Mr Seebaluck Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry
Mrs. Oree Ag Permanent Secretary of my Ministry
Officers of my Ministry
Representatives of Trade Unions,
Distinguished Guests,
Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be in your midst this morning to launch the Induction Course for Confidential Secretaries. First of all let me congratulate you on your appointment as Confidential Secretaries following the selection exercise carried out in September and October 2010. I have no doubt that you are already performing in your job to the satisfaction of your superiors. Looking at your career path, it is easy to guess that all of you reckon more than 15 years service in the public sector. Most of you must have acted as CS’s for short periods during your career replacing the incumbents on leave. You have now been promoted as Confidential Secretaries and you are expected to assume full responsibility of all your decisions and actions. I am confident that you will live up to the expectations of your superiors. However, we are conscious at the level of my Ministry that you need training to
further sharpen your skills while, at the same time, updating yourselves with regard to the best practices. This induction course has been organized to help you have a better insight into your roles and responsibilities as Confidential Secretaries and help you develop capabilities so that you would be able to perform your tasks more effectively and efficiently.

As Word Processing Operators, you were most of the time behind the desktop away from the eyes of the direct customer. Now, as Confidential Secretary, you are called upon to operate from a territory where you have direct interaction with your customers who can be an aggrieved citizen, a public officer, a representative of a Non-Government Organisation, the media people and many others. You are now the direct interface in between the customer and the superior with whom you are working. Your effectiveness will contribute to help undo wrong perceptions if any with regard to your organization. You will have the responsibility to care for the image of your boss and the organization as a whole. This is a significant change in your routine and it is a challenging position which requires you to be multi-skilled.

You will certainly have the privilege of holding sensitive information on people, issues and decisions. You know that as Confidential Secretary you have access to sensitive information, you come across issues which are highly confidential. Your trustworthiness and
discretion will be of utmost importance. Handling and managing delicate information, keeping records meticulously and accurately and dealing with the customer in the most pleasant manner while being under constant pressure require you to adopt a very professional and ethical attitude. During this course you will also have the opportunity to learn more about the security and safe keeping of official documents and your commitment to abide by the Official Secrets Act.

You will not only receive and transfer calls. You will have to help in organizing the work of your superiors and work in coordination as a team. You will also draft and type correspondences and carry out so many other tasks as listed in your job description. Therefore, you will need to acquire a wider knowledge of government machinery, procedures and processes as well as government policies because you will be expected to understand the different issues contained in correspondences, mails and files which you will have to prioritize depending on the merits of each case. You are expected to be able to deal efficiently with members of the public whether it is on the phone or in face to face situations. Our customers are increasingly better informed and literate. They are aware of their rights. They know how things are done in best practice organizations and they tend to be more demanding. The average customer of public organizations handles technology rather
effectively and has extensive exposure on trends elsewhere. He/she expects the very best in terms of delivery standard. I meet different people every day and I am conscious that the nature of your job imposes upon you to be very tactful in your interactions as some customers can be very difficult. Most of the time, you will be called upon to do extra efforts to handle such customers. I am sure that you will have the opportunity to acquire the basic skills necessary to deal with such situations after the training. You will certainly have the opportunity to develop a networking among yourselves and you will also share experiences. Such networks have the merit of providing fast track solutions to the problems of persons and cases that come to you.

This Induction Course is also meant to broaden your horizon, to introduce you to new and emerging challenges, like safety and health issues, gender issues, good governance, e-government among others. Since I took office as Minister of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms I have paid particular attention to training and development. Even with limited facilities and a small budget, we have been able to train some 3000 officers this year. I have chosen to be here this morning because I value the importance of training of the human resource at all levels. Capacity building and employee development go hand in hand with organizational development.
**Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,** our civil service has been undergoing a process of transformation. This process is a never ending one and as from next year bolder reform initiatives will be undertaken. We will be having the assistance of the World Bank to help us in furthering our reform initiatives. The public sector cannot afford to stagnate and preserve its old fashioned ways of doing business. A complete overhaul of the system has become a necessity. The main aim of the reform initiatives is to give our citizens a civil service they deserve because public services are paid out of public funds. To achieve this aim we need to inculcate the right skills and mindset in our officers so that they can meet emerging challenges. Knowledgeable workers will represent the knowledge power and the intellectual capital required to ensure the sustainable competitive advantage of our public sector organizations and our society at large.

The Prime Minister has said on so many occasions that he wants Mauritius to be a model to the world. As a nation, we have made sensible progress and placed Mauritius in very good positions. Here, I refer to our ranking (first in Africa) in the Ease of Doing Business Index of the World Economic Forum, first in Africa in the Mo Ibrahim Index of Good Governance, 19th in the Forbes Index of Best Countries for Business. We have proved ourselves in a few sectors like sustainable development through the Maurice Ile Durable concept. Why can’t we do the same for our Civil Service by making it more professional,
more efficient and more performing? It all depends on you, and all public servants from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest.

The mandate and mission of my ministry is to modernize the Public Service in order to achieve excellence in the delivery of services, improve customer satisfaction and ensure good governance. As you are aware, Government has given its approval to my Ministry to set up a Civil Service College in Mauritius. We are hoping that with the setting up of this institution we will be able to provide more training to a greater number of public officers on a wider range of subjects.

Our training courses will no doubt continue to promote and support wide-ranging reforms in the Public Service, with particular emphasis on Performance Management and Results-Based Management, while at the same time nurturing the highest standards of ethical behaviour among public officers. I wish here to invite public officers to make the most of the training courses we are offering in order to drive the reform strategies and make change happen.

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen
I now have the pleasure to declare open this Induction Course. I wish you very fruitful interactions during the course of the training programme. Thank you for your attention.