

**ADDRESS BY MR. S.C SEEBALLUCK, SUPERVISING
OFFICER, MINISTRY OF CIVIL SERVICE &
ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AT THE LAUNCHING
CEREMONY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE
AWARD 2006 ON 4 OCTOBER, 2006**

Senior Chief Executives

Permanent Secretaries

The President, Mauritian Quality Institute

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objective behind the Public Service Excellence Award which is being launched today, is to recognize and honour the Ministry or Department that would have achieved excellence and would have successfully adopted innovative approaches in the delivery of services to our citizens. The overriding message today is that public sector organizations should re-invent themselves in order to provide the highest level of services to our citizens, a

standard that calls for absolute professionalism and commitment to quality in service delivery.

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are all aware, on the economic front we are going through difficult times with the major macro economic indicators having significantly weakened. The Government has lately taken a series of policy decisions to improve the investment climate and restore the economic fundamentals. But the success of these measures will depend crucially on the implementation agency, i.e the public service. Government can only achieve its development objectives through a high performing Public Service.

The central role of the public service is therefore to deliver on the programme and priorities of the government of the day. The eternal challenge of the Public Service is to win the trust of the government of the day, and to win that trust, the public service should line up with the policies and priorities of the government of the day and deliver on them effectively and efficiently.

You will agree that the level of development of a nation is very often a reflection of the performance, or non-performance, of its Public Service. Societies will fail if their governments are ineffective, and governments will fail if their civil servants are ineffective. Examples abound on the African continent and elsewhere, of failed economies resulting from poor or dysfunctional public services. It is therefore our duty to take all such measures that are

necessary to make of our Civil Service an important contributor in the political, economic and social advancement of our nation.

I have no doubt that the Public Service Excellence Award we are launching today is another step in the right direction and it will prove to be a useful tool in achieving organisational excellence. We shall have to review our internal processes so as to make them more simple and customer friendly. The guiding principle of public officers should, therefore, be *'the delivery of quality services'* with the highest degree of professionalism, courtesy and impartiality.

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Most of you will recall that the United Nations Millennium Development Goal was set up in the year 2000 with the objective of reducing by half, the number of persons living on less than \$1 per day by the year 2015. However, the last annual stock taking by the OECD indicated that only six countries are likely to achieve this objective. Although the OECD report reveals that for most African countries the future looks better than it had been for years, there is still a great imbalance in FDI in flow to Africa. Mauritius has fared well according to the report. But we could never have achieved that without the intellectual inputs from our Public Service.

Indeed, the Public Service can play an important role in giving a country an edge over its competitors for FDI. Paradoxically enough, the Public Service can also become a major hindrance in the country's ability to attract FDI. The

preliminary results of the Investment Climate Assessment Study for Mauritius, which was carried out recently by the World Bank, showed that business licensing and operating permits were the most severe constraint on investment in Mauritius. The Government has, in a determined effort, already overhauled the licensing processes with a view to improving the investment climate. The Public Service should therefore give its full support in busting red tape and creating a business friendly environment.

The role of the Public Service assumes greater importance as governments assume new role in a globalized world. Governments are now seen as an engine of development, as a catalyst and a pace setter. This new role of the Government puts greater pressure on the civil service to deliver and to become more managerial in its function. Countries that are lagging behind are not suffering as much

from a lack of appropriate political decisions as from a failure of their public services to deliver.

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In so far as Mauritius is concerned, we have over the last ten years or so, been implementing a number of reform initiatives in the civil Service. The aim is to make our Civil Service more relevant to the modern age and ensure that it is fit for purpose. We have so far done a good job. But we will have to do more and better. I believe that the scale and scope of the current reform need to be accelerated. However, you will agree that the reform of the Civil Service is an ongoing process. It is a journey, not a destination.

And in this journey we need public officers who are imbued with a high sense of dedication, professionalism and responsiveness to the changing needs of society and the business community. The nurturing of a performance and results oriented culture can only be achieved with the commitment of all officers.

I, also make an appeal to all officers to protect the core values of the Civil Service and uphold the principles of good governance.

Good governance indeed plays a central role in the realization of development objectives. Whether in small and islands states or large nations, rich or poor, it is increasingly acknowledged that development is a by-product of good government. There is no doubt that a strong and professional Public Service is critical in promoting good

governance and creating an enabling environment for development to take place.

Before ending, allow me to place on record our deep thanks and appreciation to the Mauritian Quality Institute, with the collaboration of which the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme will be run. I also take this opportunity to present our grateful thanks to the University of Technology, Mauritius, which will assist us in the evaluation exercise. I also acknowledge the active collaboration of Union representatives in the finalization of the scheme, namely, the President of the Federation of Civil Service and Other Unions and the President of the State Employees Federation.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to launch the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme and

to declare open the competition for the Public Service
Excellence Award 2006.

Thank you.