SPEECH OF

Hon. Alain Wong Yen Cheong, M.S.K
Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
&
Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster
and Beach Management
on the occasion of the
Public Service Excellence Award Ceremony 2015
Friday 16th September 2016
18:00 hrs
THE RAVENALA ATTITUDE BALACLAVA

The Hon. Xavier Luc Duval, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Tourism and External Communications

Colleague Ministers and Parliamentary Private Secretaries

Mr. Jhugroo, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry

Heads of Ministries/Departments

Chairperson and Members of the Jury Panel

Representatives of Trade Unions

Members of the Press

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen
Good evening

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be here today and to be part of the 2015 edition of Public Service Excellence Award Ceremony. Since 2006, Public Service Excellence Award has been promoting and celebrating excellence in the delivery of the public service.

Through this ceremony, those who have done the extra mile during the year will be rewarded for their remarkable efforts in the implementation of innovative organisational approaches resulting in improvements so that the public service can escalate the efficiency ladder.

Undoubtedly, public officers represent an asset to the nation. It is right to invest in the infrastructure, equipment and latest technologies but at the end of the day, people make the difference in an organisation. Public officers play an essential role in the development of the country by providing the right enabling environment to allow businesses and the society to grow and prosper. The Public Service Excellence Award brings along a gamut of opportunities by providing a forum to mark the recognition of those who have successfully adopted the right attitude to work.

Since my appointment as Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I have laid much emphasis on the ‘HUMAN CAPITAL’, ‘PEOPLE’.
You, public officers, you are important. Governments are here to define policies but YOU are those who help in translating these policies and visions into tangible actions and results. And I firmly convinced that your involvement will allow this government to materialize its vision for a Second Economic Miracle and propel the country to a higher level of development and prosperity. I am sure that you also have a dream for your motherland.

You are our implementing arm and to succeed in your mission, you should feel comfortable and motivated. As Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, till date I have done my utmost best, I have personally involved myself and I have done everything to provide you the best possible environment and facilities to help you to better perform.

Your health and your happiness matter to me. I firmly believe that a sound working environment leads to sound performance. So goes the saying: "Happy bees make more honey". I will go a bit further to say, not only to have more honey, but quality honey.

Since December 2014 to date, with MY VISION and Government’s vision, everything has been put in place to make public officers’ life easier. You will concur with me that innovations like the Flexible Working Arrangement, the Medical Insurance Scheme, the HRMIS, the gym at my Ministry, amongst others go
along with MY VISION for happy public officers in a well performing civil service.

I have never hesitated to take the necessary steps to make public officers happier. As you might know, I have also started as a Cabin attendant, a small employee at the bottom of the ladder. But this has never stopped me from dreaming of a higher position in life and having a vision for the society and for my country. The key to success in everything you undertake is motivation and inspiration. Hence, you should always find the inspiration and with the necessary determination you will achieve your goals.

Today, thanks to the trust placed in me by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, I am heading two Ministries. I consider it as a blessing and a recognition of my willingness to help my country. And I am doing the job with all my heart without asking for any additional advantage.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The vision of my Ministry is ‘A professional public service committed to excellence’ and in order to make it happen, my Ministry is coming up with many reform strategies. Mystery shopping is one of the initiatives to promote service delivery by identifying the performance gaps and weaknesses in order to improve further the level of service provided to the nation.
**Customer satisfaction survey is another upcoming major approach.** With the approval of the cabinet, this year, my Ministry in collaboration with Statistics Mauritius is carrying out Customer Satisfaction Surveys. With its resounding success, we plan to reinforce Customer Surveys in other Ministries and departments because we believe that the best feedback comes from the citizens’ voice.

Furthermore, the **flexible work arrangement** which was implemented on a pilot basis, has been completed in my Ministry since July 2016, allowing public officers to reach office at their chosen time schedule and to extend the hours within which services are offered by the Government.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Public governance must become more responsive and accountable, moving from *reform to transformation*, in order to lead the implementation of sustainable development. It must be innovative, proactive and inclusive to be both an enabler and an outcome of sustainability.

Public service improvement cannot be based only on surveys or projects. **Individual performances would be refined to demonstrate some extraordinary leadership attributes,**
compassion and care towards the people we serve. To allow this to happen, capacity building and accountability for performance are mandatory. In collaboration with the Civil Service College Mauritius, several officers have already been trained and training is still going on, in order to fulfil our vision and mission. We are ensuring that the existence of intrinsic motivational factors with the opportunity for career development and training, as well as extrinsic motivational factors in terms of good salary, job security, working conditions do exist as they significantly influence an individual’s desire to behave appropriately towards the attainment of organisational goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The public service has always been engaged in providing quality services to the society. Public Service Excellence Award has become a milestone to encourage Ministries/Departments to innovate and excel in their respective field.

Most public sector organisations lack competition as, very often, they are monopolies dispensing necessities. So at times, they may not feel as compelled to invest in their public face. However, in the context of constant competitive pressures, the quality of the services received in a country may become a crucial factor to determine the sustainable competitive advantage of a nation.
People delivering public services, be it in the public or private sectors, face similar challenges as they manage shrinking budgets, increased citizen demands and technological advances, which undermine the viability of traditional modes of service delivery.

Let me reiterate my sincere appreciation to the jury panel headed by Hélène Echevin and her team who have done a fantastic job. They had been entrusted with the difficult task of adjudication and I thank them all for their sincerity, dedication and commitment.

I would like to congratulate the winner of Public Service Excellence Award 2015 and winners of the sub-categories. I would press upon these organisations and other participants to stay firmly onto and sustain the path of excellence and continue applying best procedures and practices to provide high quality public services. The wind of change is blowing through and I have a vision that one day this nation will intensify and live out the true meaning of its creed.

Before ending, allow me to quote Tom Peters, a renowned business writer:
“Winners must learn to relish change with the same enthusiasm and energy that we have resisted it in the past. Constant change by everyone requires a dramatic increase in the capacity to accept disruption.”

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you all for your kind attention.

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