

SPEECH BY HONOURABLE A.K GUNGAH, MINISTER OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP ON THURSDAY 31 MARCH, 2011 AT 09 30HRS IN THE CONTEXT OF PRB REPORT FOR OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE OF HR SECTION AT LA CANELLE, DOMAINE LES PAILLES.

Mr Aujayeb, Acting Director, PRB

Mrs Oree, Acting Permanent Secretary of My Ministry

Officers of the HR Cadre

Representatives of Federations and Unions

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is an immense pleasure for me to address to you this morning for the opening of the one-day workshop for officers of the Human Resource Cadre.

I understand that most of you are officers-in-charge of the Human Resource Section in the respective Ministries/Departments where you are posted.

The timing for the organisation of this workshop has not been decided haphazardly. In fact, it has been scheduled to coincide with the exercise whereby supervising officers have to formulate proposals for submission to the Pay Research Bureau in the context of the preparation of the next Report. You, Officers of the Human Resource Cadre, are key players to support and advise supervising officers in this endeavour; so much so that your inputs meaningfully determine the relevance and effectiveness of recommendations which will eventually come out of the PRB report.

The objectives of the workshop will be mainly to:-

- First, sensitize officers of the HRM Cadre on the weaknesses and strengths of submissions to be made to the PRB based on past experiences;**

- **Secondly, provide a forum for frank discussions between you and representatives of the PRB and my Ministry such that we can harmonise our position and also develop common strategies; and**
- **Lastly, collectively define a framework which can best meet the challenges facing the Human Resource Management in the Civil Service.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the past decades, many countries, both developed and developing, have witnessed a dramatically transformed landscape on nearly all fronts: economic, social and political.

The business environment in which you are operating is certainly not the same when you joined the Civil Service.

New challenges have emerged and yet others are to come with the rapid globalisation, climate change, significant technological development and the recent social unrest in the Northern African Countries, like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.

On one hand, these unprecedented challenges have generated an environment that is increasingly more complex, competitive and uncertain.

On the other hand, the rising hope and aspiration of the Government and the population are becoming more and more demanding on the public sector. There is a growing expectation that almost every problem can be solved, no matter how complex or intractable it is.

Today, more than ever before, the challenges and excitement in managing Human Resources reach out across the globe and command the attention of managers at all levels both in the public and private sectors.

The direct and all-important nexus between effective people management and effective organization management has been incontrovertibly established.

The changes in the world economy, the pressures on the resources and the new concern for employment and human rights have forced on all of us a new agenda.

The undeniable fact is that we are living in resource constrained times. Government budgets are tight, requiring enduring public sector restraint and increased efficiency. Hence these are heightening the imperative to move from business as usual to innovative practices that increase our commitment and dedication to result-based management.

In a resource-scarce island-nation like Mauritius, our people are our only main resource.

The Professor Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics, who was recently in Mauritius, qualified our country as “The Greatest Country on Earth”. For Professor Stiglitz, Mauritius has been able to provide free education for all students, free transportation for school children, free health care for all; and he adds, Mauritius owns neither diamond nor oil. Joseph Stiglitz wrote about Mauritius, in an article in the American press, namely: “What the United States can learn from the tiny island nation of Mauritius”.

In the face of the emergence of these daunting challenges, it becomes more than obvious and this is my conviction as well, that Human Resource Management has to be re-engineered so that it converts itself into a powerful instrument to uphold the exigencies of the 21st Century. Like any dynamic organisation, the Mauritian Public Service is constantly challenged to be responsive, proactive, flexible and inventive, in addressing the issues that confront the government and the citizens.

Management of people in public sector organisations has evolved since independence. It has changed from establishment to personnel management and to Human Resource Management.

But I must tell you that Human Resource Management is not a new notion. Myself, being from the private sector, I can tell you that it has been in use for over 30 years or so.

Human Resource Management, nowadays calls for a strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach if we are to manage our people effectively and optimally.

The success of Human Resource Management depends heavily on how we can harmonise the common interests of management and the work force.

As responsible managers of Human Resource, it is imperative that you shift from the routine operation and functions to assist more actively the organisational strategic team on all Human Resource issues relating to:

- First : Managing change**
- Second: Creating commitment**
- Third: Achieving flexibility**
- Fourth: Improving team work**
- And Fifth: Ensuring total quality management**

However, these issues cannot be tackled without paying due and considerate attention to such Human Resource functions which underpin the organisational success. These functions relate more specifically to the following Human Resource activities,

- First: Providing the appropriate Human Resources both in terms of quantity and quality.**
- Second: Managing a performance system which is fair, transparent and objective.**

- **Third: Developing our Human Resource effectively to enhance the skills, knowledge and attitude of public officers.**
- **Fourth: Managing reward which genuinely acts as a motivator to enhance performance of officers, teams and organisations.**
- **And finally promoting dialogue and consultation with all stakeholders to ensure harmonious employment relations.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have already highlighted the various challenges and the difficult financial situation which the country is facing. It is expected that the next report will, by addressing a number of reforms issues, pave the way for a win-win situation whereby further improvement of service delivery and creation of a highly motivated workforce will be the core objectives of the next report.

I must also place on record that PRB is an independent institution and we are here to collaborate effectively with it and contribute positively so that the objectives are met. This workshop is only a forum where we bring together all stakeholders to synergise for the formulation of better frameworks and strategies.

Although we are very much aware that it is difficult in practice to satisfy all people at all times, I wish to appeal to the Director of the PRB to ensure that errors and omissions are minimized, as far as possible and, if ever, these are to be addressed after the publication of the report, it is done within a reasonable delay rather than one year as it is currently the practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the French saying goes:

“ Du choc des idées, jaillit la lumière”.

Allow me to invite you to make best use of this platform which has been created for you today to idea-storm so that you can contribute positively in the overall forthcoming PRB exercise. I am sure that the sharing of views and information among yourselves will help you a long way in your role to assist your respective ministries and departments to formulate appropriate proposals for the next PRB Report. Please remember that if you provide smart submissions we shall have a smarter report for a SMARTER CIVIL SERVICE.

I wish you fruitful discussions.

I thank you for your kind attention.