

**Speech by H.E. Anne Marie Danielle Perrier
High Commissioner of the Republic of Mauritius to the Republic of
Mozambique**

**Panel: "From Production to Consumption – Tourism as one of the Destinations of
Local Production"**

Your Excellencies,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is a great honour to join you today, and I would like to sincerely thank the organisers for inviting Mauritius to contribute to this important conversation.

Since taking up my duties in Mozambique, I have had the privilege of discovering a country of extraordinary richness, remarkable energy and immense potential. Every journey across this beautiful country has reinforced my conviction that Mozambique possesses all the ingredients to become one of Africa's most inspiring tourism destinations and one of the region's great economic success stories.

The theme of today's panel goes far beyond tourism.

It is about economic transformation.

It is about resilience.

It is about creating opportunities for our people while preserving what makes our countries unique.

When we speak about tourism today, we are no longer speaking simply about hotels, beaches or visitor arrivals.

We are speaking about how a nation creates value.

Every nation has a story to tell.

Tourism is one of the most powerful ways of sharing that story with the world.

Through tourism, visitors discover far more than a destination. They discover a country's culture, its traditions, its cuisine and, most importantly, its people. In return, tourism has the power to shape economies, strengthen communities and build a nation's reputation.

The question before us, therefore, is not simply how tourism can continue to grow, but how tourism can contribute to the long-term development of a country.

Mauritius offers one illustration of this journey.

Ours is certainly not the only model, nor is it a model to be replicated. But it is an experience from which we have drawn valuable lessons, and it is in that spirit of friendship and partnership that I would like to share them with you today.

When tourism began to develop in Mauritius in the 1950s, few could have imagined the role it would eventually play in our country's transformation. What started as a promising industry progressively became one of the pillars of our economy. Today, tourism contributes around 20% of Mauritius' economy when its direct, indirect and induced impacts are taken together, supporting thousands of businesses and livelihoods across the island.

Its economic contribution has been remarkable.

But perhaps its greatest achievement has been to shape the international reputation of Mauritius.

Over the decades, our country became known not only for the beauty of its landscapes, but also for the quality of its hospitality, its political stability, its multicultural society and its commitment to excellence.

That reputation became one of our greatest strategic assets.

It encouraged visitors to return.

It inspired confidence among investors.

It strengthened the attractiveness of other sectors of our economy, from financial services and real estate to higher education and international business.

In many ways, tourism helped build the Mauritius brand.

And once a nation earns a strong and credible reputation, that reputation opens doors far beyond tourism itself.

Our journey, however, has not always been easy.

Like many countries represented here today, Mauritius has had to navigate oil shocks, global economic downturns, climate-related events and, more recently, the unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each crisis challenged our economy.

Each crisis required us to rethink our model.

Above all, each crisis reminded us that resilience is not about resisting change. It is about adapting, innovating and emerging stronger.

Alongside tourism, Mauritius progressively diversified its economy into financial services, manufacturing, information and communication technologies, higher education, real estate and, increasingly, the blue economy.

This diversification has strengthened our resilience, while tourism has continued to evolve to meet changing traveler expectations and new global realities.

One of the most valuable lessons we have learned is that tourism cannot thrive in isolation.

Its value is not created within the walls of a hotel.

It is created by an entire ecosystem.

Every visitor creates opportunities for farmers supplying fresh produce, for fishermen bringing in the day's catch, for artisans preserving traditional craftsmanship, for musicians and artists expressing the soul of our country, for guides, transport operators and entrepreneurs developing experiences inspired by our culture and heritage.

This is where tourism becomes a genuine development strategy.

Its impact extends well beyond the visitor economy, allowing value to circulate throughout local communities and supporting thousands of businesses, directly and indirectly.

Local production plays a central role in this dynamic.

It strengthens domestic businesses, but it also gives a destination its authenticity.

A tropical fruit grown by a local farmer.

A traditional recipe passed down through generations.

A handcrafted object created by a local artisan.

These are much more than products.

They are expressions of identity.

People rarely remember every hotel they stayed in.

They remember how a destination made them feel.

That feeling is created by its people, its culture, its food, its music, its landscapes and the authenticity of the experiences they encounter.

This is what creates lasting memories.

And ultimately, this is what builds a nation's reputation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I look at Mozambique, I do not see another Mauritius.

Nor should I.

Every nation must write its own story.

Every country has its own history, its own strengths and its own ambitions.

What I do see is a country blessed with extraordinary assets.

A magnificent coastline.

Exceptional biodiversity.

Rich agricultural and marine resources.

A vibrant cultural heritage.

A young and entrepreneurial population.

These are remarkable foundations upon which to build a distinctive tourism economy and a strong international reputation.

The opportunity is not to replicate another country's success.

It is to build a tourism model that reflects Mozambique's own identity, creates opportunities for its people and showcases to the world everything that makes this country unique.

As neighbours in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius and Mozambique have much to gain from one another.

Not because one country has all the answers, but because we share many of the same opportunities and many of the same challenges: climate resilience, food security, youth employment, sustainable investment and inclusive growth.

These challenges invite us to deepen our partnerships, exchange experiences, encourage innovation and continue learning from one another.

Allow me to conclude with one final reflection.

If there is one lesson that Mauritius has learned over the past seventy years, it is that tourism is much more than an economic activity.

It is a long-term investment in people.

In reputation.

In resilience.

And in the future of a nation.

I firmly believe that Mozambique has all the assets to write its own remarkable story.

Not by following the path of others, but by building on its own identity, its own strengths and the extraordinary talent of its people.

Mauritius looks forward to walking part of that journey with you.

Thank you very much.

Muito obrigada.