

Speech By Guest of Honour
Mr Raj Makoond at IEM Gala Dinner on Engineers Day on 13th September
2022 at Mauritius Gymkhana Club

New challenges and opportunities for the Institution of Engineers of Mauritius
(IEM)

1. In a presentation made in the context of the 70th Anniversary of IEM in November 2018, I presented a paper which highlighted the possibility of Mauritius positioning itself as a hub for ***project design and project management*** within the larger global finance ambition of Mauritius with respect to the infrastructure space of USD 150 billion in Africa.
2. This idea was further developed at an international conference organized jointly by the Institution of Engineering India, (IEI), IEM and University of Mauritius in 2019. The idea was well received.
3. This idea was further canvassed recently with a World Bank team visiting Mauritius in July 2022 and was also well received. We are trying to get some technical assistance on the HOW.
4. Most probably, less than 5% of all engineers present today have given some serious thoughts to this option and may be even less than 1% have shown any personal engagement. As at today I see only Shyam Roy and Raj Prayag still making efforts to give this option some concrete inroads. They are like Sisyphus in the Greek mythology who was cursed by Zeus, the god of gods, to keep moving the boulder uphill on the mountain slope and to climb again and again every time the boulder will roll back.
5. Let us come back to earth and look at the reasons why we should continue and keep pushing this boulder up-hill. The main reasons are as following:
 - (i) There is at present, in 2022 the global context following Covid 19, the Ukraine / Russia war, the energy crisis the review of the supply chain and the development challenge facing Africa has made this idea even more relevant.
 - (ii) There is today general consensus by scientists that there are several environmental limits which should not be crossed. These so-called planetary boundaries have been identified and they are nine of them and for most of them quantitative limits have already been set. The two core ones are atmospheric CO₂ concentration and biosphere integrity. The pressure will be huge with respect to the remaining limits for holistic solutions which would not disproportionately impact in the other boundaries.
 - (iii) In Mauritius itself with the engagement to reduce CO₂ emissions by 40% and coal consumption for electricity production by 60% in 2030. Accordingly, the energy sector

will become a major industry. Renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions, as such, will be a key component of this industry.

(iv) The Mauritius - China FTA and the Mauritius - Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), became operational in January 2021, the Mauritius - India Comprehensive Economic Corporation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) came into force in April 2021. Mauritius is deepening its Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with EU to include services. All these agreements provide for trade in services, including professional services and engineering

(v) We have the main ingredients to develop an engineering eco-system to become a regional player, in terms of:

a) recognition of engineers trained in Mauritius (I'm given to understand that we are making good progress for our universities to join the Washington Accord) IEM can work closely with our universities to facilitate Industry / Academy Partnership to enhance the position of Mauritius as a competitive knowledge/ training center in engineering;

b) Building strategic alliances with world class project management and construction companies (on similar lines on accountants have done with the Big Four, the Management Companies (MC's) (namely Ocorian, IQ EQ) and some legal chambers);

c) Building alliances with MC's; and

d) Mauritius as a high-risk small island developing state can develop sustainable solutions which become a model for all SIDS.

6. Engineers as pragmatic solution providers are uniquely positioned to play a major role in the new landscape. IEM and engineers in Mauritius and eventually within SIDS can meet this challenge.

Thank You

Raj Makoond

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