



Opening Address

By

**Ms Gillian Macintyre, Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Public Administration**

At

**DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARY ORIENTATION
PROGRAMME 2014**

At the

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Port of Spain

Mr. Reynold Cooper - Head of the Public Service

Colleague Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Permanent Secretaries

Mr. Anthony Watkins and the Odyssey Team facilitating this Programme

Mr. Claudelle McKellar, Director Public Service Academy

Staff of GHRS and MPA

Ladies and Gentlemen

A Pleasant Good Morning,

I believe we need to attract a new generation of the best and brightest to public service and I believe that government can be a source of inspiration, not degradation. This is a quote from Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of New York, and in many ways it is a very valid observation. We do need to have in the public service the best and the brightest, and a career in government should not be the result of not being able to get employment in the private sector – it must be a choice, a choice made on the basis of the benefits, opportunities and advantages of working in the public service.

Where I disagree with Governor Cuomo is that when I look around me today I see the best and the brightest who are now poised to make Government a source of inspiration, a source of excellence in service delivery, and a model of governance that is non-partisan, ethical and transparent. What I see is a new generation of public service leaders who will build on the golden platform of the past and create the diamond launching pad of the future. I know I do not need to stress for you the public interest viewpoint. You would not have reached this far in your careers without knowing this. What is required is to internally believe this and to also believe that we are already at a point where we are attracting the right people to lead us forward into a sustainable future for the public service and for our country, Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to congratulate all of you on your success in the Assessment Centre Exercise. In doing so you have demonstrated not just knowledge or competencies, not just a mix of skills and abilities, but that you also have what it takes to modernize the public service. I am convinced that you have the ability to conceptualise, develop and manage the improvements required. I am sure that you have the ability to work with other public service leaders in a collaborative instead of a competitive environment. Most of all, from my knowledge of who you are and what you can do, I am certain that you can all work with the people who report to you. You will help, not hinder them. You will improve morale and enthusiasm and create an environment in which the people who report to you and depend on you, value the soundness of your decision-making and your sense of fairness, justice, integrity and objectivity.

In the British Civil Service, the people at the top were known as “mandarins” after the all-powerful Chinese officials who had passed the old Imperial examinations and wielded immense power – they were, in fact, judge, jury and executioner. This has changed in Britain, it has changed here and it is changing everywhere else in the world. Your success at the ACE is not a license for anything other than to work harder, burn the midnight oil or electricity, and to give others the credit for the

achievements of the Ministry, but always take the blame yourself because the buck stops with you.

But, and this is important to note, you have help from the Ministry of Public Administration, from the DPS Forum, from your Permanent Secretaries and for those of you who are already acting as Permanent Secretaries, your colleague Permanent Secretaries as the retreat last week would have demonstrated. This training intervention has been designed in such a way that it gives you the opportunity to reevaluate who you are, what you bring to the table and where you think you need to make improvements. I advise all of you when working with your Personal Development Plans to remember Polonius in Shakespeare's Hamlet, "above all: to thine own self be true,/And it must follow, as the night the day,/Thou canst not then be false to any man." Then we will look at the country in the global context and our plans in that regard. This will be followed with the general direction in which the public service is heading. The Journey from Gold to Diamond is not just a change in architecture from a pyramid to a diamond-shape, but the many implications of that change – more professional streams, greater transparency, more risk-taking, a broader mix of competencies and an emphasis on excellence in service delivery. The goods and services that are based on what our citizens, clients and stakeholders want must be more widely accessible, of the highest quality, the lowest cost and best value for money. We must make the cost of

doing business, the time it takes and our national competitiveness, priorities for the future. Even if we can perform like Andrea Bocelli or Heather Headley, we the leadership of the public service, are more like the conductors of a huge philharmonic orchestra than the best performers on the stage. Our job is to create the synergy that characterises all great performances. We have to get the best out of the people who work WITH us and not FOR us. This last point is very important, it is a cultural change that needs to happen in the public service. Your role as a leader is to create other leaders. Modern literature on leadership development refers to this type of leader as the CONTAGIOUS Leader. If you successfully achieve this, then it can no longer be leaders working FOR you, but WITH you.

I want to implore all of you here to make every effort to help to further develop the DPS Forum. The Forum is supported by the Ministry of Public Administration. It is self-managed and provides an opportunity to network and support one another, discuss strategic issues, and shape initiatives for your professional development. It has often experienced attendance problems and I understand why – this is a 24/7 job and there is always pressure on us. However, I believe it is worth taking the time to reflect on this group and determine whether it provides a benefit and if it does, to shape it's operations so that they benefit you.

Another plus is that the Head of the Public Service is available to the Forum and can, and should, be invited, to discuss issues or concerns. I also want to add my own personal support to all of you and I am sure that the other PSs will also be available, even those with whom you do not work with directly.

One of the issues you will face, and with which your predecessors and peers can help, is how to deal with your new-found power and if you have not discovered it yet be advised that you do have power. One of the problems with power is that it can be an amnesiac. It can make you forget who you are and where you came from. It can make you behave and even believe that you made the journey to the top all by yourself. We know that the torch has been passed on to you and it is your duty to add value to it and then hand it over to a new generation of leaders. It is a relay in which you compete, not against other people, but against yourself on behalf of the public interest. In that context, and from that perspective, it is incumbent on all of you here today to remember the leaders, the mentors, the gurus and the support staff who got you here, who invested time and attention on you and who want desperately for you to succeed.

In this case, success is measured not just by the efficiency factors but by the extent to which you become the mentors and motivators, the guiding lights for future leaders. This is really how history will judge your true legacy. Did you

use the power that you have been given to build a new generation of leaders? Did you allow your staff the freedom to take risks, makes mistakes and learn from them? Did you create a supportive environment characterized by action or 'can do' attitudes, achievement or 'have done' attitudes and vision or 'will do' attitudes. Have you developed a resilient and sustainable organization, conscious of its duty to this and future generations, an organization that is prepared to lay itself on the line every day for the children of Trinidad and Tobago? What will be the answers to these questions, when your turn comes to pass the baton.

There will be times when, like the rest of us, you are going to question whether in choosing a career in public service you did the right thing. When things get tough and you begin to ask yourself, "What am I doing here?" I want you to remember what the present First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, said, "And in my own life, in my own small way, I've tried to give back to this country that has given me so much. That's why I left a job at a law firm for a career in public service, working to empower young people to volunteer in their communities. Because I believe that each of us - no matter what our age or background or walk of life - each of us has something to contribute to the life of this nation."

You have already made some contributions, but there is more, much more to come, and I want you to remember,

more than anything else, you are not alone. We are all here for you, for one another and for our beloved country, Trinidad and Tobago.

I thank you.

May 27, 2014