Address by Hon. S. Moutia, Minister for Civil Service and Administrative Reforms at POWC Workshop on 29.01.2013

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 made it a point to attend practically all the activities that have been organized in 2012 following last year’s brainstorming exercise. I have met most of you at last year’s Kermesse and I should congratulate you all for having contributed towards its success. I know you are all dedicated to the cause of public officers, especially with regard to their welfare.

As you are already aware, we have realized the dream of generations of civil servants for a **club house**. In the last week of December 2012 we launched the Civil Service House at Vacoas and the Hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, NDU and Land Transport has promised to look into the **possibility of putting some additional space** at our disposal to increase the level of comfort of civil servants taking advantage of the club house.

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. Welfare activities certainly contribute towards a **positive work climate** that motivates civil servants to come to work, interact with their internal customers as well as those outside their respective organizations.

Research findings in the field of Human Resource Management support the fact that **people do not work for money only.** They do need money and make representations for increases. However, once the increase is awarded, **money ceases to be a motivating factor.**

In fact, people derive much more satisfaction from the working conditions, interpersonal relations, communications structure, safe and healthy working environment and a team spirit. This is where the Staff Welfare Associations play a defining role in organizations. They promote healthy interaction among colleagues.
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. This is a very important exercise. It is also a structured mechanism to collect feedback from you with regard to last year’s activities.

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.

In fact, in my very first encounter with the POWC at the Vaghjee Hall in the context of the culinary exhibition some 18 months ago, I had requested the council to look into the possibility of providing some space to artistic talents. From the annual list of activities, I see there is much more emphasis on sports, leisure, some indoor games, trekking and cruises amongst others.

That’s why I proposed song or drawing competitions.

Ladies and gentlemen, Government is keen to promote 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. This problem has been resolved.

However, the space is presently being used by the Independent Commission on Errors, Omissions and Anomalies. I have no doubt that, soon after the Commission completes its assignment, the POWC will expedite matters with a view to provide gym facilities.

Last year I threw the idea of a cafétariat or canteen and the exchange of used school manuals among civil servants. I hope you will reflect on these, work out their feasibility and come up with suggestions. I believe that now we have a club house, exchange of books among civil servants should not be a major problem.
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 pleased to note that the POWC is finally proposing to discuss on the song competition and drawing competition at a later stage during the day.

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. And, hopefully you will all walk out in the afternoon after developing consensus on the events that you would expect the POWC to organize.

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