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PM Ramgoolam launches National Consultations on Vision 2050

The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, launched at the Paul Octave Wiehe Auditorium in Reduit on 18 December, the national consultations on Vision 2050. These consultations, spanning over four months, are a long-term strategic planning exercise in line with Government Programme 2025-2029 to lay the foundations for uplifting the country from an upper-middle-income to a high-income country with an inclusive and sustainable agenda.

Three key pillars of national development have been identified as overarching themes for consultations, namely: prosperity, sustainability and inclusion.

The Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning, Dr Jyoti Jeetun; Ministers and Members of the National Assembly; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; captains of the industry; as well as other personalities were present at the event, organised by the Ministry of Financial Services and Economic Planning.

In his address Prime Minister Ramgoolam highlighted that Vision 2050 is not a passive forecast but an active manifesto, balancing the country's immediate needs with sustainable inclusive growth. Vision 2050, he highlighted, will place families at the heart of development, ensuring that every citizen has access to the same opportunities.

He pointed out the need to join the league of advanced economies by 2050 by rightly embracing the technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics and digital services. Investing on the upskilling of the local workforce and ensuring that every citizen ranging from seasoned professionals to young students are equipped with these tools is a must, he stated.

The Prime Minister further dwelt on the need to transition the economy to a high-wage model, creating resilient jobs in FinTech and medical science, amongst others. Vision 2050, he indicated, will focus on expanding the economy while ensuring the well-being of every citizen.

According to Dr Ramgoolam, Vision 2050 must, amongst others: open new engines of



Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam (Centre) and Economic Planning Minister Mrs Jyoti Jeetun (in green saree) pictured with figures from the public sector at the launch of the Vision 2050

growth such as AI, digital services, blue economy, renewable energy, the creative industry, advanced manufacturing, green and sustainable finance and high value tourism; redesign education and lifelong learning; strengthen climate resilience; accelerate the shift to renewable energy; promote sustainable and circular agriculture; ensure the protection of the lagoon and marine ecosystems; commit to robust and accessible healthcare; reaffirm the shared values of respect, justice, meritocracy and tolerance; promote active citizenship; deepen democracy; and modernise public administration.

As for Minister Jeetun, she underlined that Vision 2050 is important for Government to make a big leap ahead, as evidenced by progress made by countries like Dubai and Rwanda, amongst others.

She remarked that, during the consultations, national dialogues will be held across all districts. Sectoral roundtables will be organised with businesses, professional associations and academia, youth forums will be held and the civil society and Non-Governmental Organisations will be involved.

Government will also engage with the private sector as a core partner in investment, innovation and job creation, thus aligning long-term public planning with long-term private sector

strategy.

Dr Jeetun observed that a long-term vision to 2050 will chart the country's economic transformation to a high-income country in a clear direction; ensure policy coordination; and provide visibility to households, investors and development partners, allowing them to plan with confidence. She underscored the need to tap the strategic opportunities offered by China, India and the African continent, as well as from other countries such as France, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

A Panel Discussion was also held prior to the official launching ceremony.

Vision 2050 will serve as a roadmap which will provide a coherent and forward-looking policy framework guiding socio-economic transformation, fostering long-term resilience, and driving inclusive growth.

It will define the long-term goals and development priorities of Mauritius towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable future. A 10-Year Development Plan will also be prepared to translate the strategic ambitions into actionable milestones, with key performance indicators to support monitoring and evaluation.

GIS

WATER IN THE MIDDLE JAPAN'S POOLS AND AQUARIUMS

From Mylene.
Japan



Jelly Fish

I was instantly intrigued when I heard there was an aquarium slap bang in the middle of Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido. Naturally, I had to check it out.

I found myself on a bustling street in the heart of Tanukiko-ji shopping arcade. Imagine London's Oxford Street at Christmas, busy, bright, and completely choc-a-bloc.

Looking up at a sleek modern steel-frame building called Moyuk, I tried to work out if I was actually in the right place for the AOAO (ow-ow) aquarium. The building gave absolutely nothing away.



Jelly Fish

It never fails to amaze me how in Japan, swimming pools and aquariums often pop up between floors. My gym pool, for example, sits on the second floor, not in the basement, not at ground level, and not even on the roof, where you'd normally expect to be doing laps with a view.

Naturally I was wondering. Was this about aesthetics? Some kind

of architectural trend I'd missed? A secret design club? As it turns out the answer is far more practical.

Mountainous terrain

Japan has a population of around 123.4 million, making it more densely populated than countries like Germany or Poland, which are similar in size. Even though the population has been shrinking since 2010, that's still a lot of people. Add Japan's long, narrow shape and largely mountainous terrain, and it quickly becomes clear that available land in cities is in very short supply, leaving little

choice but to build upwards.

Then there's the small matter of earthquakes and tsunamis which are a part of everyday life here. Japanese buildings are designed with strong steel frames and flexible structures that distribute weight efficiently. This clever engineering makes it possible to place large bodies of water on the middle floors of buildings, rather

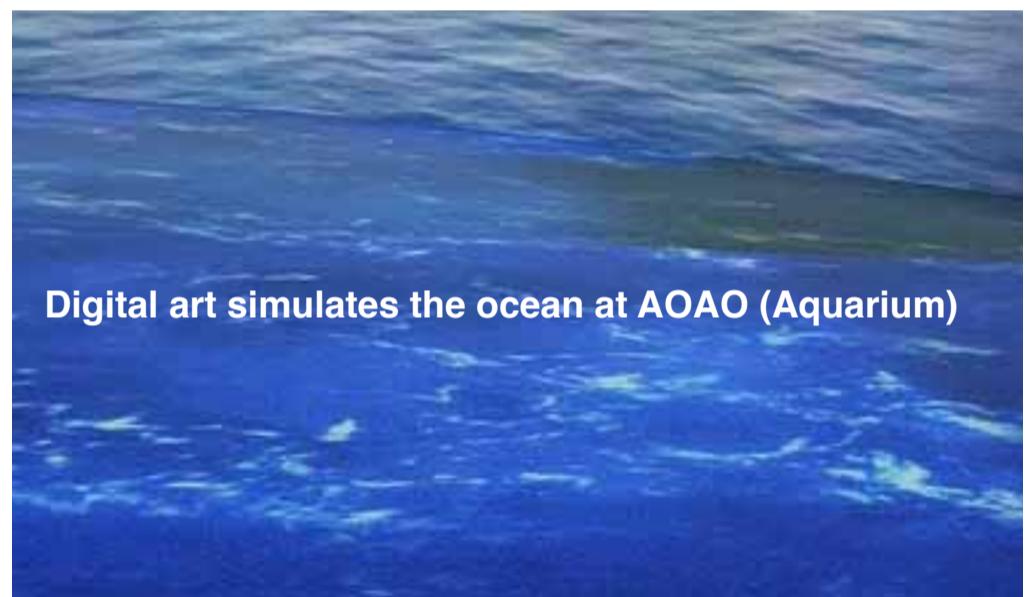
than at the top or bottom. Rooftop pools may sound glamorous, but they're actually a lot of work, needing extra insulation, heating and waterproofing. Place a pool indoors and life gets much easier. No need to worry about the weather and far less maintenance involved.

Aquariums, of course, come with their own challenges: pumps, filters and a maze of piping. Positioning them between floors simply makes sense, as it allows equipment to be installed above and below the tanks to keep

the ground. This wasn't built out of necessity, but as a statement of luxury, innovation and modern design.

AOAO Aquarium

Spread over three floors, AOAO describes itself as an indoor urban aquarium where the real stars of the show are the penguins. There are the Northern Rockhoppers, hopping around on both feet, and the Fairy Penguins, also known as Little Blue Penguins, aka the smallest penguins in the world.



Digital art simulates the ocean at AOAO (Aquarium)

everything clean and running smoothly.

While building vertically is a necessity in Japan, other places take a more show-off approach to pool design. A striking example is London's Sky Pool at Embassy Gardens in Nine Elms, a transparent acrylic pool suspended be-

Catching them at feeding time is easily the highlight.

AOAO is more than just staring at fish and jellyfish swimming around in tanks. It's also a cultural and educational space, blending nature education, visual art and hands-on experiences to help visi-



Northern Rockhoppers



Feeding time



Fairy Penguins

tors connect with aquatic life, all right in the middle of the city.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JC!!

A very special birthday is coming up this month, not your everyday, run-of-the-mill kind. For

starters, the birthday boy is turning 2,026 years old!! Born in the Middle East with African an-

cestry, tracing back to Egypt and the Pharaohs, this is a celebration centuries in the making.

Even though people waited generations for this child, there won't be any champagne or cake with candles, well, at least not for the birthday boy himself.

But, I'll be raising a glass to JC - cheers!!!
And a Very Happy Christmas to all!



A Message from Ms Razmi Farook Director-General



December 2025

Dear Peter,

As this year ends, I want to share my warmest wishes with the people across the Commonwealth, and with our valued member countries, for a happy and safe holiday season.

It's been a great privilege to lead the Commonwealth Foundation's work since being appointed Director-General earlier this year. Assuming responsibility for convening and creating space for the priorities and voices of 2.7 billion citizens has been a deep personal honour. I am very grateful for the warm welcome and deeply inspired by the work ahead.

My first months in this role have been focused on listening and learning from our civil society partners, member countries and sister organisations. The challenges we face are real—from shrinking civic space, increased economic uncertainty and inequality, and the accelerating climate emergency. Yet across the Commonwealth, citizens and communities continue to demonstrate that they can drive meaningful change when they work together.

One such example was July's landmark International Court of Justice ruling, which called on states to prevent climate change and was made possible by the tireless activism of civil society groups in the Pacific, working alongside their member country partners. In October, thousands signed up to our Critical Conversation online event to explore what the ruling could mean in practice.

I was inspired in particular by hearing Vepaiamele Grace Trief, a 16-year-old Ni-Vanuatu writer and climate advocate, recite My Testimony live at the event, a poem sharing her perspective on the ruling that was also presented at The People's Museum for Climate Change in the Hague, the Netherlands.

[Watch My Testimony on Instagram](#)

[Watch My Testimony on YouTube](#)

The desire for citizen participation in governance has never been stronger. Our most recent grants call received thousands of applications, including a significant increase from small and vulnerable states. The Foundation remains committed to supporting smaller and less well-established civil society organisations—groups whose work is often courageous and under-resourced, yet vital to democratic life.

Creative expression also continues to play a vital role in challenging shrinking civic space. The 2026 Commonwealth Short Story Prize closed with an astounding 7,806 entries, including significant increases in non-English languages and participation from almost every Commonwealth country. It continues to ensure that it reaches, promotes and supports new and emerging writers to bring forward a wealth of voices from across the Commonwealth.

This year also marked an important cultural milestone with the announcement of the first Commonwealth Poet Laureate, Selina Tusitala Marsh, on 1 July. **[I encourage you to explore the work Selina has published during her laureateship so far in our online magazine, adda.](#)**

The Foundation's unique role of bridge-building between government and civil society offers significant scope for growth and ambition as we start to look ahead and prepare for the launch of our new Strategy in July 2026.

We are also preparing for a strong and impactful Commonwealth People's Forum in Antigua and Barbuda next November, shaped by the issues that matter most to citizens. We will strive to engage organisations across the Commonwealth, amplifying the work of civil society and promoting less well-established and smaller organisations where possible. We hope you can join us, in person or online. **[Register to learn more.](#)**

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season and a hopeful start to the new year,

Razmi Farook,
Director-General
Commonwealth Foundation

RODRIGUES
NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

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See us also on facebook (GPL Centre-Rodrigues)
 YouTube. Care Co Rodrigues. Making a buzz

Hello from Rodrigues.

The Festive season is upon us in Rodrigues.

The town of Port Mathurin is crowded with visitors and is hot, busy and noisy (fireworks and loud music). The GPL School and kids are all on holiday at the moment so we have been very thankful to the EMTEL CSR Team who have taken the kids for a day out at the seaside at Baladirou and given gifts of school materials and bags for them to use when they are back at school in the New Year.

However there all sorts of activities going on at Trevor Huddleston House.

Susan and team are working on improvements to the Pre-Primary department funded by the **Mauritius Telecom** CSR funds, and thanks to financial support from **Maubank**, we are preparing to continue the Parental Guidance Programme in January. For this, a team goes out each month to visit the homes of the children in the school and explain to the parents face to face, how their children are doing at school and helping them to provide all the support they need when they are at home. We cover all the homes represented in the year.

We are also grateful to all individual donors who help to make up the shortfall between what is granted to the school from the Government (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) and what is needed for essentials for the day to day running of the centre and for projects to improve the premises and for outings and social events.

We are also grateful to an Englishman -Jon, who is helping us apply for a solar panel project that is proposed by the government to Charitable Institutions and schools. This has been proposed before, but despite having applied for inclusion in the scheme, no progress was made.

In the Care-Co workshop Birgit has been working her magic to ensure that we have enough funds coming in to continue to respect and to pay the minimum wage requirement in 2025 as well as the annual one month's pay as bonus, so that all our workforce and team at Care-Co are assured of their wages which help them to lead an almost normal life in society in Rodrigues despite their disabilities.

She now faces a new increase wage compensation decision by the government for all workers in 2026.

The funds received by us from the National Social Inclusion Foundation are helpful, but have not been increased this year.

Some street markets have yielded some extra sales, despite our two sales points being open daily.

The honey flow this year has been very disappointing, and we note that we are not the only beekeepers on the island who have had a much reduced yield from our Apriaries.

We shall be grateful and relieved when Charles, our French beekeeping helper and consultant who had to return to France, will be able to come back to Rodrigues. In the meantime the ENSAMN project, of the Italian NGO Felcos, and funded by the EU, has been providing help and advice from a prominent Italian beekeeper. Birgit is involved in the setting up of some Pilot Garden Projects, and the planting of melliferous plants which we hope will be the answer to the problems the bees have apparently been having, in finding enough forage to produce more honey.

I was able to attend the UK National Honey Show in October, but we did not have any Honey to exhibit there.

I send my personal thanks to you all who receive this letter, for your interest in us, and as usual apologies for this being a printed letter. All responses will be replied to.

So, we at the GPL Special Needs School (Trevor Huddleston house) and Care-Co for the disabled, Rodrigues, send you all our very best wishes for a Happy Christmas 2025 and great upcoming New Year 2026.

Paul

STAMPS OF MAURITIUS CONFERENCE

La Philatélie Mauricienne, Un Patrimoine en Péril?

A Souvenir Cover from the
Grand Baie Yacht Club

Le Souvenir Cover imprimé par le Grand Baie Yacht Club le 4 décembre 2025 à l'occasion de la Conférence tenue par deux fervents philatélistes, Messieurs Jean Marie Huron et Ah-Lan Lam Yan Foon.

Le thème de la Conférence était: **La Philatélie Mauricienne, un Patrimoine en Péril?**

De leur feuillet, distribué à la conférence, nous lisons : Le timbre-poste a été un des moyens les plus fiables pour les gouvernements pour éliminer le casse-tête de la taxe à percevoir sur

le courrier expédié ou reçu. Ils se retrouvaient dans des situations où les coûts d'expéditions n'étaient pas payés et cela causait des déficits importants. L'introduction du timbre-poste a résolu ce problème mais a aussi contribué à créer la philatélie.

La philatélie est très vite devenue

un moyen peu onéreux d'avoir un passe-temps, de voyager et s'instruire.

Mais a aussi permis à d'autres de façons différentes de se spécialiser dans les collections thématiques, tels les items rares ou uniques, les tampons des bureaux de poste ou autres marques postales, les enveloppes commémoratives ou les feuillets souvenir.

Jusqu'au début du 19e siècle, le seul moyen disponible de transmission de l'information, était à travers les échanges des correspondances dont les lettres étaient payées par le destinataire avec un tarif élevé qui était au-dessus des moyens de la population.

Le véritable tournant fut l'introduction, en 1839, d'un nouveau règlement postal par Sir Rowland Hill, Directeur du Service Postal Britannique, quand l'expéditeur devait payer pour l'affranchissement, dont le coût était considérablement réduit. L'introduction du timbre-poste, pour affranchir les lettres du coût de l'affranchissement, a permis au public, de chez eux, d'acheter les timbres, puis de chez eux les coller sur l'enveloppe.

Immédiatement, les résultats se sont vus, le volume du courrier a augmenté drastiquement, le service postal fait des profits.

Plusieurs pays réformèrent leurs services postaux avec aussi l'introduction du timbre-poste. Ainsi entre 1843-1847, plusieurs cantons suisses, le Brésil et les Etats Unis

émitirent leurs premiers timbres. **L'île Maurice est le cinquième pays au monde, le premier d'Afrique et aussi de toutes les colonies anglaises à émettre des timbres dont les fameux Post Office 1d et 2d en 1847.**

La pratique de l'utilisation du timbre-poste se répandit très vite, permettant à beaucoup de pays de trouver un moyen de valoriser leur image à travers le monde.

Actuellement, la philatélie, si elle est toujours populaire, est néanmoins soumise à plusieurs défis. Avec l'amélioration de la technologie, introduction du service internet à travers les ordinateurs et téléphones portables beaucoup plus rapides, le volume du courrier a drastiquement chuté. Même les cartes postales et les cartes de souhaits de fin d'année s'envoient maintenant à travers le service internet.

De plus, l'utilisation des appareils à impression par le service postal, les services gouvernementaux et les firmes privées diminuent encore plus la vente des timbres.

L'utilisation intensive des portables avec accès au service internet, font que la jeunesse se désintéresse encore plus à reprendre les collections laissées par leurs ainés.

Note de la Rédaction:

La philatélie est en effet sur son lit de mort, à Maurice comme ailleurs.

Aux derniers paragraphes, les conférenciers expliquent les raisons pour cette mort certaine.

Nous disons qu'on peut, quand même, intéresser les jeunes à l'histoire fascinante du timbre-poste. Nous sommes là pour aider.