



Feature Address by:

THE HON. CAROLYN SEEPERSAD-BACHAN
Minister of Public Administration
Member of Parliament for San Fernando West

CLOSING CEREMONY: PDP | Cohort 4

**Closing Ceremony for COHORT 4 of the
MPA Professional Development Programme**
Old Fire Station, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain.
Monday 08 December, 2014 | 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SALUTATIONS [ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED]

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen...

Today, we are here to mark another rite of passage in your lives; certainly not the first, and definitely not the last. You are graduating from the Ministry's **Professional Development Programme** today, and our hope is that we have helped you tremendously with your plans and ideas for professional development.

Many of you have been through many graduation exercises. You're accustomed to coming first in your class or being at the top of the class – am I correct? You also are our returning scholars. I want to take off from the point where you are at today.

Today's graduation exercise, I know, might feel like another graduation for you. But what has really happened here is that you are now embarking on a new chapter in your lives, truly moving into the professional aspects of your career. So, whereas the graduations in the past marked or signaled a milestone in your lives, today is slightly different. This is not the same as graduating from CAPE or CSEC or even university. You came into the Professional Development Programme as returning scholars, out of Universities, and into the world of work. Yes, each graduation was a rite of passage; but not this one. Professional development does not end with today's graduation. You have only just begun... Do you remember that song? "We've only just begun..." You have only just begun!

I want you to know that we at the Ministry have revised the Professional Development Programme,

to ensure that returning scholars like you, can maximise and accelerate your professional development with the acquisition of skillsets required for the workplace. The knowledge you would have obtained during the Programme would help improve your ability to do your future jobs, and grow as a professional. In this way, you are being groomed for new professional opportunities opening up at the Middle Management level in the Public Service. And should you choose to venture into the Private Sector, the foundation you would have garnered in this programme would stand you in good stead for your professional futures.

In the PDP, we have reintroduced a whole range of competencies to develop the right behaviours, the right attitudes and the right value systems. That is because this new world of work more than ever demands people who are honest, have integrity, and

are prepared to operate in a transparent manner in the execution of their duties.

We expect that you may wish to matriculate further in your areas of technical competency, ensuring that you keep up-to-date with the latest techniques and developments in your respective fields. What we hoped we have done with this programme, however, is imbue you with critical skillsets such as Career-Path Making, Analytical Skills, Project Management, and Intercommunication. These are among several critical competencies you will need to be a true success in your chosen career, including Innovation, Team Work, The Right Attitude and Servant Leadership.

You have no difficulty being creative because I believe one of you presented using a video, asking people about your leadership style. I think one of

the things we miss about leadership is that aspect of being a good servant. If you want to be a good leader, you have to be able to serve, and you have to demonstrate genuinely that you are able to give... That you are here for the giving and not just for the receiving...

In today's modern and ever changing work place, professional development is key to career longevity. It ensures you keep your skills and your career fresh, and you stay on top of the game. Indeed, it is necessary if one wants to maintain their job. Professional development and continuous learning go hand-in-hand. Professional development has to be the constant in your progress through life from here on out. Professional development is not a course or set of courses designed for you. It is going to be different from what you did in your university life. These courses

help but they are essentially tributaries of a constantly flowing stream of developments in your lives. A few of you might wish to argue that life's goal posts keep shifting, the rules of the game keep changing, and, how can you truly make professional development a set goal?

It is my experience that professional development must become a way of life, a personal culture, or even like a faith-based endeavour, as you move forward in life. It really is a culture of self-belief, commitment, discipline and a constant scanning of the environment so you know what's coming down the track wherever you are, and in whatever field you are pursuing. At the same time, professional development boils down to the perpetual pursuit of excellence... and therein lies the rub... Excellence is a moving target. Every time you think you reach it, the target has shifted and you

have to work even harder to reach it. And then it eludes you again. It is not that you don't reach it. You do. But for dedicated professionals, the fun, the rewards, and the satisfaction, is in the journey — not just the destination.

I think this is something you need to appreciate: this is a journey you are starting today, and this journey must be one that you are prepared to enjoy, and for which you are willing to put your best foot forward.

Of course you also have the option that so many young graduates take these days. You can go to work and live for the Friday evening lime on the Avenue. Nothing is wrong with that... More Vino and less work! You can coast from weekend to weekend without adding to your knowledge or your expertise. You might find the sushi and the Carib filling, but I can tell you, it is not fulfilling.

I am not saying you should not enjoy yourselves after all those years, from kindergarten to university and into the world of work, sweating and sacrificing, thinking to yourself that one day you will be free. Indeed, you have more than won the right to take a little time out to celebrate. However, as I have found after leaving University, it is not a question of learning or earning. It is not either-or. It is both. It is learning and earning.

In many professions the more you learn — not just the subject matter of your profession but the relationships and responsibilities, the practices and philosophies — the more you earn. In others, you can continue to earn without learning, but eventually you run into a barrier, a limit to earning without learning. Then you stagnate. You can judge your career by diminishing returns and then, it is more

and more vino, and less and less opportunities to earn.

My view is that in any professional field, stagnation is death. You must always be able, now and in the future, to add value to whatever you touch, whatever comes before you, all that you do – not just in your profession, but in life as a whole.

I alluded earlier to several characteristics which will be critical throughout your professional life, and why you must master them. We need a new breed of people to function in our Public Service of the future; and not just there, but in the Private Sector as well. We now need new breed of leaders to supervise, mentor, instruct and facilitate this new breed of professional. This is someone who embodies the best of the 21st century worker: they can work well in teams; they have a healthy respect for authority, even as they innovate and push the

envelope to ensure clients and customers get value for money as they dispatch their duties.

I must congratulate you because of your excellent presentations, this morning. When I listened to some of the themes, in terms of being creative, many of you were thinking outside of the box. The young lady who did the extempore — that is being creative. Some of you understood the importance of being concise when you are trying to share information. I thought the person who spoke about being able to become part of the family unit in a tightly-knit work group made an important observation.

We talk about diversification of our economy of Trinidad and Tobago; that diversity is going to come from you. It is going to come from the development of our human capital, and how we explore that human capital. In there is innovation and creativity.

The research will show you today that the essential ingredient for that creativity and that innovation is diversity. Do you realise Trinidad and Tobago has that diversity?


Look around you right here in this room. You have diversity in terms of professional disciplines; ethnicity; culture; and in terms of gender — equally balanced, women and men. And when you enter our Public Service, there is diversity in age groups. When you come together as teams, which is where we are structuring the new Public Service of tomorrow (the 21st century citizen-centric Public Service), we will understand that in team environments we are providing that environment for creativity and innovation through diversity.

But it is important that you develop these skillsets, as well:

- How to question authority respectfully.
- How to work together in those teams.
- What about the management skills you need to manage that environment or to manage those teams?

There is a new breed of leaders of tomorrow required to manage that environment. This is not only unique to our public service, but it applies to our private sector, as well. I must congratulate you because you have already started by showing how important it is to possess these particular skillsets. You have demonstrated this by showing they are important to you: how you work as a team; how you share; how you are able to mix in with that work-family environment; how you are able to communicate; how you are able to think out of the box.


I have outlined in various other fora, and choose to do so here again, exactly what we need, in both the private and public sectors of Trinidad and Tobago:



The Diamond Outcome

***Right People**
in the **Right Job**
at the **Right Time**
with the **Right Skills**
working on the **Right Things**
performing in the **Right Way**
delivering the **Right Results**
and receiving the **Right Reward***

Simply the Best... Always.



TRANSFORMING THE PUBLIC SERVICE FROM GOLD TO DIAMOND
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In fact, in our Public Service, we are launching a Competency-Based Framework where you would be required to develop these competencies. Indeed,

some of the things I spoke of a short while ago can be found in the new Competency-Based Framework. For example, communications skills, customer-focus, how you are able to participate in teams, and most importantly, providing value for money.

Because when we are dealing with the public's purse, we are dealing with taxpayers' money, and citizens are ready and willing and want to know how you are spending their tax dollars to generate improved and increased value.

Do you have the right attitude? Do you accept everything that comes before you or do you challenge or question things, albeit respectfully? Do you ask yourself is there a better way to do this? A smarter way? A less time-consuming way? This is where your critical thinking skills would come in. While you participate in processes and systems, you will appreciate how important it is that you are

always continuously improving on those processes and programmes.

What about your ability to work in teams? Do you play well with others? Can you put aside personality and focus on the goal at hand – ensuring the success of particular project, or even your organisation?

Are you ready to step up to the plate when required and lead your co-workers to success? Gently guiding and mentoring where necessary?

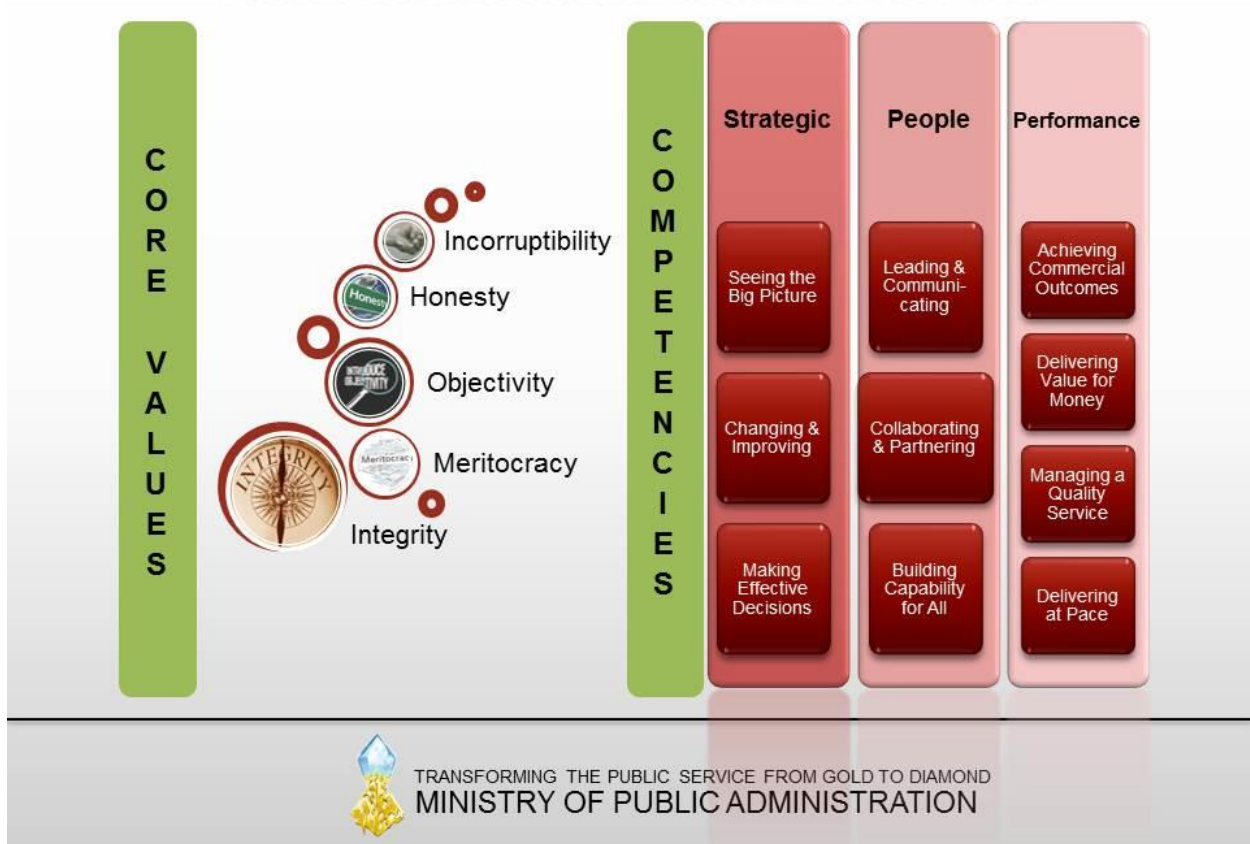
I can see some of you, because you are very bright people and always have been at the top of your class, saying, “I know that already. Why is she telling me all this?” You already have answers even before questions are asked. But in the case of professional development nobody has all the answers. It is all about preparation. For instance,

do any of you even know what will you be doing ten years from now? Maybe... Maybe not...

Up to this point in your lives and careers, you have shown you have what it takes to progress along the academic pathway to the world of work. Now, you are being called upon to dig deeper and this is why this Professional Development Programme that you have gone through has focused on these new — or perhaps not so new — competencies, and helped you to identify a few strengths and weaknesses that would impact on your career.

Allow me to share with you a slide that summarises the competencies we are looking for in the modern public officer, that 21st century public servant...

The Diamond Public Service



I also must let you know that these are competencies required in the private sector. As you go through the Public Service, what we will be doing is increasing the complexity of these skillsets, and developing you in these skillsets.

I raise this issue because, as I indicated earlier, we have revamped the PDP, and I know many of

you were very happy with the Programme. Just to reinforce some of what I said earlier, this is what GHRM and MPA are looking for in the new public officer...



I say this because tomorrow’s public officer may not even be in the office. They will be out in the field. You may be dealing with your colleagues only

over the internet; over the information superhighway. They may be working on the field and you would have to manage teams where this is concerned; when you are dealing with people offsite, amongst them.

We at the Ministry, together with GHRIS, will be doing a second revamp of this PDP programme as we go towards an online continuous assessment of these skillsets. Thus, you will not just be coming to a PDP programme (classroom) to develop these skillsets; there will be a continuous development of those skillsets, and we will be using e-learning strategies and tools to allow you to actively improve on these skillsets on a continuous basis. When you meet here, it will be because you are working in teams.

I consider this group to be very creative and innovative. We have talked about the 30 of you

present here today participating in that new pilot, as we move forward with the new PDP programme.

I wish to end by thanking all of you, and congratulating you for being involved in the PDP process, and who are better off for being in it. I must thank GHRS – the Government Human Resource Services Co. Ltd – for facilitating this rite of passage, and managing it on behalf of the Ministry of Public Administration for the second year in a row. We expect further development on the Professional Development Programme; indeed, this is how we continuously learn as well.

We have expanded, enhanced and energized our relationship with our scholarship winners and have gone way beyond making sure they are paid on time, and return home after their examinations are over. As I said, we are going to take this PDP to the next level. As you know, the Professional

Development Programme is part of that extra care, that extra effort, to help you find your footing in the world of work, and then both lead the way and set the pace to progress, not just for yourselves, but for our country, Trinidad and Tobago.

I leave you with one primary challenge today: be professional in your approach to your career. Train and discipline yourselves to be high-performing, team players who are innovative, but full of integrity; and who understand the importance of transparency and accountability, especially if you choose to remain in the public sector, and thus, are responsible for managing the public purse wisely.

When I listen to citizens and we do our focus groups, it is interesting to note what our citizens say they want from public officers. They only want to know that when they deal with a public officer, they can trust that public officer, and the officer is being

fair and honest with them. In fact, they have no problem if they have to come back 10 days later to renew a passport, for example. They just want to know that you were honest with them.

I encourage you to look beyond today. Indeed, look as far into the future as you can, and work towards succeeding in that future.

Once you achieve that success, then you would truly have crossed over into another important chapter in your lives, and made a wonderful transition through this rite of passage...

May God bless you all...

May God bless Trinidad and Tobago!

I THANK YOU...

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