Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your generous response to our invitation this evening. The Hon Speaker has kindly accepted to grace this function as the Guest of Honour and her presence adds to the glamour of this gathering.

As we have been in this business of honouring great Mauritians, we can boast of being among the best judges to gauge the importance of the economy for our country and to maintain our prominence in the economic field. As most of you have families, you must be conscious without any doubt that the future of our children will be determined by the size of the opportunities that our economy will create.

So far, our economy is the envy of Africa because our captains have risen to the challenges they met. However, we are at a crossroad where the foresight which made our success will no longer work. If we want to maintain our position of superpower of the African region, we need to be more ingenious. We have gathered three captains of Industries whom we trust that they will deliver. We have also added the Director of the Blue Penny museum because we think that the greatness of a nation is also measured by the weightage it gives to History; a Nation without a History is a Nation without a memory. And without memory, Goldsmith says you are fit for the bedlam.

I’ll invite the Hon. Speaker to deliver her address.

Thank you Madam.

I’ll leave the floor now to Farhad Ramjaun for his speech.

Thank you Farhad. I am inviting now Zahir, our Secretary to deliver his speech.

Thank you Zahir.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am going this evening to recognize the achievements of two great Mauritians: Kevin Ramkhelawon, the new CEO of Business Mauritius and Jacques Li Wan Po, elevated to GOSK last March. Gentlemen, I guess this is a proud day for you, your family, whom we have invited to witness this function, your friends and especially your spouses who have suffered with you. This is also a culmination of the long and hard hours in sometimes the sprints and at times the marathon you have been running through your professional career. Congratulations for having lasted the challenge. They say “No pain, no Gain.” May I add that all those present here share the belief and confidence of ALIF SOCIETY that you deserve the distinctions you have earned.

Kevin, the position you have reached is much sought after. The Head hunters have been in search of the depth of your expertise, experience and eminence in your fields. Your selection is a mark of quality applauded by the Business community and a seal of guarantee to Mauritians that the management of their economy is in sure hands.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Kevin was a Fulbright Scholar in 2011, Winner of the Mauritius State Scholarship 1993: a three-year educational scholarship Awardee of the Mauritian Government to national A-Levels toppers, has an extremely rich career: Director of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, when Mauritius recorded a two-year consecutive growth in tourist arrivals, Director of New Business Development at the Board of Investment, where he has been responsible for the development of new strategic economic sectors such as the Ocean economy, the Africa hub and the film industry among others. He has worked on five national budgets under three Ministers of Finance.

He also has extensive consulting experience in various national and regional organisations and a range of industries ranging from financial services, telco, real estate to public sector. And now as the CEO of Business Mauritius, he has laid out his vision in an extensive press interview. Kevin, congratulations and may you succeed to make your dream come true.

Jacques, you have been at the forefront of the battle for development and your skills have been much in demand. I wonder how you have been able to put up with so many assignments and still look fresh and young.

It will take quite some time to detail Jacques’ long CV ; so I will dare do some injustice and I am sure my good friend Jacques won’t mind, I’ll remain on what I consider the most important ones: After leaving the RCPL, Jacques graduated as an FCCA in England after which he served as Board Director of 11 big Entities, to name a few, MCB, BoM, SEAB and Small Enterprise and Handicraft Development Authority; he has been President of Mauritius Gymkhana, Rotary Club of QB and Mauritius Manufacturers Assn.

At present he is Chairman and MD of Li Wan Po Group, Rank 63 in the top 100 companies of Mauritius and Vice President of Medine Limited, rank 68.

This is no small feat Jacques. I am glad that your dedication, talent and abilities have earned you a national recognition. All firms need visionaries like you. To me, your elevation is not a surprise. This occasion truly calls for a grand celebration and Alif is proudly doing just that. Congratulations. May you meet more glory in your life ahead and May all your dreams for the future come true.

Gentlemen, you are in dangerous target-rich territories with an added disadvantage of shifting economic environments. You will be confronted with multiple dilemmas: What will you do? Will you favour creative destruction? What will you do when faced with the man who was smoking in bed in the burning house? Will you leave him die to teach him a lesson? Or do you save him, stop the risk of surrounding houses catching fire and then reprimand him for reckless behaviour?”.

Remember: you can make economic crises less likely to happen and less severe when they do occur, you cannot abolish them. Something will go wrong again and again and you do not know exactly when. So, do create the anti-fragile system that can withstand potential shocks when they happen.

Shall I end with the observation of John Kay that, “Profit is not the only purpose of business like breathing is not the only purpose of living.” It is also the tool to bring upon the Bonheur National Brut.

I would like to congratulate you both again and wish you well for the future.