SPEECH OF

Hon M. R. Alain Wong Yen Cheong, M.S.K.

Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

70TH Anniversary of the

Government Services Employees Association

Saturday 03 October 2015

10 00 HRS

Octave Wiehé Auditorium

University of Mauritius

Réduit
Honourable Xavier Luc Duval, Acting Prime Minister, and Minister of Tourism and External Communications

My Colleagues Ministers and Parliamentary Private Secretaries

Mr. Aeneas Chapinga Chuma, Assistant Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) & Regional Director for Africa

ILO Officials

Heads of Ministries / Departments

Mr. Radhakrishna Sadien, General President of the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA), and State Employees Federation

Executive Members and other members of the GSEA

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be amongst you today for the 70th anniversary celebration of the Government Services Employees Association (GSEA). Allow me to thank the General President of GSEA, Mr. Radhakrishna Sadien and the members of the GSEA for this invitation. Let me at the very outset congratulate the GSEA for its long and successful journey in serving its members across the Civil Service.
According to records, the GSEA, formerly known as the Government Servants Association (GSA) was founded in 1945. It is, therefore, one of the first Trade Unions in the Civil Service. I am told that it is also the most representative union in the civil service which is now is affiliated to the State and Other Employees Federation.

Seventy years is an age when Trade Unions can either become old and irrelevant and be pushed to the sidelines or they can take advantage of existing resources and step-up their fighting forces.

I note that the present members and leadership of the GSEA have been able to provide the necessary enthusiasm and resourcefulness to add new strengths to the seventy year old association.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The GSEA which caters for a wide variety of officers across the Civil Service has been, so far, defending, protecting and improving the conditions of work and the quality of life of workers, regardless of their status. I hereby express my deepest appreciation for your remarkable contribution in promoting sound employment relations, and the upliftment of the employees’ welfare.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unions in the public sector are, nowadays, called upon to act as change agents, as drivers and models of excellence and innovation in improving the quality of public services. It is a pleasure to say that the GSEA has been an active partner in the
implementation of various administrative reform initiatives in the Civil Service. I rely on your continued support and cooperation in the implementation of various projects of my ministry with a view to not only improve the conditions of service of public officers but also to further enhance the delivery of public services.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have, in my previous speeches on different occasions, laid emphasis on various initiatives that are being taken to bring about a transformational change in the Civil Service. In line with the Vision Statement 2030 of the Prime Minister, today, I am in a position to state that we have indeed progressed a lot in the journey towards excellence and in a near future, and I am confident that the results would become visible. Allow me to name just a few of them:

(a) The **e-Procurement platform** has become a reality since 28 September 2015.
(b) The development of the **Human Resource Information Management System (HRMIS)** has successfully crossed various milestones and the Payroll Module is expected to be operational in early 2016.
(c) The **Executive Performance Management Review**, meant for Heads of Ministries/Departments is in the process of being finalised for introduction as from 2016 on a pilot basis. This measure will supplement the existing Performance Management System (PMS) which is already operational.
(d) The Reforms Steering Council has already reviewed the roles and responsibilities of Reform Cells to render them more effective.
(e) the **E- Learning System (ELS)** is being introduced and it will encourage Ministries / Departments to make a maximum use of online courses through the ELS. This will strengthen professional and personal development and provide universal access to learning in the Civil Service.

(f) Various e-Government initiatives are being monitored at the level of the Reforms Steering Council. These inter-alia include:

(i) The setting up of a One-Stop-Shop at the National Transport Authority. This platform will both ease the processes for the registration of ownership of vehicles and eliminate the hardship being presently faced by vehicle owners and dealers. I am informed that the One-Stop-Shop is planned to be operational as from mid-February 2016.

(ii) The present policy governing the grant of email accounts to public officers is being reviewed to enable a larger number of public officers to benefit there from.

(iii) As stated in the Government Programme 2015-2019, the setting up of a Public Service Call Centre to act as a One-Stop-Shop and Information Centre has also reached an advanced stage.

(g) the much awaited **the Civil Service College Mauritius** has now taken shape and will contribute towards capacity building and human resource development

(g) the Government is coming with a **Flexible Work Arrangement System** to promote efficiency in the Civil Service and also to bring work life balance capable of creating and sustaining a strong, healthy and committed Civil Service.
Occupational Safety and Health

As you may be aware, Government places safety and health high in its development agenda. In this connection, as a caring employer, we are committed to the creation of a safety and health culture in the Civil Service and my Ministry has embarked on several initiatives so as to ensure a safer and healthier working environment, such as the development and implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Management System and enhancing of work environment through Enhancement of Work Environment Programme.

Employment Relations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the main objectives of my ministry is to maintain and promote good and harmonious employment relations within the Civil Service through the process of regular dialogues, negotiations, and consultations with Federations and unions of the Civil Service. In this context, my ministry ensures that regular meetings are held with the recognized Federations and Unions of the Civil Service in a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding for the benefit of public officers. In the same line, ministry promotes ethical standards and public service values as embodied in the “Code of ethics of Public Officers”; and nurtures an attitude of service excellence to meet the needs of our customers with high standards of quality, courtesy and responsiveness.
I would like to point out that, in the same breath, our Government has ratified various International labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, among others:

(i) Convention No. 98 – the right to Organize and Collective Bargaining;

(ii) Convention No. 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948; and

(iii) Convention No. 155 for Occupational Safety and Health.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to say that Trade Unions have always played and will continue to play an important role in the Socio-economic development of our country. I am confident that the unions will join hands with the Government, give their full support and commitment to maintain a sound employment relation and thus, ensure excellent delivery of service to public.

We need the help of trade unions to achieve the Second Economic Miracle.

On this note, *Ladies and Gentlemen,* I wish the GSEA plenty success in all its endeavours.

I thank you for your attention.

A.W