

**REMARKS DELIVERED TO THE 'TEAM BARBADOS HOSTS
WORKSHOPS'
HOSTED BY THE NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR SERVICE
EXCELLENCE
WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2009
BY DENNIS DE PEIZA, GENERAL SECRETARY, CTUSAB**

I consider it an honour to have been invited to briefly address you the participants of this workshop.

Following on my recent appointment as a Director to the Board of the National Initiative for Service Excellence, I consider that the powers that be, have carefully planned and executed my initiation into to the service of this organization. I say thanks to them for reminding me that I am here to work, but more importantly, to continue the efforts at promoting the gospel of service excellence, which I consider the hallmark of quality service.

I say this against the backdrop that the labour movement strongly supports the work of the National Initiative for Service Excellence. I can tell you that NISE holds special significance to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados, if for no other reason that the conceptualization of what we now know as NISE, came out of the bosom of the labour movement.

It is important that I recognize and stress that this programme of customer service training for front line employees within the tourism sector, is critically towards positioning Barbados to remain a preferred destination in the growing competitive market. There is no secret that word of mouth promotion is the very best you can find. So this means that if we treat our customers well, we will

make life easier for our promotional efforts, which are directed at securing repeat visitors and attracting new customers.

In deciding on what should constitute my brief remarks to you this afternoon, my thoughts wandered back to remarks I made in August, on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Barbados Workers' Union Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Week 2009. I made a comment then, which I considered appropriate now, and I quote.....

"As you work towards excellence, I challenge you to address the fundamental question of how to raise the bar to meet the customer's needs. It should be your aim to deliver the best customer service, for the purpose of improving the experience of the customer. It is your

responsibility to work towards continuous improvement, and you therefore must move to improve on what you have been doing year in and year out.”

It is important that you understand and appreciate the fact that the customer is the most important person in any business. In the tourism sector, the visitor does us a favour by coming to our shores. They have a choice of destination, and so it is essential that you as frontliners understand that you are not doing them a favour when you undertake to treat them with the utmost courtesy, dignity and respect. You must remain mindful that the coming of visitors to our shores is a means towards ensuring that each one of you working with in the tourism

sector remains employed, and more over, that you are paid a salary.

When we consider the significance of these two prime factors, the only reasonable conclusion that is left to be drawn, is that service excellence will impact on the bottom line. I therefore urge you to recognize that PRIDE in customer service must be seen as a priority.

The pride to which I speak starts with displaying a good attitude to our visitors. It is a key element of service which forms a lasting memory of their visit. To impress upon you the importance of displaying a good attitude, I will quote from an article entitled 'The Hospitality and Tourism Industry', written by J Andrew Morris. He wrote:

“As employers on the frontline with customers, you are the ones who create the customer service experience.

That’s why you must develop a service attitude. Think of it as being an actor. Actors, no matter how they feel have to set their personal feelings aside before stepping onto the stage. Playing the role of a positive customer service provider is no different. To do so, you must concentrate on acting cheerfully, friendly, no matter how you are feeling”.

Added to developing a service attitude, you need to recognize that your performance on the job is based on standards. You therefore have a responsibility to know

your professional standards, as this will help you do deliver good service.

As you seek to interact with those who visit our shores, I implore you to demonstrate good and effective communication skills. Listen to your customers and show them that you care about them and their needs.

I sincerely hope that if it is one thing that will remain with you coming out of this workshop, it would be the need for you through practice, to demonstrate an understanding of providing excellence service.

Finally, I urge you to let courtesy, friendliness and professionalism remain as your watch words, as these hold the key to delivering excellent service.