

Speech by Hon. A. Rashid Beebeejaun, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping at the
official ceremony marking the
60th Anniversary of the Government Servants' Association on
Wednesday 19 October 2005 at 1.00 p.m at the Octave Wiehe
Auditorium, University of Mauritius, Réduit

The President of the Government Servants' Association and Executive members

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me indeed great pleasure to be amongst you today and to address you on this auspicious occasion which marks the celebrations of **60th Anniversary** of the **Government's Servants Association (GSA)**. I would like to thank the GSA for giving me the opportunity to participate in the celebrations and offer my warmest congratulations to Mr Sadien and all his colleagues at the GSA for this wonderful achievement.

2. Sixty years of existence of an Association as the GSA can be regarded as a great feat. Today we are gathered to write another page of the glorious history of the GSA. In its quest for continued contribution towards the improvement of the Government system and keeping in mind the well being, progress and prosperity of the nation, the GSA has fought for the good cause of public officers. The leadership of the GSA has all along provided the necessary inspiration, enthusiasm, motivation and strength in the wake of the daunting challenges and it has spurred, together with other trade unions, the

momentum for the Civil Service to grow and expand in a broader context of rapid technological changes, globalisation and international competition.

3. Since its setting up, the GSA, besides defending the interests of the workers, protecting their rights and promoting their welfare, has been involved in a string of actions meant to raise the standard of living of its members and their families. Faithful with its philosophy of providing services to its members both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, the GSA has embarked on a series of projects. The latest one is the *GSA plus card*, a very innovative idea which brings a lot of relief to its members. Another revolutionary idea is the GSA Provident Fund aimed at granting benefits to its members on retirement, and loans for several purposes. In this endeavour, I am also informed that it has also put at the disposal of its members a spacious hall rented at discounted rate, for social and cultural purposes.

4. I am glad that the Association, in its mission to improve the work conditions and environment of its members, has always acted in a responsible manner and has operated within the framework of established rules. It has operated on sound managerial principles, and has, through its persuasive communication with different stakeholders including other trade unions, proved that the success of any organisation rests in dialogue and respect for other partners. I wish it could serve as an example to other associations thereby ensuring the sustainability of harmonious relations in the various sectors of our economy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. Reforms in any organization can only take place if there is a proper forum for dialogue among the partners. Government in its endeavour to bring reforms in the Civil Service has deemed it right to consult and have the views and contributions of all stakeholders. This is how the Trade Unions have been roped in the process and have been given the opportunity to put forward their ideas. Most of the reforms initiatives and strategies led by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms have been moulded and developed after due consultations and involvement of the various partners, specially the trade unions which have responded positively to such calls. I am pleased to say that Government Servants Association has always made an appreciable contribution in this respect.

6. The GSA has added another feather on its cap. It has been the pioneer to drive the process of institutionalising a quality culture in the trade union movement. It also plays an important role in the successful implementation of ISO Projects in the Public Sector. Furthermore, it has participated actively through the Human Resource Development Council, the Industrial and Vocational Training Board, NATReSA, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, the National Economic and Social Council, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority and other institutions, to influence the socio-economic policies and development of Mauritius.

7. Trade Unions must be proactive and be able to work effectively with any Government in power. They must be inspired by democratic principles, and must work towards a climate of harmonious industrial relations for the smooth running of the affairs

of the country. Inevitably, they should also have clear vision and mission for the development, prosperity, sustainability and stability of the society at large.

8. In the Government Programme 2005/2010, it is mentioned that “the Government will adopt a Master Plan for the modernization of Government offices to improve and enhance the work environment for public officers and transform the Mauritius Public Service into a quality Public Service. I have no doubt that the GSA will join hands with the Government for the implementation of the Master Plan.

9. The economic realities of our country are known to everybody. Not later than Saturday last during his press conference, the Hon. Prime Minister mentioned our difficulties on the economic front and appealed to the nation to brace itself to surmount the critical phase of our economic cycle. We have in the past shown that as a nation we can surpass ourselves and come to grips with difficult situations and ensure a better living for ourselves and coming generations.

10. Today, in the face of the unprecedented challenges to our sugar and textile sectors, we need to create conditions to achieve consensual decisions to grapple with the emerging problems and I am sure that responsible Trade Unions like the GSA will readily associate themselves in our common struggle to keep our economy and indeed our society as vibrant as possible.

11. With these words, let me conclude by wishing the Association plenty of success in its activities and deliberations and I look forward to the continued support and

collaboration of the GSA in our initiatives for the modernization of the Public Service and the economic structure of our country.

Thank you.