



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2013

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

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, GOSK, FRCS	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	Minister of Information and Communication Technology
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	Minister of Fisheries
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Tourism and Leisure
Hon. Lormus Bundhoo	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed-Hossen	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Surendra Dayal	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Jangbahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Roopchand Seetaram	
Hon. Mrs Maria Francesca Mireille Martin	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sutyadeo Moutia	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Peeroo, Hon. Abdool Razack M.A., SC, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Gopall, Mr Navin (Temporary Transfer to RRA)
<i>Hansard Editor</i>	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
<i>Senior Library Officer</i>	Pallen, Mr Noël
<i>Sergeant-at-Arms</i>	Munroop, Mr Kishore

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 29 of 2013

Sitting of 20 November 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 3.30 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINISTER OF TERTIARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY - POINT OF ORDER

Mr Speaker: On Tuesday 12 November at the end of Parliamentary Question No. B/863, Dr. the hon. Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology rose on a point of order directing attention to the point that the hon. Leader of Opposition had uttered, in the course of the exchange of questions and answers during the said Parliamentary Question, an unbecoming word, which I do not deem fit to mention, which he submitted to the Chair for decision.

I have to inform the House that I have perused the audio text of the Proceedings in relation to the said Parliamentary Question, but it has not been possible for me to single out whether the said unbecoming word has been uttered or not. In the circumstances, the matters rest there.

MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS – UNPARLIAMENTARY WORD - WITHDRAWAL

On 14 November, in the course of the exchange of questions and answers during the Private Notice Question, several unbecoming words, expressions and offensive language, which I do not deem fit to mention, were uttered by the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports to the address of hon. Members of the Assembly from a standing position as revealed by the transcript of the Proceedings of the House.

In the circumstances, since it is provided in the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly that it is out of order to use unbecoming words or expressions or to use offensive language about hon. Members of the Assembly, I am inviting the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports to kindly withdraw the unparliamentary words he had uttered.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I withdraw.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION – UNPARLIAMENTARY WORDS - WITHDRAWAL

Mr Speaker: On Saturday last, 16 November, in the course of the exchange of questions and answers during the Private Notice Question, several unbecoming words, expressions and offensive language, which I do not deem fit to mention, were uttered by the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the address of a hon. Member of the Assembly from a standing position as revealed by the transcript of the Proceedings of the House.

In the circumstances, since it is provided in the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly that it is out of order to use unbecoming words or expressions or to use offensive language about hon. Members of the Assembly, I am inviting the hon. Leader of the Opposition to kindly withdraw the unparliamentary words he had uttered.

Mr Bérenger: I do withdraw, Mr Speaker, Sir.

STANDING ORDER – COMPLIANCE BY HON. MEMBERS

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I seize this opportunity to make an earnest appeal to hon. Members of both sides of the House to uphold the dignity and decorum of this august Assembly, whether from a standing or a sitting position by strictly complying with the Standing Order which provides that it is out of order to use unbecoming words or expressions or to use offensive language about Members of the Assembly.

Thank you.

PAPER LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Paper has been laid on the Table –

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Annual Report 2012 of the Civil Service Family Protection Board.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

EX-CHA HOUSES & STATE LAND - SALE

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the sale of ex-CHA houses and of State Land, he will state -

- (a) if the advice of the State Law Office on the sale of State Land on which stand the ex-CHA houses to the owners thereof has changed after 2005;
- (b) if all the owners of the ex-CHA houses have received the title deed in respect of the houses and of the State Land on which the houses stand, and
- (c) the amendments that will be brought to the State Land Act to allow those families who have a housing unit on leased land belonging to the State to buy the land, indicating if same will apply to the houses standing on sites and serviced lots.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware the State Lands Act provided as at July 2005 that, I quote -

“No State Land shall be sold unless it is in the public interest to do so and in exchange of another portion of land.”

Conscious of this legal obstacle to its policy of democratisation of access to land ownership, Government spelt out at paragraph 43 of its Programme 2005-2010, its intention to grant greater and wider access to land.

Government was very explicit in its determination to translate this intention into reality by stating at paragraph 188, I quote -

“Government will remove the legal and socio-economic constraints to equitable access to land ownership.”

It is in line with these commitments that soon after coming into office, this Government through the Ministry of Housing and Lands started consultations with the State Law Office and other stakeholders as regards the proposal to sell to the owners of the State Land on which stands ex-CHA Housing Units.

Following this, a policy decision was taken on 30 September 2005, requesting the Minister of Housing and Lands to look into the possibility of selling to the lessees of State Land on which the ex-CHA houses stood.

On 03 October 2005, a Steering Committee at the Ministry of Housing and Lands started to explore the possibility of selling the State Land to the concerned lessees. A first Meeting was held at the Solicitor General's Office on 09 November 2005 in the presence of officers of the Ministry of Finance and my Ministry whereby we were requested to submit preliminary drafting instructions which were then discussed and submitted to enable the State Law Office to formulate a working document for the proposed legislation.

Regular discussions, consultations were further pursued to iron out certain pertinent issues in respect of legal aspects, financial implications and survey matters.

A first draft Bill was prepared and in March 2007 a draft State Lands Amendment Bill was approved for introduction in the National Assembly. However matter was discussed further and in March 2007 a draft Bill was circulated and was followed by extensive discussions regarding the sale price of the land. Subsequently, on 16 March 2007, Cabinet agreed to the sale of State Land on which stand ex-CHA houses at a uniform price of Rs2,000.

Furthermore, at the same meeting of Cabinet it was decided, *inter alia*, to consider the sale of State Land to other building site lessees on the same basis as for the ex-CHA house owners. We have not seen any inconsistency or any change in the advice of the State Law Office from 2005.

As a matter of fact, prior to 2005, there is no record whatsoever either in the Ministry of Housing and Lands or at the State Law Office of any advice having been sought on the subject of sale of State Land on which stands ex-CHA housing unit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding part (b) of the question, there are some 19,442 ex-CHA housing units which are found on 177 housing estates all over the island.

Some 14,605 applications have been received for the purchase of their land.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at date, some 12,314 Letters of Intent for the purchase of land have been issued.

In March 2007, the State Lands Amendment Bill was debated in Parliament and passed and the State Lands Amendment Act came in force on 04 April 2007.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the Question, in the matter of the legality of sale of State Lands, the State Law Office, according to official records has not today or earlier changed any legal advice it gave in 2005. Advice given on 09 November 2005 by the State Law Office to the Ministry of Housing and Lands was to the effect that the sale of land on which stood CHA houses would impact on a number of laws, including the State Lands Act.

On 15 June 2007, the State Law Office tendered advice to the effect that the amendment to the State Lands Act made in 2007 by Act No. 4 of 2007, covered the case of State Land, but it did not cover cases of State Lands which were on *Pas Geometriques* lands.

Some 647 applications are under process. To date, 9,935 applicants have obtained their title deeds and are, therefore, full-fledged owners of their plots of lands. The remaining 2,379 applicants have not finalised their title deeds for various reasons namely -

- failure to produce relevant documents such as affidavit of succession, death and birth certificates, identity cards;
- dispute among heirs;
- heirs staying abroad, and
- financial constraints.

As regards part (c), following a meeting earlier this year which the hon. Prime Minister had with a number of families occupying State Lands as lessees, it was decided that relevant amendment be brought to the State Lands Act to enable them to become owners of the land. Action has already been taken to include this amendment in the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provision) Bill of 2013 so that it can be implemented as from January 2014.

The proposal to extend the facility granted to former ex-CHA owners to buy the plots of land on which stand their housing unit to building site lessees has been the subject of discussions

since 2007. Concurrently, interim measures have been taken to review downwards the annual rental for these leases to help the *ti-dimounes*.

Subsequently, Government came with a laudable measure affecting some 7,600 families by claiming a nominal annual rent of R1 for those lessees paying an annual rental of less than Rs500.

The sale of land to building site lessees will enable 17,000 families to become full-fledged owners of land.

Included in these 17,000 families are some 600 lessees under the site and services scheme. Out of these, some 300 sites have been fully developed and are occupied by lessees. This measure will, therefore, be extended to those 300 lessees in the first instance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is, with its decisions and actions, proving beyond any doubt that it is committed in its endeavour to democratise the economy. The decision to extend to building site lessees, the opportunity of becoming the owners of the land on which stand their housing unit, is indeed one of the most welcomed initiatives and responds very positively to the needs and desires of some 17,000 families.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the first part of my question is concerned, we all know the decision to sell the ex-CHA houses to their owners was taken by Government on 25 June 1989 when Sir Anerood Jugnauth was Prime Minister and Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Finance. We go back, therefore, to 1989. It was logical that in 2000-2005, the then Government wanted to extend that to the State Land under the ex-CHA houses. I heard the hon. Minister say that there is no record of legal advice, either before or after 2005. Is the hon. Minister aware that before 2005 we were, in fact, advised that there needed to be an amendment to the Constitution, that selling State Land would not be Constitutional because State Land was equated to *domaine public*.

Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in fact, there is no record, after 2005 also, of the change that apparently took place in the legal advice from the State Law Office?

Dr. Kasenally: I have checked thoroughly, Mr Speaker, Sir, and there is no record either in the Ministry of Housing and Lands or - I go further - at the State Law Office of any indication to that.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask whether there is legal advice on record concerning the new cases, the 17,000 owners of houses that are not former ex-CHA houses but that are on State Lands? What is the advice of the State Law as far as that is concerned? Will it need an amendment to the Constitution? Is it Constitutional or is it as the State Law advised before 2005, supposedly, unconstitutional?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as we are concerned we decided to go and discuss with the State Law Office of what the status was and we had discussions thoroughly, my Ministry with the State Law Office and numerous meetings were held. At no point we saw any impediment for the sale of State Land to private individuals and we went around and there were amendments to be made to the law by simple majority and there was no question of change of Constitution and so we proceeded; and as I explained in my intervention, we had numerous meetings and eventually we managed to change the law and we have sold, and it is a fact now that we have done it. Maybe they had the intention, but unfortunately they didn't manage to get it.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision to sell the ex-CHA houses to their owners was taken 24 years ago and the amendment to allow the sale of State Land on which those ex-CHA houses stood, was taken 6 years ago; in one case, as I said earlier on, in 1989 and in the second case 2007. My question, Mr Speaker, Sir, related to whether all the owners of the ex-CHA houses and State Land on which ex-CHA houses stood, in both cases whether they are all now in possession of their title deeds. I did not hear the hon. Minister reply as far as the ex-CHA houses are concerned. Can I, therefore, put the question again? It was in my question. What is the situation as far as the ex-CHA houses are concerned? Are all the owners, as at to date, in possession of the title deeds for the houses?

Dr. Kasenally: As far as the houses are concerned, they have all been sold. It is the land that cannot be sold. The land on *pas géométriques* and on certain lands which are called defence

land, and we have seen no inconsistency or any change in the advice of the State Law Office as from 2005.

Mr Bérenger: The paper is coming in too late! My question is not whether they have been sold; my question is whether all the owners of ex-CHA houses are in possession of a title deed or are they still in possession of receipts and other documentary evidence? Are the title deeds in possession of all the ex-CHA owners?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the houses are concerned, they have been sold and they have got title deeds, but it is the land; as far as we are concerned, as at date, some 12,314 Letters of Intent for the purchase of the land have been issued and to date 9,935 applicants have obtained their title deeds and are, therefore, full-fledged owners of their plots of land. The remaining 2,379 applicants have not finalised their title deeds for various reasons, namely failure to produce relevant documents, dispute among heirs, heirs staying abroad and financial constraint.

Mr Bérenger: As far as the land is concerned, when the issue was debated, three problems arose: ex-CHA houses that had been constructed on *pas géométriques*; ex-CHA houses that had been constructed on privately owned land, which Government had not acquired, and lands found on ex-railway track. Can I know from the hon. Minister, one by one, if I can start with *pas géométriques*, we were informed by Government on 10 November 2009 that legal advice had been received from the State Law Office that it was not possible, it was not constitutional to sell those *pas géométriques* to the owners? My colleague, hon. Ganoo, insisted on 10 November 2009, the Minister said that he would have a fresh look and my colleague, hon. Ganoo, said even if we need to amend the Constitution and Government said then that it would be examined, being given the insistence of the Minister and that we were in favour, if required, to amend the Constitution. Can I know where matters stand as far as ex-CHA houses standing on *pas géométriques*, and whether we have received different legal advice from the State Law Office, whether we are going to amend the Constitution, if required, in the case of *pas géométriques*? How many such cases are still pending?

Dr. Kasenally: I think as far as houses on the *pas géométriques* are concerned, there are about 554, there are some on defence lands, and there are about 40 on railway lands.

As far as selling these houses on *pas géométriques* are concerned, we have got advice, we are pursuing it; there may be no need whatsoever to change the Constitution. We are having discussions with the State Law Office, and new legislation will be brought to ensure that we can sell these lands.

However, we must be very careful as far as land on *pas géométriques* is concerned. Many of these houses we have found that the original lessees have already sold their houses, and in place of it there are what I would call, not social housing – I'll lay that on the Table - but luxury villas which people are using as guest houses and are still paying R1, whereas next door to it, there are hotels which are paying millions or there are *campement* leases. Therefore, we will have to look very carefully because this may give rise to wild speculation and we have to move cautiously on that.

But as far as houses are concerned on the *pas géométriques*, not near the high water mark, we are considering that. But there are also houses which are in the villages, which are considered to be *pas géométriques*. Until now, they say that State Lands on *pas géométriques* are imprescriptible or inalienable. We have to persistently pursue the matter with the State Law Office, and I think there is a solution that should be found, but we have to go very cautiously on that.

Mr Bérenger: This goes back to what I said. Before 2005, we were advised that the State Land cannot be sold because it is imprescriptible and it was equated to *domaine public* and, more recently, after 2005, the same State Law Office advised us that as far as *pas géométriques* is concerned, again we hear the same story, that it is imprescriptible and that it is in the *domaine public*. Therefore, can I know, what measures we are going to take so that the issue of *pas géométriques* be dealt with.

Dr. Kasenally: Actually, we have got an advice from the Assistant Solicitor-General in 2005 where it is said that by simple amendment of the law, there is a certain formula, which is very technical, that we can do to be able to sell these lands.

There is also a problem on railway land. The land is being preserved in view of future requirements for the LRT, but there are 40 ex-CHA houses in the South where it is not envisaged to have the railway track and we can afford to sell this, but decision has not been taken.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as ex-CHA houses found on still private land that has not been acquired by Government and that, therefore, cannot be sold to the owners. We were informed on 27 November 2007 that the owners have resisted acquisition by Government. Can I know how many such cases there are? How many owners of ex-CHA houses are still on private land? How many such cases are left? What Government intends to do in relation thereof?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as private land is concerned, we have managed to negotiate and bought a number of portions of land. But there are other private lands, where there is a legal battle, because these were lands exchanged for grazing land and they have resisted it. They have gone to the Supreme Court and the matter has even gone to the Privy Council. But, eventually, we are waiting for that; until the matter is resolved legally, we will not be able to sell it unless there is a change in mind from the owners.

Mr Bérenger: The whole story started with ex-CHA houses sold to their owners going back, as I said, 24 years ago, in 1989. Then, we moved to selling State Land under ex-CHA houses and now we are looking at selling little portions of State Land under buildings, not ex-CHA houses. I am sure the hon. Minister will remember that the first time this was raised, it was in the Assembly by hon. Ganoo on 25 October 2005. He raised it again on 27 March 2007 and again on 15 April 2008. So, we are very proud that this was raised by us for the first time by hon. Ganoo. We have travelled a long way. This is on record, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is not *bla bla bla* about democratisation. This is on record, this is in Hansard, this is in history, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have now been informed that we have received legal advice, what kind of amendment we must bring to allow this. We met with resistance – if this is the word from the State Law Office – in the past. Can we know whether the amendment that will allow for this is ready, and if it is, can it be circulated, because of the precedent prior to 2005?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, I remember quite clearly, hon. Ganoo made the comment. In fact, he was congratulating Government for bringing this piece of legislation as far as the CHA is concerned. And he was wondering how we would manage to do it. But, as I have mentioned, we consistently tackled the State Law Office and, after some time, we managed to get over it. There is actually no big problem. We don't even have to change the Constitution. Of course, at that time, prior to 2005, you had a majority of 57:3 and you could even have changed the

Constitution. But, we have found out - because we consistently tried to bring discussion with the State Law Office that it needed a simple Act of Parliament. This was an advice given by a Parliamentary Counsel who is now a respectable Judge.

Mr Bérenger: Can I remind the hon. Minister that, in fact, it is a question put by hon. Guimbeau on 25 October 2005, which related to State Land under CHA houses. It is on that occasion that for the first time - the record is there, Hansard is there – that hon. Ganoo raised the issue of these other State Lands, under little plots, under houses which are not CHA houses. I must say that the then Speaker ruled that out of order. I cannot understand how that ruling took place, but still, hon. Ganoo insisted and persisted that it must be done, that there is need for it to be done. Is the hon. Minister aware? Can he check 25 October 2005?

Dr. Kasenally: At that time, Mr Speaker, Sir, we were having a fair number of problems with people who were unable to buy these CHA houses and we directed our effort of empowering them. In that connection, Government came out with a very laudable and bold decision to help these people. In fact, my own Ministry has set up a unit where they went and, literally all over the island, to see why these people were unable. There was poverty or there was difficulty in financing it. And, so, we came with the idea of helping them financially. The Ministry of Finance, on the advice, I may say, of the hon. Prime Minister, that we should consider helping these people. And in this connection, Government decided to finance the Rs2000. In any way, they forego the Rs2,000. But, on top of that, we helped them, we financed their cost of *mise en règle* and also we had approached certain *notaires*. Mr Hart de Keating has very graciously accepted to help us. In fact, as a matter of fact, after he had heard this new project of Government, he himself has got in contact with the Minister of Finance and has offered his services free. And this is how we managed to increase the number of people so that they could buy their land. Now, we are coming following, as I mentioned, the meeting of some people, by the hon. Prime Minister and he has directed that we would do that. But we were doing it in stage. It is something which is gradual and we have to do it. This will be another phase in our process of democratisation of the economy.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Minister, if I got him right, saying that figure of 17,000 includes some 600 houses built within the so-called sites and services project, where our Government in the past, provided sites and services and those who got that piece of land built

their own houses, non-CHA houses, therefore. I am glad to hear that that figure includes - because that figure of 17,000 includes those owners, because in the Budget Speech, it spoke only of State Land. Am I right in saying that, in fact, the land concerned as far as sites and services are concerned, is not State Land, is NHDC owned land and that, therefore, NHDC will be directed to carry out the same exercise, as in the case of State Land?

Dr. Kasenally: Maybe NHDC was empowered to provide the sites and services, but the land is State Land and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing. As far as we are concerned, it is a subject of discussion at Government level to see how we will implement it and the law will be amended through the Finance Bill and it will become effective as from 01 January 2014.

Mr Speaker: Last question to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: Even if there are no other questions. As I said, the houses were sold many years ago, in 1989, and the State Land under the ex-CHA houses six years ago, but we still have a number of cases pending. Can I request the hon. Minister that we should complete all procedures in all these cases and that the amendment concerning the 17,000, as soon as ready, should be circulated, not in the Finance Bill, but in advance so that we have ample time to consider it?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as these sites and leases are concerned, each and every one has an individual lease. The policy broadly will be that those who have already built their houses will be considered. Those who have not built will not be considered and they cannot sell these houses or the land unless they have stayed on it for, at least, five years. This is to prevent speculation.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

ELECTRIC FANS - PROHIBITION NOTICE

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr C. Sayed-Hossen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the house that following reported cases of fire incidents involving electric fans of make 'Pacific' over the past week, and an enquiry carried out by officers of my Ministry, I have arranged for a Prohibition Notice to be served on the importer of electric fans of the make 'Pacific' for the company or through its agents, resellers or retailers, not to supply and sell, with immediate effect, the said electric fans.

The Prohibition Notice will remain in force until such time as the importer can satisfy my Ministry that the electric fans of the said make comply with international standard MS IEC 60335-2-80 and that the electric fans do not represent a safety hazard for consumers.

Moreover, the importer has been informed that it shall not import any electric fan of the said make unless the goods are accompanied by an original certificate of conformity from a recognised third party conformity assessment body.

The company has also been requested to recall all the electronic fans that have been sold to agents, resellers and retailers and to notify my Ministry regularly on the steps taken to that effect until all the products have been recalled. My Ministry will ensure that such products are not put on sale unless and until such time that the Prohibition Order is withdrawn.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(No. XXIII of 2013)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2014) Bill (No. XXIII of 2013).

Question again proposed.

(4.10 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I wish to congratulate my colleague the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, for coming forward with a Budget that contains, of course, innovative measures geared at fostering investment, saving employment, protecting, empowerment of vulnerable people and mitigating the adverse impacts of the global economic slowdown and, at the same time, supporting the economic sectors to stand up the challenges they are confronting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I avail myself of this opportunity to convey my congratulations and appreciation to the bold leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. His support to the Budget 2014 reinforces his vision amidst his first and second successive mandate to pursue on our economic and social agenda to consolidate and modernise our economy and our country and to raise the standard of living of our people and this shows continuity in his vision and mission.

The hon. Prime Minister has articulated during his first term in office as from 1996 a clear vision of a prosperous and patriotic Mauritius for the advancement of the country on the socio-economic front. The first to make a mark was to put all of his people-centred strategies, the core of his policy and improving education, spurring investment, economic diplomacy, restoring confidence, strengthening of our social policies were at the heart of his policies in 2005 when he was set to have a second governing mandate. He insisted that Mauritius should project a strong image by promoting a vision of solidarity and prosperity for all.

M. le président, j'ai bien suivi le débat de chaque côté de la Chambre. C'est clair que l'Opposition nous critique comme un aveu d'échec. C'est injuste, M. le président. C'est totalement *unfair* ! Après la présentation du budget l'Opposition n'a rien trouvé de mieux que de le qualifier de « décevant, pas de continuité, effet d'annonce, on vote un budget et les décisions ne sont pas prises, l'implémentation est faible » et survenant dans la foulée d'un budget raisonnable et réaliste et accepté par presque toute la population, l'Opposition, encore une fois, nage contre courant dans son style démagogique prétendant qu'il n'y a aucune chance de relance de l'économie.

The criticism leveled by the Opposition Member of Parliament, hon. Li Kwong Wing was, to his belief, that the Budget is not sustainable, does not stand, Mr Speaker, Sir. This Budget is destined to put Mauritius on the path to creation of the next wave of prosperity. The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development puts it and I quote –

« Ce budget a créé un sentiment de ‘feel good factor’ dans le pays »

The Prime Minister emphasises on his part *que* -

« Le budget c'est un budget tourné vers l'avenir »

Further on adds –

« Le budget ne contient pas de mesures démagogiques ou populistes mais c'est un budget pour *l'empowerment* de tous les citoyens. »

Thus, in itself it demonstrates the strong institutional solidarity, support and governance at the helm of the Government. Nobody can deny it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, samedi dernier on suivait les débats et l'honorable Roopun, député du MSM, débute son intervention sur le budget, je cite –

“*lack of leadership, inability to take decisions...*”

J'avais bien noté. Là je souhaite faire le point ici. Il visait qui ? Il doit avoir le courage de le dire ! Que veut-il dire ? Le gouvernement, *inability to take decisions* ? Veut-il dire que le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, n'a pas l'étoffe de *leader* et c'est pourquoi il dit ‘*lack of leadership*’ ? M. le président, au gouvernement, encore plus au Parti travailliste nous n'avons pas un *leader* un jour sur papier pour la forme et un autre *leader* pour la galerie, pour les medias et je pense que ce *leader* termine après à un *leader* à l'Israélienne. Un *leader*, M. le président, c'est un *leader*. Chez nous au gouvernement, le Parti travailliste, notre alliance on a un *leader*. C'est un *leader and it is the only one leader*. Je m'explique. Entre 2010-2011 le *leader* de l'alliance gouvernementale a démontré sa capacité de *leadership*. Il a démontré son habileté d'être un vrai *leader* qui sait décider et trancher au moment où il fallait le faire.

What happened in August 2011, M. le président ? Là je me réfère au Med Point saga. Le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam n'est pas au pays. Certains voulaient le prendre en otage à son retour. Il y a eu aussi le retour d'urgence du Vice-Premier ministre

d'alors. Qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? On tripote une opération chantage avec *couteau lor la gorge*. Des ministres démissionnent de leurs responsabilités mais restent au gouvernement comme des *backbenchers*. Les PPS ne savaient pas quoi faire, démissionner ou non et comme disait mon collègue le Ministre Pillay Chedumbrum l'autre jour, les ministres *lève paké mais reste assizer en place !*

(Interruptions)

Lève paké mais pas aller, assizer. Et M. le président, le Premier Ministre retourne de Londres "*inability now to take decisions, lack of leadership*", allons voir!

All those 'lève paké assizer were taken in their own trap! What happened? Inability to take decisions? Le Premier ministre en vrai chef de gouvernement a tranché. Il remanie son Cabinet. Il remplace les *lève paké assizer* et ils ont dû tous finalement *lève paké aller* ! Cela a été la fin de cet épisode d'alliance contre nature qui n'a duré heureusement que 14 mois.

M. le président, une autre critique provenant de l'honorable madame Ribot. Là je comprenais parfaitement ses sentiments mais elle voulait faire accroire que le gouvernement traite les enfants handicapés comme des citoyens de deuxième grade par rapport à l'éducation. M. le président, je tiens à rappeler à l'honorable membre de l'Opposition que l'Etat mauricien a signé, nous avons ratifié la Convention des Nations Unies sur les droits des Personnes Handicapées. Maurice est dans l'obligation d'honorer ses engagements à ce secteur. Ce n'est pas mendier ou faire de la charité. Le secteur de l'handicapé relève avant tout d'une question des droits humains. On est tous engagé à l'épanouissement des personnes avec condition handicap et a créé des meilleures conditions à leur bien être et leur vie quotidienne.

Mon collègue le ministre de l'Education, l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree a bien expliqué les décisions prises en faveur des enfants handicapés dans le circuit scolaire et que le litige opposant le ministère au secteur *Special Education Needs* a été réglé, le ministère ayant accordé une hausse de 100% de subvention aux écoles spécialisées qui passe de R 30,4 m. à R 60,8 m.

Donc, l'inquiétude qui pesait sur les ONGs, les parents dont les enfants fréquentent les écoles spécialisées sera chose du passé, et ce qui est important, c'est que le taux de subventions apportera, bien sûr, une parité dans les dépenses par tête entre le secteur de l'éducation primaire et celui de *special educational needs*.

Maintenant, avec la formation des profs spécialisés, la parité sera aussi au niveau du cursus scolaire des enfants handicapés et des enfants non-handicapés. M. le président, les slogans varient, mais je dois dire que la démagogie demeure pour l'Opposition, année après année. Il faut se méfier de cette Opposition qui prétend pouvoir régler tous les problèmes du pays auxquels ils veulent imposer, parfois même, l'incompétence. Que cette Opposition révise sa copie et fait son bilan des quatre années au pouvoir, 2000-2005, marqué par la faillite économique, le déclin social et amener le Premier ministre d'alors à qualifier la situation d'état d'urgence économique et de catastrophe, avec une croissance laissée en août 2005 de seulement 2.2% comparée à 5.3% en 2000. Un déficit budgétaire de 5.3%, un manque de confiance dans les affaires, un taux de chômage avoisinant 9.6%, et c'est cela qu'on appelle aveux d'échec.

Et, sur le pôle d'emploi, le mode opératoire est nul de 2000 à 2005. La compression du personnel dans les entreprises de la zone franche, les usines fermées les unes après les autres et à une vitesse vertigineuse; une perte de 25,000 emplois dans le secteur du textile seulement et c'est cela qui était qualifié comme la situation dramatique et sans précédent.

M. le président, l'Opposition nous parle de quoi matin et soir, semaine après semaine? L'Opposition nous parle de remake. On essaie de berner la population, de manipuler l'opinion publique chaque semaine. Quel *remake*? Le *remake* 2000 à 2005? *Remake* de quoi? *Remake* d'échec? 2000-2005, c'est l'échec. *Remake* de faillite économique; c'est ça *Remake* 2000-2005. *Remake* de l'état d'urgence économique, c'est ça le *Remake* 2000-2005 ? *Remake* du déclin social, *Remake* du chômage galopant, *Remake* du recul en FDI, *Remake* de supprimer la pension de retraite à 5,000 personnes âgées, c'est ça le *Remake* ?

(Interruptions)

M. le président, c'est évident que cette Opposition de l'autre côté de la Chambre est contre toutes les mesures. Ils démontrent un comportement de droite.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't interrupt the hon. Minister!

Mrs Bappoo: Leurs propos sarcastiques sont de la droite et lorsqu'ils sont au pouvoir, ses conservateurs se montraient insoucieux du déficit budgétaire et du gonflement de la dette publique. Aujourd'hui, nous avons devant nous ce même *Leader* du MSM, ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mrs Bappoo: ... le Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances d'alors vient - aujourd'hui dans une conférence de presse, après le budget présenté par le Vice-Premier ministre, ministre des Finances - déplorait une hausse minime sur la pension de vieillesse. Il ose le dire ! Supprimer 5,000 pensions de retraite aux bénéficiaires ! Aujourd'hui, avec une augmentation de 3.6% sur les pensions, il arrive pour dire que c'est une hausse minime sur la pension. C'est du bluff, M. le président ou simplement une *panne d'idée*.

So, in spite of *l'état d'urgence économique*, the Government, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, succeeded to contain the decline, steer the economy, save the country from collapse, Mr Speaker, Sir. The key words in the 2014 Budget are vision, competence, discipline, good governance, perseverance and national solidarity. Still, there are tasks that Government will need to pursue on our economic and social agenda.

Ce budget est une nouvelle prise de conscience laborieuse qui est en train de s'opérer sur les conditions du développement économique du pays. Ces conditions sont basées sur quatre nouveaux piliers de développement qui deviendront les pôles de croissance, qui sont la création d'un hub d'aviation, d'une industrie maritime, d'un hub pétrolier et de l'économie océanique.

M. le président, il s'agit là d'une vaste bataille économique pour amener plus de prospérité économique et la création de la richesse nationale en ce qui concerne notre budget. Jamais auparavant, de tels investissements étaient ciblés. Des provisions de R 54.7 milliards, dont R 18.4 milliards en 2014 dans la stratégie nouvelle de développement *Build Mauritius Plan* constitue, l'engagement du gouvernement pour soutenir la croissance, créer la richesse nationale et promouvoir l'emploi.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now, before coming with the different Budgetary measures of my Ministry, I wish to start by saying a few words on my own behalf. Pour moi, au ministère que je

dirige, j'assume mes responsabilités avec beaucoup de sérieux, il n'y a pas de mesure avec effet d'annonce.

Je ne suis pas d'accord quand l'honorable Mme Navarre-Marie disait qu'on vote un budget, mais après pas de mesure prise. Non ! Ce n'est pas correct de le dire. Déjà, le personnel de mon ministère, cadre administrative, cadre technique, ils sont à leurs tâches et là, je les félicite et les remercie, parce qu'ils ont à implémenter les décisions à partir du 01 janvier 2014. Donc, c'est une autre garantie que je donne à mon Premier ministre, au gouvernement, à mon pays, aux familles vulnérables, l'application des mesures budgétaires, pour moi, c'est quelque chose de sérieux.

Let me now elaborate on some of the main social protection policies of the Ministry. The Budget caters for the welfare of the citizens at large, and also, further reinforces the current policy of social welfare. In spite of the global financial crisis and the falling down of Government revenue, we have more importantly consolidated the Welfare State with a host of measures, improving the quality and condition of life of the vulnerable groups, like free bus transport and social housing. We have maintained subsidies on flour and cooking gas. We have increased social benefits by 82%, and with the increasing ageing population, the number of beneficiaries of the BRP - that's the basic retirement pension - has increased by 41%, from 120,802 in 2005 to 174,491 as at to date.

We need not forget that during his first mandate, from 1995 to 2000, the then Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, increased the basic retirement pension from Rs630 to Rs1,055 to Rs1,150, in 1997 - my colleague, Dr. Bunwaree was the then Minister of Finance at that time - to Rs1,300 in 1998, Rs1,400 in 1999,, and finally, to Rs1,500 in July 2000; bringing accumulative increase to 122.2% in nearly five years. In August 2005, on his return to power, he amended, again, the National Pension Act to restore BRP for every senior citizen on a universal basis, pushing away the most abject targeting policy of the MMM/MSM Government to pull down one of the main pillars of our Welfare State.

As a caring Government, it prides itself to have year in year out since 2005 increased the BRP and the BIP i.e the Basic Invalidity Pension, the Carers' Allowance and all other benefits. *Et que dit le MSM? Il retourne pour ne dire qu'une hausse minime de la pension de retraite car*

eux en 2004, ils suppriment et ils augmentent pour ceux à l'âge de 60 ans que R 94. As from January next, an increase of 3.7% which is slightly higher than the inflation rate to all retirees, widows and orphans. Today, a person of 60 is receiving a BRP amounting to Rs3,494 per month. He will be entitled to Rs3,623 per month in January, an increase of Rs121 monthly compared to Rs94 in 2004. Elders between 90 years old and below 100 years old currently with Rs10,404, they will be entitled Rs10,789 as from January, an increase of Rs385. *Les centenaires* who benefit currently a pension amounting to Rs11,807 will be paid Rs12,300 a month; an increase of Rs493 à partir de janvier 2014.

The budgetary provision for the payment of the Basic Retirement Pension, Mr Speaker, Sir, stands at September 2013 at Rs7.8 billion. It is expected that it increases to Rs8.6 billion in 2014 and Rs9.2 billion in 2015. All beneficiaries of BIP, Basic Widows Pensions, needy beneficiaries of basic benefits, social aids, orphan pension, recipients of the new child allowance of Rs750 per month for children in families earning less than Rs6,200 per month will also benefit from the increase of 3.7% as prescribed in the Budget. This is a Budget that puts people first.

Budgetary estimates for BIP for 2014 are expected to rise to Rs1.2 billion compared to Rs1.1 billion this year with approximately 28,000 beneficiaries. It is expected to rise to Rs1.6 billion in 2015. As for widows' pension estimate to the amount of Rs886 m. for 2013 and projected to an amount of about Rs930 m. in 2015.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one fundamental measure in the Budget 2014 announced by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance, is the provision of a sum of Rs100 m. for an Income Support Programme for the poor which the hon. Minister has baptised New Income Support. This measure aims at covering some 8,000 poor families with a total revenue less than Rs6,200 per month. This is yet another protective measure to sustain vulnerable families. *Non pas que par l'assistanat*, but to empower them et *non pas les fermer dans les guettos*. It places importance on social inclusion and is linked to a social contract. This is new in the scheme. It is linked to a social contract for a period of two years by which the eligibility criteria will rest on several conditions likely that they should be registered under Social Register of Mauritius, the SRM Project. They should participate on a regular basis to an Empowerment Programme. Their children should have regular attendance at school and on top of our social aid assistance to the poor, comes this new Income Support Programme. It is to be noted that the same persons cannot

benefit from all allowances at the same time. They should now choose for the existing one or shift to the new one. This demonstrates again Government commitment to provide greater protection, solidarity, compassion to the vulnerable group because we want them gradually to be removed from the poverty line.

Government will continue to side with the weakest section of the society as I have mentioned through this new scheme. Mauritius has an extensive social protection system which is complex in itself, but spreads across many Ministries with many small programmes. The system as it currently stands makes it difficult to monitor programmes and obtain a comprehensive picture of what the public sector is doing in the social protection field. Now, the different Ministries work in the same communities and often with the same families which make it difficult to create *synergie* for investment in social protection. Therefore, the new income support will create this which is better opportunities for the empowerment of the poor and to be able finally to move them out from the poverty line.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I just want to say a few words and emphasize on the concept of the SRM. Still, it is quite *flou* in the minds of both the public and maybe also hon. Members of the Assembly. It started in 2008 under the aegis of the Ministry with the following objectives –

- better target beneficiaries for their eligibility for social programme;
- manage social programmes in cash transfer with conditions attached in an integrated manner;
- better harmonise the criteria for the different social programmes run by different Ministries, and
- analyse cyclical and structural poverty reduction policies.

To meet these objectives, there was need to collect information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the poor and other vulnerable people in Mauritius; provide a national, dynamic database which will be a key management tool for policy design and planning and poverty monitoring.

The database would also be shared with other Ministries and Government Organisations which are involved in the implementation of policies in respect of vulnerable people. We had the example of the first social programme; the housing programme. We went through the SRM.

The Crèche Scheme was implemented also through the SRM. The new scheme; the Child Allowance Scheme announced in the 2013 Budget, in December last, *pas d'effet d'annonces*, has been implemented through the SRM since January as at the end of October 2013, 6,700 children have benefitted by this scheme, that is, 4,565 families both living in Mauritius and Rodrigues and by the end of October, a sum of Rs24 m. has been disbursed to these poor children. But the eligibility is to go through the SRM. The same SRM now will be used to define eligibility and enable payment to these 8,000 vulnerable families through the new Income Support Programme that has been announced. The Ministry of Social Integration is working on the social contract. A monitoring committee will be put at the level of the Ministry of Finance to monitor, evaluate and to see at the end of two years what will be the result of the Empowerment Programme to the poor families.

I would just want to say a few words on the DVs - *des Visites Domiciles* -announced in the Budget that there will be, as from now, an option to persons above 90 years. They can choose either the DV or they can opt for a cash allowance monthly which is Rs6000 for the year, which makes Rs500 monthly. And also to those as from 75 years who are bedridden, they are entitled for a DV on a monthly basis. Some medical practitioners recruited on a sessional basis attached to the medical unit of my Ministry are providing such service. And according to record, there are some 7250 persons benefitting from this. Over the years, Mr Speaker, Sir! The DV which was introduced with a very noble intention seems to have deviated from its original mission and is no longer customer oriented and is far away from the objective of duty of care towards the beneficiaries. For example DV visits are prescheduled by the medical unit on a monthly basis which leads to instances whereby beneficiaries are often visited at time when they are not available. They do not require any medical assistance at that particular day or that particular moment. Such service is not available during emergency situation and burns the pockets of the beneficiaries as they have to recourse to medical practitioners against payment.

So, it is evident that the philosophy behind the DVs to look after the senior citizens are not in line with the field realities and urgent action is required to put the scheme back on the right track. So, it is felt that on an optional basis an amount of Rs500 be paid directly to beneficiaries and be tied up with their monthly benefits. It is to be noted that this payment is optional. And in case the beneficiary can opt to maintain the monthly DV, for example, in the

event of remoteness of their village, of their area, where they are residing, of course, the service of the medical practitioner will be given to them. And to this will be accompanied, as from 2014, a new programme which will be called a home based and community based *programme de visite* and supports *aux personnes âgées et des personnes avec handicaps*. On travaille actuellement sur l'organisation de ce programme, les modalités avec des médecins, un personnel paramédical, soignants, *carers*, physiothérapeute et psychologue. Tout cela sera le *team* qui sera à la proximité de ces personnes pour des visites à domicile. Donc, on ne s'éloigne pas avec une stratégie déjà établie mais nous voulons renforcer notre service pour que nous donnions un meilleur service avec la formation des *carers* et la formation de *informal carers* au sein de la famille. Nous allons doubler les efforts parce que c'est quelque chose qu'aujourd'hui avec le *ageing population* les familles ont besoin des *carers*, des soignants formés par le ministère, formés par le *Mauritius Institute of Health*. L'année prochaine nous allons doubler les efforts sur la formation de *formal carers* et des *informal carers* qui viennent des familles avec une personne âgée ou une personne handicapée.

Je parlerais maintenant, M. le président, sur les personnes âgées. On first October 2013, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elderly, Mauritius prides itself to become the first country in Africa in the Global Age Watch Index 2013 and 33rd among 91 countries. It is all about the performance of our Government for its commitment, continuity and consistency of approach towards the vulnerable groups, the consolidation of welfare state, the maintenance of the non-contributive pensions of 1958. *C'est la fierté de notre pays en faveur de nos ainées, M. le président.* And my pledge today is to be able to prove my commitment again, and more as Minister for Social Security to continue to work for the welfare, protection and security of the weakest and the most vulnerable in the years to come. I need here to have a special word for the Senior Citizens Council which is doing an excellent networking with its mostly 700 senior Citizens' Associations which brings up a membership of about 80,000 elderly persons. A very active network of elders and the Council is doing its best for bringing a variety of activities in the elderly Day Care Centres.

Mais, aujourd'hui, M. le président, le fait du changement démographique des sociétés est un constat mondial, c'est le vieillissement de la population causé principalement par la longévité de la vie. Les dernières statistiques nous parlent d'une espérance de vie de 70,25 pour les

hommes et 77,23 pour les femmes. La baisse dans le taux des naissances, une meilleure qualité de soin sur une population de 1.23 millions. Maurice compte quelques 174,491 personnes âgées, ce qui représente 13% de la population et les indications confirment ce vieillissement de la population d'ici 2050, dans presque 40 ans, ce chiffre passe à 364,000 personnes âgées.

Face à ce phénomène, il y a un choix à tous les niveaux de politique nationale qui doit être focalisée, orientée sur la promotion du bien-être des personnes âgées, les soutenir, les protéger moralement, socialement et économiquement. Ne pas les laisser vivre dans l'isolement, la solitude mais la sérénité de la vie familiale. L'isolement amène à la dépression pour les personnes âgées, la démence, l'Alzheimer, et c'est triste.

En tant que gouvernement responsable, nous devons témoigner de notre reconnaissance envers les personnes âgées pour leur contribution exemplaire à l'édification de la nation mauricienne, au développement socio-économique du pays. Permettez-moi, M. le président, d'informer à la Chambre que la journée internationale des personnes âgées, 01 octobre 2013, avait comme thème des Nations Unies et le WHO : les personnes âgées, c'est une force pour le développement. Donc, il faut le reconnaître. Il faudra consolider notre société inclusive en plaçant nos aînés au premier plan. La publication du *National Policy on Ageing* en 2008, sous mon impulsion, lors de mon premier mandat à ce ministère, devait apporter un changement de paradigme dans la philosophie et l'approche concernant le phénomène du vieillissement. Le concept du vieillissement actif et productif. La mise en place des structures d'accueil pour assurer le vieillissement dans la sérénité en termes d'apports, de facilités, de loisirs et de sports. La protection des personnes âgées pour leur permettre de vivre dans le cadre familial. Le concept de relation intergénérationnelle et de mise de la meilleure protection sociale et économique pour assurer aux personnes âgées leur indépendance économique.

Au sujet des structures d'accueil pour les personnes âgées, je voudrais dire que je suis heureuse de voir la dernière dotation budgétaire de R 12 millions qui est prévue *for the completion of* tout ce qui est de l'ameublement, *furnishing etc.* du nouveau centre récréatif de Pointe aux Piments qui sera connu comme le *Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Recreation Center*.

Le projet à Pointe aux Piments au coût total de R 155.9 millions est presque terminé. Je prévois le début des opérations soit à mi-décembre ou au début de janvier 2014. Je tiens là à

remercier mon collègue, le Vice-Premier ministre, l'honorable Anil Bachoo et le personnel de son ministère, du MPI pour la supervision des travaux et les nombreuses visites que nous avons effectuées ensemble sur le terrain pour le *monitoring* sur la construction de ce nouveau centre.

Je parlerais encore du développement, de l'espace, de loisir en faveur des personnes âgées. Et là, je vois qu'un effort considérable est fait dans le présent budget et je remercie le Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finance pour le soutien financier à l'aménagement du quatrième centre récréatif de loisir à Riambel. Je sais que le centre de Riambel a été longuement attendu. Pour la simple raison que le problème de changement climatique, le tsunami dans le sud de l'île nous avait retardé pour la prise de décision finale. Oui, un centre dans ces régions ou non, allons voir les développements. Quand j'ai été au ministère de l'égalité des genres, déjà les procédures pour entamer Pointe aux Piments avaient commencé. Donc, maintenant c'est la place pour Riambel et avec la première partie de l'architecture, plan etc. et cela suit avec la construction. Je voudrais aussi dire un mot pour les responsables des unités, les stratégies futures du vieillissement de la population.

I will speak briefly on the project of Observatory on Aging addressed in last year's Budget. The Observatory on Aging was officially launched in October 2013. The broad aim and objective of the Observatory was to collect relevant data about elderly, how they are adapting, living in the challenges that face them in a continuously changing environment. The Advisory Committee on the Observatory for Aging was set up in August 2013 with the participation of representatives of various Ministries, the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Research Council. It is interesting to note that much progress has been made since then and initially four themes for investigation have been chosen as priority that are directly linked with a good quality of life for the elderly and the theme: "Health, Housing, Protection, Abuse of Elderly and Recreation and Leisure".

The data collection has already started for the use of a questionnaire by a structured interview method. The data entry has also started and subsequently the data will be analysed, discussion with recommendation will follow after the results are obtained and the report writing for each theme is expected to be completed by February 2014. In the same line, Dr. Siva Raju who is the Dean and Professor of the School of Development and Social Studies of the Data Institute Mumbai India, will visit Mauritius upon our invitation on 25 November to 12

December, he will be with us. He will guide the Advisory Committee on the way forward, especially with the new challenges facing older persons and he is known to be an expert on aging processing in India. He will also hold a public lecture on 02 December “Aging in the 21st Century its challenges”. So, this is our preoccupation for the future.

Lastly, I should say that in the Budget, we have introduced a new project which will be a personal alarm system for elderly people. This morning itself, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was so sad and shocking to learn about the 70-year old woman victim who has been assaulted, which led to her death in l’Escalier. What is more unbelievable is that the old woman has been beaten and her aggressor has dared to steal her pension. This kind of assault needs to be vehemently condemned. Such assault against elderly person is a concern of everybody. The protection of the elderly becomes thus a priority to secure their well-being. We have, mostly, some 650 elderly people living alone in Mauritius. They don’t have anyone to speak. A few of them, they tell me they just speak with their TV.

So, as a caring Government and to better enhance the security and preventive measure to 650 elderly persons living alone and to other people with disabilities, we shall introduce this new project, the personal alarm bracelet or pendants to the most vulnerable person. How will it work, how will it be implemented, we have to set up a sub-committee to study the various modalities for its implementation.

I cannot leave away the sector disability, Mr Speaker, Sir, parce que j’ai dit au début a caring Government, la Convention des Nations Unies sur les droits des personnes handicapées. Comme un caring Government, on est conscient d’énormes efforts déployés par les parents, d’innombrables sacrifices consentis pour subvenir aux besoins spéciaux des enfants avec condition handicap. Pour permettre aux parents avec des revenus modestes de bénéficier d’un support du gouvernement une carer’s allowance est prévue et pour les soins si importants, ils donnent pour assurer la survie et l’épanouissement de leurs enfants, le gouvernement a augmenté considérablement le plafond des revenus annuels de R 150,000 à R 250,000 aux parents. Cette mesure va profiter à environ 600 familles de plus. Actuellement, nous avons 2,200 bénéficiaires de cette aide. Le gouvernement a aussi rehaussé le plafond pour les enfants marqués par un handicap sévère ou des handicaps multiples. Ces enfants ont besoin des soins spécialisés, des thérapies adaptées et souvent ils requièrent une attention 24/24. Nul ne mérite une aide du

gouvernement que les parents de ces enfants. Le plafond annuel pour cette catégorie a été relevé de R 250,000 annuellement à R 350,000 annuellement ce qui permettra à une centaine de parents additionnels de bénéficier de cette aide.

Je sais que l'honorable Obeegadoo, à plusieurs reprises, a fait mention de ce plafond. J'avais dit que, au moment du budget, nous allons consulter le ministre des Finances. Et voilà c'est fait ! Aussi, pour mettre en ligne avec la Convention des Nations Unies sur les droits des enfants qui définit un enfant jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans, les allocations pour les enfants alités ont été étendues à ceux âgés de 18 ans. Auparavant, ce n'était que les enfants à l'âge de 15 ans.

So, in line with Government's disability inclusive strategy, the policy of my Ministry regarding the disability sector rests on the philosophy of valuing persons with disabilities and this involves a change in mindset. It is a social contract between my Ministry and the disabled community meant to value, to empower and to give dignity and respect to people with disabilities.

J'étais choquée hier, M. le président. J'étais vraiment choquée, parce que cela démontre le non respect des droits de personnes souffrant d'un handicap. Un membre de l'opposition déclarait, en cette Chambre, qu'il a vu un policier handicapé. La loi donne droit à l'emploi à une personne souffrant d'un handicap. La loi donne droit à cela. Un membre de l'opposition, en l'occurrence, l'honorable Soodhun se tient debout. Il n'est pas satisfait. Donc, il dit : "*ène policier handicapé ou ène policière handicapée*" Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette bassesse! C'est la honte! On condamne de telles attitudes. Le policier souffrant d'un handicap a été recruté, alors on viole! C'est cela la violation du respect de personnes handicapées. J'espère qu'il se corrige.

We are remapping the case. It is based on a comprehensive report. We need to go further more education, for training, economic, social empowerment, community-based services. Our programme contains a host of innovative strategies ranging from education, employment, accessibility, culture, leisure, sports and this is the UNCRPD, it means the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Le Vice-Premier ministre, ministre des Finances, encore une fois, quand il a mis sur pied le programme de *Service to Mauritius*, les gradués chômeurs. il a fait de la place pour des gradués chômeurs, mais des gradués avec handicaps, qui ont fait des études et sont sortis avec des résultats brillants de l'Université de Maurice ; il y en a qui sont aveugles, il y en a qui ont des

handicaps physiques mais il a fait de la place dans le programme du *Service to Mauritius* et maintenant ils travaillent.

Je félicite aussi mon collègue, le ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports et hier il a fait mention pour cela, l'organisation de *handisport tournament* pour les handicapés. Les handicapés partent dans des compétitions de la région de l'océan Indien. Ils retournent avec des médailles. Ils sont des médaillés. Donc il faut promouvoir tout cela. Nous, au ministère, ce qui nous inquiète encore, c'est l'apport par rapport à l'emploi des personnes handicapées. Since 2005 nous avons eu 550 personnes *trained and some 350 placed in employment*. Au début de 2013 avec la nouvelle loi il y a eu une soixantaine de personnes *with disabilities* encore. Maintenant nous irons beaucoup plus avec l'aide des autorités Britanniques le *Reemploy UK* dont nous avons signé un MoU et qui va être avec nous le 03 décembre pour la Journée Internationale des personnes handicapées. Nous avons deux personnes de ressource qui arrivent pour faire la sensibilisation *and capacity building and creating confidence of employers for the recruitment of persons with disabilities*.

De ma mission de Londres, M. le président, j'ai pu comprendre le mot clé c'est: *confidence*. Beaucoup de gens ne font pas confiance aux personnes handicapées. C'est cela qu'un honorable membre a essayé de dire hier, mais nous, nous voulons aller beaucoup plus loin. *Confidence, this is the keyword for creating an inclusive development programme.*

Je dois, ici, encore une fois, remercier le vice-Premier ministre qui a prévu une dotation budgétaire de R 24 millions pour augmenter la capacité d'accueil des personnes âgées avec handicaps sévères dans le cadre d'un projet d'agrandissement du Foyer Trochetia à Pointe aux Piments. Je dois préciser à la Chambre que ce projet de créer ce foyer a été réalisé grâce à une aide du gouvernement de Luxembourg sur l'intervention personnelle du Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam pendant sa visite en 1996-1997 à Luxembourg.

Ce foyer de personnes âgées avec handicaps sévères offre quelques 46 internes, un service excellent dans un environnement le plus propice et agréable. Maintenant nous avons aussi accueilli à peu près 14 jeunes adolescents et adultes avec des handicaps sévères, qui, après l'ex-foyer *Namasté saga*, sont restés là. Aussi le ministère de la Sécurité Sociale a pris en charge ces 14 personnes de 20, 25, 30 ans, parce que ce ne sont pas des enfants avec un

protection order pour partir avec le ministère d'Egalité de Genres, mais elles étaient hébergées par les responsables du Foyer *Namasté*. Donc, ces personnes ont été prises par mon ministère et elles ont tout ce qui est de soin médical, paramédical, avec des *carers* formés. On a fait un MoU avec l'ONG Openmind pour les thérapies spécifiques pour ces jeunes adultes.

Demain je signe un autre MoU avec l'ONG Autisme Maurice. Parmi ces jeunes nous avons des enfants autistes. Ce matin a démarré ce colloque sur l'autisme, organisé par le *Mauritius Telecom* et *Orange*, avec des experts venant de Paris pour parler avec des médecins, des parents et des ONGs. L'autisme c'est quoi ? Beaucoup de personnes ne le savent pas et ne comprennent pas. Il faut comprendre que c'est un handicap qui affecte le cerveau d'un enfant. Avoir un enfant autiste n'est pas facile. Nous l'avons vécu ce matin, en présence du ministre de la Santé pour l'ouverture de ce colloque. Aussi, la Convention régionale que nous signons avec l'Île de la Réunion va nous aider encore pour promouvoir tout un programme de stratégies concernant les enfants autistes.

Nous avons ratifié la Convention des droits des personnes handicapées - dont j'ai parlé - mais je peux vous dire que nous avons quand même des réserves là-dessus. Je pense qu'avec la décision prise par le ministère de l'Education concernant les enfants handicapés, et le *National Disaster Management Bill* - qui va venir pour prendre soin des personnes handicapées à leur évacuation au moment d'un national *disaster* - nous allons pouvoir faire enlever ces deux réservations.

Pour conclure, M. le président, je dirai que la fermeté du discours du budget 2014 donne encore plus de dynamisme. C'est une autre étape décisive dans notre avancée vers la modernisation de notre pays. Ce gouvernement représente une tradition de créativité. On ne peut pas nous qualifier de 'non continuité'. On innove à chaque fois. On essaye de créer, de venir avec de nouvelles idées, programmes, stratégies par le *Programme-Based Budgeting*, vu le nombre de nouveaux secteurs porteurs d'investissements, de création d'emploi, une tradition de partage, vu l'effort qui est fait en faveur des personnes les plus vulnérables, les plus faibles, les plus démunies, les nécessiteux et, finalement, une tradition de responsabilité envers la nation. Tout cela forme le tableau d'un pays dynamique, imaginatif et tourné vers la modernité. Vivons donc l'optimisme et la confiance de l'avenir.

Je terminerai en vous soumettant à une réflexion de l'ancien Président des Nations-Unies, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, sur ce qu'il a dit en 1961 sur la sécurité sociale, et je cite –

“The social security programme plays an important part in providing for families, for children, for older people in time of stress, in times of difficulty but it cannot remain static. Changes in our population, in our working habits and in our standard of living require constant revision.”

M. le président, this is what, as a caring Government, we are doing under the leadership of our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: I suspend for half an hour.

At 5.09 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.44 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget has been hailed in various quarters and in this august Assembly, as embodying the vision of the hon. Prime Minister.

So, I have tried to have a glimpse of that vision; we all have. It was a Sunday, 23 May 1999, the venue was Anjalay Stadium in Belle Vue; the final match on the final day of the first division of football league between Fire Brigade and Scouts Club. Scouts Club only needed to draw to be crowned champion, but they lost when in the dying moments of the game Fire Brigade scored and became champion. The referee was, to say the least, controversial having refused, not once but twice, goals scored by Scouts Club. The supporters of Scouts Club felt hard done and they went on the rampage; everything got destroyed. They destroyed furniture, seats, buses, they set sugarcane fields on fire and then, they moved to Port Louis. They gathered around Plaine Verte and from there they marched onto the seat of the Mauritius Football Association and at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, another crowd gathered in front of l'Amicale Gaming House. The building was burnt down, seven people perished including a small daughter

of two, another one of six and a woman who was eight months' old pregnant. So many tears, so many sufferings; *le pays en entier était en deuil*.

A year later, four people were sent to prison for life, for the arson. Up to today, the victims of the l'Amicale case claim their innocence; they are still waiting for the hon. Prime Minister to nominate the members of the Human Rights Division so that they can ask for a retrial.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the last time there was a competitive football match played between two traditional clubs in this country, there were riot, arson and deaths. How can this Government forget what happened on that fatal day? Has not this Government learnt anything from the deaths of seven innocent people who perished in the arson? Is this the vision of this Government? Is this the vision of the hon. Prime Minister that has been hailed to be contained in the Budget; riot, arson, setting alight sugarcane fields, vandalising buses and shops? Why? Why appeal to the most basic of all human instincts? Why raise the communal demon?

In 1999, most of the football players in Scouts Club were not Muslims. Yet, the majority of supporters were Muslims. Just like the majority of supporters of Cadets Club were Hindus and the majority of supporters of Fire Brigade was Creole. Don't we know about that?

As far back as 1982, the MMM/PSM tried to end communalism in sport. We made it illegal to have a communal name, a religious connotation in the name of the football club, but did that remove communalism? No. The core supporters did not change. Traditional clubs still attracted supporters from specific groups, communities and religion. Reviving traditional clubs necessarily means reviving supporters from these traditional clubs. So, again, may I ask the question: why revive the communal demons? The only reason given by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for this so-called bold decision - which for me is more like a dangerous decision - is that we need traditional clubs to fill our stadiums with cheering fans. Is this Government in such dire need of gate money?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would rather see an empty stadium than have Mauritius go through another 23rd of May 1999. I would rather see an empty stadium than have the nation bury another victim of hooliganism. I would rather see an empty stadium than see our country torn apart. No, Mr Speaker, Sir, never again! Traditional clubs will inevitably revive the communal

demon, we all know that, and the hon. Prime Minister knows that better than anyone else in this House. Was not he the one who when debating the Sports Bill of 1999 stated and I quote, unfortunately, hon. Ritoo is not here, because it's good that he knows what the hon. Prime Minister had to say in 1999 -

“This legislation bears testimony to our unflinching commitment to shake off, once and for all, the communalist mindset in the practice of sports and in supporting sports team. For too long, the scourge of communalism in sports has been gnawing at the fabric of our society. Regionalisation will create a new feeling of appurtenance. We are convinced that over the years, this feeling would evolve and sustain a new fervour for sports where teams would be supported by Mauritians and not by communities. I have said it on several occasions; we have built a country, we need to build our nation.”

For regionalisation of sports - I stress that again - for regionalisation of sports, not traditional club, regionalisation of sports, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not only about de-communalising sports, it is also about building our nation.

A decade ago, the hon. Prime Minister was set to de-communalise sports and embark on nation building. That is what he said, in 1999. What happened? What happened along the way? Has he been distracted by “Nubanists”? Is there a hidden agenda or only just a weak Prime Minister who would do anything to cling to power? That is the harsh reality, Mr Speaker, Sir. History will bear witness that it is the same hon. Prime Minister who is going to take the so-called bold decision of reviving traditional club with all its communal undertone. It is the very same hon. Prime Minister who took the decision in 1999 to ban elite football in this country. It is the same Prime Minister! Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not forget that it is the very same Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam who banned le sport Roi in this country. When he did so, he was applauded by his Minister. The then Minister of Sports, hon. Mrs Arouff-Parfait even stated and I quote -

“This is the first time that a Prime Minister has publicly come forward with such a courageous measure which deserves all our congratulation and unflinching support”

Congratulations and unflinching support! What an achievement, Mr Speaker, Sir! *Quel exploit!* They killed football and shamelessly bragged about it in 1999. For more than 19 months, people

stopped playing elite football in this country. For more than 19 months, Mauritians could not even watch their national team play on our national soil. We had to play home leg of international Football matches outside Mauritius, in places like Reunion Island and Egypt. We became football squatters, *sans domicile fixe*. We were the laughing stock of the international football community. What a legacy! This is the Labour Party!

(Interruptions)

Soccer fans were deprived of their national sports. Truly, the darkest period in our football history, thanks to the inability of the Labour Government led by hon. Dr. Ramgoolam to find a solution to end the football crisis. Intervening on the Sports Bill, in 2000, hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell tried to justify the decision to suspend football matches in the following terms and I quote -

“Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are good reasons as to why for some time there was no elite soccer in Mauritius. Only over the weekend, had it not been for the intervention of the police there could have been a communal riot in this country.”

These are the words of hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell. There could have been a communal riot in this country if they had not suspended elite football. I am very interested to see if today, after a decade, the very same hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell would be among those who would come and justify going back to football that will bring communal riot in this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the historical truth is that we have had to wait for the MSM/MMM to come to power for the football league to resume. Hardly two months after the General Elections in 2000, football kicked off again. The Government provided the necessary funds to sport region and football prospered. Now, for those who lay the blame for our empty stadium on regionalisation, may I remind hon. Members of this House that on 06 September 2003, in George V Stadium, our national team won the Indian Ocean Game, beating Reunion Island two goals to one.

(Interruptions)

I was there, Mr Speaker, Sir, and like me thousands of Mauritians felt proud of our national team, thanks to the MMM/MSM Government. In 2003, Mr Speaker, Sir, there were no

traditional clubs then, still we had a more than decent national team. Under the MMM/MSM Government, Mauritius achieved its best ever ranking in the FIFA World ranking, namely 116. Last year, we were down to 202. What a shame! If our football is going down the drain, Mr Speaker, Sir, if our stadiums are empty, it is not the fault of regionalisation. No, it is the inevitable result of the gross incompetency of this Government and its dealing with the Mauritius Football Association.

Stadiums will be filled when the level of our football is raised. Players should be financially rewarded for the strict diet, intensive training and discipline required by Football de *haut niveau*. More funds should be provided to football teams. More funds should be allocated to Local Authorities, Municipal Councils, and District Councils to promote football. Sponsors should be given fiscal rebate for all donations made to football clubs. So, much can be done to raise the level of football team and attract spectators. The solution is not and will never be the revival of traditional clubs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1999, they killed football, we revived it. Now, they are set to destroy the game again. Today, we take the pledge that we will spare no effort to prevent them from destroying our football and our national unity. Tomorrow in power, we will usher a new golden era for our national sport king football.

M. le président, le budget est l'occasion pour le grand argentier de faire le bilan de l'année écoulée et d'annoncer les grandes lignes de sa politique économique et fiscale. C'est vraiment dommage de voir l'honorable ministre des finances se contenter d'une croissance économique de 3,2% en 2013 et ce alors même que des milliards de roupies ont été injectées dans l'économie avec le paiement du PRB. Il est regrettable que l'honorable ministre ait utilisé comme point de référence, benchmark le taux de croissance des pays tels que l'Inde, le Brésil, la Russie, alors que l'économie de ces pays n'a rien de comparable avec le notre et que ces pays là font face à des problèmes conjoncturels avec notamment la dépréciation de leur monnaie. Voyons plutôt ce que nous prédit le bureau du Fond Monétaire International dans leur rapport rendu public le mois dernier, en octobre. Le taux de croissance en moyenne dans les pays émergents et en développement sera de 4,5% en 2013 et 5,4% en 2014. La moyenne pour l'Afrique sub-saharienne sera de 5% en 2013 et sera de 6% en 2014. Pour les pays en

développement d'Asie on prévoit 6.3% en 2013 et 6.5% en 2014 avec un taux de croissance de 7,6% pour la Chine.

M. le président, les chiffres parlent d'eux-mêmes. Il n'y a pas vraiment de quoi se vanter. Nous connaissons un taux de croissance en deçà des autres pays en développement. Pire, M. le président, le grand argentier prévoit que notre taux de croissance en 2014 serait seulement de 3,8% à 4%. Là aussi, bien en deçà de la moyenne des autres pays en développement. Quel aveu de taille ! On comprend mieux pourquoi l'honorable ministre des finances ne s'est pas aventuré à prédire le taux de chômage pour l'année prochaine. Un taux de chômage qui a atteint 8,3% selon les chiffres officiels et qui, en fait, est bien plus conséquent si on tient en compte les milliers des diplômés recrutés temporairement sous le *Youth Employment Programme*. Avec un taux de croissance de 3,8 à 4%, comment va-t-on combattre le chômage ? Quelles sont les mesures préconisées dans ce budget pour la création d'emplois et pour faciliter l'embauche ? Quels secteurs ont été identifiés dans ce budget pour relancer l'économie et créer l'emploi ?

As far as aviation hub is concerned, at paragraph 64 of the Budget speech, we are told that the Government will develop a Master Plan which will focus on 4 segments including a cargo hub. And in the meantime Airports of Mauritius Limited will expand cargo facilities at the airport for a total amount of Rs525 m. over 72 hectares. The project is scheduled for completion in July 2014. According to the timetable for implementation of the measures announced in the Budget which were circulated yesterday, we are told that the time limit for implementation of the Master Plan, to come up with the Master Plan, to realise this aviation hub would be in June 2014. So, now we have it that the Government has committed to invest half a billion rupees by July of next year, when the Master Plan itself would not be ready until June 2014. There is no Master Plan yet, there is no feasibility study yet. There is no cost benefit analysis yet. Do we know how many additional flights are required to make this cargo hub economically viable, let alone profitable? How many airlines have indicated their willingness to increase the number of flights in Mauritius? Are we increasing the aircraft fleet of Air Mauritius? Have we done a projection of how much cargo will transit to Mauritius? No Master Plan, no feasibility study and yet Government will spend hundreds of millions of rupees. Doesn't that sound familiar? I get the strange feeling of *déjà vu* here. Tianli project, Jin Fei, hundreds of millions of rupees down the drain for a ghost town with only a few goats, enjoying water and electricity supply 24/7.

Same thing for Neo town Project. Hundreds of millions of rupees in a ghost project, hundreds of millions of rupees down the drains, job creation: zero. Mr Speaker, Sir, same Government, same Prime Minister, same result. Hundreds of millions of rupees of taxpayers down the drain.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem with this Government, to paraphrase the former Director of Audit is that it simply does not trigger the thought before it takes a decision. Spend now; think later! They built an airport, no Master Plan. Only the master's plan to give the best parts to *copain, copines*.

Next, we are told that there would be big investment in the seaport. We have heard the same story so many times before. The Mauritius Port Authority has been going on for years and years about dredging the port to accommodate bigger vessels, more bigger vessels. We talked about privatisation of the Cargo Handling Corporation before in this House. We talked about terminal for passengers, for big yachts. Nothing has happened up till now.

Hon. Bhagwan just reminded us, the last time major dredging work was carried out by the Mauritius Port Authority, we all know what happened. Boskalis! Boskalis pleaded guilty to the charge of bribing officers at the Mauritius Port Authority, it is with utter disgust that we found out that the former adviser of the Prime Minister was apparently given immunity against prosecution when there was clear evidence that he had received payments...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member I have to stop you. The matter is still before the Court. The criminal case is still before the Court. So, refrain from making comments.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: I bow to your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir, but what I wanted to say is, like my colleague Member of the Parliament, hon. Jhugroo, rightly stated on Friday last, when it comes to people close to the Government, ICAC *trouve cailloussé!*

Creating a Marine service platform is a welcome initiative, provided that all the necessary precaution is taken to ensure a fair and transparent allocation of contracts.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the new sectors identified by the Minister of Finance will not solve unemployment problem in the short run. It will not create many jobs for the graduates. In fact, there is nothing in this Budget that addresses the problem of youth unemployment. The solution to the youth unemployment problems of this country seems to be the one advocated by my friend hon. Mohamed, who just stepped in at the right moment. The only solution for the youth of this country is migration. Migrate, leave Mauritius. Government here is incapable of providing a decent job to our youths and in particular to our graduates. This is why Government has waived the bond which laureates had to sign to compel them to come back to Mauritius. Now, we have waived the bonds, because we can't provide jobs for our laureates. There is no need to come back to Mauritius we seem to tell these young people. We don't need our elites and the irony Mr Speaker, Sir, is that at the same time as this Government is dissuading Mauritians from coming back to Mauritius to serve their country, they are trying to attract foreigners to come to Mauritius. The hon. Vice Prime Minister, in his Budget speech stated at paragraph 183 and I quote -

“A pool of talent is a must in our economy, if we want to build a better Mauritius for all.”

We have already a pool of talent in Mauritius. So, you would have expected in the Budget when the hon. Vice- Prime Minister is saying that the pool of talent is a must in our economy, if we want to build a better Mauritius for all, you would have expected the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, to come with measures to attract this pool of local talents, but Mr Speaker, Sir, there are no such measures!

Instead he announced measures to attract more high calibre professionals to Mauritius. We have thousands of *gradués chômeurs* in this country and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is targeting to bring 5000 professionals in the short term and 10,000 professionals in the medium term. Is this how we are going to create employment for our young professionals? How many unemployed graduates, we will have? How many well qualified professionals do we have in this country? Every day I receive CVs and I am sure a lot of MPs receive CVs from all these young people, young talented people, graduates looking for jobs. Do we really need more foreign Accountants? Do we really need more foreign Lawyers? Do we really need more foreign Doctors? It seems that very soon we will get foreign Ministers as well!

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the root of this is a fundamental question. When will this Government start believing in his people? When will this Government start recognising the talents in every Mauritian? But then again, Mr Speaker, Sir, what can you expect from this Prime Minister who overtly and with a sense of pride, goes around saying that “I don't trust any of my Ministers.” *Les judas* and they are all sitting here applauding, “they trust me.” And at the same time, how can you expect a Prime Minister who does not trust his inner circle to then trust other Mauritians. Cry, cry my beloved country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that we need to support and empower our enterprises to do more business in Africa. Mauritius should become the gateway to Africa. Our long-term destiny is linked to this continent, which is slowly awakening, a land of opportunity. A continent rich in minerals and precious metals which has also struck oil and gas.

But what happened to the Government's decision to make us a travelling hub for Africa? Africa is at our doorstep. Yet, it takes hours, if not days to have access to Africa by air. When will Air Mauritius increase its fleet of aircraft to ensure regular daily flights to the emerging African countries? The hon. Vice-Prime Minister did not even talk about Africa when he referred to improved air services. He talked about opening up flights to Russia, China, but nothing about Africa, and that says it all, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We were supposed to have two ambassadors for Africa. What happened to them? Did they get the necessary budget? Do they have a proper office and staff? I am told that one of them is now occupying space at the Ministry of Finance, as opposed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The other one, the lady who was appointed, I am told that she is still looking for Africa in Moscow - Moscow where there seems to be more film actors to take pictures with than in Africa.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we welcome the idea of a Mauritius-Africa Fund. Mr Speaker, Sir, I could not prevent myself from giggling when I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister states the following about this Mauritius-Africa Fund , and I quote -

“(...) this Mauritius-Africa Fund will offer fee paying consultancy services on the continent to Government and Public Sectors entities. (...)”

What a joke! So, we are good enough to provide fee paying consultancy services to African Governments, but when it comes to providing consultancy services to our homeland, then we are not good enough, then we need foreigners, then we need foreign professionals, then we need Singapore. To advise on the National Identity Card, were not the National Computer Board and our ICT professionals good enough? Did we need Singaporeans? What did the Singaporeans do when they were awarded the contract? They sub-contracted it! I know of many Mauritians who are working on the National ID Card project, for which they were denied the chance to bid.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when there were flashfloods, who do we call? Singapore! There is a water management problem, who do we call? Singapore! We need an adviser for the Light Railway Transit, who do we call? Singapore! We need to change a bulb in the office of the Prime Minister, who do we call? I hope not Singapore to change a bulb! What is this obsession with Singapore? I worked in Singapore for several years.

(Interruptions)

Yes! They are hardworking, intelligent...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Enough!

(Interruptions)

I say, enough now!

Mr Uteem: We came back to help...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said enough!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: *Au moins, moi mo enn musulman. Toi, to enn musulman toi ?*

(Interruptions)

Moi, mo challenge toi, any time!

Mr Speaker: I have said enough now!

Mr Uteem: *To blier dan Buckingham koman to ti sou!*

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair! No conversations! Now, stop! I have to read the Standing Orders.

(Interruptions)

I have to read the Standing Orders –

“No Member shall interrupt another Member, except on a point of order.”

I have not found any point of order. Don’t interrupt, therefore! Proceed!

Mr Uteem: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was talking about Singapore. I was saying that I worked there. Yes, Singaporeans are intelligent, hardworking people, but in Mauritius also we have intelligent, hardworking people. So, why rush to Singapore for everything? When will this Government get rid of its inferiority complex? When will it start trusting us, Mauritians?

Mr Speaker, Sir, there was one area where we had a competitive edge over Singapore, one sector where Mauritius was preferred to Singapore and that is for investment into India. But, even here, this grossly incompetent Government was unable to maintain this competitive edge. Today, investors prefer to invest into India through Singapore than through Mauritius. And who is to be blamed? No one else than this Government! Only a few days ago, ‘The Times of India’ referred to an interview of the Chief Executive of the Financial Services Commission, where she said that some new investors were not exploring investment opportunities offered by Mauritius as a gateway to India due to tax pact related concern.

The newspaper quoted Mrs Ah Hen in the following terms -

“Because of this uncertainty, both India side and Mauritius side are losing, as we could have otherwise got the momentum. The funds would have been flowing into India. But now you have a situation where investors wait and watch. So they will look for alternative (...). That is where time is important for revising the pact.”

Time is of the essence, Mr Speaker, Sir. Time is money! And when will the Government finally understand that? *Au lieu d’adopter une politique de l’autruche, ils auraient dû prendre le taureau par les cornes. Hélas, il fut tout autre!* Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a total confusion in the sector. Where do we stand? Where are we heading to? What do we tell our clients? We don’t even know who is handling the file on the Double Taxation Treaty with India.

Is it the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who is responsible for financial services and taxation? He is responsible for Mauritius Revenue Authority and we are talking about Double Taxation Treaty here. But then, why is he not invited to India doing negotiations? Why is he sidelined in favour of hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell, the Minister of Foreign Affairs? Is he not good enough? Doesn't the Prime Minister trust him? And why does he allow himself to be treated like this: such humiliation?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Double Taxation Treaty with India should be above politics. The Government should get its act together and take decisive action. We are losing business, we are losing credibility. Management companies are laying off workers. Mr Speaker, Sir, in the financial world, where cut throat competition is the norm, we need to adapt or perish. There is only so much which the Industry can do on its own. We need the support of the Government; we welcome the initiative to set up a Joint Public Private Sector promotion Committee to implement targeted campaign in Africa. After killing the financial services promotion agency a few years ago, this Government is finally seeing the light and seeing the importance of having a joint promotion initiative. I am glad that the Vice-Prime Minister is setting aside funds to promote our reputation as an international financial centre. But then, why limit the campaign to Africa only? We need also to market our services where the investors are located, where the money is, and the Rs50 m. being set for these promotion campaigns is just a drop in the ocean compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars which are spent by our competitors to promote their jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, Mauritius' image as a well-regulated financial centre has been badly affected by the string of Ponzi Schemes, which were widely reported in the International press - the amount involved, the number of victims and the span of time over which the Ponzi Scheme lasted have uncovered the major shortcomings of our regulators. Yet, no sanctions were taken against any regulatory supervisors. Two suspected transactions report were filed with the Financial Intelligence Unit. They slept over it for more than six months. Banners and posters all over the place invited the population to invest in those unregulated scheme! The Financial Services Commission did nothing.

The Bank of Mauritius received letters; they did not report it to the Police. And when the plot came light, when the masks fell, to our dismay we found out that one of the major actors or actress, should I say, behind the scheme, was no less than 'Miss Cabat', a former counselor of

the Labour Party in Quatre Bornes, who was already on bail for an alleged case of corruption. Despite her infamous track record, despite being a serial offender, she was released on bail only a few days later, while the Police enquiry was still ongoing. During that time, on her web page, she was telling victims to wait for her return to get back their money. Even the brother of a Minister was arrested in this saga. Pressure is now being placed on victims not to come forward. They are told that they will be prosecuted if they come forward; they are told that their money were not clean in the first place. It's only a year after hundreds of Mauritians have lost more than a billion of rupees that the Government is now coming forward with measures to combat financial crime. But we already have good legislation. Ponzy schemes are already illegal. Providing financial services without a licence is already an offence. Swindling is already an offence. But what do we do when those supposed to enforce the law are party to the scheme? What do we do when we hear about the involvement of Police officers and ICAC officers in the scheme? To whom does a victim turn to? Where is the Ombudsperson for Financial Services that was promised in last year's Budget?

Mr Speaker, Sir, we should not be over zealous either. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has announced a series of measures. Some of them are good, some of them have sent a chill down the spine of operators in the financial sector and Lawyers. Regulators should not be given so much power as to be a threat to the proper running of the sector. Regulators should not be allowed to go on a fishing expedition. Uncontrolled power may lead to abuse and undermine confidence in the system.

When it comes to the offshore sector, appearances matter. We need to keep the protection afforded by the Judge in Chambers. Regulator should not bypass a Judge in Chamber to search, seize and disseminate confidential information. Privileged communication between a lawyer and his client including emails should not be lightly tampered with. I urge the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to consult all stakeholders of the industry before taking any drastic measures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the erosion of the household purchasing power is a major concern. A growing number of households cannot make ends meet. Prices of basic commodities have plummeted over the past few years. In the Budget, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister states at paragraph 503 that –

“The most sustainable way to improve purchasing power and therefore the standard of living is by improving earning capacity and creating opportunities for more and higher productivity jobs.”

This is a most laudable statement or rather a cliché, but will do little to improve the lot of the ordinary Mauritian nor increase their purchasing power in the short and medium terms.

The Government could have reduced the price of petroleum products. This would have had a cascading effect on prices. It had the means to do so. When the price of petroleum products was increased in March 2013, the reference price for mogas and gasoil were significantly higher than they are today on the world market. But, today, in order to maintain the same price, the Committee has resorted to a technical procedure. They have adjusted the price by Rs2.2 for mogas and Rs1.4 for gasoil under the item ‘adjustment’. The price of petroleum products could and should have been reduced by at least this amount by which it was adjusted.

But instead Government will be charging R1 levy to finance the acquisition of new bus is for private bus companies! *Du jamais vu!* Direct subsidisation! People who do not use buses will have to pay bus companies to change their fleet! This is the new Robin Hood, Mr Speaker, Sir. Take from the poor consumers and give to the rich bus owners! And it is not the first time that this Government is looking after its capitalist friends. Who has forgotten about the Stimulus Package? Fat cheques to the close Advisor of the Prime Minister! Even fatter cheques to a former Member of Parliament of the Labour Party! The money was meant to save jobs but both Infinity BPO and RS Denim groups went bust. Yet, the owners are still enjoying their lavish lifestyle. That is what we call: Putting our *copains, copines* first!

The Government criticised MSM/MMM that they had increased VAT to 15%. Why did not they reduce it? Once again, the deficit will be financed largely through VAT. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, what am I talking about? They did remove 15% VAT not on basic things for everyday common people; they reduced the 15% VAT on photovoltaic panels.

(Interruptions)

Jackpot once again! The immediate beneficiary of this generosity will no doubt be Sarako PV Co. Ltd!

(Interruptions)

A company owned by someone close to a Minister!

Mr Speaker, Sir, one thing that we will always remember the hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam for, is his generosity towards the family members of his Cabinet. Answering to a PNQ earlier this year, Dr. the hon. Deputy Prime Minister informed the House that following an unsolicited bid Sarako PV Co. Ltd was awarded a contract to supply 15 MW of electricity for the next 20 years at a premium price of Rs6.06. Simple calculation will come to around Rs750 m. in the life of the contract. Unsolicited bid! We all know that the European Union has refused to finance any project which has not gone through a competitive tender process. But who cares? As long as our people, our family are the beneficiaries, everything goes! We learnt that a sum of Rs37 m. annually has been earmarked from the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund for the Sarako project. We are also told that Sarako has been granted a lease of 80 *arpents* in Bambous when the normal norm is to have 2 *arpents* per MW! So, they should have been awarded only 30 *arpents*.

Now that VAT is being waived, I really hope that the CEB will renegotiate the price for the purchase of electricity from Sarako downwards. Jackpot! And it is not the first time! Have we forgotten how the in-laws of another Minister won the Prime Minister's lottery with Betamax and Red Eagle, billions of rupees to be paid to them over the next 15 years? By these standards, the dozens of millions of rupees of VAT exemption granted to Apollo Bramwell Hospital seems peanuts!

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no better symbolic example of the gross incompetency of this Government than in the way it has managed or rather mismanaged our water supply. In February and March of this year, we have had flash floods. Several people perished in those incidents. Now, barely 6 months later we are having water supply issues! Every year, we vote hundreds of millions of rupees to replace old pipes. Every year when we go through Committee Stage we find out that the money has been underspent. A bunch of under achievers! That is what we have! So much so that one *bailleur de fonds* has had to cancel his line of credit. In the meantime, we are suffering. Water is a necessity and it is criminal to play with our water supply.

What happened to Bagatelle Dam? Is the Government going ahead with the project or not? How much money has already been spent on the project to date? At least, if you have

decided to stop it, have the decency to come publicly and do your own *mea culpa* and while you are at it, I will be interested to know what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as Minister responsible for the Central Water Authority thinks about the gentleman in Balfour who got CWA to fill his swimming pool in August of this year!

It is sad, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I heard the hon. Prime Minister yesterday try to defend *l'indéfendable* and try to argue that there were no water shortage at that time. I will give him the benefit of doubt. I am sure that he did not want to, in any way, mislead the House. But let me quote from a few newspapers around that time. First, “Le Matinal”, hardly a newspaper close to the Opposition, “Le Matinal” of 23 August 2013 –

« *La situation de l'eau dans le pays est préoccupante. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Central Water Authority prévoit des coupures un peu partout à travers le pays dans les jours à venir. Une décision rendue nécessaire par le fait que la pluviométrie entre mai et août montre un déficit de 50%.* »

On the eve, I quote l’Express -

« La CWA tire déjà la sonnette d'alarme. Le pays est déficitaire en eau d'au moins 50% durant cette période. Résultat : de nouveaux horaires de coupure d'eau sont à venir à travers l'île, sauf dans le sud. »

But, the cherry on the cake, Mr Speaker, Sir, le Défi Media, on the very fatidique day, on the eve Saturday 17 August, and I quote -

«Toutefois ces deux derniers jours à Beau Bassin... »

Meaning around that time, the time when the hon. gentleman was filling his swimming pool with dozens of *camions citerne*s.

« Ces deux derniers jours à Beau Bassin, la fourniture avait été interrompue. Les techniciens ont déjà réparé une valve obstruée à deux endroits différents et la situation revenue à la normal vendredi après-midi, affirme (...)»

And then gives the name.

«La CWA compte sur la collaboration de la population (...)»

And, I quote -

«Nous lançons un appel au public pour utiliser l'eau à bon escient.»⁴

'Utiliser l'eau à bon escient'; a cry from the heart of the CWA before the hon. gentleman filled his swimming pool. *L'exemple vient d'en haut*. It all boils down to leadership or lack of it. You see, people are inspired, motivated and driven by leaders. A good captain can uplift a whole football team. We have seen it yesterday when we watched football, how a captain of a national team can uplift the whole team. A leader leads by example, but if the leader is weak, corrupt and unjust, automatically, the society will lack bearing and not prosper. Today, this Government is reaping the rotten fruit of evil seeds of division which it has sown. They nurtured *'rodeur boute'* and tried to buy the conscience of many.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not because we are surrounded by beautiful beaches that we should bury our head in the sand and ignore the distress, the poverty and the suffering of our people. This Budget was, to say the least, *décevant*, but I take comfort, Mr Speaker, Sir, in knowing that like me all Mauritians in this country know that this is the last Budget of this outgoing Government.

Thank you.

(*Interruptions*)

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(6.34 p.m.)

The Minister of Fisheries (Mr J. Von-Mally): M. le président, permettez-moi tout d'abord de féliciter mon collègue, le Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour son excellent budget et qui, comme la si bien dit le Premier ministre, est résolument tourner vers l'avenir.

M. le président, dans ce budget, il est dit qu'il y aura quatre nouveaux piliers économiques qui vont être ajoutés aux autres piliers que nous avons déjà et dedans, on parle de

l'état océan. Dans ce budget, donc, on est en train de parler d'une autre île Maurice, d'une Maurice plus grande, pas une île, on n'est pas en train de réduire Maurice à une toute petite île. On est en train de donner à Maurice sa grandeur, on est en train de parler de Maurice comme un grand état océan, M. le président. Et dans ce grand état océan, toutes les îles de notre République auront à jouer un rôle de plus en plus important, quelles que soient Maurice, Rodrigues, Agaléga, St Brandon, Tromelin, Diego Garcia et les Chagos. Quand on parle de notre République de cette façon là, ça fait chaud au cœur, parce qu'on est en train, de plus en plus, d'intégrer toutes les îles. Donc, l'intégration va se faire davantage et tous les habitants des autres îles vont se sentir plus intégrés.

Avec le concept d'état océan, M. le président, on parle de l'économie bleu ou *Ocean Economy* où on va exploiter, de façon optimal, toutes les ressources qu'il y a dans cet état océan. Je sais que mon ministère, le ministère de la pêche, a un rôle très important à jouer. Comme nous pouvons le dire, nous sommes un peu à l'avant plan pour le développement de cet économie océanique. Donc, M. le président, permettez-moi - avant de parler de Rodrigues et des îles - de commencer par les mesures budgétaires qui concerne mon ministère.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development needs to be congratulated for presenting a Budget to protect people through the provision of safety nets for the vulnerable groups in our society and encourage diversification to new emerging ocean sectors. This Budget is crafted on creating the next wave of prosperity and building a better Mauritius. It provides an opportunity to prove that Mauritius, as a small coastal State, can solve arising problems effectively in a masterly manner, and a responsibility that we relish and are geared up to face. We will continue seeking to steer the decision-making process as a honest broker to ensure the continuity of growth of the national economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me begin by focusing on the importance of our Government, on responsible management and responsible decisions. Today, we are facing numerous challenges, but the strength in the economy, our financial stability and our strategic investment in infrastructure enabled us to stand strong against the economic turmoil that gripped the world. Government played a vital role in nurturing the conditions for growth. We worked with

industries and businesses to promote growth and continually adjust our approaches to ensure our efforts are achieving results.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here, I would like to comfort the House that fisheries was, is and will always be one of the important economic sectors contributing to the national economy and will certainly become more important with time. Ocean resources provide income, food, employment, recreation to our people and, above all, generate wealth. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although the factors surrounding fisheries are many, complex and interconnected; our response has been multi-prongs, comprehensive and integrated.

The seafood processing industry with an important market share on the European market provides direct employment for 5,000 people, mostly, women who represent more than 80% of the labour, thus, fulfilling one of the millennium development goals. Its exports value stands at 300 million Euros. That is, about Rs12 billion and accounts for around 18.7% of the total commodity export.

The European Union is a destination of more than 90% of our exports. 25% of the overall canned tuna imported in volume by the European Union comes from the Indian Ocean countries. Mauritius is one among the two biggest ACP exporters of canned tuna to the EU market. Mauritius ranks third in terms of overall EU canned tuna external supply, third in terms of volume of overall EU Tuna loins external supply, and in terms of value.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has proved that the future belongs to those who can innovate within that often restrictive fiscal framework, and thinks strategically on opportunities to create value and innovation. The launching of the purse seiner “Belle Rive” to the tune of Rs1 billion by SAPMER, registered in Mauritius, and flying Mauritian flag, provides real testimony that the fishing industry has marked a decisive landmark in the future development of the fishing sector. This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, comes about more than 40 years after the last Mauritian *thonnier senneur* Lady Sushil.

Furthermore, a fish processing plant, “Tuna Processing Services Indian Ocean”, to the tune of Rs130 m. will be inaugurated shortly. Investment in acquisition of additional fishing vessels to fly the Mauritian flag and a transhipment quay to the tune of Rs150 m. is also expected

by SAPMER. Overall investment by SAPMER by 2015 will revolve around Rs8 billion to Rs10 billion, leading to the creation of some 500 additional jobs.

Donc, entre R 8 milliards et R 10 milliards seront investies par la compagnie SAPMER, et cela va créer à peu près 500 emplois, M. le président. Et je peux ajouter qu'il y a d'autres pays qui sont intéressés, qui ont signifié leur intention à venir investir à Maurice. Il y a la Chine, le Corée du Sud, l'Inde, le Japon, M. le président. Donc, tous ces pays vont aider à faire avancer notre *seafood hub*. Quand les bateaux venant de ces pays viennent à Maurice, ils vont apporter leurs prises ici ; ils vont débarquer leurs prises qu'ils ont pêchées dans la région. Donc, cela va donner davantage de travail à nos usines. Ils vont faire le *refuelling* ici. Ils vont se ravitailler ici, et nos chantiers navals auront plus de travail. Donc, ce sera tant mieux pour notre économie, M. le président.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cooperation is often a prerequisite for making progress. By staying focused, my Ministry has formed a solid bond of cooperation with Guangdong from China. This will further provide a chance of riding out the storm of recession, inasmuch as they will be investing in five fishing vessels to be registered in Mauritius, and flying the Mauritian flag, whose benefit would be accrued in the procurement of originating fish to consolidate our market access. Moreover, discussions between my Ministry and friendly countries, in particular China, Russia, South Africa, Mozambique, Gabon, Zambia, Turkey, Tunisia and Comoros, have reached an advanced stage for a strategic partnership that will evolve through investment, trade, programmes to streamline and increase research and training in targeted areas, to improve the production efficiency and environmental sustainability of the fisheries sector. We are demonstrating responsible management, and making responsible decisions in the context of a strong robust economy, in which more people will be working with the development of the ocean economy. The roadmap being developed will lead us forward throughout the coming decade, building on our strength, harnessing our opportunities, and securing a brighter future than at any other time. Within this framework, we are doing our best to boost the aquaculture sector, and many aquaculture projects are being developed, as fish is a particularly healthy and nutritious product, of which there is an increase in demand. Actually, this is covered largely through imports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that human efforts have the power to change the facet when it is done collectively. My Ministry empowered fishers by providing the necessary platform to engage in practical and pragmatic small scale pilot cage culture projects at Grand Gaube and Trou d'Eau Douce for the culture of Cordonnier, with a view to alleviate poverty through provision of floating cages and fry. This initiative has prompted the Fishermen Cooperative Societies of the regions of Poste de Flacq and Quatre Soeurs to follow suit. My Ministry would provide more floating cages to fishermen cooperatives for cage culture around the island.

Comme on le sait, M. le président, notre région, là où nous nous trouvons, est relativement pauvre en poissons comparé aux pays où l'eau est plus chaude, comme les Maldives et les Seychelles. Mais nous avons un espace de 2.3 millions de kilomètres carrés. Comme notre région est relativement pauvre en poissons, la meilleure façon d'utiliser de façon optimale ces grands espaces, c'est d'aller vers l'aquaculture. Donc, c'est ce que nous sommes en train de faire. C'est une façon pour nous d'ouvrir d'autres avenues, pour aider les pêcheurs à mieux gagner leur vie, M. le président.

We are acknowledging the crucial role of marine aquaculture for our markets and communities, as this activity has a potential to bring smart, inclusive, and innovative growth. New sites are being identified, and it deserves a prominent place in our legislation, to provide space for both small scale fishers and large scale farmers.

Furthermore, 12 new sites will be regulated to provide aquaculture sites in the lagoon for prospective farmers, being given that the existing eight sites have already been assigned. The present production, on an industrial scale, of aquaculture in floating cages is expected to increase from 600 tonnes to around 2,000 tonnes in the medium term.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius means business, and this Government means business on all fronts. In this endeavour, amendments to the fish farming regulations are being made to give effect to the concession fee for the lease of sites dedicated to both marine and inland-based aquaculture. This will be reviewed from Rs1.2 m. to an annual fee of Rs100,000. The Fisherman Investment Trust and the Fishermen Cooperative Societies will be exempted from the payment of concession fee. The regulations in this respect will be tabled shortly. Moreover, the

Central Water Authority has made provision for a new tariff rate of Rs1 per cubic metre, for the supply of raw water for inland aquaculture activities. Formerly, it was Rs10 per metre cube, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to thank my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, who has helped us a lot on that issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, fish stocking provides many benefits such as increasing the existing stocks, and is recognised for its importance to the fishing community in terms of quality fishing, conservation outcomes, employment, and subsequent economic benefits. Responsible fish stocking would be conducted around the island at a faster pace to conserve and protect our unique biodiversity. Some 400,000 '*gueule pavé*' and about one million fingerlings of '*Cordonnier*' have been released at different places around the island this year. My Ministry intends to double these figures for the year 2014.

M. le président, en fait, comme je l'ai dit, nous voulons ouvrir d'autres avenues pour aider les pêcheurs. Ce que nous faisons au centre d'Albion c'est de collecter les *fingerlings*, les petits poissons, qui autrement allaient mourir en haute mer. D'ordinaire, vous avez presque 90% des petits poissons qui se perdent en haute mer. Donc, nous captions une partie des ces petits poissons, nous les faisons grossir, nous les mettons à la disposition de ceux qui veulent se lancer dans l'aquaculture. Malgré cela, il va rester des milliers, voire des millions de petits poissons, et ces petits poissons-là, on les relâche dans le lagon. C'est ce qu'on appelle *le marine ranching*, M. le président.

Artisanal and small-scale fishery is not just an economic activity. It is a way of life. It greatly contributes to the progress and wellbeing of fishermen in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. Hence, I believe the best way to solve the food security crisis is to secure the improvement of yields. In this endeavour, my Ministry will embark on the seed production of mud crab, using the Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS), whereby crablets will be cultured, and the excess will be released in the lagoon. Marine shrimp production trial will be undertaken to replenish the lagoon, and we are looking forward to raise sea cucumber with the cooperation of China. It has been seen that, in our lagoon, especially the lagoon of Rodrigues, sea cucumber farming can be very successful. I hope that those in power in Rodrigues will take advantage of that.

Concurrently, our coral reef ecosystem is confronted by environmental and climatic threats, which call for an integrated ecosystem approach to the management of this habitat. Coral reefs are among the richest ecosystem of the world, and support important fishing and tourist industries. With the decline of coral reef habitats around the world, the importance of coral farming is becoming clear. Thus, with a view to improve live coral cover, biodiversity and structural heterogeneity of the reef system, my Ministry is implementing coral farming projects at different sites around the island, where about 2,000 coral fragments of various coral species have been fixed in nurseries in the lagoon for eventual transfer to degraded sites. This can be an economic activity, Mr Deputy, Speaker, Sir, as is the case in certain countries like Fiji.

Illegal fishing is a criminal activity. It upsets ecosystems, endangers species, reduces biodiversity, and it undermines all our conservation efforts. This is not just a crime against the environment. By reducing catches for the rest of the sector, this practice causes lower revenues and job losses. It disrupts markets and unfair competition. Mauritius is assuming its responsibilities, both as a flag and a port state, incorporating with regional and international fisheries bodies for proper management of fisheries resources through responsible fisheries practices and policies. It has amply demonstrated to the international community its willingness to combat IUU fishing, and capacity to implement a sectoral fisheries policy.

This year, under the Indian Ocean Commission Regional Cooperation Programme, two foreign fishing boats have been arrested for fishing without a licence in the EEZ of Mauritius, and two other fishing vessels have been contravened for breach of fisheries regulations. Suspected of having carried out illegal fishing, one seiner has been denied unloading and transshipment in our port.

Furthermore, as at date, 274 cases of illegal fishing have been reported at national level, with 10,330 metres of illegal nets seized, and contravention along with fines established. Thus, it goes without saying that Mauritius is committed to fight illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, that is, IUU fishing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you can see, Mauritius is assuming its responsibilities, both as a flag and a port state, incorporating with regional and international Bodies for proper management of fisheries resources through responsible practices and policies. Moreover, though

our waters are not that productive, as I have said earlier, compared to most of other ocean areas, still, we are a reference when it comes to fisheries. Our dedication, hard work and commitment are recognised in the international arena.

Mauritius is, for the second consecutive time, chairing the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission - the IOTC. The various regional and international fisheries seminars, conferences and workshops being held in Mauritius is testimony to what I am advocating.

Furthermore, Mauritius has, as a standalone candidate, indicated its interest to host the 7th South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, that is, the SIOFA, whose objective is to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of the deep-sea fisheries resources through cooperation among contracting parties.

Net fishing is detrimental to the marine environment, in particular corals and fish habitats, which goes against the philosophy of ecosystem approach to fisheries. The incentive provided under the Budget to fishermen to surrender their nets, pending the eventual phasing out of large net and gill fishing, basically aims at the protection of the ecosystem and the reduction of effort in the lagoon fisheries.

This shows Government means business, and we are acting in a responsive, responsible and effective manner, as we cannot have a thriving seafood industry unless we are certain that sustainability of fishery resources is not compromised.

In fact, we are giving incentives to fishers to surrender their nets. Nous sommes en train d'augmenter la compensation qu'on donne aux pêcheurs pour qu'ils rendent leurs filets. Pour les accompagner, on leur donne la possibilité de se tourner vers l'aquaculture. Donc, petit à petit, les pêcheurs vont voir, qu'avec l'aquaculture, ils gagneraient mieux leur vie. Eux-mêmes vont rendre leurs filets petit à petit. C'est ce que le gouvernement veut faire, en consultation avec les pêcheurs. Les pêcheurs ne vont pas être forcés à rendre leurs sennes, comme certains ont voulu faire croire. On va le faire en consultation avec eux. On leur donne plus de compensation pour les encourager à rendre leurs filets.

Unlike what my good friend, the MP from Rodrigues on the other side of the House was saying, he is advocating short-term solutions; we are looking for long-term solutions. The gradual phasing out of net fishing – five or ten days, we are not talking of bad weather days!

Other measures include relocating of fishing effort by diverting fishermen from the heavily exploited lagoon to the outer lagoon areas around fish aggregating devices, that is, the FADs. Presently, FADs have been placed in 28 locations around the island, in conjunction with fishermen, to exploit pelagic fish. Fishermen regularly apprise my Ministry on the status of these FADs to carry out maintenance and repairs. Provision in the Budget for a 50% grant on the purchase of off lagoon *canot*, up to an amount of Rs200,000 per *canot*, will no doubt greatly help the fishers and stimulate food security, increase livelihood activities and economic growth.

Last but not the least, a Fisheries Management Plan for the shallow water, demersal fish species of Saya de Malha and Narareth banks, aiming at maximising catch through sustainable utilisation of the fishery resources, has been prepared by my Ministry with technical assistance from Norway, FAO and the World Bank. My Ministry will be implementing, in the first phase, two projects, namely development of an alternative mode of fishing on the banks, using collapsible traps, and a study for the genetics of the stocks to improve the management of the resources.

M. le président, avec ces études, on a pu découvrir qu'il y a des stocks de poissons qui n'ont jamais été pêchés dans nos eaux, par exemple les maquereaux ; en anglais on les appelle *mackerel*. Il y a à peu près 26,000 tonnes qu'on peut pêcher annuellement d'après l'étude; ce sont des poissons qui meurent de vieillesse. C'est maintenant qu'il y a des opérateurs qui veulent aller pêcher ces poissons-là. Donc, c'est à travers des études qu'on arrive à faire cela.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a vision of a competitive and sustainable fisheries sector which would create jobs and promote economic growth, while protecting and conserving marine resources focused on credibility, efficiency and result oriented. In a sense, it is our aim and, indeed, I believe in our responsibility to ensure that fishery resources are exploited under sustainable environmental economic and social conditions.

Mon ami, l'honorable Gungah, dans son discours, a parlé de pêcheurs qui veulent avoir un endroit pour réparer leurs bateaux dans le nord. Je suis heureux de lui dire qu'on va avoir une

réunion avec tous les *stakeholders*, les pêcheurs tout autour de Maurice pour identifier des sites - même avec le *Beach Authority*, le *Ministry of Housing and Lands* – qu'on pourrait allouer aux pêcheurs pour qu'ils puissent réparer leurs bateaux. On va le faire pour toute l'île Maurice, qu'il soit assuré de cela.

Ceci étant dit, M. le président, permettez-moi de dire quelques mots sur Rodrigues, sur Agalega et sur St. Brandon. Selon le député de Rodrigues de l'autre côté de la Chambre, on dirait que tout est bon, tout est bien dans le meilleur des mondes à Rodrigues. Mais son *body language* dit exactement le contraire, son *body language* le trahit, M. le président. A Rodrigues, en ce moment, de quoi parle-t-on? On parle de l'exode des Rodriguais vers Maurice, c'est du jamais vu ! Cela ne s'est jamais passé comme ça. Il y a eu des gens qui voyageaient entre Maurice et Rodrigues, mais on n'a jamais eu autant de familles Rodriguaises quittant Rodrigues pour venir à Maurice. Ce qui veut dire que quelque part la façon dont l'île est gérée - l'île étant autonome, les décisions sont prises à Rodrigues - quelque part, il y a un malaise, M. le président. Les Rodriguais n'en peuvent plus. Rodrigues, actuellement, c'est comme une marmite à pression où on a soudé, ou bouché le petit trou, cela peut exploser à n'importe quel moment. C'est cela Rodrigues aujourd'hui. Et pourtant, le gouvernement central donne des facilités à Rodrigues. Le Premier ministre veut combler le fossé qu'il y a entre Maurice et Rodrigues. On donne des facilités. C'est comme-ci pour toute la nation mauricienne le gouvernement a voulu garnir la table avec toutes sortes de victuailles. Donc, vous avez tout ce qu'il faut à manger. Mais il faut que chaque mauricien fasse l'effort pour venir vers cette table pour prendre ce dont il a besoin. Mais, à Rodrigues, alors que le gouvernement central a mis pas mal de choses à la disposition de Rodrigues, qu'est-ce que le gouvernement régional fait, M. le président ? Il faut dire les choses telles qu'elles sont et ne pas parler avec une langue de bois. Quand on voit les grands développements qui ont été enclenchés, les facilités que le gouvernement central a donné, c'est triste de voir que le gouvernement régional traîne les pieds. Quand le gouvernement central offre son aide tandis que le gouvernement régional lui envoie en retour une fin de non recevoir. Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire ? On n'a qu'à prendre quelques exemples, M. le président. Vous avez les réservoirs d'eau que j'avais demandés à mon collègue, le ministre Beebejaun, 400 réservoirs d'eau il y a plus de deux ans de cela. On avait lancé les appels d'offre. On avait commencé à les construire chez les familles les plus démunies. Le gouvernement régional a tout changé. Maintenant, on ne sait plus qui c'est qui construit ces réservoirs. Après deux ans, les gens

attendent toujours ces réservoirs. Ce n'est pas 400 qu'on aurait dû faire, après trois ans on aurait dû faire 1200. Ça c'est la vérité ! Ces familles pauvres attendent toujours.

Vous voulez un autre exemple. Mon collègue, l'honorable Dr. Jeetah voulait construire une université à Rodrigues. Le MR, quand il était au pouvoir a Rodrigues, il avait déjà offert le terrain, mais où en est-on aujourd'hui, M. le président ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Von-Mally: M. le président, ceux qui sont au pouvoir disent que cela ne forme pas partie de leurs priorités ! Voilà ! On n'a qu'à donner d'autres exemples. Il y a le câble optique, le port, l'aéroport, même pour l'aquaculture, qu'est-ce que le gouvernement régional fait ? Il traîne les pieds ! M. le président, avant, son *leader* qu'est-ce qu'il disait ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. François, you should not interrupt the hon. Minister.

Mr Von-Mally: Oui, je suis resté bien tranquille quand il a parlé. Quand il a dit toutes sortes de choses, je suis resté tranquille, j'ai encaissé. Maintenant, écoutez, parce que c'est en toute objectivité que je dis cela, c'est la vérité. N'est-ce pas ?

(Interruptions)

C'est vrai ça ! L'université où c'est, les réservoirs, etc. ?

M. le président, l'université, le câble optique, le port, l'aéroport. Avant, son *leader* qu'est-ce qu'il disait : "*mo demandé même, mauricien là pas donner*". Mais nous, nous sommes venus, tout ce que nous avons demandé, on l'a eu. Eux, ils les jettent par les fenêtres ! Maintenant qu'est-ce qu'ils vont dire : « les Rodriguais ont vu maintenant, les Rodriguais comprennent. » Ils ont tiré leurs conclusions ! Ce ne sont pas les Mauriciens qui ne donnent pas, ce sont eux qui sont incomptents. On leur donne, on a garni la table, ils sont invités au festin mais ils tournent le dos au festin. Qu'est-ce qu'ils vont dire maintenant ? Les Rodriguais ne sont plus dupes. *C'est above party politics.* Il n'est pas faut pas parce que Nicolas Von-Mally ou Christian Léopold a initié un projet qui va dans la bonne direction pour la population qu'il faut le rejeter à cause de la politique. Il y a des choses qui doivent être *above party politics.* Par

exemple, ce projet d'aquaculture, M. le président, ils disent : "l'aquaculture n'est pas bon pour l'environnement ". Mais quand vous voyez le nombre de personnes qui marchent dans le lagon, endommageant les coraux tous les jours à Rodrigues, est-ce que c'est bon pour l'environnement ? Au moins avec l'aquaculture on diminuerait cela ; avec l'aquaculture on offrirait une alternative aux pêcheurs. Il n'est pas dit, soit à Maurice ou à Rodrigues, qu'on va remplir le lagon de cages de poissons. Non ! On va mettre le nombre qu'il faut afin d'exploiter le lagon de façon optimale, il n'y aura pas de pollution, il n'y aura pas de pesticide qu'on va mettre dans ces cages-là. It will be only *organic food*. Par exemple, les 'cordonniers' qu'est-ce qu'on leur donne à manger ? On donne à manger un peu de nourriture concentrée. C'est du poisson, en fait...

(*Interruptions*)

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

Mr Von-Mally: Quelquefois...

(*Interruptions*)

...il faut bouger un peu pour ne pas avoir des torticolis, M. le président.

Quelquefois, on donne un peu de nourriture concentrée, on donne des algues, le goémon qui d'ordinaire, à certains moments de l'année viennent pourrir sur nos plages, mais avec l'aquaculture, comme cela se fait à Trou d'Eau Douce, à Grand Gaube, avant que cela ne pourrisse les pêcheurs, les collectent pour nourrir 'cordonniers', après avoir récolté les régimes de bananes, ils donnent des bananiers aussi aux 'cordonniers', ils donnent aussi des feuilles de papayers ! Mais de quelle pollution on parle ? En fait, on est en train d'ouvrir d'autres avenues pour aider les pêcheurs. Je dis on est en train de tendre la main. Il faut que toutes les autres îles de la République, Rodrigues surtout, prennent avantage de cela ! Il ne faut pas faire de la politique avec tout. Il y a des choses qui doivent être *above party politics*. Pourquoi on fait cela, M. le président ?

On fait cela pour aider les pêcheurs, pour les aider à sortir de la misère, pour qu'ils aient une alternative. Donc, j'espère que ceux qui sont au pouvoir à Rodrigues vont se ressaisir et cesser de faire de la politique politique. On peut se quereller, ce n'est pas un problème. Mais on doit continuer le développement du pays. Pour construire un pays, chacun doit apporter sa

pierre à l'édifice. Par exemple, on commence par mettre la base. On peut mettre des briques, mais l'autre qui arrive doit continuer à bâtir là-dessus. Mais si à chaque fois qu'on change de gouvernement, l'autre qui vient enlève tout. Il enlève la base, les briques et il recommence. On n'ira pas très loin, la construction prendra du retard. L'honorable membre de l'autre côté de la Chambre sait de quoi je parle !

Il y a des choses que vous voulez faire autrement? Ça va ! Mais il y a des développements qui ont été faits pour la population qu'il faut mettre *above party politics*. *We must think out of the box*. Il faut être avant-gardiste. La politique démagogique n'a jamais rien donné de bon.

(*Interruptions*)

Il faut qu'on ait le courage d'aller de l'avant et de faire ce qui est bien, M. le président. Par exemple, il parle de l'environnement. Savez-vous, M. le président, qu'à Rodrigues ils ont trouvé comme prétexte des choses les plus farfelues que j'ai jamais entendues. Ils ont osé couper une centaine des mahoganys centenaire, plus que centenaire, soi-disant pour avoir plus d'eau.

(*Interruptions*)

Ils coupent, ils vendent et ils achètent eux-mêmes. Il a dit qu'il faut aller à l'ICAC, l'affaire est devant l'ICAC. Donc, je ne vais pas aller plus loin là-dessus. Comme on a dénoncé cela, ils sont allés plus loin. Ils sont allés dans la réserve de Cascade Pigeon pour couper encore plus d'arbres.

M. le président, si on respecte vraiment l'environnement, ces grands arbres qui ont été plantés par nos grands-parents, ils auraient dû les respecter et commencer par reboiser les pentes qui sont déboisées. Par exemple, dans le sud de Rodrigues, on aurait dû commencer à reboiser ses pentes. Demain si vous voulez couper un mahogany ou deux, ça va mais après avoir planté beaucoup. Vous auriez reboisé les grandes superficies à Rodrigues. Ils ne font pas cela, ils coupent avant ! C'est scandaleux !

Je vais vous dire une chose, les gens de leur propre parti, des gens qui sont haut placés je leur ai dit : vous n'auriez pas pu arrêter ce massacre ? » Savez-vous ce qu'ils m'ont dit tout bas? « Vous savez à l'école on a appris qu'il faut reboiser pour qu'il y ait de l'eau et de la pluie, mais je ne comprends pas pourquoi ils ont fait ça. » Je l'aurai dit : « Mais alors, vous restez

tranquille ! » On dirait qu'à Rodrigues, dans ce gouvernement régional qui dirige l'île, chacun fait ce qu'il veut. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'ils ont un seul membre en majorité. Donc, ayant peur de perdre cette majorité, ils avalent les couleuvres, les boas, les cabris et des taureaux et même des mahoganys.

(Interruptions)

Voilà, tout ! C'est ce qu'ils font !

(Interruptions)

Les mahoganys aussi ils avalent. Ils avalent tout. C'est bon, c'est un nettoyage mais...

(Interruptions)

To parti ine cassé comié fois li ! Combien membres to parti finn quitter fine aller ?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, address the Chair! And I will remind hon. François that he cannot...

(Interruptions)

Mr Von-Mally: I would just like to ask him, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to which party he belongs. I wonder whether he is still in this party!

(Interruptions)

L'avenir nous le dira ! Il y a beaucoup avant lui qui ont été éjectés. Il est sur un siège éjectable, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, pour terminer, je voudrais dire deux mots sur Agaléga. Je suis heureux qu'à Agaléga le gouvernement ait mis R 750 m. pour l'agrandissement et la réfection de la piste d'atterrissement et pour l'agrandissement du port. Cela est une bonne chose. Tôt l'année prochaine, je pense aller rendre visite aux habitants d'Agaléga et à St Brandon pour voir comment sont les pêcheurs et ce qu'ils font. En tant que ministre de la Pêche, je me ferais un plaisir d'aller les rendre visite afin de les aider.

M. le président, pour conclure, je dirais que le gouvernement a bien garni la table. Il faut que chaque mauricien vienne vers cette table et prenne ce dont il a besoin. Le gouvernement est comme cela. Nous sommes dans une démocratie. Si vous voulez du poisson, il y en a. Chacun doit prendre avantage des facilités offertes.

Je voudrais terminer sur une citation de Paulo Coelho. Nous avons un rêve de faire de ce pays un pays où il fait de plus en plus bon vivre. Paulo Coelho a dit –

“There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.”

Avec cela, je vous remercie, M. le président.

(7.16 p.m.)

Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka):

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is true to say that the Budget is an exercise which deals with Government expenditure, Government revenue and its fiscal policy and yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it remains one of the most important events for the population. It gives, evidently, the overall picture of the financial performance of the Government and also the plans of the Government for the coming years. No doubt, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, every year the exercise draws the attention of the people of the country and every citizen of a nation from the common man to the politician who is eager to learn about the Budget and how it would impact on his daily life and his living standard.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether we agree or not, every year this exercise brings along with it a certain number of apprehensions, but also, it raises hopes and expectations. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian people seems to have given up its hopes and expectations as well as its aspirations, for, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, year after year there has been a constant decline in the socioeconomic state of the people. This Budget's opening sentence, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is –

“Building a better Mauritius. Creating the next wave of prosperity.”

M. le président, cette introduction est assez claire et moi je note aussi des sous-entendus. Lisons entre les lignes. D'abord, il semblerait qu'il y a eu une précédente vague de prospérité et

qu'on est en train de se préparer maintenant pour une seconde, une prochaine vague de prospérité pour une île Maurice meilleure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first question that arises in the mind of the citizen is: a wave of prosperity for whom? Is it for the same people who benefited from the first one? *M. le président, la population fait face à d'énormes difficultés, passe par des moments extrêmement pénibles. Nous savons que la crise économique n'arrange pas les choses pour la population mauricienne.* A wave of prosperity certainly not what it has been experiencing since 2005. And to add insult to injury, the population knows very well who are those who are enjoying the gains of the first wave of prosperity and who will be – who are right now – rubbing their hands, awaiting the next harvest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a well-known fact that there is, in Mauritius, a small clan of people close to the *puissant maître* of the day who are always reaping all the gains - whatever it may be - all the gains of the wave of prosperity that has seemingly just passed away.

Yesterday only, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister, in an answer to a PQ, stated that the operators who were in the old airport terminal have become the new tenants of the new terminal. We have no problem with this. Yet, the new terminal is no doubt of a larger surface area and it seems to be fair to allow the former occupants to continue to operate in the new terminal and there is absolutely no reason why the additional space, the extra space, could not be allocated to new operators.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a notion that only the small clan close to the Labour Party are those who are reaping all the advantages in this island, and when we talk about this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot help, but think about certain very important projects and these projects quickly come to our mind. Let me name, but a few, some of which were already mentioned by the former Opposition intervenier; the Betamax, the Beta Oil, the Sarako, are but a few, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2005 to date, we have been noting a rise in poverty and the development of a new notion; that of absolute poverty. Absolute poverty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is said to reflect the living conditions of families living with an income below the minimum threshold. An income below what we call the poverty intervention line which is set at a monthly

family income of Rs6,200, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And, in spite of the fact that Government claims that it has spent billions in poverty alleviation programmes since 2005, we find it extremely shocking that the hon. Minister for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment finds it impossible to inform the House how many of the 6,000 families identified as those living in absolute poverty in 2006 have managed to be relieved in 2013.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will recall how the hon. Minister for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment stated in this very House that he is not in a position to say how many people he has been able to rescue, he has been able to relieve, he has been able to remove from this poverty net, stating that: ‘poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, is an ongoing process’. This was his sole answer to all the queries that we made in this Assembly; ‘It’s ongoing!’.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we consider that in the Budget one of the main objectives of his Ministry is poverty alleviation and the fact that the help that is being given to the people cannot be monitored by him is really revealing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and this tells us a lot about how poverty alleviation is being carried out in our country. *Comment est-ce que vous pensez qu'on va pouvoir gagner ce combat?*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have also noted - it was another shock that in 2013, in spite of the immense amount of money spent in this programme, instead of regressing, the number of people in absolute poverty is, in fact, rising and that today, more than 12,000 families - to repeat what the hon. Minister himself mentioned in the House - are now in absolute poverty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will recall that to a question set by hon. Bodha to the hon. Minister for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment asking him whether according to the statistics presented by this Government, the number of people in this absolute poverty net has increased to 11,000 and the hon. Minister replied, *offusqué comme tout, M. le président, disant* - ‘Et vous là, totally wrong! Totally wrong! He went through his file, took out a paper, and stood proudly in the House stating that the number is 12,000 something, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is how we are combating poverty in our island!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my own Constituency - which happens also to be the Constituency of the hon. Minister - people are treated in the most inconsiderate manner. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I met, a few weeks back, an old lady who lives alone, who has got no one

to care for her, who has no place to live in and who was given authorisation by a relative of hers to get a small unit from the Empowerment Fund to be set up in his yard. A request was made to the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment for, obviously, wooden poles, corrugated iron sheets, and they were provided. I am happy to say that the Ministry did provide corrugated iron sheets and wooden poles to that lady, but on the next day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they came and took away the corrugated iron sheets as well as the wooden poles, and when the lady queried: what was the matter, what happened? She was told: you wait, we are going to bring it back. Six months have elapsed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no sign of wooden poles or corrugated iron sheets!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask what is the problem? What happened? Especially, when we are already aware that a massive fraud was carried out a few years back on these very iron sheets and wooden poles. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I find it really very, very hard to accept.

Now, we have another problem: the distribution of school materials, uniforms, shoes etc., etc. I have been told by people that this is not provided to all the deserving people. Some of them do get, but others do not because there is another criterion that is taken into account. You have to be on the right side. *'Zot dire guete figir et guete coulère. Si li pas rouge li pas passer!* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been told.

(Interruptions)

I am not sure whether it is right, I hope the hon. Minister will go and find out. This is what has been reported to us and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it would be preferable to offer these materials through the schools and not with the MBC cameras on!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could some considerations be given to the feelings of these people, these beneficiaries, especially when we are considering school going children? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that we have to review these practices. When we want to help those who are at the lowest rungs of the social ladder, the neediest of the needy, we should do so with compassion and consideration and one should not use these situations for self gratification or self glorification.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Household Budget Survey of 2012, this survey, the results of the 2012 survey showed that income inequality has increased between 2006 and 2012. The gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widening. The gap between the haves and have nots is becoming really a cause of great concern as it appears that the Governmental measures that have been taken are not managing to alleviate the problems of the poor and what is more, the rich are progressing at a very high rate, especially, those who are in the clan are progressing at a very high rate and they are leaving behind the poorest segment of the population. The proportion of poor households living below the relative poverty line has risen to about 10%, to be more precise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by 9.8%. The number of poor households has increased in 2012 to 33,800 and this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, means that some 122,400 persons are living below the poverty line. These are not figures that I have invented. I have not taken them from the newspapers, I have taken them from the Household Budget Survey 2012, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is something that I have found very, very strange. I heard the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development in his Budget Speech stating that today there are about 20,000 people benefitting from income support. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid, this is totally erroneous and I am sure that hon. Mrs Bappoo, who is the Minister of Social Security, will agree, because on page 331 of the Budget Estimates, it is clearly written, black on white, that there are 107,000 persons benefiting from the income support. And when we make a simule calculation, *107,000 personnes, M. le président, touchant R 257 par mois par personne, cela m'apporte un chiffre d'environ R 352 millions. Ce qui veut dire que* these people are already benefitting from the income support and it is written in the Budget Estimates. However, on page 340 of the same Budget Estimates, we find a label 'New Income Support'; item, zero for 2013 and Rs100 m. for 2014. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is very, very strange.

(Interruptions)

Anyway, it is an income support. This is stated on page 331 of the Budget Estimates.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, please address the Chair!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In the Budget Estimates it is clearly stated that under the title 'Achievements', there are 107,000 persons benefitting from Income Support - I have not

invented it, it is on paper. I am sure that hon. Members of the House will recall that hon. Pravind Jugnauth had doubled this amount and had brought it to 246 per person, and from that time till now, the number has increased to 107,000 persons. Now, when we go back to the Household Survey, it is clear that the number mentioned in the household survey is 122,800 persons. Now, I understand why when I meet people *sur le terrain, M. le président, ils viennent me dire qu'ils ne touchent pas le* Income Support. *Et quand on regarde les conditions dans lesquelles ces gens-là vivent, bien sûr,* they are eligible and they are qualified for it. I do understand that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is now providing another Rs100 m. because he has to cater for these people who are not befitting from it right now. Is this a colourable device used by Government to make people believe that there are only 20,000 people in this island benefitting from social aid or income support? Now, this has to be cleared, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I have also noted that there is what we call ‘the Child Support Scheme’. From the Budget speech, it is clear that there are 6,300 children benefitting from this project. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will ask a question: how were these children selected? Because there are many, many people whom I have come across, who clearly qualify for this allocation but not are deriving it. There are some who told me that they went to look for it and they were told that the Fund is over, to come back again. Some of them have gone again and again to the office, but in vain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is why I keep on asking myself: how are we proceeding? How are we managing this?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, I will go back to the same survey. We find that there are, today, 33,800 families who are living below the poverty intervention line. I find this very, very hard to accept, when we know that a lot of money is available. A lot of money is placed in several Ministries; Ministry of Social Security is one, which is doing its job and there is also the Ministry of Social Integration. We know that there is a large amount of money in the CSR Fund. Then, how and why are we not reaching these poor people? Why can't we support them? Why can't we help them? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are so many children living with single parents, whose monthly salary are less than Rs6,200, who, although they are living in very dire conditions are not benefitting from all these schemes, especially when they are eligible and they qualify for it. I have met - as I have told you earlier - mothers, single parent families living in very precarious states and who are eligible, but are not deriving benefits from the scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to talk about the examination fees, the subsidy for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations, which were again re-introduced in 2010 by hon. Pravind Jugnauth when he was the Minister of Finance. It is, indeed, a very worthy scheme. Yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I was at the Ministry of Social Security I received complaints from parents stating that they have to call at the Social Security Offices several times before the formalities get done. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at that time, we had taken the decision to review the system, to review the way the procedures are carried out to ensure that parents do not have to call at the office several times. We were thinking of making them come once, make their application, the Social Security Officers would have done their surveys and then the social security officers were to contact the MES and the colleges to finalise the payment. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that this should have been carried out and I feel sorry that these measures were not taken, because it is not for the benefit of the initiator of the project, but for the benefit of the people at the other end.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is true that, as far as possible, we should render the life of our elders enjoyable and easygoing. I had, during my short tenure of office, with the help and cooperation of hon. Dr. Kasenally, identified and obtained for the Ministry of Social Security a plot of land at Pointe aux Piments to set up the third recreational centre for the elderly. We had also started the architectural plans and designs both for Pointe aux Piments and even - although the decision was not finalised yet - the designs were already being processed for the Riambel Recreational Centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am glad that the hon. Minister is proceeding with the Point aux Piments Recreational Centre. But, at the same time, I feel sad because along with this project there was another one in Quartier Militaire, a Day Care Centre for elderly, where I had very quickly - again, with the help of hon. Aimée - obtained two acres of land from the District Council of Moka/Flacq to set up the centre. We had already started some clearing of the wooden areas in that area very quickly. But as soon as I left the Ministry, it seems that the project has also left the Ministry along with me and there is no sign of this centre there. I wonder why!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say - as I have said earlier - that I am glad that the Pointe aux Piments Recreational Centre is being done; but again, I feel very sad for the one which was to be set up in Quartier Militaire.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is another thing which has really shocked me. It is the idea that the Domiciliary Visits to our elders, who are being offered in an optional way, that is, it is now for the families to decide whether they want the Doctors to visit their elderly who is above 90 or whether they would rather have Rs500 as an extra in their pension. But as hon. Dr. S. Boolell had stated the other day, we know that - very often - the elderly suffer from a lot of ill-treatment by their relatives, unfortunately. It is not the choice of the elderly as to whether she or he would like to have a visit of the Doctor at home or whether they would rather have the Rs500. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not agree at all with this option, because, as the hon. Minister said, it is optional. It will not always be in the benefit of the elderly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Public Accounts Committee has, on several occasions, drawn the attention of the officers of the Ministry on the great discrepancy which exists in the payment to doctors for domiciliary visits and the one having the highest sum of money for these visits can earn up to Rs1.6 m. per year and that too, these are officers who come on sessional basis while the one getting the least amount can touch around Rs250,000 per year. Now, this discrepancy had been noted long before and at that time I was in office, we had decided to change the procedures and this had received the Cabinet's approval. We were about to recruit a number of Doctors, who would have been given certain zones, and the domiciliary visits would have been equally distributed among these doctors and we were about to start. When I left the Ministry, the advertisement was to come on the papers. This was not done, and today we hear, through the audit report, that there are millions of rupees, which have been spent, which have been paid to Doctors for visits scheduled to patients who are deceased, who are dead, who are no longer there, and payments have been effected. And there have been recommendations made that the people planning the domiciliary visits should not be the people who will eventually be approving the payment for these visits, and I hope that the Ministry will take the required measures to prevent such things from happening again.

The new and effective mechanism that was to be put in place in 2010 has not been done and, therefore, today we can see that problems are still arising. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, paragraph 429 of the Budget, states that –

“Allowances are provided to children with severe disabilities (...) up to 15 years old.”

And this will be extended now till the age of 18 years. I would like to ask a question to the Minister. Handicapped children below the age of 15 years receive an allocation as the hon. Minister herself mentioned, when the parents' income within a year does not exceed a certain ceiling, but once a child is 15 years old, the child becomes eligible for the invalidity pension which is far more *conséquent*; *c'est un montant supérieur à l'allocation qu'on remet à ces enfants avant l'âge de 15 ans. Alors au lieu d'être une avancée, c'est un pas en arrière, M. le président. Parce que* the invalidity pension is higher in amount than the allocation given. Therefore, what we are doing, we are pushing away the date for the obtention of the allocation by three years, from 15 years to 18 years. This is why I would expect the hon. Minister of Finance to answer back at the time of the summing up.

(*Interruptions*)

I have been listening to you quietly, Madam. I hope that I will be able to carry on with my speech.

(*Interruptions*)

That's why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some people have rightly described the budget as a *trompe l'oeil*. You tell people: we are coming, we are helping you, we are giving you allocations and we are extending the time for you to receive this allocation from 15 to 18 years. And yet you are delaying the *obtention* of the invalidity pension. The hon. Minister herself stated, you cannot get all the allocations earlier in her speech. She said that you can get one and then you won't get the other one. Fine! I agree! But then we have to be clear and if it is not clear in the Budget, it should have been cleared by the Minister of Finance during his Budget speech. *Comme je vous ai dit, pour moi, valeur du jour, cela va être un pas en arrière.*

As for the employment of disabled persons, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the legislation was amended recently in Parliament and enterprises, having a certain number of employees, should

get themselves registered at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board. The Minister has said that the number has increased. Fine! I am happy! I am glad! This was the aim because we started working on the legislation. But I would like to know as at date how many of the companies have got themselves registered; how many have recruited employees with disabilities, and if they have not done so, how many have been sanctioned for not having got themselves registered at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister rightly stated that when we talk about children, may they be handicapped or not, they should have their rights, and they should not be deprived of their rights. And when you talk about the rights of these children, it is not only right to education; it is not only right to employment, etc, but it is also right to leisure. And I would make an appeal to the Minister and to the Minister of Education and Human Resources as well to ensure that children with handicaps, whether they are at school or outside school be given the opportunity to tap their talents and aptitudes, music, art, theatre, because I have seen many of them performing beautifully, but they should be given this opportunity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have gone through all that. I know that at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, we have some people who have been trained to make the wheelchairs for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, but we have to ensure that we empower them so that they go out and they set up their own business. We should not keep them at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board for a lifetime and give them a small amount and make them happy with this instead of empowering them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I end my intervention, and I do not say a few words on the education sector, I will fail in my duty. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a sector which I have at heart.

(Interruptions)

I will follow the advice of the Minister so that I can go through that bit properly; yes the doctor and I will take my water.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must tell you that I was surprised when I heard the hon. Minister of Education's intervention on the Budget, and especially when I heard him talking about the 9-year schooling project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to me sincerely I have heard the hon. Minister talk for a certain number of years now. He has always been talking with conviction about the education sector, but when he talked about the 9-year schooling, to me, I felt that there was a lack of conviction in his *exposé*. I will tell you why. Firstly, the Minister talked about a proposal of a budget. This is very revealing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He even stated that since it is in the Budget, it becomes a Government decision. I will, with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, go to his intervention. Just to support what I am trying to say and maybe to let him reflect on that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me take it this way. The Minister stated that the 9-year schooling should be a part of the development agenda and he went on stating –

« On est en train de parler de l'après 2015. C'est une proposition du Commonwealth en bonne position. Je dois ajouter que Maurice est aussi membre de la Francophonie et qu'il a contacté les experts d'ailleurs pour venir en parler. »

Mais il va plus loin. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to him and I quote -

*“The House will appreciate that the proposal for the 9-year schooling, announced in the Budget Speech is a valid and school friendly measure and should, however, be subject to intense discussions. The budget has caused the *déclic* for these discussions. *Étant donné que c'est dans le budget, ça veut dire que c'est une proposition gouvernementale. Maintenant, il faut travailler pour le faire devenir une réalité.* »*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for me, it is as if the hon. Minister is disowning this project. *Ce n'est pas son projet. C'est une proposition du budget. De toutes les façons, nous sommes en train de parler de l'après 2015. M. le président, pour moi, c'est un aveu de taille.* The hon. Minister is disowning the project, he has no intention to implement the project. In an answer to a PQ B/655 with regard to the abolition of CPE, he stated that his Ministry has made no policy statement of the phasing out of the CPE in its present form. The hon. Minister stated further that he had carried out a national consultative forum, in December 2011, for the review of the CPE. He even went on to say that a full-fledged national forum was held in December 2012 and in another PQ

B/26, he again stated that there are other discussions being carried out. *Mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'en octobre 2013, il y a eu des assises de l'éducation* and still nothing came out with regard to the CPE examinations. This was denounced by both the trade unionists, Mr Seegum as well as Mr Tengur.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Members of the Parliament will recall that even Mr Gokhool had, already in 2006, admitted that in his quality curriculum for strategy for reform, reference was made to the abolition of CPE and he stated that he expected it to be done by 2010 or so. *M. le président, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, des assizes. Rien!* How are we going to go about it! I have my doubt, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I feel, unlike other Ministries, unlike other projects put in the Budget, normally - *je dis bien normally* - different Ministries send their propositions, look for financing/funding from the Ministry of Finance and, obviously, the project starts from the Ministry and then goes to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance just gives the funding. But for this particular project, I have the feeling that it is not coming from the Ministry of Education, it is being proposed to the Ministry of Education and this explains the lack of conviction that has been noted in the Minister's delivery.

But then, there are two questions that I would like to ask: how would the students move from the primary level to the secondary level? How would they move from the sixth to the seventh class? I learned through a press article that students will be moving along with their friends to the same institution. I also learned again from the press that the examination results would not be used in the selection or admission of students in the secondary institutions. Parents will have no say in the choice of their institutions. Am I right? It is according to the press report.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, address the Chair, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Let me ask the question. Let us take zone 3, let us take Curepipe...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: There are five boys' colleges. The Royal College of Curepipe, the Saint Joseph College, Mauritius College Boys Department, Curepipe College, Imperial College.

(Interruptions)

I am talking about boys' schools. How will it be determined to which school a student will be admitted to? On which basis will the transfer be made because we have been told that the exams results are not important? Will it then be a fair and transparent procedure? I have heard that, just like in primary section, there will be an automatic promotion from 6 to 7, 7 to 8 and 8 to 9.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are we not aware that the problem in the primary sector is that sometimes students end up in the forth standard, fifth standard and fail to write their names properly and fail to read a comprehension properly, and still assessment is being made in these schools and they are being promoted – automatic promotion. Are we not extending this problem up till the 9th year? The question is: why should we not come forward with a proper remedial education scheme just like it is the case in Seychelles where children from preprimary sector itself are identified and given the proper support? *Encadrez les dès le départ, M. le président*, instead of waiting for failure at CPE. I heard the hon. Minister state that he feels very proud that he has set up a Resit Examination for CPE. *M. le président, après la mort la tisane!* Why should we wait for the students to fail and provide him or her with a resit opportunity rather than take care of the students, give the students the support required for success from the very beginning?

(Interruptions)

Yes, we must do both, but the more important thing is to provide...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:...the remedial education. J'ai entendu avec stupeur, je le disais, M. le ministre...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no. Address the Chair, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: *J'ai entendu avec stupeur le ministre en train de se féliciter pour la mise en place du Resit de la CPE. Je viens de dire cela, je passerais là-dessus. Je ne dis pas que je ne suis pas d'accord...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry! I don't want hon. Members to indulge in the conversation. She is making an intervention and the intervention should be addressed to the Chair. Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if it is...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if it is a good thing to provide a resit opportunity, we should not forget that proper remedial education, *l'encadrement doit se faire - je ne dirais pas de la pré primaire - dès la primaire. C'est important, parce que si nous avons eu des problèmes avec la CPE, c'est parce qu'il n'y a pas eu de soutien et de support correct, un encadrement correct dans le passé.*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, how much more time will you take to round off your intervention?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will wind up very quickly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Alors, je disais qu'il fallait s'assurer qu'il y ait un *proper remedial scheme* et qu'on ne devait pas se lancer dans l'automatic promotion directement, sans vraiment voir comment encadrer ces élèves. Ce qui me tracasse, M. le président, c'est que cette fois-ci, *we are doing away with the prevocational group totally. We are seeing that all the students, may they pass or not, will enter the 7th, 8th and 9th class.* C'est comme-ci encore une fois, ce n'est qu'à la fin de la neuvième après le National Exam, qu'on va se soucier de que faire des élèves qui n'ont pas pu rester dans le *mainstream*. Alors, cela me tracasse un peu et cela me chagrine aussi.

Je voudrais aussi poser une question : qu'en est-il de la continuité de l'Etat ? Vous allez vous rappeler, M. le président, qu'en 2000, nous sommes venus avec un projet éducatif, nous sommes arrivés à apporter une réforme, il y a eu la régionalisation, il y a eu du progrès. Ensuite, en 2005, avec l'arrivée du ministre Gokhool, on a tout cassé. On est en train de prendre nos enfants, pour quoi ? Des cobayes ! Parce qu'à ce moment-là, vous savez ce qu'on a fait ? On a cassé la régionalisation, on est arrivé avec une compétition encore plus atroce, avec les 5A+. Après les 5A+, on est venu installer...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo !

(*Interruptions*)

No, no, allow the hon. Member to intervene without interruption!

(*Interruptions*)

Please, remain silent, hon. Obeegadoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Mrs Labelle !

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Après 2005, M. le président, ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: No, it applies to everyone. Allow the hon. Lady to intervene without interruption!

(*Interruptions*)

I want some order in the House now! Yes, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: M. le président, en 2005 on a réinstauré la compétition atroce et féroce, on a relancé nos enfants dans une compétition terrible.

(*Interruptions*)

On va parler des surdoués après. Allons voir ce qui s'est passé.

La compétition a continué. On est venu avec un nouveau *scheme*, on a tout changé, puis, *suddenly* mi-mandat du gouvernement Travailliste on est venu dire que cette compétition n'est pas correcte et *we are going to phase out the CPE*. Ça c'est le ministre Gokhool avec son document: *Strategy for Reform* ! Il est venu dire que "we will not have the CPE. » *Fine!* Mais ces enfants sont maintenant dans un autre état d'âme. Fini!

(*Interruptions*)

Fini CPE! Fini *pre-vocational*. Maintenant on vient toute la bande ensemble 'monter nous aller', tout le monde va monter au secondaire!

(*Interruptions*)

Nine-year schooling. Mais seulement pas de soutien ni d'encouragement encore.

Maintenant pour les surdoués, combien d'enfants chez nous ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Dr. Bunwaree!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Combien d'élèves ont eu cinq A+ ...

(*Interruptions*)

...et je suis d'accord que cinq A+ sont de très bon résultats et ce sont de bons élèves. Mais est-ce que nous pouvons vraiment les appeler des surdoués ? Est-ce qu'il y a une logique en disant qu'un enfant de la sixième qui est un enfant de dix ans, qui a bien fait son travail et qui a eu des résultats corrects est un enfant surdoué ? *We have to give the student a proper self-esteem. We have to make the student happy with what he has done. But, there is a danger in calling that student a surdoué ...*

(*Interruptions*)

I am a teacher and I know que les surdoués de la Forme I ne sont pas les surdoués quand ils arrivent en Forme III ou Forme IV. Il y a d'autres élèves qui montent et qui font mieux que ces élèves là...

(*Interruptions*)

Bien sûr *you have a few all-rounders who do very well...*

(*Interruptions*)

Mais il faut faire attention. On a peut être cinq ou six, une dizaine ou une centaine de surdoués, mais nous avons 16000 élèves qui composent la CPE. N'est-ce pas ? Il nous faut voir l'ensemble. Il nous faut nous assurer que chaque enfant ait la place qu'il mérite.

M. le président, comme je vous ai dit après le sabotage de la réforme de l'éducation mise en place par le gouvernement MSM/MMM on est arrivé à tout changer, à tout chambouler et maintenant nous sommes arrivés à un autre stade. Plus de CPE, plus de compétition, sélection sans résultat, *nine-year schooling, automatic promotion and what not!*

M. le président,...

(*Interruptions*)

Là je voudrais faire un appel au ministre de l'Education. Il parle de doubler les allocations aux écoles spécialisées. C'est certainement une bonne chose - je ne dirais pas non. Mais ne faudrait-il pas maintenant contempler la mise en place d'un système éducatif complet ? Est-ce qu'on ne devrait pas envisager maintenant la provision de l'éducation à tous nos enfants ? Les *Special Needs Schools* c'est très bien, on les accueille. Mais il nous faut nous assurer que chaque enfant mauricien a droit à l'éducation, que ce soit un enfant normal ou un enfant avec un handicap. Il est temps que l'Etat prenne en charge l'éducation complète de chaque enfant, que ce soit un enfant complètement correct ou un enfant avec un handicap.

M. le président,...

(*Interruptions*)

Pas seulement l'APEIM mais il y a d'autres écoles...

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

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Il y a l'APEIM et d'autres écoles qui s'occupent de ces enfants. Je ne parle pas que de l'APEIM mais je voudrais parler de toutes les écoles et tous les ONG qui font ce travail. Mais là je voudrais dire une chose, si le Bureau de l'Education Catholique s'est présenté comme un groupe qui voudrait apporter leur soutien à ces enfants dans leurs écoles, les RCA, pourquoi est-ce que l'Etat ne peut pas prendre la relève pour les autres enfants dans nos institutions scolaires publiques ?

(*Interruptions*)

Mais je parle de l'éducation complète de l'enfant. Tout! Prendre la charge! Il est temps je crois qu'on fasse cela. L'honorable Madame Bappoo vient de dire que nous avons signé les conventions, il est temps que maintenant - avec des réserves bien sûr - nous faisons l'effort que nous devons faire pour ces enfants.

M. le président, on parle aussi du transport gratuit pour les enfants handicapés. Mais là il faut que je fasse une clarification...

The Deputy Speaker: How much more time the hon. Member will take?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Cinq minutes.

(*Interruptions*)

...une clarification...

(*Interruptions*)

Quand on parle de transport gratuit, ce n'est pas l'autobus mais un enfant qui a un handicap sévère qui...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: ... doit être transporté à l'école, devrait avoir un autre soutien pour le transport en termes de *school vans*, une aide un peu plus prononcée pour ces enfants. M. le président, tout cela c'est afin d'assurer que *the right to education be a right for all our children irrespective of whether they have a disability or not*.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Dr. Bunwaree and hon. Mrs Labelle, no cross talking please. Allow the hon. lady to round off her intervention uninterrupted!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: M. le président...

(Interruptions)

J'ai fait un appel et j'espère que cela tombe sur les oreilles ouvertes.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je passerais deux minutes sur le secteur tertiaire. M. le président...

(Interruptions)

C'est un chaos total! The Eastern Institute for Learning and Management saga has left the whole education sector in a trauma. Really, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I keep wondering why did not the owner of this University go through the correct procedure? Undoubtedly he would have received the support of his close relative responsible for the Ministry! But, you know what, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? This is the arrogance that is associated with people in this Party.

C'est nu dimoun, gouvernement dans nu lamain nu faire sa ki nu le.

That is why the EIILM University has had to go through this...

(Interruptions)

And, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

What is more disheartening is that instead of taking care of our students of the poor people who send their children to this institution, the Government has been throughout giving a helping hand to this institution, allowing it to advertise and to call in more students even though, as far back as 2007 in a PNQ addressed by hon. Bodha to the Minister of Education it was clear at that very time that it is an illegally established institution, that the certificate from the very start is not recognized. And I was shocked last week when hon. Minister Dr. Jeetah stated that the University had signed the Memorandum of Cooperation with EIILM Sikkim in 2012! When

certificates were issued, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far back as 2010! Is not this a horror? Horrendous, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

It is a blatant case of....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo no comment!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is a blatant case of *pouvoir dans nu la main nu fair seki nu le*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And this certainly makes us believe that the interest of our students and of our children is not the priority of the Minister in charge of the Tertiary sector.

I would like to address another issue on the same thing. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, EIILM University is not in the same state as the other universities. Let me put it very clearly. Because EIILM Mauritius had opened its doors in Mauritius even before *la maison mère* EIILM Sikkim had opened its own doors in India! This is not the case with the other universities.

Et aujourd’hui qu’est ce que nous sommes en train de faire? On a dépêché le directeur de *University Grants Commission (UGC)* à Maurice, on est en train de faire de la pression. On va noyer le poisson, M. le président ! On va mettre EIILM ensemble avec ces autres universités et on va faire de la pression pour que, pas les élèves mais que l’institut soit réinstauré.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what we call proper white washing *et cela* with bio enzymes included in the white wash powder!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tell you one thing, I have heard hon. Members on the other side of the House make their speeches and I would like to address a few issues. I heard hon. Minister Faugoo talking about hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee stating that she did nothing, she has no bright ideas, nothing to do with agriculture, but she only had one bright idea making reference to a case when she was Minister of Health. We all know what he was pointing out at. But, I

would like him to record that this brilliant idea did not come from hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, but instead from his hon. friend sitting very close to him, hon. Dr. Jeetah! This is one thing.

Now let me come to hon. Mrs Martin...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Martin...

(Interruptions)

I will be very quick. I will be very quick.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Martin has been stating that hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee has done nothing good and that the only thing good that she did was Med Point and that she did not even talk about her Ministry, that she has been talking about other issues, she is not good enough!

Let me tell hon. Mrs Martin that the population still recalls her contribution at the Ministry of Health; may it be for the taking of blood early in the morning at 7.00 a.m. for the elderly, may it be for timetable, the timing of the appointments at the hospitals - I will not go into the details - we all know what is her worth.

But, let me come to hon. Mrs Martin. Hon. Mrs Martin has been talking about hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, but could she not recall what she did at Foyer Namasté? Has she forgotten what she had stated in this very Assembly, stating that the children should be taken out of the Foyer Namasté and carried to the Director's or Manager's house, where they would learn more than what they can learn between the four walls of a classroom? Has she forgotten this? And still, and she has the guts of talking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in spite of all the chaotic situation of her Ministry! Even the Ombudsperson for Children had to take her to task. Even the Ombudsperson for Children had to say that the Child Development Unit is doing nothing worthwhile. I will not go any further. I won't talk any further about her.

(Interruptions)

But, let me now come to hon. Mrs Bappoo.

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Mrs Bappo stated...

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:...that the Opposition keeps on talking about remake and remake, and she has been talking about the Leader of the remake. Has she forgotten the thirteen years she sat in a Cabinet with the same Leader of the remake? Has she forgotten she was part of it? And, today, she has just confirmed that the remake remains a *cauchemar*, not only to her, but to all the hon. Members of the Government!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, she also mentioned that hon. Roopun had stated...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Minister stated that hon. Roopun had talked about poor leadership, weak leadership. I will just ask her to see what is happening on that side of the House! What happened to hon. Mrs Martin, what hon. Mrs Perraud and hon. Ms Anquetil had to say, and what type of chaos is going on, on that side, and she talks about leadership!

(*Interruptions*)

I will ask her finally...

(*Interruptions*)

I will ask her finally, what type of leadership was there in the RPR party that she led.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:...political party vanished, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? With this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am done.

Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the sitting for...

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Order! Order, please!

I suspend the sitting for one hour and fifteen minutes!

At 8.14 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.34 with the Deputy Speaker in Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Guimbeau, please!

Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, je voudrais commencer par exprimer ma satisfaction sur certains points annoncés lors de la lecture du budget par le ministre des Finances, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval et saluer le retour du Leader de l'opposition, l'honorable Paul Bérenger, qui a retrouvé son siège parmi nous au sein de l'hémicycle.

Je prends note des bonnes intentions annoncées par l'honorable ministre des Finances, M. le président, mais je voudrais tout de même souligner que *actions speak louder than words*, et qu'on est jugé sur nos actions. La balle est donc dans le camp de l'honorable ministre des Finances, aujourd'hui.

I would like to start by quoting the hon. Minister of Finance. Budget 2014 is about

“Creating the next wave of prosperity to Build a Better Mauritius. We are particularly in tune with the expectations of the less fortunate and most vulnerable. There are still families living in absolute poverty. Government policy is to ensure that all our citizens have a house that provides decent living conditions.”

So, I take good note of what has been said here.

La vision est bonne, et je salue, dans ce budget, l'effort de l'honorable ministre concernant le problème du logement à Maurice à travers le *National Home Ownership Programme*. Comme je le dis toujours, M. le président, tout comme la terre est le berceau de l'humanité, une maison, aussi modeste soit-elle, est le berceau de la famille. Une maison c'est sacrée, d'où l'engagement du MMSD pour une 'Maison à tous les Mauriciens, Sans Distinction' ; MMSD.

(Interruptions)

As we all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shelter is one of humanity's most basic needs. Home ownership is also one of the major aspirations of an individual, and entails a big emotional commitment. For many persons, owning a home is a significant milestone in one's life, symbolic of independence, and for the youth, the coming of age into adulthood. Therefore, affordable and quality housing is critical to improving a country's standard of living. As the hon. Minister so rightly pointed out, there are many middle income families earning up to Rs50,000 per month, but cannot afford to have a home of their own because of financial constraint. With the new Housing Empowerment Scheme, the Government is reducing the downpayment and the cost of a house unit.

Toutefois, M. le président, ce sont toujours des prêts impliquant des intérêts, des documents dans un langage incompréhensible, des frais additionnels, des conditions, et une éligibilité.

The second leg of the National Home Ownership will include the launch of a major social houses construction programme in 2014. If this is put into practice, it will bring an additional construction of some 1,600 houses. Thus, the key challenge is the demand for land and housing access by the lower income, less economically productive proportion of the population. According to the Central Statistics Office, about 1.5% of people earn below USD 2 per day. They are incidences of squatting as a result of unemployment, and the decline of solidarity networks. This is so much, as there might be some correlation between lack of housing and social unrest.

Aujourd'hui, à l'île Maurice, nous faisons face à une dure réalité, où bon nombre de nos frères et sœurs, ceux au plus bas de l'échelle sociale, les *low income and vulnerable families*,

n'osent même plus rêver de posséder un jour une maison. Le moment est arrivé, M. le président, d'éradiquer – je dis bien éradiquer – ce problème de logement une fois pour toutes. Nous tous ici, dans cette Assemblée de législateurs, avons l'obligation morale de trouver la formule adéquate pour une solution le plus vite possible, afin d'assurer des jours meilleurs à nos compatriotes concernés par cette situation dramatique. M. le président, pour briser ce cercle vicieux, il faut construire des maisons.

According to the Managing Director of the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd, during the 29th Annual Conference of African Union for Housing Finance in 2013, there is a waiting list of 20,000 units, whereas the capacity of the National Housing Development Company (NHDC) is 500 units per year.

A ce rythme, M. le président, cela voudrait dire qu'il nous faudra 40 ans pour résoudre ce problème de logement à l'île Maurice. Où serons-nous dans 40 ans, M. le président ? La plupart d'entre nous ici ne serons même plus là. Nous avons des demandes pressantes, et le gouvernement a obtenu des terrains à travers le 2,000 Arpent *Scheme*. Donc, le problème des terres ne se pose pas. En comptant autour de R 300,000 pas unité, cela reviendrait à R 6 milliards, et en cinq ans, la durée d'un mandat, cela coûterait autour de R 1.2 milliards par an. R 1.2 milliards par an, pendant cinq ans, pour éradiquer le problème du logement à Maurice, vous avouerez, M. le président, que cela n'est pas insurmontable. Ce qu'il faut c'est la mobilisation des volontés.

De l'autre côté, en nous référant aux chiffres du *Top 100 companies 2013*, nous notons que *the 10 biggest profit earners showed a combined profit* de près de R 22 milliards, soit 57% des profits totaux de toutes les compagnies à l'île Maurice. R 22 milliards, M. le président, c'est énorme. Nous avons la chance d'avoir un secteur privé dynamique, et un *Financial Services Sector* qui est en pleine extension. L'honorable ministre, lui-même, reconnaît que les *financial services remain the most productive sector of our economy*. Nous avons un secteur financier solide qui doit agir comme un moteur pour la croissance de notre économie.

Ce secteur financier est porteur d'espoir, et il faut l'encourager à prospérer davantage. Mais n'empêche, comme mentionné plus haut, nous avons tous un devoir moral envers les plus démunis de notre société. Les termes comme *taxe*, *levies* etcetera prêtent à la frayeur, à la

crainte, voire à la démotivation. Je pense qu'au lieu d'imposer des *special levies on banks and others*, il serait plus approprié de demander, en guise de solidarité nationale, *a contribution based on humanitarian ground to eradicate absolute poverty in Mauritius*. On ne parle plus de *levy* et de *taxe* ; on parle de contribution, M. le président.

Demandez une contribution de R 1.2 milliards sur des profits de 22 milliards, M. le président, ce n'est pas exagéré et tout à fait raisonnable, surtout pour une cause aussi essentielle. Il est inacceptable qu'en 2013, M. le président, on entend toujours des catastrophes, où des enfants perdent la vie parce qu'ils habitent dans une petite maison, ils n'ont pas d'électricité, ils ont une petite bougie ; et on entend qu'il y a des enfants qui ont été carbonisés. Ceci est intolérable.

Someday, somewhere, somehow, somebody will have to foot the bill. Les contributions au projet CSR sont louables mais dérisoires. Le problème du logement existera toujours à moins d'une contribution venant de la part des institutions à forte profitabilité, comme mentionné plus haut.

M. le président, j'espère sincèrement qu'un appel en ce sens sera entendu par ces opérateurs économiques. C'est le moment de traduire des déclarations telles que '*having the power, we have a duty to provide equal opportunity for all*' en action. *You have the power now* hon. Minister, et au MMSD nous souhaitons que ce pouvoir soit utilisé à bon escient.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 'j'ai foi en la vertu de notre cause' disait le Mahatma, lors de son discours prononcé la veille de la marche du sel en 1930. J'ai moi aussi foi en la vertu de la cause de MMSD, qui est une 'Maison à tous les Mauriciens, Sans Distinction'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we believe in equal opportunity for all. Thus, measures should be taken so as to eliminate financial exclusion. The inability to make the most of available financial products also forms part of its financial exclusion.

Vulnerable groups in Mauritius may identify lack of awareness about product and services, limited literacy and financial literacy dampening 'know your customer rules' as barriers to demand for banking services. There is an estimated 20% of our population who is unbanked. *Ceci est inadmissible. L'accès aux banques doit être ouvert à tous sans exception, M. le*

président. Opening of a bank account does confer a certain status to the holder. These groups are thus deprived of access to finance that would have allowed them to improve their economic conditions. There is an urgent need to conduct a survey to understand better the extent of financial exclusion in the country. There is a need to democratise financial access for these vulnerable groups.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, financial education should become a national commitment, spearheaded by the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Service Commission. The financial services should make an extra effort to reach out to the poor and the vulnerable. The latest financial accounts show that some services are highly profitable indeed. There is hope that these institutions will play a more socially responsible role by redeploying some of its profits to the needy.

M. le président, au MMSD, nous croyons dans un système capitaliste à visage humain, où le social et l'esprit de partage priment, et non pas dans un système capitaliste sauvage, M. le président. Nous ne sommes pas contre les profits des institutions financières, mais nous n'acceptons pas les profits indécents, comme l'a si bien fait remarquer récemment le Gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice. Le capitaliste financier est un concept qui doit être élargi, démocratisé, et humanisé, M. le président. Les banques et autres institutions financières ne devraient pas se limiter à l'art de se faire de l'argent sur les dos de leurs clients. L'adage 'le client est roi' est malheureusement révolu, et aujourd'hui, le client est une proie.

Le MMSD a préparé et soumis à la Banque de Maurice un document sur la réalité peu connue du public sur les profits et *unfair terms and conditions* appliqués par les banques aux consommateurs. Je fais un pressant appel au Gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice d'appliquer au plus vite les recommandations de la *task force* mise en place *to look into the fees and charges levied by commercial banks and how to regulate them in order to provide a better deal for consumers.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an urgent need to appoint a banking ombudsman. Whilst this is repeatedly in Government and Central Bank plans, the appointment is taking time. This must be treated as a priority, with a view to improving market discipline. There are many tragedies unfolding behind these high fees and charges.

Je ne peux m'empêcher de partager dans cet auguste Assemblée un souvenir qui m'a profondément marqué en tant qu'humain, en tant que père de famille, où un jour, un jeune est venu dans mon bureau, me disant que la maison de son père allait être saisie. Pourquoi ? Il avait ouvert un petit restaurant, et le père qui avait pris 15 ans pour construire sa maison a voulu aider son fils, et a donné la maison en garantie à une banque. Et le pire, M. le président, ce fils est venu dans mon bureau pour me dire que son père allait se suicider. Moi j'ai vu le fils en tant que député de la circonscription, M. le président. Ceci est inacceptable. Plus jamais ça, M. le président ! Et je vous laisse deviner la suite ; ce qui s'est passé dans cette famille. Je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails. Mais c'est inacceptable, à l'île Maurice, en 2013, des suicides parce que des maisons sont saisies par des banques.

L'introduction du *in duplum rule* dans le monde financier local est une innovation fort louable qui a fait ses preuves pendant plus d'un siècle dans plusieurs pays, dont notre voisin l'Afrique du Sud.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our recommendations aim to create an equitable society, where the poor and the vulnerable do not become victims of the abusive practices by some financial services. We will also fight, so that wealth is not created at the expense of the weak and the vulnerable, but instead is shared equitably. The first milestone towards this equity would be the democratisation of access to finance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We want to help and set up all the elements required, to ensure a fair banking and financial environment in our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we welcome all measures announced in that Budget so as to reinforce control over the financial services, in order to avoid financial scams. La honte nationale des *Ponzi Schemes* qui a terni notre image, sans oublier les milliers de familles victimes. Je souhaite que la lumière soit faite au plus vite, et que des sanctions appropriées soit prises par le gouvernement concernant les auteurs des ces crimes financiers.

We need to ensure a stable clean but clean financial environment in our country. More authority should be bestowed upon the Bank of Mauritius, and the term 'confidentiality' should not be used as an excuse for cover-ups. Instead, transparency should be the key word extended to all use of public funds.

A strong and clear message against corruption, illegal transaction and money laundering must be sent. M. le président, la lutte contre le gaspillage, et surtout contre la mauvaise gestion des fonds publics doit être mieux ciblée, et les responsabilités mieux définies. La mise en place d'un *Independent Board of Enquiry with the powers to review matters raised in the Report of the Director of Audit* risque d'être une mesure timorée, ceci d'autant plus que les fonds auraient pu être utilisés pour diminuer la misère. Je pense M. le président, que le PAC aujourd'hui devrait se tenir en public, et le rapport du Directeur de l'audit devrait être débattu à l'Assemblée nationale.

M. le président, en tant que leader du MMSD, je voudrais proposer aujourd'hui au Premier ministre l'institution d'une loi contre la misère ; une loi contre la misère, visant à lutter contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale.

Cette loi est déjà en vigueur dans plusieurs autres pays du globe dont le Québec. La lutte contre la pauvreté est une lutte sans répit et il faudra légiférer afin de conscientiser tout un chacun. Ce drame humain existe bel et bien chez nous, dans notre petite île paradisiaque. Cette loi est un cap incontournable quand la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale peuvent constituer des contraintes pour la protection et le respect de la dignité humaine.

Cette loi aidera à faire les *haves* prendre conscience qu'il existe des *have nots* et qu'il faut les aider coûte que coûte. Ne pratiquons pas la politique de l'autruche, car les effets de la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale freinent le développement économique et social du pays dans son ensemble et menacent sa cohésion et son équilibre. Nous devons faire face à nos responsabilités en tant que législateurs et mener notre pays dans un avenir serein avec la participation de tout un chacun. Cette loi contre la misère nous permettra de définir les conditions liées à la pauvreté dans notre pays. Elle sera utile pour guider le gouvernement et l'ensemble de la société vers une planification, et surtout, M. le président, vers la réalisation d'action pour combattre la pauvreté, prévenir les causes et atténuer les effets des individus et des familles. Il faut contrer l'exclusion sociale.

Dans ce combat, nous tous, gouvernement, partenaires socio-économiques, collectivités, autres acteurs de la société et les démunis, devons cheminer ensemble. Nous souhaitons que chaque personne puisse disposer du soutien et de l'appui que nécessitent sa situation afin qu'elle puisse elle-même cheminer vers l'atteinte de son autonomie et participer activement à la vie sociale et au progrès collectif.

Nous devons réduire les inégalités. Pour ce faire, nous devons favoriser le développement du potentiel des personnes, favoriser l'accès à l'emploi et valoriser le travail, favoriser la réussite scolaire de même que la réinsertion scolaire et sociale des jeunes, particulièrement ceux vivant en milieu défavorisé. Nous devons aussi, pour les personnes en situation de pauvreté, favoriser l'accès à la culture, au loisir et au sport.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we believe in an opportunity for all. We have seen in the poverty analysis 2006/2007 publicised in 2009, that the poverty incidence was more prevalent in households headed by persons with educational attainment below CPE. We strongly hope that this nine-year schooling will lead to a phasing out of the dropouts from educational system at an early age and that the physical and psychological burdens on our children will diminish.

The whole concept of private tuition should be revised. The way it is actually vulgarised is, in fact, defeating the very purpose of helping children who are slow learners. There should be enough places for all the children in our schools and all our schools should be of the same standard. It appears that the access to quality education is still a myth.

The whole educational system should be based on the needs of children. Let's Put our Children First, let's teach them how to think, let's allow them to build up their self-esteem and self-confidence. We have to prepare them to be good and responsible persons and citizens. The system should screen children with learning disabilities and the system should adapt to these needs and not the other way round.

Political agendas and personal egos should be put aside and a ten-year plan should be prepared within a general consensus so as to assure stability for the educational system of our future generation. We cannot continue on with piecemeal decision, strategic long-term planning has to be implemented

Il faut bien tenir compte du fait qu'on est en train de jouer avec l'avenir de nos enfants. Nous ne pouvons plus en 2013 accepter que les enfants souffrent de troubles physiques et psychologiques, parce que, nous, législateurs, prenons notre temps à débattre ce qu'il faut faire et cinq ans après tout recommence. Il faut, au plus vite, mettre en place des instances non politisées qui travailleront pour l'avancement de notre société.

M. le président, il nous faut, de façon urgente, rendre à nos enfants, leur enfance. L'éducation et la santé gratuite forment partie des piliers de notre *Welfare State*. Nous devons toutefois nous assurer de la qualité de ces services. La mise en place de services additionnels tels que des cliniques spécialisées pour le diabète et pour le cancer, l'ouverture de salles supplémentaires pour la chirurgie et les médi-cliniques ne pourront se faire sans personnel qualifié adéquat.

Un des problèmes majeurs de notre système de santé est le manque aigu de personnel infirmier et surtout d'infirmiers spécialisés. Je voudrais saluer ici, la présence du Dr. Jagatsingh, secrétaire général du MMSD.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, you have no right to refer to strangers in the House.

Mr Guimbeau: Ok, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Au MMSD, nous recommandons la construction d'une école d'infirmiers et d'infirmières, digne de ce nom. Cette école devra être construite selon les normes internationales et le contenu du programme d'enseignement revu. Le programme devra aussi inclure la gestion, les finances et l'hospitalité. Cette école pourra assurer la formation des aides-soignants, la formation continue du personnel infirmier et celle des infirmiers spécialisés. Le service de santé mauricien ne pourra progresser sans ce maillon indispensable que représente le personnel infirmier dans nos services de soin.

Avant de conclure, M. le président, je voudrais dire quelques mots sur Curepipe. La relance du football a déjà été enclenchée à Curepipe avec la *Vesco Plastic Football Challenge Cup* 2013 en collaboration avec la municipalité qui a débuté le 28 septembre 2013. Nous avons 28 sélections représentant chaque quartier de Curepipe qui participent avec des joueurs ne faisant partie ni des premières ni des deuxièmes divisions. La finale aura lieu au stade Georges V le 15 décembre 2013 et, bien sûr, tout le monde ici présent, vous êtes invités. Nous pouvons étendre ce *success story* du *Vesco Plastic Football Challenge Cup* aux cinq municipalités et aux sept *district councils* du pays. Chaque région organiserait son tournoi et éventuellement des finales pourraient être organisés avec les gagnants de chaque région sur le plan national.

M. le président, le succès réside dans une organisation qui demande beaucoup d'attention, de discipline et de rigueur. Il faut être motivé et il faut s'impliquer personnellement et mettre les petits copains de côté, si on veut que ce soit un succès.

Le retour vers les clubs traditionnels apparaît plus comme une solution de facilité, une solution d'avenir. Pour le sportif le cheminement est aussi important que le résultat. Cela va bientôt faire une année que le MMSD a la gestion de la mairie de Curepipe. Je voudrais ici remercier les conseillers du Parti Travailiste et du PMSD pour leur collaboration dans la mise en pratique de notre manifeste électoral. La politique adoptée est une politique d'ouverture vers les citadins, c'est-à-dire, une démocratisation participative. Nous voulons que chaque citoyen se sente concerné et veuille participer au développement de sa ville tout en maintenant et consolidant la vocation première des services municipaux, nous avons entrepris des changements en profondeur. Nous voulons redonner à Curepipe ses lettres de noblesse et faire de la ville de Curepipe une ville où il fait bon vivre, une ville où se mélangeront les activités économiques, sociales et culturelles.

M. le président, l'évaluation pour la rénovation de l'hôtel de ville avec l'aide de SOS Patrimoine est presque terminé. La Cité Pitot va être convertie en une foire artisanale. Le *Master Plan* pour le forum a été approuvé et celui du Trou aux Cerfs est à l'étude. Un programme d'embellissement de la ville dans son ensemble est aussi en préparation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over the past years, Curepipe has not known any substantial development and now we have reached a point where firefighting policies is no longer sufficient. On one side, without proper maintenance, the forum represents a safety hazard and has to be rebuilt. On the other side we have street vendors who are working in inhuman and other hazardous conditions. There are no safety and hygienic guidelines that are being applied.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a Master Plan there will be a market fair which will be able to accommodate all those working at Le Forum, le Piton Building, Foire Ramdin et Square Bruce. These will respect all the norms. The gambling outlets operating in the City Centre will also be delocalised there. With the building of a sound proof hall, the project will become economically self-sustainable.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed and supported this project, particularly, the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

M. le président, au MMSD, nous travaillons déjà sur notre programme pour les législatives de 2015 et ces mesures que nous proposons constitueront la base sur laquelle se reposeront les fondations pour la pérennité de notre nation. La démocratisation de l'accès au logement et la démocratisation de l'accès aux finances et aux capitales demeurera le cheval de bataille du MMSD pour 2015. Passé à un niveau, la profitabilité de certaines institutions financières devient indécente face au drame humain que cela engendre.

M. le président, nos enfants nous jugeront sur nos actions et non sur nos paroles. Nous devons prôner les valeurs, telles que l'honnêteté, la dignité, l'humilité et le partage. Battons-nous pour une société plus juste où chacun a sa place. M. le président, j'ai dit. Merci.

(10.01 p.m.)

Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): M. le président, je vous remercie pour la parole accordée. M. le président, le ministère des Finances nous offre une liste des mesures dont la plupart sont conformes à celles des années précédentes, à l'exception de quelques particulières modifications. De bonne foi, dans ce budget-ci, quelques mesures intéressantes ont été annoncées mais le compte n'y est pas pour les plus démunis de notre société.

Cependant, permettez-moi, avant d'aller plus loin dans cette réflexion, que j'adresse l'expression de mes sentiments de gratitude à mon *leader*, l'honorable Bérenger et le MMM qui m'ont permis de bénéficier de cette opportunité en prenant part à ces assises, et à eux tous, j'exprime ma profonde reconnaissance et mon indéfectible attachement aux valeurs patriotiques que nous chérissons tous.

M. le président, le ministre des Finances a pris quelques mesures intéressantes dans son programme, à savoir les mesures concernant le domaine du logement, de la culture, des finances et gestions bancaires, de l'aménagement des infrastructures routières, de transport en commun et diverses aides ou programmes d'activités initiés ici et là. En effet, qu'il me soit permis, M. le

président, de dire que tout ne vient pas relever comme un bâton magique les défis auxquels les mauriciens se trouvent confrontés au quotidien. En occurrence la grande disparité qui s'affiche inlassablement entre riches et pauvres, les questions liées à la justice sociale, la distribution équitable de la richesse du pays, le chômage toujours grandissant et palpable chez les jeunes, l'ensemble des problématiques relatives à l'insécurité et à la criminalité, la traite des êtres humains concernant nos enfants, sans oublier les efforts à fournir dans le domaine du respect des droits des femmes et leur épanouissement générale, etc. A ces points précis, M. le président, ce budget n'apporte aucune solution. Je vous promets d'y revenir plus loin et de façon plus analytique au cours de mon intervention.

M. le président, cela fait quatre ans que j'assiste à ce débat traditionnel du budget qui est pour moi une grande expérience pour ma participation, mais également et surtout, un grand honneur d'être la porte-parole de tous ces hommes et femmes, fils et filles de ce pays et ceux et celles des îles Rodrigues et Agalega qui attendent que leurs droits en tant que personne humaine soient respectés.

C'est un constat inéluctable de savoir que notre communauté nationale, connue dans sa diversité, puisque constituée des groupes aux identités culturelles - à la fois plurielle - variées et dynamiques, aspire à une interaction harmonieuse et un vouloir vivre ensemble.

Aussi, M. le président, me semble-t-il que des politiques favorisant à l'intégration et à la participation de tous les citoyens deviennent garante de la cohésion sociale, de la vitalité, de la société civile et de la paix. Car, en effet le pluralisme culturel à la mauricienne peut être une réponse politique au fait de la diversité culturelle. Et puisque dans ce sens, ce pluralisme étant indissociable d'un cas démocratique il n'est pas heureux, M. le président, de voir dans son pays qu'un groupe de personnes jouissent des faveurs du développement et qu'un autre beaucoup plus large, croupisse de génération en génération dans l'extrême pauvreté. Devrons-nous être en opposition pour observer ce décriant décalage ?

Je reviens, M. le président, à mes propos d'introduction portant sur les problématiques de l'heure. Au regard de leur ensemble, ce qui m'a intrigué et qui continue à m'intriguer c'est de remarquer comme tout le monde ici que tous les programmes budgétaires votés n'ont pas suffisamment œuvré à la réduction du chômage, à titre d'exemple. Car à la lecture de plusieurs

rapports en notre possession du ministère sous examen, le taux de chômage qui, en 2011, était de 7,8%, est passé à 8% en 2012, tandis qu'en 2013 nous observons un taux de 8,3%. Encore une fois, ce n'est pas l'Opposition qui le dit. Je vous prie de vous référer au rapport du budget du ministère des Finances.

Dans le même sens, la lutte contre la pauvreté reste une situation criante sur tous les plans. Le *Household Budget Survey 2006-2007* fourni un taux de moins 1% de personnes vivant dans l'extrême pauvreté. A ce jour, le rapport du Budget 2014 allègue que la pauvreté absolue a atteint pas moins de 2% de notre population. A ce tableau alarmant s'ajoute la montée croissante de la prostitution infantile de nos jeunes filles, enfants de la tranche d'âge allant de dix ans à dix-sept ans. Pour plus de détails à ce sujet, lisez le rapport d'étude sur le *Commercial Sexual and Exploitation of Children (CSEC)*, initié par le ministère de la Femme en 2001, et publié en 2002 par l'Université de Maurice dont moi-même fut collaboratrice en son temps. Depuis lors, aucune étude n'a été officiellement menée pour fournir de nouvelles données sur l'augmentation du phénomène de sorte que des mesures concrètes et efficaces de prévention soient prises et que sur la durée une lutte acharnée soit menée.

Dites-vous bien, M. le président, que nous sommes en présence de 6,700 enfants des rues et de 30% d'enfants qui continuent à échouer à leurs examens de la CPE chaque année. Pourrions-nous, M. le président, nous interroger sur l'avenir de ces enfants et l'engagement du gouvernement par rapport à leur situation ? Je pense, ici, aux programmes du ministère de l'Education et aussi d'autres ministères concernés.

Comme vous le voyez, M. le président, il est notamment connu que dans un pays comme le notre, qui se recherche pour consolider les efforts de la démocratie, de l'état de droit, laisser derrière soit des hommes, des femmes et des jeunes sans emploi, ceux et celles qui ne sont pas scolariser ou encore souffrant des diverses discriminations est une manière d'exposer *de facto* le pays dans l'impasse, dans l'installation à long terme de la criminalité et de l'insécurité de nos citoyens. Car lorsqu'un gouvernement connu pour être une politique alternative ne semble pas prendre à bras le corps la panoplie de défis que je viens de mentionner, il ne serait pas étonnant que nous assistions à des contestations citoyennes décriant la mauvaise gestion des services publics devant viser l'intérêt général.

Souvent, M. le président, des projets sont annoncés dans les meilleures intentions du monde, mais dans la pratique de l'exécution et du *procurement* pour réaliser ces projets, la gestion transparente et la bonne gouvernance souffrent. Il y a des nominations des faveurs à la tête des institutions chargées d'exécuter tel ou tel autre programme, mais à cause des incompétences notoires, ces programmes se retrouvent non-exécutés avec beaucoup de surcharges financières, au fait gaspillage du fonds public. Tout cela, M. le président, favorise et encourage la corruption des *inner circles* et les délits initiés ou *insider trading* qui fait augmenter le coût de toutes les dépenses publiques. A la fin, on sent les intérêts de quelques puissants du régime qui passent au détriment du grand public, ce qui provoque davantage, M. le président, l'écart entre les riches et les pauvres.

Revenant à la question de la pauvreté absolue, ce dont la grande majorité de notre population souffre, je voudrais interroger le gouvernement sur l'efficacité des mesures prises en matière de l'éradication de la pauvreté qui touche les hommes et beaucoup plus les jeunes femmes, les vieilles, les enfants et les personnes en situation d'handicap dans notre communauté nationale.

Et pourtant, M. le président, ces mesures prises existent bel et bien. Mais seulement, permettez que je me répète, qu'elles ne concernent pas la grande partie de la population qui est la plus touchée par l'extrême pauvreté. D'où, à mon avis, il me semble que l'efficacité de ces mesures reste à désirer et revient encore une fois, de revoir l'application de l'ensemble de ces mesures de sorte que ces populations, déjà vulnérables à la base, aient accès à leurs droits les plus fondamentaux. A titre illustratif, M. le président, je cite l'exemple de ma circonscription No. 14 et je suis certaine que ces mêmes problèmes existent dans tous les coins de notre pays.

M. le président, bien que le budget du ministre des finances ait annoncé un projet de logement en faveur des pauvres, je suis déconcertée par les situations de ces 312 familles qui occupent illégalement les terrains de l'État dans cette région. Alors, je voudrais demander quelles sont les mesures qui ont été prises pour endiguer la situation de ces familles occupant ces terrains dans ces régions précises; La Ferme Reservoir à Bambous, African Town, Riambel, Le Morne, Karo Kalyptis, Case Noyale et Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette.

Je m'interroge aussi sur toutes ces maisons construites à l'aide de l'amiante lesquelles ont été vendues à près de R 2,000 aux familles concernées. A ce jour, il y a plus d'une centaine de familles vivant dans des situations d'insalubrité dans ces régions précises : Surinam, Bel Ombre, Le Morne, Case Noyale, Petite Rivière Noire, Rivière Noire, Tamarin et Bambous. D'autant plus, la plupart de ces familles vivant à Bel Ombre et Case Noyale n'ont pas encore eu leurs contrats. Pour ajouter à tout ceci, il y avait une toilette qui est construite pour deux familles à l'époque.

A ce jour, il y a plus de trois familles allant à 17 familles qui vivent sous un même toit. De ce fait, les toilettes construites depuis ces années sont inutilisables. Les familles n'ont pas les moyens à reconstruire une toilette et remplacer les maisons construites à l'aide de l'amiante, quoi qu'elles en soient propriétaires de ces maisons, sans contrat pour certaines. Pourtant, M. le président, le gouvernement est revenu avec un même but. C'est de faire propriétaires, les familles qui occupent les terres de l'État.

D'autant plus, ces familles démunies n'ont pas de moyens à faire un affidavit de succession. A une question posée à l'Attorney General, il a répondu qu'il ne trouve pas la nécessité d'étendre le *legal aid* à ces familles démunies qui ne peuvent produire un affidavit de succession pour se procurer de leur biens après le décès du père, mère, époux ou épouse. Serait-ce, M. le président, que ce plan de logement s'avère très controversé? Dans ce même sens, M. le président, je m'interroge sur la situation des familles qui vivent dans des régions exposées et frappées par des inondations régulières, notamment, Rivière des Galets, et dire que la compagnie sucrière a offert à ce gouvernement, 2000 arpents de terrain. Est-ce que ce gouvernement ne voit pas l'utilité de reconstruire des maisons décentes et des toilettes pour ces familles, père, mère et enfant, qui vivent dans la pauvreté absolue?

M. le président, nous savons aussi que l'éducation est un outil au combat de la pauvreté et d'autres réalités sociales. Or, la réussite scolaire de nos enfants venant des régions avec des spécificités socio-économiques et culturelles respectives démontrent en préambule qu'il n'y a pas d'égalité de chance et l'équité du rendement de l'apprentissage. Permettez-moi, M. le président, de dire que les résultats de ces écoles primaires des régions pauvres comme la région de la circonscription No. 14 ne dépassent pas le seuil de 40% en comparaison avec celle des régions favorisées qui excellent d'un taux de réussites de plus de 70%, alors que le ministre de

l'éducation, l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree, a pour engagement prioritaire, la réussite de l'avenir de nos enfants.

A titre illustratif, je cite quelques exemples. L'école du gouvernement de Curepipe qui a connu un taux de réussite de 86.78% ; en 2010, est monté à 90% en 2012. De même, pour l'école primaire Gungah qui a connu un taux de réussite de 82.38%, en 2010 est monté à 86.36% en 2012 ; et le Doha Primary School qui a connu un taux de réussite de 100% en 2010, est resté inchangé en 2012. Tandis que, l'école de Bel Ombre a chuté jusqu'à 23.8% en 2012 ; alors que le taux de réussite était de 46.94% en 2010. L'école du Morne a chuté jusqu'à 9.68% alors que le taux de réussite était de 48.78% en 2010. L'école de Bambous a chuté jusqu'à 28.65% alors que le taux de réussite était de 32.93% en 2010. Je peux continuer, mais, M. le président, je crois fermement que ces quelques exemples sont nettement suffisants pour faire comprendre au ministre de l'éducation, l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree, qu'il est en train d'insulter l'effort de la démocratie de ce pays lorsqu'il vient prétendre que les résultats des enfants de la CPE est en croissance alors qu'il n'y a pas d'égalité de chance et l'équité de rendement de l'apprentissage.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je suis tout aussi décontenancée par le projet d'électricité prépayé dans le but d'éradiquer la pauvreté absolue. Comme nous le savons très bien de ce côté de la Chambre, que ce mesure va éviter aux officiers du CEB des frais de déplacement pour aller déconnecter ces pauvres familles. Car ces familles se feront comme, le dit-on, s'auto-déconnecter.

Cependant, M. le président, permettez-moi de rappeler que cette mesure avait été adoptée par ce gouvernement en septembre 2012 - un projet pilote - dans deux poches de pauvreté identifiées par la NEF, notamment La Valette et Gros Cailloux, et qui fut un échec majeur. Nous le savons très bien, M. le président, qu'une famille qui touche moins de R 6,200 après avoir payé le surcroît de loyer, du téléphone, de l'eau, de la nourriture, du transport avec un coût additionnel de transport cette année-ci pour les gens de La Valette, il couté R 26 pour le trajet allant de La Valette jusqu'au village et d'autres frais de ci de là. Avec le coût de la vie qui a augmenté, il ne doit pas rester un seul sou.

M. le président, ce gouvernement revient avec cette mesure qui continue à garder les familles dans leur extrême pauvreté sans électricité, sans eau et qui se battent pour payer ce plan de logement qui leur a été durement imposé.

M. le président, *nonobstant* que la crise économique qui frappe plusieurs pays, dont le nôtre, est une réalité. D'ailleurs, le ministre Choonee a évoqué cela hier dans son discours. Il n'a pas besoin de faire des excuses au nom de la crise économique alors d'une part certains d'entre nous s'enrichissent énormément et plusieurs familles se voient de plus en plus marginaliser au quotidien, d'autre part.

Mais il demeure néanmoins une certitude que c'est dans la crise que se vérifie la vraie solidarité et la solidarité avec les pauvres. Au regard de tous ceux qui précèdent, je propose que nous ayons une vision qui respecte la dignité humaine car dit la pauvreté, dit aussi le respect de la dignité de la personne.

Maintenant, M. le président, permettez-moi de vous faire part d'une deuxième intervention qui concerne les charges qui m'ont été confiées en ce qui concerne le département des arts et de la culture. C'est ici, encore une fois de plus, que je pense, qu'allier le travail de lutte contre la disparité criante ou alarmante dans notre société, disparité entre riches et pauvres et les discriminations dont souffre la majeure partie de notre population, constituent pour moi une occasion de fonder un discours qui pointe le respect de la diversité culturelle sans lequel on ne peut jamais parvenir à une politique de la cohésion sociale sans respecter les libertés et les droits fondamentaux.

Dite ainsi, M. le président, au cœur même de notre Constitution datée de 1968, au Chapitre II, sous le titre 'Protection des droits fondamentaux et libertés de l'individu', il est entendu que le gouvernement a la responsabilité de préserver les droits fondamentaux de tout un chacun indépendamment de sa race, son appartenance sociale, son origine, son opinion politique, sa couleur de peau, sa croyance ou de son sexe, je cite -

"It is hereby recognised and declared that in Mauritius there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex"

Partant du préambule de la déclaration universelle de l'UNESCO sur la diversité culturelle adoptée à l'unanimité par la trente et unième session de la conférence générale de l'UNESCO à Paris le 02 Novembre 2001-

«La culture doit être considérée comme l'ensemble de très distinct, spirituel et matériel, intellectuel et affectif qui charterisent une société ou un groupe social et qu'elle englobe outre les arts et les lettres, les modes de vie, les façons de vivre ensemble, les systèmes de valeurs, la tradition et les croyances. »

Définit de la sorte, M. le président, la culture ne doit pas être limitée uniquement au savoir et à la connaissance scientifique. La définition de l'UNESCO pose un dépassement qualitatif dans le temps et dans l'espace puisqu'elle considère que chaque culture parle un langage universel en raison du fait qu'elle fait corps au patrimoine commun de l'humanité. Vous aurez compris, M. le président, que mon intervention consiste aussi à démontrer que les droits de l'homme sont garants de la diversité culturelle.

Ceci dit, M. le président, permettez-moi de vous dire que je suis décontenancée de la manière dont le ministère des arts et de la culture traite les droits des auteurs et de l'invisibilité d'une mise en place d'un plan d'action concret et la publication d'un livre blanc alors que son engagement prioritaire était que Maurice devienne un centre culturel mondial.

M. le président, je ne sais pas si l'honorable Choonee comprend que nous ne vivons plus à l'époque des charrettes à bœufs. Nous sommes à l'ère du numérique et c'est là qu'il faut s'approprier des politiques culturelles de manière à assurer aux artistes et aux auteurs des idées et des œuvres, les conditions favorables à la production et à la diffusion des biens et services culturels diversifiés à travers des mécanismes de régulation pour faire face aux défis du monde numérique afin de s'affirmer à l'échelle locale et internationale.

M. le président, de bonne foi, ce budget annonce une somme de R 170 millions pour le *Film Industry*. C'est une mesure intéressante. D'ailleurs j'en avais suggéré au cours de mon *budget speech* de l'année dernière, dans l'idée de préserver notre diversité culturelle, la cohésion sociale et nos biens communs, tangibles ou intangibles. Mais, M. le président, j'ai très bien compris l'honorable Choonee, ce *Film Industry* vise la création d'emplois et d'une industrie créative. C'est ici que je ne suis pas d'avis. Un *Film Industry* doit être, avant tout, porteur

d'identité, les valeurs et des sens culturels d'un peuple qui n'a pas de prix comme le seraient certains produits qui respectent la règle pure de l'économie du marché. Nous devrions éviter de penser que les biens et services culturels seraient là pour générer de gros profits au même titre qu'une orange ou d'autres produits vendus sur le marché.

M. le président, allons-nous subventionner un projet à grande échelle, alors que nous savons que les capacités financières de notre budget ne sont pas loin comparables à celles des puissances comme Hollywood et Bollywood. Par ailleurs, même si l'honorable Choonee envisage Maurice comme le futur Mauriwood, les règles à préserver notre diversité culturelle et les politiques culturelles marquées par la technologie changeante sont pratiquement *obsolete* dans ce cas.

M. le président, un autre sujet qui me tient à cœur est celui de cette industrie culturelle annoncée depuis des années. Il y a même une étude sur l'industrie culturelle qui a été initiée par le ministère des arts et de la culture an collaboration avec l'UNESCO et le rapport avait été publié en 2008 par *the Centre for Applied Social Research University of Mauritius*. Cette étude, M. le président, a fait plusieurs recommandations notamment un *White Paper, Effective Copyright Bill* et un plan d'action. En Octobre 2012, M. le président, l'honorable Choonee, dans une interview à la presse, déclare que, je cite -

« Maurice a tous les atouts pour devenir un modèle interculturel à l'image des Nations Unies »

Et il a même ajouté qu'il prépare Maurice à devenir un centre culturel mondial. Il a aussi ajouté son ambition de faire de la créativité culturelle un pilier de notre économie car les chiffres d'affaires des activités culturelles sur le plan endogène tournent autour de R 16 milliards alors que le journal 'Le Mauricien' datant 2013 a publié ceci -

“Avril Joffe et Justin O'Connor, experts de l'Unesco en mission à Maurice l'année dernière pour un constat et une évaluation de la situation dans le cadre de la mise à exécution de la Convention pour la protection et la promotion de la diversité culturelle de 2005, observent dans leur rapport de septembre 2012, qu'il y a un manque de volonté ou de compétence au niveau du ministère des Arts et de la Culture pour développer les industries culturelles à Maurice. Selon eux, le pays est quasiment arrivé à un point de non

retour si aucune action n'est prise d'urgence : « *The cultural industries are in the process of exiting.*”

(Interruptions)

M. le président, à la suite de la mission confiée à l'UNESCO au sein du système des Nations Unies, je voudrai ici faire ressortir que ce gouvernement a un mandat spécifique d'assurer la préservation et la promotion de la féconde diversité culturelle mauricienne qui s'incarne dans l'originalité et la pluralité des identités qui caractérisent les différents groupes et communautés de notre société. Il est temps, M. le président, que l'honorable ministre qui a été un échec total dans les implantations...

(Interruptions)

...des diverses projets énoncés dans les budgets 2011, 2012, 2013 d'agir. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, l'orchestre de la Symphonie annonçait dans tous les budgets précédents...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: ... se retrouvent dans l'agonie financière et ainsi que d'autres projets ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: ... que l'honorable Choonee n'a pas eu la compétence nécessaire et la volonté politique de faire appliquer. Son Ministère a été un échec total et majeur dans l'implémentation de tous les projets visant à bâtir l'unité nationale.

Ainsi, M. le président, étant donné que les seules forces du marché ne peuvent garantir la préservation et la promotion de la diversité culturelle, gage d'un développement humain durable, il me semble bienvenu que le rôle primordiale des politiques publiques soient garanties par le billet du partenariat à conclure entre les secteurs privés et la société civile. Ce genre de partenariat, M. le président, constitue un vecteur important dans le renforcement tant de la visibilité de nos pratiques culturelles que le développement humain qui passe par la mise en place des industries culturelles viable et compétitive sur le plan local et mondial.

C'est ici, M. le président, que je voudrais savoir comment l'honorable ministre Choonee dans le respect de nos obligations, au niveau international, va définir sa politique culturelle et la mise en œuvre des moyens, d'action allouée aux opérateurs de ce secteur d'activité et quels sont les cadres règlementaires appropriés pour l'usage de ces moyens.

M. le président, permettez-moi de reprendre mot à mot mon appréhension au ministre Choonee lors de mon premier discours en 2010. Je cite -

« Yet Mr Speaker, Sir, arts and culture are catalyst for peace stability and the consolidation of national unity. I have scrutinized the Government's programme on this item. It contains a long list of wishful, prestigious projects, National Symphonic Orchestra, National Awards for Excellence in Arts etc., but the will remains a *miroir aux alouettes* or a catalogue of *folie de grandeur* if the root causes of poverty, social discrimination, equality of opportunity in education, economy and development are not addressed.”

M. le président, avant de conclure, je voudrais parler sur notre circonscription No. 14 qui est un des plus grands et des plus démunis de toutes les circonscriptions. Nous avons des gros problèmes sociaux et économiques qui concernent les droits fondamentaux de nos mandants, d'avoir accès à un logement décent, à l'emploi, à une bonne éducation, au transport commun, à la santé, l'eau, l'électricité, la sécurité routière, la propreté des villages, des centres de loisirs pour les jeunes enfants et adultes, au service de protection pour les femmes et enfants battus. La liste est longue. Sans oublier les travailleurs du VRS2 de la propriété de Bel Ombre et St. Phoenix qui n'ont toujours pas reçu leurs terrains.

M. le président, je demande au ministre chargé de la sécurité routière de venir avec des propositions afin d'assurer la sécurité routière dans ces régions, dans la région 14 ! je fais un appel pour qu'une étude soit lancée afin d'identifier les régions qui n'ont pas d'arrêt d'autobus, trottoir etc. et de rendre ce rapport public car, M. le président, il y a eu des questions soulevées à ces propos par l'honorable Alan Ganoo, d'autres membres de l'Opposition et moi-même, visant à assurer la sécurité de nos enfants dans ces régions et notamment il y a deux collèges, le collège de St. Esprit et Kids College qui ont fait plusieurs rappels mais le problème est resté *status quo*.

M. le président, la propreté de la région n'est pas assurée. J'ai quelques photos et M. le ministre Aimée doit aussi savoir. Voilà on a un jardin d'enfant et là ce sont les drains et dans la rue partout où on marche c'est comme ça. Je dépose ces photos. Le nettoyage se fait une seule fois par semaine et les drains laissent à désirer dans toutes les régions 14. Notamment Surinam, Chemin Grenier, Chamouny, Rivière des Galets, Bel Ombre, St. Martin, Baie Du Cap, Choisy, Le Monde, Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette, Case Noyale, Rivière Noire, Petite Rivière Noire, La Preneuse, Tamarin, Cascavelle, Flic en Flac, Bambous, Palma, Bassin et Kennedy. Je fais un appel pressant au ministre des collectivités locales qui a été élu dans cette circonscription qu'il assure son devoir auprès des mandants de la région 14 et son engagement prioritaire en tant que ministre des collectivités locales.

Je voudrais aussi attirer l'attention de ministre sur l'entretien du cimetière de St. Martin. Cela fait bientôt 7 ans qu'il n'y a pas eu l'entretien de ce lieu en plus il y a amas de pierres déposés devant le cimetière qui représente un danger pour les usagers de la route.

M. le président, nous parlons des programmes *empowerment* alors qu'il n'y a même pas des infrastructures pour que les femmes puissent faire leur marketing dans la région 14. Permettez-moi de rappeler à ce gouvernement que leur projet de créer des villages artisanaux est aussi à l'agonie financière dans ce budget.

On parle de décentralisation de l'économie alors que nos jeunes n'ont même pas des terrains de foot notamment Le Monde village de la Cité Bassin et aussi dans les autres régions de la circonscription No. 14, l'entretien de ces terrains de foot laisse à désirer.

Au regard de ces réalités qui sévissent chez nous, M. le président, je voudrais dire à ce gouvernement d'arrêter de dépenser l'argent public et d'investir dans des projets concrets et réalisables sur le plan local, national et international pour une démocratie participative de nos citoyens. Que chacun, M. le président, assure la responsabilité de la charge qui lui a été confiée dans l'intérêt de tout un chacun.

Merci M. le président.

(10.36 p.m)

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr L. Bundhoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the spirit of the tradition of parliamentary debates, allow me to make a few remarks on the issues raised by the Members of the Opposition, in particular hon. Uteem, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun and a few of the points raised by hon. Guimbeau and lately by hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines.

For the whole section that the hon. lady has concentrated on culture, I would resume it in only one sentence. I would wish to remind her that when the hon. Leader of the Opposition who was so proud of being a member of the party, when he was Prime Minister of this country, maybe she does not know the cultural adviser of hon. Bérenger at that time was nobody else than Santokhee, a jeweler and this is...

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can you ask them...

(Interruptions)

If it hurts them let me...

The Deputy Speaker: I want some order in the house.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the very office of the Prime Minister...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hervé Aimée!

Mr Bundhoo: In the very office of the then Prime Minister, we were paying graciously an adviser who was a jeweler.

(Interruptions)

I don't know what he was doing in the Ministry whether he was making a jewel out of culture or whether he has making a mockery of culture. This is enough to resume the whole statement made by the hon. Member with regard to culture and arts.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

The Deputy Speaker: I want some order in the House.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my good friend hon. Uteem made a very passionate, at least, he believes it was a passionate speech with regard to the decisions of Government and, in particular, after having answered so brilliantly the PNQ on football and the revival of football. He spoke about communalism, supposedly about the revival of football, but the very person who is most unfit to speak about communalism and football in the Budget is nobody else than hon. Uteem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry hon. Minister. When you are referring to a Member of the House, you must observe the decorum and address him or her as hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: I said the hon. Member. I keep on saying the hon. Member. Anyway, I agree, there is no problem about that. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the essence is the passionate speech that he tried to do with the cinema going on behind it about communalism in football.

Let me remind the hon. Member, who, in this country qualified Sir Anerood Jugnauth, as a '*bombe communal ambulant*'? Who, today, is the Leader of the re-take of the MMM/MSM Alliance?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are associating football and communalism. Who, if it is not Sir Anerood Jugnauth, at the airport, said to a whole section of the population, and qualified them as '*demon*', Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? And this hon. Member is trying to tell us, on this side of the House, about communalism?

(Interruptions)

And they are the very ones, Saturday in Saturday out, sitting with Sir Anerood Jugnauth, a '*bombe communal ambulant*', who treated part of a section of the population as '*demon*', and they have the courage and the guts to come and accuse us of anything, of communalism! In this country, if there is a *rassembleur*, and if there is....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history will recognise Dr. Navin as...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: ... as the one who prophesises unity, as a man who is a *rassembleur*, as a man who introduced the Equal Opportunities Bill in this Parliament! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have no right to come and question this Government's intention about creating a Mauritius, where everybody lives peacefully in this country!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recent history, only a couple of weeks ago, *ti ena* in-between them '*gidi gidi*', because they were not happy about the way the word 'thirty' was written in the banner to celebrate the 30 years, and they made it very clear to the 'Week-End' newspaper why they were not happy, because the thirty becomes a Hindu symbol, becomes a religious symbol. This is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, communalism at its highest level!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my good friend, hon. Uteem, was speaking. I am quite surprised – he is quite a learned person, he is a Barrister-at-law, he is an expert in international finance, he has travelled extensively. But I failed to understand, he could not make the difference between circular migration and migration *tout court!* What hon. Minister Shakeel Mohamed here, and also the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. X. L. Duval, have been doing, promoting Mauritius to European countries and Canada in order to give Mauritians an opportunity to work in this

advanced developed country and then to come back to serve the country, as better men and women, he could not even understand that. And what is worse,...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen!

Mr Bundhoo: What is worse,...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Minister, I am on my feet! Hon Hossen, just make sure that you are not interrupting the hon. Minister during his intervention, and the same applies to hon. Jhugroo also.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, have you got any problem with the ruling I just gave. I called to order hon. Hossen and hon. Jhugroo. So, where is the problem? The Minister has got the right to intervene without any interruptions from any side of the House.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for a Member to address you, shouldn't he be sitting in his rightful place. Would I be correct to presume same?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Hon. Minister, please, go ahead! Hon. Minister Bundhoo!

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I wanted to mention earlier is the intellectual dishonesty of hon. Uteem and where he failed to understand the difference between circular migration and migration *tout court* - but when you lie, you can only lie for a short period. When he proceeded with his argument...

Mr Uteem: On a point of order! Is the hon. Minister calling me a liar? If it is, then I ask him to withdraw it immediately.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Listen, please! At no point in time, did the hon. Minister use the word 'liar'. Please, go ahead!

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order, the hon. Minister is imputing motive. You don't have to use the word to impute motive. By saying that the hon. Member has lied, the hon. Minister is imputing motive, saying that he is lying.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to clarify the matter, I was just saying, as a general comment, when someone lies - anyone lies - the lie always catches up with him; that's all I said. I repeat, at no time, I was accusing any Member of the House as being a liar. But what I wanted to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that when hon. Uteem was speaking and he was mentioning about we, trying to open up and exporting as if our people overseas, and then he continues his speech, he made reference during his stay in Singapore. That's what I wanted to say, it is a little bit of intellectual dishonesty. I think I am allowed to say that, because he, hon. Uteem, is able to go to Singapore, he is able to study in the UK, he is able to have the exposure in Europe, to have the exposure in the Asian country, he is able to come to Mauritius, he is a successful barrister, but he does not want anybody in this country to go to UK and Singapore to become as successful as him. This is the problem, this is the issue I wanted to raise; it is so simple.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Uteem, at the end of his speech, made reference to Alan Paton's novel, "Cry My Beloved Country". I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should have cried for this beloved country some years ago, when POTA was introduced in this very House by Sir Anerood Jugnauth and when his Excellency Cassam Uteem was President of the Republic, and when he was made to resign over POTA, that was "Cry My Beloved Country". Cry my Beloved Country - it is the same Uteem who stood on the electoral platform, with the same Anerood Jugnauth who made him resign over POTA, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! He is right, Cry my Beloved Country, cry over the MSM, cry with the alliance you have made with the re-take of Anerood Jugnauth over the MSM. Cry, keep on crying my friend and you will cry for the rest of your life!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes! Order!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cry my beloved country! In fact, really we have to cry when I went through the newspaper where hon. Bérenger said –

“Pravind Jugnauth doit des excuses à la famille Uteem!”

(*Interruptions*)

And I proceed to quote -

“Paul Bérenger a commenté les propos que Pravind Jugnauth a tenus ailleurs concernant Reza Uteem, candidat de l’Alliance du cœur dans la circonscription n° 2. ‘Ce même Pravind Jugnauth a eu le culot de dire que Reza Uteem est un fils à papa et il a ajouté que moi, Paul Bérenger, je sais quelque chose que Cassam Uteem ne sait pas.’”

(*Interruptions*)

If somebody, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would have said something like this on me - do you know what hon. Bérenger did with Mr Duval?

(*Interruptions*)

Do you know what he did?

(*Interruptions*)

Do you know what he did with Mr Duval in the corridor of Parliament? And you know what? In the zeal for power, they are able to swallow any kind of insult despite the very leader that hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines was so proud of hon. Bérenger! Hon. Bérenger was right...

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bérenger was right then; he is right today and I can tell you without any hesitation hon. Bérenger will always be right with regard to the comments he has made on the Jugnauth family and the Jugnauth clan, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very end...

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very end of his speech, he was making comments about...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: ...corruptions and all these things. Let me remind the hon. Member, go and read the press at that time, statement made by hon. Cuttaree and hon. Bérenger.

(Interruptions)

When he said: “l’économie est en état d’urgence”. En état d’urgence, madame! You were in the red!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, kindly address the Chair!

Mr Bundhoo: Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when they said: “Nous perdons de l’emploi à une vitesse vertigineuse!”

Ti pé gagne vertige!

(Interruptions)

Today, he *ose* speak about corruptions? Let me remind him who was in power when the MCB/NPF scandal was brought to light? Who was in power and did the Illovo Deal at midnight in the heat of the night when discarding the advice of both the Attorney General and his number two?

(Interruptions)

Who was in power when all the frauds were happening at the BPML?

(Interruptions)

Who was in power and left...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, order please! Order! Order, I said.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Who was in power when skeletons were in the wardrobe one after the other?

(Interruptions)

I say one thing to them.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they must be grateful deep down inside them that we have a Labour/PMSD Government in power. Nous avons redressé l'économie et le pays est sur les rails et ils resteront dans l'Opposition pour des années et des années et des années à venir, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Khamajeet and hon. Hossen, I am warning you now!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I quote –

“So, it is a language when you are in the Opposition and another language when you are in Government.”

Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee in the Budget Speech of 2010!

(Interruptions)

This is in the speech of hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee on Budget!

(Interruptions)

I will come to it, don't worry. I have got plenty of time!

(Interruptions)

So, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee at least one thing she got very right when she was talking, if I am not mistaken, with remarks made by hon. Dr. Boolell and she said, I quote again –

“So, it is a language when you are in the Opposition and another language when you are in Government.”

(Interruptions)

Let me give you, Mr Speaker, Sir, another quote –

“M. le président, nous avons un leadership fort et déterminé en la personne du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam et autour de lui une équipe d'hommes et de femmes de conviction, capables et soudés pour mener à bien sa vision. »

L'honorable Mme Dookun-Luchoomun !

(Interruptions)

So, you see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I heard...

(Interruptions)

When I was listening...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: Can I, please, hon. Jhugroo?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Please!

(Interruptions)

Okay, I will try, okay! It is the heat of the night, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

You see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what I like with the MSM Members of Parliament. They belong to a party - and they agreed and they said themselves; this is what I like with them. So, when you are in power, when you are in Government you have one language and when you are in the Opposition you have another language! When hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun was addressing the Chair in 2010 as Minister of Social Security, she was so...

(Interruptions)

How can I say?

(Interruptions)

Proud! Happy to be Minister! Serving under hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam and she said, and I quote again –

“M. le président, nous avons un leadership fort et déterminé en la personne du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. »

Let me assure the lady that Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam is the lion that goes from strength to strength and will continue to go from strength to strength and we are going to crush them in the next general election!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the...

(Interruptions)

Don't you worry...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo and hon. Minister Dayal, the Minister of Health has got the right to make an intervention without interruption!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Can I proceed Sir? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun was making reference to the new airport she made an observation and maybe she has got a point, I must admit that, that maybe it is not fair that those who were ancient, ex ...

(Interruptions)

My apology my friend! I have not been to Oxford; I have not been to Cambridge...

(Interruptions)

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

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: ...I do not have an English accent like you! I am from a small village, I am not like you. I apologise!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, address the Chair!

Mr Bundhoo: I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, do not interrupt please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: I am proud of my roots; I am from Tyack, Rivière des Anguilles. I am from the *karo canne*!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I just make this point?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, maybe hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun has got a point. She was commenting about those who used to have shops in the ex-SSR Airport and who are now having shops in the new block of the SSR Airport. She was of the opinion that maybe we should have invited new tenders in order to re-open it and to allow for more people to bid, to have more shops, but she has selective memories. The hon. Prime Minister was answering the day before, on the PNQ he did tell her leader that: your brother-in-law is still a supplier at the Mauritius Duty-Free Shop.

(*Interruptions*)

But when she was speaking, why did not she say that the hon. Prime Minister should have intervened with Airports of Mauritius Ltd to reopen tenders to make sure that the brother-in-law of her leader, got another chance and to have his supplies there or not? She did not; she has selective memories in what she was telling.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say a word. My colleague, hon. Dayal, will tackle the issue because he is the Minister concerned. She was speaking about poverty alleviation and my good friend, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines also was doing the same thing. I think for a few hon. Members of the Opposition, it has become a buzz word to speak about social integration. But, the question that remains to be asked is why, when the MMM/MSM Government was in power, they never created a Ministry for Social Integration and poverty alleviation? Why did we do it?

(*Interruptions*)

And, because of us, because we have done it, that today you have the courage and the guts to speak about poverty alleviation.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: And, you know what? Most importantly, when they were in power, they were busy with all kinds of trusts. When they were in power, they were busy doing all kinds of things. When they were in power with us, they were busy with clinics - buying and selling. The moment they are in the Opposition, now they leave Sun Trust and they go to the open sun and they start to discover poverty. What a tragedy we are living with these people! They are trying to imitate Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam when he was canvassing for the election of hon. Dr. Jeetah where we gave the MMM/MSM a *bon raclé* in Constituency No. 7. ‘*Zot banne mauvais imitateurs*’, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. By the way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if they believe so much in the eradication of poverty, why don’t they make a few of the people become trustee of Sun Trust now that Ashok Jugnauth wants to leave the trust?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle! I want some order!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the sign of people in panic when they leave the ring and they run away. When he was speaking, I sat here peacefully and quietly listening to him. When truth hurts, people have to leave the House. And it’s good that he is leaving the House. That saved me a trip of my ambulance and of my SAMU to the hospital.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say one thing about hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun. I have high respect for her. I always have high respect for her and I don’t think after her speech

my respect for her will diminish in any way. I must say she is quite a nice lady. I must admit that. But, on a point that she raised, I must set the clock back to the time that it has to be.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, she was speaking about centre for elderly. It is very strange with this Opposition. They never thought about poverty. We created the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. It was this Government and the hon. Prime Minister, my boss, who in 1996 and 2000, initiated the construction of the first ever elderly house at Pointe aux Sables. It is this very Prime Minister who initiated the second construction of the second elderly house at Belle Mare in 2009. It is again this very Prime Minister who initiated the third construction of the elderly house at Pointe aux Piments. It is again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this very Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam who is initiating the construction of the fourth centre for the elderly at Riambel. Four at a row, by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam! And who has the guts to criticise, to make comments? It's the Opposition, when they have not made a single room, created a single bed for any of the elderly in this country.

(*Interruptions*)

Can you imagine what a tragedy we are living in this House at this hour of the night, at 11.00 p.m! I should have been sleeping, but because of what they are saying in this House and to the nation at large, it is high time that we put them in their place, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, come to the remarks made by both hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee and my good friend, hon. Dr. S. Boolell, the spokesperson and *Ministre fantôme de la santé*.

(*Interruptions*)

I think, maybe the word is incorrect, I withdraw the word. I apologise for that.

(*Interruptions*)

On dit shadow Minister of Health. *En français c'est comme ça.* Maybe it is offensive. I withdraw the word.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would wish to make a few comments, at a later stage, about remarks made by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee and hon. Dr. S. Boolell with regard to the Health Sector in Mauritius. I am a bit confused. I don't know whether there is one Opposition, two Oppositions, or three Oppositions. I don't know how the competition is going among them. I can appreciate the position of hon. Dr. S. Boolell. He is from the official Opposition, he is a spokesperson on health and he is a respected Doctor, we all agree on that. But then, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee has also taken the privilege and the habit of making comments on health after having served for a few months in the Ministry. It is a privilege, it is her right. But, I will come to that in a minute.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget under the title 'Building a Better Mauritius. Creating the Next Wave of Prosperity' is one, in my view, of the best fitting title of the third Budget presented by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Duval. Here I would wish to also congratulate the hon. Prime Minister who has, under his visions and leadership, *marche cote à cote avec le Vice-Premier Minister pour la présentation du budget.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all agree that the world and the economy in Europe and many of the BRIC countries are going through economic recessions resulting in sluggish economic growth, mass unemployment, waiving of state social programmes, drastic reduction in public expenditure. Even though with this background, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, economic growth in the European countries varies from 1 to 1.9% and countries no less than France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom are facing severe economic difficulties. Fortunately, Mauritius has so far been spared of such an economic tragedy. Our economy continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience to the daunting challenges of the post 2008 global economic downturn.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget addresses and formulates strategies to enhance both domestic and Foreign Direct Investment, create jobs, reduce poverty, build infrastructure, diversify our economy while concurrently sustaining and consolidating our welfare policies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the first time and it is good that we point out that since we have assumed office in 2005, the per Capita Income was Rs153,000 per head and today it is

Rs279,000 per head. Despite all the criticisms that were laid by the Members of the Opposition, they were not courageous enough to inform the House and population that we have managed successfully to increase per Capita Income by 81% since we assumed office and hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam is Prime Minister.

The economy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, grew at 4% on average since we assumed office in 2005 to 2012 and on top of that life expectancy has increased from 72.4 years to 73.7 years in 2012. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we owe this remarkable achievement to three things.

First, the population, for the trust they have placed in the Government and the successive hon. Minister of Finance and the leadership of hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Secondly, we owe this achievement to the foundations of the Welfare State which Government has observed and by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

Thirdly, to our Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam for his unflinching commitment to transform our economy and build a better future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must make a few comments on the main proposals made in this Budget and, in particular, I must congratulate hon. Duval for making provisions for the development of an ocean economy and the setting up of the two deep ocean water application projects. Again, with regard to the maritime service hub and in particular, setting up and making Mauritius a platform in the region for bunkering facilities and other activities linked to international trade. Also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to making of Mauritius in this part of the Indian Ocean, an aviation hub that will further consolidate our economic activities, the enhancement of strategies to develop Mauritius into a green economy and to realise the very purpose of *Maurice Ile Durable vision*. Last but not least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the *ouverture d'esprit* of this Government, our foreign policy, economic diplomacy, hon. Duval who has been nominated two times as the Best Minister of Finance for the Continent of Africa is opened up and he is gearing Mauritius by creating the Mauritius Africa Fund under the stewardship of the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Ramgoolam. And also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, almost 48% of the Budget is concentrated and allocated to sustain the very fundamental foundation of our Welfare State.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say something and allow me to put the whole Budget in the context of the health budget. In the year 2014, the Budget of the Ministry of Health is Rs9.2 billion. This compared to last year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is an increase of Rs547.8 m. Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP on health will increase from 2.36% of the current financial year to 2.41% of the financial year 2014. Per capita expenditure on health which is at present Rs6,917 will increase to Rs7,063 in the financial year of 2014.

Considerable investment in health over the past years have already started to yield promising result and today, allow me to share with you some of the major health indicators of the Mauritian population which have been improving steadily over the past decade. Life expectancy at birth which was one of the best indicators of the health status of a population has increased from 67.4 years to 70.2 years for men and from 74.6 years to 77.3 years for women in the year 2002. This represents an increase of 2.8 years for men and 2.7 years for women. Under five-mortality rate per 1000 live birth was 15.3 in 2010 compared to 17.9 in 2000. These figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, compared favourably with those of the upper middle income. Nonetheless, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to face the reality. Once we have made considerable progress on many fronts, we are facing a number of major challenges, namely an ageing population, burden of non-communicable diseases, the continuing threats of communicable diseases, emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases, and impact of climate change on health. We have just seen recently what has happened in the Philippines and Indonesia and we are witnessing what is happening in part of the USA and part of Europe. It is high time that we wake up to the fact that climate change is having a direct impact on the health of the population whether it is in the Far-East, in Europe or in America.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would wish to mention that some of the important measures announced in the 2014 Budget to enable us to address these challenges more effectively. I would comment on the implementation of the Primary Care Physical project, on measures to address diabetic care, setting up a National Cancer Agency, modernising of infrastructure and State-of-the Art equipment, capacity building and expansion of human resource base, increase statistic for assistance for overseas treatment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now to make a few comments on what was said in this House by both simultaneously and differently, at different stages by both hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee

and hon. Dr. S. Boolell. With regard to NATReSA I answered the questions, but I was quite surprised that in the House, when the hon. Member said and I quote –“The problem of drugs *a été banalisé.*” That is by me. I have to remind the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I assumed Office, NATReSA was in disarray. The hon. Leader of the Opposition put the question to me and I answered to him that the first thing that I did, I carried an audit of NATReSA. Subsequently, I then reorganised NATReSA and a new Manager was appointed to manage its affairs. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has also included the formulation of a strategic plan 2013 and 2016.

I am quite surprised that when the hon. Member was commenting on the Budget made the remarks that the sensitisation campaign conducted by NATReSA is a flop. The figures speak for themselves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How could it be a flop, when the consumption of alcohol which was 41 litres per head, in 2009, has been reduced to only 38 litres, that is, three litres per head. How could it be a flop when the number of cigarettes sticks consumed per capita in 2009 was 1071.5, and it was reduced to 759, almost 250 less sticks of cigarettes consumed by every individual on average in this country? And if this is a flop, then I would ask myself what is a success with regard to the campaign done by NATReSA - with regard to substance abuse!

Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee made the comment, and I am sure hon. Aimée who is here will listen to this, and my good friend also hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines who is a Member of Parliament for this constituency when it was said that the Dr. Yves Cantin Community Hospital is a *dispensaire*, it cannot be. It bears the very name of a community hospital. It is surprising, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir , that the hon. Member who was herself a Minister of Health could not make the difference between *un dispensaire* and a community hospital. Though she was a Minister of Health, though she represents Constituency No. 14 for many years now, she is not aware that Yves Cantin is not a *dispensaire*, but a community hospital just in the same way and manner as that of Long Montagne. Maybe, she is not even aware, but she has been to Yves Cantin, she has been to see the people there when she was Minister of Health, she would have seen a commemorative plate there, where is printed the name of the Prime Minister, hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, who opened it on 26 February, and it was converted into a community hospital in 1997, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I assumed Office as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, some Rs400 m. have been spent on infrastructural project and a further amount of Rs500 m. on the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment. Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Budget 2014, an amount of Rs1.2 billion has been earmarked for the infrastructural work and purchase of other modern equipment.

Now, let me come to the comments and general remarks made by my friend hon. Dr. S. Boolell: "Health is not wealth; in Mauritius there is no health without wealth." It is amazing. Hon. Dr. S. Boolell - I must admit this, I have a high respect for him as a Doctor - has served for so many years - and respected also - as a Police Medical Officer in the public sector in Mauritius. You tell me, and to this House that Health is not wealth in Mauritius, when in Mauritius there is no health without wealth, when this Government spent Rs9.2 billion in the health sector, when this Government employs more than 15,000 people in the health sector, when in the health sector almost 5 million people visit our hospitals, mediclinics and area health centers!

Let me remind the hon. Member, if health is not wealth, then how come for this financial year, this Government has allocated Rs25 m. for those who go on dialysis. Does the hon. Member want us to believe that we select people, only the rich get their medicines and the poor is left stranded? No! Absolutely, no, hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we have introduced the drug eluting stent this year - on the request of the Prime Minister - for people who have heart problem, does the hon. Member want us to believe that those Doctors choose only those who have money, to have the drug eluting stent or do we give it to each and every citizen of this country who required the stent? Free of charge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we have introduced this year, almost per patient Rs500,000 on medication with regard to breast cancer, is this only for the rich or indistinctively of whether you are rich or poor, because we believe in universal health care.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say this to the hon. Member. We introduced Rs200,000 as financial support to those who cannot be operated in Mauritius and we send them overseas. It was this Government that, last year, increased *le seuil de* R200,000 à R500,000, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Again this very Government, increased it from from Rs500,000 to Rs800,000.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fail to understand a man of the intelligence of hon. Dr. S. Boolell. He should know that there is a mechanism set up at the Ministry of Social Security, that those whose income in whatever way *inn dépasse* Rs50,000 would not be entitled to that. So, if the health was wealth, then the Rs800,000 would be allocated to only those who have an income of more than Rs50,000.

In fact, what hon. Dr. S. Boolell said, is the contrary. That is the truth, the bear truth and nothing but the truth, hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to cancer. This is quite amazing again.

(*Interruptions*)

The hon. Member, a learned friend, Doctor by profession - though it is dead bodies it does not matter, but he is a Doctor. The Budget gives it six lines....

(*Interruptions*)

We now evaluate budgetary measures by the number of lines appearing in the Budget! But then, if the budget of education is almost Rs12 billion, then it should have occupied 20 pages in the Budget. If the Budget of Social Security is almost above Rs10 billion, then another 20% of the pages of the Budget. If I follow your line of saying ...

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

Mr Bundhoo: ...and in the case of hon. Minister Bachoo - such a massive Ministry - if he was going to be allocated a number of pages in the Budget, then among us four, hon. Minister Bachoo, hon. Minister Bappoo, hon. Dr. Bunwaree and myself, we would have occupied almost the 70% of all the lines of the Budget - if I follow your readings.

That is not the way it goes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but for the benefit of the hon. Member, let me inform the House that a Cabinet Memorandum ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr S. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Please take your seat! Nobody has the right to interrupt the hon. Minister who is speaking at the moment!

(Interruptions)

Sit down I said! I am talking to hon. Minister Aimée as well! No hon. Member has the right to interrupt the hon. Minister who is speaking. This applies to everyone who is interrupting.

Mr Bundhoo: Now Dr. Boolell, it is OK, don't worry about it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please proceed!

Mr Bundhoo: I am making a statement. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to remind the House that there has been a Cabinet Memorandum...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: ...followed by press release on Cancer Agency which gives details regarding the functions of that Agency.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Can I proceed, please?

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind the House that there has been a Cabinet Memorandum followed by press release on Cancer Agency which gives details regarding the functions of the Agency. I wish, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the benefit of the House and, in particular, for the benefit of the hon. Member, because he is not here anymore, to table a copy of the press release with regard to cancer. The press release, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is here, the National Cancer Agency and it gives a full description of what the Cancer Agency has to undertake - carry out institutional analysis on Cancer Care in Mauritius; be responsible for population wide sensitisation campaign; set up national guidelines and protocol

based on international best practice; update continuously the National Cancer Action Plan; be a centre of excellence for the region of management, and, on top of that, it made provisions for a sum of Rs40 m. allocated for the setting up of the National Cancer Agency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For the benefit of the House, I am laying a copy of this communiqué for Members to see when they are back.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, I wish to remind Members that Professor David Caya, Professor of oncology at Pitié-Salpêtrière and adviser to former President Chirac on cancer, was in Mauritius and held a conference here and also the Cancer Agency, Professor Abega Mobo was also here...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Bundhoo: On the breast cancer...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please proceed!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, both experts have made presentations and global epidemiology of breast cancer at which all Doctors were again invited.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, two experts from World Health organisation will soon be visiting Mauritius in order to assist us with regard to implementing a strategy of training for palliative care programme.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to enumerate measures implemented so far by this Government and measures plan in 2014 with regard to cancer care. A National Cancer Control Programme and Action Plan 2010/2014 is being implemented. Work on this plan was kick-start as early as 2007. It is important to remind ourselves that Mauritius is one of the few African and Asian countries to have a National Cancer Plan that will impact positively in its whole population.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are planning to relocate the cancer patient to new wards which are above the Accident and Emergency Department at Victoria Hospital by mid 2014. Procedure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been initiated for the building of a Bunker

and installation of a new linear accelerator at Victoria Hospital to the tune of Rs211 m., the digital mammography equipment is already operational since February 2015.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me again to say something, and I quote what hon. Dr. Satish Boolell said with regard to diabetes –

“Diabetes seems to be the general word that you introduce in any budget when you have nothing else to add.”

In fact, such a remark coming from the spokesperson of the MMM is not surprising given the poor state of diabetes care in this country prior to July 2005. Diabetes was being treated as in the dark ages in spite of this condition...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Khamajeet, can't you afford to remain silent and listen to the Minister.

Mr Bundhoo:...of the population. Very basic blood tests such HbA1c which were of paramount importance for the treatment of person with diabetes was not being carried out. Nobody has ever heard of pediatrics and diabetes specialist nurses.

No National Eye Screening Programme was in place. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, every week we use to send about five to seven patients for Advanced Eye Treatment to Chennai, India. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am shocked the hon. Member mentioned, and I quote –

“This year is going to be a national diabetes register.”

So what! I am confused. Allow me to quote an extract from paragraph 361 at page 42 of the Budget Speech of hon. Duval. I quote –

“(...) a National Diabetes Register and a National Diabetes Management System (DMS) to improve follow-up care and treatment.”

That's what was stated in the Budget. Anybody who has got some minimum intelligence would understand that a consequence of a register is the DMS, that is, the Diabetes Management System. All experts in diabetic, Professor Owen, Professor Zimet, Professor Sir George Alberti who always come to Mauritius, are adamant that a National Diabetes Register is a fundamental

prerequisite for planning and modernising diabetic care. The hon. Member seems to contradict all these experts.

Allow me to remind the hon. Member about measures taken by this Government regarding diabetic care, the introduction of analogue insulin and free glucose. The Diabetes and Vascular Health Centre in Souillac. Diabetologists have been recruited in 2012, diabetes specialist nurses have been trained from Glamorgan University, an additional of 61 nursing officers are presently undergoing training at the Mauritius Institute of Health to become diabetes specialist nurses.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the introduction of the new National Diabetes Management System, it is quite unfortunate that hon. Dr. S. Boolell has chosen to leave the House or otherwise he would have known what the DMS is all about. But nonetheless, I guess he would be able to pick it up from the Hansard. The DMS, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a software which is web-based and linked to the diabetes register. The DMS is an important decision supporting system which is used as an epidemiological tool for surveillance of diabetes. It is useful for medical audit and analysis of the National Diabetes Register and other data to guide on diabetes policies. It is designed for hospital and health care providers for management of diabetic patients, particularly for the follow-up, control and compliance. In this respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bidding documents are being prepared for the DMS and is expected to be operational in 2014. As I said earlier, it is only consequential after having set up the National Diabetes Register.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget makes provision for the setting up of a National Diabetic Retinopathy Grading Centre. Also the setting up of a structured Diabetic Foot Care Services and to attain our objective with regard to the Diabetes Management System, National Diabetic Retinopathy Grading Centre and the Diabetic Foot Care Services, we are making provisions for the recruitment and training of 25 nurses in these specific categories. Also advertisement has already been published by the Public Service Commission for the recruitment of four additional Diabetologists, and God willing, by January, next year all these Diabetologists will be in post in their respective regional hospitals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, it is quite unfortunate that hon. Dr. S. Boolell has chosen to make a walkout. In fact, it would have been important for him to listen to this. I would come to this in a minute. I would quote what he said -

“We do not need either Bordeaux or London to train anybody in Primary Health Care.”

Can you imagine this? A Doctor by profession, standing in this House and telling us that we do not need anybody from Bordeaux or London or from anywhere in the world to come and train our Doctors, Primary Health Care Physicians when Government has decided, in its wisdom, to train a first batch of 40 Primary Health Care Physicians, Specialists and to have them placed in specific regions, in order, to kick up the Primary Health Care Service.

Hon. Dr. S. Boolell says that we do not require any collaboration, any cooperation with any institutions from overseas to train Primary Health Care Physicians in Mauritius. I cannot see hon. Dr. Jeetah. Only hon. Dr. Jeetah could bear testimony to what I am saying. Two or three weeks ago, I went to see him in his office and I asked him, as Minister for Tertiary Education, to initiate discussions and negotiations with Bordeaux University and Imperial College in order to enable Mauritius to train their Doctors in Primary Health Care, through the collaboration of the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Health. And a Doctor by profession, spokesperson of the Opposition, stood in this House and said that we do not require anyone from overseas to train the specialists. If this is true, we have to close the University of Mauritius, we close the University of Technology, we close the Mauritius Institute of Health and then God knows, who is going to do the training.

Let me carry on! Hon. Dr. S. Boolell, in his speech said that when he went to the Victoria Hospital, he apparently went through five Doctors, and finally he came across an ambulance driver and a nursing officer who removed a piece of wood from his finger, which incidentally, he, himself, as a senior Doctor could not remove. Can you imagine in 2013, a Doctor standing in his House, and telling you that he has been to Victoria Hospital and he has been through five Doctors and nobody can extract a piece of wood from his fingers? Finally, a Care Assistant - or I don't know a driver - removed this piece of stick from his fingers. He, himself, has been a Doctor serving for 30 years and he cannot remove a single piece of wood from his own fingers. I wonder what he has been doing for 35 years in the Mortuary.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member seems ignorant of the modern requirement for planning and organising a specialised training. How many Professors in Primary Health Care do we have in Mauritius? How many *Médecins de Famille* do we have in Mauritius? How would he train *Médecins de Famille* without any input from Professors in Primary Health Care and without *Médecins de Famille* from overseas? It is clear that he is an *amateur* in his thought. He is completely outdated and he believed in Artisanal Medical Training, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Nursing cadre! I cannot believe that when he was speaking. If anyone would dare to go into his speech, he would see this. I don't want to take the time of the House to quote what he said. Do you know what he said?

“Instead of doing what you are doing, we should encourage to have, at least, one nurse in every family and export our nurses.”

As if we come back to the 1970's, when one of the famous writers, Mr V.S. Naipaul, described Mauritius as a nation of nurses. When we have a Prime Minister who created the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Research and when we have the ambition to produce a graduate per family, the spokesperson of the Opposition wants us to provide and to produce one nurse per family and export them. Could you believe that this House and this Opposition have come to this level? I just saw hon. Guimbeau. Let me remind him that I am the first Minister of Health who, over three years, have recruited 1,000 nurses.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Bundhoo: I am, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first Minister of Health who have converted Certificate in Nursing into Diploma in Nursing. Let me also inform the hon. Member that we have two schools of nursing, one is in Victoria Hospital and one is in the North, that is, in the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Hospital. Let me also remind the hon. Member that we have employed this year, 370 Medical Officers for this country and we are about to employ another 75 Specialists in order to run the services on a 24-hours basis for the first time in the history of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me carry on with a few other things - the implementation of the shift system and physical presence of specialists in certain fields on a 24-hour basis in regional hospitals. This also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a first ever. Hon. Dr. Rashid Beebejaun, the Deputy Prime Minister, has served in the highest position before he joined politics. Hon. Dr. Kasenally has also served in the hospital as RHD before he joined politics. Hon. Dr. A. Boolell and the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Ramgoolam have served, and I am not so sure if hon. Dr. Bunwaree has served. But it is the first time in this country that a specialist will be present on a 24-hour basis in the hospital for post and prenatal, be it, gynaecologists, paediatricians or anaesthetists. This is the doing of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the first time that next year in January, the Accident and Emergency Department will be manned by Doctors on a shift system. Gone will be the days when Doctors will be working for 31 hours in a row, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! And still, these two hon. Members see no progress in the Health Sector. I think, I will organise visits for them at the Eye Hospital in Moka.

Quality of Care and National Examination prior to examination of Doctors and Dentists - the hon. Member is telling us that we should have chosen an International Examination, which would give our Doctors access to the US market, English market and Australian market. It defeats me, honestly when I was listening to him. May be the hon. Member did not realise that the exams in Canada are meant for Doctors to practice medicine in Canada. The PLAB in the UK are meant for Doctors to practice medicine in the UK. So, the exams in Mauritius are meant for Doctors to practice medicine in Mauritius. But if this is true, if those who are qualified in Mauritius passed their exams in Mauritius, if they go to the UK tomorrow morning, they still would have to take the exams because the United Kingdom is an independent country and it has its own entry exams. It is a sovereign country. This is the way it goes everywhere. And even if the Doctors, qualified in the UK, want to practice medicine in certain other countries, they have to follow the rules of that country. Even if you pass the exams in India and if you want to practice medicine in the United Kingdom, you have to go through PLAB. If you want to go to Canada to practice medicine, you have to do the same thing. If you want to go to Australia, you

have to do the same thing. So simple, basic, fundamental argument is beyond the reach and understanding of the hon. spokesperson of the Opposition!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, amendments have been brought to the Medical and Dental Council Act, as announced in the Budget 2013 for following measures to be implemented. For the first time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, basic minimum qualifications are now mandatory to embark on medical and dental studies.

Gone are those days when you would go to any country to do medicine, with five 'O' Level or any kind of 'A' Level. We have set the basic requirement. Simultaneously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a national examination has been made compulsory for medical and dental graduates prior to their registration. A Post-graduate Examination Board has been set up for the registration of medical and dental practitioners to practice as specialists in Mauritius. Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, measures are being taken to make CPD mandatory. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, lots are being done to decentralised the services in the hospitals.

With regard to chemotherapy services, this is now being decentralised to SSR National Hospital, Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. Dialysis services are available at the Souillac Hospital. A new Cardiac Unit, Angiography, is operational at Victoria Hospital. A Thalassemia Unit has already been set up at Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Endoscopy Unit, this also has been set up at SSR, Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Jeetoo Hospitals.

The modernisation of infrastructure and acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment will continue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With regard to the Women Health Institute, lots have been done. The consultant firm has already carried out the feasibility study for the construction of the paediatric hospital. Also, with regard to the Women Health Institute, the consultant, that is, the strategic networking consultant, has submitted the inception report, and the draft feasibility report is expected to be ready by December this year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Another thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The infrastructural project will continue and will forge ahead. We will refurbish the ENT Hospital, and a new block will be constructed. Four new wards will be constructed at Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital to the tune of Rs126 m. Community Health Centres at Grand' Baie, Phoenix and Bel Air will be constructed, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir. Construction of Block D and Block E at Flacq Hospital will be initiated this coming year, to the tune of Rs426 m. A new Outpatient Department at S. Bharati Eye Hospital will cost around Rs120 m. The feasibility study for the construction of a Community Hospital at Agalega has already been initiated. A provision for more than Rs900 m. has been made in the Budget 2014 for new infrastructure and equipment. Renovation of the Intensive Care Unit at SSR Hospital is undergoing to the cost of Rs37.4 m. The Triolet Medic-clinic is already operational. Upgrading and renovation works in hospitals will proceed to the tune of Rs60 m. Phase 3 of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital has already started, and is costing Rs175 m. Improvement of the wastewater infrastructure at SSR Hospital to the tune of Rs180 m. is ongoing.

Goodlands Medic-Clinic to the tune of Rs75.9 m. is expected to be handed over in February 2014, and will be operational in March 2014. With regard to the New Operating Theatres and Wards at Victoria Hospital to the tune of Rs525 m., construction works are expected to be completed by December 2014, and operational in April 2015. The new 64-slice CT Scan Angiography Machines at Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital for 2013 have already been purchased. Mammography at the Victoria Hospital to the tune of Rs45 m. is operational. Liquid and Ion Chromatography for Government Analysis Division to the tune of Rs11.7 m. is operational at Victoria Hospital. There is an Intra-aortic Balloon Pump at Cardiac Centre to the tune of Rs2 m. New Water Treatment Plan for Dr. A. Jeetoo Hospital, costing Rs3 m., is completed. Neo-natal ICU Ventilators for SSR Hospital, costing Rs4 m., is already done. There is a Central Monitoring System for cardiac patients at Dr. A. Jeetoo Hospital to the tune of Rs8 m.; and I can go on and on like this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The future acquisition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the 64-slice CT Scan X-ray and Fluoroscopy for Flacq, Dr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Victoria Hospitals to the tune of Rs45 m. Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have made provisions for 2015 for the recruitment of additional specialists/senior specialists, medical and health officers, almost 175 Pre-registration house officers, and 300 nurses additional in the coming years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to public health, none of the improvements and developments that I have mentioned so far could have taken place without a solid foundation of overall safety and hygiene in our living environment. Thus, no effort is being spared by my Ministry to prevent the resurge of vector-borne and other communicable diseases such as

Chikungunya, Dengue and Malaria, as well as to prevent the introduction of emerging epidemic prone diseases such as Avian Influenza, Rift Valley Fever, and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), the Coronavirus. In this respect, surveillance activities have been reinforced within the country and in the region.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to improving or immunising system of the new born and child survival, provision has been made in the Budget 2014, for the first time, to enable us introduce two additional vaccines, namely Rotavirus and Pneumococcal vaccines, in our expanded programme of humanisation to the tune of Rs48 m.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to make a few comments before I conclude, with regard to clinical health care waste management. Several times, several hon. Members of the House have raised this issue with me, whether it is Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospital or Flacq Hospital. But, one of the hon. Members who was very persistent and with whom I had, at least, three meetings in my office, is hon. Abdullah Hossen. I have the pleasure to announce to this House today, that Government has made a provision of Rs4 m. to conduct the first study with regard to clinical health care waste management.

I have to assure one thing to hon. Abdullah Hossen, namely that hon. Dr. Kasenally and hon. Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun, the Deputy Prime Minister, have taken the issue with me. I am of the firm opinion that it is high time that Mauritius has a central incinerator for clinical wastes. Therefore, I do not think that the appropriate place would be in any hospital, because Victoria Hospital is overcrowded, and there are people living in the surroundings. So are Dr. Jeetoo and Flacq Hospitals, and all the hospitals. I visited Reunion Island – as I have explained to hon. Hossen last time when I spoke with him – and it has a central incineration, which is environmentally very friendly. But I am not in a position; I am not an expert, and we do not have the experts in Mauritius. I have raised this issue with hon. Bachoo, and we agreed that we should call in an expert from overseas, with the help of the World Health Organisation, to conduct a study as a matter of emergency. Hon. Duval has agreed to earmark funds for a central incineration for medical and health wastes in this country. I hope that it will be done as soon as possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite all these measures, I have been taxed of having no leadership and no vision by the spokesperson on health issues from the Opposition. I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, explained at length the major reforms which I have initiated to improve the quality of health, namely –

- in-depth reform of primary health care level and at hospital levels;
- review of the model of delivery of cancer services, and for diabetic care;
- capacity building, including recruitment of an unprecedented number of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff;
- embarking on implementation of bold measures to improve the quality of doctors and nurses;
- examination for doctors;
- basic qualification requirement;
- post-graduate Board for registration of specialists;
- mandatory Continuing Programme of Development;
- upgrading of Certificate of nursing to Diploma;
- modernising of infrastructure and equipment,
- introduction of new hi-tech services, and above all
- decentralising all these services.

I agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, especially when hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee accused me of lack of leadership. I agree that I do not have the leadership that she has. Do you know why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? There is a very simple reason why I do not have the leadership. I do not have the leadership, on a 22nd December, to actually terminate the sale of a private clinic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

I do not have the leadership to actually terminate the payment of a medic-clinic. Here, I would like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to submit a copy of the document submitted in this House by hon. Bérenger, when he puts his PNQ. The document is dated 28.12.2010. I am going to table this document with the courtesy of the hon. Leader of the Opposition - which he laid on the Table of the National Assembly in connection with the PNQ of 08.05.12. I do not have the leadership to conclude a sale from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Finance and from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Health. The payment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is of a

cheque to the tune of Rs144,701,300. I do not have this leadership. I beg for apology. I request the hon. Member of the Opposition, please, spare me of this leadership, my only ambition in life and to implement the vision of my Prime Minister, and the Labour led Government, with regard to Health and Quality of Life. I rest my case.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 21 November 2013 at 3.30 p.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 00.04 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 21 November 2013 at 3.30 p.m.