



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 03 MARCH 2015

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Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 06 of 2015

Sitting of 03 March 2015

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Finance and Audit (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2015). (In Original)

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Republic of Malta) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.14 of 2015).

C. Ministry of Local Government –

- (a) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Fees for Classified Trade) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.15 of 2015).

- (b) The District Council of Pamplemousses (Fees for Classified Trade) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.16 of 2015).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**CEB - CT POWER PROJECT & ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity supply and the CT Power Project, he will state -

- (a) if Government is going ahead with the project and -
 - (i) if so, indicate the -
 - (A) updated estimated cost and price of electricity, and
 - (B) date on which the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development gave the green light therefor, and
 - (ii) if not, indicate whether a tender for a 50/100 MW base load power plant will be issued;
- (b) if the report on Liquefied Natural Gas use will be made public, and
- (c) the measures being taken to remove obstacles in the grid to optimum use of renewable energy.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, in August 2001, the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities commissioned a study for the setting up of a 100 MW Coal Power Plant at Pointe Aux Caves. The original project was that CEB was to build and operate this power plant itself.

In 2005, CT Power (Malaysia) Ltd. made a proposal to the Board of Investment for a 2 x 55 MW pulverized coal power plant to be implemented by its subsidiary, the Mauritius CT Power Ltd. This was an unsolicited proposal. At that time, there was a committee called a "Fast Track Committee". It was chaired by the then Prime Minister. The Fast Track Committee approved the proposal. In July 2006, the Board of Investment issued a Letter of Intent to the promoter. Immediately thereafter, the Central Electricity Board, on 26 July 2006, decided that negotiations be held with the promoter. This eventually led to the signature of a Power Purchase Agreement on 23 December 2008. On the same date, a Shareholders' Agreement, a Coal Supply

Agreement and an Interconnection Facility Design and Build Agreement were concluded on the same date. No EIA licence had been obtained at the time these documents were signed.

In January 2011, the EIA Committee decided not to recommend the issue of an EIA licence. The promoter appealed against this decision and the matter was taken up by the EIA Tribunal. Finally, in January 2013, the Tribunal gave its ruling in favour of CT Power.

In January 2013, the Ministry of Environment issued the EIA licence to Mauritius CT Power Ltd. with 31 conditions including the transportation of coal by sea route. Condition 15 of the EIA licence required that the promoter should provide proof of its financial capabilities for the duration of the project to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

On 23 June 2013, the Mauritius CT Power Ltd. submitted a revised project to satisfy the conditions of the EIA with the following changes -

- (i) the project value increased from USD192 m. to USD348m;
- (ii) the use of water treated at Montagne Jacquot treatment plant for cooling of the coal plant, and
- (iii) debt Equity split 70/30 instead of 80/20.

In December 2013, the Central Electricity Board signed the amended Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to incorporate the requirements of the EIA with the promise that the effective date of the PPA is subject to the signing of the Implementation Agreement.

In April 2014, the Central Electricity Board signed the following amended agreements –

- (i) the Coal Supply Agreement providing for the supply of coal by sea route and the construction of a jetty by the Central Electricity Board;
- (ii) the Shareholders' Agreement, and
- (iii) the Land Sub lease Agreement.

A Mauritius CT Power Ltd. delegation visited Mauritius in January 2015 and met me as well as the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. They requested that the Implementation Agreement be signed.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development asked CT Power Ltd. to submit a letter of comfort from its banks to confirm that it has the financial capacity to implement the

project, in accordance with the condition 15 of the EIA licence. As at today, the promoter has not met this condition.

On 06 February 2015, Government has decided that the company should state its source of funding, within a reasonable delay, failing which the project would not be implemented. Up to now, no letter of comfort has been communicated. Insofar as my Ministry is concerned, it intends to recommend to Cabinet that Government does not go ahead with the project.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, the updated estimated cost of the project is USD348 m. and the purchase price of electricity is Rs4.58 per kWh excluding coal transportation costs, estimated at 10cts per kWh and power transmission at 0.17cts. The price will change on the basis of an indexation formula over 20 years.

With regard to part (a)(i)(B), the House is referred to what I have stated above. There has been no green light.

As regards part (ii) of the question, the CEB would require additional generation capacity of 50MW in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The Central Electricity Board has taken the following decisions –

- (i) installation of 60MW fuel oil based engines at St Louis Power station, that is, 4 x 15MW;
- (ii) extension of the agreement with Consolidated Energy Limited, Beau Champ to generate 22MW for a further period of three years, and
- (iii) invitation of Expressions of Interest for the generation of energy from renewable sources, including biomass and waste to energy.

With these measures, Madam Speaker, demand will be met within the short term until 2018. As regards the medium term, the World Bank is reviewing the capacity expansion plan based on updated economic conditions. The report is being finalised and is expected to reach us by the end of March. Based on the recommendations of the World Bank, a decision will be taken on the base load requirement as from 2018.

I have impressed and I assure the House that the Central Electricity Board will resort to a transparent and competitive bidding process, contrary to past practices of opaque unsolicited

proposals, with clauses of confidentiality preventing disclosure of the agreements, and also, preventing public debates on these matters.

Now, I come to part (b) of the question, the Central Electricity Board did commission the Consultant Worley and Parsons, to carry out a study on the potential of using Liquefied Natural Gas for electricity generation in Mauritius. The report submitted in July 2014, concluded that the upfront investment required in the Port to handle the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) including regasification facility would be around Rs20 billion.

There is no objection in making it public. I am, in fact, tabling a copy on the Table of the Assembly right now.

With regard to the last part of the question, CEB has consistently stressed the low absorption capacity of renewable energy with the CEB's grid. I have had several discussions with the *Agence Française de Développement*, the *Syndicat des Energies Renouvelables* and the International Renewable Energy Agency and I am confident in obtaining technical cooperation for the upgrading of the grid. I must also state that I have met Professor Joël de Rosnay who, in spite of the dismay he felt at being sidelined by the previous regime, has indicated his willingness to provide this Government with his expertise.

The CEB commissioned a study financed by UNDP and the World Bank to assess the extent of integration possible in the existing electricity grid. The report received in October 2014 recommended the following -

- (i) the existing grid can accommodate up to 70 MW;
- (ii) further upgrade is recommended to the existing Central Electricity Board power plants to enhance the integration up to 110 MW, and
- (iii) the use of large battery storage to increase the penetration up to 150 MW.

The ongoing renewable energy projects will cater for the 70 MW, or more, to increase the capacity to above 70 MW Central Electricity Board will implement the recommendations of the Consultant to increase the absorption of renewable energy technology. The Central Electricity Board will shortly issue the Expression of Interest to invite proposals from promoters for the generation of electricity from renewable sources namely wind, sun, biomass and waste.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to have heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say that insofar as his Ministry is concerned, it intends to recommend to Cabinet that Government does not go ahead with the project. Now, the suspense, I take it, has lasted long enough. Can I have some indication from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that, now that all the checking and the cross-checking and so on have been done, that this will be brought to Cabinet within the shortest possible time?

Mr Collendavelloo: Absolutely, within the shortest possible time.

Mr Bérenger: While this is ongoing, on as we know, Madam Speaker, there have been very serious allegations of fraud and corruption, and *trafic d'influence*, right from the beginning with this CT Power Saga, but I have not heard any reference in the Vice-Prime Minister's reply, whereas his colleague, the hon. Minister Bhadain said on 04 February that his enquiries, *les projets de Neo Town, CT Power et l'achat d'Airbus sont aussi dans le collimateur du gouvernement*. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has liaised with Minister Bhadain and whether, indeed, a full enquiry on the corruption side of the CT Power Saga is on?

Mr Collendavelloo: The CT Power is also in my *collimateur*, not only that of Minister Bhadain, and we are both using the same *collimateur*.

(Interruptions)

Yes, the hon. Leader of the Opposition did not hear me saying so, because his question did not invite that sort of answer, but now that he asked it, it is clear that at the level of my Ministry, in liason with the hon. Minister of Financial Services, we are looking into that aspect, but we want to stick to the facts and only at the facts at this crucial point in time.

Mr Bérenger: I have heard the new figures, from what I have heard, the total cost for the project if the decision was to go ahead, has gone up to USD 348 million and the price of electricity is Rs4.58 per kWh, excluding coal transportation costs. Can we know with the coal transportation cost what it would amount to and within that project cost revised of USD 348 million, as we know, the one scandalous part of the whole saga was that the CEB would construct a jetty. Before it was going to be constructed by the promoter, then it was decided that the CEB would construct the jetty without an EIA Certificate having been obtained. Do we have

an estimate of how much, should the project go ahead, with the jetty part of that, because I think it went up to Rs750 m. to be paid for by the CEB? Where does the CEB stand now?

Mr Collendavelloo: If the project had gone ahead, the hypothetical estimate cost of the jetty would have been Rs600 m.

Mr Bérenger: It has been stated to stand at Rs750 m.; so, that is the first time I hear the cost of a part of a project moving backwards, but it is a good thing that it is a thing of the past, anyway. Madam Speaker, I better move to other parts of my question pending the Cabinet sitting in the very near future.

As far as the new tender is concerned, I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say, once the World Bank and so on, we have come with estimates of our power requirements in the years ahead, then a tender would be issued in a transparent and competitive bidding process. Can I have confirmation that, indeed, it would be an international and local tender, open to international operators, but also to local operators for 50 or 100 MW pending on the results of the different studies ongoing and that, indeed, we would invite any proposal, any uptodate technology to be employed, that is, coal, gas, LNG, bagasse coal, heavy oil to keep it open at an international and local level, and go for the best solution?

Mr Collendavelloo: As far as coal and oil are concerned, there is a worldwide prohibition, I would say, on development of power plants fired by oil or coal. For instance, the *Agence Française de Développement* told us, in no uncertain terms, that they would not finance any coal powered fire engine. The emphasis is on renewable energy and, however romantic that may be, it is actually something which can be realised very fast. All the people with whom I have talked favour joint ventures between the local private sector and international firms. There are certain variants; the emphasis will have to be made on that new type of energy. I will have to impress on the CEB that they need to have a culture change, that they need to accomodate their grid, they cannot just live in the same system that has been in existence since 1939. We will have to review our legislation, we will need to have a regulator, which I know the Leader of the Opposition has made a point to stress time and time again. I fully share this point; I have this file on my desk at the moment. All this must be seen in a global concept. Therefore, joint ventures between local private sector, international firms, tenders worldwide, and we will have to make emphasis also on waste to energy, because we are crumbling under our municipal waste, our

leaching fields are getting more and more polluted when this can be used to supply energy. I am trying in a few words to say what I am going to say in my speech on Thursday.

Mr Bérenger: I don't want to rush a decision, but does that mean that when the time comes for an international and local tender for 50 or 100 MW additional base load energy, that a pure state-of-the-art so-called technology, a full coal plant will be excluded in the tender?

Mr Collendavelloo: This is my thinking actually to exclude this coal plant, even in the present state-of-the-art technology, unless it becomes inevitable for Mauritius to need to have access to coal for its power generation.

Mr Bérenger: I am very uncomfortable, Madam Speaker, with the tone. There seems to be no urgency as far as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is concerned, and where he says that a decision will be taken on the base load requirements as from 2018. To build a new plant is tomorrow! It has to be tendered out, commissioned and so on, now, otherwise we don't meet that. Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that the former Minister said that we would be in trouble not as from 2018 if CT Power does not go ahead, not as from 2018, but as from 2017? Therefore, will he agree with me that there is no room for complacency as far as base load is concerned even if we are as optimistic as he is on renewable energy in the years to come?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, I have the answer of the former Minister here. I have got tremendous friendship for him, but it seems that he was of the view that without CT Power it was doomsday for Mauritius. I do not share this view although I should not be complacent; I should not be dramatic either. I do not think that there is room for drama; I think we can manage the situation if we go fast. And, of course, all these points will be taken on board. I have carefully and almost religiously read all the interventions of my predecessor and of the hon. Leader of the Opposition in order to make up my mind on these matters. I shall be pursuing discussions with all concerned and, if need be, if the hon. Prime Minister so accepts, we will have an inter-ministerial committee with invitations to Members of the other side of the House if they so wish to come and help us because this is a national issue on which there is no room for trying to obtain credit or personal advantage or whatever.

Mr Bérenger: *Zis la ki li pas ine courtiser !*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I heard a positive reaction as far as LNG gas in the future is concerned but, again, I agree totally with the hon. Minister and I have been saying that for years, that we need desperately a regulator; the legislation was prepared by the 2000-2005 Government, ready, forgotten since then, and being judge and party has landed us in the trouble we are in. But we are aware that this report on LNG gas was commissioned, paid for by the CEB; again judge and party. Is the present Government satisfied that it is a genuine report, that it is not just reproducing what the CEB usually says, that Government can rely on that report to take strategic decisions and, in the meantime, have there been any discussions from LNG countries like Qatar, India and Mozambique nearer to us?

Mr Collendavelloo: There have been no discussions, but there are at least three promoters who have manifested an interest in LNG. One is saying that the best LNG is from India, two others from Mozambique, Qatar does not seem to manifest big love for these persons.

With regard to the report, admittedly, there is room for doubt as to the independence. This is why my predecessor had asked the World Bank to review this LNG report. I agree that this is what should have been done and we are awaiting the World Bank's findings on that report. We are not taking that report as being the gospel.

Mr Bérenger: The last part of my question, Madam Speaker, I take it from what I have heard that the policy decision of Government is to make optimum use of renewable energy in the days and years to come. Does the report received recently give any cost indication, how much it would cost to eliminate obstacles that exist, from what I understand, in the existing grid to allow for maximum use of renewable energy? Has there been any costing thereof and on storage, because that is the key question, the renewable energy, Madam Speaker, as we all know, is intermittent, it depends on the wind, on the sun, cyclone and on whatever; it is intermittent and there is a lot of work being done on storage, but, again, I heard the hon. Minister being very optimistic. Have we had discussions concretely with the people that are prepared now to offer a commercially viable method of storage of renewable energy?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, the concrete discussions will be held only after formal expressions of interest have been received, but my Ministry and myself, we have held consultations, especially with IRENA and I have been surprised at the tremendous technological advances which have been made in the last year or so. I mean, this business about the clouds

stopping the sun is gone a long time ago. In Germany, which is not a country as sunny as Mauritius, they have got renewable solar photovoltaic for ages past. Now, storage, the batteries are reduced, in Abu Dhabi, they are building up a town to go only on solar energy and it is fantastic what they want to do. We just go on the Internet and we see what technological advances are being made. Of course, it is going to cost money; of course, it is more than CT Power would have cost; more than the Rs348 m. if we want to do it for Mauritius. But Reunion has done it, Seychelles is doing it and they are well in advance of us. We shall learn from our friends in Reunion and Seychelles and we shall apply and adapt with the help of the private sector which is not going to be a State enterprise. The CEB will have to move out of what they were doing and we will have to have a new paradigm shift for the installation of reliable, renewable, safe and constant energy for Mauritius in the years to come.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I think it is good news for the inhabitants of Albion and Pointe aux Sables region who have been living a nightmare since 2005. Can I make a request to the hon. Minister now that it seems that the Government would not go ahead with the project? Can the population be made aware of the extent of land which has been leased to that company and that in the course of future activities of development in the region the inhabitants be consulted prior to any new project being commissioned on that portion of land?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, it is 92 *arpents* which was leased at a nominal price of, I believe, Rs480,000 and then sublet to CT Power which was going to be at market rates. I am giving this answer from memory, the 92 *arpents* has just been given to me, but I believe the rest of the answer, if there is an error, I will correct it in due course.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking about renewable energy. Can the hon. Minister, at least, request an audit be carried out on all the projects which have been submitted to the Ministry? There have been proposals from individuals, private sector and which, for reasons unknown, we all know what has been happening at that Ministry at a period of time; whether an audit can be carried out in all the projects which have been submitted, especially with wind power and solar power; there may be valuable projects which have been left aside for reasons which we all know.

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, the reasons unknown which we all know, we are going through, but what is going to happen is that we are going to make an invitation for all those who have submitted projects to come back and *reactualiser* these projects.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have a last question.

Mr Bérenger: My last question, although I am very pleased with the answer obtained from the hon. Minister, through the hon. Minister, I would like to aim my question at the hon. Prime Minister. Can we expect, as I said, especially with the strong recommendation of the hon. Minister directly concerned, that Cabinet will consider his recommendation to give up for good that CT Power project will really be as soon as possible? And secondly, although I understand that hon. Minister Bhadain is very busy these days with other things, can I ask the hon. Minister since this is going to be a double-barrelled *collimateur* apparently, that the corruption side of it should not be forgotten or left behind and that we should be kept informed as we go along of the results of this double-barrelled *collimateur* at work?

DECLARATION OF ASSETS LEGISLATION (NEW) - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/102) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the disclosure of assets and liabilities on assuming and vacating office, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of a new piece of legislation to make it a mandatory requirement not only for Honourable Members but also for –

- (a) high officials of Government;
- (b) advisers to Government, and
- (c) chief executives of parastatal and private institutions wherein Government is a majority shareholder and, for same to apply in respect of assets and liabilities in Mauritius and abroad.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the Government Programme 2015-2019 already provides for the introduction of a new Declaration of Assets Bill with a view to curbing fraud, corruption, malpractices and irregularities in all aspects of public life and restoring our national values.

My Government will come up with such a Bill as soon as it is ready.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to ensure that when the new law will be presented to the House, if his Ministry could see to it that the definition of the word 'assets' is widened so as to include other types of property. As we know that today, in our law, "assets" is defined restrictively! Therefore, can he see to it that this new definition of "assets" is incorporated into the new Bill?

The Prime Minister: We will give due consideration to that.

Mr Uteem: Can I also ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister when looking into this new Bill, to give consideration to the possibility of making those declarations of assets public because in the past we had a problem and it is filed with ICAC, whether it has to be laid before the Speaker or not?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't think it would be proper to make all the declarations, which have been issued, public. It will depend whether the circumstances of any particular case warrants as making it public.

Mr Baloomoody: To carry on from the question of my friend, hon. Ganoo, apart from the definition of 'assets', can we enlarge the definition of the surrounding persons, the advisers - the MPs who will have to declare their assets - as well, not to limit it only to children and parents?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't think we should include advisers. I don't see it is necessary.

Mr Bérenger: I did not catch the answer from the hon. Prime Minister as far as making public the declaration of assets of elected Members and so on. The law that we passed in the past, it was in the law that it would be made public, then supposedly there was a *cafouillage* between ICAC and the Speaker's Office and so on. On a question of principle, can we have it from the hon. Prime Minister that whatever shape the new piece of legislation on the declaration of assets of Members of Parliament is concerned, those declarations of assets will be made public as it was under the previous law?

The Prime Minister: As far as Members of Parliament are concerned, I have no objection.

Mr Ganoo: I have a last question. In fact, it was the hon. Prime Minister himself who in 1987 when he was then Prime Minister in this House, of this country, that a Declaration of Assets Act was brought before the Assembly whereby all Members of this House were under the obligation to make their assets public by laying a copy of the affidavit with the Clerk which was laid in the Library of the House so that anybody could have access to that affidavit. The last Government in 2011 sneaked in a provision in the Local Government Act 2011 to do away with this necessity for MPs to make their declaration of assets public. This is why we urge the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to come back to the initial provisions of legislation so that all the MPs should declare their assets publicly.

The Prime Minister: The Local Government Act is different. The Bill we are bringing will be very different from that and I just said, insofar as hon. Members of Parliament are concerned, there is no problem.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

HIGHLANDS - SATELLITE CITY

(No. B/103) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the project for the creation of a satellite city in Highlands, he will state where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the project for the construction of a satellite city at Highlands was initiated by my Government in September 2004 and was to be implemented in two phases of 1000 and 2000 *arpents*, respectively.

My vision at that time was to create a state-of-the-art urban development pole to accommodate a mix of business facilities which would have supported the new growth cluster around the Ebène Cybercity, Moka and St Pierre.

I wish to inform the House that, it is still the firm intention of my Government to implement this project.

I am informed that subsequently, following a tender exercise, a Transaction Adviser was appointed in February 2008, by the State Land Development Company Limited, for an *Urban and Knowledge Development* Project on the identified site at Highlands.

Several road shows were organised, both locally and internationally, between July and November 2008, to promote the project. Another tender exercise was thereafter launched with the assistance of the Transaction Advisor, for the selection of a potential firm to implement the project.

In 2009, the then Government decided to set up –

- (i) a Steering Committee under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office to oversee the selection process and negotiate with the shortlisted qualified applicants, and
- (ii) a Project Implementation Committee, under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, to look into the policy issues related to the Project.

However, in December 2010, after having organised all these road shows, paid Rs33.8 m. for transaction advisory services and Rs4.7 m. for marketing expenses and others, the then Government decided not to go ahead with the project.

In 2013, the Government announced that the phase 1 of a new integrated project comprising a Knowledge, Medical and Innovation Hub covering an area of 218 *arpents* would be launched by the State Land Development Co. Ltd (SLDC) on the same site at Highlands.

During the same year, the SLDC, following an open tender exercise appointed a consultant, for a contract sum of Rs4.2 m. for the design, construction and supervision of this new project.

This Government does not intend to proceed further with the project as decided in 2013. We are for the project as it stood initially.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to PQ B/819, the then hon. Prime Minister of the previous Government stated that his office has reviewed the Highlands project and I quote –

“The findings of this review are that from the perspective of the private promoter/developer, the Highlands project would have been a mega bonanza.”

And he went on to cite the figure of Rs15.7 billion. So, may I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what measures will be taken to ensure that there is no repeat of that mega bonanza when the contract will be allocated, if it is allocated?

The Prime Minister: We certainly won’t follow with the said past.

Mr Uteem: Answering to the same PQ, the former Prime Minister expressed concern about moving the administrative centre from Port Louis to Highlands because, I quote –

“It will also impact negatively on the psyche of the inhabitants and residents of Port Louis, adversely affecting downwards the value of property and creating a socio-cultural vacuum that in turn will bite deeply into the relevance of the hitherto sacrosanct memorial statues.”

So, may I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister that going ahead with the Highlands Project will not have any negative socio-cultural impact on the inhabitants of Port Louis?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will make sure that this won't happen.

Mr Mohamed: Could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, apart from the issue of the socio-cultural impact he talked about, what about the economic impact of moving the Government business all over to Highlands? Would this not have a negative impact on the economic life of the capital city?

The Prime Minister: I do not share this view.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - because I was not party to the previous Government when he proposed to go ahead with the Highlands project - whether that project also included the moving of Parliament?

The Prime Minister: Moving of?

Mr Uteem: Parliament to Highlands?

The Prime Minister: I must say that I do not know.

ROAD ACCIDENTS (FATAL) - REPORTED CASES

(No. B/105) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to fatal road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since January 2013 to date, on a yearly basis, indicating the additional measures, if any, taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of reported cases of fatal road accidents since January 2013 to date is as follows

PERIOD	NUMBER OF CASES
January to December 2013	119
January to December 2014	125
January to 26 February 2015	17
Total	261

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that a series of measures are being implemented to curb road accidents. These include sensitisation sessions on road safety and causes of road accidents, roll over simulator to stress on the importance of using seat belts, road block operations and installation of speed cameras around the island.

The Government is deeply concerned by the alarming rate of road accidents, including fatal ones that continue to happen on our roads. I am informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport that a new Road Safety Strategy 2015-2020 will be developed that will address key areas such as speeding, drink driving and that will maximise the safety of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and particularly motorcyclists. The aim is to reduce the number of persons killed and seriously injured by one third by the year 2020. That Ministry also proposes to put in place a new system for the issue of driving licence to motorcyclists.

Madam Speaker, the Government Programme 2015-2019 has mentioned that a fairer and more socially equitable system will replace the actual one in regard to the speed cameras, traffic monitoring and sanctions. In this respect, Government has already taken a decision to abolish the penalty point system which includes the Driving Licence Counterpart and has come up with a new sanctioning mechanism for serious road traffic offences. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is currently working on the legislative amendments and the proposed measures will be ready for implementation within the shortest possible time.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, there is a complete lack of policing around 'Cross Here'. We have witnessed there have been several accidents, including fatal accidents on 'Cross Here'. Therefore, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what urgent actions does Police consider in order to protect pedestrians from those accidents?

The Prime Minister: It is very difficult to have one officer posted at each 'Cross Here' all over the island. It is almost impossible. That is why there is this sensitisation process going on. People must be alert, whether pedestrians, drivers and everybody using the road.

Mr Mohamed: Could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister consider the possibility of asking the Commissioner of Police to increase the number of vehicles and Police Officers patrolling the Dual Carriage or the Highway, all the way from the South to the North, because very rarely do we really see on a constant basis or consistent basis, vehicles of the Police patrolling and even chasing cars, but what we do see are Police Officers stopping only motorbikes and motorcyclists on the Highway, and not cars as such?

The Prime Minister: I will pass on this information to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the issue of 'Cross Here', it is noted that in Europe, even in India, there are lights, *les lumières clignotantes qui sont mises sur les passages cloutés*. Therefore, can I suggest that such things be installed here, in Mauritius, especially at night, so that those flashing lights can attract the attention of motorcycles approaching the 'Cross Here'?

The Prime Minister: That is I suppose to draw the attention of drivers that there is a 'cross here' in front. Is it that?

(Interruptions)

Well, we may consider that.

Mr Uteem: Every year, in this House, we ask the same questions about the number of fatal accidents and the numbers are not going down. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if he can have a full-fledged study carried out to find out why there are fatal accidents? Is it because of the design of the road? Is it because of consumption of alcohol? Is it because of speedy? Because then, we will have real facts, data, on the real cause of the fatal accidents and then from then take on measures instead of just having *ad hoc* reactions like points permit or whatever.

The Prime Minister: Well, there may be so many reasons. In some cases, certain parts, of course, the design of the road is sometimes responsible. But, people should be aware of that and take more precaution on reaching such spots. We cannot get rid of all these roads and build new roads all over the place. This is almost impossible.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Can the hon. Prime Minister consider revisiting the driving tests completely so as to modernise them as to a standard that exists in Europe? That could itself be a possibility that those who are testing are themselves not tested enough as to their ability to test.

The Prime Minister: Well, I do not know how far the hon. Member is right, but, this again, I will pass it on to the Commissioner of Police.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody!

POLICE ACT – AMENDMENT

(No. B/106) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Police Act, he will state if he will consider the advisability of introducing amendments thereto to provide for Police Officers to be personally liable for acts done contrary to law and to the Police Standing Orders.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, no person is above the law and like any citizen of Mauritius, a Police officer who commits any breach of the law of the country, is solely and personally liable for prosecution under Criminal Law.

However under Civil Law, in accordance with Article 1384 of the *Code Civil Mauricien*, any act or omission by a Police officer which is contrary to the law, will result in the State being vicariously liable as “*Commettant*” so long as the wrongdoing has been committed by the Police officer in the execution of his duties.

As regards Standing Orders, these are made by the Commissioner of Police as per Section 6 of the Police Act and they contain instructions and directives to be observed by Police officers in the performance of their duties. Every Police officer is bound to comply with Standing Orders or any administrative directions issued by the Commissioner of Police. As a general rule, Standing Orders are intended to regulate the internal procedures of the Police Force,

and breaches thereof may give rise to disciplinary action being taken against Police officers. A breach of Standing Orders would not, per se, give rise to civil liability.

Nevertheless, there exists the possibility of a breach of Standing Orders leading to the State being liable pursuant to Article 1384 of the Code Civil, to the extent that such breach amounts to a wrongdoing by the Police officer which causes damage or prejudice to a person or a corporate entity and that the Police officer acted in the execution of his duties.

Our legal framework is already such that in case a Police officer commits a “*faute personnelle*”, he is solely and personally liable, and the vicarious liability of the State will only be triggered where the Police officer has committed a “*faute de service*”. The need to amend the law as mentioned by the hon. Member, therefore, does not arise.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister just mentioned that it is the Government who is sued as ‘*Commettant*’, but the Police officer gets away scot-free. It is the taxpayers who pay the sum. Does he consider it proper for taxpayers to pay damages to people when Police officers are abusing their rights and authorities?

The Prime Minister: I have just said when the Police officer is a liable personally, where there is vicarious liability, the State also is responsible. I do not see what we can do more than that.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why should the Police officer or public officers, in that matter, be protected with the prescription of two years? Does the hon. Prime Minister not consider it fit that each and every citizen of this country should be liable to the law if they breach the law and there should be no protection? Why should public officers, especially the Police, be protected for two years and we cannot prosecute the Police officer after two years?

The Prime Minister: There must have been good reasons why this has been included in the law.

Mr Baloomoody: Can’t we amend this law in order not to protect these public officers who are flouting the law?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I just learned from my colleague here that it used to be six months before; it has been amended to two years. Does the hon. Member want it to be 20 years?

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: The hon. Prime Minister is totally right, Madam Speaker, when he says that once upon a time it was six months and it has moved to two years. This whole idea of it having moved to two years shows that there was the need, in actual fact of increasing the time from six months to two years. Could the hon. Prime Minister, therefore, not consider and take it on advisement, whether there is the possibility of increasing the two years, let us say, to five years, because there are innocent victims who happen to not be able to enter an action within the time frame because of many reasons, sometimes medical or legal issues? Could he not consider that just to help those innocent victims that, once again, we could increase it or double it to four years - if he could take that on advisement, please?

The Prime Minister: We will consider that.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ganoo! Hon. Ganoo, please get prepared for your question. I said, time permitting, the hon. Prime Minister will reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/122.

BASSIN ROAD – FOOTBALL PITCH - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/122) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the construction of a football pitch at Bassin Road, he will state the -

- (a) contractual start and completion dates thereof, indicating if there is any delay in the completion thereof;
- (b) name of the contractor therefor, and
- (c) costs thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ B/122.

I am informed by the NDU that the contractual start and completion dates for the construction of a football pitch at Bassin Road are 12 September 2014 and 11 March 2015 respectively.

However, due to the prevailing bad weather in November/December 2014 and also because of end of year business closure, there has been a delay in completion thereof. Works are now expected to be completed by end of April 2015. Liquidated damages will be applied as per contractual obligation for any unaccounted delay.

As regard to part (b) of the question, the contractor for the project is Super Builders Co. Ltd.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the contract amounts to Rs7,994,167.50 (inclusive of VAT).

Mr Ganoo: Was there any bidding process before this tender was allotted to the contractor?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure, but the situation at the NDU is, I must say, really rotten. The NDU is indebted to the tune of one and a half billion!

(Interruptions)

And the contractors who are there keep on getting new contracts without any tendering! It has been a real mess!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Does the hon. Member have a supplementary on this issue? Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On the basis of what the hon. Prime Minister just said, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what action is being taken to remedy the situation at the NDU?

The Prime Minister: There is going to be an enquiry first and then we will consider what action will be taken.

Mr Ganoo: Do I understand the hon. Prime Minister to say that in this case the contractor will be made to pay liquidated damages?

The Prime Minister: That is what I have been told.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/109, B/111, B/127, B/130, B/131 and B/132 have been withdrawn.

Parliamentary Question No. B/116 addressed to the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection. Parliamentary Question No. B/135 addressed to the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms will now be replied by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities.

Hon. Quirin!

SPORTS MEDICAL UNIT - STAFF

(No. B/108) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Medical Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, a list of the athletes who have received treatment thereat, since January 2014 to date –

- (a) indicating if a sports medical doctor is attached thereto on a permanent basis and, if not, why not, and
- (b) give a list of the staff attached thereto, indicating their respective duties.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, the Sports Medical Unit of my Ministry has attended to 1,020 requests for treatment of athletes since January 2014 to date. I am circulating a list specifying the number of cases dealt with by the Sports Medical Unit sportswise as well as the number of medical coverages during that period

As regard to the services of a Sports Medical Doctor at the Unit, I have to inform the House that since the departure of one Dr. D. on 20 July 2012 there is no Sports Medical Doctor attached to the Unit on a full-time basis.

With a view to providing the required medical treatment to the athletes, my Ministry has enlisted the services of a Doctor on sessional basis.

Madam Speaker, following my visit to the Sports Medical Unit on 30 December 2014 and after consultation with my officers, a request has already been submitted to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the services of four Medical/Sports Medical Doctors and a Nutritionist to be made available to my Ministry.

Furthermore, in the context of the preparation of pre-selected athletes for the forthcoming Indian Ocean Island Games, the services of 32 massage therapists/physiotherapists, two nutritionists and two psychologists have been enlisted on sessional basis since January this year.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am circulating the list of staff posted at the Unit together with their respective job descriptions.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, j'ai moi-même évoqué dans cette Assemblée à plusieurs reprises dans le passé l'absence d'un médecin spécialiste du sport, et là, je constate dans la réponse du ministre, que jusqu'à présent, il n'y a pas de médecin du sport basé en permanence. Est-ce que le ministre ne compte-t-il pas, vu l'imminence des jeux des îles, trouver quelqu'un pour être basé en permanence ? Je comprends qu'il a trouvé un médecin, mais qui sera là *on and off*, si je comprends bien sa réponse. Je pense qu'il serait souhaitable, Madame la présidente, de trouver un spécialiste du sport basé en permanence qui s'occupera des athlètes d'une façon régulière.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, as mentioned in my answer, following my visit on 30 December, my Ministry has already queried with the Medical Council to have the list of doctors who are specialised in the sport sector. We have got the list and we are working on it and in collaboration with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, we are looking forward to have, at least, one doctor to be on a full time basis at the Medical Unit to assist all our athletes participating in the Indian Ocean Games.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, par rapport aux équipements qui se trouvent au centre médico sportif, peut-on savoir quand ces équipements ont été renouvelés pour la dernière fois ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Unfortunately, I don't have this information with me, but I will table it so that the hon. Member can have a look at it.

MBC – EMPLOYEES - SALARIES

(No. B/109) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the employees of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation recruited during the period 2009 to date and drawing salaries of over Rs100,000, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, a list thereof, indicating the respective –

- (a) post occupied;
- (b) date of recruitment;
- (c) qualifications, and
- (d) salaries and terms and conditions of employment.

(Withdrawn)

STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. B/110) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the plots of State land leased to individuals/companies and others, since July 2005 to date and which have been sold to foreigners, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) location thereof;
- (b) extent thereof;
- (c) lessors/purchasers thereof, and
- (d) total selling price thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, hon. Members would surely understand that the compilation of the requested information is a time-consuming exercise.

My Ministry is compiling the information and same will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly at the earliest possible.

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/111) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the Truth and Justice Commission, he will state whether the main recommendations contained in the report thereof have been implemented and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT - RATIFICATION

(No. B/112) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement concluded in Bali from 03 to 06 December 2013, he will state if Mauritius had intended to ratify same and, if so, indicate the measures that have been taken in relation thereto as at to date.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, insofar as Mauritius is concerned, I am informed that we have always been in favour of a Trade Facilitation Agreement given the contribution that such an agreement could bring to removing bottlenecks and impediments to trade on our export markets, particularly in the region.

Insofar as the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement is concerned, Cabinet, at its meeting held on 13 February 2015, agreed to deposit with the World Trade Organisation the instrument of acceptance of the protocol amending the Marrakesh Agreement.

The instrument of acceptance itself has been sent to our mission in Geneva on 27 February 2015 and has been deposited with the Secretariat of the World Trade Organisation the very same day.

The agreement will enter into force when two-thirds of the World Trade Organisation members have accepted the protocol.

Madam Speaker: No supplementary? Next question, hon. Uteem!

BANK ACCOUNTS OUTSIDE MAURITIUS - HOLDERS

(No. B/113) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Mauritians holding bank accounts outside Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Financial Services Commission respectively, information as to whether they have initiated any inquiry in relation thereto.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I am informed that currently there is no exchange control or any legislation in Mauritius that prevents a citizen from holding a bank account outside the country.

Of course, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Financial Services Commission enquire on holders of such bank accounts, only in cases of suspicious financial transactions.

Now, Madam Speaker, the question of the hon. Member is quite broad inasmuch as it refers to all Mauritians holding bank accounts outside Mauritius. Be that as it may, recently the media has made mention of a list of names published on the database of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), and who may have bank accounts outside Mauritius, I am informed that the Financial Services Commission (FSC) has queried the licensees and approved officers whose names appeared on the list. The inquiry is being pursued and the FSC shall take appropriate regulatory actions if and where necessary.

The ICIJ database includes, amongst others, the names of entities that were not licensed by the FSC at that matter in time also.

As regards the Financial Intelligence Unit, section 20 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act allows the FIU to exchange information on the basis of the reciprocity and mutual agreement. In this context, the FIU is a member of Egmont Group of FIU's since 2003 and exchanges of information as outlined with the Group's principles of exchange of information are being conducted. These principles are in place to secure the integrity of the analysis which is carried out by the FIU and disclosing the status of same ongoing or otherwise, will be prejudicial to the work that they are doing.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, earlier in February, a French whistleblower, a former HSBC employee downloaded Swiss leaks information on cable, setting out a list of people who have been suspected of evading taxes and regulatory provisions in their local countries, This has given rise to –

- (i) in England, the British lawmakers announced they would open an inquiry on HSBC and the leaks, and also
- (ii) in India, India will investigate a new list containing names of Indians suspected to have parked untaxed wealth in foreign banks, the Minister Arun Jaitley has said.

So, being given the concern which has been raised in other countries, is the Government proposing to set up an inquiry or, at least, ask the Regulatory Authorities to set up an inquiry to see whether there are Mauritians involved in, at least, this HSBC leaked documents?

Mr Bhadain: Yes, Madam Speaker, as I have stated, the FSC is actually conducting this exercise of querying all the licensees in relation to. Of course, if there are any issues which

would come out of that exercise and the FSC is of the opinion that things have to be looked in greater depth, that will certainly be done because this Government is all about transparency and good governance.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform us who is actually heading the FIU, who has been appointed at the head of the FIU?

Mr Bhadain: The current Director of the FIU is Mr Guillaume Ollivry, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Uteem!

DBM – EMPLOYEES – TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

(No. B/114) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -

- (a) the number of staff members thereof whose employment have been terminated since 2010 to date, indicating the aggregate compensation paid thereto, and
- (b) where matters stand regarding the proposed restructuring thereof.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that in the context of the restructuring of the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd, procedures were initiated by that Bank for a Voluntary Retirement Scheme in July 2011.

I am informed that during the period November 2012 to September 2014, 74 staff have opted for the VRS at a total cost of Rs79 m.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that various attempts in the past to restructure the DBM have failed, including a strategic partnership with two Indian financial institutions.

The Government has reconstituted the Board of Directors of DBM which has the task of proposing a new restructuring plan.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance just mentioned that, at least, 74 people took the Voluntary Retirement Scheme and that was done in the context of the DBM being restructured. Now that the hon. Minister has just announced that we are not going to go

ahead with the strategic Partner, will the DBM consider reintegrating those people who had been misled into opting for voluntary retirement on the basis that the Bank was going to close down?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, the Bank will probably close down but the strategic partner, the Bank of Maharashtra, has not received the green light from the Reserve Bank of India for investing in the bank. So, the project of a strategic partner has been giving up in view of this.

Mr Baloomoody: During his visit to Rodrigues, the hon. Minister of Finance mentioned that there will be a Bank of *Petite et Moyenne Entreprise*. Is it the Bank of DBM there which will be converted into a *Petite et Moyenne Entreprise* because the hon. Minister did not, unfortunately through his visit, meet any of the staff of the DBM there and there is some concern about this?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Alright, agreed! Well, there has been a proposal at one time to convert the Bank of Development into an SME's Bank, but after consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the officers there at the Ministry, we have come to the conclusion that we will need a special SME's institution that is not a Bank to go ahead with the project of SME Bank. So, the Bank of Development will stay as such. The new Board will have to decide on its future and we are setting up, therefore, a financial institution that will be under the financial sector to cope with the project for the small scale sector.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to a PQ No. B/64, the then Minister of Finance, hon. X.L. Duval, stated that, as regards its banking operation, DBM is loss making and this year it is Rs2.3 billion worth of deposit that are due for repayment and this is one of the issues that is troubling the Development Bank of Mauritius. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the financial situation of DBM has improved and that it is now in a position to reimburse the deposits?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I don't know of any financial institution under my Ministry which is working. So, the DBM has been losing a lot of money ...

(Interruptions)

... DBM is losing money and there are two issues there. Firstly, we are paying some Rs390 m. of interest on loans. So, we have decided to reduce the loans of the DBM by the end of the year to 0, which implies, therefore, major reimbursement mainly to the National Pension Fund.

So, we are proposing to sell non-strategic assets of the DBM among which shares in SICOM which might be bought over by the National Pension Fund for refunding most of the debt of the DBM, in which case as from 2016, I hope we will have a clean balance sheet at the DBM.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister in case the DBM will be closed down, what will happen to the employees of the DBM? Can they be redeployed in the new SME bank?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: In the hypothesis that the Board decides on the closure of the bank, we have envisaged two possibilities: firstly, that there be redeployment of the staff in the Civil Service and secondly, naturally the SME financial institution will recruit those who are eligible.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS - DIGITAL TABLETS

(No. B/115) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the distribution of digital tablets to students, she will state -

- (a) the number thereof returned as broken or defective;
- (b) if all the secondary schools have internet connections, and
- (c) where matters stand as to the distribution thereof to students this year.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that out of 24,111 Tablet PCs distributed last year in 155 State and Private-aided Secondary Schools, 2,304 Tablet PCs have been reported faulty during the period May 2014 to November 2014 as per the Service Level Agreement signed between my Ministry and Mauritius Telecom. There is a warranty period of two years on all Tablet PCs procured and users encountering problems with their Tablet PCs may call at the six after-sales outlets of the Mauritius Telecom around the Island.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to state at the very outset, that the device has been provided with digital resources on both online (on the internet) and offline (in the tablet PC itself) basis. All State and Private Secondary Schools already have internet connections.

However, there is no WIFI connectivity in secondary schools except, 2 model schools, that is, the Gaëtan Raynal State College and Mauritius College where WIFI connectivity is available in Form V classrooms.

The provision of WIFI in all State and Private-aided Secondary schools is being catered into by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation. I am informed that as far back as in August 2014, a tender for upgrading the internet connectivity to at least 10 MB and the provision of WIFI connectivity in Form IV and Form V classrooms for all colleges was launched by the then Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. The evaluation of bids has been completed at the level of the Central Procurement Board, but, the contract has not yet been awarded since two bidders have made applications for review before the Independent Review Panel. This matter is being followed up by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation. The next meeting of the Independent Review Panel is scheduled on 13 March, 2015.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that in September 2014, a tender for procurement of 23,400 Tablets intended for Form IV students and educators of 2014 was launched. The closing date was on 27 November 2014 and bids were opened on the same date. The bid evaluation exercise is currently under way at the level of the Central Procurement Board and it is expected that the distribution to students who are now in Form V and educators may start around July 2015. However, it is expected that by that time the issue of availability of WIFI in schools would be sorted out so that optimum use of Tablet PC would be made.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, being given the number of tablets that had been returned after the distribution of last year, has the Bid Evaluation Committee or has the Ministry issued guidelines to ensure that there is no repeat and that appropriate software is on these tablets?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the tablets that were repaired have been given back to the students after repair, but measures have been taken to ensure that proper specifications are given to get good tablets for the students.

Mr Uteem: Does the tender extend also to the provision of education software to be used on these tablets or is it just limited to the supply of tablets?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The tablet already contains software but lessons are now being provided by the M.I.E. and, in fact, the M.I.E. is preparing resource material for these tablets.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister inform the House what was the cost for one Digital tablet and whether students were asked to pay any insurance and, if so, can we know what amount?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The cost of the tablets for year 2014 was Rs134,349,018 and the students were made to pay a sum of Rs650 in order to ensure that in case of theft or major damage to the PC, the PCs would be replaced, but they would have to ensure that they have proper evidence that major damage or theft has occurred.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the same point, I was going to ask in relation to this insurance. We have had people especially in my Constituency who have come to me and said that: 'you know, Rs650 is a lot of money.' So, this year, is the Government considering whether to exempt, at least, those who are at the lower rung of the social ladder from the payment of this sum of Rs650?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Students whose parents benefit from social aid do not normally pay this amount.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: The hon. Minister replied earlier, I think, the amount paid was around Rs180 m. for...

(Interruptions)

Rs138 m. for 24,000 tablets. I think that it will cost around Rs750 for one tablet. How come we are giving free of charge to students, one tablet that cost Rs750, when they had to pay for insurance of...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Sit down, hon. Jhugroo! Allow the hon. Minister to reply.

(Interruptions)

Allow the hon. Minister to reply. Yes, hon. Minister.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It will cost much more than Rs700, around Rs5,000.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rutnah!

STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - BETAMAX LTD.

(No. B/116) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the circumstances surrounding the allocation of the contract for the transportation of petroleum products by Betamax Ltd., he will state if Government is proposing to refer the case to the Police for inquiry and, if so, when.

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr A. Gungah): Madam Speaker, in my reply to PQ No. B/73 of last week, I informed the House that on 30 January 2015, Government had decided to refer the case to the Police.

I am advised by the Commissioner of Police that an enquiry has been instituted into the matter by the Central Criminal Investigation Division and that the enquiry is in progress.

Mr Mohamed: On the same issue of Betamax Ltd., would the hon. Minister inform the House when will the arbitration process - because according to the contract that linked both parties, STC and Betamax Ltd., I am informed that there is a clause that talks of arbitration - start and could the hon. Minister give us a date because I am sure that all members of the public, the Mauritians at large, would like to know where the responsibility really lies? So, when would the arbitration process start?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member can come with a substantive question, I can reply, because it does not relate to the question that has been put by hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: In relation to the enquiry itself, can the hon. Minister confirm whether at today's date the Police have either secured documentary evidence and/or uplifted electronic evidence from the State Trading Corporation or from any other relevant Ministries concerned with this whole saga?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, as far as I am informed, statements are being taken from all the persons involved into the matter right now.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the Betamax saga, as my hon. friend just mentioned it, started with an Inter-ministerial Committee leading to a recommendation and a report by an independent accounting firm. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Police will also enquire and take statements from sitting Members of this House who were in that Ministerial Committee who recommended the nation to pay this sum of money to Betamax?

(Interruptions)

No, it's hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

(Interruptions)

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I think the Police Department knows how to proceed in the matter.

Mr Mohamed: Could the hon. Minister, following his last answer where he says that the Police would know what to do, consider the possibility of he, himself, going to help the Police identify those now Ministers who were then also party to this supposed Betamax saga and, in fact, do his duty as a citizen to give their names and help that they go and give a statement?

(Interruptions)

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, if need be, we will be doing it. But, it is for the Police to decide about that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I will suspend the sitting for one and a half hours for lunch.

At 12.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.41 p.m. with Madam Speaker in Chair.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rutnah!

TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (TEC) - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/117) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the Executive Director of the Tertiary Education Commission, she will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to his -
- (i) terms and conditions of appointment, including the salary, allowances and other benefits drawn;
 - (ii) experience in quality assurance and regulatory framework, and
- (b) state if the Delhi University, India, has set up a disciplinary committee against the latter and, if so, indicate if -
- (i) the Commission had been informed thereof prior to his appointment;
 - (ii) his contract has been renewed and, if so, indicate the terms and conditions thereof, and
 - (iii) his replacement is being contemplated.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam, Speaker, with your permission, I wish to reply to PQ. No. B/117 and PQ. No. B/144 together as they are both related.

With regard to PQ No. B/117 part (a)(i), I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) that following an advertisement in January 2013 and a selection exercise by TEC, Professor A. K. Bakhshi, former Executive Director of TEC was offered appointment to the post of Executive Director on 18 July 2013 on a contract basis of one year which could be renewed for a second period of one year at the end of which it could be again renewed for a third and final year. He assumed duty on 14 October 2013. After the one year, the contract was extended on a month-to-month basis with effect from 14 October 2014. His appointment has been terminated on 28 February 2015.

The terms and conditions of employment of the Executive Director include a monthly salary of Rs144,000, a special allowance of Rs56,000 as well as a gratuity, bonus, rent allowance, luggage allowance and air tickets for himself and his spouse from and to India at the start and end of his contract. A copy of the Terms and Conditions is being tabled.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by Tertiary Education Commission that Prof. A. K. Bakhshi has been in the fields of academics and research and is a former Vice Chancellor (Allahabad, India). He has also been Head of the Department of

Chemistry, Director of the Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILLL) and also Director of Centre for Professional Development in Higher Education (CPDHE) at the University of Delhi.

As regards part (b) of the question, according to TEC, prior to the contractual appointment of Prof. Bakhshi as Director on 14 October 2013, the Commission was not aware of any disciplinary committee set up at the Delhi University of India against him. In a correspondence dated 17 October 2013, the Head of Mission, Mauritius High Commission, New Delhi informed that according to a letter from the President of the Society for Values and Ethics in Education dated 09 October 2013, the Executive Council of Delhi University had apparently initiated disciplinary action against Prof. A. K. Bakhshi who despite being on leave from Delhi University had accepted the nomination as Executive Director of TEC. This issue was also raised in the local media.

According to record available at TEC, though there is a record in the minute sheet that a letter was issued to Prof. Bakshi on 21 October, 2013 to seek his explanation, no copy of the letter sent nor the reply thereto is available on the file given that the original copy was handed to the then Legal Officer of TEC and cannot be traced. Further, according to records available in August 2013, University of Delhi had asked Prof. A. K. Bakhshi to show cause as to why disciplinary action should not be initiated against him. Notwithstanding this matter, in a letter dated 19 September 2013, the University of Delhi gave Professor Bakshi approval to join the Tertiary Education Commission as Executive Director subject to his availability in the matter of show cause notice as and when required by the University.

As for the part relating to the renewal of the contract, I am advised that the initial contract starting on 14 October 2013 which was for one year was subsequently renewed by the TEC Board on a month-to-month basis as from 14 October 2014 on similar terms and conditions.

With respect to PQ No. B/144, I wish to inform the House that, the employment of the Executive Director of TEC, on a month to month basis has been terminated with effect from 28 February 2015; the post will be advertised shortly. In the meantime, arrangements have been made for a senior officer of TEC to act as Officer-in-Charge for the smooth running of the organisation pending the appointment of a full-fledged Director.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, firstly, in an answer to a question of my friend, hon. Uteem, last year, Minister Jeetah stated the following –

“I suggested that we appoint the person subject to a quarterly review - the person, reference made to Prof. Bakshi - to assess his performance, but then we did not get into recruitment procedure, etc., but I am interested in the quarterly assessment performance.”

Now that we know that his contract was being renewed on a monthly basis, is there on record of any quarterly basis assessment of this person?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. Member to let me know which question he is referring to. Which Parliamentary Question is he referring to?

Madam Speaker: He just mentioned. Can you repeat it?

Mr Rutnah: For the benefit of the House, I am referring to PQ B/962, last year, a question put by my friend, hon. Uteem and it reads as follows –

“May I know from the hon. Minister – he mentioned himself....

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, can you just tell the hon. Minister whether the question was addressed to her or it was to the precedent Government?

Mr Rutnah: It was last year.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You got it.

Mr Rutnah: I am referring to a question last year. I am trying to ascertain whether when the Minister gave the answer last year in relation to the question put by hon. Uteem, whether the quarterly review was carried out, now that we know that the contract of this gentleman was renewed on a monthly basis.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will look into the matter. I do not have the information right now.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister just mentioned that there is a legal opinion. So, may I know from the hon. Minister the name of the legal adviser who gave that opinion and whether any effort has been made to try to get back those documents from him?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I have just answered to the hon. Member that I do not have that particular information. I will look into the matter and come back with the information.

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Minister confirm in the light of the answer she gave that the professor was, in fact, Head of Department of Chemistry with qualification in Science rather than in legal matters and what criteria were put to recruit someone with no legal background in a regulatory oriented job?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I'll just give the Scheme of Service. According to the Scheme of Service - I will just give you the advertisement and the profile of the ideal candidate: professional with a standing track record, well versed in custodian of the academia, fully conversant with present and future trends in the fast developing tertiary education sector worldwide, experience in management and development of knowledge industry, top leadership qualities, capacity to deliver in line with Government policy, the provision of the TEC Act and the TEC corporate vision strategies and objectives.

So, nowhere in the Scheme of Service or the advertisement, there was any mention or requirement for legal background for the post of Executive Director of TEC.

Mr Rutnah: Does the hon. Minister now agree that this was actually a tailor-made job specification to suit someone?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I have no information showing that this was a tailor-made scheme though I do agree that we have had a lot of problems with the former Director.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister just mentioned that there is now an Officer-in-Charge for TEC, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the TEC Board has been reconstituted or if not, when does she propose to reconstitute the Board?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Board is being reconstituted and very soon the Board will be sitting.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

HEALTH TRACKS - DAUGUET & SIGNAL MOUNTAIN - UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/118) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the Dauguet and the Signal Mountain Health tracks, he will state, in each case –

- (a) when it was opened to the public;
- (b) if his Ministry is proposing to carry out upgrading works thereat and, if so, indicate when, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the installation of lightning and toilet facilities thereat.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Dauguet Health Track was opened to the public on 09 September 2001. As far as Signal Mountain Health track is concerned, I am informed that joggers were already using the track well before the project was completed in August 2006.

With regard to parts (b) and (c) of the question, following concerns raised by hon. Roubina Jadoo-Jaunboccus and hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, site visits have been effected at Dauguet and Signal Mountain Health tracks and I was personally involved with it. It has been observed that maintenance works had not been undertaken for quite some time and there is a lack of lighting and toilet facilities.

Madam Speaker, with a view to promoting a healthy lifestyle and enhancing quality of life, my Ministry would be adopting a holistic approach to all these issues and will implement a project for the rehabilitation of the health tracks and for the provision of basic amenities, including lighting and toilet facilities very soon.

In fact, the idea is to convert both health tracks into major attractions. This initiative would encourage adults, youth, students, children and tourists to visit these sites and make use of the facilities.

I would also wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/86 on the subject of lighting at the Signal Mountain.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his reply. Can he also explore the possibility of involving the inhabitants of both regions as far as the watch - initially there was a Dauguet watch and a Mountain Signal watch - for the people of the region is concerned and to oversee and have a look on the security aspect and other aspects concerning the amenity? Can he consider again the setting up of these two committees especially with the people of the region?

Mr Dayal: This is a very valid proposal and I will look into it because at my Ministry we are very much concerned with getting communities involved in all our projects. Therefore, this is already in the agenda and we will be looking into it.

As far as security is concerned, we have already attended to this issue.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, there have been previous Parliamentary Questions on these two sites. The hon. Minister at one point said that there is going to be basic amenities and, in the same answer, he says that he is going to make that into major attraction. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the budgeted amount for each project, when it will be started and when he expects this basic or major attraction to be completed?

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, I must enlighten the House that basic facilities were not catered for by the previous Government. *C'est l'élémentaire!* It has been observed that maintenance works had not been undertaken for quite some time and there is a lack of lighting and toilet facilities. With a view to promoting a healthy lifestyle and enhancing quality of life, we are catering to that. My Ministry will implement a project for the rehabilitation of the Health Tracks and for the provisions of basic amenities including lighting and the setting up of toilet facilities very soon. In fact, the idea is to convert both health tracks into major attractions. This initiative would encourage adults, youth, students, children and tourists to visit these sites and make use of the facilities. We have the budget requirements, we don't have exactly the amount, but we have the funds and we are going for the project on a priority basis.

Mr Bhagwan: For the security of these joggers, can I make a request to the hon. Minister to have the *Police de l'Environnement* do a permanent watch on these two sites, especially when people go there in the morning and in the afternoon?

Mr Dayal: As a matter of fact, this has been attended to. But, the point that I want to highlight here is that no maintenance was done and we are seeking assistance from the Special Mobile Force to have special cleaning exercises.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: One last question on this issue!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! One last question on this issue! Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Madam Speaker, may we have an idea from the hon. Minister when actually the work will start?

Mr Dayal: The work has already started.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

RICHE TERRE - FIRE STATION HEADQUARTERS & TRAINING CENTRE

(No. B/119) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) if the building presently housing the Port Louis Fire Station is in a derelict state, thus representing hazards and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken for the restoration thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the proposed construction of a new Fire Station Headquarters and Training Centre at Riche Terre, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for putting this question which illustrates the unprofessional manner in which the previous Government has been running the affairs of this country.

In fact, Madam Speaker, the building housing the fire station has been deteriorating and has been left in a state of utter abandonment. The previous Government and the City Council of Port Louis were both aware of the state of the building and the threat and hazard that it represents to the occupants and the firefighters. However, nothing has been done.

I am informed that according to a Structural Investigation report from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping dated as far back as December 2006 and a report of the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms dated October 2009, the building housing the Port Louis Fire Station is unsafe for its users and beyond economic repairs.

It is inadmissible that since 2006 no remedial action has been taken and the situation has been allowed to deteriorate. The City Council of Port Louis which is the owner of the building has also failed in its contractual duty to undertake the necessary repairs to the building which is being rented by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, in spite of repeated requests.

This Government, being a caring and responsible one, will not remain indifferent to this state of affairs. In fact, I am convening the Lord Mayor, the Chief Fire Officer of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services and other stakeholders to a meeting very soon to see how best we can address this problem.

In fact, it is envisaged to prepare a comprehensive plan for the complete renovation and/or reconstruction of the building which will include the commissioning of the consultancy services to address issues such as the nature and the extent of repairs required, the planning of works without disrupting the activities of the fire station, the structural proposal taking into account the geological condition of the site and cost estimates. In parallel, we may also consider the acquisition of the land by the Government for this purpose.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a plot of land of the extent of 16 *arpents* and 30 *perches* at Riche Terre has already been vested in my Ministry for the construction of a fire station, the Head Office of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services and a training academy. Given the massive financial investments to the order of half a billion rupees to be made, it has been decided that these projects be implemented in the context of an integrated development plan for the Jin Fei site and also in the context of any future harbour and port development.

Mr Ameer Meea: In his reply, I heard the hon. Minister stating that the building is beyond repairs and then he enumerated on the repairs that need to be done. Am I right that the building will be repaired and the Fire Services will stay there or are they being relocated?

Dr. Husnoo: As I say, according to the report, the building is unsafe and beyond economic repairs but, we are going to look into it. We are going to have a committee to look into it and see whether we are going to repair the building – I think that it is a bit difficult – or to put a new building there. But, if we have to do that, we have to make sure that the Fire Services can still have a place around there so that it can cater for that duration when the work is being carried

out. So, we will have to make a place for them adjacent to it so that they can continue with the rescue services in Port Louis.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, this issue has been long on the cards and why I am insisting is that the hon. Minister himself says that according to a report it is clearly stated that the building is beyond repair! Now, he will make another committee that will look into the repairs. When are we going to take a decision whether to pull down the building and build a new one or to move it out of Port Louis?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: No, I have said the building is unsafe for its users and beyond economic repairs as it is. But, we have to be careful; we cannot just close the Fire Services here and leave Port Louis without protection. We can't do that! We are going to repair the building. Nothing has been done, as you know, since 2006. We are going to look into it; we are going to, hopefully, put up a new building depending on what we find on the survey. But, at the same time, we have to cater for the protection of the City of Port Louis. So, we have to find where to accommodate the fire station during the repairs period. We cannot just leave Port Louis unprotected!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I have heard the hon. Minister say that there was a report in 2006, and if I am not mistaken, he was a Member of Parliament representing Port Louis in 2006 until 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. He did not do anything for that issue or put any questions in Parliament on that issue when he was Member of Parliament and a backbencher, but now that he is a Minister, can he now give us a date and a timeline when will this new committee be meeting? Who will be the members of that committee and when will they finish their work? When will he start implementation, since he said that nothing has been done? How fast can he run?

Dr. Husnoo: I am glad that the hon. Member asks the question. Firstly, I was a Member of Parliament, but I was not the Minister of Local Government, nor was I a member of the Cabinet at that time. There you are. Thank you. That's number one.

Secondly, you were there for 10 years, as you said, and you have not done anything. Now, you are trying to blame me. That's usual. It's a usual thing. You have not done anything about it and you are trying to blame me now.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Dr. Husnoo: We are going to look into it. I promise you that, but give me time. I have been here for only two months.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed no questions from the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: Give me time. We are going to look into it. We are going to have a meeting. We are going to look into it and we are not going to sit as the last Government has done for the last five years.

(Interruptions)

No way! I am not like you! What I promise, I am going to do.

Madam Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

SMF MUSEUM - RENOVATION

(No. B/120) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the Museum of the Special Mobile Force, at Vacoas, he will state since when it has been closed to the public, indicating –

- (a) if consideration will be given for renovation works to be carried out thereat and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) when the re-opening thereof to the public is contemplated.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the SMF Museum was closed to the public in December 1997 on account of water leakages through the roof and the walls. It may be noted that since 2009, the site has been put at the disposal of the Ministry of Tourism and

External Communications and subsequently handed over to the Tourism Authority, which has carried out renovation works amounting to some Rs1.4 m.

As regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, I understand that the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications is in presence of a request from the Prime Minister's Office concerning the handing back of the site on account of the project for its transformation into a Regimental Museum. This request is under consideration.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this museum will be vested to the Ministry of Environment?

Mr Collendavelloo: I understand we are going to put there all the old uniforms which used to be worn for centuries. It is going to be a historical musuem. The hon. Member will note that this building used to house the Police Band, but then the inhabitants were not happy about the music reaching the houses and apparently the noise even went very far. So, it was closed down.

Madam Speaker: Any other questions? Hon. Ganoo is not there for PQ No. B/121. So, we will proceed with PQ No. B/123.

MILITARY ROAD - STATE LAND - SQUATTERS

(No. B/123) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the eighteen families squatting State lands at Route Militaire, Plaine Verte, since last year, he will state where matters stand regarding the arrangements made by his Ministry for each of these families to obtain a plot of land.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, 18 families were initially found squatting at Military Road along the Ring Road Phase 3 alignment. In 2011, it was decided that they be relocated in the vicinity outside the limits of the Ring Road. Lease agreements were drawn in respect of 14 of these 18 families. The remaining four families have, unfortunately, not shown any interest in securing a lease agreement and they have not submitted relevant documents so far.

The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) was requested, in January 2012, to assist the squatters who qualify for support under the relevant scheme operated by the Foundation. In 2014, the NEF informed that, because of the topography of the site, the cost of infrastructural

works on the site would be excessively high. The NEF, therefore, requested that an alternative site be identified for the relocation of the squatters.

My Ministry has identified another plot of State land near the Cité Martial market fair, behind “Islamic Centre for Disabled Children” for the relocation exercise. Planning-wise, the site has been found to be suitable for residential development. The families concerned were informed about the new site and they are agreeable to be relocated there.

I have personally met the families in my office on 29 January 2015 to explain to them the arrangements being made for their relocation.

A Coordination Committee with all relevant stakeholders has been set up under my Chairmanship to monitor the implementation of the project. It has been found that a geotechnical investigation of the site should be carried out to determine whether soil conditions are appropriate for the proposed residential project. In this connection, a request has already been made to the NEF.

If the geotechnical investigation shows that the site is suitable, infrastructural works would start. Thereafter, individual leases would be drawn up for the beneficiaries.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, at some time last year, I, myself, accompanied the former Minister of Housing and Lands with the NEF to identify a plot of land, maybe the hon. Minister would know exactly what I am talking about since I know he went to the spot, immediately next to the Islamic Centre for Disabled Children behind Canal Anglais that hold an area of land. Is this the same plot of land that we are talking about where some geotechnical tests have to be carried out? This is what I would like to know, first of all.

Mr Soodhun: Exactly the same.

Mr Mohamed: With your permission, Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister, since this is the same plot of land that I had identified to the officers of his Ministry, and once the geotechnical works are carried out and things are fine and since it is immediately next to the building that has been put up by the Islamic Centre for Disabled Children, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the infrastructural costs will be borne by Government as far as the retaining wall is concerned, if it needs to be built?

Mr Soodhun: I don't have this information with me, but I am going to communicate it to my hon. friend.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD/EMIRATES AIRLINE – OPEN SKY POLICY

(No. B/124) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the agreement signed between Air Mauritius Ltd. and Emirates Airline in relation to the open sky policy, he will state where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I regret being unable to answer that question. Air Mauritius Ltd. is a company listed on the Stock Exchange and governed by the Companies Act and its Constitution. I would not, therefore, be in a position to disclose information relating to its commercial matters.

I know, however, that Air Mauritius and Emirates signed a Memorandum of Agreement on 16 December 2013.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Now, my question, true it is, talks about the agreement between Air Mauritius and Emirates. But, there is another part of the question, which I believe does not at all concern Air Mauritius or Emirates, and, that is, precisely the policy of Government in relation to the open sky policy. Now, what is the stand, therefore, of Government? I am not interested in knowing *les tenants et les aboutissants* of the agreement between Air Mauritius and Emirates. But what is, therefore, the open sky policy of Government? Are we proceeding with it or are we halting it?

Mr Collendavelloo: If that is the question, I am sure the hon. Member could redraft his question on a next occasion. This is not the way that I have read it. I am very sorry. Perhaps, I cannot understand the ambit of the question which he asked. I read in regard to the agreement signed between the Air Mauritius and Emirates Airlines. If my hon. friend would ask a question on the open sky policy and what is the open sky policy of Government, I am sure we would be most happy to oblige.

Mr Mohamed: I can understand that the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister, and I take under advisement his suggestion to redraft the question but, may be, I could just

simplify matters. I understand, once again, he is not the substantive Minister, but the question is very simple. With regard to open sky, are we going to restrict it or are we not going to restrict it?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, I am sorry! Your question relates to an agreement signed between Air Mauritius and Emirates Airline in relation to the open sky policy. So, may be, you should come with another question.

Mr Uteem: If I may ask the hon. Minister, in relation to this agreement, whether the Government was party to the agreement and whether any commitment was given in the name of Government in this agreement with respect to competition, exclusivity, code sharing between Air Mauritius and any other airline?

Mr Collendavelloo: Can I rebound in the same way that I answered to your hon. colleague, to come with a substantive question on whether Government was a party and then he will, I am sure, give you all the details.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE - VACANCIES

(No. B/125) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to each of the parastatal bodies and/or institutions falling under the aegis of his Ministry, he will state the vacancies existing thereat since 11 December 2014 to date, that will be filled by -

- (a) way of advertisement calling for qualified candidates, and
- (b) means other than public advertisement which call for qualified candidates to be interviewed therefor.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, there are three parastatal bodies that fall under the aegis of my Ministry and they are the Mauritius Institute of Health, the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers, commonly known as NATReSA and the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care. There is one institution, the Mauritius Family Planning Association which is also under the Ministry.

With regard to parts (a) and (b), the information requested is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.

Mr Mohamed: With regard to all those places that have been referred to by the hon. Minister, are there any of those institutions that have filled vacancies recently, ever since December 2014 and if the answer is, yes, which would those institutions be?

Mr Gayan: Well, if the hon. Member wants a specific answer to a specific question, he must come with a specific question; but, if he is referring to something which happened last week, I am afraid that he is out of order.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, either you can reply, you say you have got the reply or you cannot reply and you say you don't have the reply!

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, when I said the question is out of order, it is because there was another ...

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Minister taking a point of order? If he is going to take a point of order, can the hon. Minister do it in a proper way?

(Interruptions)

Mr Gayan: I can say that I am not going to reply to this because it is out of order.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! Hon. Minister, please sit down!

Mr Gayan: I am sorry!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I just told you, either you have the reply to the supplementary question which has been asked by the hon. Member or you don't have. If you don't have the reply, you say you don't have it now, you will come at a later stage with it.

Mr Gayan: I do not have the answer!

Mr Mohamed: Can I be more specific, was there a vacancy at the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care recently and was it filled up by advertising or by other means? If the hon. Minister does not have the answer or does not want to give the answer, I will bow by the decision of the Chair.

Mr Gayan: Well, my answer is the same, I don't have the answer.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Minister telling us that when he was saying just now what happened last week, he was not aware what he was talking about or was he referring to

something else, or is he saying now that he is not aware of what the answer is, simply because he does not want to give the answer?

Mr Gayan: What is the question? I don't know, it is a multiple question, come with one simple question!

Mr Mohamed: The simple question is: was there a vacancy at the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care recently and has it been filled up? This is the same issue which the hon. Minister is referring to when he said last week. That is exactly what I am referring to and he is exactly aware of what I am referring to, but he does not want to answer and going round about, and refusing to answer.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, if the the hon. Member is right that last week there was a question on the very same subject, then according to Standing Order 22, paragraph 1 (b), it is out of order.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, the question from the hon. Member is clear. If you don't want to answer, you say clearly that you don't want to give a reply to this question.

Mr Gayan: My answer, Madam Speaker, is that the answer was already provided last week.

Mr Mohamed: That was not an issue that was canvassed at all. The question is: was it by advertising or any other method was used? Simple! Since he seems now to, all of a sudden, remember what we are talking about.

Mr Gayan: Well, there are lots of methods of recruitment, Madam Speaker. You can have an open advertisement, there can be a head hunting or there may be other ways; but, in this particular case, there was a Cabinet decision and that Cabinet decision was implemented.

Mr Mohamed: Why wasn't the method that is so well spoken of by the hon. Minister of Finance, whom I congratulate for, that is, calling out *pour un appel de candidature*? It is totally right, and I commend him for that. Why wasn't that method used?

Mr Gayan: Government is Government, Government decides.

Mr Mohamed: Does the hon. Minister propose to, at least, pay attention to the excellent methods that are proposed by the hon. Minister of Finance, and the hon. Prime Minister, that of

calling for *candidature* and the best possible candidates? Does he propose to take that into account with regard to the other institutions he referred to?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, there are various methods of recruitment and Government decides on the method of recruitment for any particular post. Government is not tied to any specific way of advertising. There may be, for example, advertising. Lots of people talks about advertising, advertising in the local press, international press, in specialised journals. Where do we advertise? By *l'affiche*? What to do? No, this is why I say Government is Government, Government decides in the best interest of the country who is best.

Mr Mohamed: I totally understand the difficulties being faced by the hon. Minister in answering that question, and I am very compassionate. What I would like to know, therefore, Madam Speaker, is the following. My question is addressed to him, now if he wants to use Government as a *paravent*, fair enough. But, the question is: is there, in this Republic, any other candidate that could be better than the one he is trying to appoint, and hiding behind Government in order to make that appointment?

Mr Gayan: Well, I am not aware of that.

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

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has just stated 'Government'. But, can the hon. Minister inform the House, the country and the nation that, under his pressure, that Government approved that appointment of Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Specialised Care?

Mr Gayan: No Government acts under pressure and certainly not a Government under Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

FISHERMEN – REGISTRATION CARD

(No. B/126) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the fishermen, he will –

- (a) give a list thereof holding a Fisherman's Registration Card, indicating the measures he proposes to take against holders thereof who are no longer involved in fishing activities;

- (b) liaise with the Beach Authority to ensure that a specific and adequate space is earmarked for the regular maintenance of their boats, and
- (c) state if he proposes to recruit additional officers to combat illegal fishing at sea and to take other remedial measures in relation thereto.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, with your permission I am tabling a list of 2,070 fishers who hold a Fisherman's Registration Card.

The measures taken by my Ministry to trace out fishermen who are no longer involved in fishing activities are as follows -

- (i) The activities of fishermen are being constantly monitored by Officers of the Fisheries Protection Service of my Ministry at the fish landing stations and during patrols at sea. Whenever a fisherman is found no longer involved in fishing activities for a consecutive period of six months, his fisherman card is automatically cancelled.
- (ii) All reported cases of alleged inactive fishermen are fully investigated and upon confirmation that the fisherman is not involved in fishing, his fishermen card is cancelled.
- (iii) The collaboration of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, is solicited when the need arises. In fact, my Ministry provides to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions a detailed list of registered fishermen and requests that Ministry to submit information on any case of contribution to the National Pension Fund made by an employer other than my Ministry in respect of any registered fisherman. On obtaining information from the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, any doubtful case is fully investigated where there is a justifiable ground to do so.

With regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry has already agreed to the proposal of the Beach Authority for fishermen to use some beaches for repairs of boats. Eight sites have already been agreed with the Beach Authority. We are informing the fishers, accordingly.

As regards part (c) of the question, my Ministry is in the process of recruiting additional Fisheries Protection Officers with a view to strengthening action to combat illegal fishing in our lagoon.

Other remedial measures being implemented by this Ministry to combat illegal fishing include the following -

- (a) the strengthening of collaboration between the officers of my Ministry and the officers of the National Coast Guard so as to provide a 24-hour surveillance service at sea;
- (b) increasing the number of flying squad from 5 to 8 units and equipping them with appropriate facilities so that they can intervene promptly in order to deter illegal fishing.

I would also wish to inform the House that my Ministry is presently preparing a new Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill and provision is being made under this new piece of legislation to better equip officers of the Fisheries Protection Service so that they would be able to combat illegal fishing more efficiently. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if his Ministry is envisaging issuing registration cards to fishermen in the near future, because I know that as from 2010 it is Government's policy not to issue any further fisherman registration card. I would like to know whether he is envisaging changing that policy and, at least, to replace those cards that have been taken back from those fishermen who have abandoned the profession?

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, we are actually trying to review, because there is a huge demand from the fishermen section. Since 2010, there was a stop put for issuing new cards. The problem is that we have got some people who are no more there and their cards are still there.

The second thing is that there are a good number of people, almost 504, if I am not mistaken, who have requested for new cards. We are studying the problem and maybe in the future we will see to it that new cards are issued. There is also a demand by the fishermen in a committee which I met twice in the last couple of months. They are agreeable to the proposition that those who are not using or who are unable to use, their cards should be taken and given to other people. We are working upon that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May I ask the hon. Minister what are the criteria that the Ministry look at when registering new applications?

Mr Koonjoo: I don't have the criteria as such, but, as usual, the Ministry has been operating like that since many years and if there is anything new, we will have to look into that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: The fishermen are nowadays really facing big difficulties when they have to maintain their boats. So, I would request the hon. Minister to liaise with the Beach Authority so that they can accelerate on procedures and find a place for them so that they can maintain their boats. This is first.

Secondly, if the hon. Minister can liaise with the National Coast Guard so that they be more flexible because there are lots of contraventions these days. They don't have a place to maintain their boats. So, I would request the hon. Minister to please look into that.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just replied that it has already been done. There are eight beaches which were identified with the Ministries concerned and we have agreed to allow these places where the fishermen can safely repair their boats or keep them there in bad season.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this issue!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a last question! I just wanted to clarify from the hon. Minister, you have got a batch of fishermen, there was a course running last year for off lagoon fishing and I am made to understand that for off lagoon fishing, you have got a special registration card for fishermen. I know that part of the course has been completed, but they need to do the practical.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, please ask your question!

Mr Rughoobur: I would just ask the hon. Minister to please look into this off lagoon fishing course that was conducted and if he could try to ensure that they complete their course at least, the practical part, and they get their card soon. Thank you.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I will definitely do it. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES – NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM

(No. B/127) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the setting up of the Mauritius Football League and the recruitment of a new *Directeur Technique National*, he will state -

- (a) if his Ministry is proposing to carry out a survey of the quality and adequacy of infrastructure available in municipal and district council areas, indicating if -
 - (i) consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof, and
 - (ii) his Ministry has signed any agreement with the local authorities for the management and maintenance thereof, and
- (b) the composition of the technical team in charge of preparing the Mauritius national football team for the forthcoming Indian Ocean Island Games to be held in August 2015.

(Withdrawn)

NTC – BUSES – ACQUISITION & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/128) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, in respect of the past five years, information as to -

- (a) the total amount of money -
 - (i) invested in the acquisition of new buses, indicating the -
 - (A) names of the respective suppliers thereof, and
 - (B) sources and modes of financing thereof;
 - (b) paid to private companies for the maintenance of buses, if any, indicating if facilities are available for in-house maintenance of the buses and, if not, why not, and
 - (c) if copy of the audited reports in relation thereto will be tabled.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the National Transport Corporation has, for the last five years, purchased buses as follows -

In March 2009, 8 minibuses for the sum of Rs12 m.

In 2010, 36 standard buses for around Rs94 m. and 10 minibuses for the sum of Rs26 m.

In 2011, 63 buses for the sum of around Rs180 m.

In 2013, 44 standard buses for around Rs117 m. and 27 minibuses for the sum of Rs69 m.

In 2014, 2 semi-low floor buses for a sum of around Rs7 m.

All the buses were acquired from ABC Motors except for the last two semi-low floor buses which are of the make Yutong from China, the other buses purchased from 2009 to 2014 were of the make Nissan.

As regards funding, all the purchases were effected out of lease and loans as follows -

In 2009, a sum of Rs11.9 m. was leased from SBM.

In 2010, loans of around Rs90 m. were obtained from SBI and Rs26 m. from Bank One.

In 2011, loans of around Rs88 m. and Rs87 m. were obtained from SBI and SBM, respectively.

In 2013, a loan of Rs195 m. was obtained from SBM. And in 2014, the NTC purchased the two semi-low floor buses from its own funds.

As regards part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am further informed that all buses purchased from 2009 to 2014 are maintained by ABC Motors, in accordance with a maintenance contract agreement and an amount of around Rs93 m. has been disbursed for the last five years.

(Interruptions)

I am also informed that in-house facilities are available for the maintenance of buses and a total sum of around Rs895 m. has been spent over a period of five years for the maintenance of the remaining 329 buses, giving an average cost of maintenance in-house at around Rs2.7 m. per bus whereas the cost of maintenance - this is being outsourced - is around Rs489,000 per bus. Outsourcing of maintenance of buses is, therefore, more cost effective than carried out in house.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House, Madam Speaker, that the last audited report of 2012 has already been tabled here and it does not make any mention of the newly purchased buses. I am informed that the 2013 report is still under preparation and will be tabled in due course.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, as regards the maintenance of buses, the fact that huge fleet is today being outsourced to a private contractor, I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister if he has got garage facilities and other resources at the CNT and if there has been an

analysis made to ensure that whether in terms of cost effectiveness, the measures that has been taken to outsource is correct or else while the hon. Minister is outsourcing the fleet with private contractors, what the hon. Minister is doing with the existing resources that he has in-house?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Member got me wrong. It costs five times more to do the servicing in-house than outside. It is Rs2.7 m. per bus at the CNT and Rs489,000 at the ABC Motors. It is five times more to do it in-house.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister let us know what is the latest situation concerning the Blue Line buses? We still remember the cases of fatal accidents. What is the present status and how many are in service and where the actual Blue Line buses are being maintained?

Mr Bodha: The Blue Line buses, from what I have here, were run by buses which were bought in 2007. So, they are buses which are being maintained at the garage of the CNT itself. In fact, we are going to see the possibility of renewing the fleet and to come with semi-low floor buses.

Mr Rughoobur: Very often we have got this issue of non-publication or delay in publication of financial accounts. Would the hon. Minister look into the possibility of the CNT, and I am sure in other cases as well, that there are quarterly management accounts that are prepared so that we can better assess the performance of these CNT or other organisations?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is perfectly right. I will look into the matter.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, after hearing the answer from the hon. Minister, I understand maintenance per bus per year is around half a million rupees. Can he explain to this House, what is the cost of doing the maintenance for a new bus in one year because we have got cars, lorries or buses, we know we have fuel change, oil change, fuel filter change, oil filter change, pay for servicing and brakes and this will cost Rs500,000 per year. How does he explain this?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, allow the hon. Minister to answer!

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, it is a very technical question, but I will try to answer. From what I have been told the 188 Nissan and the 2 Yutong buses are maintained and serviced by the

local ABC Motors company. The scope of maintenance consists servicing at every 5,000 kilometres interval with the works involved mainly in the following items: change of engine oil, valve and then you have a second general servicing every 40,000 kilometres and then you have periodic parts replacement. So, the average of the Nissan and the Yutong buses is about Rs40,000 per month.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, in this House we have had the opportunity of asking questions about the Blue Line buses and other buses. Is the hon. Minister satisfied with the procurement process used by CNT for the acquisition and maintenance of these buses and if not, what he proposes to do?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the Government is not satisfied at all. We have had many questions in Parliament here about the procurement of buses and how it has been delayed. They have been answered. We had many questions, we had many replies; we have to look into the matter to see to it that we have the best buses at the best prices. In fact, the Ministry of Finance at the last budget has put a subsidy of Rs1 m. for each semi-low floor buses and I think this subsidy will still be there because we need to have a new public transport based on new buses and the CNT has to show the way as regards the quality of service and the quality of management.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House who is the Chairperson of the National Transport Corporation these days and whether a new Board is being reconstituted?

Mr Bodha: Presently, the Board is being chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry and as regards the management, we have a team management, but we are going to come forward with a new management and a new Board very soon.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister explain to this House why the maintenance for buses is five times more than what is being paid to ABC Motors? Is it because management had bought *pièces de rechanges* for millions and millions of rupees which are not being used and lying down in the garage of CNT? Is it true what I am telling in this House, Madam Speaker?

Mr Bodha: I think the hon. Member has enlightened the House properly. I have been given 17 reasons why maintenance should not be done at the CNT and 10 reasons why they

should be done outside. I am going to table all the reasons but I think I would say not the proper management of spare parts. We have a number of other problems.

(Interruptions)

We have to put the new rules and regulations and I think that the whole management system at the CNT has to be reviewed, Madam Speaker.

Mr Mahomed: In fact, hon. Jhugroo has already asked the question that I wanted to ask. But then, can we know more specifically from the hon. Minister – I know he mentioned a committee and new management of the CNT - what will be done to address the issue in the long run?

Mr Bodha: The issue, Madam Speaker, is to address the whole issue of the fleet because today it is such a pity.

(Interruptions)

Because at one point in time, Madam Speaker, the CNT was seen as the pride of the nation. We remember the 100 buses bought by Professor Sarathi. It showed the way. It had the standards as regards work conditions and quality of service and I think that we have to review the whole management, the whole fleet and come forward in such a manner that the backbone of the public transport will be the CNT.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has spoken of huge amounts of money that they spent when it should not have been spent most probably on maintenance and I also heard hon. Jhugroo talked about his surprise and mine as well of the amount of money that has been spent on maintenance. Now, yes, it is an issue of management having to be looked into again, but isn't there the need? And here, my request to the hon. Minister is that he should look into the possibility of setting up a serious enquiry, once again, why not, by hon. Bhadain! By looking into the possibility that there may have been some wrong doing there.

(Interruptions)

He has got the strength to carry on and on and on. So let us give it to him.

(Interruptions)

But he will go until three this time!

Madam Speaker: Okay, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: So, maybe we could continue and have a proper enquiry to establish why the maintenance has cost so much. Who are the culpable parties? Who are the culprits? And if ever people have to be taken to task and matters reported to the Police, they should be reported to the Police in order to ensure that such issues do not happen again.

Mr Bodha: The hon. Member is right, Madam Speaker. I think this is what the Government is doing, everywhere we have to do it. In fact, in 2009, Deloitte and Touche were requested to do a report and they did it in 2009. There was a restructure plan of the CNT which was approved by Government in 2013, but all the problems still remain. So, we have to have an indepth analysis of what is the situation at the CNT today, because from what I have heard, we have an overdraft.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, after questions asked by my friend, hon. Mohamed, will the hon. Minister - when sending this case to the Minister of Good Governance – take an indepth look with regard to the purchase of spare parts, because millions and millions of rupees have been spent for so many years and after that refer this case to the Central CID?

Mr Bodha: We will do that, Madam Speaker.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, on a point of order! If I may be allowed, I speak under your correction, Madam Speaker. I think it is a very interesting and important question. The fact that Mr Rughoobur here puts it - maybe he could clarify *mon antenne* and maybe I am wrong – I want to know if he is still heading Atics, if he is also in charge of another group and whether he is the CEO of Kalis Investment that has Kalis foundation included therein. So, here, it would be, in my humble opinion, I speak under your correction and forgive me if I am wrong to raise it. Since he is himself involved directly with the company that would be a competitor of Sarako plus he is involved in Kalis Investment that includes the foundation and CSR issues, it would be taking undue advantage of his position as a Member of Parliament hereby conflictual to put such a question. I am in the hands of the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Yes. Let me make it clear to any hon. Member of this House that, according to the Standing Orders, anybody who has an interest and comes with a question has to

declare his interest. So, if the hon. Member has an interest in this, he should, first of all, declare his interest.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, let me inform the House that immediately after my election, I have resigned as shareholder, as Director of Kalis Investment and all the companies within the Kalis Investment, Atics as well.

Madam Speaker: All right! Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy reply?

BAMBOUS - SOLAR PARK PROJECT

(No. B/129) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Solar Park Project in Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) the amount paid monthly to Sarako Ltd. for electricity generated and exported in the grid since the commissioning of the installations;
- (b) if the Environment Impact Assessment Licence in respect thereof makes provision for a Corporate Social Responsibility Fund and the construction of a tourist boutique for women entrepreneurs of Bambous and of the vicinity thereof by Sarako Ltd. and, if so, indicate where matters stand, and
- (c) if copy of the agreement between Sarako Ltd. and the Central Electricity Board will be tabled.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr Collendavello): With regard to part (a), Madam Speaker, I am informed by the CEB that the monthly amount paid to Sarako PVP Co. Ltd. varies from Rs11 m. to Rs15 m., depending on the kilowatt hour supplied by the plant. A total amount of Rs154 m. inclusive of VAT has been paid over the period February 2014 to January 2015. I am tabling the details of the monthly payment, if I may.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that no condition pertaining to Corporate Social Responsibility Fund and the construction of a tourist boutique for women entrepreneurs of Bambous has been included in the EIA Licence issued on 19 August 2013. However, I am

informed that the EIA Report submitted by the promoter mentioned several socio-economic measures, including the setting up of a tourist shop and artisanal market place. I am not aware of any such projects as having been implemented by the promoter.

As regards part (c), I will very soon table a copy of the energy supply purchase agreement signed between Sarako and CEB.

(Interruptions)

Because it is not with me.

Mr Rughoobur: I just wanted to know from the Vice-Prime Minister what are the measures that are being taken, since he mentioned himself, that in the EIA Report the condition was that they had to, I think, construct a tourist shop and other amenities as well, what are the measures that will be taken so that the Ministry ensures that the contractor does go ahead with the construction of these tourist shops and other amenities?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, they put it in their report, but it was not included in the conditions of the EIA Licence. So, it was the Environment Committee that decided not to include it as a condition for giving an EIA Licence.

Mr Bérenger: I am given to understand that Sarako, the plant, is not performing with maximum efficiency. Can I know whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has looked into the problems causing that and what remedial action is being taken?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, I have had two conflicted answers to this question, and I am yet to ask my technical officer to investigate and I shall come with a statement to the House on this matter.

Mr Rughoobur: In regard to the extent of land that was awarded to Sarako, I wanted to know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if the whole plot of land has been used or only a part of it and whether that part that is not currently being used, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the Minister of Housing and Lands to proceed with taking it back?

Mr Collendavelloo: The hon. Member is right. A large part of the land is not being used. My hon. colleague will take care of this very quickly.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to have the Technical Officers of his Ministry to have a site visit, together with those of the MPI and Agriculture, because much damage has been done in the area where all these solar panels have been fixed in an unprofessional manner, from what I have seen myself and also from what experts have told me? Can I make request to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, at least, to have a full enquiry be done by technicians, at least, to see that there is no harm which has been done, not only to the environment, but to the whole, *sur les flancs de cette région?*

Mr Collendavelloo: In spite of the huge political differences which separate me from the promoters of Sarako, I have in all fairness to say that I am not in possession of such reports. However, I shall again ask my technical officers to revisit the issue and to report to me. Up to now, I have not had that sort of information.

Mr Bérenger: If you would allow me, since reference has been made to damage to the environment, now we are a tourism country. Earlier on, I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say that we are going to go full scheme ahead if this is the expression with renewable energy. I do not know if the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has taken care to look from up there when planes are coming in and out of Mauritius, what a terrible eyesore this is and this is one. If we multiply this by how many such spots without due care, we are going to damage our tourism product dangerously. So, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, especially with forthcoming projects, to look at this aspect carefully?

Mr Collendavelloo: That is a big question! Do we want to pollute our country with coal and oil? Do we want to have solar panels to save on oil imports? That is the huge debate. If we are not going to have oil, coal, solar panels, wind turbines because they are ugly, we are not going to have electricity. So, admittedly, it is an eyesore, we need to balance all this, and that is what the Ministry of Environment is for. They have to look at the impact which these solar panels may have on the environment.

If I may go further, we have buildings like the MCB Ltd. which are not eyesores through the use of solar photovoltaic; others are eyesores because they do not take the care of looking at the environment.

Mr Rughoobur: May I know from the Vice-Prime Minister what is the amount that has been paid out of the *MID* Fund to the contractor since the commissioning and before commissioning as well?

Mr Collendavelloo: My hon. friend is very far from his question now. I am sure, if he comes with a substantive question I will give a reply, but I need notice of that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has stated that the condition or what was promised in the report as far as those tourist boutiques for women entrepreneurs at Bambous form part of a report or commitment on the promoters' part, but not as part of one of the licencing conditions. Having said so, even if this is the case, could he not consider that his Ministry would approach the promoters and insist that whatever commitment they may have taken, even though if it does not form part of the licensing conditions and permits, that they do comply with their commitments and do go ahead with what they promised they themselves would do?

Mr Collendavelloo: And then they will insist on getting the rest of the land which they are not using, just to put a tourist kiosk. I would rather let my colleague of the Ministry of Housing and Lands recover that extra plot of land which we need to, for instance, relocate the squatters or do other matters there. The hon. Members of Constituency No. 14 will note that there is an acute squatter problem in the area. I must say that probably I made an error when I said that the conditions of the EIA report are not repeated in the EIA licence. As a matter of fact, they are not. But legally, are they bound by what they have in the EIA report is another issue.

Madam Speaker: A last question on the issue, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not too sure whether this would warrant a more substantive question, but I will give it a go nonetheless. This is the biggest renewable energy project the country has experienced so far. Insofar as integration onto the grid is concerned, may I have an indication from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how is this faring, because this will be an important experience for us going forward in the domain of renewable energy?

Mr Collendavelloo: Of course, a substantive question will be welcomed. Offhand, according to CEB the grid is saturated. But the grid cannot be saturated, from what I hear and what I have read, the grid can be converted into a smart grid which would accommodate all these renewables. Apparently, with Sarako Ltd. they have saturated the grid. Sarako energy goes to La Chaumière substation which spreads this electricity in the area. Apparently, it provides some 50% of all the electricity required in the hotels. But, on a substantive question, I would be most delighted to assist.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NEW TERMINAL - CONTRACT

(No. B/130) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the new terminal of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to –

- (a) if it was a design and built project contract and, if so, indicate the time taken for the execution of the design thereof;
- (b) if galvanized metal frames were used;
- (c) the thickness of the metal roofing;
- (d) the type of curtain wall glass fixed;
- (e) amount of variations cost claimed and paid, and
- (f) table copy of the contract in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – CONSTRUCTION – AUDIT TRAIL

(No. B/131) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will state if he will consider probing into the ACONEX website, with the permission of the Officer-in-Charge of the SSR International Airport, for an audit trail and follow-up of the documents that had been filed in relation to the construction thereof and table copy thereof so as to throw light on the opacity or transparency of the project.

(Withdrawn)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SECOND RUNWAY - CONTRACT

(No. B/132) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the construction of the second runway at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) name of the contractor therefor;
- (b) cost of the project thereof, and
- (c) variation costs thereof, if any, indicating –
 - (i) if works have been executed as per the contract, and
 - (ii) who certified the recommendations for payment.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS - SPORTS ACT - COMPLIANCE

(No. B/133) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Sports Federations, he will state if all of them are complying with the Sports Act and, if not, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from each of them, information as to the reasons therefor.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, since I took office as Minister on 17 December 2014, I am having consultations with all stakeholders. During the meetings I have had with National Sports Federations, most of them have expressed their inabilities to comply with the provisions of the Sports Act, particularly Sections 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the Act which relate, among others, to required number of Regional Sports Committees and clubs.

The Mauritius Olympic Committee and the Registrar of Associations have already been invited to submit their proposals to amend the Act. The National Sports Federations will shortly

be invited to submit their proposals as well. Once all the proposals are received, they will be examined at the level of my Ministry and a decision will be taken as to whether there is a need to amend the Act or otherwise.

MAURITIUS GYMNASTICS FEDERATION – SUM ALLOTTED

(No. B/134) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Gymnastics Federation, he will -

(a) state the –

(i) date of recognition thereof by his Ministry, and

(ii) sum allocated thereto by his Ministry for financial year 2014, and

(b) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom –

(i) information as to the names of the office bearers thereof, and

(ii) a breakdown of the expenses incurred for financial year 2014.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, the Mauritius Gymnastics Federation had a temporary recognition on 17 March 2014 and was fully recognised on 02 December 2014. For period ending 31 December 2014, an amount of Rs388,095 has been disbursed to the Federation.

As regard to part (b) of the question, I am circulating the information.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, j'aimerais savoir du ministre quels sont les clubs qui sont affiliés à cette fédération et de préciser si ces mêmes clubs sont reconnus par son ministère tel que stipulé dans le *Sports Act*.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I don't have the names of all the clubs that are listed and which are affiliated with the Mauritius Gymnastics Federation but, definitely, I will give it to the House to be circulated to the hon. Member.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre est-il au courant que cette même fédération de gymnastique a tenu son assemblée générale le 28 février dernier au centre de Jeunesse de Flacq ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, on Saturday the Federation made a request as usual to have its activity on that day and after that it conducted a meeting, whether it is an *assemblée générale*, I do not know because there has been no notice to my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, le ministre peut-il demander à ces officiers d'enquêter et de voir si cette même assemblée générale s'est tenue selon les dispositions du *Sports Act* ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned before we do not know whether they have done *une assemblée générale* or not, because the last *assemblée générale* that they did was on 19 July 2014 and the term of office was for four years. So, we will definitely enquire into that and inform the House accordingly.

Mr Quirin: Entre-temps, Madame la présidente, je vais déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée une copie de la convocation du secrétaire de la Fédération adressée aux clubs en vue de cette assemblée générale, et je suppose que cela pourra aider l'honorable ministre à enquêter pour voir si cette assemblée générale s'est tenu selon les dispositions du *Sports Act*.

Dans cette même voie, Madame la présidente, j'aimerais que l'honorable ministre informe la Chambre s'il est au courant que des chèques avaient été tirés à l'ordre de l'actuel président de cette fédération, représentant le budget pour l'organisation d'un stage qui n'a finalement pas eu lieu.

Mr Sawmynaden: Yes, actually I have been informed by my Ministry. I know that there are lots of fishy things going on as well in this Federation and we are definitely looking into the matter.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

CT POWER PROJECT - PROMOTERS

(No. B/135) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the CT Power Project, he will state if he will initiate procedures for the conduct of a full forensic inquiry thereof in relation to the -

- (a) promoters thereof;
- (b) shareholding thereof;
- (c) amount of money transferred to Mauritius to date, and
- (d) name of the beneficiaries thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): With your permission, Madam, I will reply to this question myself since I can refer to what I have said earlier this morning in answer to the Private Notice Question. For the moment I am dealing with the contractual matters before I consider whether it should be referred to my colleague, the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms.

With regard to the promoters, I understand that the promoters are CT Holdings Ltd., Malaysia with Mr Soopramanien Mariappan holding 90% of the shares and Mr Steven Chay Kwong holding 10% of the shares. CT Holdings Ltd. owns CT Power Holdings Ltd., which itself owns Mauritius CT Power Ltd.

The shareholding of Mauritius CT Power Ltd., a Mauritian company is as follows -

Company	Class of Shares	Percentage of Shares
CT Power Holdings Ltd.	A	58 %
Central Electricity Board Investment company (a subsidiary company of the Central Electricity Board)	B	26%
CT Power Holdings Ltd.	C	16%

As regard to the 26% shares of the Central Electricity Board Investment company, this would be effective only after the execution of an Implementation Agreement between Mauritius CT Power Ltd and the Government and this has not been done.

From available records at my Ministry and at the Central Electricity Board, there is no evidence of any amount of money having been transferred to Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the forthcoming inquiry - which he has informed us will be undertaken - will also cover the money received *au vu et au su de tout le monde*, in canvassing people by one or two sociocultural organisations; one is Mr Dulthamun and others in the whole region of Albion, distributing money and also equipment through their *bureau phantom* at Ébène? Will the inquiry also include that aspect of distributing money?

Mr Collendavelloo: Forthcoming inquiry is not the term that I have used. What I have said is that I am looking at the moment at the contractual aspect of the matter before considering whether to transfer the matter to my hon. colleague. I do not want to rush into it. I do not want to rush and accuse people of corruption left, right and centre without having, at least, some *prima facie* evidence. Of course, I know of all the facts to which the hon. Member is making allusion, but I need to be responsible before I act.

Mr Bhagwan: Can, at least, the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House and also to the population, that nobody will get scot-free, even going back to the financing of electoral campaigns back from 2005 where the promoters paid for the posters of the then *Alliance Sociale*? I think one hon. Member knows exactly what I am saying.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, refrain from making these comments!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has not replied to what I have stated.

Mr Collendavelloo: All these allegations will need to be investigated. I am not going to leave these matters. But I am not in charge of investigating acts of corruption. I want to remain within the four corners of my terms of reference and then I shall transfer to wherever they have to go.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES – LORRIES - PURCHASE

(No. B/136) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Fire and Rescue Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, since 2008 to date, information as to the number of –

(a) lorries purchased, indicating -

(i) the detailed costs thereof;

(ii) the countries of origin thereof ;

(iii) if all the lorries are operational and, if so, since when and, if not, why not, giving details thereof and the type of ladders fitted thereto, and

(iv) if all the lorries fitted with high rise ladders are fully operational and, if not, why not, and

(b) mobile pumps purchased, indicating -

(i) the costs thereof, and

(ii) if they are operational and, if so, since when and, if not, why not.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, the information requested by the hon. Member at part (a) of the question is being placed in the Library.

With regard to part (a) (iii) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services that all five firefighting vehicles procured as at date are operational except the turntable ladder purchased in January 2013, which has been put off the run since 12 February 2015 due to a fault in the jacking system control panel. Necessary arrangement is being made with the supplier for repairs. There are, however, some legal difficulties in this issue and the matter is being looked into by the State Law office.

As far as part (a)(iv) is concerned, I am informed that all lorries purchased and fitted with high rise ladder are operational except the turntable ladder.

As regards part (b) of the question, my attention has been drawn to the fact that mobile pumps are also known as Water Tenders and the information has been placed in the Library, as indicated earlier.

Mr Bhagwan: I thank the hon. Minister for his reply. I will come to that particular lorry that he has just mentioned and which has not been used. Can the hon. Minister, at least, ask specialised agencies of Government, which are doing a lot of inquiries, to go in-depth into the purchase of that particular lorry? Who recommended that lorry and whether the procedures for

purchase were being followed? What was the cost to the taxpayers for the purchase of that lorry?

Dr. Husnoo: As far as the cost is concerned, it is Rs35 m. In fact, there is some legal problem in this and it has been referred to the State Law Office and, obviously, we are going to follow it up.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we have some idea as to what the legal problem that the hon. Minister is stating?

Dr. Husnoo: Firstly, it is the problem about maintenance cost. Initially, in the bid document, the maintenance cost was Rs400,000 per year. But, suddenly, last month or I think it was just about one month ago, the agent in Mauritius has increased it to Rs900,000. Although, in the bid document, the maintenance cost was Rs400,000 per year, now they say it is Rs900,000. It is just because of this. This is compounded by the fact that there has been some problem with the joystick. He said that if we don't pay him at the new rate, he won't repair the lorry. So, it is this problem that we have referred to the State Law Office.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you have a question!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether in year 2011, five lorries have been bought by Fire and Rescue Services, model mane, which could not be used during the flashflood of 30 March 2013 due to its wrong design and oversize?

Dr. Husnoo: I am sorry; I won't be able to answer this question. I need to get information on that. I will look into it.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I have one last question. Can the hon. Minister, at least, order an inquiry and see with the relevant authorities whether there has been connivance between the then Minister – I won't mention names – and the suppliers? Whether the Minister met the suppliers here or outside, and whether there has been direct connivance with the suppliers prior to the purchase? From my information, it was a tailor-made specification which was made for the purchase of that lorry and even civil servants were not involved in the preparation of these details.

Dr. Husnoo: I am sorry, I don't have any exact information on what the hon. Member is asking but, obviously, we are going to look into it. If need be, we are going to refer it to my colleague.

Mr Uteem: With respect to the purchase of lorry, being given that now we have high-rise buildings in Mauritius, may I know from the hon. Minister, as at now, how high the ladder of the lorry can go up to, till what floor, is it adequate for high-rise in Mauritius?

Dr. Husnoo: The latest one, the one that we have problem now with could have gone to about 10 storeys high, but the remaining one can go to about five storeys. I have discussed it with the Fire Services and they told me that they can manage. In case of fire, they would be able to manage.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this issue, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether a lorry that was bought by the Ministry for outer islands, Agalega, a big and oversize lorry - which could not be sent a year before - is still in Mauritius or whether it had been landed there in Agalega?

Dr. Husnoo: I am sorry again, I won't be able to answer this question. I will look into it and inform the hon. Member.

CUREPIPE - FORUM - MARKET FAIR

(No. B/137) **Mrs M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new market fair at Forum, Curepipe, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Municipal Council of Curepipe has, following the recommendation of GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd, which was appointed to evaluate the State of the Forum, decided to construct a multipurpose building on the site of the Forum which will accommodate, among others, a new market fair.

I am also informed that this project, estimated to cost Rs100 m. and to be financed to the tune of Rs40 m. from the Government contribution and Rs60 m. by the Council has been approved by the Project Plan Committee. The project has been included in the public sector investment programme.

I am further informed that a bidding exercise was conducted in May 2014 by the Council, for the appointment of a consultant and the bids received are being evaluated at the level of the Central Procurement Board. It is expected that an award to the successful bidder will be made by the end of this month.

Ms Sewocksingh: I would like to thank the hon. Minister for the answer. May I know from the hon. Minister why this project is taking a lot time as a sum of money has already been earmarked in a previous budget?

Dr. Husnoo: Well, actually there is a bidding process that I mentioned and, unfortunately, it takes time with the bidding process, but it is in progress and we are continuing with it.

Ms Sewocksingh: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether the fair will be reconstructed, restored or restructured?

Dr. Husnoo: Actually, Madam Speaker, there were two options for the bidding, either to repair the forum as it is, that's one option or to build it anew. But now, we are going to go for the second option because when we look at the price of repairing and the price of reconstructing a new one, they are more or less the same. It is about Rs70 m. So we are going to go for building anew because that has many advantages as well, it is going to last hopefully longer and secondly, it is going to provide more stalls.

Ms. Sewocksingh: I have a last question, Madam Speaker. I would humbly request the hon. Minister to see to it that the work is being held as soon as possible because this is creating a big problem not only for the people who are using the fair but also there is a big problem of traffic over there?

Dr. Husnoo: I can assure the hon. Member that we are going to look into it.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/139 and B/143 have been withdrawn.

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

RODRIGUES –LAND SURVEYS

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement to the House on land surveys in Rodrigues.

On 01 July 2013, the Ministry of Housing and Lands promulgated three regulations under section 21 of the Cadastral Survey Act to establish new standards, procedures and guidelines for the carrying out of land surveys in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

These new regulations make it mandatory for the Parcel Identification Numbers (PINs) to be included in all survey reports and memoranda of survey prior to registration.

Subsequently, the Ministry received a request from the Acting Island Chief Executive of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to delay the coming into force of the new regulations in order to enable the Island of Rodrigues to comply with the provisions of the new legislations which would require, among others, the purchase of new equipment and the setting up of an appropriate land administration system in Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that the Land Administration, Valuation and Information System (LAVIMS) does not presently cover the island of Rodrigues. As such, the new land survey regulations cannot be applied *in toto* in Rodrigues.

Moreover, it is to be noted that, since 01 July 2013, no land transaction requiring Survey Reports / Memoranda of Survey can be effected in Rodrigues as per Reports or Memoranda require a PIN prior to registration.

Hence, Madam Speaker, I am making new regulations in order to amend the existing ones thereby exempting, for the time being, the surveyors from the obligations to insert Parcel

Identification Numbers in survey reports and memoranda of survey relating to land parcels in Rodrigues.

These new regulations will come into operation as from 01 April 2015.

Thank You.

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Finance and Audit (Amendment) Bill (No. 1 of 2015) was read the first time.

MOTION

HIS EXCELLENCY, SHRI NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA – VISIT – SPECIAL SITTING

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to move the motion standing in my name which reads thus -

“This Assembly is of opinion that a special sitting of the National Assembly be held on Thursday 12 March 2015, at such time as may be fixed by Madam Speaker, to enable His Excellency, Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, to address the House and that such sitting be exempted from the provisions of all the Standing Orders of the National Assembly, other than Standing Order 8 insofar as it relates to the election of a Speaker for the day, Standing Order 11 insofar as it relates to the adjournment of the Assembly by a Minister, and Standing Order 14 insofar as it relates to the issue of the Order Paper”.

Madam Speaker, the aim of this Motion is to allow for a special sitting of the National Assembly during the course of which we shall have the opportunity to listen to the message of His Excellency, Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, who will be on an official visit to Mauritius on 11 and 12 March 2015.

It would indeed be a privilege to receive in this august Assembly, His Excellency, Shri Narendra Modi, who has emerged on the world stage as one of the greatest political leaders of our time.

Mr Modi, who is now leading the world's largest democracy, began his life journey in his hometown in North Gujarat and hails from a family of humble origin. He is the first Prime Minister to be born in independent India.

During his record four terms of office as Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat, Mr Modi had already demonstrated great statesmanship when he transformed in record time an earthquake-stricken state into a shining, prosperous and vibrant powerhouse of growth and an important contributor to India's development journey.

His exceptional track record is attributed mainly to his steadfast commitment to the principles of good governance, his citizen-centered approach to policymaking and his out of the box way of thinking.

His election as Prime Minister of India in May last has ushered an era of new hopes for the whole Indian nation. His Government has pledged to build a strong, prosperous and inclusive nation where all Indians can realise their dreams and aspirations. We, in Mauritius, have been following with keen interest the endeavours of Prime Minister Modi in reducing extreme poverty, empowering women, providing access to electricity and investment in education, especially his very laudable Educate the Girl Child campaign.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, we share very special relations with India which is making quantum leaps on the economic front and resolutely enhancing its influence globally. The visit of Mr Modi to Mauritius will certainly consolidate the already excellent relations between our two countries and lead to increased cooperation in the economic, scientific, technological and cultural spheres.

I consider that it will be a privilege for this House to hear the message of our distinguished guest.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I commend the motion to the House.

Mr Bérenger rose and seconded.

(4.25 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): I, of course, second the motion of the hon. Prime Minister. It is not only, Madam Speaker, my duty to do so, but I do so with great pleasure and pride.

Madam Speaker, we all know, India is one of the five countries, *les cinq pays de peuplement* from where our people came from in the past. The others being China, Madagascar, Mozambique and France, mainly.

Madam Speaker, we all know what India has done for Mauritius since independence and, in fact, even before independence. Indeed, India gave Mauritius its full support on our journey to independence. They have given us total and active support to our sovereignty claim over the Chagos Archipelago and, Madam Speaker, since independence, India has given crucial assistance to the development of the country, including Rodrigues and Agalega.

Madam Speaker, nearly all the former Prime Ministers of India, including Mrs Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi and Mr Vajpayee, and nearly all former Prime Ministers of India have visited Mauritius. I, myself, Madam Speaker, as Prime Minister for two short years made it a duty to visit all the five countries where our people came from in the past, beginning, of course, with India. It is, therefore, my privilege, Madam Speaker, to second the motion of the hon. Prime Minister and to invite the population of Mauritius *dans son ensemble* to welcome Mr Modi *comme un grand frère, un ami sincère* and one of the most important statesmen of these days.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

(4.27 p.m.)

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I join the hon. Leader of the Opposition in supporting this motion.

Only yesterday, let's call it a coincidence, I was, myself, reading about my great-grandfather who happens to be from India and my grandfather, and I am only the second-generation Mauritian. Now that I have this opportunity to join the hon. Leader of the Opposition and in congratulating the hon. Prime Minister in this motion, allow me, Madam Speaker, since I have no doubt that allowing the House to be honoured with the speech of his Excellency, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India which is a long-standing tradition will further enhance the bilateral diplomatic and historical ties we share with India.

So, therefore, with those words, I am all for the motion.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I, therefore, fix the time of the special sitting of the National Assembly to be held on 12 March 2015 at 10.55 a.m.

I suspend the sitting for half an hour for tea.

At 4.30 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.07 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in Chair.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS – MOTION OF THANKS

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

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

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

Question again proposed.

Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise this afternoon and my very first words would, of course, be to you for your election as Deputy Speaker, and I would humbly request you to convey also my congratulations to Madam Speaker for having been elected as the first lady Speaker of this Assembly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish also to congratulate my fellow hon. Members of Parliament, who have been elected like me, for the first time, especially my learned friends from the Bar.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise this afternoon also to speak about the Government Programme. The title of the Government Programme warrants that we pause a few minutes and really understand what it means, 'Achieving Meaningful Change'. It is not about the meaningful change in itself but it is about achieving meaningful change, that is, lay stress on results. This Government Programme has been designed to change and bring economic progress for the citizens of this country by a new Government which was voted in office on 10 December last

year. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is interesting to note that 10 December is also the International Human Rights Day, which is celebrated every year. It is highly symbolic that on such a date as the International Human Rights Day that this Government was voted in office by the citizens of this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would here take a few minutes to remind the House how we have come about to be here today in Government, and talking about achieving meaningful change. This Government started the electoral campaign well before the writ of elections had been issued. In fact, we have started our campaign, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a very bad note. We have started our campaign on a note of betrayal: the betrayal of Manisa Hotel and the betrayal of Flic-en-Flac region; I believe it was somewhere down in the Domaine Anna. That marked the beginning of our campaign, because we felt, and we still feel, betrayal or not, we have to remain true to our principles. We had embarked upon a mission to bring change and, betrayal or not, we had to bring the change. Against all odds, 60 men and women stood up to be candidates against what was termed then, the mightiest alliance of *l'Unité et Modernité*. Against all odds we mobilised our own families and friends, and my own personal family - I am sure the families of everyone here also. Every time I speak about that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I get emotional and I have to control myself. We suffered transfers - those in the public service - in our family; we suffered threats. Daily we exposed ourselves, but did not at all give up the fight that we had started, that is, *le combat pour nettoyer ce pays de la pourriture, M. le président*, which had taken root in all our institutions.

It is with our resolute belief and our courage that we set out to fight against the self-proclaimed kings from north to south, self-proclaimed kings in the east, self-proclaimed kings *rois du sud*, self-proclaimed kings, *rois des mathématiques électorales* in Constituency No. 13.

(Interruptions)

The self-proclaimed king in the east was defeated by something like 7,000 votes between hon. Dayal and himself. 7,000 votes! Hon. Seeruttun benefitted a lot from the wise words of hon. Koonjoo. Despite the *gaz lacrymogène* they were resolute and with the determination of hon. Mrs Boygah, *le roi du sud* has disappeared.

(Interruptions)

In my own constituency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we had a self-proclaimed king of Mathematics, king of *développement économique*, king of I do not know what. He had against all odds, against all mathematical formulas, anymore.

We had to put up in Constituency No. 13 with things we could not even think of in this day and age. *Certains dîners sectaires organisés par ces tristes personnages dans un restaurant à Souillac pour une communauté spécifique, telle était la devise. Certaines grosses pointures du secteur privé s'étaient jointes à cette équipe-là* and a few handpicks from the private sector wearing their ostensible red T-shirts in La Flora/Bois Chéri and others, former Heads of parastatals, falling, of course, under the Ministry of Finance. In other areas, I have even seen some *distribution de ducklings*.

(Interruptions)

Distribution de ti-poules, ti-canards à Batimaraï, M. le président, using Government vehicles ! Heads of institutions falling under the Ministry of Agriculture also using Government vehicles parading in our constituency. Such were the conditions in which we had to campaign.

On 10 December, the silent revolution took place. My learned friend, hon. Teeluckdharry mentioned that. It was a peaceful revolution through the ballots. Never seen before! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will bear testimony to what has happened in my hometown, Curepipe. It was unthinkable before! I grew up in that town of Curepipe. Unthinkable that we would have won three nil in No. 17! Yet, this is what had happened! This was a peaceful revolution, it took place on the 10th. Why am I mentioning all this when I am supposed to talk about the Government Programme? I am mentioning all this to show that the men and women sitting on this side of the House, where we come from, the fight that we have put up against those who are on the other side, we are determined in our mission. Our mission was to win the elections and we did it. Our mission now is to achieve meaningful change and we will do it.

Of course, one of the major steps to be taken in achieving meaningful change is forthcoming very soon with the presentation of the Budget Speech. I wish here to pause to highlight one of the key propositions which this Government has put forward, namely the creation of the SME Bank. The Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will allow, will enable a paradigm shift which we all speak of, but which we have not seen. This paradigm shift transforms a jobseeker into an entrepreneur. Once his *petite entreprise* takes

off, he himself provides jobs for others. This, the SME Bank will enable, and, of course, I have to mention the word of caution which the hon. Minister of Finance has sounded against commercial banks. They also will have to walk that way to empower our entrepreneurs, especially our women entrepreneurs. Here, I am thinking of the women entrepreneurs of Constituency No. 13.

The Government Programme finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - I know, I have been reminded by my very good friend, the Chief Whip, that I do not have many more minutes to go. What our programme is about? It is about good governance, but I wish to take the last few minutes that I have to talk about the other key feature of our Government Programme: Achieving Meaningful Change. There is another aspect to achieving meaningful change and that concerns - a very important thing - accountability, accountability in public finances, accountability of the powers that legislation has bestowed upon institutions and powers that legislation has bestowed upon public officers also.

I cannot be on my feet this afternoon without mentioning what is happening outside this House, what is being broadcast about an important constitutional post, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, called the post of the Director of Public Prosecutions. It is only and only a question of accountability. Unfortunately, my learned friend, hon. Mohamed is absent today. He has been dragging this debate about the constitutional post of the DPP on a political field when it was never such the case. What is it all about? Mr Deputy Speaker...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gobin, I would ask you not to comment on the conduct of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Gobin: No, certainly not! I want to...

The Deputy Speaker: I would advise the hon. Member not to talk about the topic which is currently a hot topic.

Mr Gobin: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Only perhaps to remind hon. Members that what is being sidetracked as being a political issue is certainly not! It is a question of accountability.

(Interruptions)

And it is very unfortunate - I wish also to state, it has nothing to do with the person. I have worked at the State Law Office for many years. I have known the person, the DPP now, who was not then the DPP. Personally, I have learnt a lot from him and I still enjoy very good relationship with him, but this is not the time to get passionate about a question which is merely a question of accountability of public finances. The independence of the Office of the DPP has always been guaranteed by Section 72 of the Constitution and nothing changes. The independence of the DPP means the independence in the question as to prosecution, discontinuing prosecution or taking over a prosecution. Nowhere, at no time, has it been even suggested that anything will change regarding section 72.

I wanted to highlight also that what is being used as a basis for criticism is an Issue Paper - I have been to look at it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - produced by the Law Reform Commission, dated March 2009, entitled: "The Office of Director Public Prosecutions: The Constitutional Requirement for its Operational Autonomy". Nothing in this paper is being violated, except for one paragraph, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I have to mention this. At page 3 of this report, paragraph 6, I quote –

"The current practice since Independence of law officers working at Attorney-General's Office appearing for or advising DPP falls foul of the principles underlying the setting-up in the Constitution of distinct offices of Attorney-General and DPP. This arrangement is unconstitutional and should be brought to an end."

I humbly beg to disagree. If this paragraph 6, on page 3, is correct, it would mean that each and every prosecution undertaken from 1964 up to 2009 would be unconstitutional! Because all law officers have been law officers of the Crown at some stage and they have been State Counsel at other stages.

The DPP, I say it again, and the law officers are two separates. The constitutional independence, the security of the tenure, is guaranteed by section 72. The arguments of Professor De Smith are being used to say that we are undermining the independence of the DPP. Any of those documents, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the report of the Mauritius Constitutional Conference dated September 1965, the report of the Constitutional Commissioner, Professor De Smith, dated November 1964, every single recommendation in those reports has been included and incorporated in section 72 of the Constitution.

What do they say? In November 1964 the report of Professor De Smith recommends the separation of the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions suggesting that the Attorney General would be a Minister and the Director of Public Prosecutions a Public Officer with exclusive and independent authority in relation to the taking over, continuance and discontinuance of criminal proceedings.

The report of the Mauritius Constitutional Conference dated September 1965, the relevant part is at page 17, paragraph 27. Perhaps we should pause here to note the presence of the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth who was present then. He would bear testimony to what was recommended and what has been implemented. Paragraph 27 reads –

“The Constitution will establish the Office of DPP who will have independent powers in relation to criminal prosecutions corresponding to those vested in the Director by the existing Constitution. A person will not be qualified to be or act as Director unless he is qualified for appointment as a Supreme Court Judge. The Director will be appointed by the JLSC, his security of tenure will be similar to that of a Judge.”

Where did we depart from any of those requirements? At no time, I say it again, has any suggestion been made that the independence of the DPP, insofar as his prosecution duties is concerned, will be reviewed. Independence of the DPP does not mean having a whole budget to spend without accountability. The only way to have accountability to this House is through the Attorney General.

Unfortunately, I, as a backbencher, cannot address a Parliamentary Question to the DPP. He will not answer. I cannot wait *au bon vouloir de son attaché de presse pour savoir combien d'argent a été dépensé sur tel projet or telle conférence*. The accountability concerns the administration and the finances.

I salute the admirable work the law officers do. I have been myself a law officer. The independence of the law officers is guaranteed by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission, neither the DPP nor the Attorney General appoints law officers, neither the DPP nor the Attorney General disciplines them or promotes them to higher ranks. These are the prerogatives of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

The arrangement prior to 2009 was perfect. 2009 marked a change which was introduced not by legislation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by a then Cabinet decision which was implemented under the Civil Establishment Order and Estimates in the Budget were provided separate, like for the Judiciary.

What Cabinet has decided on Friday, and this is perhaps my ending remark, goes in line with what we say in the Government Programme for achieving meaningful change. One of the points is regarding exactly accountability. No Government department, no public officer should think that he will manage public finances without accountability.

My ending remarks perhaps, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the very last words of the Government Programme are as follows, this is when the President sums it up and says –

“Honourable Members, I thank you for your attention and pray that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon your counsels.”

These are not words which are introduced as a matter only of tradition. With the blessings of the Almighty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we shall achieve meaningful change, the fruits of economic reforms, the fruits of these changes will trickle down to all levels of our society.

With these words, I thank you.

(5.31 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me at the very outset to congratulate you for your election as Deputy Speaker. You personify the trust that the new regime has in its young population. I would also like to congratulate Madam Speaker to be appointed as Speaker and, today, this Government has made history once more to have the first lady to occupy such a distinguished and, moreover, constitutional post.

I seize this occasion to convey my thanks to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who gave me the opportunity to serve the country in a ministerial capacity. It is indeed a great honour for me to form part of this new Government under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, whose experience and wisdom and true class will, no doubt, bring our country back on the right track.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, le père du miracle économique, fut aussi désigné comme le père de la démocratie aux Etats-Unis pour son geste historique, celui de démissionner comme Premier

ministre en 2003, pour céder la place à l'honorable Paul Raymond Bérenger suite à un accord électoral. Parole donnée parole sacrée ! Est-ce que le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam aurait fait de même ? J'en doute fort.

Une pensée aussi à mes deux colistiers l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, mon *leader*, un homme de principe, qui, lors de l'élection partielle au No. 8, avait promis qu'il y reviendrait comme candidat aux législatives. Il a abattu un travail colossal dans cette circonscription et ce depuis 2006. Pravind Jugnauth a su maintenir la flamme du MSM et, à l'élection partielle de 2009, il doit sa victoire grâce à ses efforts et non pas aux Travailleurs. Il faut se rappeler que le PTR, sachant très bien que nous allions remporter cette élection, ne montra sa solidarité qu'à quelques jours du scrutin, alors que la messe était déjà dite, que le poisson était déjà ferré. *Navin Ramgoolam ne put alors que déclarer piti ki pas pu li.*

(Interruptions)

Un mot aussi pour saluer l'honorable Madame Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun qui a été un guide, un phare, un vrai, lorsque j'étais étudiant au collège du Saint Esprit. Durant la campagne électorale, elle m'a été d'un précieux soutien dans la circonscription et nous sommes aujourd'hui collègues au Cabinet. Ce trio a fait preuve d'un esprit d'équipe et d'une confiance absolue, deux ingrédients suffisants pour repousser et vaincre la campagne communale. Cette bave de crapaud abject qui n'a pas atteint la blanche colombe, l'électorat de la circonscription du no. 8 -Moka/Quartier Militaire. *Without their support, their hard work and their vote, I would not be standing here, in this august Assembly.*

M. le président, la performance réalisée par l'Alliance Lepep lors des dernières élections, peut être considérée comme un exploit sportif. *When you put your best foot forward, have good intentions, good things happen with hard work and the blessing of God.* L'Alliance Lepep a déjoué tous les pronostics en faisant un véritable raz-de-marée que nos adversaires n'ont jamais vu venir ! Les deux *Leaders* du Parti Travailleiste et du MMM, *the wishful thinkers* par excellence pour le rêve d'un 60-0, sont aujourd'hui au pied du mur alors que les trois *Leaders* de partis, que ces messieurs considéraient comme petits partis ou encore comme un gros boulet, occupent actuellement le *front bench* du gouvernement.

Un tel miracle n'aurait pas été possible sans un capitaine hors pair pour nous mener à la victoire. Alors que d'autres parlaient de II^{ème} République durant des séances de *koz-kozér*, Sir

Anerood Jugnauth, lui, interrogeait le peuple, parlait aux mauriciens pour connaître leurs sentiments, leurs souffrances et leurs attentes. Le père fondateur du MSM est le seul capitaine, tel que le peuple l'a voulu, à bord du navire qui vogue vers son deuxième miracle économique.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you may know, the background underpinning the unprecedented scandals and bad practices that have rocked the previous regime are today being disclosed to the public. People are taking cognizance with disbelief and horror of the way public funds have been utilised by a handful of irresponsible politicians, whose lust for power and who are greedy to amass disgraceful fortunes *sur le dos du petit peuple*. The population has rightly tossed away those who preached democracy, but practised kleptocracy with impunity since 2005.

Personnellement, je ne peux m'empêcher de repenser avec frisson au traitement dont j'ai eu droit de la part de ce régime de Gestapo et de passe-droits. Décembre 2012 se révéla être le début de la fin pour l'ancien régime. En deux ans beaucoup d'eau a coulé sous les ponts! N'est-ce pas?

En 2012, pour les élections municipales, je fus témoin et acteur de l'épisode '*Ou koné ki sanla mwa !*'. Quand la police m'arrêta sur instructions de 'la sirène' qui disposait d'une carte maîtresse au sein du gouvernement, dans la foulée, on fouilla ma maison, terrorisa ma femme et mes enfants. Tout cela pour qu'ensuite la justice décida qu'il y avait *no case to answer*.

La *Human Rights Commission* du département d'État Américain a même qualifié mon arrestation d'arbitraire, tout comme celle de mon *Leader* Pravind Jugnauth. '*Crache en l'air tombe lors ou néné !*', comme dit si bien le dicton mauricien.

Je tiens à remercier mon épouse, mes deux enfants, mon *Leader* Pravind Jugnauth, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Ivan Collendavelloo comme mon conseiller légal, mes deux voisins, les honorables Mahen Jhugroo et Mahen Seeruttun, mes collègues du MSM et aussi ceux du MMM qui m'ont apporté leur soutien lors de cette terrible épreuve. Malgré ces persécutions, au moins le peuple a su '*ki sanla ça madame là!*'

Our new team wants to do things differently because Mauritians have suffered enough. They want a society where good governance will be the driving force behind all endeavours being initiated. The newly set up Ministry for that purpose illustrates the commitment taken by

this Government to restore trust and confidence in our institutions which will have to take up major socio-economic challenges in the upcoming years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since taking office in December last, I have been conducting a vast evaluation of sporting amenities so as to have a clearer idea of the situation. Last week, in his address to Parliament, hon. Franco Quirin was inviting me to undergo *un état des lieux*. It seems that the speed in which things are moving right now has taken him by surprise. He should know that since taking office on 18 December 2014, I have been visiting gymnasiums, football grounds, youth centres and all these are inherent to good sports practice and culture. And that evaluation is still going on.

The least that I can say is that the infrastructure is somehow in bad shape. There is an acute problem of maintenance. My Ministry has already started working on that and we are doing all that we can to revamp these amenities.

M. le président, c'est notre devoir au niveau des pouvoirs publics de faire en sorte que ces installations soient bien entretenues, ceci afin que nos sportifs puissent s'entraîner dans les meilleures conditions possibles pour faire flotter haut le quadricolore mauricien. Comme annoncé dans le discours-programme gouvernemental, toute une série de mesures novatrices visant à insuffler une nouvelle dynamique dans le secteur sportif sera mise en œuvre.

Cette vision se décline en cinq axes, notamment –

- la construction de nouvelles installations sportives ;
- la consolidation du football professionnel et le sport d'élite ;
- la promotion du sport scolaire ;
- la vulgarisation du sport pour tous, et
- la formation et le renforcement des capacités.

M. le président, le sport qui est un puissant vecteur d'identité nationale, ne peut que jouer un rôle catalyseur dans cette conjoncture. Il est vrai que notre but est, avant tout, de réaliser un nouveau miracle économique mais nous avons la capacité de réaliser aussi un miracle sportif. Nous voulons d'une jeunesse avec un fort sens patriotique, entreprenante, intelligente et autonome. Nous devons entourer, encadrer, soutenir et faire confiance à cette jeunesse. C'est l'avenir de ce pays. Il faut croire en eux, à leurs attentes, leurs envies et leur soif de changement.

Par ailleurs, la promotion du concept 'd'un esprit sain dans un corps sain' via l'activité sportive au niveau scolaire sera une de nos priorités. Cela en vue d'inculquer aux élèves des écoles primaires les valeurs du sport dont l'esprit d'équipe, le respect d'autrui mais aussi, et surtout, développer une nation saine.

Comme vous le savez, les maladies comme le diabète, l'obésité touchent de plus en plus de jeunes et les bonnes habitudes - que ce soit pour l'alimentation ou les exercices physiques - se prennent dès le plus jeune âge. Les discussions sont à un stade avancé avec la ministre de l'Education pour que ce projet, qui nous tient à cœur, puisse se concrétiser très vite. Il en va de la bonne santé et du bien-être de la jeunesse mauricienne. Je souligne, qu'à ce niveau, mon ministère et celui de ma collègue, Mme Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, sont en synergie et nous avançons dans la même direction pour le bien-être de la jeunesse mauricienne.

S'agissant de l'initiation au sport et la détection de nouveaux talents, les enfants, dès leur plus jeune âge, auront l'occasion de pratiquer différents sports dont l'acrobatie, la gymnastique, le golf et l'équitation, entre autres. C'est la requête faite par moi-même aux fédérations et elles y ont accédé.

Cela nous permettra de démocratiser ces sports que certains pensent n'être réservés qu'aux privilégiés. Ce souhait est partagé par les différents présidents de fédérations que j'ai rencontrés depuis ma prise de fonction et ils ont promis de nous aider à ce niveau.

M. le président, le sport ne concerne pas que les jeunes. Le programme *Sports for Life* destiné aux citoyens, en général, sera revu pour inclure de nouvelles activités et des salles de *fitness* seront construites afin d'inciter la population à pratiquer le sport.

En outre, le gouvernement mettra en place des centres de remise en forme dans les complexes sportifs et les centres de jeunesse afin de les rendre plus accessibles au grand public. Cette démarche vise à promouvoir la culture physique chez les mauriciens. À noter que déjà, grâce à la collaboration de ma collègue, l'honorable ministre de l'Education, certains terrains au niveau des établissements scolaires publics seront mis à la disposition du public pour la pratique du sport. C'est notre moyen à nous de démocratiser la pratique sportive aux quatre coins du pays.

De plus, compte tenu du nombre croissant de noyades à Maurice, un programme de formation au sauvetage sera mis en œuvre afin de former davantage des sauveteurs et sensibiliser le public, en général, sur la sécurité en mer.

Le sport de haut niveau sera consolidé par la mise sur pied d'un institut national des sports' ; ce sera une école de champions qui jettera les bases de l'élite locale, qui va promouvoir et développer le renforcement des capacités et le leadership sportif. Nous pourrons aussi organiser et dispenser des cours de formation en vue d'améliorer constamment les compétences et les acquis des entraîneurs. Des mesures incitatives seront introduites pour améliorer l'employabilité des sportifs de haut niveau après leur carrière sportive. Ceci est un aspect important - comme vous le savez peut-être déjà - car beaucoup de ceux qui ont défendu le quadricolore mauricien avec honneur sont ensuite tombés dans l'oubli, aussi la pauvreté pour beaucoup.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the daunting challenge that lies ahead of us in the sport sector is the laying foundation for a sporting future for the nation for the next 20 years. In this context, much investment will be made for development of sport at grassroots and community levels. Furthermore, we will address the need to create the right linkage between primary and secondary institutions by putting the athlete at the center of all sporting development.

While focusing on high level sport to gain more medals, we should strive hard to provide more opportunities to one and all to practice a sport. The fact is that both fronts are equally important and interlinked with each other. In fact, they are interdependent. It goes without saying that more people are practicing sports. The highest will be the probability of tapping latent potentials.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, more and more Mauritians suffer from various diseases. 23 % of the populations suffer from diabetes and 22 % is pre-diabetic. These figures are very alarming and should be a matter of concern beyond political consideration. This is why it has become important to raise awareness about the importance of sport and physical activity in our daily life in order to reduce disease such as cardiovascular disorders affecting an increasing number of Mauritians. It is, therefore, imperative to change our lifestyle to promote physical activities at national and regional levels. The proximity of sports facilities coupled with the relevant mass

media campaign to create awareness about the benefits of sports activities will definitely enhance the practice of sport activities by the population at large.

We believe that such facilities should be made accessible to a larger segment of the population. The key is that everyone should be able to find his favoring activity to stay fit. We will keep abreast with worldwide fitness trends. Tai chi and yoga classes which attract many people will continue to be taught in Youth Centres across the country.

Sport teaches self-discipline and team spirit. Athletes learn how to win with grace and lose with dignity by acquiring a sport spirit. Sport is, in fact, a school for life, contributing to give us a sound mind in a sound body, and teaching us how to respect each other. Given all the benefits which can be derived from sports, more emphasis will be laid on its development. My Ministry wishes to present a new vision for sport development over the next 10 to 15 years. Sport and physical activity can help the Government achieve key objectives. The truth is that only 20% of adults in Mauritius take 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week, as recommended by health professionals. There are great disparities within the population. Participation is low among those with lower incomes and falls with increasing age. This means we are a long way behind the best achieving nations. For example, in Finland the participation rate is at 80% and actually increases with age; but, we should not think that we are losers on the world sporting stage.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will adopt a twin-track approach of increasing participation in sport and physical activity and developing sustainable improvement in success in international competition, giving particular attention to identifying and nurturing those with sporting talent.

We must get more people playing sport across the whole population, focusing on the most economically disadvantaged groups, along with school leavers, women and older people. It is a fact that initiation to sports and physical activity when young is crucial if people are to be active throughout their lives. This is a firm demonstration that the present Government is in sport for the long-term, not the quick fix. We have to tackle the long dropouts in the number of people playing sports once they leave full-time education. Young people find it hard to continue their interests. This is why forging links between schools and local club is important.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now talk about our '*sport roi*'. Mauritian football has experienced moments of glory in the 1970s. However, at the end of the 1980s, an attempt by the

then Government to give a new impetus to this popular sport through the concept of regionalisation did not give the expected results. On the contrary, this process contributed to the decline of our football. In addition, shortcomings and malfunctioning at Federation management level worsened the situation, bringing the sport to its lowest level in the FIFA world ranking.

Today, it has become imperative to look at football development with a new mindset. The expansion of the football industry and the business across the world has brought about its professionalisation in many countries, leading to its transformation into a global sport. It is clear to everyone that Mauritius cannot lag behind in this sector if we want our football to keep pace with world trends. My Ministry will, therefore, provide all its support to sustain the professionalisation of football.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to increase the level and quality of players and contribute to the successful performance of the national team in international games, important measures will be taken. In this context, four areas will be addressed, including increasing participation at grassroots level, setting up of a football academy and high-level training centres and consolidating professional football.

Government will support the development of the football industry which has an important social economic role to play at national level. Not only full-time jobs for footballers are created but the holding of professional football matches during weekends also provide sound and entertaining leisure to all citizens across the country. Our youths aged between 8 and 14 will be scouted and trained by qualified coaches through a talent development programme, with the aim of identifying promising youngsters and providing them with technical skills and tactical knowledge at an early age.

A Football Academy will be set up with the help of European professional club teams for the better development of talented players who will be channeled to the professional football league. Appropriate funding will be made available with a view to helping them to pursue a career as professional football player, either locally or abroad.

High-level training centres will be set up at Anse-La-Raie and Bel Ombre to provide for regular lengthy residential training camps, especially prior to major international games.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, everyone knows the value of sport: Value in improving health and tackling obesity; value in giving young people confidence and purpose to divert them from drugs and crime, and value in the lessons of life that sport teaches us.

My ambition for sports in Mauritius is to start a 20-year process of re-establishing this country as a powerhouse in the sporting world, a country that can look at the playground or the podium and feel a sense of pride. The Indian Ocean Island Games (IOIG) held in Mauritius in 1985 and 2003 demonstrated the power of sport to engage the nation. Do you think that it is a coincidence that Sir Anerood Jugnauth was the Prime Minister of the country at that time? We can be proud of what our top athletes have achieved so far, but we cannot stand still.

One of the main focuses of my Ministry is the forthcoming 9th Indian Ocean Island Games which will be held in August 2015 in Reunion Island. Five months before the start of the games, much is yet to be done. A delegation of approximately 400 athletes, coaches and officials will attend the competition. Financial assistance and other support services are provided to the National Sports Federation to ensure that preselected athletes are training in optimum conditions.

I should also highlight that remarkable effort which is being made by *Club Maurice* to raise funds from the private sector and managed to successfully support our athletes in their preparation and participation in the games.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has got a clear mandate to establish a new roadmap for sport development. Public, private and voluntary sectors need to work together better towards fulfilling our common responsibilities in increasing participation and developing sustainable improvement of our performance at international level, particularly in football. I am convinced that we will deliver as a team and Mauritius is on its way to achieve *un miracle sportif*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall now list down the main key policies and programmes for the Youth Sector. My Ministry will revisit the operation of its Youth Centres to ensure that they continue to cater for the young people for the provision of leisure, training and activities of youth interest. Hence, Youth Centres will become an important necessary platform to provide physical and psychological space for young people to meet, exchange ideas, experiences and take effective leadership roles and initiatives.

For this to happen, I am reviving the Youth Advisory Committees to be responsible for the management of Youth Centres. This Committee will comprise of representatives of Youth Clubs, youth organisations of the regions, including *Forces Vives*.

Consequently, my Ministry will extend all necessary assistance in terms of personnel, logistics and equipment for activities pertaining to youth development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you are aware, most young people are free in the afternoon and during weekends. To this effect, my Ministry has already started to reconsider the hours of operation of Youth Centres to ensure their structured activities benefit from all facilities required.

My Ministry favours the promotion of literacy and artistic activities among young people. As such, a series of literary workshops and competitions will be organised both at regional and national levels. With a view to promoting a volunteering culture among our youth, my Ministry will set up a National Youth Volunteer Scheme. You will agree that volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development. It remains a powerful means of engaging the active population in tackling social issues; it benefits both the individual and society at large. It is noted with much concern today that volunteerism has drastically decreased.

We, therefore, need to foster and inculcate, once more, the volunteering culture among our Mauritian youth. This will enable the youth to bring in their energy, passion, creativity and innovative solutions to pressing issues pertaining to themselves and the society at large. The National Youth Volunteer Scheme will provide opportunities for youth to engage in volunteer programmes at regional and national levels.

As a first step, my Ministry has already started to enrol 100 youth leaders aged between 18 to 29 who are interested in voluntary work to undergo a basic training, both theory and practical, in voluntarism. The training will cover topics such as importance of volunteerism, outreach strategies, leadership and communication skills, community service, disaster management and outdoor activities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Mauritius is one of the best youth development programmes which my Ministry is promoting. It is a balanced, non-competitive programme of voluntary and challenging activities that encourage personal discovery and growth, self-reliance, perseverance and responsibility to themselves and service to

their community. Participants aged between 14 and 25 undergo four sections, namely service, physical recreation, skills and expedition at bronze, silver and gold levels.

In so doing, my Ministry offers life skills education to young people in colleges, youth groups and deprived areas. The modules covered by this programme include values, self-esteem, sexuality and health amongst others. As such courses in leadership are provided to the youth to equip them with skills such as communication, leadership and group dynamics among others.

At this stage, I wish to inform the House that the National Youth Survey on Youth Behaviour has been conducted in 2014 and its findings are being considered to redesign our training programmes to respond to emerging needs and challenges of the youth population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to providing healthy and positive leisure activities during school holidays, my Ministry will revisit the existing activities and organise innovative activities and projects like “*Camp de Vacances*”, cyclo-rallye and youth concerts. A synergy will be developed with schools, Parent-Teachers’ Association and the student community to plan the various activities.

In order to address problems facing young people in this fast changing society and also where the needs of young people are dynamic, my Ministry will come up with a National Youth Counselling Programme. The objective is to provide young people with information and support to help them address life tasks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, employability is the focal concern of any youth as it is rightly said that a decent job is the gateway for a secure and prosperous future. Youth being a core component of our population with lots of energy and potential, must be given proper training and guidance so that they are empowered to face the daunting challenges of life. To that end, my Ministry will embark an ambitious project to further vulgarise the entrepreneurship culture among the youth. The primary objective being to bring a shift in the paradigm in making youth become *créateur d’emploi* instead of *chercheur d’emploi*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Youth Excellence Award Programme is an annual feature of my Ministry whereby young people who have excelled in various fields are rewarded. The areas of interest for this year’s edition will comprise leadership and community work, art, design and technology as a tool for social development. I am confident that the Government Programme

2015-2020 will no doubt give a new impetus for our sports activities and set the scene for new youth development strategies. Its aim is to build a better Mauritius. We can only achieve that by helping and guiding our youngsters.

I would like to conclude with these words of Nelson Mandela, I quote -

“Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than Governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

(5.59 p.m.)

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me start by congratulating you for your election as the youngest Deputy Speaker of this House and also, please, convey my congratulations to Madam Speaker.

I also congratulate all hon. Members of this House for their election, especially those who are elected for the first time and welcome those who are coming back to the House.

Let me also welcome the appointment of hon. Yerrigadoo as Attorney General. He has been appointed Attorney General, that is, legal adviser of the Government.

(Interruptions)

I would also like to thank the constituents of Constituency No. 1 for returning me back to this august House and I am sure they can rely on me to do my utmost, as I have done in the past to fight for their interest and well-being.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me come now to the Programme. Election is over, there is no need for further campaigning, so we have to look at the reality and the welfare and well-being of the country, but I would like to start by quoting the Attorney General. Especially as an Attorney General, he should be precise when he addresses the House. He should not mislead the House, because he is going to give legal advice, so he has to be precise. So, when he started his speech on this Programme, he said that on 10 December the people have put an end to almost ten years of the reign of Labour Party which certainly was not working in the best interests of our people

and our Republic. This is not precise. In fact, they have put an end to ten years' of Labour/PMSD Government. Let us not deny that fact.

The PMSD has been in Government for nearly ten years, together with the Labour Party and with my good friend, hon. Shakeel Mohamed. They have been in Cabinet. The Leader of the PMSD has occupied senior posts. When my good friend, hon. Mrs Selvon, who has been elected like me in Constituency No. 1 was making her speech, talking about the economic situation in Constituency No. 1, *la misère qu'il y a dans la circonscription*, we should remind ourselves that we have had nearly four years of PMSD Minister of Finance, one and a half years of *PMSD ministre de l'Intégration sociale!* And who was occupying the post? No less than the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Leader of PMSD! And who was the PPS of Constituency No. 1? It is good to know. My good friend, hon. Mrs Perraud!

(Interruptions)

Four and a half years the hon. Minister occupied the post! The hon. Minister took the salary with all the benefits that go with it, and then, now, the hon. Minister comes and says that the boat is sinking! Let us be clear and honest. History remains history, facts remain facts. The PMSD was in Government; they should take their part of responsibility. Not only hon. Mrs Selvon! The first opportunity the hon. Minister of Finance had when he was addressing the House on the Additional Remuneration Bill, what had he to say? - I won't quote the full speech.

« Les gens vivent de plus en plus mal. La nation mauricienne a subi une politique économique qui appauvrit les pauvres et qui enrichit un petit groupe au sommet de l'économie. »

So, this is a fact! Ten years of Labour-PMSD Government, this is where we are.

Now let's come to the programme. Generally speaking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't have much problem with that programme. It is a programme which carries more than 90% of the programme of the Remake 2000. And if you compare the two programmes - we imposed our programme when we went with the Labour Party - you will see that the two programmes are more or less the same. When the MMM went with the Labour Party, we agreed on a programme, and it was our programme. Now, the people have made a choice. This Government will be judged on its actions, not on the programme. I will come to certain decisions which the

Government has already taken, which shows that they are deviating from their programme, and the *euphorie* which was there on 10 or 11 December is slowly fading out. Evaporating!

(Interruptions)

I will stress on the political wills of the Government on three issues. I will limit myself on those three issues because we will have another opportunity to address the House when it comes to the Budget Speech. At the time I am talking now, it is less than hundred days that this Government is in power. Already out there, people feel that, in certain circumstances, in certain sectors, they have been misled during the campaign by this alliance. Let's see the police. We have been talking about accountability. Has there been any change in the acts and doing of the police since there has been a change of Government?

(Interruptions)

Listen! The hon. Member had an opportunity! May I be allowed to address the House?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. No interruptions, please!

Mr Baloomoody: I am under your guidance.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, hon. Baloomoody, continue!

Mr Baloomoody: *Commissaire de police!* We know what he has done for the last ten years, how there have been many arbitrary arrests. On both sides of the House we have been victims.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No interruptions, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Now, he asks for his pre-retirement leave! He gets his pre-retirement, his golden handshake.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence!

Mr Baloomoody: There is no accountability for him?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, silence please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: There is no accountability for the....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence!

Mr Baloomoody: There is no accountability for the outgoing Commissioner of Police, of what he has done to our friend here, for what he has done to my colleague on the other side, my colleague behind me, hon. Dr. Joomaye! So, he is not accountable? He takes his golden handshake and he goes! For the gentleman at the RRA, rightly so, he has asked for his pre-retirement leave, and we have said “No, you stay here. You will be accountable.” But what about the outgoing Commissioner of Police? He gets out scot-free! The way there have been arbitrary arrests, be it for people on this side. We were at *Les Casernes* when hon. P. Jugnauth - the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister of Sports knows how we supported him at the time he was in difficulty. But what about the Commissioner of Police? He is not accountable? In the Police Force, even today, unfortunately so, names of hon. Ministers and the hon. Prime Minister are still being used – *Ah, l’ordre là pé vinn depi lahaut.*

(Interruptions)

It is a fact! Not every day! Yesterday night, the son of Mr Utchanah was arrested; a 21-year old Pupil Lawyer Master. He will be called to the Bar. He was arrested yesterday. He was called to come at the station at 09.30. He went to the station at 09.30 in company of his counsel. He remained there. Only at three o’clock, they wanted to record his statement. They recorded his statement and finished at 7.00, and when his counsel asked that he be allowed to go home and he gave his undertaking that he would come to court today, they said « *non, l’ordre là ine vinn depi lahaut. Bizin ferme toi!* »

(Interruptions)

This is what they said!

(Interruptions)

This is what they said! I am reporting the facts. This may be nonsense! You are not aware, hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: Ask the counsel! I have spoken to the counsel; I have spoken to the parents and some Police Officers who were there. *L'ordre là ine vinn depi lahaut!* And there was no objection to release that boy. This morning, they released him with no objection whatsoever.

(Interruptions)

Puni that young boy! The mentality has not changed in the Police. It is still the same. *L'ordre là vinn depi lahaut!* Especially the Central CID!

The Prime Minister: I would like to know who said that.

Mr Baloomoody: I will communicate it to the hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: Because the mentality is the same!

(Interruptions)

I will tell the hon. Prime Minister! I will tell the counsel who appeared and stayed there till 10.30 at night with his client.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, will you please address the Chair?

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, but the hon. Prime Minister is asking me a question. I have to answer. I can't be ...

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, thank you!

Mr Baloomoody: This is respect to the hon. Prime Minister.

This is why this morning I was insisting that it is time that there is accountability in the Police because they feel they can do whatever they want. If in Court tomorrow there is a civil proceeding, Government will pay; they don't have to pay. We know the State will pay, and we know how many payments have been made. In the case of Ramlagan, Rs7 m.; in the case of Kaya; in the case of the couple Desmarais, thousands of rupees have been paid. But whose money is that? Your money, my money, the taxpayers' money! But the Police Officers are free; they carry on doing whatever they want! So, we have to bring a change and a good reform in the Police; a change of *mentalité*, make them earn respect. When I was a child...

(Interruptions)

Yes, change their *mentalité* so that they can earn respect. Police!

(Interruptions)

Yesterday, at Rivière Noire, Dr. Gujjalu said there were bruises on his body. Things are going on the same, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Things have not changed! Through you to the hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, silence! Let the hon. Member continue.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: So, we have to bring confidence in the Police. Today, youngsters - it is unfortunate and an act which we condemn - have no respect for the Police. Youngsters are attacking the Police. I am a *Curepien*. Do you know what happens at Jan Palach, Curepipe? Whatever the number of Police Officers you put, these young people will continue to do whatever they want, because Police Officers today do not earn respect. I remember when I was a student, when I saw that Police Officer – I can say his name, Mr Malabar or Sergent Judoo

(Interruptions)

When you see Police Officers you would get shaky, you go straight to your home or to whatever place you have to go, no messing around on the road, but this is not the case today in the Police

Force. It has to be clear. There is a majority of Police Officers who do their job wonderfully, but, unfortunately, the minority...

(Interruptions)

...*les brebis galeuses* get the whole Police Force into disrepute.

In the Government Programme, section 137 talks about an Independent Police Complaint Board. This is welcoming to have an Independent Police Complaint Board. But then, it is not clear. What will happen to the Division of the Human Rights Commission? At the Human Rights Commission, we have a section which deals with Police *brutalité*. So, will that be closed? Are we going to close the Human Rights Commission completely? To be honest, I have been trying to know who is the Minister responsible for human rights. If we believe in human rights, we must have a Minister responsible for human rights. According to the law, that Human Rights Commission has to publish a report annually and submit it to the Minister responsible for human rights. But, unfortunately, I have a Cabinet Paper dated 07 January 2015 with the name of 25 honourable Members who are Ministers, but it is not written who is the Minister responsible for human rights. So, I hope that when the hon. Prime Minister addresses the House, he will enlighten us on who is the Minister responsible for human rights.

Now, if we have a Complaint Commission, it has to be accountable and do its work independently and swiftly. So many complaints are lying down there, with no result! There is a concern about the length of time investigation takes. There is a need for all cases to be quickly investigated so as to minimise both the impact on the career of the Police, but also the psychological impact of the victim. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a weak Civilian Complaint Review Board is worse than no Complaint Review Board because it gives the impression of oversight, but, in fact, it provides little to none.

Now, let me come briefly to the Judiciary. There is in that programme the establishment of a Court of Appeal. This has been on the Table for quite a long time, in the Mackay Report, the previous Government, the Government before, the MMM/MSM Government but, up to now, there is no consensus as to who the Judges will be. Already in the Judiciary, there is the concern about the Judges now who are Judges of the Supreme Court and who do not want to be Judges of the High Court. So, who will sit on that Court of Appeal? Is it retired Judges again? Judges of the Commonwealth? We have to have a consensus amongst all the parties concerned. We should not

rush into it. We have to be careful as to who the Judges will be at the Court of Appeal. I have listened and read carefully the speech of the hon. Attorney General, there is no reform with regard to the Bail and Remand Court. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that liberty is very important, that somebody who is presumed innocent should not be denied his liberty. And we started the Bail and Remand Court! The Mackay Report says there should be a Bail and Remand Court, but not for the purpose it is being used today. We wanted a Bail and Remand Court so that there should be no transfer of prisoners. The idea was, first, to have a Remand Court in the prison, but Magistrates did not want to sit in the prison, then they decided: 'Let us have a Bail and Remand Court in Port Louis so that we do not have to move prisoners from there and there is no exit and entry', which was, at that time, allowing drugs and all sorts of illicit and illegal things. But, today, what has the Bail and Remand Court become? Are you aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, that today if you object to bail in any District Court, the District Court does not entertain your motion in the District Court level? You have to apply to the Bail and Remand Court for the motion. If you are accused or suspected, you are in a Police cell, you wait up 10 to 15 days to get a date...

(Interruptions)

No!

(Interruptions)

For certain people, yes! You wait for 10 days because the queue is so long there. So, they have to get the accused from Baie du Cap or Souillac, he stays in a Police cell, when you get a date - the earliest date you will get at the Bail and Remand Court today - it takes 12 to 15 days.

(Interruptions)

My friend is saying more. And then, he comes to Port Louis, he stays in a Police cell for three days; he comes to Port Louis, his bail motion is heard, he goes back, judgment is delivered two or three days after, then he has to go back to that Police Station in Baie du Cap or where it is to pay to be released. But, this was not the idea of the Bail and Remand Court. The Bail and Remand Court was there for only accused who were detained at the prisons centre. We should go back to the District Court level, District Magistrates should hear bail cases, as it used to be. We have sufficient Magistrates, we cannot complain about that. In fact, there is no space. Magistrates

are sometimes sitting in corridor, in garage - at Pamplémousses it was in a garage. So, we have Magistrates. Liberty is important. We cannot deny somebody of his liberty just for an administrative reason. I would invite the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to kindly look into the matter and see to it that, at least, where the Police are objecting, there is an opportunity....

(Interruptions)

Yes, we should go there....

(Interruptions)

No, the DPP...

(Interruptions)

If it is in the interest of the people, interest of democracy, interest of good governance and interest of justice, if we have to go back, we go back. But, in the case of DPP, it is not in the interest of justice. I will come to that later on.

Now, let me come to another issue. At paragraph 169, there is the Law Reform Commission. You intend to give more power, more jurisdiction probably to the Law Reform Commission. It's good! But, are you going to listen to their findings? This is most important. What would happen to the report? We know that the Law Reform Commission has got a report in 2009. We will come to that report later. So, giving power, allowing the Law Commission to bring changes in the law, but if Government was going to set it aside and disregard it completely, there is no point about the law, to invest in a Law Reform Commission.

Now, one issue which has been canvassed heavily during the campaign is the question of nomination of advisers and certain persons at parastatal bodies. Hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo has gone round and said '*Fini ti copains, ti copines*; there will be advertisement, transparency, everyone will be given an equal opportunity, there will be accountability.' But he, himself, what has he done at the casino? The casino already is going astray. A professional was hired there to put some order. He had to resign after a few weeks because of the consultant who has been appointed at the casino. And he is the one who is going around, telling us that there will be transparency in recruitment! Now, about my good friend, hon. Soodhun! You know, when I first heard, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Ministries will recruit lawyers in the Ministries, I welcomed that decision. And I am sure - as you are aware - there is quite a lot of young lawyers

out there who are qualified now. In our time, we did our Master after having been called to the Bar. Now they do one, two, three Masters and they come and are called to the Bar. They are qualified in several spheres and they can be of good assistance to Ministries because they are qualified in a specific sphere. I know of lawyers who are qualified in urbanism, but they were not given an opportunity to apply for that post.

(Interruptions)

He was not given! It was never advertised. Let alone advertised, send a communiqué to the Bar Council and they e-mail it to all barristers. Are you interested, there is a vacancy? This is how it has been done. Most of the lawyers are qualified. This gentleman, I do not know him personally, I do not have anything against him. But what does he have more than others to be appointed Legal Adviser?

(Interruptions)

Is it only because he is a relative to a Member of this House?

(Interruptions)

I hope not! I do not want to make it personal, but this is an appointment which is contrary to the principle. There are many appointments where *cousins, cousines, familles* have been appointed. Again, this morning itself, there was a clash between hon. Shakeel Mohamed and the Minister of Health. Last week, we had a clash with the hon. Leader of the Opposition regarding a certain appointment at the Cardiac Unit.

(Interruptions)

Unfortunately, the question did not come! There was a question of my friend hon. Bhagwan, it did not reach. We would have seen that this man had been four times on bail and he has been nominated Chairman of I don't know which cooperative! Four times on bail! But, what is worse, we are talking about the fight against corruption, to have the right person in the right place and we have to project that image. When looking at that Board, people should say: "Yes, I trust this Board. I am going there to complain." Can we trust the Board of ICAC today, when we have learnt the way people have been appointed there? The rush in which they have been appointed within less than 24 hours, and a few hours given to the Leader of the Opposition for consultation! The answer that the hon. Prime Minister gave us, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that there was a

rush because we, Members of Parliament, had to swear an affidavit for our assets! He has been misled - with due respect to him. The last day for swearing the affidavit was *un 21 janvier*, not *le 31 décembre*. *C'était le 21 janvier!* This was the last day we had to sign our affidavit with regard to...

(Interruptions)

Sorry?

(Interruptions)

Even this is not a good valid reason. The law says every Member of Parliament; it is 30 days after the first sitting of Parliament.

(Interruptions)

There were other officials. The hon. Prime Minister told us - when my friend hon. Uteem asked the question about who was looking about that important file when the Director was sacked - there was a responsible person who was looking for four or five days about these files. But this responsible person could not have accepted the declaration of assets, be it for Ministers? Why was the rush? The two Directors, one at least we know, wanted to be a candidate for the elections, has been in a Press conference with the Leader of the MSM! Is this the image we want to produce and show to the people? The trust? We want to tell them that this is a Government that wants to fight fraud and corruption, that this is our team, whom you can trust and make our complaint? The FIU, yes! Today we learnt that another staff of hon. Minister Bhadain has been nominated to look after the FIU.

Now, when we talk about fraud and corruption - I am sure you must have learnt about this interesting judgement....

(Interruptions)

Let me come...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, allow the hon. Member to talk!

Mr Baloomoody: There is a decision to set up a Financial Crime Commission (FCC). But, again, it is not clear from the speech of hon. Minister Bhadain what the FCC is. I am aware that he is very busy now, working till late.

(Interruptions)

Meeting important persons! But, what is that Financial Crime Commission (FCC)? In the first paragraph, we read that –

“A Financial Crime Commission will be set up as an apex body responsible for the investigation and prevention of all financial crimes in Mauritius, including fraud and corruption, money laundering, financial practices and other white-collar jobs.”

Then, on the next page we see –

“The Financial Crime Commission will be set up as an umbrella organisation to oversee the operation of a revised and enhanced ICAC model, the FIU, Assets Recovery, (...).”

Which is which? Is it going to investigate? Is it going to be an umbrella body? We have to be clear on how we want to proceed with regard to crime, to combat fraud and corruption. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure people on the other side as well are shocked by that nomination. What is worse, at the Prime Minister’s Office, one Mr P. M., not the Prime Minister – for good reading, let me read a judgement of the Intermediate Court. It is not an ongoing case, it has been finished and fine has been paid - Police v/s Boskalis International BV and Baggermaatschappij Boskalis BV. Boskalis is an international firm. The two accused were two foreigners and they were accused at the Intermediate Court with Cause Number 766/2013. There were six charges of giving bribe, but I will read only two, the last two counts. Count 7 -

“In or about the year 2006, one Boskalis International BV, as represented by Mr Jan Cornelis Haak having registered office address at Rosmolenweg 20 3356 Papendrecht, did willfully and unlawfully agree with one Mr R. M.”

Commonly known as P.M.!

“57 years, Consultant...”

Again!

“... residing at Ave Maurice Prudent, Floreal, to do an act which is unlawful (...).”

What is the act?

“... on or about the aforesaid date the said Boskalis International, which was a bidder for a contract with the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) did agree with one Mr R. M. to give gratification of USD 25,000 to one Mr S. C. who was the Chairman of the Mauritius Ports Authority to consideration of which (...) did influence in procuring Boskalis a contract for carrying out dredging works.”

The other charge, Count 8 –

“That or about the year 2006 when Boskalis International, as represented by the said gentleman Mr Jan Cornelis Haak having his registered office of address (...) did willfully and unlawfully agree ...”

In this one, he agreed personally –

“...with one R. M., 57 years, residing at Ave Maurice Prudent, Floreal to give gratification of USD 60,000 to one Mr S. C. who was the Chairman of the Mauritius Ports Authority.”

So, these are the people who have conspired and agreed. And the Company comes to Mauritius, retains the service of counsels, pleads guilty, and goes on the other side of the Court, under oath relates exactly how the transaction took place and was found guilty and he paid his fine and went away. And these are the gentlemen who will be Advisers to the Office of the Prime Minister! I understand he will sit or he is already sitting on the Board of Air Mauritius, where we know that...

(Interruptions)

... millions of rupees will be involved when Air Mauritius will renew its fleet. I understand he will be at the Board of Investment. Are we going to be confident with these institutions? He has not yet been found guilty in another case which is still before the Court, this I agree; he is presumed to be innocent in that case. But, we know what Boskalis has come and said in Court and he was not challenged, not even cross-examined!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that on the issue of fraud and corruption, the issue of transparency with regard to nomination of people, this Government does not have the political

will and people are starting to feel that on that issue they have been misled during the campaign by the alliance.

Now, let me come on the last one. In fact, I would not have spoken on this, but we learnt it only on Friday after the Cabinet meeting, the decision to get the Office of the DPP under the aegis of the Attorney General, a political nominee. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's be clear from the beginning. There are three issues with regard to the question of the DPP. I am talking about the Office of the DPP, not about the DPP. Many Members in this House have intervened; I listened to my friends, hon. Teeluckdharry and hon. Rutnah, and there have been accusations against the DPP that he has abused his Office, he has used money, stayed in hotels and all these things. But this is about the DPP, and I am concerned about the Office of the DPP and not the person who occupies that Office. If the Government feels that there has been abuse or *maldonne* by that gentleman who is occupying that post, the law allows a certain procedure. Impeach him! Start the procedure! But don't touch the institution! If you feel that somebody in that constitutional office - there is a procedure! Let's do it. But don't touch the Office of the DPP!

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, my friend, hon. Manish Gobin has quoted, selectively I must say, the De Smith report. But, let me quote the same report, what Professor De Smith has to say in his book "The New Commonwealth and its Constitutions the underlying rationale for this constitutional practice", when he states that the independent constitutional status of the DPP stemmed from, I quote –

“The need to safeguard the stream of criminal justice from being polluted by the inflow of noxious political contamination... To segregate the process of prosecution entirely from general political considerations.”

Professor De Smith had a vision when he wrote that. It will be good and interesting for you to read, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, "*Le procès du roi*", written by Jacques Panglose. What has been said in that book has not been challenged. Nobody has challenged that book. It relates the case of late Sir Gaëtan Duval; how there was political interference, how in this House it has been said that neither the DPP, nor the Attorney General at that time, were involved, it was only the Office of the Prime Minister. This is very serious. Are we going back to these dark days, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

We know that in 1998, Lord Mackay proposed a transition in his report, and I quote –

“Those who support the Director of Public Prosecutions in the State Law Office should constitute a separate department, reporting and managed by the Director of Public Prosecutions, and with no responsibilities except those relating to prosecution”.

This is what Mackay said: ‘reporting and managed’. An independent institution! When I listened to hon. Rutnah on the radio, he said nothing will change, the Attorney General will only supervise. Supervise the work of an independent institution! A political appointee! We know how pre-trial investigation is important in a trial. We, who practice at the Bar, know how this is important, and we know of cases in the past where there has been political interference, which have been struck out by the Court. Are we going in that path again? Lord Mackay says so. Professor De Smith says so. Now, we have the Law Reform Commission whose Chairman is the best constitutional lawyer – I am sure we all agree – this country has ever had so far, Mr Guy Ollivry QC. He presented the report, looking specifically about this issue, to ensure that we do not go back to the dark days when politics were mixed with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He recommends, and this is what he has to say, I quote –

“It is abundantly clear from the requirements of the Constitution that the Office of the DPP must operate independently of the Office of the Attorney General. The current practice, since independence, of law officers working at Attorney General’s Office appearing for and advising DPP falls foul of the principle underlying the setting up in the Constitution of distinct officers of Attorney General and DPP. This arrangement is unconstitutional and should be brought to an end.”

And this is exactly what was done.

My friend, hon. Gobin, was talking about accountability of finance. But we know in this House what were the amendments after 1989. The Prime Minister has answered our question when we asked about the financial status or expenses at the DPP’s Office. So, the question of accountability is here. There is no need to get the Attorney General to supervise to have accountability. In this House, questions have been answered by the previous Prime Minister. But the hon. Member does not know because it’s the first time that he is here. I do appreciate, but then it does not mean accountability...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: I am sorry! Accountability is here. So, don't hide behind the shield of accountability when we know there is no accountability in many sectors today. Don't hide behind accountability to say that we have to do away with the separation. I know of people out there, the officials of the State Law Office, barristers, members of the DPP Office are very concerned about what is happening. Let me tell you this. At international level, we will be watched very carefully, because this is the trend at international level, especially in the Commonwealth countries, to have these offices separate. This will have a negative effect on our legal system, and I hope that the hon. Prime Minister, and the Government, will look into that again.

So, let me conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by saying that, we, on this side of the House, like I said in the beginning, don't have much problem with the Programme, but we will watch carefully to ensure that what you have been elected for, what you told and promised the people, and we will support where we need to support, but we will raise our voice wherever this Government deviates from what it has promised. It is good to note that the question of the DPP was never mentioned in the Programme, was never mentioned during the campaign, and was not even mentioned by the Attorney General when he addressed the House. It was put in *catimini*. So, on issue like this, we will be here, and the people can rest upon us.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Seeruttun!

(6.43 p.m.)

The Minister for Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): M. le vice-président, c'est avec beaucoup de fierté que je m'adresse à la Chambre sur le discours-programme du nouveau gouvernement MSM/PMSD/ML, issu des élections du 10 décembre 2014. Un gouvernement que le peuple a plébiscité dans sa sagesse, sa maturité, sa clairvoyance, et en toute lucidité.

Mais avant d'entrer dans le cadre des débats, je voudrais tout d'abord, dans la riche et pure tradition parlementaire, vous féliciter très sincèrement pour votre élection à la vice-présidence de cette auguste Assemblée, et la population mauricienne est certainement heureuse de vous voir dans cette fonction, et avoir un jeune de 24 ans à ce poste de vice-président. Nous

marquons ici l'histoire. Cela démontre la détermination du Premier ministre, et son attachement à la cause de la jeunesse. Je voudrais aussi profiter de l'occasion pour féliciter la présidente d'être élue, ici, par les membres de l'Assemblée nationale, et je voudrais que vous lui transmettiez ce message de félicitation de ma part.

Comme vous le savez, c'est la première fois qu'une dame accède à ce poste, et là aussi nous marquons, encore une fois, l'histoire, et cette avancée, c'est grâce encore une fois à notre Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, qui a démontré une nouvelle fois son attachement profond à la cause féminine. N'oublions pas que c'est lui qui, en 1982, avait créé un *full-fledged* ministère des Droits de la Femme, et c'est encore lui qui avait exigé qu'on présente une loi pour éliminer toute forme de discrimination sexiste contre la femme. Qui plus est, M. le vice-président, nous avons présenté neuf candidates aux dernières élections, et elles sont toutes aujourd'hui présentes dans l'hémicycle.

(Interruptions)

C'est une grande première ! Contrairement à nos adversaires, aucune de leurs candidates n'est présente, et avec la nomination de Madame la présidente, on peut dire, comme dirait l'anglais –

“This House has now a MAAM as Speaker.”

Mais, à un moment où tout le monde se réjouissait de l'élection d'une femme à la présidence de l'Assemblée nationale, une nomination qui fait la fierté de la nation arc-en-ciel, l'opposition, principalement le MMM, a tenté - fort heureusement en vain - de reléguer au second plan cet événement historique. A peine la séance levée le 22 décembre de l'année dernière, le *leader* de l'opposition - avec ses élus - devait rappeler la presse pour faire des commentaires sur ce choix. Qu'avons-nous entendu? Qu'avons-nous lu dans la presse? L'honorable Paul Bérenger vient dire que c'est la première fois qu'un candidat non-élu est nommé *Speaker*. Cela a été rapporté dans tous les titres de la presse écrite, et diffusé également sur les ondes des radios privées. Quelle énorme fausseté par le *Leader* de l'opposition ! Je sais qu'il est aussi, à ses temps perdus, un historien, mais je crois, là, qu'il a induit tout le monde en erreur. S'il avait fait son *homework* convenablement il n'aurait pas lâché cette énorme fausseté, et ce qui est surprenant c'est que tous ceux dans son entourage l'ont cru.

M. le vice-président, laissez-moi rappeler au *Leader* de l'opposition que ce n'est pas la première fois qu'un candidat malheureux devient *Speaker*. Il y en a eu dans le passé. En 1959, Harilall Vaghjee, avec 2,124 voix, était un candidat battu dans la circonscription numéro 11, Grand Baie. A cette époque, il y avait 40 circonscriptions, avec un seul élu selon le système de *first-past-the-post*, et Harilall Vaghjee, devenu par la suite Chevalier, était devancé par Rameshwar Jaypal, bénéficiaire de 2,658 voix, et une année plus tard, soit en 1960, il accéda aux fonctions de *Speaker*, et ce jusqu'en 1979. C'est clair que ce n'est pas la première fois qu'un candidat battu aux élections générales accède au poste de *Speaker*. Je m'attendais à ce que le *leader* du MMM fasse amende honorable et corrige son erreur.

J'ai écouté avec attention le précédent orateur, l'honorable Baloomoody. Il a dit qu'il est d'accord avec notre programme électoral, mais il attend dans nos actions l'implémentation de ce programme. Je dois dire que pendant les dix dernières années, il y avait un gouvernement, mais il n'y avait pas de *leader*. C'était cela le problème de ce pays. Il y avait un manque de *leadership*. Mais, aujourd'hui, avec le nouveau Premier ministre - un vrai *leader* - nous allons voir que tout ce qu'on a promis va être implémenté, et si je peux ajouter, avec notre vice-Premier ministre, l'honorable Soodhun, et mon ami l'honorable ministre Dayal, on peut être sûr que tout ce qu'on a promis - avec bien sûr nos autres collègues ministres - il y aura des mesures qui vont être prises rapidement. Il a aussi fait mention de moins de 100 jours qu'on est au gouvernement. Cela fait moins de 10 semaines ; on ne peut pas tout faire durant une période aussi courte. Il y aura des changements certes; il suffit d'attendre et de voir que ce qu'on a promis on va *deliver*.

Il a parlé de cette décision concernant l'office du DPP. C'était cela notre mandat, on avait demandé à l'électorat de nous mettre au gouvernement pour pouvoir amener plus de transparence, et aujourd'hui, en voulant avoir plus de supervision, plus d'*oversight*, on est en train de condamner cette décision.

Revenons, M. le vice-président, aux résultats des dernières élections. Je voudrais saluer tout bas cet électorat de la République de Maurice qui a voté avec intelligence, et avec ce vote cet électorat a dit non à l'arrogance du pouvoir, non au pouvoir de l'argent, non au gaspillage, non à la violence, non à un pays sans *leadership*, et encore moins non à un pays avec deux capitaines.

Nos adversaires présageaient déjà une victoire avant même que le peuple n'aille voter, et avec leur quarante candidats de chaque côté, ils pensaient que le coup était déjà joué. *They even claimed that they would bury us, but they did not know that we were the seeds that would come out of the soil to provide the shades for the population.* Souvent on a entendu les quarante qu'ils détenaient, et on sait très bien dans le jargon mauricien, qui est bien à nous, ce que ce numéro 40 veut dire !

(Interruptions)

On savait déjà que quand les deux 40 allaient exploser, cela sentirait la défaite.

Le Parti travailliste est aujourd'hui un Parti qui respire le scandale à outrance à tel point que son *leader* a dû se retirer.

(Interruptions)

Mais ils remplacent le *Macarena boy* par le *Macaroni boy* !

(Interruptions)

M. le président, permettez-moi de profiter aussi de cette occasion pour remercier l'électorat de ma circonscription, Vieux Grand-Port/Rose Belle, qui a su démontrer qu'il n'est pas à la merci d'un quelconque Roi autoproclamé du Sud. Je profite aussi de cette occasion pour féliciter mes deux colistiers qui m'ont soutenu dans ces élections.

Lors de ces élections générales on a témoigné un électorat qui a résisté à la violence, au climat de terreur et aux actes d'intimidation durant toute la campagne électorale. Et ce qui s'était passé dans ma propre Circonscription - Circonscription No. 11, Vieux Grand-Port/Rose Belle - est toujours gravé dans ma mémoire. Je ne vais pas élaborer là-dessus car la police enquête toujours sur l'affaire du gaz lacrymogène qui avait été lancé lors d'une réunion nocturne, organisée par l'équipe de l'Alliance Lepep, et j'espère que le ou les coupables seront pris dans les filets et ne resteront pas impunis devant la loi.

Pour revenir au discours-programme présenté le mardi 27 janvier, M. le vice-président, je dois dire qu'il a été béni par ce peuple admirable. Ce peuple - toutes les couches sociales confondues - a démontré sa confiance, sa sincérité et sa volonté de soutenir le gouvernement dans sa politique visant à tout nettoyer. Le sourire qui illumine le visage de tous les Mauriciens, y compris le *hard core* Travailliste, est visible.

Dieu merci qu'on a reçu un autre gouvernement dirigé par Sir Anerood Jugnauth pour redonner confiance à la population. Et si c'était l'autre, le pays aurait connu encore des périodes d'instabilité et de '*maja karo*'. Vous avez vu les derniers événements qui ont choqué toute la population. Les défilés aux Casernes Centrales en témoignent.

Depuis le jour de la proclamation des résultats, le pays respire. La population se sent libérée et elle sait qu'elle peut compter sur le Premier ministre et des *leaders* déterminés à mettre bon ordre dans ce pays. Et des *leaders* qui sont animés par le désir ardent de construire cette nation mauricienne.

Déjà, le travail accompli jusqu'ici par cette équipe prouve que le *feel good factor* est là. Les promesses sont tenues.

Il fut un temps, M. le vice-président, les policiers devaient être sur nos routes pendant des heures pour assurer la sécurité du cortège de l'ancien Premier ministre, surtout quand il devait prendre l'avion pour ses fréquentes escapades à Londres en particulier, et cela provoquait l'irritation des automobilistes.

Aujourd'hui on peut comprendre pourquoi autant de sécurité était nécessaire lors de ses déplacements à l'étranger.

(Interruptions)

Aujourd'hui...

(Interruptions)

Comme c'est bien dit !

Aujourd'hui, les automobilistes saluent le passage de notre Premier ministre, en signe de respect, ils flashent le cortège. Ça, c'est la différence, M. le vice-président.

(Interruptions)

En 2008, les Américains avaient dit '*Yes We Can*'. Mais le 11 décembre 2014, les Mauriciens ont dit '*Yes. We did It*'.

(Interruptions)

M. le vice-président, le discours-programme du gouvernement énonce les différents chantiers et champs d'action des cinq années à venir.

Le gouvernement prend des engagements fermes, et nous nous attèlerons à honorer nos engagements.

Nous nous investirons pour atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés. Ce plan quinquennal, M. le vice-président, est cohérent, dynamique, bien dosé, empreint de sérieux et est pragmatique. Les besoins pressants de la population de Maurice, de Rodrigues et d'Agaléga en vue d'améliorer leur quotidien sont pris en considération.

M. le vice-président, à travers ce discours-programme, nous nous sommes engagés dans une longue marche vers la transformation de notre pays.

Nous avons choisi de réformer notre pays en renforçant la base économique ainsi que les entités tombant sous les différents ministères.

Comme vous le savez tous, le monde est aujourd'hui confronté à de multiples défis. Les uns plus difficiles que les autres. Mais, nous ne reculerons devant rien. Nous sommes prêts à les relever et nous avons le courage et la détermination, M. le vice-président.

Nous avons un gros travail à entreprendre. Le peuple est conscient de cette tâche et ensemble nous l'abattrons.

Les pratiques de mauvaise gouvernance et de corruption favorisées par l'ancien gouvernement constituent un des défis majeurs à enrayer. Nous comptons sur l'appui nécessaire de tout le monde pour l'amélioration de nos performances en matière de gouvernance et de la lutte contre la corruption.

Il y a aussi la gestion des affaires publiques. Vous avez vu le dernier rapport de l'Audit - rapport que l'ancien gouvernement avait caché dans un tiroir à cause des élections générales. Nous ne voulons plus de ce type de gestion. Assez de gaspillage et de dilapidation des fonds publics ! Et c'est pour cela que la création d'un ministère des Services financiers, de la Bonne Gouvernance et des Réformes institutionnelles sous la houlette de mon collègue, l'honorable Bhadain, s'est avérée nécessaire.

Ce discours-programme, encore une fois, M. le vice-président, a suscité un réel intérêt parmi la population. Et on n'a qu'à lire quelques déclarations des gens de la rue, des gens simples qui vivent terre à terre ainsi que celles prononcées par les dirigeants syndicaux.

Et je ne fais que citer deux syndicalistes. Monsieur Suttihudeo Tengur, président de la *Government Hindi Teachers Union*, a déclaré, je cite -

« Une nouvelle ère s'ouvre sur la prochaine décennie », pour qualifier ce programme.

Une autre déclaration qui vient cette fois de Monsieur Haniff Peerun, président du *Mauritius Labour Congress*, je cite -

« Le programme du gouvernement est révolutionnaire, c'est un programme qui répond aux aspirations du peuple. C'est la première fois que cela provoque une unanimité parmi toute la population, y compris le patronat ».

Ça suffit pour résumer les grandes lignes du discours-programme.

M. le vice-président, je me tourne maintenant vers le secteur de l'Agro-industrie et de la Sécurité alimentaire.

Vous en conviendrez avec moi, M. le vice-président, que sans ce secteur nous ne pourrions pas vivre. Nous pouvons avoir un toit, des vêtements, mais la nourriture reste essentielle pour l'être humain. Je me rappelle encore d'une déclaration d'un ancien Premier ministre de l'Inde, le Pandit Jawarharlall Nehru, qui remonte à plus de 65 ans. Il avait dit, je cite -

« *Tout peut attendre sauf l'agriculture* »

Cet *evergreen statement*, M. le vice-président est toujours valable aujourd'hui et le restera pour encore très, très longtemps. C'est ce secteur qui nourrit le monde.

L'avenir de l'agriculture ne concerne pas que les planteurs, il nous concerne tous et pour relever les défis mondiaux (accroissement de la population, changement climatique, respect de l'environnement), l'agriculture a plus que jamais encore besoin non seulement de solutions innovantes, mais aussi d'un dialogue ouvert et réaliste. Nous ne sommes pas des « *missié comme tout* ». Les ONGs peuvent avoir des idées brillantes pour faire avancer ce secteur. Il faut que ce secteur améliore sa part de contribution au Produit Intérieur Brut (PIB) du pays. Un pays comme

l'Inde, sa part au PIB se situe autour de 22 % et moi je trouve inacceptable que la plupart de ce secteur au PIB de Maurice se situe à environ 3 %. Et cela va en diminuant d'année après année.

Rien n'a été fait, M. le vice-président, pour empêcher la dégringolade. Ce secteur à Maurice, malheureusement, a été délaissé. Il y a un désordre total. Mes deux prédécesseurs n'ont pris aucune initiative pour donner une nouvelle impulsion, pour encourager les jeunes à se tourner vers la terre nourricière.

Une de mes ambitions, M. le vice-président, parmi tant d'autres, est de développer ce secteur en une activité génératrice de revenus et de création d'emplois capables de résoudre le problème aigu du chômage et de la pauvreté à Maurice. J'insisterai pour un secteur agricole productif afin d'attirer les jeunes.

Les services techniques du ministère sont là. Il ne suffit que de tout réorganiser pour le soutien nécessaire aux personnes intéressées. Les objectifs de mon ministère, M. le vice-président, sont multiples. Faute de temps, je ne peux qu'énumérer quelques-uns. Mais quand même c'est important de faire part de mes soucis, et aussi de tracer dans une certaine mesure l'itinéraire à suivre pour que ce secteur à Maurice se retrouve. Mais le plus important, le faire progresser d'une façon efficiente pour qu'il contribue au développement socio-économique du pays. La façon dont le secteur a été géré durant ces dix dernières années laisse beaucoup à désirer. Il y a eu une approche d'amateur. Il y a plusieurs projets qui ont été formulés mais jamais implémentés.

M. le vice-président, durant ces cinq dernières années j'ai été aussi membre du *Public Accounts Committee* et tout le monde connaît la façon dont les affaires du pays ont été gérées. Je vais citer qu'un seul exemple. Le projet *FORIP (Fields Operation Regrouping and Irrigation Project)* a coûté R 2.5 milliards pour le réaménagement d'une superficie de 9,000 hectares. Une mauvaise gestion a fait perdre entre R 500 millions et R 700 millions à l'État. Pour moi, c'est un scandale, M. le vice-président ! Que serait-il passé si le PTR/MMM était au pouvoir ? A la page 22 de son manifeste électoral, cette défunte alliance avait annoncé son intention de poursuivre le projet *FORIP* avec le même style. Et les dégâts auraient continué. Il faut que ça soit bien clair, M. le vice-président. Nous ne sommes pas contre le regroupement. Mais il faut que le projet soit bien mené et que cet argent n'aille pas dans les drains. Je suis déterminé à y mettre bon ordre. D'ailleurs, j'ai demandé un rapport complet sur les planteurs qui ont bénéficié du programme

FORIP. Le plus gros problème, M. le vice-président, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de système pour qu'on fasse le contrôle et l'évaluation du projet pour voir si on a atteint l'objectif d'une façon efficiente et qu'on a bien utilisé le fonds qui a été mis à la disposition de ces planteurs.

M. le vice-président, toujours au niveau de mon ministère, il y a plusieurs défis majeurs à relever. Pendant ces prochaines cinq années, on va faire tout pour remettre notre secteur agricole sur le rail du progrès et du développement. Il est maintenant navrant et triste de constater l'héritage catastrophique laissé par l'ancienne administration qui rendra notre tâche encore plus ardue et difficile.

L'industrie de la canne qui reste un pilier important de notre agriculture est à bout de souffle et se trouve à la croisée des chemins. Ce secteur, déjà affecté par la baisse de prix par 36% sur le marché européen depuis 2008, a reçu un coup de massue ces derniers temps avec la plongée de l'euro. Les producteurs et les planteurs qui recevaient R 16,000 par tonne de sucre en 2013 verront leurs recettes descendre à environ R 12,500 la tonne pour la récolte de 2014. M. le vice-président, le gouvernement ne peut rester insensible face à une telle action. Il est de notre devoir de s'assurer que les producteurs, surtout les petits planteurs, obtiennent des revenus adéquats qui leur permettront de continuer à cultiver la canne pour la suivie même de cette industrie. Mon collègue, l'honorable ministre des Finances et du Développement économique et moi-même, avec la bénédiction du Premier ministre, travaillons en ce moment même à finaliser des mesures afin de compenser partiellement les planteurs pour la perte de leurs revenus.

M. le vice-président, le secteur sucre sera appelé à faire face à une concurrence plus féroce sur le marché européen à partir de septembre 2017 quand le quota de sucre sur ce marché sera complètement aboli. Le Syndicat des Sucres a déjà pris les dispositions nécessaires pour trouver des nouveaux partenaires stratégiques en Europe pour la vente de notre sucre à des prix rémunérateurs. Du côté du gouvernement, on suit la situation de près et on aura des consultations régulières avec les principaux acteurs pour prendre des décisions appropriées afin que l'industrie puisse continuer à exister et à progresser.

M. le vice-président, au vu de la situation actuelle dans laquelle se trouve l'industrie cannière, des mesures drastiques et courageuses devront être prises dans le court et moyen terme afin de la restructurer et de l'amener à bon port. Une étude sur l'avenir de l'industrie a été commanditée par le ministère et une ébauche du rapport des consultants vient d'être reçue. Un

comité de pilotage étudie les recommandations en ce moment même et le rapport sera finalisé bientôt après consultations avec toutes les parties concernées. Il est fort possible que les lois doivent être amendées et les honorables membres auront l'occasion de s'exprimer sur les changements à venir.

M. le vice-président, en ce qui concerne la culture vivrière, mon ministère s'est fixé l'objectif d'atteindre une production bio de nos fruits et légumes à hauteur de 50 % d'ici à 2020. Nous avons un gros problème à présent pour contrôler la traçabilité des résidus des pesticides dans les légumes offerts sur le marché et, donc, une nouvelle impulsion sera donnée à la culture bio pour s'assurer que les produits que la population consomme soient sains pour la santé. Nous irons aussi de l'avant avec le projet de la construction d'un marché moderne pour la vente à l'encan, en remplacement des trois marchés existants. Ce projet préconisera, entre autres, des mesures strictes pour la traçabilité des résidus de pesticides dans les fruits et légumes. Ce marché va aussi permettre la vente de nos produits agricoles dans des conditions hygiéniques et sanitaires convenables et éliminera la disparité, parfois énormes, dans les prix de ces denrées à travers le pays.

M. le vice-président, mon ministère compte introduire des nouvelles normes de production afin d'améliorer la qualité de nos produits agricoles destinés au marché local et à l'exportation. La certification verte sera établie pour les produits bio.

Mon ministère encouragera l'utilisation des compostes et fertilisants bio pour les champs. Les planteurs de légumes bénéficieront déjà d'une subvention gouvernementale sur le prix du composte et cette subvention sera maintenue dans le prochain budget afin de populariser l'usage de ce produit et décourager l'utilisation des produits chimiques.

Le gouvernement a accueilli favorablement le projet conjoint de la MCFI et de la MCAF concernant la production des fertilisants bio, projet qui a été inauguré par le Premier ministre la semaine dernière. Ce projet cadre parfaitement avec la politique gouvernementale visant à promouvoir la production bio à Maurice.

M. le président, mon ministère encouragera aussi les agriculteurs à adopter la culture de zéro tolérance, qui, tout en améliorant la qualité des produits, diminuera aussi les coûts de production car les produits chimiques ne seront plus ou peu utilisés.

Une autre culture qu'on doit nécessairement promouvoir est la permaculture qui est un mode de production agricole saine et durable. Cette culture, développée il y a une quarantaine d'années, prend de plus en plus de l'ampleur et a été adoptée avec succès dans divers pays comme l'Angleterre et l'Australie. Cette culture s'oppose diamétralement aux méthodes de culture qui dépendent des produits chimiques et qui nuisent à l'écosystème et à la santé.

La permaculture résiste très bien aux changements climatiques et peut assurer la sécurité alimentaire dont on a tant besoin. Nos agriculteurs ont intérêt à adopter cette mode de culture qui leur sera bénéfique ainsi qu'au pays.

Mon ministère, donc, se propose de lancer une campagne d'information et de sensibilisation auprès des agriculteurs pour les intéresser et encourager à adopter cette culture. Nous allons assurer que tous les supports techniques et les conseils adéquats leur soient donnés à cet effet.

M. le vice-président, une des contraintes majeures affectant la croissance dans le secteur agricole est la non-disponibilité des terres. J'ai reçu beaucoup de doléances de la part des planteurs à l'effet que des terres agricoles appartenant à l'État ont été distribuées par l'ancien régime, non aux vrais planteurs, mais à des agents politiques qui n'ont rien fait jusqu'ici pour les développer.

Mon ministère est en train de faire un audit complet des terres allouées afin d'avoir une idée exacte de la situation. Des mesures appropriées seront éventuellement prises pour une meilleure allocation de ces terres afin que celles-ci soient mises à bon escient.

M. le président, j'ai parlé un peu plus tôt de la situation dans l'industrie sucrière. Avec la baisse des prix du sucre à l'exportation et l'augmentation des coûts de production, beaucoup de petits planteurs ont abandonné la culture de la canne. En effet, le nombre de planteurs a drastiquement baissé de 35,000 il y a dix ans de cela pour tomber à 16,000 aujourd'hui.

On m'a fait comprendre que les terres leur appartenant ne sont plus ou peu cultivées et restent donc dans un état d'abandon. C'est une situation dramatique car, d'un côté, il y a des entrepreneurs et cultivateurs qui cherchent désespérément des terres pour des projets agricoles et, de l'autre côté, des grandes superficies de terres sont à l'abandon.

Donc, mon ministère va accélérer la création d'une *Land Bank* pour enregistrer les terres abandonnées et les allouer aux agriculteurs intéressés à travers un contrat dûment signé entre les parties concernées. Si ce projet se matérialise, cela va définitivement donner un *boost* considérable à notre production agricole.

M. le président, le secteur de l'élevage, pour ne pas être en reste, passe ainsi par des moments difficiles. En dépit des fonds substantiels disponibles pour le *Food Security Fund* et des projets mis en œuvre durant ces dernières années, la production du lait et de la viande a régressé.

Les éleveurs de porcs font face à d'énormes difficultés pour l'écoulement de leurs produits à des prix rémunérateurs, ayant à faire face à une concurrence féroce due aux produits importés en grande quantité. Les nourritures pour bétail coûtent de plus en plus chères et ils n'arrivent pas à nourrir les animaux convenablement. Les régions dans lesquelles ils opèrent à Saint Martin et Bassin Requin laissent à désirer. Les éleveurs...

(Interruptions)

Bassin Requin, oui !

Les éleveurs des vaches et des cabris font aussi face à de graves problèmes, eu égard au manque de fourrage, les prix élevés de la nourriture de bétail, les difficultés à écouler leurs produits et les prix dérisoires qu'ils obtiennent pour ces produits.

Mon ministère se propose, donc, de créer des zones spéciales à travers le pays pour l'élevage des vaches, des cabris et des porcs. Ces zones regrouperont les fermiers, les agro-processus, les entrepreneurs, les distributeurs et les services gouvernementaux en un seul lieu. On attend à ce que ce projet apporte plus d'efficacité, plus d'économies d'échelle, une meilleure gestion des déchets et plus de productivité.

Mon ministère prendra aussi les mesures suivantes visant à –

- (I) élaborer une nouvelle politique d'élevage afin d'améliorer le potentiel génétique de notre cheptel ;
- (II) revoir le Service d'Insémination Artificiel...

Je sais que le temps fait défaut, mais c'est un gros ministère, M. le vice-président.

Mais, comme je vous dis il y a aussi le secteur des Bois et forêts. Il y a un gros projet. Donc, le ministère s'embarque dans ces prochaines cinq années et nous avons mis comme objectif d'augmenter la superficie de nos forêts de 2 à 12 pour cent dans les prochaines cinq années. Dans ce contexte, quelques 100,000 arbres indigènes et endémiques seront plantés annuellement dans toutes les forêts appartenant à l'État ainsi que sur nos îlots, les parcs nationaux et les réserves naturelles.

M. le vice-président, il y a aussi le Jardin Botanique SSR de Pamplemousses. C'est un drame de voir l'état dans lequel ce jardin se trouve actuellement. Ce pourrissement est dû à la nomination d'un ancien conseiller, président du Conseil de District du Nord, à la tête de ce jardin. Aujourd'hui, ce jardin a perdu tout son cachet historique et cela fait la honte d'un pays comme Maurice. Donc, je vais tout faire pour qu'on redonne à ce jardin ses lettres de noblesse.

M. le vice-président, je vais conclure pour dire que nous avons, ici, un gouvernement déterminé, sincère, qui veut travailler avec le peuple et pour le peuple, avec un Premier ministre qui croit dur comme fer que ce pays a tous les atouts pour réussir ; il suffirait d'avoir un vrai *Leader* et aujourd'hui on a un vrai *Leader* et c'est cela qui va nous donner une nouvelle île Maurice pour que les jeunes de demain puissent dire merci à Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Merci, M. le vice-président.

(7.23 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs A. Perraud): Mr Deputy Speaker, let me, at the very outset, congratulate you for your nomination as the youngest Deputy Speaker, and also to convey my congratulation to the Speaker for her nomination as the first lady Speaker of this House. Indeed, this nomination is a *première* and a matter of pride for all Mauritians, especially women of the Republic of Mauritius.

Moreover, it translates into reality a discourse of democracy and conveys the vision of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who firmly believes in the potential of women. In the same vein, allow me to also congratulate the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his wisdom and determination to committing himself in achieving meaningful change for the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is highly committed to a model of economic growth and sustainable development which is socially inclusive and mindful of the environment.

This was evident in the electoral manifesto of *l'Alliance Lepep* and further reflected in the Government Programme for the next five years. Since coming to power, the Government has been addressing a number of societal issues while looking for ways and means to enlarge the national cake for the benefit of each and every citizen of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the policies of my Ministry are well-aligned to the overall vision of achieving social justice which is the common thread that cuts across all the measures enunciated in the Government Programme. These will undoubtedly contribute significantly to women's empowerment, their increased involvement and active participation in society. The measures will also impact positively on our children and families.

On a daily basis, we deal with some of the most intractable and difficult problems affecting the country's vulnerable members, children and women. In a nutshell, we try our best to uphold their basic human rights within the overall framework of the Government Programme and its philosophy of working for the betterment of the whole nation through a massive social programme.

In a bid to ensure that economic development has a human face, the elaboration of a well thought Marshall Plan to fight against rampant poverty and increasing social inequalities is highly commendable. I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Marshall Plan, as announced in the Government Programme, will go a long way towards social inclusion. The Marshall Plan will also pave the way to addressing one of the poverty issues. This thematic, as you all know, occupies a prominent place on both the international and regional agenda. This issue also figures high on our agenda. For instance, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment as well as the National Empowerment Foundation have put in place specific schemes to cater for the need of the vulnerable groups, including women and children.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view that the Government Programme makes provision for the restructuring of the National Empowerment Foundation to render it more proactive, I am envisaging to establish strategic partnership with the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment to explore avenues of collaboration for the welfare of women. I wish to inform the House that the National Women's Council has a strong network of women's organisations and can serve as a platform to reach out to the unreached.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Women Entrepreneur Council has already identified about 150 women who are experiencing distressful living conditions in terms of their basic needs. Thanks to the very symbolic contribution from the members of the women's associations, the National Women's Council has been able to bring some immediate relief to these women. We cannot, however, afford *ad hoc* interventions. I, therefore, wish to maximise on the proposed structure of the NEF so that we find innovative measures to cater for these vulnerable women.

Poverty issues concern our children too. I am looking forward that the proposed Marshall Plan incorporates measures that will ultimately take into account the strategic needs of children living in distressful situations. A well thought Marshall Plan, as enunciated in the Government Programme, is surely a long-term strategy that culminates in the achievement of meaningful change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while women's human rights are enshrined in our Constitution, Section 16 (c) of our Constitution, as amended in September 1995, is explicit that there shall be no discrimination, and I quote –

“... by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex...”

The reality, however, is a far cry from this principle of equality. For instance, women still face discrimination in the world of work. They are still marginalised politically, economically, socially, culturally and their full potential and worth as human beings and agents of social transformation are often not appreciated and acknowledged.

We can debate for hours and days on how best to bridge the outstanding gender gaps to ensure that women get their substantive rights. In fact, at the level of my Ministry we are actively engaged in these debates and discussions with all stakeholders, the public and private sectors, NGOs, women's groups and civil society in general. Our motto is to raise awareness amongst all our stakeholders that gender equality is their agenda too.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is imperative that development is engendered to ensure that development is not endangered, as so rightfully stated by the former UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan. This statement has far-reaching consequences and should be the concern of all.

The decision of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to set up the National Coalition against Domestic Violence Committee, under the aegis of the PMO, is testimony that this Government firmly believes in gender equality. Having this mechanism at the highest echelon of this Government is an effective means to ensure a multi-agency response to the issue of domestic violence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, domestic violence destabilises families. The strong stand taken by the Government depicts its determination to eliminate this problem which is threatening the social fabric of our society. Domestic violence, especially against women, is the consequence of gender inequality and a major factor undermining peace, development and human rights.

In recognition of this, we shall also implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the reinforcement of framework for protection from domestic violence. We faced one big issue which has hit the headlines in recent days, that is, the growing incidence of violence in various forms against women. Not a day goes by without yet another media report about a woman somewhere in the country, who has been the target of violence, resulting in deep psychological trauma or even death. In recent weeks, we heard of the cases of two elderly women in their late 80s who, within a week's interval, also became victims of this increasing gender-based violence. So much so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I had to make a statement to the media condemning these acts of aggression which are being perpetrated against the most vulnerable and helpless of our women folk. This deplorable trend in our society should be of concern to all of us, and we should do everything we can to put a stop to it. We shall also endeavour to promote the economic empowerment of women survivors of domestic violence. To that effect, I will enlist the support of the National Women Entrepreneur Council and other relevant institutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am confident that the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Committee will yield positive results and that the cases of violence against women will be addressed in a holistic manner.

As the well-being of families ranks high on this Government's agenda, my Ministry is also implementing a National Action Plan on the Family to further strengthen family ties and provide a healthy environment for a prosperous population.

The Back to Work Programme is another bold measure announced in the Government Programme which will ensure the financial and economic emancipation of women from the yoke of drudgery and property. Hence, the creation of jobs for women will lead to their economic and personal development.

This year is a particular momentous time for all as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform For Action. The Beijing Action Plan was instrumental as a reference document used by many Governments, Women's groups and NGOs worldwide to advance women's rights. More than ever before, at this juncture, we need to be bold and daring in our decision-making. For us to be much more efficient and effective, we have to embark upon some much needed and long overdue reforms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the National Women Council Act was enacted in 1985, it served a particular purpose: that of rallying women across the country into Women's Associations and Regional Committees. The National Women Council has, no doubt, been pivotal in terms of establishing a strong network, thereby facilitating the job of my Ministry in establishing linkages with women from all walks of life. But 30 years on, this Act does not reflect changes in society or fit in with a 'Gender and Development' agenda.

At a time when the Ministry has been applying a 'Gender and Development' approach, aimed at addressing outstanding gender gaps in all sectors of socio-economic development, the Regional Committees have not been able to follow suit. Moreover, the ageing membership of women's associations has also resulted in the loss of vibrancy of the National Women Council. Hence, the urgent need to revamp and restructure this nationwide platform.

By and large, women cannot continue to be passive beneficiaries of development, but should instead be active agents who collectively work towards transforming society in line with the Government strategy of an inclusive development. The challenges regarding closing of gender gaps across all levels of development should be the prime concern of women. Unless they take a proactive role and engage in meaningful advocacy, they would run the risk of their rights and freedoms being violated, thus perpetuating gender inequality.

At an economic level, we have been witnessing worldwide that women are the hardest hit during times of economic crisis. There is rising joblessness amongst the female population while many women try to survive by working in precarious jobs on a part-time basis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Women Entrepreneur Council has been our main vehicle to support and assist potential and existing women entrepreneurs. However, it too has its own weaknesses. It has hitherto helped women entrepreneurs who are largely at the lower end of the hierarchy of micro enterprises. There is need for their increased professionalism in terms of strategic planning. These enterprises must also try to become more up market with innovative products, services and practices.

It is time, therefore, to revisit the National Woman Entrepreneur Council, especially in light of the bold and ambitious vision of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). As the Minister of Finance said recently, the SME sector will be the main pillar of the economy in terms of job creation and innovation within 10 years. I believe that women entrepreneurs will also benefit from the one-stop shop which will be established shortly. Similarly, the forthcoming SME bank will enlarge the opportunities of the women entrepreneurs in terms of access to finance. Allocating an envelope of the Rs10 billion to this revolutionary project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, speaks volume.

The issue of protection and well-being of children is also multi-disciplinary and is a matter of concern for all. In fact, child protection is the collective responsibility of the Government and the community at large. My Ministry has been very much in the limelight with the increasing reporting of cases of children who are victims of violence. In 2014, the Child Development Unit (CDU) dealt with some 5,900 cases of children who were victims of violence, including cases of abuse and neglect reported at the CDUs six outstations across the country. Furthermore, a total of 445 cases of sexually-abused children (including incest) were also recorded last year.

Much effort has been deployed to cater for the protective needs of the victims. Yet, we do agree, there is still a lot to be done to ensure that victims are properly rehabilitated for eventual reinsertion in mainstream. The decision of Government to adopt a 'zero tolerance' attitude against perpetrators of child violence is highly commendable.

Equipping Police stations with CCTV and audio recording system will for sure avoid further trauma of the victims. The separate electronic register and perpetrators of child sexual abuse to be set up will result in a better tracking mechanism.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is party to all major international human rights instruments, and is strongly committed to upholding the highest standards in the promotion and

protection of human rights. Children constitute one-third of our population and we attach great importance to child development, protection and welfare and the rights and participation of children at both national and international levels.

We are committed to upholding the principles advocated under the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Due consideration is given to the convention when developing new policies and legislation in order to ensure the ongoing promotion and protection of the rights of children in Mauritius.

I am confident that the forthcoming Children's Bill will largely consolidate the legislation covering all aspects of children's rights and as such we will provide more protection and security to the children of the Republic. This is in line with the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child held in Geneva on 14 and 15 January 2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to commend the forthcoming introduction of a new Juvenile Legal Framework. This legislation will provide more support to minors who have, unfortunately, been in conflict with the law. This is a concrete measure that will contribute to uphold the rights of these children. In the same vein, the proposal to set up a Correctional Youth Centre for girls addresses a long felt need in respect of girls who are in need of reform for their eventual reinsertion in mainstream.

Nevertheless, I firmly believe that this Correctional Youth Centre for girls will be endowed with all amenities and is rendered child friendly. Enhancing support services for a full-fledged Family Division is also most welcome.

As regards the upgrading of District Courts premises, I am sure that care will be taken to provide for child friendly space and child friendly arrangement for our children victims who are brought to Court on a regular basis. The provision for legal representation of children victims is also acclaimed. I am also confident, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the long-awaited domestication of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-Country Adoption will soon become reality. This particular piece of legislation will provide for more permanency placement of children who have been removed from their familial environment.

Following the recommendation of the UN Special *Rapporteur* in May 2011, a National Child Protection Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared by an International Consultant with the assistance of the European Union. This strategy is a visionary framework for child protection and sets up goals and priorities to be carried out in Mauritius during that timeframe 2014/2022. It aims at strengthening the main 'gatekeeping mechanism' of the child protection system of Mauritius by placing greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention, family rehabilitation, provision of alternative family substitute care, nurturing society and community practices which are child protective. The strategy identifies a number of priority areas which represents part of the system to be strengthened in the coming years.

Moreover, the Action Plan provides for primary and secondary prevention actions, specialised social services and intensive social services, including alternative care where the involvement and collaboration of different stakeholders is called upon to ensure implementation of activities under their responsibility for the smooth functioning of the system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is important to highlight that the National Child Protection Strategy has heavy cost implications and will have to be implemented phase-wise based on priorities. Once materialised, the strategy will give a practical shape to the measures spelt out in the Government Programme.

Before I conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to flag out that, whilst I have focused my intervention around measures directly related to my mandate, it goes without saying that I commend all the other measures related to other sectors of development. For instance, when addressing issues, these definitely have their gender implication, particularly in terms of raising awareness on adaptation and mitigation factors. The provision of hot meals to all primary school children will, undoubtedly, result in a win-win situation whereby children will be motivated to go to school, and needy parents will be eased of their financial burden. Children will have access to a balanced meal and enhance their academic performance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government Programme has indeed taken care to make provision for the different segments of our nation, inclusive of its youth. Our youth has the potential to be strategic agents of change. The active participation of our youth in decision-making processes is essential for their empowerment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme has set the tone for the next five years. Members of this Government are committed and determined to translate all the enunciated measures into concrete actions.

Toutes les conditions sont donc réunies pour la concrétisation du discours-programme. I am confident that our collective action and synergy will have positive dividends and we shall live up to the expectations of the nation and honour our commitment.

Thank you.

At 7.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.01 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

The Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr P. Roopun): First of all, let me associate myself with the other hon. Members to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, for your appointment to this high office.

Madam Speaker, you are entering history as the first woman to head this august House and we hope that very soon, we are going yet to create history again by voting another woman as President of the Republic and thus move towards more parity.

I have no doubt that, with your wide experience as a public officer and as a Member of this House for over ten years, you will inspire and guide us all towards upholding the decorum and dignity of this House.

Allow me also, Madam Speaker, to welcome and greet your Deputy Speaker as well as the other 35 Members who have joined us in this House. Among them, there are some seven hon. Members who have got the added responsibility as Ministers and seven as Private Parliamentary Secretaries.

During the intervention of some of the new Members, we have had a glimpse of their capabilities and the passion with which they wish to serve. I wish all of them well and pray that they have a long and fruitful career and that they will participate fully in the workings of this House.

Madame la présidente, l'élection de 2014 marque un tournant dans l'histoire politique de notre pays au même titre que l'élection pour l'indépendance en 1967 et l'élection de 1982.

C'est pour la toute première fois qu'on a un gouvernement sans la présence ni du Parti Travailliste ni celle du MMM.

Il y a eu une véritable déroute du MMM qui a obtenu le pire résultat depuis son entrée au Parlement en 1976. Pour le Parti Travailliste cela a été une grande raclée avec un seul rescapé de l'ancienne équipe gouvernementale. Le comble est que ce rescapé, on peut même dire ce miraculé, n'était même pas sur la liste initiale des candidats.

Le véritable enseignement toutefois est venu du peuple, de la façon intelligente et la maturité qu'elle a démontrée. La population n'est pas tombée dans le piège que le Parti Travailliste et le MMM l'a tendu, malgré le matraquage que leur alliance était imbattable et qu'on s'acheminait vers un 60-0. La population a tenu bon. Elle a donné une preuve cinglante que c'est elle qui détient le véritable pouvoir. Cette alliance était si impopulaire que la majorité silencieuse était résolument déterminée à voter contre. Ce qui est clair, c'est qu'après cette élection, le peuple a pris pleine conscience de son réel pouvoir.

Ceci est en elle-même un renforcement de la démocratie et c'est dans ce sens que j'ai parlé d'un véritable tournant pour notre pays.

Ces prétendus experts en matière électorale et politologues autoproclamés, aujourd'hui au chômage, trouveront, j'en suis sûr, dans le choix de l'électorat, plusieurs sujets pour des thèses doctorales pour meubler leur temps.

Quant à moi, Madame la présidente, je dois, sans fausse modestie, exprimer ma joie et fierté de faire partie de la majorité gouvernementale qui est appelée à servir le pays jusqu'à l'an 2020.

(Interruptions)

Et après !

Pour moi ce résultat est une douce revanche sur cette alliance MMM/Parti Travailliste. C'est contre cette même alliance que j'ai entamé ma carrière politique en 1995 aux côtés des deux fidèles du MSM, le Vice-Premier ministre, l'honorable Showkutally Soodhun et l'ancien député, Soorooj Phokeer.

Depuis, j'ai fait un long cheminement avec le MSM et sans tambour ni trompette j'ai participé à toutes les batailles. Ensemble on a, certes, connu des hauts et des bas mais je suis

resté fidèle avec le Parti qui réciproquement m'a fait confiance en m'accordant une investiture pour toutes les élections générales qui ont suivi.

Pour cela, je suis indéfiniment reconnaissant envers le Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth ainsi que l'actuel *Leader* du MSM, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth que je remercie.

Madame la présidente, en sus de ce que la population a vu et subi pendant les neuf dernières années, il est bon aussi de souligner que nous, les députés du MSM, ont dû endurer sous le régime Travailleiste surtout après qu'on s'est retrouvé dans l'opposition en 2011.

Le Parti Travailleiste a tenté, par tous les moyens, d'anéantir le MSM. On a tenté de séduire et de soudoyer nos députés par différents moyens. Quand cela n'a pas marché, on est venu avec des harcèlements et des menaces. Le *Chief Whip* a expliqué, l'autre jour, ce qu'il a lui-même subi.

Ce petit groupe de députés n'a pas agi par calcul politique mais avait une ultime conviction: qu'on devait par tout et contre tout agir dans l'intérêt du pays. C'était un véritable parcours de combattant parsemé de beaucoup de défis qu'on a dû relever aussi bien que des humiliations subies, que ce soit, ici, dans cette Chambre ou à l'extérieur dans nos circonscriptions respectives.

Je me rappelle très bien, semaine après semaine, les membres de l'ancien gouvernement narguaient que bientôt tous les membres du *front bench* MSM allaient porter un bracelet électronique destiné aux suspects en liberté conditionnelle.

Madame la présidente, ces derniers temps, on vient parler d'un prétendu 'dossier orange' mais personne n'est dupe, car on sait très bien que si vraiment un tel dossier existait, le Parti Travailleiste n'aurait jamais hésité à s'en servir. Pourquoi attendre qu'on soit dans '*Karo canne*' pour parler de ça alors qu'on aurait dû agir quand on était au pouvoir.

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, le début de l'année 2014 nous a fait découvrir la face cachée de certains. Pour eux, la politique se résume implacablement qu'à une question d'intérêt, même si on doit renier son ami d'hier et au point de devenir subitement amnésique.

Agissant par pur calcul politique, ils se lançaient dans un exercice de surenchère...

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: On a point of order. Section 40, sub-section 2 of the Standing Orders, hon. Bhagwan should withdraw the word '*batchara*' immediately.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I said '*batchara*' in general.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, it is for the Chair to determine whether the word has to be withdrawn or not.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, did you use...

(Interruptions)

Please, withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, kindly, please withdraw that word!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I have not said to hon. Gayan '*batchara*' ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: But you have used that word to whom? To whom did you use that word? To whom was it addressed?

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry, I must stand on a point of order. My very good friend, hon. Bhagwan, knows that he is out of order when he uses this term in the House, whether it is addressed to an hon. Member or to anyone in general. He is a seasoned politician.

(Interruptions)

No! He is a seasoned politician, he should know. My friend hon. Gayan is a seasoned politician. Let us just keep calm! Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: Okay. He has withdrawn. So, that settles the matter.

Mr Roopun: Madame la présidente, certains agissant par pur calcul politique se lançaient dans un exercice de surenchère et de marchandage. Pour quelques sièges additionnels et des places dans la hiérarchie, ils étaient prêts à tout. Mais quand le MSM a tenu tête sur une question de principe, ils se sont résignés à faire un pacte même avec le diable pour accéder au pouvoir.

On connaît tous la fin de l'histoire. Celui qui voulait tout avoir et tout de suite, se voit, ici, chaque semaine, comme dans un purgatoire pour se faire rappeler constamment de cet acte de trahison. C'est un boulet qu'il devra traîner jusqu'à la fin de sa carrière, reléguant loin derrière toute contribution positive de sa longue carrière politique. La population se souviendra surtout de ce requin qu'on a voulu ferrer. Il n'a certes pas atterri dans le filet, que certains avaient prévu, mais il aura néanmoins, en travers de sa gorge, un hameçon qu'il ne pourra jamais s'en débarrasser.

L'histoire retiendra aussi l'arrogance de certains qui devront faire face à ceux qu'ils ont méprisés. J'espère sincèrement qu'ils vont en tirer les leçons.

Comme le dit si bien ce proverbe -

« L'arrogance précède la ruine, et l'orgueil précède la chute, mais celui qui est humble d'esprit obtient la gloire. »

At this juncture, Madam Speaker, before coming to my Ministry, allow me to express my gratitude and renew my thanks to the constituents of Flacq/Bon Accueil for having elected me to serve the Constituency for yet a second mandate.

We all know that the Constituency was considered to be a stronghold of a so-called '*roi de l'est*'. So much so that my opponents were harping that they would win by a margin of over 15,000 votes. I took up the challenge, Madam Speaker, and remained there to fight. This was mainly out of loyalty to all the constituents who remained with the MSM, especially after 2005. Despite the fact that they were systematically victimised and sidelined, they never lose faith in us and gave us all the support. I had made it a point to be there and to be by their side whatever happens.

Though this constituency is considered by outsiders to be one of the most difficult, I knew the reality of the ground and I knew that we could do it. In fact, when electoral campaign started, we knew what would be the results. I am thankful to my two colleagues, hon. Dayal and hon. Rampertab who joined in later, but ultimately the electorate of Flacq/Bon Accueil chose between someone who has been loyal, who acted on principle and rejected someone who had always had merely his interest in mind and wanted at all times to be in the winning team without any consideration for others and without any principle. I am glad that the electorate of Flacq/Bon Accueil, as in the other 14 constituencies, gave us a 3-0 victory and I am thankful to them for that.

Madam Speaker, allow me to address this House on issues pertaining to my Ministry and the orientation I want to give to the fight against poverty and the empowerment of the most vulnerable. Already during the electoral campaign, we set the tone and expressed our strong commitment to reduce inequality and to meaningfully change the life of those at the lower rung of the ladder. We had taken a firm commitment to increase the old age pension to Rs5,000 and within days of our coming to power, this was realised. The first Bill before this House was designed to grant to all workers and employees of this country a salary compensation of Rs600. The hon. Minister of Finance also announced that he will provide Rs10 billion for SMEs. In the same vein, a Minimum Wages Bill will also be introduced and it is in the same philosophy that my Ministry will act. We will ensure that due support be extended to address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable, while at the same time affording all facilities for the beneficiaries to escape from the poverty trap and become self-reliant.

Madam Speaker, though I am optimistic, we are fully aware that poverty is a hydra-headed scourge and combating it is a herculean uphill task which even the most developed countries have not been able to tackle efficiently.

Field realities have demonstrated that providing material supports such as sound housing, school materials, etc., is not sufficient to eliminate poverty. Besides, measures taken, so far, to empower the most needy has not yielded expected results.

Accordingly, we need to reengineer our thought processes and come up with a holistic, coherent and time-bound strategy. To this end, it is important that all stakeholders work together and develop a concerted approach. In this regard, the Marshall Plan, as mentioned at paragraph

20 of the Government Programme, has all its importance. My Ministry has already set the ball rolling. Preliminary discussions have been held and a roadmap is currently under preparation after consultation with different stakeholders. In this respect, I have already enlisted the support of international agencies to provide expertise with a view to preparing a detailed plan with short and medium-term objectives.

As at date, there are some 150 pockets of poverty scattered over the island. Some will be redefined. A new holistic and participatory approach will be adopted with the active involvement of all partners present on the ground to ensure that these deprived regions are geared downwards meaningful change and they are fully integrated within the region.

Since assuming office, I visited several pockets of poverty, met various beneficiaries, had consultations with various stakeholders and also received representations from various quarters. Field assessment has already started to identify the immediate and long-term need in each pocket. I have already contacted the Parliamentary Private Secretaries and they are ready to collaborate fully in our endeavor to develop a clear Action Plan for the socio-economic development of deprived regions.

Decision has also been taken to set up a Technical Unit at my Ministry. This Unit will, *inter alia*, monitor and evaluate ongoing programmes and bring meaningful contributions in the formulation of new policies. It will also liaise with other Ministries and Government agencies to ensure a coordinated approach in service delivery. This Technical Unit will also be instrumental in the preparation and implementation of the Marshall Plan.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry alone cannot win the fight against poverty. It requires the contribution of each and every sector if we want to make meaningful progress. To this end, I shall be adopting an open door policy and invite suggestions from all quarters. In the same vein, a help desk with a hotline service will soon be operational at the level of my Ministry to respond effectively to all complaints and queries.

My Ministry is also envisaging the setting up, in the course of this year, of a Poverty Observatory. This Observatory will be a permanent platform for all relevant stakeholders to sustainably address poverty which is complex, multifaceted and multidimensional. The Observatory will be an independent, consultative Committee comprising of Statistics Mauritius, representatives of Civil Society and private sector among others. It will take stock of poverty

trend through feedback and field realities. The Observatory will also interface with the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and come up with appropriate recommendations to the Ministry for adjustment in policies or strategies as deemed appropriate. The Observatory will also act as an advocacy group in the fight against poverty. I have said enough, Madam Speaker, to demonstrate that my Ministry has the commitment to put into place the necessary framework to make meaningful strides in the fight against poverty.

The National Empowerment Foundation, Madam Speaker, falls under the aegis of my Ministry. Same will be restructured, as mentioned in the Presidential Address, and reiterated by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on 01 February at Le Morne in the context of the celebration of the 180th anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery. The objective is to improve its service delivery and field interventions. Presently, the NEF has three main fields of intervention, namely -

- Child Welfare and Family Empowerment;
- Social Housing and Community Development, and
- Training and Placement.

All these three pillars will be reviewed to ensure that the set objectives are really met. In addition, new programmes will be introduced for maximum coverage.

One of the most important components of the Child Welfare Programme is presently the distribution of school materials to needy children. For the School Materials Scheme of 2015, it has been noted that a large number of vulnerable children from *ZEP* schools were not among the beneficiaries. Under my clear and strict instruction, a cross verification exercise was carried out. Some 2,000 children from the *ZEP* schools, who were initially not covered by the programme, were identified and corrective measures were taken.

Furthermore, in view of numerous complaints received across the island, the NEF was requested to set up special desks at the Citizen Advice Bureau, Social Welfare Centres, and Community Centres. As a result, some 3,500 new cases were attended and they were provided with school materials. In view of the chaotic situation, I am now completely reviewing the scheme to ensure that the most deserving children benefit from such support. My Ministry is, in consultation with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, ensuring that all vulnerable families living below the poverty threshold be registered under the Social Register of Mauritius.

This will constitute the national database through which all support of the NEF will be provided henceforth. Only eligible children under the SRM will benefit from school materials as from this year.

A new scheme will be put in place to address needy children who have not passed their CPE exams, but have potential to excel in other disciplines such as arts, music and sports. An exercise is presently being undertaken by my Ministry to determine the number of vulnerable children who have failed the CPE, SC and HSC exams in order to put up appropriate schemes to provide them with additional support.

On the other hand, needy students who have excelled in their exams will be motivated to pursue further studies and benefit from any additional support wherever needed.

This Government is committed to widen the circle of opportunities for this segment of our youth for their social integration and become responsible citizens.

Insofar as social housing is concerned, the NEF had initiated a scheme for the construction of a house made up of Corrugated Iron Sheets for the most vulnerable. This scheme is being phased out, and presently owners of plots of land and lessees of State lands are provided with a 31.5 m² concrete house covered with a CIS roof.

The NEF also facilitates the obtention of the required building permits. We are fully aware that the size is not adequate for large families. Following representations made, we are presently having consultations with the Ministry of Housing and Lands as well as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, with a view to harmonising the size layout and also the affordability of the housing unit.

The NEF has implemented a few Integrated Housing Projects at La Valette, Sottise and Dubreuil, where fully concrete housing units with the necessary off-site and on-site infrastructural facilities are provided.

However, the Ministry has noted with concern that various beneficiaries at La Valette are in arrears, and appropriate measures are being initiated to remedy the situation.

With regard to the Integrated Housing Project at Gros Cailloux, which started as far back as 2011, my Ministry has noted with concern that remedial works are still ongoing and that handing over has not yet been effected. The NEF has been given clear instructions to expedite

matters. In the meantime, the Ministry will be having consultations with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in regard to the quantum to be paid by prospective beneficiaries, and thereafter the procedure for the allotment of the units shall be initiated.

The Training and Placement Programme of the NEF also need revamping. Over the years, the NEF deviated from its original objectives by providing training and placement facilities to unemployed persons irrespective of their economic status, thus duplicating with the Youth Employment Programmes presently under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour. The Technical Unit to be set up by my Ministry will, as a matter of priority, review the whole programme and ensure that all schemes be geared exclusively towards vulnerable unemployed.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I wish to point out that most of the programmes presently in place were implemented by hon. Xavier-Luc Duval as the then Minister. Unfortunately, after he changed Ministry, there had been no significant improvement, both in terms of policy and programme. I hope that with the implementation of a Marshall Plan on poverty, the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and a Poverty Observatory, this Ministry will once again become the focal point of all actions regarding poverty alleviation as well as empowerment of the vulnerable.

However, I wish to emphasise that no meaningful progress is possible without the support of each and everyone, be it colleagues Ministers, hon. Members from both sides of the House, the private sector, the civil society and the public at large.

Let me end, Madam Speaker, by quoting Kofi Annan –

“In our task in fighting poverty, we cannot succeed without the leadership of the strong and the engagement of all. Let us work in partnership between rich and poor to improve the opportunities of all human beings to build better lives. Let us summon the will to do it.”

Thank you.

(9.28 p.m.)

Mr M. S. Hurreeram (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for your election as Speaker, and

hon. Adrien Duval as Deputy Speaker. In both cases, once again, Madam Speaker, we made history.

This country is turning on a new page now. Actually, it is writing a whole new book, for we hold in our hands the power to change our destiny, the power to build this country from the ruins left over by the previous Government, the power to aspire to a better future. Who better to lead us than the father of the first economic miracle, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who I wish to thank for the faith and trust he placed in me to represent Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg/Plaine Magnien. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to all leaders of *l'Alliance Lepep*, in particular hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Leader of MSM. My warm thanks also go to all those who stood alongside me during the elections, ranging from my constituents, my family and my fellow candidates.

Madam Speaker, everybody in this House and particularly the population in general have expressed an *'ouf de soulagement'*, as if they have been liberated from a suffocating situation.

11 December 2014 was a turning point. It brought with it a lush breath of fresh air. The last general election outcome has seen what they thought was the non-submersible Titanic, but we know the fate of Titanic. Today, one is politically dead while the other is vanishing from the political arena with three resignations this morning. At this rate, soon the actual Leader of the Opposition will no longer be Leader of the Opposition. *Pe fini dans la honte!*

Madam Speaker, the expectations of the population are high, and the Presidential Address of this Government has clearly shown the way; the commitment and the vision for recurrence of economic, social, environmental and sustainable development. We believe economic development cannot be achieved by foregoing social development. Both have to go in pair, and this is what this Government intends and pledges to do.

On doit impérativement corriger les erreurs du passé et remettre le pays sur les rails. Nous savons tous comment le pays était en pilotage automatique ces dernières années, et que quasi rien n'a été fait pour accentuer la croissance économique et assurer le développement social du pays. Même cette institution, notre auguste Assemblée nationale, a été bafouée avec la complicité dudit principal parti d'opposition d'alors ; *'Koz kozé'* primait sur tout.

Madam Speaker, we recall the lamentable state in which the country was before Sir Anerood Jugnauth came in power in 1982 and the heights his Government had taken the country to during his primeministership. We understand this is a democratic game; the population decided to try new venture. A dream of shortcut success. Unfortunately, this dream was shattered. All we remember today of the Labour Party in power are scandals, corruption, abuse of authority, nepotism, just to name a few.

(Interruptions)

Abusing women, of course!

Madam Speaker, we are not going to spend time on this. The people of Mauritius are now back in good hands; in the hands of a team which is competent, a team that is just what a democratic Assembly should be like, a team like *l'Alliance Lepep* Government.

Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to eradicate pessimism from the hearts of our youths and the population at large. Each and every youth should know that they will get what they rightly deserve, because we believe in their abilities and their competencies.

As a nation, we need our best brains to thrive, and this Government will have to stop the detrimental brain drain that this country has known for the past years. Everyone would recall that the previous Government was encouraging our youth to massively migrate for jobs and career prospects.

By taking this stand, Madam Speaker, they had clearly demonstrated their level of incompetence! I personally think they failed lamentably the trust of our youngsters and jeopardised the future of our beloved country. Madam Speaker, having said that, the question arises: what does this youth want and what do they need? What do they aspire to - leisure, fairness, social justice, real equal opportunity, including entrepreneurial opportunities, safety and security and job creation? We have an agenda, Madam Speaker, to address them.

This Government has taken on the challenge to create an unprecedented number of 15,000 jobs annually and firmly believes that the next economic leap forward of the country will be achieved through the entrepreneurs. No seed will sprout if not watered properly. Similarly, no entrepreneur will ever grow as a business if he/she is not supported properly. The main hurdle for any small entrepreneur today is adequate access to capital. It is precisely to palliate this

difficulty that this Government is planning the setting up of an SME bank with an unprecedented amount of Rs10 billion which will motivate and support our youth to put forth their business ideas without having to face the dire obstacle that the financing issue is.

In order for SMEs to flourish, a winning concept which boosts competitiveness and shapes a sound business environment is vital. There are 23 million SMEs spread all over Europe. This is the result of several influences, not only from the EU and at country level but also the regional policies. A broad base of SMEs is very important for the economic tissue of a region and, subsequently, for its wealth and sustainability and this is true for Mauritius as well, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we need to inculcate the go-getter attitude in our youths and banish the nepotism which gangrenes the country today. We need to have a generation of fearless economy builders to support growth in the forthcoming years. This is why this Government has created an innovative Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation under the able leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. How could it be otherwise, when we know that the sugarcane industry in Mauritius is still surviving the international challenges owing to the laudable reforms that only hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth had the political guts to implement!

In today's time, we need such boldness if we want our vision to succeed. Our entrepreneurs need to evolve to the next level and be ready to face the global economy in which we live today. If we want to be the hub and the spearhead innovation in the region, we need to be able to attract the right talents. We need to arm them with the right tools and create the right protection for them. We need to create sufficient legal framework to protect the work of our researchers and our techno-entrepreneurs.

This can only happen through the creation of contemporary intellectual property protection laws and recognised patent office. The patent office should protect innovations, inventions, industry designs and other ideas that should take root in the creative brains of our fellow citizens and companies implemented here. The patent office should be recognised internationally through treaties with other technology-based countries such as the USA, Germany, Japan and South Korea.

Madam Speaker, we now have the responsibility to gear our island into the digital age. It is not an easy task, considering the delay that we have accumulated, all the missed opportunities

and the damage to our international reputation due to mismanagement of the then E-Government domain. We shall not dwell on the 'could haves', but we will rather focus on what we can do. We note that there is a huge gap between our access to technology and our current use of technology. For instance, most of us have a smart phone. But, what do we use it for? Social networking? Messaging? Web browsing? Is that the optimum use of technology? We are far away, Madam Speaker, from using it as an e-wallet, electronic transport ticket and access to real-time information. We need to build the right framework and the right mindset to fully embrace the maximum potential of the technology available to us in this age.

Our youth yearns to be digital entrepreneurs, Steve Jobs or Bill Gates of Mauritius. This can only happen when we create the right framework for e-commerce and a strong secured electronic banking system supported by the right logistics. We are now fully aware that the Internet knows no boundaries. Let us open the market and the horizon of our entrepreneurs and let us help them reach those horizons. We need not be the next Singapore; we just need to be the next Mauritius. The Mauritius 2.0, Madam Speaker! We need to reinvent ourselves; we have the capacity, the ability and we have the willpower and, above all, Madam Speaker, today we have the leadership.

But what is Mauritius 2.0, Madam Speaker? It is not a fuzzy concept which is so far-fetched that it becomes a utopia. It is a paradigm shift in our way of thinking, doing and living. We need to have sustainable development goals such as e-education, e-Health, high-speed broadband technologies, smart grids, smart transportation, real time information and smart cities. We need to build capability through research and innovation to optimise the use of ICT as a transformation tool for a better country, a knowledge-based country.

A knowledge-based country undeniably will contribute greatly to economic prosperity and social welfare. It requires a radical transformation in the way the Government interacts with citizens, businesses and other Governments. The philosophy is a national issue and we, as policymakers, should envisage renewing the National ICT policy. The new policy should consider risk factors that can affect the normal running of an IT-based Government and include mitigating measures.

The Government should be more cautious in its approach regarding adoption of propriety technologies and should not be geared profit-oriented companies in the choice of systems that are acquired.

We should be wary, Madam Speaker, that our universities and tertiary institutions are opening their doors to propriety companies such as Microsoft that while providing frameworks for students to learn, also limit their exposure to only one type of system. Such a policy can only affect the long-term objectives of the Government who would rely on the locally trained talent for the future.

We, as policymakers, should be bold and ambitious for the realisation of Mauritius 2.0 and one major shift would be the implementation of a National Open Source Acceptance Initiative. It includes development of software based on an open source philosophy for the whole e-government ecosystem. The Government, through a dedicated organisation, would then be the custodian of the codes and the systems it creates. This will reduce the risk of overreliance on proprietary software vendors.

Nevertheless, these businesses would still play a vital role in providing management services to the Government and disseminate the platform throughout the country. The aim is to build an information society based on open standards, open data and technological neutrality.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius 2.0 aims at achieving –

- Smart governance;
- Smart people;
- Smart environment;
- Smart mobility, and
- Smart economy.

Throughout our history, we have seen that the legitimate aspirations of our people are admirable and legitimate. They deserve to be treated intelligently therefore. Just as other basic commodities, such as water and electricity, Internet connectivity should be a basic right for each and every citizen of our country. It should be managed by an independent organisation, *un peu à la CWA, CEB*.

This organisation should not be profit based and should be initially funded by Government. It will then allow Government to deploy its strategy for a connected Mauritius and pave the way for Mauritius 2.0.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui, encore une fois, avec la clairvoyance et le courage politique du ministre de la Technologie, Communication et Innovation, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, avec la bénédiction de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, et entouré des ces jeunes loups remplis d'enthousiasme et de vigueur, on fera de l'île Maurice 2.0 le pilier de ce miracle économique tant attendu.

Madam Speaker, today, I am honoured to be part of this fellowship and humbled to be able to serve and build my country for the future. I will not fall short of this responsibility. I welcome it. The energy, the faith and my devotion to this cause will never falter.

Madam Speaker, thank you indeed for your attention.

(9.45 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): Madam Speaker, allow me to congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker for your election as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively of this august Assembly.

It is a real privilege for me to stand up in this House to address you on the Government Programme for the period 2015-2019. This is an exercise that has been done by the previous Government, but I can assure you and the House that, for this one, the Government firmly intends to put words in action. This Government will not sell dreams like the former Government did, but will realise them for the benefit of every single Mauritian, irrespective of his creed, community and gender.

I will fail in my duty if I do not pay tribute to our great Leader, the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who led us to a landslide victory during the recent election; never faltering and never losing heart. Indeed, real leadership is not about prestige, power or status. It is about responsibility. Beyond doubt, Sir Anerood Jugnauth is a man of great vision and strong determination who will certainly lead Mauritius, once more, with full confidence, to a new economical miracle. A strong beginning has been made, and a promising future awaits us. This

Government, under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, is pledged to work for the welfare of the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable sections of the society.

I have to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for placing his faith and trust in me, and for assigning me with the responsibility for Industrial Relations, Employment, Occupational Safety and Health, and Training.

Madam Speaker, the people of Mauritius had wisely agreed to bring *L'Alliance Lepep* to power in December 2014. *L'Alliance Lepep* is a team which I proudly belong to, a team of which I adhere to the value and principle, a team that means business, that is ready to take actions and measures to take away the murky days the country had been facing for the past nine years.

The murky days are gone now. Time is for Mauritius to become sparkling, cheerful and bright, as it was the case from 1983 to 1995 and 2000, when it was led by a great statesman in the name of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, our beloved Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, this Government is also committed to conducting business on the principles of discipline, transparency, accountability and good governance. These are orders of the day for this Government. There will not be business as usual.

Since our massive victory in the last polls, our opponents have been claiming that the people did not adhere to *l'Alliance Lepep's* programme and team, but just wanted to sanction the former regime. I totally disagree with such cheap statement from these bad losers. Shame on them! The whole nation has made their choice, and that choice was very clear in their minds. People have chosen *l'Alliance Lepep* because it represented truth over lies, light over darkness, stability over instability, and national unity over scientific ethnic theories and calculations.

Of course, it is true that the Labour Party did achieve some miracles. They managed to make a salesgirl become overnight a multi-millionaire, now tracked by Interpol. That was their example of democratisation of the economy. We have recently also witnessed some examples of private banking at home, with huge safes, and the former Governor of the Central Bank doing some homework at his residence. We can say that there was, indeed, a culture of savings during the Labour Party era.

The Labour Party did construct a wonderful bypass between Terre Rouge and Verdun, which lasted, unfortunately, for less than a year before it collapsed.

One must not forget how holidays had become the trend in Parliament with the blessing of the Leader of the Opposition. Where is he? He is not present. The Opposition was often on and then off, but the misery of the people was always on. Let me tell you that this Government, under the strong leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, is on for a very long time. No cooling period is in the pipeline. We are here to work hard for the people, and we will continue to work hard. Why? Because they deserve it! They deserve to be rescued from the brink of despair, to be lifted and empowered, to believe in this great nation once again. They had longed for it, but they were acrimoniously betrayed for the past nine years.

But hope is alive! And the new effective policies, sound economic management and with our strong leadership team of competent Ministers, led by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, the people of Mauritius will once again live and believe in good trusted governance.

Madam Speaker, as a former magistrate, I have seen before Court of justices many of our unfortunate citizens tried for having stolen food just to feed themselves or their children. I have witnessed people unable to pay their rent, and parents unable to buy uniforms for their kids. The former Government did not care about them.

The former Prime Minister, himself, stated that he had '*la classe*' and that people were being jealous of him. People were not jealous of him, Madam Speaker. Actually, people were afraid of him, afraid of his dictatorial and dogmatic manners to deal with them. That is why on December 10, the guy who said '*foder ena classe pou fer seki mo pe fer*' could not even be elected as a Member of Parliament in Constituency No. 5, which was supposedly his arena, where he always autoproclaimed himself as '*Le Roi lion*'. We went on a safari expedition to hunt that lion.

(Interruptions)

He surely paid for his arrogance, as my fellow constituents in Constituency No. 5 have voted intelligently and have sanctioned him without pity for all the years they have suffered during his reign in power. One of the main reasons for such defeat was that the people were fed up of him and his lies.

One just has to go to see the slums in Baie du Tombeau, the miseries of people in other villages like Bois Marchand, the poor conditions of the basic infrastructures in that Constituency, that one had as his Prime Minister for nine consecutive years. I feel proud and blessed to be part of the team that won the three seats in that Constituency. I seize this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to heartily thank all those who have placed their trust and voted for us on 10 December 2014.

Madam Speaker, under the Prime Ministership of hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, we have given hope to our people and mainly the youth. The youth has been suffering under the former Government. The former Government has always preached that one should study hard to find a decent job. Nobody in this Government disagree with this statement. Those who work hard must be rewarded. Nevertheless, my heartrending conclusion when observing their time in Government was, unfortunately, that one had to be indecent to have a decent job. We want to change that and bring meritocracy in every decision-making.

The Labour Government has left a very '*lourd héritage*', which was threatening our social cohesion. The curve of unemployment has been constantly going up. At the end of 2014, the rate of unemployed has attained 7.8% and around 43,600 persons, of whom 25,100 female and 20,000 youth between the ages of 16 to 25 were without a job.

For the past nine years, very few jobs were created. Creation of jobs was not the former Government's priority. Someone who has studied hard needs to be rewarded. So many parents invested in the studies of their children. Some of them deprived themselves of so many things, convinced that the education of their sons or daughters will bear fruits in the future. But, unfortunately, they have been disappointed. The picture painted above is undeniably morose. That is why I take a strong commitment to tell the youth that this Government cares for them and that job creation will be the very high priority in our agenda. We have announced in the Government Programme 2015/2019 that we will create some 15,000 jobs yearly, both in the public and private sector.

Madam Speaker, unemployment of young persons is a real issue not only in Mauritius but on the whole African continent and even in Europe. It is disheartening to note that youth are more likely to suffer the most as they are the most vulnerable, lacking experience in the world of work and less prone to face the situation with maturity and stoicism.

But, fortunately, our future is bright as I am strongly confident that this Government is eager to create jobs through the new economic pillars such as the Regional Bunkering Hub, Ocean Economy, ICT sectors and so many other sectors. You cannot create jobs without a new economic pillar. The Deputy Chairman of the World Bank for the African region, Makthar Diop insisted upon that last year and I quote –

“Favoriser les investissements dans de grandes entreprises créatrices d’emplois salariés dans le secteur ‘formel’ est fondamental, mais il ne s’agit que d’une solution partielle au défi de l’emploi des jeunes en Afrique ».

We do not want a « *solution partielle* », Madam Speaker, we aim to bring a meaningful change to cut down unemployment rate in this country.

Failing to invest in our youth is a false economy, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon always said to countries who want to achieve a strong and sustainable economy. Having a job must not be a lucky fate but a right and we are going to give this right to our fellow countrymen.

I understand that my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is coming with measures to deal with the problem of unemployment in the 2015 Budget. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, who has agreed to transfer the Youth Employment Programme with its entire staff to my Ministry.

The Youth Employment Programme, which was initiated by my colleague hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, indeed, facilitates the transition of youth from education to the world of work. To date, some 9,031 jobseekers have been placed. In line with the Government Programme, the Youth Employment Programme will be reviewed with the aim to extend the duration of the contract of employment to two years. This will undoubtedly increase the employability of our young jobseekers and fresh graduates.

In view of the high rate of female unemployment, it is high time that we introduce measures which will empower our womenfolk to become economically more independent. In this regard, the back to work programme will be implemented by my Ministry to facilitate women to take up or resume employment. We will enlist the collaboration of the Human

Resource Development Council and the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development for that purpose.

Madam Speaker, jobs will be created and that is not just an '*effet d'annonce*'. We mean business. We have shown it when we gave hundred percent subsidies to School Certificate and Higher School Certificate exam fees and the increase in the old aged pensions. Another example is the abolition of the '*permis à points*' which was penalising unduly professional drivers. We have a comfortable majority and we do not intend to sit back but vow to deliver.

Madam Speaker, as my Ministry is also responsible for training, we will invest massively in training as trained people give them the opportunity to easily find a job in Mauritius as well as abroad.

Support services are essential to jobseekers to assist them in finding jobs. Accurate information on the labour market, different training schemes, job requirements and other counseling activities should be available at a one-stop shop. This Government has proposed in its programme the setting up of a National Employment Agency which will find suitable job placements for the unemployed. This agency will be a modern, client-oriented institution which will react positively to the expectations of the local needs. The National Employment Agency will be equipped with the necessary resources to unlock job opportunities.

The focus will be on career counseling, providing personal attention to jobseekers, up-to-date labour market information on vacancies in emerging sectors, training courses and self-employment opportunities.

Moreover, my Ministry will guide the students on their choice of career and emerging professions through an Integrated Career Counseling system.

Madam Speaker, the problematic issues of foreign workers has also to be addressed. We have been facing, since some years, a paradoxical situation in the labour market where the number of unemployed is nearly the same as that of foreign workers. There are presently 39,000 foreign workers in the country and over 30,000 are unemployed in the manufacturing sector.

The situation is becoming untenable in this context of increasing unemployment. There are still a lot of foreigners working in the construction and textile sectors when we could employ local people. As a negative impact, this is increasing unemployment rate.

My objective is to reduce our dependency on the foreign workers. There is no one size fits all solution to this problem, the more so that the replacement of foreign workers by the Mauritians does not function as an automatic arithmetical equation, as sometimes the local jobseekers do not possess the skills and competencies required by our enterprises.

I have already stated that recruitment of foreign workers will be made only in scarcity areas. I wish to highlight that this Government has nothing against foreign workers. Migration forms part of this global village that is the world.

We know that Mauritians are also recruited abroad in many areas of scarcity and the same principles will apply here. We shall review the way foreign workers are recruited. We shall also address the skills mismatch problem. My Ministry intends to collaborate very closely with institutions such as the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, the Human Resource Development Council and other specialised training institutions on this issue. Training will be given utmost priority for our local workforce. This will reduce our dependency on foreign labour.

With a view to promoting the recruitment of our citizens abroad, my Ministry also intends to sign bilateral agreements with other countries. Maximum efforts will be made at regional level also to enable Mauritians to secure jobs in Africa, as well.

Madam Speaker, another example of the *lourd héritage* of the former Labour Government, is the increasing income inequality. The income inequality has also been rising steadily during the last decade. 20% of the income earners earn half of the total income of the country and the ratio between the highest 20% and the lowest 20% is constantly increasing. The irony is that it was the then Governor of the Bank of Mauritius against whom there is a charge of money laundering, who was the first to officially pull the alarm at the end of year 2014.

It is also to be noted that in 2012, 10% of the workers in the private sector were earning Rs4,970 or less a month and 32.6% were earning less than Rs8,397 a month.

This Government has the courage to tackle issues neglected by the previous regime. We have indeed decided to work on a minimum wage bill. It will take the time it will take, but no Government has done it in the past. Consultations have already been initiated in that respect. I have taken note of the recent report of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) on the

matter. The task of establishing a minimum wage policy is a great one. All suggestions are welcomed including those from the Opposition, if you can hear me.

The introduction of a minimum wage shall, no doubt, constitute a major landmark that will contribute to give the workers, who are the driving force of the development of this country, the right to a decent life, which they so deserved, after so many decades of exploitation and protracted struggle for dignity.

Madam Speaker, the current main pieces of the labour legislation, namely, the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act, which were introduced in August 2008 and promulgated on 02 February 2009 to replace the Labour Act 1975 and the Industrial Relations Act 1973, respectively, were subsequently amended on two occasions, namely, in July 2009 and in May 2013.

This Government, in its endeavour to further improve the plight of Mauritian workers and to ensure decent working conditions to all, intends to review these two pieces of legislation. In this regard, I intend to have meetings with the representatives of both trade unions and employers to request them to submit their views on any amendments they would wish to bring to the two pieces of legislation.

In the same breath, with a view to better supporting working mothers to fulfil their family obligations, the Employment Rights Act will be amended to extend Maternity Leave from 12 to 14 weeks, as stipulated under Article 4 of the ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection, adopted by ILO in June 2000.

Madam Speaker, the Police Officers of this country will now have the right to syndicate to safeguard their interests. Never had this happened before!

According to the International Labour Organisation, freedom of association and the right to organise and bargain collectively are fundamental rights.

It is now observed, Madam Speaker, that many countries have recognised the rights of uniformed men and women to form part of their trade unions. Moreover, in the modern governance climate, societies around the world are re-valuing the services provided by the Police Force, particularly in the context of challenges brought about by terrorism and globalisation of the criminal activities. It is now common to hear debates around the proposition that better

policing by such forces is contingent on them having rights themselves. There is now broad consensus that good governance implies treating those who enforce law and order with respect for their basic rights.

Madam Speaker, the Government Programme 2015-2019 mentions that Police Officers will be allowed to syndicate to safeguard their interests. This is a historic and bold decision on the part of this Government.

The effective implementation of the policy measures announced in the Government Programme relating to my Ministry requires not only an appropriate legal framework, but also a paradigm shift in our industrial relations culture and a change in the mindset for all the stakeholders, namely Employers, Trade Unions and Workers.

I shall, Madam Speaker, be making decent work and social dialogue, the cornerstone of the labour and industrial relations policies of my Ministry. It is important and even crucial that all stakeholders, and particularly employers to understand the need to humanise industrial relations, and the need to humanise the workplace where the worker spends the best part and the biggest chunk of his life. More importantly, employers must understand that the need to give proper attention to such fundamentals as - decent wage and decent working conditions, job satisfaction, employee welfare, compliance to labour laws and creation of decent jobs amongst others.

Madam Speaker, our Government philosophy is clear and unambiguous. We do not oppose job creation to labour rights. I believe that they are the two sides of the same coin. We wish to protect workers and, at the same time, protect their jobs. Enhancing job security as well as ensuring that workers continue to draw income in a sustained manner will be our main concern. If we want a stable Mauritius, Madam Speaker, there will be no other higher imperative than industrial peace for a sustainable socio-economic development.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais conclure mon discours en soulignant qu'on a souvent fait des annonces dans cette auguste Assemblée. Mais la question est à quel point on est sincère quand on les prononce.

Le gouvernement de Sir Anerood Jugnauth représente cette sincérité tant recherchée par la nation mauricienne. Nous voulons redonner au peuple mauricien, et aux îles appartenant à la République, sa dignité perdue.

Comme le dit Vercors dans *Le Silence de la Mer*, je suis confiant que les obstacles seront surmontés, car la sincérité surmonte toujours les obstacles, et nous les surmonterons.

I thank you and thank the House for their attention.

(10.13 p.m.)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr E. Sinatambou): Madam Speaker, allow me, first of all, to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of this august Assembly. As the first woman Speaker of this House, I am sure that you will live up to the expectations of neutrality, of impartiality, of having an iron fist in a velvet glove, because I think that this House needs someone like you in order to maintain order and to have the right attitude to prevail.

Allow me also, Madam Speaker, to request you to convey my congratulations to the hon. Deputy Speaker for his election - Oh, he is here. May I be allowed to congratulate him for his election as the youngest Deputy Speaker ever to be elected in this country. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to congratulate the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, hon. Callichurn, for his maiden speech, and also to congratulate all hon. Members of this House, both those who have been elected for the first time and those who have been re-elected. May I finally, Madam Speaker, thank my constituents for re-electing me to this august Assembly.

I wish, here, to pay a special tribute to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for his vision and high sense of statesmanship, and to state that I am particularly grateful to him for appointing me as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. I commit myself to execute the high responsibilities conferred on me with full diligence and dedication.

Madam Speaker, I was in two minds as to the tone and tenor of my speech this evening. Was I going to give a broad overview of the diplomatic agenda of this Government, or did I need to reply to some of the repartees which we have heard on the other side of the House? Unfortunately, I must say that what I have heard coming from the other side of the House is not

to my satisfaction, even if I may say so humbly. Not to my satisfaction because to take, first of all, what I heard from the First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, hon. Bhagwan.

In his speech before this august Assembly on the Presidential Speech, the hon. Member cast an improper accusation, and that is what I believe is not acceptable. Accusations, if substantiated, if evidenced, if true may indeed be made before this House and ought to be made before this House, but not if they are unsubstantiated, or are made without any evidence and are most gratuitous. Here, I have to say that I could not understand how he could come before this House and say that the promoter of CT Power had financed all the posters of the 2005 General Election of *l'Alliance sociale* when hon. Sinatambou was a candidate. I have never in my whole lifetime had any poster paid for me by anyone, let alone by CT Power, and I believe that it is those types of gratuitous aspersions which are most unbecoming from hon. Members from the other side of this House. What is even worse is that a point of order was taken. I was allowed to say what was wrong because, indeed, I did explain that this was casting imputations on my election, and that those imputations were not true. I did insist that this is false and, today, again, I heard the hon. Member, in the course of one of his questions, stating again the same gratuitous allegation. I recall some of my friends once telling me how, sometimes, on the other side of the House, they have got a very bad habit. They start a lie, you hear it once, then you hear it twice, then the third time, then the fifth time, and the tenth time people start thinking it is true. This has to stop because if we bear, as was said earlier by another hon. Member of this House, the substantive 'Honourable' before our name, we have to act honourably, and I do hope that this is the type of bad habit which will stop.

Here, I would like to pause for a second to also say that it is not only in this House that this very bad habit - I should even say, perhaps, this very bad manner - of casting gratuitous accusations and smearing people has happened, and this has to stop. I would here refer to what I heard from the Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, my hon. friend, Roubina Jadoo-Jaunbocus, when she seized the opportunity of her speech to say that she condemned the shameful attacks which were made against women candidates during the last electoral campaign, and especially against the family of my party leader, hon. Pravind Jugnauth. *L'Alliance de l'unité et de la modernité*, so-called, has really acted in a most undignified manner in attacking members of his family, and I believe that this should be strongly condemned.

I think that hon. Members, on both sides of the House, whether from Government or from the Opposition, have to concede that we have all witnessed how democracy has been trampled down, has been stamped upon, how Parliament has been constantly adjourned, you will recall, Madam Speaker, in the year 2014; adjourned, suspended, dissolved. As we say, *ils ont tout fait pour garder le Parlement clos*. Parliament, the pinnacle of democracy, *était devenu un objet entre les mains de certains*. Attempts had even been made to slaughter our Constitution and come up with a second Republic designed to suit the needs of some. But, finally, the will of the people has prevailed, *et le peuple* has shown that real power has always and will always remain with the people. Our country, I think, we can all say, is breathing again thanks to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who has been able to foster the required strength to take this country from where it was going to.

May I now, Madam Speaker, come to something which is very serious because I just heard, this late afternoon, the hon. Leader of the Opposition saying three words: *masque pé tomber*. I am afraid to say that he was wrong! *Masque finn tomber!*

(Interruptions)

Masque finn tomber! Why am I saying that, Madam Speaker? When we go back, and here I have taken the liberty of referring to my good friend, the Third Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart, hon. Rutnah, who was also referring, in his speech, to the smear campaign to which he has been subjected. A smear campaign, where the hon. Member told us how the Opposition had managed to obtain a few photographs of him with very good friends at a Christmas party in 2007, and with the complicity of a Government newspaper and multimedia, they created a clip to discredit him, to ruin his reputation. But, as he said, fortunately, the electorate is intelligent, and did not buy that.

What struck me in that particular speech was how hon. Rutnah, the former Member of the MMM, said something which, I believe, hundreds of thousands of people believe to be true today. It is that the Leader of the Opposition, very frequently, uses the word ‘shame’ in this House. As my good friend, the Third Member for Piton-Rivière du Rempart put it before this House, he is ashamed to say that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, against the backdrop of the 2014 events, has sold the militants, has sold the workers and has sold virtually everybody who had trust in him. All the glory that he acquired since the seventies, he sold that glory for nothing

in days, and today, he has been reduced to a man with little or no credibility in this country. I believe that if ever someone had any doubt as to the veracity of this particular proposition, the fact that the MMM has this very day lost 25% of its elected Members who have just resigned from the party, does indicate how wrong they would have been, how wrong the Leader of the Opposition is in the way he has been acting. What I think should bother all of us is how – I think we have reached the 84th day that Government is in office - they have been acting. And every time Parliament has had a sitting, Madam Speaker, you see them putting questions, as if they are the big justicers - I would have said Zorro, but Zorro was right, I cannot say Zorro. And I think it is so wrong. Let us take, for example, their questions on Betamax. I must say, I have read...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, it is their right to ask questions.

Mr Sinatambou: Yes, however, Madam Speaker, the very questions they are putting today are the very questions they ought to have put for the whole of last year, the very same questions which they refused to put, the very same questions which they would not ask because they were so keen on keeping Parliament closed, which is why...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I gladly welcome the questions, but done in the right way.

Let me now say, Madam Speaker, one or two things which, I believe, are also of importance. Madam Speaker, the state of rotteness which we have inherited, I am afraid, baffles the imagination. Before coming into Government myself, what I read in the newspapers, which had baffled me - and which I believe must have baffled the majority of Mauritians - is the fact that the MBC had paid, I think, Rs5 m. of compensation to the Director-General upon his leaving office. That was scandalous! I am sure that the majority of this country will have opined that this is not acceptable. But what did we find out once we came at the helm of Government? That, in effect, the MBC has a debt of Rs880 m. If Rs5 m. was a scandal, what is Rs880 m.? What is worse, Madam Speaker, is that this afternoon, I was shocked when I heard that it cost Rs895 m. to maintain the NTC buses for five years in-house, at the cost of Rs2.7 m. of maintenance cost for each bus. Where on earth have we heard that? That is where I object, I am afraid, with all due respect to them. I believe that this would have been a shameful coalition because they were going to be together for five or seven years. We don't know, because we have luckily not had

the second Republic where they would have all agreed together to sit on all the scandals for God knows how many years!

Now having said this, Madam Speaker, you do, therefore, appreciate that this Government was elected against the difficult economic setting which impacted most severely on the lower rungs of the Mauritian society. The Government Programme 2015-2019 has been crafted to respond to the economic challenges that this country faces. It also ensures that the advancement of the economy remains people-focused. Indeed, the measures enunciated in the programme reflect the determination of Government to create the necessary conditions for the advent of a second economic miracle under the leadership of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Now, what is going in this respect to be the role and responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. I have been quite surprised. We were sworn in on 17 December and, within the first three weeks, I already saw a number of articles regarding the renewal, or rather the lateness of this Government in securing the renewal of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. And I said to myself: 'what is this?' This is the piece of legislation which has been in force since the year 2000, which is coming for renewal and which is going to expire on 30 September 2015. Why are we being blamed within less than three weeks of our entry in office for not renewing it? What were they doing on both side, whether it be the then Government or the MMM coalition partner? And this is what is not right! We agree with criticisms, we agree with questions, but the right ones.

But, fortunately, between 19 and 25 January of this year, an African Union delegation went to the United States, and the Government of Mauritius was invited to be part of the delegation, And we have been able to get both bicameral and bipartisan support for the timely renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. What is even nicer is that about three weeks ago, President Obama has requested the U.S. Congress to make allowance, in the 2015 American Budget, for a 10-year renewal of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and to make allowance for nearly 2 billion US dollars of budgetary funding for that Act. However, I think, here, that we need to put a word of caution. What the United States has explained is that the AGOA, as it is known, was actually devised to take Africa out of necessity. So, in principle, it is not applicable to Mauritius, because as they keep saying: 'if you are a middle income economy, you do not

graduate for that'. But luckily, Mauritius will also benefit from AGOA for the coming 10 years. We have now received a letter; this is good to be mentioned in front of this august Assembly, Madam Speaker. We have received a letter at my Ministry from no less than the Secretary of State, Mr John Kerry, who, first of all, assured me personally that the US administration is giving us full support for the renewal of AGOA. But, more importantly, for those who keep complaining and criticising, Secretary of State Kerry has commended this Government for its efforts in good governance and in combating fraud and corruption. I hope it falls in good ears!

The other aspect which I think I could safely mention of this House before the time allocated to me is over is what is known as the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement. Why I am mentioning this in particular is because the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organisation was actually concluded in Bali at the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO Members from the 3rd to 6th of July 2013. And within the 84 days of this Government's mandate, Government has actually sent a letter of acceptance to the WTO Secretariat to adopt the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Why I believe the other side should be condemned is because this Agreement was adopted in December 2013. Yet, they closed down Parliament for virtually a year. That agreement, Madam Speaker, has been analysed by economists, and the International Chamber of Commerce and Industry has evaluated that the global economy is going to be increased by another one trillion dollars if we apply the Trade Facilitation Agreement, and yet, they were busy *cause causer* as opposed to doing what is good for the country!

The third aspect of economic diplomacy which I would like to bring to the attention of this House is what is called the Trade in Services Agreement. The Trade Facilitation Agreement deals with trade in goods while the Trade in Services Agreement deals with services. What has happened, Madam Speaker, is that since March 2013, 24 World Trade Organisation Members have decided to start negotiating this agreement. Those 24 Members make up two-thirds of the world's economy and those 24 countries started negotiating the Trade in Services Agreement in March 2013. They have now reached the 10th round of negotiation which ended about mid-February of this year. And would you believe it, Madam Speaker? Mauritius is not part of the 24 WTO Member States negotiating! They were negotiating something else here!

What is worse is that the global figures in terms of exports of services for the year 2012, which are the latest figures that I have, are that the global export in services is 4.4 trillion dollars! We are trying to set up Mauritius as a services hub. 24 Member States of the WTO start negotiating a Trade in Services Agreement in March 2013. They have held ten rounds of negotiations up to February 2015 and Mauritius was out of it! I think this is most shameful!

(Interruptions)

What bothers me is that they still want to come and teach us lessons! Yes, gentlemen, if it is deserved we agree, but from what I have heard up to now, I cannot say that you are right in your criticisms.

At this stage, Madam Speaker, because time is of the essence, I would like to say something which I believe is very important. I heard the Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West, hon. Baloomoody, disagree strongly with this alleged constitutional unorthodoxy of changing the law regarding the Office of the DPP. Let us just get our chronology right. The MacKay Report dates from before 2000.

(Interruptions)

Sorry?

(Interruptions)

Two reports...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please...

Mr Sinatambou: The one I know is from 1998, Madam Speaker. What I would say...

(Interruptions)

with or without the MacKay Report. Let us say, there were two MacKay Reports, one from 1998 and one in 2006; with or without the MacKay report, the fact is that the decision which has been taken, from the way I understand it, would bring the Office of the DPP in the same position as it was when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Prime Minister of this country. Whether it is good or not is not the issue. We are saying it is good. It had never been challenged. Everyone has always agreed it is lawful. Now, suddenly, and that is the problem - they will take any

argument in my mind. How can this be undemocratic, when it was democratic when they were in there?

(Interruptions)

How can it be undemocratic when they have been there for ten years and you found it to be right then?

(Interruptions)

That is the exact point we want to...

(Interruptions)

I will read it, don't worry. I am good at reading also!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Sinatambou: We are good at reading also. But the point we are making and, maybe I should also say, I have also in my career been acting Attorney General and what I would like to add is that I have also worked at the Attorney General's Office up to the stage of Principal State Counsel. At no time, when I was there, has there been any slightest apprehension that the situation to which we are going back with the Government's decision could have been or was unlawful.

What I would like to suggest to all Members of this august Assembly is, let us not take cheap points to score...

(Interruptions)

Yes, that is what I strongly think that some are taking arguments just to score points and sometimes too cheaply.

(Interruptions)

Let me give you...

(Interruptions)

No! Madam Speaker, the Law Reform Commission is not judicially empowered to make those accusations.

(Interruptions)

Be that as it may, Madam Speaker, I would like perhaps to ask for five final minutes.

The first thing that I would like to say in those last five minutes, Madam Speaker, is that my family and I have suffered severe civil and criminal defamation in the course of the last political campaign. My wife wanted to be here tonight, but I told her: “don’t bother”. Because, she wanted to face the Opposition when I would say that, they had lied and stated that my wife was a battered woman. We even went to the Police, Madam Speaker. We reported the matter to a Police station. I made a declaration at a Police station at the end of October 2014, against one Minister and two Members of Parliament.

In November 2014, it was a political acolyte of their shameful coalition who started an Internet campaign. This time my wife made a declaration in November. Do you know what is worst? Nothing happened once again in November! What is now unacceptable is that the two leaders of the shameful coalition also made the fallacious accusations! Do you know what is wrong, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

My wife said to me: “Etienne, can we dare to go and make a Police declaration against them? What might not happen to us if they win?”

Look at the type of atmosphere people were living in! Look at the type of fear that was being created in this country! Which is why I would insist that I bear no grudge against neither the then Prime Minister nor the now Leader of the Opposition. But, I wish that - that’s why I am saying it here - either or both of them could make *amende honorable* and present excuses to my wife, not to me. I don’t need their excuses. In politics, we actually develop hard shells. They can say whatever they want about me; I don’t care. But, I wish they could apologise to my wife for the wrongs that they have done to her.

Pour conclure, Madame la présidente, je dirai que j’ai été très sensible à ma nomination en qualité de ministre des Affaires étrangères, de l’Intégration régionale et du Commerce international de l’île Maurice, et j’en remercie vivement le chef du gouvernement, notre Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugauth.

Dans ce monde vaste et complexe, comprenant beaucoup d'enjeux et d'exigences, la diplomatie mauricienne que nous avons engagée sera au service exclusif de l'intérêt national et se conjuguera avec les efforts déployés pour la réalisation du deuxième miracle économique mauricien. Accomplir mon mandat dans lequel je me suis pleinement investi avec cœur et efficacité, Madame la présidente, est toute mon ambition. C'est pourquoi je suis conforté par l'étendu de mes responsabilités, dont surtout celle de consolider nos acquis nationaux et d'élargir le rayonnement international de l'île Maurice par une politique étrangère ciblée.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I thank you for your kind attention.

(10.45 p.m.)

Mr S. Ramkaun (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a great honour and privilege to me to address honourable Members of this august Assembly as Third Member of Constituency No. 5, Pamplemousses/Triolet. Let me join all my colleagues to congratulate you, Madam, for having been elected as the first lady Speaker of this august Assembly, and my congratulations also to hon. Adrien Duval, the youngest Member, for having been elected as Deputy Speaker.

I would also like to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Showkutally Soodhun and hon. Pravind Jugnauth for the confidence placed in me to represent the people of one of the most populated constituency of the Republic of Mauritius. Last but not least, I am thankful to my family, wife, children, campaign committee members and constituents who have been always by our side for a massive victory of *l'Alliance Lepep* in the last December elections.

Madam Speaker, I must say that it has been an outstanding experience to be part of the wonderful team of *l'Alliance Lepep*, and the results of the general elections of December 2014 showed that the most sincere, hard-working and responsible team has won with flying colours. It couldn't be the other way, as we noticed during the campaign que l'île Maurice avait marre de la gestion de l'ancienne équipe dirigeante - une odeur nauséabonde avait envahi l'atmosphère de notre République ; les gens, du petit au plus grand, suffoquaient sous le poids de la corruption, de la fraude et du je-m'en-foutisme qui avaient gangréné toutes les opérations publiques - qui avait, en fait, pour mission de mener le pays à bon port. Le pays touchait l'abîme, et il fallait toute la vision et connaissance, la gestion du meilleur gestionnaire et administrateur politique qu'est Sir

Anerood Jugnauth pour redresser la barre et redonner confiance à ce peuple admirable que certains avaient voulu réduire en peau de chagrin. Fort heureusement, le peuple a su, par sa sagesse, réagir promptement, faisant fi à des promesses farfelues de certains politiciens dépassés, et en leur retournant à leur propre étude.

It has been proven, Madam Speaker, that the people of Mauritius are much more alert than some may have thought. Those people are still applying the lost and found formula based on communal casteism and mathematics. They thought that the Mauritian people would blindly follow them, but, unfortunately for them, the Mauritians already had in mind to get rid of all those who had been doing politics for their own sake, putting their interest first.

Madam Speaker, I would like again to come back to the last campaign. I would like to share with all of you present in this House what I personally witnessed in Constituency No. 5. I would like to ask anyone of you a simple question. Have you ever been confronted to a case of poverty, where people are living in a condition which can be qualified worse than an animal? Madam Speaker, I have lived this unprecedented and awful experience. How can we forget Cité Longère, Cité Florida, Cité NHDC and the surrounding areas of Baie du Tombeau, Cité EDC of Pamplemousses and various *poches de pauvreté* of the constituency? During our last campaign, we were informed by the residents that the former Prime Minister had visited Cité Longère prior to the 2005 general elections. After that, he had never bothered about those people living in *longères* with corrugated iron sheet roofs, open air bathrooms and common toilets. Such was the situation since 1994 ! *Et pourtant, c'était dans la circonscription de l'ex-Premier ministre, qui avait à ses côtés deux autres ministres de la République.* It is a real shame, Madam Speaker. The last electoral campaign was a nightmare which we witnessed in broad daylight. Hopefully, those who were in power are no more, and now the challenges have come on the surface.

Madam Speaker, l'être humain est si minuscule dans cet univers qui est rempli d'incertitudes. Certains avaient essayé dans le passé de faire croire qu'ils sont des êtres supérieurs, et on connaît tous le sort peu enviable de ces gens-là. Aujourd'hui, on prend leur nom en guise de cobaye pour décrire la bestialité dans les œuvres de l'homme. A toute proportion respectée, notre pays aurait pu connaître le même sort. Mais, comme je l'ai fait ressortir plus haut, Madame la présidente, la population a pu prendre conscience de son sort éventuel si l'autre avait triomphé.

La femme mauricienne dans sa grande majorité avait dit, ‘Assez d’être réduite au rôle de *pom-pom girl*.’ Pour redonner la valeur due aux femmes, le *Leader* de l’*Alliance Lepep* avait choisi une femme en la personne de Madame Ameenah Gurib-Fakeem pour être la première femme présidente. Ce choix est justifiable et ne souffre d’aucune contestation de la part des gens qui voient juste et qui œuvrent dans l’émancipation de la femme mauricienne, dont la contribution est primordiale dans le progrès de la nation mauricienne.

Cependant, il est à noter que certains qui ont bénéficié des largesses de l’ancien régime continuent à jouer le rôle de lèche-botte ; ceux dont l’ancien chef d’État avait fait référence, lui qui croyait que les hommes d’honneur n’existaient plus. Il a été complètement pris à contre-pied dans sa propre circonscription, et il doit maintenant assumer les conséquences.

Madame la présidente, ce gouvernement ne vend pas des rêves ; non plus il fera gronder le tonnerre. Ce gouvernement est celui de ce peuple de Maurice, débrouillard jusqu’à la dernière goutte de son sang, sincère dans ses relations et conscient de son passé qu’il ne rejette pas. Mais, ce peuple de Maurice a pris l’exemple du passé pour vivre le présent, et ainsi consolidant dans la foulée son futur.

Ce peuple de Maurice a pris conscience du programme de son gouvernement, et il sait que pour cicatriser leurs plaies laissées par l’ancien régime il va falloir du temps, mais heureux de ce gouvernement qu’il a aidé à prendre les rênes du pouvoir. Dans sa sagesse, ce peuple de Maurice accordera à ses dirigeants le temps qu’il faudra pour redresser la barre et mener le pays à bon port. Pour cette prise de position, je dois saluer le peuple, et je suis convaincu que sous le double *leadership* de Sir Anerood Jugnauth comme président et de Pravind Jugauth, on peut attendre à un meilleur paysage mauricien social.

Madame la présidente, le pire est derrière nous, les années qui ont noirci notre ciel bleu et notre mer turquoise sont derrière nous. Avec la création des ministères avant-gardistes, avec en point de mire la conquête d’autres créneaux de productivité, on peut dire que le pays est entre de bonnes mains. La confiance est de retour, et on ne finira pas d’en parler, et les gens sont heureux d’avoir pu éviter le pire des scénarios.

Madam Speaker, I am, in fact, very proud to be part of this team that will cement the social life of the Mauritians, which will create jobs, which will make equality a reality and will make Mauritius flourish again *en une véritable nation arc-en-ciel*. Yes, Madam Speaker, this

Government, under the leadership of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, with hon. Pravind Jugnauth as the leader of the MSM and leading party of *l'Alliance Lepep*, together with the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Leader of *PMSD*, and the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Collendavelloo, Leader of *Muvman Liberator*, is meant to fulfil all the aspirations of the Mauritians. This track record of Sir Anerood Jugnauth is enough *comme une garantie pour une vie meilleure*. Now, it is time for concrete actions, and I would add that all the conspirators who are aiming to destroy Mauritius are doomed to pay for their bad deeds, no matter who they were or who they are. We are Mauritians and we will aim for our Motherland. One of the main targets of the Government led by *l'Alliance Lepep* is to realise the *deuxième miracle économique*, and this is paving its way. A flashback of the *premier miracle économique* that this country witnessed between 1983 and 1995 reminds us, *inter alia*, of the following -

- diversification of the Mauritian economy;
- full employment;
- industrialisation and its decentralisation;
- tremendous urban and rural development;
- infrastructural undertaking;
- building of a nation of entrepreneurship;
- improvement in the quality of life of the people in general;
- strengthening the Welfare State, and
- social harmony and promotion of education, training and health services.

In order to ensure a full-fledged development of the Mauritian economy and the society at large, the *Alliance Lepep* led Government has taken on board modern concepts like -

- innovation;
- good governance, and
- ocean economy as ministerial attributes.

The implementation of our Programme will be made in consultation with the people and in doing so we will aim to achieve the second economic miracle in far lesser time than originally planned. The organisation structure will be systematically reviewed in order to accommodate physical infrastructure, related functions such as tender exercises, contract management and procurement, etc.

Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the confidence placed upon me by hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth who has given me the responsibility of Constituency Nos. 5, 6 and 7 as Private Parliamentary Secretary. The three constituencies are already on board a fast speed train of all-around progress and development. The District Council of Pamplemousses-Rivière du Rempart will play a major role in the improvement of the quality of life of the northerners. In order to alleviate the housing problems in Baie du Tombeau as well as in other areas of poverty, a Committee chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands, hon. Soodhun, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, hon. Roopun, and the other hon. Members of the constituencies, is already working on a scheme to assist these vulnerable people to have decent low-cost houses.

I have also the privilege to meet my mandates regularly. There is a flow of complaints and requests. It is now that we are acknowledging in what mess the people were in these last years under the former Government. Hopefully, since we assumed our office under the Prime Ministership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Mauritian people are breathing hope that their lives would be better.

Madam Speaker, from the first day of assuming power, Mauritians have witnessed that Members of the National Assembly of *l'Alliance Lepep* have taken to their task like a duck takes to water. We have already implemented many points of our Government Programme 2015-2019, and we are aiming for a second mandate, as I am more than convinced that we will succeed in implementing all the points of our Programme.

One more thing I am sure, Madam, we are conscious of the task that is awaiting us, and we will shoulder our responsibilities, as we are all persons having our work culture. We are the *hommes et femmes de famille conscients, et on est guidé par le respect de ceux qui nous entourent et qui nous côtoient.*

I end my speech, Madam Speaker, by adapting the famous quotation of Charles Dickens

—

‘It was the worst time yesterday; it is the best time today.

It was the age of foolishness yesterday; it is the age of wisdom now.

It was the winter of despair till December 2014, and it is henceforth the spring of hope.’

Thank you for your kind attention.

(11.01 p.m.)

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Madam Speaker, first of all, I wish to congratulate you for your election to accede to the Chair of this august Assembly, and I am sure all of us present today and the whole of the Mauritian people are very proud for you to be the very first lady of the Republic of Mauritius assuming this great responsibility. My sincere congratulations also go to the Deputy Speaker, hon. Adrien Duval, who is the youngest Member of this House ever to have assumed such a high responsibility as Deputy Speaker and, of course, he has a long way to go. This is due to our Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. This symbolises the faith and confidence the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has in the young people of today, as well as in the youth 15 years ago, when my good friend, hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo, the Attorney General, was then given the *portefeuille du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports. L'histoire retient de bons souvenirs de son parcours.*

I also extend my warmest congratulation to all elected Members of the last general elections of 10 December 2014. I feel greatly honoured to be among the team of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, a man of uncommon integrity, who marks history by becoming the Prime Minister of Mauritius for the sixth time in his political career and, obviously, we have lots of things to learn from him. I deeply thank the hon. Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the Leader of MSM, our leader, a man of vision and resilience, whom we are extremely proud of - thank you Leader - and who, despite lots of lobbies and personal attacks against me, entrusted his confidence in me to stand as candidate for Constituency No. 10, Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East.

Merci à notre président du MSM, l'honorable ministre Soodhun, et d'autres dirigeants, et surtout l'équipe des '*young orange*'.

I am also thankful to all the electors who placed their confidence in me by voting the three candidates of *l'Alliance Lepep*.

Madam Speaker, Constituency No. 10, where there were three Ministers during the past years, and it was with a lot of pride that they used to acclaim the fact that it is the only Constituency where there are three Ministers, excluding that of Constituency No. 5, but, in terms

of development or progress, nothing has been done. It is very sad to note the one and only development that Constituency No. 10 has got is the 5-star prison at Melrose.

Madam Speaker, how can there be any kind of progress in the Constituency, when neither former Minister Jeetah nor Minister Seetaram had enough time to look after the problems faced by the electors, as they were both busy looking into the matters of Betamax and Sarako respectively.

Electors of Constituency No. 10 used to ask various questions, such as what is the reason behind that the Leader of *Parti travailliste*, who is actually on leave, can rely on persons like Rajesh Jeetah who had numerous *frasques* in any field he was designated. We cannot forget *le lait* 'Amul', STCM, hedging, *université marron* and the famous accident at Sodnac and his implication in the sale of the clinic Med Point.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, perhaps just on the eve of the last election, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam happened to realise it when he finally decided not to give any of the three Ministers a ticket to stand as candidate for the election of 10 December 2014, but, what a coincidence, the *l'Alliance de l'Unité et de la Modernité*, also known as the *Alliance d'un pays moderne et un peuple uni a fait* parachuté un novice *chokra* au nom de Washeel et deux *senior*, anciens ministres, *chachi* Indranee et l'actuel secrétaire du MMM, Ajay.

Auparavant, il disait à ses sympathisants qu'il préfère rester chez lui, voir son fils grandir au lieu de s'aligner au côté du Travailliste, alors que le choix était clair. L'électorat a assumé sa responsabilité.

I hope that hon. Baloomoody would be of the same opinion as far as it concerns the Senior Adviser of PM, as regard to his newly appointed Secretary of the Party whose case was pending for several years, and the case terminated just after the *concrétisation de l'Alliance de l'Unité et de la Modernité*.

(Interruptions)

The population had been able to do the distinction between the two teams.

Mr Uteem: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I would like to get the guidance of the Chair as to whether the hon. Member can, in this House, challenge a decision of a Magistrate in Court.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Tarolah, can you just repeat what you said, did you challenge the decision of the Court?

Mr Tarolah: It's not a challenge.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Did you just mention that there was a decision of the Court?

(Interruptions)

Mr Tarolah: It's not a challenge.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem, he did not challenge, he just stated that there was a decision of the Court in that sense.

Mr Uteem: If he can then clarify that he was in no way imputing that the decision of the Magistrate was in any way...

(Interruptions)

The decision of the Magistrate was motivated by the fact that there was an Alliance between MMM and Labour.

Madam Speaker: In fact, hon. Uteem, he did not say that the decision was motivated. He just mentioned that the case had been settled after an event.

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of clarification, the case has not been settled, as you tried to interpret it; there has been a judgement by the Intermediate Court and the case is still on appeal.

So, hon. Members should be careful before imputing motives on a Court and the more so that the case is on appeal.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, did you make a point of clarification, was it a point of personal explanation?

Mr Baloomoody: A point of clarification to correct, to have the facts clear to what you have said as the Chair.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, proceed hon. Tarolah!

Mr Tarolah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. L'Histoire va retenir et ça a créé un mauvais souvenir. Dans quelques jours le *Leader* de l'opposition va célébrer ses 70 ans. Madam Speaker, *quelle trahison!* The scene is still vivid in almost everyone's mind where you may find the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Sir Anerood Jugnauth sharing their birthday cakes, and what a speech was delivered by hon. Bérenger on that occasion! Great emphasis was made on patriotism of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and everyone knows what was reserved on the next episodes with various subtitles as "Cooling-off period", '*Mo fine bien amerder, Pravind pas fine consulté Monsieur Bérenger avant li mette so point de droit*', et les *ons* and *offs* until everything had gone off. But we must be grateful to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for having been able to convince Sir Anerood Jugnauth to leave the State House as President of the Republic and to '*nettoye pays de sa pourriture la*'. Sir Anerood Jugnauth did not hesitate for a single minute and was firm in his conviction. This is what the population respected; *parole donnée, parole sacrée*. As it was the case in 2003, everyone knows what kind of pressure was there not to let hon. Bérenger become Prime Minister, but '*sa ki nous dire, nous faire*'; the slogan was converted to reality.

Madam Speaker, we remember those days when hon. Bhagwan used to advise the *militants* by saying: '*Zot bizin mette photo Sir Anerood Jugnauth dans zot lakaz et dire merci Sir Anerood*', and, Madam Speaker, what a coincidence today that not only the *militants* or the *activistes* travaillistes, but the whole population are of the same opinion. Everyone is thankful to the present Government whether the retired persons, the senior citizens, the civil servants up to the students, all of them, *chaque couche sociale a bénéficié de ce changement de régime*. That is called change, Madam Speaker, not that change which was claimed '*pou change ou la vie dans 100 jours*', and not to mention whose life got changed very, very rapidly.

The pensions were increased as promised, increase in the compensation of all civil servants were given, SC and HSC exam fees were handled by the present Government. Et ça, ce n'est que le commencement. Dieu merci, nous avons une équipe formidable à côté de Sir Anerood Jugnauth sinon après sept ans avec un Président de la deuxième République '*pas bann coffres, mais containers qui ti pou ouvert pou tire dollars et livres sterling*'.

Madam Speaker, let me give an *aperçu de notre circonscription*. Our Constituency No. 10 is just at the side of the Constituency No. 9 where *le Roi de l'Est* had tarred every single road. A good friend of mine used to give that example on quite a lot of meetings organised during the past general elections saying: '*Li chien pas ti pé gagne le temps lever depi lor simin, jusqu'à li chien zot ti pé fini passe coltar, sa vitesse ti pé coltar chemin la dans No. 9*'.

(Interruptions)

The roads of our Constituency are in a very bad condition and it is a humble request made to hon. Minister Bodha to look into the matter. Constructions and renovation of our social welfare centres are very urgent as the buildings are left in very bad states. *Il y a aussi un manque d'espace* pour les loisirs surtout pour les jeunes when we are talking about bringing football of a higher quality. So, it is a request to the hon. Minister Sawmynaden for a stadium with the latest amenities for the village of Bel Air, where teams coming from all around the island used to participate in the tournament organised in that football playground which is actually in a deplorable state.

To remain in the field of sports, I must add that it is very deplorable to note that there are volleyball teams from Camp de Masque Pavé playing in the Second Division at National level, but do not have a suitable volleyball pitch for proper practice and training. They usually need to move to another village to get such facilities.

Madam Speaker, I still remember the meeting organised at *La Boutique Teoka, Bel Air* for the last general elections where, at the end of his speech, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister asked a question to the crowd present on that day, as to whether they are for the Second Republic or water for 24 hours and everybody shouted they need water. That is called a miracle, Madam Speaker, in less than five minutes it started raining and that rain of blessing has bestowed all over our country and today almost all our reservoirs are full. But lots of villagers are still complaining of the lack of water supply in various regions. It is a humble request to the Vice-Prime Minister,

hon. Ivan Collendavelloo, to do a study as our constituency has the privilege of having the longest river of our island, the GRSE river passing through and carrying lots of water to the sea day and night. So, we can have a water treatment plant in the region which can very easily supply the eastern region. Madam Speaker, this is called meaningful change which will definitely be achieved very soon as there is willingness to work to bring that change in the daily life of our citizens.

It will be recalled that the SME sector contributes around 40% of the Gross Domestic Product while providing employment to around 54% of the working population. With a view to igniting the spirit of entrepreneurship among youth and making the Small and Medium Enterprise sector the main engine of growth, the setting up of an SME bank and a one-stop-shop in Ebène targeting young entrepreneurs is announced. This will provide them with all the facilities and incentives to start their business under one roof. A fair share of the budget, that is, an estimated amount of around Rs10 billion will be allocated to boost the Small and Medium Enterprise which is said to play an important role in the development of the economy. Hon. Minister Bholah is convinced that the SMEs can become the backbone for economic growth, and I wish him good luck.

Madam Speaker, I also make an appeal to the hon. Minister, if he can organise a session of conference with the winner of *le Prix Nobel de la Paix en 2006 et inventeur du micro-crédit, l'économiste Bangladeshi, Muhammad Yunus, qui a dit dans un interview, I quote –*

« Je crois à un monde sans pauvreté, simplement parce que les pauvres ne sont pas responsables de la situation. On doit créer les opportunités et les conditions pour permettre aux personnes de s'impliquer dans un projet social qui peut permettre de résoudre les problèmes de l'économie actuelle. Gagner de l'argent peut vous rendre heureux, mais rendre d'autres personnes heureuses est la plus grande des fiertés. »

So, Madam Speaker, by improving the general wellbeing of the population under the leadership of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and together with all the hon. Members of the coalition partners without forgetting the support of the whole population, will urge for a new and modern destiny of the generation to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and all the hon. Members of this House for your patience and attention and I also pray for the blessings of the Almighty to be bestowed upon us.

Thank you.

Mr Fowdar: Madam Speaker, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr Jhugroo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 05 March 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 11.18 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 05 March 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

TEC - QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION OFFICER - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/104) **Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to one Mrs K. P. R. recruited as Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer of the Tertiary Education Commission, he will state if he has been informed of the false representations made in relation to her experience and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out in relation thereto.

Reply (Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research): I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that Mrs K. P. R.

was appointed as Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer on 12 May 2009 following an advertisement and a selection exercise undertaken by Tertiary Education Commission. She is still serving as Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer at Tertiary Education Commission.

The main requirement for the post of QAAO as per the scheme of service are -

- (i) A post graduate degree preferably at doctoral level from a recognised university;
- (ii) at least three years' teaching and research experience at tertiary level in any area, and
- (iii) commitment to the enhancement of the quality of teaching and possess good communication and report writing skills.

As per records at the Tertiary Education Commission a complaint was received on 05 June 2014 making serious allegations on a number of issues, including experience of the Officer. On 17 June 2014, the then Executive Director had sought explanation from the Officer concerned. However, there is no record at the Tertiary Education Commission as to whether a reply was received and any action taken thereon.

In regard to the part related to enquiry by ICAC, I understand that a complaint by way of an anonymous letter had been received at the level of the ICAC and is being investigated.

In view of the serious nature of the matter contained in the letter dated 05 June 2014, I propose that a full-fledged enquiry be conducted by the TEC Board once it is newly constituted to look into the allegations and to make recommendations for any action as may be deemed appropriate by TEC.

ADDIS ABABA - AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT – MAURITIUS REPRESENTATION

(No. B/107) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the 24th African Union Summit, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between 23 and 31 January 2015, he will state -

- (a) who represented Mauritius thereat, and
- (b) the outcome thereof.

Reply (The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade): The 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was held in Addis Ababa from 30 to 31 January 2015. It was preceded by the following meetings -

- Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held on 26 and 27 January 2015; and
- Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) held on 24 and 25 January 2015.

The theme of the Summit was “Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa Agenda 2063”.

The Chargé d’Affaires a.i. of our Embassy in Addis Ababa represented Mauritius at the AU Summit. He was accompanied by the Second Secretary from our Mission.

In addition to the above meetings, the Mauritius delegation also attended the following:

- Meeting of Sherpas on Post 2015-Development Agenda held in the margins of the African Union Summit on 24 and 25 January 2015;
- African Union Ministerial Committee on African Candidatures within the International System on 26 January 2015;
- Twenty Second Summit of the African Peer Review Mechanism held on 29th January 2015; and
- Launch of the African Union Foundation and Ebola Fund.

Various decisions, declarations and resolutions were adopted by the Assembly, amongst others: the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak and cancellation of debt of those countries affected by it, Alternative Sources of Financing of the African Union, the Development of the Agenda 2063, Africa’s engagement at the various international Climate Summits and on Illicit Financial Flows.

I wish to inform the House that the decisions and resolutions have already been circulated to the various Ministries concerned for an effective implementation and follow up action.

I also wish to inform the House that the next Summit of the African Union will be held in June 2015 in South Africa and Mauritius looks forward to an active participation therein.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/121) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Public Procurement Act and related legislation, he will state the amendments he proposes to bring thereto.

Reply: As the House is aware, in its Programme 2015-2019, Government has already expressed its commitment to review the Public Procurement Act in order to -

- (i) make it more transparent with regard to the call for bids for all types of procurement; and
- (ii) Increase accountability of both public bodies and suppliers participating in tender exercises.

The proposed amendments to the Act are currently being worked out and these may form part of Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill in the context of the forthcoming Budget.

PORT LOUIS MARITIME & PORT LOUIS EAST - ROADS

(No. B/138) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the classified roads in Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the urgent –

- (a) cleaning/removal of wastes/soils from the covered blocked drains/canals at -
 - (i) Saint François Xavier Street, from its junction with Madras Street up to Delhi Street, and
 - (ii) Magon Street, towards the Khadafi Square, near the children playground after the Dr. I. Goomany Municipal Centre, to prevent water accumulation during heavy rainfalls, and
- (b) replacement of the covered cross slabs by heavy duty slabs, at Saint François Xavier Street, at its junction with Bombay Street.

Reply: With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Road Development Authority as follows -

- (i) the cleaning of drains and removal of wastes at Saint François Xavier Street has already been completed, and
- (ii) the cleaning of drains along Magon Street is scheduled to be completed on 09 March 2015.

In relation to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Road Development Authority has started to cast off-site new heavy duty slabs. The slabs will be replaced by the end of March.

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE
– CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT**

(No. B/139) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the appointment of Mr V. M. as Chairperson of the National Institute for Co-operative Enterprise Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Committee, information as to –

- (a) his qualifications;
- (b) his address, and
- (c) the allowances and benefits, if any, to which he is entitled.

(Withdrawn)

REGISTRATION DUTY – FIRST-TIME BUYERS - EXEMPTION

(No. B/140) **Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the exemption of registration duty in respect of the first-time buyers, he will state if he will consider the advisability of introducing amendments to the law in relation thereto so as not to restrict the exemption to any price threshold.

Reply: Registration Duty exemption is currently granted to a qualifying first-time buyer provided that the value of the house purchased does not exceed four million rupees. In the case of acquisition of bare land by a first-time buyer, the exemption threshold is set at one million rupees.

The question of reviewing those thresholds, Madam Speaker, is a matter of fiscal policy decision and this is best considered in the context of the current budget exercise. I will, therefore, invite the hon. Member to be patient.

DIABETES – CHILDREN - TREATMENT

(No. B/141) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to diabetes, he will state the number of children presently under treatment in relation thereto, indicating if Government is envisaging a permanent sponsorship of medical treatment for such patients.

Reply: In reply to the first part of the question, I wish to inform the House that according to the National Diabetes Register, there are presently 520 Type 1 diabetic patients, of whom 180 are below the age of 18. As regards Type 2 diabetes, the number of children below 18 years is 36.

In regard to the second part of the question, I wish to emphasise that in Mauritius, health services, at all levels, from primary to tertiary is free of user cost.

I wish to elaborate on the services that are presently provided to diabetic patients. These are namely –

- comprehensive paediatric diabetic management programmes for such patients in all Regional Hospitals;
- support of all activities related to diabetes care by Diabetes Specialist Nurses;
- provision of glucose meters, testing strips as well as latest insulin analogues to all children with Type 1 diabetes aiming at achieving excellent control of blood sugar;
- conduct of open day activities whereby such patients are screened for eye, kidney and cardiac complications. In addition their blood glucose level and oral health are assessed;

- screening of students of Form III, that is between 13 to 14 years and Lower VI, that is between 17 to 18 years for Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) risk factors. Those who are obese with a family history of diabetes are referred for further investigations and follow up, and
- conduct of sensitisation and health education programme on diabetes on a regular basis to both patients and parents.

KENSINGTON, POINTE AUX-SABLES – HOUSING UNITS – TREATMENT PLANT

(No. B/142) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the housing units at Kensington in Pointe-aux-Sables, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to when they will be connected to the treatment plant.

Reply: The hon. Member may refer to the reply made to past Parliamentary Question A/19 on 25 March 2014.

In my reply to PQ B/79 of last Tuesday, I informed the House that the Wastewater Management Authority has completed a detailed topographical survey and a preliminary design in the regions of Terasson, Verger Mangue, Pointe-aux-Sables, Petit Verger and Kensington Place. Based on prevailing rates, the cost for the project is estimated at Rs2.4 billion.

Given its location, the region of Kensington Place can be connected directly to the Montagne Jacquot Wastewater Treatment Plant under a separate project at an estimated cost of Rs80 m. The project duration is some 18 months.

The Wastewater Management Authority will submit the project to the Project Plan Committee for approval and funding.

TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR – QUALITY AUDIT - COMMITTEE

(No. B/143) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the tertiary education sector, she will state if a committee was set up to inquire into the quality audit thereof and, if so, when, indicating –

- (a) the composition thereof, and
- (b) if the committee has completed its inquiry and, if so, will she table copy of the report in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

TEC – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - POST

(No. B/144) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether, in regard to the Tertiary Education Commission, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if the Executive Director thereof has been dismissed and, if so, indicate if the post will be advertised internationally and, if so, when.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/117)

NHDC – SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECTS

(No. B/145) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing projects, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the number of -

- (a) housing units built by the Company island-wide, since 2006 to 2014, and
- (b) house seekers presently enlisted at the Company, indicating the categorisation of the applicants in terms of monthly earnings.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the NHDC that during the period 2006 to 2014, 1,923 housing units have been constructed on 27 sites across the island; and these houses have already been allocated.

As for part (b) of the question, 39,573 households have registered themselves at the NHDC for a housing unit. The breakdown of their monthly household income is as follows -

- i. 11,992 draw a monthly household income of less than Rs6,199;

- ii. 14,123 draw a monthly household income between Rs6,200 and Rs10,000;
- iii. 8,157 have a monthly household income between Rs10,001 and Rs14,999;
- iv. 3,043 households have a monthly income between Rs15,000 and Rs19,999;
- v. 1,179 have a monthly income between Rs20,000 and Rs24,999;
- vi. 492 draw a monthly income between Rs25,000 and Rs29,999, and
- vii. the remaining 587 households are families with monthly household income of Rs30,000 and above.

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - HOUSING UNITS

(No. B/146) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the housing problem in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to -

(a) the number of -

(i) housing units built by the Company thereat, since 2006 to 2014, and

(ii) applicants living thereat seeking a housing unit from the Company, and

(b) if the Company has any project for the construction of housing units and, if so, indicate in which region/s.

Reply: With regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the NHDC that during the 8-year period from 2006 to 2014, the Company has constructed 120 housing units on two sites in Constituency No. 14, namely in Bambous (78 units) and Camp La Colle (42 units).

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, 1,681 families living in that Constituency have applied to the NHDC for a housing unit.

With regard to part (b) of the question, about future housing projects in Constituency No. 14, three sites namely Bassin-Quatre Bornes, Cascavelle and La Gaulette have been identified. The NHDC is presently working on a project proposal for the construction of some 200 housing

units on those sites. In consultation with the MSPA and Medine Sugar Estate, other suitable sites are being prospected for future housing development in that Constituency.

PAILLES TREATMENT PLANT - REHABILITATION

(No. B/147) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Rehabilitation and Modernisation of the Pailles Treatment Plant Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand, indicating the improvement expected thereof that will be brought to the distribution of potable water in the region of Port Louis as a result thereof.

Reply: The works at the Pailles Water Treatment Plant consist of the upgrading of the existing 30,000m³/day slow sand filters and the construction of a new Rapid Gravity Filter of capacity 80,000m³/day. Works started in July 2013 and the contractual completion date is 14 March 2015.

I am, however, informed by the Central Water Authority that the plant will now be commissioned by end April 2015.

I am further informed that, according to the contractor, the delay is due to -

- (i) the late delivery of the Mechanical and Electrical equipment as a result of cyclone Bansi, and
- (ii) the procurement of the filtration sand following a ban on the export of sand by the Saudi Authorities. The sand is now being procured from India and will be delivered by end March 2015.

The new plant will treat 80,000 m³/day at a higher turbidity condition of 400 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units) as compared to 15 NTU presently. It will ensure an uninterrupted water supply in the region Port Louis, more importantly during and after periods of heavy rain when the turbidity of water in the Grand River North West is excessively high.