



ADDRESS BY

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MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

AT THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

HOSTED BY THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Salutations...

I am truly delighted to be with you this morning as we launch this Leadership and Management Development Programme for 2011, in our accelerated thrust to boost the quality of the administration and operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service.

Let me therefore start by welcoming you to your new roles as emerging leaders in our Public Service and indeed congratulating you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to begin this statement with my usual level of frankness which has characterized my professional and political life.

First, I believe in the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service and I believe that, with the applied effort, focus, sincere partnering with all Public Service employees and constant support from

the political directorate, we can finally break down the barriers that have inhibited our ability to fully implement a continuous, consistently supported programme of modernization.

Second, I am steadfast in my belief that the process of creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century Public Service, driven by excellence in service delivery, supported by strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with quality and timely decision making is not as elusive as some might believe.

And third, I am of the firm view, that in order to move beyond the *mechanics* of modernization, and into the *process* of implementation, we must begin right here, with a renewal of how we think, how we work, how we build teams and how we lead!

Let me also be frank with you about a perspective which we have all at different times shared. Transformation has been an

elusive dream and a regularly promised deliverable for a very long time.

I do not doubt that some in the Public Service may feel daunted rather than motivated by the mere mention of transformation. In a sense, we have over time become locked in the mechanics of transformation itself and may have released our concentration on the need to pursue implementation.

What we must do this morning, therefore, as you approach this Leadership and Management programme, is to bring the process back to its origin and ask, what really was the purpose of moves to transform and modernize the Public Service?

Ladies and gentlemen, the Public Service affects the daily lives of each of our 1.3 million people in Trinidad and Tobago. Everyday our citizens are affected by the operations of our Public Service.

Whether it is through:

- (i) The use of Public Transport,
- (ii) Access to Passport Renewal Services,
- (iii) Applications for Scholarships and Grants,
- (iv) Requests for Social Relief
- (v) Applications for a new Birth Certificate
- (vi) Safety and security provided by our Protective Services
- (vii) Use of the Postal Services
- (viii) Access of Health Services...

And the list goes on...the Public Service impacts the lives of people on a daily basis!

In fact, many of you will by now be familiar with the Seven Interconnected Pillars for Sustainable Development, which forms the basis of the commitments the Government of the People's Partnership made with the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The fulfillment of these commitments and the attainment of the objectives of the Seven Interconnected Pillars depends on the delivery of efficient, focused, customer centred Government Service delivery.

We must therefore ask ourselves, what is the value, quality and efficiency of the services that we provide?

Consider your own lives and your own access to various services. If you seek to access insurance services through claims and you are met with inefficient and uncooperative systems, you are left unsatisfied. You may even consider another insurance service provider.

If you buy goods at a particular supermarket and you are met with poor service, poor quality goods and an unpleasant environment, you will next time go to another supermarket.

In both of these instances alone, you expect efficient, reliable goods, quality and excellent customer service. You pay for it therefore you expect it and demand it. Similarly, the private and corporate citizens of Trinidad and Tobago pay for Public Services through taxes and direct fees.

They therefore are entitled to demand excellence in service and delivery and quality!

Transformation therefore has at its core, the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

This is where that contribution that you make, as Directors and the emerging leaders of the Public Service, become critically vital.

Your style of leadership and management of the various Departments and Units of Ministries can either add, or diminish value.

Your approach to team leadership and people management can either motivate employees or restrict their growth and contribution.

The decisions you make can either create value, or incur costs.

Your ability to manage and resolve, rather than sidestep and ignore conflict can either propel the organisation, or restrict its advancement and the personal development of people.

The strategic support you give to Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries can either lend to strong and sound decisions, strategies and implementation programmes, or frustrate the process of Government Service delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, the functions you carry out will inevitably impact the lives of people in Trinidad and Tobago

whether they are employees of the Public Service, or citizens accessing Government services.

Of great significance, the business community and the sectors that support our economic system also rely heavily on efficient, quality services from Government Ministries. Delays in the Public Service can mean costs to the Private Sector and therefore a cost to the economy.

In fact the Green Paper speaks to the ease of doing business in Trinidad and Tobago as one of the issues affecting our global competitive position.

As you will no doubt agree, in the Private Sector customer service delivery, corporate excellence and efficiency have all improved by leaps and bounds over the last years.

Whether it is in our mobile services, food services, the retail sector, the hospitality sector, a strong and sustained approach to delivering quality was made and has been successful.

Our clients, our partners in sustainable development, have recognized the need for modernization, pursued the process, implemented strategies, improved reliability and efficiency and their operations have vastly improved.

On the Public Sector side, therefore, what is our excuse for not providing services that are out of sync and below the expectations of our clients and partners in sustainable development?

This reinforces my earlier point that as paying customers, you demand excellence and therefore it should logically follow that as paying customers, the people of our country, the Private Sector and all organisations accessing Government Services must be expected to demand excellence also.

This is where the importance of ongoing training and leadership programmes, such as the programme we are launching this morning, comes sharply into focus. We operate in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century environment, using 20<sup>th</sup> Century systems and processes and this must change starting here today!

We operate in an environment where the Private Sector absorbs a high percentage of our best and brightest and our challenge is to create a Public Service with an image of professionalism and achievement.

We operate in an environment where our clients are more sophisticated, discerning and demanding of value for money.

It is for this reason that I declared recently, that the Ministry of Public Administration must move beyond the role of *facilitator* of modernization, and assume the role of **Champion**.

We have a duty to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Service. And our approach must be multi-faceted and determined.

Among the most critical aspects in building the forward movement for modernization is Human Resource Management systems, and promoting leadership and management development.

We must also entrench a citizen-centric, value for money culture of service delivery which involves appropriate financial management, value creation and audits, bolstered by sound communications systems.

And these areas are critical to our activities here this morning. Many Public Service employees, perhaps including some of you, have expressed dissatisfaction with the current system of Human Resource Management within the Civil Service. Your view is supported by the findings of the surveys conducted by MORI, and stakeholder analyses done by the consulting firm Adam Smith International.

The shortcomings identified in the Human Resource Management system include human resource capability and capacity as well as policies and procedures.

The shortcomings must be addressed and a significant element for the in approach is training and development, now managed by the Public Service Academy.

In fact, we are at the moment considering the creation of a new entity, that would be more focused on training and development and adept in its delivery mechanisms to better meet the training and development needs of the Public Service. But I will discuss this in greater detail in due course.

The programme we are launching today is a first step in the development of a force of professional and committed leaders.

The programme is intended to:

1. Facilitate your transition from manager to emerging leader;

2. Provide you with the knowledge you need to support your Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries;
3. Contribute to the development of a team of Directors/Divisional Heads capable of advising on, and implementing Government plans, programmes and priorities; and
4. Enhance your contribution to sound decision making and policy development.

As you engage this programme therefore, use this as the platform from where a recommitment was made and an invigorated march forward began.

The responsibility for promoting excellence and delivering efficient services is now shared with you. And with the Public Service being the thread that weaves itself through every facet of our daily lives, take hold of your role as a stakeholder in whether our nation advances, or falls behind.

Ladies and gentlemen, today you enter the role of leadership, but I also want to remind you that your role for tomorrow is to develop the leaders of tomorrow.

The direction we go from here, as I have illustrated, is intimately linked to our nation's development priorities. It is linked to the success of the economic sectors that drive and propel our economy. It is linked to the wellbeing of our citizens. It is linked to the delivery of a modern, developed nation.

Let's not fall short and be content to say '*these things happen*'. Let's instead go beyond the conventional, into the pioneering and underline our achievement by saying, '*this change will happen*'!

Ladies and gentlemen I thank you.