LAUNCHING CEREMONY

THE TRAINING ON CUSTOMER CARE AND SERVICE DELIVERY FOR PRISONS OFFICERS

THURSDAY 16 MAY 2013 AT 09 30 HRS

THE PRISONS TRAINING SCHOOL

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE SUTIADEO MOUTIA, MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

Mr. Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive

Mr. Bruneau, Commissioner of Prisons

Mr. Hoolass, Permanent Secretary

Prof Torul, Chairman, Conciliation and Mediation Commission and also Resource Person for the Training Programme

Distinguished Guests

Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!
It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be in your midst this morning in the context of the **upgrading and modernization** of the Prisons Counter Services and also for the launching of this **training programme** on Customer Care and Service Delivery for Prisons Officers.

Let me first and foremost commend the laudable initiative of the Prisons Department to **take much interest** in the improvement of counter services and to complement this initiative with a **focused training programme**.

The ultimate objective of all these initiatives is to provide a **quality service** to both our **internal and external customers**. We, therefore, **need to know** our customers and what could be their **expectations** in terms of customer or counter service.

The service sector has been called upon to pay much attention to the **needs of stakeholders**. And, we are conscious that apart from the core target population, in the present case prisoners and staff of the Prisons Department, officers find themselves accountable in varying degrees to, just to name a few:
• non-state actors operating in the area of human rights and gender,
• the media,
• families and relatives of prisoners
• international organizations
• Civil Society organizations collaborating with the Department, and
• Suppliers of services

Staffs of the Prisons Department are expected to have many other skills apart from whatever job-specific skills they have acquired during their training upon recruitment. Training and development has grown into a very important Human Resource function of organizations.

Training should also not be seen as a one-off event. It should, in fact, be seen as a continuous feature and, at the level of central government, the Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, is very much determined to provide the necessary facilitations.
That’s why my Ministry has been provided with funds to set up the Civil Service College. The college will certainly address the training needs of public officers.

Ladies and gentlemen, no organization can afford to fail in customer care as we are more and more conscious of the fact that organizations exist only because there is a population or a constituency needing a service.

Times have changed and will continue to change. The external environment of organizations is changing at an increased rate. Managements of organizations are bound to adapt their services to the changing circumstances.

You will certainly agree, ladies and gentlemen, that the prisons services which was until recently believed to enforce punishment on individuals who failed to conform to societal laws and norms, have progressively changed the focus to reform and rehabilitate people within the Criminal Justice System. To that end, agents of reforms and rehabilitation are
called upon to develop partnerships with institutions and the civil society outside the Criminal Justice System.

This is, in fact, one of the major challenges of modern Criminal Justice Systems carrying a legacy of an oppressive culture. This paradigm shift often takes the form of a cultural shock for many both within the prisons department and the mainstream society.

Our Law Enforcement Officers are now called upon to adjust their interventions in conformity with all the international Conventions ratified by Mauritius. I have no doubt that service providers are often required to unlearn old practices before internalizing new ones. That’s the most difficult part, but not impossible!

Ladies and gentlemen, as announced in the Budget Speech 2013, one of the major constraints and challenges of my Ministry is that we have inadequate facilities to satisfy high demand for training of public officers. Unless and until we have our Civil
Service College infrastructure, we rely on the **collaboration of other training institutions**, including the Prisons Training School, to which we are very thankful for their unflinching **support** and **contribution** to our common human resource development mission.

Ladies and gentlemen, Human capital is regarded as one of the most important resources. It is people that give an organization a competitive edge. All other resources, financial and technological would be useless if there are not sufficient, knowledgeable and resourceful people to handle them.

This is why the Government under the visionary leadership of Dr. Ramgoolam, has decided to **transform** our country into a **knowledge hub** for the region. He always emphasizes the importance of continuous education, lifelong learning and development of our intellectual capital.

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as the civil service is concerned, you all know that it is **funded by public money** and the public is becoming **more and more knowledgeable and demanding**.
They require a more accountable civil service, good governance and at the end of the day, a better quality of life through an efficient, modern and cost effective public service.

For many people and organizations nowadays, a high standard of quality and customer care is taken for granted. Customer service in other words, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for survival. It is no secret that the quality of service matters greatly in creating a positive experience with customers.

A smarter Civil Service should be characterized by innovation, in the wake of a rapidly changing business environment and thus provide rapid responses to the expectations and aspirations of the Mauritian population. My ministry is undertaking reform initiatives geared towards enabling Ministries/Departments to deliver timely and quality services within the parameter of good governance. A customer focused approach is therefore being promoted through the ‘Improvement of Counter/Customer Services Scheme’.
As you are aware, under this scheme, funds are allocated to Ministries/Departments for the upgrading/modernization of their customer/counter services.

Measures taken under this scheme have contributed to improved waiting areas, a better channeling of customers and streamlined processes, which resulted in faster service delivery for critical public services delivered to a large number of members of the public daily.

To support the implementation of this scheme, user-friendly guidelines on “Providing Quality Counter/Customer Services” were published and these have been widely distributed to public officers serving at counters in Ministries/Departments. During the year 2012, 13 projects have been implemented and financed under this Scheme to the tune of 2.2 million rupees.

Ladies and gentlemen, in addition to investment in capital and equipment, the quality issue is also concerned with people and motivation and it involves a cultural change. All these reform
strategies can be achieved only through **employee development and growth** and **investment on education and training**.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Prisons Service and personally **Mr. Bruneau**, the Commissioner of Prisons, for this fruitful partnership and collaboration and also **Professor Torul**, who despite his heavy professional commitments, accepted to act as a Resource Person and facilitator for this course.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to end here with the words of **John Ruskin**, a respected historian (quote):

“The training which makes men happiest in themselves also makes them most serviceable to others”. (Unquote)

With these words Ladies and Gentlemen, I now have the pleasure to declare officially open the training programme for Prisons Officers.

I thank you for your kind attention.