

ADDRESS BY THE HON ASHIT KUMAR GUNGAH,
MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS ON THE
OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF AWARD COURSES FOR
OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY MAURITIUS, WEDNESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2011,
AT 14:00HRS.

**Mr. Fokeer, Director General,
University of Technology, Mauritius**

Dr Reddy, Chairman Board of Directors,

Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry

Mrs. Oree, Ag. Permanent Secretary of my Ministry

**Dr. Chittoo, Head of School, School of Business,
Management and Finance**

Dr. Babooa, Registrar, University of Technology, Mauritius

Officers of my Ministry and of the UTM

Trade Unions representatives

Resource Persons

Members of the Press

Dear Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon Everybody.

It gives me great pleasure to attend this ceremony for the launching of the Award Course 2011 for some 87 Senior Officers and Executive Officers of the General Services.

Allow me, at the very outset, to extend to all of you present here and, through you, to all the public officers in the Civil Service, my best wishes for a happy, prosperous and successful New Year 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Civil Service, is usually perceived as slow, bureaucratic and reactive rather than proactive. This perception is not only in usage of the Mauritian Civil Service but of Civil Service in many countries, both developed and developing.

Most people are unaware of the important role played by public officers in the development of the country and in building a modern Mauritius through the array of services they provide. Most of you work with diligence, dedication and commitment. However, since I assumed duty as Minister, I have made it a personal challenge to correct this perception. Although there are a few black sheep, the majority of public officers are hardworking and conscientious. In a modern society there is no place for lame ducks in its Civil Service. As Minister, I shall endeavour to provide all support to bring the lame ducks on track and delivering. However, if attitude does not change, we shall have to apply appropriate measures including severe sanctions.

The world does not stand still and neither can Mauritius nor Mauritians afford to do so. The Civil Service is faced with serious challenges and if we want to overcome these challenges successfully, we need to have ambitious public officers willing to achieve an ambitious programme of public sector reform.

The international economic downturn and the adverse effects of climate change demand that the reform process be accelerated if we want to remain afloat. My Ministry has already initiated action for the formulation of a Comprehensive Civil Service Reform Strategy which will include,

First, an assessment of the new Performance Management System;

Second, a new Human Resource Strategy;

Third, setting up of the Civil Service College; and

Last, an effective Human Resource Management Information System.

For the reform to be successful we need to have public officers with proper knowledge, skills and the right attitude.

This brings me back to my vision, for a **Smarter and Stronger Civil Service**.

A Smarter and Stronger Civil Service, which I don't fail to mention, the occasion arising. A **Smarter and Stronger Civil Service** is about a Civil Service where public officers are fully committed to:-

First, placing customers at the heart of everything they do;

Second, being more creative, innovative and prepared to take managed risks;

Third, building partnerships with other stakeholders in order to enhance productivity and achieve efficiency gains;

Fourth, being flexible and adapt to new priorities and challenges; and

Last, adhering to the enduring Civil Service Values.

One of the means to build a **Smarter and Stronger Civil Service** is, no doubt, through training. I would like here to relate the anecdote about a woodcutter who wanted to get an increase in pay but was unable to deserve it.

It goes like this:-

- John, a woodcutter, worked for a company for five years but never got an increase in pay.

- The company hired Bill and within a year he got an increase.
- John resented Bill's getting a raise after only a year and went to his boss to talk about it.
- The boss said: I quote "you are still cutting the same number of trees you were cutting five years ago. We are **a result-oriented company** and would be happy to give you an increase if your productivity goes up." End of quote.
- John went back and started hitting harder and putting in longer hours. But he, still, was not able to cut more trees. He went back to his boss and told him his dilemma.
- The boss advised John to go talk to Bill. "May be there is something Bill knows that you and I don't." he said
- John went to Bill and asked him how he managed to cut more trees.
- Bill answered: "After every tree I cut, I take a break for two minutes and sharpen my axe. When was the last time you sharpened your axe?"

This question struck John since he had been cutting trees all the time and never thought of sharpening his axe.

The morale of the story is that if we want to move forward in life, we need to arm ourselves with proper tools. We have to continuously sharpen our axe if we want to be result-oriented and ensure our employability in this competitive business environment.

I mean to say that the training you will receive at UTM during the semester will help you to enrich your knowledge, sharpen your skills and enhance your attitude so that when you go back to your workplace you are better equipped to contribute towards a **Smarter and Stronger Civil Service**. This is an opportunity for you not to miss.

I am sure that you will find the discussion interesting and valuable and you will derive maximum benefits from your interaction with the resource persons.

We look forward to your full participation in the training programme over the next 4 to 5 months and I strongly encourage you to become actively engaged in the various course sessions and discussions.

I wish you a very successful and enriching training course, and I declare the Award Course 2011 duly launched.

Thank you for your attention.