

Speech by Hon (Mrs) Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun
Vice Prime Minister,
Minister Of Education, Tertiary Education, Science & Technology

Senior Officials of my Ministry

Director and staff of SENA

Managers, SEN Schools.

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning to all of you.

It gives me great pleasure to be present here this morning for the official launch of the **Quality Assurance Framework for Special Education Needs Schools.**

This Framework becomes a landmark in itself in that it fully supports and complements the major thrusts of Inclusion and Equity that characterize our education system. Indeed, you will recall that Government Program 2020-2024 had put Inclusiveness at the heart of a non-discriminatory social construct and Education, being at the core of this Government's inclusiveness agenda, my ministry has taken measures to ensure a fair access to high quality Education for All.

In that endeavor, we are aligning ourselves on two Important International Conventions. One is the **United Nations Convention for the Right of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) whose Article 24** stipulates that States Parties recognize the legitimate right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties have committed themselves to the architecture of an inclusive education system at all levels and for lifelong learning.

The other international commitment relates to the 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, of which SDG 4 clearly stresses the provision of an inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

This, Ladies and Gentlemen, explains the establishment of the Special Education Needs Authority (SENA) as a statutory body to regulate and facilitate

evidence-based policies and ensure the provision of quality services in the dispensing of special and inclusive education.

You who have been active in the field are fully conversant with the long-standing difficulties that our young learners with disabilities had been confronting formerly, the constraints they had traditionally been exposed to, the stigma that had, sadly, been attached to them.

SENA was accordingly entrusted with the mission to ensure equitable access to quality education and holistic development—and is being done through adapted pedagogies, accommodations, assistive technologies and multi-sectoral support systems for learners with diverse disabilities and special education needs.

The absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework and hence issues pertaining to standards, efficiency, accountability, and transparency could not formerly be effectively addressed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is no longer the case. Let us all be on the same page and understand the value addition brought by a QA Framework.

Operating within a quality assurance framework has multiple benefits, not least of which is that it facilitates ongoing identification of quality-related problems and possible ways to resolve them. Overall, therefore, it supports the establishment and the embedding of a quality culture within an organization.

The underlying principle is and remains the emphasis on continuous improvement and the maintaining of high standards in the educational provision such that learner success is fostered.

This understandably means that institutions and staff engage in a continuous process of self- reflection, self-assessment and improvement to achieve the best possible quality outcomes in policy implementation and practice.

If we put aside the rhetoric, the bottom line is that, through Quality Assurance, we are seeing to it that children with disabilities and their families receive the right services at the right time and that those services have a positive and lasting impact.

Obviously, we have to recognize that quality assurance is and will remain a dynamic process as priorities and targets of SEN schools keep on evolving.

Nothing is ever carved in stone—but the fact remains that, while we can set performance indicators for school efficiency and effectiveness, we still require a committed leadership to make things happen.

This is where you, Managers, get into the act. It will be expected of you that you help everyone in your institutions internalize a culture of continuous improvement—and that you can most profitably do through quality performance management, monitoring and reporting.

At the end of the day, the sense of transparency and accountability is enhanced and there is an uptick in the organizational credibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you will find out, there are seven domains that are spelt out in this Framework and these are in line with widespread international quality assurance practice and they all lead towards the convergence of efforts for a targeted enhancement of student learning experience and their holistic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would wish to place on record my appreciation for the work being done by SENA and its staff. This is just one more feather in their cap as the Authority seeks to professionalize the sector.

Let's together take this opportunity to make this Special Education Needs sector a robust one by implementing this highly commendable QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK to achieve excellence in this specific sector where **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**.

Thank you for your kind attention.