

**Address by**

**Honourable A.K. Gungah**

**Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms**

**Launching of Project for Recycling of Used Mobiles  
and Batteries**

**in Government Offices**

*Thursday 05 May 2011*

*Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall*

**My Colleague, Hon Devanand Virahsawmy, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development**

**Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry**

**Mr. Lallah, Chief Executive Officer, Mauritius Telecom**

**Mr. Jadoo, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development,**

**Mrs. Ng, Director of Environment**

**Members of the Press**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good Morning**

**It is indeed a pleasure for me to associate myself and my Ministry with the project being launched today, that is, the recycling of used mobile phones and batteries. This falls in line with the policy of my Ministry to put in place measures that will bring about the greening of the civil service.**

**As I pointed out several times, including in my address during the debate in the National Assembly on the Presidential Address, the**

**vision of this government is to transform the Civil Service into a SMARTER CIVIL SERVICE.**

**A smarter civil Service implies among others, the GREENING of the Civil Service. A ‘Green Mauritius’ requires the effort of one and all. Both policies and day to day activities must be in line with best environmental and sustainable development practices. Current growth and development imperatives should be met without jeopardizing the availability of scarce resources for future generations.**

**Public Officers, as responsible citizens, have a key role to play to ensure the sustainable development of Mauritius. We encourage them to adopt a ‘green behaviour’ at work and at home and to lead by example. Hence, the promotion of a green mindset is, de facto, one of the key elements of the reforms initiatives being used to modernize the Civil Service in order to contribute towards “Maurice Ile Durable”.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Last year, my Ministry reviewed and updated the 'Code of Ethics for Public Officers' to include, inter-alia, the adoption of a Green Behaviour. For recall, the 'Code of Ethics for Public Officers' sets out the standards of correct conduct and behaviour expected from public officers. It provides the guiding principles by which public officers should abide in their day to day work.**

**Some of the highlights of the Code of Ethics are the following:**

**First: to take into account sustainable development practices and *mainstreaming environmental considerations into policies*;**

**Second: *to cut down on the use of paper* through re-utilization, double-sided printing, emailing and using soft copies, particularly of bulky documents;**

**Third: to *save energy* - switching off office lights in unutilized spaces and optimizing the energy settings for computers and other electrical devices;**

**Fourth: to cut down on the use of the lift for one or two levels – using the stairs is so much better for the health!**

**Fifth: to use *water* in a responsible way;**

**And sixth: to recycle paper and dispose of wastes in a responsible way.**

Already, in 2009, the theme for the edition of the Public Service Excellence Award was *'Sustainable Development through Organizational Excellence'*. This theme was aptly chosen to reflect the concern and commitment of Government to put environmental issues high on its agenda.

Public service organizations were thus sensitized on the urgent need to adopt environmentally friendly policies and adapt to new practices to ensure the long term socio-economic and sustainable development of the country.

Besides the traditional elements necessary for operational excellence such as good governance and ethical practices, customer focus and innovation, organisations were assessed with regards to their green-mindset. I am pleased to say that the Grand Winner of the PSEA, the Haemodialysis Unit of the Flacq Hospital, did demonstrate a

laudable degree of concern for the environment. The Unit had in fact taken the initiative to recycle used plastic gallons and other wastes and thus contribute largely to having less hospital wastes ending in the dumping grounds.

The project we are launching today also fits very much within government objectives. Used batteries and mobile phones contain materials that are both recyclable and considered hazardous. They contain a number of heavy metals and toxic chemicals, which if not properly taken care of and disposed of in a proper way, can lead to soil contamination and water pollution, which if not properly handled can be a serious health hazard.

In 2006, the European Union passed the Battery Directive, calling for a higher rate of battery recycling so that at least 25% of all the European Union's used batteries are collected for recycling by 2012. As far back as 2002, Belgium and Sweden registered a recycling rate of over 50%. We should try to emulate these examples of these widely acknowledged green countries. Not just for the sake of it, but because being an Island State, we are at even greater risk than these other countries.

**Recycling is one of the easiest and most accessible ways for people to improve their environmental footprints. While promoting reutilization of scarce resources, it shows our commitment to develop sustainable behaviour.**

**We are thankful to the promoters of this project, namely, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Mauritius Telecom, for putting the boxes within the ease of Public Officers. It can give a very significant boost to the project because in so doing we would be able to reach about 60,000 individuals in the service, most of whom use mobile phones and evidently used batteries in their daily life.**

**I strongly encourage Public Officers to support this initiative and remember to dispose of their used mobile phones and batteries in a responsible manner through these especially designated boxes.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**My Ministry is fully committed to review initiatives being promoted in order to be geared more towards a GREEN and SMART**

**Civil Service. Much effort is being put into developing a New Reforms Strategy for the Civil Service – assistance is being sought to hasten this process.**

**The Strategy will pave the way and give the sense of direction and dimension of measures to be adopted for the coming decade. Many of the measures in themselves will promote, if not constitute implicitly sustainable modes of service delivery.**

**May I end by pledging the commitment of my Ministry to encourage and support Government endeavour to render Mauritius a real “*Maurice Ile Durable*” and be an icon of sustainable development in the world.**

**Thank you for your attention.**