

SPEECH BY HONOURABLE A.K GUNGAH, MINISTER OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE INDUCTION COURSE FOR CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARIES AT FOOKS HOUSE AT 09.30 HRS ON 21 MARCH 2011.

Mr Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry,

Mrs Oree, Ag Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,

Officers of my Ministry,

Mr Sadien, president of the SEF,

Dear participants,

Members of the press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning everybody,

I am profoundly pleased to be in your midst this morning for the launching of this induction training programme for you who have been promoted to the post of confidential secretary.

First, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you all for your promotion in your new post of Confidential Secretary. I have no doubt that this has been your aspiration, and a legitimate aspiration to climb the echelon of the cadre to which you form part. It is also a culmination of your personal efforts, dedication and perseverance in your professional career.

The public service in Mauritius plays a key role in the life of Mauritians and in building and maintaining the competitiveness of our economy. Through the work it does, the public service provides for infrastructure, housing, education, health services, law and order, poverty alleviation and creates the right environment for our people to earn a good living, raise a family and lead a fulfilling life. And you are part of these organisations involved in providing any of these services.

The world does not stand still and neither can Mauritius afford to do so. Now, more than ever, the Mauritian public service needs to remain relevant and responsive in providing quality and timely services. It should demonstrate courage and initiative to bring changes geared towards innovative and enhanced way to make business. Hence, my vision to build a Smarter Civil Service.

This task of building a smarter civil service is not only for me, nor for you only, but for all of us. We require the cooperation, collaboration, efforts and energy of all stakeholders and public officers from all grades, including the confidential secretaries, in this tremendous task that we have set to ourselves.

However, this challenging task cannot be achieved without training which is a pre-requisite for the improvement of service delivery in the public sector. Moreover, there is a need to build a learning organisation if we want to commit ourselves to effective reforms of the civil service and shift from business as usual and the ways we think and behave traditionally. The 21st century problems call for a paradigm shift in thinking and tackling the problems of the day.

Peter Senge in his book “the fifth discipline” has highlighted the ‘essence of management’.

Over the last few years, managers have been thinking to bring about improvements in their organisations. This objective has been expressed by managers in different ways:

- Some say: they want to build high performance organisation or gain competitive advantage.
- Others talk about: -
 - total quality management
 - Fast cycle time systems (ie fast track)
 - Self managing work team (no control is exercised)
 - Empowered organisation (the notion of empowerment)
 - Improving productivity
 - Innovation and creativity

No matter what words or buzz words they use, they are all really describing different facets of the same fundamental purpose which is as follows:

“to marry the individual development of every person with the superior economic performance of the organisation.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my wish to see each public sector organisation to be transformed into a learning organisation. I am striving relentlessly for the setting up of a civil service college. Following my personal intervention with the commonwealth secretariat for a feasibility study to be carried out on this important project, the latter responded promptly and positively. A team from the Singaporean civil service college, headed by no less a person than the Director, Ms Tina Tan, herself, conducted the study in January this year. We have just received the draft report which is being examined by my Ministry.

This in itself is a positive sign that we are moving towards the implementation of this long cherished project. Once the project is implemented, it will no doubt be an important milestone towards our objective for a smarter civil service.

This training programme is geared, among others, to assist you in enhancing your knowledge, skills and attitude. You will be exposed to the programmed learning and interaction with the resource persons, practitioners and fellow participants.

Theories can be learned from books. But learning should be put into practice by doing or performing the jobs in which you are involved. This induction course seeks to tap and harness the knowledge and

skills from seasoned resource persons and fellow participants. You will have the opportunity to share your own experiences, all of which will bring you a long way in nurturing your competencies.

I hope that the lessons, insights and experiences you will share during this training will provoke a renewed commitment on your part to not only ensure effective service delivery, but also to add value in your daily office activities.

I am more than convinced that all of you present here reckon more than fifteen to twenty years of service. You have brought your valuable contribution to the development of our country and for the well being of our population with loyalty, honesty, impartiality and integrity. And you still have a lot to contribute as I see in you valuable resources for the civil service.

On this note, I wish all of you a fruitful and successful training and an enjoyable day ahead.

I thank you very much for your attention.