

Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs

ACCS Training

Opening remarks by the Minister for Employment and Social Affairs, Minister Patricia Francourt, Monday 20th September 2021

Principal Secretary of Social Affairs

Principal Secretary of Employment

Chairperson of the Agency for Social Protection

CEO of the Agency for Social Protection

Members of Anti-Corruption Commission,

All staff present

Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to be amongst you to mark this event organized by the Ministry to launch a series of training being undertaken in collaboration with the Anti-Corruption Commission of Seychelles (ACCS) for the staff of the Ministry.

Today marks a new beginning, a fresh start in our approach and about the way we conduct our business as a Ministry. We are starting on a clean slate in regards to our overall mindset when it comes to delivering the service that we have been entrusted to do and to our clients' expectations.

The Ministry has always been marred by allegations of corruption practices. In many instances the reports have not been evidence-based but in order to regain the public's confidence, we need to act in order to show that we are committed and prepared to do better. It starts now with the sessions about the risks, impacts

and ways in which corruption practices can be prevented, being conducted by ACCS with the entire Ministry. This will run this month and in October, it started with the Social Affairs Department recently, today it is the turn of ASP, to be followed next month with the Employment Department.

This awareness campaign could not have come at a better time, it will provide you, esteemed staff, with all the necessary knowledge to help you remain highly ethical while you deliver in your respective functions. This will help in raising the trust that the public in general have in our service as it will demonstrate that there is accountability and good governance being embedded across the board. It is very crucial to get staff to understand the need to maintain good ethical practices, to be accountable by recognizing that each and everyone has a role to play in upholding what **is right**, ensuring **fairness** in decisions taken at all levels resulting to the Ministry building a better image and reputable statute.

Today, ASP is going down in history as it witnesses its own launch of the campaign through its first Anti-Corruption training and the introduction of its first Standard Operating Procedure training for welfare application for its front line staff. The aim of such is to have an efficient and effective welfare application system to benefit those who are vulnerable in our society. Undeniably, the Agency and the other Departments of the Ministry provide some of the most important services in the country, that we do within the constitutional and legislative framework of our state. Given the importance of our work, there is the necessity to guarantee that the services remain transparent and free of any corruption practices.

Therefore, I urge all of you, esteemed staff of the Ministry to make the most of the Awareness sessions and the subsequent training, to amass skills, knowledge and abilities which will bring your respective organizations to a level that will inspire confidence and trust. Do not hesitate to clarify your doubts, ask questions and share your ideas to help improve the organization that you all form part of.

Many benefits are expected to be achieved. To have a better understanding of the situation will help you raise the bar high, build up your integrity to do things right. It is never too late and we are never too old to learn. It is hoped that after the sessions you will better understand the need to better manage and be more accountable on the use of the Ministry's resources and assets. We all have our code of ethics that is supposed to bind us to practice in a professional manner, all the time respecting and upholding human dignity, ensure fairness and equity and advocate for social justice. The training will underscore the social values that we all need to emulate to ensure our work practices are not compromised in any way when assessing the needs of our service users, to facilitate and provide the relief that they require and expect from us.

At this juncture I wish to thank the ACCS team for making time to undertake the sessions with the Ministry. You are the catalyst in our drive to do and be better. Together we will win the fight against corruption practices for the betterment of our country.

With these few words, it is my honor to launch the sessions and training and wish you all fruitful participation.

Thank You.