

Message from the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius



We are this year organising the 7th Edition of the much-awaited Bank of Mauritius Inter Club Youth Championship. This Championship has come a long way. When I look back at the road travelled, I am delighted to see that this sporting event for young people has surpassed by far our original expectations.

Six years ago, working with the Mauritius Athletics Association, together we launched the Inter Club Youth Championship competition to get youngsters from 9 to 14 years to join in athletics. This has been such a resounding success at national level that the Bank decided to make it an annual event and part of its Corporate Social Responsibility programme. This decision mirrors Government's policy to promote sports more widely and to spot talent able to fly the flag of Mauritius high at national and international competitions.

In the maiden edition of our Championship in 2007, we counted 500 young participants and this year, we are expecting as many as 700. Rodrigues is part and parcel of our sports development strategy. In 2009, we sponsored the maiden edition of the Rodrigues Inter Club Youth Championship with 300 participants. Since then, the number of athletes coming from Rodrigues keeps increasing, with 350 participants this year.

At the Bank, we are thrilled to see the results of bringing our contribution to such an impressive initiative. These competitions have become the breeding ground for young athletes and it makes me very proud to see our new national champions now emerging as shining stars in the region and beyond.

Since 2011, several commercial banks have joined us in our efforts to give our youth a platform for expressing their athletic skill. We started with 12 banks and today, we have 17 banks on board. I am very pleased by this collaborative spirit among the banking community.

We are committed to reward winners of the various competitions in a broader way. For the Bank sponsors the four best athletes from Mauritius and the four best from Rodrigues for one year, covering their expenses on education, sports equipment, medical treatment, insurance and transportation. In addition, every year we organise a prize-giving ceremony at the Bank for those athletes who set national records in any of the disciplines of the Inter Club Youth Championship, and I see them come proudly accompanied by their parents, mentors and coaches.

One measure of the success of this whole venture is the youth making a name for themselves on the local and international stage as they represent Mauritius in various categories in international tournaments. Let me cite a few examples:

1. Jonathan Permal

- Silver Medal in 200m *Jeux de la Francophonie* in Nice in 2013 ;
- Silver Medal in 200m in the African Junior Championships in Mauritius in 2013;
- Bronze Medal in 100m in the same championships;
- Silver Medal in the 4x100m in the same championships; and who
- Competed in the World Junior Championships in 2012.

2. Orwin Emilien

- Bronze medalist in the 400m Hurdles in the African Junior Championships in 2013 in Mauritius;
- Silver medalist in the 4x100m in the same Championships; and
- Vice Champion in the 400m hurdles for the *Jeux de la Francophonie* in France in 2013

3. **Julien Meunier** was Silver medalist in the 4x100m in the African Junior Championships in 2013 in Mauritius.

4. **Anna Milazar** from Rodrigues was Bronze medalist in the high jump in the African Junior Championships in 2013 in Mauritius.

5. **Jean Ian Degrace** was Bronze medalist in the 4x100m in the African Junior Championships in 2013 in Mauritius.

6. **Aurélie Alcindor and Florianne Lisette** from Rodrigues formed part of the 4x100m relay team for the *Jeux de la Francophonie* in France in 2013.

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to all athletes in the 2013 event. I thank the Organising Committee of the Mauritius Athletics Association and reiterate my sincere appreciation to our co-sponsors.

My best wishes to you all, from Mauritius and from Rodrigues, who aspire to be the champions of tomorrow. Your enthusiasm and dynamism is what gives this special event such lustre in the sporting calendar for youth in Mauritius. Through your training, you will achieve continuous improvement, and in the best spirit of competition, you will set new levels of performance against, not just national, but regional and international benchmarks. In this way, you have set a model for progress and especially for all young people today to engage in health-promoting sport bringing honour to yourselves, to your families and to the nation.

We hope that our young athletes will fly the flag of Mauritius higher in sports competitions in the years to come, benefiting from the support the banking community has provided.



Rundheersing Bheenick
Governor