

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR. P. JHUGROO, SUPERVISING OFFICER, MINISTRY OF CIVIL SERVICE & ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2006 ON 4 OCTOBER, 2006

The Secretary to Cabinet & Head of the Civil Service

Senior Chief Executives

The Director, Pay Research Bureau

Colleagues Permanent Secretaries

Heads of Ministries/Departments

The President of the Mauritian Quality Institute, Mr. Zandaza

Representatives of the Federation of Civil Service Unions

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Civil Service & AR to this ceremony for the launching of the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme 2006. First, allow me to thank you all for your presence which is a testimony of your unreserved willingness and commitment to participate in this project.

As you may be aware, the introduction of the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme was first announced by the Honourable Prime Minister just after his assumption of office, when he addressed Senior Public Officers at a

workshop at Maritim Hotel in August 2005; and again when he launched the National Quality Award organized by the Mauritius Quality Institute in October 2005.

It is common knowledge that with globalisation and the fast changes taking place around us, coupled with severe competition from all fronts, there is no doubt that the operating environment is no more the same and that the challenges to the public service are more daunting and complex to-day. We therefore imperatively need to reinvent ourselves and move away from opportunistic reforms to more strategic reforms by developing a clear vision and devising tactics to achieve concrete and meaningful results.

The challenge to the public service, often characterised by heavy bureaucracy and complex processes, is such that public officers must work with a sense of urgency and commitment in whatever they do. They must learn to bring changes and transformation and evolve a new paradigm of innovation, where more and more officers are involved in genuine collective thinking and action. In short, today we need a new kind of leadership management and operating culture, one which is more inclusive, supportive, nurturing and more receptive to new ideas and the public service has to build capacity in three areas – total organizational excellence, innovation and enterprise and openness and responsiveness.

As a matter of fact an organization exists to serve its customers. It does that through the people and the systems it has. If in the public service we can lead our people effectively and motivate them to put in place the best practices and processes, we would be able to satisfy and why not to delight our customers - that's what managing for excellence is all about. If we are still far from operating on the frontiers of excellence e.g compared to more performing economics like Singapore or New Zealand, we cannot deny that the Mauritian public service has in relative terms progressed steadily in many ways during the last 10 to 15 years - but we still admit that much remains to be done.

So far several reforms have been initiated in the public service-be they general administrative reforms or sectoral reforms. The implementation of quality initiatives such as the Gemba Kaizen and ISO principles, improvement of counter services, office automation through computerization of processes, development of Citizens Charters, adoption of the Code of Ethics for Public Officers, and even the newly started PMS in some Departments etc. have proved to be successful and capable of yielding immediate and long term benefits for the Civil Service in Mauritius. Above all, these reforms have largely helped in the promotion and consolidation of a quality culture in the public service and the development of a more performance oriented and customer focused approach.

Several other reforms are also underway in line with the measures highlighted in the Government Programme 2005-2010 in the Budget Speech 2006-2007, the new Finance Act, the Business Facilitations Act, among others. Again all these are geared towards ushering a new public service which is seamless, more efficient and effective and committed to achieving results to set the country on the path of economic growth.

These reform initiatives are basically aimed at better service delivery, TQM and ultimately in fostering a culture of Excellence in the public service. The Public Service Excellence Award Scheme is therefore precisely meant, on one hand, to consolidate and boost up such performance improvement initiatives and, on the other hand, to acknowledge and give due recognition to the hard work and achievements of public officers in Ministries and Departments. This scheme will further allow Government as employer to value its officers for what they do and achieve and for the levels of skills and competencies they demonstrate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Ministries/Departments or any of their Units/Divisions/Sections will be eligible to compete for the Award, which will be adjudicated by a Panel of Jury on the basis of highest scores attained in each of the following criteria:

- **Leadership**
- **Effectiveness & Efficiency**
- **Customer Focus**
- **Innovation and Improvement**

The winner of the Public Service Excellence Award will be offered a cash prize of Rs 100,000 and a trophy. Furthermore, based on the level of achievements, the Panel of Jury may decide to award to participating organizations individual prizes of Rs 50,000 in respect of each of the four judging criteria, along with a souvenir shield.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have to point out that the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme has been devised in consultation with various stakeholders/partners, namely the Mauritian Quality Institute, the National Audit Office, the Pay Research Bureau, the University of Technology, Mauritius, the State Employees Federation and the Federation of Civil Service Unions and other Unions. I take this opportunity to thank them all for their support and contribution.

As I said earlier several Ministries/Departments and units/divisions have successfully embarked on the path of reforms, both administrative and sectoral and others are following suit. We would greatly welcome the participation

of such Ministries/Departments as well as the others in the Public Service Excellence Award Scheme. We also call upon Supervising Officers of Ministries/Departments and Heads of Units/Divisions to take up the challenge and encourage their officers to participate in this award scheme. There is no doubt that the winners of this competition will be looked upon as role models and other will benchmark on their best practices.

We therefore look forward to high level of participation in this competition.

Let me take this opportunity to also inform you that, although some of you may be aware, that in the context of a competition organized by the ICAC for the “Best Anti-Corruption Framework” – the Customs Department (MRA) has been awarded the first prize. We congratulate the Customs Department and its officers who are dedicated in their fight against corruption and we encourage them to continue in this path.

A special prize has also been awarded to the Ministry of Civil Service & AR for promoting ISO Quality Principles and ethical standards and behaviour in the public service. We would like to dedicate this award to the whole public service as several Ministries/Departments have adopted and embraced the quality standards whereas the Code of Ethics is applicable to all Minsitries/Departments.

The Award Scheme will be run in close collaboration with the Mauritian Quality Institute given its wide experience in organizing such Awards and in view of its full fledged involvement in promoting the concept of quality at the national level. The Ministry of Civil Service &AR has good working relationship with the MQI which is also supportive of our reform initiatives. I now have the pleasure to request Mr. Zandaza, the President of the MQI to address us.

Thank you.