

Opening Address by Minister for Employment and Human Resources Development on the occasion of the launching of the Productivity Working group (10th April 2008)

Members of Senior Management
Members of the Productivity Working Group
Friends and partners

Let me first of all thank you for accepting to join with us to analyze and find solution to this very challenging issue of productivity improvement in workplaces. This is yet another example of the working together in consultation that our President is so vehemently promoting.

Productivity or the lack of it has been and still remains a matter of serious concern for all of us. The employment Department has had several productivity related complaints from individual employers, the Seychelles Chambers of Commerce and Industries, as well as from the Federation of Employers Association (FEAS). The frequency of productivity related complaints have steadily increased and grievances lodged by employers are very often productivity related.

Today more than ever before, we need to be looking at the way we utilize resources to maximize output. In our strategy 2017 we have made a commitment to double our GDP in a space of 10 years. This is no easy feat and there are various factors to contend with in our pursuit to achieve this goal.

The cost of investments is progressively becoming more elevated, natural resources are becoming scarcer, importation cost due to factors beyond our control is creeping higher and human factors which including policies, laws and regulations, attitude of both employers and employees, practices in work places, beliefs and value system among others are issues that need to be addressed.

Productivity thresholds, goal setting, effective planning, performance management and improvement transcend the remit of labour and employment. However, somebody needs to take the lead role and wear this mantle to take us nearer to our desired and expected outcomes. It is because we believe so much in the hidden potential of our economy and our people, that we are, against many odds, assuming this role to take us to our goals and beyond. I have no doubt that all of us around this table share this belief.

This working group is entrusted with the tasks of looking at productivity in its entire dimension. In your deliberations you will very often need to bring in resource persons from other agencies and sectors of our society. You may need to form smaller and more technical sub-working groups to tackle specific matters that require more acute technical dexterity.

What we expect from you are recommendations and proposals in finding solutions to issues and challenges in the area of productivity. This requires your total commitment and may require that you put in extra effort, but I feel very strongly that all the energy that we put in this task will be worth it. Issues of productivity in workplaces cannot be solved by the department or by a working group alone. The factors which affect productivity are many and varied. I hope that together with our partners we will be able to develop strategies that will help improve workplace productivity.

I also believe that as the leading agency in the fore front of our battle for improvement of productivity in the workplace, we will set the example that we would like to see and exhort others to follow. You all have proven track records in your areas of specialty which is why you are part of this very important working group.

Our tasks are not going to be easy. However, the satisfaction of having being part of the solution and for having worked hard is exhilarating when goals are met. The potential benefits are huge. Our country stands to gain much from our efforts.

This is an opportunity for you to make another significant contribution to the progress of our nation. I would like to assure the working group of the total support of the Government through the Department of Employment in the achievement of this very important goal.

It remains to wish you all the best in your deliberations. I will be following very closely the work of this committee and I look forward to receiving your recommendations.

Thank you.