



ADDRESS BY

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MP FOR SAN FERNANDO WEST

MINISTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

AT THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

HOSTED BY THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

HILTON, TRINIDAD

TUESDAY 12 June 2012

SALUTATIONS

Permanent Secretary, Gillian Macintyre

Deputy Permanent Secretary, Richard Madray

Ag Director of the Public Service Academy, Mrs Marcia

London-Mc Kellar

Facilitators

Course Participants

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our Public Service is fifty years old. Before we became independent, it was really a **civil** service, serving our colonial masters and modelled on the British Civil Service. What little recognition it got, what little reward it received and all the vast responsibilities with which it was entrusted came from London, England, the centre of the British Empire. All roads, especially for training, led to London.

For a long time after 1962 when we became independent the paths still led outward. The old beaten track led to the UK, and some new emerging pathways led to the US and Canada. Even at the secondary level, those who could afford it sent their children abroad to study and they went straight on to University. Only those who could not afford it sent their children to UWI.

Fifty years later we are increasingly seeking, and finding, solutions to our educational and training options in Trinidad and Tobago and in the Caribbean region. In our Ministry, we are even creating our own solutions internally or jointly with other local trainers and training institutions. This by itself is a remarkable achievement in just fifty years especially given the extent to which the superiority of “foreign” schooling, foreign pronunciation and foreign everything were both institutionalised and internalised.

After 50 years, we, as a developing nation, have the physical assets to better respond to the challenges of the 21st century and the expectations that come with the inevitable development of infrastructure and new technologies. However, we cannot neglect the development of our most precious and valuable resource - the people, the public

officers, who have dedicated their lives to the service of our country.

Interestingly, the Ministry of Public Administration in all its previous incarnations had long recognised the need and importance of shifting both the focus and locus of its training, and not just for economic reasons. The Ministry began to understand that the unique set of values, circumstances and culture that make up Trinidad and Tobago requires unique solutions developed within Trinidad and Tobago by persons familiar with who we are, where we came from and where we want to go as a nation. I am sure each and every one of you in this room identify with that.

The Public Service Academy of the Ministry of Public Administration has taken the nationalisation of training to a new level. This is the third instalment of an Executive

Leadership Development Programme that the Academy designed and is implementing. It is one of about forty training programmes run so far this year by the Academy in a variety of subject areas all aimed at upgrading the skills and knowledge of public officers.

This particular programme has two broad objectives- improving the specific leadership competencies of participants and enhancing their knowledge of specialised public service areas.

Why are we doing this?

The reason we are doing this is to ensure that our public service is able to make the transition to what is called a citizen-centric form of Governance. This will only happen when the ordinary citizen, regardless of race, religion, gender

or geography can access the best quality service at the lowest possible cost, in the shortest possible time. This can only happen if the leadership is in place with the vision, the communication and management skills, and the empathy with the clients that will ensure that we respect and value the ordinary citizen and that we get the trust that we need for progress to take place.

Let me speak to you as participants here in this programme who are already leaders in your own right but who, with this training, will be better equipped for the future demands on the public service as we go through the process from gold to diamond. This morning I want to urge each and everyone one of you, because you are future leaders, to learn more about the Gold to Diamond. I hope that you would internalise our Gold to Diamond concept and be part of the communication and

marketing agent, and the change agent from the Gold to Diamond.

A few weeks from now we will be recognising and rewarding fifty outstanding public servants who have distinguished themselves in their leadership roles in the public service over the past fifty years. They are the solid gold foundation for the future, the launching pad for the transformation of the public service, a long standing dream which my Ministry intends to convert to reality.

What we are doing now is polishing the diamonds of the future. Through these leadership programmes, the Ministry of Public Administration is providing the environment, the tools and, one hopes, the hunger for the responsibilities of even higher levels of leadership in future. And this could come sooner rather than later. The recent and imminent retirement

of senior public servants has left a gap which you, all of you here today, are expected to fill. You are going to be taught how to learn from the lessons of the past and build on the achievements of the past so that you can climb on the shoulders of giants and reach even higher heights and greater glory.

But might I add, as future leaders of tomorrow, you also have a responsibility to nurture and develop leadership qualities in your subordinate. This is how we develop leadership within the public sector.

As a University Lecturer, Manager, Board Chairman and Minister of Government, leadership is something that I have always been deeply concerned about. I have looked at it. I have studied it and I have tried to learn from the greats. In

this case, my concern and constant preoccupation has been the relationship between the government and the governed, the relationship between the public officer and the public. There are two great leaders whose views about the ordinary people I want to share since it is important that we understand how absolutely crucial is the need to listen to them and to involve them in the business of public service.

The first is General Colin Powell. He says, “Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems, is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.”

Secondly, Lao Tsu, the Chinese Philosopher. He advises, “Go to the people. Learn from them. Live with them. Start with

what they know. Build with what they have. The best of leaders when the job is done, when the task is accomplished, the people will say we have done it ourselves.”

All of us as leaders, including myself, my Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretaries and all of you, that we as leaders, we will be going out to the public in order to ensure that we listen to the citizens because only when we have listened, when we have understood, when we have empathised, will we deliver a citizen centric Public Service.

Today we are showing that we care, not only about our employees, but about the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Today we are demonstrating our commitment as a Government and as a Ministry to the future of our country and

the future of our public service. They are synonymous and symbiotic.

Today ladies and gentlemen, I want to urge you to remember that leadership starts from the top and goes all the way to the bottom of the organisation, of the Public Service.

Today I urge you to take full advantage of the opportunities we have made available to you, the enormous wealth of resources that our facilitators bring and, most of all, the learning environment which transcends space and time and which gives you the opportunity to reach for the stars.

I thank you ladies and gentlemen.