SPEECH OF
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MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

Workshop on the Occasion of the
International Youth Day 2015
Organised by
The Government Services Employees Association

ON Wednesday 12 August 2015 AT 10 00 HRS
AT THE SEAT OF THE ASSOCIATION
BEAU BASSIN
Good morning

It is a real pleasure to be with you this morning for the Opening Ceremony of this workshop which is being organised in the context of the International Youth Day.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, the International Youth Day was established by the UN in 1999, and is observed annually on 12 August. This event is an
opportunity for governments and others to draw attention on youth issues worldwide, to raise awareness of the importance of youth participation and investing in youth. The engagement and participation of youth is essential to achieve sustainable human development. It is therefore an opportunity for us to celebrate the creative force and the innovative impetus that young people bring to every society. More efforts will be needed to raise awareness about the importance of youth civic engagement and its benefits to the individual and to society, including for sustainable development as well as resilience and wellbeing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like here to thank the Government Services Employees Association and particularly Mr Radhakishna Sadien, the General President for organizing this one day workshop and associating me with this momentous event.

The Theme of this workshop “the contribution of our youth for an efficient and effective public sector in Mauritius” would allow us to reflect on how our youth can bring their contribution to materialize our vision for a professional public service committed to excellence. It is also worth noting that youth issues are receiving greater global attention now than ever before. Youth are increasingly proving to be a
force for change and therefore, we need to further reflect on whether our policies and programmes are strategically empowering our youth for sustainable development.

The UN Secretary General, in his speech at the World Youth Forum, stressed the importance of public service by encouraging the world's youth to enter into this field. He said, and I quote: “In this changing world of new challenges, we need, more than ever before, dedicated and talented individuals to enter public service. More than ever before, we need people like you sitting here today, to make the choice of service to mankind”. End of quote.

The transformation of the public service into an effective and efficient vehicle at the service of the people is indeed a formidable challenge. The ultimate objective is to have an efficient Civil Service, characterized by merit, professionalism, impartiality, honesty and accountability. In targeting this objective, we have had to undergo the inevitable process of reforms, capacity building, promotion of agencies in the fields of quality and productivity and also decentralization of services.

Today, we can safely say that, with the relentless support that we have received from different stakeholders, we are on the right track. The profound transformation taking place in the Civil Service should inspire us to look to the future with more assurance and optimism. We need to
make of the Civil Service a powerful instrument for the timely implementation of Government policies while taking on board the rapid changes in the global economy.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, 

The challenges facing the country are huge and the role of the public sector to put the country on the path of sustainable development is undeniable as it plays a key role in the lives of Mauritians in building and maintaining the competitiveness of our economy. Now more than ever, the Mauritian Public Service needs to remain relevant and responsive in its service and have the courage and initiative to make changes and do things better. Hence, my vision to build a professional Civil Service committed to excellence.

I have been holding office for the last seven months and ever since I am convinced that public officers can perform and outperform when they are given the tools and the right work environment. You can rest assured that this will remain the case during my mandate and that I will give my full support to the public service.

Mauritius relies heavily on its human resources, the most important asset which has helped to overcome its natural handicaps and transform its people into additional assets for the country’s economic
development. Therefore, investment in people development is becoming imperative.

This Government recognizes that youth is one of the most valuable assets. Young people are energetic, adventurous, innovative, hardworking and willing to learn. I believe that with the right skills, these young people are exactly the force we need to drive progress across the global agenda and build more inclusive and vibrant societies. As Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I will make sure that my Ministry which holds the overall responsibility for training and development of human resources will not fail to its duties.

In line with the Alliance Lepep Government’s Programme 2015-2019, a series of new measures would be implemented to bring a transformational change in the civil service with focus on human capital and talent development and also the optimization of Information and Communication technologies as a tool for training and development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the setting up of the Civil Service College, this specialised training institution will open up new vistas in the field of training and development of public officers. This project is a milestone in our
endeavor to make the Mauritius Civil Service more professional, productive and efficient.

The Civil Service College will develop into a regional centre of excellence in Public Sector Management and Governance. It will cater for the specific training needs of employees of all public bodies, thus ensuring training of a critical mass of around 80,000 public officers in all grades in the medium and long term.

We are also in the process of putting in place an E-Learning System which will provide public officers with an access to web-based courses to complement traditional face-to-face courses facilitated by my Ministry.

Breaking technological barriers is critical to improve the efficiency and quality of public service delivery. The development of practical e-learning courses in the public sector will no doubt bring along a number of outstanding advantages for public institutions and for staff, including reduced costs, increased retention, application to the job, consistent delivery of content and self-paced learning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another major project that will definitely need your support and contribution relates to the establishment and operation of the Human
Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) Project. The system will not be only about setting up an on-line human resource database for the Civil Service, but it will in parallel be a valuable tool for officers of the Human Resource and Financial Operations Cadres to better perform their respective duties using re-engineered business processes within a modern work environment.

In conclusion, I stand firmly behind my belief that if employees are allowed to actively participate in decision making it could and would reduce turnover and absenteeism and, thus increase productivity. Therefore, active employee participation in decision making would directly improve service quality in the public service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I appeal to all stakeholders, specially the Federation of Unions to tirelessly collaborate with government in the enhancement of efforts that create and support the enabling conditions where our people acting on their own and within the framework of our national laws and programs are able to make decisions and choices that contribute to our country’s sustained social, cultural and economic development.

I would once again like to reassure you of my commitment to provide maximum support to ensure that Public Officers operate in a more vibrant environment to meet the new challenges facing our nation.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would here like to quote Rabindranath Tagore: “Everything comes to us that belongs to us if we create the capacity to receive it”

Unquote

Before ending, I would like to share with you the reason for which I engaged in politics. I saw Adrien Duval, who is very young and has a real ambition to participate actively in decision making in the country. Like you, who here today. This gave me the courage to bring my contribution. Today, it gives me great pleasure to see you here. I believe in you for the future of our country.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to participate actively and take full benefit from this workshop and I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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