Launching of the Public Service Excellence Award 2012

Address by Hon. S. Moutia, Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall New Government Centre, Port Louis

Friday 28 September 2012 at 1430 hrs

Mr. Sateeaved Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive of My Ministry,

Permanent Secretaries,

Heads of Departments,

Members of Trade Union Federations,

Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Afternoon!

It’s an honour and privilege for me to be with you all this afternoon for the launching of the 6th Edition of the Public Service Excellence Award 2012. This Edition has as theme “Innovation and Citizen Engagement in Service Delivery”.

The Public Service Excellence Award is an annual event with the primary objective of encouraging innovation and excellence in the delivery of public services. It is meant to recognize those organisations which have put relentless efforts to deliver services efficiently and in an effective manner. Such proactive organizations should be the pride of the Nation as they contribute in translating the vision of government of putting people first. The focus is on our customers who can be at the centre only if there is quality in leadership, team spirit, innovation and improvement.

Organisations taking part in the Award Scheme are assessed by panel of jury composed of persons from both the private and public sector. It provides the public sector with an opportunity to showcase in a very explicit manner the capacity of public organisations to innovate and modernise service delivery.

Governments in all countries are undertaking ambitious reforms to strengthen and transform their respective public sectors, especially at this point in time when the economic and financial impediments require that Governments have to do more with less.

Moreover, citizens have increasing expectations from Government. They also press for a voice in the design and delivery of such services.
Democratic Societies guarantee citizen’s right which implies that people are “given a role” on matters that interest them most or they have a role in the decisions that affect them most directly. Citizens should be given a choice in matters where they are expected to play an active role as “agent” of public policies.

While greater performance and accountability have been perennial objectives, contemporary reform programmes are explicitly outcome-oriented and citizen-focused, encouraging citizens to participate in shaping policy objectives, their design and implementation. Today, service delivery outcomes and citizens engagement feature prominently in most government reform agendas.

In Mauritius our reforms agenda aims at the following among others:

- achieving higher level of performance;
- greater transparency and accountability of government decision-making;
- greater responsiveness to and inclusion of citizens in such processes; and
- more responsive and effective services to citizens.

To meet these objectives, we are reviewing organisational structures and work practices and the way in which we mobilise, deploy and utilise human, financial and technological resources. The use of ICT is playing a critical role in government efforts to revitalise the public sector. Modern technology is a significant strategic tool for uplifting public sector performance, offering benefits of greater efficiencies and effectiveness in government operation and service delivery, improved communication and coordination across organisational boundaries and levels of government, and greater transparency and accountability in government functions.

My Ministry is spearheading the shift to a technology-enabled Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) that would provide support for effective human resource planning and judicious use of our human resources both within the sector and at the level of individual organisations. We are already finalizing our technical requirements including the different interactive modules. As soon as the software is ready, implementation
will be piloted in my own Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Accountant General’s Office and 4 other sites before extending it to the whole Civil Service. I, therefore, appeal to management and work teams of departments and line ministries to start organizing their human resource data so that by the time we are ready with the HRMIS software, you will be already in the starter-block waiting for the signal.
Ladies and Gentlemen

Reforms should be the concern of one and all in the Service. Co-ordination and collaboration within and among Ministries and Departments must be fine-tuned so as to streamline processes and ensure the delivery of high-quality and customer-focused services. My Ministry is constantly encouraging such efforts and promoting them through various administrative reform initiatives such as the adoption of quality management systems, the upgrading of Counter/Customer Services and an increased use of ICT tools, including the provision of e-services. These have generated substantial gains in terms of improved service delivery.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the civil service has successfully played a crucial role in the development of our country. It has worked to provide a conducive environment for the Mauritian society to thrive and prosper. This is a role that it will be called upon to play in an increasingly challenging environment, beset with challenges of diverse nature. And, I have no doubt that it will respond to those challenges in the most befitting manner.

This launching of the Public Service Excellence Award is a call for all public sector organizations to pursue excellence and even compete for recognition. Not everybody can be a winner but we could all be in the Excellence League.

Ladies and gentlemen heed the call and let us have enthusiastic participation for this Edition of the Award. There is nothing better than healthy competition. We want winning teams and a winning civil service.
While the best organizations will bag the prizes, the other participating organizations cannot and will not be written off. They will deserve our appreciation for making innovation and improvement in service delivery a priority.

Before ending, ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to invite Ministries and Departments to take up the challenge and ensure that at least one entity within their organization participates in the Public Service Excellence Award 2012. I look forward to a large number of organizations entering the competition this year to join this pursuit for excellence.

With these words, ladies and gentlemen, I wish good luck to those taking up the challenge by participating and I thank you for your attention.