'People', nous avons voulu capitaliser sur l'énorme bagage professionnel de Benjamin. Au-delà du développement personnel favorisé par cette démarche, c'est aussi l'occasion de créer du lien entre les différentes entités du groupe, à travers rencontres et partages, et tout en sortant de sa zone de confort », dit-elle.

Choisir le théâtre comme levier de développement personnel est un pari à la fois audacieux et pertinent. Cet art vivant permet de travailler sur des compétences essentielles telles que la communication, l'écoute ou la gestion des émotions. « S'il favorise avant tout la créativité, le théâtre aide aussi à surmonter certaines peurs, comme celle du regard des autres, et à mieux gérer ses émotions, renforçant ainsi la confiance en soi », fait ressortir Benjamin Gilot.

Terra prend en charge 50 % du coût des séances, rendant l'initiative plus accessible pour les collaborateurs.



Agriculture responsable et artisanat local

La 4e édition de Ferney Ti-Bazar se tiendra le 31 août

La quatrième édition de Ferney Ti-Bazar aura lieu le dimanche 31 août, de 10h à 15h, dans l'ancienne usine de Ferney et sur la pelouse qui y fait face. Cet événement gratuit mettra à l'honneur les produits éco-responsables d'une trentaine d'exposants, artisans, agriculteurs et agro-entrepreneurs du Sud-Est et d'autres régions de l'île Maurice.

Au menu : l'aquaponie et ses produits sains, l'agriculture respectueuse de l'environnement, des vêtements et accessoires locaux, les produits alimentaires issus de pratiques raisonnées, la fabrication d'objets à partir de matériaux recyclés par des jeunes porteurs de handicap intellectuel, la cuisine simple et authentique à base de produits mauriciens...

La découverte du patrimoine culturel de la région, avec la participation de l'ONG Our Heritage Foundation, sera aussi au programme. L'élément central sera un atelier ludique de fabrication de mini-pirogues, mettant en vedette ce savoir-faire plusieurs fois centenaires dans la région.



Long Beach célèbre la cuisine végétale avec le duo allemand Veganer Wandel

Dans le cadre du concept « Plant-Based Experience » lancé l'année dernière dans tous les resorts de Sunlife, le Long Beach, resort 5* réputé de la côte est, a accueilli, du 31 juillet au 7 août, le duo culinaire allemand Veganer Wandel, composé de Kevin Leeder et Linn Behner. Cette initiative s'inscrit dans la volonté du groupe de proposer à ses hôtes une gastronomie innovante, durable et respectueuse de l'environnement, sans compromis sur le goût. Installés au Portugal, Kevin Leeder et Linn Behner ont créé Veganer Wandel pour inspirer une transition progressive vers une alimentation 100 % végétale. Ce qui a commencé comme une simple collection de recettes s'est progressivement transformé en une aventure créative visant à rendre l'alimentation végétale ludique, accessible et délicieuse. Leur style unique – des vidéos minimalistes où seuls les ingrédients et les gestes sont mis en avant – séduit des milliers de passionnés à travers le monde sur les réseaux sociaux. Ils comptent ainsi 1,4 million d'abonnés sur Instagram, dont la majorité est basée



en Europe.

Lors de leur passage à Maurice, les deux influenceurs ont animé des ateliers à destination des équipes sur place et des clients. Le lundi 4 août, le duo a animé un atelier presse autour d'une recette incontournable: le burger végétal. Linn Behner a présenté son fameux burger aux haricots rouges, une recette facile et simple, à la portée de tous. Un burger qui intégrera prochainement le menu des resorts Sunlife.

Mahogany Shopping Promenade accueille Pains et Moulins

Le portfolio de Mahogany Shopping Promenade, à Beau Plan, s'étoffe d'une nouvelle adresse gourmande et très appréciée des consommateurs : Pains et Moulins. Il s'agit de la deuxième boutique ouverte dans le Nord par la marque, qui connaît déjà un grand succès à travers un menu à la fois sain et délicieux.

Créé par des boulangers et pâtisseries de tradition française, Pains et Moulins fait la part belle au goût à travers une magnifique sélection de pâtisseries, viennoiseries, sandwiches et autres gourmandises délicates. L'idéal pour savourer un pain au chocolat

ou un croissant chaud le matin, une bonne baguette craquante à midi, ou encore se faire plaisir avec un succulent dessert.

Pains et Moulins ravira aussi bien les habitants que les visiteurs. L'ouverture d'une pâtisserie-boulangerie dédiée au savoir-faire et à la tradition répond à une demande croissante des consommateurs de la région en termes de restauration saine et locale. Cette adresse familiale et chaleureuse est également en ligne avec la promesse client de Mahogany : satisfaire tout le monde dans un cadre simple, accueillant et ouvert.

DEBRIEF

ÉTUDIANTS DE STANFORD À MAURICE

Blast Burson s'associe à l'initiative de la MCCI Business School

Avec son initiative inédite « *Fostering Innovation in the Mauritius Ecosystem* », la MCCI Business School place Maurice sur la carte des collaborations académiques d'excellence en offrant aux étudiants de l'Université de Stanford une immersion au cœur d'entreprises locales. Blast Burson, l'une des entreprises participantes, accueille, du 1er juillet au 30 septembre, Alayna Cleaver, étudiante en design à Stanford.

Lancée en partenariat exclusif avec la prestigieuse université américaine dans le cadre du Stanford Global Engineering Internship Programme, cette première édition ouvre la voie à des échanges uniques illustrant, selon Aisha Allee, fondatrice et CEO de Blast Burson, la capacité de Maurice à s'ouvrir aux talents du monde entier et à stimuler l'innovation.

L'initiative a pris forme en 2024, lorsque Blast a eu l'opportunité de participer au programme intensif « *Fostering Innovation in the Mauritius Ecosystem* », dispensé par le prestigieux Stanford Centre for Professional Development. « *Lorsque la MCCI Business School a décidé d'aller encore plus loin en ouvrant ses portes à des stagiaires de Stanford, Blast n'a pas hésité une seconde. Cette initiative portait en elle tout ce qui nous anime : transmettre, apprendre, innover. Depuis plus de 20 ans, nous faisons de notre agence un véritable terrain d'apprentissage et de développement des talents. Accueillir une étudiante de l'une des plus prestigieuses universités au monde, c'est non seulement contribuer à un écosystème éducatif international, mais aussi affirmer notre fierté de*

partager l'expertise et la créativité mauriciennes avec le reste du monde. C'est une opportunité précieuse que nous sommes fiers de soutenir et nous remercions la MCCI Business School pour cette collaboration exceptionnelle », poursuit Aisha Allee.

Au carrefour de l'innovation mondiale, le Stanford Global Engineering Internship Programme vise à enrichir la formation des étudiants en ingénierie en leur offrant une immersion professionnelle dans un environnement multiculturel et international, au sein de pays en développement, explique pour sa part Toriden Chellapermal, CEO de la MCCI Business School.

Les stages, destinés aux étudiants de la Stanford School of Engineering, se déroulent sur une durée de 9 à 12 semaines, entre fin juin et fin septembre. L'entreprise d'accueil prend en charge une indemnité couvrant l'hébergement et les frais de vie sur place. Les étudiants retenus s'engagent, eux, à effectuer leur stage à temps plein et à participer activement.

Plus qu'un stage, une expérience de vie Alayna Cleaver, originaire de Kansas City dans le Missouri, a ainsi l'opportunité



d'effectuer un stage de 3 mois au sein de Blast Burson. La jeune femme, qui effectue une spécialisation en 'product design', axée sur la conception et la fabrication de produits physiques, confie que cette opportunité l'a immédiatement séduite, car elle a toujours été animée par l'envie de voyager et de sortir de sa zone de confort.

« *Je voulais vivre une expérience professionnelle concrète dans un*

environnement nouveau, au sein d'une équipe de designers. Ce stage chez Blast Burson m'a permis de travailler sur des projets réels, notamment sur des projets créatifs et impactants, tout en gagnant en autonomie et en découvrant une nouvelle culture », confie-t-elle.

Après cette immersion à Maurice, la jeune étudiante poursuivra son parcours international avec un semestre d'échange à Paris.

4e Forum de dialogue intergénérationnel pour la région des Etats insulaires d'Afrique

Le Marché commun de l'Afrique orientale et australe (COMESA), en collaboration avec la Commission de l'Union africaine (UA), la Commission de l'Océan Indien (COI), l'Institut d'études de sécurité (ISS), Youth for SDGs, le Réseau des jeunes de la Corne de l'Afrique (HoAYN) et Search for Common Ground, organisera le 4e Forum de dialogue intergénérationnel pour la région des États insulaires du 1er au 3 septembre 2025, à Belle Mare, à Maurice.

Le forum de cette année sera axé sur le renforcement de la collaboration intergénérationnelle afin de relever les principaux défis auxquels est confrontée la région des États insulaires, notamment l'insécurité maritime, les crises climatiques, la gouvernance démocratique et l'instabilité électorale, ainsi que la résolution des conflits. Grâce à un dialogue inclusif et multidimensionnel, l'événement vise à faire progresser les efforts de consolidation de la paix et à promouvoir la stabilité régionale à long terme.

Sous le thème « *Construire la paix, réparer les divisions : action intergénérationnelle pour la prévention des conflits, la gouvernance démocratique et la justice entre les sexes* », le Forum vise à :

- Favoriser un dialogue ouvert entre les jeunes et les générations plus âgées afin de renforcer la compréhension mutuelle et la coopération sur les questions de consolidation de la paix et de gouvernance.
- Doter les jeunes des connaissances nécessaires pour faire face à l'insécurité maritime et aux crises climatiques tout en promouvant l'utilisation durable de l'économie bleue comme stratégie de consolidation de la paix.

- Sensibiliser aux violences basées sur le genre en tant qu'obstacles systématiques à la paix et plaider en faveur de l'intégration de la justice entre les sexes dans les initiatives de consolidation de la paix.
- Donner aux jeunes les moyens de jouer un rôle actif dans les processus démocratiques, l'engagement législatif et la résolution des crises et conflits.
- Renforcer les initiatives et les plateformes régionales existantes en faveur de la jeunesse, telles que le Parlement des jeunes de l'Indianocéanie, afin d'élargir et de favoriser les espaces de dialogue et de plaidoyer régionaux afin d'accroître leur impact collectif.
- Élaborer un plan d'action pour guider la collaboration intergénérationnelle à long terme entre les jeunes, les décideurs politiques, la société civile et les dirigeants communautaires afin de faire progresser les efforts en matière de prévention des conflits, de gouvernance démocratique et de justice de genre.

Le Forum de dialogue réunira des représentants de la jeunesse et des parties prenantes des Comores, des Seychelles, de Maurice, du Cap-Vert, de Madagascar, de La Réunion et de São Tomé-et-Príncipe. Parmi les participants figureront le Panel des sages de l'Union africaine, FEMWISE, l'ambassadeur de la jeunesse pour la paix de l'Union africaine (AYAP) pour l'Afrique de l'Est, le Parlement régional de la jeunesse de l'Océan Indien, des membres du Panel consultatif de la jeunesse du COMESA et des représentants du réseau WiseYouth et de l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature (IUCN).

Rendez-Vous de l'Emploi

Opportunités et conseils à La Croisette

Depuis vendredi, et ce jusqu'aujourd'hui, dimanche 17 août, se tient, à La Croisette, Grand-Baie, le Rendez-Vous de l'Emploi. L'événement rassemble des spécialistes qui mettent en avant les opportunités du monde du travail et répondent aux questions d'étudiants, de chercheurs d'emploi, ou de professionnels s'interrogeant sur leurs perspectives. Le centre accueille en effet les responsables de Soft Skills Consultants, ainsi qu'un animateur pour rythmer la journée. Les visiteurs pourront assister, à 11h, à une séance de 'Live Career Counselling' menée par Kesho Gooriah, et à 15h à un 'Free Career Assessment' proposé par Soft Skills Consultants. Le centre commercial promet également des animations jusqu'à 16h aujourd'hui.

« *Avec le Rendez-Vous de l'Emploi, nous souhaitons offrir au public plus qu'une simple expérience shopping. La Croisette devient un lieu où l'on apprend, où l'on se développe et où l'on construit l'avenir. Nous croyons que chaque rencontre peut être une opportunité, et nous sommes fiers de créer un espace qui favorise ces échanges humains et professionnels* », déclare la direction de La Croisette.



DEBRIEF

LOCAL CONFERENCE OF YOUTH

Mauritian Youth lead the charge in Climate Action

The Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) was organised by local youth group the National Forum of Colleges (NAFCO) from 9-10 August at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka, Mauritius. The event, supported by the Australian High Commission and the United Nations in Mauritius and Seychelles, took place ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Youth, and the subsequent COP climate summit. The conference concluded two months of outreach activities organised by NAFCO with partners in government, civil society, academia, and youth. It was aimed at empowering young voices in Mauritius to contribute meaningfully to global climate discussions. Over two days, 160 participants engaged in debates and collaborative sessions to feed into a national youth statement on climate action. This statement will represent the collective vision and concerns of Mauritian youth regarding climate change and environmental sustainability. The national youth statement will also draw on discussions from the recent Indian Ocean Climate Conference for Youth (IOCCY) that was held in Madagascar from 18-20 July, which was also supported by the Australian High Commission and the United Nations, and drew participation from young people from Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, and Maldives.

The Mauritian national youth statement will be presented at the UNFCCC Conference of Youth, ensuring that Mauritian youth perspectives are represented in international climate negotiations.

"We believe that the youth are the most powerful agents of change in combating climate change. This conference is a platform for young Mauritians to voice their concerns and ideas ahead of COP30," said Saniyah Hossenbocus, President of NAFCO.



Australian High Commissioner Kate Chamley said that "Australia is committed to supporting youth engagement in climate action. We believe that young people's voices are crucial to shaping effective and inclusive climate policies. This Local Conference of Youth is an excellent platform for Mauritian youth to make their voices heard on the global stage."

As for Lisa Singh, the UN Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles, she stated that "Mauritius' youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow – you are leaders now. From community action to the global stage at COP30, your voice is strategic, your vision is essential, and your leadership is shaping the just, sustainable future we all need."

Youth in Focus SDG Photography Competition

Showcasing Local Youth Action for the SDGs

The Youth in Focus SDG Photography Competition Prize-Giving Ceremony was held on Thursday at the Institut français de Maurice, bringing together youth, government officials, UN representatives, the diplomatic corps, private sector partners, and members of the creative community to celebrate the power of photography as a tool for sustainable change. Launched on UN Day 2024, the competition invited youth living in Mauritius, aged 14–25, to capture the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the themes of "People, Prosperity, and Planet." Between October 2024 and April 2025, hundreds of entries were submitted, reflecting the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of young people across the country.

The event was organized by the United Nations in Mauritius and Seychelles, in collaboration with the Government of Mauritius, private sector sponsors SBM, ER Group, and Constance Hotels & Resorts, and supported by youth organizations and creative professionals. Held to mark International Youth Day 2025, the ceremony aligned with this year's global theme: "Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond."

As for the winners, they were as follows:

Age Group 14–17:

- 1st Place: Dywell Munigadu



- 2nd Place: Cooper Preston
- 3rd Place: Sisem Jotan Sebastien Lazer

Age Group 18–25:

- 1st Place: Aisha Abbasakoor
- 2nd Place: Jaumally Noor Mohammad
- 3rd Place: Aungnoo Roushdana Bibi Saniyya

Reflecting on the competition's core values, Aneeta Ghoorah, Ombudsperson for Children, underscored how the initiative "resonates deeply with the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children – to uphold and promote the rights and dignity of every child in Mauritius as enshrined in the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child. Central to their rights is the freedom for you, youngsters, to express your views, share your concerns and voice out your aspirations."

As for Lisa Singh, UN Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles, she called on young people to embrace their role as catalysts for change. "Young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow, but the changemakers of today," she said. "Through photography as a medium, we celebrate their creativity, voice, and power to shape an inclusive and resilient future where every citizen lives life to the fullest. The UN stands with every young person: keep showing up, speaking out, and driving change."

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