



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2015

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Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
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Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
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Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
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Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform

Institutions

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Hon. Jayeshwur Raj Dayal, CSK, PDSM, QPM	Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 04 of 2015

Sitting of 24 February 2015

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ICAC – FINANCIAL CRIME COMMISSION & BOARD MEMBERS

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Independent Commission against Corruption, he will –

- (a) state –
 - (i) when legislation to set up a Financial Crime Commission and a revised and enhanced Independent Commission against Corruption model will be introduced, and
 - (ii) the date and time the two members thereof, other than the Director General, were appointed;
- (b) obtain information as to the date and time on which the new Director General thereof made and subscribed to the prescribed oath in respect of the –
 - (i) disclosure of assets and liabilities before the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court, and
 - (ii) oath of secrecy before the District Magistrate, and
- (c) obtain from the Independent Commission against Corruption, information as to if the new Director General or Commission has stopped any ongoing
- (d) investigation or prosecution.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like to reply to the PNQ together with PQ B/54 as both relate to ICAC.

In regard to part (a)(i) of the question, as the House is aware, the Government Programme 2015-2019 provides as follows, I quote –

“Government (has a mandate for change and) will relentlessly fight fraud, corruption and financial crime. To that effect, a Financial Crime Commission will be set up to act as an apex body to oversee the ICAC, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the enforcement department of the Financial Services Commission.

Government will (leave no stone unturned to) eradicate fraud, corruption, malpractices and irregularities in all aspects of public life and restore our national values. To this end, a new Declaration of Assets Act for MPs and high-ranking public

officers and a Financing of Political Parties Act will be enacted. A new Code of Conduct will be introduced for all MPs and public officers.”

In this context, the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms and the Attorney General are on mission at present in London for, *inter alia*, discussions with the following institutions regarding assistance in the setting-up of the Financial Crime Commission -

- Serious Fraud Office;
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office;
- Financial Conduct Authority, and
- National Crime Agency.

The Financial Crime Commission will be set up as an umbrella organisation to oversee the operations of a revised and enhanced ICAC model, the FIU and Asset Recovery Unit, the enforcement units of the Financial Services Commission and the Financial Reporting Council relating to securities, insurance and financial reporting fraud within a newly set up Anti-Fraud Unit. This will bring harmonisation in the structure for the fight against financial crime in Mauritius and will ensure better coordination amongst existing institutions. This will also mitigate the risks of fraudsters exploiting loopholes in the functioning of institutions which may have led to the recent cases of Ponzi schemes where many innocent but gullible persons have lost their hard earned money.

As an immediate measure, pending the setting-up of the Financial Crime Commission, an amendment will be brought to the Asset Recovery Act and the Asset Recovery Unit will be merged with the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Madam Speaker, the present composition of the Board of the Independent Commission against Corruption is as follows -

Chairperson	:	Mr Luchmyparsad Aujayeb
Members	:	Mr Narainkrishna Peerun, and Miss Shakilla Bibi Jhungeer

The appointments of the previous Board members were terminated under section 113(4) of the Constitution and after consultation with the Solicitor General. All the outgoing members have been paid compensation for loss of office in accordance with section 113(5) of

the Constitution and section 52 of the Employment Rights Act. They have also been paid all their benefits due and accrued.

In regard to part (a) (ii) of the PNQ, the two other Board Members of the ICAC were appointed on 10 February 2015. They assumed duty on 16 February 2015 in the morning.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that the new Director General has on, 28 January 2015, subscribed before the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court to the oath in respect of the disclosure of his assets and liabilities as required under section 25 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the new Director General has already taken the oath of secrecy as required under section 81 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that –

- (i) the Commission which is the sole authority vested under the Prevention of Corruption Act with the power to discontinue an investigation, was constituted on 16 February 2015. No ongoing investigation has been discontinued by the Commission so far, and
- (ii) by virtue of section 72 of the Constitution, only the Director of Public Prosecutions can discontinue a prosecution.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister quoted the Government Programme but, as the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is aware, before that, in the Electoral Programme, what was put forward, what was promised was a Financial Crime Commission that would conduct its enquiries and that *englobera différentes institutions existantes dont l'ICAC, etc.* Then, we move to the Government Programme which said -

“A Financial Crime Commission ...”

The Rt. hon. Prime Minister just quoted that paragraph.

“... will be set up to act as an apex body”.

And then, last Tuesday, here, the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, hon. Bhadain, said that the Financial Crime Commission will be set up as an umbrella organisation to oversee the operations of a revised and enhanced ICAC model. I have tried to hear when will the two things be done. When will the legislation to set up the

new institution and to replace ICAC by - to use the words of the hon. Minister - 'a revised and enhanced ICAC model' come?

The Prime Minister: Well, we have already started working on it. They have been to London to get further information to help us in this context and we will do our best to come as soon as possible.

Mr Bérenger: Well, I am glad to hear that Government will come forward with the legislation as soon as possible. But, then, can I ask why the new Director General, under the present law, has been appointed for three years in the letter that he has received and which I received? I will move on to that later on.

The Prime Minister: For the time being, we have been acting under the present law.

Mr Bérenger: I take it that with the new legislation everything will be reviewed?

The Prime Minister: Well, I do not know what there will be. I cannot foresee beforehand!

Mr Bérenger: Well, then, at least, can I put the following question? The Rt. hon. Prime Minister will remember that the essential difference between the present Prevention of Corruption Act and the one which we voted in 2000-2005 was the existence of an Appointment Committee to appoint the Director General and the others and to remove them with the unanimous vote to remove them, so as to secure security of tenure, which is the essential part thereof. Can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether the present law, which was rushed in after the 2005 general elections, will be replaced by a new, to use the words again of the Minister concerned, 'a revised and enhanced ICAC model' like in the legislation which we voted in 2000-2005, there will be a guarantee of security of tenure of the Chairperson, the Director General and the other members?

The Prime Minister: We will do everything that we feel is necessary.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is aware that when he made his speech last Tuesday, the hon. Minister included in the forthcoming Financial Crime Commission not only ICAC, FIU, Asset Recovery Unit, but also the Financial Reporting Council? Is he aware that the Financial Reporting Council like, for example, the Bank of Mauritius, is a regulatory body and not a crime combating agency?

The Prime Minister: There is always some fine-tuning to be done, Madam Speaker.

Mr Bérenger: Fine-tuning is being done in London, I understand.

(Interruptions)

Therefore, can I insist that the way that they are appointed and that they are removed, especially the way they will be removed, can I have that guarantee from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister that we will have, at least, the same security of tenure as in our law in 2000–2005?

The Prime Minister: We will do everything that will be in the best interest of this country.

Mr Bérenger: In his speech last Tuesday again, the hon. Minister said, I am quoting, Madam Speaker, from the Hansard -

“As an immediate measure pending the setting-up of the Financial Crime Commission, an amendment will shortly be brought to the Asset Recovery Act and the Asset Recovery Unit will be removed ...”

Très élégant!

“... from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and will be merged with the FIU (...)”

How immediate will be immediate? Can we take it that this piece of legislation, which has been promised to be introduced as an immediate measure, will be very soon forthcoming? Can I know whether the DPP has been consulted about that removal of the Asset Recovery Unit from the DPP’s Office and, if yes, what his reaction has been?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say whether the DPP has been consulted and so far as “immediate” is concerned, it is not most immediate, but it will be immediate.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: If I can move to the next part of my question. As we know, Madam Speaker, the law provides for consultation between the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition before the appointment of the Director General is made. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that I received the letter of consultation, supposedly on 30

December 2014, in the afternoon, and the next day the Press reported that he had taken office on the same day, that is, on 30 December 2014?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the letter for consultation was issued and then we proceeded with the appointment of the new Director of ICAC. It was an urgent matter because the Members of Parliament had to do what we call the declaration of assets, and that was the last day. Therefore, because of the emergency, things went on very fast.

Mr Bérenger: That was not done at all! But, does he realise that, in fact, the appointment is irregular? The law provides that the Leader of the Opposition must be consulted before he is appointed! Now, I received a letter - I am not usually very slow - but, in the same afternoon, the gentleman concerned took office supposedly because of declaration of assets requirement. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tell me that he agrees with that and that the appointment was regular?

The Prime Minister: We all know consultation means consultation! We had already made up our mind. Whatever would be the comments of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Mr Aujayeb was going to be appointed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Well, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that if he had given me not even an afternoon - in other words he is saying: "we don't consult, we decide and we send a letter like that" - I would have informed him that I object to the appointment of that gentleman and I would have given him in confidence why, what information I have found since then, that in my view, disqualifies this gentleman from this job? Is he aware of that?

The Prime Minister: This gentleman took office on the next day; it was on 31 December.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister was reading; so, probably, he did not catch my question. My question is: is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that had I been consulted, as the law requires, I would have advised against appointing him because I would have communicated in confidence information which shows that that gentleman is unfit to occupy that job?

The Prime Minister: The Leader of the Opposition could have phoned me and informed me. He didn't do so.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, honestly, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has been President of the Republic. Usually, I react within two days whenever he consults me and the President. He finds it decent that I received a letter in the afternoon. The gentleman *prête serment* in the same afternoon, he starts work, and he has just confirmed the next day. I don't even have time to react. I have to seek information. I don't *agir à la légère*. Is he seriously telling us that that was in order? *Vitesse de croisière n'a pas encore été atteinte*, bureaucratic model, what have you !

The Prime Minister: In the circumstances, we have no alternative.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, if I can move on to the other two members. We have now the Director General and the Chairperson whom I consider unfit to sit in that job. I am prepared to communicate to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister the reasons I said that.

Now, if we can move to the two other appointments, Madam Speaker. We are supposed to instil confidence in ICAC. The previous Government and the previous Prime Minister changed the law and destroyed ICAC over the years. Now, supposedly, we want to instil confidence to show that the members are all independent. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister telling me, honestly, that it will instil confidence in the independence of ICAC and that the two other members are –

- (i) a senior Police officer at the head of the NIU - a good friend of mine - but a Police officer to sit as an independent member for long years at the head of the NIU. He can be given any other kind of job; he is a friend of mine, and
- (ii) a young lady to sit on ICAC with the supposedly an image of independence when that lady on 22 March 2014 was proudly presented by the hon. Minister Pravind Jugnauth - this is right - as an upcoming political recruit of the MSM.

I am tabling that, of course.

Is this kind of appointment going to instil confidence in the population in this new ICAC?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we will judge these people after the action they will be taking in ICAC. We have, in this country, precedence where political people, people who have already been Ministers, people who have been in this House, been appointed in the Judiciary, an independent Judiciary, where they have been delivering, doing their duties properly and we have had no reproach whatsoever. Why not in this case?

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I move on to the last part of my question to give some time to my colleagues who have their own questions. I am glad that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, at least, did not hide like the former Prime Minister, behind the Parliamentary Committee. The Parliamentary Committee has a wide ambit to monitor ICAC, open-ended, but the former Prime Minister and the member he appointed at the head of ICAC put on a very restrictive, prohibitive interpretation on the monitoring of ICAC to be done by the Parliamentary Committee. I am glad that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister today has not adopted the same attitude. Can I know whether he has in mind the member who will instil confidence and will chair? Because we walked out of that committee under the previous Government. It was useless and a waste of public money because the Chairperson took orders from the former Prime Minister to paralyse the Parliamentary Committee. Do we have a guarantee that this will be allowed to work this time and that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will choose the right person as Chairperson to let that Committee do its work?

The Prime Minister: I have no one in mind so far, but we will certainly do what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is suggesting. This is really our aim; what we want to aim at.

Mr Bérenger: On the last part of my question again. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that there have been several Press articles in which it was reported that the DPP being dissatisfied with the way ICAC was conducting one specific enquiry, called in the Director General, I quote –

“... a convoqué le conseil légal de la commission to express his dissatisfaction with the way ICAC was conducting one given enquiry”.

Now, we know that the DPP likes *mise au point*, communiqué and so on, but there was none in that case. It was reported on several occasions, but there was no *démenti*, no *mise au point*, no communiqué. Can we know whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has looked into that and whether, in fact, the DPP expressed his dissatisfaction in that way?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this.

Mr Bérenger: The last part of my question was whether any prosecution or investigation has been or is being stopped by the new Director General or the Commission as a whole now that it is constituted. Can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that two sitting Ministers in the present Government have been targeted by the former ICAC? An enquiry was conducted on two now sitting Ministers, and ICAC, with the green light of the DPP, was going ahead with prosecution. Can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware of that and, if he is not, whether he will look into it?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this, Madam Speaker. But, if there is any decision to prosecute, the DPP is free to do that.

Mr Uteem: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated that the Director General and other members of the Commission were dismissed under section 113 subsection (4) of the Constitution. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that, under the Prevention of Corruption Act, there is a special procedure under section 23 for revocation of the Director General by the Parliamentary Committee? Would he agree that by bypassing this statutory provision and going under the Constitution, the Government is going against the United Nations Convention on Prevention of Corruption, which provides for security of tenure to people at the head of corruption investigating agencies?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am advised that everything has been done according to our law.

Mr Ganoo: I will pursue on the point which my hon. friend has just raised. Doesn't the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree that the state of our law, as it is today, including the provisions of our Constitution which have been used for the termination of the appointment of the previous Director General means that any Director General or high-ranking member of the ICAC is at the mercy of any freshly new elected Government? Does not the Rt. hon. Prime Minister think that there is need to amend our law for further clarity, so that impartiality and the independence of the Director General of the ICAC should be entrenched by further amending the law?

The Prime Minister: We will do everything that is necessary in the interest of the country.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: As a last question, can I say the following? The Rt. hon. Prime Minister and you Madam Speaker will allow me to say that the new ICAC *a pris un très mauvais départ*, the worse possible. Is he prepared to review the appointment of the new Director General, to go through the proper procedures and to call for *appel de candidatures*, as is claimed nearly every day, to review the appointment of the new Director General and the two members, so as to instil the required confidence in the public or alternatively to introduce as soon as possible legislation to set up the Financial Crime Commission and to set up the revised and enhanced ICAC model that has been promised; to do that, either to review their appointment or to come forward with the legislation as soon as possible?

The Prime Minister: The second part I have already answered, we will do our best to come as soon as possible. Insofar as the first part is concerned, to me it looks like *après la mort, la tisane*.

Madam Speaker: Last question to the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

I will give the hon. Member some additional time.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated that the former Board was revoked on 26 December and we heard that it is only on 31 December that the Director General was appointed. May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, in those five days, who were in charge of those highly confidential materials, sitting in the offices of ICAC?

The Prime Minister: Well, there were other people who were there; the confidential materials were in custody of those that were there.

Madam Speaker: Any other question, Leader of the Opposition? Do you have any other question, Leader of the Opposition?

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition, I am asking you whether you have a final question now, because we have got only two minutes left. So, I am just asking you if you have or you don't have.

(Interruptions)

If you don't have any, then time will be over in two minutes. Questions addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Uteem!

ICAC- BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. B/54) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

- (a) composition of the present Board thereof, and
- (b) procedure followed for the termination of office of the members of the previous Board thereof.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/55) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of applications received for an inquiry to be carried out as to whether there exist sufficient fresh and compelling evidence to refer the conviction to the Court of Appeal for review, since 2013 to date, indicating in each case the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Protection of Human Rights Act was amended in 2013 by introducing section 4A, so as to allow a convicted person or his representative to apply to the National Human Rights Commission requesting the latter to conduct an inquiry as to whether there exists sufficient fresh and compelling evidence to refer the case back to the Supreme Court for a review of the proceedings.

I am informed by the National Human Rights Commission that two applications have been received since 2013 for inquiry to be carried out as provided under section 4A of the Protection of Human Rights Act.

Inquiry in the first case, received on 10 July 2014, is ongoing and same is expected to be completed by mid-2015. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/15 of the sitting of 10 February 2015.

In regard to the second application dated 28 July 2014, the Commission is presently gathering additional information regarding the conviction, over and above the information provided by the convicted person.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to PQ No. B/15, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated that the search for the existence of fresh and compelling evidence is a complex exercise and that is why it is taking more than six months. May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether the Government intends to come forward with amendment to the existing legislation to facilitate people who feel that they have been wrongfully convicted to ask for the reopening of their cases?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we had stated in our party programme that we were going to bring amendments in order to facilitate this task. But, being given now that there has been already an amendment and the Commission is acting under it, we'll wait for the result and see what happens.

Mr Bérenger: Precisely on that point, is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that when legislation was brought in this House by the former Government, former Prime Minister in 2013, when the law was amended, I pleaded with the former Prime Minister - *supplié* - that, instead of only fresh and compelling evidence – the law is the law, the Commission and subsequently the Court, if it reaches the Court, the Commission will have to go by the law. The law says unless there is fresh and compelling evidence the case will not be reopened, whereas in UK, in Australia, in New Zealand and so on, if exceptional circumstances are found, there is latitude for the Commission to reopen the case. I pleaded with the former Prime Minister, *j'ai supplié*. - we should follow the example of UK, Australia, New Zealand and include 'exceptional circumstances also'? I don't know why the former Government, the former Prime Minister refused bluntly, and now, it is a tight jacket. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me that there is need to look at that; what has been already introduced for years in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and so on should be introduced here?

The Prime Minister: We don't look behind, we look forward and we will consider that.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, after the amendment was brought in 2013, as stated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, there was an enquiry that started out at the National Human Rights Commission and it is only, as stated by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, during the last general election several Members of the now Government have stated that they would reopen the enquiry. This is what was stated, that they would reopen the enquiry, at several public meetings ...

Madam Speaker: Please, come with your question!

Mr Mohamed: So, the question is: does the Rt. hon. Prime Minister intend to keep his promise of reopening the enquiry? Because what is going on before the National Human Rights Commission is a hearing. Does he intend to keep his promise of reopening the enquiry that he made public during the last general election?

The Prime Minister: We don't reopen in a vacuum; we will have to pass the necessary law before acting.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, being given the time that it is taking the Human Rights Commission to complete a single enquiry, has there been any request from the Human Rights Commission for the increase in staff or logistics or financial assistance for them to speed up their enquiries?

The Prime Minister: Not so far that I am aware of.

Mr Bérenger: I am glad - if I heard correctly - I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that he will consider amending the law as per what prevails already in UK, etc. I understand that, apart from going before the National Human Rights Commission, the families of the persons concerned are thinking or are going to the Privy Council *à leurs frais*, and I am sure lot of us would help. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister if assistance is sought from those families, if they go ahead with assistance before coming to help them before the Privy Council, not to pay for this or that but to help them to get the Privy Council to hear that case as soon as possible?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can't answer to this question unless we study this situation deeply and see what can be done.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

PRIME MINISTER (FORMER) - OVERSEAS MISSIONS - DELEGATION

(No. B/56) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to each of the overseas missions undertaken by the former Prime Minister, since July 2005 to December 2014, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) countries visited;
- (b) composition of the delegation, including the names of the accompanying journalists, if any;
- (c) duration thereof;
- (d) total amount of money spent in terms of -
 - (i) air ticket;
 - (ii) *per diem*, and
 - (iii) other allowances, if any, and
- (e) name of the hotels in which he stayed.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the information requested for is being compiled and will be tabled in the National Assembly.

HORSERACING - COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

(No. B/57) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Commission of Inquiry set up to look into all the aspects of horseracing in Mauritius, he will state if it has now completed its works and submitted a report thereto and -

- (a) if so, indicate -
 - (i) when, and
 - (ii) the main recommendations thereof, and

(b) if not, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

(i) reasons therefor, and

(ii) cost incurred by the Commission for the inquiry.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Commission of Inquiry on horseracing has already completed its work and is currently finalising its report. I am further informed that the Commission will honour its commitment to submit its final report prior to the start of the 2015 horseracing season.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, a total sum of Rs4,790,673.98 representing air tickets, accommodation costs and part payment of fees, has been disbursed so far.

An additional sum of around Rs3,008,348 will have to be disbursed on receipt of the final report. This sum represents outstanding fees and expenses for the visit of two Commissioners to Hong Kong in connection with the inquiry.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that my Government is fully determined to fight the mafia that has brought horseracing in Mauritius into disrepute. Once the final report of the Commission is submitted, appropriate action will be initiated.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, is Government envisaging making public an interim report before the final report is obtained?

The Prime Minister: In any case, I am not aware of any interim report.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware - because I am a bit taken aback by his last answer - that there is already an interim report and is he telling the House that he has not been made aware of that interim report that already exists?

The Prime Minister: I have been told that an interim report was forwarded to the former Prime Minister. What he has done with it, I don't know.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The former Prime Minister used to tell us at length in the House that he had called the Commissioners and told them to be ruthless, to be tough on anybody and

not to spare anybody. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the new Prime Minister met the Commissioners and asked them to behave in the same manner?

The Prime Minister: I have not met anybody so far.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, one of the main problems we have witnessed concerning the mafia operating at the Champ de Mars is the way the GRA was operating. Can the hon. Prime Minister give the assurance to the House and to the country that while choosing the person to be at the head of GRA, at least, we have somebody who will not be linked directly or indirectly with the Mauritius Turf Club?

The Prime Minister: We will do our best.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since we understand that there is an interim report somewhere in the office of the former Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

In the safe! Can we request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to have a fresh look in the safe and make public that report, if ever there is an interim report?

The Prime Minister: I have neither the key nor the code!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

PRIME MINISTER (FORMER) - RESIDENCE - SEARCHES

(No. B/58) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, following the searches carried out at the residence of the former Prime Minister, respectively at Desforges Street, in Port Louis, and at Riverwalk, in Vacoas, from Friday 06 to Sunday 08 February 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police -

- (a) a list of the exhibits secured thereat, indicating in each case, the quantum of money seized, and

(b) information as to the charges that have been lodged against him as at to date.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the inquiry into the case involving the former Prime Minister is ongoing, and at this stage, it would not be appropriate to disclose material facts or any other information related to the inquiry, as this may cause prejudice to its proper unfolding.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to the Private Notice Question on Tuesday 10 February 2015, wherein I stated that provisional charges of “Conspiracy” and “Money Laundering” were lodged against the former Prime Minister on 07 February 2015. He appeared before the Bail and Remand Court on the same day and was granted bail on the same day subject to the condition that he furnishes a surety of Rs200,000 and enters a recognizance of Rs1 m. under each charge. He was released on parole on that same day pending his appearance before the District Courts of Upper Plaines Wilhems and Rivière du Rempart for the fulfilment of the conditions of his bail.

He appeared before the District Courts of Upper Plaines Wilhems and Rivière du Rempart on Monday 09 February 2015, and furnished the required sureties.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether during the search at Riverwalk, a sum of Rs110 m. and a sum of 10 m. in foreign currency have been found in the luggage and in the safe?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have not asked for the details. I don’t know.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Prime Minister state how many sex stimulant tablets were found in the safe and whether these tablets had been registered with the Pharmacy Board?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: Well, I cannot answer this question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

**MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE - PERMUTATIONS, DEMOTIONS &
PROMOTIONS**

(No. B/59) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list of the officers thereof who have, since 10 December 2014 to date, been subject to -

- (a) permutations;
- (b) demotions, and
- (c) promotions

indicating, in each case, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, it is presumed that by the word “permutations”, the hon. Member is referring to transfer/posting of Police officers within the Force.

I am accordingly informed by the Commissioner of Police that, from 10 December 2014 to 19 February 2015, 781 Police officers of all ranks have been transferred within the Divisions, Branches, Units and Stations of the Police Force. It is the prerogative of the Commissioner of Police to conduct this exercise, taking into consideration the best interest and exigencies of the service as well as to ensure quality service delivery by the Police.

The list of transfers in the Police Force is published in the Police Routine Orders which is meant for internal circulation. Besides, the hon. Member would recall that such information were not being divulged to the House in the past on the ground that the posting of officers is considered to be of a sensitive nature and relates to the security of the country.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 10 December 2014, no Police officer has been demoted.

However, in the context of filling of vacancies in specialised units, officers who have been assigned higher duties may be considered for promotion in a substantive capacity after having satisfactorily completed a minimum period of six months’ assignment in their respective post.

In the event they are transferred to other Divisions/Branches/Units of the Force during that period, their assignment of duties lapses.

From 10 December 2014 to 20 February 2015, 21 Police officers posted to the Very Important Persons Security Unit and one officer posted to the Fingerprints Section of the Central Criminal Investigation Department which are specialised units of the Force, and who were assigned higher duties on 05 October 2014, were posted out to other Divisions/Branches/Units of the Force. As they had not completed a minimum period of six months at these specialised Units, their assignment of higher duties lapsed when they were reverted to their former ranks.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that promotion in the Police Force falls under the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and is governed by Regulations 14 and 19 of the DFSC Regulations and Police Standing Order No 16.

From 10 December 2014 to 20 February 2015, one Assistant Commissioner of Police has been promoted to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police and three Inspectors to the rank of Chief Inspectors of Police in a substantive capacity. Thirty-one Police officers, all ranks inclusive, have been assigned higher duties when they were posted to the VIPSU. In addition, one Superintendent of Police has been assigned duties as Director General of the National Security Service.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tell us whether it is also within the prerogative or prerogatives of the Commissioner of Police to demote, for whatever reason, people who were responsible for the security of the former Prime Minister and Ministers and to promote those who are now responsible for the security of the actual Prime Minister and Ministers? Is this also within the prerogative of the Commissioner of Police?

The Prime Minister: I don't know anybody who has been demoted, but the hon. Member should know better than I do what in his Government the former Prime Minister was doing.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: I had understood that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister said that he does not look in the *rétroviseur*, but looks forward. Can he tell us when he will start looking forward?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I look eye to eye to the hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Since the question relates to changes that have taken place or are taking place since the last general elections and we are informed, if I am not mistaken, that the Commissioner of Police has already left on leave prior to retirement - the Constitution provides that the Disciplined Forces Service Commission appoints the Commissioner of Police after consulting the hon. Rt. Prime Minister - can I know whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has already been consulted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission in relation to the next Commissioner of Police?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have not yet been consulted. I know that the present Commissioner of Police is retiring and the next in seniority, if I understand rightly, is going to act.

Madam Speaker: One last question!

Mr Jhugroo: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the former Prime Minister took several years, we asked so many PQs regarding the promotion in the Police Force, and these promotions have been given only to some of his *petits copains*?

The Prime Minister: I thought the question was aimed at ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has to answer to this question!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, we all know the past. In fact, so far as transfers and all that are concerned, after the general election of 2005, many more transfers took place.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

VACOAS POLICE STATION – ROAD ACCIDENT - 09 JANUARY 2015

(No. B/60) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if, on 09 January 2015, a case was reported at the Vacoas Police Station regarding vehicle bearing registration number 6271 Oct 08 owned by the Tourism Authority and, if so, indicate –

- (a) who was driving the vehicle at the material time and in which capacity, and
- (b) the outcome of the inquiry carried out thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 January 2015, in the morning, a road accident was reported at Vacoas Police Station. The accident involved a van owned by the Tourism Authority. It was driven by one Mr L.M.S.A, a Manager of the Authority to whom the vehicle was allocated.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that according to information, this van in question was driven by someone who was a former employee of the Tourism Authority and only reinstated in his position as employer of Tourism Authority after the accident?

(Interruptions)

As far as backdated is concerned, I don't know who did it, but it is not us!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No cross-talking, please! No cross-talking! Allow the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The information that I have is that he was already employed and in that capacity he was driving that van.

Mr Mohamed: Would the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, therefore, table in this House the letter of appointment of that person since we want a clarification as regards this issue?

The Prime Minister: We will do that in due course.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

PARASTATAL BODIES - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/61) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in the light of the announced policy of Government to proceed by way of interview for recruitment in the parastatal bodies and other institutions wherein the State is a majority shareholder, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the parastatal bodies and other institutions falling under the aegis of his Ministry, information as to the vacancies existing thereat which will be advertised and those which will not, indicating the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to my office, there is only one statutory body, namely the National Adoption Council and one Government-owned company, namely, the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co Ltd, falling under its aegis.

The National Adoption Council is administered by a Board and is fully serviced by public officers.

Regarding the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co Ltd there is at present no vacancy at CEO level.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody!

CRIMINAL CASES - SUSPECTS – SURETY

(No. B/62) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to money deposited as surety by suspects in criminal cases, he will state if he has been made aware that same are not refunded within reasonable delays once the cases are over and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that once a criminal case is disposed of by the Court, procedures are initiated to refund the money deposited as security by a surety.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am further informed that, there can be delays in the refund process due to the following reasons-

- (i) the surety does not come to the Court for the refund;
- (ii) the surety fails to notify the Court of changes in his address or his telephone number;
- (iii) the surety fails to furnish accurate information regarding the Court case;
- (iv) the Registrar-General's Office needs a reasonable time to process the registration of documents;
- (v) the Attorney General's Office has to submit a taxed bill of costs, and
- (vi) the Certificates of Character are awaited in cases where the convicted parties have been conditionally discharged and required to be of good behaviour during the period specified by the Court.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Master and Registrar is presently working on updated procedures and guidelines to be implemented as from March 2015 in order to avoid delays for the refund in the future.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that there are many people out there who are waiting – not months, not weeks – for years to get their money refunded and this is being delayed because there is no staff in the Court and very often the ink on the receipt has faded away, there is no evidence, and they can't get back their money? It is a small ticket, smaller than the *ticket bis*.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this situation. I can only say what I have been told by the Master and Registrar.

RIVIÈRE DU REMPART POLICE STATION – MR A. K. R. – DEATH

(No. B/63) **Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the death of Mr A. K. R. whilst in Police custody at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station, on 30 July 2011, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, in relation to the said Police Station, information as to the number of officers who –

- (a) were on duty thereat during that night, indicating the name of the Chief Inspector of Police who was on duty thereat at the material time, and
- (b) have been subject of transfers following this incident, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) date of transfer, and
 - (ii) reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to the Private Notice Question of 10 February 2015, wherein I stated that following fresh information obtained, the Police have reopened the enquiry on the death of Mr A.K.R. on 30 July 2011 in Police custody at Rivière du Rempart Police Station.

Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following the death of Mr A.K.R., Police Officers who were on duty that night have been transferred with effect from 30 July 2011.

As the enquiry is ongoing, it would not be appropriate to give the name of the Chief Inspector of Police who was on duty at the Station on 30 July 2011.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in cases of suspected death in Police custody, it is an established practice to transfer personnel working at the material time of the death in order to avoid all risks of tampering with evidence and witnesses, which practice is in line with the instructions of the National Human Rights Commission.

Mr Rutnah: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister state whether, during the course of the enquiry, investigative authorities or those who are in charge of scientific and/or biological evidence or the photographic department of the Police have secured or taken any photographs of the corpse of Mr A. K. R. hanging?

The Prime Minister: Hanging, certainly not, because he was lying on the ground as far as I know. But I have not been given any such information.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/98 in regard to St. Louis Power Station Project addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. Questions addressed to Ministers! Hon. Quirin!

MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION - MR D. S - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/68) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr D. S., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Football Association, information as to the terms and conditions of his recruitment.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association that the services of Mr Didier Six have been enlisted by the MFA and the Professional Football League on a seven months contract basis as from 16 January 2015 to act as General Manager, National Technical Director and national coach of Club M and will be renewed for a further period of two years.

I am further informed by the MFA that he has been paid the sum of 35,000 euros at the time of signature of the contract. During the seven months' period he will be paid a monthly salary of 10,000 euros. That amount also includes the salary of his assistant, Mr Alain Happe who will also be in charge of the female football team. Mr Didier Six will also be provided with accommodation and transport facilities.

Furthermore, Mr Didier Six will regularly communicate with the press on progress made by our national team.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire quelle est la participation de son ministère concernant les dépenses qui seront effectuées par rapport au recrutement de M. Didier Six comme entraîneur national et comme Directeur Technique National ?

Mr Sawmynaden: The contribution of my Ministry for the seven months period contract is Rs2.1 m.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, avant que M. Six ne soit engagé par le ministère des Sports, la MFA, la ligue professionnelle, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire où a-t-il exercé comme entraîneur national et pendant quelle période? Et aussi où a-t-il exercé comme Directeur Technique National et encore une fois durant quelle période ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, from November 2011 till January 2014, Mr Didier Six was *l'entraîneur national de l'équipe nationale du Togo* and he brought the same team to the Quarter-Finals of the CAN.

Mr Quirin: Dois-je déduire, Madame la présidente, que M. Six n'a jamais été Directeur Technique National dans un autre pays ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, Mr Didier Six has the qualification to be the DTN.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je peux venir avec une autre question supplémentaire par rapport à cette même question ?

Madam Speaker: Next question!

REUNION ISLAND - INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES – TRAINING PROGRAMME

(No. B/69) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the 9th Indian Ocean Island Games which will be held in Réunion Island in August 2015, he will state the proposed training programme in Mauritius and abroad, in respect of each sports discipline participating therein, indicating the budget allocated by his Ministry and the Club Maurice Company respectively thereto.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, training in sports is an ongoing process. However, with regard to specific training in view of the 9th Indian Ocean Island Games, I am tabling a Training Programme of all the 14 sports disciplines and the four handisports disciplines.

Moreover, each discipline, including handisports, has been granted the possibility to organise at least two local training camps and one international training camp. The training camps to be organised are still being finalised by the respective sports federations.

Matters will be expedited once the budget 2015 will be approved by the National Assembly. An amount of Rs2.5 m. has already been made available by Club Maurice to some 10 sports federations pending receipt of further contribution from other sponsors.

Madam Speaker, since I took office, I have visited numerous sports infrastructures and attended many sports activities with a view to evaluating the environment in which our athletes are training and performing. I must say that some sites need renovation while others are adequate.

I can assure the House that I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that our athletes are training in optimum conditions not only for the coming *Jeux des Iles*, but also for all other competitions.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, aux jeux de 2011, Maurice avait récolté, je pense, 37 médailles d'or. Peut-on savoir par rapport aux prochains jeux qui auront lieu en août de cette année, quels sont les objectifs que lui-même et son ministère se sont fixés en termes de médailles d'or?

Mr Sawmynaden: Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, je n'ai pas de boule de cristal et je ne peux pas répondre.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir si chaque sélection nationale a en ce moment un entraîneur national et nous indiquer les noms ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madame la présidente, for badminton we have a coach coming from Malaysia, basketball is Mr Cornich, football M. Didier Six, Judo M. Velici, swimming Mr Philippe, tennis c'est Mr Oyoo plus two coaches et weighthlifting, M. Constantin. The other sports federations are working on the other coaches.

Mr Quirin: Une question, Madame la présidente. Peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre quelle est la totalité de la somme qui a été récoltée jusqu'ici par le Club Maurice Company pour la préparation des différentes sélections?

Mr Sawmynaden: I have just replied to that in the first question. Rs2.5 m. has been made available to the sports federations by Club Maurice.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem has a question.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry proposes to give financial reward to people who will bring back medals for Mauritius?

Mr Sawmynaden: It has always been a normal practice. It will be done in the same way.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea.

**PLAINE VERTE & ROCHE BOIS - DISTRIBUTION METHADONE
CENTRES**

(No. B/70) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Distribution Methadone Centres found in the Plaine Verte and Roche Bois regions, he will state if consideration will be given for the relocation thereof and, if so, when, giving details thereof.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Madam Speaker, as the hon. Member is aware, methadone was being dispensed to around 575 beneficiaries in a caravan in the vicinity of Dr. Idrice Goomany Centre at Plaine Verte and to some 325 beneficiaries at Route Abattoir, Roche Bois. This was resulting in overcrowding and loitering at these two dispensing sites. Similarly, in the other regions methadone was being dispensed to an average of 500 beneficiaries in each site. This again was leading to loitering, overcrowding and there were numerous representations from the public about this antisocial behaviour. Moreover, dispensing of methadone was being effected from 6 a.m. to noon at certain sites. As this Government is committed to address problems relating to the methadone programme, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has already taken several important measures. These include a decentralisation process, which, as far as possible, reduces the number of beneficiaries at any one site. The decentralisation process started in the region of Beau Bassin on a trial basis. The number of sites was increased from 2 to 8 with an average of 75 beneficiaries per site and the dispensing time was rescheduled so as to reduce it from 6 hours to 2 hours starting from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. The decentralisation process is focused on control mechanism as well as a component relating to rehabilitation. As the decentralisation process in Rose Hill and Beau Bassin were successfully implemented, it was decided to extend the process throughout the island.

In this respect, my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, had consultations on 30 January 2015 with the stakeholders concerned, including representatives of NGOs and members of the Press to finalise new locations for dispensing of methadone in the region of Port Louis. All Members of the National Assembly of Constituency Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 were invited to the meeting. Unfortunately, those from the other side of the House, including the hon. Member, did not turn up.

Madam Speaker, as from 14 February 2015, all dispensing sites in Mauritius, including those at Plaine Verte and Roche Bois have been decentralised. More than half of the number of beneficiaries from Plaine Verte...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Sawmynaden: ... have been redirected to new sites at Plaine Verte Police Station, Cité La Cure Community Health Centre and Terre Rouge Police Station. The methadone clients are at present getting their dose at a centre which is closest to their declared place of residence.

As regards Roche Bois Dispensing Site, some beneficiaries have been redirected to new sites at Cité La Cure Community Health Centre and Baie du Tombeau, Terre Rouge and Abercrombie Police Stations.

An evaluation and monitoring team from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has visited all the dispensing sites, including those at Plaine Verte and Roche Bois for assessment. This is a better control on the distribution of methadone with beneficiaries having now to present their identity card as well as a 'carte d'accès'. Besides, with the hours of distribution being renewed to 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. and most of the dispensing sites being in the compound of Police stations, the overall impact is positive.

However, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will keep monitoring the situation in Port Louis and other areas.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister in his reply stated that the Members of Parliament from the Opposition side were invited to a Press conference. Do you find it normal for Members of Parliament from the Opposition side to come in a Press conference of the Minister and that we should have known what has happened to the relocation of Plaine Verte and Roche Bois methadone Centres? Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister - because I did not hear from his reply - whether the Roche Bois Methadone Centre has been relocated or will be relocated?

Mr Sawmynaden: I don't have an answer to this question but, as it is mentioned here, the Members of Constituency Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 were invited to a meeting.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

**TRUST FUND FOR SPECIALIZED MEDICAL CARE – EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

(No. B/71) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Trust Fund for Specialized Medical Care (Cardiac Centre at Pamplemousses), he will state if the post of Executive Director thereof has been filled and, if so, indicate -

- (a) when;
- (b) the name of the incumbent, giving details of his terms and conditions of employment;
- (c) if the post was advertised and, if so, when and, if not, why not, and
- (d) if the prior approval of the Board thereof was sought and obtained and, if so, when.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Madam Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that as a result of the termination of the employment on 31 December 2014 of the former Executive Director, Mr D. Poinosawmy, a vacancy arose. The approval of Government was obtained on 30 January 2015 for the constitution of the Board and the appointment of Ms Vijaya Kumaree Sumpth, a Barrister, holding LLB and postgraduate qualifications as the new Executive Director of the Cardiac Centre. The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms which has been consulted, has conveyed approval to employ her on terms and conditions in line with the recommendations of the PRB Report.

With regard to part (c) of the Question, similar to the case of the former Director, the post was not advertised, but the approval of Government was obtained for appointing the Executive Director of the Cardiac Centre.

With regard to part (d) of the Question, after obtaining Government's approval, the Cardiac Centre was informed of the appointment of the new Executive Director. At the last Board Meeting of the Trust Fund for Specialized Medical Care held on 13 February 2015, the Board gave its approval for the appointment.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know from the hon. Minister - we can understand why Minister Gayan is not here - since he gave us the diplomas and so on of '*madame là*' ...

(Interruptions)

Is he aware that, on 01 August 2006, the issue relating to that ‘*madame là*’ was raised here, and Minister X. L. Duval replied? Then, she was appointed - same lady - Director of Tourism Authority, travelled all over the world on missions which had nothing to do with, supposedly, her appointment...

Madam Speaker: Come with your question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: If I cannot introduce my question, I will not put the question!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition....

Mr Bérenger: Shame!

Madam Speaker: I do not want...

(Interruptions)

I don't want anybody to usurp the rights of the Speaker!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Yes, yes, you are protecting him!

Madam Speaker: I will repeat, hon. Leader of the Opposition, I don't want anybody to usurp the rights of the Speaker! You may, please, reply hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

Please reply, hon. Minister.

Mr Bérenger: Shame!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You do not have the right to usurp...

Mr Bérenger: You are usurping our rights....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am really sorry, hon. Leader of the Opposition. Are you challenging....

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: You are asking me, I tell you!

Madam Speaker: Are you challenging the rights of the Speaker?

(Interruptions)

Are you challenging the rights of the Speaker?

Mr Bérenger: I am saying that I should be given a minimum decent time to put my question! This has always been so until now when Minister Gayan is in question and is not here!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think I have given you sufficient time to explain and to ask your question. But I will repeat once more. I will not allow any Member of this House to usurp the rights of the Speaker! Hon. Minister, you may please reply!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: It is my supplementary question!

Madam Speaker: You may please proceed!

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the substantive Minister - it is unfortunate that the Minister is not here - when he says that Government has given its approval, do we understand it is Cabinet decision? Because we have gone through the Cabinet decision and we have not seen anywhere that the appointment was mentioned officially.

(Interruptions)

I am asking! You are not the Minister!

(Interruptions)

Mr Sawmynaden: Hon. Bhagwan, I think Government is Government. The Government has made the decision!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the hon. Minister tell us, since we are talking here about an Executive Director of the Specialised Medical Care (Cardiac Centre at Pamplemousses) and, at one point, that same person was appointed as Head of the MTPA, has the common denominator - that is what I wanted to know - hon. Minister Gayan?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan, last question on this issue!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, could you please proceed with your question?

(Interruptions)

Please sit down!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please proceed with your question!

Mr Bhagwan: Since we have heard many times, even the Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated that this new Government will stop the politics of *petit copain* and *petite copine*, can, at least, the hon. Minister state to the nation it is a clear case of *politique de petite copine*?

Mr Sawmynaden: I think I have already answered the question. The person is qualified and this been through Government.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

This question has sufficiently been canvassed! Next question, please!

Mr Bhagwan: One last question!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, his question has sufficiently been canvassed. Next question, please!

MONT ROCHES – VERGER BISSAMBAR – SEWERATE PROJECT

(No. B/72) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Sewerage Project at Verger Bissambar, Mont Roches, in Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to the –

- (a) date of
 - (i) launch of the tender;
 - (ii) award of the contract;
 - (iii) signature of the contract, and

- (iv) handing over of the site therefor
- (b) name of the contractor therefor;
- (c) contract value thereof;
- (d) expected start and completion dates thereof, and
- (e) number of housing units to be connected.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, my information from the Wastewater Management Authority is that –

- (i) the tender was launched on 22 July 2014;
- (ii) The contract was awarded on 11 November ...

(Interruptions)

I shall resume when there is some order.

Madam Speaker: Any Supplementary questions, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I am waiting!

Mr Collendavello: Well, when you stop talking.

The contract was

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, either I talk or he talks.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to reply.

Mr Collendavello: I am not going to talk if people are going to talk.

- (i) the tender Sewage Project was launched on 22 July 2014;
- (ii) the contract was awarded on 11 November 2014, one month prior to general elections to Onix Co. Ltd for the sum of Rs63,885,437.70 m. inclusive of VAT;
- (iii) the contract document has not according to my information yet been signed;
- (iv) the site was handed over to the contractor on 09 January 2015;

- (v) the project start date is 01 December 2014 and the expected completion date is 31 May 2016, and
- (vi) 207 houses will be connected under this project.

Mr Bhagwan: I have one supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Can we know from the Vice-Prime Minister whether the contractor with the Wastewater Management Authority has had a meeting with the inhabitants, at least, to inform them of the progress of work?

Mr Collendavelloo: I precisely asked that supplementary information and I was told that there had been a meeting on 20 January 2014 with the inhabitants to inform them of the implementation of the project. I am insisting that such meeting be done. It's time there will be such a project. This morning, I was told that a second meeting is scheduled for Saturday, 28 February 2015.

Can I add, if that is of interest to you, that wastewater overflowing on the road near the Mont Roches Training School and religious institutions is being regularly pumped. I am giving this information in the light of what I said with regard to Cité Marcel Gabon in Albion.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister whether he could request the Wastewater Management Authority to give a hotline? We all know that in such type of very delicate works in front of people's premises there are problems which arise when they are digging. Can the Wastewater Management Authority, at least, give a hotline or an officer responsible to which they can address - even to the MPs of the constituency - the problem whenever such problem arises at any period of time?

Mr Collendavelloo: I shall convey that.

Madam Speaker: Any other questions? Hon. Uteem!

STC – BETAMAX SHIPPING LTD - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

(No. B/73) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the contract for the transport of petroleum products by Betamax Shipping Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the –

- (a) total amount paid by the Corporation to date in respect thereof, and

- (b) reasons for the termination thereof, indicating the financial implications to the Corporation as a result thereof.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that USD 145.7 m. has been paid by the Corporation to Betamax Ltd for the transportation of petroleum products for the period ranging from August 2010 to January 2015.

I wish to point out here that prior to the arrival of Red Eagle, a 10-month contract was in operation between the STC and Betamax Ltd under which the latter was required to provide separate tankers for the transportation of White and Black Oils. Those vessels were sourced on the market as and when required.

The amount paid under that contract was USD 20,459,726 for the importation of 855,985 tons of Petroleum Products. The average freight paid by STC for those vessels was USD 23.90 per ton. That was deemed to be fair market rate and was not questioned.

As from the date of arrival of the Red Eagle, that is, in May 2011, a new 15-year contract came into operation. This is the one which has been the subject of concern. Under this contract, the Red Eagle carried both White and Black Oils. The Red Eagle could, however, carry only 925,000 to 970,000 tons of the annual requirements of STC, which is 1.1 to 1.2 million tons. The balance had to be transported by other tankers provided by Betamax Ltd but for which the STC was invoiced freight charges on same terms as for Red Eagle.

Under this contract, STC had paid USD 125,244,128, to Betamax Ltd for the importation of 4,067,703 tons of Petroleum Products. The average freight was, therefore, USD 30.79 per ton.

It will be of interest to note that with the arrival of Red Eagle, the cost of freight per ton to STC rose from USD 23.90 to USD 31.32 in its very first year of operation and to USD 31.61 in the second year.

For the information of Members and to clarify this issue of freight paid, I have decided, Madam Speaker, to table a paper on payments effected to Betamax Ltd under this Contract of Affreightment.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, in December 2014, Government set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee to review the process that led to the award of the Contract of Affreightment (COA) of petroleum products between STC and Betamax Ltd, which was signed in November 2009. In the first instance, it was decided to renegotiate

the COA with Betamax Ltd, more specifically, freight rates, demurrage fees, the “escalation” clause, port dues and bunker consumption. Betamax Ltd did not express any willingness for renegotiation. Instead, they insisted that they had made the country save Rs500 m. to date and would make the country save another Rs1 billion in future. Subsequently, after examining the facts and circumstances and legal advice obtained, it was found that the solicitation/invitation to bid, award and signing of the contract were in breach of Section 14 of the Public Procurement Act and, therefore, unlawful.

At this stage Madam Speaker, it is premature to determine the financial implications, if any at all, to the STC.

However, I must point out that STC is definitely making savings by having recourse to other tankers for the transport of petroleum products. For the first shipment of white oil, STC has paid an all-inclusive freight at the rate of some USD 26.57 per ton for a spot charter, as compared to USD 32.25 per ton paid to Betamax Ltd for the last spot tanker Great Manta. Regarding fuel oil, the average freight rate for the first spot chartered tanker will be about USD 28 per ton, as compared to USD 35.15 per ton paid to Betamax Ltd for the last spot tanker that was named Great Manta.

Regarding fuel oil, the average freight rate for the first spot chartered tanker will be about USD 28 per ton as compared to USD 35.15 per ton paid to Betamax Ltd for the last spot tanker Roy Maersk.

For the second shipment of white oil, STC had more time and thus launched a request for quotation and obtained an even better price of about USD 20 to USD 21 per ton. The price is within the range indicated by STC’s consultants as being those currently obtainable on the market.

A similar exercise is being carried out by the STC for a second spot charter for fuel oil.

In the next three weeks, STC will launch an international tender for a standard and unbiased COA to cover the remaining period of our contract with MRPL, that is, up to July 2016.

Madam Speaker: Does the hon. Minister have a long statement to make or is he nearly finishing?

Mr Gungah: I have nearly finished.

Madam Speaker: Because otherwise you may circulate your reply.

Mr Gungah: I have nearly finished. For such a COA lasting for some 15 to 16 months, it is expected that the savings to be made by the STC will be even more important.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to inform the House that, on 30 January 2015, Government also decided that the case be referred to the Police. I am advised that an enquiry has been instituted into the matter by the Central Criminal Investigation Division (CCID).

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I hope you will allow me to quote from Hansard because what the hon. Minister just told this House is completely opposite to what was stated by hon. Soodhun when he was then Minister of Industry and Commerce. We asked the same question about whether procedures were followed under the Public Procurement Act, and this is what the hon. Minister stated following a PNQ of 10 August 2010 -

“We, in this country, have a lot of businessmen, many *cousins, cousines*, they never invested Rs2 billion. It is the first time in Mauritius that a Mauritian is going to invest and we already have a contract. Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded after STC was exempted from the Public Procurement Act and, I think, as a lawyer, the hon. Member should know.”

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, don't use unparliamentary words!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that when the MSM was in power they defended the contract *bec et ongles* and said that the procedures were followed, and now the hon. Minister is saying that this was not properly done?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member would agree that it was hon. Soodhun, who was at that time Minister of Industry and Commerce, who asked a forensic enquiry to be conducted in the Betamax.

Mr Mohamed: I have one question, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister said that legal advice was obtained as regards the breach of the Public Procurement legislation. Could he, first of all, tell us from whom was this advice obtained and when, and could he table that legal advice?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, being given that the case has been referred to the Police, I prefer not to venture into tabling any document right now in order not to cause prejudice to any party.

Mr Uteem: Following up on my learned friend's question, can the hon. Minister tell the House who was the legal adviser who gave that advice? Because answering to a PQ on 24 May 2011, the hon. Minister Soodhun, in an answer to a question put by me, stated that -

‘In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the advice of the SLO was that the agreement is legally in order.’

So, I want to know whether it is the same SLO that is now changing ...

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I don't have the names with me right now, but I can give that reply to the hon. Member later on.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, I listened to the answer of the hon. Minister earlier that an amount of USD 145.7 m., which amounts to Rs4.4 billion, paid to Betamax Ltd. So, can he confirm whether payment has been effected even when the vessel was out of service?

Mr Gungah: Yes, Madam Speaker, I confirm.

Mr Mohamed: I have a question, a very simple one. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether it is the SLO that gave advice or another private party who was given a contract to give that advice?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I repeat that being given the case has been referred to the Police, I won't reply to it.

Madam Speaker: I have to inform the hon. Members that PQs No. B/98 and No. B/99 have been withdrawn.

At 1.04 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.25 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

MAURITIAN ECONOMY - EURO DEPRECIATION

(No. B/74) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the depreciation of the Euro, he will state -

- (a) if any study has been carried out to assess the impact thereof on the Mauritian economy, and
- (b) the remedial actions he proposes to take in relation thereto.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the Bank of Mauritius, in line with its mandate, closely monitors developments on the international currency market and the evolution of the exchange rate of the rupee against major currencies. I am informed that its staff regularly conducts internal reviews on the effects of fluctuation in the exchange rate on our economy, our competitiveness and the balance of payment.

Mauritius sells some Rs25 billion worth of goods to the Eurozone market, including sugar, textiles and clothing, and seafood, which represents 35 per cent of total exports of goods. On the services side some 55 per cent of tourism earnings are in euro due to a high concentration of arrivals from the Eurozone countries. The ICT/BPO sector is also heavily reliant on the European market.

The depreciation of the euro against the rupee implies that the rupee value of our euro earnings will fall. This generally leads to a fall in revenue for exporters and operators which impacts on their profits during the year. However, exporters of goods and services see currency fluctuations as a risk that they have to manage. They can do so through various financial instruments available for hedging, diversification of markets in terms of currency and building contingencies during times when the exchange rate is favourable or in periods of positive shocks.

As the House is aware, the current depreciation of the euro against the rupee is not due to a general appreciation of the rupee on the domestic market. It is due to a weakening of the euro on international markets combined with a strengthening of the US Dollar. On the cross rate the euro, which was standing at 1.37 one year back, has moved down to 1.14.

The adverse impact of the depreciation of the Euro on enterprises may either be partly offset by the appreciation of the US Dollar or can even be reinforced in some cases. For example, enterprises that are receiving payment in Euro and have to pay for import in dollars will be doubly hit by the situation on the market.

The depreciation of the euro would also generally have a favourable impact on cost of imported goods paid in euro, which represents some 20 per cent of our total imports. The bulk of our imports, is 1 million US dollar, the bulk of our imports which represent some 70 per cent of operations and US dollar is also appreciating.

Government revenue would also be affected by the fall in the value of the euro as taxes levied at importation are based on the rupee value of the goods.

In this case as well because the euro is depreciating along with an appreciation of dollar, the net impact will be mitigated.

The same assessment can be applied to the management of our debt.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Bank of Mauritius has already held working sessions with banks, through the Banking Committee, and with economic operators, particularly MEXA and AHRIM. I understand that the bank will continue to have an on-going dialogue with the main players of the economy on that issue.

Likewise, in the context of a preparation of the Budget, I am having consultative meetings with the hosts of the economic operators, including SMEs. We will certainly discuss possible measures that can be taken to help exporters both of goods and services to mitigate this adverse effect.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the former Governor of the Central Bank had a policy of intervening in the market to support the rupee to fight inflation. Being given that inflation is under control and being given the double impact – doubly hit, as the hon. Minister rightly pointed out - has the hon. Minister held consultation with the Governor of the Central Bank to coordinate action to mitigate any double currency impact by intervening or not intervening in the market to support the currency?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: That is a good question. The point is that we have been fighting for years on the concept of strong rupee, weak rupee, which is for the best for the economy. I feel that the rupee should be at the rate of exchange it should be, depending on the internal strength of the economy and also vis-à-vis our trading partners with whom we are trading. Those two factors normally determine the exchange rate. So, the question of a strong rupee or a weak rupee does not arise. We tend to speak of a competitive rupee, which means a rupee like this normally goes down, floats down. We are following very closely.

The Bank of Mauritius and I are meeting regularly to look into the whole question of exchange rate. There is no doubt that we are moving in a period of very high volatility in exchange rate. It was on the US dollar a few years back and today it is on the Euro. Probably, the private sector will have to learn to deal with volatility in exchange rates in its own dealing, which implies taking measures that can correct measuring balances in exchange rate.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, to limit the impact of the appreciating dollar and depreciating euro, Government-owned enterprises,

State-owned enterprises, including Air Mauritius, State Trading Corporation, are going to hedge the currency risk?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, but we have to understand that we don't control the cross rates, dollar to euro cross rates; we don't control it. It is international and is based on world movements. On the other side, do we have at local level means of fiddling with exchange rate? We don't have it. We don't have it, and we naturally are encouraging the major uses of currencies like the State Trading Corporation, Air Mauritius to look into ways and means of protecting themselves again higher fluctuations in exchange rate.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether changes are being envisaged to the composition of the Monetary Policy Committee and its terms of reference so that they should consider not just interest rates matters but also foreign currency issues?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, the Monetary Policy Committee is mainly a committee that decides on interest rate and it is a funny situation because we have been trying to copy the major markets and instituting their committees which look after its exchange rate, forgetting that we are not New York, we are not London, we are not Tokyo in the sense that any minor fluctuation in exchange rate can determine growth and investment trend. So, I have strong reservation on a Monetary Committee that will just look into controlling inflation when we know in Mauritius, since Independence, the average rate of inflation has been very high; 6 to 7%. It is inbuilt in the system and there is not much we can do. Even now, at this situation, at a time the rate of interest is close to zero in most major economies, we are still with an inflation rate which is above 3% because it is inbuilt in the system. Therefore, I am not convinced that the Monetary Policy Committee can and should limit its long hours of work just to know whether modulation in the rate of interest will determine investment trend in the country.

The second question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition as to whether we should extend the powers of this Committee to look also in the exchange rate is something that cannot be considered because it is the sub-Monetary Policy Committee that looks into interest rate.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - AIRWAY COFFEE LTD. – TENDERS

(No. B/75) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the occupation of spaces by Airway Coffee Ltd. at the old and new terminals respectively of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd. and Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to when tenders were launched therefor, indicating the –

- (a) mode thereof;
- (b) criteria laid down therefor;
- (c) name of the bidders therefor, and
- (d) if Airway Coffee Ltd. met all the criteria of the tender.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission I shall reply to PQs B/75 and B/76 together, as they relate to the same subject.

I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of Airports of Mauritius Ltd (AML) that a first public tender exercise for Food and Beverage Operations in the old Passenger Terminal at the SSR International Airport was launched by AML on 27 May 2009 through an advertisement in the local press. The closing date was fixed for Monday 22 June 2009.

Six bids were received and evaluated and these were from -

- Tropical Times
- Sunworld Co. Ltd
- Sen & Ken Ltd
- Airway Coffee Co. Ltd
- Mungroo & Sons Co. Ltd
- Sanremo

Tropical Times scored the highest marks in all the options. Surprisingly, Madam Speaker, the process was annulled.

A new tender exercise for Food and Beverages Operations was subsequently launched by AML on 24 December 2009, therefore a few days later and the closing date was 29 January 2010. The Tender Notice was published in the local press. Bids were called by AML

for Option 1, which was for the Airside Departing Passengers, and Option 2 for Landside Well-Wishers Hall, Landside Welcomers Hall and for Lounge Management.

Seven bidders submitted their offer at the closing date on 29 January 2010. These are

-

- (i) Tropical Times Ltd;
- (ii) Airway Coffee Ltd;
- (iii) Flic-en- Flac Management Services Ltd;
- (iv) Mungroo & Sons Co Ltd;
- (v) Kissaten Co. Ltd;
- (vi) Sen & Ken Ltd; and
- (vii) Island Famous Brands Ltd.

The bids were opened on the same day at AML Boardroom by the AML Tender Committee in the presence of two bidders.

The Evaluation Committee met on 11 March to analyse the bids and submit an Evaluation Report. The tenders, as the hon. Member asked, were evaluated under the following criteria -

- (a) demonstrated understanding of AML Ltd. requirements;
- (b) proposed concession fee and monthly minimum guarantee for AML;
- (c) competence and relevant experience;
- (d) range of food and beverages offered;
- (e) details of person(s) to be involved in the project;
- (f) demonstrated ability to provide rapid response to urgent requirements.

In addition, to these requirements in the press advertisement, it was stated that all bidders should be well established and have at least 5 years' experience.

The Committee submitted its Report on 29 March 2010, wherein it recommended the award of the tender for Option 1 to Airway Coffee Co. Ltd although the company was registered only in March 2009 and had no direct experience in catering. Instead, Airway Coffee submitted a copy of the Technical Services Agreement with a well-known restaurant.

The Committee also recommended the award of the tender for Option 2 to Tropical Times.

The Board of AML approved the Bid Evaluation Report on 01 April 2010. Madam Speaker, consequently, on 05 April 2010 Airway Coffee Ltd was allocated the contract for Option 1. The Concession Agreement was signed on 03 June. The Agreement was based on a monthly concession fee of 28% of its turnover to be paid to AML, subject to a minimum guarantee fee of Rs1 m. In addition, Airway Coffee had to submit a concession security deposit of Rs3 m.

Madam Speaker, the Concession Security Deposit was never paid, in spite of several reminders and nevertheless, the agreement with Airway Coffee Ltd was renewed for the period January 2013 to 31 March 2013, and the minimum guarantee fee was reviewed to Rs1.1 m. + VAT for the Airside Departure and Rs66,000 + VAT for the Well-wishers outlet, and the lounge management remained the same, at Rs151.00 for adult and Rs66.00 for children. For State Lounge it is Rs66.00 per person.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, Airway Coffee Ltd was allocated the management of lounges in March 2011 as the contract of Tropical Times Ltd, which was the operator at that time, was cancelled, it is claimed, due to poor and unsatisfactory service.

In April 2011, Airway Coffee Ltd was also allocated the contract for Food and Beverages in the Well-wishers' Hall following the departure of Tropical Times Ltd.

From April 2013 to September 2013, the agreement was renewed on a month-to-month basis.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the Board of AML decided that the existing concessionaires and tenants operating at the old Passenger Terminal would be transferred automatically to the new Passenger Terminal. Consequently, there was no tender exercise for the award of commercial spaces at the new Passenger Terminal.

Madam Speaker, although, at that time, Airway Coffee had outstanding claims and had not paid the concession security deposit, AML gave a favourable recommendation on the performance of Airway Coffee.

On 17 December 2012, Airway Coffee Ltd signed a Concession Agreement with ATOL, the operator of the new terminal and, thereafter started operation at the New

Passenger Terminal. The new Concession Agreement was signed for the operation of three retailed restaurant outlets. The new concession fees were as follows –

- 28% of gross revenues for the international departure.
- 21% of gross revenues for domestic departure.
- 21% of gross revenues for the public restaurant at level 2.
- The minimum guarantee fee payable to ATOL was Rs3,130,000. monthly.
- A monthly payment of Rs87,000 for air conditioning and maintenance of common equipment.

I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer of ATOL that the above rates were reviewed on 23 July 2014, it is claimed to be in view of the investment for provision of modern catering facilities by Airway Coffee. These are now as follows –

- For the international departure from 28% reviewed downwards to 26%;
- For domestic departure and public restaurants from 21% to 19%, and
- The monthly guarantee fee from Rs3,130,000 to Rs3 m. for six months peak period and to Rs2.8 m. for the six months off peak period.

Madam Speaker, the amounts owed including interest/penalties by Airway Coffee to AML and ATOL on an aged basis are as follows –

Year	AML (Rs m.)	ATOL (Rs m.)
2011	7.6	-
2012	7.4	-
2013	13.8	11.6
2014	22.4	22.0
2015	-	26.0
Interest*	8.3	-
Penalty*	-	2.2
Total	30.7	28.2

The grand total, Madam Speaker, is Rs58.9 m.

I am informed that AML has sent reminders for the amounts due in 2011, 2012 and 2013 on several occasions.

However, after the General Elections, a final reminder was sent by AML on 15 December 2014 to recover the total amount due otherwise legal action would be initiated.

I am informed that ATOL, on its part, held several meetings with the management of Airway Coffee Ltd in July, October and November 2014 requesting payments as per contract, and reminders were also sent.

Madam Speaker, on 12 January 2015, the advice of the Solicitor General was sought with regard to legal action to be taken against Airway Coffee Ltd for the amounts due to AML and ATOL.

Following legal advice received on 27 January 2015, both AML and ATOL have initiated winding up proceedings against Airway Coffee Ltd. Two notices "Statutory Demands" have been served on 14 February 2015 by the Attorney-at-Law of both AML and ATOL to recover the amount due pursuant to Section 180 of the Insolvency Act.

Airway Coffee Ltd has up to 02 March 2015 to apply to the Bankruptcy Division of the Supreme Court for the Statutory Demand to be set aside and 15 March 2015 to settle the amount claimed. If no such application is lodged, then AML and ATOL shall within one month as from 15 March 2015, they have one month to proceed with the filing of a petition for the winding up of Airway Coffee Ltd.

Madam Speaker, in line with Government Programme 2015-2019 to review the entire process of tendering, procurement and contract allocation, to increase competition, transparency and accountability, the contract for the provision of Food and Beverages will be publicly advertised and more than one provider will be selected.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether the evaluation of the bids for the second tender was carried out at the PMO instead of Airports of Mauritius Ltd. office?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I do not have the information, Madam Speaker. I just know that it was opened at the AML boardroom in Port Louis. I gave that information in the former reply.

Mr Jhugroo: Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who were the Chairperson and members of the Evaluation Committee which recommended that the contract be awarded to Airway Coffee?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Evaluation Committee, Madam Speaker, consisted of Mrs Fong Weng, Permanent Secretary at PMO, who was the Chairperson; Mr Ringadoo,

Mr Serge Petit, Chief Executive, AML; Mr Seenarain, General Manager, Constance Academy, and Mr Teha, Commercial Officer, AML; he was the Secretary.

Mr Jhugroo: Are you aware hon. Deputy Prime Minister, that ATOL, a private company, does not even have an Internal Audit Department to ensure transparency and prevent malpractices?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware. I know AML has one. I will check for ATOL.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, from what I understand from the Deputy Prime Minister, there were two tender exercises. May we know why the first tender exercise was cancelled and whether there were new requirements in the second tender exercise?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The tender was virtually identical on both occasions. I did not check the final tender document, but, as far as I know, they were identical. The reason which I don't find very plausible was that they wanted to have more bidders. In fact, they had, I think, six bidders at the first time - virtually the same bidders - but, obviously, when you open the tender, everybody knows what the prices are and if you do it again a few months later, then the whole game is absurd.

Mr Bérenger: Being given that legal action has already been taken for winding up of Airway Coffee, can I know what arrangements are being made so that in no circumstances - winding up, not winding up, pending new tenders being issued and so on - shall we end up with no catering offered to incoming and outgoing tourists?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No coffee, you mean?

(Interruptions)

We will make arrangements so that there is no break in the service.

Mr Jhugroo: How come, that despite Airway Coffee had a debt of Rs25 m., it was given a red carpet to move to ATOL, a private company which is not governed by PoCA and Public Procurement Act?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, this is obviously a question how it was given green light whilst not having paid the concession, even the concession deposit of Rs3 m. But I intend, in fact, Madam Speaker, to send the file to the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms so that they can have a look and take whatever action is required.

**SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – AIRWAY COFFEE LTD – AMOUNT
OWED**

(No. B/76) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the occupation of spaces by Airway Coffee Ltd. at the old and new terminals respectively of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd. and Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to the amount of money it owes thereto in each case, indicating –

- (a) since when, and
- (b) if measures have been taken for the recovery thereof and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/75)

BAGATELLE DAM PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/77) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Water Resources Unit, information as to –

- (a) who took the decision to –
 - (i) change the scope of works, and
 - (ii) suspend the works, indicating the;
 - (iii) value of the variation order issued in respect thereof, and
 - (iv) the percentage increase it represents to the initial cost of the project;
- (b) the construction cost of the new project thereof, and
- (c) if the main contract falls outside the purview of the Public Procurement Act.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): My reply may be read in conjunction with the answers given to PNQ of 12 April 2011, PQ A/216 of 28 June 2011, PQ B/186 of 03 April 2013, PQ B/967 of 17 December 2013 and more especially PQ 1B/54.

In June 2012, Coyne et Bellier of France in association with Servansingh Jadav and Partners, recommended a change in the design of the spillway of the dam and in the type of foundation. This was because additional tests had revealed that the soil could not accommodate the original design.

The answer to part (a) (i) of the question is that it was the Ministry which changed the scope of works, after obtaining the views of the Consultant together with the views of the geotechnical expert from the University of Mauritius, amongst others.

As regards part (a) (ii), the Ministry and the Water Resources Unit instructed the suspension of the works as from 27 July 2012. This suspension was lifted on 27 December 2013 on the advice of the Consultant.

Following the procurement exercise for the cut-off wall, a Variation Order was issued to the Contractor for the sum of Rs1.7 billion (exclusive of VAT), representing 58% increase of the initial cost after seeking Government approval in October 2013.

With regard to part (b), the revised cost of the project is estimated at Rs4.9 billion (excluding VAT).

With regard to the last part of the question, the then Government obtained funding to the tune of RMB 580 m. for the Bagatelle Dam Project from the Government of the People's Republic of China through EXIM Bank (China) . One of the funding conditions was that the works should be undertaken by a contractor from that country. I am informed that the then Government requested the Chinese authority to submit the names of, at least, three contractors that would be invited to submit bids in accordance with the Public Procurement Act.

However, the Chinese authorities maintained that they would submit the name of only one contractor and designated China International Water & Electric Corporation (CWE) to proceed with bid negotiations.

The State Law Office considered that this funding was from a donor organisation to which section 3(3) of the Public Procurement Act applies. This section provides that the rule of a donor organisation prevails over our rules of procurement. It is a moot point whether the People's Republic of China was a donor organisation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to confirm whether at the time the tender was launched for the construction of the cut-off wall there was no estimate made on the cost of construction of that cut-off wall?

Mr Collendavello: I have it, I have read it somewhere, but it is difficult for me to find it outright. The construction of a cut-off wall was estimated at Rs1.7 billion exclusive of VAT, that is, what I read in a paper which I have in front of me.

Mr Lesjongard: What I want to confirm with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is whether it is true that at the time the tenders were launched no estimate of that cut-off wall was available.

Mr Collendavello: The time the initial tender was launched?

Mr Lesjongard: No.

Mr Collendavello: The time the tender for the cut-off wall. Probably so! What I read is that the construction of the cut-off wall, commonly known as COW, not envisaged initially, would amount to Rs1.7 billion exclusive of VAT. Whether that estimate had been done prior to tender or at the time of tender or afterwards, I don't know. I would have to check all that.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister another question related to COW, that is the cut-off wall? Is it right to say that even a tender was launched, the works were allocated by way of a variation order?

Mr Collendavello: I think it was allocated by way of a variation order, but then, I would have to check again.

Mr Lesjongard: It is there in the Audit Report. My question now is why was a tender launched and then afterwards the works were allocated by way of a variation order?

Mr Collendavello: That is Labour Party Government, what can I tell the hon. Member! That was the practice under that Government. They do contracts, they do tenders and then they do variations!

(Interruptions)

What can we do? This dam is costing about Rs1.5 billion more. The hon. Member was with them; he should ask them.

Madam Speaker: A last question on this issue!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Please proceed, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am doing my job, okay.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is in relation to the use of taxpayers' money. I am paid for that. Okay? Whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is a new Minister, he has to reply when I am asking a question.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please address the Chair!

Mr Lesjongard: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that - because he stated a figure of Rs4.9 billion for the total cost of the project - in the Audit Report the figure stated is Rs5.4 billion for the total cost of the project?

Mr Collendavelloo: I know. That is what the contractor is claiming, but we do not agree with that at all. I know the figure of 5.4 has been bandied about, but I stick to 4.9, which is the figure that I have on file.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Being given that works have been suspended at the request of the Mauritian side, can I know from the hon. Minister what is being paid to the contractor in the meantime and whether since the last general elections the Government of Mauritius has taken up the whole issue with the Government of China?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, let me answer the first part first. I have taken this issue personally with the ambassador of the PROC. I have been on site with him, I have visited the site together with my technicians.

I take that very seriously, although I do not know much about COWs and all these technical matters. I stand guided by my technical officers. I am putting the pressure that I can. The issue being that we will get this dam completed as fast as possible.

With regard to suspension of the works, what I saw on site is that the works were ongoing. In fact, my information is that although the works were suspended in July 2012, this suspension was lifted on 27 December 2013. The works are ongoing. They are being monitored. Insofar as the works themselves are concerned, my technicians tell me that they are satisfactory. The question is the question of finance and what are these additional claims. I must add that with regard to the consultants, there is now a dispute resolution process which has been engaged by Government to claim ultimately through an arbitration process damages from the consultants. According to us, it is because of the consultants that all this has happened.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

BAGATELLE DAM PROJECT - CONSULTANCY FIRM

(No. B/78) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Water Resources Unit, information as to the name of the consultancy firm responsible for the detailed design thereof, indicating –

- (a) the cost of the consultancy fees thereof, and
- (b) when the contract thereof was terminated, indicating the reasons therefor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed that –

- (a) The contract was awarded to Messrs Coyne et Bellier (France) in association with Servansingh Jadav and Partners, for the sum of Rs147 m. (excluding VAT) following a procurement exercise carried out by the Central Procurement Board.
- (b) On 13 January 2014, the Ministry terminated the Consultant's contract with effect from 15 February 2014. The Ministry has entered into a dispute resolution process with regard to financial prejudice caused as a result of gross negligence on the part of the Consultant.

A new Consultant Artelia Ltd was appointed as from February 2014.

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated that the contract was terminated on gross negligence. Can he elaborate on that?

Mr Collendavello: Well, I am no longer a lawyer, but from what I know is that these consultants failed to do the adequate job technical works and that led them to recommend a particular design to the foundation and to the wall.

As the work started, it was found that the basalt under the water could not stand that dam and the design had to change, and that led to an increase in cost. That is what Government is claiming. Under the contract, Coyne et Bellier would be liable to all the damages if you can prove *faute lourde*. If you cannot prove *faute lourde*, then the limitation is capped to a certain amount. That is the whole issue.

In addition, Coyne et Bellier is claiming now from Government. Now that we are putting a claim, they are putting a cross claim, of course, some Rs238 m., against Government.

The matter is not yet before the arbitrator. The matter is now under amicable dispute solution. The French party has now seemingly refused any amicable settlement because we, on the Government side, had asked an extension of time. This matter is being sorted out by the State Law Office. I don't think there will be big problems before we reach the arbitrator.

Let me add that the arbitration is to be held in Mauritius under the rules of the MCCI – LCIA, which is probably the only good thing in this contract.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm that further to the suspension of the works because of the design changes, nevertheless the consultant did give notice of additional claims and the Ministry paid an amount of about Rs130 m. to the consultant?

Mr Collendavello: I am not aware of this. I would not be able to say outright.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I have one question. Was the decision to sue for gross negligence was already taken by the previous Government?

Mr Collendavello: The previous Government.

Mr Bérenger: By the previous Government. I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say that on the French side they are refusing an amicable settlement. Then my question would be: Does that mean that the claim of gross negligence will not be that easy to prove?

Mr Collendavello: That is a legal matter. I do not know whether it is going to be easy or not. What has happened, to make it crystal clear, is that after we took over, the State Law Office asked for an extension of time awaiting instructions from the new authorities. The French side grew upset about it and they wrote a letter saying that they were not going to

accept any delays and they did not want to enter into the amicable dispute resolution. We have explained the situation to them and we are still willing to undertake the amicable dispute settlement or else we will go to arbitration. In any case ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No mobile phones inside, please!

Mr Collendavello: ... before the arbitration starts, there will be amicable settlement discussions, of course.

Mr Bérenger: In the case of the roads, now the RDA is taken to task by the new Minister. Is the Minister satisfied that the Water Resources Unit and the Government side played fully its role in that matter?

Mr Collendavello: I would not wish to pass judgment, Madam Speaker. Let me say that I, personally, am not very happy at that stage of things. But before I pass any judgment, let me reflect calmly over that situation, which is a complicated matter.

PAILLES & POINTE-AUX-SABLES - SEWERAGE NETWORK PROJECT

(No. B/79) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage network project in the region of Terasson and in the nearby region of Pointe aux Sables, he will state where matters stand regarding the region of Pailles and the vicinity thereof, indicating –

- (a) the reasons why the project is being delayed, and
- (b) if due consideration will be given to ensure the implementation thereof in the near future.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): The Wastewater Management Authority informed me that with regard to the region of Terasson and the nearby region of Pointe aux Sables - which this hon. Member knows very well - it has carried out a detailed feasibility study for implementing a sewer network in the following regions -

Terasson - 700 households

Verger Mangue - 75 households

Pointe aux Sables - 1,400 households

Petit Verger and Kensington Place - 650 households

The estimated cost of the project is Rs2.4 billion. The Wastewater Management Authority is considering the implementation of the project, in phases, starting with Terasson, which is most vulnerable. The cost of the works at Terasson is around Rs320 m.

With regard to the region of Pailles, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that bids have been invited for Phase 1 of the project which includes the construction of 4 kms trunk sewer and a pumping station. The closing date is 25 February 2015.

Of course, if the hon. Member so wishes, I will gladly accompany him all over his constituency to visit all the places that he considers necessary.

Mr Barbier: I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for his answer. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister - concerning the regions of Pointe aux Sables and Terasson - whether he can give some precise information about the date the project will start it and whether preliminary works have been completed. I mean the drawings, surveys and all that. If not, when can we expect it to be completed? When tender can be launched? And when can we expect the works to physically start on the site?

Mr Collendavelloo: I have no answer for the moment, Madam Speaker but, of course, if my hon. colleague is so minded I would welcome him in my office at any time that is convenient to him in order to fully discuss the matter.

Mr Barbier: I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and I ...

Mr Collendavelloo: Without giving any bait, of course.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Barbier, do you have one additional question on the same issue?

Mr Barbier: Ok, B/80!

PAILLES - FOOTBALL PITCH

(No. B/80) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football pitch situated near the Police Station at Pailles, he will state if consideration will be given for same to be vested with the Municipal Council of Port Louis with regard to the maintenance thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the football pitch referred to and situated near the Police station at Pailles is not a football ground as per established standard. The plot of State land on which stands this playing field whereat teenagers of this region practice football is only 150 sq ft x 80 sq ft and was formerly being used for illegal dumping of waste. My Ministry had therefore in year 2009 cleaned this site and converted it into a playing field for the benefit of the youngsters of that region.

I am further advised that there already exists two football playgrounds at Morcellement Raffray and St. Louis Street, Pailles.

However, I am making the necessary arrangement to hand over this playing field to the City Council of Port Louis for maintenance purpose, as requested by the hon. Member.

Mr Barbier: I thank the hon. Minister. May I know whether we already have engaged some procedures for the handing over of this football pitch at Pointe-aux-Sables to the Municipal Council?

Dr. Husnoo: As I have mentioned, my Ministry is making the arrangement.

Mr Barbier: Can we know by when?

Dr. Husnoo: It is going to take a few weeks or months I think; we should do it. There should be no many major problem; we are going to do it as soon as we can.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I heard the hon. Minister say that the football ground will be handed over to the Municipal Council of Port Louis and this concerns several football grounds. Would the hon. Minister ensure that when these football pitches are vested in the municipal council that appropriate funding is also given to the municipal council to maintain and operate these football fields?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes. I know this problem. We have discussed it already with the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive. I am going to look into it.

TURKEY REARING PROJECT

(No. B/81) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Turkey Rearing Project, he will state if the experimental phase thereof is now complete and, if so, indicate if turkey chicks will be made available to farmers who are interested therein and, if so, when.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that, in the context of the Turkey Rearing Project, a first batch of 514-day old turkey chicks of reproductive breed Orlopp Bronze was imported from France in October 2013 for reproduction purpose and eventual distribution to interested farmers.

The Animal Production Unit of my Ministry has experimented on the adaptability of the imported turkeys to local conditions and has investigated parameters such as fertility, hatchability, growth rate and feed conversion efficiency which are of paramount importance in turkey production. The tests have shown that the turkeys were well acclimated to local conditions.

However, one of the main constraints identified was the low fertility rate which has not allowed the desired results to be achieved. Turkey reproduction is facilitated by artificial insemination, a technique which the staff of the Animal Production Unit has not acquired yet. The expertise of the Chinese experts working at Albion under the Chinese Agricultural Technical Cooperation Programme has been sought to impart the necessary training to the staff.

I am advised that the turkeys imported in October 2012 have been distributed to some 50 farmers in June 2014. Pending the capacity-building programme and the resumption of the Turkey Reproduction Project, turkeys of commercial breed are being imported and sold directly to farmers. A first batch of 1,000 turkey chicks has accordingly been imported in September 2014. A second batch is planned for May 2015.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the hon. Minister, concerning those chicks which have already being distributed, whether the Ministry has had an assessment of the progress achieved so far by the farmers to know whether all the aspects of this rearing business are being looked into and whether any adjustment needed is being sought?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, in fact, assessments and monitoring are being made. Those farmers that are in that kind of breeding are backyard farmers doing artisanal breeding. So, what we are planning to do is, given that the demand for turkey meat is on the high side, we are thinking of revamping or increasing that industry. We are looking at ways and means to get more farmers into the breeding of turkeys so that we could increase more and more people to produce locally the turkey meat.

Mr Barbier: As the hon. Minister may be aware, there are so many types of species of turkeys which can be developed because there is a high demand on the international

market. Will the hon. Minister consider the possibility of having help from our friend countries, which can help us in having the right varieties, to be able to have this business developed on a commercial basis, as it can be very important source of income for the country?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, in fact, we are contemplating to look for partners from overseas to assist our local people here to get more acquainted with that type of breeding, so that we could get into more commercial breeding of turkey.

HALAL & VEGETARIAN FOOD - REGULATIONS

(No. B/82) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to halal and vegetarian food, he will state where matters stand pertaining to the regulations in relation thereto which had been finalized by his Ministry and the State Law Office, following the working sessions held with the other relevant stakeholders, last year.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Madam Speaker, discussions and consultations have reached an advance stage in relation to the introduction of relevant and appropriate provisions pertaining to Halal and Vegetarian Food in the Regulations under the Food Act.

The main provisions in this respect pertain to -

- (i) definition of Halal and Vegetarian Food;
- (ii) setting up of relevant Certification Bodies with appropriate powers, and
- (ii) labelling requirements.

There are still certain issues that remain to be addressed. These include -

- (i) enforcement aspects;
- (ii) the Authority/Body to be assigned responsibility for enforcement, and
- (iii) the establishment of a Certification Body for Vegetarian Food.

Further consultations are, therefore, under way with relevant stakeholders.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, as you would recall, you yourself were then Minister of Health had started this project and I only wish that it could come to conclusion as soon as possible. Could the hon. Minister inform us who are the stakeholders and whether

those stakeholders have been informed of the forthcoming meetings, and when will those meetings be held?

Mr Sawmynaden: I know the State Law Office and the Regional Public Health Superintendent, the members of the Ministry itself, but I don't have the other information about who are the stakeholders exactly.

Mr Mohamed: Since this is - we will all agree - not an issue on which politics or anything should be done, could the hon. Minister, even though he is not the substantive Minister, consider the possibility of asking for help from all members who would like to contribute for this matter to come to conclusion as soon as possible?

Mr Sawmynaden: I will pass on the message to my colleague Minister.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this Committee that is looking into the labelling of food will also cover imported food? Because a lot of food has labels and, therefore, we need to have agreements with other countries that before they put halal or vegetarian label it should comply with Mauritian law.

Mr Sawmynaden: I think that these are certain issues that remain to be addressed like the authority body to be assigned responsibility for enforcement.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

EX-CHA & CITÉ EDC HOUSES – SALE

(No. B/83) **Mr A. Ganoo**(First Member for Savanne & Black River)asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the ex-CHA and Cité EDC houses, including those located in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof sold to the occupiers thereof, as at to date, indicating the -

- (a) location thereof, and
- (b) number of owners thereof who have not received their respective title respective title deed as at to date, indicating the reasons therefor in each case.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, there are 177 ex-CHA housing estates consisting of 19,442 housing units spread in 145 different localities throughout the island. All the housing

units have by now been sold to their owners. This exercise started in 1985 and was completed in 1993.

Madam Speaker, I wish to point out, however, that out of these ex-CHA owners, there are 188 who have not finalised their deed of sale yet. In the vast majority of these cases, the owners of the housing units have not turned up to submit the relevant documents to allow for the drawing up of the title deed. In a few cases, the legal heirs of the deceased beneficiaries have not agreed among themselves about the succession, and in a few other cases, the present owners are not residing in their houses which are being occupied by a third party. In the face of what is obtainable, my Ministry is setting up a structured administrative mechanism along with appropriate legal action to have these 188 cases regularised at the earliest. Obviously, the cases in Constituency No. 14 will also be dealt with.

Madam Speaker, the list of the 188 cases will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

For Constituency No. 14, which is of direct interest to the hon. Member, there are 23 cases for which deed of sale has not been finalised. Out of the 23 cases, six have succession problems, in 16 cases, documents are missing and in one case the housing unit is being occupied by a third party.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed, next question!

LRT SYSTEM PROJECT – CONSULTANCY SERVICES

(No. B/84) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Light Rail Transit System Project, he will state the amount of money successive Governments have spent in relation thereto in terms of recruitment of consultants and consultancy services since the implementation thereof in Mauritius has been envisaged.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with regard to the Light Rail Transit System, a number of consultancy services have been carried out. The first study, in fact, dates back as far as 1991. Most of the studies were carried out in relation to the transport system in general, with the Light Rail Transit System as an option.

I am informed that the first payment was, in fact, effected in 1993. The information requested is, therefore, being compiled and will be tabled in due course.

Madam Speaker: Any supplementary, hon. Mahomed?

Mr Mahomed: May I ask the hon. Minister to table figures that have been carried out on consultancy services not specifically meant for the light rail transit, but all those which came to the conclusion that the light rail transit will be the best option for the Republic?

Mr Bodha: As the hon. Member is aware, Madam Speaker, there have been many surveys and studies and, in fact, between 2005 and 2010, the preferred option by the then Minister was the bus way. It was only in 2010, when there was a change in Government, that the whole issue of the light rail came again. Between 2010 and since then, the preferred option has been the light rail. But there have been a number of consultancy services. The last one is the consultancy services which were requested from Singapore and you had two stages: one was consultancy services for the implementation of the Action Plan and the second one was the consultancy services for securing the transaction management services.

I will compile all the information and it will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly in due course.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Pending us having the information, including the latest consultant - and this Singapore enterprise is a Government body, is appointed by the Government of Singapore - pending us having the amount of money they have been paid, can I know, now that Government has decided to put the project on hold for the time being, what communication there has been with the Singapore authorities? Have there been exchanges of correspondences and meetings? Have they been informed that the project is put on hold, and what arrangement - termination contract or what have you - has been arrived at with the consultants?

Mr Bodha: Nothing of the sort has been done so far. What has happened so far is that the Singaporean company has, in fact, delivered on the transaction management of the project, and Government is going to take a decision in the days to come and we will contact the Singaporean company in due course.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the project has been temporarily shelved, completely abandoned?

Mr Bodha: It has been shelved.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since we are pleased to learn that the first level consultant work on this matter of light rail was in 1991, which was an excellent idea and still is today, and so many successive governments have spent so much money on this whole consultancy for the project of light rail - and hon. Pravind Jugnauth, I remember, was right when he came in 2010 and tried to push for the whole idea of light railway - could we not, therefore, find out how much money has been really spent by the Republic and whether it is worthwhile not to delay its remaining on the shelf? Lesser the time it remains on the shelf, maybe we will not be faced with another situation where the whole project cost eventually will be another increase that will be more of a problem for us to face if ever we want to implement it.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is right. We have to take a decision and we have taken the decision. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth was, in fact, very in favour; we all were in favour for the light rail project. I think the estimated cost was Rs15 billion, and last time the hon. Minister, my predecessor, came to present this project, it was Rs25 billion. So, this is what I am saying. In fact, we have taken a decision and then we will come back with a list of all the expenses. You will have an idea of how much money has been spent since 1991. In fact, in 1995, when the hon. Prime Minister lost in December 1995, the project cost Rs4 billion.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mahomed!

LRT SYSTEM PROJECT - LAND ACQUISITION

(No. B/85) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the implementation of the Light Rail Transit System Project, he will state if the land acquisition exercise therefor has been completed and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) number of houses concerned therewith, and
- (b) cost thereof.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I have been informed that in connection with the implementation of the Light Rail Transit System, 92 plots of land have been earmarked for acquisition along the corridor between Curepipe and Port Louis. Procedures for land acquisition have already been completed at the level of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and as at today, 88 portions of land have already been acquired by Government.

As regards the remaining four plots, the matter is *sub judice*, as the owners have challenged the legality of the compulsory acquisition. Out of the 92 plots of lands surveyed, only 27 houses are concerned with regard to that project.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has informed that owners of the lands have not yet been compensated as evaluation procedures are still underway.

However, as the House is aware and as is mentioned in the Government Programme, Government has decided for economic reasons not to proceed with the Light Rail Transit System. In the present situation, a technical committee is studying the various options as regards to a mass transit transport system in the context of a decongestion programme, in view of a new economic and physical development plan.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Yes, Madam Speaker, thank you. Thank you, hon. Minister. What will become of these plots of land that are affected by this project?

Mr Bodha: This is a very important question, Madam Speaker. We are considering different options. The alignment is there; the lands have already been acquired and could be put to good use in the Decongestion Programme.

Mr Mahomed: I have an additional question, Madam Speaker. Is there any construction currently ongoing on the land that is strategically reserved for the ex-Railway, Light Rail Transit now, meant for something else?

Mr Bodha: I am not aware. The information I have is that we have 27 residences among that 92 plots. But whether there are any new constructions, I don't think I am aware. I think my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, is monitoring the situation closely.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I know from the hon. Minister if however we have to pay for the acquired land, how much it will cost the Government?

Mr Bodha: The evaluation process is on.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Mahomed: One last question, Madam Speaker. What I meant just now is land on the ex-Railway track behind the Quatre Bornes Market. Is there a parking currently being constructed over there?

Mr Bodha: Well, now that the hon. Member has provided the information, I think we will contact the hon. Minister for Local Government who will monitor the situation with the Municipality of Quatre Bornes.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN - HEALTH TRACK - SOLAR STREET LIGHTING SYSTEM

(No. B/86) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the project for the installation of the Solar Street Lighting System along the Health Track on the Signal Mountain approved for funding by the Maurice Ile Durable Fund, he will state where matters stand, indicating the time frame for the commissioning thereof.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, the specifications for the Solar Street Lighting System for installation along the Health Track on the Signal Mountain have been finalised. My Ministry is now consulting the Municipality of Port Louis regarding modalities for the implementation of the project. A time frame can only be established after the consultation process.

Mr Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I have an additional question. Is the original scope of work, meaning lampposts to be fixed along the whole Health Track being maintained?

Mr Dayal: Everything has been done. Once the process of consultation is finalised, we have funding and everything, the project will be on.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

CHEMIN GRENIER - MARKET FAIR PROJECT

(No. B/87) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Chemin Grenier Market Fair Project, he will state if the construction thereof is being envisaged.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the District Council of Savanne has, taking into consideration that the existing market fair at Chemin Grenier is in a bad state, decided that a new market fair be constructed for the benefit of the inhabitants of that region.

In that context, a plot of private land to the extent of 2 *arpents 67 perches* has been identified and procedures have already been initiated by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for its acquisition. Given that the owner of three contiguous plot of land, Mr Jabar Boodhoo Meah is not agreeable to the sale of these portions of land, compulsory acquisition procedures have been initiated by the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

The project is being considered positively by my Ministry. Once it is approved by the Project Plan Committee, we will contact the Ministry of Finance regarding the availability of fund.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister indicate a time frame in relation to the land acquisition by Government?

Dr. Husnoo: I think the time frame would depend on the Ministry of Housing, not on the Ministry of Local Government.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Will the hon. Minister give an urgent attention to that matter since both the public and the sellers are penalised by the lack of poor infrastructure?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, if I may say so, Madam Speaker contacted me about this project some time ago and we are working on this project. We have been working on this project and once, as I said, we get the land, we are going to get the project approved by the Project Plan Committee and then we will get it going.

Madam Speaker: Let's say that it is not in order to make reference to the Speaker in any question, but we allow the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister - pending the acquisition of the land and the construction of the new Market Fair - see to it that the operators at the Fair are allowed by the authorities to operate in the meantime without any harassment?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes. We will look into that and make sure that everybody will be able to work.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

MOTORCYCLE RACING –TRACK

(No. B/88) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to motorcycle racing, he will state if consideration will be given for the setting up of a dedicated track therefor with a view to preventing the organization of illegal motorcycle racing on public roads and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Member is aware there is presently no dedicated circuit for motorcycle racing in Mauritius. Consequently, with a view to preventing the organisation of illegal motorcycle racing on public roads, the facilities at the parking ground of Anjalay Stadium at Belle Vue have been made available freely to motorcycle racers.

All motorcycling organisations availing themselves of the facilities have to make their own arrangements to improve safety during racing and carting on the parking space.

The Mauritius Motorsport Federation which caters for both motorcycling and auto rally sports also organises motorsport races in other locations like La Nicolière, le Mont Blanc, the Chamarel Road and Plaine Champagne. Before any rally is organised, the appropriate authorisation and clearances are sought from the different authorities like Police, Fire Services, the Ministry of Environment, National Emergency Centre and the Beach Authority and the Local Authorities, among others.

Madam Speaker, all these arrangements have been made pending the setting up of a dedicated track which is not only a very costly project but the health, safety and environmental aspects will also have to be considered. Once an appropriate plot of land will be identified to accommodate a circuit, necessary provisions will be made for the project to be implemented. Meanwhile, I am proposing the request of the Commissioner of Police and the National Transport Authority to enforce existing Legislation concerning the required standard and norms of motorcycles used for racing.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I understand from the reply of the hon. Minister that actually the Government is not contemplating to go forward with such a track, but one of the numerous reasons of fatal accidents on our roads is that there are so many illegal motorcycles racing among the youths. Will the hon. Minister consider a study on the matter and, accordingly, can he react on the findings of the study and then try to rethink about whether we will have a track or not?

Mr Sawmyaden: As I have mentioned, once the appropriate plot will be identified, my Ministry will make provision to go ahead. But regarding motorcycle racing, we will request the Commissioner Police to see to it because motorcycles used for racing and those used on the roads are two completely different machines. That is why they are very dangerous. The technical team of my Ministry is looking into the matter, and once everything will be finalised we will go ahead with the project.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, maybe the hon. Minister is not aware, but the technical team of his Ministry has been looking into this matter for many years. Now, they are still looking into it.

(Interruptions)

The technical team is the technical team!

(Interruptions)

I am not talking about the hon. Minister; I am talking about the technical team.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: I am not talking about the hon. Minister; I am talking about the technical team. There is a big difference. That is why I started by saying: 'maybe he is not aware', and it is not him that I blame. What I would like to say here is the following: would the hon. Minister look into, first of all, all the illegal racings that are going on at La Passerelle area, Roche Bois, in Constituency No. 3, where both types of motorcycles are used; racing as well as normal motor bikes every night where you have spectators sitting on both sides of the highway and watching and we have food sellers selling food and accompanying those who are watching?

Taking that into account and because of that there were 25 acres of land that his predecessor had stated in this august Assembly had already been found and a racing track would be built thereon. That is why, I understand, the hon. Member, Ameer Meea, has come up with this question. It is because his Ministry has already found 25 acres and there was a commitment to come up with a proper racing track. Could he, therefore, follow suit with this commitment that his Ministry had made and his technicians had helped to come up with?

Mr Sawmynaden: Regarding the first question, that is why I have requested the Commissioner of Police and the National Transport Authority to enforce the law. As regards the 25 acres of land, it is nowhere to be found in my Ministry. We have looked into the matter; there is no file regarding this plot of land.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister just mentioned that already there are certain tracks being used, namely in the stadium in Rivière du Rempart. Being given that most motorcycle accidents in racing happen due to bad design, may I know from the hon. Minister whether people from his Ministry do look at the design before giving any authorisation for any legal motorcycle racing to be carried out in Mauritius?

Mr Sawmynaden: I think this up to the federation and they need to get all the clearances before doing any motorcycle racing.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister just stated that the plot of 25 acres of land is not yet there. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if he will make a formal request to his colleague, the Minister of Housing and Lands, so that any land be identified for this project?

Mr Sawmynaden: I am already looking into the matter, and please rest assured that I have already identified a site and will come up with a proposal shortly.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

BUS SERVICE – VELORE & NICOLAY ROADS

(No. B/89) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the bus routes No. 70 and 77 plying towards the Immigration Square, Port Louis, he will state if he is aware that the buses along these routes do not pass along the Velore and

Nicolay Roads, thereby causing hardships to passengers who have to alight thereat and, if so, indicate if –

- (a) the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto, and
- (b) consideration will be given for the setting up of a bus stop along the Mariamen Temple Street, near the Sunnasee Building.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, according to authorised itineraries, bus route No. 70 which starts from Cité La Cure Traffic Centre and bus route No. 77 which starts from Terre Rouge Police Station, should both transit through Noor-E-Islam Road, previously known as Nicolay Road, on their way to Immigration Square.

As regards Velore Road, which is a link between Military Road and Noor-E-Islam Road, it has been removed from both routes and itineraries since several years now, because of the difficulty for vehicles to exit at the junction. Buses instead proceed up to the junction of Military Road and Noor-E-Islam Road, where it is safer for vehicles to exit at the junction because of the presence of traffic lights.

I am informed that complaints have been received to the effect that buses owned by individual operators along both routes, regularly fail to follow the authorised itinerary on reaching Quay ‘D’ roundabout. They instead move along the motorway, thus bypassing Military Road and Noor-E-Islam and Mariamen Temple Roads.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that since the beginning of the year, four contraventions have been established, because the NTA is monitoring the situation in that region and regular checks are being carried out to ensure strict compliance with the conditions attached to the Road Service Licences. Disciplinary action will henceforth be taken against both the bus crew and the bus owner in the event of repeated offences.

However, with regard to part (b) of the question, the National Transport Authority along with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will carry out a survey soon, to explore the possibility of siting a bus stop along the Mariamen Temple Road.

I am also open to any suggestion of the hon. Member.

**BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS LTD. – MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE –
REPORT**

(No. B/90) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the

Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., he will state if consideration will be given for the setting up of a full-fledged inquiry into the management thereof, since the appointment of Mr D. N. as Chief Executive Officer thereof and, if so –

- (a) table copy of the report of the Ministerial Committee presided by the former Minister of Public Infrastructure in relation thereto, especially concerning allocation of land at Ebene, Rose Hill, and
- (b) consider taking immediate measures regarding the prevailing chaotic situation and the degradation caused to the environment by parking and hawkers at the Ebene Cyber City.

Mr Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, in line with the commitment of this Government to eradicate corruption, nepotism and malpractices, the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms will be requested to carry out a full-fledged inquiry into the management of the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., from June 2007 to December 2014, the period during which Mr D. N. was Executive Chairman. The terms of reference, thereof, are being drafted.

As requested by the hon. Member, I am tabling a copy of the report of the Ministerial Committee presided by the ex-Minister of Public Infrastructure in relation thereto.

Madam Speaker, in respect to part (b) of the question, I agree with the hon. Member that a chaotic situation still prevails at Ebene Cybercity with respect to illegal parking and hawkers which BPML has not been able to sort out until now.

The proposed multi-storey parking tower has not yet been finalised and, in the meantime, as an interim measure, temporary parking for some 1,030 cars has been allowed on selected plots. I am also informed that the 40 buildings or so that have been completed so far, have parking slots which can accommodate some 3,600 vehicles in total. In addition, I am told that double-yellow lines have also been painted on all the main arteries of the Cybercity and the Police are exercising control over illegal parking.

The problem of hawkers is still pending and is as problematic as before.

I have, therefore, requested BPML to review both issues and to come up with sustainable solutions, and I propose, of course, to follow up closely on the problems raised by the hon. Member.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, why are we wasting so much time to appoint new people there? We must have new people in charge of BPML and I am sure they will have right ideas in terms of food courts and so on. I cannot understand. It is not difficult to solve those problems.

Mr Jugnauth: We are in the course of appointing the people to constitute the Board. We will do so very soon.

Mr Bhagwan: Would the hon. Minister confirm to us whether in the terms of reference for the inquiry - *le Gooljaury Tower*, the way the land was given, misappropriating of leisure, land space, *cela a été réservé pour l'environnement* - the whole issue of that project also would be included into the inquiry which would be conducted?

Mr Jugnauth: Of course, the Ministry of Good Governance, I mean the inquiry will look into that aspect also. We will look into the report, the findings of the Ministerial Committee at that time which, unfortunately, concluded that there were a lot of shortcomings and it remained just like that and no action was taken. So, they will have to look as far back as the conclusion of that report also.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for tabling this report, which is a very, very good act on his part. With regard to immediate measures that could be taken to stop the chaotic situation, could the hon. Minister consider the possibility of ensuring that there are pavements that are free from any obstruction that would permit people to walk from offices to restaurants and to stop them from walking on the streets? Because road accidents could really occur at any minute, as we are speaking now. And this would be, maybe, only a suggestion and I wish you could really take it into account.

Mr Jugnauth: Of course, Madam Speaker, we have to review the infrastructure that prevails there and taking into account the fact that pedestrians also need to have a place which is safe for them to move from one place to the other.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I also make a request to the Minister? The Ebene area appears to be found in a no man's land. It is supposedly to be under the responsibility of the Moka-District Council, which is far away. Neither the Municipality of Quatre Bornes nor Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has any jurisdiction on the area. The hon. Minister would see by himself *comment cet endroit est mal entretenu*. Can I appeal to the hon. Minister at least to liaise or give directives to our Ministers responsible and the Minister of Local Government to have a common meeting so that this area can be cleaned, at least, every day?

Mr Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I believe that it falls under the jurisdiction of the Quatre Bornes Municipal Council.

(Interruptions)

No, not Moka. It is Quatre Bornes

MBC – AUDIT EXERCISE

(No. B/91) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the results of the audit exercise carried out by Mr R. J., former Director of Audit, on the management thereof by Mr D. C., former Director General thereof, indicating –

- (a) the names and grades of the officers who have recently been laid off/made to retire and the reasons thereof;
- (b) the status of the overdrafts and accumulated loans due to Government and private institutions, and
- (c) when a full-fledged Board will be constituted as per the MBC Act.

Mr Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, with regard to the management of MBC by the former Director General, I am informed that the audit exercise, being carried out by the former Director of Audit, is still underway and will be completed shortly.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am tabling the information requested.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the status of the overdrafts and accumulated loans due to Government and private institutions amounts to Rs818 m. The breakdown is as follows –

Overdraft -

- (a) MPCB, Rs208.4 m.;
- (b) SBM, Rs6.6 m.

With regard to loans –

- (a) SBM, Rs110 m.
- (b) Government of Mauritius, Rs53 m.
- (c) People's Republic of China, Rs440 m. making a total of Rs818 m.

Madam Speaker, after receipt of the report of the enquiry with reference to Finance, the management of the MBC will be in a better position to review expenses and revenue to make the institution more effective. The Corporation, I am informed, has already embarked on a cost reduction exercise and comparative figures show, at least, some improvement over the past performance. For example, MBC has made a saving of Rs1,986,125 since 30 December 2014 to end January 2015, that is, over a period of one month. And I believe that if we take that figure over a period of twelve months it, will make around Rs24 m. This gives us an indication of, in fact, the mismanagement of funds under the previous management.

As regards part (c) of the question, the constitution of the Board is under process.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the auditors of the former Director of Audit will also enquire into the purchase of equipment, specialised cameras purchased, and which were being used on only specific occasions and the cost of the equipment?

Mr Jugnauth: I believe it also includes the acquisition of equipment.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I also make a request to the hon. Minister to ask the auditors to enquire into the subcontracting of works by the MBC to specialised agencies where even civil servants and advisors have been involved; whether this aspect will be taken into consideration?

MrJugnauth: Of course, I also think that they will be looking into that, but if any Member has any information he can, of course, communicate to me directly and I will pass on to ...

(Interruptions)

...hon. Members from both sides!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the latest concerning the enquiry of the very rapid amount of emoluments given, taking pension by the former Director General when he just fled from the MBC/TV?

Mr Jugnauth: I can confirm that this is part of that enquiry. In fact, this is the first part of that enquiry and, at this stage, of course, I cannot say anything until the conclusion comes to my knowledge.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, a last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know exactly the amount pocketed by the Director General?

Mr Jugnauth: Unfortunately, I don't have this amount now. I remember there was a question. Unfortunately, it was not reached, but it must have gone written. So...

(Interruptions)

But, of course, I undertake to give the figures.

Madam Speaker: You have a question, hon. Jhugroo?

Mr Jhugroo: On MBC yes, only one small question. Can I know from the hon. Minister who took the decision at the MBC to pay the former Director General, I think around Rs5 m.?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, if I can recall, there was one clause in his contract called a 'Clause de conscience', whereby he decided that he could no longer remain as Director General and then I suppose that he must have written to the Board - but I am just speaking from memory. I know that the information was relayed to the Prime Minister's Office, and from what I recall I believe the former Secretary of Cabinet dealt with it. But I do not want to mislead Parliament. If the hon. Member will come with a substantive question, I will provide all the information.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: From what the hon. Minister has just said, from what I understand, he is saying that the former Director General used and abused a clause of the management contract, 'Clause de conscience'. Can the hon. Minister tell us when, what year, that 'Clause de conscience' was introduced in the management contract of the Director General - the former, a long time before him? In what year was that clause introduced in that management contract?

Mr Jugnauth: I have to check because I don't have the information. I can provide...

(Interruptions)

The question is addressed to me.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/95 has been withdrawn. Time is over!

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(4.10 p.m.)

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS – MOTION OF THANKS

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Second Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West (Mrs D. Selvon).

"That an Address be presented to the President of the Republic of Mauritius in the following terms -

"We, the Members of the Mauritius National Assembly, here assembled, beg leave to offer our thanks to the President of the Republic of Mauritius for the Speech which he has addressed to us on the occasion of the Opening of the First Session of the Sixth National Assembly."

Question again proposed.

Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Madame la présidente, permettez-moi tout d'abord de vous féliciter en tant que présidente de la nouvelle Assemblée nationale, plutôt deux fois qu'une, puisque vous êtes aussi la première femme à occuper de telles fonctions. Mes félicitations vont également à votre vice-président.

Je voudrais aussi saisir l'occasion pour féliciter notre *Leader of the House*, le Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, qui a su vaillamment amener l'Alliance Lepep à une victoire cinglante et sans appel aux élections législatives de décembre 2014, ainsi que mon Leader, le Premier ministre adjoint, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, pour la confiance qu'il a placée en moi car, Madame la présidente, c'est mon deuxième mandat.

Pour la deuxième fois consécutive, je suis reconduit au Parlement pour représenter la circonscription numéro 12, Mahebourg/Plaine Magnien, et je voudrais remercier ces mandants de m'avoir renouvelé leur confiance après une campagne rude, et même dans certains cas, malsaine.

Cette victoire, faut-il rappeler, Madame la présidente, est la victoire de toute l'île Maurice. Une victoire contre le complot de deux soi-disant grands partis qui voulaient bafouer la démocratie ; une victoire sur la corruption et le mensonge. C'est aussi une victoire des idées nouvelles contre la pensée unique, une victoire de la modernité sur l'immobilisme, car L'alliance Lepep a su comprendre les attentes du peuple. C'est pourquoi il y a eu une telle adhésion à notre programme.

Faut-il rappeler que dans les jours qui ont suivi les élections, dès la formation du gouvernement, nous avons immédiatement pris des mesures importantes, telles que –

- l'augmentation de la pension de vieillesse ;
- le gel des sentences sur les permis de conduire ;
- la reprise des terrains à bail accaparés par les petits copains ;

C'est cela un gouvernement responsable, c'est cela une alliance qui tient ses promesses, Madame la présidente. Et ça ne fait que commencer !

Dans le programme électoral nous avons mis en avant certaines idées phares, car nous sommes conscients des enjeux qui attendent l'île Maurice aux plans économique, social et environnemental.

Nous retrouvons aujourd'hui dans le discours-programme les mêmes idées phares. J'aimerais m'appesantir sur quelques-unes de ces mesures que nous allons introduire. Tout d'abord, le soutien aux plus vulnérables. Il s'agira de mieux canaliser les aides.

J'aimerais ici soutenir un point qui touche beaucoup de personnes dans l'impossibilité d'acquérir une maison. Pour être éligible à l'acquisition d'une maison NHDC, il faut avoir un salaire ne dépassant pas les R 10,000. Mais le coût de la vie à Maurice n'est plus le même qu'il y a 10 ans, Madame la présidente.

Je demanderai donc au vice-Premier ministre, ministre des Terres et du Logement, mon ami l'honorable Soodhun, de bien vouloir revoir ce barème à la hausse, car cela soulagerait tous nos compatriotes qui ne touchent pas suffisamment pour joindre les deux bouts mais qui ne sont pas éligibles aux aides sociales.

Le logement est en effet un élément capital pour le développement et le bien-être de ce pays et il est au centre de la politique gouvernementale.

Avec le projet de plus de 10,000 maisons sociales, que nous accueillons avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme, c'est un pas supplémentaire qui va être franchi pour soulager toutes ces familles qui sont dans le besoin et qui veulent assurer leur avenir.

J'aimerais ici attirer l'attention du vice-Premier ministre sur la nécessité de régulariser la situation des habitants des cités CHA qui ne sont pas encore propriétaires de leurs biens, notamment à Cité La Chaux, Cité Balance et Camp Carole pour ne citer que quelques exemples. Mais nous savons tous que dans chaque circonscription, il y a ce genre de situation problématique.

Par ailleurs, Madame la présidente, il est important que la NEF soit restructurée. Le *Deputy Prime Minister* qui a fondé le ministère de l'Intégration sociale, dont dépend la NEF, avait jeté les bases de la lutte contre la pauvreté, mais malheureusement le travail énorme qu'il a abattu n'a pas été suivi.

Aujourd'hui, il est temps de mettre en place un mécanisme qui permettra de lutter contre la pauvreté de façon durable, et la volonté de ce gouvernement est là, Madame la présidente. C'est un combat qui doit impliquer tout un chacun aussi bien de ce côté de la Chambre que de l'autre côté, afin d'éradiquer ce fléau qui mine notre société.

Maintenant, j'aimerais aborder la question épineuse de la restructuration de nos institutions. C'est une réforme importante et délicate, mais si elle est bien menée, va redonner confiance aux Mauriciens dans leurs institutions et dans le service public.

Nous avons un problème de confiance du public envers nos institutions. Ce gouvernement, Madame la présidente, prend le taureau par les cornes et donne un signal fort à toute la nation, car nous voulons redonner espoir à tout un peuple mais aussi redonner leurs lettres de noblesse à nos institutions.

Il s'agit surtout de faciliter l'interaction entre la population et les services publics en établissant, par exemple, de nouveaux horaires ou des horaires plus étendus dans certains services, car nous savons tous combien les démarches administratives sont lourdes aux heures d'ouverture habituelle.

Il faudra engager une réflexion sur les modalités à appliquer, mais nous pourrions déjà penser à étendre le principe du *shift system* qui existe déjà, par exemple, dans les hôpitaux, à

d'autres services. Car notre objectif prioritaire est de satisfaire le public, mais aussi d'accompagner de façon efficace la relance de l'économie de notre pays.

Avec un service public performant, c'est la population qui est satisfaite et c'est l'économie qui tourne à plein régime, car la relance économique est la priorité de ce gouvernement.

Et comme le dit si bien le *Deputy Prime Minister*, toute relance économique doit passer par une redynamisation de l'industrie touristique, car le tourisme est le pilier de notre économie.

Tout cela passe par une restructuration de la MTPA et de la TA et par une nouvelle vision pour notre industrie touristique basée sur –

- une sécurité renforcée ;
- un contrôle de qualité strict et une hausse dans la qualité de nos produits ;
- un moratoire sur la construction de nouvelles chambres ;
- une meilleure connectivité aérienne, et
- une présence plus assidue sur les marchés traditionnels.

Je n'ai aucun doute que le *Deputy Prime Minister*, avec le charisme qui le caractérise et les résultats qu'il a obtenus dans le passé, sera à la hauteur des ambitions affichées dans ce secteur, Madame la présidente.

Le programme gouvernemental est très étoffé et contient de nombreuses mesures toutes aussi importantes les unes que les autres. Mais il y a un secteur qui mérite toute notre attention, parce qu'il a trait à l'avenir de nos enfants ; c'est l'éducation.

Nos enfants méritent un meilleur système éducatif qui ne les broie pas lorsqu'ils sortent à peine de l'enfance ; qui ne les forcent pas à se jeter, si jeunes, dans une compétition féroce qui a pour nom la CPE. C'est pourquoi l'introduction du *9-year schooling* est une nécessité absolue.

Elle permettra de renvoyer l'examen à plus tard, à un âge où les enfants sont plus mûrs. Et j'ajouterai que pour faire de nos enfants des adultes équilibrés et éduqués nous devons aussi renforcer notre système universitaire. Il y a trop d'universités qui ne sont pas au niveau ou qui sont carrément '*marrons*', si je peux me permettre cette expression.

Les parents investissent des fortunes dans une formation qui, au bout du compte, est sanctionnée par un diplôme bidon. Et ce gouvernement va tout mettre en œuvre pour que l'avenir de nos jeunes soit entre de bonnes mains.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de terminer en rappelant à la Chambre que ce gouvernement a un travail gigantesque qui l'attend.

Mais avec l'esprit d'équipe et la volonté qui nous animent tous, je n'ai aucun doute que nous réussirons dans notre tâche.

Hélas, certaines personnes au sein de cette auguste Assemblée osent mettre tout notre programme gouvernemental en doute, parce qu'ils ont rêvé, un bref moment, de se mettre à notre place, à travers des calculs arithmétiques, en faisant intervenir l'alchimie.

Mais le rêve s'est transformé en cauchemar, avec une défaite sans appel aux dernières législatives. Car aujourd'hui, c'est une collation de l'Alliance Lepep qui tient la barre de ce pays et non des alchimistes qui pensaient pouvoir jouer avec la Constitution de la République de Maurice. Donc, je n'ai aucun doute que ce pays est entre de bonnes mains, que l'équipe qui dirige actuellement ce pays va vers un avenir plus que brillant, on va dire, que notre bateau sera à bon port et que même dans le futur la même équipe sera au pouvoir aux prochaines élections.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

(4.23 p.m.)

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker on your election to the Chair, and I am sure we can rely on your guidance and expertise for the smooth running of the affairs of this House. I seize this opportunity to congratulate hon. Members of both sides of the House on their election.

Madam Speaker, I take immense pride and pleasure to stand here as a Member of the National Assembly duly elected by the people of Constituency No. 3 for the second time consecutively and I wish to express to them my sincere gratitude and pledge to represent them with conviction and loyalty. I want to reassure them that I will leave no stone unturned to live up to their expectation. May I also express my thanks and gratitude to my leader, hon. Paul Bérenger, who is the hon. Leader of the Opposition and Leader of *Mouvement Militant*

Mauricien, for the trust placed in me and also my thanks and gratitude to my parents, relatives and friends.

It is my sincere belief that the MMM, despite what opponents may say, remains the torchbearer of national unity. It has always fought for social justice, consolidated democracy, combatted communalism and offered equal opportunity to any Mauritian who aspires to become Prime Minister. It is not surprising that it is the only big party for not having been beaten by a resounding and eloquent 60-0 *pisso*.

Madam Speaker, let me now come on the *discours-programme*. Madame la présidente, je dois concéder que c'est un programme gouvernemental ficelé ayant pour objectif de faire perdurer, de prolonger le *feel-good* atmosphère qui prévaut depuis plus d'un mois dans le pays. Si c'est bon pour l'ensemble de la population qu'il y ait les conditions nécessaires pour qu'elle reprenne goût à la vie avec moins d'anxiété, d'inquiétude et de tourmente qui caractérisaient notre quotidien dans un passé récent, il n'en demeure pas moins que les attentes parmi les gens sont nombreuses, comme c'est toujours le cas après une campagne électorale marquée par des promesses. Il faut être prudent et mesuré et ne pas pousser le bouchon trop loin en termes de largesse, car, en temps et lieu, les gens ne vont pas tarder à s'interroger sur les stratégies économiques que compte utiliser ce gouvernement pour trouver les ressources financières requises pour traduire la réalité de toutes ses promesses. Il est vrai qu'un programme est un programme, une ébauche, un plan pour l'avenir et n'a rien de semblable à un budget. Donc, nous attendons voir ce que nous réservera le budget qui sera présenté dans quelques jours, en termes d'explications détaillées et chiffrées pour soutenir les mesures annoncées dans ce programme.

Outre le transport gratuit pour les étudiants et les personnes âgées, on a eu une augmentation substantielle des prestations sociales payées en décembre sans prévision budgétaire préalable. Avec le phénomène de vieillissement de la population, la dotation budgétaire sous ce chapitre s'amplifiera crescendo au fil des années et ce sera aux générations futures de fournir les efforts nécessaires pour assurer ces pensions dans la durée.

Il y a eu une augmentation salariale de R 600 à tous les travailleurs et fonctionnaires. C'était bien, car c'était leur dû. Mais cela n'exclut pas le fait qu'il faut trouver de l'argent même si on s'emploie à éliminer les gaspillages qui ont marqué l'ancien régime. On arrivera difficilement à la somme nécessaire sans recourir à la taxe. Un salaire minimal est aussi à l'agenda de ce gouvernement pour les travailleurs au bas de l'échelle. Là aussi, si l'intention

est louable, il faut être vigilant et prudent, afin que cela ne serve pas de prétexte pour des licenciements massifs et d'autres abus.

Plus loin, dans le discours, on a lu que les subsides aux frais d'examen du *SC* et du *HSC* seront étendus à tous les étudiants. Cela s'applique-t-il pour les *private candidates* et pour ceux ayant échoué une fois ou deux fois ? Quand on pense qu'il y a des parents qui sont riches qui en ont les moyens et ils peuvent eux-mêmes s'encourir les frais, on est tenté de dire : est-ce que ce n'est pas un *vote catching devise* qui va nous coûter cher ? Il y a des largesses qu'on doit absolument éviter. Quand on ajoute les prestations sociales, les pensions, les compensations salariales, les repas chauds, les subsides aux frais d'examen, cela avoisine des milliards de roupies. De quoi se demander s'il n'y aura pas des taxes déguisées qui vont être introduites dans le prochain budget.

Au niveau de la santé, on constate un effort pour rendre les services hospitaliers plus proches. Je me permettrai toutefois de suggérer la mise sur pied d'un comité spécial comprenant des représentants du ministère des Finances, de la Sécurité sociale, de la Santé, des Affaires étrangères pour accélérer les démarches pour les patients qui ne peuvent pas être opérés à Maurice. J'en parle, parce que j'ai eu plusieurs cas dans ma circonscription, et je peux vous dire que c'est un vrai calvaire pour une famille d'entamer des démarches pour envoyer un de ses membres dans un hôpital en Inde ou ailleurs. J'espère que l'honorable ministre - je crois qu'il est là - prendra bonne note de cette proposition.

Maintenant, Madame la présidente, la problématique des marchands ambulants a été aussi mentionnée dans le discours-programme, et ce problème nous concerne tous. Plusieurs formules ont été essayées au cours des deux dernières décennies, mais une solution durable n'a jamais été trouvée. J'apprécierais si l'honorable ministre pouvait venir avec un plan d'envergure pour solutionner cet épineux problème. Et là, comment ne pas oublier le '*Hawkers Palace*' ! Ce projet a été torpillé par fanatisme politique, et aujourd'hui ce bâtiment aurait servi à abriter bon nombre de marchands ambulants ; pas la totalité, mais quand même une bonne partie. Le problème de marchands ambulants reste entier. C'est vraiment un drame, et récemment on a entendu le ministre de tutelle proposer le *duty free* aux marchands ambulants pour leurs véhicules. J'aurais aimé savoir comment ça va se faire dans la pratique ; quelles vont être les conditions nécessaires pour que les marchands ambulants obtiennent une voiture ou un van *duty free* ? Peut-être le ministre concerné va nous donner plus de détails durant son discours.

Madame la présidente, laissez-moi dire quelques mots par rapport aux jeux de hasard, le *gambling*. Madame la présidente, les Mauriciens sont bercés par le rêve et se tournent de plus en plus vers les jeux de hasard. Ce sont des millions de roupies qui changent de main. Il y a quelques veinards, mais il y a aussi des milliers de perdants. A-t-on mené une enquête approfondie pour déterminer son impact sur la vie des Mauriciens ? Aucune étude sur l'impact social n'a été faite sur ce que cela aura sur notre société, et aujourd'hui on paie les frais de cette irresponsabilité.

Madame la présidente, aucune société ne peut se payer le luxe de voir des pères de famille tomber dans le cercle infernal du *gambling*. Quand les parents qui sont censés être des *role models* cèdent à la tentation, c'est très grave. C'est le fondement de la cellule familiale qui est menacé. Qui a intérêt à ce que les Mauriciens deviennent des '*zougadères*'? Figurons-nous si toute l'île Maurice devient un grand casino avec tout le monde s'affairant autour des tables de jeux ! Pourrons-nous compter sur une optimisation de nos ressources humaines pour relever les multiples défis qui se profilent à l'horizon ? Qu'on se ressaisisse, et que le bon sens prévaut ! Qu'on décourage le *gambling*!

Ce n'est pas une façon de démocratiser l'économie. J'ai entendu dire récemment que le ministre des Finances est en train de revoir toute la question en ce qui concerne les jeux de hasard, et j'accueille cela favorablement.

Et parallèlement, il est aussi mentionné dans le discours-programme par rapport au fléau de la drogue. La toxicomanie persiste, et là-dessus j'aurais aimé dire que la drogue, ce fléau, doit être placée au-dessus de la mêlée politique ; ça doit être *above party politics*. La drogue est un fléau qui n'est pas sujet à une politique partisane. Nos travailleurs sociaux engagés semblent prêcher dans le désert ; pire que l'indifférence il y a même de la complaisance. Le mouvement antidrogue mène une croisade et bénéficie de très peu de soutien digne de ce nom de l'État. Après presque 30 ans, il est plus que nécessaire d'instituer une commission d'enquête. La dernière en date était la Commission Rault qui était en juillet 1986, et j'accueille favorablement la mise sur pied d'une nouvelle commission d'enquête sur la drogue. Mais là encore on attend la mise sur pied de cette commission d'enquête. Qui va la présider ? Qui seront ses assesseurs ? Quels seront les *terms of reference*? Mais l'initiative est louable.

Et aussi, dans le discours-programme, mention est faite par rapport à Agaléga. Agaléga, comme vous le savez, est rattaché à la circonscription No. 3, dans ma

circonscription. Beaucoup de projets ont été annoncés ces dernières dix années, mais dans le réel, concrètement, rien n'a été fait. J'ai eu l'occasion de visiter Agaléga en compagnie de l'honorable Mohamed, et je peux vous dire que les conditions de vie des gens qui vivent à Agaléga sont vraiment inadmissibles. Je suis vraiment navré de constater qu'année après année, beaucoup de projets ont été annoncés, et comme je vous l'ai dit, rien n'a été fait. L'ancien ministre des Administrations régionales, le nouvel adhérent au PMSD, était passé maître dans l'art des effets d'annonce, allant même jusqu'à être ridicule. On se souvient même de son dernier passage à Agaléga et de la bourde qu'il a commise là-bas, mais tout ça c'est le passé. J'espère vraiment que tous ces projets qui ont été annoncés dans le discours-programme vont être réalisés pour le bien-être des gens d'Agaléga.

L'ouverture d'une ambassade en Arabie Saoudite - que moi-même j'ai pu soulever à travers des questions parlementaires pendant ces cinq dernières années ici au Parlement - aussi figure dans le discours-programme. On attend cela avec impatience, et je crois que l'honorable Soodhun en a parlé dans son discours.

Madam Speaker, Government also announced the decentralisation of Port Louis. Let me say a few words on this issue. Port Louis is a microsome with all ethnics represented. While the city is invaded by skyscrapers shooting up, the surrounding suburb constitutes a belt with numerous pockets of poverty. This double standard development which has been going on is causing suffocation and asphyxia in this vital region where we still have a centralised system. For Government to venture in a decentralised capital, Port Louis, that is, where we have the Parliament, the Supreme Court, all the major Government offices that, according to the new project, will move out of the capital, Government should come forward with a project of providing the inhabitants of the capital opportunities to continue their trade and business in order to earn a decent living. Actually, the capital is falling prey to social evils with theft and prostitution becoming current features. So, we better think well before just embarking on a project that will have this side effect in the long run.

Madam Speaker, let me also say a few words on the Public Accounts Committee of which I was a Member during the last mandate. The mandate and practices of the Public Accounts Committee vary considerably from legislature to legislature in different countries since each one operates within a different political context and faces issues unique to the legislature it serves. However, there is a shared and increased understanding across both the Commonwealth and the Southern African Development Countries as to the key features of a Public Accounts Committee in order to ensure its effectiveness.

I believe that the mode of functioning of the PAC be revamped into a forward-looking dimension since the ultimate purpose of both the Public Accounts Committee and of the National Audit Office is to encourage improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public money, which is essential in fostering effective governance. I will not dwell further on this issue as time will not permit, but we have all the recommendations of the last Public Accounts Committee report, and I also remember that last time the Deputy Prime Minister was the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, he also pleaded for a revamping of the Public Accounts Committee with more powers.

Madam Speaker, on paragraph 263 of the Government Programme, mention is being made to monitor political funding and abuse of power. Since *c'est d'actualité*, I would like to say a few words in relation to political funding, which is a cost to democracy. In order to carry out their core activities, political parties need appropriate funding. This relationship between money and politics, however, is controversial and much of the debate on the role of money is concerned with the improper influence of money on the democratic political process and with the illegitimate personal enrichment of some politicians. While the shady aspects of finance and politics should not be ignored, the relevance of money extends beyond illegitimate sources that flow into coffers and pockets of some politicians. The scope of political finance has a wider relevance in the context of the functioning of democracy and should thus be seen as a broader than merely involving illicit transactions. More generally, political activities involve expenses which should be seen as a necessary and unavoidable cost of democracy because money is one of the most essential resources for political parties which are the principal protagonists of modern democracy. It plays a critical role in the democratic process and, in order to function properly, political parties need to maintain their party organisations, to employ party personnel, to conduct election campaigns and to communicate with the electorate at large. In order to carry out these and other necessary functions, appropriate financial resources need to be made available to political parties because of the potentially distorting effect money may have on the democratic process. However, it is important that the role of money in politics be properly regulated by public law.

The recent events linked to political financing have demonstrated that this issue must be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to prevent the loss of citizens' interest in the political life and in order to maintain and increase the confidence of citizens in the political

system, and a proper legal framework and rules governing the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns must be adopted.

The conditions in which political parties exercise their activities have changed over recent decades and nowadays they need substantial financial resources to gain visibility and obtain political support for their ideas. Therefore, I consider that the regulation mechanism must take these realities into account and empower political parties to obtain sufficient resources to carry out their task. However, this has to be accompanied by a robust legal framework. Most contemporary European states have taken substantial legislative action in recent years to regulate the practice of party financing. Often, public legislation has developed in connection with or as a reaction to corruption, scandals or other improper influence on political decisions through financial means.

Madam Speaker, since our legislative system is based on the Westminster model, it would be beneficial and advisable that we draw experience from the reforms that have taken place in the United Kingdom. The fact that a classical, liberal and non-interventionist democracy such as the United Kingdom, where political finance has traditionally been to a large extent unregulated, has recently adopted a far more legalistic and regulatory approach to the issue can be seen as exemplary to this development. This, as I said, forms part of the Government Programme, but it should come rather sooner than later, that is, the piece of legislation, so that it can be debated extensively in the House for the well-being of our system and our democracy.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, let me say a few words on the post of the Prime Minister. It is not given to anybody to be Prime Minister of a country. It is eminently a question of destiny. I am sure the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is fully aware of the chance he has to write history and that he will spare no effort to leave his footprints in the stand of time for the coming generation to appreciate. In his quest of a modern society, I am convinced that he will show the political will with acumen needed to bring forward amendments in the electoral system *dans un esprit d'ouverture et de fair play, et dans d'autres domaines tels que le découpage des circonscriptions.*

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: It is time to break for tea for half an hour.

At 4.43 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.20 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Benydin!

Mr T. Benydin (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, permit me, at this very first instance, to compliment and congratulate Mrs Hanoomanjee - she is not here - on her election as Speaker of the National Assembly and yourself, one of the youngest Members of Parliament, as Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pride for the young people of Mauritius. The election of Mrs Hanoomanjee as Speaker is a major breakthrough for the promotion of gender equality. I recall that she was also the first Chairperson of the Mauritius Revenue Authority and in that capacity she was very instrumental in bringing together, under one umbrella, three Government Departments, namely Customs, Income Tax and VAT Department, to better harmonise revenue collection in our country.

I am equally grateful and thankful to the *Mouvement Libérateur* and to the leaders of *l'Alliance Lepep*, especially to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for sponsoring me, a representative of workers and a career trade unionist, to stand as candidate in Constituency No. 15 and to facilitate my election as a Member of the National Assembly. My election, therefore, confirms the proximity and closeness of *l'Alliance Lepep* with the working class of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the electoral campaign, while the so-called alliance “modernity and unity” was busy minimising the crowds that were gathered at Vacoas respectively on 12 October and 07 December 2014 by narrowing the space with the complicity of the MBC/TV, it is glorifying to note that, in their wisdom, the people of Mauritius were busy preparing for a silent revolution and proved the “Navin-Paul Alliance” wrong in their mathematical calculations.

I. $40 + 40$ – I would like to repeat, because I like this very much – did not equate 80% (but 47), and

II. The supporters of *l'Alliance Lepep* were four to five times greater in numbers than those present at Quatre Bornes and Port Louis.

Unlike the arrogant spirituous and Macarena culture (Blue Label type) of Navin, Sir Anerood Jugnauth showed humility throughout the campaign and triumphed in view of his high spiritual values mixed with exemplary moral principles and cultural values, which our Mauritian citizens feel very proud for this great leader. Hail to thee, Sir Anerood Jugnauth and to the leaders of *l'Alliance Lepep*!

The adversaries of *l'Alliance Lepep* were indeed ill-inspired in that all the time during the campaign they sang and echoed loudly “*Allez Navin*” meaning “go away Navin – Navin *hatao*”, whereas our supporters and electors were better inspired and sang the praises of Sir Anerood by saying “*SAJ pe vini*” and *Nu fine vini*, and Navin *fine tombe dans carreau cannes*, and his alliance kissed the dust and suffered a crushing defeat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, achieving meaningful change by empowering the people for a better livelihood is the commitment of this Government. In line and in consonance with the declared objectives of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government Programme (2015-2019) spells clearly the willingness to eradicate poverty via a Marshall Plan to improve standards of living of the population by, *inter alia*, the following measures –

- (1) increase of pensions and social aids to Rs5,000;
- (2) alleviating people’s burden by eliminating VAT on a number of food products;
- (3) 100% subsidy to students for SC and HSC examinations;
- (4) special support to the elderly and physically handicapped persons;
- (5) payment of a uniform rate of salary compensation (Rs600) to all workers;
- (6) the introduction of a Minimum Wage Bill;
- (7) improved health care systems and quality health services (e.g. second Cardiac Surgery Centre and Vascular Surgery Unit, etc.);
- (8) a better system to democratise the economy, with the setting-up of a New SME Bank;
- (9) creation of new jobs (15,000 annually) and the extension of the Youth Employment Programme (YEP) to a period of two years;
- (10) improvement of Social Housing Schemes (10,000 over the period of five years);
- (11) equal opportunities to one and all;
- (12) iIntroduction of laws to protect children and women against domestic violence;

- (13) protection of the environment and addressing issues related to climate change, and
- (14) reinforcement of security and law & order in the country.

The Government Programme clearly underpins the promotion of common values of respect for human rights, fundamental freedom, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and social justice, environment protection, sustainable development and pro-poor economic growth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in November 2012, the Government of Mauritius signed with the social partners and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) a Memorandum of Understanding on the Decent Work Country Programme for 2012-2014. The programme is still in progress. The priorities of the Decent Work Agenda were highlighted towards the creation of Decent and Productive Employment with Social Protection and Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination at Work. As somebody coming from the rank of trade unions, I am pleased that our Government will come forward with a Minimum Wage Bill for the workers at the lower rungs of the ladder, unlike the previous Government which only contracted an ILO expert to make a study on the minimum salary and nothing concrete has been realised.

It also goes without saying that the National Remuneration Board has become an obsolete body and should be revamped. Remuneration Orders (ROs) in many sectors are more than 15 years old and have not been revised. Instead, there should be another more effective national pay organism for workers who are not covered by the Pay Research Bureau. As such, salaries and conditions of work should be reviewed every three years to put all workers on the same level playing field.

I also commend the report published recently on “Income Inequality in Mauritius” by the National Economic and Social Council and would like to refer to the public statement made by the Commissioner Mahmood Cheeroo, which I quote –

« La politique salariale est la principale cause de l'inégalité sociale. »

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation (CCM) should be transformed into a Commission for Arbitration instead because many of its recommendations have remained ineffective. The intrinsic values of decent work should prevail in all circumstances and at all times. The two labour laws, the Employment Relations Act and the Employment Rights Act, need profound amendments and changes in that they do not effectively provide safety nets and protection against unfair dismissal and a range of

issues pertaining to working conditions, namely excessive hours of work, severance allowance, portable pensions, stress at work, bullying and harassment at the workplace, just to enumerate a few shortcomings in these labour laws.

Social dialogue and the consultative machinery have to be improved. The National Tripartite Forum set up administratively in year 2010 to act as a mechanism for the promotion of social dialogue to address issues such as salary compensation, occupational safety and health, employment creation, labour and industrial relations, and skills and training have been a non-starter under the previous Government. I am confident that the new Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training will take up the challenge and will undertake all efforts to revive all bodies concerned with industrial relations and to make them function, particularly the National Tripartite Forum which should function within a legal framework to allow workers to work in dignity and safety.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the objective of a decent work policy should be geared at promoting secure jobs with career prospect and a particular focus to support the implementation of a national Plan of Action for youth employment. There is at present discussions and talks going on in various quarters on whether the retirement age should not be revisited to facilitate job creation and to allow young people to enter the labour market. Also, it is imperative that a survey be conducted with regard to the number of people working in the informal sector and to find out whether they benefit from social protection schemes and conditions of work which are related to decent work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, paragraph 251 of the Government Programme underlines that the public sector will be reorganised and reformed to make it more productive, transparent, accountable and customer friendly. In this context, a number of fundamental reforms should be undertaken at the earliest and these reforms could be facilitated with the declared policy of Government to go forward with the introduction of a Public Service Bill, which undoubtedly will set parameters with a clear-cut policy defining responsibilities of Public Officers, Ministers and relevant bodies under the various Ministries.

It is also a matter of concern that the Civil Service College, which was supposed to come into operation years ago, has not yet taken off. All efforts should, therefore, be undertaken to ensure its smooth running and gear it at promoting a world class Public Service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Public Service Commission also needs a complete overhauling both in its composition and mission. The Commissioners should come not only from the ranks of retired Public Officers but should also include professionals experienced in the field of modern management and public administration. Vacancies in the public service should be filled without delay. Procedures for prescriptions and approval of schemes of service should be simplified to allow new and vacant positions to be filled without long administrative constraints.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, those who think that the destination will be difficult to be reached should not lose sight of the fact that with our faith, hard work and sacrifice, *l'Alliance Lepep* can move mountains. To repeat the words of one of my great friend, an international trade unionist, who rightly said before leaving this world that “*seuls les optimistes survivront.*” In *l'Alliance Lepep*, we are all optimistic and we believe in the future of this country, and we believe in the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

On this note, I would like to thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gungah!

(5.40 p.m.)

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr A. Gungah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I would like to congratulate you for your nomination as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. I also seize the opportunity to congratulate Madam Speaker for her nomination; a nomination which creates a historical milestone by having a first lady at that position.

It is my duty to place on record my gratitude to the electorate of my constituency for having elected me and my two fellow candidates, hon. Rughoobur and hon. Fowdar, to represent them for the next five years in the National Assembly.

In the same breath, I thank the population for having voted in favour of *l'Alliance Lepep* led by Sir Anerood Jugnauth; a vote which proves to many people that in politics 40% + 40% is not equal to 80% and still not to a “60 Zero” and that the so-called chemistry which certain people were talking about was more a myth than a reality.

In the aftermath of the last general elections and with the presentation of the Government Programme 2015–2019, a new chapter has been opened in the socio-economic life of the country, where people can legitimately see the upcoming of an era of prosperity

and social justice and harmony. A decade long of poor leadership, creating bitter disappointment among the people of the country is now over.

This Government, under the leadership and the vision of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, has braced itself to work for the people and with the people.

History will bear testimony that in the need of the hour, the citizens of this country have elected Sir Anerood Jugnauth as their leader to halt the degradation which the nation was suffering from. We are now rekindling the people's confidence in governance, reignite the economic engines and steer the country on a positive growth path.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cette victoire de l'Alliance Lepep a été construite sur des bases solides, avec des hommes et des femmes convaincus dans leur combat. L'histoire retiendra la sincérité, le langage de vérité tenu depuis aout 2011 par le Leader du MSM, Pravind Jugnauth.

Malgré la répression et la politique '*dominère*', alors que certains agissaient comme des membres de la gestapo pour faire peur aux opposants politiques, Pravind Jugnauth a dénoncé la politique de copinage, le favoritisme accordé à certains proches du pouvoir au détriment de la population. Malgré tous ces obstacles et actes de répression, la vérité a triomphé. Pravind Jugnauth n'a jamais tergiversé. Aujourd'hui l'histoire lui donne raison.

The people have clearly demonstrated their maturity in choosing the team to govern Mauritius for the next five years. They have freed the country from the shackles of ineptitude and indolence. For us, the countdown has already started.

However, the road to cleanse the country of all the ills of the previous Government and to put the country back on a pathway of socio-economic progress will no doubt be arduous and fraught with multi-faceted challenges. But the population can rest assured that no hurdle will be *insurmontable*, so strong is our determination and perseverance.

This Government Programme has been inspired by the philosophy of the Prime Minister who strongly believes in good governance, the promotion of law and order, a corrupt-free society and equitable distribution of wealth, where the fruits of progress trickle down to one and all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government Programme has embedded a socio-economic trajectory to combat unemployment, to empower our citizens, including our youths, to attract investment and create new pillars of growth, to foster social inclusion, to protect the

most disadvantaged and the elderly, to enhance social services and improve delivery of social goods, to promote law and order, to foster an eco-friendly course of economic development, among others.

The themes which I have just enumerated are clearly indicative of the Government commitment to implement the appropriate measures for the economy to be powered with new vitality, resilience and dynamism and to pave the way for improvement in the quality of life so that every citizen can aspire for brighter days ahead.

The team spirit and synergy that prevailed during the last election campaign will no doubt epitomise the increasing public interest in the socio-economic development of our country, the foundations of which have now been laid in our Government Programme 2015-2019.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is not a nation that stands alone. We shall be affected one way or another by the changes around us. We cannot be a bystander to these developments. We must endeavour to influence the evolving situation in a manner that would ensure our national interest and enhance our national goals and objectives. With this in mind, I envisage that our industrial, commercial/trading and consumer protection agenda will stand on the following main tenets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the industry sector will have to play a determinant role in shaping a new economic configuration. *Le secteur peut générer beaucoup d'emplois, et nous devons tout mettre en œuvre pour combattre le chômage. Les mesures annoncées dans notre programme vont permettre de donner un nouveau dynamisme au secteur de l'industrie.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme provides an array of measures to bring back the industry sector on a new growth path. Indeed, the performance of the industry sector during recent years has been rather modest. As an export-oriented economy, increasing exports to higher levels is vital to sustaining economic development.

In recent years, exports have been growing on a low and erratic trend which is not conducive for the country to tread on a high-growth path. We will, therefore, have to revisit the export promotion framework so that activities are implemented in a coherent, holistic and targeted approach. In fact, an Export Development Plan will be designed to expand the export frontiers and our footprints in the region with a more greater variety of products.

The Government Programme also emphasises an Africa Export Strategy. Africa is asserting itself as a new economic force where we can undoubtedly leverage on rising level

of income. The middle class is increasing and the implementation of economic liberalisation policies will surely help us in our goals.

I will also mention the development of a fashion industry. In this modern age, fashion is underpinning the development of many key economic sectors and is pivotal to be competitive in all market segments. In Mauritius, it is vital to provide the necessary support to the industry sector to produce fashionable, trendy, branded and high-value products that are saleable in both the regional and the global market place.

Here, the Fashion and Design Institute will have a critical role to play to endow our designers, through academic and professional training, with capabilities to produce innovative and differentiated products that can competitively make the difference in the market.

M. le président, notre secteur manufacturier a été à la base de notre premier miracle économique. Malgré toutes les difficultés du marché, je suis sûr que ce secteur a un bel avenir. La mondialisation a permis l'ouverture d'autres marchés, et Maurice doit savoir profiter de cela. Je suis confiant que ces mesures annoncées dans le programme gouvernemental vont permettre un nouveau positionnement de ce secteur, à un niveau plus avancé dans le monde, et ainsi apporter sa contribution dans le développement socio-économique de notre pays.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, new pillars for economic growth shall be developed to exploit fully and judiciously the competitive positioning of our nation in this region of the world. With over two million square kilometres of maritime territory, Mauritius must project itself as a regional hub and in a leading role in the maritime sector.

Le trafic maritime dans l'océan Indien grandit énormément. Cela suite à une croissance dans le commerce entre les pays émergents de l'Afrique et l'Asie. Notre pays devrait en tirer le plus de bénéfices.

Furthermore, an increasing number of shipping lines prefer to call past the Cape of Good Hope because of high charges in the Suez Canal, and the piracy zone imposes a high premium. It is estimated that the volume of the bunkering business in the region is of one million metric tons, and Mauritius currently captures only 30% of the market. The potential to expand is here.

By capitalising on our superior business potential and its strategic geographical position at the crossroads of Africa and Asia, our country is well placed to develop into a premier regional petroleum hub.

The elaboration of a strategic approach is auspicious for positioning Mauritius as a regional hub in petroleum trading, thereby establishing a strong new pillar in the economy that would service the region, reinforce the position of the country as an air and maritime hub, and generate a variety of activities related to provision of goods and services to boost the economy.

The petroleum storage capacity is called upon to keep pace with the anticipated development, the more so as the country does not have the necessary infrastructure to maintain any strategic stock of its own.

M. le président, avec la mise à terme du contrat de Betamax, le gouvernement a démontré son engagement à promouvoir la bonne gouvernance et éliminer les pratiques déloyales. La *State Trading Corporation* prend actuellement les mesures afin d'approvisionner le pays en produits pétroliers. Ce matin j'avais affirmé que nous payerons le fret à un prix beaucoup plus bas que celui que nous avons payé à Betamax et le pays en sortira gagnant.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, advancement in information and communication technology, globalisation and trade liberalisation have resulted in evolution of a more complex and challenging business environment.

Today, consumers are constantly being faced with a bewildering array of goods and services in the market. Consumers must be equipped with an elevated level of consumerism knowledge, information and skills. Mauritian consumers need to be kept in touch with development in the market, enabling them to act and decide effectively.

However, without the Government's intervention to protect consumers through adequate legislation and enforcement, the aim of creating empowered consumers will not be realised. We believe that the promulgation and effective enforcement of consumer protection policies and legislation will promote the protection of the basic rights of individuals as consumers.

The Consumer Protection Act was enacted in 1991, while the Fair Trading Act was enacted in 1979. Both these pieces of legislation have stood the test of time. It needs to be overhauled. It is sad to note that the Consumer Protection Bill, which was introduced in this

August assembly in 2014, did not proceed beyond first reading stage, for the reason we all know. The interest of consumers of this country was relegated because of priorities given to personal interest.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we shall look at the socio-economic interest of our citizens through the enactment of the new Consumer Protection Bill – a concept we advocated throughout our electoral campaign. We are going to fulfil our promises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, trade facilitation and ease of doing business are the cornerstone of economic development and growth. Economic cooperation with our traditional and main trading partners has proved its usefulness in promoting and enhancing trade. Exploring new markets will continue to be our main target in our trade and commercial endeavour. We must seize the diplomatic and economic high ground to expand our commercial ties with others and play a leading role in Africa affairs.

This Government is hardly in power for two months that the UK Trade and Investment Office is considering setting up an office in Mauritius. This shows the credibility and potential of Mauritius and this Government commitment that it means business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, promoting investment, both domestic and foreign, will also play a crucial role in the employment creation process. Private sector investment as a percentage of GDP has stagnated over the years and has been more geared towards real estate development and commercial complexes.

Mauritius, on this trend, will never achieve its goal to be a high-income country. Shifting to higher production possibility curve is the only way. Leveraging on the ingenuity and entrepreneurial flair of our people constitutes the most viable option.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the provision of Rs10 billion for SME development and the setting up of a new SME bank, which are spelt out in the Government Programme 2015-2019, are concrete measures which constitute a historic milestone to open new windows of opportunities for our people, to promote an entrepreneurial society and to boost economic progress.

However, attracting FDI will be a critical stepping-stone to foster development of skill, technology and knowledge-intensive activities. New support measures, provision of new infrastructure such as a techno park and improvement in the investment climate will certainly create the propitious environment to attract FDI in key emerging sectors which have been identified in the Government Programme.

My Ministry will work hand in hand with all related institutions and agencies in further streamlining trade procedures, accelerating trade facilitation and improving the ease of doing business in the country. We will coordinate efforts at all levels for a concerted action to ensure that trade occurs in the best possible way with the least cost and time to the benefit of one and all. My Ministry will ensure that non-tariff measures enforced in the country are only the reasons of strategy, security, sensitivity, environment, and do not become unnecessary barriers to trade.

In the same vein, my Ministry will sustain its effort in reinforcing the image of Mauritius as an ideal location to carry out trading activities. We will fully assist in the national effort in the implementation of the Single Window Project in the overall context of trade facilitation in the country.

We will follow up with line Ministries for the early renewal of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for export to the US market, for uninterrupted market access, and will continue to keep a constant watch on the evolving world trade scenario to prevent hazardous and contaminated items from entering our territory with efficient trade control measures and documents. On the issue of trade and environment, we will work in close collaboration with all those concerned to ensure that pollution free trade is taking place in the country.

M. le président, le développement d'un pays moderne serait un vain mot si on n'a pas un mode de production "*eco-friendly*." Depuis plusieurs années, les organisations internationales tirent la sonnette d'alarme sur l'effet de la production industrielle sur l'environnement.

Many countries worldwide have embarked or have gone a long way in promoting a safe, clean and carbon-free economy that matches with imperatives of resource efficiency and a better quality of life.

This Government pledges to place environmental protection in a cornerstone of our socio-economic development process. The Government Programme provides a holistic approach to restore the image of Mauritius as a green, clean and safe island, through strategic measures, including the production of renewable energy, the introduction of a Climate Change Bill, better management of our beaches, adoption of policies for water and waste management and the development of a modernised infrastructure. These key measures will

certainly provide more effectiveness to the concept of *Maurice Ile Durable* as well as pave the way for Mauritius to regain its status as a Paradise Island.

An Eco Label certification for the manufacturing and service sectors will be developed. Forthcoming regulations on Energy Efficiency Labelling will lead to use of energy efficient electrical appliances. The quality of building materials will be closely monitored and relevant legislations will be harmonised, while Inspection and Testing Schemes will be implemented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Legal Metrology Services is responsible for the administration of the Legal Metrology Act 1985.

Legal Metrology plays a vital role in consumer protection and in the technical support to industry since it ensures that weighing and measuring instruments used in trade and industry are accurate and traceable to international standards. In order to ensure that instruments are used properly, inspections are carried out by officers of the Legal Metrology Division at markets, market fairs, shops, super/hypermarkets and filling stations. Pre-packed goods are verified to ensure compliance with net contents and labelling the Legal Metrology Act. It is to be noted that the control of instruments used in trade and the control of pre-packaged commodities are done according to international standards.

To ensure more effective consumer protection, Government will review the scope of legal metrology for better control of instruments used in health sector and road safety. Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) dispenser for motor vehicles, medical measuring instruments like blood pressure, breath analyzers and speed radar will be controlled under the Legal Metrology Act.

More emphasis will be laid on the control of imported pre-packed commodities (both foodstuffs and non-foodstuffs) concerning labelling requirements and accuracy of net contents to ensure that consumers get correct information and the quantity declared on the package. Furthermore, this will provide fairness to our local manufacturers and packers. Awareness programmes in the field of legal metrology will also be enhanced.

Over the past years, the public at large has been hardly hit by unprecedented increases in prices. A number of families have had to curtail their expenditure in view of the exorbitant prices of a number of products. In this perspective, Government's policy to eliminate VAT on a number of products is most welcomed as this is likely to have a significant positive impact on the purchasing power of consumers.

To further promote and protect the rights and interest of the consumer, Government will set up a National Price Consultative Council with a view to providing a safety net to consumers against unreasonable price increase of basic commodities.

The function and operation of the Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU) will be revisited with a new consumer protection regime with more emphasis on consumer education, consumer advocacy and consumer welfare as well as the empowerment of Consumer Protection Associations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is condemned to perform and succeed because we cannot let go the hopes and aspirations that the whole Mauritian society has placed on us. *Nous n'avons pas le droit à l'erreur*. There should be five fundamental principles that should guide us all the time in our action and conduct as a Government:

First, this is a pro-people Government. We have been elected by the people, for the people, and it is with the people that we shall forge ahead in the best interest of one and all. On this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do not have kings – one for the south, one for the east and even one “the king of all kings”. On this side of the House we are but the humble servants of our people.

Second, we should invariably remain guided by values of good governance, meritocracy, accountability and transparency. We should lead by example.

Third, we should wage a relentless war against wastage at all level. Extravagant and unnecessary expenditure should be curtailed.

Fourth, we have one clear and consistent leader with common vision, goals and objectives.

Fifth, a Government that is result oriented. Action speaks louder than words. We should aim at excellence and ensure that the Government Programme is implemented within the time frame.

M. le président, ce programme va nous aider à nous tourner résolument vers un avenir plus serein et surtout plus confortable pour nos citoyens. Nous allons laisser derrière nous un passé douloureux, marqué par des évènements sur lesquels je ne voudrai pas élaborer ici. On doit plutôt porter un regard plus optimiste et serein sur l'avenir. D'ailleurs, les efforts déjà entamés contre la fraude et la corruption est un pas qui ouvre une fenêtre sur un nouveau paysage de notre pays. Aussi, les mesures du programme gouvernemental vont apporter un

nouveau souffle pour un nouvel essor économique. En fait, ce programme, nous l'avons vu, comporte les ingrédients essentiels afin que notre pays puisse relever les défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés et permettre un meilleur avenir pour le peuple et des générations à venir. C'était la promesse de ce gouvernement, et maintenant nous sommes attelés à réaliser le deuxième miracle économique.

M. le président, laissez-moi terminer en faisant référence à Confucius. Je cite -

“In a country well-governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this quote sheds light on what the future will be from what the past has been.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

(6.11 p.m.)

Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, the most important and honourable post, which I know you will hold with dignity and impartiality, and I wish you well. I would like also to extend my congratulations to the newly appointed Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been a tradition in this Assembly for new Members of the new Government to criticise the decisions of the former one and for the Opposition to question the decisions of the newly elected Members. I intend to fulfil my duties as Member of this honourable House positively, constructively, focusing on the future, not on the past.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am proud of our diversity. It is our biggest strength. In a world so divided by religious and ethnic conflicts, we must realise how easy it is to turn this strength into hatred and division. My father is Hindu, my mother is French and my father-in-law is Muslim. I see my three sons as Mauritians. This mixed heritage truly makes it my greatest asset in this globalised village we are now living in.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should we participate in a policy of cynicism and division or one of unity and hope? Too much effort and time is spent on what divides us, as opposed to what should unite us. Too much effort on mistakes made, as opposed to the achievements we can all be proud of. Too much effort focused on the past and not enough on the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all recognise the contribution of the indentured labourers and slaves who built our agrarian economy, but we must also recognise the efforts of the French and the English who colonised Île de France, of the Muslim and Chinese traders and shopkeepers who favoured commerce, not forgetting the Franco-Mauritian community who developed the sugar industry and set the path for textile and hospitality sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am a member, a proud member of the Labour Party, a party that has included great Mauritians such as Emmanuel Anquetil, Renganaden Seeneevasen, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed, Pandit Sahadeo, Sir Satcam Boolell and many other illustrious women and men, too many to mention. I have to acknowledge the huge contribution of the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Sir Gaëtan Duval as well as hon. Paul Bérenger, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, the former Prime Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, and many other political leaders from all parties. It is due to their combined efforts, intelligence, vision and personal sacrifice that we are here today.

For a small island without natural resources, we have already exceeded the wildest dreams of our forefathers, for today Mauritius is looked upon by most of the world as a success story.

The World Bank and the IMF regularly make reference to the ‘Mauritian Miracle’ and I personally never get bored of hearing of our standing and recognition by global organisations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however all is not perfect. We are only 11th in Africa for press freedom, 8th in Africa for international property rights and 117th in the world for dealing with construction permits.

So, while we have made significant progress, we cannot rest on our laurels, and we must strive even harder to continue to develop our nation and lead it to a better and a brighter future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to plan, think long term, and implement without fault the following: the building of our national identity and culture.

M. le président, j’avais adressé à l’honorable Premier ministre une question sur les associations socio-culturelles. Je n’ai pas eu le soin de pouvoir développer le fond de ma pensée. Loin de moi d’essayer de l’embarrasser, mais plutôt de toucher à un point fondamental de notre pays. La culture est le ciment d’une nation ; cette culture, notre culture est multiple. Elle est riche. Elle est variée. C’est ce qui fait notre force.

Cependant, nous sommes toujours rattrapés par de vieux réflexes. Certains, sous le couvert de la culture, s'invitent dans des débats tels que la politique énergétique de ce pays, sur les nominations étatiques, sur l'orientation économique de notre république, et j'en passe.

Il faut que cela évolue, d'où ma question à l'honorable Premier ministre, en m'inspirant du *Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act of Singapore*. Je rejoins l'honorable Leader de l'opposition sur ce point. Ce n'est pas tant la non-prise de parole qui fait mal, mais bien les propos qui sont tenus. À Singapour, si vous êtes un homme religieux, vous devez parler sur le sujet pour lequel vous êtes mandaté. Si vous avez envie de vous inviter dans d'autres débats, vous devez le faire à titre personnel. Ce n'est peut-être pas la priorité de ce gouvernement fraîchement élu, mais j'espère qu'une législation adaptée sera adoptée lors de cette mandature car, M. le président, nous avons des identités multiples : franco-mauricienne, indo-mauricienne, sino-mauricienne, créole-mauricienne, et j'en passe. Ces identités souvent distinctes et parfois mélangées forment la grande nation mauricienne. Notre rôle est de la faire évoluer et grandir.

M. le président, je voudrais partager avec vous maintenant mon analyse rapide du discours-programme. Tout d'abord, je suis content de savoir que la responsabilité de gérer notre économie se retrouve désormais dans les mains de celui qui a beaucoup contribué au décollage économique de ce pays dans les années 80 et qui mesure la tâche qui lui incombe, qui est celle de projeter notre économie vers celle de pays à hauts revenus.

Pour y arriver, nous avons besoin de 7% à 8 % de croissance continue pendant les 10 prochaines années pour espérer doubler nos revenus. Se contenter de 3 % reviendrait à hypothéquer et sacrifier toute une génération.

J'ai parcouru attentivement le discours-programme ; il y a certes une vision, de bonnes intentions, mais entre une intention et une action existe un long chemin. Il faut une stratégie, il faut l'implémenter, et il faut par-dessus tout une équipe solide. J'ai été à la tête moi-même d'une entreprise qui a des intérêts dans l'immobilier, dans l'hôtellerie, dans l'agro-alimentaire et je siège par ailleurs sur le conseil d'administration d'un des plus gros conglomérats de l'île, et à ce titre j'ai pu constater les choses suivantes.

M. le président, depuis l'indépendance, le secteur privé n'a fait que reproduire des modèles génériques. Dans le secteur du textile, nous fabriquons plus ou moins les mêmes produits depuis 30 ans. Dans les hôtels, on y dort dans les mêmes lits, on y mange la même nourriture. Nos banques vendent les mêmes services. Les services financiers font de

l'administration sans valeur ajoutée alors que l'on devrait se focaliser sur du *wealth management*, du *private banking*, du *private equity* avec l'Afrique. Nos centres commerciaux proposent les mêmes magasins. Les IRS développent les mêmes maisons.

M. le président, n'est-il pas temps de transformer cet état d'esprit et d'attirer enfin l'innovation et la créativité ? Savez-vous que Maurice est parmi les leaders mondiaux de la production des cathéters, les *stents* pour le cœur ? Nous produisons des pièces d'avions sophistiquées pour Airbus actuellement.

Nous devons développer notre attractivité et nos compétences et attirer cent fois plus d'entreprises innovantes, et ce dans tous les secteurs de notre économie ; de l'agriculture au textile, des services financiers à l'hôtellerie. Et pour cela, l'État doit apporter sa pierre à l'édifice. Formation, infrastructure, accompagnement administratif, les entrepreneurs performants ont besoin d'un Etat performant.

Il existe, M. le président, une pléthore de jeunes entrepreneurs en Europe et en Asie qui lorgnent du côté du continent africain, et qui souhaitent, pour des raisons fiscales et de qualité de vie, s'expatrier. Il faut être capable de capter cette migration, et parallèlement encourager une nouvelle génération d'entrepreneurs mauriciens - les José Poncini de demain, les Sir Edouard Lim Fat de demain, les Fakhru Currimjee de demain.

M. le président, par rapport à notre industrie touristique, nous sommes à la croisée des chemins. C'est maintenant ou jamais ; il nous faut réinventer notre destination. J'attends avec impatience les assises du tourisme, comme proposé par le ministre de tutelle, ainsi que son schéma directeur, et nous aurons l'occasion d'en débattre ultérieurement.

Concernant le secteur immobilier, il faut que nous apprenions à nous ouvrir vers l'extérieur. Nous, Mauriciens, avons un rapport particulier aux étrangers. Nous avons pu attirer quelques familles sud-africaines, françaises dans deux grandes agglomérations, notamment Grand' Baie et Tamarin, et tout de suite on a commencé à parler d'invasion.

Ces nouveaux migrants louent des maisons, emploient du personnel, investissent dans l'économie nationale et régionale et apportent des nouvelles idées. À titre de comparaison, il y a à Dubaï deux millions d'étrangers et dix millions de touristes.

M. le président, il est impératif que nous ayons une politique d'ouverture, certes contrôlée, mais il est primordial de savoir s'ouvrir.

Le développement et la création de richesse que j'appelle de tous mes vœux doit avoir pour objectif sous-jacent une meilleure qualité de vie à tous les citoyens de notre République. Un dicton vous dit la chose suivante-

‘Quand on est capitaliste à 60 ans c’est qu’on n’a pas de cœur. Quand on est et on reste communiste à 60 ans c’est qu’on n’a pas de cerveau.’

Grâce au développement économique, la lutte contre les inégalités doit être le cheval de bataille. Nous devons partir en croisade contre la pauvreté, redonner à notre population de l’habitat digne, planifié autour d’un vrai service urbain et de parc arboré, du développement où il fait bon vivre, et créer de la richesse pour tous.

M. le président, le nouveau régime a fait de la lutte contre ce cancer qui est la corruption sa priorité. Elle aura mon soutien indéfectible tant que cela restera du domaine d’actions concrètes. Notre République doit être exemplaire dans la conduite de ses affaires.

M. le président, nous serons une opposition vigilante, incisive quand il le faut et surtout constructive, et testerons la réelle volonté de ce gouvernement de venir avec une vraie réforme électorale, une profonde transformation des administrations régionales, un plan d’aménagement de notre territoire pour les 25 prochaines années, une législation sur le financement des partis politiques, une politique cohérente sur notre mix énergétique qui doit faire la part belle aux énergies renouvelables.

M. le président, pour conclure, apprenons à apprivoiser nos craintes et nos peurs. La peur empêche d’entreprendre, la peur empêche d’avancer, de se projeter, et il faut avoir le courage de dire à nos concitoyens la vérité. M. le président, je suis devant vous fier ; fier d’avoir l’occasion de servir mon pays, de contribuer à son développement, car la politique c’est l’art de rendre l’impossible possible.

Merci.

(6.24 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr R. Dayal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, congratulations to Madam Speaker, on her appointment by this Government that ‘walk the talk’, to preside over this august National Assembly. I equally congratulate the Deputy Speaker, the symbol of the new generation of young politicians.

Allow me to congratulate the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Leader of the House, for moulding this Government Programme to achieve meaningful change in all spheres that touch the Mauritian society. Paragraph 6 of the Programme says, I quote –

“Government’s objective is to transform Mauritius into a truly forward looking, environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant and innovative country with modern infrastructure, global connectivity, high skills and technology.”

Today, I am standing in this august Assembly with the *vox populi vox dei* of the electorates of Constituency No. 9, Flacq-Bon Accueil. I am morally and emotionally grateful to them for giving me an opportunity to serve our motherland in the highest interest of each and every one in our Republic. I pray the Almighty to give me the courage and wisdom to serve the nation, through my constituency, to the best of my ability on the trust bestowed upon me.

I have to thank the people of Mauritius for choosing a ‘Government of the People, By the People, and For the People’. With us, democracy and the existing peace and harmony among our people will never be threatened within the framework of *un Etat de droit*.

This august House will remain the House of the people, certainly not the House of a few privileged ones with their own agenda, overriding the needs of the people.

The wish of our people is to have justice, social harmony, feel safe and secure, peace and prosperity. This has triggered our reasons to offer our competence and leadership to serve our motherland and its people, to relieve them from injustices and sufferings in all its form, and to feel secure and safe.

It is the call of our history to gather all the competences that were set aside and wanted to contribute for a better Mauritius, to have space to evolve, to bring their contribution for the welfare and better future for its people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has already understood the wishes of the people and will bring changes according to the needs of the people for a better Mauritius.

As the Government of the people, we have the political will, competence and blessing to fulfil our mandate in the interest of the nation. Nation building and the welfare of its people will be the priority of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the need of the day and the wish of the people is to have a performing, caring and stable Government where honour and dignity of each Mauritian is protected.

Peace and harmony will have its place. Victims of injustice, sufferings and favouritism will be assisted and heard. Democratic norms will be preserved.

Government House won't be converted into a business house and be the property of a privileged few. Our institutions will be protected from mafia infiltration. Feel safe and secure factor and re-engineered human factor should be the pillar of any development. Certainly, creation of wealth and sharing of wealth, employment and capacity building will be our focus.

No doubt good governance and creation of trust between the Government and the people will be the driving force for success and progress of our Motherland.

The greatest challenge of the day is to transform expectation and dreams of the people into realities. Having the trust and blessing of the people, we will succeed as a team.

The environmental aspect of the meaningful changes that have already started is incorporated in 12 more chapters that have been drafted in the face of a state of environmental degradation that has never been seen in our entire national history.

Whereas the previous Government recorded numerous deaths and desolation more than once in the wake of heavy floods and other bad weather conditions, the new regime led by Sir Anerood Jugnauth has already successfully faced extreme weather conditions created by meteorological disturbances like superstorm Bansi and huge waves that exceeded 50 feet in height in some areas of our Republic. As a result, there has been no loss of life, and damage to property has remained manageable - and this is exactly what we call 'meaningful change'. However, we have to admit, as Nelson Mandela has stated, I quote –

“We have not taken the final step of our journey, but the first step on a longer and even difficult road.”

The wave of change that brought this Government to an overwhelming victory in December 2014 is still vibrant, and it is now our collective responsibility to sustain this dynamism while concurrently creating the opportunities for a better, prosperous and more equitable and all inclusive Mauritius.

The country was heading into a dangerous decline towards a gloomy future. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, our Prime Minister now, had to resign as the President of the Republic to *sauve nou pays* and led *l'Alliance Lepep* to victory. This Government came at an opportune time, and our Government Programme will halt this decline and gear our country towards prosperity. Our objectives are clear. We want a better future for ourselves and the future generations. In fact, we want a sustainable Mauritius where fairness, equity and transparency prevail. The few recent measures already taken clearly indicate the path we are heading in the national interest. We want Mauritius, which has been choking for the last ten years, to breathe anew and adopt changes that will be quick but sustainable, more precisely in the wake of climate change and other emerging challenges. The beneficiaries of this change will be the population of the Republic of Mauritius without any distinction.

For the past ten years, while the previous Government had been publicising for a *Maurice Ile Durable*, it was, in fact, the contrary that was happening.

Never in history have we witnessed unsustainable development to such an extent where our national heritage and environmental assets were plundered, massacred and dilapidated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as environment is concerned, there have been numerous abuses and malpractices.

Allow me to mention just a few of them -

- unwarranted development on our environmentally sensitive areas, ESAs and sensitive coastal areas;
- Our State lands were distributed to *petits copains* for speculation and ill-defined projects. *Nous avons vu un festival de la terre*.
- Even our public beaches were not spared. I do not need to remind the House what happened at Trou-aux-Biches and Mon Choisy; not to forget what happened at Riambel. You all know the story! Fortunately, we have reacted quickly to put an end to such abusive *accaparement* of our *patrimoine*, which belongs to the whole nation.

I am putting an end to projects that have negative impact on environment like construction of hotels on *barachois* and wetlands and development of residential complexes on steep slopes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government Programme has been crafted in such a way so as to respond to the needs of the country and aspirations of the people whilst ensuring the judicious and sustainable use of our natural assets.

Furthermore, our people-centred programme is rooted in key guiding principles like law and order, good governance, discipline, transparency and accountability. Above all, it instils a sense of much needed direction for meaningful change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me at this point to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his trust in conferring upon me the responsibility of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Solid Waste, Beach and Disaster Management portfolio. I will now take the opportunity to address the House on the mandates entrusted to me.

Coming to environment proper, allow me to highlight that this Government has chartered a new line of action for a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius. We cannot afford to legate an environment which is devoid of its critical ecosystem services to the future generations. This is precisely why environmental sustainability is the *fil conducteur* of this Government Programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this point, I would like to remind the House that it is none other than the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, himself, who had brought environment to the forefront in our country in 1991 by creating the Ministry of Environment and the required legislative framework to ensure sustainable development.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I commend the revival of the National Environmental Commission under the chair of the Prime Minister himself who has not only a vision but also the wisdom to lead our nation. The objective of this Commission, which is to give directives to foster environmental sustainability, will finally be met. The House will note that this Commission never met for the last 10 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to make our legislative framework more robust and effective to cope with emerging challenges like climate change, amongst others, my Ministry will amend the Environment Protection Act. The law will be made stricter to enhance the existing enforcement compliance and monitoring mechanisms. This law will also foster stewardship. The existing provisions will indeed be consolidated for better environmental protection and management, promotion and mainstreaming both sustainable development and climate change with the participation of all stakeholders.

Through these amendments –

- enforcing agencies such as local authorities and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will be further empowered to allow them to prosecute under the Environment Protection Act;
- the Environmental Impact Assessment mechanism will be strengthened to take care of climate change concerns and eco-friendly practices such as waste minimisation, reuse, recycling, composting, energy efficiency and renewable energy, green building practices as well as water conservation and management. The Ministry of environment will opt for a dedicated eco-friendly building which will be a showcase for Mauritius. It is heartening to note that the first eco-commercial building will be inaugurated shortly in my constituency in Flacq, where the promoters are even contemplating of providing electricity to the Central Electricity Board as a patriotic gesture, which I commend.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to highlight when the *Police de l'Environnement* was set up on 01 December 2000, there were only 12 staff and four vehicles. During my Ministership, the *Police de l'Environnement* - this is only three months - which plays an important role for the enforcement of environmental laws, has recently been strengthened to a total of 44. I say again, 44! Furthermore, eight vehicles have been provided to the *Police de l'Environnement* for its activities, which is adequate and in good running condition, *s'il vous plaît!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for too long monitoring has been *l'enfant pauvre* of environmental management. Measures will be taken to provide capacity building and equipment to redress this gap. The National Environmental Laboratory will be provided with modern equipment to enable better monitoring of the state of the environment. This will support timely policy decision making, so that the population enjoys a better quality of air and water. In this spirit, my Ministry will shortly commission two state-of-the-art equipment, one to be placed at the Meteorological Services at Vacoas and the other one at the Islamic College, to monitor the quality of air we breathe to initiate remedial measures as and when required. We will also increase the capacity of the National Environmental Laboratory to cater for preparedness against chemical disasters.

As far as our lakes and reservoirs are concerned, these will be monitored routinely to check against harmful algae and bacteria, thereby ensuring healthy living. New mechanism will be introduced to ensure compliance with international standards and legal frameworks with regard to water usage. With respect to landslides prone areas, the hardening of targets is envisaged to be reinforced with new types of buildings conceived in vulnerable areas.

Let me now address climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that climate change poses a serious threat to Small Island Developing States like Mauritius. Firm actions will be taken to reduce our vulnerability and increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change. These include –

- a forthcoming Climate Change Bill whose main thrust is to make Mauritius climate change resilient and adopt a low-carbon development pathway in line with the overarching objectives of developing a green economy. This Bill is the first of its kind for Mauritius and amongst the Small Island Developing States;
- the development of a 2050 Pathway Carbon Calculator for Mauritius. This will help us to model our greenhouse gas emissions for a low emission and sustainable development pathway;
- the formulation of a Low Carbon Development Strategy and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) to integrate and mainstream climate change mitigation in the institutional framework and into core development plans, policy and strategies for Mauritius;
- the setting up of an Early Warning System for incoming surges such that coastal communities in the Republic of Mauritius of at least three hours warning of possible incoming surges to eradicate safely;
- construction of a refuge centre at Quatre Soeurs to protect the local communities in low lying areas, vulnerable to flooding due to high tides, storm surges and other calamities;
- in the same spirit, pollution maps for greenhouse and other noxious emission gases will be generated for the purpose.

In view of the recent recommendations of the IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change), it is envisaged that Mauritius aligns itself with the recommendation to phase out crude oil by the end of this century, which means the whole concept of *Maurice Ile Durable*

will have to be reviewed to meet the challenge of climate change and global warming in our global quest not to be trapped irreversibly. In line with my Ministry's propositions, at ministerial level we are proposing an acceleration towards the use of renewable energy technologies. In this spirit, the innovation technology of Japan will have to be probed into through bilateral cooperation along with further developments in solar and wind/wave energy penetration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a well-known fact that our coastal zone is a prime asset for our country for its inherent and monetary values. Unfortunately, this key resource is under instance pressures from conflicting sea and land-based activities such as tourism, fisheries, construction, and sewage disposal amongst others. The damaging impacts of these activities that range from beach erosion, poor lagoon water quality and coral degradation will be addressed in a holistic manner. We will come up with targeted coastal conservation plans that will address the specificities of these eroded and vulnerable sites. We will create more beaches. I repeat, we will create more beaches for the public and restore those that are damaged.

I am seriously envisaging the creation of a specialised team of Engineers Squadron at the SMF with the support and blessing of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for the rehabilitation of our beaches. Our beaches will be upgraded with provision of the state-of-the-art facilities to meet international norms such as Blue Flag/Green Globe.

Coming to sustainable consumption and production, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to quote Albert Einstein who rightly pointed out, and I quote –

“We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive”.

And to add to this dictum, that of Mahatma Gandhi, I quote –

“The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.”

Thus, we are all aware, our resources are limited, and transitioning to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production and behavioural change are the crucial paradigm shift that will support our efforts towards better resource use. Towards this end, our national actions will be anchored in the 10-year Framework of Programmes (10 YFP) developed by the United Nations Environment Programme. This is a global framework of actions to support countries to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.

We will learn to make good use of our available resources and do away from excessive mode of consumption with the following measures –

- guidelines on sustainable lifestyle will be prepared to promote sustainable and environment-friendly behaviours for the Government, business sectors and public at large;
- the capacity and skills of all stakeholders will be enhanced;
- new technologies in key economic sectors will be adopted to promote cleaner and more efficient production, and
- creation of green jobs will be encouraged.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no cost-benefit analysis exercise will be able to value our unique and scarce environmental resources other than self-realisation. A responsible and environment-conscious population with green attitudes, smart choices and a sustainable lifestyle will support Government's efforts in making Mauritius a cleaner, greener and safer country. We will build a nation of environment champions by –

- reinforcing environmental education and awareness at all levels;
- encouraging a multiplier effect to ensure maximum outreach, and
- targeting our youth and children, as they are our hopes and the decision-makers of tomorrow, and we are making them participate in the national tree planting campaign.

I now come to greening of our physical environment. The ambition of this Government is to maintain a healthy environment for a healthy population. In this context, we have already launched a multi-faceted environmentally friendly project in Flacq for a stretch of about 7 kms; all the 20 constituencies will have similar projects.

At national level, we are launching an “*Embellir Maurice Programme*”. Moreover, we will intensify cleaning campaigns, greening and refurbishment of strategic spots to maintain a healthy living environment for our citizens. To restore the pristine state of our environment, not only trees will be planted and green spaces created, but I also intend to create endemic gardens in public areas to inculcate respect for our biodiversity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will have noted that to achieve sustainable outcomes in our environmental protection and management, we intend to use a mix of policy instruments, namely regulatory economic and education.

To this end, we have firmly anchored all our policies and strategies in the different regional and international commitments taken by Mauritius and will accordingly incorporate the relevant recommendations to the following –

- 2012 Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development;
- the 2014 Third International SIDS Conference (SAMOA Pathway);
- all the Multilateral Environmental Agreements that have been signed by Mauritius such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Montreal Protocol, and
- all regional protocols.

I will now talk on solid waste management, which is another important issue of my Ministry. I would like to inform the House that the waste management function has been limited so far to collection, transportation and disposal in a landfill. Presently, 420,000 tonnes of solid waste is being generated annually, out of which 280,000 tonnes of organic matter. Rs1.2 billion are being spent by the Government for the collection, transport on disposal. With this business as usual scenario, we will soon require other landfill of bigger capacity and a 25% increase in our budgetary provision by 2020. But “*are nou non*”. There will not be another landfill site like Mare Chicose. Even all the waste of the landfill site at Mare Chicose will be recycled in the future and this with no cost to the Government.

Time has come for us to move to a cyclic society where resources being disposed are permanently ploughed back for reuse and recycling. To achieve this meaningful change, we will start now with concrete actions. I am envisaging the reduction, reuse and recycling of solid waste in a tangible manner where behavioural changes at all levels are a necessity, bringing a new era for a new economic pillar emanating from solid waste whilst protecting our environment and registering considerable savings of taxpayers’ money.

We have already triggered the mechanism for the recycling of used tyres through pyrolysis. I should draw the attention of the House that, out of 5,000 tonnes of tyres imported per year, only 500 tonnes go to the landfill site of Mare Chicose and the remaining is littered around the country. With this project, there would be total recycling of used tyres and none would go even to the landfill site.

We are also attending to the other aspects of solid waste. These include –

- waste segregation at source;

- transforming all our transfer stations into resource recovery centres in a phased manner through the provision of sorting infrastructure for the recovery of the resources currently lost;
- presently, the private sector is producing some 30,000 tonnes of organic waste to compost. My Ministry is opting for 100% composting of green waste at Government level to support the community of planters for eco-friendly fertilisation of vegetables and cane plantation. Presently, the cost of one lorry load of compost is about Rs5,000 and Government will be providing some 15,000 tonnes of compost free of charge to promote a paradigm shift in the use of organic fertilizer, and at the same time reducing the excessive use of nitrates in agricultural food production and protecting our underground and surface water resources and our coastal regions from nitrate pollution.

Furthermore, sound management of waste to ensure cleanliness is yet another matter which should deeply affect our civic pride and community spirit and, undeniably, our economy. In this context, a Cleanliness Index Monitoring Scheme in collaboration with local authorities will be developed. This will assist local authorities to assess the extent of littering and also to monitor progress achieved.

As regards hazardous waste management, it is not economically viable to set up treatment/disposal systems for this type of waste as the quantities generated are too low. To this effect, my Ministry is considering the exportation of these wastes when optimum amount is available for cost-effectiveness.

Rodrigues has a success story for the hardening of targets and has already said “no to plastic carry bags”. A strategy will be announced for Mauritius as well.

I have made contact with numerous friendly countries to support us, including USA, UK, India, Australia, France and the Netherlands amongst others for the development of a sound solid waste strategy and management.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now move to beach management. Since my taking office, I have made a ‘*constat de visu*’ and I have noted with concern the following –

- 50% of our public beaches do not have the basic amenities such as toilet facilities. *C’est ça la modernité!*

(Interruptions)

Of the old regime!

- There is inadequate security and safety on the beaches.
- there is a problem of easy access to our beaches or in some cases access is being denied to beach users. In this spirit, 66 additional accesses to beaches have been identified to be created.
- presence of stray dogs on beaches, which are nuisance to both Mauritians and tourists;
- encroachment of our beaches by '*transat*' and other commercial activities.

This Government will take various measures to make our beaches more attractive and safer for beach users. The following will be implemented –

- preparation of a Beach Management Plan to ensure an integrated approach in the management of beaches;
- enhancement of surveillance and enforcement on public beaches will be undertaken with the support of qualified life savers from the Police Force, *Police de l'Environnement* and the National Coast Guard. In this context, it is to be noted that Vigilance Towers and hotlines have already been set up at some highly frequented public beaches in the first instance. More beaches will be identified in keeping with the scheme;
- review of the legal and institutional framework of the Beach Authority to respond more effectively to the new challenges and opportunities facing development on public beaches;
- removal of all obstacles and obstructions on the public beaches so as to allow a free access at all times to beach users;
- implementation of a programme to keep our beaches free from stray dogs, and
- rehabilitation of all our erosion prone beaches will be tackled in an environmentally sustainable and friendly manner. As a matter of fact, the nation will have more public beaches than before.

Allow me now to touch on a very sensitive issue, which is the safety of our citizens in times of disasters.

Past events as well as future threats demonstrate the need for a multi-hazard approach to disaster management in the Republic of Mauritius. We have taken commitment towards a

comprehensive, proactive and integrated approach to risk management, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery for the safety of our people.

We must be part of the solution, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre gives us both the opportunity and the means to target disaster management at all levels; from the highest levels of Government to grassroots communities.

To ensure our robust future for our country and families, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre will be given a new orientation and will seek to achieve sustainable and resilient disaster management through -

- (a) appropriate institutional, legal and implementation mechanisms. In this context, a legal framework will be developed and a National Policy, Strategic Framework and Action Plan for disaster risk management in the country will be prepared and implemented;
- (b) informed, scientific, multi-hazard risk reduction approaches mainstreamed in development and reconstruction based on national priorities;
- (c) integration of disaster risk management into all Government development programmes, so as to promote internal service resilience within Government;
- (d) participatory, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder engagement in line with national and international standards for effective disaster relief and response. Thus, the Centre will implement disaster risk reduction and management programmes through community participation and public awareness campaigns, as well as integrating key messaging into our schools' curricula and school safety planning.

The following specific actions will be taken –

- a comprehensive risk and vulnerability mapping exercise for Mauritius and the Outer Islands will be carried out;
- plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, prevention, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders;
- the Centre will also take the lead to establish a unified and coordinated multi-hazard national early warning and an emergency alert system to provide accurate and timely advice to the general public and key stakeholders,

- an automated flood monitoring system in flood prone areas, rivers and canals integrated with the Doppler Weather Radar will be developed and operated to give timely warning and alert to the first responders and the general public against hydro-meteorological events.

Wildfires, in themselves, are source of serious ecological disasters and disasters in terms of man and material resources. In this spirit, new mechanism will be devised to control arson and unchecked burning sugarcane fields.

I am also looking forward to the outcome of the third world conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015, to further guide our actions on this disaster.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, I wish to inform the House that through my visit to Reunion Island and my participation in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit in India recently and my meeting with the president of the CRM and former Minister of Environment of Madagascar, General Rabotoarison Charles Sylvain, whose nephew, Mr Behoharimisa Ralavo, is *le Ministre de L'Environnement, de l'Ecologie, des Forêts et de la Mer*, I have established the indispensable networks for collaborative efforts at both regional and international levels.

I will end my intervention by stating that the 2015-2019 Government Programme clearly reflects the proactiveness of this Government to translate intentions into concrete actions. Environmental protection and sustainable development should be realised at national and community level, at micro and macro level.

We will invite the private sector through the inclusion of the CSR guidelines from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for environmental projects, the civil society and the public at large to help us transform Mauritius into an environmentally sustainable Republic.

With the guidance of a legendary, experienced, action-oriented, man of wisdom and words, the Leader of the House, our respected Prime Minister, we will achieve our goal, no doubt!

Thank you.

(7.01 p.m.)

Mrs R. Jadoo-Jaunbocus (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will start by thanking, first of all, the Almighty for having bestowed its blessings upon me, this girl from a village known as ‘The Vale’. I have the deep honour and privilege to address this House for my maiden speech. I stand here as the first woman ever to be elected in Constituency No. 2, Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I intend to address this House on a few aspects of the meaningful change that people of this country have voted for on 10 December 2014 by giving a large majority to *l’Alliance Lepep* at the last general elections. May I, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, congratulate you for your election. As such, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you are the so much required breath of fresh air that has come to this House. I congratulate you.

May I also, in the same breath, congratulate Madam Speaker. I seize the opportunity to congratulate Madam Speaker, first, for having been elected as Speaker of this House, and I congratulate her, secondly, for having been elected as the first ever woman to Chair this House. It is a pity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that more women have not been elected to this House as so earnestly hoped for by one and all. I seize this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to condemn the shameful attacks made over women candidates during the last electoral campaign as well and especially against the family of hon. Pravind Jugnauth. *L’Alliance de l’Unité et de la Modernité* has really deigned to stoop so low, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so as to attack Members of his family. Shame!

(Interruptions)

I will not dwell too long on this aspect of such *bassesse*, yet there is one aspect of the electoral campaign that I must and I have to turn to, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Je manquerai mon devoir envers les femmes de notre pays si je ne dénonce pas l’attitude masochiste de quelques-uns de nos adversaires politiques en ce qui concerne leurs attitudes surtout lorsqu’ils ont attaqué et porté atteinte à la vie privée de certaines de nos candidates.

(Interruptions)

I tarry here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to think about hon. Mrs D. Boygah, again I refer to the family of hon. Pravind Jugnauth, and myself. In such conditions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can we expect women to wholeheartedly throw themselves into politics and less so to be elected to this House? How can we call upon our upcoming women female generation

to get involved in active politics? Aussi longtemps qu'on n'aura pas un vrai changement d'attitude en ce qui concerne la gente féminine, si la présente attitude persiste, je dis bien si la présente attitude persiste, on ne pourra jamais atteindre notre objectif de 30% de femmes élues dans le Parlement. And I ask this House to take note. Notwithstanding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, such adverse conditions in which the last campaign was held, I will seize this occasion to thank my electorate for their full support and trust in me. Even in the teeth of targeted personal attacks against me personally as a woman candidate, against my close ones, yet, *mes mandants ont quasiment refusé de tomber dans la bassesse qu'un certain candidat de l'Alliance, soi-disant, de l'Unité et de la Modernité voulait les entraîner. Je salue la maturité et la sagesse de l'électorat du No. 2.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we now move on to the meaningful change that our Government is about to bring. And meaningful change it will bring. It is clear that meaningful change will not happen overnight. This meaningful change is a whole process in itself, starting with a change in the mindset of those governing and the change in the mindset of the stakeholders involved. Going through our five-year programme 2015-2019, it is clear that it is hailing *le second miracle économique*. This is very much possible and this is very much achievable. De par les actions prises en créant des ministères tels que la Bonne gouvernance, Technologie, Communication, Innovation et Economie océanique, tout cela démontre que les bases pour ce deuxième miracle économique ont été jetées, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

During the past nine years, the Mauritian society has seen disintegration in its values to such an extent that corruption has become encrusted within our system. Today, when we look back over the last decade, we take stock of the fact that many billions of rupees have been flippantly injected into projects that today are cracking apart, literally cracking apart, such as the Bagatelle Dam, such as the Route Verdun-Terre Rouge, such as the Sorèze and many more, and we now realise that *les intérêts de la nation sont passés après les intérêts personnels de certaines personnes*; that was the former Government.

We have all indeed witnessed how democracy has been trampled upon, stampeded upon. Parliament was being constantly adjourned, let us recall, and extended. *Ils ont tout fait pour garder le Parlement clos*. Parliament, which is the pinnacle of democracy, *était devenu un objet dans la main de certains*. Even attempts have been made to slaughter our Constitution and come up with a second Constitution designed to suit the needs of some and give immunity to some, and now we can see why, but finally the will of the people has

prevailed and *le peuple* has shown that real power has always and will always remain with the people. Our country, I say with pride, is now free from such tyranny.

The first step of this Government, which I hail loud and clear, under the leadership of hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, whom the whole nation has unconditionally accepted as being the one and the only person who will be able to bring about this much-needed change, this much-needed turn of the wheel, bringing about economic and social change that this country realises, shows that indeed, yes, we can do it. The former Government did not govern; it reigned on the back of the people.

Let us pause here to ask ourselves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what has happened. These institutions meant to act as watchdogs were all prevented to act. They were, in fact, converted into mere instruments and even puppets, I will say, to play to the tune of a privileged few and to favour a privileged few. They made a mockery of good governance. The setting up of a Ministry of Good Governance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a vivid answer and is a testimony to this Government's will to put order where necessary. Good governance implies that this Government is not only putting under scrutiny the actions, decisions and steps taken by the former Government under scrutiny, it is also and most strikingly ensuring that its own very actions and all the actions of its different Ministries will be scrutinised, and that, we have to salute. We pause to ask ourselves how we will achieve that. We will achieve this in a transparent manner, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in an accountable manner, where each and everybody involved will have to put their respective decision in the perspective of good governance, within the framework of good governance and assume full responsibility at every level of their actions and of their involvement. It will not be a case of '*pas moi, li sa ; pas moi sa, contracteur sa ; pas moi sa, l'autre sa!*'

(Interruptions)

We have all lengthily heard from the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, hon. Bhadain, expatiate upon how he intends to translate good governance into reality over the next five years to come. So, I will not go into these details. We even have a whole chapter, Chapter 4 of the Government Programme, dedicated to good governance.

As I have just mentioned, in order to achieve this long term holistic programme of *redressement de notre économie*, we must embark upon a process of rethinking and re-engineering of our whole system, that is, innovate. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, economic change

will not happen into a vacuum. Changing the human mindset is in itself a long and judicious exercise. We have to adapt each and every one to a rapidly evolving environment, be it in technological development, be it in financial or be it in economic strategies.

Today, when the whole world has become a global village, ICT development is and will inevitably become the backbone of our future success. In the year 2000, under the leadership of our Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, we have created a cybercity out of a sugar cane field and this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been through vision and a very forward-looking mindset. And what happened for the next 10 years? Status quo has instilled, stagnation settled in. Today, through the Government Programme 2015-2019, our Government once has come back shows its determination to give a new boost to the ICT sector.

For instance, in keeping with our evolving technological environment and the risks linked thereto, Government will set up the appropriate ecosystem and comprehensively secure ICT infrastructure to protect Mauritius from internal and external cyber threats and attacks and this through our National Cyber Security Strategy.

Another example of this endeavour of our Government is commitment to develop this sector, and to promote this economic miracle the price of telecommunication services will be made more affordable. We have heard this in the past, but this time it is for real and it will be translated into reality, and this, rest assured, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will not be at the expense of quality and service. This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will increase accessibility to the general public and especially to the business world which is most important for such economic progress and miracle to happen.

When we turn to look at the different and numerous measures proposed in our Government Programme, it is clear that the end result will be a boost to attract new investors, thus creating new opportunities for our younger generation. I bear testimony to this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Shortly after the general elections, we have been contacted by youngsters, young professionals from overseas, Mauritian professionals who have expressed their interest to come back to Mauritius. It is the voice of our youngsters from overseas and they are saying that Mauritius is now requiring us, needing us, calling us, and we are here to come back to serve our country, and that has been achieved through the vision of this Government, through the vision of our hon. Rt. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Let us remind this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what has been formerly qualified as a white elephant, *l'éléphant blanc*, has, in fact, created some 25,000 employment. This has been a panacea to unemployment during that period and has created so many posts and helps so many livelihoods. We must salute that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, under the guidance of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, will, no doubt, have a major contribution to our *relance économique*. I have had the privilege, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to work under the leadership hon. Pravind Jugnauth, and I am more than convinced through the years having worked with him that his dynamic approach, coupled with his critical and analytical mind, will give him an edge in bringing about the innovation that we are all striving for and we are all hoping for.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to conclude I must say that much has been said by few in this House, and outside this House, that our Government Programme which is the translation into words and actions of the electoral manifesto of *l'Alliance Lepep*, that such programme constitutes mere words and will remain unimplemented. We have heard this today in this House. We have heard this over the weeks that Parliament has sat in this House itself, but quite the contrary, let me assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Indeed, the action of this Government is a firm negation of what, so far, has been the criticism of our programme. We are a Government that means business, and we rely as the Government on an Opposition that will put the interests of this country first and foremost and put petty politics aside. Constructive criticism is what has been modelled from our Westminsterien model. We hope that this survives in this House for the benefit of our country, for the better good of our country and our nation.

When I say the action of this Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer to the rapid implementation of the Government promise to increase old age pension to Rs5,000. I refer to the extension of 100% subsidy on the SC and HSC exams fees for all students. I refer to the electoral promise to open an Embassy in Saudi Arabia. This is very much, as we have heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister Showkutally Soodhun say that such is on the Government agenda and will become a reality. I refer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to the promise to have a *commission d'enquête* on drugs, to redress the Police Force to give it its former glory. I refer to the question of law and order. I also refer to the implementation of major decision such as the resiliation of the notorious Betamax deal which we have had; the Ministry has had the guts to resile. I also refer to the setting up of enquiries into the festival *de la terre* and many other enquiries to come.

This Government again, I repeat, is a Government which means business. It is not a Government of mere words. As it has been said, *parole donnée* has been always *parole sacrée*. This has always been the motto of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, our Rt. hon. Prime Minister, and this will remain the motto throughout this mandate and all future mandates to come. As we all know, *saki nou dire, nous faire*. Let it be noted.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

(7.17 p.m.)

Mr M. S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me way in this august Assembly. First of all, let me congratulate Madam Speaker for being the first lady ever to be the Chairperson of this Assembly and, at the same time, congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Adrien Duval, to be the youngest we ever had. I am confident you will preside over this Assembly with all fairness and equity. *Bonne chance à vous deux!*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like also to congratulate all hon. Members for their election. Let us not forget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the people of Mauritius, people of our great country, *ce peuple admirable*, who have taken the right decision in choosing the right Government. They deserve our gratitude and our congratulation.

At the last December general elections, precisely on 10 December 2014, a historical date for all of us present here, we got two main political blocks facing the electorate. While our opponents' main concern was to have a second Republic, our main concern was *le deuxième miracle économique*. Our only concern was our people, to improve their standard of life.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, during last year, in this very Assembly, while things were going from bad to worse in this country, their main concern was not the country but their interest in cooling off and on, on and off, off and on. We had an Opposition *qui avait démissionné de toutes ses responsabilités, qui était devenue complice du gouvernement du jour*. In fact, they were so keen to *koz kozer* that very often there was no parliamentary session.

Ceci dit, M. le président, c'est du passé. *Let us face the future*. Joignons nos efforts pour jeter les bases d'un présent plus confortable, et avec un brillant avenir pour nos enfants.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the President Address has left a feel-good factor prevailing over the country. *Même les honorables membres de l'opposition sont d'accord là-dessus.* This is due to the seriousness of the new Government in tackling urgent problems and starting to fulfil its electoral manifesto. Even though we are just two months in office, we have spread happiness for the most respected members of our society. The increase in old age pension and other social aids is a reality today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it always pays to work, the more so for those who want to work hard and are rewarded. It is stated in the Government Programme that Government will introduce a *Chambre des Métiers* Bill to give due recognition to the various professions, including the registration of people in the different trades, setting standards for training facilities and qualification in each trade. So, we have brought measures to help people to set up their own business. *Nous voulons un peuple entrepreneur et non pas un peuple assisté. Nous encourageons la débrouillardise.* A new SME bank will be set up...

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry to interrupt you, hon. Member, Madam Speaker will now take the Chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Madam Speaker, I am so delighted, in my maiden speech, to address both the Deputy Speaker and Madam Speaker.

So, a new SME bank will be set up and Rs10 billion earmarked by Government to support the development of this sector over the next years.

Concerning democracy, Government will adopt a consultative approach in matters relating to the Constitution in the interest of the public. Government will also amend the Local Government Act to consolidate democracy. This is of particular interest to me. *Une affaire de cœur et de nostalgie.* I myself have been a Municipal Councillor for 18 consecutive years and I have been Lord Mayor of the City of Port Louis.

I am, therefore, fully aware of the constraints for a Municipal Councillor to perform his duty. There is much to be done at the level of local authorities for the community to benefit. We want to promote better participation for the management of the community through a '*gestion participative*'.

As you are surely aware, Madam Speaker, needs vary according to regions and specificities of the inhabitants.

There is a need for a new Local Government Act which caters for the aspirations of all members of the community, which allows for a mere dynamic environment wherein councillors and employees feel motivated to give the best of services to the local community. Hopefully, this will be taken into consideration with the new Local Government Act in preparation by the committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval.

Surely, this committee will come out with a very appropriate and democratic policy paper giving necessary powers to Municipal Councillors to administer their local area according to the specificities and needs with which they are fully aware.

Even though, the Ministry will still have a *droit de regard* on major policy matters. I would like to make a solemn appeal to all hon. Members of this Assembly to support my request that the City Council of Port Louis be considered on a different level, an institution with a historical background, being given that it administers the capital city. The capital city is for all of us, and we have to be proud of it, to work for its international recognition.

Concerning the National Development Unit, which is now under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, it will be provided with resources and means so that expectations are fully met.

The Citizens Advice Bureau will be restructured so as to act as interface and facilitator between Government and the public.

This Government cares also for people in Agalega and other outer islands. Agalega will be equipped with appropriate amenities so as to make life better and improve the standard of living for its inhabitants.

Madam Speaker, the only reason we are doing all this is because we have a clear mandate, a mandate with *carte blanche* given by our wise population.

People's expectations are high on this Government, and there is a perception that the priority sectors of development have not yet kick-started. However, you will surely agree with me, Madam Speaker, that the state of affairs prevailing in our institutions are such that prior 'cleaning' is *indispensable* to clear away all existing mess. This is why in this Government we have a full-fledged Ministry for Good Governance.

The people of Mauritius has put their trust in *l'Alliance Lepep*, and we will prove that we are worth of their trust.

Madam Speaker, this Government with all the capable leaders, namely the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Showkutally Soodhun, the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Collendavelloo, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Minister of Information and Technology and all other Ministers, will put their heads together in the interest of the nation. We are compelled to succeed in our endeavour as we have in this Government three brilliant hon. Members during the period they were in post as Minister of Finance. I am pleased to name here, Madam Speaker, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. The latter was even rewarded on several occasions by international institutions. Sir ...

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth has undoubtedly the full ability and willingness at heart to bring together all forces to innovate and move forward with the strong support of his Deputy Prime Minister and Vice-Prime Ministers and all Members of the Government.

Why not from the Opposition also for the sake of the Republic, for the sake of the people, of this nation! Madam Speaker, I make an appeal to my friends of the Opposition to make constructive criticisms for the sake of this country and the interest of the population, *et comme dirait le Leader de l'opposition, dans 'l'intérêt supérieur' du pays.*

Madam Speaker, this country is grateful to hon. Anerood Jugnauth under whose leadership the country had its '*premier miracle économique*'.

I am proud to say that the PMSD was *partie prenante de ce miracle économique*. At that moment in time, the PMSD was in alliance with the MSM party.

(Interruptions)

Zot zalou, nou comprend !

Madam Speaker, Sir Anerood Jugnauth is the right man in the right place to face the challenges and to bring redress where need be.

(Interruptions)

Madame Speaker: Hon. Henry!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, please!

Mr Abbas Mamode: *Nou comprend zot zalou.*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Abbas Mamode: May I resume, Madam Speaker?

(Interruptions)

I sincerely....

(Interruptions)

Let me finish, hon. Bhagwan!

I sincerely thank all the leaders of *l'Alliance Lepep* for having put their trust in me to stand as candidate in the election; special thanks go to hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Deputy Prime Minister.

To all the people who stood by me and believe in *l'Alliance Lepep*, I will prove that they were right to trust me.

Long live Mauritius for a better future!

May the Almighty bestow his blessings on this country!

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leopold!

(7.32 p.m.)

Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, before I come with my maiden speech, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the catastrophic situation which took place yesterday at Port Mathurin filling station.

Thanks to God that the incident occurred when all five tank takers on the filling station were empty. If only one of them had contained petrol, an explosion would have taken place, thereby destroyed everything in a one-kilometre radius. Important structures like the Court of Rodrigues, the central power station, the Police Headquarters and the port would have been at risk, with the Mauritius Trochetia currently anchored, and all major decision-making institutions of Rodrigues would have been destroyed.

It makes us once again reflect upon the urgency to develop the port of Port Mathurin as per the Port Master Plan. During the visit of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development recently in Rodrigues, we had highlighted this issue with him and in the Port Master Plan as far as fuel depot is concerned so as to make Port Mathurin safer. There is a provision to set up a petroleum island in Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight humble by the responsibility placed in me by the people of Rodrigues but, first and foremost, allow me to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, for your elevation to your high office. May I also join the chorus of congratulations that has echoed around this Chamber to congratulate all the hon. Members of this House for having been elected by their respective electorates.

I am very honoured indeed to enter this Chamber as representative of the OPR Party (*Organisation du Peuple de Rodrigues*) for the electorates of the autonomous island of Rodrigues. I would like to sincerely thank the electors of the autonomous island of Rodrigues for showing confidence in my ability to represent their interests here in this House. I succeed one of the greatest members and campaigners I believe this House has known, the first Rodriguan who got elected in 1982 and served his constituency as Minister of Rodrigues under the name of Mr Louis Serge Clair. He is the leader of the OPR Party through which both hon. François and I are proudly representing the interests of our island here, in the decisive House.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, allow me to remind this august House that on 20 November 2001, when Members of the National Assembly voted the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, a law which is also rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius is laid as the foundation stone of an autonomous island of Rodrigues where powers are devolved from the central Government to the people of the island. It is an achievement which came, Madam Speaker, after 25 years of tough negotiations and explanations; 25 years of fight grounded on the concept of devolution of power for better governance and appropriate development. This is a fight which actually started in 1976 with the birth of the OPR Party. We were eventually granted autonomy in 2001.

On 12 October of this year, we are going to celebrate the 13th anniversary since the first Regional Assembly was set up after an election. Over 12 years and so of autonomy in Rodrigues, the local authorities have been striving to improve life in the island. Numerous

hindrances have come along the way and many have been overcome. Before I come to the expectation of the people of Rodrigues, allow me, Madam Speaker, to highlight issues that successive regional Governments have met in regard to the implementation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, the hon. Members in this august Assembly are not extensively familiar with the provisions of the RRA Act 2001, and I ask for your kind permission, Madam Speaker, to bring to the attention of the House some provisions of the said Act on which the Rodriguan people are looking forward to positive changes. This RRA Act is modelled on the concept of the devolution of powers enjoyed by Trinidad and Tobago and a case study of same ordered by the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, at the head of the MSM/MMM party alliance after the success at the 2000 elections.

One of the first issues that was uncovered in this Act is the proportional allocation of seats. Proportional representation as part of the system for the return of Members is a good system in as much as it ensures the maintenance of democracy in the legislative process and also an opposition is essential in keeping check on any government anywhere in the world for that matter. The Regional Assembly is normally made up of 18 Members of whom 12 are local Members elected at the first-past-the-post basis and six are island regions elected on a proportional basis.

Madam Speaker, six out of 18 Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are island region members, all of whom are returned through the Electoral Commission. When we look at Tobago, Madam Speaker, as per the new Tobago House of Assembly Act 2011, 12 Members are elected on that first-past-the-post, four Members are appointed on the advice of the Chief Secretary, two on the advice of the Minority Leader and two are independently appointed by the President. These dispositions, Madam Speaker, under the new Tobago House of Assembly Act, in my own appreciation, ensure that the regional Government is able to work in a stable condition and not under the constant threat of overthrow because of a too small ruling majority. I insist on the fact that the proportional representation (PR) is good as long as it protects the majority wish of the first-past-the-post.

Also, Madam, throughout the world, countries which have adopted the PR system also have the legal provision that prevents people from being elected on party list being *des transfuges*. The RRA Act must be equipped with similar provisions so that the island region members can only retain membership of the House as long as they represent the same party.

Our people, irrespective of their *appurtenance partisane* resent this party hopping process which has taken place, especially with the island region members of the RRA which for them is all but simply disrespectful of the voters' wish.

Madam Speaker, *les affaires de Rodrigues sont sous la supervision directe du président du Conseil exécutif, soit le Chef commissaire. Rodrigues faisant partie intégrante de la République de Maurice, les affaires de Rodrigues doivent être représentées et défendues sur une base continue à sa juste valeur.* Therefore, I humbly make an appeal to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and Minister for Rodrigues to honour on a most consistent basis the provision of section 39(3) of the RRA Act 2001 which states, and I quote –

“The Chief Commissioner shall, if invited by the Prime Minister so to do, attend meetings of the Cabinet in order that he may -

- (a) apprise Cabinet of decisions taken by the Regional Assembly in the exercise of its powers under this Act;
- (b) represent the interest of Rodrigues in any matter having or likely to have an adverse effect on Rodrigues.”

The Chief Commissioner has the responsibility to keep the Rt. hon. Prime Minister informed on the matters of Rodrigues and also continually protect our inhabitants' interest.

Late Robert Ahnee, who drafted the RRA Act, often regretted that provision of 39(3) had been so often overlooked. The people of Rodrigues are once again looking at the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Madam Speaker. Indeed, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, was the very leader of this House and over the then Government when decision was reached to grant Rodrigues Island its autonomous status. The people of Rodrigues irrespective of political affiliations have not forgotten his great gesture and determination for that respect and are ever so grateful for the trust that he, along with hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, has demonstrated for them. The people of Rodrigues believe in the seriousness and interest from this newly installed Government and trust that central Government and regional Government will maintain a mutually respectful and fully collaborative relationship for the better good of one and all in the island. So, in as much as goes our gratefulness for this great constitutionally recognised and protected tool, 12 years plus of application have highlighted shortcomings that must be seen too without undue delay.

Madam Speaker, the elections are now behind us, my constituency voted for change and my constituency is on the lookout for that change. I say to you and the people of

Rodrigues Island, yes, we will have a bright future ahead, and I feel immensely proud and privileged of the trust bestowed into me by my people in ensuring that this central Government steers positive plans to build a strong and prosperous economy for the island of Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the people in my electorate and the number one issue that has been raised with me is the need to create jobs, especially for the young and those who have completed tertiary education and professional training. At present, my constituency has an unemployment rate well above the national average. I will be working everyday to address the issue of unemployment, to provide jobseekers with the all leading information required in order to build the working careers, be it on an employment or self-employment basis.

Madam Speaker, it has indeed been music to my ears to hear the hon. Minister of Finance at an early meeting of the sixth National Assembly boldly marking the necessity for the Mauritian economy to veer into small and medium entrepreneurship. Rodrigues is a great place to invest and grow a small business. This is why the Rodrigues Regional Government in its 2015 Budget has focused its attention on finding ways to drive young people to become entrepreneurs.

The 2015 Budget of Rodrigues Regional Government provides for the set-up of an appropriate environment and various opportunities for the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. Among some of the measures devised, the RRA has worked at ways to reduce as far as possible red tape, the difficulties that new entrepreneurs encountered which is the element for discouragement. In this same line, the Commissioner responsible for Industrial Development and Cooperative and her staff have also set up a venture capital fund to back lenders, so as to help them have appropriate fund from commercial banks.

Madam Speaker, it is in my contention that in this job creation endeavour, the central Government should consider reducing red tape, reviewing relevant tax schemes, providing support to small and medium-sized businesses *et enclencher les grands défis infrastructurels de l'île Rodrigues, notamment l'agrandissement du port, l'agrandissement de l'aéroport et la connection de Rodrigues aux câbles optiques.*

Rodriguans are determined to succeed. This determination must be sustained by bold decisions aimed at economic growth. Challenges are numerous for the Republic of Mauritius. The economy needs a reboot and Rodrigues must not be overseen in the key process, and in

turn, we will be able to contribute to the economic success of the Republic of Mauritius and be part *du deuxième miracle économique de la République de Maurice*. Possibilities from Rodrigues to contribute are there, especially with port matters and port development.

Madam Speaker, allow me to seize this opportunity to draw to the attention of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and also to the hon. Minister of Shipping of the urgency of matters as regards the port of Port Mathurin and of the precarious situation allowed to prevail as regards the replacement of MV Mauritius Pride. Indeed, over a year has elapsed since the MV Mauritius Pride stopped serving Rodrigues. We have been waiting for the replacement, but not seeing anything coming in that regard, with strain being put on Mauritius Trochetia, which is due for maintenance check for at least a month very shortly, the Rodriguan population is very concerned.

Rodrigues is an asset to the Republic of Mauritius and as an integral part of the State of Mauritius, Rodrigues needs what it deserves, that is, adequate support from the central Government, so as to build solid economic base. We have the capacity to do so. Rodrigues is capable of generating money so as to inject in the economy of the Republic of Mauritius. Let us not allow, Madam Speaker, prejudices masquerading as instinct to determine how it acts or the decision that we make, and let us find ways to speak with goodwill and respect. Polarisation separate people from ideas; therefore, it does not help us to find solution to the challenges that we face. In grappling with our most thorny problems, let us deliberately and resolutely maintain optimism that a solution can be found. Let us not unthinkingly impute malicious intent to those with whom we disagree. Let us display generosity of spirit and sincerity. Let us not encourage cynicism.

Accepting the proposition that every party is the same, and that no one in the public life will trust us as politicians if we lead by powerlessness and in turn to disenfranchisement for the people that we represent in this house. The Republic of Mauritius should continue to be a courageous nation as it has relentlessly proved in the past. We can move towards the future where our Constitution derives its authority from the will of the people.

Our pathway to future prosperity is built on the foundation of education and vocational training. Education is a public good that enriches our whole society and that is a concept that the OPR Party understood.

Madam Speaker, I come from a very poor family and I was the first in my family to go to university for professional training. Both my parents were hard-working. They did

everything they could to make sure that all their children had every possible educational opportunity; an opportunity that they did not have. They taught me and gave me the opportunity to see first-hand what hard work looks like.

Madam Speaker, let us be a nation that actively seeks the contribution to global prosperity, peace and equality. Inequality divides people and deprive us of shared experience. Great inequality leads us to unrest, to resentment, to distrust and to violence. Equality helps to promote national unity. We should be a unified nation that takes pride in its multi-ethnicity and its multi-culturalism. The Republic of Mauritius should be a compassionate nation. We must open our hearts to give help when there is poverty, sickness and powerlessness. The OPR party stands for building prosperity and we believe that the Republic of Mauritius should be a prosperous nation. We want the Republic of Mauritius to be able to take advantage of most opportunity that comes across.

My presence in this House, Madam Speaker, is the result of collective efforts. Therefore, I would like to thank my leader, Serge Clair, *l'équipe de l'OPR avec tous les commissaires*, all the volunteers who worked so hard to ensure that those two seats in the National Assembly remain with OPR Party.

I will end my speech with the words of Terry Pratchett, to make us remember that our purpose here is to work for the betterment of the people that we represent. She says, I quote –

“Always remember that the crowd that applauds your coronation is the same crowd that will applaud your beheading.”

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to address this House.

Mr Baboo: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Seeruttun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 26 February 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Hon. Members, I wish to inform Members that provision has been made for dinner.

At 7.52 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 26 February 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SUPREME COURT – UNDELIVERED JUDGMENTS

(No. B/64) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Supreme Court, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Master and Registrar, information as to the number of judgments pending thereat in respect of cases which have been heard –

- (a) ten years ago;
- (b) five years ago, and
- (c) three years ago respectively.

Reply: Government is committed to bring reforms to the Judiciary to expedite determination of Court cases and improve the services given to the public by our Court system.

Delays in judicial proceedings may amount to a denial of justice and undermine confidence in the Judiciary, and jurisdictions such as Guyana have gone as far as providing for statutory time limits for Judges to give their decisions. In New Zealand, the High Court and the Supreme Court deliver most of their judgments (over 90%) within six months. This is done administratively by the Courts, which publish the time within which they expect to deliver judgments and also publish the time taken by Courts to deliver judgments.

As far back as 2006, Lord Mackay recommended that Judges and Magistrates be encouraged to do better case management and that directions may have to be issued by the Supreme Court for that purpose. Further, Judges are enjoined by paragraph 6.5 of the “Guidelines for Judicial Conduct”, to “perform all judicial duties, including the delivery of reserved decisions, efficiently, fairly and within a reasonable time.”

With regard to the question of the hon. Member, I am informed that the Chief Justice regularly asks the hon. Judges of the Supreme Court to provide him with a list of undelivered

judgments. I am also informed that the last exercise which was effected at the beginning of this year shows that there are only six cases in which judgment has been reserved. Five of these cases are awaiting judgment for four years and one for three years.

**JUDICIARY- JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS COMMISSION & VIDEO CAMERA
RECORDING**

(No. B/65) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the judiciary, in order to keep a check and balance on judicial conduct, he will state if Government proposes to –

- (a) set up a Judicial Complaints Commission;
- (b) introduce video camera recording of all court proceedings, and
- (c) amend section 74(1) of the District and Intermediate Court (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1888 to make it mandatory for all court proceedings to be recorded by technological or other scientific means.

Reply: The Judiciary, as one of the three arms of Government, is impartial and independent. The principle of separation of powers is enshrined in our Constitution in order to ensure that Judicial Officers discharge their duties independently and without fear or favour. Our system is similar to that of the United Kingdom inasmuch as we are governed by Guidelines for Judicial Conduct which are based on the Bangalore Principles.

I am informed by the Office of the Master and Registrar that presently, all complaints concerning Judicial Officers are directed to the Office of the Master and Registrar and to the Office of the Honourable Chief Justice, and that such complaints are properly investigated by the Master and Registrar, by the Deputy Master and Registrar, or by a Judge nominated by the Honourable Chief Justice who is then apprised of the outcome of any investigation. Should the Honourable Chief Justice consider that the complaint is founded, the matter may be referred to the Judicial and Legal Service Commission for necessary action or for any other action deemed fit in the circumstances.

Honourable Members may wish to note that several jurisdictions have now provided for an independent mechanism to look into complaints against holders of judicial office. Thus, in the UK, the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) (formerly the Office for Judicial Complaints) supports the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice in their joint

responsibility for judicial discipline. It seeks to ensure that all judicial disciplinary issues are dealt with consistently, fairly and efficiently. In New Zealand, the Judicial Conduct Commissioner and Judicial Conduct Panel Act 2004 provides a way for people to complain about the conduct of a Judge and to have those complaints assessed. An independent Judicial Commissioner receives complaints, conducts preliminary investigations and decides what further actions, if any, are to be taken.

Consultations will be held with the Chief Justice to determine whether, with a view to providing a better delivery of service, an independent body should be set up, by law or administratively, to look into complaints made against the Judiciary and advise the Chief Justice on action to be taken.

With regard to parts (b) and (c), hon. Members will be aware that judicial officers are already bound by the Guidelines for Judicial Conduct, made in 2002, which establish standards of ethical conduct for Judges. It is considered that complaints against the Judiciary may be adequately and satisfactorily dealt with by such independent mechanism as may be set up, after consultation with the Chief Justice. The number and nature of complaints against the Judiciary are not such as would justify the video recording of all court proceedings in Mauritius for the purpose of keeping a “check” on judicial conduct. The Court record should and does speak for itself. It is the view of this Government that it is for the Chief Justice, and not for the executive to ensure that all judicial officers adhere by the Guidelines for Judicial Conduct.

Having said this, there are obvious advantages to having Court proceedings recorded simultaneously and transcribed diligently. Government will extend its assistance to the Judiciary in enhancing the digital recording system for the benefit of the public at large as well as our Court system.

CAMP CAROL, GRAND' BAIE & PEREYBERE - DRAINS

(No. B/66) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the flood prone areas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to if, in collaboration with Greek experts, it had commissioned a report in relation thereto in 2013 and, if so, indicate –

- (a) if Camp Carol, Grand Bay and Pereybere were among the regions identified for the carrying out of urgent drain and related infrastructure works, and
- (b) the urgent remedial measures that are being taken in relation thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed that an international tender was launched for Consultancy Services for Land Drainage and Watershed Management Study in November 2010 by the NDU. The contract was awarded on 29 January 2013 to the consortium Z & AP Antonaropoulos & Associates S.A in association with Desai & Associates.

The Terms of Reference for the consultancy services, funded by the World Bank, was confined to specific parts of Mauritius defined in relation to major drainage basins. The study focused on major catchments which are highly vulnerable to floods/where severe flooding are experienced across Mauritius.

In reply to Part (a) of the question, I am informed that Camp Carol, Grand' Baie and Pereybere were, *inter alia*, part of the study.

In respect to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that the preliminary design reports submitted by the Consultant to the NDU in April 2014, highlight that in the region of Grand' Baie, there are a number of wetlands which have started disappearing with the advent of development. Moreover, the lack of stringent controls by the Authorities in ensuring that the wet lands are preserved has further aggravated the drainage of storm water. The rapid development has also encroached on the few natural watercourses that existed, thus leaving the surface storm water to find its way through built up areas and causing flooding and ponding during and after the downpour.

As for Camp Carol, the main reasons for flooding are attributed to, *inter alia* –

- (i) low lying areas where the surface water has no outlet to discharge;
- (ii) inexistence of storm water network in many places or the inadequacy of the existing network to carry the flows;
- (iii) obstruction in the storm water network due to overlying developments/constructions, and
- (iv) backfilling of wetlands.

As regards Pereybere, the main issue highlighted in the report is the disposal of surface water run-off from storm events due to lack of properly designed storm water channels and roadside drains in many places.

The solutions proposed by the Consultants for Camp Carol, Grand' Baie and Pereybere are, *inter alia*, the construction of a storm water network, a main cut-off drain canal in the perimeter of the area where flooding problems have been identified and a road reprofiling in Pereybere.

In consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and all other authorities concerned, appropriate remedial action will be taken.

ABERCROMBIE – POLICE DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/67) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new and modern Divisional Headquarters at Abercrombie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police –

- (a) a list of the offices that will be housed therein, and
- (b) information as to -
 - (i) if the present occupiers of the existing Police Quarters at Abercrombie will have been vacated and, if not, why not, and
 - (ii) where matters stand as to the proposed construction, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the project for the construction of a new and modern Divisional Headquarters at Abercrombie is planned for the Financial Year 2016. The plot of land where the Police Quarters at Abercrombie is presently located has been identified and earmarked for this project.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the proposed building to be constructed will cater for usual requirements for a typical District Headquarters. It will comprise offices for administration, public and emergency services as well as offices for specialised units and other associated facilities.

The following offices will be included, just to mention a few main ones –

- Police Station to cover the Abercrombie region;
- Passport and Immigration sub-office;
- Family Protection Unit;
- *Brigade des Mineurs*;
- Emergency Response Unit;
- *Police du Tourisme*;
- Divisional Traffic Police;
- *Police de l'Environnement*;
- Divisional Support Unit;
- Crime Investigation Division;
- Prosecution Unit;
- Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit;
- Revenue Clerk/Cashier.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, presently two Police Quarters are occupied by serving members of the Police Force. The latter have been requested to vacate the said quarters since 13 December 2013, with the option for reallocation of quarters in other regions. The occupants have requested for permission to allow them to continue occupying these quarters while they make necessary arrangements to move to a permanent dwelling of their own. However, they will have to vacate these quarters before the start of demolition works of the existing structures.

With respect to part (b) (ii) of the question, the Architectural Section of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is presently working on the structural design of the proposed building. Construction works are expected to start in March 2016 and to be completed by April 2017.

SOLID WASTE SOLID SCAVENGING SERVICES - PROCUREMENT

(No. B/92) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the procurement of solid waste solid scavenging services for villages SWM1, including carting away of post cyclonic waste – CPB56/13 and solid waste solid scavenging services for villages SWM2, including carting away of post cyclonic waste – CPB57/13, he will state the -

- (a) number of potential bids received, and

- (b) names of the -
- (i) determined substantial responsive bidders, and
- (ii) bidder to whom the contract was awarded, indicating the basis on which the bid was determined.

Reply: I am advised that the tender for the contracts “Solid Waste Scavenging Services for Villages SWM 1, including carting away of Post Cyclonic Waste” – CPB/56/2013 and the contract for “Solid Waste Scavenging Services for Villages SWM 2, including carting away of Post Cyclonic Waste” – CPB/57/2013, were launched on 07 January 2014. The bids were received and opened at the Central Procurement Board (CPB) on 18 February 2014 (for SWM 2) and on 19 February 2014 (for SWM 1) respectively.

In regard to part (a) of the question, four bids were received for the SWM 1 contract (CPB56/13) and three bids were received for SWM 2 contract (CPB57/13).

In regard to part (b) (i) and (b) (ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the whole evaluation exercise was carried out by the Central Procurement Board. The names of the substantially responsive bidders are as follows -

For SWM 1	For SWM 2
Maxiclean Co. Ltd	Maxiclean Co. Ltd
Atics Ltd	Atics Ltd
CRSE Ltée	

After evaluation of the bids, the Central Procurement Board approved the award of contract as follows -

SWM 1 [CPB/56/13]	Lot 1 (Mahebourg)	Atics Ltd
	Lot 2 (Trou d’Eau Douce coastal village)	CRSE Ltée
	Lot 3 (Flacq Village)	Maxiclean Co. Ltd
SWM 2 [CPB57/13]	Lot 1 (All coastal village from Anse la Raie to road linking Chemin Vingt Pieds to Grand Bay Police Station)	Maxiclean Co. Ltd
	Lot 2 (All coastal village from Le Goulet to the road linking Chemin Vingt Pieds to Grand Bay Police Station)	Maxiclean Co. Ltd

On 16 April 2014, my Ministry issued letters of notification of award to the above successful bidders. However, on 21 April 2014, one aggrieved bidder filed a challenge to the Ministry. Subsequently, the aggrieved bidder made an application for review before the Independent Review Panel. The case is currently before the Supreme Court and came for mention on 23 February 2015.

Since the matter is *sub judice*, I am not in a position to provide any further information at this point in time.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/93) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to his Ministry, he will state the number of officers recruited therefor, since January 2014 to date category-wise and grade-wise, indicating if the recruitment procedures were strictly complied with and, if not, indicate the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: The information regarding the first part of the question is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

With regard to the second part of the question, I am informed that all recruitment procedures in line with the PSC Regulations and other prevailing Regulations, including those under delegated power by the PSC, were complied with.

ANSE LA RAIE - YOUTH TRAINING CENTRE - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/94) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Youth Training Centre at Anse La Raie, he will state if renovation works will be carried out thereat, indicating if consideration will be given for the acquisition of additional land in the vicinity thereof for the

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- (a) extension of parking facilities thereat, and
- (b) conversion thereof into a modern Youth Residential Training Centre with all the required amenities.

Reply: I have to inform the House that upgrading of the dormitories at the Youth Training Centre at Anse La Raie are ongoing.

Furthermore, a request has been made to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for additional State land to the extent of around 13 acres, adjacent to the Training Centre, to be vested in my Ministry for the setting up of a modern residential Youth and Sports Training Centre as announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019.

The centre will be provided with all modern amenities as well as the required parking facilities.

The House may wish to know that a plot of land to the extent of 1 acre 9 perches was excised from the existing 8 acres and 20 perches to be given to one of the “*petit copains*” of the outgoing Government in the context of the “*State land saga*”. This excised plot of land would have given direct access to the beach to Tirupa Tourism Enterprises Ltd represented by one Mr L. N. who forms part of the *clic de “petits copains”*, in the context of his Four-Star luxury hotel project for which he had already benefited 11 acres and 85 perches of State land. The project has up to now not materialised. Hence, the request for the plot of land allocated to Tirupa Tourism Enterprises Ltd to be vested in my Ministry for the construction of a modern Youth and Sports Training Centre with all the required amenities.

SAINT BRANDON ARCHIPELAGO - WRECKSHIP FV KHA YANG

(No. B/95) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the wreck ship FV Kha Yang, presently grounded on the shores of the Saint Brandon Archipelago, he will state -

- (a) the ecological consequences of the oil spill and irreversible damages caused to the reef barrier resulting thereof;
- (b) the measures taken, if any, for the removal thereof and the timeframe set therefor;
- (c) if it held the required authorization to fish around the Archipelago, and
- (d) if Government will consider introducing legislation to protect this last pristine piece of the Mauritian territory.

(Withdrawn)

QUATRE BORNES – SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. B/96) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Plaine Wilhems Sewerage Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to the expected completion dates of the works in relation to Quatre Bornes, indicating as at to date, the number of –

- (a) roads resurfaced, and
- (b) drains reinstated.

Reply: The Plaines Wilhems Sewerage project comprises two projects which encompass Quatre Bornes. Lot 2 covering regions of Central Quatre Bornes, Belle Rose, and Sodnac was substantially completed in September 2014.

Lot 1 A covers Stanley, Trefles and Hugnin as well as La Source, Palma and Bassin. Works started in May 2010.

Under Lot 2, 99.4 kms of streets and 1.5 kms of drains were reinstated. Under Lot 1 A, 38 kms of roads and 50 metres of drains have been reinstated.

POINTE DES LASCARS - HIGH-END LUXURY HOTEL

(No. B/97) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether he will state if his Ministry is in presence of an application for the construction of a seven star hotel in Pointe des Lascars and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the promoter thereof;
- (b) proposed room capacity thereof, and
- (c) estimated cost thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Board of Investment that a proposal for the implementation of an Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS), which includes the construction of a high-end luxury hotel at Pointe des Lascars, has been received.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed by the Board of Investment that -

- (i) the Promoter of the IRS project is Blue Sky Real Estate Domaine de l'Hermitage Ltd, and
- (ii) the proposed room capacity of the hotel is 100 at an estimated cost of Rs4.1 billion.

I am further informed as follows -

- (i) so far, a letter of approval for an IRS Certificate has been issued to the promoter;
- (ii) the hotel is planned to be on the market in 2018 and will be operated by the Jumeirah International LLC of Dubai, and
- (iii) although preliminary consultations have been held at the level of my Ministry, no formal application in respect of the hotel has yet been received.

CEB - ST LOUIS POWER STATION PROJECT – APPEAL

(No. B/98) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Redevelopment of the St Louis Power Station Project for the Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 4 x 15 MW Diesel Generating Set, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Review Panel, information as to if it is in presence of an appeal from the Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractors and, if so, if the appeal has been entertained, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CEB - ST LOUIS POWER STATION PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/99) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Redevelopment of the St Louis Power Station Project for the Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 4 x 15 MW Diesel Generating Set, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if it had been instructed to start negotiations with Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractors, albeit their bid had been rejected by the Central Procurement Board for non-compliance, indicating the number of contracts the CEB has awarded thereto over the past ten years, indicating in each case –

- (a) the contract value thereof
- (b) the local partner thereof, and
- (c) if they had manufactured the equipment supplied.

(Withdrawn)

BEAU BASIN - ORANGE MOBILE NETWORK - COVERAGE

(No. B/100) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Orange Mobile Network, he will state if he is aware of the very bad coverage thereof in Beau Bassin, mainly in Chebel, Maingard, Barkly and Mont Roches and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I have requested Mauritius Telecom and the ICT Authority to look into the issue of mobile network coverage in the region of Beau Bassin and to come up with remedial measures to address same.

CANOT - FOOTBALL GROUND - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/101) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a football ground at Canot, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the District Council of Black River that from information gathered from Medine S.E. Ltd, a portion of land has been vested into Government by the latter, under the 800 *arpents* Land Release Scheme, for the construction of a football ground at Canot along the Albion Approach Road.

I am further informed that since the District Council is facing financial difficulties, I am examining, along with my colleagues, an appropriate mechanism for the financing of the project.