SPEECH OF THE
HONOURABLE MINISTER ALAIN WONG, MSK,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF
THE E-LEARNING SYSTEM
ON THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2016 AT 14 00 HRS
AT THE LUNCH ROOM OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Canabady

The Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Mr Jhugroo

Senior Chief Executives and Permanent Secretaries

Mr Springett, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

Mr Emmanuel Bor, Technical Adviser to UNDP

Professor Ely Mustapha, UNDP Consultant

Representatives of Trade Unions

Ladies and Gentlemen
It is a pleasure for me to be here with you today for the official launching of the E-Learning System.

This D-day is a memorable one for the Civil Service. We are here to reap the fruit of months and months of diligence and hard work which have ultimately crystallized into a promising tool for learning and development for our public officers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is undergoing through a major transformation. Today, knowledge and information are becoming more and more important in our economic and social relationship. At the core of this transformation is the rapid growth of Information and communication technologies.

Creating, sharing and using information and knowledge are the key factors of economic growth and essential for our competitiveness. We can say that the driving force of the information society can ensure and assure a better quality of life and work, sustainable employment and digital literacy for all so as to avoid social exclusion.

In the knowledge society, the life cycle of knowledge and skills becomes shorter and shorter. This is why we have to invest in human capital and learning technologies to shape our own future.
It is in the context of these challenges that Government has envisioned to transform Mauritius into a High Income Economy where the Civil Service is called upon to play a crucial role in the attainment of this objective. It will have to continually re-engineer itself through the adoption of latest tools and technologies and in building the required capacity to embrace change.

In this perspective, my Ministry foresees that the Civil Service of 2030 would be manned by highly qualified and talented people operating in a completely different and modern environment to provide services in a very efficient and effective manner. The challenges ahead are huge and the Civil Service has no alternative, but to strive hard and maintain its level of competitiveness. This would, however, be dependent on a strong human resource base to make things happen and to adapt to a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment.

In this process of transformation and innovation in the public service, much focus will be laid by my Ministry on the -

- Modernisation for Excellence in public service delivery
- Strategic Human Resource Management
- Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

Moreover, it should also be acknowledged that a civil-service manned by highly qualified people equipped with the necessary knowledge to
guarantee efficiency is now *essential* to ensure satisfaction in service delivery in the advent of the ever changing needs and requirements of the public. The E-Learning System represents a major step in the modernisation process for excellence in public service delivery.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are all aware of, the *most valuable asset* in our country is our *human resource*. In my view, no development can occur without having the appropriate human resources and making good and judicious use of such resources.

The E-Learning System is therefore *an essential platform* from which public officers may develop their knowledge and improve their skills at their own time and pace by benefitting from courses that will be made available to them. Our motto is simple yet effective: “*Mass training for massive development.*”

Human capital is regarded as one of the *most important resource*. It is people who give an organisation a sustainable comparative advantage. *All other resources*, financial and technological would be useless if there are not sufficient, knowledgeable and resourceful people to handle them.

This is why the Government, under the Visionary leadership of our Prime Minister, in his wisdom to make of our country a knowledge hub
for the region, has emphasized on the importance of continuous education, lifelong learning and development of our intellectual capital.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The rationale behind training can best be summarized by the following Chinese proverb:

"*Give a man a Fish, you have fed him a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*"

However in today’s changing and evolving environment, this well-known proverb would have to be revisited. It is no longer sufficient to learn to fish, but it is also important to consider and look for new fishing technologies, acquire expertise/skills in marketing of the product and developing fruitful relationships with the stakeholders. So goes the analogy from the traditional training to the new e-Learning mode.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As far as the *Civil Service* is concerned, you all know that it is funded by public money and today the public is becoming more and more knowledgeable and demanding. They look towards a more accountable civil service, good governance and at the end of the day, a better quality of life through an efficient, modern and cost effective public service.
A smarter Civil Service should be characterized by innovation, in the wake of a rapidly changing business environment and thus provide rapid responses to the expectations and aspirations of the Mauritian population.

On the national front, one of the challenges is to establish a competitive, dynamic and resilient economy against the backdrop of globalization, fiscal constraints and increasing demand for better, quality, timely, effective and efficient services.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Opportunities are existent and at times created. This new learning opportunity has been created by Government for you. Our earnest wish is that you should capture each and every opportunity you experience along the learning process and maximize the benefits therefrom to enhance your knowledge and competencies.

The implementation of ELS will help my Ministry through Civil Service College, Mauritius to cater for the specific training needs of employees of all public bodies, including Parastatal Organisations and Local Authorities thus, ensuring the Training of the critical mass of around 85,000 public officers in the long term.
As Public Officers, you are now called upon to play a pro-active role, welcome innovation, take new initiatives and show more judgment in your approach.

It is with much pride therefore that I have to tell you that this ELS project will also have as raison d’être the means to guarantee efficiency and at the same time to ensure that performance and service delivery will exceed expectations – factors which are essential to pave the way for rapid economic development while at the same time ascertaining satisfaction of public at large.

I would like to end with a quote from Elliot Masie:

“We need to bring learning to people instead of people to learning”

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let us all wish that the advent of the E-Learning System will contribute to the successful accomplishment of this goal.

Before ending I would like to thank Mr Simon Springett and Mr Emmanuel Bor from the UNDP, the team from my Ministry and other partnering Ministries and Departments, the course owners and course
integrators and all those who have directly or indirectly contributed in the
development and the setting up of the ELS.

Last but not the least, I wish to thank Professor Ely Mustapha, who has been instrumental throughout the whole process in order to make this e-Learning project a reality in Mauritius. I wish you good luck in your future endeavours.

With these words, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I thank you for your kind attention, I have now the pleasure to officially launch the e-Learning system.

A.W