

What we've done...What's new...? AMFCE's events

- **INSPIRING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH THE MCB**

On Thursday, 4th April 2024, Business Banking successfully hosted its Annual Woman Entrepreneurship Event at MCB, St. Jean. The event was a celebration of the resilience and innovation of exceptional women leaders in entrepreneurship. The highlight of the evening was a panel discussion that delved into how entrepreneurship empowers women economically and the crucial role of education in fostering talent development. The theme, #InspireInclusion, resonated throughout the discussions, emphasizing a commitment to recognizing and valuing women's needs and aspirations in various entrepreneurial fields.

The distinguished panellists included Priscilla Balgobin, Senior Partner at Dentons Mauritius, who shared her expertise in corporate, finance, and tax law, as well as her insights into the evolving Fintech landscape; Natacha Emilien, Deputy Group CEO of CSI Energy Group, brought her extensive experience as an impact entrepreneur, advocating for business as a force for positive change; Our AMFCE member, Sharanaz Subratty, Managing Director of Casting World, captivated the audience with her journey from a career in marketing to founding a business dedicated to reef conservation through eco-friendly 3D solutions. Her achievements, including the SME Excellent Award in 2019 and the NPQC in 2021, were a testament to her dedication and innovation.

The event was a resounding success, offering inspiration and celebrating the significant contributions of women entrepreneurs in Mauritius.



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- **ILO (International Labour Organisation) MEETING**

To set the pace and discussion on the development of a Code of Conduct on the Fair and Ethical Recruitment of Migrant Workers in the Indian Ocean region on 16th April 2024.



This session was mainly aimed at employers who are hiring migrant workers as well as at Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) who are responsible for sourcing and placing workers into roles. Representative employer organizations and other stakeholders have a pivotal role to play in raising awareness and helping the galvanise organizations around this agenda.

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- **INDUCTION 2024**

On 20th April 2024, the AMFCE Executive Team convened for the 2024 induction event at Hennessy. The highlight of the gathering was an inspiring address by the newly elected President, Shabnam Esmael, who shared her vision and objectives for the 2024-2025 mandate. The event also honoured past presidents for their invaluable contributions to the association over the years. Aline Wong, Past President and Commissioner, opened the proceedings with an extensive overview of the AMFCE's history, purpose, and mission, expressing her expectations from the current members.

Marie France Chamary-Samy paid tribute to the legacy of Past President Margaret Pan Sin and reaffirmed her support for the new committee. She emphasized the importance of continuity within the association and the supportive role of Past Presidents and Commissioners.

Vimi Appadoo followed with insights into the rules, responsibilities, and accountability of the Board, highlighting leadership and role modelling.

Dr. Patricia Day-Hookoomsing elaborated on the objectives, constitution, and subrules of the AMFCE, emphasizing the importance of adherence to the association's principles.

Past President Rima Ramsaram concluded the induction with a detailed explanation of the responsibilities of each Executive member and their respective roles. She discussed the various upcoming projects and underscored the significance of each member's contribution to the association's success. The induction event was a blend of inspiration, recognition, and strategic planning, setting a strong foundation for the year ahead.



- **FABESSENTIALS LAUNCH**

The brand was launched on April 25th, 2024 at Henessy Park Hotel by a few hundred invitees and honoured by the Deputy High Commissioner of India, Mr Vimarsh Aryan. Many AMFCE members attended this event and witnessed the eco-friendly products firsthand.

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- **ENABLING AFRICAN TRADE GROWTH WITH A SUSTAINABLE LENS**

On 6th May 2024, members gathered at The Pod, Vivéa Business Park, Moka, for a trade event organized by our partner, MCB. The conference, titled "Enabling African Trade Growth with a Sustainable Lens," provided valuable insights into Africa's evolving market landscape. This event explored how Africa stands apart from other major trade blocks and strategies for leveraging African trade growth to sustain business expansion.

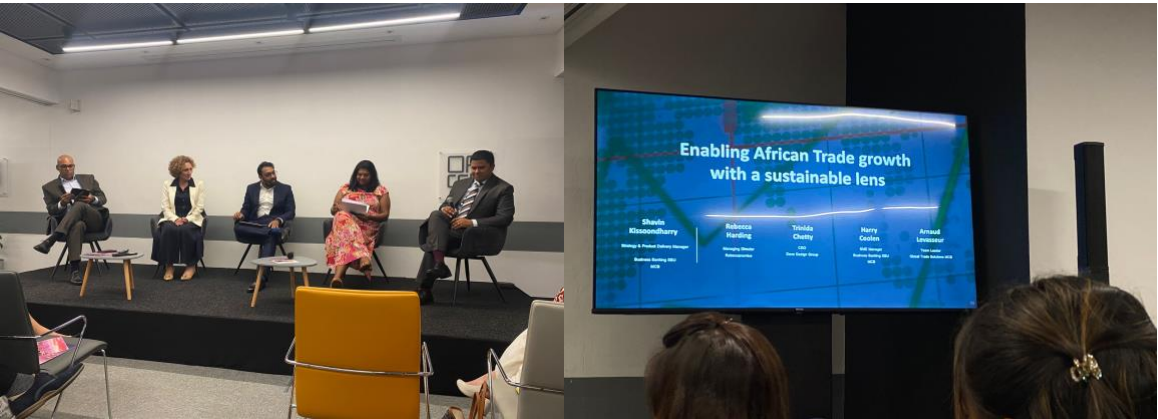
The conference began with an engaging keynote by Mr. Ashley Epstein, discussing the ripple effect of African trade dynamics. This was followed by Rebecca Harding's insightful speech on leveraging data and understanding global megatrends in geopolitics, economics, technology, and sustainability. She highlighted the significant presence of social and women entrepreneurs in Africa.

Mr. Arnaud Levasseur, Team Leader for Global Transactional Banking, introduced attendees to the Global Trade Portal, showcasing the potential opportunities it offers for users. The panel discussion featured AMFCE's Immediate Past President, Mrs. Trinidad Cheddy, CEO of Deco Design Group; Mr. Harry Coolen, SME Manager for Business Banking; Mr Arnaud Levasseur; and Mrs Rebecca Harding, moderated by Mr Shavin Kissondharry. The consensus among the panellists was that while trade in Africa involves risks, it also presents immense opportunities, with the trend shifting away from China and Europe towards Africa.

Rebecca emphasized the benefits of economies of scale, access to markets, and free-trade areas, which facilitate the flow of goods and services at reduced costs. Trinidad discussed the advantages of exporting to Africa and importing from South Africa, while Harry highlighted the smart-island concept and working capital financing to promote sustainability.

Overall, the event was an enlightening session, offering attendees a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges in African trade, and how to integrate sustainability into business solutions.

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- **HRDC TRAINING COST RE-IMBURSEMENT**

We are delighted to recap the recently concluded briefing sessions on HRDC Training Cost Reimbursement Procedures, organized by Business Mauritius. These sessions, held on 10th May and 13th May 2024, at Business Mauritius in Ebène Cybercity, provided invaluable insights into the reimbursement process and the Levy Grant Scheme.

The sessions were facilitated by officers from the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), who offered a comprehensive overview of the Levy Grant Scheme. They delved into the specific procedures and documentation required to claim training cost reimbursements, addressing numerous inquiries from our members. The detailed agenda covered:

- **Overview of the Levy Grant Scheme**
- **In-depth discussion on reimbursement procedures and necessary documentation**
- **Interactive Questions and Answers session**

These sessions provided a platform for our members to gain a clear understanding of the reimbursement process, enabling them to navigate the procedures efficiently. We hope those who attended found the sessions informative and valuable. For those who couldn't attend, we encourage you to reach out for more information on the reimbursement process to ensure your organization can benefit from the available support.

- **SPECIAL TRAINING ON "DRIVING GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION" FOR SMES**

In collaboration with the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) recently concluded a highly successful training program titled "Driving Growth and Competitiveness through Technology and Innovation." The program, held weekly from May 13 to June 10, 2024, at The Catalyst Building in Ebene Cybercity, was designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of SMEs in Mauritius and other African countries.

Participants engaged in an in-depth exploration of innovation frameworks, including Design Thinking, with a focus on addressing specific competitiveness bottlenecks in their industrial processes. The training equipped attendees with the knowledge of the five stages of design thinking, along with practical case studies and problem-solving exercises. This hands-on approach enabled SMEs to develop and implement innovative frameworks in their workplaces, optimizing their processes through the adoption of business intelligence tools.

The training sessions, held over five weeks, provided an invaluable platform for SMEs to learn from experts and each other. It underscored the critical role of technology and innovation in driving business growth and competitiveness. Participants left the program with a clearer understanding of how to leverage these tools to enhance their business operations

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and achieve a competitive edge in the market. We are proud to see our AMFCE members take proactive steps in advancing their businesses through this comprehensive training program.

- **WOMEN IN TRADE: INITIATION MEETING ORGANIZED BY THE SHETRADES MAURITIUS HUB**

On May 29, 2024, AMFCE members had the distinct opportunity to participate in the "Women in Trade: Initiation Meeting," organized by the SheTrades Mauritius Hub at EDB Ebène.

This gathering marked a significant milestone in fostering collaboration between AMFCE and SheTrades Mauritius Hub, with a shared goal of empowering women entrepreneurs and facilitating their entry into the global market. Mrs. Nirmala Jeetah, Director of Bio Industry & Project Development at the EDB, opened the session by outlining the hub's initiatives, which include capacity-building programs, mentoring, policy advocacy, and overseas events—all designed to enhance women's participation in economic development.

Representing AMFCE, Ms Sathya Pillay Samoo emphasized the pivotal role of women entrepreneurs in driving innovation and growth, urging members to utilize the resources provided by SheTrades Mauritius Hub to overcome challenges and unlock their full potential. A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the Needs Assessment Survey results, which identified specific training needs for women-led businesses, guiding future program development. The session also featured inspiring success stories from three women entrepreneurs, showcasing how the hub's support has enabled them to explore international markets.

The event concluded with a networking cocktail, offering further opportunities for collaboration. This meeting underscored the importance of partnerships in empowering women entrepreneurs and highlighted the promising future of AMFCE's ongoing collaboration with SheTrades Mauritius Hub.



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- **BUDGET INSIGHTS FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

On 18th June 2024, the AMFCE held an insightful event on the Budget Speech 2024-2025 at Club House Royal Green. The session, moderated by AMFCE’s Executive member Reena Dhanjee, featured esteemed panellists including economist Mr. Eric Ng, accountant Mr. Anthony Leung Shin from PwC, and Mr. Noor Mahmad Oozeer from the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA).

The event began with a warm welcome by Vice President Mrs. Pooja Maulloo, followed by a keynote speech by Mr. Eric Ng, who provided an in-depth analysis of the proposed budget's potential to boost the economy, create jobs, generate foreign exchange, and control inflation. Mr. Ng's discussion set the stage for a deeper exploration of the budget measures.

Mr. Anthony Leung Shin then focused on the financial health and stability aspects of the budget, particularly its implications for “entrepreneurs”. He emphasized the importance of economic empowerment for women and reflected on how the budget measures could support this goal.

Mr. Noor Mahmad Oozeer provided a detailed overview of the processes and implementation of the budget measures, discussing changes such as the minimal salary threshold and government assistance, and their practical impacts on businesses. He also elaborated on customs and excise duties improvements aimed at enhancing efficiency.

The event concluded with a lively discussion on the national debt and strategies for economic diversification and reserve rebuilding. The panellists shared their insights on how SMEs and women entrepreneurs could be integrated into these broader economic strategies. The session provided a comprehensive understanding of the budget's implications and fostered an engaging dialogue on future economic prospects.

Overall, the event was a significant success, offering valuable perspectives on the 2024-2025 budget and its potential to drive economic growth and stability in Mauritius.

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- **ABSA InspireME EVENT**

From 18th to 21st June 2024, two members of the Association Mauricienne des Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises (AMFCE) were Adila Diouman- Mosafeer Adilla and Kajal Reekoye participated in the prestigious Absa InspireMe Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. This annual event, hosted by Absa Bank under its Women Banking Proposition, gathers influential business leaders to discuss business, leadership, and women-centric issues. The conference

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aimed to empower women-led SMEs by providing access to market linkages, networking opportunities, and mentorship.

The conference featured a rich program, including a two-day conference and marketplace, a business-to-business day, and a city tour. Participants engaged in sessions covering critical topics such as business resilience, digital enablement, and access to finance, with opportunities to interact with experts from various industries. Additionally, a side event organized in collaboration with the International Trade Centre facilitated trade missions, offering expanded business opportunities beyond Africa.

With a theme of "Empowering your story for growth," the event was an inspiring platform for women entrepreneurs to share experiences, learned from each other, and explored new markets. This year, the conference targeted over 500 in-person attendees and aimed to connect over 5,000 virtual participants, offering a unique blend of knowledge-sharing, networking, and business development opportunities.



Achievements and Progress - AMFCE's Ongoing Initiatives

- **Business Without Borders (BWB)**

The BWB batch 3 2024-2024 has been initiated in May 2024, and is currently at the recruitment (mentor and mentees) phase. BWB3 presents a considerable improvement over the previous 2 batches, having integrated an additional component, the Enterprise diagnosis, over and above the usual capacity-building (7 online applied management modules) and mentoring (60 mentees and 60 mentors).

In addition, BWB3 also features a sampling in selected African countries, namely Rwanda, Kenya, Congo, Djibouti and Uganda, paving the way for the extension of the program to the African continent in the near future and eventually, to other developing countries.

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- **Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)**

Good news: AWE 3 has been officially approved by our sponsor, the U.S. Embassy, and is due to start before the end of the year. The program is currently under process and awaiting the signature of the contract.

Looking Forward - Upcoming Events

- **Boss Lady Mental & Physical Health Playbook**

Join us on July 20th, 2024, at Maison Eureka, Moka, for a comprehensive session on maintaining both mental and physical health tailored specifically for dynamic women leaders.

- **FCEM World Congress 2024 – Sydney, Australia**

The FCEM World Congress 2024 is scheduled to take place in Sydney, Australia. This esteemed event offers a global platform for women entrepreneurs to connect, develop professionally, and foster international collaboration. Attendees can anticipate a comprehensive agenda, including workshops, keynote addresses, and panel discussions, all aimed at enhancing business strategies and providing insights essential for success in the global market. We are excited about the opportunity this congress presents for our members to expand their networks and gain invaluable industry knowledge.

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