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PRESS RELEASE Launch Event for the National Sensitisation Campaign on the 24/7 economic model The Human Resource Development Council, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources is pleased to invite you to the launch event of the National Sensitisation Campaign on the 24/7 Economic Model. This national campaign will be officially launched by Dr. the Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, at the Swami Vivekananda Convention Centre tonight at 18:30. The Launch Event will also be graced by the presence of Dr. the Honourable Vasant Bunwaree, Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources. The speakers will include Dr. K.S. Sukon, Acting Director of the HRDC and Mr. Deepak Tulsidas, Chairperson of the HRDC. The ceremony will include a procession of 24/7 employees (police force, coast guards, firemen etc.) as well as performances by Eric Triton, Bhojpuri Boys and Komiko and will be broadcast live on MBC. **Background Information:**

The imperatives of globalisation require economies to transform from the traditional industrial model of yesteryears into modern, post-industrial ones. A country's economic activities can no longer be restricted to the confines of the traditional 9am-to-4 pm working hours. Not only do consumers increasingly expect access to goods and services 24 hours a day but the global economy and our sustained economic growth also demand it. Indeed, the 9am-to-4pm is posing a serious threat to our economic development, particularly in emerging sectors such as ITES-BPO. An economy which is able to operate efficiently and smoothly round-the-clock is deemed by many to be a pre-requisite for sustainable competitive advantage and for building our resilience to external shocks. The new economy is emerging as a knowledge-based and service-based economy which is technology driven and operational 24/7. In order to respond to these challenges and to the growing labour demand from the emerging sectors, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) is launching this National Sensitisation Campaign on the 24/7 Economic Model. A 24/7 economy does NOT mean employees working 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Rather, it means that a country's economic activities are ongoing and many activities are happening concurrently. Indeed, a 24/7 economy does not mean that employees should work continuously for 24 hours but working differently instead. The round-the-clock economy is characterised by the adoption of alternative work practices such as:

- Shift work,
- Flexi time,
- Job sharing,
- Compressed work week,
- Telecommuting,
- Reduced hours/Part time,
- Banking of hours/Annualised hours,
- Partial leave, Phased retirement,
- Leaves and sabbaticals,
- Teleworking/remote working and virtual office using IT and Data Communication Technology.

These alternative and flexible work practices can be win-win for both the employers and the employees. Employees have greater flexibility and are better able to synchronise and balance work and family life. These practices also lead to increased personal empowerment and employee morale; possible additional income due to the ability to take up a second part-time job; reduced stress to reach the office at 9 a.m. and improved productivity. Advantages to the employers include ability to better attract, recruit and retain highly competent employees; enhanced employee productivity, loyalty and commitment; reduction in overhead, transport and real estate costs; reduction in absenteeism, tardiness and employee turnover as well as increased returns to shareholders. In a nutshell, the 24/7 initiative is being launched in Mauritius with a view to:

- improve the international competitiveness of the productive sectors of the economy, thereby promoting economic development;
- give Mauritians access to goods and services on a 24-hour basis including public transport;
- increase leisure, entertainment and late night shopping facilities offered after office hours;
- allow employees to achieve better work-life balance through flexible work practices;
- enhance productivity at the work place;
- provide more choices as well as employment opportunities, including for those who wish to be involved in various types of jobs and activities (for instance, disabled people and women can take up jobs as per their convenience);
- reduce skills shortage;
- attenuate traffic congestion and demand for public transportation at peak hours (since all officers do not need to resume duty at the same time in the morning);
- lessen pressure and stress on employees to reach their work place at peak hours in the morning;
- allow Mauritius to be part of global supply chain networks;
- encourage the widespread use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to foster innovation in the way we work;
- encourage the development of clusters so as to enhance service delivery;
- foster an effective entrepreneurial environment that will nurture the development of SMEs;
- reduce break-ins and other crimes since there would be more "eyes on the street" round the clock; and above all,
- widen the circle of opportunities for all.

In order to adopt this new paradigm, it is important that the constraints are clearly identified and measures taken to resolve them. The HRDC has set up several sub-committees to identify the main impediments to the successful adoption of a 24/7 economic model. Security and availability of public transport rate

high on the agenda. Other challenges to society include social and possible health problems, a conducive legislative framework, changes in current human resource policies, the availability of childcare services among others. For employers, major challenges could be high technological costs, employee resistance to change, the setting up of an appropriate performance monitoring system, employee health and safety as well as the disruption to "teamwork" and of the organisational culture.

The Government has initiated actions by launching this national sensitisation campaign in order to sensitise the Mauritian workforce to face the challenges of a changing economy and to sensitise employers to empower workers to adopt alternative work practices and create an enabling environment. The campaign will inform about best practices applied in other countries and enlist the support of all the key stakeholders in order to make the 24/7 economic model a reality as well as provide a sound and solid base of career guidance to the student population, parents and retrenched workers so as to reduce the mismatch within the labour market.

Note:

Should you have any query, please do not hesitate to email us at hrdc@mauritus24by7.com. You are kindly requested to contact Valerie Charoux for scheduling interviews about the 24/7 campaign on 2632626 / 2584240 or alternatively by email at maurice-conferences@intnet.mu