VEARP

Hon Suttyadeo Moutia, Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms;
Mr Seebaluck Senior Chief Executive Ministry of civil service Affairs And Administrative Reforms

Ms How Fok Cheung, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry;

Mr Ibrahim Koodoruth, our Consultant on this project;

Mrs Bhunjun, Head, Family Welfare and Protection Unit of my Ministry;

Staff of both Ministries

HR CADRES of the Civil Service

All Protocol Observed;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear Participants, good morning.

58.3% and 80% relate respectively to the number of working women who were reported to have been victims of physical abuse and who, as a consequence, suffered from low productivity.

This same study also indicates that out of 46% of working women who reported to be victims of emotional abuse, 75% suffered from low productivity.

Out of 44.4% working women victims of sexual abuse, 80% suffered from low productivity.

The document also underscores the fact that 50 out of 79.7% of working men reported to have been victims of emotional abuse, suffered from low productivity and that the same percentage, that is 50% out of 81.2% of working men who reported to be victims of physical abuse, suffered from loss of productivity.

You will agree with me that these figures are compelling. Gender-based violence is considered as one of the most pervasive violations of human rights.
For a nation like ours, which depends essentially on its workforce for its economic progress and prosperity, such figures speak for themselves as regards the potential of Gender-based violence to seriously compromise the health, dignity, security and autonomy of our citizens.

This study came out in 2010. Since then, other publications have all underpinned the necessity of tackling the subject of GBV to ensure a safer and more prosperous society.

Gender-based violence, ladies and gentlemen, should indeed be everyone’s concern. No individual, irrespective of social background or economic status, can safely affirm that GBV will not have a bearing on his or her life.

GBV is not a personal problem; it is not a couple’s problem; it is not a family problem. It is a problem that needs to be addressed by all. Government and civil society, all have a role to play in preventing GBV from permeating our social fabric.

At the level of the ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, we have developed a National Costed Action Plan covering the period 2012-2015
to enlist the support of various partners and stakeholders in fighting this scourge.

Several programmes have been conducted under 5 pillars regarding namely, legislation, capacity building, awareness raising, media and monitoring and evaluation.

A **National Platform to End Gender-based Violence** with multiple partners has also been created to enlarge our network and encourage advocacy and action against GBV.

The reason of our presence amongst you today is to launch the **Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy** for public officers. The VEARP is a training programme targeting the human resource cadres of both private and public sectors.

It is to be a continuous endeavour.

This year two private companies, TNT and CERIDIAN have enlisted our services under this programme. Air Mauritius is also one keen partner as regards VEARP.

For me, as Minister, it is obvious that if we want the VEARP to be an effective tool, the public sector must be a key player in its implementation.
For this reason, I sincerely want to thank the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Hon Suttyadeo Moutia for having believed in this programme. His unflinching support has enabled this training to materialise for Human Resource Cadres of the Civil Service. I am confident that his collaboration translated through your active participation to this workshop, will yield fruitful results namely in ensuring an enhanced detection and proper support to both victims and abusers.

If I am not mistaken, the labour force in the civil service stands around 80 thousand. Taking into account the figures mentioned at the beginning of my speech regarding the loss of productivity resulting from gender-based violence, we can fairly say that you, as human resource cadres, have a tremendous responsibility.

Indeed, the VEARP will empower you to detect the various signs and symptoms of gender-based violence among your staff.

Potential and existing victims as well as perpetrators of GBV can, as a result, be channelled to appropriate support services.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
There are many forms of Gender Based Violence. Dealing with this problem on a case to case basis and referring them to the services of our Ministry, will help you as HR cadres to promote a healthier working environment. Your actions will definitely have a bearing as regards the wellbeing of your staff. You will as well as contribute to enhance the productivity of your respective departments and organisations.

The Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy is a strategic and practical document. It aims at:

1) Making available VEARP services to stakeholders engaged in the fight against gender-based violence so that they may assist effectively both abusers and victims to end the vicious cycle of domestic violence.
2) It is also in line with the objectives of my Ministry to harness collective effort in eliminating gender-based violence.
3) It contributes, as well, to set guidelines for both the public and the private sectors in establishing workplace initiatives to fight gender-based violence.

Today, I am appealing to you to work towards a win-win situation. The knowledge being imparted to you during this training will enable you not only to scale up your skills as
Human Resource officers but also better assume your role and responsibility as a citizen, as you help to effectively mitigate the negative impact of domestic violence among the workers with whom you interact every day.

Some of them may be people you appreciate, people you know and who are suffering in silence. You will be better equipped to lend them a helping hand.

In doing so, you will contribute in their welfare, maybe save their lives.

You will also help them in bettering their familial situations and ensure that victims are empowered to overcome abusive relationships. As regards abusers, you can make sure that they are referred to appropriate services for their rehabilitation. All it takes, is being equipped with the right information, a compassionate eye and ear and being able to secure the correct referral. Remember: each action counts. Individual action as well as collective efforts all have a bearing on how efficient the strategy to eliminate GBV in our society is.

I wish you all success and now declare this training programme on Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy for officers of the Human Resource
Speech of Hon Mrs Mireille Martin
Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Launching of the Training Programme of the
Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy
with the Officers of the Human Resource Cadre
Thursday 28 August 2014
9.30 am Fooks House

Cadre of the civil service, in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, open.
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