Address by Hon. S. Moutia, Minister for Civil Service and Administrative Reforms at POWC Workshop on 19.01.2012.

Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive
Mr Ruhee, Chairman of Public Officers Welfare Council
Officers of my ministry
Presidents and Representatives of Departmental Staff Welfare Associations
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

It gives me great pleasure to be with you all at the opening ceremony of this workshop with a view to brainstorm and decide on activities that would be desirable for the welfare of public officers. I have had the opportunity to be with you all at the Kermesse in October last year. I know you are all dedicated to the cause of public officers, to their welfare especially while they are working to contribute towards the national effort.
Now, you are all focusing on activities for the 11 months of 2012. And, hopefully you will all walk out in the afternoon after developing consensus on the events that you would expect the POWC to organize.

Ladies and gentlemen, the POWC would have no “raison-d'être” without the dynamic existence of all the departmental Staff Welfare Associations. No major event like the kermesse would have been possible without your participation.

You all deserve our congratulations for the good work you have been doing. I know it is not easy to do voluntary work. Volunteers are made of some other breed. As long as you will have your own intrinsic motivation to persevere, nothing will make you shy away from your mission to contribute to make things better for people.

At the level of my ministry, I appreciate that the POWC has a *modus operandi* to secure the participation of you all in the elaboration of the plan of action for the year. I am convinced
that you do as well hold consultations with your members as it is only when there are consultations that participation goes up. This is the very objective of the POWC, that is, to bring maximum welfare with the minimum funds to a maximum number of public officers.

I understand that there are a number of popular activities that need to be organized every year. However, that should not prevent you from innovating. I believe you will generate new ideas that would increase diversity and quality of welfare activities.

I have read the report of the POWC with much interest and I am sure Mr. Ruhee and his team will spare no effort to realize one of this government’s objectives, that is, ensuring a work-life balance. We need our officers to have access to decent leisure activities while not neglecting their work. I have personally thrown the idea of the creation of gyms at appropriate facilities to increase the scope of welfare provisions. I understand that space is a major problem in Port Louis. I sincerely expect the
Senior Chief Executive to come up with options in the near future.

Perhaps, it would not be a bad idea to think in terms of some canteen or cafetariat service providing healthy food to public officers especially in Port Louis. Years back there was such type of service at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. Such a service would provide a healthy alternative to the classical fast food services to which public officers resort to in general.

I am again throwing another idea. It is about the free exchange or very low price sale of used school manuals that could be organized in January every year at the Emmanuel Anquetil building. It will certainly promote increased level of solidarity and collaborative spirit among public officers. We are all aware that in December when we all proceed with the grand nettoyage we come across used manuals which require space to be stored. Why not bring them to a population who needs such materials?
I am aware that such projects could be envisaged. You will have to work out the feasibility and cost-benefit analysis. It will require inputs from a team of volunteers from members of families of public officers who could be roped in for the activity. We should not forget that we need to integrate the family members of public officers in activities organized by Staff Welfare Associations and the POWC.

I am sure the POWC is working on the modalities of a song competition among public officers to bring out to broad daylight the latent potentials and talents of public officers.

I would not take much of your time as you have a lot to do. Your time would start after the tea break. I am looking forward to have your proposals at the earliest and wish you all fruitful deliberations.

I now have the pleasure to declare open this one-day workshop! Thank you!