

## ACU-HRM Network Conference, Le Meridien, Mauritius

I am very happy to be here with you this morning and I would like to thank all the distinguished organisers from the University of Mauritius and the Association of Commonwealth Universities for inviting me to attend this 7<sup>th</sup> ACU-HRM Network Conference. I understand that the conference will centre around the theme of 'HR steps up', reflecting the need for, not only HR specialists, but perhaps more importantly, all managers who have a day-to-day role of leading by example and guiding their staff in such a manner that the strategic aims of the organization are understood and embraced by all members. This coordinated action is vital if the organization must step up a gear, if not two, to implement changes that will nurture the sustainability of the organization for the foreseeable future.

The conference programme spans a range of topical and vital HR issues. Staff engagement I believe is one of them. An engaged employee is a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. In his book, *Getting Engaged: The New Workplace Loyalty*, author Tim Rutledge explains that truly engaged employees are attracted to, and inspired by, their work, committed, and fascinated. Engaged employees care about the future of the company and are willing to invest the discretionary effort – exceeding duty's call – to see that the organization succeeds.

However, it is legitimate to ask how many of us work with passion, drive and commitment and how many just clock in the time without the passion. This observation is more worrying when reflected on the status of the world economy. Although the world economy remains somewhat fragile, growth in emerging markets is returning tentatively, but rising inequalities, macroeconomic concerns, and high unemployment—particularly among the young—continues to afflict many advanced economies. The world economy is still feeling the effects of a deep and structural economic and financial crisis. I know that the crisis is not felt the same way in all parts of the world. No country and no organisation, is shielded from a systemic crisis. And this puts us in front of a great responsibility. All of us who have leadership positions, be it in the private sector or be it in the public or political or academic domain, I think we have a great responsibility to explain what we can do to ensure that people in an organization grow with the organization. And this inevitably requires both efforts of the employer as well as the engagement of the employee to learn from our past mistakes, strengthen governance structures and implement change through fair and ethical decision making.

And in this regard, this high level conference comes at an opportune time. The array of discussion papers that will be presented by eminent scholars, academics and professionals of the HR industry succinctly blends theory and practice and will undoubtedly result in significant policy suggestions and recommendations to overcome barriers towards sustained growth, build intellectual capital, transform organizations, capitalize on key strengths to

fight off competition, nurture employer and employee engagement so that we are proud to be part of a team that brings about economic success and social fulfillment.

With these few words, I wish you all interactive and fruitful deliberations and declare the conference open.

I have great pleasure in declaring the Conference open.

**Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory, G.O.S.K.**

**Vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius**

**17.10.2016**