SPEECH OF HONOURABLE MARIE ROLAND ALAIN

WONG YEN CHEONG, M.S.K.

MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

On the Occasion of the

Annual Delegates Congress

of the

The Federation of Civil Service and Other Unions (FCSOU)

ON THURSDAY 02 July 2015 AT 10.00 HRS

AT THE SEAT OF THE FCSOU TRADE UNION HOUSE

COROMANDEL
Mr Narendranath Gopee, The President of the Federation of Civil Service and Other Unions

Bureau Members

Representatives of respective Trade Unions

Representatives of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am indeed very pleased and honoured to be amongst you today on the occasion of the Annual Delegates Congress of the Federation of Civil Service and other Unions. Allow me to thank you all and the President Mr Naraindranath Gopee, in particular, for associating me with this event. Such events provide us with the opportunity to know each other better and further consolidate our harmonious working relationships.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is the stated policy of this Government to transform Mauritius into a truly forward looking, environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant and innovative country with modern infrastructures, new technologies, global connectivity, and a highly skilled workforce.
In fact, Government has set clear objectives to bring about meaningful changes for the Civil Service to become more efficient and effective. There is also the need for a new mind-set to provide greater impetus to improve the quality of services delivered to the citizens. More so, the quality of our services should also reflect our humanity and our commitment to higher values. This cannot, however, be achieved without the collaboration and involvement of one and all.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Today, we are at the crossroad of our development, and more than ever before, we need the understanding and the support of all stakeholders, and above all, of the trade union organizations in our country. I consider that sound employment relations are essential in the Public Service. In the same vein, my Ministry is pioneering the spirit of harmonious employment relations across the civil service by ensuring that Ministries/Departments hold regular meetings with their recognized unions to discuss issues of mutual interest.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to highlight that our Government has ratified various International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, which include among others:

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


(iv) Convention No 100 – Equal Remuneration.

Allow me ladies and gentlemen, to stress on the fundamental principles of Collective Bargaining which aims at fostering harmonious and sound employment relationships in the Public Service.

Collective Bargaining is one of the ILO Conventions which acts as an instrument for trade unionism in Mauritius. It is an important form of social dialogue. Institutions for social dialogue and collective bargaining help to protect the fundamental rights of workers, help to provide social protection and promote sound industrial relations.
Social dialogue, in turn, is an important component of good governance. It involves the social partners (employers’ and workers’ organizations), and encourages accountability and participation in decisions that affect the lives of all people in society. These factors directly contribute to better government.

From the ILO perspective, collective bargaining is an important way for workers, employers and their organizations to reach agreement on important issues, related to employment. Collective bargaining can be an important means for building trust. This trust can be reinforced through dialogue which continues after bargaining ends.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** our Government relies on the Public Service to translate its vision into reality. I am sure you will agree with me, that we cannot build the Mauritius of tomorrow with the Public Service of yesterday.

The new and emerging global and local challenges and technological developments require that the Civil Service continually reengineers and reinvents itself in order to be able to stand to the measure of these
challenges and help the country maintain its competitive edge so as to position itself in the global market. Under this economic and social background, not only the government, but also many institutions and organisations have been compelled to review their strategies, and initiate a number of reforms. A smarter civil service calls for a well designed strategy focused on good governance as one of its main strengths and where the value system of progressive public institutions is viewed as service and not bureaucracy.

We therefore need to move towards a responsive civil service that would support government’s vision of a modern and economically strong nation while sustaining our commitments. There should be increased levels of accountability, cost-efficiency and responsiveness to meet the expectations of the citizens which certainly requires a real cultural change.

However, transforming the Public Service into an instrument capable of fulfilling its role depends on several factors, but above all, it depends on effectiveness of its workforce, which in turn depends on the way in which employees are managed.

As you are all aware, my Ministry has introduced major reforms that will enable officers across the Service to better perform their duties as well as facilitate and modernise the service delivery. In fact, a vast
programme of modernisation and transformation of the Civil Service is underway. I am confident that this will carve out a new landscape for the Civil Service in the coming months.

It is expected that an important part of the reform process will be the upgrading of skills of our human resource who will be the actors at management and operational levels.

**Ladies and Gentleman,**

To sustain structural reviews and process reengineering at the level of organizations, the Civil Service College has been set up to meet the need for capacity building to implement reforms, to provide the right set of skills and management tools and to bring about behavioural change through a lifelong learning culture. The College will also help bridge performance gaps identified during performance appraisal of public officers and make a positive impact on overall productivity in the civil service.

In the same wave, breaking technological barriers is critical to improve the efficiency and quality of public service delivery. My Ministry is setting up an E-Learning System on an electronic platform to provide public officers with an access to web-based courses to complement traditional face-to-face courses.
The development of e-learning courses in the public sector will ensure a number of additional advantages for public institutions and for staff, including reduced costs for Government and better training opportunities for a higher number of officers.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

You will agree that in the process of reform, the Performance Management System is a key instrument for the emergence of a culture of high performance in the public service. It allows us to review the way we do things in the public sector, the way we interact with peers and colleagues and the way we deliver services to our customers. The effective implementation of the performance management system can thus enable us to embark on the much awaited transformational change in our public service.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In this context, we are also introducing the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) that will allow us to keep track of all employees and provide relevant data for purposes of control and improved decision making.

The HRMIS is a valuable tool and I am aware that HR professionals are committed to this project as it will help streamline Human Resource
processes and reduce extensive manual efforts needed to perform your work. Thus, large volume of cumbersome and time-consuming HR activities will be carried out by the HRMIS.

It will also improve record management to the extent that records will be kept up-to-date and can be easily generated for quick decision making as well as improving communication between HR and other sections. Your full involvement in the implementation of the HRMIS is, therefore, crucial.

Moreover, this Government is also instituting policies, procedures and actions to enable employees to easily pursue a more balanced lifestyle. The pursuit of work-life balance reduces the stress employees experience when they spend majority of their time on work related activities and neglect other important components of their lives. To strike the right work life balance, my Ministry, through the Public Officers Welfare Council (POWC) will introduce new leisure activities for the welfare of public officers and their families.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to say that trade unions have played and will continue to play an important and crucial role in the socio-economic development of our country. As I mentioned at the very outset, there are various challenges that we will have to address. Therefore, I seize this
opportunity to solicit your collaboration for the implementation of these reforms strategies that will contribute to successfully achieve the objectives of the government to build a modern civil service.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I would like to quote here a famous saying by Publilius Syrus,

**Quote:**

> "Where there is unity there is always victory".

**Note: Minister added:**

Je tiens à saisir cette occasion pour vous dire que je prends bonne note des doléances du président de la FCSOU au sujet du Pay Research Bureau. Avec raison, parfois il faut comprendre certains systèmes qui semblent difficiles. Par exemple le PRB ou la PSC. Mais il est un fait qu’il faut que la transparence soit visible…

Je n’interfère pas dans les travaux du Pay Research Bureau. D’ailleurs, si je pouvais le faire, je ferai encore beaucoup plus pour les fonctionnaires. D’ailleurs, je peux vous dire que je me battrai toujours pour les droits des travailleurs.

Laissez-moi aussi ajouter que le deuxième miracle économique promis par ce gouvernement ne sera pas possible sans la contribution des
fonctionnaires. Vous remarquerez aussi que je consulte les syndicats de la fonction publique avec de prendre certaines décisions, et à chaque fois ces syndicats accueillent favorablement mes décisions.

Je souhaite, par ailleurs, que les fonctionnaires soient couverts par une assurance médicale. Et cela aidera à changer le paysage de la fonction publique.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.