



GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010 - 2015

ADDRESS

by

The President

of the

Republic of Mauritius

in the

Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall

Tuesday 08 June 2010

Government Programme 2010-2015

Address by the President of the Republic

MR SPEAKER,

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

1. I am pleased to welcome you to the First Session of the Fifth National Assembly. I bid a special welcome to the new members of the Assembly.

2. The policies pursued by Government, during the last five years, have been endorsed by the population at large. They have expressed their approval of Government's philosophy and of the concrete measures already taken to address historical inequities and open new opportunities accessible to all.

3. The population has clearly expressed its support for the pursuit of the democratization of the economy and the transformation of Mauritius into a society of equal opportunities based on the values of Unity, Equity and Modernity. The Government Programme 2010-2015 constitutes a blueprint for the realisation of this vision.

4. Economic efficiency and social justice will continue to underpin all the actions of Government. Government will resolutely work towards strengthening national unity, entrenching democracy, promoting still higher norms of governance including transparency and accountability in public affairs and ensuring that the population at large becomes stakeholders in national development.

5. The Constitution we inherited from the founding fathers of the nation has served us well. However, no matter how well our institutions may be seen to be functioning, they need to be adjusted to help the country face new challenges. We need a constitutional regime that will strengthen our democracy, promote nation-building and further entrench the fundamental rights and freedom of all Mauritians.

6. As part of this process of constitutional review, Government will start wide-ranging consultations and will appoint a team of constitutional experts which will assess the application of the Constitution since 1968 and consider the appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system.

7. Government strongly supports a robust regulatory regime for effective regulation and safeguard of national and consumer interests. In this context, further measures will be introduced to strengthen the independence of regulatory bodies.

8. Government is committed to supporting the fundamental rights of all citizens, including privacy rights and freedom of expression. A plural, fair and independent media is an essential component of a democratic system. Accordingly, Government will introduce legislation for media law reform. Government will also support greater professionalism in the media and the powers and functions of the Independent Broadcasting Authority will be reviewed to provide for ethical conduct and safeguard of the fundamental rights of all our citizens.

9. Government embarks on this new mandate with new challenges on the macroeconomic front as well as on public finances. Although the country weathered the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, it now has to face a new daunting situation spawned by developments in the Euro Zone. Government has the resolve, competence and the experience to face these challenges. And it is comforted by the wholehearted adherence of the people to the mission it has set itself.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

10. Government will reorganize the Management Audit Bureau into an Office of Public Sector Governance. The office will operate under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office. It will have the responsibility to ensure that public sector management becomes more outcome-oriented and is in line with best practices of governance, in particular those relating to transparency and accountability.

11. One of the main thrusts of the Government Programme will be the implementation of further measures to provide a stronger, more secure and stable society. In fact, wide ranging and profound measures have already been successfully implemented with a positive impact on the Law and Order situation.

12. Law and Order remains a top priority for Government. The primary purpose is and will always be the safety and security of our citizens and visitors, and the protection of our national interests. Tackling crime and dealing with offenders remains a paramount concern for Government.

13. Government will pursue the ongoing reforms in the Police department and will ensure that the department is properly manned, equipped and trained to maintain law and order in the country.

14. Government is committed to implement the proposals contained in the National Policing Strategic Framework which was published in February 2010, the ultimate aim of which is to help shift the Police from a 'Force' to a 'Service', where service to the community will be at the centre of our policing.

15. Government will set up Local Community Policing Committees for the elaboration of local crime reduction strategies. The purpose of each Committee will be to work towards creating a healthy and safe community environment for all who live and work within a given area.

16. Government will establish an independent law enforcement agency under the aegis of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to reinforce the fight against transnational crime and to recover ill-gotten gains.

17. Government will establish a legal framework within which the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) will operate. The NCIS will provide leadership in criminal intelligence on a national scale. It will help law enforcement agencies pre-empt crime by processing and disseminating information, giving guidance, and analysing major criminal activity.

18. Government will establish a National Crime Control Commission with the special mandate of reviewing measures for the protection of vulnerable persons, including elderly persons, women, children and persons with disabilities.

19. Government will arrange for the extension of the Closed Circuit Television Surveillance Systems to other regions, particularly high-risk areas.

20. Government will recruit at least 5,000 Police constables as part of the programme to improve security and reinforce law and order.

21. The legal framework will be reviewed to combat criminality in general. Government will adopt a new Police Act and a Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence Act, with Codes of Practice designed to regulate the conduct of persons entrusted with the duty of investigating offences.

22. Government will adopt, in accordance with human rights and civil liberties standards, an Interception of Communications Act to fight more effectively against organised crime and drug trafficking.

23. A new Bail Act will be introduced. The Courts will be able to impose a curfew requirement on detainees and order them to wear electronic bracelets. The law will also provide that a person released on bail will be liable to be arrested for breach or anticipated breach of a bail condition and the imposition of harsher penalty for the breach of bail conditions.

24. Government will introduce special measures for the protection of witnesses and vulnerable persons, including the elaboration of a Witness Protection Programme and circumstances where the out-of-court statements of such witnesses, video-recorded under oath, would be admissible as evidence in Court. An important amendment will be brought to the law so as to prevent intimidation of witnesses in drug-related cases and other serious cases.

25. Government will amend the existing legislation with a view to providing stiffer penalties for those found guilty of murder or manslaughter, gang-rape as well as for drug trafficking and drug-dealing offences.

26. Government will adopt a Victims Rights Act and a Victims Charter to better safeguard the rights of victims of crimes. The Victims Charter will outline the standard of service to which a victim of crime is entitled.

27. Government will review the Juvenile Offenders Act to bring it in line with the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice.

28. In order to mitigate the unintended consequences of gambling in the country, Government will relocate gambling activities in specifically designated areas, away from residential and commercial areas.

29. Government is committed to make the procedure for complaints and investigation against Police simplified and enhanced, and an Independent Police Complaints Bureau will be set up for the purpose of investigating such complaints. A legal framework, within which the Independent Police Complaints Bureau will operate, will be established.

30. Government will receive delivery of a sophisticated Offshore Patrol Vessel to reinforce surveillance of our Exclusive Economic Zone and territorial waters.

31. Government will continue to implement the programme for the improvement of the prison conditions, security and environment, thus creating facilities for rehabilitating detainees for their reintegration in society.

32. To overcome the problem of overpopulation in the prisons, Government will finalise the construction of a new high security prison at Melrose to accommodate some 750 detainees serving long sentences.

33. Government will step up rehabilitation programmes, literacy and numeracy courses to be provided to detainees with the assistance of non-governmental and other voluntary organisations.

34. Government will step up the training programmes for prison officers so that they are kept abreast of the latest techniques in the management of the prisons service and the rehabilitation of detainees.

35. Government will undertake wide consultations with the NGOs, the '*forces vives*' and researchers with a view to elaborating a long-term reform of the prisons service, including the rehabilitation of detainees to meet the requirements of a modern country.

36. Government will introduce a multi-purpose identity card with improved security, including biometric features. The new card will facilitate identity authentication, therefore eliminating the need for multi-documentary proof for transactions.

37. Government reaffirms its commitment to the fight against fraud and corruption.

38. The public sector will be provided with an Anti-Corruption Framework to help build trust and confidence in public institutions.

39. Government reiterates its commitment to fully adhere to international instruments and conventions aimed at combating fraud and corruption.

40. The Republic of Mauritius has ratified the Optional Protocol to the United Nations' Convention against Torture. In line with its obligations, Mauritius will set up a National Preventive Mechanism which will ensure that the conditions prevailing in our prisons, police cells and other places of detention comply with human rights obligations and the provisions of the Protocol.

41. The awareness campaigns for better protection of human rights will continue.

42. Government will continue to invest in the expansion and modernisation of the SSR International Airport in its endeavour to transform the airport into a modern state-of-the-art one in the region. A second runway will be constructed and will be dedicated only for landing of aircrafts.

43. A new Cargo and Freeport Zone will be set up with improved and modern logistic facilities to give a boost to air freight traffic at SSR International Airport.

44. To expand Freeport activities and transshipment, Government will pursue the modernisation of the port, including cargo handling and storage. Measures will be taken to improve logistics, information flows and customs processes. Furthermore, the development of a Leisure and Cruise Hub as an economic activity in itself will be accelerated.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

45. Natural Disasters and extreme weather events represent an increasing risk to sustainable development. Government will take measures to strengthen the monitoring of weather and climate and encourage research into the impact of climate change and other natural disasters to enable decisions to be taken based on sound scientific information.

46. Further, considering that climate patterns recognize no boundaries, Government will enhance regional and international cooperation for the development of climate-related science in the Western Indian Ocean.

47. Government will acquire a weather Radar to further increase the capacity of the Meteorological Services in issuing torrential rain and cyclone warnings.

48. Government will contribute to monitor and exchange seismic data and information through the regional network put in place by the United Nations. In addition to the seismometer already installed on the premises of the Meteorological Services in Vacoas, Government will install a second one in Rodrigues.

49. Government will provide better means of monitoring and forecasting ocean waves for all those at risk. Wave rider buoys will be deployed in the territorial waters of Mauritius.

50. Government will set up a Disaster Management Centre which will be responsible for the management of natural disasters in Mauritius.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

51. Government will ensure that, as a national broadcasting service, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation continues to cater for the intellectual, cultural, information and entertainment needs of its audience and, at the same time, ensure the complete switchover of the television and radio systems from analogue to digital.

52. In line with the Government's policy to preserve and promote ancestral languages and traditions, the MBC will be encouraged to launch additional TV channels dedicated to broadcasting in languages widely spoken and taught in Mauritius.

53. A Cultural TV Channel will be set up for the promotion of local artistic talents and cultural organisations and to enable the Mauritian Public to appreciate local productions.

54. Government will review the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act to keep pace with latest technological development in the sector and also to address the issue of shareholding in the electronic media and for the imposition of penalties for breaches of broadcasting laws and conditions attached to licences.

55. As part of its endeavour to promote nation building, Government will introduce the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) for students having completed their secondary education.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

56. Government will continue to encourage the use of renewable energy in order to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions through the setting up of wind farms, hydropower stations, the use of land fill gas for energy production and the optimum utilization of solar energy.

57. Government will proceed with the development of a Land Based Oceanic Industry which will use deep sea water for cooling purposes. Government will also explore sources of geothermal energy. A Master Plan for Renewable Energy will be prepared for the development of renewable energy projects up to year 2025.

58. Government will encourage the democratization of the electricity generation sector by providing the necessary incentives to small producers and households to generate electricity.

59. Government will undertake legal and institutional reforms in the energy sector and will establish an independent utility regulatory body to regulate the energy sector. An Energy Commission to harmonize energy policies at the level of stakeholders involved in the sector will also be set up.

60. One of the main objectives of Government is to reduce energy demand and improve the country's energy security. An Energy Efficiency Bill will be enacted to provide the framework for product labelling and importation of energy efficient equipment. Government will promote projects to achieve energy savings in the private and public sectors and create national awareness on energy conservation.

61. In order to address the challenges facing the water sector, Government will develop a Master Plan for a more judicious use of water resources to cater for projected needs up to 2050. The Plan will review and update the legal and institutional aspects of the water sector, including water rights. A Water Resources Bill will be introduced.

62. Government will construct two dams at Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles, in order to increase storage capacity by some additional 30 million metre cube by 2013 and improve water supply in Port Louis and the South. A project to divert water, from Rivière du Poste to feed Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, will also be implemented to improve water supply.

63. Government will implement a major programme for the rehabilitation and upgrading of the water supply network to reduce water losses and to alleviate hardship caused by water supply disruptions. Government will undertake the construction of a new water treatment plant at Pailles to mitigate water supply constraints and ensure regular water supply in the Port Louis region.

64. Government will continue with the implementation of the wastewater projects and house connections in Plaines Wilhems and extend the project to other areas with the aim of ensuring proper sanitation and promoting public health. A Master Plan will be developed to identify projects in the waste water sector for implementation in the next twenty years.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

65. Government acknowledges that the key to economic democratization is empowerment.

66. Government recognizes that the human being is at the centre of sustainable development and that equal opportunity to participate in development is a pre-requisite to nation building.

67. Government pledges to redouble its efforts to combat poverty in all its forms while ensuring that the process of economic democratization reaches every section of our population.

68. To better achieve its objectives and fulfil its commitments to improve the living standards of the population, Government has created a separate Ministry to look specifically after Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. The main focus of this Ministry will be to enhance the quality of life of the vulnerable groups through greater social justice and human development.

69. It will assist the needy citizens of Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands by exploring all avenues open to them to access economic resources and facilities. Furthermore, it will ensure that these citizens are fully integrated in the mainstream of our society. A strong and diversified platform will be put in place to address poverty, fight exclusion, promote inclusive and sustainable growth and secure social progress.

70. The National Empowerment Programme will continue to provide dedicated support to specific vulnerable groups on a countrywide basis. Pending a reassessment of the level of poverty, the immediate area of intervention will be to extend assistance under the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme to the totality of families identified in 229 pockets of poverty across the country.

71. Government will build greater synergy and coordination in poverty reduction strategies and programmes in order to achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness in the national drive against poverty. The main areas of interest and intervention will be in social housing, training and education, capacity building and employment, infrastructural development and provision of public utilities, and health and recreation, the main objective being to bring about behavioural change in these citizens which would eventually empower them and promote responsible citizenship.

72. Government will pay special attention to the socio-economic empowerment of less-able persons. It will also set up and maintain a common database to ensure better complementarities of social programmes and provide a more comprehensive and effective set of services to beneficiaries.

73. Government will organize an '*Assises de l'Intégration Sociale*' to enlist the support of the civil society, the private sector and other development partners for the elaboration of a comprehensive and integrated action plan for the empowerment of vulnerable groups.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

74. Government will adopt an economic policy geared towards progress and prosperity for the whole nation. Government will ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution of the national wealth.

75. Government is strongly resolved to ensure a fair balance between economic imperatives and social exigencies.

76. Government fully understands the hardships experienced by the unemployed and the plight of low income families when prices rise. One of the top priorities of Government is therefore to create more jobs by boosting economic growth while maintaining a low inflation environment to protect the purchasing power of our fellow citizens.

77. Government will strengthen the endeavour to make of Mauritius a globally competitive economy. Reforms will be pursued to improve the ease-of-doing business, the investment climate and to further open up the country to foreign investors, expertise, ideas and capital. The focus will be on building the economic pillars of the future while at the same time further consolidating the existing ones and enhancing their competitiveness.

78. Government intends to transform Mauritius into a Duty Free Island with the objective of enhancing tourism and making Mauritius a more dynamic trading hub.

79. Government will accelerate the democratization of the economy, thus further broadening the economic and business circle in the country. To this end, measures will also be taken to encourage direct participation of workers and other stakeholders in major economic activities including energy production, manufacturing, financial services, Information and Communication Technology and tourism. Furthermore, to ensure workers' participation in land and property development, the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust will be revamped to fulfil its mission.

80. Government will give due consideration to workers who produce the wealth of the nation. In this respect, the National Pay Council will be phased out and the tripartite mechanism will be reinstated as a permanent forum for discussions amongst the social partners with a view to better understanding and responding to the challenges that face the country.

81. Government will consolidate the country's economic resilience to successfully cope with external shocks and global uncertainties.

82. Government will endeavour to consolidate public finances to bring down the budget deficit and public debt further.

83. Government will bring fiscal reforms to further improve the tax system and ensure it is efficient, fair and conducive to both large economic operators and small

and medium entrepreneurs. The proposed reforms will relieve taxpayers and encourage investment and savings. The National Residential Property Tax and the tax on interest will be abolished.

84. Government will speed up the setting up of an Integrated Tax Administration System. This will facilitate tax audits and intensify the fight against tax evasion and fraud through better data and information management.

85. Government will also speed up the modernization process of other revenue departments.

86. Government will continue to promote efficiency and effectiveness in public finance management by better planning and consolidating the implementation of Performance-Based Budgeting (PBB). Emphasis will be laid on better accountability and transparency. The scope of PBB will be extended to cover local authorities and statutory bodies. The emphasis will be on results in service delivery.

87. Government will also introduce new legislation for Public Finance Management which will provide a comprehensive and modern legal framework, compatible with PBB.

88. The soundness and stability of our financial system have been crucial to resisting the impact of the global financial crisis. Government will build further upon this strength. Policies will be aligned with global trends. To maintain Mauritius as a clean and credible financial services sector, Government is committed to adopting international norms and standards in banking, insurance, securities, corporate governance and anti-money laundering and to the implementation of the recommendations made under the IMF/World Bank Financial Sector Assessment Programme and those of the Financial Stability Board.

89. Government will set up an Ombudsperson Office for the whole financial services sector, both banking and non-banking.

90. Government will introduce a Limited Partnership Bill and a Foundation Bill to give a new impetus to the development of the global business sector. Government will pursue efforts for further diversification of the sector both geographically and in terms of the activities of global business companies. Government will also ensure that whilst our country remains a jurisdiction of sound repute fully compliant with international norms, our International Financial Centre remains a competitive one.

91. To pursue the reforms relating to pensions, Private Occupational Pension Scheme legislation will be enacted including measures to better protect the purchasing power of pensioners.

92. Government will continue to empower Ministries and Departments by improving their capacity to implement capital projects and delivery of services. In

this regard, the public procurement system will be further reviewed, modernized, decentralized and supported by the implementation of an e-procurement platform.

93. Government will step up its collaboration with other countries in the region so that we can make significant progress towards an effective common market. Government will work to derive maximum benefits from the interim Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union. It will build on the work already started by the Indian Ocean Commission.

94. Government will pursue initiatives to develop Mauritius as a service hub for the region and as a link between Africa and Asia. Efforts will be pursued to position Mauritius as a Centre for Capacity Building by supporting the operations of the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence and the IMF's African Regional Technical Assistance Centres.

95. Government will establish an International Arbitration Centre and take necessary action to promote legal process outsourcing.

96. To further improve the Doing Business Climate, facilitate trade and reduce the cost of importing and exporting, Government will modernise and rationalise regulations and licensing agreements.

97. Government will enhance the use of the Public Sector Investment Programme and the Projects Plan Committee to ensure that capital projects are carried out within the time frame and budget. In this context, the capacity of Ministries and Departments to plan, prepare and implement projects will be strengthened.

98. Government will also provide the necessary infrastructure to support private sector and PPP projects including the Road Decongestion Programme and Renewable Energy Projects.

99. To further expand economic infrastructure for sustainable growth, a study will be undertaken in view of the reopening of the Port of Mahebourg.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

100. With a view to establishing standards and help boost the Construction Sector, the new Construction Industry Development Board Act has been promulgated. In order to bring in greater professionalism in this sector, Government will:

- review the Professional Architect Council Act and the Registered Professional Engineering Council Act; and
- introduce a new Professional Quantity Surveyors Bill.

101. Government will ensure that the National Development Unit pursues its mandate to enhance the quality of life of the population through the provision of

community-based infrastructure and amenities as well as the implementation of an effective Land Drainage Programme over the island.

102. The free travel scheme for the elderly, the disabled and students, which became operational in 2005, will be maintained. The mechanism for disbursement will be reviewed to ensure efficiency.

103. Government will introduce new measures to address the problem of road safety among which will be a new driving centre. The Road Traffic Act will be re-examined and regulations will be made for the outsourcing of the examination of vehicles and to authorise the use of personalised number plates on vehicles amongst others.

104. With a view to providing an efficient land transport system, Government will come up with a strategy paper for the land transport sector.

105. Government, in its attempt to alleviate and solve the traffic congestion problem, will soon embark on a Bus Modernization Programme to upgrade bus services throughout the island. The aim being to offer fast, frequent, convenient and more attractive services to the commuters. This programme also includes the construction of an alternative mode of transport on the Curepipe-Port Louis corridor. The *metro-léger* project will be reconsidered.

106. Special consideration will be given to the National Transport Corporation to put it on a sound financial footing and to ensure its sustainability.

107. The Shipping Sector plays a vital role in the economic development of the country. Government will make regulations under the Merchant Shipping Act 2007 to ensure compliance with the International Maritime Conventions to which Mauritius has adhered. The objective is to have an effective Maritime Administration and a sound Ship Registry Framework.

108. In view of the increase in regional traffic, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd will be reorganized.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

109. Government will continue its proactive foreign policy aimed at strengthening our international relations, in particular with our traditional partners while consolidating our *acquis* and further widening our economic base.

110. Government will give particular attention to forging special and strategic partnerships with a view to accelerating the socio-economic development of Mauritius. Government will also work towards the deepening of cooperation with friendly countries.

111. Government will intensify its action to defend the right to effectively exercise sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and will explore all options available to ensure its early return to Mauritius and the resettlement of the archipelago.

112. Government will make a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf for an extended continental shelf in the region of the Chagos Archipelago.

113. Government will continue to work constructively with France in the co-management of Tromelin without prejudice to our sovereignty.

114. Government will continue to support initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting peace and security in particular in Africa and the Indian Ocean region, including addressing the issue of terrorism.

115. Piracy is becoming a serious concern for maritime security in the Indian Ocean. This may have very adverse impact on the stability and development of our region. Government will continue to work very closely with neighbouring countries, the European Union and international organisations like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to ward off this new threat.

116. Government will pursue the policy of developing circular migration schemes thereby encouraging the mobility of our work force to acquire new skills and consolidate their experience overseas with a view to developing entrepreneurial ventures upon their return.

117. Government will take steps to accelerate the process of regional integration. Government will also encourage cross-border initiatives in key sectors such as food security, climate change, infrastructure, ICT, renewable energy and marine resources development.

118. Government will continue to pursue an active international trade policy for Mauritius to fully integrate into the global economy.

119. Government will ensure the effective implementation of anti-dumping and countervailing legislation to safeguard the interests of our domestic industry.

120. Government will, in consonance with the objectives of Maurice Ile Durable, support and promote the interests of Small Island Developing States.

121. Government will participate actively in all efforts of the international community to address issues relating to climate change and sea level rise.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

122. Government will complete the construction of some 550 low cost housing units by February 2011 on 11 sites across the islands. 10,000 additional housing units will be constructed for lower and middle income groups. Some 1000 arpents of land to be made available within the context of the Government/MSPA deal, will be used for the construction of the new housing units.

123. In line with the democratization process, Government will allow those at the lower rungs of the ladder to also have access to “fully serviced sites” where they will be able to construct houses on their own on plots of land of 60 toises. At the end of five years, around 1000 such lots will have been allocated to eligible beneficiaries who will also benefit from prototype plans and loan facilities.

124. The Land Administration, Valuation and Information System project, commonly known as LAVIMS, is an ongoing reform program that will deliver the essential building blocks for a modern Land Administration and Management System for the Republic of Mauritius. The main outcome of the project will provide an instrument for the effective use and development of land resources to achieve economic prosperity, social equity and preserve the natural beauty of the island. A national digital cadastre integrating a valuation roll for all residential and commercial properties will be created.

125. Government will shortly introduce a new land Use Planning and Development Bill which will provide for the consolidation of all planning related legislation into a single piece of legislation and at the same time make provision for streamlined appeal procedures through the creation of an Independent Planning Appeal Tribunal.

126. Government will carry out a comprehensive review of the five Municipal Council Areas and the existing urban Outline Schemes which are outdated.

127. With the introduction of the Business Facilitation Act, the Local Authorities are mandated to issue Building and Land Use Permit within a period of two weeks. Government will further streamline procedures to ensure that development projects are not unduly delayed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

128. Government will sustain its policies, programmes and projects from a gender perspective while extending technical assistance to all Ministries for the formulation of gender sectoral policies. Women Centres will be revamped into “one-stop shops”, thereby promoting the concept of decentralized services.

129. To boost women entrepreneurship, women will be trained and empowered in the informal sector for the setting up of home-based activities and micro enterprises. A Trading House will be set up at the seat of Enterprise Mauritius to provide a marketing showcase and an outlet to them. A Documentation/Research Centre on Gender Issues will be set up. Additional Women/Empowerment Centres will also be constructed.

130. Government will sustain its policies for the promotion of family welfare and protection from domestic violence through the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence and the National Action Plan on the Family. Protection of victims and rehabilitation of perpetrators of domestic violence will be reinforced through the proclamation of the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act and formulation of a Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy.

131. In light of the findings of a study on teenage pregnancy, Government will devise policies and a National Plan of Action to address the issue.

132. Government will intensify its actions to better protect the child. The National Parental Empowerment Programme will therefore be strengthened to better equip parents with necessary skills to enhance parent-child interactions. Child Protection Clubs will be set up at school level.

133. Conscious of the need to incorporate, in national legislation, the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to ensure that loopholes in existing legislation pertaining to children are removed, Government will come up with a Consolidated Children's Bill.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

134. Government will consolidate its strategies and policies to improve the tourism product portfolio to be more responsive to market demand.

135. The recommendations of the Tourism Sector Strategy (2009-2015) will be implemented with a view to sustaining future tourism growth.

136. Emphasis will be laid on a controlled development strategy with focus on service quality and environmental preservation and enhancement. Government will further impress on tourism operators the need to adopt best environmental practices and eco-friendly measures.

137. Our tourism and eco-tourism product will be diversified through development of additional niche sectors such as cultural/heritage tourism and eco-tourism.

138. Government will intensify the campaign to enhance the visibility of Mauritius as an attractive up market tourism destination in traditional markets as well as in emerging ones. In this respect, advertising campaigns will be carried out jointly with airlines and trade partners

139. More emphasis will be placed on e-marketing with increasing recourse to intense web campaigns.

140. Government is committed to creating the appropriate conditions to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders in the different spheres in the tourism sector. To further the democratisation process in this sector, a Tourism and Hotel Investment Trust will be created. Necessary measures will be taken and the legal framework will be set up to further open up the sector providing new opportunities for investment, employment and new ventures. Better integration of the tourism sector will be promoted.

141. Additional welfare schemes for the benefit of the employees of the tourism sector will be set up.

142. Government will ensure that leisure facilities and services are made more accessible to the population.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

143. Government is committed to further consolidating equity, quality and relevance at all levels of the education and training system.

144. With regard to Pre-school education, the existing grant scheme applicable to children aged 4 will be extended to cover 3 year olds.

145. In line with internationally accepted best practices, Government will encourage the use of mother tongues to facilitate teaching and learning. Government will work towards the introduction of 'Mauritian Kreol' and 'bhojpuri' as optional subjects in schools. In this regard, existing research work will be supplemented and consolidated so as to develop an agreed standardised spelling and grammar. Equal consideration will be given to other languages used in Mauritius.

146. More equity and inclusiveness will be introduced into the current Laureate Scheme. Government will explore the possibility of awarding scholarships to a larger number of students.

147. The management and funding framework of grant-aided secondary schools will be reviewed.

148. In order to alleviate the difficulties of a larger number of students, Government will review the current formula for the payment of SC and HSC examination fees.

149. In order to improve access to upper secondary education, Government will establish new and innovative pathways for students who have successfully completed the O- level/ School Certificate either in the academic or technical /vocational stream.

150. The Special Needs Education Sector will be restructured in order to ensure that no child is deprived of education on account of any form of impairment or disability. In this respect, the present Grant in Aid formula payable to NGOs engaged in special needs education will be reviewed.

151. Government will consolidate measures and actions to reduce the failure rate at the end of the primary cycle. Special pedagogical programmes will be introduced to enhance performance.

152. Government is committed to sustaining the digital revolution in education. The teaching and learning process as well as school management will be digitally assisted. Appropriate measures will also be taken for the provision of laptops and free internet access to needy students.

153. Government is committed to addressing the issue of indiscipline and misbehaviour in schools. The School Psychological service will be reinforced and community participation in collectively dealing with cases of students with behavioural problems will be encouraged. Internationally tested programmes like “Roots of Empathy” will be introduced.

154. As part of an inclusive education strategy, Government will implement a comprehensive academic programme to cater to the needs of talented and gifted students thereby nurturing the abilities of all.

155. Government will further decentralize technical and vocational education and training. It will ensure that Mauritius positions itself as a regional hub in that sector.

156. In order to help our citizens better manage their education, training and future employment, an ICT-based “*Centre d’Orientation Académique et Professionnelle*” will be set up.

157. To help reduce the labour market mismatch, a national audit exercise will be carried out to set up a database on training and human resource development.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

158. Government will pursue the modernization process of the agro industrial sector. The sugar industry will continue to be transformed into a sugar cane industry with the full participation of the small planters. Every effort will be made to ensure that the remaining measures under the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy 2006-2015 are completed in an efficient manner.

159. Government will seek opportunities to increase the revenue of producers through value addition. The Fair-trade certification will be promoted and Government will provide the necessary support to small sugar cane producers to subscribe to the Fair-trade system.

160. Food security remains a major challenge for a net-food importing country like ours. To increase our food self-sufficiency ratio, Government will introduce a Food Security Stimulus Package of Rs 2 billion to assist planters, breeders and fishermen to maximise local production.

161. The Agricultural Services including the Division of Veterinary Services will be reorganised with a view to making them more responsive to the exigencies of a modern agro-industrial sector. This will ensure a better provision of services to planters, breeders and the industry as a whole.

162. An Institute of Agri-food Biotechnology will be set up to enable producers to have access to genetically superior varieties and high quality seeds or planting materials. Diagnostic services on plant and livestock diseases will be improved. Existing training

institutions will be upgraded. Laboratories will be accredited so that our produce can access new export markets.

163. A national auction for fresh vegetables and fruits will be set up to enable consumers to have access to high quality produce that meets the standards of food safety.

164. Government will expedite the setting up an *Agricultural Production and Marketing Information System* which will provide correct information on a real time basis to planters to enable them to better plan their planting and production.

165. A National Agricultural Land Bank will be set up to ensure that agricultural lands are used optimally.

166. Government will set up a National Meat and Milk Board to give a boost to the livestock sector and maintain the momentum of the new pig breeding scheme.

167. Government will accelerate the setting up of four model dairy farms to showcase modern breeding techniques and to promote value addition.

168. The National Food Laboratory will be accredited to promote certification and give a boost to exports of livestock and sea food products.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

169. Government is committed to pursue efforts to ensure that the industrial sector continues to play a pivotal role in the structural transformation of the economy. In this context Government will foster consolidation of the sector and focus on its modernization supported by information, knowledge, science, technology and innovation to enable the production of high value, branded and a more diversified range of products for a wider market. Measures will be implemented to ensure sustainable industrial development through eco-friendly processes and products.

170. Government will establish a Scanning Mechanism that would systematically scan regional and global markets to identify opportunities for the development of specific competitive sectors and products. This will lead to an “*Observatoire de L’industrie*” that provides for economic intelligence and information dissemination to economic operators and policy making. The ‘Observatoire’ will facilitate the integration of the industrial sector in the global value chain, identifying niches where Mauritius has a competitive advantage.

171. A strategy to re-dynamize exports aimed at market consolidation and diversification will be formulated. The export promotion strategy will be revisited in line with developments in the global marketplace. New export avenues in the region will be explored to take advantage of trade liberalization in COMESA and SADC.

172. Government will develop supply side capabilities in areas of fashion, design and creativity, product development and branding, quality and compliance and eco-friendly technology.

173. Government will provide support to enterprises in their drive to be environmentally compliant to meet increasing consumer exigencies for eco-friendly products. In this context, emphasis will be laid on cleaner production through a Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Programme, with the support of UNIDO/UNEP.

174. Government will set up an Industrial Advisory Council for greater synergy among private and public sector stakeholders.

175. In order to maintain a safe stock of petroleum product for the country, Government will consider proposals for the construction of additional storage capacity to store 15,000 metric tons of Mogas and 10,000 metric tons of Gasoil.

176. The Legal Metrology Division will be modernised. Further training will be provided to its officers and new testing equipment will be acquired.

177. With a view to fostering the development of a viable film industry in Mauritius, Government will elaborate and implement a new framework for the film industry which will provide a roadmap for financing, marketing and regulating the industry.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

178. Government is conscious of the need to ensure economic and social development without compromising the quality of life of future generations. Through the Maurice Ile Durable vision, it will ensure the integration of environmental considerations into policies as a means of achieving balanced development. A white paper to define a long term Maurice Ile Durable policy, will be elaborated.

179. Environmentally sensitive areas such as our rivers, wetlands, beaches, lagoons and coral reefs are natural assets on which our development model is highly dependent. Government will come up with comprehensive legislative and institutional frameworks to protect and enhance these resources for the benefit of the present and future generations. Awareness and educational programmes will be undertaken to bring about a more responsible behaviour and attitude towards nature.

180. Government will take bold and firm actions to take up the challenge of climate change through a vulnerability assessment.

181. Government is committed to strengthening the existing enforcement and compliance mechanism for more effective pollution control and the protection of our natural resources. The Environment Protection Act and other associated environmental laws will be reviewed.

182. Local Authorities will also be empowered to play a more effective role in environmental management and sustainable development.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

183. Government will invest further in tertiary education through the physical expansion of existing institutions and the setting up of new “*Campus Universitaires*” in different parts of the Republic of Mauritius. In addition, in order to create a culture of higher learning in the country, the 24/7 concept will be extended to tertiary education.

184. Government will pursue its policy to transform Mauritius into a Centre of Excellence in Higher Education in the region. Government will reinforce steps to attract renowned Tertiary Educational Institutions through the provision of appropriate incentives and through bilateral and multilateral Mutual Recognition Agreements.

185. In order to enable the attainment of the objectives set to achieve the development of a skilled, versatile and competent workforce and to promote social mobility, Government will strive to reach an objective of one graduate per family.

186. Government will continue its endeavour to make Mauritius a regional hub for tertiary education.

187. Government will set up a one-stop-shop for tertiary education, to facilitate access to information. The Tertiary Education Loans Scheme will be reviewed.

188. In a bid to promote research and intellectual property development, Government will review the existing legal framework for intellectual property rights and will establish a Mauritius Intellectual Property Office and a National Intellectual Property Council.

189. Government will organise a National Research Foresight Exercise with the participation of all scientists engaged in scientific research. The ultimate objective will be the preparation of a time-bound Action Plan on Research and Development with clearly defined deliverables.

190. Government will put in place incentives for the development of a research culture in the tertiary education institutions through improvement of linkages between education institutions and the world of work.

191. Government will give a new drive to science popularization and sensitization of science activities in Mauritius. Science Parks will be set up; the emergence of start ups in Science and Technology will be encouraged, including venture capitalization through linkages with key international partners. Awards and research grants will also be awarded to young scientists wishing to pursue research in Scientific fields of relevance to the local economy.

192. The support of business and industry will be sought to fund key research projects in line with the needs of the country.

193. Government will provide incentives for tertiary education institutions to come up with programmes in new emerging areas such as nanotechnology, renewable energy, marine sciences and life sciences which may be developed at a later stage as new pillars of the Mauritian economy.

194. A new culture of Open and Distance Learning will be promoted, through the setting up of the Open University and its development to include provision of courses in key areas of the economy. Government will give a new thrust to emerging languages in the business sector, through the setting up of the Language Institute under the Open University.

195. Government will promote the cultivation of seaweed with a view to developing an industry based on value added transformation of seaweed for human consumption, cosmetic applications and medical and pharmaceutical uses.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

196. Young people constitute a dynamic force for social harmony, democracy and equality. They are an essential resource for sustainable development and are the very foundation upon which a nation is built. Government will therefore continue to give a special attention to our youth and will come up with a series of new programmes for their personal growth and fulfilment and their effective participation in the development process for social transformation. The programmes will include, inter alia, the following:

- review of the National Youth Council Act to give a better representation to young persons on the Board
- training in entrepreneurship to youngsters
- construction of new youth centres in different parts of the island and upgrading of existing ones

197. Government will pursue the policy of democratization of sports with a view to fostering a culture of sports among Mauritian citizens. An Integrated Strategic Plan for Sports will be prepared in collaboration with the sports federations and the National Olympic Committee.

198. New sports complexes will be constructed in different parts of the Island and the existing sports infrastructure and facilities will be upgraded and/or expanded. New sports disciplines like cricket, hockey, beach soccer, beach volley and track cycling will be promoted.

199. In order to stimulate local football, the Steering Committee Master Plan will be implemented. Several football grounds will be upgraded and allocated to first and second division football teams. A new football stadium of international standard will

be constructed in the south of the Island. The grant to first and second division football teams will be increased to partly finance the professionalisation of football in Mauritius.

200. A National Institute of Sports will be set up on the premises of the Anjalay stadium to enhance the performance of Mauritian athletes at regional, continental and international levels and to ensure that local sports talents are nurtured and developed to pursue excellence at all levels.

201. The Sports Act will be amended to address weaknesses in the existing legal framework and to cater for new developments and challenges in the sports sector.

202. Government will also implement a new scheme for the economic integration of retired high level athletes.

203. The synthetic athletic track at Camp du Roi Stadium in Rodrigues will be replaced

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

204. Government will maintain payment of Basic Pensions to all elderly persons, widows, orphans, and persons with disabilities.

205. Government will review the social protection system to ensure that the most vulnerable groups of the society are provided with adequate protection. In that respect the Social Aid and other relevant legislations will be reviewed.

206. Government will proceed with the construction of new social security offices in various regions around the island. In addition, efforts will be pursued to improve the counter services in the various social security offices to provide a better customer service.

207. Government will act as coordinator and provide all facilities to encourage private sector employers with less than 50 employees to submit their returns and pay their monthly contribution electronically. In this context, an aggressive campaign will be carried out to encourage all employers to pay their contribution electronically by 2015.

208. Government will review the organizational structure of the National Pension Fund to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its investment functions. In that context, relevant amendments will be brought to the National Pensions Act.

209. Government will construct a building to house the inmates of the Probation Home for Girls to ensure that the rehabilitation program for the residents is carried out in a more conducive environment.

210. Government will construct two additional Recreation Centres for the elderly in the North and in the South of the Island in order to provide recreational facilities to a greater number of elderly persons.

211. In view of the increase in the number of elderly, Government will implement a Carer's Strategy with a view to :

- i. creating a pool of some 3000 carers over the next 5 years;
- ii. providing basic training on home-based care; and
- iii. providing respite care to all persons providing care to the elderly.

212. Government will formulate appropriate policies geared towards promoting active and healthy ageing.

213. Government proposes to launch an IT Literacy Programme for the benefit of elderly persons with a view to promoting lifelong learning and to enable them to keep pace with development issues.

214. Government will further promote the integration of persons with disabilities by facilitating their access to training, education, employment, health, and ensure the protection of their human rights amongst others.

215. Government will proceed with the construction of a Respite Care Centre for children with disabilities. These children will benefit from specialized services and rehabilitation including leisure facilities. The respite care facilities will be beneficial not only to the disabled children but also to their parents who require some respite.

216. Government will proceed with the extension of the Foyer Trochetia with two additional living Units in order to cater for a greater number of severely disabled elderly persons.

217. Government will take necessary measures to promote national solidarity by ensuring capacity building of NGOs through the setting up of a 'National NGO Resource Centre'. The Centre will act as a focal point for NGOs and will provide an integrated approach to service delivery to NGOs and civil society at large.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

218. A major review of local government legislations will be undertaken in order to better meet the aspirations of the population. Consideration will be given to the creation of new Municipal Councils.

219. A new formula will be devised to better respond to the requirements of local authorities and reduce disparities between urban and rural areas.

220. Government will pursue the implementation of the E- Business Plan with a view to offering a unique local government portal to the public, and facilitating networking amongst Local Authorities.

221. Government will implement a coordinated and integrated solid waste management programme in line with the concept of Maurice Ile Durable.

222. Government will implement a Business Process Review in each local authority with a view to upgrading business processes and workflow in Local Authorities, adopting improved corporate governance practices, reporting, transparency, maximizing efficiency gains and improving service delivery.

223. Regarding the Government Fire Services, the Government will, *inter-alia*, undertake a full review of its fire and emergency cover across the whole country and enhance its rescue capability to deal with more complex incidents.

224. Government will also review the fire safety legislation to ensure consistency and relevance.

225. Efforts to improve control and management of beaches will be pursued. Additionally access to public beaches will be democratized and, security will be enhanced through the installation of CCTV surveillance system.

226. As regards Agalega, Government will embark upon an important programme of infrastructure development and provision of more housing, health and educational facilities. The productive capacities relating to agriculture, livestock and fisheries will also be enhanced.

227. In St Brandon, measures for environmental protection will be pursued and strengthened.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

228. In the Health sector, the goal of Government is to benchmark our health services to the best in the world. Government remains committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals regarding health standards.

229. Government will set up an Institute for Women's Health to cater for the specific health and medical needs of women with state-of-the-art technology.

230. Given that the proportion of the elderly population above 65 years old is increasing, a National Geriatric Hospital will be set up to cater for the specialized needs of this group.

231. A National Paediatric Hospital will also be set up to treat, *inter-alia*, complex congenital and acquired conditions which children suffer from.

232. A new Block comprising 6 Operation Theatres, 1 Intensive Care Unit and wards to accommodate a total of 136 beds will be constructed at Victoria Hospital.

233. A modern National Health Laboratory Services Building will be constructed with laboratory services of international standards to cater for new disciplines such as Immunology, Genetic Testing and Bioinformatics.

234. Public hospitals and health centres will be made more patient-friendly by improving communication between the health personnel and the patients' families through training and capacity building in customer care.

235. With a view to modernizing the quality of health services, Government will continue to invest massively in the acquisition of latest medical equipment including mammography machines, anaesthetic machines, new operating tables, new haemodialysis machines, endoscopy equipment as well as sophisticated MRI and CT scanners.

236. Specialist services such as cardiology and neonatal intensive care will be extended to all regional hospitals. Neurosurgery and Spinal Surgery Units will be set up in the New Block at Victoria Hospital as well as an Endodontic Unit.

237. The Cardiac Centre will be upgraded to operate as part of a Regional Institute of Cardiology that will be set up in Mauritius.

238. Clinical Audit, which is a quality improvement process that upgrades patients care and outcomes, will be introduced within our health service.

239. Ayurvedic services will be strengthened and extended to all health regions.

240. A master plan aiming at upgrading and reinforcing primary health care services so as to decrease the workload in public hospitals will be implemented.

241. The mediclinic concept will be used for strengthening the primary health care network.

242. The recent pandemic of AH1N1 has highlighted the need to review our strategy towards other communicable threatening diseases such as Chikungunya and Dengue. The Communicable Diseases Control Unit will be consolidated to strengthen surveillance. Besides, measures to control all aspects of Environmental Health and Food Security will be strengthened.

243. In line with the World Health Organisation Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), action will be taken to strengthen the organizational structure for dealing with the NCDs.

244. The Diabetes and Cardiovascular Health Centre recently opened at Souillac Hospital will implement an intensive capacity building programme.

245. A new Digital Mammography Screening Service will be set up with a view to reducing mortality from breast cancer by early detection and treatment.

246. With a view to encouraging people to adopt healthy lifestyles, in particular, to eat healthy foods and practice adequate physical activities, aggressive health promotion campaigns will be carried out. In addition, screening programmes for diabetes and other NCDs in schools, at workplaces and in the community will be strengthened so as to reach some 500,000 persons by 2015.

247. HIV testing and counselling will be further decentralised in all Community Health Centres. The National Day Care Centres for the Immuno-Suppressed will be further decentralised to other regional hospitals so as to make HIV care, testing and anti-retroviral treatment more accessible and to take these nearer to the homes of HIV patients. Measures will be taken to encourage Mauritians to go for HIV testing. Community testing will also be reinforced across the Island.

248. Government will intensify measures to address the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV, using a Human Rights approach, with social mobilization at community level and regular behaviour-change communication campaigns. Treatment, care of, and support for infected persons will continue to be improved with regular updating of national protocols, thus strengthening the health response. There will be better coherence between government Ministries, the private sector and NGOs so as to enhance harmonisation and alignment.

249. The HIV and AIDS Act 2006 will be revisited to improve aspects regarding discrimination and stigmatisation.

250. The Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme will be scaled up through the opening of new Day Care Centres in all regions. The Therapy will also be introduced in the Prisons.

251. The Needle Exchange Programme will be scaled up in high-risk areas and it is proposed to reach some 8000 injecting drug users by 2013.

252. With a view to developing Mauritius as a Medical Tourism destination, the setting up of private medical and nursing schools will be encouraged. The Regional Hospitals will be converted into teaching hospitals in collaboration with foreign universities such as Hopitaux Universitaires de Geneve, University of Maryland and University of Cardiff, Wales.

253. Government will implement a National E-Health Strategic Plan in order to enhance patient safety and comfort, improve clinical outcomes and streamline overall hospital operations.

254. The Mental Health Care Act will be revisited.

255. The Clinical Trials Bill will be introduced to provide a legal framework for the testing of pharmaceutical products on human beings.

256. The Pharmacy Council Bill will be introduced to provide for registration of pharmacists as well as to regulate the practice of pharmacy.

257. Amendments will be brought to the Pharmacy Act 1983 with a view to updating the existing legislation to meet modern and updated criteria in pharmacy practice.

258. The Medical Council Act will be amended to provide for the recertification of medical practitioners and the setting up of a board of Postgraduate Medical Education which will consider all issues relating to registration of specialist qualifications.

259. A new regulatory body, the Health Professionals' Council, for all health and allied professions, other than medical and nursing, will be set up.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

260. Arts and Culture are catalysts for peace, stability and the consolidation of National Unity.

261. Government will continue to promote further the effective development of Mauritian creators and performers and to provide a wider and enhanced spectrum of cultural products to the Mauritian public. In this regard:

- A National Symphonic Orchestra will be set up.
- An International Film Festival will be organised to promote fusion between Europe and Asia in the cinematographic field and encourage the development of a Film Industry in Mauritius.
- An Artist Welfare Fund will be set up to encourage our artists in their quest to live by their talents.
- A National Award for Excellence in Arts will be set up. Outstanding performances, creativity and innovativeness will be duly acknowledged.
- The National Unity Award to acknowledge the contribution of artists in the consolidation of National Unity, will be given a new dimension and will incorporate an annual "Festival Mauricien" showcasing our multiculturalism.
- An "*Ecole de Cinéma*" will be set up with a view to promoting the cinematographic art as an important component of the cultural industry in Mauritius.
- The scope of the President Fund for Creative Writing will be extended to other written and spoken languages to give a boost to Mauritian literature.

- Artistic and Cultural production will be given a new impetus by the elaboration of a marketing strategy at National and International levels. Financial assistance will be provided to artists and creators to enable them to offer good quality products to the market.
- A Virtual Museum on Arts and Culture will be set up to highlight our rich cultural diversity, including a component on Heritage as well as another on the peopling of Mauritius.
- The range of Speaking Unions will be completed with Arabic, Bhojpuri, Creole, Mandarin and Sanskrit speaking unions, thus embellishing our linguistic landscape.

262. Government will review and enlarge the aims and objectives of the National Heritage Fund for better management, preservation and protection of our National Heritage.

263. A “*Conseil National de la Culture*” will be set up for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. It will be an umbrella organization regrouping our Cultural Centres and Speaking Unions.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

264. Significant progress has been made towards building the ICT sector as the fifth pillar of the Mauritian economy. The next stride now will be to convert Mauritius into a regional ICT hub.

265. The vision of Government is to make of Mauritius an I-Mauritius (*Intelligent Mauritius*) through full Broadband Islandwide Connectivity and to narrow the digital divide.

266. Government will undertake a review of the National ICT Strategic Plan 2007-2011 under the Competiveness and Public Sector Efficiency Programme which aims at sustaining growth and employment to address the impact of the global recession.

267. Further diversification of ICT services, including Software developments, high-end BPO activities and Disaster Recovery Centres will be envisaged.

268. Government will construct other Technology Parks around the island to support the development of the ICT sector and thus generate employment opportunities for our youth.

269. Government will make Internet even more affordable to the public and make “Access to the Internet” a basic citizen’s right in Mauritius. In this connection, the One Laptop per Child programme will be implemented for the benefits of Lower VI students and free internet facilities will be extended to such places as Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres.

270. Government will implement an Industry Related Capacity Building Programme by leveraging on 2700 online courses which are currently being offered under the Universal ICT Education Programme. This will ensure that the country secures the required pool of IT competencies. Government will set up a national on-line library with a view to promoting and democratising access to information and knowledge.

271. With a view to enhancing the interface of citizens with Government Services, flagship e-Government applications in the country will be further developed such as E-Judiciary, E-Education Portal, E-Health and E-Agriculture.

272. Alert to the need of having a reliable and effective Cyber security strategy, Government will make of Mauritius a secure ICT destination. Legislation regarding privacy and online protection will be reviewed and consolidated, critical information infrastructure will be duly protected.

273. Government will undertake a major institutional review to align organizational operations with the emerging needs and challenges. The legal and regulatory frameworks will also be consolidated and benchmarked against international best practices.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

274. Government will further consolidate and develop the seafood hub as an economic pillar. In this endeavour, Government will support the development of a local fishing fleet capacity to harness the tuna resources in the EEZ and the region. A fish auction market to serve the needs of local regional and international stakeholders will be set up.

275. Government will ensure that the fisheries sector maximizes benefits from the resource potential in the EEZ. In this respect Government will develop a Fisheries Master Plan which amongst others will analyze and propose options for a comprehensive sustainable fisheries development and management plan for Mauritius and Rodrigues. A Rs 1 billion Fund will be set up to encourage industrial fishing.

276. In line with Government's resolution to address poverty alleviation, the Fishermen Investment Trust and the Fishermen Welfare Fund will be reinforced so as to play a more important role in capacity building and empowerment of fishermen.

277. Government will give special attention to the strengthening of the autonomous status of Rodrigues and will take further steps to ensure its full integration within the Republic of Mauritius.

278. Government will hold consultations with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) for the introduction of Local Government in Rodrigues. The RRA Act will be amended in line with the experience gained over the last seven years of operation under the decentralised system.

279. Government will continue to modernise the infrastructure in Rodrigues and ensure further diversification of economic activities in the fields of Fisheries & Aquaculture, Agriculture and Tourism, including eco-tourism. The following will be implemented, among others:

- construction of a new runway at Sir Gaetan Duval Airport
- connection of Rodrigues to Mauritius via the Fibre Optic Cable
- building of 1000 low cost housing units over the next five years
- construction of dams for water storage
- construction of a new secondary school
- development of the port area

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

280. Government will ensure that the Civil Service continues to re-engineer itself so as to respond effectively to new priorities and challenges, provide high quality advice and support to the Government and help deliver citizen-centered and world class public services. To this end, the Performance Management System will be reviewed to facilitate its applicability.

281. Government will also promote lifelong learning through the setting up of a modern Public Service Training Centre for excellence in order to keep public officers abreast of modern techniques of management and public administration.

282. Government will however ensure that whilst the Civil Service evolves and adapts to changing times, the fundamental values of objectivity, integrity, impartiality and honesty that underpin the Service are protected, preserved and upheld at all times.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

283. Government will relentlessly pursue its policy of employment creation, protection of workers and the promotion of social dialogue. Innovative policies and practices to unlock opportunities for employment will be implemented. In this context, a post crisis National Employment Policy will be worked out with the assistance of the International Labour Office.

284. Government will also ensure that decent work conditions prevail at the workplace.

285. Government will undertake a review of the Registration of Associations Act to streamline the operation of associations and consolidate the requirements for good governance. The Recruitment of Workers Act will also be reviewed.

286. With regard to the employment of foreign workers, the Government will investigate the possibility of entering into bilateral labour co-operation agreements with other sourcing countries.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

287. The Justice system in Mauritius has seen a major overhaul through the implementation of a substantial part of the Mackay Report 1997 as updated in 2006.

288. Government intends to continue with those reforms. Legislation will be introduced to set up the Court of Appeal and the High Court. The simplification of court procedures will ensure that a greater number of people have access to the justice system. The evidential rules, in particular the Judges Rules relating to criminal evidence and procedure, will be reviewed and new legislation will be introduced to take into account developments in the law, in particular the reinforcement of human rights, be it for the accused or the victims. New legislation will provide the High Court with a Family Division that has all the required support services. The Mauritian Civil Code, also known as the Code Napoleon, will be reviewed to take on board the evolution of the Law in various areas covered by the Code, including matters relating to divorce.

289. Government intends to pursue reform of the Legal Profession to ensure that it has the right and appropriate legal structure to meet the needs of liberalization and maximize on the opportunities that Globalisation brings. The Bar Council Act and the Law Society Act will be amended to provide for a Registrar vested with administrative responsibilities.

290. Government will consider bringing amendments to the existing legislation to further reinforce the DPP's Office and the Law Reform Commission. The institutional set up for the training of judges, magistrates and law officers will be reviewed and a fully fledged institute will be set up to provide for the continuous training of our judges, magistrates and law officers.

291. The reforms in the judicial and legal sectors will be pursued to ensure that access to justice is and remains a reality and the Attorney General's Office is equipped to provide independent and impartial legal advice to the Government.

292. Government will reinforce the Attorney General's Office in terms of human, infrastructural and financial resources to equip it to better meet the future challenges and to more efficiently assist the Government in implementing its policies in the domestic, regional and international fields.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

293. SMEs will continue to be key drivers of the socio-economic development and democratization process started in 2005. Government will continue to promote and nurture their progress to make SMEs the number one job provider and increase their contribution to GDP in a substantial manner by 2015.

294. Government will, under the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme, support enterprise productivity and competitiveness in areas of skills and training, technology upgrading, standards and marketing.

295. The Competition Commission of Mauritius will advise Government and make policy recommendations to further increase competition and open the economy to wider participation, and bring the benefits of competitive markets to the consumer.

296. Government will further empower the co-operative movement in playing fully its role in the democratization of the economy and in offering business opportunities to people with limited means.

297. The Co-operative Credit Unions will be called upon to sensitize individuals in mobilizing savings and acquiring prudential financial management skills. The Credit Unions will also be required to provide appropriate financial products to encourage the setting up of micro businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises. Consequently, this will help in addressing family indebtedness and promoting a culture of entrepreneurship amongst co-operators.

298. Government will introduce a code of good governance for the co-operative movement.

299. Government will carry out an in-depth and complete review of all the legislations governing consumer protection and rights, with a view to bringing them in line with the new business environment prevailing and to make them readily understandable and accessible to the population.

300. Government will implement a web-based management information system for the Consumer Unit to provide an enhanced service to consumers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

301. Mauritius today is work in progress. Over the last five years, Government has built sound foundations upon which to build a more prosperous, compassionate and inclusive Mauritius where each citizen is an active stakeholder in the development process and where he has the opportunity to realize his potential and legitimate aspirations.

302. Government is determined to ensure a steady growth in GDP, hand in hand with increase in Genuine Progress Indicators.

303. The underlying theme of the Government Programme 2010-2015 is “Building our Future Together”. Government is committed to making the children and youth of the country accomplished and proud heirs to the worthy legacy they will inherit, a nation united, a society more equitable, in a spirit that is forward looking and modern.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

304. I pray that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon your counsels.