

**ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE A.K GUNGAH, MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE
AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARD CEREMONY FOR
THE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011

SIR HARILAL VAGHJEE MEMORIAL HALL, PORT LOUIS.

Dr. Reddy, President, University of Technology, Mauritius

Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry,

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

Mr Beeharry, Director, Procurement Policy Office

Officers from Ministries and Departments

Awardees

Members of the Press

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.

I am pleased to join you this morning for the ceremony of award certificates to 180 Procurement Officials who have successfully completed the Certification of Public Procurement Programme mounted in 2009 by the Procurement Policy Office and the University of Technology, Mauritius. I am informed that so far 361 officers have

been trained and there are at present 85 officers following the programme.

I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Procurement Policy Office for its initiative to invest in capacity building for those involved in procurement at their departmental level. I wish to express my sincere congratulations to all the awardees who have successfully completed this course in spite of their numerous professional and personal commitments.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Public procurement is increasingly becoming a critical factor in the process of national development as well as in international trade. There is hardly any trade agreement where mention is not made of the requirement for open and transparent public procurement rules. At national level, emphasis is laid on value for money without overlooking the principles of open and fair competition, transparency and accountability.

As a single most powerful buyer, Government has the potential of influencing the market to attain economic, social and environmental goals. Public procurement is now an effective tool to ensure sustainable development.

It is worth mentioning here that Mauritius has been identified as one of the six pilot countries for the implementation of sustainable public procurement project under the United Nations Environment Programme Sustainable Consumption and Production plan of action. On the basis of its performance, Mauritius was recently invited by the UNDP to make a presentation at the meeting of United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Living in a fast changing world, we are bound to constantly improve our ways of doing things. Our legal frameworks have to be reviewed more often than before to enable our country to not only survive, but to progress in this highly competitive environment. New institutions are being created to act as regulatory bodies so as to ensure a level playing field, but also to ensure that we are getting value for money, especially at a time when financial resources are limited.

In January 2008 the way of doing procurement underwent a drastic change, with comprehensive standard procedures and documents, which might have been perceived as complex compared to the simple, but inadequate procedures which had been in existence.

However, it is noted that smooth transition was facilitated through the conduct of awareness and training sessions all across public sector organizations during the 12 months preceding the promulgation of the new legislation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and having a private sector background, I am a staunch believer in training and development. Training has become such a vital element in human resource management and development that if we do not invest enough in it, it may lead to failure. As you are aware, the Pay Research Bureau in its 2008 Report has, *inter-alia* recommended that Public Officers, at all levels, should undergo between 40-60 hours training annually depending on their grades. Human Resources are our most valuable asset and the enhancement of our Human Capital is the crucial factor in the development in the Public Sector.

Government can only rely on its human resources in its endeavour to achieve sustainable development and raising the standard of living of our people.

This is why my Ministry is investing a lot in training. In 2010 we have provided short training courses to nearly 3000 officers including sponsorship to around 800 for longer courses. However, we know that we have to do more.

You are surely aware that discussion is actually being held with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank for assisting my ministry in the formulation of a new reform strategy which will include a new Human Resource Strategy and Capacity Building. We are also negotiating with the delegation actually in Mauritius for the creation of a Civil Service College which will benefit all Public Officers from the lowest to the highest grade in order to help us modernise our Civil Service render it smarter.

I would like to end here and once again thank the Procurement Policy Office, the University of Technology, Mauritius and all those who in one way or the other have contributed in organizing this programme.

I wish also to reiterate my sincere congratulations to you, awardees on your success which you really deserve after so much of hard work, perseverance and sacrifice. My earnest appeal to you is that your learning should not stop here. We have only put you on the track of continuous and lifelong learning. I will strongly encourage you to continue on this path for further self development and for a brighter career.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.