



Opening Remarks
By
Ms. Gillian Macintyre
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Public Administration
at
BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP
at the
Hilton Trinidad Hotel
Port of Spain
Friday 25th July, 2014

Salutations

- Ms. Prabhawatie Maraj, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
- Consultants at PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Staff of the MPA;
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

The term “business as usual” tends to have a negative connotation except when for whatever reasons basic services are not available. While we are not in the hurricane zone, we still experience extreme weather events in some parts of the country. All of us have experienced floods, and increasingly we are being warned about earthquake damage and tsunamis. Fires and explosions are always a possibility, especially in the energy and manufacturing sectors.

We, in the public service especially, have to ensure that our goods and services are available under the worst and most trying of circumstances, especially in the aftermath of extreme events.

On August 4, 2011, Cabinet agreed to a strategic initiative for the Establishment of a Business Continuity Management (BCM) Capacity throughout the Public Service. Three months ago, on April 16th we held a kick-off meeting and today we are holding our first stakeholder workshop. What this demonstrates is that we mean business. It will be business as usual even when the circumstances are unusual.

It is in this context that I welcome all of you here today especially the four pilot Ministries - Finance and the Economy, People and Social Development, Trade, Industry, Investments and Communications and Education. I also welcome the counterpart staff from my own Ministry, the Ministry of Public Administration, and our facilitators from PwC, Bruce Scott and Cassie Ramkerrysingh.

Today’s workshop is part of a process which is expected to lead to the development of the draft BCM Policy and Governance Unit, and the roll-out of BCM across the Public Service.

In this particular workshop we want to make sure that we give you enough reasons for you to commit completely to BCM so that we will all be ready to deal with any extreme issues that might arise that have the potential to disrupt the delivery of public goods and services. We will be presented with the results of the BCM diagnostic assessment of all five Ministries, a roadmap for BCM implementation in our Ministries and Departments, and we will have the opportunity to discuss the issues and challenges around the roll-out of BCM

This is a full and demanding schedule but it is an essential first step to implementation. All of us must be on the same wavelength while, at the same time, seeing how we can improve the readiness and business continuity process in our Ministries. It is clear, however, that we must all work together as a team if we are to move forward or achieve any success with BCM.

From my perspective as the Permanent Secretary of the coordinating Ministry and as a career public officer, there will be a learning process involved. In this process we are all high on the learning curve so that we will be less challenged than if we came from outside the service or

without experience and knowledge about what we would need to do. In most cases we will need to learn some new skills and ways of doing things. It is not a change in what you do so much as adding value. What will be required to provide business as usual in unusual circumstances is job enhancement as part of capacity building initially in the five key Ministries and subsequently in the entire public sector. This is partly the responsibility of the Employer but it is also the responsibility of all of you here today who will play a crucial role in the operationalization of BCM to ensure that you acquire the skills, knowledge, capacity and competencies that will be needed. We believe that as you interact with one another through the entire eight-stage process we will see the evolution of an extremely supportive, team-based environment that will have the synergy, the energy, the dedication and commitment that we need to ensure that when the next disaster strikes, the public service and all the institutions it manages, will be ready, willing and able to provide stability, comfort and, most of all, hope.

I thank you.