Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate Finance is at the heart of a successful response to climate change adaptation and mitigation for Small Island Developing States. Several climate funding initiatives are available but SIDS including Mauritius do not have the optimal technical capacity to access them.

It is recalled that during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Sri Lanka in November 2013, the Commonwealth leaders examined the problems being faced by small and vulnerable member states to combat climate change and access climate funds. An expert group led by the former President of Guyana, His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, had amongst others, recommended the establishment of a Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub aimed at addressing the capacity gaps of SIDS and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in accessing and managing climate finance.
The Republic of Mauritius has offered to host the Climate Finance Skills Hub and the Commonwealth Heads of Government will consider the proposal this November in Malta.

As part of the proposal, a pilot phase of the Hub will be shortly implemented in Mauritius and will cover the Small Island Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries in the Indian Ocean, Caribbean and Pacific Oceans. This training is also part of the proposal to be showcased to the Commonwealth Leaders in Malta.

I am, therefore, pleased to welcome you today to this training session on Climate Finance Readiness organised in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat. I understand that it is the first time that a training on this very important topic is being conducted.

Let me also seize this opportunity to express our thanks to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

This training session will be carried out by Acclimatise, under the aegis of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade of my Ministry for one week.

Mrs Virginie Fayolle and Mrs Jennifer Steeves are the resource persons from Acclimatise and they will provide a general introduction to Climate Finance Readiness over two half-days and an extensive training over a three day period. I would like to extend a warm welcome to both of them.

As you are already aware, the consequences of climate change are being felt heavily in each and every country but more so Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are the most affected. Climate change and climate adaptation no longer
remain an environmental issue but are increasingly becoming developmental and economic issue. They affect all aspect of the development agenda including poverty eradication, healthcare and food security amongst others.

As climate challenges for Mauritius are huge, Government has placed climate change high on its agenda. Mauritius, with its limited resources, is sparing no efforts in taking initiatives to address climate change. Only last week, the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management held a soft launching of the 2050 Pathways Calculator for Mauritius which will endeavour to devise feasible strategies options and explore environmentally sound technologies to mitigate climate change.

This training is thus timely as it will raise awareness on the international climate finance landscape and will strengthen our expertise in accessing global climate funds.

I am confident that after the training session, you will be adequately equipped to unlock the much needed funds for mitigation and adaptation projects and that we can ultimately draw up a climate finance capacity development roadmap.

I declare open this training session on Climate Finance Readiness and I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.