



Financial Services Commission  
Mauritius

**Speech by Ms Clairette Ah-Hen, Chief Executive**  
**Initiatives under the Consumer Education and Financial Literacy Programme**  
**24 November 2014**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the FSC House today in the context of our Consumer Education and Financial Literacy Programme.

For the soundness and stability of our financial system, FSC Mauritius believes in promoting initiatives that create an enabling environment to make the on-boarding process of all consumers of financial services and products simpler.

As the financial marketplace constantly evolves, investment products are becoming increasingly complex and financial services increasingly diverse. Information is considered as a public good, yet because of increased information asymmetries, I quote Mr David Wright, SG of IOSCO, '*Consumer education has become more important – in fact vital - than ever in order to better balance the huge differences between consumers – dispersed and fragmented – and the financial industry*'.

The recent financial crisis has questioned how well businesses deliver consumer financial services and how good regulatory institutions address problems in financial markets – i.e. whether they were fit-for-purpose? Unfortunately the crisis has shown that many were not.

Today, consumers need to have a better understanding of key financial concepts to better comprehend and evaluate the choices available to them as well as to avoid frauds. According to the IMF, "*Effective consumer protection and market conduct regulations are key aspects of a responsible finance agenda.*"

FSC Mauritius is mandated under Section 6 (f) of the Financial Services Act (FSA) 2007 *“to promote public understanding of the financial system including awareness of the benefits and risks associated with different kinds of investment and to take measures for the better protection of consumers of financial services.”*

Research and new behavioural economics show that consumer protection can work only if we have long term and sustainable programmes. Given the complexity of today’s financial products, investor education requires a multitude of tools to be a successful and efficient undertaking. Thus those running the financial education programmes must also be innovative, dynamic, flexible and with tremendous staying power.

Section 32 (1) of the FSA 2007 stipulates that the FSC Mauritius *“may develop and promote such programmes and initiatives, where it deems it necessary in collaboration with financial institutions or bodies representing the financial services industry, to inform and educate consumers or potential consumers of financial products and financial services.”*

At FSC Mauritius, we believe that informed consumers make better financial decisions. Since 2011, when we launched the FSC Young Talent Competition, we chose to adopt an incremental approach to our Consumer Education and Financial Literary Programme. Today, this programme has become an important part of the FSC Mauritius initiatives, leveraging on diverse means and methods to be able to reach out to a maximum number of consumers and potential consumers of financial services and products.

I would like to this opportunity to thank our stakeholders, industry associations and professionals who have provided valuable support as members of the jury panels or entertaining queries from students and also, of course, schools and students for their participation.

FSC Mauritius will continue to enhance these initiatives and ensure that we deliver on our objective of better consumer protection.

The choice of the appropriate media for delivering investor education and financial literacy programmes usually depends on the target audience. In order to achieve the widest exposure, many regulators use all available media.

To reach a wider audience, the FSC Mauritius has created a series of Consumer Education Posters - with our own, specially created characters and *Kreol* as the chosen language. The first in this series of posters was launched on 12 December 2013 and was on how to protect yourself against financial scams. Since then, other posters have sensitised people on licensing and investing. We distributed these posters in secondary schools, community centres and had them displayed in public places and on our website.

Today, we thank you for being in our midst as we unveil the latest developments under our Consumer Education and Financial Literacy Programme.

To start with, we are launching **ProtectYourFinance.com**, the dedicated FSC Mauritius consumer education website, to reach out to current and potential consumers of financial services of all ages and income groups, in a medium which is becoming more popular (*incontournable*) day by day. As pointed out by the IMF *'Technological innovation is perhaps the most promising way to advance financial inclusion.'*

Other initiatives we will be sharing with you today include:

- A Financial Literacy Snake and Ladders Game – we have customised the Snake and Ladders Game concept to pass on key messages on financial terms and what to do and not to do, in particular in respect of investment (*more traditional but still as enjoyable and fun - for all ages*); and
- The Launch of our fourth poster on how to deal with Insurance Complaints (*connaissance pour empêcher li faire la liane*)

Going back to [www.protectyourfinance.com](http://www.protectyourfinance.com), we believe that the website's simplicity, ease of use and most importantly, our friendly mascot whom we refer to by the initials:- O.W.L. will appeal to the public. Our Mascot's initials O.W.L. stand for (*you have probably already guessed since it is very intelligent*) **One Who Learns**. It is worth noting that the website is not intended to give legal or

professional advice but to provide general guidance so that consumers can make informed decisions about their finance.

We hope you will add [www.protectyourfinance.com](http://www.protectyourfinance.com) to your 'favourites' as well as regularly provide us with your feedback.

On this note, I would like to thank the whole team - *the staff at FSC, our trainees, the young IT specialists (Aeris and CodeVigor) and artist Laval Ng (Aztlán)* - behind the initiatives that we are launching today. I wish you a nice browsing on [protectyourfinance.com](http://protectyourfinance.com) and **Be Wise with Your Money.**

*Clairette Ah-Hen*

*24 November 2014*