

No. 18 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2010

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*Members**Members***THE CABINET****(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>

Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 18 of 2010

Sitting of Friday 26 November 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 3.30 p.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table -

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development -

The Annual Report 2009 of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.

B. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reforms Institutions -

The Annual Report of the Probation and Aftercare Service 2009.

C. Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection -

The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 210 of 2010).

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION
RICHE TERRE LAND SETTLEMENT - PLANTERS -
NOËL/RAMKISSOON REPORT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the small planters of the Riche Terre Land Settlement who refused the compensation proposed by Government, he will state if the Ministerial Committee set up to look into the implications of the recommendations made in relation thereto by Messrs Alain Noël and Jayraj Ramkissoon has submitted its recommendations to Cabinet this morning and, if so, whether Cabinet has taken any decision thereon.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2006, the Government was in the presence of a proposal for the development of an integrated project by the Tianli group, later known as the Jin Fei project. This project, a first of its kind, is bringing in massive foreign direct investment and creating some 30,000 new jobs. In the light of such huge investment, Government decided for economic reasons and in national interest to terminate the lease of the land for agricultural purposes, which was leased to some 121 planters.

In the context of the cancellation of the lease, Government had opted for a very humane approach, taking into consideration the social implications of such a decision and the goodwill to ensure that the planters continue to earn a decent living. Government's decisions were even upheld by the Supreme Court which went, in a judgment delivered by the Supreme Court, to the extent of observing that the compensation offered was higher than what was deserved in the circumstances.

Government went out of its way and decided not only to pay compensation but, on humanitarian ground, provide land to the 52 planters who were still cultivating their land. Cash compensation was provided to those 69 planters who had long abandoned their land, as evidenced by official reports. The Government Valuer, the only authority to assess value of land, assessed compensation at Rs100,000 per *arpent*. Once more, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government, for social and humanitarian reasons, went out of its way to increase the compensation to Rs120,000 per *arpent* during a meeting the planters had with the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to point out that the land provided to the ex-planters of Riche Terre land settlement is agricultural stations, where the land is more productive, is of better quality and is also fenced for prevention of thefts. As indicated in the Noël/Ramkissoon report, the ex-planters were not only given an alternative site in the vicinity, on land of proven agricultural value and already accepted by 65% of the eligible planters, they were also offered the opportunity of continuation of agricultural activities and livelihood. In addition to the cash compensation, they were also offered facilities, such as writing off of irrigation dues, CEB debts, rescheduling of DBM loans. Provision was also made for technical support from AREU, support under the Food Security Programmes for land preparation, upgrading of irrigation network, fertilizers and seeds, and fencing amounting to approximately an additional Rs120,000.

Furthermore, I personally met the 22 ex-planters on a number of times, and also sometimes their representatives, and explained to them that it was in their best interest to accept the package offered by Government. Unfortunately, for reasons known to themselves and to those surrounding them, they insisted on making exaggerated claims of cash compensation, ranging from Rs600,000 to Rs2.4 m. To this effect, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House that even the Noël/Ramkissoon reports have found that the claims of these ex-planters were done in an unprofessional manner, were based on inaccurate assumptions, and there was not a justifiable, rationale for their claims, some of which were irrelevant and based on a subjective comparative exercise not related to any supporting evidence of actual land occupancy and cropping status.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government had commissioned the Noël/Ramkissoon report in order to take a fair and just decision on the claims of the 22 ex-planters. In a spirit of good faith, it was decided not to release the report, in view of the larger implications and with a view to preventing more confusion and creating two categories of planters arbitrarily. This would have been unfair, unjust and inequitable to others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 22 ex-planters have systematically refused the package offered to them by the Government. Once more, in order to show its good faith and goodwill to find a solution, Government set up a Ministerial Committee to look into the wider implications of the implementation of Noël/Ramkissoon report. This Committee made the following recommendations, which were retained and approved by Cabinet this morning, and which I

announced in a press conference earlier this afternoon. The decisions taken by Cabinet are as follows -

- (a) A clear distinction should be made between the 13 *bona fide* planters identified in the report who were cultivating their lands and the nine who were not occupying their lands when the survey was conducted by AREU.

I must say that this survey was not a one-spot check, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was a survey which was carried out for some time - I think about two years.

- (b) The recommendation made in the report for an equal treatment to all the 22 ex-planters should not be entertained.
- (c) In line with the recommendation of the report, the 13 *bona fide* planters would be offered the option to take land or cash (Rs35,650 per *arpent* per year for the period July 2007 to August 2015, totalling to a sum of Rs276,760) in addition to Rs120,000 plus interest, which was available to all the planters across the board. It is worth pointing that the planters have systematically refused the option of land compensation. Consequently, they will be given the option of cash compensation, as mentioned in the recommendations of the report.
- (d) Cabinet has also approved -
 - (i) the writing off of all irrigation and CEB debts;
 - (ii) rescheduling of DBM loan;
 - (iii) technical support from AREU, and
 - (iv) support from the Food Security Fund for land preparation, upgrading of irrigation network, fertilizers and seeds, fencing and other upgrading works.
- (e) The remaining nine planters who were not cultivating their lands would be offered Rs120,000 plus interest. However, if they still want to undertake agricultural activities, once again, in good faith, and to show that we are here to help anybody for that matter, not only these planters who are interested in these kinds of activities under the Food Security Programme, they may request for land, which will be considered on a case to case basis.

- (f) Finally, Cabinet has decided that the Noël/Ramkissoo report should be made public. I will be tabling a copy of the report on the Table of the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Noël/Ramkissoo report has clearly indicated that -

- (i) All procedures were followed in the termination of the lease agreement. The report states, I quote -

“Our analysis constitutes unequivocal evidence that procedures followed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security for termination of lease agreement of the Riche Terre Land settlement have been adhered to”.

- (ii) It comes out from the report that the assessment undertaken by the AREU and Agricultural Services are correct.

According to the Noël/Ramkissoo report, there was concordance on the reports submitted by the Land Use Division, the Irrigation Authority and the AREU regarding the 22 ex-planters on land occupancy.

- (iii) The assessment of the Government Valuer is based on international norms and practice, and the compensation recommendations for loss of leasehold interest are valid and assessed with assumptions that are favourable to the ex-planters while also reflecting policy decision regarding harvest of standing crops and relocation.
- (iv) The Noël/Ramkissoo report has also concluded that there is no justifiable rationale for the claims of the 22 ex-planters, as these are irrelevant and based on a subjective comparative exercise not related to any supporting evidence of actual land occupancy and cropping status.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Noël/Ramkissoo report has retained the initial proposals of Government in respect of compensation to the ex-planters of Riche Terre land settlement. However, although it has accepted that there are two categories, has accepted the survey made by AREU and other institutions, the report has nevertheless recommended that the 13 and nine

planters be dealt with collectively, as those planters had insisted to be dealt so. In addition, it has recommended a cash compensation to be paid to the 22 ex-planters in lieu of land.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a responsible Government, with the intention of helping the ex-planters, we are again making a humble appeal to all the 22 ex-planters to accept option A, that is, a cash compensation of Rs120,000 plus accrued interest and relocation at either Bois Marchand or Arsenal. This is the best option, and it is in their interest to accept this package. Be it as it may, it is open to them now. This is a decision that we have taken this morning; they can take the cash compensation over and above the Rs120,000 plus interest. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are insisting, as a responsible Government concerned about the future of these people, that they should go for option A.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we want to empower these planters as entrepreneurs. They will be eligible, in addition to cash and land, to accompanying support. It is in their interest for them and their families in the medium and long term.

Unfortunately, these innocent planters are being misled by unscrupulous people with obscure and hidden motives, as I stated earlier on last week. They are being encouraged by some people for so many reasons, including political motives and mileage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are living in a country which respects the rights of each citizen. *C'est un État de droit*. This Government will not condone any irresponsible act. We don't want to live in a country where we have to compensate squatters if the land is required for national purpose.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I suppose the hon. Minister will not agree with me that - but I would wish that he would agree with me - it is unacceptable that it took 20 days of hunger strike for Cabinet this morning to decide to release the Noël/Ramkisson report. This being so, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will see to it that a copy of the Noël/Ramkisson report reaches the hunger strikers as rapidly as possible, right now?

Mr Faugoo: It is not at all irresponsible or unreasonable, Mr Speaker, Sir. What is unreasonable and unacceptable is the hunger strike itself. It is the people behind who are instigating these people who are being unreasonable. This is wrong! This is what the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir, should condemn without reserve!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: My question was simple. Will the hon. Minister see to it that the hunger strikers be provided with a copy of the Noël/Ramkisson report as soon as possible, right now?

Mr Faugoo: I have no problem as to that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it, of course, that the report that is being released is the original report, that is...

(Interruptions)

Well, I have to ask whether it has been tampered with in any way! I take it that it has not been tampered with in any way.

Mr Faugoo: I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Leader of the Opposition does not believe in our independent institutions. Today, he is questioning the integrity of this Government, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

This is not correct. The report is the original report. There have been no amendments whatsoever.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: I can vouch, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the name of the Government, on behalf of the Cabinet, that it is the original report; nothing has been amended. This is not MMM; this is Labour/MSM Government, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order, please! I do not think it is proper to put the words of the hon. Minister in doubt.

Mr Bérenger: Well, I asked that it be confirmed, and he has confirmed that it is the original report.

My third question is that the Ministerial Committee was set up to look into the wider implications of the report, and now the Noël/Ramkisson report is being released. Do I take it,

therefore, that the Ministerial Committee has come to the conclusion that there are no wider implications, and can I know why it has taken so long - how many months - to come to that conclusion?

Mr Faugoo: I think the Leader of the Opposition failed to understand or maybe failed to follow what I said earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Committee was set up to study the wider implications and, in the light of those wider implications, come up with recommendations, and this is exactly what we did. This is why we are departing from what has been recommended in the report; to treat all the 22 planters equally, because that will lead to anarchy, will lead to injustice and inequity to some of the planters, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: My question is: why has it taken so long for Government, through a Ministerial Committee or through the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, to come to the conclusion that there are no wider implications?

Mr Faugoo: There are, Mr Speaker, Sir! This is why he is failing to understand. I said there are implications. This is why the Committee was set up; this is what was studied, and this is what was recommended in light of those wider implications, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: The conclusion has been to release the report, wider implications or no wider implications. I heard the hon. Minister just say that this is why we departed from the recommendations in the Noël/Ramkissoon report. So, can I know exactly the new proposals which Cabinet has come forward with today? Are they exactly the recommendations contained in the Noël/Ramkissoon report or have they been amended?

Mr Faugoo: If I were to answer to this question of the Leader of the Opposition, I would have to read again my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't mind maybe circulating the answer. I have made it clear what was the proposal of Government in the first place, how far the recommendations made in the report are different, what did we find in the Ministerial Committee and what recommendations we made to Cabinet, which was approved by Cabinet. It is all there.

Mr Bérenger: My point is that it is confirmed that the proposals put forward by Cabinet today are not exactly the proposals in the Noël/Ramkissoon report.

Mr Faugoo: It cannot be. This is why we said we studied, and we have not accepted the report. There is no problem with the report; it is a good report. But we have not accepted the

recommendations *in toto*, because that would lead to more unfairness, injustice and inequality, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposals made by Cabinet and Government this morning, and released through a press conference, are being looked into by the *grévistes de la faim*, I suppose, right now. Would the hon. Minister be prepared to meet the hunger strikers or their representatives after they have studied the proposals?

Mr Faugoo: I don't know who the representatives are. There are so many. There were some rushing to my office just now, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have got letters from planters, black on white, claiming that so and so are no longer representatives, and still you see them everyday giving interview in the press. I have no problem in meeting them, but what I am saying is that this is a final decision of the Government. Either you take it or you leave it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, 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.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2011) BILL

(No. XVII of 2010)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010).

Question again proposed.

(3.54 p.m.)

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker Sir, first of all, I wish to congratulate my colleague, the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic

Development, for his Budget Speech. Where many wanted him to fail, he has succeeded in confounding his not so well-wishers. The Budget has been generally well received by the public, and the private sector has acknowledged the necessity of marrying the economics with the social. We are living in a buoyant democracy and, of course, everyone is voicing his opinion through the media - from the frivolous to the most outrageous.

Speaking about economic diplomacy, we all know that our Prime Minister has made a major breakthrough on the world diplomatic stage since 2005. From Clinton and Obama in the United States, to Chirac and Sarkozy in France, Hu Jin Tao in China, not to mention Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, and finally Lee Kuan Yu in Singapore and Mahatir in Malaysia, he has firmly put his footprint on the world stage.

He has chartered a pathway, which is the envy of other world leaders. He has consolidated diplomatic, economic and political ties, which have started paying handsome dividends to our country - the Jin Fei project being one.

This will be further strengthened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, my colleague, hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell, with the posting of 'economic diplomats' in our strategic foreign missions, as enunciated in the Budget Speech.

The Budget, while consolidating our economic structure, has reinforced our social strategies to ensure that the poor and downtrodden are taken care of. This is the very essence of this Budget, piloted by the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and other Ministers, under the guidance and vision of the Prime Minister, as enunciated in the Government Programme.

Our country has managed to weather through a string of crises over the last five years, namely the triple shock, energy crisis, food crisis and the world financial meltdown, without forgetting the global climate change challenges. We are not yet out of the woods. Dark clouds are still gathering over the horizon, as Shakespeare puts it so aptly in Macbeth -

“Fair is foul, foul is fair.”

It is, therefore, more than ever imperative, that we stay extremely cautious and tread with utmost care and trepidation. We cannot afford any *largesse*, and a watchful eye should be kept on our spending while economic development and growth should be relentlessly pursued.

Good governance, probity and transparency should be the order of the day. Mo Ibrahim and Joaquim Chissano have applauded Mauritius for its effort in this direction during their visit here last weekend. Of course, as usual, there has always been improvement, and we are pursuing this goal.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to look around to see what is happening around us. The Eurozone crisis has already produced a major casualty. After Greece, Ireland, the 'Celtic Tiger' has gone from boom to burst, and its Government has crashed, with the junior partner pulling off the plug, and is calling for an early election in January, following a stimulus package of 85 billion euros literally imposed by the IMF and the European Central Bank, generating such acrimony by its people, fearing that they have lost their sovereignty after 90 years of independence from the Brits.

There is real fear that other European States, namely the PIGS, which is Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, will be engulfed in the same crisis by contagion. Great Britain is not spared, and there is real fear that while it is coming up through its crisis, there may be a double depression.

Drastic cuts in public spending are being imposed, and the workers in Greece and Ireland have been forced to take a 15 per cent cut in salaries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we export to Europe and our tourists come mostly from there, and logically we are bound to be affected by *ricochet*. Fortunately, not to worsen matters, the majority of our trade unions have accepted, although reluctantly, the deal which Government has put forward on the table.

Here, I wish to congratulate the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations for the very delicate balancing act they have performed to protect the economy and limit public spending. We must realise that nobody owes us a living, and we have to fend ourselves. Criticisms have been levelled against Government for failing to cater for the '*rattrapage*' in loss of purchasing power, but it has never been the practice, either here or anywhere else in the world, to link wage increase to inflation rate. However, all the social measures put in place by this Budget and previous Budget will more than adequately make up for it. I refer to subsidies on rice, cooking oil and flour, which are now

having a very volatile price on the world market - and the price is going up and down like ping pong - that will cater very much in balancing the budget of the most downtrodden.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to stay cautious but, above all, we need to adopt the right policies that will help our country to withstand the adverse repercussions of the downturn of our traditional economic partners - mainly, from Europe - and to forge ahead in the pursuit of consolidating our position in the region. While reinforcing our ties with our traditional partners from the West, we have also to look towards the East, that is, Eastern and Southern Asia, towards the emerging economies, namely India and China. We have been able so far to make it almost without bruises, that is, a reasonable growth rate, inflation rate well under control, unemployment rate not so catastrophic, budget deficit still manageable, good business climate and, above all, an omnipresent feel good factor. We still need to act judiciously.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall now outline the various achievements in the housing sector. For many people, the most secure and stable housing option is ownership. A house is the single largest financial investment any individual makes in his lifetime.

In Mauritius - and this is recognised by the UN habitat - over 90% of householders are owners of their house. The House will recall that, in our first mandate, Government brought a key change in the life of owners of ex-CHA houses by making their dream become a reality - the sale of the land on which stand ex-CHA houses at a nominal price of Rs2,000.

The scheme has provided the owners with secured tenure and, since its implementation, 8,239 owners of ex-CHA houses are now owners of the land on which stand their houses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has been working on solutions with regard to constraints for land which cannot be sold to owners of ex-CHA houses. I am pleased today to announce that, with a view to providing a just and equitable treatment and equal opportunity to owners of ex-CHA housing units found on private land, my Ministry will claim only Rs10 per annum. This measure will be effective as from January 2011, until the finalisation of the deed of sale between Government and private owners.

As we all know, provision of housing is the cornerstone of any social policy, and providing adequate and affordable housing has been a big challenge for all governments over the years.

The construction of 550 housing units on 11 sites around the island for low income families is nearing completion. Some 200 housing units will be available by December 2010, whilst the remaining 350 will be ready for allocation early next year.

Furthermore, the NHDC is carrying out infrastructure works like roads, water and electricity supply, sewerage infrastructure and other amenities at Ville Noire, Glen Park and Souillac. After completion of these works in December 2010, 242 serviced plots will be available to the lower middle income families for housing development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to address the high demand of housing by inhabitants of Port Louis, the NHDC will shortly start constructing 36 housing units for the lower middle income group at Military Road, Port Louis. My Ministry is also thinking of building more houses in the region of Vallée des Prêtres, again to cater for people who would be moved from Vallée Pitot to there. All the squatters on the verge of Rivière Lataniers will be moved to Ste. Croix at Batterie Cassée, where serviced plots will be allocated to them, and there will be infrastructural work. My colleague, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, will give a hand in building modest houses for them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the construction of housing units and the increasing access to land tenure is not only means of creating affordable housing for needy families. The Roof Slab Grant Scheme introduced in 1997 has also been important in orienting housing towards home ownership for families who already own a plot of land, but do not have the financial means to cast a roof slab. This year, funds to the tune of Rs72 m. have been distributed to 1,592 families.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a caring Government conscious of the increasing construction costs and the consequent hardships encountered by the low income group, we have reviewed upwards the grant under Roof Slab Grant Scheme from Rs60,000 to Rs65,000.

The House will recall that, with a view to improving the living conditions of families in the NHDC housing estates which required some remedial works, Government injected funds to the tune of Rs280 m. As at date, 90% of the works have been completed. Of course, there have been problems in certain housing estates, where access has been flatly denied to the construction workers to do their work. This is pure sheer selfishness on behalf of a handful of individuals.

In the forthcoming financial year, we are addressing the rehabilitation of water networks and sewerage infrastructure, estimated at Rs87 m., on some NHDC housing estates. The NHDC is presently finalising documents in this respect.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in our vision for the next ten years, Government has, in this Budget, expressed its determination to ensure a good living standard for every family. We are resolved to create the right and conducive environment in housing development, and the eradication of poverty. Accordingly, to balance the demand and supply of housing, this Government, through its new policy direction and national housing programmes, will target 40,000 families. Emphasis is being placed on targeting the right segment of population for housing support, as well as providing a framework for community cohesion sustainability in deprived areas.

Despite the global economic crisis, Government will be investing heavily in the housing sector.

As a preliminary step, five schemes have been spelt out in the National Housing Programme. Mr Speaker Sir, the first two schemes follow the traditional philosophy - Government as a provider of housing, whereby some 8,700 units will be constructed in line with green building concepts.

Government is further making home ownership a reality for all. The housing programmes which will be implemented cater for families earning monthly income below Rs10,000. We are introducing innovative schemes with mortgage facilities.

With a view to strengthening home ownership and ensuring affordability, three additional schemes are being provided to cater for households with monthly income ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs50,000. These schemes would benefit some 30,000 families.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the measures announced in this Budget clearly shows Government's commitment in providing a decent and affordable housing to needy families of this country.

Mr Speaker Sir, the success of a country is judged by many different parameters, one of which is its physical fabric. Well-planned, well-designed and properly implemented projects are an indicator of the level of development of a country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a major public facilitator, my Ministry has great responsibilities as the central planning service provider of Government. It lends its expertise and contribution to

other ministries and stakeholders, public and private, small and big. We are working together with our partners.

I am happy to announce that the preparation of a Planning Policy Guidance to guide the development of Real Estate Scheme has been completed. You are aware that, although the Integrated Resort Scheme market has somewhat slumped, the development of RES has soared. Developers would know where and how to best carry out a RES development if they are in presence of development criteria upfront, as this gives certainty to private promoters.

My Ministry has taken the lead and has come up with a Planning Policy Guidance for the location, siting and design of telecommunications equipment. The guidelines and procedures elaborated therein will, on the one hand, remove the hassles which service providers are facing in extending their network and, on the other hand, allay fears regarding public health, assist the local authorities in determining permits, and reduce potential appeals from aggrieved parties.

The protection of the environmentally sensitive areas is not only the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, but everybody's concern. In fact, the need to protect those areas on the one hand and the need to pursue development goals on the other hand have prompted my Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, to prepare an environmental manual for planners. This subject plan, as it is legally called, will fit perfectly in the *Maurice Ile Durable* vision of development with protection of the environment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have completed the revision of the District Outline Planning Schemes which were approved in 2006, so as to respond to current concerns and challenges, and assist the local authorities in the determination of permits. The modifications brought will no doubt boost the development perspectives for major projects, which were hampered by certain zoning prescriptions. We shall soon be awarding the contract for the comprehensive review of the five municipal council areas, extending from Port Louis to Curepipe.

As you are aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government intends to find a permanent solution to the traffic congestion on our roads, especially along the Port Louis-Curepipe corridor. A mass transit system requires adequate ridership to be effective and economical. To promote use of such a conveyance, the population and activity density around stations interchange and along the corridor should be maximized. The core policies in the current National Land Development

Strategy require that local plans be prepared to provide the best opportunities for this to happen. We expect to have a first operational draft of the new Outline Schemes in one year.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the Town and Country Planning Board, has also carried out an interim revision of the Quatre Bornes Outline Scheme, where there is very strong development pressure, especially for high-rise developments. A balance has to be struck between amenities of residential areas and higher density development advocated in the National Land Development Strategy. This is especially relevant to the call to integrate transport with land use, which is being voiced out in all quarters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, many projects are still bogged down for lack of infrastructure, and this is viewed as a major brake in the economic recovery. My Ministry prepared a Master Plan for Palmar, and it has now initiated a planning process for the provision of infrastructure to accelerate implementation of projects on a cost-sharing basis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for too long we have delayed the replacement of the existing Town and Country Planning Act 1954 by a modern legislation, responsive of present and future trends and challenges in land use planning. The piecemeal amendments and additions to facilitate the administration of development are no longer adequate. It is time to consolidate, once for all, planning related legislations into one piece of legislation, for the benefit of all stakeholders. If this is not done, we shall be still following the cumbersome and lengthy preparation, review and approval procedures which will come in the way of development.

This cannot continue if we are to fulfil our promises to the population to modernise the country's set up. A firm commitment has been taken to present the consolidated modern Land Use Planning and Development Bill to the National Assembly soon.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the scarcity of State lands and to ensure a fair return on this prime asset, Government needs to ensure a judicious management and use of this resource. In this context, my Ministry has reviewed rental for the different types of leases (industrial, *campement* and building site leases) to optimise Government revenue. As at date, revenue collected from the industrial and *campement* site leases amount to some Rs418 m.

In line with the Government policy to enhance the condition of living of the vulnerable groups, building site leases are granted to people of low income who cannot afford to purchase land. Since July 2005 to date, some 834 building site leases have been granted.

In the same vein and as a caring Government, decision has been taken to regularise the occupation of State lands by families at Dubreuil and in the vicinity of La Ferme Reservoir at Bambous. Some 106 families were concerned with this exercise. In the months to come, we are also moving people from Route Militaire and Vallée Pitot, to make way for the Port Louis Ring Road. I wish to point out that, although I have provided land for the construction of housing units, there is a pressing need to provide for related infrastructure and basic amenities for a healthy and sound environment.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has granted commercial leases to small entrepreneurs so as to help them start, develop and expand their business. As my colleagues are aware, in his Address, the President has announced the creation of a new road network and upgrading of existing ones. In this context, my Ministry has acquired some 410 *arpents* of privately owned land for infrastructural purposes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the recent piracy attacks on ships in the Indian Ocean has highlighted the importance of sea traffic and its vulnerability. As sea traffic is vital for the world economy, it falls upon each nation to provide safe navigation in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Over the last five years, there have been a number of joint missions with the Indian authorities on hydrography, following which, strategic sites around Mauritius have been surveyed, existing charts updated and new ones produced. Some are already on sale at my Ministry. A hydrographic unit has also been set up at my Ministry, and hydrographic surveys around the island will be undertaken yearly, which will result in updating the bathymetry of our Exclusive Economic Zone. It is to be pointed out that this has been possible, following the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrography signed between the Government of Mauritius and the Republic of India in October 2005, on the initiative of the Prime Minister. It is also to be noted that Mauritius is one among the very few African countries which has initiated the survey of its Exclusive Economic Zone, thanks to the Government of India.

Mr Speaker, Sir, land administration is of particular importance to any government, as it supports a wide range of governmental functions. These include ownership of land, taxation of

land, land use regulations, utility maintenance and construction, environmental compliance, and many others. The effectiveness of land administration depends heavily on a sound and up-to-date information infrastructure. To this regard, my Ministry is currently implementing the Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management System (LAVIMS) Project, which aims at delivering the essential building blocks for a modern land administration and management system for the Republic of Mauritius.

The project was initially due for completion on 15 July 2010. However, given the complex nature of the project, certain completion dates had to be extended up to December 2010, in order to cater for uncertain issues. As at date, more than 95% of the project deliverables have been completed. User acceptance tests for the different components have started, and a joint operation phase with the contractor is planned to ensure a smooth transition. The new LAVIMS system is expected to become fully operational by the end of March 2011. With the coming into operation of LAVIMS, we will acquire an Information Management System that will integrate three major land related components - a Property Valuation, a Cadastre, and a parcel-based Deeds Registration System. This project will harmonise and bring transparency to property transactions.

Equally, the LAVIMS Project will provide a dataset that will be of relevance to a wide range of users, including Government, Ministries/departments, as well as other utility providers such as the CEB, CWA and the Mauritius Post. It will also provide the post code for each and every region of the country. My Ministry will put in place a mechanism that will allow an optimum use and sharing of the LAVIMS dataset with all stakeholders.

Mr Speaker Sir, I have set out in detail the policy and vision of my Ministry for the year to come. From now on, the talking will stop, and I have impressed upon the staff of my Ministry to roll their sleeve and get going to achieve our goals.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.25 p.m.)

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, vendredi dernier « la population a eu droit à la même rhétorique, à la même rengaine, les mêmes effets

d'annonce, les mêmes mesures archi-répétées et, finalement, le même vin, servi dans une bouteille différente ».

M. le président, je me suis permise de parodier l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, qui tenait ces propos à la suite de la présentation du budget en 2009. Je me suis permise d'emprunter ces mots de l'honorable ministre des finances qui avait tenu exactement les mêmes propos.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if this was the feeling of hon. Jugnauth last year; it has been mine this time. Why this feeling? Why this feeling of *déjà-vu, déjà entendu*? Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to give one or two examples. I am not going to read the entire list, because these are repetitions.

Firstly, regarding pre-primary school for social integration and so on and so forth, last week, we heard the hon. Minister of Finance stating, and I quote -

“We are investing in new primary units in Chamarel, Albion, Barkly and Belle Mare.”

Last year, what did we hear?

“The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) is constructing one pre-primary school in Belle Mare and another one in Chamarel.”

Last year, ‘is constructing’, and this year ‘we are investing’ to build the same schools.

(Interruptions)

A second example, Mr Speaker, Sir, of *déjà-vu, déjà entendu*. We heard last week -

“Some Rs215 m. will be invested next year to upgrade primary schools, many of which were built over 50 years ago”.

This year, we heard that. Last year, it was said -

“We are providing for Rs1 billion to upgrade primary schools built over 50 years ago”.

Rs150 m. to start works with some 17 schools; last year, it was R 150 millions for schools built over 50 years ago; it's a repetition of the same words again this year. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a copy and paste nearly!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to read all this, but, maybe, a last one. Talking about Rs27 billion worth of projects, with almost Rs3 billion in 2011, among the programmes -

“There will be the new transfer station at La Chaumière, to replace the one at Saint Martin”.

This is this year, and we heard that last week. Last year, it was said -

“We are moving the Saint Martin transfer station to La Chaumière, at a cost of about Rs130 m.”

I will stop here, because the list concerns all these repetitions is really long. This is why I said *que ce sont des mesures archis-répétées et, donc, la même rengaine.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, moreover, we have been favoured with huge amounts for projects over a period of five or even ten years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to see how many ten years the hon. Minister has stated last week. *Il se projette dans dix ans. Je ne vais pas essayer de psychanalyser cette projection de dix ans.*

(Interruptions)

Donc, venir avec des gros chiffres...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order now!

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, si l’honorable ministre des finances reprochait à son prédécesseur, et je cite : « la tactique est simple, M. le président, comme toujours. Impressionner à travers des annonces grandioses et des sommes mirobolantes », j’ai toutes les raisons de croire que l’honorable ministre des finances a fait sienne cette tactique. C’étaient des sommes mirobolantes ; R 27 milliards de projets et, pour ces projets qui ont été identifiés, il investit R 3 milliards cette année-ci.

At this pace, Mr Speaker, Sir, these projects will run over ten years. He talks about 40,000 houses on a mix basis over the next ten years. Scheme 3 - 9,000 serviced plots of houses over the next years; a scheme for 15,000 serviced plots over the next ten years, and it went on this way; big figures over a long period.

Si le ministre des finances parlait d’impressionner à travers des annonces grandioses et des sommes mirobolantes, je dirai simplement : essayez d’impressionner, car ces annonces

grandioses et ces sommes mirobolantes n'ont pas impressionné grand monde, comme en témoignent les rares applaudissements tièdes dont certains membres de la Chambre nous ont gratifiés vendredi dernier. Ils n'avaient pas tort, M. le président ; ces annonces grandioses sont archi-répétées. On les trouve aussi dans d'autres secteurs et, par moment même, cela frise le ridicule.

Prenons, par exemple, la force policière. M. le Président, le ministre parle de la transformation de la police *from a Police Force to Police Service*. M. le Président, ce programme a été lancé par le premier ministre lui-même, en février 2010, comme en témoigne le GIS Newsletter - *'The Prime Minister launched this project'*. Quand je parle de février, je parle du mandat précédent, donc quelque chose qui a été accompli par le gouvernement travailliste/PMSD, le mandat dernier. Et venir parler de ça comme une innovation ! C'était dans le GIS ; de grands articles de journal - *'fini faire ça ; de la force au service, fini'*. Et, maintenant, venir parler de ça ! Il y a de quoi avoir des applaudissements rares et tièdes lorsqu'on passe par des méthodes de ce genre. M. le président, voilà ce que nous avons eu la semaine dernière. Donc, reprendre de telles mesures, cela m'étonne.

Having said so, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come back to the Budget. The hon. Minister mentioned the main thrusts of his Budget and he talked about, I quote -

“Rebalancing growth, making a great leap forward on productivity, and consolidating social justice.”

I am going, Mr Speaker, Sir, to focus on the third one - consolidating social justice. Mr Speaker, Sir, during the past decade, a lot has been said regarding alleviation of poverty, and I must say that several attempts have been made in that direction. I am not going to go back to what was said and done between 2000 and 2005. I am not going to talk about the works effected through the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups; I am not going to talk about integration through the huge social housing programme, neither the integration through the educational reform, and the integration of street children. I am not going to dwell into that, but I will just go to what has happened during the past five years.

Since 2006, when the then Minister of Finance presented the first Budget of the previous Government, he talked about the setting up of the Empowerment Programme. When he talked about this programme, he mentioned that this programme will have a life span of five years. He

talked about the activities, be it land for social housing, training and re-skilling, programme for unemployed women, tourist villages and so on and so forth.

During the years which followed, in each Budget, he came and explained the progress, the new measures. In the meantime, the Empowerment Programme became the National Empowerment Foundation. He later came forward with the EAP (Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme), with DCP (Decentralised Corporation Programme) during the last past years. Last year, the hon. Minister, in his Budget, talked about consolidating social progress, with nearly 40 paragraphs. So, last year, we heard about consolidating social progress, and this year we heard about consolidating social integration and eradication of absolute poverty. In the meantime, we had a Ministry of Social Integration. The hon. Minister announced a series of measures last week, which he thought appropriate to consolidate social integration. We have heard about these measures during the past five years, which we have found in the previous five Budget speeches.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened to the hon. Minister carefully, and then I read all these paragraphs several times very carefully. The more I read, the more desperate I felt. *M. le président, qu'y a-t-il de nouveau dans ce présent budget?* What's new to eradicate absolute poverty? What's new for social integration? Is it the 50% of CSR resources to finance the three national programmes (social housing, welfare of children from vulnerable groups and eradication of absolute poverty)? But, these programmes, Mr Speaker, Sir, are here since years. Is there any innovation under these programmes?

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2006, in his Budget Speech, when introducing the Empowerment Programme, which is now the NEF, as I said, the hon. Minister of Finance talked about a life span of five years. After five years, we have a new Minister of Finance, and now he talks of ten years. He now says at paragraph 334, I quote -

“An estimated Rs5 billion is expected to be mobilised from CSR over the next ten years to support these programmes.”

He was talking about what I have just mentioned (social housing, children from vulnerable groups and eradication of absolute poverty). Now he is talking about ten years.

Is the hon. Minister of Finance telling us that, with his budgetary measures, the cycle of poverty will continue? Is he telling us that the children of those children in today's vulnerable groups will be the children of vulnerable groups in five or ten years? Is the hon. Minister of Finance telling us that, with his budgetary measures, there will be other pockets of absolute poverty? *Peut-être bien.* In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance, less than one year ago, did not believe that these measures would take people out of absolute poverty. Et là M. le président, j'ai des difficultés. Comment et pourquoi, après avoir décrié ces mesures onze mois de cela, une fois dans le fauteuil du ministre des finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth vient, avec ces mêmes mesures, sans aucune modification? Comme quoi que, hors du fauteuil du ministre des finances, il avait plus d'imagination! M. le président, voilà ce qu'il disait...

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je ne me laisserai pas déranger par des gesticulations qui frisent celui d'un énergomène. Quand on parlait de *absolute poverty*, le ministre des finances déclarait que 'c'est face à l'ampleur de ce problème qu'une proposition a été faite pour qu'il y ait un mécanisme, afin que ces familles qui sont dans le *absolute poverty* puissent au moins acheter des aliments essentiels - et je dis bien, M. le président, les aliments essentiels - à meilleur marché'. Moins d'une année après avoir prononcé ces mots, se retrouvant dans le fauteuil du ministre des finances, on est en droit à s'attendre à ce que l'honorable ministre mette sur pied ce mécanisme, afin que ces familles puissent au moins acheter des aliments essentiels; et je dis bien 'des aliments essentiels'. L'année dernière, c'était une urgence; cette année-ci, on peut attendre quatre ans et peut-être même dix ans - parce qu'il est tout le temps pour dix ans. Mais, moins d'une année après qu'il ait prononcé ces mots, l'honorable Jugnauth a oublié sa proposition. Il pense le faire dans quatre ans. L'année dernière, c'était urgent et, après une année, on peut attendre quatre ans. Maybe, Mr Speaker, Sir, by moving wheat, flour, edible oil, margarine from the list of zero rated supplies to exempt supplies, he is setting a mechanism...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Any further disturbance I hear in the House from both sides, I will have to take action and ask the Member to leave the House. Any minor provocation will be dealt with.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was saying that, maybe by moving wheat, flour, edible oil and margarine from the list of zero rated supplies to exempt supplies, he is

setting a mechanism to allow poor people to buy '*aliments essentiels*'. Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we must be humble in recognising that the plan to eradicate absolute poverty and for social integration has not given the expected results. It is important to know why *et de rectifier le tir*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be no social integration without social housing, without education, without job. Social housing, Mr Speaker, Sir, *a été un échec total*. Can you believe it Mr Speaker, Sir? It is only in 2009 that the Labour/PMSD Government started its first housing project. It is in a reply to a PQ, and the hon. Minister said it 'In May 2009, the NHDC awarded the contract for the construction of 550 low cost housing units.' I must say that the hon. Minister was very honest in stating that 'we already completed the construction of 533 housing units, which were started just before 2005.' He was honest to state it and, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to read the list of projects started and completed between 2000 and 2005. I am not going to read the whole list which was provided, following a PQ put by my colleague, hon. Obeegadoo.

With regard to education for social integration, what innovative measure has been introduced during the past six years, particularly for those children who are being *broyés par le système, le A+ de M. Gokhool?* Where is the new curriculum for the prevocational sector? What has been done to improve ZEP? Comme une dame me disait M. le président, *ZEP ine vine zèbre!* En ce qui concerne, le *Enhancement programme*, il vaut mieux ne pas en parler. Quant au *Second Chance programme*, parlons-en M. le président. Parlons-en de cette école de la deuxième chance.

M. le président, le concept de l'école de la deuxième chance est bon. Au fait, on n'a rien inventé. Ce concept est issu du livre blanc 'enseigner et apprendre vers une société cognitive', présenté par Mme Edith Cresson, qui était alors commissaire européen chargée de la recherche et de l'éducation en 1995. Ce concept vise l'intégration professionnelle et sociale durable des jeunes de 18 à 25 ans sortis du système éducatif, sans diplôme, sans qualification et sans emploi. Il est bon de souligner que ce projet était proposé pour atteindre un objectif du livre blanc, qui est la lutte contre l'exclusion. Donc, l'école de la deuxième chance peut être un bon outil dans la lutte contre l'exclusion, et la tranche d'âge M. le président n'est pas rigide.

En France, dans différentes régions, vous avez des tranches d'âge différentes. Cela peut varier de 18 à 25, de 20 à 30 et, en Guadeloupe, par exemple, ce sont des jeunes de 18 à 30 ans.

L'idée est que chaque école doit s'adapter à son territoire de développement et à son environnement. Mais, il y a un aspect important dans ce concept; je dirai même la pierre angulaire est qu'il est en partenariat avec le monde de l'entreprise. Un des principes du concept est que l'insertion ne peut se faire qu'en collaboration avec le monde économique. Il ne peut y avoir d'intégration sans emploi stable. Voilà pourquoi, M. le président, cette formation repose sur une alternance formative en entreprise, dont la durée théorique représente entre 30% et 40%.

L'autre aspect que je souhaite souligner est que les enseignants sont issus de l'éducation nationale, soit d'autres parcours professionnels, un modèle qui est là depuis une quinzaine d'années. Et maintenant, qu'en est-il de l'école de la deuxième chance locale qui a été mise sur pied ? This measure was announced in the 2008-2009 Budget, and the programme started in May 2009 with three modules, that is, life skills management, basic literacy and numeracy, advance literacy and numeracy. Mr Speaker, Sir, if I agree with these three modules, in my humble opinion it is not enough; *un programme* with these three modules will not satisfy the needs of those who have to be socially integrated and the needs of those who need this programme.

My first question is: what about those who have dropped out of school at lower secondary level? We all know that the percentage of dropouts is higher at lower secondary level. What is the academic level of the target group? I have no doubt, Mr Speaker, Sir, that those who enter these programmes will need a *remise à niveau* regarding literacy and numeracy; with our 30% failure at CPE, 10% barely literate, though having passed, with nearly 25% illiterate from prevoc - after three years prevoc, at least, 25% come out illiterate. So, with these markets, we need this basic literacy and numeracy. But you cannot stop there and talk about *école de la deuxième chance* for social integration.

On the other hand, Mr Speaker, Sir, what about the trainers? *J'ai bien souligné, tout à l'heure, qu'en France, ces enseignants sont issus soit de l'éducation nationale, soit d'autres parcours professionnels. Et ici, qu'est ce qu'on a trouvé comme* trainers? I am aware that the trainers who are actually working there have received training by Caritas in "Functional Literacy". I know Caritas is good in this domain, with long years of experience. I know the programme; I received it personally to be a trainer in "Functional Literacy". I did it, and so I know the programme.

But what about Life Skills Management? According to my information, for the first batch, it is the trainers from Caritas who were doing the job, but for the second batch - for this batch now - it is the trainers who have not been trained to be trainers in the field who are doing the job. *C'est une plaisanterie. Il nous faut quand même être un peu sérieux.* When I look at this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I ask myself whether this programme has been set up to satisfy a need or just for the sake of doing it, just to say 'We have set up a Second Chance Programme.'

Mr Speaker, Sir, giving the worst to those who badly need the best seems to become the way forward in the education sector. Punitive transfers of teachers to ZEP, or teachers or head teachers who are at the eve of retirement, less schooling hours to prevoc students, unqualified trainers to Second Chance Programme. *Soyons sérieux si on veut aider ceux qui en ont le plus besoin!*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to most humbly request the hon. Minister of Education to revisit this programme. *On n'a pas à inventer la roue. Regardons ce qui se passe ailleurs. Si nous voulons vraiment accroître l'employabilité de ces jeunes pour une intégration sociale, il nous faut impérativement revoir ce programme.*

Je voudrais ici, M. le président, saluer la louable initiative du Bureau de l'Education Catholique qui a commencé un programme, notamment le Open Community School pour ceux qui veulent compléter les 'O' level et 'A' level. Certains vont le faire en un an, d'autres dans deux ans et peut-être plus. Ce programme a reçu un accueil favorable du public, vu le nombre de demandes des adultes de 18 à 64 ans ! Dire qu'il y avait une attente, qu'il y a un besoin ! Je suis certaine qu'on entendra un résultat très positif de ce programme dans un avenir pas trop lointain.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if Government is serious about consolidating social integration, it is imperative to revisit the programmes which have been running during the past five years, and which the hon. Minister of Finance is proposing to continue.

Based on figures given by the former Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech last year, it is clear that the objectives of the NEF were not achieved. We are far from what was mentioned since 2006, in terms of social housing - the hon. Minister himself just confirmed - training and skilling, eradication of absolute poverty and women empowerment.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, billions of rupees have been spent under the different programmes of the NEF.

After five years, with billions of rupees invested in the NEF, without any tangible positive impact on the lives of the vulnerable people, is it not wiser for Government to carry out a thorough evaluation and assessment of the different programmes? Before we keep on investing billions, why don't we go for a thorough evaluation and assessment of the different programmes put in place during the past five years?

In 2008, the then Minister of Finance mentioned -

“We have sought to find out who are the poor, where they live, why they are poor, and why many of them remain poor. We wanted to know their plights and predicaments, so that we can tailor our actions to their needs and to reach them more effectively”.

He announced that 7,157 families living in extreme poverty were identified, and then he talked about the new programme of Eradication of Absolute Poverty, which was introduced with a budget of Rs395 m.

When the hon. Minister of Social Integration took office in July, he commissioned, I think, a study to identify the number of people living in absolute poverty. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Social Integration came out with the figure of 7,000 families in the 229 pockets of poverty all over the island. There are still, 7,000 families in these pockets of poverty. Where has all the money spent on poverty alleviation gone? The question we should ask is: has the money been spent in an effective manner? The other questions which I ask myself are: have the households who were poor in 2005 remained poor in 2010? Have the households who were not poor in 2005 fallen into pockets of poverty in 2010? These are questions, Mr Speaker, Sir, to which we need answers.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to keep in mind that, behind statistics and huge amounts which are being spent, there are individuals, babies, children, elderly persons living in extreme poverty.

On the other hand, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is being said - and it is sad to say so - that there are people who are making money on the heads of those poor people, and I am sure the hon. Minister of Social Integration has started seeing that. *On se rappelle très facilement de la saga*

concernant l'achat des matériaux de construction. I am not going to dwell into that; it is not important. But we have to revisit and see to it that the money spent goes to those who need it.

We have also learnt, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the hon. Minister of Social Integration will organise '*une Assise de la Pauvreté*'. This will surely cost a lot of money, but it may serve its purpose if those directly concerned with this problem, that is, the poor people themselves, are given the right to talk and make their voice heard. We have more to learn from them if we want to help them. The solution should come from them. They should be a partner in that endeavour. Their definition of poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, may differ substantially from the definition by Government, experts and consultants. We should take their views on board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, allow me to reiterate my request to -

- (a) revisit the prevocational sector.

M. le président, que le *prevoc* cesse d'être une garderie où on envoie les enfants passer quelques heures. Que cela cesse, et qu'on vienne avec un programme pour aider ces jeunes !

Mr Speaker, Sir, I reiterate my request to -

- (b) revisit the Second Chance Programme;
- (c) carry out a thorough evaluation and assessment of the different programmes for social integration and eradication of absolute poverty;
- (d) the setting up of appropriate mechanism to ensure that the billions of money spent go to those who really need them, and also,
- (e) revisit those Women Economic Empowerment Programme, since many women are finding themselves with an increased indebtedness due to lack of proper monitoring.

Mr Speaker, Sir, time constraint has prevented me from talking about the social integration of drugs addicts, those suffering from alcoholism, compulsive gambling. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would have thought that, with the higher amount that the hon. Minister will collect with the increase of excise duty on cigarettes, cane spirit, increased licence fees, he would have put a structure to help those who are willing to get out of those social evils like alcoholism and compulsive or impulsive gambling. But, unfortunately, this has not been the case.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not by increasing the licences of casinos that we are helping an impulsive or compulsive buyer. Very quickly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was really surprised when I heard the Minister. Talking about social evils, he said that ‘there is a third social predicament on which we need imperatively to take a firm stand, that is, impulsive gambling due to the proliferation of outlets across the country’ - *comme si on ne savait pas comment cela s’est passé*. He recognised that we have this problem of impulsive gambling due to this factor. And he is right, because researchers have shown that. I’ll quote something from a latest research from the Swinburne University of Australia:

“Proximity is likely to be the cause of gambling problems.”

So, researches have proved that. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also said that gambling venues can provide a physical oasis from the outside world and its problems; *et Dieu sait à combien de problèmes le mauricien doit faire face*. The Minister knows about this problem of impulsive gambling, and what has been put to help these persons. Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are structures now to help these impulsive/compulsive or pathological gamblers to get out of these problems.

En passant, M. le président, where is the project to relocate gambling outlets in specific areas? If there is a will to help impulsive gambling, we can’t stop at increasing the licences. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the same thing if we want people to quit smoking. It is not only by increasing, year after year, the excise duty that you are going to achieve that. Where is the Smoke Cessation Clinic announced in 2008? Where is it?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I was quite surprised, because there was even a Cabinet decision dated 19 December 2008.

“Cabinet has further taken note that, as from 22 December, a Smoking Cessation Clinic will operate at the Odette Leal community, etc.”

It is a Cabinet decision. Moreover, in the International Tobacco Control Policy National Report for Mauritius, it is being stated that, above this *soi-disant opérationnel* Smoking Cessation Clinic at Beau Bassin, it will be nationwide. Where are these clinics? Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that either it is being done only to...

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Member is going to take some more time, I'll have to suspend for half an hour.

I must inform hon. Members that there has been a time allocation for both sides of the House, and that the time has to be respected. Otherwise, those who will come at the latest stage, of the debate, the last moment, if their time has been taken up by other Members, will have no opportunity to speak. So, is the hon. Member stopping here or is she going to take some more time?

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take some two or three minutes more.

Mr Speaker: Okay, carry on!

Mrs Labelle: I was just saying that we can use this money to help people get out of it. Mr Speaker, Sir, before I resume my seat, I will reiterate the request I made for the past five years for my constituency. I have repeatedly raised the problem of soil erosion at Rivière Sèche and the access road to Camp Savanne. For six years I kept saying that. Unfortunately, up to now, these projects have not been implemented. I sincerely hope that this will be done during the financial year, and that access to internet will be made available to all the young persons of my constituency.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At 5.05 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.37 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mrs B. Juggoo (Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for his first Budget, under the mandate of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*, contrary to the comparison of the wine bottle and its label, the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has accomplished a splendid job, under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in a daunting challenging international context. Against the backdrop of Euro crisis, which experts claim may last longer than the financial crisis, and the credit crunch the world lived just a few years ago, hon. Pravind Jugnauth has navigated with remarkable skill through troubled waters to present a budget that seems to meet expectations nationwide except, of course, those who are bent on opposing for the pleasure of

opposing, just like you have heard it now. Pravind Jugnauth has artfully managed a marriage between restructuring growth and strengthening - I am sorry, hon. Mrs Labelle is not here to hear - social justice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while charting a new way to a paradigm shift in trade and economic strategy. Let me, therefore, congratulate the Prime Minister and the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for their masterly stroke.

(Interruptions)

The first noticeable observation - you must learn how to observe - relates to macroeconomic management. Although we still have to make more efforts to attain the performance we have been used to, the economic variables show improvement or are stable on practically all fronts, except with regard to external equilibrium. Economic growth, fiscal deficit, debt ratios, and even savings, which had fallen to its lowest, are showing signs of improvement or stabilisation. The structure of the economy too seems to be undergoing major transformation. In the light of the burgeoning problems facing our traditional trade partners, this Budget proposes a paradigm shift in our trade strategy, a diversification in sourcing our inputs and in the destination of our exports, which hitherto had been euro-centred. This strategic thinking will have a major impact on our trade relationship, but we need to tread with caution and do not rush decisions without proper studies. When we talk of 10 years, it is just not done tomorrow, Sir.

The education hub - we heard our friend just now speaking contrary to what I am going to say - starts to make some inroads, consistent to the vision of Government in accommodating an increasing number of foreign students. In response to the current trend, Mauritius is putting in place a framework to create the propitious climate to accommodate foreign students. This includes new accommodation, authority to work, or transport connection.

I am sure many Mauritians may have been pleasantly surprised to learn that over 10,000 foreign patients received professional treatment in our hospitals, that is, both the education hub and the health hub are evolving fast as potential economic activities to widen the economic base and protect us against external shocks. The Budget has seen the potential in our country which we never dreamt of, and is accordingly creating the mechanism to unleash the huge potential. As the poet, Robert Browning, once said -

“Our aspirations are our possibilities”.

Hon. Mrs Labelle, “Our aspirations are our possibilities”. We have the ability...

(Interruptions)

I have repeated it for you.

(Interruptions)

“Our aspirations are our possibilities”.

We have the ability to transform dream into realities, and make things happen -

“Rome was not built in a day.”

The Budget is well inspired, and seeks to bring strong and lasting development. Very often, we hear of the need to sharpen our international competitiveness and of raising our productivity, as usual. In the past, our strategy was to resort to devaluation or to depreciation. This gives ailing sectors a breathing time, but after a few years the problem returns again with greater adverse impact. Both the former EPZ and the sugar sectors thrived on the sort of strategy, and never really got back to stand on strong limbs again. We need to provide strong foundations to fortify our productive sectors in a way they can build resilience to external shocks, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Budget has looked at our problem in a slightly different way, and identifies the need to be productive. It is not a matter of 10 years, as hon. Mrs Labelle was saying. We should see how to increase productivity and where. This is the question to ask. There is no easy task in that; it takes longer time to see the result, and we should know when people were in Government for 25 years, nothing was done. The Budget here lays the foundation stones and identifies seven areas where we can raise our productivity, sharpen our international competitiveness and strengthen the potential of our various industrial sectors. This is a very strong signal, as well as response to the curtain of protection and preferences which are falling with rapid globalisation, and our satisfactory economic performance, Sir.

Seven areas are targeted to explore its potential growth and export, and make a great leap forward on productivity. It is an attempt to look at development with a new mindset of merging to related but inextricably intertwined concepts of where the telescope ends and where the microscope begins. These new sectors are -

1. land resources;
2. marine resources;
3. human resources,
4. doing business environment;
5. dissemination of information;
6. physical infrastructure, and
7. public sector reform.

These are our future assets in a world where competition is fierce, tough and rough, be it housing project or police services, as our friend just mentioned, but it takes time. They are based on robust foundations, theoretically sound and empirically tested in some of the most performing economies like Germany, Singapore or Japan.

Productivity and innovation are the key prerequisite to obtain a share in world trade. We need to work hard, for without working hard, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nothing grows but weeds. I was, therefore, surprised when some Opposition quarters dismissed this Budget as '*fade*' with nothing to offer. Actually, it is laying the foundation for a bright future in a world without preferences or protection, and it looks at the possibility of tapping resources which have been left unattended for years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I listened to the section on education, it reminded me of an important phrase from Johann Wolfgang I had come across during my school days. He said -

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and help them to become what they are capable of being.”

So, hon. Dr. Bunwaree has indeed played a major role for the past few years for bringing progress to this sector. Few persons would disagree with the budgetary proposals, in its endeavour to shape the lives of our youth and prepare them to face the challenges of the future. With the number of scholarships significantly increased and a wider choice for the recipients, our hardworking students are indeed spoilt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no government has done better in the education sector, and both the vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Human Resources and, of course, our Prime Minister, deserve our heartiest congratulations. Positive reforms touch all levels of

education, from pre-primary to secondary and tertiary level, including provision of free transport to facilitate social and economic mobility. Education creates better workers and better citizens, permits the uplifting of a nation and a transition to a higher income economy, as well as the vehicle to alleviate poverty and promote equality of opportunities.

It is a vehicle that will also help to enhance understanding even among couples in a context of accelerated family breakdowns and declining values by promoting equal independence, mutual dependence and reciprocal obligation in new couples. The *Alliance de l'Avenir*, and more specifically the Labour party, have always been in the forefront with regard to universal provision of education. Remember our Chacha, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. The manner that this Budget strengthens the educational sector reinforces the welfare state and the capitalist system, two concepts often difficult to reconcile. How does this Budget achieve these two concepts? By giving access to higher educational level to more students, it is able to capitalise on the exploitation of high value-added sectors, and then the education service sector emerges as an industrial sector in its own right, serving not only the need of the nation, but also catering for regional and world market.

The education hub, the shift to high-tech and precision engineering sectors, the oceanic industry and medical tourism are all new possibilities. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, with the blessings of our Prime Minister, Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, is creating the enabling climate that will open new vistas of growth and consolidate existing ones. Yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was saddened to read the editorial comments of some dailies, and had to note their illiteracy of how development and growth are achieved. These editors-in-chief and economic analysts failed to grasp the subtle and indirect way of how a government can lay the foundations of a new resilient economy on strong pillars.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government's intention to promote women entrepreneurs is laudable. We have heard just now that not much is being done. We have been talking of equal opportunities. Yet, when we look at the statistics, we note female unemployment rate to 12% while female participation rate is 43%. We have still to catch up. We are concerned about this situation, because this represents resources that are optimally utilised. A job bestows financial independence and reduces the risk of exploitation when one is financially vulnerable. This Budget proposes to introduce a coordinated framework under the umbrella of a unified Business

Enterprise Board, which will bring together the SMEDA, the NPCC, the NICE, the NWECC, Enterprise Mauritius. Coordination and rationalisation are undoubtedly important to improve efficiency, avoid duplication and minimise costs.

However, one fear that I have is that priorities may not be efficiently dovetailed and, as with many reforms, too often women may be sacrificed. At this stage, we have very little information. Therefore, we are not there to criticise, but we need to know that, without less clout, national women entrepreneurs may be sacrificed and lose their identity. Resources may be denied to them such that the very purpose for which they were created may be ignored or overlooked. For instance, NICE used to provide training to women entrepreneurs on very useful topics, such as preparing business plans or pre-feasibilities. These courses have now been stopped. Given certain historic heritage, many enterprising women who run small and micro enterprises have not studied at tertiary or even secondary level for that matter. This does not mean that they are not productive, or we can't say they lack intelligence. But I would like to be reassured that the current and specific needs serviced by NICE or NWECC would not be simply ignored, while other institutions just take over and absorb all resources of our entrepreneur council.

Another fear is that, in such a super body, there could be complications for management and less of personalised attention, with a boomerang adverse effect on women and the cooperative movement. I would, therefore, urge to tread with caution, and ensure proper and effective planning before implementing an idea, however attractive it is.

We, of course, have a very able Minister of Gender Equality, hon. Mrs Sheila Bappoo, and she will take care, I know, to promote or upgrade our women citizens. We shall surely rely on her support for our shares, participation and support for our women citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Prime Minister created the Ministry of Social Integration, many observers were sceptical. Why sceptical? Yet, in the space of a few months, we are seeing some positive developments. But we have to see; we just cannot come and say nothing has been done. Maybe, we have to wear glasses to see. I don't know how people see, but, then, under the active guidance of the vice-Prime Minister, the able Minister, hon. Duval, with access to basic facilities being expedited on a fast track lane, I think things should work out well, time given, contrary to what hon. Mrs Labelle must be thinking right now. Naturally, it is

just a Budget in form of papers in black and white. So, we have to be given time once the Budget is being voted. I am sure action will be taken.

Some 50% of CSR resources will be diverted, as we heard before - I am repeating - to three national programmes: social housing, welfare of children from vulnerable groups and eradication of absolute poverty. In terms of money, this is equivalent to some Rs5 billion in the next decade or an average of Rs500 m. each year. This is, indeed, no small amount.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government has a caring and considerate approach, and has targeted assistance to those citizens who will depend on life income support owing to medical problems and disabilities. I need to underline that the concept CSR was introduced last year to ensure transfer payments from performing economic sectors to needy citizens and simultaneously consolidate the welfare state.

No civilised Mauritian can afford to permit its citizens to live at two extremes. The Government made positive intervention. This concept is being improved and implemented with greater seriousness of purpose, showing that the Government, under the hon. Prime Minister, endorses continuity wherever there is no valid reason to change.

The snag, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that, too often, distribution to recipients lacks equity and fairness. Remote regions in rural areas are often ignored, while urban areas obtain a disproportionate share. Sometimes, the distribution of welfare benefits is geared to particular ethnic groups or in specific regions.

As a parliamentarian visiting my constituency, I often received unpleasant remarks. So, I would make an appeal that distribution of welfare benefits be conducted with greater equity and fairness, so that it is perceived by all regions of having been completed in a transparent, fair, equitable and compassionate manner.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many critics feel this Budget is not sufficiently ambitious. On the subject of creative industry, the vice-Prime Minister has pledged Government's support for the setting up of a modern film industry. Mauritius may not, as yet, have international main actors, but the vast potential for technicians, financiers and value-added cannot be ignored. The demand is there, and we need simply to extend our hand and grab it. India faces tremendous constraints. Film producers wait for more than six months before getting a slot in a studio or

film city. Mauritius was, at one time, a favourite location for film shooting. Today, film producers are losing interest, because of the cost to bring all the equipment, and the unavailability of indoor facilities. In the past, there has been a serious interest shown from London and India, but we failed to capitalise on these interests for setting up of film city at Domaine Les Pailles.

The Prime Minister often talks of bureaucratic excesses. Those who have been entrusted with certain high responsibilities need to rise to the circumstances. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister responsible for Cooperatives for his enlightened initiatives and saving some cooperative movements from closing down. In my constituency, the Long Mountain Cooperative Society had some problems, and we have to place on record the wonderful job done by the Minister himself, and the Chairman of the DBM; the manner in which payments were effected by the Sugar Syndicate to the community of planters grouping cooperative societies, often resulting in the money been blocked for refund of loans. The hitch was that small planters were not borrowing, but were not receiving any money at all! The money was retained to finance loans contracted by big planters. It was a situation of big planters borrowing, while small planters not receiving the payment, although they have not borrowed. The Registrar and Audit Unit kept quiet over this lack of justice. Fortunately, with the assistance again of the Chairman of the DBM and the Minister of Cooperatives, the anomaly has been corrected. I would urge the parent Ministry to look into the matter closely and review the legislation, so that no cooperative should be closed in this country. I am sure that I can rely on our friend, the Minister of Cooperatives.

To come to the conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will turn to a few grass roots problems confronting the various regions of my constituency. Earlier, I stated the appreciation for the proposed measures given to boost the cooperatives sector. Constituency No. 4 is a peculiar one that is both rural and urban, and contains some of the hottest regions in the country. It is also one of the constituencies most deprived of resources. Year in year out, I plead for greater consideration and resource allocation, to bring the region in line with mainstream development. There are serious problems of security.

It seems that we do not have much time left, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I will give you two minutes!

Mrs Juggoo: I will try to wind up quickly. With regard to the NHDC apartments, I will make an appeal to the Minister of Housing. It is plunged into darkness, and those people live in real deplorable manner. Children and women have to brave pitch darkness, and are exposed to the social scourges one can imagine. I appeal to the Minister for Housing for prompt action. For the past five years, the residents have suffered, and we would like to have their wall put up, which we have requested, for security purpose.

At Crève Coeur, Vallée des Prêtres and Long Mountain, the residents face problems of a different nature, but no less pertinent. This region faces an acute shortage of water, and they have no access to tap water. Therefore, after years of lobbying, water pipes have been put at Rivalland two years back. But, the exercise is yet to be completed. The need to expedite matters and complete the operation cannot be overemphasised. It may be pertinent to point out that the residents have to use dirty water at times. With the Verdun-Terre Rouge Link Motorway connectivity, I wish to thank the Prime Minister for initiating action on this project last year, which, I am convinced, will unleash vistas of development for this village. Last year, largely to the support of the Prime Minister, hon. Anil Bachoo and hon. Rajesh Jeetah, the contract for Long Mountain Hospital was awarded. Unfortunately, progress in implementation is woefully slow. I would appeal to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Health, for assistance in expediting matters, as the inhabitants have long awaited this project.

Other places like Congomah, Tosca Bridge, Blackburn Bridge and Parampot Bridge are all sources of danger. Request has been made to the relevant authorities, and I am sure, with the able Minister Anil Bachoo - I hope this will be in our Budget - it will be done. Even though the delay in project implementation, we have to cope, and I am sure this year the work will be implemented. Why can't we import foreign contractors? You had given us hope, and I am sure...

The Deputy Speaker: Conclude, please!

Mrs Juggoo: I have two minutes to finish.

The Deputy Speaker: No, your two minutes are over now!

Mrs Juggoo: I have just two minutes to finish.

The Deputy Speaker: Alright.

Mrs Juggoo: We have the project of Sainte Croix, Vallée des Prêtres, Cité la Cure, Long Mountain, and pavements in Notre Dame. We wish to see it completed. I would like to thank the Minister Anil Bachoo for his prompt intervention. My constituency consists of a major urban segment, and the municipality budgetary allocation to this region has been negligible, even when funds are earmarked from the region's share of the budget to other areas. For the past 25 years, this region has been denied. So, it is time that the municipality corrects this discriminatory practice, and puts back the region on the bandwagon of the development train. We bake the cake, but when it comes to eat it, the municipality gives it to other regions.

I would not have time to finish all but, before rounding up, I would like to thank those supporters from my constituency, without whom I would not be here today. These people have high aspirations, and I do hope that facilities will be extended to make their place a better one to live, and mine as well, as I live in the constituency. The Prime Minister has confided me in a difficult constituency, in the light of the problems that the residents face, and I wish to thank him for his trust. It gives me immense satisfaction to be able to bring a smile on the lips of vulnerable citizens.

I will conclude on a quotation from Albert Einstein -

“If my theory of relativity is proven successful, Germany will claim me as a German and France will declare that I am a citizen of the world.”

As the Leader of the Opposition says *‘La clef de l’avenir’*, I would say *‘L’avenir - Avec’*.

«La clef de l’avenir avec l’Alliance de l’Avenir, c’est la clef de l’avenir et l’alliance de l’avenir pour l’avenir de tous les mauriciens».

Thank you for your attention, Sir.

(6.09 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, permettez-moi, avant de venir sur le budget, de rendre hommage cet après-midi à feu Mamade Elahee. Je commence par cela, car c’est arrivé aujourd’hui. C’était un patriote, un mauricien qui a donné toute sa vie pour la promotion du sport dans son quartier et dans sa ville, au niveau national et international. Je voudrais, au nom de tout le monde, rendre hommage à toute sa

famille et à toute la classe sportive. Je crois que les jeunes d'aujourd'hui doivent s'inspirer de ce qu'a été le parcours de Bhye Mamade.

M. le président, ceci dit, nous voilà donc réunis cet après-midi pour des débats budgétaires auxquels je me considère comme un grand habitué. Je crois que c'est le 27^{ème} discours du budget que j'ai le privilège de prendre connaissance, ayant moi-même participé à un tel exercice tant de fois avec mes amis de mon parti, que ce soit au gouvernement, ou dans l'opposition. M. le président, je suis donc bien placé pour séparer l'ivraie du bon grain et de faire la distinction entre les slogans creux, les effets d'annonce, le genre volet rhétorique, et les mesures courageuses, durables pour faire de notre île un pays prospère et de notre Etat une nation ambitieuse et solidaire. C'est cela l'essence même de tout exercice budgétaire, ou au moins devrait être l'objectif du budget national.

Ceci dit, M. le président, il est toujours intéressant de suivre de près la présentation du premier budget d'une nouvelle législature, d'autant plus que nous avons, cette fois-ci, un nouveau ministre des finances, qui a passé les cinq dernières années - nous en sommes tous témoins - à critiquer vertement, à vilipender, et à diaboliser son prédécesseur. L'exercice revêtait, donc, pour nous, un intérêt particulier. Nous nous sommes préparés, de ce côté de la Chambre, à être témoins d'un grand virage à gauche pour marquer une démarcation claire et nette, à défaut d'une rupture, avec la précédente politique économique.

M. le président, je ne voudrais pas, parce que je suis de ce côté de la Chambre, être perçu comme faisant partie de ceux qui trouveront automatiquement que tout n'est pas bon ou l'inverse...

(Interruptions)

...parce qu'on se trouve en face.

Nous assumons pleinement notre rôle de parlementaires responsables, en gardant constamment en tête l'intérêt de notre pays et de sa population, en accordant une attention particulière au pouvoir d'achat, aux investissements dans la santé publique, l'éducation, l'environnement, et à la justice sociale et économique. Evidemment, nous nous intéressons aussi de savoir si les principes de la bonne gouvernance, dont l'efficacité, l'efficacité économique et la transparence, sont appliqués lors de l'utilisation des ressources financières et humaines.

C'est en tenant tous ces facteurs en ligne de compte que nous avons décortiqué, analysé et fait des critiques constructives sur la politique économique en général, et sur les budgets successifs, en particulier depuis 2005 - ce que nous avons fait et ce que nous aurons l'occasion de faire durant le discours de ce présent budget.

Malheureusement, M. le président, le temps nous a donné raison et, aujourd'hui, l'un des principaux axes de l'action gouvernementale de ce nouveau mandat, c'est précisément de défaire toutes ces mesures que, justement année après année, l'opposition dans son ensemble, que ce soit le MMM ou l'autre opposition MSM, avait dénoncées - et je peux dire - sous les quolibets et railleries des députés de la majorité de l'Alliance sociale. Et, aujourd'hui, comme le *Leader* de l'opposition l'a fait remarquer, ces mêmes députés de la majorité, M. le président, applaudissent bruyamment lorsque ces mesures sont abolies.

Je suis allé aux *records*, M. le président, et on a parlé du *NRPT*...

(Interruptions)

Ils avaient même tapé la table...

(Interruptions)

To ti encore CEB ou ailleurs ; pas causer ! To pé rode tickets.

(Interruptions)

C'est le débat No. 12 du 13 juin 2006, l'*Appropriation Bill*. Je vais faire circuler une copie pour Ms Deerpalsing. A cette époque, la *National Residential Property Tax* était extraordinaire, formidable ; cela allait rapporter beaucoup d'argent au gouvernement, et c'était justifié, M. le président. Je ne veux pas être méchant, mais la *NRPT*, le 'Navin Ramgoolam *Property Tax*', même beaucoup de l'autre côté de la Chambre l'ont traité ainsi. Moi-même je l'ai dit ici, et je n'ai pas honte à le dire. Nous avons même manifesté pour montrer notre désapprobation. L'autre jour, j'ai écouté mon ami, l'honorable M. Cader Sayed-Hossen - qui n'est pas là - à la radio, qui disait 'Vous savez, ce n'est pas dans le programme du Parti Travailleuse et de l'Alliance de l'Avenir ; nous avons, deux ans de cela, décidé de défaire la *NRPT*'. Mais, M. le président, si on retourne aux débats sur le discours du budget de M. Rama Sithanen, et l'autre, à l'époque du budget de 2009...

(Interruptions)

To pou gagne l'occasion causer mo tifi, écoute tranquille. Mo pé dire mo tifi pou le moment. Ecouter! Amène thermos to boire boire to la tisane.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, hon. Bhagwan! I will make sure that you are not interrupted.

Mr Bhagwan: I am just making a point. Hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen said on radio "Two years ago, we decided. It is not now that we have been pressed upon by the MSM". And he went on and on. Nobody believes that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

C'est une fuite en avant, et c'est dans leur *deal* politique. Entre-temps, je me demande - l'honorable Ganoo, je crois, avait même posé la question - si ce n'est pas nécessaire de demander un *refund*. Vous-même, vous acceptez maintenant que la *NRPT* n'a pas sa raison-d'être. C'est *a very bad tax which has created a lot of problems to people. So, give a refund!* M. le président, c'est extraordinaire lorsqu'on voit ce revirement de veste.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, rien que pour la réintroduction des subsides sur les frais d'examens, combien de manifestations dans les rues les partis politiques de l'opposition d'alors, les syndicats et les forces vives ont dû organiser. Il n'est pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir et, aujourd'hui, ils ont accepté. L'Alliance sociale, à l'époque, *ine boire di sang bane dimounes misères, ceux qui ne pouvaient pas payer*, et cela est un fait.

(Interruptions)

Aujourd'hui, sous pression politique, vous avez dû changer.

Plus globalement, M. le président, à l'époque, nous avons surtout dénoncé l'orientation de la politique économique qui a caractérisé le mandat de l'Alliance sociale, dont la politique était tellement antisociale que les dirigeants ont dû avoir recours à un *change of name* pour venir devant l'électorat à nouveau en 2010. *It is a fact*, et c'est comme ça.

M. le président, quel bilan économique ultra libérale aujourd'hui, et quels sont les résultats? Selon l'*Annual Data and Forecast of Economic Intelligence Unit*, le *PIB per capita* de Maurice, en termes de Parité de Pouvoir d'Achat (PPP) en dollars américains, est passé de \$10,157 en 2005 à \$7,129 en 2010, et sera de l'ordre de \$6,689 en 2011, soit une baisse de 34%. Un plongeon sans précédent, un gâteau national qui s'est considérablement rétréci. Voilà la réforme! Mais quelle réforme pour qu'aujourd'hui nous ayons ces résultats ! Bien sûr, M. le président, je ne veux pas être méchant. Le Premier ministre ne pipera mot lors de ses grandes messes de presse, après les réceptions, qui ne sont généralement que prétextes pour monopoliser la télévision nationale, maintenant piratée par un service de désinformation nationale pour chanter la gloire du chef. Je vais revenir tout à l'heure sur M. Hitler de la *MBC/TV*.

(Interruptions)

Si le pays s'est, en termes réels, appauvri, M. le président, ce n'est pas pour tout le monde, parce que les chiffres du bureau central des statistiques démontrent clairement que les riches sont devenu plus riches. C'est visuel, on le sait, alors que ceux qui se trouvent au bas de l'échelle se sont appauvris. En clair, les inégalités sociales se sont accentuées. C'est cela le bilan d'un gouvernement qui prétendait *putting people first*.

M. le président nous sommes tous des politiciens. A moins qu'on ne veuille pas voir, dans les quartiers aujourd'hui, les gens sont pauvres. Il y a des gens qui vivent avec seulement l'argent de la pension de vieillesse. Heureusement, il y a des gens de bonne volonté ; heureusement, il y a des ONG ; heureusement, il y a des politiciens de valeur qui arrivent, par leur proximité, par leur générosité, à aider ces gens qui sont dans la détresse, avec ce maigre argent de leur pension. Il n'y a qu'à aller voir dans les citées ouvrières, dans les quartiers pauvres des régions rurales aussi, comment les gens n'arrivent pas à joindre les deux bouts ; surtout les gens pauvres.

M. le président, le pouvoir d'achat du mauricien également a connu une érosion de 17% depuis 2005, en raison des cascades d'augmentations de prix, alors que la compensation, version *National Pay Council*, a été chaque année dérisoire. Tandis que les poches des mauriciens se vidaient, les caisses de l'Etat se remplissaient, avec notamment un gonflement de la recette de la TVA, en raison de l'augmentation des prix et de la consommation. Et c'est pour cela que le ministre d'alors, M. Sithanen, avait pu amasser tout cet argent et le mettre dans des fonds, au

détriment de la population, et même de la classe moyenne. Tout le monde voyait clairement que la classe moyenne était étranglée par la politique de l'Alliance sociale. On avait parlé à l'époque de *'bumper crop, early harvest'*. Certains, comme l'honorable Arvin Boolell, *'tape la table même, tape li pied tout'*. Comme toujours ! Et il ne sait pas pourquoi il fait cela.

M. le président, tout cela évidemment a un impact sur la qualité de vie de nos compatriotes, alors que le moral de la population en prenait un sale coup. Nous avons tous étaient témoins, M. le président, combien cette politique économique a été dangereusement néfaste pour le social ; criminalité en hausse, prolifération des fléaux de la drogue, du jeu, affectant la santé mentale de ceux ayant été pris au piège de l'endettement, surtout du jeu et de la drogue.

M. le président, pour toutes ces nombreuses raisons, nous avons dénoncé et critiqué la politique économique de l'Alliance sociale. Nous n'étions pas les seuls. L'actuel ministre des finances avait fait de l'anti-Sithanen son fond de commerce, et il se faisait un devoir religieux de ne jamais rater de dénoncer la politique économique de son prédécesseur lors de ses conférences de presse hebdomadaires, à tel point que les conférences de presse finissaient par se ressembler.

L'actuel ministre des finances trouvait, en 2006, que Sithanen avait piqué ses idées, *que travailler pu fini mort dan karo* avec la retraite à 65 ans. En 2007, il exprimait son énorme déception, parce qu'il n'y avait pas de mesures pour compenser la perte du pouvoir d'achat, surtout avec la dévaluation de la roupie, et que Sithanen était le grand valet du gros capital, en raison de la baisse du *corporate tax*. L'année suivante, il trouvait que Sithanen sortait de son sommeil en découvrant subitement la pauvreté. Et, en 2009, il trouvait que c'était une occasion ratée, car il n'y avait pas de mesures pour soulager la population, et que c'était le même vin, servi dans des bouteilles différentes, pendant quatre ans.

Voilà les observations de l'actuel ministre des finances sur le budget de l'Alliance sociale du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, présenté par le Dr. Sithanen. L'occasion est venue, M. le président, avec la présentation du budget 2011, de lui retourner ses compliments, et avec intérêts. Fondamentalement, qu'y a-t-il de différent avec les budgets de Rama Sithanen ? C'est le même vin. *Produit pareil, ine ajoute ajouter, après ine met lote l'emballage.*

Comment ce budget va permettre de faire grossir le gâteau national ; comment les salariés vont rattraper leur pouvoir d'achat ; comment ce budget va réduire les inégalités sociales ? Voilà

les grandes questions auxquelles ce budget n'apporte point de réponse. Voilà l'exemple parfait du double langage. Quelqu'un qui a passé les quatre dernières années à critiquer son prédécesseur vient faire plus ou moins exactement la même chose.

Y-a-il une nouvelle philosophie, une nouvelle orientation politique, M. le président ? C'est pourquoi j'estime que cet exercice budgétaire a fait fonction, avant tout, d'agent révélateur de double jeu, de double langage. L'actuel ministre des finances, il est vrai, n'est que le nouveau jockey de la banque mondiale, de la même écurie, avec les mêmes entraîneurs de la banque mondiale, avec les mêmes palefreniers, sauf qu'on a ajouté une bande orange à sa casaque rouge ! C'est à cela que le ministre Bunwaree faisait référence en parlant de continuité. Mon bon ami, le ministre Bunwaree, a parlé de continuité.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, j'ai décidé de ne pas répondre à ce voyou !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please! Continue.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: 'Voyou' parliamentary. Un nouveau ministre certes, mais...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Bhagwan: ...servant le même vin dans une nouvelle carafe.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo, please! If you have anything to say...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I am on my feet! Please remain silent. We are actually listening to hon. Bhagwan. You will have the opportunity to intervene at a later stage, and say whatever you have to say.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to remind the House, I am a professional, a pharmacist, not a *marchand sirop*, as mentioned by hon. Barbier!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please take your seat, hon. Member!

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! Is it parliamentary for a Member of Parliament to use the word ‘*voyou*’? I would like your ruling on this, please.

The Deputy Speaker: We have to know the context, and if the context was used unbecomingly to...

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: He has to remove these words! Withdraw! Withdraw!

(Interruptions)

He has to withdraw!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I rule that the word was not used in a way to attack the character of a hon. Member.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to raise a point. It was...

(Interruptions)

Toi to dire order, toi!

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Hon. Barbier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! If the hon. Member has something to say, let him do so.

Mr Jhugroo: Hon. Barbier said that I am not a pharmacist, but a *marchand sirop*. I challenge him! If he has the guts, go and say it outside!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Take your seat!

(Interruptions)

Take your seat, hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Please, order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Jhugroo, you are warned! I warn you, hon. Jhugroo! You have raised an issue...

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order! I am addressing everybody; I want silence. Hon. Barbier, please! Hon. Jhugroo, I have not heard the Member stating so, and if ever hon. Barbier has stated those words, as a gentleman, he should withdraw. I must stress...

(Interruptions)

Please! I must stress that I have not heard it personally.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, hon. Jhugroo...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, please! Please, be seated! I insist I have not heard it. If the hon. Member has said it, then, please, he should withdraw it, and if he states that he has not said so, we take his words as a hon. Member.

Mr Barbier: I said that he sells syrup for cough.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please, you continue now!

(Interruptions)

Hon Members: Shame! Shame!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, please! Hon. Bhagwan, you may continue now! I want silence, please.

Mr Bhagwan: Comme je vous l'ai dit, M. le président, nous sommes revenus à la case départ et, aujourd'hui, les pauvres de ce pays...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

I want again to stress that I am warning every Member of this House. At this point, hon. Bhagwan has got the right to address the Chair and, if any Member interrupts, I will have to take sanctions. I am very sorry. Yes, please!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, je vais redire ce que j'ai dit...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Nous voilà donc revenus à la case départ, avec un nouveau ministre, certes, mais nous servant le même produit dans une nouvelle *carafe*. Voilà où nous en sommes aujourd'hui !

M. le président, ces commentaires étaient en guise d'introduction sur le budget, et maintenant je vais passer à quelques observations qui ont attiré mon attention.

M. le président, j'ai entendu le ministre des finances venir dire qu'il y a des goulots d'étranglement au niveau de la PSC, qu'il y a un problème et, d'après ce que j'ai compris, ces personnes ne font pas bien leur travail, il y a un *backlog*, et qu'il faut venir avec un nouveau système pour les nominations et autres au niveau de la fonction publique, avec des pouvoirs délégués.

M. le président, je ne peux m'empêcher de relever ces observations à une attaque contre cette institution. Cette institution est prévue par la constitution, et respectée par tout un chacun.

Nous avons été au sein du gouvernement, et nous sommes dans l'opposition. Et, ici même, nous n'avons pas le droit de poser des questions sur la PSC. Je crois, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Pas faire moi dire quelque chose qui pas bizin Arvin ; par amitié !

Je crois que c'est la première fois que nous vivons une tentative aussi vile de dévaluer une institution qui a fait ses preuves tant bien que mal au fil des années. Et même, aujourd'hui, ce ne sont pas les syndicalistes de la fonction publique et encore moins ces dizaines de milliers de fonctionnaires qui me contrediront. Ils ont eu raison de venir dénoncer cette mainmise et ce contrôle de l'exécutif sur la PSC. Mais, M. le président, dans leur folie de vouloir tout contrôler, le ministre des finances a cru qu'à travers une majorité parlementaire, ce gouvernement pouvait s'approprier des pouvoirs constitutionnelles de la PSC. Je dois poser la question: est-ce qu'il n'y a pas anguille sous roche ? Lorsque j'ai vérifié le budget, j'ai vu, par hasard, deux postes de *Deputy Financial Secretary*. Comment vont-ils être nommés ? D'après leur formule, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas déjà *job for the boys* ? Mais on ne va *pinpoint* personne. Certaines personnes vont venir au ministère des finances, et je sens déjà la crainte de ces employés du ministère des finances.

M. le président, tout le monde le sait, lorsqu'on parle de *delegation of powers*, est-ce - moi-même j'étais ministre - qu'avec notre système actuel, *delegation of powers means* un ministre peut donner des instructions ? Est-ce que le *Permanent Secretary*, avec les pouvoirs délégués et quelques assesseurs vont venir faire ces nominations ? Il y a autant de questions et l'ingérence - quoi qu'on dise le contraire - des politiques au niveau des nominations. Et c'est pour cela, M. le président, que je crois que cette démarche n'est pas correcte, et je suis sûr que même les membres de la PSC ont appris cela à travers le discours du budget à la télévision. Et même au niveau du bureau du Premier ministre, selon mes informations, il y a des doutes sur l'opportunité de venir présenter un projet de loi dans ce sens au Parlement. Et, déjà, je vois les premiers signes d'une opération *cutting down to size*, des ambitions politiques démesurées de certains.

M. le président, le ministre des finances a parlé, dans son budget, du *Mauritian Dream*. A voir, M. le président - nous étions de ce côté-ci - la timidité de l'accueil réservé par ses pairs des bancs du gouvernement, je me demande si ce rêve est partagé d'une manière unanime de l'autre coté de la Chambre. En ce qui concerne ce *Mauritian Dream*, est-ce que certains ne font

pas des cauchemars ? Parce que ce sont des politiciens ; ils descendent dans leurs circonscriptions et font face à des gens et des problèmes, et au Parlement - moi aussi j'étais au gouvernement - il faut faire des discours. On côtoie certains dans le couloir - je ne vais pas citer des noms - et beaucoup parmi mes amis de l'autre côté ne sont pas satisfaits. 'Ki à faire! Ki pou faire! Margoz! Ici tape la table, mais en dehors!' C'est la politique !

(Interruptions)

Moi, je suis un vieux renard comme l'honorable Arvin Boolell ! C'est la vérité! Et, M. le président, lorsqu'on parle de *Mauritian Dream*, quel doit être notre *Mauritian Dream* ? Qu'il n'y ait pas de corruption! Qu'il n'y ait pas de politique de petits copains ! Qu'il n'y ait pas des personnes comme M. Hitler à la MBC TV et comme certains au *Mauritius Duty Free Paradise*, M. le président !

(Interruptions)

M. le président, vous avez donné un *warning*, et je vais répondre à cette demoiselle qui vient de m'interrompre...

The Deputy Speaker: Please, hon. Bhagwan, address the Chair! We will take care of others. You are under my control, there is no problem.

Mr Bhagwan: ...à ma façon, avec le protocole des *Standing Orders*.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, le *Mauritian dream* ne doit pas devenir un cauchemar. Pourquoi y a-t-il cette décadence aujourd'hui? Pourquoi sommes nous arrivés à ce point? Après que l'Alliance sociale ait remporté les élections de 2005, il y a eu une politique de *lev paké aller*. Les meilleurs cadres de l'île Maurice ont été mis à la porte. Et, aujourd'hui, l'Alliance sociale a mis - *job for the boys* - les petits copains à la tête de beaucoup d'institutions. Vous avez vu les faits tout récemment au *Tobacco Board*, *Rose Belle Sugar Industry Board*. Je ne vais pas parler du *Tourism Fund*, *Tourism Authority*, *Discovery Mauritius*, *Fantasy Mauritius* et je ne sais quoi encore. Mais, M. le président, j'ai une liste de tous ces corps parapublics. L'Alliance sociale a mis des 'Ali Baba' dans tous ces corps parapublics et, aujourd'hui, comme résultat, *enn par enn pe aller par grape ; mett la main dans coffre-fort pé vende whisky*. M. le président, c'est ça la

mauvaise gouvernance. Si on veut avoir une discussion sur Air Mauritius - je vois sourire le ministre du tourisme ; il a honte d'être le ministre du tourisme...

(Interruptions)

Est-ce cela le *Mauritian Dream*, M. le président ? Est-ce qu'il est normal qu'on ait cette situation à Rodrigues année après année? Je ne vais pas parler des élus ici. Est-ce que c'est nécessaire ? Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas de *Mauritian Dream* pour nos amis, nos frères et sœurs de Rodrigues? Ils se sentent exclus. Il y a un problème quelque part. A voir les déclarations du Chef commissaire, entre les deux élus de la majorité, il y a une différence d'appréciation. Entre les élus et le Conseil régional, il y a des problèmes d'observation.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Nos amis, nos frères de Rodrigues se sentent exclus. Je crois que ce n'est pas correct, M. le président. Nos amis, nos frères de Rodrigues se sentent écartés et, ce matin, le Chef commissaire a fait une déclaration: 'Sithanen n'est pas là, c'est la même arrogance au ministère des finances'. Tout cela est connu par la population de Rodrigues. Je crois que ce n'est pas bon pour cette entente qu'il y a entre Maurice et Rodrigues. Il est important que le gouvernement et tout le monde fassent de sorte que nos amis, nos frères et sœurs de Rodrigues ne se sentent pas exclus, et qu'eux aussi fassent partie de ce *Mauritian Dream*.

M. le président, j'avais fait mention tout à l'heure de la MBC/TV. Je suis allé aux chiffres, et c'est important que certains élus du gouvernement le savent. 291,000 téléspectateurs payent les R 100. R 27.7 millions de roupies par mois sont collectées par la MBC. L'argent ne sort pas de la poche du Directeur général.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bundhoo, please!

Mr Bhagwan: *To fine degrader comme ministre. Ferme to la bouche...*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member will have the opportunity to address the House.

Mr Bhagwan: *To pa honter tone degrader!*

(Interruptions)

Mo pa ti envie dire sa bouté la! Reste trankil ékouter.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Please, continue with your speech.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *To ti bizin honter pour causer toi. Reste trankil.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Continue! Continue!

Mr Bhagwan: En réponse à la question No. B/1453, il est dit que *Rs27.7 m. is collected as licence fees monthly*. R 28 millions multipliées par 12, et vous avez le chiffre pour les 290,000 téléspectateurs. Qu'est-ce que se passe à la MBC à part la garantie gouvernementale, le grand bâtiment d'Ebène, le *headquarters*? Je suis sûr que l'aide de la Chine est garantie par le gouvernement, notre argent. Comment la MBC/TV est gérée aujourd'hui, M. le président? Un chef se croit investi de pouvoirs supérieurs à ceux du chef de gouvernement. M. le président, je ne vais pas parler de ce problème, et j'espère que dans les jours à venir le Premier ministre, au nom de la transparence, va déposer le rapport Torul à l'Assemblée nationale. Le Professeur Torul a été commandité par le ministère de travail. Comme médiateur, il a fait un rapport sur les problèmes industriels concernant une employée, madame Ameer, et de faire une étude sur les relations industrielles à la MBC/TV.

Voilà, M. le président, ce n'est pas un MMM, ce n'est pas moi, c'est la fille du trésorier du Parti Travailleuse. Voilà ce qu'elle dit sur Mr Hitler!

(Interruptions)

Of course, my good friend!

« Dan Callikan terrorise les employés de la MBC. Il est comme Hitler. Il est entouré de l'état-major du SAS, et les employés sont comme des juifs. Je refuse de travailler dans un tel climat. Un climat de terreur. »

Voilà ce qu'elle a dit, et elle a claqué la porte. Je suis triste, M. le président. Après l'épisode de madame Ameer, après l'épisode de Pamela Patten, maintenant c'est cette fille.

Où sont ces défenseurs de cette organisation qui s'occupe de la défense, M. le président ? Où sont ces organisations, la promotion, les ailes féminines ? Il n'y a pas de conférence de presse. Mais moi, je vais défendre ces employés, et je le fais à chaque fois, M. le président. Je pose des questions parlementaires au Premier ministre et c'est grâce à l'opposition - j'avais l'intention de mentionner Jhugroo. Maintenant non ! Hungama ! On a oublié l'épisode de Hungama où le Premier ministre a été obligé de faire partir monsieur Bijay Madhoo, avec la perte de millions de roupies. Et, aujourd'hui, qu'est-ce qui se passe à la MBC/TV ? Certains ont peur. Mes amis de l'autre côté sont protégés par le grand chef. Il a été le conseiller du Premier ministre ; il est là-bas ; c'est lui le boss. Dans certains milieux, il dit '*I am the Prime Minister*'. Il est comme ça. M. le président, même certains ministres ont peur de ce monsieur. Je dis certains ; pas tous.

« Les membres de la direction sont devenus comme des tireurs d'élite. »

Ce n'est pas terminé avec cette demoiselle-là.

« Il vous surveille à l'aide de caméras, et dès qu'ils ont une bonne portée de tir vous êtes mort. Votre carrière est finie. »

Voilà un peu, M. le président, la MBC/TV sous l'ère de Callikan. J'ai toujours demandé ici la démission de ce monsieur dans l'intérêt de ces employés, dans l'intérêt de ces gens, dans l'intérêt des mauriciens qui payent ces 100 roupies, ce qui fait 27.7 millions de roupies. Il sera présent lorsque le Premier ministre sera là.

Avez-vous vu, dans un autre pays, le Directeur général de la BBC/RFI venir s'asseoir au parlement comme un espion ? Avez-vous vu cela dans un autre pays M. le président ? C'est une honte pour cette institution, et c'est pour cela qu'on a toujours voulu - cela a été mentionné dans un programme - une télévision privée. Grâce aux radios aujourd'hui, nous pouvons connaître certaines vérités dans ce pays, et les mauriciens le savent. Radio MBC *couma dire pa exister même sa !* Et, aujourd'hui, tout le monde sait pourquoi on a fait partir Madame Patten ! Il y a eu un *tailor-made* poste et déjà des gens sont préparés pour remplacer Madame Patten. Il y a des gens qui sont rejetés d'une certaine radio - *tailor-made jobs for the boy*, pour monsieur Hitler. Alors, voilà un peu la situation.

(Interruptions)

Pa dire non ! C'est comme ça. J'avais honte de ne pas défendre ces dames. Voilà un peu, M. le président. Que ce soit Madame Ameer, que ce soit Madame Patten, et maintenant M. le président....

The Deputy Speaker: Just to remind you that the 45 minutes are over. You have some more time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Ils m'ont fait perdre dix à quinze minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: I make allowance for that also.

Mr Bhagwan: No, but we have agreed for a certain period of time among the Whips.

(Interruptions)

Disturbance allowance.

M. le président, je vais venir maintenant sur l'environnement, parce que cela me tient à cœur. Tout simplement, M. le président, parce que la qualité de vie de nos enfants d'aujourd'hui et de demain et celle de nos petits enfants après-demain et, en finalité, la vie même sur terre dépend des choix en matière de développement économique et social que nous faisons aujourd'hui. Il est évident que le modèle de développement qu'on a connu jusqu'à présent n'est plus viable à long terme. La gouvernance planétaire exige un changement radical profond et je pense, en toute humilité, M. le président, que j'ai tenté au mieux de mes capacités - alors que j'assumais les fonctions de ministre de l'environnement - de donner une impulsion nouvelle, afin de tracer une nouvelle voie en faisant de la protection et de la préservation de l'environnement une responsabilité collective. Sans la population, on ne va jamais pouvoir y arriver, et toute la population de l'île Maurice doit avoir une ambition.

A ce chapitre, déjà en 2005 - l'honorable Obeegadoo le sait - nous avons proposé la création d'un ministère d'écologie et de développement durable, et le gouvernement du jour est venu avec le projet MID. Nous l'avions dit. C'est une copie vide. Nous l'avions déjà dit, et nous le dirons aujourd'hui. Pourquoi disons-nous que c'est vide ? Parce qu'il y a une nécessité d'avoir des réflexions sérieuses, concrètes et décisives, d'avoir des décisions claires par rapport au

secteur énergétique au niveau des consultations nationales et démocratiques pour l'élaboration d'une stratégie nationale du développement durable. Il y a eu une consultation qui a démarré récemment, mais c'est trop timide, à tel point que je me demande si les mauriciens en général, la population - tout le monde parle du développement durable - a bien compris ce qu'est ce développement durable. Qu'est-ce que le pays va gagner avec ce concept de développement durable ? Je pense qu'il faut sensibiliser davantage la population, pour que le MID ne reste pas une coquille vide. Il faut de l'imagination pour mobiliser toute l'énergie et les compétences nationales, pour faire de notre République un Etat exemplaire en matière de développement durable. Le pays, notre république, dispose d'un atout formidable, d'une carte maîtresse avec l'engagement du Professeur de Rosnay. Saisissons cette opportunité en faisant piloter le conseil scientifique du développement durable qui se chargera de mobiliser les scientifiques d'ici et d'ailleurs, pour aider le pays à d'abord prendre les bonnes décisions stratégiques et derrière les bonnes actions, il y a d'abord les bonnes réflexions et les bonnes décisions. Il faudra surtout l'écouter plus attentivement. Il est à Maurice. Il a donné quelques conférences. Il a fait pas mal d'observations, de suggestions. Je crois qu'il est important pour le gouvernement de prendre note et d'appliquer dans une stratégie globale toutes ces observations et faire piloter ce projet si valable pour notre pays. Je propose, M. le président, de créer un conseil national de développement durable avec les partis politiques parlementaires et extra parlementaires, le secteur privé et la société civile, pour dégager un large consensus national. Il faut avoir un consensus national durable pour les alternances politiques, pour que les alternances politiques ne viennent pas remettre constamment en question les stratégies nationales. Il faut avoir une stratégie ; il faut que cette stratégie ait une unanimité.

We have to walk the talk - *assez kozer, bizin bouzer*. C'est ça le message ; et bouger vite dans la bonne direction. Ce ne sont pas les ampoules. Nous avons vu le scandale des ampoules économiques. J'ai oublié tout à l'heure de parler sur le CEB. J'ai commencé ma carrière au CEB - j'y ai passé presque 17 ans de ma vie. A l'époque, M. le président, lorsqu'on était cadre du CEB, on était fier. J'ai commencé dans les années 69 - 17 ans de service. Il y a eu de grands présidents comme Maurice Paturau, Sir Dayendranath Burrenchobay, le professeur Kasenally et le professeur Baguant. Il y a eu des Directeurs généraux de la trempe de M. Desmarais, M. Chevreau à l'époque. Mais, aujourd'hui, avec ce qui vient de se passer avec cette affaire d'ampoules économiques, il me revient la PNQ du débat 36 du 02 décembre 2008. M.

Assirvaden était dans la galerie. C'était une PNQ sur la nomination du Directeur général du CEB qui a été limogé, qui a été suspendu récemment. Le MMM, l'opposition avait fait objection sur cette nomination, en donnant des raisons. Voilà le résultat, M. le président, de ce qui s'est passé au CEB, et nous sommes appelés à prendre de grandes décisions stratégiques ; et il y a l'exemple des ampoules économiques.

M. le président, il y a un dossier qui est tout aussi important, notamment le dossier du changement climatique. On ne voit rien dans le budget. Le pays prend du retard par rapport à la remise à jour de son plan climat. Au niveau de l'environnement, il n'y a pas de secret, il faut qu'il y ait transparence. Par rapport au *monitoring* de l'érosion côtière, je sais qu'il y a pas mal de projets qui sont en chantier, mais il faut informer. M. le président, sans faire de la politique, je crois qu'au niveau du ministère de l'environnement, il faut informer encore plus la population. Il faut davantage d'initiatives, et même diplomatiques; même au niveau des petits états insulaires.

M. le président, le budget c'est un discours. Le ministre des finances a fait son discours ; il a fait des propositions. Nous faisons état de nos propositions, mais l'île Maurice aujourd'hui traverse par une situation difficile. Nous sommes les représentants de la population. Nous avons été élus pour défendre la population, pour faire entendre la voix de la population, que certains le veuillent ou non. Nous représentons un grand pourcentage de l'électorat - 43% - et nous avons la ferme intention de faire notre travail contre vents et marées, que certains le veuillent ou non. Pour nous, ce budget, ce n'est pas l'effet que certains croient ; il n'y a pas d'excitation. Il y a un problème au niveau de la population. Les gens de l'île Maurice ne sentent pas qu'il y a eu ce budget. Voilà un peu ce que j'avais à dire, M. le président. Nous serons ici l'année prochaine à analyser les résultats de ce budget, et déjà pour moi c'est un départ raté, quoi que peuvent dire les amis de l'autre côté.

Merci, M. le président.

(7.00 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy):

M. le président, je voudrais me joindre à l'honorable Bhagwan pour rendre hommage à Mamade Elahee.

I would like also to congratulate the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance for this broad-based Budget, which sets out an ambitious set of actions to reinforce the economy and secure the prosperity of current and future generations. It sets out a framework to address the current economic challenges and to build a smart economy to the thriving enterprise sector, high quality employment, secure energy supplies and attractive environment, and first-class infrastructure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have carefully listened to Members on the other side of the House. Some of them tend to forget that this Government has won the last general election, and we have a clear mandate to govern this country.

We are here for the next five years. Unfortunately, for them it will be five long years in waiting. *Ce gouvernement est fermement en selle, M. le président.* The population has given us its full support to lead this country on the road to progress. *La population est intelligente et sait qui doit gouverner et qui doit faire l'opposition.*

L'Alliance de l'Avenir, led by the Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party, is firmly determined to push this country ahead in all fields, particularly in the field of socioeconomic development.

Today, we have a strong alliance, composed of the Labour party, the MSM and the PMSD which form this Government. Nobody can deny the fact that this Government, through the Presidential Address, has charted out the way to progress for this country.

From what I have heard so far, I note that *l'opposition est en panne d'idées*. They will be confined to this role where they feel best, that of criticising and not proposing anything concrete for some more years.

My colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, has brought in this Budget numerous measures which are in line with the socialist policies of the Government; measures to help the poor and the needy, those who are at the lowest rung of the social ladder.

The Government has initiated a series of actions, and the hon. Prime Minister has been well inspired in creating two new important Ministries, namely the Ministry of Social Integration and the Ministry for Tertiary Education. One geared towards alleviating poverty, and the other

towards preparing our youth and giving the country the necessary brains for its future development.

On the other hand, what do we see? The Opposition has nothing to offer in terms of concrete proposals during the debate. The Leader of the Opposition and the others have been speaking only on *rattrapage du pouvoir d'achat*. *Il serait bon de rappeler que le rattrapage a toujours été fait à travers le PRB et le NRB, et non au niveau du tripartite.*

The PRB takes into account the loss of purchasing power. *C'est pourquoi, pour éclairer la Chambre, le dernier PRB de 2008 au taux de 39% de full compensation covers the period 01 July 2003 to 30 June 2008. The next report of the PRB will take into account 2009/2010 and other years to come, whereas the NRB will cover the private sector, and sector by sector.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the well-being of the population is at the heart of this Budget. By mainstreaming all the dimensions of sustainable development, the Budget has laid the foundation stones that are crucial for reconciling economic development with environmental sustainability whilst encouraging people towards a more responsible and sustainable lifestyle.

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development will set out the policy, strategy and action plan for promoting sustainable development in the country. It will adopt a holistic approach to the whole issue. The multi-dimensional approach to policy formulation is innovation by itself. It will foster growth in the economy whilst, at the same time, ensure that the environment is not damaged permanently. The setting up of this special Ministry to deal with sustainable development is precisely not to adopt a piecemeal approach but rather an integrated and long term planning in the use of our scarce natural resources.

These past years have highlighted our vulnerabilities as a Small Island Developing State. We have had to face the brunt of different crises - the daunting food security crisis, energy insecurity, the recent financial crisis, the disturbance caused by the ashes of the volcano in Iceland, the euro crisis, and the looming threat of climate change and sea level rise. Mauritius cannot afford to do business as usual. We have to be clear on the development scenario that we want to choose. Today, we have a better understanding of anthropogenic impacts on the environment, the need of the society and the impacts of modernisation. We cannot, therefore, claim to be ignorant about natural resources degradation and its cost for both the present and future generation.

This Budget has not only paved the way for an economic dream, characterised by the GDP of one trillion rupees by 2020 and a per capita income of USD 20,000. It has, at the same time, paved the way for another dream and an environmental and sustainable development dream, encapsulating the '*Maurice Ile Durable*' vision enunciated by the Prime Minister; a dream characterised by an improved resource efficiency, as well as energy and water security, with every household equipped with a solar water heater by 2015, where rain water harvesting will be initiated across the country, and where households will not only be consumers but also producers of electricity for their own needs and for the sale to the grid.

This dream is also characterised by Green buildings. To this end, a policy guideline and rating system is being developed to promote resource efficiency in buildings, to provide a whole range of solutions to different needs. We are also encouraging the Green industry concept for firms to be cost-effective in the use of their resources.

As far as waste is concerned, the 3Rs principle - namely reduce, re-use and recycling - will be fully adopted to close the circle and make Mauritius resilient to shocks in raw material prices and availability. All households will be encouraged to carry out backyard composting individually or in the near green public areas. Waste sorting at the household level will then become a comfortable habit and cover large percentages of the total providing inputs to new industrial activities.

This dream cannot become reality if we do not have clean air. In this regard, a comprehensive mobility system of public transportation, bikes and alternative vehicles can limit the use of private cars to the conditions where they are unavoidable. The introduction of systems of car-sharing and green taxi fleets can also facilitate mobility needs.

In terms of healthy and disease-free environment, the risks posed by chemicals, hazardous and radioactive wastes and other pollutants are being reduced, prevented and managed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even government administration is part of this dream through sustainable public service practices. The adaptation of a sustainable procurement code is underway.

This dream culminates in a sustainable lifestyle, where education and awareness raising activities in the media and through participation create a responsible and eco-conscious population. Changes in minor everyday gestures with far-reaching impacts will give to everybody the opportunity to make the difference.

The end result of this dream is environmental stewardship, whereby everybody will join hands to make our country a clean, green and sustainable island; whereby all Mauritius will develop towards environment the caring attitude of mothers and fathers to their children. *Maurice Ile Durable, c'est possible* with the active participation of everybody and with the generous share given to the various components of sustainable development.

In our quest to this dream we need information and accurate data for effective decision-taking process. This Budget, which has provided for the strengthening of a national statistical capacity, is more than timely. We need to measure more environmental parameters. The new concepts which have emerged, like ecological footprints, water footprints along with carbon footprints, have to be measured so as to enable the right policy decisions. For example, the water footprint of a commodity is an important variable to be integrated into our climate change policy decisions.

The environmentally fiscal measures taken in this Budget clearly demonstrate that the vision of a sustainable future is more than realistic. By reinstating the subsidy on solar water heaters, doubling the rate of excise duty on PET bottles, plastic bags and cans and increasing the *MID* levy on petroleum products and coal, Government has proved its will to make use of different economic instruments to implement sustainable development in the most cost-effective manner.

Economic growth needs to be decoupled from pressures on the environment if we are to move along the pathway of sustainable development. It is noteworthy here to highlight the impetus given to the Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme, where resource efficiency, energy efficiency and water conservation projects are being encouraged. The subsidy on solar water heaters will enable the whole population to contribute towards energy efficiency. Furthermore, the commitment of Government is clear on the issue of renewable energy through the wind farm project and the use of landfill gas at Mare Chicose for electricity production. In addition, necessary legal and institutional framework will be developed to speed up the

implementation of the land-based oceanic industry. Within this framework, partnership with all sectors must be secured, and transparent and participatory processes be encouraged.

Research and development is a key ingredient of sustainable development as we move towards a full-fledged green innovation system, where all stages of exploration introduction, pilot adoption, diffusion and universal access for eco-innovations are supported by suitable policies. We cannot afford to downplay the importance of sharing our know-how and experience.

Government has provided the wheels, and we expect the research and implementing institutions to drive the engine. Measures have been adequately provided in this Budget to this end.

Our challenge is to ensure that all efforts are rationalised, so as to be more efficient and effective, optimising on the use of manpower, natural resources, infrastructure and energy. This will enable us to sustain improvement in standard of living for our fellow citizens, without jeopardising our legacy to future generations.

As the vision of this Government is to make Mauritius a sustainable island, it has now become necessary and urgent to formalise the *MID* concept into a *MID* policy and strategy. In this context, an important workshop will be organised next week on *Maurice Ile Durable* in collaboration with *l'Agence Française de Développement*. The workshop will be officially opened by the hon. Prime Minister, and will be attended by participants from key public and private sector organisations.

Within the same locus, my Ministry is also implementing the eco-village project in 12 villages, to encourage people to adopt eco-friendly lifestyles and practices. We are starting with Pointe aux Piments, Panchavati and Rodrigues early next year.

Waste minimisation and waste recycling are keys to achieve sustainable waste management. To this effect, my Ministry, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, has embarked on a waste segregation project in primary schools. This project will be extended to all secondary schools and tertiary institutions as well.

The House will agree that access to stable energy supply has been crucial to drive the economic, social and environmental development of our country. However, as Mauritius strives

to emerge as a model of sustainable energy production, it is imperative that fuels used and their discharges have the least impact on environment. I am happy to state that the first consignment of 500 ppm diesel has been received by the STC, and has been made available to consumers. Moreover, the technical advisory committee on coal ash management, set up at the level of my Ministry, has come with a number of concrete recommendations. A steering committee and several technical groups are analysing these recommendations for prompt implementation.

As part of our commitment to the United Nations and in the context of the last international meeting for the 10-year review of the Barbados programme of action, Mauritius has prepared its National Assessment Report. This report has enabled us to review the Mauritius strategy for further implementation of the programme of action for sustainable development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the coastal zone of Mauritius, as a Small Island Developing State, is not only important for the tourism sector, but is fundamental to the very existence of the island itself. In this regard, we are currently implementing the recommendations of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework Study for Mauritius and Rodrigues. Side by side, we are continuously upgrading and uplifting the physical environment across the island through the Living Environment Unit of my Ministry.

Let me now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, turn to a major issue that is highly correlated with our sustainable development pathway. I am here referring to the issue of climate change. Human activities around the world are producing increasingly large quantities of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide resulting from the consumption of fossil fuel and deforestation, among others. Most experts expect that the accumulation of such gases in the atmosphere will result in a variety of environmental changes over time, including a gradual warming of the global climate extensive changes in regional weather patterns, and significant shifts in the chemistry of the oceans. Researches generally conclude that a continued increase in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases would have serious and very costly effects, especially to least developed countries and Small Island States. As confirmed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in all its reports, Small Island Developing States like Mauritius have characteristics that make them especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Small Island States are expected to bear high adaptation costs. However, these costs

have been systematically underestimated in the past, as shown by recent analysis carried out by the Union Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change.

With this climate change backdrop, where we have recognised that adaptation and mitigation to climate change are not options, Mauritius has seized each and every opportunity, both at the regional and international fronts, to voice out our concerns together with other Small Island States. We have amongst others -

- (i) called upon the international community to undertake urgent, ambitious and decisive action to significantly reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases, including fast action strategies;
- (ii) underscored that adaptation must be an urgent and immediate global priority;
- (iii) called for the adoption of a package of mitigation activities, now and up to beyond 2012, that provides for long term stabilisation of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration, as well below 350 ppm CO² equivalent levels.

Presently, three officers of my Ministry are actively participating in the 16th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC that is being held in Cancun, Mexico. Together with the Alliance of Small Island States and the African groups, we are pushing again forward our proposal. We sincerely hope that, unlike this time, unlike the Copenhagen Meeting, the Cancun Conference will result in concrete actions that will be accompanied by adequate funding resources, technology transfer and capacity-building. We also hope that our prime objectives of an Agreement with Environmental Integrity, the Recognition of the Special Vulnerabilities of SIDS, and the Avoidance of Unfair Burdens on SIDS will be met.

The House may recall that the last Copenhagen Meeting resulted in a collective commitment by developed countries for US\$30 billion annually in “new and additional” resources in 2010-2012, to help developing countries reduce emissions, preserve forests, and adapt to climate change. It also led to the need for mobilising US\$100 billion a year in public and private finance by 2020, to address developing countries’ needs. However, up to now, not a single cent has been disbursed under this accord.

Further, there is an urgent need to review the functioning of the Adaptation Fund and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) set up under the Kyoto Protocol. Although these funds are operational, they are yet clouded with much doubt. Up to now, Mauritius has not been able

to register a single CDM project with the CDM Executive Board. In parallel, the Adaptation Fund has not applied the compromise provided for in the Copenhagen accord, according to which LDCs, SIDS and Africa should be prioritised. Without this prioritisation, the Board may allocate funds on a first-come and first-serve basis.

On the local front, I want to bring to the attention of the House that my Ministry has, together with 19 other African countries, embarked on the Africa Adaptation Programme, which is funded by the Government of Japan. Under this programme, an amount of Rs90 m. has been earmarked for Mauritius. This project will allow us to establish a framework for adaptation to the adverse impact of climate change, by integrating and mainstreaming climate change adaptation into the institutional framework and into core development policy, strategies and plans for the Republic of Mauritius.

Other forthcoming projects to tackle climate change and for which international supports are currently being sought include amongst others -

- Setting up of an “*Observatoire national du changement climatique*”;
- Climate Proofing of Key Economic Sectors of the Republic of Mauritius, and
- Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the coastal zone of Mauritius, where we have already undertaken coastal protection works at Flic en Flac and Rivière des Galets.

As far as mitigation measures are concerned, we have widely sold, at a heavily subsidised price, compact fluorescent light bulbs via the Central Electricity Board. We are currently implementing the different projects under the Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme. We have, in this Budget, reinstated the grant of Rs10,000 for the purchase of a solar water heater for each household, and we will soon develop a roadmap for climate change mitigation, which will lead to the preparation of a National Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan for Mauritius.

Although we do not have any legal obligation as a Small Island State to cut down our greenhouse gas emission, yet this Government is doing its level best, through the adoption of a forward planning approach, as enunciated by the present budgetary measures, to combat climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude, in our journey to sustainable development, this Budget has provided us with the right enablers that would accompany, direct, support and sustain us. Our environmental and sustainable dream is within our reach, and we are not far from it. My Ministry is ready to lead the changes that are necessary to enact the vision of “*Maurice Ile Durable*”, in close collaboration with all Ministries, public and private bodies. In this pursuit, let us not forget that, as a nation, we are all striving to legate a better environmental future to our children.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

(7.24 p.m.)

Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): M. le président, je voudrais avant tout féliciter le vice-Premier ministre, ministre des finances et du développement économique pour avoir présenté à la population le budget 2011 au nom de ce gouvernement, dirigé par le Premier ministre, l’honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Ce budget vient donner le moyen et l’orientation pour concrétiser le programme quinquennal de ce gouvernement et va même au-delà. Le monde vit actuellement une période sans précédent. Après une crise financière qui a bouleversée le monde et une récession en Europe qui perdure, beaucoup de grandes puissances occidentales pratiquent une politique d’austérité. La République d’Irlande est un exemple récent de cette vulnérabilité à laquelle font face beaucoup de pays, et nous ne sommes pas à l’abri. Heureusement pour l’Irlande, M. le président, la Communauté Européenne dans son ensemble est venue à sa rescousse. La question que l’on se pose est : quel pays sera la prochaine victime? La situation économique mondiale reste toujours précaire, car il n’y a aucune visibilité dans le court terme, et encore moins dans le moyen terme. Après ce que le monde a vécu pendant cette décennie, il y a un nouvel ordre économique mondial qui est en place, et le monde des affaires ne sera plus comme avant.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to quote a great Statesman, John F. Kennedy, who said, I quote -

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

Voilà, M. le président, le contexte dans lequel ce budget a été préparé par le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances. Fidèle à lui-même, il a démontré sa capacité d'écoute et sa volonté de transformer les attentes de divers groupes en des mesures concrètes. Son calme, sa sérénité et son sens du devoir lui ont permis de présenter un budget cohérent qui matérialise des promesses de ce gouvernement. Ceci explique que celui qui est en colère, ou encore *mari en colère*, avec ce budget n'arrive pas à comprendre l'enjeu économique, social et du développement de notre pays, car une personne qui est en colère tout le temps finit par perdre ses moyens. Ceci explique peut-être aujourd'hui, M. le président, que l'Alliance de l'Avenir est au gouvernement et nos opposants sont à la traîne.

Ce gouvernement s'est engagé à moderniser notre pays, tout en tenant compte l'égalité des chances, chose qui va aider à consolider l'unité nationale, et c'est bien de cela qu'il est question dans ce budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in times of harsh economic realities and all the threats that we are presently facing, we would need to look for new opportunities. For every threat there is always a new opportunity and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is indeed what this Budget addresses. It steers the way for the country to seize the opportunities opened in the changing world economic order. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, also sets clear objectives to generate one trillion rupees of GDP and a *per capita* of US\$20,000 by 2020, whereas in other countries unemployment rate is going up, salaries are going down, and social aids and benefits are being curtailed. We only have to take the example of Greece. This Budget gives a strong signal that the interest of the economically vulnerable groups would not be sacrificed for the sake of economic development. Despite an inflation rate of 2.7%, a 3.2% salary compensation is granted to those at the lower rung of the ladder. Even those earning up to Rs30,000 are being compensated. Coupled with that, this Budget sets the measures that need to be taken with regard to housing projects and education, to alleviate the challenges facing the vulnerable groups.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a competitive world and nobody owes us a living. We need to fare by ourselves, and the sanity of this nation relies on the ability of our people to be more productive. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, productivity does not mean working night and day to increase output; productivity means trying to do things in a smarter way. To be able to do that,

we need to empower people, and there is no better means than to provide the necessary framework and, by that, I mean educational training and development.

This Budget has, in an innovative and balanced manner, provided the means to empower our people. It has taken on board the needs and aspirations of the whole nation, right from the less fortunate to those having adequate means. There is no better way to rescue those trapped in poverty than to teach them to earn living, as this Budget caters for under various schemes to be coordinated by the Ministry of Social Integration. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the foresightedness of our Prime Minister, we today have a full-fledged Ministry to look after the needs of the less fortunate ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his quest to make a quantum leap forward on productivity, the hon. Minister of Finance has identified seven main avenues to be optimised. Among these, he is investing on our human resources. Series of measures have been earmarked in this Budget, whereby this Government commits itself to take a child from pre-primary up to tertiary level, so that he or she is prepared to face the future. A child miseducated is a child lost, as rightly said by John F. Kennedy.

This Government engages in taking every child of this country on board, so that lack of financial resources is no more a barrier to development. The reintroduction of subsidies on exams fees for SC and HSC is yet another signal of the commitment of this Government. The review of the current government scholarship schemes is again another step forward in offering these facilities to a larger group of students. Let me remind the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, out of 50 scholarships, 24 will be granted to students from families with modest income.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for these facilities to be beneficial to the country, we must ensure that those who are to undertake the studies abroad are required to come back and work for the country. Modernising the country with better scope of success will obviously attract their return earlier to the country. The setting up of the new Ministry to cater for tertiary education, and the measures addressed in the Budget to promote Mauritius at a knowledge hub go hand in hand with building human resource capacity that can easily shift to higher value added sectors. This will indeed also attract investors, knowing that they have a pool of competencies locally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, indeed the empowering of our people, increasing their productivity and producing higher value added goods and services remain the focal point of this

Budget. In this Budget, strong emphasis is being laid on the concept of economic diplomacy. This is not just a vain word for this Government, as echoed lately by *les prophètes de malheur*. On the contrary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a concrete example of economic diplomacy has been witnessed only this week, with the commitment of EU to disburse a larger share of the financial envelope to Mauritius, in the context of accompanying measures regarding sugar reforms for the period 2011 to 2013. The rebalancing of growth, the diversification of our economy and the shifting of Eurocentric based economy to a global based one, with particular focus towards the East, to a large extent depend on how well we do with regard to our economic diplomacy strategy. In this regard, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have the mindset, the experience and the know-how, and I have absolutely no doubt that we will exceed. We have to consolidate our embassies with the appropriate experts, so as to deliver the expected outcome. I am sure that my good friend, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will take that as a challenge to take our embassies to new heights.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the great countries are already playing a major role in the world economy. There is no doubt that this will continue further. It is no surprise that China, India, Japan and other Asian nations are contemplating to come up with a single currency for that bloc of nations, so as to be less dependent upon the US dollar volatility. When we all know how, when and where the financial crisis started, turning east is the way forward. In addition to consolidating our traditional tourist market, the tapping of a potential market of sixty million tourists from India, China and Russia is the right way forward to maintain Mauritius a world leader in the hospitality sector.

We have been awarded the first prize, *meilleur branding pour le tourisme* by BBC world news and Future brand. The recognition of Maradiva Hotel as best hotel in the world bears testimony to the standards and respect that we command in that service sector. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget provides the necessary tools to achieve those objectives. On the branding of Mauritius issue, much have been said by the local pseudo experts. However, the real experts have proved them all dead wrong with this award.

The making of Mauritius a duty-free shopping paradise as a new economic pillar is indeed an achievable objective. We know it is not going to be overnight, but the foundation has been laid for the country to make headway in this endeavour. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need

to believe in ourselves, in our ability to make things happen. I would like to reassure the House that this Government will achieve significant progress to convert this island into a duty-free shopping paradise.

M. le président, ce gouvernement reconnaît la contribution de nos aînés au développement de notre pays. Dans un souci de mieux les encadrer, ce budget vient donner davantage de facilités, dont la construction de nouveaux centres récréatifs, une augmentation de 3.2% de la pension mensuelle, la construction d'un hôpital spécialisé, l'exemption de la taxe sur le *lump sum* jusqu'à un plafond de R 1.5 millions entre autres. Tout ceci démontre la détermination du Premier ministre et du vice Premier ministre et ministre des finances de donner à nos aînés toute la considération qu'ils méritent.

M. le président, les petits planteurs de ce pays ont aussi joué un rôle prépondérant dans la construction de notre pays. Avec le démantèlement des accords préférentiels, tels que le protocole sucre et la réforme du régime sucrier de l'Union européenne, ces planteurs connaissent aujourd'hui des difficultés énormes à sauvegarder leur exploitation.

M. le président, les dix mesures préconisées dans le présent budget viennent consolider la démarche des entreprises, sous l'ERCP, pour leur venir en aide et leur donner une bouffée d'oxygène afin qu'ils puissent survivre et continuer à contribuer à la richesse du pays. Encore une fois, ce sont des promesses tenues du gouvernement! Néanmoins, j'attire l'attention du ministre des finances qu'aujourd'hui, les petits planteurs sont en grande partie de la deuxième et troisième génération des petits planteurs, et sont des salariés. Vivre uniquement des revenus de la canne serait impossible avec la disparition du protocole sucre et la baisse du prix du sucre. Dans un souci de ne pas les encourager à abandonner leur exploitation, je fais un appel au ministre des finances de revoir cette condition attachée à l'exemption accordée sur les 60 tonnes de sucre, d'autant plus que cette industrie cannière a toujours besoin des petits planteurs pour qu'on ait la masse critique et que l'industrie soit viable.

M. le président, ce budget vient aussi renforcer la politique du logement du gouvernement et révolutionne l'accès au logement de toutes les couches sociales, en particulier des plus démunis et de la classe moyenne. Il faut bien faire ressortir que toutes les familles ayant un salaire moyen entre cinq mille roupies et cinquante mille roupies sont touchées par ces mesures.

M. le président, dans le passé, certains de ceux qui ont bénéficié d'une maison construite par le gouvernement ont vu la saisie de leur maison, car ils n'ont pu rembourser les prêts. Aujourd'hui, avec l'extension de la période de remboursement à 40 ans, les familles pourront s'acquitter de leur prêt sans pour autant mettre la pression sur le budget familial. Les moyens que donne ce budget pour améliorer les infrastructures, telles que nos routes, l'agrandissement de l'aéroport et le port, le concept du *medical hub*, l'exploitation de nos ressources marines, le renforcement de la sécurité et l'implémentation d'une nouvelle carte d'identité nationale, sont autant de mesures pour moderniser le pays.

M. le président, le projet *Maurice Ile Durable*, si cher à notre Premier ministre, a taillé une part importante dans ce budget. Préserver l'environnement est essentiel à la survie de la planète, et chaque mesure à la préserver est une contribution à un monde meilleur où il fait bon vivre. Les mesures préconisées, entre autres la réintroduction du *Solar Water Scheme*, le développement d'une politique nationale sur le guide de construction des bâtiments écologiques et la construction des villages écolos, démontrent la détermination du gouvernement de conserver notre environnement pour les générations futures. Dans ce même élan, je profite pour faire un appel à mes collègues ministres d'encourager l'usage des voitures hybrides dans les différents ministères au moment de renouveler leur flotte de véhicules.

M. le président, un pays pluriculturel comme le nôtre doit, aujourd'hui, à travers l'art, promouvoir l'unité nationale. Notre riche passé et notre culture mauricienne doivent contribuer à nous unir. Ce budget jette les jalons d'une île Maurice qui va avancer dans le monde audiovisuel et de développement du potentiel créatif et artistique. L'encadrement et l'assistance financière essentiels au développement de nos artistes démontrent l'engagement du gouvernement de les soutenir et de les valoriser. Les valeurs morales sont essentielles pour créer une société saine.

M. le président, certains fléaux, tels que la cigarette, l'abus d'alcool et la prolifération des maisons de jeux, sont devenus de vrais problèmes dans notre société et, si on ne réagit pas maintenant, on risque de faire un tort immense à notre société, à notre population, et surtout à notre jeunesse. En imposant des taxes supplémentaires, ce gouvernement veut réduire ces risques. Certes, il y aura d'autres mesures qui devront accompagner ce contrôle. Mais le message est clair. On veut préserver la santé de nos concitoyens, et leur permettre de vivre dans une société saine et paisible.

Le budget présenté par ce gouvernement, M. le président, nous permet de nous repositionner sur l'échelle locale et internationale. Ce budget est un budget à visage humain, un budget avant-gardiste et responsable. Responsable, M. le président, parce que le ministre des finances a su trouver le juste milieu dans un contexte difficile. J'ai trouvé encourageant, qu'au lieu de parler de Produit Intérieur Brut, le PIB, on commence à parler plutôt du Bonheur Intérieur Brut, le BIB, comme indice de réussite. Nous ne pouvons que l'encourager dans ses efforts de maintenir les charges sociales, les défis macroéconomiques, tels que les dettes publiques et le déficit budgétaire, à un niveau acceptable.

Bien évidemment, il a fallu demander à tous ceux qui en ont les moyens de contribuer un peu plus. Dans cet élan de solidarité, je crois fermement qu'ils ont compris. Mais, ce qui m'étonne, M. le président, c'est la prise de position de nos opposants politiques qui, depuis la présentation de ce budget, ne font que débattre si ce budget est un budget de continuité ou pas. Ce n'est pas là le débat. Encore pire, M. le président, quand ils crient sur tous les toits que ce budget impose une taxe trop lourde. Ceci confirme qu'ils veulent défendre plutôt les *high income earners* que ceux qui sont les moins lotis. *Growth is not an end in itself, but it makes possible the achievement of other important goals. This Government has listened to the population, and is embarking in this new decade with a clear vision and with achievable objectives. This Budget paves the way forward to realise this nation's dream.*

Je réitère ici, M. le président, mes félicitations au vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, M. Pravind Jugnauth, et au Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, pour ce budget avant-gardiste et humain.

Merci M. le président.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Khamajeet rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Saturday 27 November at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(7.47 p.m)

BEL AIR EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE - HUMP - REMOVAL

Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have one issue to address to the House, and this is in relation to the removal of a hump which lies opposite the new Educational College found in Bel Air. This will be addressed to the Minister of Public Infrastructure who is not here, but I am sure one of the Ministers will convey the message.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Continue please.

Mr Seetaram: It is quite inconvenient for the inhabitants nearby, because that hump has been the cause of cracks in houses. The basic reason is that there are heavy vehicles that go towards the Beau Champ sugar factory, and also lots of buses which obviously go to Touessrok and St Géran. There is quite an outcry among the inhabitants from that area, which is called Verger. The immediate request would be whether this very hump could be removed and moved towards the roundabout that is a few hundred metres from the actual area, in order to avoid such problem to loom. This very hump has recently also been the cause of a fatal accident, where there has been an accumulation of traffic due to the fact that it is found near the road which goes to Trou d'Eau Douce. So, it is not well placed, and it is an inconvenience to the traffic thereof. I would be very grateful if the hon. Minister could convey the message to the relevant Minister of Public Infrastructure.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): The needful will be done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

TROU-AUX-CERFS - ROAD SAFETY, STREET LIGHTING, TOILET FACILITIES, DUSTBINS & POLICE PATROL

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, j'ai un appel pressant à lancer concernant Trou-aux-Cerfs. Mais je dois dire que je trouve déplorable qu'à l'occasion de ce débat il n'y ait que six ministres présents des 25 ministres...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should raise his point and other Ministers will reply.

(Interruptions)

Je me permets de constater, M. le président, que, de tous les ministres directement concernés, c'est-à-dire le ministre de l'environnement, le ministre des infrastructures publiques, le ministre responsable de la sécurité publique, le ministre responsable des administrations régionales, personne n'est là. Pour avoir été moi aussi au gouvernement, je sais qu'il est du devoir des ministres d'être présents à l'ajournement des travaux. Bien, il n'empêche que je vais donc me fier à la présence du ministre des affaires étrangères - curepipien comme moi - pour transmettre à qui de droit le message. Après tout, je suis son député.

M. le président, Trou-aux-Cerfs est un lieu très fréquenté, surtout en ce moment, avec l'arrivée de l'été; nous parlons des curepipiens, mais aussi des vacoassiens, des quatrebornais et au-delà qui viennent pour de la marche rapide, pour le jogging, ou tout simplement pour une bouffée d'air frais. Selon mon estimation, en jour de semaine, on devrait compter au minimum quelque 800 personnes au Trou-aux-Cerfs et, durant le weekend, au-delà d'un millier.

M. le président, le premier problème c'est le trafic routier - la circulation routière - autour du cratère. En tant que curepipien, et depuis de longues années, j'avais proposé l'interdiction pure et simple de la circulation de voitures autour du cratère, parce que cela constitue un danger direct pour ceux qui y sont pour faire du jogging ou de la marche à pied. Il a fallu qu'il y ait mort d'homme, il y a de cela sept à huit ans, pour qu'enfin le conseil municipal de l'époque décide d'interdire l'accès aux voitures à la route circulaire pendant des heures précises. Je crois que

c'est de six heures le matin jusqu'à neuf heures. Je n'y vais presque jamais le matin - je ne saurais pas - mais, l'après-midi, de 16 heures à 19 heures.

Alors, premier appel, c'est, qu'à présent que le soleil se couche plus tard, donc les gens y sont jusqu'à beaucoup plus tard, qu'on étende les heures d'interdiction pour les véhicules jusqu'à 20 heures ou au-delà. N'attendons pas qu'il y ait un autre drame, une autre mort d'homme avant d'agir. Mais, évidemment, il faudrait éventuellement en interdire l'accès totalement. Lié à cela, il y a maintenant un problème de plus en plus grave de stationnement de véhicules. Il n'y a pas de place au Trou-aux-Cerfs. Les véhicules stationnent n'importe où, c'est un danger public, et il n'y a aucune présence policière. Donc, tout le monde s'en plaint. Circulation routière autour du cratère mais aussi parking.

Je voudrais aussi parler du problème d'éclairage. Nos enfants vont au Trou-aux-cerfs - nos épouses, nos filles - jusqu'à fort tard le soir, et Madame la ministre Bappoo sera peut être intéressée de savoir qu'il n'y a pas d'éclairage en permanence. Il y a souvent les ampoules qui sont brûlées et ne sont pas remplacées ; les ampoules automatiques ne marchent pas souvent. Si Madame Martin y va, elle doit savoir de quoi il s'agit. Il suffit d'y aller vers les 19 heures ou 20 heures. Il y a un problème, et il n'y a plus de patrouille policière comme c'était le cas il y a quelques années. Donc, il faut absolument que les autorités policières s'arrangent pour qu'il y ait, à la fois pour le parking et pour la sécurité publique, une présence policière.

Ensuite, il y a les toilettes qui sont dans un état impossible. C'est un lieu fréquenté par les mauriciens en début et en fin de journée, mais aussi par les touristes. C'est un arrêt obligé pour tous les tours operateurs, et les toilettes sont dans un état - je dis les toilettes, mais il y en a qu'une seule - impossible. On ne peut pas s'approcher de ces toilettes, et l'eau ! Que dirais-je à propos de l'eau ! C'est à l'exemple du reste de Maurice; les tuyaux d'approvisionnement d'eau sont un jour sur deux cassés, avec des fuites. Donc, il n'y a pas d'eau.

Les poubelles sont peu nombreuses autour du cratère, avec les ordures qui débordent - qui ne sont pas entretenues ; il n'y a pas un service de ramassage d'ordures régulier. Donc, M. le président, avec l'été qui arrive, nous avons un problème pressant. Hier même, les habitants de la région ont exigé de moi que je soulève ce problème ici au parlement. La solution est globale. Mais je commence à désespérer du présent conseil municipal qui aurait dû transformer ce lieu en

un haut lieu pour les promeneurs et les sportifs. Peut-être faudra-t-il attendre un changement de l'administration municipale pour qu'il y ait une décision de proposer un projet global.

Mais, en attendant, l'appel pressant que je lance au ministre Boolell - curepien comme moi et comme plusieurs d'entre nous ici - c'est qu'il approche ses collègues et soulève la question au conseil des ministres, vendredi prochain, pour demander d'urgence que l'on traite de ce problème de circulation routière, d'éclairage et de sécurité publique, de toilettes et d'approvisionnement en eau au Trou-aux-Cerfs.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): Sir, the concern of the hon. Member would be conveyed loud and clear to the Ministers concerned. I am sure appropriate measures would be taken to give satisfaction to one and all.

(7.56 p. m.)

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to raise a matter of concern that will be addressed to my friend and colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government. Unfortunately, he is not here today, but I am sure his colleague, hon. Dr. Boolell, will kindly take this note and convey my message to him. I thank him for that.

I have put two Parliamentary Questions on the Municipality of Port Louis, and more than three months have elapsed and the information has still not been placed in the Library. My PQs are from August 2010...

The Deputy Speaker: No. The hon. Member must take this issue privately with the Chair, and the Chair will convey the message. Hon. Baloomoody!

(7.57 p. m.)

LE JARDIN DE LA SALINE - MARCHANDS AMBULANTS

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once again, I would like to raise an issue, and I am happy to see that hon. Dr.

Boolell is still around to take note, and will do the needful by sending my request to the appropriate Minister. I have the same problem like the *jardin* we have in Curepipe. There is one *jardin* in Port Louis, *le jardin de la Saline*, where we have the same problem of security, management, or should I say mismanagement, with regard to light and the environment. More importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *le jardin de la Saline* is becoming a place *bien fréquenté maintenant* but, unfortunately, it is not safe for the purpose it is being used now. One day we will have a severe accident, and a serious one. Many young children - especially now we are in summer and in holiday period - go there to play football and run around, but there is no security.

First, you have *les marchands ambulants*. They are here providing a service to the users of the *jardin*, but they are not properly located. They are located all around, with children playing football on the left and, on the right, there are *les marchands de gâteaux piments avec les carailles et de l'huile chaude*. So, it is very dangerous.

My appeal is that, for the time being, at least, the authorities, be it the Ministry of Local Government or the Municipality itself, do take action to locate the *marchands ambulants* in a specific area, so that the whole garden would be safe for all users, especially the children who go around to play. I think this is an urgent matter, and we don't have to wait for a serious accident to take action. This is my request to the hon. Minister.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): The concern which the hon. Member has expressed will be again conveyed to my colleague, and I am sure that measures will be taken to ensure that there is redress to give satisfaction to one and all.

At 7.58 p.m. the sitting was, on its rising adjourned to Saturday 27 November 2010 at 11.30 a.m.