



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 12 AUGUST 2016

CONTENTS

QUESTION (*Oral*)

ANNOUNCEMENT

MOTION

BILL (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

THE CABINET

(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)

Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Santaram Baboo	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain, GCSK	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Pannoo, Mr Vinod

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 26 of 2016

Sitting of 12 August 2016

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 3.00 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOUNDATION – SETTING UP

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility, he will state -

- (a) the obligations of the companies in 2015 in respect thereof and, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount of unspent money thereof available thereat as at to date, indicating if some companies are presently in arrears thereof;
- (b) the total amount of money thereof granted to the Non-Governmental Organisations in the years 2014 and 2015 respectively and to the Lovebridge Company Limited as at to date, and
- (c) how and when the proposed National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation will be set up, indicating –
 - (i) the proposed composition of the Board thereof;
 - (ii) the proposed percentage of Corporate Social Responsibility money of the companies that will be remitted thereto;
 - (iii) if the draft guidelines thereof are available, and
 - (iv) what will be the role of the Mauritius Revenue Authority in relation thereto.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Madam Speaker, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) system was introduced in the Income Tax Act in 2009, whereby companies were required to devote 2% of their profits for carrying out CSR activities under approved programmes as per published guidelines. In my Budget Speech of November 2010 at paragraph 333, I stated the following, and I quote -

“To this end, we are reviewing the utilisation of CSR. Our aim is to focus on the most urgent problems so as to maximise the social benefits and ensure national coverage. We will, therefore, use 50 per cent of the CSR resources to focus on the three National Programmes. Government will add to the CSR resources to implement these three programmes which are -

- Social Housing
- Welfare of Children from Vulnerable Groups
- Eradication of Absolute Poverty.”

In July 2015 all CSR guidelines were removed and companies were allowed to use their CSR funds according to their own CSR framework.

Madam Speaker, during the pre-budget consultations, numerous representations were received from civil society organisations concerning the operation of the CSR system. The main criticisms levelled were as follows -

- lack of focus on poverty alleviation and assistance to vulnerable groups (diversion from the original objectives);
- arbitrariness and lack of transparency in the allocation of CSR funds by companies;
- difficulty in accessing funds by some deserving NGOs and other civil society organisations;
- in the absence of guidelines, there had been a proliferation of all types of organisations and clubs just to benefit from the CSR funds, and
- lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of CSR programmes and activities.

There have been many instances where the CSR funds were not directed to the support of vulnerable groups. After giving careful consideration of the representations received and after assessing the current system, I announced a new CSR Framework in the Budget 2016/17 with a view to ensuring greater transparency and better outcomes in the implementation of CSR programmes.

Madam Speaker, concerning part (a) of the question, according to provisions in the law, the CSR obligations of companies in 2015 were as follows -

- every company shall in every year set up a CSR Fund equivalent to 2 per cent of its chargeable income of the preceding year to implement a CSR Programme in accordance with its own CSR framework;
- ‘CSR programme’ means a programme having as its objects the alleviation of poverty, the relief of sickness or disability, the advancement of education of vulnerable persons or the promotion of any other public object beneficial to the Mauritian community;

- a company shall submit to the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) as an annex to its return of income a statement showing the amount of CSR spent and the details of the CSR projects implemented by the company during the income year, and
- the unspent balance has to be remitted to the MRA.

The unspent Corporate Social Responsibility money collected by MRA is transferred to the Consolidated Fund within one week of collection. Thus, MRA does not hold any such funds at its level. The unspent CSR money collected by MRA and remitted to the Consolidated Fund to date is as follows -

- fiscal Year 2014 - Rs166.5 m.;
- from January 2015 to June 2015 – Rs55.8 m., and
- fiscal year 2015/16 – Rs147.5 m.

Regarding the question of whether there are some companies which are in arrears, I am informed by the MRA that there are some companies which are in arrears and the detailed figures are, in fact, being compiled. Anyway, MRA has all the statutory powers for enforcement and recovery of unpaid tax, including CSR money.

With regard to part (b) of the question, for the year 2014 under the previous CSR guidelines, companies and Foundations with a CSR Fund of Rs500,000 and above, must seek prior approval of their Corporate Programme/projects from the CSR Committee, including the NGOs involved.

I am informed that in 2014, out of a total amount of Rs336 m. of approved CSR programmes, an amount of Rs124 m. was meant for NGOs. It must be stressed that these relate only to big companies with a CSR Fund above Rs500,000. However, there is no information available as regards projects and grants to NGOs by companies with CSR Fund of less than Rs500,000.

Concerning 2015, since removal of the guidelines, the CSR Committee has no information with regard to funds made available to NGOs. However, the Income Tax Act was amended to provide for companies to submit as an annex to its return of income tax a statement showing the amount of CSR spent and the details of the CSR projects implemented by the company during the income year.

The information for the income year 2015/16 will be available only after all companies would have submitted their returns by 31 December this year.

As has been explained in reply to PQ B/522 of 07 June 2016, a one-off amount of Rs100 m. has been paid as seed capital to Lovebridge Ltd. in January 2016 from the Consolidated Fund.

In addition, Government is providing direct financial support to NGOs yearly from the Consolidated Fund as follows -

- Fiscal Year 2014 – Rs235 m.
- 6 months budget (January 2015– June 2015) – Rs106.5 m.
- Fiscal Year 2015/16 – Rs245 m.
- Fiscal Year 2016/17 – Rs293 m.

With regard to part (c) (i) of the question, the new National CSR Foundation will be under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. It will be managed by a Board of Directors, comprising a Chairperson, members from the private sector, public sector and civil society. It will be set up after the Finance Bill has been passed and it will be fully operational before January 2017.

With regard to part (c) (ii) of the question, businesses will be required to contribute, through MRA, at least 50% of their CSR money to the new National CSR Foundation at the start of their next accounting year, for example, for companies with accounting period ending 31 December 2016, the new CSR framework will be applicable as from 01 January 2017. The rate of contribution will be changed to at least 75% in the following year.

With regard to part (c) (iii) of the question, the guidelines will include the six priority areas of intervention as stated in the Budget Speech and are as follows -

- Poverty Alleviation – targeting families in the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM);
- Educational Support – targeting families in the SRM;
- Social Housing – targeting families in the SRM;
- Supporting persons with severe disabilities;
- Dealing with health problems resulting from substance abuse and poor sanitation, and
- Family protection, that is, protection to victims of domestic violence.

The detailed guidelines will be finalised by the National CSR Foundation after undertaking consultations with stakeholders concerned. With regard to part (c) (iv) of the question, the MRA will act as an agent for collection of the CSR money and its recovery on behalf of the National CSR Foundation.

Any unspent balance of CSR money should be remitted at the time of submission of annual income tax return to MRA as per the current practice. The money collected by the MRA will be channelled to the National CSR Foundation and no longer to the Consolidated Fund.

There will be a possibility for a company or its foundation to continue using its CSR money on an existing or a new CSR Programme, provided it fits within the six priority areas, and is approved by the National CSR Foundation.

Mr Bérenger: Maybe, I missed that part of the reply from the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

If only that was true for the present!

On 29 September 2015, we were provided with the figure for total amount of CSR money collected from all companies. I did not hear the hon. Minister give us a figure. Is there any reason why?

Mr Jugnauth: The total amount of CSR, I have for calendar year. I can give for 2014. It is Rs842 m. and for 2015, it is Rs756 m. Now, there are part of that money that forms part of the expenditure by companies and part of the money are collected by the MRA; those that are not spent on programmes and projects.

Mr Bérenger: The total amount of money collected by the MRA from all the companies under the CSR legislation had kept on increasing year after year. Has the hon. Minister looked why in 2015 it has gone down as compared to 2014?

Mr Jugnauth: The amount that has been collected by the MRA was more in 2010 and it was less afterwards, and slightly more and then less, and it has increased also. From 2014, I have figure for the calendar year, Rs166 m. and for 2015, Rs126 m.

(Interruptions)

Yes, unspent!

Mr Bérenger: No, I am asking about the total amount. The figure which the hon. Minister has just given means that less CSR money was collected by the MRA in 2015 as compared to 2014. My question is whether you have looked into to have an explanation?

Mr Jugnauth: It has varied, Madam Speaker. Well, of course, the difference, we have not looked into as to why at certain times there has been an increase and at other times there has been a decrease. I believe it is mainly due to the fact that there are certain years where more money has been used in allocating to certain programmes and more money has been used to allocate to certain NGOs. That is why the amount which has been handed over to MRA has also varied.

Mr Bérenger: I think this is wrong. The total amount of money collected by the MRA is before it is used for this or that purpose. It collects all the money. Well, never mind! On the second part of my question, I have heard that unspent CSR money is more or less automatically transferred to the Consolidated Fund. Can I ask the hon. Minister - if he does not have the figure, he can tell us later - in 2014 and 2015, the total amount of unspent CSR funds that was transferred from the MRA to the Consolidated Fund?

Mr Jugnauth: For fiscal year 2014, it was Rs166.5 m., and then we had this six-month period for the Budget January 2015 to June 2015, Rs55.8 m. and then for fiscal year 01 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, Rs147.5 m.

Mr Bérenger: Can I move on to the next question? I take it from what I heard that Rs100 m. has been transferred to Lovebridge Co. Ltd. - paid from what I heard. If that is confirmed, can I ask the hon. Minister - because heavy pressure was put by the former Minister of Finance on all companies to join Lovebridge and to pay into Lovebridge - whether the Ministry has looked into the amount of money that the companies paying CSR money in general have indeed paid into Lovebridge? Because my information is that it is less than 5%.

Mr Jugnauth: Well, Madam Speaker, I can recall that at one time when the question was put by an hon. Member and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister had answered, it was, in fact, really very little money. I can't recall the amount, but it was very little money. But what I have been informed is that, in fact, there is commitment from a list of a number of companies. I know that the former Minister of Finance had tabled in the past, a list of those companies. I have the list. As to how much each one of them has, as at to date, contributed, I will need to find the information and to furnish to the House later on.

Mr Bérenger: Can I move on to the National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation? Can I take it that, in fact, that will be set up by way of an Act of Parliament and, if yes, whether the required legislation will be before the House before the end of the session or, at least, before the end of the year?

Mr Jugnauth: I have stated in my answer that we are going to include it in the Finance Bill so that the required legislation will be amended and after which, therefore, the Foundation will be set up.

Mr Bérenger: As far as the Foundation itself is concerned, of course, there will be a Chairperson and there will be a Board. Can I know whether the Board thereof will be chaired by Government side, by public sector side or by the private sector side and whether the public sector side or the private sector side will have a majority on the Board?

Mr Jugnauth: I am open to any suggestions, Madam Speaker, because I must say the whole purpose of reviewing this CSR framework is because through consultations and through a number of written representations and also we have checked, we found out that a lot of money was being channelled to objects which are far from the CSR guidelines. Therefore, I have been in consultation with both the private sector and the NGOs – not all of them, of course, but with some and very serious ones. We had discussions with my colleague, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, and we are open. We will listen and see what is best in the interest of fighting poverty and whatever we have stated in the guidelines.

Mr Bérenger: I congratulate the Minister on this frame of mind and I take it that NGOs will be fully consulted as he has just said before decisions are taken concerning the Chairperson and the composition of the Board, the majority.

The key issue which I would like to raise, Madam Speaker, is to ask the following to the hon. Minister. He made the Budget Speech, the choice of words are his. When we say that first year, at least 50% of CSR money will go to that Foundation and the second year, at least 75% - this can mean anything – can mean a 100%. So, why this choice of word and what does the Minister have in mind at least 50%, but especially at least 75%, does it mean that we can have a situation where the whole of CSR money goes to the Foundation?

Mr Jugnauth: Let me say that it is not the intention of Government to have the whole of the CSR to be managed by the Foundation, but, as I said, again because what we have seen when the guidelines were removed, the amount of money that has been spent, left, right and

centre I would say, I think it is appropriate to have – it is going to be 50% for the year and for the next financial year, as I have stated, 75%. But we would wish that the companies also play their role. They have, at least, the liberty of deciding on how they are going to spend this 25% that will remain.

Let me also add why is it that we have required 50% and we are moving up to 75%. There is one sector in order to be able to provide social housing for the very poor, unfortunately, there are very few companies which are involved in that and I do understand also because it requires resources in order to be able to build houses. That is why we need to pool all available resources in order to, at least, alleviate the burden of the very poor for social housing.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of the dramatic situation that has developed since that statement that at least 50% first year will go to the Foundation to be set up and at least 75% the dramatic situation that has arisen is that a lot of companies are withholding all actions, are not contributing any more to NGOs and are pending because they don't know what is going to happen and that puts NGOs and other sectors in a terrible situation. So, is the hon. Minister prepared to ask the companies concerned that they should apply some form of *moratoire*, that is, in the meantime until the Foundation legislation comes up, that they should stick to the *status quo* until we see clearer in the situation, but that everything should not be put on hold and put the NGOs and the others in a very difficult situation?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, indeed, Madam Speaker, I have taken note of that concern by the NGOs and a number of companies also. I have been discussing with the private sector. That is why yesterday, we publicised on the website of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and we have also given information to the media so that they can at least inform the public about the different steps that we are taking in order to establish this new system. I can reassure the companies and the NGOs also, civil society, that as I have stated, for the accounting period which is going to end on 31 December 2016, the new framework will apply as from next year. Therefore, from now till the end of this year, they will still be able to operate their funds. I will also add that those NGOs – because I have had representations that what will happen also after that - which are, of course, *bona fide*, which are serious, will be able to accede funds afterwards from the Foundation also.

Mr Bérenger: My last question before I leave the floor to others because they have a great interest in that subject, rightly so. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

I apologise! This is again wishful thinking for the present only.

Before you had CSR guidelines and a CSR Committee set up by law to apply those guidelines, last year, the then Minister of Finance did away with all this, *d'un trait de plume*, but, in the meantime, the MRA had to collect money and abide by the law. Therefore, is the hon. Minister aware that MRA rightly discussed with the private sector and came to an agreement on a text corporate CSR framework to act as guidelines being given those guidelines had been thrown overboard? Is that agreement between the MRA and the private sector on corporate CSR framework going also to be taken on board?

Mr Jugnauth: I haven't had a look at this document, but I believe it is the document which normally the MRA issues so that it facilitates the companies to put all the information whenever they are going to do their returns so that the MRA has all the facts and figures, whether they are complying with the law. So, I believe this is the document.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, in his Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development stated that the money endowed to the Foundation will be allocated to support civil society actions in six priority areas which are listed in his Budget Speech. So, may I know from the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether this Foundation will only allocate money to existing NGOs or would carry out projects on its own and whether this priority will be amended to at least include sports?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I thank the hon. Member for that question because let me say what is going to be the key roles and the functions of the National CSR Foundation. They will undertake programmes and projects for the benefit of the vulnerable groups. They will also allocate CSR funds in light with the specific guidelines that I have mentioned. They will be monitoring and evaluating the CSR programmes that are being proposed by the different companies or NGOs and they will also serve as a platform for coordination and communication amongst all the stakeholders.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In a past Parliamentary Question that the then Finance Minister stated to the House, apart from having transferred Rs100 m. in

Lovebridge, Lovebridge also recruited some 25 staff and also that Lovebridge would submit the annual progress report on its activities and programmes. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Finance Minister what has happened to these Rs100 m. which have been transferred from the Consolidated Fund, how much has been spent, what will happen to the staff and whether there are any report which has been prepared and tabled by the Lovebridge company?

Mr Jugnauth: The information that I have is that 30 professional social workers have been recruited in May 2016. All these social workers have been trained on the Lovebridge methods during the months of June and July and surveys also are being carried out in the different regions of the country. I understand that 200 eligible families have been identified, that is, around 1,000 persons and that some 45 presentations in companies and the general public have been made to inform of the potential *accompagneurs* on the project details. By March 2017, some 200 *cellules* will be in place and an *accompagnement* programme of the beneficiary families will be launched.

Now, I must say that this is an ongoing programme. These Rs100 m. have been given as seed money, but there is the Lovebridge Board which has come up with all the guidelines and the ways of how it is going to move forward. It is a long-term process. So, it is not as if it is for one year, it is ongoing and they will be receiving money, as I have said, from the number of companies which have committed to give financing to this project.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Madam Speaker, on the same line of hon. Uteem, I notice that, in the Budget Speech 2016, regarding the CSR Foundation, no mention was made in object for sports, education, scientific research and environment. May I suggest respectfully that these be included in the objects for the CSR Foundation when it is set up?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, for these objects, Madam Speaker, it is not that we are not taking care of these issues. They are going to be taken care of, but under different items. For example, we have the Loto Fund which we are going to set up to cater for sports activities and other activities. So, we want to be focused on the fight against poverty and that is why we believe that together with the private sector, in the years to come, I am convinced that we will be able to do a lot together. For the other objects there are other funds that have been earmarked.

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

Mr Bérenger: Thank you. To a final question to the hon. Minister, in the past matters relating to the CSR were lost somewhere in the Finance Bill and circulated at the last minute as amendments to section 50 of the Income Tax Act. If we want to do a good job, can I make the request to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development that the Finance Bill in general, but especially that part, should be circulated as early as possible, because we have to look at the fine print, it is a very complicated issue. Therefore, for everybody to have a chance before the Finance Bill is voted - in a rush as usual - that this be circulated early so that we have time to do our work also and take into consideration all the points that have been raised today?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, of course. I believe that Cabinet would be deciding on the Finance Bill pretty soon and that ample time will be given for all Members to look at the different provisions so that we have an interesting debate in the House.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

ANNOUNCEMENT

MRS SAFIA ELMI DJIBRIL, VICE-PRESIDENT – PANAFRICAN PARLIAMENT – OFFICIAL VISIT

Madam Speaker: Honorables membres, j'ai l'honneur de vous annoncer la présence parmi nous cet après-midi de l'honorable Safia Elmi Djibril, deuxième Vice-présidente du Parlement panafricain.

Madame la Vice-présidente est en visite officielle chez nous dans le cadre d'une campagne auprès des pays membres du Parlement panafricain de la région de l'Afrique de l'Est pour la ratification du protocole à l'acte constitutif de l'Union Africaine relatif au Parlement panafricain.

En vos noms et en mon nom personnel, je souhaite à Madame la Vice-présidente un agréable et fructueux séjour à Maurice.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL 2016 (No. XVII of 2016)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2016-2017) Bill 2016 (No. XVII of 2016).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(3.37 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: *Laissez-moi, Madame la présidente, souhaiter la bienvenue à nos illustres invités du Parlement panafricain.*

Madam Speaker, when I had the occasion to comment on the Budget a few weeks ago I said that I thought - and I mean it - that the Budget is *excellent dans la forme et dans le fond*. I mean it, Madam Speaker because I like this Budget. I like it because it has been well drafted in clear language, the speech was well delivered; that is for *la forme*. As far as the *fond* is concerned, Madam Speaker, - and this is important - the Budget is comprehensive. It is coherent and to me, it is also innovative.

Now, this Budget has had the rare privilege of being complimented by all sides of the House. Very rare, Madam Speaker! Very rare, I don't know if it is a record!

(Interruptions)

It has been complimented by all sides of the House. And, it is all to the credit of our Minister of Finance and Economic Development who is nowadays, I see, being accredited as the Prime Minister even the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. So, it is all agreement everywhere I see, Madam Speaker. But...

(Interruptions)

Sorry?

(Interruptions)

No, not at all!

(Interruptions)

Not at all!

(Interruptions)

I think, Madam Speaker, if there is one guy whose *le coeur fer mal*, it must be the Leader of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

...who has been sitting there for the last 12 years, Madam Speaker! That must really make *le coeur fer mal* whereas I have been here very comfortable, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

So, let us carry on.

So, the compliment has been made, Madam Speaker, by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, himself, which is proudly accepted by the whole of Government because the Budget, after all, is a sum total of the policies of this Government for the next year and forward. So, when the Leader of the Opposition, himself, finds it *intéressant*, we proudly accept that compliment! *C'est un certificat de haute compétence que le Chef de l'opposition donne à l'ensemble du gouvernement et je lui dirai merci pour cela.*

Madam Speaker, why do I say it is important for the Budget to be comprehensive? Because Mauritius is a complex society, the Budget needs to be comprehensive; the Budget needs to be inclusive. In the Mauritian context and I will take also the global context to make my point, *la nation arc-en-ciel* means, Madam Speaker, that no one should be left out.

We know that during the Budget Speech, the whole nation sits in front of the television and everybody waits to see whether he is in there somewhere, he has been mentioned somewhere. Madam Speaker, for the various religions in Mauritius, everybody watches to see if the Budget is biased, if the Budget is skewed, if the Budget has given more to this guy than to my lot etc.

I must say and this is a compliment again to the Minister of Finance, Madam Speaker, that the Budget is very comprehensive and very exclusive. Honestly, I can find no preference to this group or to that group. Everybody finds himself and it is really a Budget of equal opportunities. Why it is important, Madam Speaker, because we have the greatest asset in Mauritius. I will take you later as far as tourism is concerned. Our greatest asset is peace. The peace that we have, the external inter-communal relationship that we have is our greatest asset in Mauritius in this trouble time. The world is not getting any safer. The world is

getting more dangerous. How pleasing it was when a few weeks back, us, Mauritians, when we looked at the new Global Peace Index coming and we find that only 10 countries in the world have been found to be free of conflict. A little Mauritius, with so many religions, with so many communities is one of these 10 countries that have been listed – I do not know how many countries there are in that index. One country in ten and that is Mauritius, Madam Speaker. We all need to be proud of that.

We need, Madam Speaker, to maintain that because as we move forward to become a regional powerhouse, peace and security is going to be even more important, Madam Speaker, than anything. We have very friendly people, peace loving people and this is the point where I want to come to? Peace also depends, Madam Speaker, on the judicial system and on the Police force. These are the people that need to uphold law and order and the rule of law. I, therefore, maintain, Madam Speaker, that our future economic success, of course, depends on projects. Of course, it depends on the right tax incentives, But to have sustainable economic development - I lay emphasis on 'sustainable' not a flash in the pound - it can only happen when it is underpinned by quality institutions. The institutional setup of this country, of such quality can propel Mauritius to where we want to be, that is, a modern high income country. A first world country, Madam Speaker does not exist with second or third world institution. A first world country only exists with first world institutions and this is the same point, Madam Speaker, that I raised last year because I believed truly in this.

As far as law and order is concerned, Madam Speaker, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister during the year set up a Committee to brainstorm on law and order. I chaired it. There were many, many senior Ministers. It was important that we looked at the effectiveness and efficiency of the Police force in that context because he needs to crack down on crime and petty crimes. We all see how many serious crimes there are also, Madam Speaker. Crimes also affect the quality of life, but it affects also our economy and affects our ability to grow and this is why I am talking about it here in the budget which is basically social, but also most importantly economic.

If we want to become a regional centre or if we want to become a financial centre, a port city, ICT where we can talk about cybercrime, you name it, Madam Speaker, crime and law and order is an issue. Of course, you need punishment and that is obvious. But enforcement, Madam Speaker, is crucial. Before I start on this section, I would like to pay tribute to our Police force because they are doing an excellent job in a very difficult context. Madam Speaker, our policemen must be respected on the streets. The public must respect our

policemen. Madam Speaker, when we looked at the situation, we thought it was urgent that the Police get better training in Mauritius. Let me take an example. When we compared what was happening in Germany, that is, the training that is given in Germany and what pertains here in Mauritius. In Germany, Madam Speaker, before a Police constable goes on active duty, he has two and a half years of formal training and in Mauritius, it is six months. Obvious isn't it that the German police officer when he goes on the first day of duty, he is not going to have the same ability as our own local bobby. It is not going to be possible.

Madam Speaker, I did not want to miss the point that the Minister of Finance included in the budget, a section on providing better training to the Police. It is important, Madam Speaker. We are far behind in my view in terms of the length and quality of training that we give to our Police force as compared to what happens in other developed countries, Madam Speaker. That is, therefore, the German model. But apart from training when we travel, we see Policemen in Europe everywhere. The equipment, the baton, the *taser*, the guns, the radios, handcuffs and everything which they are equipped to do the work, but when we look at our own policemen, if you look at them, sometimes all they have is their own uniforms on them. That is all they have. They just have to respect their uniform and nothing else. Sometimes, when there is trouble what will happen, they just look away because they have nothing to cope. They do not even have a pepper spray very often. So, Madam Speaker, again Rs115 m. has been put in the budget and I thank the hon. Minister of Finance for that because it is important that our policemen are respected in the streets like any worker, whether he is a carpenter, a mason or a an accountant, he has to have the tools and the training to do the jobs otherwise he will not be able. You can have 50,000 policemen and they will not be able to do the job if they do not have the proper training and if anything happens, they will just look the other way because that's all they have been given, the equipment or the training to do.

Madam Speaker, we look forward through this budget to a better trained and better equipped Police force. Madam Speaker, law and order is important. Would you go today to a great tourist destination, Kenya, when you know the Boko Haram can shoot you at any time? Probably you wouldn't go. If you have to choose between Johannesburg and Cape Town for holidays where will you go, Madam Speaker? Cape Town! Would you go to Egypt? You probably would not go these days.

(Interruptions)

We will go and have a look, Prime Minister. We need a holiday.

So, this is the importance of the institutions in economic development. I talked about that, but then we can also go to health. We had the Chikungunya crisis which has affected my industry very much in 2008. A country next to us had the plague some time ago. Would you go there to do anything, business or work or tourism if there is a plague? So, health institution, environment, Madam Speaker, I do not want to go too long into this. I am just saying, Madam Speaker, that we need to look closely at the quality of our institutions if we want to go forward and have a 5% or 6% growth that this country deserves and that this country can achieve, Madam Speaker.

Now, as far as my own industry is concerned, tourism, I just wanted to say that at the start of this new Government, we had good tourism rates and people were saying that it was a flash in the pan. It must be some coincidence that *l'oiseau de bon augure* that this has happened but, in fact, it is not. When you look at the growth rate - I will take a few minutes to talk about the importance of numbers and also quality - and at the social growth in 2015, last year, there is 10.8% growth in the number of tourists.

2016 up to date, we, again, Madam Speaker, have double-digit growth. Fantastic! When you compare my predecessor, from 2011 to 2014 - I was not in the Ministry of Tourism - the growth in numbers, Madam Speaker, on average, was not higher than 2%. From 2011 to 2014, 2% on average and, from then on, Madam Speaker, there is a surge in tourism. And, of course, we have taken the commitment of the Prime Minister and the whole Government in terms of bringing greater prosperity, bringing greater development, seriously. Madam Speaker, the growth in tourism has, of course, contributed to the overall 3.4-3.5% growth rate of the economy over 2015. In fact, if there had been no growth in tourism - it is good that I say that, because it is not obvious all the time - we wouldn't have even 3% growth. So, it is important to say that we are contributing fully to the commitment of the Government for greater economic prosperity.

What is also important, Madam Speaker, is that, when we arrived, we decided to change the concept of tourism; one of ever greater number of hotel rooms, chasing too few tourists, to another paradigm where we would look at the product itself. Let us get the quality of the product right and the tourists will follow. That is what happened. Now, Madam Speaker, airlines are queuing up to come to Mauritius because everybody wants to come to

Mauritius, for whatever reason, but mainly because the product is an excellent one, offering great value for money.

Obviously, we don't look only at numbers coming. We do prefer one million tourists staying eleven days or maybe 500,000 tourists staying 20 days. In fact, it does not matter. It is too short sighted to look only at arrivals. There are many, many other parameters that need to be looked at like the room rates that are being charged by hotels; tourism spend; the length of stay. All these are relevant parameters that we take into account, and we felt that the product – when we came into this Government – was continually decreasing in quality, the room rates were falling and the quality of the tourists in Mauritius was falling. We were not the head of tourism in Mauritius. That is why we announced the moratorium in hotel openings for two years, but with the very high number of tourists' arrivals, Madam Speaker, six months early, we said, "Okay, no more need for moratorium because, in fact, we have reached our goal of equating and giving equilibrium to supply and demand in the tourism industry."

Now, we feel that, to fuel the growth in the future years, we need something like 600 to 800 additional rooms annually. But we need to bear in mind, Madam Speaker, the fact that Mauritians also have a legitimate right to enjoy the beaches. It is one of the only three leisure activities that exist in Mauritius. You go and sit on the beach and no one will charge you for it. So, it is free. It is open to the public and it is greatly enjoyed by the public. So, we do need to bear that in mind. In next two years, we are not likely to have any substantial hotel openings, because it takes about two years for hotels to be built and opened. We have had several applications and we have looked at this very carefully, with always in mind the quality of the product.

There was one hotel application near the airport. He wanted to build a three star hotel. He was insisting and said, "I want a three star hotel." I said, "No, forget it - I don't think he was even a Mauritian -, you are not going to get that." In the end, he changed his mind. He agreed with us, and he is building a 4-star hotel. This is to our advantage. We are getting a better product from the same investor, and we will continue, Madam Speaker, to encourage a quality hotel development in Mauritius.

But what does it mean, - the fact that the growth rates are increasing; probably, in the next two years, there is nothing much in the pipe line for hotels - for the rest of the para-hotel industry? This is important to understand, because apart from hotels, there are 900 tourists'

residences in Mauritius. They belong to every one; you and I, *les Mauriciens moyens, la classe moyenne*. They own bungalows, they own apartments - and a few hon. Members here too probably. So, Madam Speaker, over the next few years, in my mind, it could be, if we play it right, the golden age of democratisation also of the tourism industry, because we will try our best to fill all these villas and apartments that belong to the ordinary Mauritians, where the ordinary Mauritians can directly benefit also from the hotel industry. But, of course, we need to encourage them to be up to international norms. We need to encourage them to support high quality, and I will ask MTPA and the Tourism Industry to fully support this sector, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, *un autre défi que nous avons eu à relever a été la basse saison* or what we used to call. I try not to call it '*la basse saison*' anymore because the hotel industry in Mauritius is not seasonal. The hotels are there all year, they are opened all year. In some countries, the staff is fired during the low season. In Mauritius, we keep the staff, we keep the rooms; everything is still open. So, any additional tourists that you can get during the months of May to September, it is money in the bank for the hotels, money in the bank for the exchequer, money in the bank for everyone. It is pure win-win situation. So, we have tried very hard to develop the low season, and I must say we have been successful in this. I have just been looking at the figures for May, June, and July of this year – August is just starting. We brought to Mauritius 54,000 additional tourists compared to two years ago. 54,000 additional tourists just in those three months! That represents, if you multiply by the tourism spend, about Rs2.7 billion that has come to the Mauritian economy. That would not have come, had we not decided to fully develop the low season, and we are winning the battle for the low season. We have a campaign called Mauritius 365, which is a winter season campaign internationally, and the aim is to bring additional people mainly in the low season because in the high season we are usually quite full anyway. Now, what are the threats to this sector? It is a very fragile sector. *Nous ne sommes jamais à l'abri des imprévus dans le tourisme*. We are never safe from calamities: natural, health, environmental, ecological; you name it. In fact, I am very grateful to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for having set up a Ministry for disaster management, because we are never safe in tourism or generally from disasters these days.

Safety and security will remain our main concern and probably the main threat to the tourism industry in Mauritius and around the world. It is our main concern and our main threat. You may remember, Madam Speaker, the Irish girl who was sadly killed in a hotel in

the north of the island. That actually destroyed that hotel group completely. It was called the Naiade Group. It even had to change its name. Such was the impact, and in a way, we were fortunate that it was not from one of our main markets. It was an Irish girl from Ireland, obviously, and the effect was a bit limited to Ireland. Had it been from France, UK or Germany, the effect could have been devastating. So, security is extremely important. Safety is extremely important. This is why, as far as safety is concerned this time in the lagoons, the lagoons of Pereybère and of Mon Choisy have now become virtually boat free, and people can use it safe from the threats of speedboats going up and down.

Now, following the tragic accident at Grande Rivière Sud Est, we have been called upon to look again at the whole boat sector in Mauritius. *Il fallait mettre de l'ordre, Madame la présidente.* I think we were sitting on a bit of a time bomb, to tell you frankly. Over the years, these boats had been licenced, left, right and centre, and sooner or later, there was going to be a problem. We had to look at all this. It has taken a lot of time to look all this. We brought in international experts. I expect that there will be some resistance to that because every meaningful change brings resistance. I know there will be resistance, but Government is determined to have its way so that, in fact, we can minimise any accident or loss of life at sea because that will dramatically affect the future of the tourism industry which employs directly and indirectly some 120,000 people. So, the new boat regulations will be coming into effect in the next few days. We have had wide consultations with all stakeholders, we have talked to them. Obviously, they will find it difficult to accept change. They are going to complain why we reduce the capacity. In fact, we are reducing the capacity because, according to international norms, this capacity has to be reduced, especially taking into account some of the very rough seas that we have around Mauritius, especially the East and North of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, in addition to reducing the capacity of craft, we will be asking for life rafts for the bigger capacity boats. For the environment, there will be ecological toilets and so on and so forth, better training also for the skippers. So, there will be some resistance, Madam Speaker, but you may have heard of the famous saying –

"Change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end."

And we want to get to the gorgeous part, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, what is the future of the tourism industry? The future of the tourism industry, as we have it, with our new markets, like China, India, Middle East, Africa; the

future of the tourism industry is not just hotels, but attractions also, Madam Speaker, because citizens from these countries may not want just to bathe in the sun all the year; also, there is not a lot of sun during winter. So, the future of our tourism industry will be based on excellent hotels to move into many more attractions, many more places where tourists can spend their money, whether it is in duty free, whether it is in restaurants, we want to provide, Madam Speaker, what tourists love to do. We want to be able to provide that, especially as I mentioned for new markets. We have hopefully a great new aquarium that would come up in Port Louis. Hopefully, we can find somewhere to put a cable car and we would also promote new restaurants. We are talking of Shanghai Chefs so that they can come and help us upgrade these wonderful Chinese restaurants that we have, but we are still not of the sort of quality that there is in China or Hong Kong. There is money in the Budget; we want better museums; we want art galleries and we want more leisure parks. That is the future of our tourism industry and we will welcome any new investment in that sector because it is really going to be a win win for the country and, hopefully, for the investors also.

Here, Madam Speaker, I would like, once again, to thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for removing the strange clause that was allowing local authorities to charge up to 10% of the turnover on certain attractions and entertainment in the regions. Can you imagine 10% of turnover usually goes to a 100% or more of profits! So, this was the level of taxation that could be imposed by certain local authority. That is now being removed and it is a good thing because what we want is for people, tourists, etc. to be able - not to invade, maybe not the right word – but to go to towns and villages, help to develop these economies.

I'll make an appeal to Village Councils, District Councils, local authorities, not just to contend themselves with picking up rubbish and fixing the lights, and even they don't do that all the time, but they should promote business and activities in their area. If they have good restaurants, they should promote them, ask people to come and visit, ask people to come and dine, make some advertising, some promotion. This is the same for villages, etc. Let us have so many places that have so many attractions.

Last time, I was in Plaine Verte. When we go to any Asian place, Madam Speaker, we look for these souks. We would like to see whether we can get a bargain or buy a chain of gold or something. We like that. That is what the tourists want. They don't always want just to go to the supermarket. So, let us try and see whether in Plaine Verte we can develop that, and we can! I would like to talk to the local authority, my friend the *Lord-maire* and

everybody else and the Minister of Local Government so that we can develop. I will see the MPs of the region. We can develop and give real economic value to some of the really exotic places that we have in Mauritius. That is also our aim. That is why I was so sad when we were talking about imposing this tax which now is going to be a thing of the past, Madam Speaker.

Another area where we have been very successful is in cruise tourism. In 2014, there were hardly any cruise tourists coming to Mauritius. Hardly anyone came. When I talk about cruise tourism there are two types: the regional tourism, that is, the boat just stays in a region, it goes to Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mayotte, Comores, etc or, of course, world tourism.

So, when I say there was no cruise tourism, I meant no cruise tourism, just world tourism. When I took over as president of the Ile Vanille, I had that on my agenda. So, let us develop cruise tourism because every single island in the Indian Ocean will by definition benefit. Mauritius usually benefits much more because of our great air access; we also have a fantastic Port and a specific quay for cruise tourism. Mauritius is usually the homeport for these ships. So, we supply them also.

We are talking about hundreds of millions of rupees of supply, bunker, foods and everything else. You can imagine, 2,000 to 3,000 people staying two weeks on the boat, how much they eat, how much they consume, any source of supply out of Mauritius. So, this is fantastic. We are promoting that and we have been very, very successful, even if I say so myself. I think this year something like 16,000 people will be joining these cruises in the region.

As from early next year, we are going to have a cruise line coming, the Silverseas; smaller ships, high quality and at the end of next year we are going to have another cruise line called Fred Olsen coming. So, from the one cruise company called Costa Croisière which is here at the moment. End of next year – touch wood, Insha' Allah - we are going to get, Madam Speaker, three cruise lines and that is going to be very good. I think, Madam Speaker, over the next few years, this is going to be a major item for Mauritius

Madam Speaker, during the year also, we have gone into hotel classification. We wanted to increase the quality of the hotels. We thought we would be having lots of problems, but we did it very well and we hardly had problems with the hotels. Three-quarters of the hotels in Mauritius already have their star rating now and most of them are happy. One

or two have appealed, not more. There are 25 remaining and that will be for the next two/three weeks and we are going to have all the hotels in Mauritius with a star rating. What is good about the star rating is that people will want to go up to a better rating. If you are a 4-Star, you will want to be a 5-Star, and after that a 5-Star plus. So, if you want to have their rating going up, we say: “Well, if you do this than the other, you improve your service here, you improve your premises there, you will go up one step further.” The hotel classification, apart from giving a great idea to the tourists as far as what sort of establishment or service they can expect, it is also helping the hotel to upgrade themselves and this is exactly what we want, Madam Speaker.

So, Madam Speaker, in a nutshell, I think we have been putting in practice what was promised in the Government Programme. At paragraph 199 of the Government Programme, and which I’ll just read very quickly, Madam Speaker, it is said –

“Government will re-establish the reputation of Mauritius as an upmarket destination for the quality of its tourism product based on a brand promise of excellent service delivery. Demand and supply will be balanced in a bid to uphold the quality of our product offer at all times.”

So, I think, Madam Speaker, we have been going along the line that we mentioned in the Government Programme and doing exactly what we promised and this is how it should be.

To crown all this, Madam Speaker, what we have done - and we are very proud of this – for our little island, if you put on CNN, you might have a chance to see Mauritius advert, CNN Mauritius, ‘come to Mauritius during your holidays’. LCI, Eurosport and Sky! We have been able to do this and it cost us about Rs80 m. from savings we have made, Madam Speaker, from the budget of the MTPA. It has not come from additional funds. It has come internally from savings and Mauritius has not been on these channels for yonks, 10 years maybe or more. So, this is good and I am sure that we, Mauritians, wherever we are or our diaspora overseas, when they look at these programmes, they see little Mauritius on CNN, etc., they must be very proud and we should all be very proud that our island is on these channels.

Madam Speaker, it needs a lot of effort to do all the actions that we are doing. Regarding the shareholders, we are happy when the shareholders get a fair return on their investment. That is fine! But, we do it mainly, Madam Speaker, for the 120,000 directly and indirectly employed persons in the tourism industry. They are the people for whom we want

better conditions, better pay, better chances of promotion, greater respect and greater dignity. These are the people whom this Government works for because they are the people who need our help and our support.

These workers are the people who make our tourism industry unique in the world. You have happy employees, Madam Speaker, you have good hotels. Happy employees make good hotels. Unhappy employees - you can have the most beautiful hotel in the world, if you have someone who does not want to serve you, he takes three hours to bring your tea or speaks to you in a rude way, you are not going to be happy in that hotel. You will want to leave as soon as possible. And so, Madam Speaker, we are grateful and thankful and we want to pay tribute today to the workers in our hotel industry.

Very quickly, regarding the airport, Madam Speaker, our only airport was voted first in Africa - not just sub-Saharan Africa but the whole of Africa - for, in fact, two categories; as the best airport and that is important. The contract of *Aéroports de Paris* was renewed recently, I want to say that. Why, Madam Speaker? Because firstly, we think they have been doing a reasonable job and, secondly, it is important given the problems that airports have around the world in terms of security, etc. It was important to give the right message to the international community that we have the best possible management here. These are times of trouble and we have to go the extra mile to prove that.

Madam Speaker, some months ago we had this silly incident on Air France when someone brought some sort of paper bag and it was a bomb hoax. For that little incident, we were nearly blacklisted by Air France because, at one point in time, they thought it was a real bomb. Had it been a real bomb, we would have had a real probability of Air France not coming to Mauritius. Air France does not come to Mauritius then maybe British Airways would not have come, maybe other airlines would not have come. Just think of the effect that it would have had on Mauritius! Just think of the effect that the incident at Sharm el-Sheikh had on Egypt's tourism industry! So, we cannot take security lightly. Recently, the Prime Minister put the SMF armed, etc. with the machine guns at the airport. There is probably no threat at the moment, but it is good that we are prepared to be ready at all times and to give the signal that we take security very importantly. And following that incident, although there was nothing, we have had, I think, three security orders: international Air France, *la direction générale de l'aviation civile* and another company which I forgot the name, came to Mauritius to look at the security of our airport. There are always one or two things that we can do. But, this is life. Things change, technology changes, threats change,

but we need to be always on top of the world in terms of putting our capacity to meet the real challenges, Madam Speaker. So, we have done that. We take that very seriously. Passenger numbers continue to grow. The challenge now is to grow into a cargo hub, that is a more difficult challenge and not as easy as attracting tourists to Mauritius and we need to continue along that line. The good news is that we have talked to the Chinese recently about setting up an Aviation Academy. They seem very interested to set up an Aviation Academy that would train probably not pilots at the beginning but *Aiguilleur du ciel*, etc. everything to do with the airline industry and hopefully that will come that we will have a regional aviation training academy in the near future in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, coming on to the port, I am quite pleased with the port performance I must say, something like 2,947 ships called at Port Louis in 2015. It is quite a lot of ships and we had no major incidents, you will agree. The ships came and left quietly and have been dealt with correctly. No major incidents during that even though we had 3,000 ships! We unloaded and loaded hundreds of thousands of containers in the port, again to the general satisfaction of everybody.

But, what is pleasing, Madam Speaker, is we are going towards an era of happier - I should not speak too soon - labour relations in the port because I personally believe that everybody is entitled to aspire to good wages. This is human nature and the better the wages, the happier I am. Obviously, it has to be sustainable. But, if you are earning a lot of money you must provide the productivity, the effort and the discipline that go with that. The two, in my mind, go together: I earn quite a lot of money I work hard for it. This is what I believe should happen in my Ministry, in the ports and everywhere. We have to deliver on efficiency and we have to deliver on quality.

And, I am happier, Madam Speaker, that labour relations at Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, particularly, are improving. I am happy to see that following the letter of regret and excuses that Mr Edouard sent following the incident of last December that he is going to be reinstated, I think, within the next two weeks in a different department but, I think it is going to be an end to a sad story. At the same time, Madam Speaker, of course, everybody will draw the lessons that need to be drawn from this. And I think, as I mentioned, hard work, good pay and one will not go without the other and that is important also to make that point, Madam Speaker.

So, labour relations are better; hopefully, we can conclude the salary negotiations in a very good manner and productivity also has risen considerably, I must say, although we have lots of repairs and things happening at the port at the moment. Productivity in the last six months has averaged 20.6 moves per hour. It is peaked at 23 moves per hour and from about 18 moves per hour about two years ago. So, we are improving, in fact, I will talk about DP World in a moment but when we talk about DP World, we are talking about 28 moves per hour, at least. So, we still have some way to go to get to international norms.

As far as DP World is concerned, Madam Speaker, you don't see it so much in the papers, we are still in contact with them. We are still talking to them. There are some stumbling blocks and every week something happens. We'll try to find a solution and we will see whether we can come to an agreement or whether we don't come to an agreement. But, we are still talking and if we do come to an agreement, we will give it full publicity, there will be no *cachiet, cachiet* or whatever. What is done will be fully public.

And, Madam Speaker, at the time when we are talking about the necessity to invest, it is good to say that the Port, be it the Mauritius Ports Authority and the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. are fully contributing to the investment effort and the capital formation in Mauritius. In this financial year, we have invested or we'll be investing Rs2 billion, Rs4 billion next year and another Rs2.5 billion the year after, that is to make of Mauritius in terms of quays, in terms of depth of the water for the biggest ships to come, etc., we will make it into a great port and buy new ship to shore cranes as well which will come and make of Port Louis a fantastic port, Madam Speaker.

I think various departments in my Ministry, Madam Speaker, have worked very well during the year. I would like to thank all the colleagues that have worked together with us to make this happen. I would not attribute that to myself, but I would say, Madam Speaker, perhaps the only thing we can do in Mauritius is to pick the right people to do the right job. The right man, at the right moment, in the right place, Madam Speaker, that makes the whole difference in the world. You would not believe how life can be easy for the Minister when we have the right Manager, the right Chairman looking after the right organisation. That is important, Madam Speaker, because I believe that most problems – not really business problems and not even financial problems – are people problems. Most problems can be solved through having the right people and only one thing will ensure that we have the right people and that is meritocracy. I believe meritocracy, equal opportunities, Madam Speaker, will be the solution to most ills affecting this country or any other country.

I have the occasion to say and I say it again, Madam Speaker, quite sincerely that I believe this Government has gone a long way in promoting meritocracy and equal opportunities. I really think so although we will all agree that we still have room to go. We always have room to improve, but, Madam Speaker, we have done a lot and I think our economy, our society needs to go to the next level and we need to give further impetus to meritocracy. Again, there is a committee to look after this.

Let me explain it this way, Madam Speaker. At primary school, we all compete. We will compete another year or so for the CPE and then there will be less competition, but still competing for that end of Nine-Year Schooling exams or whatever. At secondary school, we compete again, this time we compete for the School Certificate and HSC and some others compete to become laureate, fantastic. We all compete to get into Universities and to pass our exams. So, from the moment we get into school, we are competing. However, once we leave school, once we leave the University then the feeling in Mauritius is that we don't need to compete. I will go and see my MP every Wednesday and I will see whether he can help me to get a job. So, we have changed completely from a competition-based system to a system where you have to go and *comme si supplier*.

(Interruptions)

Give me a job! *C'est dégradant aussi pour la personne*. It is not good for the person to come and say I got a job because so and so help me to get a job. What is the start to your career like that? We wonder why people then get demotivated. I got a promotion because somebody likes me, I have a family in high place and he got me a promotion. This is not the society that will bring us to high income, Madam Speaker. So, we need to change that mentality and we need to get people to understand that we need to compete all through our lives. We, politicians, we understand that we compete every four or five years. That is how we do, but everybody needs to understand that. We need to get out of this system where once we finish schooling or University, all we need to do now is look for *un passe-droit* and we will get to where we want. That is, Madam Speaker, I think, something that we will come to and maybe we can sort out before the end of this mandate although I must say that perception is worse than reality. In fact, Madam Speaker, a lot of what is done, if not all that is done is, in fact, based on meritocracy and proper assessment of the person.

Madam Speaker, when talking about employment and employment creation, I think we need to be careful. We have 43,500 people unemployed according to Statistics Mauritius.

We also have, according to the Ministry of Labour, something like 38,000 live work permits, nearly 40,000 foreign workers and a little more than 40,000 unemployed. And of this 43,000 unemployed, half do not have CPE or do not have SC. So, they are really unskilled people, but they will never go to work in industries. They won't go to work in the seafood hub. They, probably, turn down most of the jobs that are available to them, of course, except as you know, jobs like *éboueur*, attendant and things like that in the public sector. There is an imbalance that is important for us to correct, otherwise, I think, we will not be able to pursue our economic development. There is an imbalance. We cannot keep on importing labour whilst unemployment supposedly is high in Mauritius. So, something must be done. It is not just mismatch because these 20,000 people don't have any skills. Most of them have CPE or SC. All these 20,000 people don't have. I think, Madam Speaker, *il y a une disparité entre le salaire au bas de l'échelle du service public et du service privé*. We have to sort it out. One has to go up somewhere. We have to equate them otherwise we will not be able to get the right people to work in Mauritius.

Let us look at the construction sector to give you an example. Construction in Mauritius is at its lowest ebb at the moment, minus 5% and a negative growth in construction last year. How many foreigners are working in construction? 4,200 foreigners work in construction whilst construction is at its lowest ebb in Mauritius. So, what will happen tomorrow when we say we take a lot of public money, we boost construction? We just have to import more labour. Where is the sense in that? There, we need to sort out why it is that Mauritians don't want to work maybe in construction. As far as I know, *les Français* work in construction. The English work in construction. Mauritians do not want to work in construction.

There are some problems that we need to see. The problem is not only with workers, I believe, Madam Speaker, the problem is also with the employers because when people want work, it is for good pay. That is crucial why people do not work. It is for good chance of promotion. They want, obviously, job security. If you hire and fire, then you will not be able to recruit again. Madam Speaker, they need to be treated with dignity and respect. That is also important that somewhere along the line we just open the floodgates. In tourism, we have closed the floodgates for foreigners. By just opening the floodgates sometimes, what we do, we also encourage bad employers. We need to have the right equilibrium between Mauritian and foreign labour. If you take BPO, Madam Speaker,- someone has just spoken about it - they want to move a subsidiary of their company to Madagascar because they need

300 people to work in their Call Centre. They have about 2,000 in Mauritius and they cannot get more people to work there. Although it is very good work, people do not want to work there. They will be moving to Madagascar. So, Madam Speaker, we need to do something about it. It is important that we find a solution for this sort of funny *comportement des employeurs et des travailleurs mauriciens*.

Madam Speaker, when we are talking about boosting the economic growth and boosting employment, we need to boost employment in the sectors where Mauritians want to work otherwise we will not be able to achieve that. We will just be boosting foreign workers. We need to be able to boost employment where Mauritians still want to work. We need to have better career guidance. That is important when we look at the figures for the Youth Employment Programme. There are 1,600 degree holders who are not working or still waiting on that programme, with wide variety of qualifications and hardly anybody with IT according to the Youth Employment Programme is unemployed. Only 40 people! If you have a Management degree, then you have got a long waiting list, nearly 300 people wanting to work, have a management degree. So, the ability of our career service and parents also to properly guide their children and the students, Madam Speaker, is extremely important.

Madam Speaker, I just want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for one more thing, that is, the Rs100 m. that is being provided for pavements in Mauritius. I would also congratulate my colleague, hon. Bodha. We cannot continue, in Mauritius, with so many cars every year with hardly any pavements. It cannot continue like this. We had 21,000 additional vehicles registered last year. 21,000 additional vehicles were registered last year. No wonder there are so many accidents! You cannot drive in a crowd as if you have to avoid people along the road. I live in the north. There are hardly any pavements anywhere. There are a few only at Petit Raffray. We have to do something about it. In the future, we cannot avoid some sort of massive Government's land purchase programme because we will need to create pavements. We will not be able to continue like this, but I am very thankful that we have the Rs100 m. for the pavements. That is going to change the lives of many people. Maybe we don't walk so much anymore, many of us here in this House, but people do use buses. They do walk to the market, walk to work etc. And imagine the situation! We are all used to it, that is why we don't see it, but we should open our eyes, see what is happening and we will need to do something about that in the future.

Just before finishing, Madam Speaker, during the year I have chaired about 11 committees. The trickiest one is the Truth and Justice Commission committee. That is the

trickiest one because it has so many recommendations. Most are valid, but some are very difficult to do. So, we have decided, Madam Speaker, in the committee that we should give most of them back to the Ministries and each Ministry should own the recommendations and do something about. It shouldn't just be owned by the committee otherwise we wouldn't get as much as we ought to. But still, I am happy we have had a number of things done. We have opened access to Le Morne. I thank the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Soodhun, my colleague, hon. Baboo. They have done a great thing. We have been waiting eight years for that to happen. We have opened it. It is a beautiful site. Let us all go and visit that site. It is going to be *un lieu de pèlerinage et de recueillement*, Madam Speaker. That site, Madam Speaker, is an icon for the dignity of the human being and the dignity of the human flesh. That is very important, Madam Speaker, that we have been able to do that. I think that is one of the strong points, *le point fort*, of our actions, at least as far as the committee is concerned.

We are doing more than that. Yesterday, I got a copy of a letter from my colleague hon. Soodhun. He is giving me two *arpents* of land near the site and we are going to have an ex-slave village. It should come up very quickly because it is all in wood and thatch. So, we will have that very soon, Madam Speaker. You will be able to see living testimony of how people lived before and that will come up very quickly. So, Le Morne, which has this beautiful site, will be attracting hundreds of people to that site and already hundreds of people are going. Many more than we had expected. I went there the other day and there were hundreds of people. I thought there would not be many people. So, that is going to give also an economic boost to that region, and God knows, that region is an economic boost. It is a wonderful asset that we have. We will develop it, of course. It will be developed properly and it is going to be a major attraction for Mauritians and for tourists alike. And, of course, it is completely free.

Madam Speaker, in terms of international slavery museum, we have identified the site. There will be a land swap. We have a beautiful building and we will go ahead with that slavery museum. It is never easy to create a museum. It is very specialised, but we have now the facility to do that and to open the museum. A few weeks ago, Benjamin Moutou, the famous historian published a book. We commissioned a book on the economic contribution of slaves in Mauritius. I don't know if you are aware, Madam Speaker, that every single building, every single infrastructure in Mauritius up to 1845, was actually built by slaves. Everybody else was a supervisor. The actual people who worked were slaves. So, we think that it is a good idea also. As a tribute to these slaves, Madam Speaker, to their lives and to

their deaths that it should be indicated on every public building when it has been built by slaves - slave labour. That would show also, Madam Speaker, that the slaves contributed tremendously to the development of this country.

(Interruptions)

They are masters and slaves and they still are, maybe!

Finally, Madam Speaker, the impact of Brexit. The pound sterling fell 13% against the rupee since Brexit; Euro 2½ percent less. What does that mean? Let's say you have a hotel. You get 13% less tourists. Probably, you will spend less also because you have to feed them. But saying you get the same number of English tourists, but you get 13% less money. Which one would you prefer? I will prefer they have 13% less tourists because I will spend less. The impact of the fall in the value of sterling on Mauritian economy for some sectors could be dramatic, Madam Speaker. We have to be careful. This is something that will hang over this economic prospect for some time to come and we have to deal with because it is better to have a reduction in quantity of goods and number of tourists. It is a reduction in revenue because the costs are the same, unless you're importing in pound sterling. So, that is a danger of Brexit and obviously, one is the revenue, secondly is the impact also on demand with the UK tourists, in fact, travelling less because it is more expensive. So, you have two sides.

One good thing I forgot to mention is that from research that we have at the Ministry, the terrorism that has occurred, has not dampened international travel. Our source markets are still. People are still travelling. What are they not doing? They are not going to strike prone areas. They are going to areas which are safe and here Mauritius can, in fact, also benefit from that. People are avoiding Turkey. People are avoiding North Africa. People are avoiding places where there have been issues and hopefully we don't want to profit from that, but that is a fact and one good thing, therefore, that has come out of this also, maybe positive thing, if we play our cards of security and safety right, we will continue to be seen and the Indian Ocean will continue to be seen as a haven of peace and security.

Madam Speaker, just to end, I would like to say that once again I would like to congratulate my colleague and friend, hon. Pravind Jugnauth for a beautiful Budget. I would like to say that this Budget, in my opinion, will go a long way to make of Mauritius a better, more prosperous country and a fairer society.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.41 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.15 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The debates are nearly over. The dust has now more or less settled down. During the past two weeks, the country has been able to digest this Budget. It is in a better position to assess the good points, the weaknesses, and evaluates its impact on the country. The good factor referred to still prevails in some quarters although part of it has already eroded, particularly due to the scandals which have come to light since the presentation of this Budget. As to those who had questioned its viability since Day one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, lingering doubts still persist as to its pretention to usher the country into a new era of development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development had a well-defined objective when presenting this Budget. After the painful experience with regard to the last Budget of this Government presented by the former Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Finance had, by all means, to obliterate from the memory of the population all these inaccurate forecasts and unrealistic projections contained therein.

The hon. Minister had also the daunting task of restoring trust in his peers, in his political allies, in Government and the country at large, especially after the numerous political crises that this Government had gone through since the beginning of the year. And, last, the hon. Minister, on a personal level, had the equally formidable challenge of reasserting himself as the leader of the majority partner in Government and present himself as a Minister of Finance with a vision for the country, and also position himself, in the same breath, as the one to climb the podium for the gold medal.

There is no doubt, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Minister of Finance has succeeded to a certain extent in his endeavour. With the string of popular measures announced in the Budget, *il a réussi son coup*. Admittedly, the most conspicuous and positive impact of hon. Pravind Jugnauth's Budget is that it triggered a feel good factor, which we have not seen for a long time, certainly during the last five Budgets. The last one was particularly misleading, as I just said, with measures and the forecast that seemed utterly incredible so much so that the nation had lost faith in the whole budgetary exercise. It caused significant damage to the credibility of the Government and sent the wrong signals, and it is

precisely because the previous Budget was so appalling that the 2016-2017 Budget gains in popularity and in appreciation. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for having been so long in this House, I could see through the communication's strategy of the hon. Minister who had engineered an aggressive spin doctoring exercise by overplaying the difficult and harsh measures that the Budget was going to propose. This was also what triggered the '*ouf de soulagement*' from the population.

Having said this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it would be unethical on my part, as a Member of the House, to close my eyes on what I consider to be the failings and inherent contradictions contained in the Budget. Each one of us, every parliamentarian has a fiduciary duty to protect the interests of our taxpayers, of our constituents, and ensure that public funds are spent in the most efficient manner. I will, of course, refrain from embarking on the path of sheer demagoguery during my speech, but I will speak, as we all should, without fear or favour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Budget is not only an exercise to provide a series of measures which will make people feel good, but it has more importantly to propose strategies to help the Government implement its vision and its programme, because the aim of the Budget is to transform the socioeconomic landscape by developing and setting up new economic pillars and also revamping the existing ones.

The question is whether the budgetary measures proposed by the hon. Minister will attain this target. In other words, how far this Budget will fuel our economic engine and set the foundations for the country to propel itself into what the hon. Minister called 'A New Era of Development'. For my part, having gone through the Budget several times and read as much as I could what other commentators, analysts and economic gurus have commented on this Budget, I have lingering doubts.

We are laying stress on this issue because we feel that the Minister should have addressed the structural weaknesses of our economic foundation and the macroeconomic fundamentals. In other words, the hon. Minister should have taken appropriate measures and proposed deep-rooted reforms to address the serious imbalances of our economy, because fiscal reforms are a *sine qua non* condition to revive growth. Mauritius needs structural reforms to get back on the path of rapid recovery. Unfortunately, this Budget does not address this question.

Let us take economic growth. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even before the Budget - and this is by way of a preliminary remark - has passed the test of parliamentary approval, one project of great substance has been withdrawn. The impact of a single project on which the

growth and employment forecast have been worked out, obviously, undermines the impact of the Budget.

The Budget earmarked Rs2.7 billion for the project to be financed from a grant from the Government of India, to which Mauritius would contribute some Rs2 billion. Since this project has been frozen, public investment will automatically fall and this augurs badly for the Budget and economic growth. Out of the Rs97 billion earmarked for capital investment for the next three years, the Heritage Project should, in theory, absorb at least Rs20 billion. My estimate is indicative and conservative as this project was conceived more or less in opacity. I will leave it to the imagination of hon. Members of this impact in the next three years in terms of growth, employment creation and the construction sector.

This puts in question the forecast growth of 4.1 per cent not only for 2016 and 2017 but also for the three years to come and I fear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, once again, Mauritius will be condemned to struggle in the middle income trap. To me, our growth rate is more likely to be below 4 per cent and I shall demonstrate why the forecast rate is unlikely to materialise because this Budget which so many consider as daring is still short of what is required to achieve the goals set. At the pace we are growing it is questionable even if in 2020 we will qualify to become a high income country.

Let us look at the per capita income, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Between 2014 and 2015, per capita income fell from USD 10,200 to USD 9,134. Can we expect to reach USD 13,000 by 2018, the goal set by Government to attain the high income country status? This Budget, unfortunately, does not create sufficient innovative conditions to move in this direction. Meanwhile, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many countries have been outpacing us.

Let us look at Seychelles next door. Instead of narrowing the gap between some similar island economies, we find the gap growing because we are progressing at a lower speed. Three decades ago Singapore or Ireland had their per capita income around three times that of Mauritius. Today, it is more than five times. Singapore today enjoys a per capita income of USD 51,000 while Seychelles exceeds a per capita income of USD 15,000. These are revealing international data.

Even, in terms of savings, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the savings rate, in fact, truly took a descending trend as far back when Mr Sithanen was Minister of Finance, that is, more than a decade ago. Successive Ministers of Finance have been bringing little to reverse this trend. The gross national savings rate was a low 10.4 per cent and forecast to be 10.8 per cent of GDP, one of the lowest rates in the economic history of Mauritius.

Little was done to stimulate the savings. This Budget does not provide any incentive to raise savings. Indeed, it totally ignores this variable. And, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, savings is a critical variable in the strategy to fuel growth and create quality jobs. It is savings that generally become investment and it is investment that acts as an injection to stimulate growth and growth creates jobs. Jobs are the surest vehicles to alleviate poverty and the section in the Budget on macroeconomics stability is quite misleading as it talks of nothing other than deficit and revenue, and expenditure.

Investment is in the same predicament, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Investment is forecast at 17.9 of GDP, a rate much below what is needed to take Mauritius to a sustained high growth *sine qua non* conditions to create jobs and alleviate poverty. With the Heritage City excluded from the development scenario even this investment rate is doubtful. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this country, at least, requires an investment rate equivalent to 23 per cent of GDP, not 17 per cent. We are more than 6 per cent short. This country needs investment because our people need jobs with a decent income. Unfortunately, again, nothing of this sort is done in the Budget. Even the mega project of Metro Express which will absorb nearly Rs10 billion is unlikely to make great in roads in this Budget, unlikely to have a significant on-job creation and growth in this fiscal year.

In the best of circumstances, the funds received from India will leave the circular flow. Assuming the project starts at the earliest time possible, taking administrative paperwork, project mobilisation, and design more likely to be effected by foreign firms and paid in foreign exchange, I see very little impact on growth and job creation for Mauritians. I do not realistically see *le premier coup de pioche* announced before the next Budget, as was the case with Heritage City. As we all know, our implementation capacity is so dreadfully low.

Even in terms of employment and job creation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that unemployment has a social and psychological dimension. It bestows dignity to the individual. It permits the individual to live decently. It helps the country to maintain law and order. It also enables the country to earn higher tax and spend less on social support. Successive Governments have unsuccessfully grappled with the problems. We have the potential of creating a climate where jobs should, in practice, be chasing workers. Today people queue up, lobby at the doors of MPs to obtain a job. This is an unhealthy situation for a country aspiring to become a high income country, the dream of the hon. Minister of Finance and the Government.

More importantly, this Budget sends the wrong signal because the jobs the Government is proposing to create are temporary. Actually, Statistics Mauritius estimated employment in 2016, the first quarter, at 528,200 compared to 545,600 in 2015 which means the labour force has contracted in the first quarter of 2016, very few or real productive jobs have been created. Net job creation is just a little over 1,000 and, according to Statistics Mauritius, between 2015 and 2016, unemployment fell from 46,300 to 45,000.

Now, let us examine the Budget on proposals to relieve the unemployment scourge. While I have no doubt on the good intention of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, I fear he may have been ill-advised. The Budget expects to move out 21,600 unemployed from the unemployment register. This is, indeed, a laudable initiative. But, assuming this figure is correct and this vision materialises, it will leave the unemployment figure at around 32,000, including new entrants to the labour market. Everyone will be happy, as within a year by a stroke of the pen the hon. Minister will have brought the unemployment rate to 5.9 per cent. It will leave the impression that the Government has created jobs. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, deeper analysis will reveal that it is not the case and the Minister would have only built great expectations in the minds of the expectant youth.

The Budget forecast is close to guesswork rather than a scientific approach. The first observation is that training was proposed to 5,400, employment under YEP 2,000, filling 7,200 vacancies in the Civil Service collectively, totalling 14,600. The Government expects to create 7,000 jobs, but the Budget is vague on this figure. It is not clear in which sector or economic activity the additional jobs will be created. The arithmetic is intelligent but the training, while pertinent, is recognisably a short-term palliative. A significant number in this category will be paid a meagre amount of Rs5,000. The jobs proposed in the Civil Service reflect poor vision and a complete lack of understanding how the labour market and the economic transmission mechanism work.

M. le président, tristement les chiffres de *Statistics Mauritius* démontrent clairement que les principaux indicateurs économiques se sont détériorés l'année dernière par rapport aux deux années précédentes. La croissance réelle du PIB, l'investissement global a chuté, l'investissement privé est tombé, les exportations de biens ont connu une contraction. Je ne vais pas vous donner tous les pourcentages, tous les chiffres. Le secteur textile en particulier a régressé. Donc, comme nous le savons tous l'ancien ministre des Finances nous avait promis une croissance économique de 5.3%, un investissement global de 24.8%, des exportations de biens, de services de 52.8% etc. Il n'a atteint aucun de ces objectifs puisqu'on

a finalement eu une croissance de 3.4%, un investissement global de 18% et *I will stop here*. En somme, *Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been* une véritable contre-performance. Le déficit budgétaire reste toujours au-dessus de 3% du PIB et, d'après le budget du ministre des Finances, ce déficit sera de l'ordre de 3.3% pour l'année 2016-2017 équivalent à un déficit de R 15 milliards. Mais quand nous ajoutons les R 3.6 milliards pris des fonds spéciaux, c'est-à-dire le *National Resilience Fund*, le *Build Mauritius Fund*, le déficit budgétaire s'élèvera alors à 4.1% du PIB. En vérité, M. le président, la croissance réelle de notre production est restée en dessous des 4% ces sept dernières années et la production industrielle n'a pas suivi avec une croissance qui n'est de 0.2%.

And yet we find in the Budget, the Minister has the task to improve the fiscal health of our economy and the Budget mentions the need for strict fiscal discipline. And I do not have to dwell, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on other factors like the major absorption capacity, the implementation capacity which characterises this Government and which has also characterised all past Governments.

Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget, while having not provided the necessary remedies to the imbalances in our economy, fails to provide an impetus *ou un vrai coup d'accélérateur à la machine économique*. The measures to revamp and introduce structural reforms to our traditional pillars are simply missing. And it is not me who is saying that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When we read what has been published in the papers recently by the experts, we will see that the comments go in the same direction as I am arguing. Let us take, for example, in a newspaper a few days ago –

« *Baromètre économique de PluriConseil: des analystes restent sur leur faim.* »

Several questions were asked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

“No drastic measures to make Mauritius a compelling investment jurisdiction.”

The budget “lacks substance (...).”

I am quoting –

“(...) as not enough is being done to address the structural challenges.”

« *La part belle au social.* »

This is what gives credibility to these comments. For example –

« *La quasi-totalité des sondés pensent que le budget a suffisamment pris en considération le côté social, notamment en ciblant la pauvreté absolue. En revanche, 77% trouvent insuffisante la prise en compte de l'économie, donc "nothing bold economically."* »

« *État soucieux des finances publiques.* »

In fact, 70% of those who have been questioned are ‘*soucieux des finances publiques.*’ And interestingly, in terms of the social measures that have been taken, the overwhelming majority thinks that the budget has been positive on that score.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, therefore, the question we have to ask ourselves also is where are the proposals for the structuring of the new pillars, for erecting the new pillars, the African Strategy, the Ocean Economy, the Knowledge Education Hub or even the Regional Hub for Health. I will not delve furthermore on this question because sufficiently has been said before me on these new pillars which we were expecting to come up since this new Government has come to power. In Vision 2030, the Prime Minister has said 30,000 would have been created in the coming four years as far as the Ocean Economy is concerned. Where are the measures to revamp and dynamise our manufacturing base? Again, the Prime Minister said in his Vision 2030, I quote –

“Few countries in the world can progress without a sustainable manufacturing base. Manufacturing today accounts for about 18% of our economy and we aim to increase its share significantly to 25% within the next three years.”

In connection to our Africa Strategy again, the same document mentions the Africa Strategy we are adopting to make Mauritius become the regional platform for trade investment and services. Unfortunately, yesterday we saw in ‘*L’Express*’, comments made on this issue of “*Ouverture sur l’Afrique - On prend les mêmes et on recommence*”. We see the negative comments on this question of the Africa Strategy. I quote -

« *A l’instar de l’Africa Fund qui dans sa nouvelle forme, avec un budget de R 500 millions n’a financé qu’un seul projet. Alloué initialement dans le budget 2014 de Xavier-Luc Duval, ce fonds a été structuré pour privilégier les investissements dans les pays de la région. Or, les spécialistes ont peu d’espoir dans ce projet.*»

I’ll stop here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me come to our financial services! Here is an industry that has been, over the past few years, one of the keys and most consistent contributors to our GDP growth. The shock wave, triggered by the Indian DTA negotiations, have, unfortunately, cast a shadow on the future strength of this industry.

Beyond the political failures of credits attributed to this GTA renegotiation, much has been said about where we ought to position Mauritius in the financial service world. But one thing is clear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Indian DTA issue has shown how vulnerable a pure tax centric jurisdiction can be to politically or Government induced alterations to our taxation agreement. And we note that the budget still makes of tax incentivizing a major proposition in its attempt to revamp the sector or counteract the ripple effects of a shock like the Indian DTA outcome.

I think, we should seriously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, be asking ourselves one simple question before we spell our strategies for this sector. *Sommes-nous une place financière digne de ce nom? Ceci dit, on notera les multitudes d'interrogations qui en découlent.* Do we know what it really takes to be such a place? Are we striving to improve towards being one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I know the hon. Minister responsible for this portfolio has made many efforts, but let me attempt a picture of where we stand. Do you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that when the CEO and the Deputy CEO of AfrAsia Bank resigned, the CSSF in Luxemburg, that is, the regulatory authority and many in London, were already informed of the resignations even before the official communiqué was out?

Similarly, in the BAI case, we have been boasting for over a year now, it does bring political satisfaction and gives Government *les halons*, but with the speed information travels, we keep regressing from being a serious financial place.

Last year, we introduced the PDS with the restriction of 20% sales dedicated to Mauritians. This year, we changed it and it is not the first time. Do you remember we did so with capital gains tax, with the NRPT? This yo-yoing is naïve and portrayed us as amateurs to the International Finance Committee which casts an element of uncertainty of our jurisdiction.

Similarly, Cabinet approves the Highlands City Project. It is acclaimed in the Budget Speech and a week later, we discard it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Isn't this amateurism at its peak?

And speaking of Heritage City, we have heard so much about the Innovative Financing Scheme that has been designed for it with convertible debts and preference shares. My feedback on this is that this is the most basic and rudimentary financing structure and I feel we have made a good joke ourselves with our ambitions to become a sophisticated financial place.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being a financial place is not just about policy coherence or sense. The businessmen coming to Mauritius often will want professional standards at all levels in its connectivity, he needs precision, he needs to be able to have any of the wines listed on the wine menu, he needs good restaurants in the city, most of all, he needs people to be responsive, quick and sharp. The list is long. But, what I mean to say is that it is up to policymakers to improve the mindset, not just within the industry but around it. The whole of Mauritius has to evolve.

On a more business note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a financial place offers investment solutions, alternative placements, efficient markets, derivative markets, commodities, solutions for placement. We need diversity in our financial products and our laws have to adapt to create a supporting jurisdiction. I have doubts as to whether we have the appropriate framework to move up. The FSC, the regulatory body seems to be more concerned about compliance which is, of course, a must, but cumbersome than it is for business development. I think we should revamp the FSC, make it independent, but accountable and certainly free from politics. Let the FSC drive the industry with the industry and not against it, get it paired with the CCF, for example, in Luxembourg. We should dare introduce new financial offerings, riskiest if need be, but, at least, available for all those who can afford to risk it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I mean to say is that this important growth engine of our country needs to see a change in mindset if we are to succeed in our transition to a more sophisticated and mature jurisdiction. Diversity is needed for there to be sufficient alternative investment solution and it all has to work under an independent FSC that is here to defend, promote, regulate and control operators.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will make a few comments on an issue which struck me when I listened to the hon. Minister's speech. My comments on this issue are driven by the analysis made by the World Bank, inclusive relentless growth with regard to the erosion of the middle-class in our country due to the unequal distribution of wealth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the World Bank has made remarks with regard to the erosion of the middle-class in our country due to the unequal distribution during the last decade. Indeed, when commenting on the vulnerability of the middle-class and other income groups, from 2007 to 2012, they came to the conclusion that the lower-middle class had declined significantly from 30.5% to 24.9%. In Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we all know, economic concentration has historic origins. The large corporate sector, through a structured presence in most sectors with full vertical integrations, leaves little economic space for the SMMEs and the new entrants. In fact, there is no level playing field for the competition. This fundamental issue in our country, this question of the concentration of the economy in the hands of a few is a global phenomenon which, as we saw recently, is causing widespread frustration even among the middle-class in Europe and was one of the underlying causes of Brexit. But, although the Budget includes positive measures in favour of SMEs, the poor state of operators in the SME Sector may not enable them to overcome the hurdles to take full advantage of the measures. It is imperative that the implementation process should cater for special and differential treatment for the micro and the small enterprises and vulnerable economic operators. Over the past decades, we have seen, in fact, a polarisation of the economy. Around the large corporate sector through a structured presence in most economic sectors, full vertical integration within the conglomerates leaves little economic space through our SMMEs and the new entrants. There is no level playing field for free and fair competition.

As I said, this last World Bank Report had shown the emergence of this vulnerable segment among the middle-class which is slowly sliding back into poverty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Where is the democratisation of our economy? The Government has the challenge to take bold move to transform Mauritius into a high-income country with a vibrant middle-class of world-class entrepreneurs and professionals. Unfortunately, we have seen many processes and measures without a clear underlying strategy and long-term objective.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I repeat, there will be no democratisation of the economy if we do not embark on a massive initiative of targeted support and differential treatment for micro and small enterprises. Has this Budget been able to do this? Among the most vulnerable people of the small holder farmers, this Budget has extended the SME Development Certificate to individual entrepreneurs and cooperatives. However, the smallest farmers will be left to compete head on with the largest corporate farmer which already has a head start in terms of resources and economies of scale. There is no sustainable solution for

the small cane farmers who are still struggling for survival within a successful *industrie cannière*. If the burden of supporting small farmers is left to Government, why should Government support and perpetuate a passeist system instead of challenging them towards new ventures where they earn better returns? In the manufacturing sector, the same airfreight subsidies have been extended to all exporters. The reality is that a few large exporters CMT, Ciel, Palmar, Esquelle, will benefit from the bulk of the subsidies. Over the past decades, SMEs have not received the differential support needed to graduate to export which means they will derive little benefit from this measure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a failure of the innovation system and the technology, training and transfer systems in Mauritius and this is denying the SMMEs of the opportunity to adopt new technologies and to move into innovation driven growth. There is a focus on real state and physical space through creation of SME industrial parks, rightly so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but without targeted support and creation of economic space in terms of markets, industrial space only will not be effective to lead to competitive SMEs. And finally, the solution proposed for the small cow breeders is to make them dependent on industrial processes who will receive Rs10 m. to provide support service to small cow keepers. This will not address the real issue, Mr Deputy Speaker. So, the Budget has provided very generous incentive to established players and the large corporates, the PDS, for example, but at the other end of this spectrum, there have been some measures for vulnerable groups like the three-year suspension of treaties. There is, however, no clear strategy for a long-term solution for sustainable livelihoods of the vulnerable classes. The big losers in this Budget could be the middle-class who are stagnating, slowly sliding backwards with no strategy and measures for social mobility in spite of statements like we have seen in the Budget, fostering a wave of modern entrepreneurs or a class of entrepreneurs that is equal to the challenge and who can succeed in the most sophisticated of markets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last part of my intervention will be on poverty. Poverty is on the rise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no one can deny that.

M. le président, il est un fait indéniable que la pauvreté a gagné du terrain dans notre pays. Le groupe de nos concitoyens qui sont considérés comme les plus vulnérables a augmenté de 10.2% en 2007 à 12.7% en 2012. Et pourtant, M. le président, ce pays a connu un développement et une croissance soutenus pendant la dernière décennie. Il y a eu des augmentations des revenus par tête d'habitant. L'investissement direct a augmenté, une nette

amélioration dans notre secteur d'exportation. Comment, donc, expliquer que la pauvreté est aussi difficile à combattre ? Peut-être que la volonté politique n'y était pas !

Today, it is very laudable that the hon. Minister of Finance has focussed so extensively on poverty alleviation. But, there are still some room, some issues to be clarified on this chapter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Budget Speech has provided for a scheme to help 6,400 families registered on the social register to come out of poverty. But, as was pointed out in the PNQ raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition some two weeks' ago, the Estimates made mention of 13,267 families who would be eligible to this new scheme. This is very confusing. The House should know clearly how many will benefit from the new social assistance scheme proposed in the Budget, especially as we see from the Estimates that only Rs200 m. have been budgeted for this item. The question I asked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is: *pourquoi faire les choses à moitié?*

Statistics Mauritius reveals in its 2013 Poverty Analysis that an amount of Rs1.3 billion would be required to move all poor people, who represent about 122,000, out of poverty using a poverty line of Rs5,652 per adult equivalent. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is why to my mind the problem of poverty has not been sufficiently addressed in this Budget. As I said, Statistics Mauritius and the Marshall Plan also, I am given to understand, mentioned Rs1.3 billion needed to lift these people from income poverty, including relative poverty.

I don't see why the hon. Minister did not go the extra mile and dedicate Rs1.3 billion to lift our poor people out of the relative poverty trap in which they are. By the way, I would have been grateful to the hon. Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment if he would have laid the Marshall Plan on the Table of the Assembly to enable all Members of this House and the public at large to know what are the contents of the Marshall Plan. A few months ago, I asked the hon. Minister a question about this possibility of him making public the Marshall Plan and I once again appeal to him to do so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to my mind, there are three planks on which should rest the fight against poverty.

Firstly, the integrated community development approach, that is, the provision of the basic amenities and infrastructures for the poor, the absolute poor, that is, water, electricity, a housing unit and a quality education for their children.

Secondly, empowerment through economic activities for low-skilled labour. For example, we know the proverb: instead of giving a poor man a fish let's give him a fishing rod. So, we have to empower these poor people. I have seen that in my constituency. When you go through Case Noyale, you will see all the squatters squatting, in fact, on the beach of the *Pas Géométriques* at Case Noyale with their small huts and houses like a Shanty Town. But, you will see all of them, now, selling fruits, *confits*, fish and everything. All of them have become small economic operators, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, there is the possibility of empowering these poor people through economic activities which, of course, have to be determined and planned by the authorities.

Besides integrated community development, besides empowerment, the third plank, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you would be surprised, is social transfer through pensions and social protection. But this is, of course - I will come to that in a few minutes - theory what I am saying. At the practical level, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Social Integration should wield a powerful mechanism, an executive arm, *une vraie machine de guerre*, to implement his pro-poor policies, a new dynamic, revamp, proactive, aggressive, NEF or CSR Foundation, by whatever name we call it and whatever mechanism can be thought about. This new mechanism, this new executive arm, this new tool, of course, should be supported by dedicated hard-working cadres, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Some of the measures announced by the hon. Minister are related to the three planks I just mentioned. However, not all the issues have been addressed to tackle the problem in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Let me take the example of social housing. On Tuesday, I asked a PQ to the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands who gladly indicated to the House that currently, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are 30,000 house seekers. Do you know out of these 30,000 house seekers, Mr Deputy Speaker, how many of them earn below Rs10,000? 16,804! *Presque 17,000* house seekers are earning a monthly family income between Rs6,200 and Rs10,000. Now, between the bracket from Rs10,000 to Rs15,000, do you know how many there are, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 8,789! *Donc*, in all, *il y a environ 25,000* house seekers who are earning less than Rs15,000 today. This is a very dreadful figure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Therefore, how shall we find a solution to this problem?

Again, when we go to the Budget speech, at paragraph 311 of the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development announced that the Government will construct at least *800 maisons* over the next three years for those in the absolute poverty category. *Donc*, I repeat *16,000 personnes* earning *moins de R 10,000*. *Dans le discours du*

budget, the hon. Minister tells us he will build at least 800 *maisons* over the next three years. I do not doubt the good faith of either the Minister of Housing and Lands or the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, but the whole question is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when will we once for all settle this housing problem, especially for those who are at the bottom of the ladder?

In the same breath, I endorse fully the decision announced in the Budget to allocate partly the money endowed to the CSR Foundation for social housing. This morning, *on avait écouté le ministre des Finances* replying to a PNQ where he says that now the CSR Foundation will have as one of its priority areas, social housing. The money which will be endowed to this Foundation can be used for social housing to support NGOs in this area of social housing. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the supplementary I wanted to ask the hon. Minister this morning, but I did not have the chance. I am sceptical on how NGOs will embark in the construction of social housing themselves. Therefore, will the Foundation itself embark on social housing, contract out with the private contractors or the NHDC, how will this be done remains to be seen.

I take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to appeal to the hon. Minister to consider seriously, under the Chapter of Social Housing, the case of occupiers of asbestos houses in the CHA Estates all over the country. Several questions have been asked in this House, for ages now, to the previous Government, more particularly, to pull down all these houses occupied by destitute old couples. These are CHA, EDC houses built after Cyclones Alix and Carol.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure you don't know about those days, but these houses were built for families in those days. Today, these asbestos houses are mostly occupied by old couples and as we know, they constitute a risk hazard. The Minister should make of this issue a priority once the CSR Foundation becomes operational.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to social transfers, that is, the social protection and pensions, do you know that, again, both the World Bank in its report *Inclusiveness of Growth and Statistics Mauritius* highlighted the fact that in Mauritius nearly 75% of the poverty reduction has been associated with the social protection benefits. 75% of the poverty reduction is due to social protection benefits. Since 2012, Statistics Mauritius explained that the 2012 poverty rate of 9.4% would have been higher; it would have come to 19% if there were no social protection in our country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We realise how powerful

this tool of social transfers is. It was 9% in 2012, because the poverty analysis was between 2004-2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we realise how powerful is this tool of social transfers, 9% in 2012 because the poverty analysis was for 2010. This report clearly established that poverty rate which was at 9.5 per cent would have been higher, would have been 19 per cent if there were no social protection in our country. And, according to the same report, poor households are more reliant on transfers than other income households, of course. A poor household derives 29 per cent of its income from transfers, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. 29 per cent! This allows me to make the following comment.

I think that not enough consideration has been given to the heterogeneity of the profile of those poor households. What do I mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I explain myself. According to the World Bank again, 31 per cent of the most vulnerable households in Mauritius are headed by single women. This means that nearly a third of the poor households in our country are headed by single women. It is difficult for these women to be absorbed by the labour market and, at the same time, take care of their children. To my mind, a set of special allowances should have been given to the female heads of households who are single, of course, subject to well-defined requirements and criteria.

Allow me to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same breath, therefore, how powerful, how important a tool is our pension mechanism in reducing poverty in this country. This is why I appeal to the hon. Minister. The Pension Reform Committee has been set up, as we learned from the Budget itself, in the last pages of the Budget the hon. Minister suggested to set up the Pension Reform Committee, we should find ways and means to ensure that the poverty reducing objective of our pension mechanism should be improved, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

In fact, the IMF Working Paper in 2015 talked about this. Of course, they suggested targeting. I am not suggesting targeting, but I am just appealing to the hon. Minister to look at all the ways and means to ensure that the poverty reducing objective of our pension mechanism be improved so that those who deserve a higher pension get the higher pension, especially as I have just given the case of poor single women heading a family.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wanted to say a few words on the CSR, but this afternoon we have had sufficient explanation from the hon. Minister about the CSR, the operational framework, the foundation and so on. The questions of the hon. Leader of the Opposition

have enlightened us sufficiently. But, suffice it to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National CSR Foundation should be entrusted with the responsibility of coming up with proactive innovative policies in their pro-poor policies. One example that comes to mind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the very much popular food waste laws as it is the case in Europe. Supermarkets, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, other suppliers doing business in the food industry should be made to be socially responsible and one way of doing it would be to introduce a food waste law like in France, in the UK.

In Italy, ten days ago, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us go on the Net and we will find it. Ten days ago this law was passed in Italy whereby it is illegal for businesses to throw away consumable food items which can be redistributed to those who do not even have a meal per day. This would have been an innovative pro-poor policy and in a constructive way consolidating the concept of CSR in Mauritius. A month ago I put a Parliamentary Question to the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to that effect. But, of course, he underlined in his reply the difficulties of setting up this law. But, we should not stop here. We should try to emulate the other countries and find the solutions to this problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because as I said, it is one pro-poor policy which is now very popular in many countries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will stop on drugs. I will refrain from making any unjust criticism. But, the report which has been circulated by the hon. Minister this week from the National Drug Observatory is very alarming, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we go through all the figures and the statistics in this report. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will give two examples.

In 2015, there were 515 admissions to the public health institutions, including Brown Sequard Hospital etc. for drug related problems. 25 per cent were related to suspected new psychoactive substances, that is, synthetic drugs. But, what is more alarming in this figure is that 131, that is, 25 per cent related to suspected new psychoactive substance, 54 cannabis, 38 opioid drugs, 11 multiple illicit drug use, 3 cocaine, but there is an unknown figure in the statistics – 278 on 515 which are characterised as ‘unspecified illicit drug use’! That is, I suppose - I speak under the correction of hon. doctors in this House - even the doctors have not been able to determine the molecules or the components of whatever substances have been found in the body of these people under treatment. They call it ‘unspecified illicit drug use’. I am not talking of *synthétique* which is 131 *cas sur* 515. 278 ‘unspecified illicit drug

use'! So, it is not cannabis, it is not other drugs, it is unspecified. They can't even know what are the molecules in these drugs.

In the first half of 2016, 435 admissions were recorded for drug related problems, out of which 43 per cent were related to suspected new psychoactive substance, 31 cannabis, 63 opioid, 10 multiple, 1 cocaine. But listen to that: 141 again 'unspecified illicit drug use'! So, when we analyse figures for 2015 and 2016 more than 75 per cent, I would have thought, of those admitted to our public health institutions have been admitted because under the influence of either new psychoactive substance or unspecified illicit drug use, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, the percentage is overwhelming! This rise is alarming! I am, therefore, convinced that complementary to the Government policy of repressing drug-trafficking, the approach to curb demand and limit the damages, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of such drugs by young people should be reviewed. We cannot remain silent faced with this increase in drug consumption or treat the problem associated to drug consumption as taboo anymore. Government has to take a lead to inform the population, especially our young people about the dangers of drugs and how to avoid problematic drug consumption. We can see clearly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is the trend today.

But, worst, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, among patients admitted for suspected new psychoactive substance in public health institutions in the first half of 2016, 76 per cent were aged between 15 and 29 years old. 76 per cent of those admitted in our public health institutions suspected for new psychoactive substances were aged between 15 and 29 years old, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! The age distribution of these drug users is alarming and shocking! This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I make an appeal to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, for years on we have been fighting against drug abuse - we have been in this House for so long I know the Prime Minister's dedication to combat this scourge which is drug abuse. I said it in this House and I say it again when we were together, at one time, we amended the Constitution to prevent drug offenders to be released on bail and this was quashed in the Judicial Committee and so on. But, the motivation was here. The good faith was here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I know.

But, today, things have changed. There has been a paradigm shift. We have perhaps to relook about our strategies. I am not talking of *dépénalisation ou légalisation*. I do not want, of course, to enter into this debate, but I think we must be open minded, we must be

open to new strategies, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and try to find how we can put a stop to this *fléau*, which is doing so much damage, causing so much havoc. What we should know also is that a drug addict, it is not his own problem. His family, his mother, his brother, all the people around him suffer so much; not only him. Perhaps he does not even know, since he is a *toxicomane*, what damage he is causing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

This is why, some time back, I addressed a PQ to the hon. Minister to inquire on the question of sensitisation of the young people in school with regard to the danger of synthetic drugs. I asked him whether we should not rope in the NGOs for that purpose. The hon. Minister gave me the answer: 'But there are so many schools, thousands and thousands of students in our secondary institutions.' This is why I appeal to him to review that possibility of allowing NGOs with a proven track record, of course, which have been militating in this field for years, which have experience, and even to choose those people who should go into the schools, to select them, and agree to that proposal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I appeal to the hon. Minister to review, therefore, this question of allowing the NGOs to help the other authorities to sensitise young people in schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would have stopped here, but I just want to raise two matters concerning my constituency. Very quickly! Firstly, in Rivière Noire - this is constituency matters, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - this week, three Ministers of this Government went to *Les Gorges de la Rivière Noire*; and not the least. We know what was the problem. I am sure you heard about it. *Dans Les Gorges de la Rivière Noire*, apparently authority was given to an Indian film company to shoot. We have seen photos in *l'Express* and on the net also about the damage that has been caused. The felling of trees, and even a JCB was there. Can you imagine a JCB in *Les Gorges de la Rivière Noire* cleaning up? I suppose, to make space, room for the beautiful actors and actresses to sing behind the trees or whatever, and nearby there was a river. The inhabitants of the region, of course, sounded the alarm bell.

The hon. Minister of Environment went there. He has assured the population of this locality and of the country that no damage has been done and everything was done under the control of the Ministry of Agro-industry. Hon. Minister Seeruttun was also there. But I would appeal to the hon. Ministers concerned to see to it that this does not happen next time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are talking so much of environment. We all know how much time, money, energy is being spent and so on. Of course, we are not against development. It is a good thing that Mauritius becomes a centre for the film industry, but I think, as usual, all developments in this country should be environmentally foolproof, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The second part that I wanted to raise - the hon. Deputy Prime Minister just talk about that - is Le Morne. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure you know me. I do not pick quarrels on everything. In fact, I was going to ask a PQ. I have already left it with the Secretariat some 10 days ago, but, unfortunately, we did not have PQ session this week. Le Morne Heritage Trust, as we all know, *est une grande avancée pour tout le monde dans ce pays*. It is an international heritage site now. In fact, when the law was passed in 2004, the MSM/MMM Government passed this law, Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Act. I will request the new Members of this House to go and read the debates. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Prime Minister, hon. P. Jugnauth was the Deputy Prime Minister. I went through the debates. They both intervened in the debate. But one month ago, there was a ceremony there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Firstly, the MPs of the locality were not invited. Some *mauvaises langues* said that it was PMSD *gamat*. I will not say that. None of the three MPs was invited for this ceremony. This is not good for democracy. I checked with hon. Jhuboo and he assured me that he was not invited also. I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this is not good.

This is a national issue - giving access to everybody to go and see this cathedral of Le Morne Mountain. On top of that, we have been told that all the guidelines, all the procedures and the security measures have not been respected. I would appeal to the Minister concerned not to politicise this sacred memory. In fact, this would be an *immense tort si on continue à faire cela*. Now, I understand that this coming Sunday, there will be another function. Invitations have already been launched. There will be another *rassemblement dimanche prochain*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us give the respect that it deserves to Le Morne Heritage, and we refrain from such types of *enfantillage*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir I am nearly finished. In one year, from now on, we will be in a position to assess the impact of this Budget on the country; how meaningful it has been; what has been the accomplishment of the proposals. One year from now on! One year is a long time in politics - very, very long time. It is even difficult to predict what is going to happen in one year, from now on till the next Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and whether the hon. Minister of Finance will still be Minister of Finance or has graduated to some other function or what would be the scenario in this country as far as *l'échiquier politique* is concerned. What I can hope is that little Mauritius goes on forging its ride, and I wish good luck to the country.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will now resume the Chair.

At this stage Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Wong Yen Cheong!

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr A. Wong Yen Cheong): Madam Speaker, let me, at the very outset, congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for this very audacious Budget that will usher a new era for sustainable development for the country. The array of measures, fiscal incentives and proposals reflects the philosophy of *‘l’Alliance Lepep’*. Indeed, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has left no stone unturned to bring about the badly needed turnaround on both the economic and social fronts. In fact, this is not just another budget, but an economic plan to further boost up the economy while, at the same time, reinforcing our Welfare State of the country without forgetting the vulnerable groups of society. And, of course, the measures announced go along with the vision of the second economic miracle we pledge for.

Madam Speaker, Amy Leigh Mercree said, and I quote -

“Commitment mixed with drive and sprinkled with imagination creates sustained results. Stay focused and you will make your mark!”

This is what this Government is doing.

Madame la présidente, en 2014, ce gouvernement a pris un engagement vis-à-vis de la population et cet engagement nous l’honorons chaque jour à travers chacune de nos actions. L’équipe gouvernementale, Madame la présidente, et menée de mains de maître par les *leaders* politiques, tels que les honorables Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Xavier-Luc Duval, Ivan Collendavello et Pravind Jugnauth qui regardent dans la même direction et qui font preuve de respect mutuel.

L’innovation est au cœur de toutes nos actions. Cela apporte déjà, et continuera à apporter des développements tangibles et durables pour le bien de toute la nation, n’en déplaise à ceux qui souhaitent à tout prix de voir échouer ce gouvernement. Ce gouvernement laissera une empreinte indélébile et les futures générations et même ceux qui refusent de l’admettre aujourd’hui, se rendront à l’évidence que le gouvernement de

'*Alliance Lepep*' a propulsé l'île Maurice encore plus loin sur la voie du progrès et de la prospérité.

L'échec, Madame la présidente, ne fait pas partie de notre vocabulaire. Et toutes les couches de la population en sont témoins. Nous sommes bien partis pour relever les défis économiques, sociaux, environnementaux, et j'en passe. Certes la voie de la réussite ne sera pas de tout repos, surtout avec ceux qui essayent et tenteront de nous mettre des bâtons dans les roues. Mais avec de la vision, la conviction, la volonté, la détermination nous y parviendrons.

Madam Speaker, hon. Pravind Jugnauth rightly said: "With this Budget we are breaking with the past and traditional policies and approaches." It is also encouraging that it has not taken much time for many people, even from the Opposition side, to recognise that it is *un budget intéressant*.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has given an attentive ear to each and every proposal made during the pre-budgetary consultations. This budget not only provides concrete measures for the *relance économique*, but also lays a solid foundation for the eradication of absolute poverty through the Marshall Plan.

Several environmental issues that are closely linked with poverty will also be addressed. The fight against absolute poverty and other audacious measures announced in the Budget give me great hope for our country and, in particular, for my Constituency, Grand River North West and Port Louis West. For decades this Constituency lagged behind in terms of development. Things have changed since this Government is in power. Public infrastructure and roads among others have been upgraded in various regions. New and modern social houses have been built and granted to vulnerable people and my colleague, hon. Patrice Armance and I, make it a must to personally ensure that our constituents live in a healthy and safe environment.

I am glad that with the new measures announced, Constituency No. 1 will follow the trend of development and progress. I would like to point out that together with audacious measures to improve quality of life, the most important legacy which a Government can offer to its citizens is education - education through various means. And I must point out that both Ministries for which I am responsible, go along with this philosophy. For example, Environment Education is a key ingredient in the building of a sustainable and responsible nation. The Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach

Management is actively engaged in environmental awareness and sensitisation programmes, including distribution of resource materials and commemoration of international environmental events such as Earth Day, World Environment Day and Clean up the World.

To support our initiatives towards promoting sustainable lifestyle, we will double our efforts to inculcate a sense of environmental stewardship and literacy at all levels of our society. In the same vein, training and capacity building are intrinsically linked with reforms in the Civil Service.

Government has taken the commitment to bring transformational change in the Civil Service in order to render it more responsible and provide an expedient service to boost the economy. In this respect, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is sparing no effort to step up training and capacity building in the Civil Service. It is noteworthy that the Civil Service College was a long awaited project since 20 years back. On my assumption as Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I have personally ensured that the project be revived.

I am pleased to state that we have successfully set up the Civil Service College in Mauritius and rendered it operational since 16 November 2015 to cater for the human capital development across all sectors and grades of officers in the service, parastatal bodies, local authorities and State-owned enterprises. The College is running 33 courses which focus on customer care, leadership, and change management among others. Since November 2015 to date, 2,167 officers have been trained. It is also envisaged, henceforth, to train Parliamentarians and ultimately to develop the college as a regional centre of excellence.

I note with appreciation that my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has acceded to my request to increase the provision for training and capacity building in my Ministry's budget from Rs5 m. to Rs20 m. This will enable the College to dispense more courses following training needs of Ministries, Departments and ensure that the public officers have the relevant skills, values and above all to inculcate the right mindset. To fulfil this requirement, the College will ensure that systematic training need assessments are carried out so as to map the training gaps and skill competencies mismatch.

Madam Speaker, the setting up of the E-Learning System (ELS) constitutes technological breakthrough that will have a significant impact on both personal and organisational development in the public sector. The ELS which will make use of web-based

technologies will complement the traditional face-to-face training. It is presently managed by Civil Service College and it is foreseen that a larger number of public officers in all grades, some 90,000, including those from parastatal bodies and local authorities would benefit from the new learning and ultimately foster a new learning culture in the Civil Service.

Madam Speaker, I note with immense pleasure the attention given by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to re-engineer and transform the public sector institution through, *inter alia*, a modernisation capacity building process and the merger of different institutions. I would like to assure the House that my Ministry will provide all support.

My Ministry has a key role to play in accelerating reform in the Civil Service. I am indeed very much grateful that my Ministry has given the necessary means and resource to be able to both consolidate ongoing initiatives and embark on new ones.

Madam Speaker, the House will concur with me that ICT is now integral to an organisation. I am pleased to note that this Budget has not only highlighted the importance of modernising the Civil Service but also provide the means to accelerate process. This will undoubtedly help towards streamlining business processes, reduce delays and improve customer satisfactions. In this regard, my Ministry will fully participate in fathering the digital economy by providing the necessary support to Ministries/Departments to facilitate the delivery of E-Service for the benefits of their customers.

The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms will also collaborate with the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation with a view to ensuring that all public officers be given a government.mu.org email account on the basis of a reasonable time frame. I have no doubt all these measures will create an e-culture and cause a paradigm shift in the civil service.

Madam Speaker, my good friend, hon. Shakeel Mohamed was talking about trial and error. I beg to differ and without going into much detail, I would like to point concerning the public service. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to point out some major reform initiatives, which are on the way, we already started. These are the Performance Management System (PMS) which is instrumental for the successful implementation of the Government's plan to modernise the public sector, improve the delivery and quality services and trigger the change in the mindset and determination of public officers so as to assist in delivering the economic agenda of Government to achieve the Second Economic Miracle and Vision 2030.

In line with Government agenda to reinforce the concept of accountability in the civil service, we have also successfully introduced another bold initiative, namely the Executive Performance Management Review which is a reporting system or organisational performance for Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries/Departments based on their specific key performance indicators.

In the light of this major breakthrough, the Performance Management System is now covering all public officers from top to bottom. PMS is expected to become a major instrument for transforming the public service into an acting driving force for spearheading national reforms and instilling a performance culture where public officers actually deliver and are rewarded for their performance according to a concept, I will say: Earn As You Work.

The HRMIS, which is a priority project of my Ministry and a valuable tool to assist in a strategic human resource planning and management, has reached a crucial stage in its implementation. In fact, the HR and payroll modules have reached the user acceptance test phase and the system is expected to be fully utilised in about 40 Ministries/Departments by June 2017. The implementation of HRMIS will, in itself, constitute a major transformation in processing the monthly payroll of public officers through the elimination of several time-consuming manual activities.

Madam Speaker, the coming into operation of the HRMIS will no doubt run the simpler the Management of Human Resources in the complex of environment in the Civil Service. In effect, this strategic tool will, in the near future, bring tangible benefits by reducing considerably the process time of all HR related activities. Productivity at work will considerably increase and Ministries/Departments will be able to focus more on its strategic HR through judicious use of the human resources.

In addition, the electronic attendance system which is gradually replacing the manual attendance register is being upgraded to provide for, *inter alia*, a seamless interface with the HRMIS and to run the control of attendance at work more effective.

There are other reform initiatives, Madam Speaker. Government's strategy for Public Service Reform is that services must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their customers. This undoubtedly requires a better understanding of what makes customers satisfy and how this can be measured. In this perspective, my Ministry will ensure that the quality

culture instilled across the civil service is reinforced through the continued implementation of the following –

- (i) Counter service and customer care;
- (ii) ISO Certification, and
- (iii) Public Service Excellence Award to give due recognition for excellence.

It is, indeed, a matter of pride that for the first time, industry of the Civil Service of Mauritius, a Customer Satisfaction Survey has been successfully carried out by my Ministry in collaboration with Statistics to measure how far people are satisfied with the level of service delivery. The survey which initially covered all the Civil Status Officers across the island will be extended to other sectors as well as the result published for public knowledge in due course.

Mystery shopping is being carried out in 10 selected organisations to ensure delivery of quality services to customers. My Ministry is investing in capacity building to train a dedicated team of officers to enable mystery shopping to be carried out on an ongoing process at any time of the year and in any organisation.

On the other hand, the number of ISO Certification Projects which cover divisions, sections of Ministries/Departments are on the increase. My Ministry is now providing training to some 150 facilitators across the Civil Service to enable the already ISO Certified Organisation.

Madam Speaker, Civil Service Reforms, another unprecedented initiative worth highlighting relates to the formulation of a Civil Service Reform Strategy incorporating a human resource strategy as well as a capacity building strategy.

My Ministry has, in fact, received technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat since April 2016 with a view to enabling Government to undertake strategic Civil Service reform using a holistic approach. In this endeavour, the Consultant has carried out wide consultations with various stakeholders, including public officers of different grades, administrative, technical and operative at different levels, representative of the private sector, the civil society and those of trade unions of the Civil Service.

The reform strategy will cover the three main pillars of people process and technology and will be complemented by an action plan, the reform strategy along with their accompanying implementation matrix are expected to be ready by end 2017. I am confident

that this Reform Strategy will chalk the way forward for the next 10 years in line with Vision 2030.

Madam Speaker, we are conscious of the problem of employment prevailing in the country for the past years and we are committed to reduce unemployment, in particular, among our youth.

In Budget 2015-2016, funds were provided for the filling of 7,446 promotional and entry vacant posts in the Civil Service. I am proud to announce that around 5,000 of these vacancies - Oh, my God, nothing has been done! Somebody said that - have been filled as at June 2016. For the Budget 2016-2017, I am grateful that the Minister of Finance and Economic Development for providing funds for the recruitment of 7,200 new entrants in the Civil Service.

Madam Speaker, since my taking office in the Ministry, I have given much attention to our more valuable assets while harnessing public officers to provide an effective service delivery to our citizens. We must also promote their welfare and ensure that they have a work life balance at the same time. With this concern at heart, we have introduced the following new schemes -

- (i) The Flexible Working Arrangement, and
- (ii) The Government Medical Insurance Scheme.

The Flexible Work Arrangement Scheme is meant to be implemented across the civil service for officers working on a five-day week basis with a view to improving overall efficiency in the Civil Service for longer hours of office operation and reduce lateness and extended service to our customers.

Madam Speaker, allow me to explain this because a lot of people do not understand why public officers can come at the time they want. But, in fact, it is the time that we implement. There are three slots. The first slot starts one hour earlier than the usual time and then the usual time and then one hour later than the normal time. Thus, we have given the Civil Service a much longer day. We have earned two more hours of office opening in the public service and this is at no cost at all. So, this is something that is really good. If we have to calculate how much costs 8 hours per day, these are billions and two hours more have cost nothing to this Government. So, this is something that is really good. If we have to calculate how much cost 8 hours a day, these are billions and 2 hours more has cost nothing to this Government.

Moreover, it provides more flexibility to officers to attend and leave office at times which are more convenient to them, thus enabling them to attend to their own family commitments, enhancing the work life balance of public officers and ultimately reducing stress. I have always believed that when people are happy they have a better performance at work. Moreover, the Scheme has been introduced on a pilot basis in my Ministry as from 01 October 2015 and extended to seven of the Ministries/Departments as from January 2016. It will gradually be replicated across the Civil Service.

The Medical Insurance Scheme is being spearheaded by my Ministry as from this year. It would consist of a Basic Plan where its premium would be on a cost sharing basis, that is, the 50% Government contribution to be matched by 50% employee's contribution. The Scheme will be optional, and enable public officers to have access to a wider array of medical facilities. Consultations have been held with all stakeholders, including trade unions and the scheme would be implemented by January 2017.

Madam Speaker, the successful implementation of the Scheme will result in a healthy workforce in the Civil Service, reduce pressure in our public hospitals and contribute in the development of a medical hub.

Madam Speaker, in this new era of development, the human capital would play a significant role and consequently safety and health would remain a key element. Safety, health and welfare issues are important factors of life in any business, be it public or private. While compliance with legislation is a major factor, the development of an effective safety and health culture would be beneficial by encouraging safer working practices through the Occupational Safety and Health Management System. My Ministry will continuously support the creation of the necessary conditions to render the work environment conducive to inspire and improve the morale of public officers.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform that since my assumption as Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I have always ensured that public officers work in a healthy environment. A gymnasium is operational in my Ministry for the benefit of my officers. In addition to the provision of sports and gym facilities, I have a dream to put in place a public service food court in order to promote healthy eating habits and healthy/bio food as well as to reinforce social networking relationships in a desired work/life balance. I am convinced that healthy officers can better perform and this will positively impact on the whole service.

Madam Speaker, let me now come to another Ministry for which I am responsible, namely the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management. And, I am thankful to hon. Raj Dayal who has spoken a lot on it recently in his speech.

Sustainable development is at the core of this Budget and it is also the engine of growth, innovation and productivity to pave the way for a greener Mauritius. This Budget has, in fact, put in place the required enablers to accelerate our shift to a more sustainable society.

This Budget has brought a new outlook on environmental sustainability through a plethora of measures to promote sustainable practices in sectors such as agriculture, energy, water, blue economy, tourism, land use planning, transport, amongst others.

The creation of an agri-business park on a demonstration basis will showcase the potential for symbiosis between planters and breeders in terms of waste management and resource use. Furthermore, the provision made for an exclusive and modern bio-farming zone as well as levy on pesticides and agro-chemicals will accelerate our efforts towards sustainable agriculture, safer food and conservation of ecosystem services. Investment in sophisticated laboratory equipment for the testing of fruits and vegetables will support our efforts towards eco-labelling. With regard to energy efficiency, I am particularly pleased to note the economic instruments proposed to promote sustainable consumption. For the renewable energy sector, there are exciting provisions to accommodate the production of electricity from local renewable sources. What is more interesting to note is the potential for the creation of green jobs in this particular sector.

Madam Speaker, while talking about environment we should not forget that our ocean and our lagoons are also of prime importance. Our actions towards the preservation of our biodiversity should be in line with the measures ratified during the COP 21. In so doing, we can win on every front.

I firmly believe that appropriate measures are necessary regarding navigation, nautical activities and even artisanal fishing in our lagoons. It is of utmost importance to do what is right instead of having recourse to traditional measures and actions which may have destructive effects. We should not also succumb to lobbies which may often have negative consequences for Government and the population.

Let us not forget that the climate change is already happening and I would like to congratulate hon. Pravind Jugnauth for the measures announced in the Budget and which are in line with the protection of environment.

Madam Speaker, we all know that our lagoons are dying and when I talked to the hon. Prem and he always said that we have to change the habits of people fishing. I had the idea when I was recently in a meeting in Nairobi where we were asking to protect the elephants and the wildlife because there are lots of poachers who kill the elephants and the natives. From one elephant they get about \$50 only. They have been taught how to let the animal live and with the lifespan of the elephant that person, instead of earning \$50, could earn with his family \$50,000. It is because they have tourism, the tourists come and visit the elephants over the span of life that make them earn more money.

I had the same thought here when I said all the fishes in our lagoons don't deserve to be taken by fishermen because the tourists want to put some snorkels and be safe like rightly said by our Leader of PMSD, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. We need these tourists. They want to come and swim and see. He wants to remove more motorised activities in the lagoons and this will promote for a nicer and cleaner lagoon, and maybe we can save our beaches.

Madam Speaker, I will now highlight the main achievements of my Ministry that support the vision of Government. Enhancing resilience, green economy and sustainable development: adaptation to and mitigation of climate change remain our priority. The Ministry of Environment is already engaged in various activities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emission, including –

- (i) Development of a Mauritius Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted in the context of COP 21. The House will note that Mauritius was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change;
- (ii) Development of a Guideline for Climate Change Adaptation Strategy on Coastal Setback with the collaboration of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and
- (iii) Development and implementation of the Climate Change Charter in collaboration with local authorities.

Furthermore, I am delighted to inform the House that my Ministry has recently secured a grant of USD 1.6 million under the Global Environment Facility for the

implementation of our nationally appropriate mitigation actions for a Low Carbon Island Development Strategy in the wind power sector.

Madam Speaker, our coastal zone, which is of a vital importance to the socio-economic development of Mauritius, is subject to degradation as a result of land and sea-based activities and climate change.

A continuous coastal rehabilitation programme is being undertaken at priority eroded sites based on the recommendation made under different expert studies. Works have been undertaken at critical eroded sites, namely Grand' Baie, Pointe aux Sables, Poudre d'Or, Cap Malheureux, Quatre Soeurs, Grande Rivière Sud Est, Bain Bœuf, Baie du Cap, La Prairie, La Preneuse, Le Morne, Grand Sable, Grand Port and Roches Noires. To further support our national effort, a grant of \$9 m. from the Adaptation Fund has enabled my Ministry together with relevant stakeholders to improve coastal ecosystem services and implement an early warning system for storm surges for the coastal zone.

With regard to preparedness to disasters, a dedicated refuge centre is being constructed at Quatre Soeurs. We think this initiative major coastal protection works will be undertaken at Mon Choisy and Rivière des Galets. My Ministry, Madam Speaker, is already focusing on the greening of the economy and promoting a sustainable production. We have already embarked on an ambitious capacity building programme under the Switch Africa Green Project in partnership with the UNDP and UNOPS. Green practices and responsible behaviours in the agriculture, manufacturing and tourism sector are being encouraged.

In addition, a policy reviewed exercise carried out very recently has enabled us to identify significant potential to further green these sectors and create a plethora of green jobs. By embracing cleaner production technique, industrial symbiosis and waste minimisation, SMEs can aim at increasing productivity and maximising profits. As Mauritius is drawing industrially and economically, new emerging waste streams such as electrical and electronic waste, construction and demolition waste and industrial waste, including hazardous waste have become matters of serious concern at the current rate of Municipal waste generation; the Mare Chicose Landfill is expected to reach saturation by end 2018. Against this backdrop, my Ministry has taken the following main initiatives -

- construction of an interim hazardous waste storage facility at La Chaumière where some 100 tonnes of hazardous waste will be stored temporarily by June 2017;

- awaiting eventual shipping to licensed treatment facilities abroad;
- an e-waste management system is expected to become operational by April 2017. This will be a public/private partnership initiative, and
- financial support from *l'Agence Française de Développement* has already been secured for development of a new strategy and Action Plan for solid waste management and resource recovery system for Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, another milestone towards sustainable consumption is the banning of plastics bags and as from 01 January 2016, we have witnessed a change in the mindset of both consumers and producers. Local manufactures have also diversified their activities by producing bio-degradable plastic bags and more eco-friendly bags. The provisions made in this Budget to encourage waste minimisation and promote resource efficiency are indeed highly commendable. We will, in fact, sustain this scheme on solar water heater, rain water harvesting and composting.

Madam Speaker, in line with the 2016/2017 Budget towards streamlining the licencing mechanism, my Ministry is setting up an EIA e-licencing platform. This platform will enable more efficient parameting procedure and considerably decrease paper use. Proper enforcement of environmental legislation and monitoring of environmental parameters are critical to ensure a healthy environment for our fellow citizens. To better cope with emerging challenges and improve environmental and public health, my Ministry will review the Environment Protection Act for better protection of the environment, strengthen the air quality monitoring through a network of fixation and review a number of standards, including drinking water and effluent discharge.

Madam Speaker, we will continue with the embellishment and upgrading of our physical environment as it is a key element towards improving the quality of life of our citizens and market Mauritius as a green tourist destination. We will also upgrade our public beaches through provision of amenities and by ensuring safety and security of public beaches. For example, we are setting up some towers where we will have lifesavers and these lifesavers are usually from volunteers such as Wildlife Saving Society and the Surf Life Saving Society, which are offering their services, but we have to help them.

We all know that climate change is causing frequent and extreme weather events with dramatic consequences. We have no choice than to be better prepared to save lives and properties. In this context, a comprehensive National Disaster Scheme 2015 has been

prepared to enable stakeholders to better understand and assume their respective roles before, during and after disasters. Furthermore, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act which has already been promulgated provides for the prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters, mitigation of the adverse impact of disasters, disasters preparedness, effective response to disasters and management of post disaster activities, including recovery and rehabilitation. Some 40 simulation exercises have so far been conducted to enhance the preparedness of agencies and local communities against natural disasters such as flooding, tsunami and landslides among others. Moreover, a national Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Emergency Alert System is being implemented to provide alert in a timely and reliable manner.

Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Mauritius will have the privilege to host the 6th session of the Africa Regional Platform and the 5th High Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction and the team implementing Sendai Framework in Africa. In collaboration with UNISDR Regional Office for Africa and the African Union from 22 to 25 November 2016, we are expecting some 600 delegates including 50 Ministers from the African Continent. Mauritius would benefit both in terms of capacity building and visibility at regional and international levels.

Before concluding, Madam Speaker, it is not my habit to reply, but I have today, unfortunately, to reply. There are a few issues, like I have just heard hon. Ganoo talking about the Gorges de la Rivière Noire and about the damages that are being caused. I have to say, unfortunately, I have been there together with hon. Baboo and hon. Seeruttun. We did not want to leave Port Louis and go all the way in the mud because it was rainy and then to come here to make some false declarations. I have seen with my eyes and I witnessed it.

(Interruptions)

You did! I cannot understand. Maybe we can go together again because all I have seen, there is nothing. The trees are not being cut. There is a plan - I will tell you just now – called PAN. I made a mistake with the press when I said it was POL. It is not POL it is PAN. This programme is cutting all the invasive bushes, trees that are damaging our native forests. This plan has been going on since seven years. Of course, you take a picture of a tree that has been cut, it can make a lot of damage, but you have to go and see. I would be the first one to alert and say no to it. These are pictures. We know what we can do with pictures. We can go

together. I invite you. It is not my habit to do that. It was clean and we are promoting a film industry.

(Interruptions)

When you have a community that use a track, it is a very bad habit that they all believe that it is their track and nobody else should come on that track. There is nothing wrong. Concerning JCB, it was not a JCB but an elevator.

(Interruptions)

A crane! There was absolutely no activity. The Press were there, the gentlemen were there!

Madam Speaker: Do not refer to the Press!

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: It is a fact. I don't want to say any bad word in this Assembly. I never did and I don't want to start. But I can assure the House, everything was nice and clean there and they were doing it in respect. Concerning Le Morne also, I don't understand why they said: "It is only *Tamtam PMSD*", or whatever it was called. *Gamat!*

(Interruptions)

I know, I am sorry hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. It is not the habit of PMSD to reply to these, but I have to tell it. There was a big orange. It was not the sun, it was hon. Toussaint with his orange shirt!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, you can't do this, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: The Vice-President of the Republic also was there. Hon. Roopun and hon. Boissézon too.

(Interruptions)

You can lift up your hands those who were there!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, don't do this hon. Wong Yen Cheong! Continue, without involving others!

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: My apologies, Madam Speaker. Everything was respected. Concerning a track, when people go to visit, what kind of safety can we offer? Have we ever

seen anywhere at Gorges de la Rivière Noire what kind of safety than just cleaning a track when people go at their own pace and at their own risk. What shall we do? Shall we put handrails and make a degradation of the environment? No, it should be left as natural as possible.

(Interruptions)

I will stop here, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. We always listen!

Madame la présidente j'ai toujours eu de l'admiration pour ce gouvernement. Madame la présidente, je voudrais saisir cette occasion et dire ces quelques lignes que je viens d'écrire pour souligner que, contrairement aux spéculations, '*l'Alliance Lepep*' est plus unie que jamais. Non seulement par la confiance, la collaboration qui existe entre les partenaires qui sont le MSM, le PMSD et le ML mais aussi parce que nous avons un *leader* en l'honorable Sir Anerood Jugnauth qui donne la motivation nécessaire et qui inspire le gouvernement tout entier afin que nous puissions honorer l'engagement pris en 2014.

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, ce serait une omission de ma part si je ne reconnaissais pas la confiance que l'honorable Premier ministre place en nous, et en particulier la confiance qu'il a dans le PMSD et en moi-même, en me confiant la responsabilité de diriger un deuxième ministère. Je voudrais remercier Sir Anerood Jugnauth pour cette confiance et je peux lui assurer que je ferai de mon mieux pour honorer cette confiance et que je serai à la hauteur de cette responsabilité qui m'a été confiée.

Comme je le disais plus tôt, certains répandent des rumeurs de soi-disant tension entre les partenaires de '*l'Alliance Lepep*', mais je dois préciser que le PMSD n'est pas un adepte de la culture de fuir devant ses responsabilités, ni de répondre, ni d'écouter parce que vous venez d'entendre mon *leader* qui m'a dit de ne pas répondre.

(Interruptions)

Nous tenons nos engagements en tant que partenaire d'une alliance. L'année dernière dans cette même auguste Assemblée lors des débats budgétaires, j'avais souligné qu'il doit y avoir une confiance mutuelle entre les partenaires. Et j'avais insisté que le PMSD a toujours été loyal tout en honorant les engagements pris vis-à-vis de la population. Je peux assurer la Chambre et la population que, au PMSD, nous n'allons pas déroger à ce principe. De plus, au PMSD, nous avons un *leader* qui opère plus comme un entrepreneur. *Résultat lor résultat*, ce

n'est pas un slogan creux! Nous avons réussi dans tout ce que nous entreprenons car au PMSD nous ne prêtons aucune attention aux rumeurs, aux spéculations, aux palabres et aux machinations des agents déstabilisateurs qui ne veulent rien d'autre que l'échec de ce gouvernement.

Nous restons concentrés sur nos objectifs et nos engagements pris envers nos partenaires. Contrairement à ce qui est publié dans la presse, débités par les oiseaux de mauvais augure...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Wong Yen Choeng : Le respect mutuel existe bel et bien entre chaque partenaire de l'alliance. Nous n'hésitons jamais à unir nos efforts afin de nous entraider pour le bien de l'alliance du pays. Je citerai comme exemple, l'honorable Soodhun, qui n'a jamais hésité à tendre la main à tous les membres des partis de notre alliance gouvernementale.

(Interruptions)

J'ai toujours eu de l'admiration pour l'autre *leader* de l'alliance, le vice-premier ministre, l'honorable Ivan Collendavelloo.

(Interruptions)

Je n'oublierai jamais ce que Sir Gaëtan Duval, de qui j'étais très proche, avait souhaité, que ce soit son ami Ivan Collendavelloo qui lise son oraison funèbre. Il me l'avait confié. De plus je ne connais pas beaucoup de députés qui, pour laver leur honneur, avaient démissionné de l'Assemblée nationale. Bravo!

Alors qu'un massacre de 60-0 s'annonçait en notre défaveur...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker : Hon. Baloomoody !

Mr Wong Yen Choeng : Je peux vous assurer qu'aucun membre de ce gouvernement n'a pris part aux élections pour prendre le pouvoir parce qu'un massacre de 60-0 s'annonçait contre nous. Nous étions là pour défendre notre pays parce que nous n'étions pas d'accord avec la deuxième République et tout ce qui s'ensuivait.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, interruptions, please! Hon. Quirin, I just drew your attention!

(Interruptions)

No interruptions !

(Interruptions)

Order !

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Please, continue!

Mr Wong Yen Choeng: Nous sommes là aujourd'hui et ce, grâce à deux agents exceptionnels qui ont abattu un travail énorme en termes de communication pour que 'l'Alliance Lepep' prenne les commandes du gouvernement. Malheureusement, l'un deux était assis de l'autre côté de la Chambre et l'autre attend l'issue de son procès pour une affaire de coffre si je ne m'abuse. Alors ces deux agents nous ont vraiment permis de communiquer, ont tout fait pour que nous remportions ces élections et former le gouvernement. Je ne pourrais jamais les remercier suffisamment de m'avoir permis de m'asseoir de ce côté de la Chambre.

(Interruptions)

Et de diriger aujourd'hui deux ministères.

(Interruptions)

Des palabres il y en a, et il y en aura! Je peux rencontrer des gens de l'autre côté de la Chambre qui sont mes amis et je ne le nierai jamais, Madame la présidente. Je pourrai toujours dialoguer et ce n'est pas pour cela que nous sommes en train de 'casser' le gouvernement parce que j'ai le droit de parler à tous les membres de cette Chambre et j'espère que j'aurai toujours le droit de le faire.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, allow me to conclude by stating some ten key strategies enunciated by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Chart a clear path for the future of our country. Through this Budget, Government has clearly expressed its firm intention to play its role fully as a facilitator to achieve sustainable development. It is now up to all stakeholders to assume the responsibilities. We need to ensure that our efforts are integrated and our actions are harmonised. It is only then that we will ensure a legacy for our future generation.

Madame la présidente, je pensais à cela tout à l'heure, permettez-moi de citer une parole de Jésus-Christ, quoi que je n'ai pas l'envie de faire la messe ici. Dans son sermon sur la montagne...

(Interruptions)

Il disait –

« Pourquoi vois-tu la paille qui est dans l'œil de ton frère, et n'aperçois-tu pas la poutre qui est dans ton œil? Hypocrite, ôte premièrement la poutre de ton œil, et alors tu verras comment ôter la paille qui est dans l'œil de ton voisin. »

(Interruptions)

There are two small things on which I want to conclude. First, it is because I talked to the hon. Attorney General, and it is concerning the *certificat de moralité*.

Madame la présidente, malheureusement, nous savons qu'à Maurice le certificat de moralité est servi par certaines personnes d'une façon abusive, parce que souvent quelqu'un qui a petit délit est condamné à vie carrément, et je crois que l'*Attorney General*, à qui on a parlé, va faire le nécessaire.

Pour terminer sur une bonne note, Madame la présidente, ce matin j'ai eu une bonne nouvelle, et je tiens à l'annoncer. J'ai pu négocier avec Air Mauritius pour que tous les *public servants* aient 15% de *rebate at the lowest seasonal cost* et ainsi que les membres de la famille...

(Interruptions)

... à bord d'Air Mauritius. Alors, pour étendre cette joie, je dirai que cela s'applique à tous les membres du Parlement et ainsi qu'aux membres de l'opposition et à leurs familles.

Je terminerai sur cette note en disant merci beaucoup.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Collendavelloo!

(7.11 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): It is late in the day, but the night is still young. So, let us start and try and make it sweet, I don't know about sweet, but I know about short.

Madame la présidente, l'an dernier, en avril, j'étais debout de ce même côté, et j'écoutais le discours du budget de l'honorable Lutchmeenaraidoo, et par la suite, quelques jours après, je pris moi-même la parole. Nous étions en période de transition ; pour nombre d'entre nous, une transition personnelle, professionnelle, qui s'abattait sur nous, alors que, franchement, nous ne nous attendions pas. Mais, pour le pays, une transition extraordinaire, car le budget Lutchmeenaraidoo préparait le pays pour l'année qui allait suivre.

Aujourd'hui, la transition cède le pas à la certitude, car tous les mouvements qu'on a pu connaître, aujourd'hui s'estompent devant une certitude : l'unanimité inédite de toutes les forces politiques, à part l'honorable Mohamed, autour du budget.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Collendavelloo: Le développement annoncé par l'honorable ministre des Finances, Pravind Jugnauth, est extraordinaire. D'abord, ce souci du *sustainable development*, tel que préconisé par le Premier ministre dans sa Vision 2030. Rendons-nous compte ! Contrairement à ce que certains commentateurs ont pu dire ! C'est le droit fil de la politique édicté par l'Alliance Lepep depuis les élections. Développement en préservant l'environnement. Oui, le développement, pas seulement durable, mais le développement renouvelable et renouvelé. Mais surtout, contrairement à ce que nous avons connu pendant 10 ans, où nous avons une philosophie économique édictée par le Très-Haut Navinchandra Ramgoolam : *Empower the rich, so that the crumbs get to the poor!* C'était ça cette philosophie ! Et c'est cela qui a mené la population à vouloir effectuer la transition.

Aujourd'hui, c'est la protection des classes sociales. C'est là le désir de protéger ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle, ceux qui vivent dans ce pays, en se demandant : 'Mais comment ça se fait qu'il y ait le sentiment que nous vivons dans deux pays ?' Et c'est ce que s'efforce à combler l'honorable ministre des Finances. Et c'est ceci que j'ai suivi comme philosophie au niveau de mon ministère, au niveau de mon action politique depuis que j'ai la charge du ministère de l'Energie et des Utilités publiques.

Au tout début de mon mandat, j'étais confronté par le problème CT Power. CT Power voulait dire 100 mégawatts de puissance en moins pour le pays. Il fallait faire quelque chose. Je fis appel à deux personnes. Un que j'ai nommé comme président du comité de direction de la CEB, M. Naidoo. Je le connaissais d'à peine quelques mois, mais qui m'avait frappé par un esprit d'intelligence très pointu, une connaissance du business ; il était le conseiller personnel

du président de la République de Madagascar, ainsi que du président de la Tanzanie. C'est quelqu'un comme ça que je veux. Et en deuxième temps, en faisant appel à Gérard Hebrard.

Laissez-moi dire un mot sur deux personnes qui ne s'attendent pas à ce que je les nomme aujourd'hui. C'est M. Naroo et M. Tanoo. Dès ma prise en fonction, j'ai eu des entretiens avec eux, et ils ont tout de suite compris qu'il fallait absolument m'aider dans cette tâche et que, eux, ils n'avaient plus leur place au CEB. Je leur rends un hommage public, aujourd'hui, car ils m'ont facilité la tâche. Sans eux, s'ils avaient voulu faire obstacle et que j'avais à utiliser la loi, je n'aurais pas fait cette transition d'une façon aussi facile que cela. M. Naroo n'est pas mon ami, mais je tiens à dire les faits tels qu'ils sont.

Après CT Power, le Leader de l'opposition a exprimé avec justesse, avec raison, son accord avec moi qu'il y avait un problème : l'insuffisance de la puissance électrique pour assurer l'électricité à la nation, en court : le *blackout*. C'est ainsi que dès décembre, je disais à la presse : « La situation est inconfortable », et à cette Chambre "*there is no room for optimism, but we are not in doomsday scenario.*" C'était un challenge, un défi que j'ai pris. Je ne suis pas ingénieur. Jamais je n'ai fait ces choses, mais j'ai rassemblé mes équipes techniques, et on a travaillé.

Ces réunions étaient dures parce qu'elles étaient des réunions faites dans la discrétion, sans publicité tapageuse, sans tam-tam, sans pouvoir dire ce qui se passait, mais à rassurer le Premier ministre sur l'action ministérielle que je menais. Et c'est ainsi que, petit à petit, nous avons échafaudé un programme pour nous assurer de la pérennité de l'électricité. Le *Leader* de l'Opposition en fit un cheval de bataille ; au départ, d'une façon très compatissante envers moi, en se disant presque dans quel pétrin tu t'es foutu. Le 1^{er} avril 2015, nous voyons dans le *Hansard* –

"I believe the risk is very real that we have not a general blackout, but rolling blackouts, cuts here and there all over the place. As from the end of the year, the CEB is being, according to me, over-optimistic (...)."

Et il me cite, à juste raison, pour venir dire : « mais vous aussi, vous êtes en accord avec moi ; ce qui est vrai. »

Un peu plus loin, il dit –

"I think we can agree to disagree on our assessment of how serious, and how big the risk of rolling blackouts; (...)"

La différence était dans la mesure et non pas dans le fond. C'est un peu comme les drogues synthétiques : sont-elles alarmantes ou sérieuses ? On se bat dans la syntaxe et c'est ce qui se passait entre le *Leader* de l'Opposition et moi. Et le Leader de l'Opposition citant, toujours à juste raison - nous sommes en avril - ce qui se passe en Afrique du Sud le 1^{er} avril. Quinze jours plus tard, le 14 avril 2015, il dit –

« Le troisième danger qui nous menace, d'après moi, *Madam Speaker*, - discours du budget – et celui d'une crise dans la fourniture d'électricité avec des *rolling blackouts* comme actuellement en Afrique du Sud ou au Ghana. (...) *Madam Speaker*... »

C'est lui qui dit cela.

« ... le risque de *rolling blackouts* – entendez-moi – à partir de fin 2015 est malheureusement bien réel. »

The seat is uncomfortable when you hear that sort of language from somebody like the Leader of the Opposition and when you are in charge of that very Ministry. My nightmare of a country in the dark was not unreal at all, because, after all, the Leader of the Opposition is not somebody who speaks lightly. And this went on in a very nice manner between the Leader of the Opposition and me, but then, a change occurred in June, and that is important to note. In June, the whole tone, the whole political tone changes. Because on 14 June because the legislative defeat, finally, the Leader of the Opposition knew what he was facing. It was clear; the writings were on the wall. 60-0 was gone! On the contrary, the threat of 60-0 was on the other side! But for the Municipal elections, there was room for optimism. They did a better campaign during the Municipal elections than during the legislative. Because, first of all, they were free to conduct that campaign; the MMM was free to conduct its campaign as it wanted, and the MMM knows how to campaign. But I also know how to campaign!

(Interruptions)

So, we had good campaigners on both sides! That was a tough campaign! We predicted the victory at the Municipal elections, but could we have thought that our young dynamic team of Ward I, Stanley, would win *haut la main*? Could we have thought that the MMM would not have been able to rescue such a candidate as Mr Toussaint...

(Interruptions)

I mean, I felt very sorry for him; he is such a nice man and he has done so much for the Municipality. Again, it is good that we render him homage. But, could we have predicted

that? I don't know about the other towns. I know for Beau Bassin/Rose Hill where I was conducting the campaign and I remember the day of the elections and of the results of the 14th of June when we came with 120-0. Now, that was a killing blow! As from that time, the tone changed between the MMM and us. And between the Leader of the Opposition and me, I regret to say that, because I have been working with him for 35 years. Then, the attacks became personal: 'You don't know what you are doing! *To pas comprend narien! Li pas comprend narien! Narien!*' All sorts of accusations! Diminishing me in my personality and that I would never be able to do what I am saying that I was doing. It was necessary for the Leader of the Opposition to say that because it was necessary to enhance the morale of the troops, and then a campaign started. *C'était le spectre du blackout! Le blackout était devenu fictif arrivé en juin.* Je venais à la Chambre, je venais démontrer qu'il n'y avait plus de possibilité de *rolling blackouts* de par les stratégies que j'avais dirigées – mes techniciens à pourvoir pour empêcher cela. C'était clair ; tout le monde me donnait raison, mais la campagne, elle, allait en s'accroissant. Jusqu'au moment en novembre, où, l'apogée, le paroxysme du journal 'L'Express' : risque de *blackout* !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Collendavello: Lundi le 09 novembre, la veille de Divali, on tire un article comme ça ! On traumatise toute une population en disant : « *Blackout ! Le CEB, dos au mur !* » Quel dos au mur? On avait la situation en main et ils le savaient. De mauvaise foi ! On traumatise une population, on vient dire *blackout* la veille de Divali ! A la maison, je recevais toutes sortes de questions : *Ki demin pa pou gagn kouran ? Ki, pou mett la limière pou narien là ?* Dans la rue au *Ward I*, on me posait des questions, on ne me croyait pas parce que 'L'Express' avait dit : *Blackout !* Le lendemain, quel *blackout* ? La lumière est partout ! Hein ! Divali Night !

(Interruptions)

Un travail en silence, mais un silence courageux que j'ai maintenu envers et contre tous et même en dépit de l'incompréhension de certains de mes collègues.

(Interruptions)

Eclairé de la lumière!

St. Louis, qu'est-ce que je n'ai pas fait pour qu'aujourd'hui St. Louis commence à être érigé ! Quatre *state-of-the-art engines* 15 mégawatts ! Vous savez qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas fait pour m'empêcher de faire ça. Jusqu'en Cour Suprême, ils sont allés. Jusqu'au dernier bout pour ensuite retirer le procès. Entre-temps j'ai perdu tant de temps. Avoir à expliquer au Premier ministre ...

(Interruptions)

... pourquoi j'ai tardé sur St. Louis. Ce n'est pas facile à expliquer au Premier ministre une affaire comme ça.

(Interruptions)

Comment le Leader de l'Opposition l'appelle ? Le futur Premier ministre!

(Interruptions)

Oui, aujourd'hui même!

Enfin, après la Cour suprême, les appels d'offres sont lâchés, le contrat est donné. Encore une fois, *challenge* ! On continue jusqu'à la fin et à la fin on retire le *challenge*.

(Interruptions)

Non, je ne dis pas malhonnêteté parce que nous sommes avocats, nous savons que cela se fait très souvent quand on regarde le dossier adverse, au moins on réalise qu'on n'a pas *a leg to stand on*.

C'est un contrat pour R 4.2 milliards financé par la Banque Africaine de Développement qui avait objecté au premier contrat de l'ancien régime parce que la Banque Africaine de Développement - à ma prise de fonction je vois ça - avait dit qu'il y avait quelque chose de suspect. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que l'honorable Jahangeer va lui aussi rentrer dans cette sauce de suspicion. Mais aujourd'hui nous savons que 4x15 même si cela fait 60, au fait ça fait 47 mégawatts de puissance garantie.

Les *combined cycle gas turbines*, 70 à 80 mégawatts vers 2018 à Fort Georges. Et là puisque je suis dans le *mood* de remerciement à tout le monde, laissez-moi dire un mot spécial pour le *Deputy Prime Minister*, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. J'avais d'énormes problèmes pour que soit alloué le terrain de Fort Georges à CEB. Pourquoi ? Le plan initial c'était de le mettre à Les Salines.

(Interruptions)

Oui, les Grandes Salines.

Et se pose le problème de *Ramsar Committee*. J'ai le choix. Soit je me bats mais je perds du temps, soit je vais en retraite et je cherche du secours. Je vais pleurer chez mon ami, sur son épaule, mais je n'ai pas pleuré longtemps et très, très vite, nous avons pu débloquer la situation et nous avons eu ce terrain de Fort Georges où...

(Interruptions)

Je me suis plaint.

Aujourd'hui, nous avons déjà *shortlist* neuf contracteurs et la première phase sera de R 1.6 milliards et la deuxième phase sera de R 4 milliards. Je n'oublie pas, M. Sunta, le Directeur Général, qui m'a également donné un sacré coup de main pour que je puisse débloquer cette situation. Sinon je ne sais pas quelle aurait été ma position aujourd'hui.

Le *tank farm*, je comprends l'inquiétude de mon confrère l'honorable Baloomoody, celui de mon collègue ministre, l'honorable Alain Wong Yen Cheong et les autres députés de la circonscription No. 1, mon collègue l'honorable Armance, mon ami l'honorable Mme Danielle Selvon, il y a tellement de députés dans cette circonscription que vous oubliez.

(Interruptions)

Cinq députés!

Alors nous devons choisir. Nous avons abandonné les turbines dans cet endroit mais nous avons eu toutes les *clearances* pour le *tank farm*. Trois réservoirs de 6,500 m³ chacun au coût de R 540 millions avec - je le dis pour mes collègues députés et ministre de No. 1 - toutes les garanties contre l'incendie, l'environnement et tout ce que vous voulez. Nous avons payé les plus grands experts juste pour nous assurer qu'il n'y avait aucun risque, ni de pollution - évidemment pas dans la construction car c'est normal qu'il y ait un peu de trouble de voisinage. C'est donc le *tank farm*.

Autre mesure, Alteo. Très intéressant, Alteo. Le contrat arrive à expiration. Nous sommes en négociation pour avoir une nouvelle technologie et pour nous assurer qu'entre coupe, il y a 74 mégawatts mais sur le charbon et pendant la coupe, 66 mégawatts uniquement sur la bagasse. Et là, mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Seeruttun est à Rodrigues, mais que je rassure tout le monde, un des points cruciaux de cet accord sera le prix de la bagasse aux planteurs. Les planteurs ont beaucoup souffert. Il est temps que les

planteurs puissent recevoir même s'ils ne recevront pas tous leur dus mais au moins qu'ils reçoivent assez pour pouvoir ne pas abandonner la culture de leurs ancêtres. Encore une fois, je ne sais pas si je réussirai, mais croyais-moi j'essayerai. Mais à quoi ça sert à faire cela si vous ne pouvez pas emmener l'électricité jusqu'à chez vous, Madame la présidente. C'est ça le point.

Nous avons été habitués à un réseau électrique qui prend de l'électricité, du *generating stations* qui fait à partir de l'huile, donc qui produit de l'électricité jour et nuit, qui rend sur un réseau, qui est stable et qui vous emmène 66,000 voltes, qui descend à 22,000 pour finalement atterrir chez vous à 220 ou 240. Toute notre vie nous avons été habitués à cela. Maintenant, nous entrons dans le renouvelable. Qu'est-ce qui arrive avec le renouvelable? C'est que le soir on n'a pas encore inventé un soleil. Le soleil brille pour tout le monde, mais il ne brille que 12 heures au maximum. Et c'est pour cela que 4,3 milliards de roupies sont mis de côté pour pouvoir augmenter la capacité du réseau, - mon ami l'honorable Mahomed le comprendra facilement, l'honorable Jahangeer également - pour faire que ce réseau puisse s'équilibrer. Nous pensons que cela pourra se faire très, très vite - je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails techniques - mais, en plus, quand on produit l'électricité par le solaire, normalement on n'est pas la maison parce que le jour on est au bureau et moi dans ma maison c'est en train de produire de l'électricité qu'est-ce que je vais faire avec cela. Il faut stocker et où le stocke-t-on ? Dans des batteries ! Je pensais que c'était très compliqué mais quand on m'a expliqué j'ai vu que ce n'est pas trop compliqué de devenir ingénieur dans ce pays. Nous avons fait une provision pour 380...

(Interruptions)

Non, nous avons trois ingénieurs dans cette Assemblée. Vous vous rendez compte combien cela fait si vous mettez les trois ensemble. 380 millions de roupies - nous allons installer pour opérer 18 MW de batteries pour stocker et cela nous permettra de connecter jusqu'à 160 MW d'énergie renouvelable de toutes les sources: hydro, solaire, le vent, les vagues, la saleté - enfin la saleté il n'y a pas besoin de batterie parce que cela est tout le temps comme ça. Mais là aussi cela ne suffit pas parce que, à quoi cela vous sert d'avoir des machines, d'avoir un réseau, d'avoir de l'énergie renouvelable si, en même temps, vous êtes en train de produire de l'électricité avec de l'huile lourde. En d'autres termes, vous faites tout cela pour nettoyer votre environnement mais de ce côté-là, vous polluez. Alors dès que j'ai pris ma fonction, j'ai été conseillé et nous le poursuivons jusqu'à l'heure d'explorer le gaz naturel liquéfié. Alors le gaz naturel cela remplace. Ce n'est pas une énergie renouvelable mais souvenez-vous du

débat entre le *Leader* de l'opposition et moi lorsque le projet de loi de MARENA est entré à la Chambre mais j'ai donné cette responsabilité à MARENA, et je vois que le docteur Sudhoo fait un travail extraordinaire. Malheureusement, la vie n'est pas facile pour moi depuis deux ans. Alors que tout allait très bien pour avoir du LNG dans 18 mois du Mozambique, le Mozambique passe par une crise économique et ils ont retardé leur programme de LNG et nous devons nous tourner vers d'autres pays que nous allons explorer maintenant - le Qatar je ne sais pas quoi. Nous allons voir comment faire face à cette situation, je vais lire cela en anglais puisque c'est quelqu'un qui a préparé cette phrase pour moi. The procurement exercise for a comprehensive study on the implementation of LNG has been launched. The study will be completed in about 14 months. The new Fort George plant - c'est cela le combined cycle *dont je parlais* - will be able to adapt to LNG.

Le LNG, il faut faire attention il y a un problème que l'honorable Uteem et l'honorable Mahomed ont soulevé : est-ce que c'est *commercially viable*. Si c'est pour alimenter les *generating stations* pour faire de l'électricité, la réponse est non. Cela ne vaut pas la peine, oublié depuis maintenant continuons avec l'huile lourde. Mais, par contre, j'écoutais les chiffres ce matin. 2,900 bateaux, disait mon ami Xavier-Luc Duval, s'arrêtent dans Port Louis par an. Mais savez-vous qu'il y a 33,000 qui passent à côté de Maurice ? Et ces 33,000 bateaux - vous savez ce qui est en train de se passer? Ils sont en train de se convertir au LNG. Pourquoi? Parce qu'ils obtiennent des crédits carbone et avec COP21, cela devient *economically viable* de rouler avec le gaz. Singapour est déjà en avance. Singapour a déjà mis ses infrastructures mais nous, nous commençons ; nous sommes deuxième. Notre chance c'est quoi? C'est que nous avons appris dans Ardill quand on était petit - the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. Pourquoi? Vous vous rappelez des pirates qui étaient obligés de s'arrêter à Maurice pour refaire la profession au XVIIIe siècle mais c'est exactement ce qui va se passer avec les bateaux qui roulent au LNG parce que de Singapour à Maurice il ne leur restera plus de LNG et les 33,000 bateaux - disons 10 000 - auront à s'arrêter à Maurice pour le *bunkering*. Donc, dans vos négociations avec DP World, il faut prendre compte de cela, c'est une aubaine pour Maurice mais pas juste les bateaux, les camions et les bus aussi peuvent rouler au LNG. A New Delhi, dans les maisons aujourd'hui c'est le LNG qui vient alimenter les maisons si tant et si bien que ni l'Australie ni l'Inde ne peuvent être une source d'approvisionnement pour le LNG. Voilà où nous en sommes arrivés. Nous sommes arrivés très loin dans le LNG et, bien sûr, je ne ferai rien tant que je n'aurais pas eu une étude de faisabilité devant moi.

Deuxièmement si je n'ai pas passé par MARENA j'attire l'attention que dans MARENA il y a deux députés qui siègent, un de l'opposition et un du gouvernement et Madame la présidente, je vous remercie d'avoir exercé un choix judicieux sur la sélection des deux députés qui font ce travail sans le sou je crois et qui le font *dedicated* mais surtout qui mettent à contribution leur expérience d'une bonne manière, non partisane parce que tout le monde est conscient que nous parlons de l'avenir du pays. Laissez-moi parler des énergies renouvelables. *Government remains committed to adapting a responsible and environmentally sustainable policy regarding energy production.* Ce sont là les paroles du Premier ministre dans son 'Vision 2030'. Il y a MARENA, un chiffre que je jette ; nous sommes arrivés aujourd'hui à 20.3% de production d'énergie renouvelable dans notre pays. Formidable! Dans le silence, sans tam-tam mais avec courage regardez où nous sommes arrivés et nous avons une vision de 35%. En 2030 j'ai aucun doute qu'on va largement dépasser ce chiffre et mon rêve - il est permis quand même de rêver - c'est qu'un jour dans trois ans, par une soirée d'hiver où il ne fera pas trop froid, l'île Maurice soit assurée à 100 % par les énergies renouvelables. Ce sera formidable. Je dis un petit mot sur l'énergie solaire dans les grands centres, c'est-à-dire, les moyens comme Bagatelle, Super U etc.

Je vais dire un petit mot sur l'énergie solaire dans les centres moyens comme Bagatelle, Super U etc. Il y a un litige entre le CEB et eux. Le CEB, et je m'aligne sur cette position, pense qu'ils ont à contribuer à un *contractual standby capacity charge*. Auparavant, tout le monde avait à contribuer à cela. J'ai enlevé ça pour la classe moyenne. Cela fait R 200,000 pour Super U et vous allez me dire que c'est une fortune ! Pour Bagatelle, je crois que c'est R 157,000. C'est un débat ! The *Utility Regulatory Authority*, MARENA s'en occupe. Le URA va s'en occuper bientôt.

Concernant *Waste to Energy*, nos déchets, nous en avons beaucoup. J'espère que nous arriverons à nous entendre avec mon ami, l'honorable Wong Yen Cheong. A qui appartiennent les déchets de l'île Maurice ? Un débat stérile parce que les déchets appartiennent à la nation et nous allons voir quoi faire.

L'honorable Jahangeer a parlé de *smart grid*. Nous allons faire un *smart grid* comme je l'ai dit, mais surtout nous allons investir pour que nos câbles soient souterrains pour qu'on ait plus ces histoires de chauve-souris, de cyclone, de la pluie, du vent etc. qui viennent couper le courant déjà. Ça va coûter de l'argent. Je dois aller très vite parce qu'il y a deux ou trois choses que je dois dire.

Concernant l'efficacité énergétique, il ne sert à rien d'avoir fait tout cela, des stations électriques, un bon réseau, le *smart grid*, des compteurs électroniques si nous gaspillons l'énergie. A quoi ça sert ? Alors, c'est là que le *Energy Efficiency Office* qui avait été établi sous l'ancien régime mais que j'ai revigoré maintenant avec monsieur Kendal Tang, comme Chairman, va venir donner une impulsion à l'énergie. On forme des auditeurs de l'énergie, 42 en ce moment et nous avons déjà audité 10 bâtiments publics et privés avec des conseils comment économiser l'électricité. A la CWA, on arrivera à économiser 15% et probablement, au niveau de la nation, 10% de notre énergie. Mais ce n'est pas tout. Avec quel argent vous allez acheter votre panneau solaire ? Ça coûte entre R 250,000 et R 400,000. Si vous voulez avoir vos propres batteries de stockage, ajoutez 20% à 30%. C'est de l'argent ! Alors, qu'est-ce que nous avons fait ? Nous avons la *SBM Eco-loan*, des emprunts avec des meilleurs taux d'intérêt et des bonnes conditions, l'exemption de *l'income tax*, l'exemption du *land conversion tax* pour les propriétaires et pour les locataires.

Une mesure importante, *no VAT on photovoltaic Inverters and batteries*. Ça fait beaucoup d'argent. Nous allons amender the *Electricity Act and the CEB Act* afin d'alléger les procédures. Nous aurons *8-year income tax holiday* pour ceux qui commencent leurs entreprises avec *green energy*, pour ceux qui existent et qui sont enregistrés avec le SMEDA et d'autres conditions trop longues pour parler là, quatre ans de *tax holiday*. La *bio-mass*, y compris les feuilles des cannes car encore une fois il faut penser aux petits planteurs quand on fait ce programme d'énergie. Trop long pour parler de ce qu'on va faire des petits planteurs mais nous avons un programme qu'on commence à Rose Belle pour cela. Mais ce n'est pas seulement pour les riches. Pour ceux qui sont moins riches, le CEB, avec mon soutien personnel, nous allons mettre un projet où il y aura 10,000 foyers qui auront un kilowatt de *solar PV*. Un kit qu'on va mettre sur leur maison. Le CEB va payer 80% pour ces maisons. Ce sont les *low-income households social tariffs* et en plus, quand ils acceptent, ils doivent payer 20%. Mais quand ils acceptent cela, ils auront 50 kilowatts d'électricité gratuite.

(Interruptions)

On leur donne le kit et quand le soir, ils ont besoin d'électricité, 50 kilowatts d'électricité gratuites. Le CEB va faire plus que ça.

Le *fibre net project* va être mis sur pied pour servir notre réseau informatique afin de pouvoir investir dans le *fibre net*. Nous en parlerons plus tard. Pour cela, je dois vous dire que je propose d'amender le *Central Electricity Board Act* afin de permettre le CEB de

former une compagnie subsidiaire pour implémenter ce projet. Ce sera dans le *Finance Bill*. Je préfère l'annoncer depuis maintenant parce que ce sera présenté au Cabinet bientôt.

Les lumières sur l'autoroute. Assez ! On en a marre ! On ne peut plus laisser ça dans la main des *Local Authorities*. Je n'arrête pas de remercier des gens. Mon collègue Bodha et moi, à sa suggestion, on a donné tout cela au CEB pour R 30 millions. Le plan est déjà mis en route, le travail a déjà commencé, nous avons mis un *target date*, le 30 septembre pour tout finir sur l'autoroute. Seulement entre vous et moi, c'est un secret, ne le dites à personne.

(Interruptions)

Je mets la cravache pour qu'on puisse tout terminer le 8 septembre pour que les pèlerins du Père Laval puissent avoir de la lumière sur les routes.

(Interruptions)

Je ne promets rien, mais j'espère qu'on pourra le faire.

Le Parti Travailleiste a tout gelé alors que le gouvernement MSM/MMM de l'an 2000, contrairement à ce que les syndicalistes disent, avait commencé avec un programme du IFC, gelé par le Premier ministre et en 2010 il retourne à ses habitudes Travailleiste, bien *entrenched*. Il va chercher une équipe de Singapour pour venir comme conseiller. Ces gens sont payés R 1 milliard de l'État.

(Interruptions)

R 1 milliard a été payé ! Dites-moi, est-ce que quelqu'un voit un résultat quelque part de cela ! Ensuite, quand ils ont fini d'avoir un milliard, les singapouriens disent : maintenant, si vous voulez qu'on aille détecter les fuites, il faut nous payer encore R 25 millions. Là, le Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun n'en pouvait plus, il a dit au Premier ministre : *sorry, I am fed up*. Il a coupé et les singapouriens sont repartis. Quand j'ai pris mes fonctions, ils étaient en train de faire leurs valises.

(Interruptions)

Là c'est le débat le plus sérieux de ma vie parce que les projets vont coûter beaucoup d'argent.

Le record après la *Wastewater* c'est la CWA. Nous allons faire le maximum. Nous avons mis en place de nouvelles structures. Mais, pour faire tout ça il faut deux choses: il faut de l'argent et il faut de la technologie. Mais nous n'avons ni l'un ni l'autre! On peut fabriquer

l'argent mais pour la technologie, il faudra faire importer les Singapouriens encore! Nous avons plusieurs options, soit je suis content de ma position de ministre et je ne fais rien, je dis *carry on*, essayons de faire pour le mieux. Soit nous faisons pour le mieux, mais vous savez ce que ça veut dire? Ça veut dire que nous aurons à attendre 10 ans pour remplacer 1,600 km de tuyaux et à un coût faramineux avec des contracteurs qui continuent à fouiller avec la JCB etc. Ou alors, *we take the bull by the horns*. I am ready to risk my reputation on this. We tender and we get the best team to come and they invest their money and they bring their technology and we negotiate terms. This is why I have asked to form part of the team with DP World so that I learn a bit how you are doing it so that we want to get the best of all worlds here; new technology, foreign direct investment. But, of course, you have got to pay them. We will need profits, but with the system of KPIs. The more they perform, the more they get money. If they don't perform, they pay a penalty. This is the Algerian system and it works.

We have got the best advice from the World Bank and I am going to come to the nation after having discussed with the Prime Minister and my colleagues to get the best deal and have an open public, transparent debate. Can I say a word on my learned friend, my hon. colleague, Mr Uteem who found that there had been under spending?

I quite appreciate on looking at the figures in the Budget - he would say what is happening. My colleague, hon. Bashir Jahangeer gave him the reply and told him: "Listen, you have a contract for Rs300 m. but you can't expect to spend Rs300 m. in one year because you have got to tender. You have got to go to the CPB. You have got to look at the contracts, the engineers – the engineers take the longer time that you can imagine! Then you start the work and you can't pay the contractor the full amount. You have got to pay him '*tigine tigine*'. And, I will make sure that Dr. Ismael supervises this personally because he is accountable to me to make sure that money is well spent and that we don't have these cost overruns. Cost overruns, when we come to Wastewater we will see. So, I cannot agree with what my good friend, hon. Uteem said. Not a cent on Rivière des Anguilles? No, not true! We have started a procurement process. Under the old regime the *Agence française de développement* had pulled out of this project. I have gone to great length and when I was in Paris I went upstairs and finally we got the money from *Agence française de développement*.

La Ferme Dam, we need upgrading, but people have built houses down there. We can't upgrade because we can't do works. With my friend, hon. Vice-Prime Minister Soodhun - whom I thank a lot - we have been able to compulsorily acquire the land. There is

the problem of squatters. Let me reassure my friend, hon. Ganoo, I have dealt with Médine and I have told them: “What is two *arpents* of land for you? Give it to these poor people. They are people who work for you in any case! Let’s have a nice housing structure with good renewable energy and give us the cadres.” They will give us the quantity surveyors, the architects, the engineers etc. and we will build the houses after tender. I will not go on on all the projects because I have already submitted the list of projects for the CWA in the House. We are in a period of transition at the CWA with Dr. Ismael and Mr François Desmarais. After all that they say, I put my people or whatever, and we have a project management office. We are recruiting a Chief Operations Officer. We want to deliver and we have to deliver!

Let me say a word for the desalination plant which hon. Jahangeer mentioned. That is not on. That is okay for Rodrigues because there is no reservoir and the topography is different. For Mauritius, we cannot have desalination plant. Since 2005, this debate has been finished. Mr Jean-Mée Desveaux had dealt with that issue a long time and we can’t. We have a population of 1.2 million we have 2,000 metre cube of rainfall and we compare with Israel which with a population of 6.7 million receives an annual rainfall of 300 millilitres. Of course, Israel will want to desalinate water. They have no choice. But, we have the choice. Our problem is not water, Madam Speaker. We have plenty of water. Our problem is *gaspillage* by the CWA, mismanagement. This is the problem and this is where I come to human resources.

The CEB has recruited 375 employees, productive employees, engineers, accountants, shift foremen, technicians. We are now training about 60 technicians. To do what? Because we need them for renewable energy, they have to be trained. Let me say a word about Bagatelle Dam which I had forgotten. Bagatelle Dam, there is a huge cost overrun and, at least, the contractor has done a good job, but he is claiming a lot of money. We will see what our legal advisers have to say about it. We are going to start mediation proceedings and we shall see.

The water treatment plant, again, we have been dragged before the Supreme Court. One year we have lost by legal proceedings and the contractor to whom the CPB awarded the contract, I think he got a shock himself when he received his letter of award. So, we are paying. I have directed the CWA to hire a firm of consultants for Rs400 m. just to supervise the work of the contractor so that we don’t get cost overruns later. This is what we are doing. We have engineers, safety and health officers and all this.

I heard hon. Mohamed saying: "I have the document here that clearly shows the salary scale, the notice, the reference of the notice." He did not produce the document, which, according to him, showed that we had done internal advertisement, but have recruited, externally, only people from Stanley. First of all, as if people from Stanley or Trèfles cannot work in CEB. We know what is the talk, because we know what he says outside. I am not going to go further on him because it is going to waste my saliva. I would have expected him to put the document on the Table and prove what I am doing at the CEB! No! He does his *fracas* and takes his bicycle and runs away!

In this internal advertisement for Administrative Assistants, all four of them were from internal, and then we had nine from the Ministry of Labour. You know the innuendo! It is as if I have people whom I protect and I give jobs! Ministry of Labour, on job cards; these are the people who are recruited. Trainee technicians, 33 from internal, 51 from Ministry of Labour; Senior Audit Executive, one internal, and I asked Mr Hebrard: 'Why do you take one external'? He said, 'I have finished with the internal candidate who was there', and he goes on and on like this. When you have exhausted internal candidates, then you go for external or you take from Ministry of Labour.

For the sewage sector, Madam Speaker, I will do what I did for CWA. I will beg your permission to put in a list of projects for the Wastewater Management Authority. The purpose of this is to assist, and I see my friend, hon. Rughoobur, has seen the click in it. Instead of asking me the question: 'What are you doing in Pereybere?' In this, you have the answer. But from that answer, you have material to ask questions on what is happening to the contract. If like hon. Rughoobur, you do your work properly, then you will see everything. It takes you five minutes for your constituency. It is all set down here. Then, you have material to go round in your constituency, either to blame me or to congratulate me, but, at least, you have the facts before you. All the projects are here.

One word for the Roche Bois pumping station. Long ago, it used to be in the hands of the private sector. It was taken away, and supposedly, employees of Wastewater can manage that. Catastrophe! It has cost us a lot of money and a lot of you know what.

We have another issue with the Ministry of Environment because we are getting raw leachate from Mare Chicose, and that, from 2003. We shall have to find a solution for this.

Let me end, Madam Speaker, but not conclude, with the social measures. All that I have said, there is one issue. I have been lucky because as soon as I took the Ministry, the

price of oil shot down. It is not my doing. Rainfall has not stopped falling. We touch wood. So, we have been able to give 60,000 consumers a 31% reduction on their electricity bill. 52,000 water customers, 6 m³ free of charge. I have heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition telling me: 'You should give it to everybody.' Not on my life! I will never do this! Why should I give Mahen Jhugroo 6 m³ of water?

(Interruptions)

And he is not asking for it! 10,000 people do not pay wastewater fees any more.

Now, let me announce what I have told CEB to do. There was a question from one of my colleagues - I think it was hon. Mahomed - on people who have their electricity supply disconnected. I looked at the figures, and I must confess that I was shocked. For years and years, people have been disconnected. So, I have told the CEB: 'Let us meet and let us do something about it.' Because there are genuine hardship cases, which I know, which all of us know, from our constituencies. So, we are writing off the debts to about Rs30 m. for some 12,000 customers in hardship situation and who are presently on the disconnection list for non-payment. But this is a one-off amnesty. We are not going to let that go on and on, but we think we should do something. CEB has got the money. This is not going to starve CEB. So, I have issued that directive, they are working on it, and I hope that it is going to give results.

Then, I have been surprised to learn that people who invest in small businesses, when they need to connect electricity, they have to pay a huge sum of money to have a new transformer or to have a new pole or something of the sort. We are working on it, but I am in a position to announce that all capital contributions applicable to economically viable projects, in particular those involving job creation or food production and which require the extension of electric network to their sites, will be entitled to join a new scheme.

What is that new scheme? Small and medium enterprises as well as private individuals requesting a load not exceeding 15 kVA, will benefit from a payment facility in respect of the applicable capital investment, subject to a maximum of Rs250,000 per project, payable in five yearly instalments without interest. That is Lepep! The first instalment will be payable upfront prior to the execution of the work, but alternatively, if you do not want to join the scheme, then you will pay only half of the investment, but upfront, of course. So, you have the choice to do what you want to do.

I am going now to finish, but I would like first of all to address a few words to hon. Quirin, through you, Madam Speaker. I was taken aback by the bitterness of his tone, telling

us: we started the Plaza etc., it is our project, you are just doing what we had to do! It is a reality, since 2005, the only *maire* who did something for the Plaza was Mr Varen Andee, he repaired the roof. Then during the MMM tenure, it is a fact, nothing was done. There was a project, yes, but it is easy to build a castle in the air if you don't work to do it. Pas un clou, Madam Speaker, n'a été mis le Plaza. Quand le maire Ken Fong fut nommé en juin....

(Interruptions)

Aujourd'hui, passez devant le Plaza et demandez à l'honorable Quirin ce qu'il voit ! L'honorable Quirin a terminé en parlant de la plainte, justifiée, de M. Bruno Julie, qui, après une carrière magnifique dans la boxe se retrouve sans emploi. J'ai cherché, j'ai demandé et on me dit qu'il y a un problème pour qu'il devienne entraîneur ; il a le premier certificat, il n'a pas le deuxième certificat etc. ; bien compliqué et j'ai abandonné. Mais on ne peut pas faire de la politique – et je ne connaissais pas mes amis faisant de la politique sur le malheur des gens !

(Interruptions)

Mais on rit ! Continuez de rire, hon. Quirin ! Parce que ce que je vais vous dire là, ce que vous avez annoncé, vous avez défoncé une porte ouverte et vous le savez ! Parce que quand le *Chairman* du *CEB* a lu cet article, il m'a contacté. Il m'a dit : ouvre ton journal et regarde ça un coup ! Bruno Julie ! On ne peut pas le laisser comme ça. Aujourd'hui, Bruno Julie est employé à la *CEB* !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Collendavello: Et c'est moi qui ai pris la responsabilité !

(Interruptions)

Ne me dites pas que l'honorable Quirin, hier, ne le savait pas, qu'il n'était pas au courant ! Mais s'il n'était pas au courant, je lui donne le bénéfice du doute. Seulement il a cessé de rire ! Mais la boxe à Plaisance, vous vous rendez compte le Plaisance Boxing Gym ! Moi, je me souviens, j'étais enseignant au St. Andrews. Le Père André Avrillon, qui était curé de la Paroisse de Ste Anne, il venait...

(Interruptions)

Monsieur Nagloo était entraîné par le regretté Farid Matar qui était un entraîneur de boxe. Ils avaient une petite gym et tout le monde y allait. Les boxeurs - je me suis rappelé de leur nom - Gupta Gopaul, aujourd'hui si on le voit, jamais on le croira. Il y avait Jean-Claude Nagloo, Giovanni Frontin, Georges Marison, Jean-claude Dumont, Joel Balisson, Mario Mungur, L'Eveillé et, bien sûr, Bruno Julie. Bien sûr, tous des boxeurs de Plaisance ! L'honorable Quirin cause...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin, I am addressing myself to you! You had time to speak! Please, allow the Vice-Prime Minister to speak now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: Mais laissez-moi finir! Sous le MMM, c'était l'élite qui bénéficiait.

(Interruptions)

Oui, j'étais dans le MMM! Ah, oui ! Je partage cette responsabilité sans aucun problème. Je partage, parce que j'ai été parti prenant. Je n'ai aucun problème là-dessus. Mais quand – comment on appelle ça, la rupture ? Mais quand le maire Ken Fong prend le pouvoir, il m'appelle et on discute, et on fait un plan. On dit que maintenant on va privilégier les petites équipes de football, les petits boxeurs. Toutes les semaines je vais dans les tournois, je vais à des distributions de prix. Ces jeunes-là ...

(Interruptions)

Et on me dit que les conseillers municipaux de 'l'alliance Lepep' sont sur le terrain, ils travaillent. Je leur ai demandé : 'synthétique' ? Ils me disent, oui, mais ce n'est pas alarmant. Et toujours, on arrive : est-ce que c'est alarmant ou bien est-ce que c'est sérieux ou bien ce n'est pas grave ? Vous allez me bouquiner un peu. Les 'barons de la drogue' avaient payé M. Hoffmann, un grand chercheur ...

(Interruptions)

...en Amérique, pour inventer la drogue synthétique en parallèle. En Israël, le Hebrew University faisait cette drogue synthétique pour des besoins militaires. Et voilà, où nous nous

sommes rendus dans le nord. Légalement, on ne pourra rien faire parce que vous changez un petit peu la composition chimique et vous êtes en dehors de la loi. Et donc, nous avons un programme de sport et je termine avec l'honorable Koonjoo. J'ai été très sensible à ce qu'il a dit. Vous savez, on ne choisit pas la famille de sa naissance. Nous avons parmi nous dans cette Chambre des membres qui sont nés dans la pauvreté mais qui sont sortis de cette pauvreté. Nous avons également des membres dans cette Chambre qui sont nés dans la richesse. Ce n'est pas un péché d'être né dans une famille riche. Moi, je suis né dans une famille de petit fonctionnaire et je n'ai aucun problème là-dessus. Mais c'est ce que vous faites pendant votre vie qui compte, quelle est la lutte que vous adoptez. Il y a des gens qui se servent de cette richesse pour venir débiter n'importe quoi. Alors voir premier débit ! On ne peut pas être plus méchant que ça. On me rappelle que l'honorable Quirin était conseiller municipal en 2003/2004 lorsque le conseil municipal décidait de fermer le Plaza.

(Interruptions)

Je suis député de la même circonscription en 2016 ; alors, on décide de re-ouvrir la salle de Plaza. L'honorable Mohamed vient dire que, ah, le CEB fait des *advertisements*, ils disent que c'est interne, mais, au fait, tout le monde comprend que ce sont des *external candidates*. J'ai donné les statistiques. I have the document here that clearly shows the salary scale, the notice, the reference of the notice. Relisez les documents! Dites-nous de quel *job* il s'agit pour que je puisse répondre aujourd'hui. Je suis allé regarder tous les *jobs*. Tout cela c'est du *nonsense* ! Et il parle de M. Fakim et de M. Kureemun ! Il dit : those two people have been suspended from the CEB. Why those two? Who is in charge of the Disciplinary Committee to listen to them? Someone from Collendavelloo Chambers, Mr Colunday! Is this *rupture*?

Je comprends quand on entend ça ; mes amis auraient pu avoir des doutes sur ce qui se passe sur le CEB. Vous allez prendre les renseignements. Oui, M. Kureemun faisait face à un comité disciplinaire. Evidemment, le CEB a passé par le Conseiller légal du CEB pour identifier celui qui serait le *Chairman* et ils ont décidé que ce serait Me André Robert et c'est Me André Robert qui fait le *Disciplinary Proceeding*. Où est-ce qu'il est allé chercher Colunday ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Collendavelloo: Et laissez-moi vous annoncer une chose ! Le jour où il pérore dans cette Chambre, M. Kureemun avait déjà, le même jour, demandé sa mise à la retraite. Alors, qu'est-ce qu'on raconte ? M. Fakim, Colunday, *Disciplinary Committee to listen to them!* Encore une fois, le *General Manager* est allé chercher conseil avec Me Sookia, le *legal adviser* du CEB et Me Sookia a dit : Écoutez, pour quelqu'un d'aussi haut placé, il faut trois personnes. Et il a suggéré un juge de la Cour Suprême, *sitting Judge of the Supreme Court*, pas M. Colunday, pour siéger sur le comité, assisté du *Chairman* du Wastewater Management Authority, Monsieur – je dis bien son prénom parce qu'on sait quelle palabre il fane. M. Suleiman Hansrod et M. Neerunjun, ancien Directeur au ministère du travail. Et qu'est-ce qu'on veut essayer de faire croire ? Que j'ai un genre de problème avec M. Fakim ! C'est un ami d'école avec moi et que j'ai fait tout pour mettre mes personnes pour le mettre dehors ! Mais il va se défendre devant un juge de la Cour Suprême, assisté de deux assesseurs. S'il gagne son *case*, il gagne son *case*, s'il perd son *case*, il peut toujours aller en Cour. Donc, quelle palabre on fane. Et Collendavelloo Chambers n'existe plus depuis avant les élections, depuis la campagne électorale, mais on continue : 'Collendavelloo! Collendavelloo!'

La dernière fois qu'on m'a questionné sur les honoraires, j'ai eu l'élégance de dire que si on ne me donnait pas la permission, je n'allais pas *disclose* les honoraires de certaines personnes que l'honorable Mohamed connaît très bien et je vais continuer à le faire. Je vois que 'l'Express' a publié ça aujourd'hui. Ça ne vient pas de nous. Je ne sais pas d'où il sort cette information. Ce n'est pas correct de venir dévoiler les honoraires des gens qui ont fait leur travail et qui ont réclamé des honoraires qui ne sont pas excessifs. Quand c'est excessif, ça c'est une autre chose. Et le comité disciplinaire de M. Fakim aura lieu, il sera défendu, il aura ses avocats, ils vont présenter, et le plus choquant, ce même honorable Mohamed, avant-hier, il se met debout, il parle de l'*Equal Opportunities Committee*, il dit : je ne vais pas vous donner le nom parce que je suis un *gentleman*, je vais vous dire juste pour les oreilles du Premier ministre, vous savez comme je suis, moi !

(Interruptions)

Cinéma sans payer!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah! It is becoming worse!

Mr Collendavello: Et ensuite, il vient donner le nom et je dis: tiens, Mohamed est devenu un *gentleman*, il a changé depuis le temps. Je suis autorisé à vous dire que Collendavello Chambers n'existe pas, mais que l'Étude d'avocats est prise en charge par l'honorable Baloomoody, député de l'Opposition. Je suis autorisé également à vous dire que M. Colunday, avocat, son père était MMM, il est mort ; lui, dans les dernières élections, législatives et municipales, il a travaillé pour le MMM dans ma circonscription contre moi. Je suis autorisé à vous dire tout cela parce que j'ai demandé si je pouvais dire tout cela à la Chambre pour que ces palabres cessent un peu.

Et en dernier, Christelle Sohun, Collendavello Chambers happens to be a member of the IRP ! Il n'a pas été dans les *Chambres* depuis quatre ans. Ça aussi je suis autorisé à le dire. Bien sûr, elle a commencé ses premières armes comme nous, tant avocats dans le Cabinet ! Mais alors ! Elle n'a plus le droit de travailler ? Juste un tel, un tel, un tel! *Taleur mo donne noms* qui réclament par millions pour une affaire qui dure une demi-journée !

(Interruptions)

On ne peut pas parce que ce sont des confrères à moi !

(Interruptions)

Par décence, je ne vais pas le faire. Voilà le genre de bassesse, mais seulement laissez-moi vous le dire.

(Interruptions)

Parce qu'en toute justice, je dois accepter que ni les autres membres du parti Travailleiste, les autres députés je veux dire, ni les députés du MMM, ici présents, ni les membres du MP ne sont partie-prenantes de cette scandaleuse façon d'agir au parlement. Malheureusement, le terme 'mensonge' est *unparliamentary*. Donc, je viendrai dire la contrevérité.

(Interruptions)

La fausseté !

Madame la présidente, j'ai suffisamment abusé du temps de la Chambre. J'ai voulu mettre en place les contours du travail du ministère et j'ai voulu annoncer l'avenir tout en revenant sur ce qui a été fait pendant les 20 mois. Pourquoi je l'ai fait ? Parce que je ne travaille pas à coup de conférence de presse. Chacun a son style de travail, mais à l'occasion des débats budgétaires, je suis obligé de conclure maintenant sur une note.

L'accueil que l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth m'a réservé alors qu'il préparait le budget, et je me souviens très bien que lorsqu'il a fallu que je lui annonce les plans pour la CWA, il a tout laisser tomber pour me recevoir. Je lui dis : ce n'est pas grave, je reviendrai demain, c'était au téléphone, il me dit : non, tout le monde attend et je te reçois, on a parlé avec son équipe sur le budget. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'il y avait un point en litige. Ça na pas été difficile de le convaincre, il a compris tout de suite la justesse de l'argument. C'est pour cela qu'en reprenant ma place, je dis, pas seulement bravo, comme j'avais dit au commencement, mais merci Pravind.

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

Mr Uteem 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 Tuesday 16 August 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(8.39 p.m.)

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION LTD - WORKFORCE

Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, I would like to raise an issue that has to do with a notification from the part of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd to reduce its workforce at its passenger terminal as per Section 16 of the Act from 16 persons to zero.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Mahomed: Now, people have come to me today with a letter dated 04 of August 2016 from the Ag. Manager of the Corporation addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training with copy to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands, I believe this is the parent Ministry of the MSCL. The letter is a formal notification of reduction of workforce under section 39(b) of the Employment Relations Act. Only yesterday you will recall how heated the debate was concerning a figure of 60 jobs that were created in the seafood sector. The hon. Minister Koonjoo vehemently contested these figures which, according to him, were low figures! Now, the list of 16 persons who are now on the brink of losing their jobs have their names and dates of entry attached with this letter, which I am going to table just now.

The list comprises of four terminal attendants, five security guards, one gatekeeper and six luggage porters who were employed on permanent and pensionable basis as from March 2008. The people are bewildered. They have expressed their strong perception to me of the belief that because of the year, that is, 2008, when they were employed the Labour Party was in power. They feel that they are being victimised because of that - association with the Labour Party.

The MSCL is in the papers today. It must be said that, at one point in time, Mr Kailash Trilochun chaired a meeting to discuss the restructuring of the MSCL. From the letter we also learnt that, as per the Mauritius Ports Authority Master Plan, there will be a new passenger terminal and thus the MPA has recently decided to take over the operations of the passenger terminal from the MSCL with effect from end of April 2016.

I listened to the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, today, mentioning that the shipping sector is booming; he said that we have reached an all-time high figure of 2,900 ships. At the same time, he further stated we are enjoying happier labour relations in the Port. So, this prompts me to rise and make a humble plea to the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training not to, therefore, give his green light to the said notification of reduction of workforce at the level of the MSCL, the more so on a humanitarian ground.

I am tabling a copy of the letter and I thank the hon. Minister for his positive consideration.

Thank you.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): Madam Speaker, I have been made aware of this situation just now, so I shall come with a statement to the House on Tuesday. Let me take full stock of the facts first.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(8.43 p.m.)

- 1) **HAWKERS - DECAEN & IMMIGRATION SQUARE SITES – GARBAGE COLLECTION**
- 2) **DR. HASSEN SAKIR STREET – SEWER WATER**

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Tonight I am raising an issue which concerns the hon. Minister of Local Government. In fact, it is the two sites that have been made available for the hawkers of Decaen and Immigration Square. As we are all aware, the sites there are not covered, there is no tent and each time that there is heavy rainfall they can't work. But, the problem they are having - this morning I met some of them - is the Municipality of Port Louis is not removing the garbage that is left everyday there. They told me that they are working in very unhygienic conditions; especially the toilets and bathrooms there cannot be used. So, I would kindly ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter with the Municipality of Port Louis so that needful can be done.

Also, a quick reminder to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities concerning a matter that I raised a week ago about Dr. Hassen Sakir Street whereby there was sewage water which was flowing in the canal in front of the residential area and which has not been attended to yet after a week. So, if he could kindly do so. Thank you.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. A. Husnoo): Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised that the Municipal Council of Port Louis is not taking care of that, but I will definitely talk to them tomorrow and make sure that the necessary is done.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): May I answer?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Collendavelloo: Hon. Ameer Meea, first of all, I apologise for the late reaction on my part. I was preparing my speech. But, I have had time to look into it and I have obtained a correspondence from the Wastewater Management Authority which I am at liberty to hand over to you just after to tell you that there have been site visits and inspections on 05 August 2016, on 08 August 2016, 10 August 2016 and 12 August 2016.

There is a problem and the problem is grazed deposit and stalactites type protuberances which were noted at the top of the sewer pipe. They could not clean it because of something. Now, they have seen clear and odourless water found running in the storm water drain and the decision is: interventions scheduled for 13 and 14 August for clearing stalactites protuberances deposits using root cutter or something, mounted on high-pressure jetting hose. CCTV sewer camera inspection will then continue to ascertain status of pipe and identify what remedial actions are required.

Again, I apologise for having been two days late. I am sorry, it is an urgent matter, and I should have looked at it before but *mieux vaut tard que jamais*.

At 8.50 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 16 August 2016 at 10.00 a.m.