Opening address by Minister Mitcy Larue, Minister for Health at the, Seminar on Patient-centred Care, 6 May 2016

In 2013, the Government embarked on the modernization of the health services. In 2014, the Ministry of Health launched the Health of Our Nation movement. Last year, the National Health Policy was adopted, and this year we are in the process of establishing the National Health Strategic Plan. A common theme of all these important national initiatives is that our efforts have people as the main focus. Development, whether in its economic, social or health aspect, places people at the centre. Our efforts to increase the wealth of our nation, or the health of our nation, see as their central objective, the continuing and ever progressing wellbeing of the Seychellois people.

The people is not an abstract concept. Our efforts are not directed at a nameless or faceless mass, but rather at the recognition and understanding that, whatever measure we use – be it GDP per capita, life-expectancy or infant mortality rate, it is the individual and his family that we seek to serve. National, people-centred policies, strategies and investment must translate into person and patient-centred services and care. In other words, what we do as policy makers and service providers must have, as clear results, an impact on the individual patient and client.

How well do we do at putting into practice this principle on a day to day basis and in all our health programmes? I invite you to reflect deeply on this as you
explore and debate during this seminar. I can see clear evidence that we often succeed in applying the approach of person and patient-centred care. There is a great deal of satisfaction on the part of the clients and patients who use the health services: people whose health has been restored; babies and mothers who leave the maternity unit in perfect health; the individuals who feel empowered and motivated after a session with their health professional. On the other hand, there is also clear evidence that sometimes we do not get it right: the patient who is distressed more by the encounter with the health professional than with his ailment; the failure to respond to the patient’s questions; our reluctance to engage with the patient’s carer. It is my hope that this seminar will highlight the good practices that exist, inspire and motivate all of us to improve our approach and also examine weaknesses and point the way to improvement.

I am pleased that this seminar brings together health professionals and users of the health services. It is this interaction that will help to make our services more patient-centred and effective and the use of our services more satisfying and beneficial. The first presentation of the first draft of the Charter for Health will, I hope, open a dialogue which will lead to the adoption of a common vision and the way forward in the pursuit of the health of our nation.

I offer you my best wishes for the success of this seminar, which I now have pleasure to open.