

Public Service Excellence Award 2011

Address by Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah, Minister of Civil Service and

Administrative Reforms - Launching Ceremony

Maritim Hotel, Friday 22 July 2011 @ 18 00 hrs

Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry,

Mrs. Oree, Ag Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,

Permanent Secretaries,

Heads of Departments,

Representatives from the Unions,

Members of the Press,

Distinguished ladies and

Gentlemen,

A very Good Evening to you all

***"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and
should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."***

This is what Martin Luther King had to say to workers affiliated to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees the week before his assassination on April 4, 1968. This is what stands valid today for. Uplifting humanity through working to ensure the socio economic development of the country is precisely the job and vocation of the Public Service. Excellence therefore remains the order of the day.

This evening is set for the launching the Public Service Excellence Award 2011 that will celebrate the achievements of the most performing and most deserving Ministries and Departments in the Civil Service.

The public service has successfully played a crucial role in the development of our country. It has worked to provide a conducive environment for the Mauritian society to thrive and prosper. This is a role that it will be called upon to play in an increasingly challenging environment beset with challenges of diverse nature.

Public officers, therefore, should have the desire, the motivation, the determination and the commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of excellence - a commitment that will enable them to attain the success they seek in that role.

Public Officers should be ready to move fast and adapt to ever changing parameters. They should find innovative solutions to deliver public services that meet, and even go beyond the expectations of the public. In so doing, they should continually revisit established ways of doing things. In short, Public Officers should deliver smartly at every level in the Public Service.

Smart organisations are in a better position to operate within a quality framework so that they achieve excellence. Excellence should be a goal to be relentlessly pursued, one that can be achieved with the proper attitude, discipline and commitment.

Add to that, the right leadership and teamwork and a new mindset will emerge. Already, some organisations are more alert and ready to adopt best practices than others. Some are capitalising on the use of new technologies to become more efficient. Others have made headway in going green by making sustainable choices with regard to the adoption of environmentally friendly processes including the recycling of wastes.

My Ministry is constantly encouraging these efforts and promoting them through various administrative reform initiatives such as the adoption of quality management systems, the upgrading of Counter/Customer Services and an increased use of ICT tools, including the provision of e-services. These have generated substantial gains in terms of improved service delivery.

A New Reform Strategy for the Civil Service is being devised to further consolidate and give added impetus to the ongoing reforms.

Reforms should be the concern of one and all in the Service. Co-ordination and collaboration within and among Ministries and Departments must be fine tuned so as to streamline processes and ensure the delivery of high-quality and customer-focused services.

It is my firm conviction that the Public Service Excellence Award 2011 will trigger the will to change in Ministries and Departments. In, fact the theme for this year's award "*Achieving Excellence through Modernisation*" has been deliberately chosen to emphasise the need for the Civil Service to modernise itself.

Studies have shown that countries that have moved fast on the path of development are those that have re-invented and modernised their Civil Service. Examples of such countries include Japan, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia.

The adoption of innovative strategies to bring about and sustain a modern, performance-based culture of excellence is therefore most desirable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is what the Public Service Excellence Award is all about. Excellence at organizational level can only be achieved through excellence at individual level.

Former US Secretary of State Collin Powell reminds us that, and I quote

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude. "

Unquote.

It is this culture of excellence that will strengthen public trust in the Civil Service. And trust in the Civil Service is vital for the development of a democratic and stable society like ours.

We value excellence and efforts made towards this end. This is why, as Minister of the Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I made it a personal commitment to visit the Grand Winner of the last Public Service Excellence Award, the Haemodialysis Unit of the Flacq Hospital as well as the 4 winners of the sub category awards, namely the Ministry of Industry, the Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Mediclinic, the Energy Services Division and the Biodiversity Unit, Forestry Services. Their achievements are worthy of praise and I personally wanted to congratulate and encourage officers of these organisations to pursue with renewed dedication on the laudable path they had embarked upon.

I take this opportunity to invite Ministries and Departments, Units and Divisions operating within the civil service to take up the challenge by participating in the Public Service Excellence Award 2011. I look forward to a large number of organisations entering the competition this year to join this quest for excellence. I would further expect that each and every Ministry submits at least one entry in this Award and I sincerely hope that the adjudicators will have a tough time to determine the winners.

Thank you for your attention.