

**Address by the Honourable A.K Gungah, Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms on the occasion of Opening Ceremony of the One-Day Workshop on Action Plan 2011 of the Public Officers' Welfare Council, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, at Hotel Le Meridien, at 10 00hrs.**

**Mr Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive**

**Mr Ruhee, Chairman, Public Officers' Welfare Council**

**Representatives of Staff Welfare Associations**

**Members of the Press**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address you this morning on the occasion of this One-Day Workshop organized by the Public Officers' Welfare Council. This workshop provides an excellent forum for Presidents and Representatives of Staff Welfare Associations in Ministries and Departments to take stock of activities organized by the Council last year and eventually come up with an Action Plan for the year 2011.

As you are all aware, I have been holding office for the last seven months and ever since I have been convinced that public officers can perform and outperform if they are given the tools and the right work environment.

For the first time ever my Ministry will be actively pursuing enhancement of work environment which is a further step towards catering for the welfare of public officers.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

The challenges facing the country are immense and the role of the public sector to put the country on the path of sustainable development is undeniable as it plays a key role in the lives of Mauritians and in building and maintaining the competitiveness of our economy. Now more than ever, the Mauritian Public Service needs to remain relevant and responsive in its service and have the courage and initiative to make changes and do things better. Hence, my vision to build a Smarter Civil Service.

However there is a well known adage which says –

*“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.”*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our strong belief that there has to be a work life balance. The Public Officers’ Welfare Council has been set up with the objective of providing a forum where public officers can meet in informal settings for sports, leisure, recreational and educational activities. Such activities promote teamwork, strengthen the bonds of friendship among public officers and helps to counteract stress.

I am happy to note that last year, the Public Officers’ Welfare Council further diversified its activities and came up with certain innovative ones which made the year 2010, a year rich in activities. Innovation does not happen, it is made to happen. It is my sincere wish and desire that you officers present today to represent the interests of your Staff Welfare Associations put on your finest thinking hat and produce a calendar of even more innovative activities for 2011.

As you are aware, my Ministry recently acquired a building situated at the Gymkhana Grounds in Vacoas to be used by the Council for the organization of workshops, meetings, talks and brainstorming sessions. This building has been renovated and will be an ideal meeting place for those who want to make use of it.

In fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, this building will be put at your disposal as from next week.

I want you to do even better. I have noticed that officers of the service do not have a decent place to meet and have lunch, I invite the Public Officers’ Welfare Council to explore avenues to put up a new public Officers’ mess or cafeteria where healthy food could be sold at an affordable price and be consumed in a conducive environment. It will have the double advantage of providing opportunities for you to network.

I would once again like to reassure you of my commitment to provide maximum support to the Public Officers’ Welfare Council and the Staff Welfare Associations to ensure that Public Officers operate in a more vibrant environment to meet the new challenges facing the country. Moreover its not only the work environment that is important but we also need to have well trained public officers and in this context I am glad that the delegation from Civil Service College Singapore sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat is here to assist us

to set up our Civil Service College. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to our Prime Minister, Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam who when he was in Trinidad and Tobago for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, discussed with the Commonwealth Secretariat and opened further avenues of cooperation. It is thus that the Commonwealth Secretariat became active and involved in sponsoring this project.

Allow me, Ladies and Gentlemen, to seize this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the chairman and to the members of the Public Officers' Welfare Council as well as those Public Officers from the different Ministries and Departmental Staff Welfare Associations, who have given time and effort, and continual support to the Public Officers' Welfare Council.

Today, also marks the launching of a Souvenir Magazine which gives an overview of the 2010 activities of the Public Officers' Welfare Council. It is with great pleasure that I have noted this particular initiative of the Council and I strongly suggest that this be made an annual feature.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and I look forward to the new calendar of activities for the year 2011.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure to declare the workshop open.

Thank you.