Launching of Training Programme

for

Office Management Executives & Higher Executive Officers

0915 hrs, Monday 29 April, 2013

Fooks House

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

Mr Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive

Mr. Hoolass, Permanent Secretary

Mrs. Rachel Ng, Resource Person

Representatives of Unions,

Officers of my Ministry,

Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!
I am pleased to be in your midst this morning at the launching of a 3-day training programme for Office Management Executives and Higher Executive Officers.

I seize the opportunity to congratulate you all upon your promotion to the new positions you are occupying now. This is a due recognition of your competence and delivery since you joined service. You are not new in service and you have your own knowledge about work systems within the civil service. Then, why should you be brought back to the Training Unit again?

Ladies and gentlemen, learning is a never ending process. And, it is important that we submit ourselves time and again to training and learning. We are living in an era of changes and turbulences triggered by daunting challenges for the public sector. The impact of globalization, technological development, pressure for quality and timely services
inevitably call for a re-engineering of the ways we carry out business.

I’ll share with you a short story before I proceed further.

Abraham Lincoln was watching a competition between two twin brothers cutting logs of wood. One of them hit with his axe repeatedly without stopping. The other one stopped every hour and resumed after a short break. The final result was that the second one who took breaks repeatedly throughout the day and known as the idle chopper had won the competition. When his brother asked how he could chop so much wood while taking breaks every hour, the idle chopper replied that he was in fact not resting. He stopped every time to sharpen the axe! The one known as the idle chopper was in fact the smarter chopper! Only because he continuously sharpened the axe!
The moral of this story is that people deliver better with lesser efforts if they sharpen their skills. Training is not as a waste of time. We should allow for continuous training. We should sharpen our knowledge and skills continuously.

Continuous training is vital for businesses that want to grow. Continuous training and development is vital for the civil service if we want to do business differently for a new breed of internal and external customers who would not be satisfied with average service. Fundamental changes are, therefore, required if we want to ensure a public service which is more customer-oriented and result-based.

Some people often wonder whether formal training has its importance especially when one can learn about the job while doing the job or by learning from colleagues. Learning from colleagues may be fraught. One runs the risk of learning wrong
practices from a colleague who has learnt the wrong way or who may have poor level of motivation.

Formal training is necessary as it takes you out to some other setting. It allows you to interact with people doing similar jobs in different settings and to learn new theories and practices from learned resource persons.

This is why we are setting up the Civil Service College. The Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, has the vision of a modern Mauritius. He believes in continuous learning and development. He wants to see at least one graduate per family. He sees Mauritius as a Knowledge hub by year 2020.

The Prime Minister wants all those who could not access tertiary education to have the opportunity now. That’s why government is providing the facilitation for new campuses,
distance education, flexible programmes at universities and a Civil Service College for civil servants.

Government is much conscious of the need to further sharpen the skills of the human resources of the country as we believe that we have to maintain our human capital in shape because it constitutes the main strength for our economic development.

Training has the merit of continuously updating the knowledge and skills of the human resources to keep them abreast with latest developments in management tools and techniques. My ministry which has a training mandate also supports the training initiatives of other line ministries. We are sparing no effort to ensure that an efficient and effective investment is made on our human capital.

My ministry plays a pivotal role in developing the human resources in the public sector with a view to sustaining a skilled
and economically productive workforce. This explains the relevance and importance of this training course which in itself should be perceived more as a developmental rather than an academic programme.

In fact, as you are all aware, we are in the midst of broad reforms in the civil service. These reforms include, inter-alia, modernization, re-engineering and restructuring programmes. But, implementation of these reforms is only possible through proper Human Resource Management practices, which are aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of public sector organizations.

Dynamic Human Resource strategies should aim at creating value by tapping on available skills and expertise of our talented public officers to achieve high performance.
The main aim of these initiatives is to ensure that the civil service is capable of driving the nation’s development and service delivery agenda. It includes the inculcation of the right skills and attitude in order to meet emerging challenges, to re-orient the civil service towards a proactive, innovative, and performance-based approach and to develop a highly knowledge-based public service.

In this highly competitive globalised world, no organization can survive if it does not improve its efficiency by increasing productivity. We often measure productivity in terms of economic inputs and outputs, but human and social outputs are equally important. Job satisfaction leads to human outputs just like employee training and development programmes lead to valuable social results.

A high-performing public service can be created only if people who work in it are motivated and dedicated. There is no doubt
that in the ever-evolving environment and changes that lie ahead, your roles and functions, as OMEs and HEOs are dynamic and challenging in nature.

Your roles are no longer confined to routine activities, as you will be called upon to be more entrepreneurial, versatile and pro-active, showing more dynamism and creativity. Sometimes you will have to take crucial decisions on the spot whenever a problem crops up.

Dear Participants, I sincerely wish that you make the most of this training Course as a learning journey. You will have the opportunity to learn from and interact with your colleagues and resource persons.

Most important of all, when you go from here after the course, you should leave with a new mindset and I hope you will assume your responsibilities with utmost dedication and total
commitment. I have no doubt that you will strive hard to improve your performance and that of your organization. I wish you all the best.

Last but not least, I also wish to thank all the resource persons including Mrs. Rachel Ng, from Arning Company Ltd, who is present today and who has also contributed in mounting this programme.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure to declare open the training Course for Office Management Executives and Higher Executive Officers.

I thank you for your attention.