Launching of Publication “Understanding Performance Appraisal Forms & Performance Improvement Plans”

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Official Opening of Training Programme for Officers in Charge of Human Resources in Ministries/Departments

0915 hrs Tuesday 19 March 2013, Clos St Louis, Domaine Les Pailles

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

Mr. Sateeaved Seebaluck, Senior Chief Executive

Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments

Trade Union Representatives,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very Good Morning to you all!

It is a great honour for me to address you this morning when we are setting the stage for a new mindset in the history of the Civil Service of Mauritius.

We are celebrating the 45th anniversary of our country’s independence as well as the 21st anniversary of our country’s accession to the status of Republic.
We are a fairly young country. And, there is no doubt that all our citizens do feel **proud to be a Mauritian**. We are doing quite well and we are continuing to **attract Foreign Direct Investment** at an increasing rate against the backdrop of the recent global economic downturn.

As a **sensible government** we need to be responsive to the call of the time. We need to accept change. We need to **re-invent our ways of doing business** and this is where the whole issue of Performance Management System and Performance Appraisal fit in.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Civil Service has certainly played its part in the development of the country. However, being good in business implies that we should always ask ourselves

- Whether we could have done better
- Whether we could have been more cost-effective
- Whether we have the optimal level of governance standards
- Whether we are making good use of our resources
- Whether the management model is still relevant.

Ladies and gentlemen, **complacency** should never be the order of the day! When I was assigned responsibility for this ministry, many questions bothered me with regard to concerns about

- **value for money,**
- the price government pays for the procurement of goods and services,
- quality of service, or
- timeliness in delivering outcomes.

Change in approach and mindset is necessary, ladies and gentlemen, to find answers to all these questions and many others. We need to shift from the traditional transactional stance for a **more strategic approach**.

I am sure you are all aware that, in the context of Budget 2013, for the **first time in the history of Mauritius**, the budget document was accompanied by an **implementation schedule**.
Government is committed to deliver on all its undertakings in the Programme Based Budget in a **timely manner** and with a **project management approach**. Government means business and, as **implementation arm** of government, the Civil Service has to **adjust** accordingly.

This is where the whole reforms process fits in. My ministry has, in fact, adopted a series of measures over the **past 10 years**. However, perhaps the **boldest initiative is being taken now**.

The Performance Management System has been in place after the publication of the PRB Report 2008. The right signal was given with the shift from line budgeting to Programme Based Budget which implies that we have to **substantiate our claims for funds** for programmes at the level of each ministry and department.

Some core officers have already been given training to **facilitate the process** and by now civil servants are conversant with the Performance Appraisal document.

Ladies and gentlemen, my Ministry has been sensitive to observations on the **first version of the Performance Appraisal Form** and we have reviewed it to make it **more user-friendly**. This is why you have been called upon to be updated on the changes. The Annual Confidential Report is now something of the past.

The business environment is changing faster than ever before and it is **increasing in complexity with newer technologies** coming into play. Our customers are no longer the **passive type** they were sometime back. Their level of literacy and development represent **real challenges** for public service providers. They demand **high standard services as customers** and **smart programme outcomes as citizens**.

The attendance-based management and the classical 9 to 4 approaches may not be the effective and compatible response to such demands. What is required is **effective performance at all levels by civil service agents within the 9 to 4 schedule** at their respective work stations. Such performance, therefore, needs to be **monitored against agreed targets** and the proposed Appraisal Form aims at doing just that.
Ladies and gentlemen, it boils down to the question of a **new culture**! Government has provided the right framework with the Employment Rights and Employment Relations Acts of 2008. These two legal instruments have taken employer-employee relations from conflictual to consensual relationships.

Performance Management System aims at **reinforcing the spirit of consensus by addressing areas of opacity** that existed in the Annual Confidential Report. The new system does not mean to be a **remake of the same Confidential Report system**. It provides for **agreement on deliverables**, **evaluation of achievements at mid-term** and, finally, **transparent appraisal mechanism at the end of the accounting year**.

This is where you will have to play a defining role. You will have the responsibility to **make the system work**. You are required to be the **pace-setters** of the reforms process and I am sure you will show your **entire commitment**.

I believe we can trust you. In fact, many of our HR people have done **degree or post-graduate studies** in management and with specialization in Human Resource Management. Government has played its part in encouraging those officers on the path of career development. They have benefited from **study leaves** and **incremental credits**. It is natural that government should expect some **return on investment**.

That return on investment should be through a **professional attitude** that would help the smooth implementation of the change especially after successive Reports of the Pay Research Bureau in 2008 and 2012 which provided for the phasing out of the Annual Confidential Report and implementation of PMS.

Ladies and gentlemen, you know it better than me about the Performance Management System. PMS is a management tool that is increasingly being resorted to by Governments worldwide to **improve public service delivery** since it allows for a clear definition of responsibilities, greater autonomy and increased transparency at all levels of the Government machinery.
In Mauritius, Performance System is being implemented as a key reform initiative that stimulates **performance focused on results** and allows managers at all levels and their staff to achieve concrete results through the

- identification of key priority areas where resources can be focused,
- alignment of organizational objectives with individual targets, increased accountability at individual level; and
- development and nurturing of a performance culture among public officers.

The new Appraisal Form has been developed following recommendations of UNDP consultants. The latter recommended, *inter-alia*, that the Performance Appraisal Forms should be reviewed with a view to making them simpler and more user-friendly. The Pay Research Bureau Report 2013 has also made a similar recommendation.

Consultations were also held with various stakeholders, including Heads of Ministries/Departments, Directors/Heads of Technical Sections, Officers of the Administrative Cadre and the three Federations representing public sector employees. All comments and observations received were taken into consideration before the Performance Appraisal Forms were finalized.

My Ministry conducted the review exercise and came up with streamlined processes for the appraisal exercise and a set of simplified and user-friendly Performance Appraisal Forms.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the **first part of the exercise**. In the course of the year, the Performance Management System will be made to **cover Senior Management** and the last phase would definitely **focus on organizational performance**.

The paradigm shift is not an isolated exercise. It is one of the many reforms initiatives and the Human Resource Management Information System and the Civil Service College are certainly aiming at supporting the PMS.
HRMIS will reduce pressure on HR sections by taking over many transactional operations. HR teams will then have more time for

- **Job analysis and design in view of Scheme of Service exercises**;
- **Human resource planning** as we may not afford to retain retiring officers on contracts just because of the absence of any proactive strategy with regard to succession planning;
- **Monitoring performance** in view of identifying above average as well as poor performance for timely recognition and remedial actions respectively;
- **Understanding the reasons behind any performance gap** and **Undertaking training need analysis**.

The Civil Service College will on its part play the role of training services provider to support the PMS.

With a view to enhancing the understanding of the new appraisal processes and facilitating the filling of the Performance Appraisal Forms, my Ministry has produced a **publication that can be used as a guide and reference document** by all users in the public service.

This publication, which I’ll have the honour to launch in a while, will supplement the training being given to all supervisors and Heads of Sections and will be widely circulated among public officers.

A soft copy will also be posted on my Ministry’s Website. I am confident that users at all levels in the public service will make optimal utilization of this document for the smooth and consistent implementation of the PMS in our public service.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now have the privilege and honour to launch Training Programme and the booklet that would serve as a guide for implementation of the Performance Management system. Thank you for your attention.