

TRAINING PROGRAMME ON CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Address by the

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Sir Bhinod Bacha

Messrs Benydin and Imrith from the Unions

Representatives of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

I am doubly pleased to be here this morning on the occasion of the launching of the Training Programme on Customer Service Management and Development. *Pleased* as Minister at the service of the people and the Mauritian nation. And *pleased* as a former Civil Servant serving both people and country to the best of my ability.

I have been *alive* to the challenges facing our Mauritian nation and our country in a rapidly globalizing and acceleratedly competitive world. *Alive* to the need for all of us to lift ourselves up from our bootstraps, roll up our sleeves, and work harder and harder still, more and more dedicatedly, more and more responsibly, and more and more patriotically for our country, and our people, and deliver to their satisfaction, and for their happiness and that of their children. *Alive* also to the absolute and imperative need for us to satisfy rising expectations of our clients: the people.

The Machinery of Government, of which the Public Service is a determining cog, needs to be constantly oiled, and a major component of this constant oiling process is focused and specialized training which equips the Public Service with the necessary know-how and skills, including dynamic communication and public relations skills, to practically and pragmatically deliver the **quantity** of promised and expected goods and services, while simultaneously ensuring the **quality** of those goods and services.

Training cannot thus be simply matter-of-fact, routine, cosmetic, and of mere paper-value, with a whole host of stereotyped words sounding great but of no real and intrinsic value in a genuine modernizing and transformation process. This is why I have just emphasized the absolute necessity for focused and specialized training, with no place for mere book-value, for mere copy-text book value, only serviceable for theoreticians and academics perpetuating a set of values quite out of tune with modern-times values, modern-times realities and challenges, and modern-times thinking. Training should thus **not** be like literature which, in the final analysis, only reflects "*what was often said but never so well expressed*". It should be on-going, on-the-job training, and formal training, aimed at regular "*remise à niveau*", and taking on board ascending needs and requirements.

True it is that there are realities which are universal and which are common to all Government Machineries, to all Public Services. But *true* it is also, that there are realities which are specific to each country's Government Machinery and Public Service. Ours is a country wherein there is not **one** and **only one** public opinion but **many** and **several** public

opinions, being a country epitomizing diversity in unity. *Wherein* exist democratically diverse pressure groups and groups of interest. *Wherein* the goods and services expected, apart from the basic ones, common to all in the context of a common and basic hierarchy of demands, are not necessarily the same for each component of our rainbow nation. This fact *alone* makes customer service a varied but rich challenge, as the *constant* factor of provision of quality customer service is set in a field of play of *variable* factors related to variable expectations from a varied clientèle.

It is of vital importance, therefore, that public officers, regularly called upon to deal with members of the public and other stakeholders, should first and foremost comprehend fully the *psyche* of their clients. They all expect courtesy, politeness, proactive listening capabilities, patience, the right answer and the right advice and guidance, and objective, honest, and prompt services, from public officers paid from public funds to serve, and serve well. It is not a mere empty cliché that “Le Client est roi”. “Le Client” is *indeed* “Roi”. Our Motto should be: “**Happy Client. Happy Public Service**”.

The training that will be imparted to participants will, I hope and I trust, lead them to realize, and keep constantly in mind, that customer service is a noble **MISSION** *not* a burdensome **COMPULSION**. It is a **VOCATION**, not a mere **DUTY**.

It is too often ignored that science is organized common sense. But I rest assured that the all-importance of common sense in dealing with members of the public and other

stakeholders shall never be ignored. And common sense allows a non-stop caring customer service to be the Public Service's second nature.

I hope that Management and Staff will continue to have a cohesive shared vision for the welfare of the country and for the common good, by putting *people and country first*. And I also hope that I have myself, this morning, delivered the service expected from me by you all, who are also customers who will certainly not like to do unto others what they would not like others to do unto them.

I wish that the Public Service awakes into a Public Service World *where* the mind is without fear; where the head is held high; *where* the mind has not lost itself in the dreary desert sands of dead habits; and *where* service to the human person is indeed, and also, a *passion*.

With these words, it gives me much pleasure to *declare open* this *In house Training Programme*, and to wish the organizers and the participants all the success they most certainly deserve.