Ministers
Principal Secretaries
Chief Executive Officers
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
School Leaders and Teachers
Dear Students

Good afternoon.

It gives me great pleasure to address you all at the 2018 Eco-schools award ceremony, aimed at rewarding our schools for their achievements within the Seychelles’ Eco-Schools programme.

Today is an important day for all our schools which are striving to become sustainable in their operation.
Over the years, they have managed to engage in several Education for Sustainable Development practices which promote sustainable learning, develop critical thinking and provide for informed decisions and actions in response to several socio-ecological issues affecting our Small Island Developing State.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, in collaboration with its partners has over the years managed to provide support to the schools to ensure that Education for Sustainable Development is mainstreamed in their daily operations. It is not an easy task with sometimes limited resources; but, what is important is the level of understanding, commitment and engagement from all stakeholders to ensure that schools maintain the implementation of national and international sustainable development strategies.

The Eco Schools Programme has proved to be an ideal way for schools to embark on a meaningful path towards improving both the school environment and that of the local community.
It can have a life-long impact on the young people engaged in it and their families.

Through the programme, school children acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. It is a transformative process and a mindset changer, empowering the students to drive change and improve their environmental awareness.

What a fantastic way to prepare the leaders of tomorrow by giving them the opportunity to lead change within their school and get involved in sustainable practices where results are clearly observable and benefits readily enjoyed.

This year we are happy to note that private schools will soon join the eco schools programme as all four private schools have expressed interest to come on board. We have decided to engage them so that education for sustainability is practised on a wider scale and that all schools are recognised for their effort in pushing further the education for sustainability agenda.
I would like to call upon all our public and private schools to continue striving for sustainability in their daily operations. Your strong commitment will not only ensure your educational institutions becoming sustainable, but help shape a group of citizens who are empowered to exercise their fundamental right to promote, sustainably manage and protect our country. There have been two remarkable schools whose projects deserve our appreciation and praise today.

One of them is the Anse Royale Secondary School. This school has integrated education for sustainability in their daily teaching and learning process. They have been able to engage and gain the support of all staff members, students and the community. This is a good example of what we mean by the whole school approach.

Mont Fleuri Secondary and Mont Fleuri Primary schools have also made commendable effort this year. Let us give these schools a big round of applause. They are our champions and an inspiration to others.
We urge schools, as educational institutions, to continue to create meaningful, collaborative, and participatory learning opportunities for the students and adults alike. Keep initiating projects and innovative activities that will help students critically reflect on potential risks and propose measures to mitigate the impacts.

I would like to call upon all staff members to support and contribute to the eco schools programme in their respective schools. Remember that we depend on the environment for our survival. In return, the environment depends on each one of us so that it can continue to provide us with what we require. Each and every one of us has a role to play, not only to educate our future generation but to be role models to safeguard the wonderful natural resources we have been blessed with.

We have to bear in mind that, in order for the eco schools programme to be successful it requires the support from school leaders and active involvement from staff as well as a long term
sustained commitment and the willingness to involve in decision making and the meaningful and impactful actions. You have the power to help your school maximise its ambitions, improve on its innovative approaches and build on its success.

I take this opportunity to thank all those involved in providing services and initiating programs for the benefit of our schools. I would like to urge all our esteemed partners and potential benefactors to extend their assistance and be generous in their support, be it through the sustaining educational programs, financing of school projects or donation of learning support materials on Education for Sustainable Development themes.

I would like to congratulate the participating schools for the tremendous efforts shown this year. May this be an encouragement for other schools which were not able to report their achievements during the first phase of the Eco-Schools judging. We cannot say hopefully you can do so next year because we know that certainly you will.
A special thank you also goes to all the judges for their dedication and time, while acknowledging that it was indeed a challenging task.

Gratitude is extended to all our sponsors for their generosity. Without you, this ceremony would not have been possible today. Your contribution shows how collaboration is vital towards a sustainable future for Seychelles. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Seychelles Island Foundation (SIF), for this year again, sponsoring the educational trip to Aldabra, providing a once in a lifetime experience to our students.

Thanks also go to the Environment Trust Fund, the Island Development Company which will be sponsoring exciting educational trips, Masons Travel for the safari trips and Hunt Deltel for their generous contributions. I am convinced that the students and teachers who will go on these trips will gain knowledge and skills which will enhance their appreciation for the environment.
To conclude, let us focus and work on achieving the quality education which we all want to see. I strongly believe that the right to quality education is indeed a process where citizens are given equal opportunity to participate, learn and develop real life experiences regardless of age, gender, ability and wealth. Issues like sustainability and environment protection affecting all sectors of our country are taken into utmost consideration by policy makers and integrated in our formal learning content.

The end product of this education would therefore not to be an industrialised society but sustainably minded and environmentally conscious value based individuals empowered to pursue and sustain a quality of life that is sustainable.

This will depend not only on the education and training programmes and resources invested but on educators equipped with the necessary capacity to deliver with pride, focus, accountability and impartiality.
Let’s continue to make Seychelles a role model for other small island developing states to follow.

Thank you for your attention.