Address by Hon. Alain WONG,
Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
The United Nations Africa Public Service Day
&
Africa Public Service Day 2016
Thursday 23 June 2016
Time: 10.00 hrs
Venue: Flacq Fire Station

My colleague, Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo, Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun, Minister of Social Integrity and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Rajkumar Rampertab, Parliamentary Private Secretary
Hon. Raj Dayal, Member of Parliament for Constituency No.9
Mayors and Presidents of District Councils
Mr. Jhugroo, Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry
Permanent Secretaries
Officers of my Ministry and the Local Government
Officers of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here this morning on the occasion of the celebration of the “United Nations Public Service Day and Africa Public Service Day”. Allow me to thank you all and particularly my colleague, Minister of Local Government, Hon. Husnoo, for joining us for today’s event as it is an opportunity to further unveil our good practices and celebrate success in the Public Service.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since over two decades, through the celebration of the United Nations Public Service Day and the Africa Public Service Day, we have been acknowledging the values and virtues of service to the community. This day is also an opportunity to recognise the commitment of officers to improved performance and service delivery that meet the requirements of all stakeholders.
The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year’s event is “Leaving No One Behind: Innovative Institutional Approaches and Public Service Delivery”.

This theme is also in line with the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations for Development, which has set out bold new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are universal - that is, both poor and rich countries - have taken the pledge to leave no one behind and to grow sustainability, within the natural boundaries of our planet. In this respect, there is widespread recognition of the need for a more active participation of different stakeholders in the national implementation and monitoring of the agreed seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

Successfully attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals depends on an empowered, effective and efficient public service which is trusted by the public it serves. Public service must become more responsive and accountable, moving from ‘reform’ to ‘transform’. Today it is a question of ‘innovation’ or ‘evaporation’. The public service must be proactive and inclusive to be, both, an enabler and an outcome of sustainability. Leveraging social and technical innovations to raise civic engagement and access to
information provides an opportunity to link citizens’ voice and state accountability.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Here, let me commend the initiatives of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services for showing so much interest in the improvement of its services, the ultimate objective of which is to provide better services to the public. I am very much pleased to note that this action is very much in line with the vision of my Ministry which is crafted on the National Vision 2030 towards ensuring modern and innovative service delivery to all, thus leading to a sustainable society. As you know, the public sector has a momentous role to play in the growth of our country. As such Government is emphasizing on values like impartiality, professionalism, accountability and honesty for a more effective and efficient Civil Service. This, however, cannot be achieved without the dedication and commitment of one and all.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me also point out that today’s event is in itself an innovation. We believe that it would be more efficient and effective to adopt an inside-out strategy, which allows us to move towards our clients and assisting them to cater for their own needs and
requirement. We are confident that with such a customer-centred approach, Public Sector Organisations will adopt a collaborative approach for a better and optimum use of the resources available at the Ministerial and Department levels. I also wish to assure the public that organising this event in Flacq itself is a testimony of our commitment to serve all citizens of the country with equality and fairness.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This initiative comes at an opportune time when the buzzwords nowadays such as “Government from the outside in”, “Citizens first”, “Single window no wrong door” and “Right First Time” cut across the strong vision of the Government to be more customer-centred and caring.

In today’s context, when all citizens are aspiring for a quality service, no organization can afford to fail in customer care. We know that times have changed and will continue to change. The external environment of organizations is fluctuating at an increased rate in the wake of a volatile, uncertain, complex and turbulent world. Management of organizations are bound to adapt their services to the changing circumstances.
For many people and organizations nowadays, a high standard of quality and customer care is taken for granted. It is no secret that the quality of service matters greatly in creating a positive experience with customers. A smarter Civil Service should be characterized by innovation, in the wake of a rapidly changing business environment so as to provide rapid responses to the expectations and aspirations of the Mauritian population.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As you are aware, with a view to nurturing a performance-oriented and customer centric culture in the public service, Government has decided that it is mandatory for all Ministries and Departments to have their respective Customer Charter, whereby organisations concerned pledge to provide services to the public as per set standards. I am happy to learn that the Fire Services has already taken the necessary steps to update its charter which will be officially released today.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me add that, my Ministry has introduced major reforms which will enable officers across the Service to better perform their duties as well as to facilitate and modernize the service delivery. A customer focused approach is therefore being promoted through
the ‘Improvement of Counter and Customer Services Scheme’. Under this scheme, funds are allocated to Ministries/Departments for the upgrading and modernization of their customer and counter services.

I am informed that measures taken so far have contributed to improve waiting areas, putting in place a better channelling of customers and streamlining of processes. All these initiatives have thus resulted in better service delivery in critical areas to a large number of members of the public daily.

I would like to say that if public service delivery is more an art than a science, let us perceive things differently. It is high time to:

“Think like the Customer and Act like the Owner”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this process of modernisation and transformation, visionary leadership and good governance are critical for the promotion of a value-based public service. This can only be achieved by adhering to the fundamental ethical values of integrity, objectivity, impartiality and honesty that constitute its very foundation.
In this respect, I am pleased to inform you that we have come up with a new poster for **Code of Ethics for Public Officers** which we are officially launching today. I am confident that this initiative will help further enhance a culture of integrity in the public sector.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

I would like to put on record the laudable initiatives taken by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services to enhance its service delivery. I would also like to assure you of the continuous support of my Ministry, in other initiatives for further improving your services.

Before ending and in recognition to the noble job that you are doing, allow me to share with you an anecdote from Battalion Chief William Peters from Jersey City Fire Department:

(Quote)

“People always know when we are around: It’s the BRT (the Big Red Truck), and no matter the colour, it is a symbol of who we are and what we do. It is the largest tool in the toolbox, the seldom perfect fire apparatus.”

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