



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

MONDAY 17 JUNE 2019

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 12 of 2019

Sitting of 17 June 2019

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

A. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.
(Government Notice No.107 of 2019)
- (b) The Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No.108 of 2019)

B. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

The Nursing Council (Code of Practice) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 99 of 2019)

C. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 101 of 2019)
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 102 of 2019)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 103 of 2019)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 16) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 104 of 2019)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 17) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 105 of 2019)
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 18) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 106 of 2019)

D. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

The Non-Citizens (Work Permits) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.
(Government Notice No.100 of 2019)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**BANK OF MAURITIUS - SPECIAL RESERVE FUND – BREAKDOWN**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the proposal in the Budget Speech to utilize Rs18 billion of the undistributed reserves of the Special Reserve Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius –

- (a) a breakdown of the Rs13,473,623,493 of undistributed reserves standing to the credit thereof as at 30 June 2018, distinguishing between accumulated unrealized profits and accumulated realized profits, and
- (b) information as to if amounts therefrom have previously been used for the purpose of repayment of the public sector debt and, if so, indicate when.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the reply to this question necessitates that I, first and foremost, give an overview of the role of the various reserve funds at the Central Bank.

There are, in fact, three reserves that are maintained at the Bank of Mauritius, namely

–

- (i) The General Reserve Fund;
- (ii) The Special Reserve Fund, and
- (iii) The Official Foreign Reserves.

As per the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, whenever the Bank makes a profit, 85% thereof is transferred to the Consolidated Fund of Government and the balance of 15% is transferred to the General Reserve Fund at the Bank of Mauritius. The balance in the General Reserve Fund must be at least equivalent to the paid-up capital of the Bank. The balance of the General Reserve Fund currently stands at Rs2.7 billion while the paid-up capital of the Bank is Rs2 billion.

As regards the Special Reserve Fund, section 47 of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004 provides for any net realised gains or losses in any financial year of the Bank arising from changes in the valuation of its assets or liabilities to be credited or debited to that Fund.

The valuation of foreign exchange reserves is made on the basis of fluctuations in market rates and, therefore, gains/losses arising thereon are considered as realised. This is in accordance with international accounting practice.

In fact, the balance in the Special Reserve Fund is considered realised for three main reasons –

- (i) The first reason is that the foreign currency reserves are held in highly liquid assets. Official Exchange Reserves of Mauritius are by definition considered liquid as otherwise they will not count as Foreign Exchange Reserves. Indeed, more than 99.6% of the foreign exchange reserves at the Bank of Mauritius are held in cash and in highly marketable securities which satisfy the criteria of high convertibility and marketability.

In fact, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales Technical Release of 2017, at paragraph 3.21, stipulates that, and I quote –

“Unless there are doubts as to the convertibility or marketability of the currency in question, foreign exchange profits arising on the retranslation of monetary items are usually realised, irrespective of the maturity date of the monetary item. This is generally accepted practice even though the exchange difference may not be ‘readily convertible to cash’ at the balance sheet date”.

As such, Madam Speaker, the current year profits include gains and losses arising from fair valuation from financial assets. The current year profit and accumulated profit, therefore, include both realised and unrealised gains in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards. But the distributions are subject to the provisions of the Bank of Mauritius Act.

- (ii) The second reason is the fact that the Special Reserve Fund can be used to capitalise the Bank of Mauritius. To recall, when the Special Reserve Fund was created in 2004, an amount of Rs13 billion which stood in the Foreign Exchange Fluctuation Reserve Fund and which was deemed as realised by virtue of section 47 of the Bank of Mauritius Act was transferred to the Special Reserve Fund. This is an undeniable proof that the balance standing in the Fund is considered as realised gains, and

(iii) The third reason is that the Special Reserve Fund has also been used for monetary policy purposes. In fact, the law was amended in May 2015 to provide for the use of Special Reserve Fund for monetary policy purposes [Section 47(5)(b) of the Bank of Mauritius Act refers].

As at 30 June 2018, a total amount of Rs1.4 billion has been used to meet part of the costs of conducting monetary policy operations.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, in accordance with the explanations I have just given, the balance of Rs13,473,623,493 standing in the Special Reserve Fund as at 30 June 2018 is accumulated realised profits in terms of the International Financial Reporting Standards and the Technical Release Guidance document issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales in April 2017.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the Special Reserve Fund has not been used to repay public sector debt.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, it is clear that the funds in the Special Reserve Fund are actually realised as at today and, therefore, can be distributed.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, what the hon. Prime Minister has just said is tantamount to economic and accounting heresy, and I maintain that. I will just ask him firstly, if he has - I know he is not a financier. So, I will give some credit for that. Has he read Note 5 of the accounts of the Bank of Mauritius? And if so, does he know that it says that the Special Reserve Fund includes any net realised gains and losses, and section 47(1A), any unrealised gains or losses of the Bank? It says that in the accounts of the Bank of Mauritius. Is the hon. Prime Minister telling me that this is false?

The Prime Minister: Well, I do not have to deny what is printed in the accounts that have been published by the Bank of Mauritius. But I still maintain my answer with regard to the question that has been put.

Mr X.L. Duval: Madam Speaker, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Here, we have a Prime Minister who comes to tell the House that clearly...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You have to be moderate in your reply.

Mr X.L. Duval: ...this Special Reserve Fund, as everybody understands, includes a lot of paper profits, and these paper profits are not allowed to be distributed to the

shareholder, the Government by a Central Bank. *Il mélange ça* avec other accounting issues, BAI, etc., went bankrupt because of the same thing. We are not talking about companies. We are talking about Central Banks.

Madam Speaker, I am going to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has raised the issue of distributing paper profits - if that is a better word for a layman - to the Government.

The Prime Minister: Well, I might not be an accountant or a financier like the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He has, of course, a greater mind, which I do recognise, but I am informed that he is wrong on this issue. And if it was, as he said, paper profit or whatever, why is it that, in October 2011, an amount of Rs1 billion was transferred from the Special Reserve Fund of the Bank of Mauritius to credit the Accountant General's account? Why is it that when he was Minister of Finance he did that? If it was paper! He transferred Rs1 billion? According to the line of argument he is advancing today, then, I wonder what he himself has done on 31 October 2011.

Mr X. L. Duval: Whatever we did was in concordance with the law, which was not changed.

(Interruptions)

Now, if it is true, Madam Speaker, my question is...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: What does the IMF have to say about the hon. Prime Minister's economic heresy? That is my question.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Leader of the Opposition, I know, has a very good relationship with the IMF. In fact, he has told us that he has written to the IMF; he has tabled the reply from the IMF. I shall come to that in my summing-up to reply to what he has been saying. But talking about the IMF, I hope, as a lay person, I have tried to read recommendations from the IMF, the latest revised Guidelines for Foreign Exchange Reserve Management. I might not probably understand the same recommendations as the hon. Leader of the Opposition, again because he has got a greater mind, but let me quote what the IMF says. What is Reserve Management and Why is it Important? That is the title of that chapter -

“Typically, official foreign exchange reserves are held in support of a range of objectives including (...)”

And I shall not spend the time of the House to read what are the recommendations with regard to other issues. Let me come to the matter which is of direct interest to us. One of the objectives is “to assist the Government in meeting its foreign exchange needs and external debt obligations.” Madam Speaker, this is the recommendation of the IMF. In fact, we are going along with the recommendation of the IMF, and this is why there is this proposal to amend the Banking Act in order to be able to meet fiscal policies also.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister is confused between the foreign assets of the Bank of Mauritius, which belong to the Bank of Mauritius to pay Rs230 billion of creditors that it has and the Special Reserve Fund. It is a completely different issue, and this is confirmation, Madam Speaker, to me that he is totally confused, and it is dangerous. This is what the IMF said about Seychelles. Here, this is what it said at page 15 when Seychelles went bankrupt because of this sort of issue. This is what the IMF said –

“Unrealised valuation gains from currency fluctuations, foreign concessions will no longer be transferred from the Central Bank of Seychelles to the Government.”

This is actual fact, Madam Speaker, and it is clear to me that the hon. Prime Minister has misunderstood...

(Interruptions)

... the purpose of a foreign exchange asset...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Can I have some order? Yes!

Mr X. L. Duval: That the Prime Minister is totally confused between foreign exchange assets of a bank, which represents Rs240 billion, most of which are owed to other creditors and, Madam Speaker, here are the accounts of the Bank of Mauritius to prove it, Rs237 m. and Rs220 m. of creditors against that Rs237. It is not his to take or to rob. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister must understand - crucial for the country - the difference, that is, the Special Reserve Fund. And I maintain that the majority of the Special Reserve Fund, as said by Mr Basant Rai, this morning, are paper profits, and is going to do, Madam Speaker, a BAI...

Madam Speaker: No...

Mr X. L. Duval: ... equivalent to BAI in the accounts of...

Madam Speaker: Please, do not make a statement. You have asked your question. Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition maybe does not have cogent arguments and he is making a long speech and talking about Seychelles, about former ...

(Interruptions)

Let me answer!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, no! You have made your point! Allow the hon. Prime Minister now to make his point.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, when he was asking his question and making a lengthy comment about it, I remained quiet and I listened carefully. So, allow me, please, to answer. The Leader of the Opposition has mentioned a number of things in his question. I do not want to comment about Seychelles. We have very good relationship with Seychelles and I do not want to make any comment with regard to the financial situation of Seychelles. But, maybe, let me quote also from one of his colleagues, the Auditor of the Bank of Mauritius. I quote again from a correspondence that has recently been addressed to the Auditor, and I shall quote only part –

“The current year profits include gains and losses arising from fair valuation of financial assets measured as fair value through the profit and loss. The current year profit and accumulated profit, therefore, include both realised and unrealised gains in accordance with IFRS and, therefore, are available for distribution subject to the provisions of the Bank of Mauritius Act.”

(Interruptions)

Exactement! That is the reason for the purpose of coming up with this proposal. Now he is praising former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, Mr Basant Rai.

(Interruptions)

Quoting and praising also.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I quoted. He should not misquote.

The Prime Minister: When the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quoting...

Madam Speaker: You quoted from the papers this morning. Okay.

The Prime Minister: When you are quoting, you are supporting; you are telling people what he is saying!

(Interruptions)

You are telling people what he is saying is correct!

(Interruptions)

You quote...

Madam Speaker: It tantamounts to support.

The Prime Minister: You quote and you do not believe in it?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, but it tantamounts to supporting.

The Prime Minister: How can you quote somebody and then you say you do not believe in him, you do not believe in his arguments? Well, this is a new type of Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Now, maybe he is quoting from a former Governor. Let me also quote from another former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Dan Maraye! His son had been candidate of the PMSD, Madam Speaker!

(Interruptions)

Dan Maraye has been campaigning for the PMSD. Then, he was good; then he was okay? I shall not again waste the time of the House. In a recent radio interview, Mr Dan Maraye, former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, and I will quote only those parts which will give the answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition -

“Nou ena 11.7 mois de réserve. Donc, moi, personnellement, mo p koz kuma ene ancien Gouverneur. Mo pas trouve nanien de mal kin transfer, ki le gouvernement p fer sa.”

Another part –

“Si nou ena cash ki p dormi, 11.7 mois d’importations, c’est bien trop, nou kapav reduire li ziska 8 (...).”

And then, he goes on to say –

“Donc, c’est très faisable et mo pas trouve rien à dire, rien pou dire de négatif dedan personnellement.”

He does not stop here, Madam Speaker. He goes on to say in another part –

“Mo pas trouver dan ki façon so montant liquidité pou affecter.”

He goes further - *Li pas trouver so montant pou affecter.*

“Non surtout pas, c’est ene good move. Li pe reduire nou bann dettes.”

That says it all.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am happy to see that the hon. Prime Minister is supporting now Mr Dan Maraye. This is very good.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree!

Mr X. L. Duval: I thank him for that. Madam Speaker, I will say again that it is extremely worrying for this country that the hon. Prime Minister is so confused about this whole issue, and I mean it very sincerely, and also that the IMF has not been consulted. I am going to ask the hon. Prime Minister now whether what is being proposed, I presume in the Finance Bill, is to take away the independence of the Bank of Mauritius, its Governor, its Directors and in terms of deciding what amount of this economic heresy will be distributed to the Government and the timing, who is going to decide eventually on the amount and the timing, or is it going to be now a prerogative of his good self to decide that.

The Prime Minister: Again, let me repeat, Madam Speaker. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that the IMF has not been consulted, when it is the very fact that the IMF, itself, in the latest recommendation, has said that we can use reserves to meet our external obligations.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, be moderate hon. Leader of the Opposition. You should be moderate in your approach, please.

(Interruptions)

You should be moderate in your approach!

(Interruptions)

Oh, no!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, that is why I said, the other day, that the cinematography industry has got brilliant days ahead, because we can see the acting. I have never seen such a Leader of the Opposition asking ... For me, it is a serious matter, it is a serious question, and we want to enlighten people on this issue. And laughing as if making cinema! What is this? You are not in a film here! We are not shooting here! Let me say, with regard to the independence of the Bank of Mauritius, that the Bank of Mauritius is and will remain independent. In fact, let me remind the hon. Member and the House that I was Minister of Finance. I had brought amendments to the Bank of Mauritius Act in order to give more independence to the Bank of Mauritius, because previously there was a provision where the Minister of Finance could direct the Bank of Mauritius to do a number of things. In fact, I amended this provision when I was Minister of Finance. But I think he is the last one to talk about independence of Bank of Mauritius because he nominated one person, when he was Minister of Finance, to sit for the first time - And you know who it was? An adviser of hon. Xavier Duval - on the Monetary Policy Committee. And he is talking about independence of the Bank of Mauritius?

Now, with regard to what is being proposed, let me again say, Madam Speaker, that I have announced a measure in the Budget. We all know how the process is. There are debates in this House, eventually there is going to be a vote on the Budget. Further, there is going to be a Finance Bill that is going to be proposed to the House. There will be further debates. Whether that Bill or any part of that Bill will be approved by this House, enacted, I cannot say. We shall see, but this is the proposal. And if ever the Act is amended, of course, there are going to be consultations. As I say, as the proposed amendment stays today, it will be for the Board of the Bank of Mauritius to take a decision on this issue. Therefore, there is no taking away in any manner whatsoever the independence of the Bank of Mauritius.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, he has put Rs18 billion as amounts due from the Bank of Mauritius in his own Budget. Therefore, how much is going to come - Not out of foreign exchange reserve; that is irrelevant and it is irrelevant to the issue - out of the Special Reserve Fund, which is required by the Bank of Mauritius to use in monetary policy objectives? How much of that Rs13.5 billion or more will he use to repay his debt?

The Prime Minister Well, it is stated, I have put it in all transparency; Rs18 billion. This is composed of debt that we have to repay. We have scheduled repayment of debt. That is the obligation that we have to repay in terms of the interest that is accruing on the debt.

(Interruptions)

I am giving the hon. Leader of the Opposition the figures!

(Interruptions)

I am giving!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please do not interrupt from a sitting position.

(Interruptions)

No, hon. Rutnah! Please! I warn you.

The Prime Minister: Scheduled repayment of debt Rs2,350,000,000, and early repayment of debt Rs15,650,000,000. Now, Madam Speaker, let me say one thing. It is easy just to ask a question about how much, but the people should know the exact situation. First of all, those debts, when we are talking about the Rs18 billion of debt equivalent, we are talking about all being taken in foreign currency, that is, dollars and euros and other currencies. Rs18 billion equivalent taken in foreign currency - 97.8 of those Rs18 billion of loans have been taken by the Labour Government...

(Interruptions)

Rightly so! And partly Labour/PMSD Government also. Now, do you know how much interest we are paying on these Rs18 billion? About Rs400 m. interest. Rs400 m. interest! And what are we earning? Peanuts! And rightly so, when some people are saying, including former Governor, Dan Maraye, when we have reserve, we have money available and, at the same time, on one hand. And then, who has brought the reserves to a record level? It is this Government. This Government has been working very hard to achieve that amount of reserves, representing more than 11 months of import cover. Now, when we have money available and, at the same time, on the other hand, we are paying approximately Rs400 m. of interest. As a responsible Government, what do we do? We keep our reserves and we say 'Let them grow and let the interest rise and let us pay more and more interest.' I am saying this not only on the issue of how much interest we are servicing every month, every year, but also in case of fluctuation of foreign currency. What happens when the dollar or any other foreign

currency goes up? Therefore, first of all, the rate of interest rises and, secondly, the amount of capital that we have to refund will go up and, therefore, we will have to take more money from public funds, from the pockets of the population in order to refund. That is why we consider that it is sound management, it is in the interest of the people and, of course, we have to see to it that we make maximum and best utilisation of the money that we have.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister is of the impression that these reserves belong to him. They belong to the Bank of Mauritius and he has to buy it from them. Read Basant Rai this morning. I am very, very surprised. I have never had this experience in my life.

Madam Speaker, I am going to say this. There are Rs16 billion of *réserves, les profits accumulés de la Banque de Maurice depuis 20 ans, 25 ans*. He is proposing to take Rs18 billion. Are we supposing, therefore - rightly so - that the reserves of the Bank of Mauritius become zero - I am talking about the Special Reserve and the General Reserve, not the foreign exchange assets, which he is confusing with. If he does what he does and he understands half of what I am saying, he will understand that the Bank of Mauritius Balance Sheet will look like this: share capital Rs2 billion, reserves zero. Is that what he is proposing? This is what is included in his Budget Speech, and it will mean weakening the Bank of Mauritius to a position never seen since independence, Madam Speaker. I hope he understands what my question is.

The Prime Minister: *Madame la présidente, il ne faut pas être démagogique à ce point-là.* Probably, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not aware that the balance of the Special Reserve Fund as at 30 June 2019, since it was published last time - It has grown up; it has increased my friend! - has increased to Rs20 billion. So, out of that, if Rs18 billion is being taken, Rs2 billion will remain. So, the issue of trying to frighten people and say this and that, I think it will not work at all.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr X.L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the hon. Prime Minister has a *boule de cristal*, but we are on 14 June, 30 June is in 15 days' time, and it is the valuation at that date. I am sorry. If he has got a *boule de cristal*!

Madam Speaker, I am going to appeal to the hon. Prime Minister, sincerely, that he is putting the reputation of Mauritius and the Bank of Mauritius at risk. He is putting our currency at risk because the Bank of Mauritius has spent billions of rupees in the last few

years to defend the currency and to apply monetary policy. He is putting our reputation at risk. He is putting our credit rating at risk. He is putting out financial services at risk. Please, backtrack, cancel this horrible provision in his Budget.

The Prime Minister: I stand to be corrected by technical people. The valuation that I just mentioned is on the basis of 14 June 2019.

(Interruptions)

Yes, 2019, my good friend!

(Interruptions)

Yes, but it is a mistake, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: I thought it was 30 June, but it is 14 June. Let me again, Madam Speaker, reassure the country, because there is no hope in reassuring the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He is also in another world, maybe. What we are doing - there have been, of course, extensive discussions, there have been also consultations, and we have seen to it that we manage the finances of this country to the best of our ability.

Madam Speaker, I will never do something that is going to jeopardise the interest of the country, especially institutions like the Bank of Mauritius. I think I have been long enough Finance Minister in order for people to see how I have always acted in a responsible manner, and it is not now, especially when we are looking forward to do a lot in terms of development, in terms of building the infrastructure of this country, in terms of continuing to increase the reserves of this country - This is my challenge, and people will see that I mean business and that we have increased to a record level and that we shall keep on doing it in the future. Of course, time will tell, but I reassure the people that we are, in fact, taking a measure which is in the best interest of the country. As I say, people will understand that when we have Rs400 m. to service in terms of debt interest and when we know that there are fluctuations in terms of foreign currency, I believe that this is the best decision that we can take in order to alleviate the burden of public sector debt. And I must remind the hon. Member - I said that before, but just to remind - that, in the past, we have also refunded an amount of foreign debt in US dollars, and I am proud that we are keeping up with this tradition so that what we want at the end of the day, in terms of public sector debt, that we

have a minimum in terms of foreign debt but, of course, we do have local debt, which is a major part of the public sector debt.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, you did not give me a last question!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, I gave you!

(Interruptions)

No, I gave ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I drew your attention twice!

(Interruptions)

No! If you want, we can suspend. I will not argue with you. I can suspend the session, you look at the video. I drew your attention twice to it. Twice, I drew your attention. Most probably, you were not listening, but I drew attention that time is over!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I can also say you did not say it. So, don't say I am not listening. Just maintain the fact that you did say it, I did not hear it. That is different from saying I did not listen because I can say the same to you every time there is some problem in the House.

Madam Speaker: No, but I don't think there should be any argument with the Chair on this issue. I have said that I did draw your attention.

(Interruptions)

Are you arguing again on that matter or that is the end of the matter?

(Interruptions)

No, it is not up to me.

(Interruptions)

No, that is the end of the matter. Time is over!

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to 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.

POINT OF ORDER - SITTING OF 21.05.19 - NAMING OF HON. S.**MOHAMED - DPM SPEECH**

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Madam Speaker, there is an issue which I would like to raise, with your permission. It is with regard to the sitting of the National Assembly of 21 May 2019. On that particular date, I have checked the unrevised version of Hansard as well as the video recording of the debate showing the then Ag. Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, stating the following after I was ordered out and named following his motion. He had said, and I quote –

“This Member - I believe he is the First Member for Constituency No. 3 -, let us not think as he says; we are going to say he talks nonsense, he is ridiculous. He is neither nonsense nor ridiculous; he knows who he is protecting. There are people who have associated themselves with arms traffickers, who were going to sell arms to terrorists, and these people would have had their assets frozen. He does not want that law to pass and he is probably going to repeal it if ever he comes back to power, because he wants to protect certain persons. He does not want to have assets of people who finance terrorists to be frozen. He does not want that at all! He wants them to continue their business and he would like Mauritius to be the haven of traffickers, and that is why he is so hysteric tonight.”

Madam Speaker, I have given you advance notice though it was not an obligation according to Standing Orders, but by respect, I gave you advance notice, and due deference to you, saying that I will be raising this point of order which is, I believe, clearly in violation of Standing Order 40, paragraph 3, which is seriously imputing motives upon me as an hon. Member of this House. Now, those are words that I verified. I gave you advance notice of it in order for you to be able to see whether you would have time to verify it because not to have to go through what I am saying only on 28 May, last month. And I humbly request,

therefore, Madam Speaker, that you intervene on this point of order and order the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to withdraw those words.

Madam Speaker: I thank the hon. Member for having given me advance notice of his intention to raise this point of order. This has given me the opportunity to peruse the Hansard of 21 May. The record shows that the atmosphere prevailing during the proceedings on that day was tense and that there were acrimonious exchanges from both sides of the House. It is clear that the words uttered by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, during his summing-up speech, and to which the hon. Member has taken objection, in my view, amount to a rebuttal of the stand taken by the hon. Shakeel Mohamed in the course of his intervention during the debate. So, this comforts the stand I had taken at that point in time. So, I, therefore, find no merit in the point of order raised.

Hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo!

(12.13 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2019-2020) BILL 2019

(NO. X OF 2019)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2019-2020) Bill 2019 (No. X of 2019).

Question again proposed.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, first, let me congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for a well thought Budget. Four and a half years have lapsed since we are in Government. We have presented and debated four Budgets already and this is the fifth and last Budget of our Government.

Madam Speaker, as the previous Budget, this last Budget is full of substance. *Il faut être vraiment de mauvaise foi pour refuser de l'admettre.* The whole family, man, woman, children, adolescence and the elderly have been taken care of. The well-being of the family has been the guiding principle behind this important Budget, allowing family to prosper.

Madam Speaker, not only that, I must say that the Budget strikes a right balance between the economic and social aspects of life. Contrary to what the Members of the Opposition are saying, on this side of the House, we say that it is an excellent Budget, a strong Budget, a Budget which announces good news. The measures announced clearly indicate that, unlike the previous Government, our Government has at heart the long-term interest of the population. Our Government, I must say, is ready and willing to put in the necessary investment, which will not only consolidate the position of Mauritius as a modern nation, but also maintain its competitiveness as a global player.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, at this stage, to take you back to the past, prior to the 2014 General Elections. What was the situation then? What was the feeling of the population? I must say that the situation was not good at all. The population was worried, desperate and with a lot of anger. Many wrong decisions taken. In a word, this was the legacy of the previous Government, Madam Speaker. And what was the wish of the people? The people wanted vision, the people wanted leadership. Now, the question is: what have we done since we came to Government in 2014? Madam Speaker, our record speaks for itself. When you have leaders like hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth and our present Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth as Head of our country, things cannot go wrong. They are people whom you can trust. We, on this side of the House, know that with the hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth as Prime Minister, we are on the right path. The population rest assured, knowing very well that the country is headed by a Prime Minister who is serious, hard-working and of values.

Madam Speaker, since 2014, we have been asking ourselves what kind of legacy we want to leave. Since 2014, we have been working to bring meaningful change to the country to improve the lives of our people and, at the same time, to redress the wrongdoings of the previous Government. This is the reality, Madam Speaker. Betamax case, the full bench of the Supreme Court ruled that the contract was illegal, was illegally awarded by the previous Government. I will not delve further on this matter. Last Friday, my colleague, hon. Minister Gungah, has gone through the details of this particular case and explained at the same time how public funds have been saved. The case of CT Power is yet another victory of this Government. The Law Lords of the Privy Council have, once again, rules in favour of the Government. Chagos is also another remarkable achievement of our Government. It is the result of our Government's efforts, in particular those of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. I must say that he has always believed in this cause. His determination, perseverance and conviction

have been the guiding force of this battle. Thank you, Rt. hon. Minister Mentor for this historic success! Our Prime Minister has now taken the lead and is continuing the good work.

With regard to the Medpoint case, I believe judgement has already been delivered by the highest court of appeal. This case is closed and I am of the view that we should refrain from reopening debates on the matter. Madam Speaker, what is also important is to check on views of people outside the House. Let us start with the private sector. Business Mauritius in *Le Defi Quotidien* of 11 June 2019, stated –

« Des mesures intéressantes qui méritent d’être mieux développées. »

What about the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry?

« Un budget catalyseur de l’économie. »

The Mauritius Bankers’ Association, Madam Speaker, has this to say for Fintech –

« C’est une bonne chose pour l’économie que ces secteurs soient soutenus par plusieurs mesures et un cadre règlementé comme annoncé dans le budget. »

Further, listen to what the Chamber of Commerce has to say –

« Un budget social, environnemental et tourné vers le peuple. »

L’Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l’île Maurice –

« Les mesures sont encourageantes pour dynamiser ce secteur. »

The Law Society and Bar Council of Mauritius –

« J’accueille favorablement les provisions du budget pour la modernisation des cours de districts et la construction d’une nouvelle cours à Forest Side. La création d’une cours d’appel séparée et d’une Land Division est une bonne chose. Avoir une cours séparée pour les cas de dépossession de terrain et pour les enfants est un progrès et rejoint la norme à l’étranger. »

Let us now turn to some major accounting firms. Let me start with PriceWaterhouse Coopers –

« C’est encourageant de voir plusieurs pour développer davantage la Fintech. »

Ernst & Young –

« Un budget moderne avec un accent sur l'environnement, la vie sociale, le sport et le bien-être des Mauriciens. »

Dans son analyse, BDO souligne que le ministre des Finances a alloué plusieurs mesures clés et des incitations pour donner un espace vital pour des facteurs économiques du sucre, du tourisme et de la manufacture pour redynamiser leurs activités.

Madam Speaker, these firms are organisations held, I must say, in high regard. These experts have been conducting economic analysis for years.

Let us now consider the views of some of the major trade unions! Let me start with the *Confédération des Travailleurs du secteur privé*, I quote -

« On constate avec ce budget que davantage de familles issues de la classe moyenne seront dorénavant éligibles. Pour ce qui est des logements sociaux, nous espérons qu'ils seront construits. »

What about the Federation of Civil Service and other unions –

« a salué la mesure portant sur le paiement de R 25,000 par tonne de sucre aux planteurs pour les premières 60 tonnes. Jamais le prix de la canne à sucre par tonne n'a grimpé aussi haut. C'est un très bon prix. »

Madam Speaker, look at the difference in the analysis of the Budget. Independent stakeholders. You will agree with me that the progress that this Government has made is extraordinary. I have had the opportunity since the Budget announcement to listen to people from various places. I must say they are happy with the Budget and one must not forget that the people outside are intelligent. They acknowledge the good work of our Government and above all, they know very well who are those who are working for them, who care for them and who are those who are making false promises.

I find it surprising that Members of the Opposition find nothing good in the present Budget. Madam Speaker, we have been in Government for the past four and a half years. Let us have a look at our major achievements. This has been mentioned by many Members on this side of the House last week. The increase in pension. This measure I must say, has considerably changed the lives of our elderly. When we took office, I was at the head of the Ministry of Social Security. We increased the Basic Retirement Pension from Rs3,623 to Rs5,000. Since then, the pension has continued to increase and stands at Rs6,210. An increase, Madam Speaker, of 71%. As from January 2020, pension will further increase by

Rs500 to reach Rs6,710. Thanks to this Government, retirement pension has almost doubled. And still the Opposition is not satisfied! Believe me, Madam Speaker, I think it is a very difficult job to please Members on the other side.

Madam Speaker, how can the Opposition say that this Government has not done anything to bring relief to vulnerable groups of society? Another example I have in mind right now, when I was Minister of Social Security, we realised that children under the age of 15 with a disability of up to 60% were not at all eligible to Basic Invalidity Pension. That was the reality. A serious injustice! Think about those children who were not receiving a pension because of the age criteria and this injustice had been the case for 40 years, Madam Speaker. Can you imagine! 40 Years! I know how hard it has been for parents whose children were not eligible for the said pensions to cater for their needs.

Madam Speaker, in such a situation, one of the parents usually had to stay at home to look after the child. As such, the family had only one source of income. At that material time, I personally took the matter with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and I must say that he immediately addressed the issue and we successfully removed the age criteria. This move, Madam Speaker, could have been done by the previous Government as well, but nothing was done. Now, thanks to our Government, all the children with a disability of up to 60%, are eligible for a Basic Invalidity Pension and we are happy for them because they are in need of this pension.

The Opposition still cannot see what we have done nothing for these children, but never mind, Madam Speaker, the population is not blind, they can see who cares for them.

Madam Speaker, let me now draw the attention of the House to another important point to the number of sittings of the National Assembly. How many times we have sat up to now. Around 167 sittings, Madam Speaker! Not bad at all! This reflects the seriousness of the Government, *culture de travail*. We know that the previous Government closed Parliament for almost one year. It is ironical that today these are the very people who dare to give us lessons and complain and say that we have achieved nothing.

Let us now come to another strength of this Government, the legislations we have passed so far, Madam Speaker! Do you know how many legislations we have passed? 126! An average of around 30 per year! Allow me to mention a few of the landmark legislations which the previous Governments have never thought of –

- The Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Act whose main purpose is to combat fraud and corruption in the country and also to recover and explain wealth, passed in 2015.
- The Employment Rights (Amendment) Act 2015 to extend the duration of Maternity Leave from 12 to 14 weeks.
- The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2016 to deal with climate change which is a very important issue to discuss and whose main object was the prevention, reduction and mitigation of the impact of disasters.
- Madam Speaker, what about the Police (Membership of Trade Union) Act of 2016 whose main objective is to allow members of the Police Force to join trade unions. This was a historical and long-awaited measure.
- What about the Social Integration and Empowerment Act of 2016 whose main objective is to promote social integration and empowerment of persons living in absolute poverty within the philosophy of enhancing social justice and national unity.
- The Special Education Needs Authority Act of 2018 whose main objective is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of Special Education Needs policies of the Government.
- The Declaration of Assets Act of 2018 whose main objective is to make a better and more comprehensive provision for the declaration of assets by holders of important offices, Ministers.

The Local Government (Amendment) Act 2018 – Madam Speaker, we have made history. The question is: are all these achievements not sufficient to show the good work we are doing? So, I leave it to the House to appreciate.

Madam Speaker, before I move to another matter it would be an oversight not to mention the measures for victims of land dispossession. I refer to the creation of a Land Division of the Supreme Court, a Land Research and Monitoring Unit and a Special Fund of Rs50 m. as announced under paragraphs 334 and 335 of the present Budget.

Our Prime Minister decided to set up the Inter-Ministerial Committee on land dispute chaired by myself with other Ministers. The newly announced measures, I am sure, will go a long way to supporting those heard by the Truth and Justice Commission.

Madam Speaker, let me now come to the achievements of my Ministry, the Ministry of Local Government. Over the past four years, this Government has invested massively in infrastructure aimed at improving the lives of our people. The twelve local authorities under my Ministry are key agents in this process. They oversee important projects for the development of towns and villages across the island.

At this point, Madam Speaker, I must highlight that we have always worked towards equal development in both towns and villages. I will not go into details about the vast number of projects, infrastructural works which have been realised and which we are still realising. Members, on this side of the House who have intervened so far, have already listed the ongoing projects in their respective Constituencies. However, I need to mention that I am personally chairing a project monitoring and coordination committee to closely monitor the capital projects of local authorities and that of the National Development Unit. The purpose of this Committee is to ensure that projects are being carried out as quickly as possible.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius like the rest of the world is facing climate change and with the growing problem of flash floods, it was necessary for the Government to address the problem of irresponsible construction. We have brought necessary amendments to our existing law concerning illegal constructions. We have further empowered our local authorities by giving them more statutory powers to fight illegal constructions. In line with the new laws, more inspectors have been reputed – 89 inspectors and following that, they have been posted in the twelve local authorities to conduct ex-post control inspection on a regular basis and also to enforce these new statutory enforcement provisions of the law.

Another important issue that needed to be addressed is greater transparency in the issuing of building and land use permits by the local authorities. This was an issue that has to be addressed, I must say, as quickly as possible. So, my Ministry, I must say, has successfully implemented the new online application system for BLUP with the help of hon. Nando Bodha across ten local authorities.

Madam Speaker, I will fail in my duty if I do not say a few words about the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service which provides an essential service to the population. Madam

Speaker, let me seize this opportunity to thank them for their contribution to society. They are doing a great job.

The fire code – it was long awaited. No one had dared to introduce the fire code. On this side of the House, we have done the needful and now, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service has, at its disposal, an essential tool for fire safety.

Madam Speaker, you know how much this Government has invested in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service in an effort to improve the services offered to the population. From 2010 to 2014, the previous Government invested only R1.8 billion in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service. From 2015 to 2019, Madam Speaker, we are investing over Rs2.7; in 2014 before we came in Government, the Budget of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service was only Rs348 m. For the present Budget alone, we are providing it with no less than Rs905 m. we have almost treble its budget Madam Speaker. This is the reality of this Government. This is our achievement.

What about human resources Madam Speaker? From 2005 to 2014, only 244 firefighters were recruited. Under our government from 2015 to 2019, we have recruited 485 fire-fighters. Double the number recruited under the previous Government in ten years and still the Opposition is not satisfied.

I am also pleased to inform the House that, in few months' time, we will have a new Fire Station at Rose Belle, which is presently under construction. The new station will considerably reduce response time and provide additional support to Curepipe, St. Aubin and Mahebourg Fire Station when required.

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, Government is committed to enhancing the quality of life of all the citizens of the Republic of Mauritius including our brothers and sisters of Rodrigues and Agaléga. The absence of proper infrastructure to travel to and from Mauritius is a serious challenge for the inhabitants and one of our major concerns.

As such we are implementing major projects to improve the air and sea connectivity of Agaléga island. This project, Madam Speaker, was announced before we came in Government, nothing was ever materialised and on this side of the House, we are serious and the needful is being done.

As the House will recall, Madam Speaker, I have answered questions in Parliament about these major projects and I don't think I will go into details, but I must say that I have had the opportunity to visit Agaléga in September last year where I had meetings and

discussions with the people, with our brothers and sisters. I listened to their concern on various issues and the needful is being done. Upon my return to Mauritius, a series of measures have been rapidly taken. Let me cite a few – a second resident medical officer was sent to Agaléga to be based on the south island; medical allowances are now payable to pregnant women and patients attending major surgeries in Mauritius; wheel chairs were shipped to Agaléga for the welfare of the elderly and persons with disabilities, school materials were provided to the children in Agaléga, a family protection officer from the family unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality visited Agaléga to sensitise the population on social issues.

Sports equipment were sent to them for the benefit of the youth. Most importantly, Madam Speaker, I personally ensured the development of a new protocol for emergency medical evacuation in collaboration with all stakeholders concerned. This protocol has helped improve communication between stakeholders, speed up the response time and clarify roles and responsibilities. Since its implementation in October 2018, we have successfully reduced the waiting time for urgent medical evacuation and carried out 15 evacuations.

I am very pleased that the hon. Prime Minister has also retained new measures to improve health care access in Agaléga. Given the remoteness of the island, telemedicine services, Madam Speaker, will make a huge difference. We are also coming forward this year with new projects such as library, a fully equipped gym and also a refugee centre in the South of the island. All these measures will surely improve the quality of life of our sisters and brothers in Agaléga.

Madam Speaker, as you know, I have also been vested with the portfolio of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The hon. Prime Minister is fully conscious of the fact that women cannot be left behind if we want to bring meaningful change and long term changes. In the Budget 2018-2019, the hon. Prime Minister had, for the first time, introduced a chapter on gender mainstreaming, a well thought measure. In the present Budget 2019-2020, gender mainstreaming has again been cited as one of the ten avenues to embrace a better future together as a nation. With this Government, we are moving towards a legacy of inclusion. This shows that our Prime Minister acknowledges the immense contribution of women to the development of our country. Our Government is determined to give women the recognitions they deserve. Through gender mainstreaming, women will be taken on board in the projects and policies of all Ministries and departments.

Madam Speaker, I have always said that gender equality is not only the mandate of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, it is the concern of all Ministries. And since we took office, we have been striving, we have done our best to render all policies, programmes and projects gender-responsive across all Ministries and departments. A sum of Rs200,000 for gender mainstreaming was allocated to five Ministries on a pilot basis in the budget 2017-2018. I must say this initiative reaped positive results and was hence extended to all Ministries in the Budget 2018-2019. In the Budget 2019-2020, a provision of Rs200,000 has again been allocated to all Ministries to continue the good work.

Not only this, Madam Speaker. In addition, the Ministry has been allocated a sum of Rs2.6 m. to elaborate additional gender-responsive projects. I am happy to see that gender equality and women agenda occupies a more prominent place on the Government's list of priorities. An increase in the budgetary allocation for mainstreaming gender speaks volume.

Madam Speaker, I must applaud the initiative of the hon. Prime Minister for the announcement of another measure relating to the revamping of our women empowerment centres. I am of the opinion that those centres ought to have been revamped and I am happy that this will be done. So, the hon. Minister of Finance has rightly made provisions for a sum of Rs11 m. for the revamping of our women empowerment centres, the implementation of projects for elderly, vulnerable and unemployed women and the promotion of women wellness. This move, Madam Speaker, demonstrates the Government's willingness to improve the conditions of women in our country.

Madam Speaker, last Friday, I heard one Member of the Opposition commenting on the new measure to ensure that, at least, one woman is present on corporate boards. According to that Member, we should have pushed 30% of women on board. Madam Speaker, I think we need to start somewhere, we need to give companies time to implement this measure, and then, of course, we can gradually increase the number of women on corporate boards. On this side of the House, Madam Speaker, we have dared to start somewhere. A bold measure, not thought of by any other Government. Instead of showing appreciation, the hon. Member is criticizing. This is not fair.

Madam Speaker, even the African Union has appreciated our efforts and dedications towards gender advancement in Mauritius. In July 2017, at the 29th Summit of the African Union, the hon. Prime Minister was honoured for the first time with the African Gender Scorecard Award. It is a matter of real pride that in February this year, we have received the

same award for a second time. This clearly reflects the continued progress of Mauritius towards gender equality and women empowerment.

Madam Speaker, the decision to extend maternity leave on full pay for more than three confinements for women working in the public service is most welcomed. It is a very good measure and this measure, Madam Speaker, is very important. It, in fact, addresses the issue of an ageing population.

Madam Speaker, as mentioned earlier, the mandate of my Ministry is to ensure the protection and well-being of children. Let me remind the House that in July 2018, following a Cabinet decision, the Child Development Unit of my Ministry has been split into two. At a certain point in time, Madam Speaker, it was necessary to revamp the Child Development Unit. The growing number of children is a matter of serious concern. I have always said and will maintain that a child's place is not in a shelter and that we have to do all that we can for that child to reintegrate his family. The Alternative Care Unit has, therefore, been created to rehabilitate and integrate children's place in shelters in their families. We have had to identify additional venues to facilitate the process of reintegration. Parental visits are now conducted in 12 venues. I have also personally set up a committee to ensure that children are removed only on a matter of last resort. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, some children cannot be reintegrated for different reasons. They are either orphans or their parents are drug addicts or are in prison and that is why we have revisited the foster care programme. We are sparing no effort to ensure that children grow up in a family setting. As at date, some 65 children have been placed in 57 families. This figure might seem insignificant to some members.

But, believe me, Madam Speaker, this is not an easy task. To be able to place a child in a family is a real challenge, but rest assured, we are doing the needful so that more and more children can reintegrate their families or have a family. We have taken up the challenge and we are doing the work. The increase of R1 m. in the Budget provision for the Foster Care Programme will provide a new breadth to the project.

Madam Speaker, the welfare of children is a priority of our Government. We have not hesitated to take the bold steps of closing three shelters where children were allegedly ill-treated. This clearly shows that the best interest of our children is one of our main priorities. We will not remain silent in the face of any kind of injustice against them.

Madam Speaker, it is pertinent to highlight that Mauritius is classified as the most child-friendly country among 52 African countries in African Report on Child Well-being. It has consistently maintained this position since its publication of the first report in 2008. Madam Speaker, again, it is unfortunate that Members of the Opposition find nothing to say except criticism. At least, our efforts are being recognised on an international level.

Madam Speaker, I know that Members of the Opposition are very keen to know when the Children's Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly. I must say a long-awaited Bill. I admit that this piece of legislation is long overdue, but we have been hearing of the Children's Bill ten years now. We are working on it, complex and sensitive nature legislation, but, Madam Speaker, we mean business. We have had several consultations with the State Law Office, the Master and Registrar and we are coming with the setting up of a Children's Court, and this has been announced in the present Budget. I must say that we have had to consult the Police and many relevant Ministries. This exercise has been done already. And, Madam Speaker, I do hope that in the months to come, we will bring the Children's Bill to Cabinet and then to Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I now turn to another essential mandate of my Ministry which is to care for victims of gender-based violence. The increasing number of cases of domestic violence cannot be overlooked. It is a matter of great concern. Madam Speaker, in March, this year, we have recently launched an Integrated Support Centre. We can now provide immediate, consistent, coordinated and timely assistance to victims of domestic violence and children victims of abuse on a 24-hour basis.

Madam Speaker, you will agree with me when a person is victim of violence, every minute counts. Previously, we could answer only one call at a time on hour hot line 139. With the Integrated Support Centre, we can now answer multiple calls simultaneously. We also immediately liaise with other stakeholders such as the Police, hospital or shelters so that victims are attended to within the shortest time. Madam Speaker, our Government has materialised this project and still I remain perplex how Members of the Opposition find nothing positive to say.

Madam Speaker, I do realise that if we really want to address the issue of gender-based violence we need to go to the roots of the problem, we need to rehabilitate perpetrators to prevent them from committing acts of violence. For this, Madam Speaker, my Ministry has recently embarked on the development of a Perpetrators Rehabilitation Programme in

collaboration with the UNDP. Victims of domestic violence are also being empowered so that they become financially independent.

Madam Speaker, we have to admit that the battle against gender-based violence is not at all an easy task. It is always difficult to deal with situation where human relations are involved. We have to be very careful while handling such situations. However, we are providing as much support as possible to victims. We are also conducting massive sensitisation campaign to combat this problem.

Madam Speaker, in relation to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, it is worth noting that the sum of Rs40 m. allocated in the previous Budget has served to upgrade and renovate more than 75 community centres. Madam Speaker, the Social Welfare Centres and the community centres, throughout the island, have participated actively and are participating actively in activities aimed at promoting a better lifestyle and a clean and sustainable environment. Sensitisation campaign has been carried out in these centres on a range of issues, including drug and substance abuse, domestic violence, road safety and child and elderly care, amongst others.

Madam Speaker, in line with Government's policy to transform public sector businesses in this digital area, social welfare centres will equally undergo a digital transformation.

Madam Speaker, my intervention today would not be complete if I do not say a few words about my Constituency Stanley/Rose Hill, where we also have the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Ivan Collendavelloo. I must say we are working together hand-in-hand to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. It is a matter of great pride to see Rose Hill transforming - isn't it, hon. Collendavelloo? - transforming it into a modern town with the best facilities. Beyond major works, such as the Metro Express, we have also carried out a number of projects, Madam Speaker, for the well-being of the inhabitants. Madam Speaker, bear with me, I will list a few –

- the upgrading of Ligne Berthaud;
- the renovation of Plaisance Fair;
- the sport complex of Stanley;
- the mini-soccer pitch at Camp Levieux;
- the renovation of the NHDC Complex at Camp Levieux;

- the renovation of the *Salle de Fête* and administrative block of Plaza Theatre. Phase I, Phase II already completed. We are working on Phase III, and
- the launching of two community centres.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the following major projects will soon be materialised -

- a multi-purpose complex at Géranium, Camp Levieux;
- a medi-clinic at Stanley. So, this has been asked by the inhabitants. We are working on it and I am sure that in the months to come we will be able to kick-off this particular project, a very important project for the inhabitants, Madam Speaker;
- a primary school and kindergarten at De Plevitz, and
- an incinerator at Camp Levieux. And, of course, as part of the Metro Express, Rose Hill Town Centre will overtime be transformed by the New Urban Terminal.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we are serious, we are working, our achievements are remarkable, and the budget is full of substance, a strong budget. On this side of the House, Madam Speaker, we are not sleeping, we are working towards the betterment of the nation under the leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnuath, a Prime Minister who is serious, hardworking.

Of course, we admit that there is still work to be done.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! But, Madam Speaker, we will continue to work to improve the quality of our respective mandate. I am confident that we will succeed as one people in our vision and mission. We will come back, Madam Speaker, we will come in this House again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.04 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.38 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The declared vision of this Government is to make Mauritius a high-end income economy, that is, embracing a brighter future together as a nation.

Five years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, five years we are still stuck in the middle-income trap. I say clearly, in a middle of an income trap.

The economic projections of this Government was to have a GDP of 5.7% by 2017, but, unfortunately the GDP growth hasn't even exceeded to 4% for the fiscal year. This shows the total *faillite* of this Government, and the policies adopted over the past years. Once thing that Government seems to have championed is to make big mega announcements which disappear budget after budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the Budget 2019-2020, the population was expecting something that would give a wow effect, especially, as we are on the eve of a general election. Many projects announced with high targets will end on paper only. There might be some *électoralist* measures just *pour faire la bouse dou*. How many of them will be implemented? Four years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many projects are still theories, no implementation.

Many of my colleagues, on the other side of the House, especially, the hon. Prime Minister, they are very fond of the cinematography industry. They refer very often to that industry. Thus, that is why we keep seeing only trailers, but we never get to see the whole movie, or it's written 'coming soon'. How do we expect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that within six months we will have a second economic miracle as promised by this Government?

Let alone the hon. Prime Minister with his team, not even David Copperfield will able to embrace a brighter future together as a nation in less than six months. The population is undoubtedly a better judge at the end of the day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I do not see how this Budget will make a difference in the lives of the common man. The devil in this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may not lie so much in the announcement, but rather into the measures hidden behind them. This Government has always and again been overpromising and under-delivering when it comes to public sector debts which were supposed to be brought to around 63% of the GDP by the end of June 2019. The share of

foreign debt in total, public sector debt was to be brought down by 18% from 19.5% in the last fiscal year, but Government has failed to achieve its objectives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is speaking in terms of having recourse to the Reserve Bank of Mauritius which will go to the extent of amending the law to tap the savings of several generations of Mauritians. And what is worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that this Government may soon face a situation where it may have to sell Government's assets to finance the *panadol électoralist* measures within a debt of some Rs330 billion plus by 2020.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have seen what has happened in Greece. This morning, during the PNQ, we heard what happened to Seychelles. Argentina, in 2010, had used its Central Bank Reserve to repay their debts with the result that the country has gone in recession.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget is trying to please everybody and to avoid critics, but it does not bring anything in terms of innovation or how to face the forthcoming challenges. And to support my above claim, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to provide to the House some key indications from some international independent organisations, and I will start with the Index of Economic Freedom, which says, that, in year 2014, we were ranked 8th, but today, in year 2019, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are at the 25th position. In terms of social progress, Mauritius was ranked 34th in the year 2014 and today we are at the 43rd position. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, worse, it is sad to know that as per the Global Hunger Index, which assesses the nutrition situation in a country, we are now ranked 47th, as compared to the years before 2014 where we were amongst the first six countries where our citizens were not having nutritional issues. In terms of innovation, we have shrunk from the rank of 40 to 75 as per the Global Innovation Index.

Coming to the core of the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is, Budget 2019/2020, when we listened to the hon. Prime Minister last Monday, we had the impression that many measures, many projects were already there in previous Budgets' exercises. It is as if only the years and date changed. Hon. Baboo elaborated a lot of these measures that were there in the previous Budget and which we could see this year too. So, I am not going to elaborate on them so as not to waste the time of the House. It was just like a copy-paste, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

In this Budget, the Minister of Finance has announced the creation of a new category of enterprises whose turnover is between Rs50 m. to Rs250 m. Why this measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? What are we trying to achieve here? Let us take the case of the SME sector which employs some 255,000 people and which contributes to 40% of our GDP. The Minister of Finance has affirmed that as we grow our GDP, we must also make it inclusive.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they were at the heart of our democratisation policy before announcing that the Budget for Small and Medium Enterprises will be around Rs45 m. over a year. Is it all that the Government will provide to the entire SME sector? There seems to be gross injustice against the small players. The Micro Credit Loan Scheme which, so to say, has been increased from Rs250,000 to Rs500,000 for instance, is already an existing measure. Women entrepreneurs are already entitled to the credit of Rs500,000. Announcing it as a new measure is misleading the population. Another measure that the hon. Minister announced is a new category of SMEs. The law in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, defines SMEs as those enterprises which have a turnover of less than Rs50 m. The new category will only be in favour of big ones.

Coming to the payment of an interim monthly allowance of Rs1,000 to the public officers as from 01 January 2020, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was a legitimate expectation that following the introduction of the minimum wage, certain anomalies and adjustments might have had to be addressed which had not been done so far. Another question that arises, will public officers be paid their compensations on and above the Rs1,000? Will the Rs1,000 advance have an impact on their final revised salary following the PRB? And Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what about our fellow countrymen from the private sector who equally creates the wealth of this country? Are we not doing *deux poids, deux mesures* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Are these people another category of citizens who do not deserve an increase in their salary? I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, both public and private officers will make their own deductions.

Coming to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund to be introduced in a much needed measure to encourage labour mobility and safeguard the interest of workers, especially at a time whereby layoffs have become a common feature in Mauritius. Here again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question will be, is it applicable equally to public officers? Have all its implications been carefully thought? Or will it not remain an *effet d'annonce*?

Coming to another measure which was announced last Monday, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is, the increase in the monthly carer's allowance from Rs3,000 to Rs3,500 for some 23 bedridden pensioners and the extension of domiciliary visits of doctors for persons aged 75 years old and older, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would it not have been better, had the Government extended this measure to all bedridden persons of any age? I am very happy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that our elders will receive an increase of Rs500 in their pension. But I fail to understand, however, the rationale for the increase being payable only as from January 2020. Our senior citizens have also the right to know whether the Rs500, payable as from January 2020, is inclusive of compensation for the year or will the compensation be added on top of the Rs500.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our elderly were expecting to have a higher increase in their pensions. *Ils sont restés sur leur faim*. Any support extended to them should be genuine and true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We should recognise their contributions in the development of the country, and not as a vote bank. I am sure in the same way the fishermen could also legitimately expect some more decent treatment from this Government.

The Budget also proposes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to recruit some 528 employees in the health sector. With the by-election that is supposed to come and general elections looming around, does the population not need to know when this recruitment can feasibly be done? We all know recruitments and promotions are frozen by law once the election is being declared and we will probably have two or maybe three elections soon. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the population has the right to know whether or not they are being taken for a ride. This Government claims that it will focus on our youth and their future

It was to develop a comprehensive approach to equip them with the right set of skills and to integrate the labour market of now and tomorrow. We even heard Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there will be two jobs per person. What we see today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the Skills Development Authority is still a proposal in this Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to say that I personally do not find anything concrete in this Budget to fight against the consumption of hard drugs which seems to have already assumed epidemic proportions in our country. Is it not time for Mauritius to be more human towards its sick people.

Drug consumption Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a sickness and should be treated accordingly. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not in favour of drug consumption.

Not at all! But, I am convinced that we should have been more compassionate towards those trapped in the consumption of same. On another note Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would say that there are about some 85% of convicts who recidivate and return to prison because of the stigma attached to them and very often for minor offences. Isn't it, not the time for the Government to renew morality certificates so that these people have the possibility to reintegrate our society?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one thing that I cannot deny and I should say I am pleasantly surprised and thankful that following to a similar PQ that I addressed to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor on 14 May last concerning the issue of amending the Reform Institutions Act so that murder will be included as a category not to be eligible for remission or release on parole and it seems that in this budget it is addressed.

Another measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we welcome in this budget is to have at least one woman on the Board of Directors. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we at the PMSD, we strive to put women first. Our slogan for the women league is "*Fam en avant*". Anything that we do for women that puts women first is welcomed. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how many women are concerned with this measure. And again here this Government has missed a golden opportunity. An opportunity to amend the law in order to allow more women representation in Parliament, it could have been done this time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when there is consensus. We all agree on this side of the House.

Again, this means that this Government never had the intention to do so. It was just for the sake of mentioning it; putting it in the Electoral Reform Bill and it became a non-event.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now come to the Agricultural sector. The Government has announced that only for the Financial Year 2019-2020 planters will be paid Rs25,000 per ton of sugar. Investing in sugarcane is a long-term investment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. People look for certainty of return on their investment. I really fail to understand on how a one-off measure or a piecemeal measure will encourage planters to return to their fields, one-off. They are all shattered with this measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Yes, some would say better something than nothing. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Rs25,000 sounds good only to the ears. And here I would like to quote Shakespeare, unfortunately my good friend hon. Rutnah is not here. Just to make the population understand how these sugarcane planters got shattered, and I will quote –

“Had I no eyes but ears, my ears would love (...) Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see, yet should I be in love by touching thee.”

Which means, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, only hearing it but when I will touch it, the Rs25,000 will be nothing and I will explain why? I will explain why this Government is playing politics with the poor planters and in no way will alleviate their sufferings. Let's make small calculations together, I am sure many of us here must have friends or people, families, relatives who are planters and they would understand what we want to say, my point.

Assuming, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an extraction rate of 10%, there is a need for 14 to 15 tons of cane, 14 to 15 tons of cane to produce one ton of sugar. I am sure the media also will understand what I am saying. The cost of harvesting turns around Rs1500 per ton. The cost for 15 tons turns out to be around Rs21,000. The net profit thus will be only Rs4,000, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Rs4,000 per ton of sugar and that's it. And on top of it, the planters will have to invest some Rs50,000 per *arpent* of land as initial investment. This investment may last for some five years and planters will have to reinvest again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would it not have been better to index the payment made to planters on all value added of sugarcane processing including value generated from the production of alcohol, ethanol, rum, vinegar, etc., and above all electricity produced from bagasse. I am afraid, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this measure of Rs25,000 per ton of sugar announced *en grande fanfare* has not and will not unfortunately encourage small planters to go back to their fields. In fact, small planters should not have expected any better from this Government, which has all throughout its mandate been taking them for a ride. The small planter community will not forget the case debated in this august Assembly about the alleged fraudulent manipulation by the Mauritius Sugar Insurance Fund Board of the Sugar Production Data for small planters depriving some 10,000 sugarcane planters of a rightful compensation for the crop year 2017, amounting to some Rs450 m., Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Rs450 m., Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was a daylight robbery and thanks to whom? Thanks to whom did this daylight robbery come up? It was through the Leader of the Opposition.

(Interruptions)

Thanks, yes, you are right. Thanks to the actual hon. Leader of the Opposition who did and does his job *sans peur ni frayeur* and he will and we shall continue to do our job as it should be.

The Budget claims that it will be providing funds under cane replantation programme to encourage planters to bring their lands back under cultivation, but fails to say how much funds. Whereas in Budget 2017-2018, page 11 section 67, it was mentioned that and I quote –

“We need to address the issue of abandonment of cane lands. To that end, a provision of Rs50 million is being made for bringing back under cane cultivation at least 500 hectares in fiscal year 2017/18.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at that time, there was a figure of Rs50 m. mentioned but today, 2019-2020, we come up again with more or less the same measure, a copy-paste but without any amount.

In this Budget, there is a provision of Rs15 m. for the MCIA to acquire equipment for harvesting sugarcane for small planters. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *je reste perplexe sur cette somme*. What do we expect in Rs15 m. as equipment for small planters, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Come on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a limit. They came up *en fanfare* saying that they will give this, that and earmarking only Rs15 m. for equipment. What equipment? What equipment are they going to buy with only Rs15 m? I'm sure Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, time will tell this is just an *effet d'annonce*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agricultural stakeholders want to know what is the policy direction in this sector? Was it not the time? I say was because the time is over for the Government that is why I am saying was it not the time for this Government to come up with a Master Plan to transform the sugar sector. This Government is just trying to manage perceptions of the public without taking any bold and concrete measure to addressing a fundamental problem affecting one of the pillars of our economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, year in, year out, the Government since four years comes up with more or less the same measure in the agricultural sector - sheltered farming, road tax allowances, waving or reducing loans, allocation of grants and schemes, etc. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but what have we achieved today? What have we achieved today in this sector? 40 planters, a lot, not a lot but a few lines were mentioned on that day. Many measures have been taken since the past years but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the end of the day, a packet of tea 500 grams on the shelves of supermarkets is around Rs160-Rs200. We are giving so many subsidies. *La boisson que les Mauriciens prennent le plus est le thé, M. le président* and we still buy a packet of tea Rs200, and we are saying that yes, we are going to brighten our

future. I think it's the time for the Government to consider to subsidise tea as it is being done for rice and flour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government seems to be very insensitive to the major challenges concerning food security. Every time, there is a cyclone or heavy rainfall, there is a rise in price of vegetables and fruits. Since 2014, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been a drastic decrease in strategic crops production such as potatoes, onions and garlies. The livestock sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, milk production, meat production are in the worse situation and some are about to disappear, if not already disappeared. There are so many problems to be addressed in the non-sugar sector which have been left behind, like labour problems, the impact of climate change on the livelihood of farmers and so on.

Recently, I heard that onion seeds producers are subsidising onion seeds at Rs2,000 a kilo to onion ware producers as, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are being paid Rs5,500 per kilo instead of getting their proposed price, that is, Rs7,500 per kilo. What about welfare animal in this budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? It is, we can see on social medias and newspapers, cruelty to animals. Is it not the time to tighten the law to fight against cruelty against animals? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, considering all this, I should say that there is an urgent need to revamp this industry. This industry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not functioning as it should be. Is it because there is too much of nepotism in this industry? Last Friday, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Minister Seeruttun gave us a long lecture about *ti copains, ti copines* when he was talking on Betamax. A long lecture. The very next day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is on Saturday, 15 June 2019, an article appeared on 'Le Defi Plus' and I would like to quote the newspaper with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where it refers and I quote –

It is a long page.

The Deputy Speaker: Are you quoting the full page?

Ms Sewocksing: No, I wish I could, but I leave it to the people to go and find 'Le Defi Plus' of Saturday. They can read the full page, but I'll try to have one or two paragraphs just to make my point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can table it if you want as well. The title itself says –

“Les ex-collègues de Seeruttun prennent l'ascendant. La séparation du MSIRI de la MCIA donnerait des avantages conséquents à certains ex-collègues du ministre de

l'Agro-industrie. Ce qui soulève plusieurs interrogations, surtout que le ministre a déjà placé des camarades et anciens collègues à des postes de responsabilité.

Depuis qu'il occupe le portefeuille de l'Agro-industrie, Mahen Seeruttun a procédé à la nomination d'un bon nombre de ses proches et anciens collègues à des postes importants. Parmi, on retrouve plusieurs anciens du Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI), où il a travaillé pendant de nombreuses années. Du coup, quand le ministère exprime l'intention de séparer le MSIRI de la Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (MCIA), on commence immédiatement à se poser des questions.

Plusieurs des employés du MSIRI, décrits comme des proches collègues de Mahen Seeruttun à l'époque où il y était secrétaire comptable dans les années 90 jusqu'à sa démission en 2005 pour se porter candidat pour le Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM), ont été propulsés à des postes de responsabilité sous le ministère de l'Agro-industrie. D'autres encore ont la possibilité d'améliorer..."

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksing, I asked you a question whether you are reading the whole article or importing from the article. Please quote.

Ms Sewocksing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is my time.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am not forbidding you from quoting; please don't read the full article.

(Interruptions)

Ms Sewocksing: I do obey to your rulings, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but it is just the paragraph, I am not reading the whole page, it is just this small paragraph. So, but one thing interesting, I cannot miss this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will fail into my duty if I do not do this because I am standing here as an MP and I should say what is not good. So, in the article

—

"C'est lien de parenter. Le beau-frère et le principal agent. Dans le passé, les nominations des proches du ministre ont déjà fait polémique. En octobre 2015, Jugdis Bundhoo..."

I heard there is another one.

« ... le beau-frère du ministre, est nommé CEO de la MCIA. Il travaillait à la Mauritius Sugar Authority avant la fusion avec la MCIA. Mahen Seeruttun a nié toute intervention dans son recrutement. Il a par contre reconnu avoir recruté son principal agent, Bhagwat Daumoo, pour le poste de General Manager de la Mauritius Meat Authority. Ce dernier est le propriétaire d'une quincaillerie à Grand-Sable et le ministre avait expliqué à l'époque qu'il avait fait du head-hunting plutôt qu'un appel d'offres. »

I better stop here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because ...

(Interruptions)

No, I better stop here. Let the people, let the population judge and they will see for themselves.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Ms Sewocksing: Let us come to another sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. One of the vital economic pillars of our country is the ICT sector and very briefly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say I do not find anything convincing that will make this sector prosper. Concerning the implementation of ICT in the education sector, for instance, it is announced that *l'Université des Mascareignes* will offer a Masters in artificial intelligence and robotics in collaboration with *l'Université de Limoges* and *l'Université de Nice* which seems to be good, but Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard similar measures before and more precisely with the polytechnic Réduit Campus which was supposed to offer courses in middle management, ICT, and ICT related fields, announced *en fanfare* again in 2015, but at present only two basic diploma courses, two Microsoft and one Oracle program for unemployed graduates are being run.

Referring to the Masters in artificial intelligence at the *l'Université des Mascareignes*, I still could not understand whether this measure will benefit the Mauritian youth as it is clearly mentioned that a post study work visa will be granted to allow international students to work for three years in Mauritius after completion of undergraduate studies in sectors where there is scarcity of skills such as ICT, Fintech, artificial intelligence and biotechnology. With this measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I see more foreign students coming to Mauritius which is good in a way for our economic growth, but not good at all for our local ICT graduates.

Regarding inclusiveness of innovation, I was initially quite pleased to hear that some 11,000 families who are on the social register will be given totally free access to Internet. We hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the service provided will have enough speed to allow for effective use and not merely a show that connections will be provided. It would have been wiser to merge an IT Equipment Loan Scheme to assist such families into the purchase of laptops and computers with free Internet.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that our tourism industry had been on the decline since few years and is in crisis. The Leader of the Opposition lengthily debated on the actual situation and gave his suggestions. When he was Minister of Tourism, the industry was at its peak, many measures that is found in the budget today 2019/2020 were already there when hon. Xavier Duval was Minister, incentive for the mice market, cruise tourism, cleanliness campaign, air corridor. I'll be very brief, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Today, they are trying to prove that *ils sont en train de réinventer la roue*. All this happened at the time of hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. He was the right person at the right place, and not only in the Ministry of Tourism, be it in other Ministries, or as Deputy Prime Minister. He worked with great wisdom. Even Rodrigues, today, is sharing hon. Xavier-Luc Duval....

(Interruptions)

He got a one-way ticket. And now, we can see the kind of job he delivers as Leader of the Opposition. Since he has taken office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the population has been aware of many scandals and frauds in different sectors. Along with him, we, Members of the PMSD, did not fear to leave the Government to save the democracy. When we had to do it, we did not fear and we will not fear and we will keep on doing our job as it should be for the population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, time is running, but I will fail in my duty if I do not say a few words on my Constituency, No. 17, Curepipe/Midlands. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have tried my best, along with hon. Adrien Duval, our 'ti-Joe' in Curepipe, and even with hon. Toussaint, I do agree. At least, I tried my best, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to be there during rough and tough times, and also during bright days. I tried, through several PQs, at Adjournment Times, during my interventions in this august Assembly to raise matters concerning my constituency. I have a long list, but, unfortunately, I will not be able to give the list, but briefly, I would say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, be it when I am on this side of the

House, or be it on the other side of the House when I was sitting next to hon. Tarolah, hon. Rughoobur and hon. Sesungkur. We were together there. I never missed an opportunity to come up with matters concerning *Cité Anoushka* concerning squatters in Malherbes and Dubreuil, problem of drains, forum market, traffic jam in the city centre, bus shelter, infrastructure and amenities, drugs, law and order. The list is too long, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hansard has them all. But nothing concrete, nothing sustainable, *hélas!*, has been done for Curepipe. Curepipe/Midlands *est resté l'enfant pauvre du budget, M. le président*, except from some social centres, the Town Hall is being renovated, and this Town Hall renovation Scheme was there since the hon. X.L. Duval was Minister of Finance. Some drains and there, fencing and lighting here and there, and the Budget this time says that there will be a gymnasium. It is written that there will be a gymnasium or outdoor open-air gymnasium in Curepipe. I don't know where. All my friends are asking: where is the swimming 'fool' pool? So, forget about that gymnasium. How can we do an open-air gym in Curepipe, anyway? I don't know who gave this idea of doing an open-air gym? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's stop selling dreams with people in Curepipe. "*Anne, ma soeur Anne*, it will not come the swimming pool?" Hon. Soodhun is here. While drafting my speech, I was thinking, maybe, I ought to go to New York and get some resources over there ...

(Interruptions)

With the Sheik! Maybe! Maybe, then, some new things can be materialised in my constituency!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would conclude by saying that this Budget is a *budget qui fait vendre des rêves*. The Budget seems to fulfil an elusive electoral ambition. With this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, we are creating a country that leaves beyond its means. For us, PMSD, we resume this Budget as *du recyclé, réchauffé et raté*.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Oree!

Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This morning, hon. Sewocksingh asked me whether I am going to fight with her, definitely not. In this side of the House, we always demonstrate respect for women, and I will do so. But, I must remind what her leader mentioned earlier, that he is paid to find loopholes in the Budget, and she is doing the same thing. She is confused. I was listening to her silently; I hope she will do the same thing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel honoured to participate in this Budget once more. Sir, allow me to react on instant comments made by politicians and some media people. The former Prime Minister listed several projects which were left aside. But let me remind Navin Ramgoolam that budgets demonstrate vision, intention and mission of any Government. They involve forecasts. Normally, there are always modification and adjustments in the list of initial projects, but of changes in external factors and Government's strategies. The situation is the same for big conglomerates. For example, not all 22 initial players complete matches, there are changes of substitutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he also alleged that the most important budgetary measures which address real needs of the population were his ideas. He clearly confirms that he has little esteem and consideration for common Mauritians, whom he believes he can take for a ride. Navin Ramgoolam wants to take credit for things that he has not done and which this Government is realising under the able leadership of the Prime Minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is normal for Government to aim high and to set challenging targets to achieve the best economic performance. In fact, a record number of projects formulated by this Government have been completed and the change is visible while a number of other projects are nearing completion. The Prime Minister's Office is experiencing the difficulty to respond to invitations for the Prime Minister to attend functions related to completed projects. The calendars are already full. Ministers, mayors, chairmen of district councils have been asked to handle events by themselves. I must also mention that the pace of development and transformation is the same in Constituency No. 5 and Constituency No. 10.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritian citizens realised that cultivation phase is over. We have made effort together, *la main dan la main*. Now, it is time for harvest. Only this time, the crops and surpluses are being equally distributed to all farmers of this nation. There is no transportation towards Italy, Switzerland and any hidden granary. Others argue that there is nothing concrete in this Budget. I think they are blind, Sir. Concrete and bold measures have already been taken in successive budgets of this Government. Actually, the economy is operating at full capacity. The country is undergoing unprecedented construction work and infrastructural development, so much so, that concrete is sometimes scarce on the market.

Some Members of the Labour party declared that there is nothing new in this Budget and called it a 'budget microwave'. This is demagoguery. As a matter of fact, everybody knows that heavy capital investment projects cannot be realised within one financial year. Several procedures must be followed, project initiation, consultancy, tender procedures, acquisition of

land, among others, must take place. Technically, funds must be earmarked for ongoing projects in more than one budget until works are completed. So, it is normal for some projects to appear in more than one budget. That is why we have the three-year strategic plan. This Government cautiously follows all procedures related to implementation of projects to avoid blunders like Betamax, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one prominent political leader mentioned that this Budget is *électorale*. I would rather ask him to be *réaliste*. Representatives of the European Union, UNDP, IMF and World Bank closely monitor all economic actions and budgetary measures of Mauritius. We do not perform in isolation nowadays, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Some were even present in this House during the Budget Speech. Many countries benchmark their economic performance on Mauritius. Our country is taken as a model. Any irresponsible economic move would never go unnoticed, there would be reactions. This applies for the use of reserves by the Bank of Mauritius as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Here, I must tell hon. Xavier Duval something. He mentioned that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. But let me tell him that too much of improper knowledge is worse. This can turn people mad and cause unnecessary irritation and hysteric laughter. If our country is not credit rating, why you are getting funds from outside, even European Union, China, etc. So, he was trying to fool people, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2015 various economic measures have been taken by this Government. New laws have been introduced and some were amended. Several budgetary measures have been implemented for mainly two reasons: to achieve maximum growth and to support the most vulnerable people of our society. This synergy is clearly visible.

Drastic increases in old age pension started since 2015 and prices of basic utilities and necessities are being steadily reduced since 2017. The social measures announced in this Budget are not new. It is the culture of the MSM and Pravind Jugnauth. This Government is indirectly doing a divine task. It is in line with the concept of sharing or *partage* highlighted by all religious philosophies. During his speech, hon. Dr. Boolell mentioned that the Prime Minister failed macroeconomically, the Budget is leaving a legacy of debt and the Budget is without vision.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, innocence must be proved in a Court of Law, but not the vision of any Government. The main intention and vision of this Government is to support

the needy and to distribute wealth in favour of the poor as never done before. All possible measures are being taken by this Government to make Mauritius become a drug-free, clean and crime-free nation for a better future.

Let me also react on macroeconomic issues. The basic of macroeconomic includes high economic growth, that is, a country must produce more goods and services, increase the GDP, price stabilisation, reduce the rate of inflation, bring a balance of payment surplus and to create maximum jobs. So many Members spoke on macroeconomic issues inside and outside this House. Some seem to be worried, even most figures are bright.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I intentionally checked the latest figures of the MCB focus which is not a public body where rate of inflation is falling and is just 2.1%. Our rate of economic growth is 3.9% whilst the global rate is 3.6%. The unemployment rate is also falling. So, how we can fail macroeconomically? In fact, Mauritius passed the macroeconomic examination. In fact, according to several reports, Mauritius is the most performing country in Africa. How a student can fail when he is first in a classroom of 55 students.

There are four investment grade countries in Africa according to latest report of Moody's and Mauritius is one among them. Let me also inform the House that I am a sitting Member in the SADCPF and last month I attended a meeting together with hon. Ramful. I was delighted to learn according to the IMF and DSA report on dead dynamism in SADC countries. According to that report which was projected, South Africa, Angola, Seychelles, Namibia and Mauritius are outside the red zone. In fact, according to this report, the public debt of Mauritius is sustainable and the external debt is stable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, therefore there cannot be any debt crisis in Mauritius. Hon. Ramful can confirm this to hon. Dr. Boolell and his leader also. I am tabling the documents, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, allow me to refer to some miscellaneous issues that arouse here. Government took several bold and even unpopular decisions for the benefit of our nation. All medicines are not necessarily sweet. I am happy for the hawkers of Port Louis because I was also owner of a shop. Very soon, they will be relocated in the railway terminal where not only passengers but also the general public and tourists will buy their products.

Hon. Hurreeram rightly mentioned that the subsidies given by this Government to different industries is much better than the stimulus package given by the previous Government to some dear ones only.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been mentioned in the Budget that there are 11,000 low-income families in Mauritius. But I am sure that most of them eat, live and sleep decently. In fact, there are very minimal cases of absolute poverty in this country. We have relative poverty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another argues that the Budget is deceiving and I wonder how he cannot see what this Government is giving and how consciously all sections of the population are benefitting from the decision and scheme which touch their daily life

Hon. Uteem seems to be deeply concerned about the social unrest and attacks on places of worship in Mauritius. Let me tell him that among all the Prime Ministers of this country, there is only one who prevented people to get access for prayer and ritual at a Kalimaye at St. Paul. Even news reporters were arrested. I can reassure him that very soon with the implementation of the Safe City Project, Mauritius would be safer. Generally, hon. Uteem seems to be a gentleman like his father, but sometimes I don't understand when he is in his natural state, outside or inside. I cannot understand why he is so rude in this House sometimes. He wants to continue the game even when the final whistle of the referee is over. How can a lawyer disrespect the ruling of the Privy Council? I just cannot understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Allow me to mention something about Constituency No. 4. The list of the projects completed in Constituency No. 4 is very long and time is limited. I am also very pleased to announce that the Residence Roma will hardly face any severe flooding problem. The construction of the Marjolain Bridge was announced in June 2017 by the Prime Minister and has been completed last month. *Rezilta lor rezilta*. Massive drain works are being done at Residence Roma.

Let me inform hon. Rughoobur and hon. Sawmynaden that the problem of connecting does not arise at my birthplace, that is, Chittrakoot because, up to now, there is no playing ground over there. I played for nearly twenty years and sometimes as a player manager. Initially, the name of the club was Chittrakoot Cultural Circle. I participated in various MFA tournaments also. I had to go to lower Vallée des Prêtres and sometimes at Residence La Cure for training and matches. I am pleased to announced that the people of Chittrakoot will soon get their

football playground. The inhabitants asked for one, but we are giving two as land is available after the closure of Chitrakoot Government School. Before 2014, the urban part of Constituency No. 4 was totally neglected in which the hon. Leader of the Opposition was a Senior Minister and even hon. Ms Sewocksing. We always speak about inclusion, exclusion and equality. In fact, before 2015, there was no synthetic playground in Ste Croix, Roches Bois, Cité La Cure. There was no swimming pool. There was no gymnasium. This region was totally neglected Sir. This Government constructed the first mini soccer pitch at Residence Briquetterie and Lower Vallée des Prêtres. The Youth Centre at Residence La Cure is operational. The sports complex at Abercrombie market fair is in the pipeline. Funds have been earmarked in this Budget for the construction of a swimming pool at Allée Tamarin in Roches Bois. The Municipality of Port Louis is actually working on several projects for the betterment of these people. Also, since 2015, infrastructural works have never stopped in other regions like Le Hochet and Long Mountain and this will continue.

Before I conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just have something personal to declare because this may be my last speech...

(Interruptions)

for this year of course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was elected in Constituency No. 4 and I am a PPS for Constituencies Nos. 3 and 2 also. So, I regularly go to places of worships and I get the same feeling whether I am at Jummah Mosque, I am at Père Laval or I am at Kaylasson temple. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I get the same feeling. Now, I remember what my teacher said when I was at Islamic college in Plaine Verte. He told me: religion unites, but man divides. I would go further and I will say what I have been taught in temples. In Sanskrit it is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – ‘the world is one family’.

To conclude, let me remind this House and the nation at large that since our independence successive Governments have played their part. A lot has been done and more will be achieved in the future, but the achievement and bold decisions of this Government operating under Sir Anerood Jugnauth as Mentor and Pravind Jugnauth as Prime Minister will make history and will be remembered for ever.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(3.46 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci M. le président.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before coming to my comments on my Budget, I have two points to make. First, I listened carefully on Saturday night on radio the comments made by the *député transfuge*, new *porte-parole* of the MSM in their weekly press conference. He stated: Reza Uteem fait honte à la jeunesse mauricienne. This is what is stated par *le député transfuge du numéro treize maintenant porte-parole du MSM*. You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *voilà ce que la jeunesse de l'île Maurice dit, la jeunesse n'aime pas les transfuges. La jeunesse n'aime pas les gens qui changent de camp. Gayne ticket mauve apres alle soleil, dernyer coup mo sur pour dan caro canne et ticket mem kpav pa gayner et pa pour dan numero treize.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me congratulate my good young friend who is the President of our party, hon. Uteem for his excellent delivery and speech. We may agree or not agree on what he has said on the issues, but he, as a young MP, on his second mandate, I have to congratulate him. I'll tell him he will have a long career in politics for the years to come and we are very proud in our party to have him as president and our *porte-parole* for economic affairs and even on social media and media trusts. Many people have commended him for the points he had made on his delivery.

The second point I have to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am not making it personal, but, notwithstanding what was the verdict of the Privy Council on Medpoint – we have been here in Parliament, we have asked PQs ourselves then, we had made public meetings *zott mem aste zott mem vender*, but the fact remains that Rs144 m. plus VAT out of the public coffers was paid and the valuer who once lost his memory – *finn perdi memwar* – could not have remembered how 75 came to 144. The fact cannot be denied, but this Medpoint scandal will haunt the MSM, Privy Council or no Privy Council and it will remain the mother of all scandals. This is the point I had to make. Government on the other side, raised a lot of temper; they were very angry, but the fact remains 144m. was paid and one valuer lost his memory and could not remember how this 75 came to 144.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget Speech epitomises the desperate act of a Government that has been showing over the months arrogance and ignominy in the conduct of public affairs. This is known. We have live TV. It is reported in the press - arrogance and

ignominy. Opacity in the award of State contracts, that is, State capture much decried in Africa - again here in Parliament, we have asked and we have said that there is lot of opacity. Defiance and contempt when confronted with its failings and excesses – *colère généralisée*; resistance and hostility to provide proper replies and at times no reply at all to parliamentary questions - as at to date 134 questions have not been replied. We are waiting the end of this mandate. By now, 134 questions without reply – *je n'ai pas eu le temps d'aller vérifier quel ministère. C'est à la bibliothèque qu'on peut le savoir* and I was made to understand last time the Prime Minister was on the hit list of those who have not submitted replies here to Parliament and I hope he has these replies on his part if not, he will be hit on the top of the list.

Also what has been happening since December 2014 – comforting posture in accommodating political *transfuges* in search of green pastures and the list goes on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will revert to some later on. This is the state of affairs nearly at the end of this mandate and the population of Mauritius knows what is happening. Government won't be able to hide this state of affairs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a culture of impunity has infiltrated the body politics of this Government and has plagued the very nature of what democracy stands for.

Week after week, here in Parliament, we have denounced scandals, usurpation of legitimate rights of our citizens – *renvoi des élections villageoises*; corruption, malpractices exposed but brushed aside by Government with disdain. Week after week, we have queried Government through Parliamentary Questions, we have made our point in the different budgets, but week after week, month after month and now this mandate is coming to its end, no change at all. Who does not remember? Even now, I still remember what was said. The famous mantra of a Minister: Government is Government and Government decides. That was said. And now, the same Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is caught in another controversy that hurts the sensibility of an important segment of our society. What a shame! This is a fact and everybody in Mauritius knows what has been said in the past and what is being said now.

How can I forget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I referred to PQ B/28 of 28.03.2017 replied by hon. Dr. Husnoo who was transferred to the Minister. This Parliamentary Question replied, by itself, on the state of affairs of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care by the former Director of the Trust Fund. What has not happened there? The case had

to go to a Fact-Finding Committee presided by Mr Aujaheb, referred to the ICAC. The director had to resign and we all know the saga of what happened there. From what I understand, how can you imagine a Trust Fund which had its reputation, we have been there, we have been having our blood checked there. One of the state of the art hospital in the region. Whisky and black label bought through the funds provided by the Trust Fund at the supermarket in the North. *Ki sane la ti p boire sa banne whisky la?* Why, up to now, the case has been referred to ICAC? I am just making my statement here, in the House, and I hope the Director of ICAC takes note of what I am saying. Up to now, no concrete action on the report! We have asked PQs and the hon. Prime Minister had informed us that the case was referred to ICAC. Yes. What has been the done? *La clef tirroir inn perdi* of the famous file? We are nearly reaching the end of our mandate. This is one. There is another case, B/21, on the IBA. The director of IBA had to resign. Again, referred to ICAC! Nothing happens! But the director had submitted her resignation. She was presented as an MSM candidate. The other one was Campaign Manager of the ML, but what has been the estimates apart from these two resigning? *Qui étaient les complices dans ces deux cas?* I am just stating two cases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I will now turn to statements made in previous budgets because we at the end of this budget. What has been said? In the first budget, who does not remember the magician Minister, Minister of miracles, Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo, announcing here in pomp and fanfare in January 2015, the Jumeirah company of Dubai will construct not a five star, a seven star hotel in Pointe des Lascars. Seven star hotel! Nothing new! The cemetery maintains the solemnity of Pointe des Lascars, we know this region, Pointe des Lascars. We tried to develop this Pointe des Lascars since 2000 when we were in Government in 2000-2005. It is a nice place. Seven star hotel! Nothing! What about the gold refinery and exchanges for gold transaction in Mauritius announced again in the magician's first budget? The list of his bluff is long. I am referring to the first Minister of Finance, past election. I will let him rest in his political cave.

The Deputy Prime Minister, his theatrics and replies trying to impress us is legendary. We all remember his assessment on the credibility of Sobrinho, following his eye diagnostic concerning the investment of financial propriety of this man. We all know the collapse of the Royal Park Complex where Sobrinho would have invested massively from his Angola cut is a stark reminder.

On the water sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, this *24/7 p tasse dans la gorge banal sa*, especially the Deputy Prime Minister. Actually, we have been told through the Press, radio, reservoirs throughout the country are all full, yet consumers, in our own constituency, myself and my colleague, I can give proof, in Albion, for the past weeks, days, people complaining about water. Yesterday, I went to Petite Rivière, Camp des Embrevades, Allée Tamarin, all these within the region of Petite Rivière and in the South, even in l'Escalier, in Constituency No. 13, people had to go to street protest. But anyway, I have to put on record my appreciation for the staff of the CWA who have been working in difficult times, in difficult situations, going to the people, having insults, problem of tankers, but the staff of the CWA, I am not mentioning names, deserve our support. They have been working in difficult conditions.

The Bagatelle Dam, we have to wait again. The Rivière des Anguilles Dam identified for more than five years ago has suffered a chequered history and made yet another proviso for his design, a long and painful wait for the consumers in the region, especially in Constituency No. 13.

What about this trade mark project? The reform of the water sector, through affermage of the CWA? So many PQs have been asked. The Deputy Prime Minister stated, at the beginning of his mandate, that this project was an article of faith which finally ended in his long list of failures. I won't talk on the LNG project and the Combined Cycle Gas Turbines saga and the humiliation handed over to him on that project.

On the agricultural sector, especially on the sugar sector, I will only lament on the fate of the world renowned MSIRI. Under the leadership of past directors, it used to attract respected scientists and sugar technologists to monitor our sugar industry. At the beginning of this Government mandate, the institute was unceremoniously brought under the aegis of the MCIA. For three years, it brought down its efficiency in mentoring the sugar sector. Now, only recently, judging that things were going wrong, the MSIRI has regained its autonomy and I hope it performs well. What a waste opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

The World Bank has been asked to analyse and provide a solution to our ailing sugar sector. The World Bank will recruit Mauritian experts to propose remedies afflicting this sector after five years.

At the beginning of his mandate, the hon. Minister of Agriculture spoke about new challenges facing our sugar sector. We all remember with all seriousness of purpose how he

mentioned the introduction of macadamia trees to compliment the sugar sector on marginal lands. I think last week, he made his speech and told us now we are having plants on the *pépinière*.

(Interruptions)

I am saying now. His first speech was in 2015. How many kilos of macadamia nuts have been produced so far? Nothing! Are our *badamier* trees not producing better nuts. What a ridiculous situation!

We also remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that bagasse will be supplemented in electricity generation by *fatak* grown on abandoned sugarcane lands. Ridiculous proposals again! These *fatak* plants could not only produce *balai fatak*, let alone the substitute for bagasse. Another failure, Mr Deputy Speaker! We need to be more serious to tackle challenges in our economy. These *fatak* plants could not only produce *balai fatak*, let alone the substitutes of bagasse, another failure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We need to be more serious to tackle challenges in our economy. We remember that in one of the Prime Minister's Budget Speech, the construction of a floating oil refinery in our port area to service our oil needs, and even with export possibilities, was proposed. It brought a deafening applause from the Government's side as loud, but not as numerous as at last week's Budget Speech. The number of thumping sets a new record of 73 in our Parliament.

Do we remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the various ventures to invest in Africa and the Africa Fund to support it? How about the Special Economic Zone in Senegal? The one in Ghana? The land secured for the *Zone Franche de la Biotechnologie* and the ICT in Côte d'Ivoire?

To top up this impressive list of the past Budget pronouncement, we add a new addition – the Naivasha Industrial and Technological Park in Kenya. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these are mere sound bites to be heard only at Budget Times.

In January 2015, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the beginning of the mandate, the Government raised by Rs3 per litre the levy on the Build Mauritius Fund for the sale of gasoline and diesel. At the end of their mandate, they shamefully returned back this Rs3 levy to the car owners and other road users. That announcement prompted another round of applause from Government's side. *Mais, M. le president, il faut rendre à César ce qui appartient à César.*

During that period of 15 January 2015 and 10 June 2019, Government sold about 950 million litres of gasoline and 2,200 million litres of diesel. That Rs3 levy added Rs10 billion which has been siphoned off from the pocket of road users, from the *camioniers* and others who have been using vehicles. Rs10 billion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we, on this side of the House, have passed four and a half years, we have led a relentless campaign to denounce appointment of cronies in Air Mauritius. Recently, again, *Mr Pran Kass* has been appointed at the Board of Air Mauritius and State Bank. The Airport of Mauritius, I won't mention the special Adviser of the Prime Minister in so many subsidiaries. The State Bank, again, *Mr Pran Kass* has been appointed recently, last week. The GRA, an important institution which is working for one particular firm, SMS Pariaz, very close to Government and I won't mention the Government-owned bodies and subsidiaries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, week after week, we have asked Parliamentary Questions, we have given names, we have given information, but nothing happens. I still remember, I was sitting there, Government, in one of the first statements, said: 'Henceforth, this new Government would not appoint Chairman using big cars, BMW Mercedes, they would be part time.' What is happening at the MMA, *paletot croisé*, the Chairperson? He was a *transfuge* of the former PMSD's president, now *transfuge* going to MSM. His salary is nearly Rs300,000 monthly. At the CEB, the Deputy Prime Minister replied, the Chairperson of the CEB using such type of Mercedes, and I won't mention the subsidiaries. And here, it was promised, it is in writing that this Government won't do, as it was the case before, new procedures.

Appointment of relatives and friends - do I have to remind Government? – male and female. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also exposed abuse of Ministers and Government Officials through PQs, it is there, executives of State-owned bodies and parastatals in their travelling excursions and their *per diem* allowance, recently going to Festival de Cannes. I am coming with another PQ for some information.

Festival de Cannes, we all know what is happening to our tourism industry. When the reply is given to us - go and check. We are given the information for fees paid for travelling, but no information on *per diem*. You go and have to look according to approved rate. How would I know the approved rate? This comes from public money. The people of Mauritius would like to know how much has been spent. The taxpayers and public were incensed with

such grotesques largesse so much that the Prime Minister himself has brought down the money allocated for that item. So, the Prime Minister knows who are the recidivists, who are the ones who are abusing.

Abuse of parliamentary practice and procedures have been the hallmark of this Government and in so doing, they have set bad precedents and which will need to be rectified by the next Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have sat and watched many palavers over the past four and a half years and listened to unfulfilled promises of the Government whispering its last political breadth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all what I am saying has happened here, it is on record. I think it is our duty, and we will come at Committee Stage to query Government item by item. I can say for sure, for the past four budgets, we have raised so many queries at Committee stage. It is good that Madam Speaker can have some work be done, and let us know how many questions we have asked at Committee Stage, how many replies have been circulated at the Library, going into deaf ears, they say that they will be circulating. We would like to know, the public would like to know.

M. le président, je voudrai maintenant aborder le volet environnemental de ce discours du budget. Un sujet qui, aujourd'hui, est au cœur des préoccupations des jeunes à Maurice et aux quatre coins de la planète. Commençons par le plus évident et le plus révoltant, la gestion des déchets. J'ai lu l'autre jour au niveau du G20, ils sont en train de prendre en compte les déchets marins. La situation d'aujourd'hui, aux abords des routes, les terrains vagues, à la lisière des forêts de l'Etat, le long des berges des rivières, dans les lagons.

En dépit des milliards investis dans les services de voirie des collectivités locales, dans les stations de transfert, Mare Chicose, à la Beach Authority et ailleurs, le pays reste sale. Avec les risques que cela comporte pour la santé de nos compatriotes, pour l'écologie et l'industrie touristique.

Deux ans après avoir lancé la campagne 'Moris Nou Zoli Pays', la situation n'a pratiquement pas changé. Je me souviens l'ancien ministre, l'honorable Soodhun, avait présidé des comités, la MBC, les gants, *cleaning*, T-shirt. M. le président, pire Maurice est aujourd'hui un pays négligé au niveau de l'environnement - *I am sad to say that* – et dans bien d'autres sens également. Chien errants. Pardon, il y a que des maîtres errants, en vrai, les

rates et les insectes nuisibles profitent avantageusement de cette aubaine. Allez-demander un petit secours au niveau de MSAW à Rose Hill, ils n'ont pas de moyen. Le problème de chiens errants est non seulement un problème dans les régions urbaines, mais au niveau des plages publiques, au niveau de l'industrie touristique.

Le Premier ministre propose maintenant un *Mega National Cleaning and Embellishment Campaign* qui sera entrepris par les départements du secteur public et privé. Une initiative qui vient confirmer l'échec de la campagne lancée par le Premier Ministre depuis deux ans. C'est un échec, le Premier ministre vient de l'avouer, a maintenant lancé un mega campaign. La grande trouvaille cette fois-ci est la création d'un *Centralised Cleaning Coordination Committee*, un peu comme les inspecteurs de nids de poule du ministre Bodha. Allez voir l'état des routes! Une manière d'enfoncer une porte ouverte, car il existe déjà un *Coordination Committee* au niveau de *L'Environment Protection Act*. La solution n'est pas que les comités. Il faut un leadership, une vision, une stratégie et bien évidemment, la participation populaire. Ce n'est pas une grande opération de nettoyage qui changera durablement les choses Je disais que ces détritux sont partout, ils ne se sont pas tombés du ciel évidemment, au long des routes périphériques parce que le conducteur qui l'aura jeté, qui n'a toujours pas réalisé que c'est, lui, contribuable, qui payera, en finalité, pour le ramassage.

Aux abords des forêts, débris de construction et de rénovation, en l'absence des décharges municipales abordables. Dans nos villes et nos villages parce que la gestion souffre de la mainmise du pouvoir central et ne sont maintenant que des appendices d'un parti.

Il faut reconnaître que les incivilités répétées de certains n'arrangent guère les choses. Cependant, il faut aussi reconnaître que ne pas salir est aussi une attitude sociale qui est façonnée par la qualité de la gouvernance ambiante, l'exemple venant toujours d'en haut.

Si l'indiscipline prévaut sur les routes, dans les lieux publics et qu'il y a un sentiment de laisser-aller généralisé au niveau de la gestion des affaires du pays, et que les passe-droits et autres abus sont légions, pourquoi devrait-il attendre que le citoyen va respecter scrupuleusement les règles de l'environnement ?

Si l'industrie des courses, des jeux, que certains institutions sont pourries, pourquoi l'environnement serait-il plus propre ?

Si les feuilletons Boskalis et autres continuent avec des épisodes interminables, comment vous pensez la population peut suivre ? Il y a certainement un effet de cause. La vision, le Premier ministre annonce à la fois une stratégie de gestion des déchets - réduction,

réutilisation, recyclage - et un incinérateur qui bouffera 1,000 tonnes par jour, je suppose, pour générer 20 mégawatt d'électricité, 175% des déchets générés. Toute la stratégie élaborée par les paragraphes 360 à 376 ne seraient-ils donc qu'un trompe-l'œil. Je demande à être convaincu du contraire.

M. le président, j'ai essayé d'aller consulter le rapport d'*EIA* de ce projet qui devrait être accessible sur le site du ministère, comme prévoit la loi, mais il m'a été impossible de télécharger le rapport malgré toutes mes tentatives. Le délai pour la soumission des commentaires du public expire ce jeudi et je souhaite vivement que toutes les parties concernées, et y compris les jeunes qui manifestent pour l'urgence climatique les vendredis.

En ce qu'il s'agit du projet *Waste to Energy*, il y a certes des technologies fiables, le gouvernement doit agir en toute transparence sur ce projet et surtout, nous expliquer comment ce projet cadre avec le '*Brighter future*'.

A priori, M. le président, un petit Etat insulaire, qui chercherait à protéger et nourrir ses sols afin de produire des cultures vivrières de qualité, devrait composter ses sols. La moitié des déchets sont organiques et peuvent être compostés. L'empreinte carbone de ce projet ainsi que les options plus durables doivent être prises en considération. Outre sa gestion désastreuse de l'aide aux victimes d'un désastre naturel, le ministre qui prétend préserver l'environnement s'est aussi permis de *delist* le projet de tramway, c'est le gouvernement à travers le ministre de l'environnement.

M. le président, sur ce projet Metro Express, nous ne sommes pas contre le projet, mais la façon dont le projet est géré, l'opacité autour de ce projet, l'*EIA Report* qui n'a été rendu public. J'ai eu quelques *briefs* de l'EIA, mais au niveau du *Traffic Impact Assessment*, là aussi, le ministre vient nous dire qu'il faut s'adresser au consultant du Korea Express Corporation.

M. le président, tous ceux qui habitent dans la région de Beau Bassin sont inquiets de la situation, au niveau du rondpoint de Beau Bassin. Les gens de Beau Bassin ne savent pas comment ce projet va être opérationnel dans le rondpoint de Beau Bassin, il y a tout une pagaille autour de ce projet. J'espère que le ministre Bodha qui fait des *site visits* autre part, dans d'autres circonscriptions du pays, aura, je dis, le courage de venir expliquer aux gens de Beau Bassin, au gens de Barkly, au gens de la région, comment ce projet va être terminé et opérationnel en prenant compte la sécurité des gens, surtout dans cette région de Beau Bassin

où il y a l'école BPS, il y a l'école Philippe Rivalland, il y a l'église Sacré Coeur, il y a la place des taxis, il y a le marché. Personne ne sait comme ce projet va être opérationnel.

Voilà, un peu, M. le président, ce que j'avais à dire sur ce budget. M. le président, quatre ans et demi, bientôt les élections générales, j'ai entendu le ministre Jhugroo l'autre jour faisant état vendredi : 'Le MSM plus fort que jamais', j'ai pris note. Si le MSM est plus fort que jamais, ayez le courage de mettre 60 candidats, ayez le courage de venir devant l'électorat avec 60 candidats. Nous, nous allons le faire. Le MMM va aller seul aux élections avec 60 candidats et nous vous donnons rendez-vous sur le terrain.

(Interruptions)

Nous vous donnons rendez-vous sur le terrain. *Barré la caisse!*

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dayal!

(4.17 p.m.)

Mr R. Dayal (First Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Budget 2019-2020 is the pragmatic harbinger of tangible, meaningful change in the lives of all Mauritians, ensuring sustainable development and inclusiveness in national wealth distribution democratically and the national interest, and for this, our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance must be congratulated for masterminding this Budget.

Embracing a Brighter Future Together as a Nation must be viewed within the framework of the vision of this Government for a greener, safer and cleaner Mauritius, and more importantly, their achievements through past budgets acclaimed by the great majority of our people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while in December 2014, were sworn in as a Government in the symphonic season, we were in the eye of yet another global emergency caused by climate change with global warming, temperature rise of 1.2 degree centigrade over the last decade, higher than the global average, which was less than one degree, i.e. 0.85 degree centigrade. Sea level rise of 5.6 millimetres per year when the global average was 3.3 millimetres. The acidification of the Indian Ocean with the La Niña and the El Niño phenomenon causing coral bleaching. The nation will never forget and forgive the trauma of more than 10 dead in flash floods under the Labour regime.

This Government is leaving no stone unturned to spare Mauritius such trauma. So far, we are very successful on this score. The vulnerability of Mauritius as part of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was tangible in the Republic of Mauritius, in particular, with its outer islands like Rodrigues, Agaléga, St Brandon and Diégo Gargia. We had the political will to bring meaningful change in the physical and living environment of the nation, and today we have bag full of realisations acclaimed locally, regionally and internationally. Let me enumerate some of them concerning the environment, because I am going to confine myself mostly on the environmental issues.

- (i) The National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act and relevant scheme with contingency planning and I would like to pause at the level of contingency planning and our motherland today we have contingency planning for almost all types of disasters that we can face, manmade or natural

–

- (a) Cyclone Emergency Scheme

Today we have one of the best warning systems in the world and this has been acclaimed when I addressed the United Nations in Yokohama in Japan.

- (b) Heavy Rainfall

Torrential rain and flooding emergency scheme where we have a proper mapping for all flooding areas.

- (c) Tsunami Emergency Scheme

It must be noted that four tectonic plates that of Africa, Australia, Indonesia, the Antarctica and Eurasia are influencing at a depth of some 20 kilometres with regular eruption our marine environment. And here, we must say we have got a golden opportunity for doing what we call ‘claiming our development rights’ as far ocean economy is concerned, and we have already forwarded our request to many countries in the world.

- (d) High Waves Emergency Scheme, Water Crisis Emergency Scheme;
- (e) Earthquake Emergency Scheme, Landslide Emergency Scheme, and
- (f) Port Louis Emergency Scheme as per the Disaster Management Plan.

We are seeing to it with total success and no fatality. Mauritius *est un État de droit* and a democratic Republic where the rule of law applies. This is why our priority responsible for disaster management was to provide legal framework for responses in the national interest, mindful of the rights of the average citizen. We came on a priority basis with the Disaster Management Act and the draft Climate Change Bill is in our agenda. I drafted it when I was Minister of Environment.

(ii) Plastic ban promulgated in 2015, which came into force in 01 January 2016 and the provision of biodegradable alternatives to protect our environment. We did that before many countries in the world, including Canada. The previous regime did not have the political will to make it happen. We made it happen at the Government.

(iii) In the wake of our Beach Management Plan, as a caring Government, we have increased the number of our beaches from 117 to 129. The one at La Prairie has been increased and the one at Anse La Raie as well. Four regional offices at Pereybere, Belle Mare, Flic en Flac, St Felix provide better services to our citizens.

Provision of eight new toilet facilities! Can you imagine, there were many beaches having no toilet facilities in the previous regime and we are now curing that lacuna and we are also catering for disabled persons, which was never done before, and have upgraded 15 existing toilets and 209 solar lighting in 31 public beaches.

The provision of 50 recycle plastic picnic tables - *ti dimoune quand ale picnic* - when they go for picnic. We will provide them the facilities they deserve as the citizens of the Republic of Mauritius, a modern one. And 21 public beaches and 60 recycle plastic benches that will last for about 400 years. In various public beaches, the rehabilitation of 18 of our coastal beaches together with the conception, implementation of the Bain Boeuf public beach, sweetly a beachfront, with the plantation of coconut trees - we have coconut available right now in those trees - as well as that of Baie du Cap. Here, we have planted Mangroves as well.

(iv) The Doppler Radar System

The commissioning of the Doppler Radar System with the financial and technical support of Japan, with innovative features - I stress, innovative features - for enhanced disaster management based on the establishment of the Reunion Island Doppler Radar and that of Fukushima in Japan. The Doppler

Radar we have, will be a unique one of its kind because it will have features to monitor flooding and also to warn the people of Mauritius of what is happening in their environment, more precisely regarding natural disasters.

(v) Refugee Centre at Quatre Soeurs

Innovative Multifaceted Rescue Centre at Quatre Sœurs ; it is almost ready for inauguration. When I was the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Disaster Management and Beach Authority, I made a site visit with the team of my Ministry, and to my great surprise, the site for the construction of refugee centre was on the low watermark, which was simply unacceptable by safety standards and accessibility norms in emergencies. The site was highly vulnerable to the onslaught of tsunami and the tidal waves. Constructing a refugee centre thereat was irresponsible at putting unnecessary the lives of refugees at risk. This Government changed the location to higher safe grounds and initiated land acquisition process and, today, the Refugee Centre has been built to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants residing the locality. The Refugee Centre is a multifaceted building meant to be used at all times for the welfare of the residents of the region. It is the first of its kind in the region and also the world. This is tangible innovation to be proud of by the Nation.

The construction of a Refugee Centre after the innovative one at Quatre Soeurs will now be constructed in Agalega and is meant to provide protection to our compatriots living in a highly vulnerable zone as a direct result of global warming and sea level rise, and other disasters like cyclones, tidal waves and tsunamis. Measures meant for facing the challenges of climate change and building the religions of environment are spelt out at paragraphs 336, 337 and 338, and I won't elaborate. It is interesting reading of what is our intention, our vision and our projected work. Mitigating the impact and adapting to climate change are enumerated at paragraphs 339 and 340, thus addressing flooding in 40 high-risk sites that have been identified, including Domaine Hibiscus in my constituency. Five local experts will be recruited to provide assistance for better planning and emergency responses, and here, I would pause to say that at *Cité Argy*, the drains are almost completed, like in other areas throughout Mauritius. And the people living there are very happy

about what we are doing for them, and they do not complain. During the last rainy season, they did not complain about flooding in their residential areas.

- (vi) **Hazardous and electronic waste**
 Management of hazardous and electronic waste in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry with an MoU, I personally signed with Mrs Echevin. In my mandate as a Minister, this Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for hazardous waste and electronic waste, and we made room for an area at la Chaumière for the recycling and safe disposal - never heard of and never seen before us.
- (vii) **Coral Farming**
 Initiated coral farming in collaboration Seychelles! I personally monitored the project and we have planted corals in Mauritius in our lagoons.
- (viii) **Air Pollution, the scourge of the century worldwide.**
 Mauritius has almost the second best quality of air in the world, and we are not happy about it. We want to be the number one. With the project of greening Mauritius and the project of *Moris Nou Zoli Pei*, installation and commissioning of air monitoring facility at the Meteorological Services in Vacoas is a hallmark achievement of this Government. Pursuing the *Moris Nou Zoli Pei*, as mentioned at paragraphs 350 and 354 in the three-fold national strategy, at pages 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69, the public is very much aware of what it contains. Addressing further the problem of pollution is streamlined at paragraphs 377 to 383; this means we are systematically dealing with the problem of pollution.
- (ix) **Establishment of a carbon imprint monitoring apparatus with the support of the British High Commission.**
 And I must say, I initiated the project, and today, we are monitoring our carbon imprint by planting plants that our forefathers brought from India, from Africa and from other parts of the world. And we are also constantly monitoring our carbon imprint.
- (x) **COP 21 in Paris**

We, as a Government, pledged for a grant of Rs5,5 billion to meet the challenge of climate change, establishment of a national and determined contribution to meet the challenges of climate change in collaboration with France. And I had the pleasure of reading to the elite present there, the speech prepared by our Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Ivan Collendavelloo. It was so appreciated that we have grant for our Green Energy Scheme;

(xi) Early Warning System for storm surges

The establishment of an Early Warning System for storm surges, tidal waves and tsunami in collaboration with Deltares, Holland and we are the first country that had access to such a warning system and it is meant to protect the vulnerable people of our community who live in coastal zones and they have enough time to prepare to evacuate to safe areas.

(xii) Health Track

Through rehabilitation of the health track at Dauguet, and I must say here that hon. Mrs Roubina Jadoo was then PPS. She approached me and when we reached there, Dauguet was in an abandoned state and we did rehabilitate it and today it is being utilised properly by all the Mauritian citizens living in the region. And the setting up of a new facilities throughout - there are numerous, I won't be able to mention all of them.

The 2019/2020 Budget is a landmark budget - I say again - is a landmark budget as it embraces a brighter future together as a nation. Ten avenues trigger this endeavour and the seventh one promotes a safer future whilst the eighth faces the challenge of climate change for further building the resilience of our environment. This clearly shows the *démarche* of our Government, another able leadership of our Prime Minister and his own team of Ministers, PPSs and MLAs, to respond to the challenges and exigencies posed by climate change to save life and property in keeping with our commitment to the electorate who overwhelmingly voted for us, fostering the production and use of green renewable sources of energy as spelt out at paragraphs 342, 343 to 349. If we manage to install solar panel in all our reservoirs which we are planning to do and lakes, will produce more than enough green energy to cater fully to our needs and for this hon. Deputy Prime Minister must be congratulated because it is a laudable initiative indeed. And it has never been thought before. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Ivan Collendavelloo has done a lot to foster green energy and I must say here

that we even get a prize from the United Nations for providing 10,000 households in the Social Register with free electricity. This is our vision to help the needy and those who need our support.

I must now talk about my constituency and I must say how happy we are to learn that through the intervention of Anil Gayan who was then the Minister of Health, our good friend, hon. Dr. Anwar Husnoo and our Prime Minister who made it possible to have the state-of-the-art new teaching hospital in Flacq and we are not going to go for *gandia*, we are going to have there almost 50 perches of land dedicated to Ayurvedic plants. We are going to have, in the teaching hospital, enough space for development. This is vision. 25 *arpents* of land and the old hospital is on about four *arpents* of land. This shows clearly the vision of this Government and those responsible for running the affairs of the State.

The second thing that I would like to talk about - because I come from a family of planters – a lot has been said about sugarcane. We just have to go to Curepipe near Wooton, Rs5 billions of taxpayers' money have been dumped there to produce sugar. And what has been removed? Tea plantation that was giving tea to us and tea was sold at a very cheap rate. And is this vision? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say now that now the hon. Minister, Mahen Seeruttun is fostering the plantation of tea and is doing it in a sustainable manner.

(Interruptions)

I have planted sugarcane...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No crosstalking, please!

Mr Dayal: I have planted sugarcane in the past regime and I have planted sugarcane in this regime. I must say the facilities provided by the hon. Minister to sugarcane planters, I won't mention it here because it will take me about half an hour, so I better – and it is coming from the horse's mouth, somebody who was planting sugar, looking after sugar and producing sugar. And the other facilities provided to the other because I am equally from a family of vegetable growers and other types of plants that give fruits and the Fruit Fly Eradication Project was long neglected and hon. Mahen Seeruttun is reviving it. We are grateful to him because when we go to pick ripe guavas in our forest areas, we will not get contaminated guavas, we will get good ones. I have tried it because I was behind the first project of Fruit Fly Eradication Project as the helicopter pilot and I know it works, it works and he is doing a very good job. Well done for that, hon. Mahen! And I must also say,

because in my constituency we have many planters, this is why I am saying it, because there was a lot of hullabaloo there and I must say that we have done justice to the community of planters because providing 50% of subsidy in fertilizer only, it means increasing the production of sugar by almost 50%. Because the more fertilizer you put, the more the yield is increased and you get better facilities. I can go on like this but I will just say that this budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been a trendsetter based on our first budget. What the previous regime could not do, we have done and I am talking about workers of the sugar industry. They had no money to give and we provided the money and we gave the money. We have done a lot for this country to have the appropriate green cover because we are convinced that sugarcane plantations provide not only green cover but also helps us to get credit from relevant sources to finance our various projects at national level because the carbon imprint is very high in sugarcane plantations.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

(4.41 p.m.)

Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Merci, M. le président. J'ai écouté l'honorable Dayal, ministre de l'environnement déçu du gouvernement *Lepep* à cause de l'affaire *bal couleur* et je ne crois pas qu'il ait parlé du milliard d'arbres qu'il voulait faire la mise en terre - pas mille, pas un million, un milliard d'arbres qu'il voulait faire la mise en terre. L'on se pose la question : où était l'honorable Dayal lors de l'abattage des arbres à Vandermeersch et à Anse la Raie.

(Interruptions)

La déclaration de l'honorable Dayal est restée risible comme celle de l'honorable Soodhun qui avait dit que chaque personne allait avoir deux boulots à Maurice et que la ville de Phoenix deviendrait un *New York City*. C'est à ces bourdes qu'on a eu droit pendant les cinq dernières années. C'est à ses bourdes qu'on a eu droit pendant les cinq dernières années et on dit cela M. le président, nous entamons la cinquième année de ce régime, dite gouvernement *Lepep* qui présente son cinquième et dernier budget. Il y a eu six grands Zorros si on prend en compte Vision 2030. Nous avons en effet eu un changement de Premier ministre, l'original étant devenu Mentor et le second en fonction en ce moment n'a pas été publicisé par le peuple. Nous avons eu droit à trois ministres des Finances, l'avant-dernier

avant de rentrer dans sa cave, dans un moment de délire, nous débite ceci et je cite – ‘Depuis 10 ans déjà avec 3% de croissance, on s’enflamme, moi j’ai honte’.

I could not possible agree with him on the figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nor could I possible agree with the analysis made by hon. Étienne Sinatambou, last Thursday and to refute him, I would cite some figures. Sir, during the last year of the MSM in 2005, GDP grew by a meagre 2.3% with an average growth rate of 3.84% for the period 2000-2005. Then came the Labour Party and its first year in power in 2006, this figure rose to 5.1%. In 2007 and 2008, growth rate increased to 5.5% with an average annual growth rate of 4.68% despite the World Financial Crisis of 2008. Now why did I use these three years? Simply because hon. Étienne Sinatambou was Minister in the Labour Government just before being replaced at the Ministry of ICT. As a matter of fact, during his speech on the 2008 Budget, he was full of praise and even commended Dr. Navin Ramgoolam for his leadership and today he is speaking a different language.

Let us look at the achievement of this Government since 2014. In his first Budget, *le prophète du deuxième miracle économique* promised us an average growth rate of 5.7% which was later revised to 5.5% in the Vision 2030 by the now Minister Mentor. Clearly, they have not been able to deliver on their promise. The average growth rate since 2015 stands at 2% lower, at 3.7%, as stated by the Minister of Finance in this year’s speech at paragraph 30. This rate is well below what they promised in 2014. Just like they are caught up in the dead trap, they are now entangled in the 4% GDP trap, not knowing how to get out. They have now forecasted a growth of 3.9% for 2019 and 4.1% for 2020. Based on their performances, one can expect that these predicted figures will not be achieved. It is now clear that they have neither the necessary vision nor the leadership or a competent team to get them out of their self-made mess. The Government has reached just level of incompetence in managing the economy and also lacks of credibility that it is high time for them to go.

In 2014, they made a lot promises which they have not been able to fulfil. The population feels that they have been abused and cheated. Any sensible Government should know what to do in these circumstances. Now, after this light digression, Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will come back to the figures again. Let me quote an editorial from ION News entitled *et je cite* –

La honte de Lutchmeenaraidoo et celle du gouvernement.

published on the 18 of March which compares the performance of the Labour Government and *gouvernement Lepep je cite* –

“L’histoire politique et économique du pays nous apprend assez ironiquement que les électeurs n’ont que peu fait des statistiques de croissance. En effet, entre 1996 et 2000, Navin Ramgoolam a réalisé une meilleure croissance annuelle moyenne (5,84%) que n’importe quel autre gouvernement depuis 1982.”

End of citation.

Et on parle de miracle économique c’est alors qu’en 2000 que le Parti travailliste était au pouvoir, que le record de croissance du gâteau national fut pulvérisé avec 9.2% - le chiffre le plus élevé depuis 1982. Chiffre que je viens de citer est extrait du même article. *Now this is what you call an economic miracle.* Comment voulez-vous que ce pays progresse quand depuis décembre 2014, ce gouvernement a connu une dizaine de démissions dont deux parlementaires et deux ministres sous la pression médiatique et des réseaux sociaux.

(Interruptions)

15 excusez-moi! 15 démissions parlementaires.

La promesse du deuxième miracle économique n’a été qu’un mirage et à la place, on a eu droit à des scandales à répétition. Les deux dernières en date étant l’affaire Gayan ayant associé les musulmans au *honour killing* et le *South African Connection* qui ébranle le bureau de la présidence pour la deuxième fois, le premier étant l’affaire Álvaro Sobrinho. Est-ce qu’il y aura sanction? Le peuple attend.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are great challenges at the local and international level in the financial services sector and meanwhile the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance, hon. Sesungrur, in his interview given to Sunday Times of 15 June 2018, stated that former MSM Minister Roshi Bhadain *avait berné les investisseurs du Super Cash Back Gold et du Bramer Asset Management et qu’il avait même liquidé pour dipain dibeurre les actifs du Britam qui valaient des milliards de roupies. Il a à maintes reprises dit qu’il n’avait pas dit cela* but I am going to table the article for record sake later.

Le ministre Seeruttun est un expert-comptable et il sait de quoi il parle mais là où il s’est trompé, il aurait dû dire le gouvernement qui a vendu *pou dipain dibeurre* parce que Roshi Bhadain était ministre du gouvernement.

(Interruptions)

Non Bhadain. Non, excusez-moi. L'ancien ministre Bhadain était membre du gouvernement.

On le sait le groupe BAI avait acheté Courts en 2005 pour R 750 millions. En 2015, le gouvernement *Lepep* l'a vendu pour R 400 millions et les rumeurs disent que Courts est en vente en ce moment pour R 1 milliard. L'hôpital Apollo Bramwell, qui avait coûté plus de R 2 milliards au groupe, a été vendu au groupe Ciel pour R 700 millions avec une location annuelle de R 60 millions. Alors le gouvernement *Lepep* a vendu un state-of-the-art Apollo Bramwell et pour citer le Ministre Sesungkur *pou dipain dibeurre* et en même temps le gouvernement *Lepep* a racheté une vieille clinique rouillée, Medpoint pour les yeux de notre tête - de nos têtes, des *taxpayers*...

(Interruptions)

Pour les yeux de nos têtes, la tête des *taxpayers*. Comment on appelle cela? Comment on appelle cela M. le président? On appelle cela du vol en plein jour - *daylight robbery*. La réputation de la République...

(Interruptions)

Daylight robbery

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Even a child will tell you this is daylight robbery...

(Interruptions)

La réputation de la République...

(Interruptions)

Qui avait écrit *Dear Pravind. Go and find out, dear Pravind.*

(Interruptions)

La réputation de la république n'a pas de prix et le ministre Sesungkur ose dire durant son discours que les membres de l'opposition font des déclarations irréfléchies. Alors je lui demanderai de balayer devant sa porte avant de nous critiquer. Ce budget de Pravind Jugnauth ne répond pas aux attentes et aux besoins de la population et des opérateurs économiques alors que les secteurs clés de notre économie : le secteur financier, l'industrie touristique, l'industrie cannière, l'industrie textile éprouvent des difficultés. Où sont les propositions budgétaires pour les secteurs en crise? Avec le cumul des fonctions du Premier

ministre et du ministre des finances, on constate qu'il ne dispose pas assez de temps pour ce qui se passe sur la scène internationale.

Lors de son discours, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a été très sélectif sur l'utilisation des statistiques pour étayer ses arguments. La réalité sur le terrain est que les gens souffrent face aux problèmes quotidiens, problème de l'eau et la sûreté de la vie. Le Premier ministre se vante de la gratuité de l'Université mais, M. le président, les parents de ce pays vous le diront, leur enfants sont contraints de prendre des emplois qui sont sous payés et qui ne correspondent pas à leur formation initiale. Pour faire baisser les chiffres du chômage, le gouvernement les font suivre des stages de formation telle le YEP pour une éventuelle embauche permanente, mais la réalité est toute autre, seuls les apparentés du régime arrivent à trouver un emploi permanent. Mais qu'a fait le gouvernement de concret pour créer un écosystème propice au développement, au progrès et à l'innovation ? Où sont les infrastructures pour les secteurs émergents tels que l'intelligence artificielle et le *blockchain* ? Où sont les mesures incitatives pour l'investissement et la création d'emplois appart ces quelques mesurette qu'on peut lire à la page 44 ? Aucune vision, aucune mesure pour créer des nouveaux secteurs d'activité. Pendant les derniers quatre ans et demi, l'économie océanique, paragraphe 94 du discours, pour ne citer que celui-ci ne restait qu'un secteur qui a beaucoup de potentiel mais où absolument rien ne s'est passé.

What has become of the implementation of the road map of this Government, as supposedly formulated around seven priority sectors? What has become of the seabed exploration for hydrocarbon, for deep ocean water of application, for marine renewable energy? For ocean knowledge, of course, we have loved quite a bit when the Minister of Ocean Economy who was uncomfortable in replying to parliamentary questions.

On a eu les épisodes de barbara, de baleines et, tout récemment, de requins, that's all. All this Government has succeeded in doing is making the ocean economy a national laughing stock.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, may I request you to address the Chair, please?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. I am so sorry about that. This is no laughing matter. I was part of the official delegation at the Rio Plus 20 Conference and at the 6th Conference in

Samois in 2014, together with hon. Dr. Boolell. We had taken serious international commitments there for ocean economy and today it has become a national laughing stock.

Donc, il y a eu aucune ambition pour rehausser l'environnement des affaires, aucune mesure pour la création d'emplois qui sont à la mesure ...

The Deputy Speaker: No crosstalking please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: ...des qualifications et des attentes des jeunes diplômés...

The Deputy Speaker: I said no crosstalking!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Où sont les technopôles promises?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, order please! Hon. Jugroo! May I request the hon. Member Baloomoody and hon. Jhugroo to leave the Chamber and continue the discussion outside please. Because you are disturbing the speech of the orator. Please go and continue your discussion outside the Chamber!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: I want to say one thing.

The Deputy Speaker: I have given my ruling. Please, can you go? Because both of you were discussing from a sitting position. You should have taken a point of order before.

Yes, please continue!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Où sont les technopôles promises? Je vais dire à Maurice, pas au Kenya, qu'on veut nous faire avaler dans ce budget au paragraphe 159. Vous vous rappellerez, M. le président, que lors de la présentation du budget 2015, le gouvernement

avait annoncé que l'État allait lancer 13 méga projets à travers l'île, dont huit allaient être conçus comme le Smart Cities. Il avait aussi annoncé la création de cinq technopoles au coût de Rs120 milliards, provenant du secteur privé et des fonds d'investissement étranger. Nous avons rien vu venir et pas un mot dans le discours du ministre des Finances. Ou sont-ils ces projets ? Et on ose parler du Kenya maintenant, du bluff comme d'habitude. La bande de taper à la table *will tell you that Rs1,000 advance will be paid for the next PRB. Good! But does that figure include the salary compensation due to normally every civil servant in January? With the introduction of the minimum wage in 2018, this measure has created a dislocation in the salary structure of the Civil Service, which by law should be corrected prior to any salary revision by the PRB. This issue has not been addressed in the budget.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Will those Civil Servants who have retired after 2018 be compensated accordingly due to this imbalance created by the introduction of the minimum salary? More importantly ...

(Interruptions)

Can I continue?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: More importantly...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait please! Take your seat. Good temper has been prevailing in this House for previous speeches. May I request that we continue on that line and allow the Member to continue his speech. Thank you.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, Sir. How about workers in the Private Sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? They contribute massively to this economy. Will they also be compensated for their relativity imbalance in their salary? What about the Rs500 increase on the old age pension? Is the annual compensation included in that figure? Last year, compensation was Rs400.

L'argent dont dispose ce gouvernement, M. le président, pour ses dépenses ne provient pas de la richesse créée par l'économie, il l'a soit emprunté, soit reçu en forme de dons de

l'Arabie Saoudite, de l'Inde ou de la Chine. En ce qui concerne les dons reçus de la Chine pour la construction du stade olympique de Côte d'Or, il y a opacité entre les accords passés entre la Chine et Maurice.

Deputy Speaker, Sir, everybody has noticed that there was a moment of silence, a lull when the Prime Minister announced that the tablet project will now be extended to Grade 4 students. *Les tapeurs la table* responded with a delay because they were flabbergasted. Flabbergasted after what Data Communication Ltd did with the State of Mauritius with, according to the National Audit Report, connivance at the Ministry of ICT and the Attorney General's Office. There was severe criticism in the National Audit Report.

(Interruptions)

The Audit Report criticised you! *Alors que le gouvernement...*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, can you take your seat ? I did ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but I told you to address to the Chair.

Mr Osman Mahomed: I am so sorry about that. Alors, que le gouvernement avait promis dans le budget 2015/2016 un *Legacy Sovereign Fund*, des investissements, soi-disant pour la génération future, on attend toujours. C'est tellement paradoxal aujourd'hui car chaque Mauricien, jeune ou vieux, porte sur ses épaules une dette de plus de Rs300,000, un niveau jamais atteint dans notre histoire.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I look at the debt level, I can only take the analogy of what I call the frock syndrome, and it goes as follows: If you drop a frog suddenly into boiling water, it will jump out, but if you put that same frog in a vessel of water and start heating the water gradually it will adjust its body temperature accordingly until it reaches a stage beyond its capacity and it dies foolishly. This is what this Government has been cooking up over the last four years. It has slowly killed all the hopes of this generation and of future ones.

M. le président, où est-ce qu'ils sont allés chercher cette mesure de puiser les réserves de la banque de Maurice pour réduire la dette publique que le régime *Lepep* a contractée pour faire fonctionner notre cuisine ?

Cela a été discuté en détail par les orateurs précédents et lors de la PNQ de ce matin, et je ne vais pas m'y attarder. But then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in its last published

accounts, on the item titled, 'Hiring external Fund Managers', a new item, never seen before, the Bank of Mauritius has disbursed Rs190 m. on external Fund Managers for the year ending 30 June 2018. I hope, someday, after the election, we will not find out once again that someone from *la cuisine* has laughed his way to the bank. One wonders whether using the Special Reserve Fund of the bank to pay the national debt was not motivated by the advice extended by these expensive Fund Managers to the Board of the Bank of Mauritius.

M. le président, nous sommes confrontés à la dureté de la vie sur le terrain et l'on peut s'empêcher de constater que la pauvreté est en train de s'installer. La cuisine, pas celle qui manipule la politique politicienne de ce gouvernement, la vraie, celle qui fait vivre nos familles, elle vit l'augmentation des prix des aliments de base. En écoutant le ministre Seeruttun vendredi dernier, celui que les planteurs ont affectueusement surnommé 'Seeruttun *zom tablisman*', qui a dit dans son discours que notre thé local est unique. J'ai finalement compris pourquoi le prix du paquet de thé d'un livre, produit à Maurice, a grimpé de R 85 en 2014, et se vend aujourd'hui à R 170 ou R 200 ; une augmentation de plus de 100%. Comment les mesurètes, proposées pour le secteur thé, comme mentionné au paragraphe 76 du budget, vont résoudre ce problème. Les prix du sucre, du lait, du riz et du poulet ont tous augmenté de façon considérable, allant jusqu'à 50%. Le prix de l'essence est resté élevé pendant cinq ans malgré les baisses sur le cours mondial et l'on n'ose venir nous couillonner avec une baisse de seulement R 3 à quelques mois des élections. Voici ce que nous sert cette fameuse cuisine. Sa mainmise sur tous les leviers du pouvoir ont conduit à la fermeture de la *BAI*, perte substantielle à la *SBM* et *Air Mauritius* qui a pris du plomb dans l'aile. Et au Parti travailliste, notre crainte est que Maurice ne subisse le même sort que la Grèce. Alors, M. le président, beaucoup a été dit sur les promesses non tenues du gouvernement sur les 10,000 logements sociaux. Moi, je trouve que le plus grand mal c'est la non publication par le gouvernement du Plan Marshall contre la pauvreté, ce qui rend le *monitoring* des mesures sociales difficiles. C'est dommage, et pourtant cette proposition figure dans le paragraphe 20 du Programme du gouvernement en 2015-2020.

Je vais maintenant dire quelques mots, M. le président, sur un secteur que j'ai particulièrement suivi pendant les cinq dernières années avec plusieurs interpellation au Parlement. Je vais parler des utilités publiques et je commence par l'eau, source de vie, élément vital. Il n'y a pas eu ce 24/7 dans la fourniture d'eau. C'est un slogan qui fuit de partout. On s'y considérait heureux, si au moins on avait un approvisionnement 7/24. M. le président, non seulement on n'a pas eu ce 24/7, mais après cinq ans que ce gouvernement est

au pouvoir, le réservoir Bagatelle n'est toujours pas *fully utilised*, parce qu'il n'y a pas de station de traitement. A un certain moment, dans cet auguste Assemblée, on a émis de sérieux doutes quant à l'utilisation de l'eau non filtrés dans les robinets de certains endroits de l'île.

Pas de partenaire stratégique non plus – je n'ai pas de problème avec cela. Mais cela démontre le tiraillement entre le ministère des Finances, voire même celui du Premier ministre et celui des Utilités publiques. Maintenant, on entend qu'on va privatiser le *CEB*. Ce tiraillement, on l'a aussi vu sur ce projet de turbine à gaz, avec toujours les mêmes protagonistes. Le projet semble être dans une impasse, et ce qui est inquiétant, c'est que le ministre a dit, lui-même, au Parlement, qu'il n'y a pas de plan 'B'.

And what how about the summary of the Poten & Partners report which the Deputy Prime Minister promised last year to table in this National Assembly? We are still waiting for it. On a dépensé des dizaines de millions de roupies en *consultancy*, avec la part du lion allant à ce fameux Poten & Partners, laughing their way to the bank, comme dirai l'autre. Maintenant, le journal *Sunday Times* d'hier, en a fait son principal titre :

« Le prix du *trash energy* passe de R 3.09 à R 4.45. »

Et le journal parle de plusieurs choses -

« Jackpot pour Alteo, miettes pour les petits planteurs. »

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Do you want to take the seat of the Speaker, hon. Mohamed?

(Interruptions)

Then, let him continue with his speech! You don't have to stop him!

Mr Osman Mohamed: Alors -

« Le prix de la « *trash energy* » passe de R 3.09 à Rs 4.45/ KMh : Ivan

Collendavelloo, l'accusé no. 1 ? »

Voilà ce que *Sunday Times* d'hier a écrit.

A l'heure où je vous parle, on est toujours incertain quant à l'avenir du projet ferme éolienne de 29 mégawatts à Plaine-Sophie, initié par l'ancien gouvernement. Le Premier ministre adjoint a pris des engagements, ici, au Parlement, mais les promoteurs ne les

respectent pas. Bref, les cinq dernières années ont été des années de perdues. Après quatre ans, le CEB a dû loger une plainte de la Police. *It smells rot, it smells hanky-panky.*

Je me souviens de la fameuse déclaration de l'honorable Collendavelloo sur le projet éolienne de Plaines des Roches. Selon ses dires, il a fait en quatre jours ce que son prédécesseur n'a pas pu faire en quatre ans. Je crois qu'il voulait renforcer, une fois de plus, son argument de toujours, qu'il n'y avait point d'énergie au ministère de l'Énergie avant son arrivée. Mais quand on voit ce qui s'est passé à Plaine-Sophie, le ministre Collendavelloo ne peut pas mettre ce scandale sur le dos de son prédécesseur, celui qu'il avait indirectement nommé '*the energyless Minister*', *so to speak*. Ce qui sera injuste pour lui de le faire. Ce qui me choque, c'est la défense de l'indéfendable. Pendant les cinq dernières années, M. le président, ce qui m'avait le plus étonné, ce sont la création et le fonctionnement de trois entités subsidiaires nouvellement créées au CEB. Cela a suscité beaucoup d'interrogations sur le fonctionnement et l'octroi des contrats sans passer par le *Procurement Board*. Mes questions au Parlement sont restées bien des fois sans réponses. Certains vont devoir répondre. Du côté de la *Wastewater Authority*, alors, là, il y a des menus réchauffés, avec l'énième annonce de projet d'assainissement de Pailles, Guibies, et là, on ne précise pas si c'est pour le phase I ou II, et ensuite, le projet *Grand'Baie Sewerage Project*, ô combien important, du point de vue de la protection de l'environnement.

En ce qui concerne l'environnement, c'est un échec. J'ai lu le discours du ministre Sinatambou, qui est d'une quarantaine de pages. Et là, il a consacré qu'un seul paragraphe sur le volet environnement. Un paragraphe de quatre lignes, M. le président ! Pour ne dire que le ministre des Finances a prévu R 20 millions pour *consultancy*, alors qu'il y a tant de rapports de *consultancy* au ministère de l'Énergie. C'est une honte ! Il n'a pas de bilan...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Voici ce que Vassen Kauppymootoo, ingénieur en environnement et océanographe, dans son interview du 26 mai, trois semaines de cela, a dit, au journal *Week-End* –

« Vassen Kauppymootoo, ingénieur en environnement et océanographe :

« Maurice n'a plus le panache d'avant à cause de la dégradation environnementale. » »

Mais la triste vérité est dans son interview dans le cadre du Journée Mondiale de l'Environnement de 2018. Alex Laridon a écrit que Maurice est passé de Maurice Ile Durable à 'Maurice Ile poubelle'. Mais la triste vérité c'est qu'en éliminant le projet Maurice Ile Durable, avec ces 5 'Es' cruciaux, le gouvernement a mis un frein au développement durable de Maurice pour notre génération et les générations futures. Dans le contexte du 50^{ème} anniversaire de notre Indépendance, le gouvernement a reconnu la contribution du projet de Maurice Ile Durable en élevant le Professeur Joël de Ronay au niveau de *GOSK*. Le développement sain au service de toute la population est remis en question. La congestion et la pollution routière sont à leur apogée. Le traitement de déchets, l'île Maurice est sale et c'est maintenant que le Premier ministre le réalise, comme on l'a entendu dans son discours. Et il parle de 3 'R': Réduire, Réutiliser, Recycler. Ce gouvernement a découvert l'Amérique chaque année pendant son mandat, et est toujours très excité par cette découverte. C'est de cela qu'on a eu droit pendant les cinq dernières années. Est-ce qu'on est en train de construire des drains pour nous aider à nous atteler au menace de changement climatique ? J'ai une question demain sur ce sujet. L'environnement physique de nos îles, plages, et lagons, a subi des dégradations importantes.

L'environnement physique de nos îles, plages et lagons a subi des dégradations importantes. Aujourd'hui, le développement inclusif avec la participation de toutes les industries, y compris celle du tourisme, particulièrement menacée, a été un échec et quitte à la gestion optimale du territoire.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the main public infrastructure project that this Government is currently undertaking was a Labour party project. I am referring to the Metro Express Project. Many other road projects as well as the Rivière des Anguilles Dam were also planned by the previous Government. However, I must confess that at no time did we conceive Safe City nor the *complexe sportif de Côte d'Or*, two extensive projects that are certainly not priorities for the population. The cost of these projects will add to the already unsustainable debt level. And what about the Highway Project near the Airport which has cost the taxpayers Rs600 m. and which will benefit only the private sector.

Given that we are in an election year, I would wish the Minister of Public Infrastructure to provide us with the answers to the following questions –

- Why is it that after four and a half years and after Rs700 m. spent, the Terre Rouge/Verdun Road has not been fully repaired? Please don't come and tell that

this is a big scandal. I will tell you about the biggest scandal just now. The Minister of Public Infrastructure will have to explain why is it that after four and a half years, Court proceedings have not been initiated against the Consultants and the Contractor of this road. Time and again, I have come with Parliamentary Questions about this issue. *C'est très, très louche.*

- I hope he will explain how he will resolve the impending traffic congestion problem the Metro Express is likely to cause at the Beau Bassin Roundabout and in Quatre Bornes.
- I hope he will also tell us why is it that after four and a half years, *il n'y a pas encore eu de coup de pioche pour les urban terminals de Victoria et de Immigration Square* et que maintenant seulement qu'on fait mention dans le budget.
- M. le président, alors que dans les autres endroits de l'île les marchands ambulants peuvent travailler en toute liberté, à Port Louis, il y a eu une discrimination sélective vis-à-vis un certain segment de la population.
- What about the *complexe sportif de Côte d'Or*? We were told initially by the Prime Minister that it will cost Rs1 billion. Then, after some time, the Chairman of the project announced that it will cost Rs3.1 billion and now we have learnt that it will cost Rs4.6 billion. This is the biggest scandal of all time.

(Interruptions)

An increase of 360%. Une augmentation de 360% et à notre grande surprise, on apprend que seulement...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask you to resume your seat. Thank you, hon. Osman Mahomed.

Hon. Jhugroo, I have said before, please not from a sitting position. If you have to raise a point of order, you stand up and you raise the point of order. Hon. Osman Mahomed, I have also asked you to address the Chair. Please, address the Chair!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I am addressing you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Ce complexe sportif a connu une augmentation de 360% et à notre grande surprise, on apprend que seulement une partie des travaux sera livrée pour les jeux des îles. Il nous faut prendre en compte la rénovation des facilités sportives existantes au coût de R 600 millions.

(Interruptions)

Le coût total, M. le président, sera de R 5.2 milliards.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Toussaint, not from a sitting position, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Et je ne parle pas du coût d'hébergement des athlètes et d'autres officiels et d'autres dépenses à coût de centaines de millions de roupies. On a endetté notre pays pour financer des folies, des caprices des politiciens en mal de popularité sans se préoccuper du lendemain. C'est scandaleux !

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a few words about the Chagos Archipelago, but I will pass of the list.

Avant de terminer, M. le président, je vais dire quelques mots sur ma circonscription, la circonscription No. 2, qui pendant les cinq dernières années n'a pas connu de grand développement qu'elle a connu en 2005 et 2014 quand le parti travailliste était au pouvoir.

(Interruptions)

Sous le régime travailliste, on a eu la construction du nouvel hôpital Jeetoo et la Médi-clinique. Avec le gouvernement, on n'a pas eu de construction de nouveaux chemins comme celui qui a désenclavé Vallée Pitot en connectant la Rue Boulevard Victoria et la Route Militaire. On n'a pas vu la construction de grandes facilités sportives telles que celui de terrain de foot Serge Bardotier de Tranquebar et celui de la Rue Harris à Ward IV et à Champ de Mars, lesquelles aménités au total dépasseraient les R 3 milliards.

(Interruptions)

R 3 milliards et je pèse mes mots. Mais qu'est-ce qui s'est passé en 2015 et maintenant, c'est l'abandon et le délabrement de ces mêmes facilités. Moi-même j'ai dû poser plusieurs questions au Parlement et c'est comme cela qu'on a pu résoudre le problème du terrain de foot Surtee Sunee à Vallée Pitot qui était imbibé de matière fécale après l'intervention de la NDU après les élections de 2014. C'est suite à mon insistance que le terrain de foot de Tranquebar, Serge Bardotier, s'est doté de lampadaire et que bientôt on aura des vestiaires et des gradins. Trois questions, trois interventions parlementaires!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Osman Mahomed : Les drains construits par l'actuel gouvernement ont été une catastrophe parce que les eaux les plus abondantes ont refoulé sur le chemin, l'eau à par la suite inondé les terrains et les maisons des habitants. Les drains étaient couverts de béton.

(Interruptions)

Les ingénieurs anglais, M. le président, n'étaient pas des bêtes. Quand on regarde ce qu'ils ont fait à Champ de Mars, ils ont couvert les drains et les anglais ont construit et maintenant c'est le débordement à chaque pluie. Ce qui étonne les habitants, c'est la vitesse avec laquelle on est en train d'enlever les pierres taillées de la Rue Desroches à Port Louis et ailleurs dans le Ward IV pour les remplacer par les drains encore plus étroits qu'avant. L'on se pose des questions : où vont ces pierres taillées. C'est ça ce que les gens pensent aujourd'hui. Beaucoup de questions ont été posées par moi et l'honorable Bashir Jahangeer, député de la majorité sur ce qui se passe réellement sur la promenade de santé de Montagne Signaux.

Durant les années du parti travailliste, la circonscription No. 2 a connu des beaux jours sur tout le fond, développement infrastructurel, des opportunités d'emploi, de loisir, un vrai combat contre la drogue a été mené. C'est un fait que la drogue synthétique fait des ravages depuis 2015. Mille jeunes ont été admis, M. le président, dans les hôpitaux en 2017 pour avoir consommé de la drogue synthétique. C'est ce qu'avait indiqué le ministre Anwar Husnoo lors de l'ouverture du centre menu phare de Montagne Longue. La prolifération de l'utilisation de la drogue, surtout la drogue synthétique n'a jamais atteint un tel niveau dans le pays.

Pour conclure, M. le président, c'est trop tard pour ce gouvernement, le temps de partir est arrivé et je ne puis m'empêcher de penser à ce que l'honorable Mahen Jhugroo avait dit lors de son discours inaugural en 2015.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to mention ...

(Interruptions)

Why doesn't he let me talk, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? You have to rule.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, I decide when you talk and when you stop talking, it is my job.

Mr Osman Mahomed: But when it is noisy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, other Members cannot hear. So, why should I speak?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, we hear noise all throughout the debates on both sides of the House, but hon. Members I have been warning you, I don't want any comments from a sitting position. You can resume your seat now.

Mr Osman Mahomed: L'honorable Mahen Jhugroo avait dit dans son discours inaugural en 2015 –

“Madam Speaker, I wish to mention today that during the last electoral campaign – that was in 2015, listen carefully – Dr. Navin Ramgoolam has got to treat l'Alliance Lepep as camion saleté. Let me remind him that this camion saleté with our driver, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, has been able to elect 51 MPs.”

Hormis les transfuges qui ne restent ...

The Deputy Speaker: Can I say something, hon. Member. I have given you a lot of latitude to canvass your arguments. Can I request you to be moderate in your remarks, please?

(Interruptions)

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am citing from Hansard. What seems to be the problem?

(Interruptions)

Ce gouvernement a fait pire que l'ancien gouvernement, ouvertement et sans pudeur.

(Interruptions)

L'ambiance était déjà à la morosité. Depuis Lundi après-midi c'est le désespoir. On sait désormais qu'il n'y a rien plus vraiment à attendre de ce gouvernement et de ce Premier ministre. Cinq ans de perdu ! Ce n'est pas seulement le fait que le pays tournait au ralenti. Ce qui est grave c'est que le pays a reculé en termes de progrès économique, d'équité, de protection de l'environnement et de bonne gouvernance. La population elle réalise l'urgent besoin de se ressaisir parce qu'elle s'est trompé de marchandise qu'on lui a proposée, gouvernement Lepep. Certains vont dire que le mal fait à nos institutions, à nos jeunes et à notre vivre ensemble est tellement grave qu'il sera difficile de remettre le pays sur les rails. Non, M. le président, l'espoir et les rêves sont permis dans ce beau pays. Vivre dans le changement, vivre dans l'alternance, vivre dans le parti travailliste, il y va de notre salut.

Merci.

At 5.24 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.02 p.m. with Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Koonjoo!

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr P. Koonjoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like, at the very outset, congratulate the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the preparation of this Budget and having successfully steered the economy and putting it back on the path of strong sustainable and balanced growth.

Statistics, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, don't lie. According to the world economic outlook for April 2019, after a strong growth in 2017 and early 2018, global economic activity slowed down in the second half of 2018. In spite of the challenging external economic environment, our economy has displayed a good resilience of growth rate reacting 3.8% in 2018. It is evident that measures taken to strengthen the domestic economy in the previous Budgets have borne their fruits. The implementation of major infrastructural projects has not only provided positive economic spin-offs but also had the potential to boost up economic productivity and growth which is necessary for the building of resilience.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same breath, I wish to add that relentless efforts made in addressing our income inequality. For example, the introduction of the minimum wage is not only momentous but also crucial to avoid unwarranted macroeconomic outcomes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are in the right direction. Aware of the fact that the unemployment rate has reached its lowest level since 2001, it is evident that the bold measures taken on various fronts by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development have successfully shifted the economy on a sustainable path.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that our ambitions are to be materialized by consolidating and involving existing sectors while propelling emerging ones in the future. In this context, the Ocean Economy is seen as one of the stronghold of the Government Programme 2015-2019. Ocean Economy is called upon to play a vital role in our development strategy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ocean economy is emerging at a key pillar by opening new frontiers of development. Since December 2014, various actions had been taken to facilitate trade and investment in the ocean economy. Strategies have been revisited to boost up the

existing sectors namely fisheries, tourism and maritime sectors. With a view to reinforce our position, appropriate measures have been taken to promote emerging sectors such as marine renewable energy, marine ICT, deep ocean water applications, ocean protection and marine bio technology in order to set the scene for Mauritius to play a leading role in this region.

Concurrently, the World Bank Report entitled the Ocean Economy in Mauritius making it happen, making it last, has concluded that the doubling of the GDP contribution of the ocean economy is achievable. The key areas, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of intervention for supporting the development of ocean economy are firstly, individual sectoral investment and secondly, the need to address the number of cross sectoral issues that are essential to ensure an attractive business environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before coming to key budgetary measures relating to my Ministry, I would like to reply to the comments made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition - unfortunately, he is not here – on the number of jobs created in the Ocean Economy. I wish to emphasize that one of the objectives set in the economic mission statements of Vision 2030, that is, the creation of 25,000 jobs in the ocean economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 25,000 jobs include both direct and indirect jobs within a period of five years. It is worth noting that every direct job created in the ocean economy entails a multiplier effect on indirect employment. With a view to achieving this objective, we focus on both facilitating investment in the ocean economy and also enhance the employability of the youngsters to join the cruise industry in order to address young unemployment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Statistics Mauritius, as at now, does not have any statistics on job creation in the ocean economy sector, but it has only an estimate of employment in the sector based on the annual survey of employment and earnings. Based on that estimate, employment in the ocean economy sector stood at 40,200 for the year 2017. I am pleased to inform the House that these figures are from the statistics of the country.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, don't interrupt his speech please.

Mr Koonjoo: I am sorry Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. From information obtained from some sectors related to the ocean economy mainly Fisheries Training and Extension Centre (FiTEC), cruise sector, cooperatives and other number of direct jobs created during the period 2015 to 2018 stood up at 7,092. The breakdown of the 7,092 jobs includes 5,871

Mauritians who are currently employed in the cruise ships. It represents an export of services under mode four.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is important to note that figures exclude employment in our sectors such as ship building, maintenance and repairs, private maritime training academy, cargo handling corporation limited, Mauritius ports authority tourism bulk cargo, operators and distributors cleaning and forwarding agents, ship handlers, boat builders, fish processing industry among others. It is only the fish processing company; we have about 12,000 people working there only.

The hon. Members may wish to note that it is a fact besides the direct employment created in the sector, there are also indirect jobs created by each subsector of the ocean economy. It is worldwide like this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In Mauritius, based on activities being carried out, significant numbers of indirect jobs are being created. For example, in the fish processing industry alone, one of the main stages of the ocean economy, it has been estimated that for every direct job, two to four indirect jobs are created. The broad employment multiplier indicator used in this subsector is that for every direct job created, three to five jobs are created economy-wide subject to all processing taking place locally, and that is important. In this regard, we are encouraging new entrants to move to the value chain.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fisheries sector will continue to contribute significantly to our socio-economic development and food security. And this is worldwide, especially in developing countries and in Africa. In the wake of the blue economy initiative, attempts to harness its full potential have remained our priority. The Fisheries sector is poised to undergo profound transformation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This would be driven by exploitation of untapped fisheries resources, shifting market conditions and technological breakthrough as well as sectorial and trade policies. Such transformation is clearly visible in the latest fisheries status statistics published by the Statistics of Mauritius.

The hon. Members may wish to note that despite tough economic conditions in our key markets, the seafood sector has registered robust growth rate for the third year in a row, reaching 6.3% last year, the fifth exports account for around 20% of national visible exports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2018, total exports of fish and fish products generated revenue of Rs14.9 billion showing an upward trend. More importantly, domestic exports, which represent the bulk of total exports, have reached Rs10.4 billion. The transshipment of the fish at Port Louis has remained buoyant and exceeded 54,000 tonnes in 2018. With the

construction of the proposed new fishing port announced in this budget and the new budget measures relating to the setting up of a fish auction market, goes well with the fishing transshipment activity in Port Louis. This is expected to grow significantly in the near future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, local production has registered a double-digit growth for the third year in a row, increasing around 29% in 2018. Indeed, total fish production reached 29,255 tonnes in 2018 compared to 12,652 tonnes in 2015, representing an increase of 130%.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, artisanal fisheries is high on the agenda of this Ministry and the country. It contributes to food security and poverty alleviation. My Ministry has taken several measures to empower the fishermen and these include, among others –

- (i) A Canot Scheme that was introduced in 2015 with 45 registered fishermen as beneficiaries in a grant of Rs200,000 for each canot;
- (ii) A scheme of the construction of semi-industrial boats less than 24 metres with four fishermen cooperative societies as beneficial and a grant of Rs4 m. for the cooperative society;
- (iii) Procurement and distribution of ice boxes is already delivered to all registered artisanal fishermen to help them reduce post-harvest losers and improve the quality of fish caught in the trade, and
- (iv) Training of 85 eligible applicants for registration of new fishermen after successful completion of their general fisher course.

As a result 85 of the fishermen cards were issued and a batch of 50 fishermen will start the course very soon, and we should not forget that for ten years in the past, there was not a single card given to a fisherman. Not a single card!

Furthermore, for the first time in history, all registered fishermen will benefit from a group Life Insurance Scheme, it is already done. This will cover any accident and loss of life at sea. The contract has already been awarded to Sicom Ltd. In the same vein, following the introduction of a Primary School Achievement Award, that is, PSAC, the whole scholarship Scheme was revisited and anomalies existing in other categories of scholarship were corrected.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, fishermen children attending any courses from post-PSAC to post-graduate level is eligible for a scholarship. Formerly, it was only for children sitting for the sixth standard, CPE. Only that! Now, it is up to the University level, and this is

a very big help for those people who are beyond the ladder of poverty. Those who do not know about poverty, they won't understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am sorry. It is worth noting that scholarship for attending vocational courses has been reviewed to cover long duration courses at various levels.

Since 2015, 1,389 scholarships have been awarded to children of fishermen to pursue their education in the tune of around Rs7 m. offered by the Fishermen Welfare Fund. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the current budget, the bad weather allowance has been increased by around 10% from Rs310 to Rs340 in 2019, this year. But it is interesting to note that the hon. Leader of the Opposition stated that fishermen would not be able to buy two cigarettes with this Rs30 increase. Perhaps he does not know the value of Rs3.

In 2014, when this Government took office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the bad weather allowance was at Rs258 per day and we should also know that bad weather allowance is only distributed in Mauritius, not anywhere in the world. Only in Mauritius! Since then, this allowance has constantly increased every year until 2019 to reach Rs310 in January, and then, Rs340 as from the current budget, representing thus an increase of 32%.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the bank's fisheries have been revitalised as evidenced by the strong growth registered in the local production. It is worth noting that the number of fishing vessels operating in our banks increase from 27 in 2014 to 43 in 2018 and it's going to increase further in the coming years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the industrial segment improvedly adopting a three-pronged approach, namely –

- (i) development of our national fleet. We are very rapidly going through it;
- (ii) enhancing the competitiveness of our seafood hub by pursuing the strategic objectives identified in the National Export Strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, and
- (iii) promoting the development of aquaculture.

Indeed, in view of the harnessing the full potential of the seafood sector, we are focusing on the supply side of business environment, market access and social and environmental constraints.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through the competent authority, has held to subhead our market diversification through the signing of an MoU with emerging economies.

I wish to highlight that a reciprocal fishing agreement has been signed and ratified with the country of Seychelles to allow vessels from both countries to fish in the EEZ. We should remember that the EEZ, we are partly shared by Seychelles and Mauritius together.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Members of the House may be aware that aquaculture is growing rapidly worldwide. Likewise, my Ministry is laying much emphasis on this promising sector. It is important to note that the signing of the first deed of concession of an aquaculture project has brought structural reforms in the sector by encouraging both local and foreign investment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figures speak for themselves. According to latest statistics available at the AFRC, aquaculture production in terms of volume expanded from 774 tonnes in 2014 to around 1,250 tonnes in 2017, first representing an unprecedented growth of 62%. In the same vein, it is worth noting that oyster production is a real success story in Mauritius and we are encouraging them. This segment has recorded a triple digit growth in around 306% group exponentially from 85,000 units in 2014 to 600,000 units in 2018.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before moving to the new budgetary measures, the House may wish to note that in line with the announcement of aquaponics in the last budget, with a view to boosting the SME sector and empowering entrepreneurs, Albion Fisheries Research Centre has constructed an aquaponics shed, the training of fish batch of entrepreneurs will start soon. I am pleased to announce that the new Fisheries Bill will be presented in the House in the coming weeks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the setting up of the online and physical fish auction market, as announced in this Budget, shall be a major development. This will redynamise the competitiveness of the seafood industry as well as boost fisheries transshipment activities, and really it has come at an opportune time as the fisheries sector is expected to undergo profound structural transformation in the way of the blue economy initiative. This project shall leverage our competitive advantage in areas, such as IT, trading, shipping and connectivity finance and seafood.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cognizant of the fact that fish stocks are threatened by climate change, ocean, acidification, IUU fishing, overfishing and pollution, optimal, efficient and careful development and exploitation of marine resources remain at the core of any strategic development of ocean economy. In this context, the stock assessment of marine

resources announced in this Budget is crucial to identify untapped resources for consolidating and diversifying our seafood industry as well as sustainably managed and protect our marine resources.

In the same vein, the construction of the breakwater at Fort William which will shelter around 120 fishing vessels will create a fully functional fishing port. This facility will enable the country to capture a higher fish tonnage and enhance the attractiveness of the proposed fish auction market.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a bid to facilitate empowerment in the maritime sector, my Ministry elaborated a comprehensive training strategy to enable greater access to employment by our youth in the expanding maritime sector, including the cruise industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, addressing youth unemployment, in particular those with low educational attainment, was a challenge for this Government. Although there is a huge job demand from the cruise industry, in particular the hospitality segment and the intake at the MMTA. We know that, in the beginning at the MMTA, it was very low, but now, it has taken its *envol de croisière* and they are doing very well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was informed that fees payable by students for training as well as undergoing medical test was excessive, thus youngsters from poor families cannot afford such training. The course fees for STWOC which is very, very important and before, sea training was 11,000 and 40,000 respectively, excluding the medical test fee which could vary between Rs6,000 to Rs12,000 in private clinics. Enhancing the employability of the youngsters being an utmost priority for this Government, the following actions were taken and include, amongst others, the fees were brought down to just a nominal fee of Rs2,000.

Provision has also been made to medical test at public hospitals against a payment of only Rs2,000. We are also partnered with the local recruiting agencies to facilitate and enhance the recruitment and placement of Mauritian seafarer boats, cruise ships as well as opening up of marine trading market to the private sector as well.

It is worth noting, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that as at date, out of 6,623 trained, 4,762 were trained by the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy (MMTA). The remaining 1,681 candidates who have been trained by Acropolis, it is a foreign company, but handled by Mauritians. They have either embarked on-board or have directly or indirectly obtained their embarkation cards. We can gauge the positive impact of these measures in order to encourage more people to join this promising sector. The House would recall that we introduced a

landmark measure to exempt seafarers from payment of income tax; no seafarer is paying income tax. In the same vein, Seafarers' Welfare Scheme has been revisited, and it is worth noting that the medical treatment grant has been extended to the seafarer's spouse as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear today that these strategies have paid off as thousands of Mauritian youngsters are working on cruise ships and our objectives set up in the Economic Mission Statement of Vision 2030, proudly put forward by the Rt. hon. Mentor, have been met, and today is flourishing.

I would like to emphasise that investment of skills will remain a priority. Indeed, under the National Ocean Council, an Action Plan for capacity building and training in the ocean economy was elaborated and led by the Vice-Chancellor of Mauritius in order to meet our short, medium and long-term objective, and I say thank you, Mr Chancellor of Mauritius.

Concerning research and development, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an MoU has been signed between the MOI and the MIO of Goa for collaboration in research and knowledge transfer.

Moreover, the House may wish to note that the Government of Australia provided financial assistance for the acquisition of a new multipurpose vessel and the same is expected to be delivered around September, this year. So, in September, we are going to have several issues which will be very pleasant to Mauritius, not only the arrival of the Pope, but also the vessel.

It is worth noting that this state-of-art vessel would enable us to carry research activities in distant waters and better explore our maritime territory. In order to boost research and development capacity in the ocean economy, the proposed institution reform announced in the last budget is being implemented. I wish to inform the House that two consultants were recruited by FAO to work on the implementation of this measure. The consultants are now finalising their report and probably they will be in Mauritius before the end of the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has taken various initiatives and commitments to protect and conserve the ocean ecosystem, such as the ongoing octopus closed season implemented since 2015, coral reef restoration, marine ranching programme. All these are at the same time in force.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coastal communities and marine tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystem. It is comforting to note that in this current Budget, funding will be available to restore the degraded reefs and our marine ecosystem as well as national protocol

will be developed in order to control the population density of crown of thorns sea star which is a natural predator for reef building corals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that last year, Italy signed an MoU with Mauritius on the co-financed various activities. These activities include the promotion, tidal energy, an establishment of a pilot tidal energy project.

On a concluding note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the creation of dedicated Ministry of the Ocean Economy with wide responsibilities clearly demonstrates that we are at the real vanguard of these new developments to explore seriously the ocean, and also to grow the economy as well as tackling challenges on our economic development agenda, such as food and energy insecurity, climate change impacts, unemployment, poverty and so on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that the ocean economy is firmly rooted and is already emerging as economic pillar as well as a key player to move the next level of development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on this note, allow me to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, once more again, for his bold measures taken, and I must admit that I have seen a lot of changes in this young man. I know him as a young boy and he was quite timid, now he has become a furious man and he means business, he listens...

(Interruptions)

Not that business.

I know that time has made him, not really time, but circumstances also, and I must thank the Opposition, the way they treated him in Mauritius, outside Mauritius how mean they were, I can't understand how people, who sit in this august Assembly, can crack jokes on a Prime Minister. It's important to say it...

(Interruptions)

But, he has met with difficulties, I must congratulate his mother, his wife and the children, because they have stood side by side with him.

I tell you one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is in Bhojpuri, in Hindi, I hope people will understand. There is saying, long time back old people used to say about it that *katore pe katora beta baap se bhi gora...*

(Interruptions)

Yes, I'll translate. *Katora* means it's like bowl. One is in the other one, and the son is...

(Interruptions)

Katore pe katora beta baap se bhi Gora.

(Interruptions)

Yes! And I said that sometime back, that he is going to do better than his father. This is my belief, without offending, Sir. It is a pride for you.

(Interruptions)

Yes! You should be proud. Every father should be proud.

(Interruptions)

Hence, I would like to emphasise that in line with the Vision 2030, getting us from where we were and where we are today, in 2030 and beyond, it requires farsighted vision, bold actions and ability to deliver performance standards at all levels which only this Government and this Prime Minister have the guts and the courage to do it. Good luck, my dear friend!

Looking back to the Minister of Finance, he has been able to accomplish so much on various fronts in a relatively short period of time, and more importantly, his determination to fight against social injustice in a challenging economic environment. This is laudable, exemplary and worthy of emulation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the late former South African President, Nelson Mandela, once said, and I quote –

“The Indian Constitution provides inspiration in preparation of a new South African Constitution. We hope that our efforts in formulation of a new constitution will reflect the work and ideas of this great son of India. Dr. Ambedkar’s contribution to social justice and to the upliftment of the oppressed is worthy of emulation.”

I have no doubt his legacy will endure for forever as history always is written by achievers.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

(6.45 p.m.)

Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): M. le président, d'emblée laissez-moi féliciter le Premier ministre pour son Budget 2019-2020. Un Budget équilibré, un Budget qui tient à cœur les plus démunis, un Budget de continuité.

M. le président, mes honorables collègues ont d'ores et déjà énuméré les mesures phares de ce Budget. Néanmoins, il y a deux mesures qui me tiennent à cœur ; le premier, c'est la mise en place d'un *Food Agency Standard* pour certifier les produits alimentaires Halal ou pas. Depuis 10 ans les autres gouvernements ont essayé de le faire, mais ils n'ont jamais pu le faire. Mais ce Premier ministre, il l'a fait dans ce Budget, et aussi la construction d'un incinérateur pour les carcasses des animaux, ce qui est très bien pour notre environnement.

M. le président, comme d'habitude, dans chaque exercice budgétaire, *I do some sugar coating. What does it mean? I propose some amendments, some proposals to the Budget.* Mais avant cela, j'aimerais donner la réplique à mon ami, l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan. A chaque fois, il critique *the PMO's advisers*. But let me tell him, one man who really marked my life is Jean-Mée Desveaux. What was his salary? What was his action? He was like a super Minister and all CEOs who have to take a decision in their institution had to go through him. And one of them was the Montagne Jacquot project water treatment plant. I remember, at that time, I was a contractor with the Japanese company. And that company was the lowest bidder, and that man, he supported IBL. He did everything to curb that project and cancel it. And there was re-tender because he did not want to give the one that was deserved to get the project. Now, we are talking about advisers from our side. We have to think about Mr Jean-Mée Desveaux. He was a super Minister! He was on all the Boards. He was on all the Utility Boards. He was a superman, *missié konn tou!*

Now, concerning my friend, hon. Osman Mahomed, he was talking about Côte d'Or, opacity. But let me remind him, at the time of the construction of a new terminal Airport of Mauritius, which was financed by the Government of China, was there a tender? It was given to a certain company, as recommended by the Government of China. And who was getting the job there, only people from Triolet. No one from my constituency! And it's normal, when a Government finance a certain project, especially a Government like China, they want to see only Chinese companies competing. And that is why you have in Côte d'Or the Chinese company that got the project. There is nothing strange. And don't forget, the airport was like *une passoire*.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Jahangeer: When we came in Government, we had to do some repair work at the Airport of Plaisance. He was also talking about taking Rs18 billion here and there, but what about the Rs31 billion that were taken by BAI outside Mauritius? Where is this money?

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: He talked about Plaine-Sophie wind farm.

Ce contrat a été signé en 2013 par l'ancien gouvernement. But then, again, why waited for now to say: 'Retrieve, cancel the project'? If a contractor is not performing, six months were more than enough to cancel the contract. They should have cancelled at that time. And the price that we were paying was supposed to buy from the promoter, Rs25 per kilowatt. Never heard about this! For a wind farm, look now how much we are buying. Much lesser! So, when he starts talking certain things, he should think about what happened during his Government.

Now, in 2013, *il y avait mort d'hommes à Port Louis*. He was talking about inefficient drainage system. We have built so many drains in this Government and we have never heard of *mort d'hommes*. Because the drainage system is good, it is improving and we are still working on it.

Let me now go to what I said about the sugar coating. The first point I would like to take, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is storage battery. You have heard about Emirate Stadium for Arsenal and this stadium doesn't take a single kilowatt-hour from the British grid because they have solar panel which charge a certain quantity of battery, 5MW and they use the battery to light up the stadium. On a larger scale, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is tackling the problem by setting up certain storage battery across the island soon. In the budget, it is written 18MW but what I am talking about is the domestic application of the storage battery. There are many houses nowadays that have solar panel on their house. But this solar panel works only during the day. At night, you don't have sun. So, what they are doing actually is that they are using up, but during the day the consumption of electricity is not as much as after five or six o'clock in the evening. That's where the peak starts. So, what I am proposing and what has been designed by the CEO of – actually it is a by-product of TESLA, the CEO Elon Musk, he was investigating on the electric car and as a by-product, they designed a battery which is 50cm high, 30m width and this battery is placed, a power wall ...

(Interruptions)

Exactly! So, you just hang it on the wall. It is like a painting and you plug in your cable to it. This battery, you can remove it, take it to your bungalow, if it is charged, you can take it to any place. And that will run on a house of air-conditioner or the lighting system, this battery can be used. This battery was invented by USA; it is copied now by the Korean, the Japanese and with the same capacity.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Do not disturb the orator, please!

Mr Jahangeer: But the only problem to this battery is the initial price. It is around Rs100,000. So, *comment on peut amorcer ce prix-là*. This battery lasts for a minimum of 10 years. So, what you can do, you have the solar panel, charge your battery. At night you use only the battery. So, in this way, you will bring down our carbon emission, you will also bring down the amount of energy produced by the fossil sources like diesel and things like that. What I am suggesting is that we have to come up with a Home Battery Scheme either the Government buys in bulk, or it leases the battery to people who have solar panel on their house. And I would like to ask the Prime Minister to consider this proposal.

Next, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a saying 'water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink'. And I have been saying that for the last three budgets we need to construct a water desalination plant, minimum of 10,000 m³. We cannot live in an island, we are surrounded by water and every summer we hear the same thing, we have to cut the water supply, we have drought, there is no rain. So, at least, the water desalination plant will take over and whatever we produce in excess, we can sell to the agricultural sector or we can export to Madagascar, yes why not?

What I would like also to see is incentive for recycling of grey water. What is grey water? Grey water is your water coming from your sink, water coming when you have bath, water coming from your washing machine and also you collect this water through a filter and you pump it back to your toilet.

I propose that this should be a mandatory condition for new houses, because, right now, if you see your bill, you are paying water, 50% to wastewater, 50% for the water even though you are not consuming that much of water as wastewater but you are still paying that. We would like to have some incentives, reduce the wastewater bill if the new houses can

afford of such systems where they recycle the water through a filter and back to the toilet tank. This means you will save more natural resources.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the budget, the hon. Prime Minister gave more incentives for tax deduction with regard to sale of existing houses or apartments. I will go a little further. There is a law in Europe since 2009 that anyone who sells a house or an apartment, an existing one, he has to provide the potential buyer with *un certificat de conformité*. What does it mean? It means that the water system is okay, the electricity is okay, the gas system is okay, why? Because very often it is unfair that you buy an apartment and you see small leakages in the wall, you think it is a small repair work to be done and what happens is that actually the whole house is coming from top, from the ceiling, it is leaking. So, we should avoid such kinds of situations and be fair to all potential buyers, that is, we make it a law that anyone selling a house or an apartment, must be certified by a registered engineer that the existing services are okay, it is very good, very important this one.

Even the presence of asbestos in certain old buildings has to be certified that this building is free from asbestos. So, the Ministry of Land and Housing should come with such a law to amend it, especially for the wellness of new buyers of new apartments and houses.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this point in time, we can't play. We have to ask ourselves after coming all this time: are we in a position to have a second mandate? Now we can approach this subject en *trois volets* –

- (1) of what metal is the Prime Minister made of;
- (2) what is le *bilan national* ? *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait pendant toutes ces années, et*
- (3) bien sûr, le bilan individuel de l'élu, qu'est-ce qu'il a contribué au bilan national?

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the Prime Minister, we all know what happened to him when he was the Minister of Technology. He resigned by himself from this case of MedPoint but still he continued to monitor his team. He holds strongly on his team although he was nothing, he was not even a Minister, he was just a normal Member of Parliament. Then what I like also, what we can see also from him, he embodies what we call, *mens sana in corpore sano* means a sound mind lies in a sound body. You can see him, he is interested in sports, he cares about his physical and that's very important because when a Prime Minister is sick, he is absent from the Parliament for a long time, its waste of public money

but we don't see our Prime Minister absent, I don't remember that he was absent because of health because he is always practising sports and he keeps himself in good shape. We have seen also this Prime Minister, he has been heading all committees with regard to the implementation of a national drainage system, of NDU projects, of infrastructure projects. He oversees everything and makes sure that the projects have started.

We also know about his victory on Chagos. He is after the unconditional retreat of the US and the British from the Chagos Island. As an individual, he is admired by the whole population for his achievement and also for his accessibility. I can tell you, if you ask for an appointment if he does not give it today, he will give it tomorrow but he will call. If you call him, he doesn't answer but he will reply back tomorrow but he does it. That's what we like with him and because, of course, of his strong character.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, what about *le bilan national*? Many of the Ministers have already talked about their own achievement. In 2015, during the first Budget exercise, we found out that we were at the crossroad of our destiny; one of which would lead to success, we did not know. Are we on the road to success? Now, we started a mandate with a plan investment of approximately Rs135 billion in public infrastructure; both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues. Indeed, during the first two years, people were discouraged because nothing was coming out from the ground. Even in my Constituency: 'Ah! You are doing nothing. Your Government is doing nothing.' Of course, we are doing nothing because we had to clean the mess left by the previous Government. The Bagatelle Dam has to be repaired. The first Ring Road also had to be repaired. We have Verdun link road which also had to be repaired. So, when you look at it, of course we had to spend time in rearranging, in repairing, that's why we could not do anything. Of course, there was the BAI saga also. We had to clean up the mess in the bank, in the insurance company.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let us look at the public infrastructure. We had constructed the Decaen bypass which is easing the traffic flow to the city centre. We had built the Airport bypass which results in zero traffic in that area. Of course, we have completed the Verdun link road and we have completed so far 75% of the Metro Express system, a new mode of transportation which will be introduced to the people of Mauritius. We have started the Phoenix flyover and almost 10% work has been completed. Moreover, part of a decongestion programme such as the foundation of A1- M1 link is already laid. The trunk road network across the island is being upgraded beside the construction of small bridges in different villages.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when it comes to law and order, we had been able to intercept tons of hard drugs which would have been fatal to our people, to our youth. We have already launched a tender to avail ourselves of our Police forces, of a mass spectrometer to detect drug users whilst driving their car which was impossible before.

When it comes to education, this is a sector where we put maximum emphasis because progress of a country lies on how the people are educated. We have been able to implement the 9-year schooling system. We have completed the construction of three technical colleges which are now in full gear training new technicians, meeting the requirement that was missing especially what we call the mismatch of the labour force. We have also the free university education which the Prime Minister gave us last year.

With regard to the public health, this is a venue where improvements are very tangible. We constructed an extension of Victoria Hospital for special cares. New medical units have been extended in different hospitals over the island such as the renal care. The new ENT hospital is being completed in Vacoas and a new hospital is being constructed in Flacq. The quality of the medical services to the public itself has improved where the public does not have to wait long to be taken care of.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you consider the agricultural sector - I remember myself, during the campaign, we saw that the tea industry was fading out and when we took up Government, thanks to hon. Mahen Seeruttun who really did something to revive the tea factory.

(Interruptions)

I will come to it. Now...

The Deputy Speaker: No crosstalking!

Mr Jahangeer: We have also the bio farming in Britannia, in my Constituency that he has initiated. There is also a department investigating new fibre strains to produce bagasse with more calorific values. Mr Deputy Speaker, as far as artificial intelligence, we have a structure already set up to meet the demand for the coming years. However, in the case of electricity and water, we should not forget that we started our mandate in 2015; we had a critical situation of blackout threat. Hon. Bérenger said: we were walking on a tight rope at that time. Yes, but the Deputy Prime Minister saw the problem with the new power station in Saint Louis and, of course, we have other renewable power stations that are being set - the

wind farm in Roche Noires. We have two or three solar power plants that have been set up across the island; in Henrietta, near Jinfei, near Triolet.

In the water sector, we promise 24/7 water distribution. Yes, we are a little far from it. I will explain you why and which is not beyond our control. At the time, in the previous Government, there was a Singaporean Consultant who did a study with regard to the replacement of the defective pipes. But what the report did not do; did not mention is that the corrosion of these pipes did not stop at the trunk, at the main pipes; it went to the distributed area. That is why we are taking so much time to correct this problem of defective pipes. We have achieved approximately 400 kilometres of trunk pipes but we still have to do more to complete the repair and replacement of these defective pipes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we should not forget that, as far as Rodrigues is concerned, we have set up a challenging project, that is, the laying of a submarine fibre optic cable from Mauritius to Rodrigues and for high-speed internet facilities. We did it successfully. Then, of course, now in Rodrigues, you have also the project for extension of a new runway but from a first study, the ground was not strong enough to support this kind of structure. Now a new place has been earmarked to implement the project, to extend the airway.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when it comes to unemployment, the Opposition side said that we promised zero unemployment.

Yes we did. We have zero unemployment in the construction sector. Get me now a mason, a plumber, an electrician, we cannot get them because we have to import from Bangladesh, from India, from China. You cannot get them because the construction sector is so developed now; it is in full gear that we have lack of local expertise for such sector.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Why do you have to disturb the hon. Member?

Mr Jahangeer: We say *tel père, tel fils*. *M. le président, dans les années 2000, le Premier ministre d'alors, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, came with a project to set up a cyber-city in Ebène. What did the Opposition said? Ene éléphant blanc.* What happened today? Get me a square metre empty there, you cannot get. You have about 25,000 people every day going to the Ebène city. That is a full success. This shows his vision, this is true vision. And now, we have another one coming up through hon. Pravind Jugnauth. It is the safe city.

Laissez-moi, M. le président, dissiper quelques malentendus qui ont été prononcés par l'opposition, d'abord le coût d'une caméra à R 5 m. Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait, ils ont pris la valeur du contrat, R 20 milliards, divisée par 4000 caméras et ils ont bien sûr R 5 m. C'est extrêmement faux parce que quand vous regardez certains structures que vous voyez dans les routes principales, il y a *speed camera*, il y a *facial recognition camera*, il y a les transmetteurs, il y a des *data collectors*. Ce n'est pas uniquement qu'on regarde et on dit il y a une caméra là, non ce n'est pas ça. Il y a aussi le *software*, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Jahangeer: Et bien sûr, certes, il y a aussi le coût du contracteur. On ne peut pas avoir ça gratuitement, il y a le contracteur qu'on doit payer. Donc, ça c'est la première chose. Et aussi quelqu'un avait dit du côté de l'Opposition, ça a été construit, ça a été mise en place parce que c'est pour *track down the politicians*. Let me tell politicians, there are many ways to escape a camera. It is not my duty to tell them how to escape it. You can sit down in a taxi, you can wear wig, you can do many things. You can change the name plate of a car but still you have - I am not here to advice you how to escape the tracking of a camera.

Next time, when you go to Dubai, there is a street called Sheik Zayed Road. You will see a robot, a policeman going up and down in the street saying marhaba! Marhaba! Marhaba! How are you! But at the same time, they are not just saying that, they are taking your picture and comparing it with listed person. Is it not safe? If we have people walking in the street, they immediately capture the picture and compare with people who have been listed, who are here in Mauritius. Is it not safe for the people of Mauritius?

Moreover, the safe city concept is not just to have cameras or to prevent terrorism, it is also to promote interoperability across law enforcement and emergency services. If on the road, you have a severe car accident, this will be connected to the related services, the fire rescue department and all this will be interconnected. They will despatch immediately the people needed on ground due to the accident. They also have sensors, this bar, to see that there is no flood happening in the street. If there is a flood, immediately they will warn the concerned department, making the city safe to walk for both men and women at night. One day, all of you will thank the hon. Prime Minister that they can walk at night at any time because big brother is watching you, is caring for you.

We have also the introduction of minimum wage salary and the negative income tax which gives a very huge relief to many Mauritians.

M. le président, je suis retourné à l'île Maurice depuis 1995 et j'étais témoin de plusieurs gouvernements, y compris le MSM, MMM, le Parti travailliste, but never in that period I have seen a Government capable of time compression. We have compressed time, we have achieved so much in three years that we are proud today to reply to the second point. To come to what I said, if we are going to have another mandate, the second point is *le bilan national*. So, I can say that we are proud today, we have achieved so much and we are ready. So, we have passed the second stage.

Now, the third stage, *le bilan personnel*. What has *l'écu du peuple accompli*? I have set 182 PQs and I have addressed this august Assembly. 182 PQs for these five years! 182!

(Interruptions)

No, I said, I set, I did not say withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: You don't have to reply to them, you address to the Chair.

Mr Jahangeer: Yes. Now, these PQs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are not to attack anybody personal. They are here, whether certain institutions are not doing their job properly, which is to push. That was the main idea for these PQs. I had eight interventions with regard to Bill represented to this august House, related to my professional background and I have only three overseas missions, regretfully.

Now, in my constitution, Constitution No.13, we have implemented 99 projects with the help of hon. Boygah. We have implemented 99 projects which concern roads, drains, bus shelters, lighting of football grounds both in Rivière du Poste, Bois Cheri, La Flora, in all of these villages and we are now about to complete an incinerator in Souillac and in Grand Bois.

Coming to the Rivière des Anguilles dam, this project is not our project. This project was designed by the Labour Party, but they have never been able to implement it. We are going forward with the project, we have now finished the consultancy stage and we are about to issue tender next year. We will now choose the consultancy. As regards the Rivière des Anguilles Swimming pool, same, the original design was from Labour Party, but they have never accomplished, they have never completed the Rivière des Anguilles Swimming pool.

(Interruptions)

Yes, the previous Government did not do anything at all. Now, they are telling us we are delaying. Yes, we better take time slowly, but surely. We cannot be in the same situation as Bagatelle Dam, having a dam which looks like *une passoire*. *Non*, we want something which is good. We want to make sure the technical studies are done properly. That is why we are taking time. Now, it is completed. Now, we can say we are going forward next year with the Rivière des Anguilles Dam.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Jahangeer: Now, we have completed *les trois volets*. Le leader du parti, le bilan national et le bilan individuel. Now, we are left with one obstacle: the opposition.

M. le president, what do we have? We have, on my left wing of the opposition, *jolie mamzel ki inn trouve enn joli dalon*. On the upper side, we hear *les rugissements du lion par écho ou par résonance*. The lower side, we have the MMM in standby mode waiting for new energies to reboot! I don't see opposition!

So, my conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, we are now on the industry 4.0.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Jahangeer: We are already in the era of industry 4.0. In six months' time, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, we are embarking on *l'Alliance Lepep, 2.0*.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will now resume her seat.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramkaun!

(7.25 p.m.)

Mr S. Ramkaun (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Madam Speaker, first of all, on behalf of the population of Mauritius, and in particular the inhabitants of the Constituency No. 5, and on my own behalf, I congratulate the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for having presented this visionary budget for the

financial year 2019-2020. It is undeniable that the people living in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega, plus the Outer Islands, welcome the measures announced in the Budget. These people are really delighted and are praising the measures taken to solace the day to day life of the common people. Everybody is aware of the series of highly positive measures which will considerably alleviate their household burden. This positive and vibrant mood following the Budget Speech reminds me of 10 December 2014, when this Government came into power, when the Opposition party, claiming 40 plus 40 meaning victory, were perplex, and this the case again today, nearing the end of the 5th year which is a very good sign for this side of the House.

Madam Speaker, in clear terms, the inflation rate is under a full check and control in the able hands and vigilant eyes of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. All the economic indicators, which are directly and indirectly related to the enhancement of the quality of life of the people, are operating in a positive direction. The investors, the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs, the self-employed, those involving family cooperative businesses and a myriad of trades find themselves in a conducive and business-friendly atmosphere, as a result of the new measures announced in this Budget.

Trade unions and work councils are also very thankful to the Government for having taken on board several measures which are in favour of the employees of various sectors. Female workers, retired, disabled and senior citizens, the children, babies, students at all levels and all the inclusive population have been taken care of in this Budget. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance reserves qudos of the people when he made himself directly involved in the two activities, which will surely have an impact on the way of living of Mauritians and people of the Outer Islands -

- (1) the practice of physical exercise, and
- (2) the cleanliness campaign.

People are already responding positively to the call of the Prime Minister, who, as a role model, did the exemplary 26 tours of the track at Maryse Justin Stadium. And, I am sure, the previous Prime Minister of the ex-Government shall not succeed in even a single of this tour.

Madam Speaker, the following social measures announced in the Budget, namely, reduction in the price of LPG, reduction in retail price of mogas and diesel, increase in old-age pension, widows' pension and disabled persons' pension; reduction in indirect taxes and levies on a number of products of daily consumption, free access to broadband for those

registered under the Social Register of Mauritius, facilities targeted in the middle class to invest in their own home.

Madam Speaker, the other side of the House has been stunned by the above social measures which have been proved to increase the feel-good factor in the country. This Budget has given a boost, as in the previous Budget exercise of this Government to all the economic sectors, amongst others, information technology and Fintec, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, micro and small enterprises, mid-market enterprises, airport and ports, infrastructures. This Budget is also expanding our economic space by –

- (1) the setting up a regional value chain for liquefied national gas with Mozambique;
- (2) developing a health city of 80 hectares of land in Madagascar, and
- (3) implement projects to take advantage for the industrial and technology park in Kenya.

These measures will, no doubt, foster value creation of our economy and will create jobs for our citizens offshore.

Madam Speaker, as a responsible Government and the *voeux* taken by our Prime Minister to combat drug trafficking, which is a worldwide concern, this Budget has considered securing our border and combating drugs by –

- (i) making provision to set up a national drug secretariat;
- (ii) making provision to purchase equipment to detect and sanction drivers under drug influence, and
- (iii) making provision for the purchase of specialised vehicles and security as well as communication equipment for ADSU.

However, it is deplorable that the opposition finds measures announced in the Budget as *sans éclat et fade, nanien pas sérieux, pas finn capav avancer*. The Opposition does not have anything positive to say on the special holiday decreed on September 9, 2019, during the Holy Papal visit to Mauritius; reduction in prices of LPG, diesel, mogas and other measures announced by the Government in favour of *ti-dimounes*. The proposal for the setting of mediclinics, health units, sports complexes at some specific regions are very laudable initiatives.

Let us now come to the projects in Constituencies under my responsibility, that is, Constituency Nos. 5, 6 and 7. Here again, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for having provided in this Budget of the National Assembly the necessary funds for implementation of various projects.

To summarise, the projects already completed in Constituencies 5, 6 and 7, 295 projects for a total contract value of Rs349 m., be it drains, infrastructures, roads and amenities, whereas the NDU has already awarded and issued financial clearances for 405 projects totaling Rs994 m. This Government has again marked history. Development in the whole of Mauritius has never attained this limit such that all contractors are now fully booked and now not in a position to undertake further projects until some of these projects are completed.

Going through the list of projects, we have, amongst others, various projects, if we take constituency-wise –

- Constituency No. 5, we have 24 road projects, 30 drain projects, 4 amenities, that is, small infrastructures, children's garden and crematoriums;
- Constituency No. 6, 4 major road works, 28 drains, 5 amenities, and
- Constituency No. 7, 65 road works, 20 drain projects and 7 amenities.

I wish to list all the projects, but it would be too lengthy. So many projects are there, but, however, I will list some of the projects which are already in progress. In Constituency No. 5, we have various sites which were affected during the recent rains. We won't go in the list of the roads because there are so many of them, but we can go through the drain projects

–

- construction of drain at Grande Pointe aux Piments, already ongoing, Rs13 m.;
- construction of drain, Long Mountain junction, Rs32 m.;
- construction of drain at Morcellement Ripailles, Calebasse, Rs.7.8 m.;
- drains at Jouvance Rs9.6 m.;
- drains at Independence and John Kennedy Street Rs26 m.

So, we have a list of 30 drain projects and this is not only in one constituency. This is the same in all the constituencies. The third Member for Constituency No. 2 just stated that there is no project in his constituency. That is not true. We have projects everywhere and all these projects are in progress. Some of the projects might be delayed because in the execution of a project, there are several steps. We have to get the consultancy, the consultant

works out the design. Then, we have either contractors or if there are big projects more than Rs25 m., it goes for open tenders which take time. So, many of these projects have taken time. So, these are the lists of projects.

Members of this august Assembly will recall temporary shelters in Cité Longère constructed at Baie du Tombeau. 94 families were made to stay in longère after cyclone Hollanda in 1994 in these temporary shelters. For 14 years, the previous Government with the ex-Prime Minister elected in the same constituency. Nothing had been done to improve the situation. These 94 families were using only three toilets, as already stated by hon. Jhugroo, Minister of Housing and Lands, and three bathrooms for 94 families. Ca c'est l'ancien gouvernement, more interested in *djembe tousse sali*, instead of looking after the problem of poor families.

This Government through the leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, once aware of this problem, provided funds to relocate all the 500 families of Cité Longère as well as Cité Tôle in temporary shelters in corrugated iron sheets but now having a living room, a toilet and a bathroom for each family with necessary water and sewerage connections. Permanent construction is already under progress and once completed these housing units shall be available to these families only.

We also recall the ex-Tianli project where huge investments had been made for road infrastructure and utilities for the whole 500 acres of land taken by the ex-Government from the small planters. None of the projects started. This Government had to review the agreement taken by the then contractor Tianli and took over 325 acres of the land to be managed by Landscape (Mauritius) whereas they were given 175 acres for their project. Now, Mauritian businessmen have been invited to submit their Expression of Interest for their projects on these lands. This will now create opportunities for residents of Baie du Tombeau and nearby villages.

In order to facilitate free trade in this area, the Government through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport - hon. Nando Bodha is here, thank you - the enlargement of the motorway from Riche Terre to Port area converting the 4 lanes to a 6 lane one is under completion.

Les mandants de cette circonscription n'ont aucun projet de l'ancien ministre du sport et de l'ancien gouvernement. Même le bureau de la Jeunesse et des Sports était dans un bâtiment de location pour plus de R 75,000 par mois. Toujours les petits copains héritaient. C'est ce gouvernement qui a transféré ce bureau dans un bâtiment appartenant à l'État.

Même pas les centres sportifs dans cette circonscription, un terrain de 10 arpents, ayant pris avec Teragrid Ltée pour un projet, a encore une fois été donné à des copains.

Nous avons aussi d'autres projets qui n'ont jamais été initiés par l'ancien gouvernement mais oui les bâtiments ont été loués pour le *District Court* de Mapou et de Pamplémousses, un bâtiment loué pour plus de R 400,000 par mois. Nous avons un *Area Health Centre* à Baie du Tombeau toujours un bâtiment en location en vraiment état piteux et c'est ce gouvernement qui avec et sous la direction du leader et du Premier ministre a initié le projet. Le *District Court* de Pamplémousses et Mapou a été transféré dans un bâtiment à Pamplémousses appartenant au ministère de l'Agro-Industrie. Il y a le *Area Health Centre* qui a déjà été construit et nous allons faire le *launching* très incessamment et aussi d'autres projets à venir, par exemple, nous avons le développement concernant le terrain foot à Trou aux Biches qui a déjà été terminé et inauguré par le Premier ministre. Nous avons aussi un *multigame area* à Triolet. Ça aussi le Premier ministre était là-bas pour la deuxième fois pour l'inauguration. Amongst others, upgrading of football pitches and provision of lightings on the following sites: cité Florida, Baie du Tombeau, Terre Rouge football ground, Calebasse football ground. De même que le contrat de construction d'un terrain de foot à la NHDC à Baie du Tombeau. Les travaux sont en cours et seront complétés dans quelques mois. Sans oubliant les projets dans d'autres circonscriptions, si nous parlons de la circonscription No. 6, nous avons le grand projet que notre collègue, hon. Rughoobur a parlé, le projet Camp Carol où c'est un *network of drains* pour évacuer l'eau de Grand Baie.

Pareillement c'était à Pereybere qui a un contrat de plus de R 58 millions qui ont déjà été allouées et les travaux seront terminés d'ici quelques mois. En parlant du No. 7, nous devons remercier le ministre Mentor qui était auparavant le Premier ministre de ce pays. Il avait fait construire une piscine.

Il y a le Youth Centre à Rivière du Rempart et puis aucun projet d'ancien gouvernement.

Récemment on est allé là-bas, il y a avait le problème d'un *traffic centre* à Piton qu'on ne pouvait pas se servir parce que l'espace était très étroit. Avec l'aide du ministre Nando Bodha, on a fait un joli travail, un *traffic centre* flambant neuf a été inauguré par le premier ministre. Et bien c'est ça le gouvernement! Le gouvernement est en train de travailler et voir à ce que leurs problèmes soient résolus.

Members will also recall heavy rainfalls in the North causing flooding in the vicinity areas of Cottage, Fond du Sac, Piton, L'Amitié, Gokoola, Belle Vue Maurel, Morcellement

St André, d'Épinay, Terre Rouge, Pamplémousses, Bois Rouge. *Les travaux à côté sont presque terminés et à Fond du Sac les travaux ont déjà commencé.*

Similarly, works at Piton, Gokoola have already started and works at Grand Baie, Pereybère, Camp Carol, Goodlands, Mamzelle Jeanne and football ground at Poudre d'Or are already in completion stage.

Coming back to number 5, Triolet-Arena is taking shape with the help of our Minister of Youth and Sports, hon. Stephan Toussaint, and tenders are being floated for the construction of a Multi-Sport Complex at Triolet by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. These complex shall have a multitude of sports infrastructure namely volleyball pitches, basketball pitches, *pétanque* court, open gym as well as a health track.

This Government believes in our youth and has approved the construction of a Multi Use Games Area in eight other regions like Rivière du Rempart, Flacq, Moka, Black River, Savanne after completion of these sports infrastructure in Tyack, Phoenix and Triolet. The contract for the construction of a health track by the NDU along Triolet bypass is in the process of being awarded.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would like to extend my unconditional support to the Prime Minister in the fulfillment of the ambitious vision for the country that has been set in the Budget.

Madam Speaker, I am proud and privileged to be part of this Government as elected Member to serve our nation who deserves to be taken care and this Budget has all the ingredients to make the lives of our citizen better. I again seize the opportunity to congratulate the Prime Minister and his team for all effort put in the working out of the proposals for this Budget.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Tarolah.

(7.45 p.m.)

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is with lots of satisfaction that I rise in this august Assembly to speak on the Budget 2019-2020 which the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and

Economic Development, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth has presented to this House and to the nation on the 10 June 2019.

Madam Speaker, lots of criticisms coming from the other side of the House, we can hear that the Government had mishandled certain issues of national interest, where is the miracle they keep on claiming.

Madam Speaker, allow me to enlighten those who do not want to accept that the population at large cherish in this Budget 2019-2020. In fact, I will stress on the miraculous achievements of this Government. The very first decision of this Government to increase the monthly pension is, in itself, a miracle. No one had believed that somebody, who, in the year 2014, was receiving Rs3,623, will be receiving Rs6,710 as from the year 2020. This increase was extended to all the beneficiaries. Furthermore, in this Budget, the monthly Carer's Allowance is now Rs3,500 instead of Rs3,000. Can anyone tell the beneficiaries of pension that they need not get that much money and that hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is mishandling this issue of pension?

Madam Speaker, the second historical measure of this Government is the minimum wage, it is much more than a miracle for the labourers who were earning Rs1,500 to Rs2,500 monthly and are now getting a pay of up to Rs9,000. Go and tell them that the Government of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth has mishandled their problems.

Other historical initiatives of this Government, firstly, reforming the education sector by eliminating the rat race fever of the CPE; secondly, the introduction of tablets which is extended to students of Grade IV and thirdly, how can we forget those students who are getting the privilege of tertiary education freely. Can anybody has the guts to tell those students that hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth has no consideration for them.

Madam Speaker, history had witnessed what Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth was capable of. Housewives have put aside the so-called the *poukni* to bring *four à gaz* in the kitchen, and today hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is encouraging the use of gas in the kitchen by bringing a significant reduction in the price of 12 kilogram of cooking gas which was formally at Rs330 and now the price is at Rs210 as from the next day of the presentation of the Budget.

The other day, I heard a consumer saying that she uses three cylinders of cooking gas which usually cost her nearly Rs1,000 and that now she has to add Rs50 only to that Rs1,000 and she will receive five cylinders of cooking gas. So, dear Members of the Opposition this is

what is called a miracle for that consumer. Can you say to that lady that there has been no due consideration in this Budget?

Madam Speaker, I will once more congratulate the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Pravind Kumar Jugnauth for the achievement at the United Nations regarding the Chagos issue. Everybody has had the opportunity to witness the outcome of *papa-piti* as usually stated by my good friend, hon. Jhugroo. Hon. Minister of Finance did make a provision of Rs50 m. for the Chagossians to visit certain islands there. Can anybody say that the Chagossians were forgotten during the preparation of this Budget?

Madam Speaker, for the taxi owners, can it be said that they were left behind with the decrease in the price of diesel and mogas and much more by alarming them to exchange their car in four years' time instead of waiting for five long years.

Madam Speaker, the civil servants, the backbone section of our population, was allocated a package of Rs200 m. for the medical insurance and the allocation of allowance Rs1,000 as monthly allowance. Sugarcane and tea planters were given due consideration. Are these measures not a miracle in itself? *Miracle après miracle*. Or will you rather qualify the leaking of the Bagatelle Dam as miracle or is it a miracle that the Ring Road got collapsed before a bicycle has come to use the road. The miracles of Betamax, hedging, and Stimulus Package without forgetting the heavy burden for *Métro Léger*, the real miracle is that this Government has come with the Metro Express project and people of this country will be lucky enough to travel by metro in few months' time.

Madam Speaker, the local authority with the collaboration of the NDU, the Ministry of Environment and the Prime Minister, lots of work are being done in every village of our Constituency No. 10. Let me enumerate what this Government has been doing to elevate the quality of lives in every village of our Constituency No. 10.

Village Council of Medine and Mont Ida: construction of two recreational centres; accommodation of a library; *pétanque* courts; incinerator; children's playgrounds; resurfacing of several roads, drain works in various areas, pavements and handrails along the main road.

Village Council of Camp de Masque: housing units; renovation works at the village council; provision of a library; construction of a shelter; a sub hall; another housing unit, family corner at Bissessur Lane, resurfacing of roads, drain works in various areas; provisions for the construction of a modern Area Health Centre.

Village Council of Camp de Masque Pavé: renovation works at the Social Welfare Centre; enlargement of roads and reorientation of the volleyball pitch; renovation works of the village hall of Camp de Masque; provision of outdoor gym; children garden at Petite Cabane; mini soccer pitch; resurfacing of roads.

Village Council of Clementia: covered podium; recreational centre; resurfacing of roads and drains; pavements.

Village Council of Bel Air: Modern gym at Bel Air; sub hall at Caroline; construction of footbridge at Bel Air; recreational centre at St Michel; provision of lighting at the football playground of St Michel; sub hall at La Lucie Roy; laying of foundation stone of Bel Air market fair next week; provision of a mediclinic at Bel Air; provision of sheltered farming at Caroline; resurfacing of roads and drain works; mini soccer pitch at la Lucie Building; pavements at La Laura; children's garden at Cité Caroline.

Village Council of Ecroignard: renovation of village council; provision of shelter with podium; renovation of volleyball pitch; lay-by pavements with handrails near the primary school; children's garden; resurfacing of roads, drains.

Village Council of Bramstan: new children's garden; construction of a new village hall; new cremation ground; drains and resurfacing of roads.

Village Council of Trou d'Eau Douce – renovation of village council; cloakroom at football playground of Trou d'Eau Douce; construction of a new roundabout to allow public transport bus to drop the passengers of Débarcadère and St Croissée to the nearest point; resurfacing of roads and drains network; provisions for the construction of new Area Health Centre.

Village council of Grande Rivière Sud Est: New sub hall at Beau Champ; embellishment works at the public beach at Quartier GRSE; resurfacing of roads, drains network and cross drains; children's garden and family corner; construction of public toilet at Camp-des-Pêcheurs.

Village Council of Olivia: children's garden at the deep river; construction of a new bridge at La Nourrice; children's garden at Thérèse; renovation of volleyball pitch; enclosing the football playground with concrete wall; new gym equipment; new family corner at Charlie; children's playground at cité Olivia; mini soccer pitch at Kewal Nagar; resurfacing works and drain works.

Village Council at Sebastopol: multi-usage pitch at Camp Bombaye; lighting football ground at Pellerin; new mini soccer pitch at Pellerin; health track behind recreational centre; children ...

(Interruptions)

Pas gagne mo tracas!

(Interruptions)

Tout sa la inn fer pour banne habitants. Pas gagne mo tracas!

Children playground near village hall; resurfacing of roads and drains enclosing the cemetery of Sebastopol.

Village Council of Montagne Blanche: lighting at golden football playground; sub hall at Petit Paquet ; construction of incinerator ; drain networks with handrails at St Joseph RCA ; sub hall at Morcellement Sans Souci...

Madam Speaker: How many more pages you have? I wish to know how many more pages you have.

Mr Tarolah: I have two more villages. Sub hall at Morcellement Sans Souci; lighting and fencing with cloakroom at Petit Paquet football ground; children garden at NHDC; drain work at Morcellement Sans Souci.

Village Council of Melrose: lighting of football playground, mini soccer pitch; outdoor gym; family corner; renovation of village hall; provision for a learning swimming pool at Melrose Government School; sheltered farms, livestock farms.

Just to add, without forgetting the embellishment works carried out by the Ministry of Environment.

Madam Speaker: If you have got embellishment works, I think it is time to circulate.

Mr Tarolah: Yes. Ministry of Environment at different socio-cultural sites. Madam Speaker, the Government of the day has a very rich track record thanks to the Prime Minister who is the Minister of Finance too and who has always been attentively listening to each and everyone's proposals. Presenting a budget with the title: 'Embracing a brighter future together as a nation' is almost synonym to what the slogan of the MSM party is, that is, *unir pour bâtir*.

Let me remind the House that every time MSM is in power, our country had known significant progress. Be it under the leadership of Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, during the period of 1993 to 1995 and today under the leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Mauritius is experiencing a change to the tune of the global demand.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, I will add that the Leader of the MSM, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, presented the fifth and last budget of the mandate of this Government. As legally the dissolution of the National Assembly is due in a few months' time, the whole nation will be asked to act their democratic right to choose their Prime Minister and its team to govern this country. I have no doubt the choice has already been made and hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth will be the next Prime Minister as well. *Mille fois Pravind!*

Merci pour votre attention.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Aliphon!

Mr Aliphon: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Hurreeram rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 June 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

VANDERMEERSCH STREET –TRAFFIC FLOW

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. The Deputy Prime Minister is not here, so, I am addressing my question to him. It concerns

traffic flow along Vandermeersch Street up to the roundabout of CEB, Rose Hill. It is a real nightmare. Can I ask the hon. Minister to have a site visit early in the morning as from 7.00 a.m. up to 8.00 a.m and see what is the real problem facing not only the inhabitants of Rose Hill, but also Beau Bassin going to Port Louis. There are no Police Officers. I do not know if it is on purpose that the traffic lights - I have already informed the hon. Minister on several occasions, but no action - remain on orange. Is it political motive? There is a problem of security of the general public. I have drawn the attention of the Minister on several occasions. So, I think, there is urgent need for the Minister to have a site visit and a meeting with the Police. The Mayor cannot do anything, he is not responsible, but it is very urgent that the Minister acts rapidly to prevent any further case of accident which has been happening during the past weekend. So, can I appeal to the Minister, the urgency to initiate action and have a site visit early in the morning and even in the afternoon.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr N. Bodha): I would like to reassure my hon. friend, the appeal will be taken care of. In fact, I went there on Sunday, but maybe Sunday is not the right day to assess the nature of the problem. I will see to it tomorrow that urgently we can find a solution because between the roundabout of Rose Hill and the roundabout of Beau Bassin, with all the works going on, in fact, there are some issues and I am going to take care of them.

(8.01 p.m.)

**TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD –
TELEPHONE OPERATOR**

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise a matter which is addressed to the Minister of Social Security. It is about a gentleman who really touched my heart because he posted a message on Facebook. He is a person with disability, he has visual impairment and he has been a trainee telephone operator under the National Skills Development Programme since August 2010, for the past nine years. He is currently placed at the Head Office of a Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board and he is making a cry from the heart that after nine years as trainee, at least, he deserves a full-time position and he deserves to get a salary which is commensurate with his nine years' experience instead of the stipend he is currently getting which is below the minimum wage. I will table a copy of the certificate from the

Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board which certifies that he is employed as a trainee since August 2010.

So, my appeal to the Minister is for him to talk to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board and see whether there is any possibility of putting this gentleman on a full-time employment basis with the appropriate salary.

Thank you.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr E. Sinatambou): I thank the hon. Member for his words. In fact, I never knew about this. The gentleman, if he works for the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, could simply have addressed a letter to me and I would certainly have looked into it much earlier than now.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(8.02 p.m.)

PLAINE VERTE GARDEN – LIGHTING

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The issue I am raising tonight is addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government and it is in relation to Jardin de Plaine Verte.

What happened is that recently the Municipal Council of Port Louis has replaced the lanterns of Jardin de Plaine Verte starting for Diego Garcia Street to the end of the garden, that is, near the Post Office of La Rue Magon. The problem is that many places have been missed, and more importantly, the bus stop at Kaddafi Square is still in the dark.

So, I would urgent the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to ensure that the Municipal Council of Port Louis carry out a survey at night so that they identify the places where that has been missed and also, some poles have been erected, but no lanterns were placed on them. So, it is important that we carry out a survey at night and replace the lantern where it has been missed.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-

Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, I take good note of the query and I will urge the Municipal Council of Port Louis to look into it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

(8.04 p.m.)

CAMP YOLOFF & ROCHE BOIS - CHILDREN PLAYGROUND - REPAIRS

Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre, Madame Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, and it concerns the children playground at Camp Yolloff and Roche Bois. Since children playground is used by children, there is some equipment which need...

(Interruptions)

Not, it's not a joke, because when equipment is not secure, so, some equipment need to be carted away and some need to be replaced.

So, I urge the Minister to see with the City Council of Port Louis so that the necessary be done without delay since this concerns the security of kids.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): This is a recurrent feature. In my constituency also it happens. Wear and tear issue, but rest assured hon. Member, we will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

(8.05 p.m.)

RICHELIEU - METRO EXPRESS WORKS

Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Yes, Madam Speaker.

Ma requête, ce soir, s'adresse au ministre des Infrastructures publiques, c'est concernant les travaux de Metro Express qui se font à Richelieu, au dépôt de Richelieu. Hier, je suis allé visiter une famille qui vit à côté du dépôt, où il y a la construction, et le nombre de poussière, c'est alarmant. Donc, les gens ne peuvent plus vivre correctement dans leur maison. En cinq minutes, j'étais moi-même couvert de poussière. Il y a des enfants qui tombent malade. Il y a un enfant, que j'ai visité hier, qui souffre de bronchite.

Donc, je demanderais au ministre s'il peut intervenir pour que le contracteur prenne des mesures de précaution, mettre des filets de protection par rapport à la poussière pour qu'il n'y ait pas ce problème.

PAILLES ROAD - PAVEMENTS

Donc, si je peux me permettre, Madame la présidente, j'ai une deuxième requête au même ministre. C'est concernant la région de Grande Rivière. J'avais posé des questions parlementaires sur les trottoirs qu'il fallait aménager à Grande Rivière, Pailles Road. Effectivement, cela a été fait au début du chemin, mais au milieu cela n'a pas été complété, cela n'a jamais été fait, s'il peut éventuellement faire un relevé pour venir avec des trottoirs, il y a aussi beaucoup d'élèves qui empruntent la rue là-bas.

Merci.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr N. Bodha): Merci, Madame la présidente.

Au fait, je suis allé au centre dimanche et effectivement, il y a un problème de poussière, mais j'ai déjà demandé au *Project Manager* de LNT de voir ce qu'on pourrait faire. Effectivement, il y a une poussière assez forte, parce qu'on travaille beaucoup, au fait. Mais le centre sera terminé dans quelques semaines, dans quelques mois. J'ai déjà demandé que justement on prenne toute les précautions nécessaires concernant la pollution causée par la poussière.

En ce qui concerne les trottoirs qui n'ont pas été complétés, je vais faire de mon mieux pour que ce soit fait, Madame la présidente.

At 8.07 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 June 2019 at 11.30 a.m.