

**Speech of Hon Alain Wong, MSK, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment on Thursday 19 July 2018**  
**on the occasion of the release of the Monitoring Report on the First Call for Proposals and the launching of the General Call for Proposals 2018**

Mr. Ashis Kumar Hoolass, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment

Mr. Medavy Munien, Chairperson of the Council of the National CSR Foundation and Council Members

Permanent Secretaries

Members of the private sector and private Foundations

Mr. Dana Chengan, Chairman of MACOSS

Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations

Members of the Press,

Distinguished Guests,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to be in your midst today to address you on the occasion of the release of the Monitoring Report 2017-2018 and the launching of the General Call for Proposals for the year 2018 of the National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation.

As you are aware, the Foundation launched its First Call for Proposals in April 2017 and 231 projects for an amount of Rs 201 Million were approved for funding. In line with its mandate and to ensure better transparency and accountability of funds, the Foundation has also to ensure that the projects financed with CSR funds are monitored and evaluated.

This Monitoring Report is the first of its kind in so far as the use of CSR funds is concerned. The Monitoring Report covers 189 projects out of the 231 approved projects, representing 82% of the projects presently supported by the Foundation.

I am happy to note that the Monitoring Report highlights that funds allocated by the National CSR Foundation to most NGOs are **in general** being used effectively and efficiently and that the funding provided by the Foundation is contributing to sustain the work of these Non-Governmental Organisations. This is a positive note which pays tribute to the work being carried out by our Non-Governmental Organisations at grass root levels in the various approved fields of intervention for a more inclusive and equitable society.

I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate those NGOs for adhering to good governance practices and aligning to the principles set by the Foundation.

The Report also highlights a few cases whereby NGOs are either encountering difficulties to implement projects or are non-compliant to requirements. I understand that in such cases, mentoring support and the necessary follow-up are being provided to them by the Foundation.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The cycle for the First Call for Proposals will be completed with the preparation of an Evaluation Report, which is expected to be completed by the end of December 2018. This will enable us to determine the impact of the projects and programmes implemented by NGOs.

The main aim of the National CSR Foundation is to generate better social outcomes for the poor and vulnerable groups while ensuring greater transparency and accountability in the use of CSR funds.

In this context, the National CSR Foundation has come up with an enhanced funding framework, which is based on a social investment model, that is, **funding for results and outcomes**. The new policy aims at strengthening the partnership with the non-governmental organisations to deliver services, programmes and projects that meet the needs of vulnerable individuals, families and communities and to encourage social innovation to address emerging and persistent social needs and problems.

Under the new funding strategy, apart from the General Call for Proposals, we are also proposing Special Call for Proposals to address targeted interventions.

For the General Call for Proposals 2018, to be launched this afternoon, an amount of **Rs 250 Million** has been earmarked. The details on the Policy and Guidelines on Funding and the General Call for Proposals are contained in the documents that will be distributed to you all at the end of the ceremony. The documents will also be placed on the website of the Foundation

The actions of the National CSR Foundation, which was set up in December 2016 and operates under the aegis of my Ministry, have been consistent with the purpose for which it was established, namely :

**First, to ensure greater transparency in the use of CSR funds; and  
Second, to generate better outcomes for the vulnerable groups.**

Through the Government Programme 2015-2019 and Vision 2030, a coherent and strategic framework has been designed to tackle poverty, inequality and social exclusion.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Government is, indeed, committed to eradicate absolute poverty and promote a more inclusive society.

The latest measure announced in the 2018-2019 Budget Speech by the Hon Prime Minister and Minister of Finance concerning the centralised approach to disburse public funds to NGOs through the Foundation are in fact key strategies to bring greater efficiency and impact in the social sector.

NGOs are our key partners and their immense contribution in complementing Government actions in addressing the daunting challenges related to poverty, inequality and social exclusion has to be acknowledged.

NGOs can rest assured that this measure will bring better coordination and integration of services that they are providing. This will also eliminate duplication and fragmentation of actions on the ground.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The private sector is another key stakeholder which has, through its CSR initiative over the years, supported the projects and programmes of NGOs and contributed vastly in the fight against poverty.

This is the reason why the decision concerning the remittance by the private firms of 75 % of their CSR funds to the Mauritius Revenue Authority with effect from January 2019 as announced two years ago has been reconsidered in the 2018-2019 Budget Speech so as to give the possibility to those firms to retain the additional 25% with the consent of the National CSR Foundation if they are supporting a programme which they have already started.

This will, no doubt, bring better synergy, coordination and collaboration between the National CSR Foundation and the private sector.

We all share a common vision and if we really want to bring impact, then the approach of working in silos should be avoided.

My Ministry is already fostering the philosophy of partnership and collaboration through the setting up of Community Working Groups in all districts in Mauritius and in Rodrigues.

The Community Working Group, which is coordinated at the level of the National Empowerment Foundation, is an excellent platform to mobilise public institutions, the private sector and NGOs to work together at community level to tackle social challenges, avoid duplication of projects, thus ensuring efficient use of the limited resources that we have.

Moreover, to support those living in conditions of absolute poverty, Government has implemented an innovative Scheme, namely the Subsistence Allowance Scheme, which targets beneficiaries eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius after they have signed a Social Contract with my Ministry. Since December 2016 to date, funds to the tune of Rs 323 Million have been disbursed to some 10,385 households.

To address inequality, Government has come up with the Negative Income Tax and the Minimum wage.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The outcomes of those landmark measures are reflected in the 2017 Household Budget Survey conducted by “Statistics Mauritius” and show a significant reduction in relative poverty and income inequality.

However, despite progress made, Government will continue to pursue its actions to take more families out of poverty and vulnerability.

No doubt, a number of the measures have been announced in the Budget 2018/2019 which will help in reducing poverty and vulnerability. Among them, there are:

First, the increase in the per capita grant in the Special Education Needs (SEN) sector from Rs 1,300 to Rs 5,200.

Second, to tackle the problem of domestic violence, support will be provided to relevant NGOs to set up additional emergency shelters for women and children

Third, funds to the tune of Rs 760 Million have been provided for poverty alleviation programmes and empowerment of the poor and vulnerable groups.

These new measures will definitely enable us to improve the well-being of the vulnerable persons and achieve the vision for a more inclusive and equitable society.

As you all are aware, although the poor people have the willingness to overcome their vulnerability, they are sometimes trapped by the lack of resources and need to be provided with the necessary “accompagnement”. This is where the NGOs should enter on stage. NGOs have greater opportunities to tackle poverty at grass root level given their proximity approach to vulnerable groups, prompt interventions in remote areas, innovative solutions responding to dynamic socio-economic needs and ability to cater for emergency and hardship cases.

As NGOs, you have the necessary tools to facilitate the empowerment of the vulnerable groups and thus your involvement in poverty reduction is determinant.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

To conclude, I wish to reiterate my support to the laudable contribution of all stakeholders in addressing social challenges.

A partnership approach and collaboration is imperative if we are to succeed in this endeavour.

I also invite our partners to participate in the different working sessions that will be held in the context of the Call for proposals. This will help you to better design your projects.

With these few words, I now have the pleasure to officially launch the General Call for Proposals 2018 and release the Monitoring Report on the First Call for Proposals 2017-2018.

Thank you for your kind attention.