

**Public Service Excellence Award Ceremony – Edition 2022 on Friday 17
March 2023 at 18:00 hrs at Caudan Arts Centre**

**Hon. Hurdoyal, Minister of Public Service, Administrative and
Institutional Reforms**

Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening.

Excellence in the public service is nothing new to me since I was appointed Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms in January 2017, serving until November 2019.

The Public Service, is the executive arm of Government, and as such it has a crucial role in the provision of quality, efficient and effective public services for the creation of an enabling environment propitious to the development and prosperity of the nation.

The adoption of innovative strategies to nurture a performance-based culture geared towards achieving excellence in the delivery of public services, is therefore of utmost priority

The objective of the Public Service Excellence Awards is to provide public institutions with the necessary tool to continuously improve ways of doing business to achieve higher productivity and enhance quality of public services and

aims at promoting a performance-oriented, responsive, customer-friendly and accountable public service.

During the Public Service Award Ceremony in 2018, under my ministership, the Prime Minister, Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said “ I believe in the capacity of our public institutions to contribute meaningfully to improve service delivery.”

The recent developments in the sector have proved him right. The recent reforms in the Civil Service are geared towards a systematic, integrated and coordinated way to bring improvements, innovation and transformation across the whole Civil Service to meet the present and future needs of our citizens.

No government can build a sustainable and just environment, where institutions foster inclusive economic growth and higher standards of living for all segments of society, without a constructive, two-way relationship with citizens.

The organising principle of public service delivery must be the needs of users. This is notably reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal 16.6, which aims to “develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels,” as well as indicator 16.6.2, which proposes to measure the “proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services.”

High-quality service delivery requires a sound understanding of citizens’ expectations, experiences, and key drivers of satisfaction, as well as a policy framework that places citizens at the center of decision-making processes rather than at the periphery.

Putting citizens at the heart of public institutions provides a twofold benefit: it makes public administrations more efficient and increases citizens' satisfaction and trust in government. Citizen-centric service delivery implies that policy makers better understand the needs of and key drivers of satisfaction for citizens.

While improving the delivery of service, public agencies must identify gaps and areas for improvement in their service delivery mechanisms by gathering direct feedback regarding the experiences and perceptions of their users and by critically examining public sector efforts to fulfill the needs and expectations of citizens.

The public service plays a crucial role in the development of our country. The Public service must constantly modernize processes and procedures so as to become more citizen and business-friendly. Public officers must be alert to best practices and new technologies likely to help them become more efficient.

Public Service must be brought up to speed with the technological advances and inventive strategies which will revolutionise service delivery as technology and innovation are the driving forces of development in the present age.

The public sector has to be positioned to deliver modern, reliable and customer-focused services to all citizens, including the most vulnerable in our society. More and more, consumers want and reasonably expect to be able to access government services from the comfort of their homes or other remote locations; there is a significant percentage of the population which has grown up entirely in the information age and is consequently more likely to make fuller use of public services if it could be done online.

The world is fundamentally changing with massive shifts in digital technology reshaping the business world. Governments the world over are looking to transform the way they deliver services to citizens, improving access to services, simplifying processes and reducing costs.

Rapidly changing demographic, societal, economic, and technological trends are shaping our future. Citizens' needs and demands are also evolving, and our public service must become more agile and innovate to keep pace with this rapidly changing world.

Mauritius is on the right track towards the use of information and communication technologies and its application by some ministries and departments for the provision of information and public services to the people.

Government is promoting the development of the ICT sector, which includes the implementation of an e-Government Programme. This Programme aims at providing Government services more conveniently to the public, businesses, and entities on a digital platform, anywhere and anytime. The Government is investing in e-Government initiatives so as to transform interactions with citizens, businesses as well as redefining service delivery by the public sector.

Let us be clear – organisational change has been, and remains, a critical action in the wider process of delivering public value to citizens through efficient and effective e-Government services. Let us also be clear – organisational change by itself will not necessarily deliver public value, nor will it deliver the full extent of public value that is needed by citizens.

You must work on processes that improve the trust of citizens in government. To make real progress on transforming government services you should aim to positively transform the relationship between public servants and citizens.

Being trusted and transparent is not something that can be achieved and then maintained easily. Hard to build, and easy to destroy, trust and transparency need to be worked on as core organisational goals, and it is in that context that organisational change comes back to the centre stage.

Citizens today expect more transparent, accessible, and responsive services from the public sector. And those expectations are rising. The needs and voices of citizens must be considered during the various stages of public service design, delivery, and evaluation/review.

In a citizen-centric service delivery system, the main imperative is not to fit operational structures and processes to the requirements of government departments, but to serve citizens—who are considered the main stakeholders.

Digital services must be delivered in a timely, efficient, and transparent manner by some in a way which meets citizens' expectations in improving quality of life, doing business and saving time and money.

The Mauritius Public Service touches the life of every citizen from cradle to grave. It has been the backbone of social and economic progress in Mauritius for decades. The Public Service has helped build our country, including our diversified

economy, our educated population, and our diverse and community-minded society.

There are number of dedicated public officers who are relentlessly striving for excellence day in and day out, despite all the constraints and challenges, and they deserve to be celebrated and recognized. It is their example that will serve as a catalyst for change.

Let me conclude by congratulating the winners of the Public Service Excellence Award 2022 and encourage them to sustain their efforts in delivering quality public services. I commend the other participating organisations and I am sure they will be present next year with renewed enthusiasm.