



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 10 AUGUST 2010**

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

<i>Members</i>	THE CABINET (Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)	<i>Members</i>
Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP		<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, GCSK, FRCP		<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK		<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth		<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo		<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell		<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS		<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK		<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha		<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree		<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo		<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun		<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK		<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah		<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo		<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun		<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée		<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee		<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee		<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum		<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK		<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah		<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed		<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma		<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen		<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
<i>Chief Hansard Reporter and</i>	Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie
<i>Sub-Editor</i>	
<i>Senior Library Officer</i>	Pallen, Mr Noël
<i>Sergeant-at-Arms</i>	Munroop, Mr Kishore

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 11 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 10 August 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

The Passports (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 156 of 2010).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Finance and Audit (President's Fund for Creative Writing) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 158 of 2010).

C. Ministry of Tourism and Leisure –

The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund as at 30 June 2009 (In original).

D. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reforms Institutions –

The Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 157 of 2010).

E. Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms –

The Civil Establishment (Amendment No. 2) Order 2010.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – TRANSPORTATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the transportation of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation –

- (a) and table copy of the formal invitation for Expression of Interest sent to six firms on 04 March 2008 and of their proposals, and
- (b) information as to –
 - (i) if a final agreement has been signed between Betonix Ltd and the Corporation, and
 - (ii) the control that will be exercised over the freight rates agreed upon between Betonix Ltd. and the Corporation and based on rebates available with regard to indicative market rates.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, following a detailed study undertaken by an independent international consultant in 2007, namely Maritime Logistics and Trade Consultancy, it was concluded that, were Mauritius to have its own tanker, there would be net substantial savings of USD12.6 m. and strategic advantages such as greater control over pricing, delivery, timing and volume of imports. The Consultant, accordingly, recommended the purchase of a double-hull tanker.

The other advantages that could be derived by encouraging investment in this project are as follows -

- (i) the bulk of profits will stay in Mauritius;
- (ii) there will be foreign exchange savings in terms of payment that would have been due to foreign tanker operators;
- (iii) a long-term transportation contract between Betamax Ltd and STC may help to stabilise and minimise freight rates in the national interest;
- (iv) Government will collect 15% as corporate tax;
- (v) the tanker being registered under the Mauritian Flag, Mauritian seafarers will have employment opportunities;

- (vi) all provisions and spare parts will be purchased through agencies in Mauritius, and
- (vii) Executive Ship Management Ltd of Singapore (ESM) being owner of more than hundred vessels, in case of breakdown, there will be no disruption at all in the supply.

The collaboration of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry was sought and 400 firms who were members of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry were invited to state whether they were interested in the project. Only six firms showed interest.

When a formal invitation for Expression of Interest was sent to these six interested parties on 04 March 2008 by the then Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, Betonix Ltd was the only one to submit a responsive proposal, to their acquiring and operating a double-hull tanker vessel for the transportation of petroleum products for Mauritius for a period of 15 years as from 2010. I am tabling a copy of the formal invitation for Expression of Interest. In view of confidentiality obligations inherent to procurement practice, a copy of the proposal received cannot be disclosed without the approval of the bidder.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be appropriate to inform here that in between the bid was submitted and the actual processing, the company Betonix Ltd had changed its appellation into Betamax Ltd.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, a contract of Affreightment was signed between Betamax Ltd and the State Trading Corporation Ltd on 27 November 2009. An Implementation Agreement between my Ministry and Betamax Ltd has also been signed on the same date. The agreement is based on the satisfaction of a series of conditions laid down in the 'Letter of Intent' given to the promoter in January 2009 and which are as follows -

- (i) Betonix Ltd to hold 85% and the ESM 15% of the shares in the new company which will own and manage the new tanker vessel;
- (ii) Betonix Ltd and ESM to fully finance the purchase of the double-hull tanker vessel from their own funds and without any financial commitment and involvement whatsoever from Government;
- (iii) the vessel shall be registered locally;
- (iv) freight rates to be charged in connection with the transportation of petroleum products would have to be jointly agreed upon between Betonix Ltd and ESM

on the one side and the State Trading Corporation on the other, and would be based on rebates available with regard to indicative market rate, and

- (v) on the understanding that the STC will provide the Joint Venture Betonix Ltd/ESM the guarantee of a 15-year captive cargo as long as the conditions which, I have just spelt out, are respected.

It is to be pointed out that it is only upon being satisfied that the conditions set have been fulfilled that Government decided to pursue with the proposal made by Betamax Ltd.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, as already mentioned, one of the conditions that needed to be met before the issue of the agreement, in principle, was that freight rates to be charged in connection with the transportation of petroleum products would have to be jointly agreed upon between Betonix Ltd and ESM on the one side and the State Trading Corporation on the other, and would be based on rebates available with regard to indicative market rate. Notwithstanding such an arrangement and with a view to properly safeguarding the interest of Government, the services of BDO De Chazal Du Mée (DCDM) were solicited to conduct an independent evaluation of the offer with focus on the comparative cost advantages that would be obtained from Betamax Ltd, if any, as opposed to the existing arrangements with the then carriers.

For the sake of ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of the evaluation, STC was required to provide to BDO DCDM all detailed workings and relevant data for the proper conduct of the evaluation exercise. In October 2009, DCDM submitted its report, and it concluded overall that the rate being proposed by the promoter is more competitive than what was being obtained. Apart from this factor, the agreement will yield to the country the other desired strategic advantages I referred to earlier. Thus, the rate per metric ton that has been agreed upon is premised of careful consideration of all the elements related thereto.

It is common practice worldwide for importation of strategic products to be entrusted to national carriers, as they can better defend national interests which remain their topmost priority.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister gets me wrong; we believe it is a positive step forward for Mauritius through Betonix to own an oil tanker and also what is done is done. But I want, for the record, to establish what has happened, that is, why, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a bit surprised why he won't lay a copy of the proposals of all the six companies. Can I remind the hon. Minister what happened? In 2007 - what the hon. Minister calls the project - it was for Government to purchase a tanker. Therefore, through the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, its members were asked who is interested to become a shareholder,

then it changed. I have to look at the copies of the formal invitation for Expression of Interest, but the project changes. Now, the project is for private entities to purchase a tanker.

Concerning the formal invitation for Expression of Interest – we have a copy - we were informed that five were non-responsive and only one was responsive. So, table the copies of the proposals of the six! Why won't the hon. Minister do it?

Mr Soodhun: I would like to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition, because, I think, this is a very good occasion to clear all the doubts. Personally, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no objection as I am doing it for the Expression of Interest. In due course, I would be very glad to circulate all the proposals. I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that all have to be done in transparency. We don't have any quarrel about this.

Mr Bérenger: Pending us having the six proposals - we have been told, and repeated today, that only one, that is, Betonix Ltd. was responsive - can I know from the hon. Minister in what way were the five others non-responsive?

Mr Soodhun: It is so simple; they did not comply with all the requirements. Let me explain! We set up a ministerial meeting when we had this issue. On top of that, after having the report of the meeting – I mentioned that in my answer – we said that there should be an independent consultant in order to clear all doubts that people may have.

Mr Bérenger: On a point of order, the consultant had nothing to do with the five non-responsive proposals. He looked at the proposal from Betonix and agreed. Fair enough! But the consultant had nothing to do with what the hon. Minister had said concerning the five other proposals. He should not mislead us.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not hiding anything. I can mention the names of the five that we have. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition wants the names, I can give him.

(Interruptions)

When these five were called to submit their requests - the technical side - they were not qualified. Some even ran away.

(Interruptions)

They did not submit them! Only one company did. Let me explain to the House!

(Interruptions)

I'll give the names: ABC Motors, Currimjee Jeewanjee, Abdullah Osman...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: As I have said earlier, I do not have any control on the answer of the hon. Minister.

(*Interruptions*)

That is the style of the hon. Minister!

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has said that he is going to table the six proposals. I hope he keeps his word. We will come back onto that. I did not hear whether the final agreement between Betamax Ltd and the State Trading Corporation has been signed and, if yes, is the hon. Minister prepared to table a copy of the final agreement?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't think there is any problem with the agreement. But I would like to explain about the contract. At the Ministry, we don't have any objection to table the document. Even as Minister, I am ready to table the document, but the problem is that Betamax Ltd. did not want. When one of the partners refuse that we make it public, we can't do so. The fact is that legally we can't do it.

Mr Bérenger: I move to the last part which is my big worry. How are the freight rates going to be fixed? Because these will impact directly on the price of diesel, *essence* and so on, on the consumers. Before I look at that in details and put specific questions, in the past we were buying petroleum products c.i.f., therefore, including freight. There was competition and STC picked the best offer of product price, premium, freight and so on. Since we are dealing with Mangalore and we are not purchasing on a c.i.f. basis, can I know how has the freight been handled? Is it Mangalore itself which is providing the freight, the vessels and so on? Is Mangalore fixing the rates, or who is doing it?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, Mangalore has nothing to do with the freight. It is not in c.i.f, but in f.o.b. We are buying from Mangalore in f.o.b. In fact, let me explain! When we started to buy, it was Mangalore Oil Refinery, but they refused...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bérenger: My question is on freight.

Mr Soodhun: Let me explain the event! Why Mangalore!

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister is explaining that, at the beginning, it was c.i.f.

Mr Bérenger: Not on freight! The Minister is explaining everything, except freight!

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Leader of the Opposition should listen. This is the main point. Mangalore refused to provide vessels and we had to go to the traders who are the *courtiers*. We did have problems with traders. Now, we are having a new vessel and we are proud of it. Even Seychelles has a vessel. Mauritius is the only country in this region which does not have a vessel.

Mr Bérenger: My question is simple. From what I understand - from what he says, it is not easy to understand...

(*Interruptions*)

He seems to be saying that since we are purchasing petroleum products from Mangalore, we have to go through *courtiers* to get freight. Who has handled that? Is it the STC? Have there been tenders?

Mr Soodhun: We are now dealing especially with the tenders and we have the benchmark, through which, we negotiate. This is why now nobody is going to invest...

Mr Speaker: Was the freight being negotiated by STC or others?

Mr Soodhun: It is the STC.

Mr Bérenger: With tenders?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already signed a contract of 15 years for the freight.

(*Interruptions*)

Before, yes, we had tenders for freight.

Mr Bérenger: It seems that it has been the same thing as rice. Who, finally, decides that they should take this ship owner or that one? I'll study the reply and come back. Can I know when the new tanker is going to be ready and the cost thereof?

Mr Soodhun: According to the information that we have, the vessel will be ready by April 2011.

Mr Bérenger: Can we know the cost?

Mr Soodhun: The cost of the vessel will be met by the owner, Betamax Ltd.

Mr Bérenger: We are going to pay. The more expensive the tanker is going to be, the more the freight rates are going to be. Have discussions taken place? What is the expected – since we can't be told how much it will cost – rate of return? What is the expected profit that the company will be allowed to make? Because this will be passed on to the consumers!

Mr Soodhun: It will cost about USD 20 m. to USD 25 m.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, more than Rs1 billion!

Mr Bérenger: The agreement says that the freight rates – which, I repeat, will be passed on to the consumers – have to be agreed jointly by Betamax Ltd. and the State Trading Corporation. From what I see, there is no arbitration in case there is deadlock. If STC and Betamax Ltd. do not agree, what happens?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, normally we have an agreement that the freight will be based on inflation. There is an escalation rate: two to five years, it is 1%; six to ten years, it is 1.5%.

Mr Bérenger: Of what?

Mr Soodhun: 1% of the inflation rate. Eleven to fifteen years, it will be 2% on the rate that we are now paying.

Mr Bérenger: Betonix Ltd. joined with the Executive Ship Management Ltd. of Singapore, they are specialist in that area. STC is now with professional respected leadership, but STC is not a specialist in that business. Government decided that the STC, like Betonix Ltd., will resort to expertise as required when we will reach the point where the detailed freight rates are to be agreed upon.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, a monitoring mechanism will be set up at the STC level. This is an occasion for me to inform the House that a reliable mechanism will be set up at the level of STC to constantly monitor the market rate and to ensure all the time that we enjoy the most favourable rates from Betamax Ltd.

Mr Bérenger: That is why my question is: we need outside international expertise, will the STC turn to such expertise through that committee or directly because it is a very specialised business?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, we are going to get international information. STC is well-organised and with the new General Manager who has the full confidence of the House, I am sure, if need be, as we did in the other cases, we are not going to hesitate to ask for it. That's what we are going to do; there is no problem with this.

Mr Bérenger: I insist that we need expertise. Is the hon. Minister aware that Worldscale Association (London) Ltd. – it is for the whole world apart for America – sets standard freight rates and so on? This is a reference. But is the hon. Minister aware that, although this professional work is done, the actual price negotiated between the ship owner and the charterer can range from 40% of the rates that they have calculated to 200%? It is a huge variation that brings a lot of variables into it. Can I ask the Government, the STC - because we have approved, what is done is done - whether we have already started the job of identifying which foreign expertise we are going to turn to?

Mr Soodhun: As I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, STC is going to monitor the whole situation. STC has the capacity - we cannot just say that they don't have the capacity - and, if need be, we are going to contact them. We are not going to hesitate on that.

Mr Bérenger: We will have one tanker. It is a good start. In case of non-availability of that tanker, breakdown or whatever - I wish them well, I don't want them to have accidents like in Mumbai harbour a few days ago - we are informed by the Minister that Executive Ship Management Ltd., owner of numerous vessels, will step in. From what I have read, Executive Ship Management Ltd. is a very efficient organisation, but they are in it for profit. If they have to step in, that clause, that freight rates, agreed between Betamax Ltd. and STC, will no longer apply. So, if we have to resort to vessels from Executive Ship Management Ltd., what is the mechanism through which the freight rates are going to be agreed upon?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, all this has been taken care of. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned, in case we have any problem, any default, there is a condition attached in the agreement. If there is any problem, Betamax Ltd. is going to provide the vessel. It is its own responsibility and it is in the contract and, on top of that, we have signed a contract with Mangalore. Mangalore will help us in such a situation.

Mr Bérenger: Probably, the Minister is not aware. What he has just said is different from what he said 10 minutes ago. Before, we were given the guarantee that in case the tanker is not available, Executive Ship Management Ltd., owner of so many vessels, will step in. Now, we are told that Betamax Ltd. will step in. It can't be both!

Mr Soodhun: We have an agreement with Betamax Ltd. and on the contract, this has been mentioned. We know it; otherwise we can't have any agreement in the world.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister one question which, I think is fundamental to the whole issue. He is talking of good procurement practice and so on. Since we have to give a guarantee of 15-year cargo to Betamax Ltd. and this project amounts to nearly one billion of rupees, since this Expression of Interest was issued in March 2008 and the Public Procurement Act came into effect in January 2008, and we are dealing with a major contract, doesn't the hon. Minister think that, this transaction should have been monitored by the Central Procurement Board and everything should have gone through this Board? The STC should never have issued directly an Expression of Interest and thus acted in breach of the PPA which came into effect in January 2008.

Mr Soodhun: The hon. Member says the contrary to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks.

(Interruptions)

What is done is done! Let me explain the hon. Member! We, in this country, have a lot of businessmen, many *cousins*, *cousines*, they never invested Rs2 billion. It is the first time in Mauritius that a Mauritian is going to invest and we already have a contract. Mr Speaker, Sir,

the contract was awarded after STC was exempted from the Public Procurement Act and, I think, as a lawyer, the hon. Member should know.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has made mention of the recruitment of Mauritians to work on the ship. Has the exercise for recruitment, identifying the different grades of Mauritians, who would be working on the ship, started?

Mr Soodhun: It is a very good question. I would like to congratulate the hon. Member. He is acting as a patriot now! We will have a training course which will start very soon and we are going to recruit Mauritians only.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem and then I'll come back to the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that there would be a price review mechanism. May I know from him how often would the price be reviewed? Will it be on every consignment, on a monthly basis, on a yearly basis, how often would the price be reviewed?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, as and when required.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two questions, if you will allow me. I just heard the hon. Minister saying that STC did not have to go through the Central Procurement Board because it was exempted from that. Can I ask him whether the STC is on the list of exempted bodies or was it exempted for that transaction only?

Mr Soodhun: It is on the list, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Yes! Go and check!

Mr Bérenger: My last question is: we are taking a big step forward which entails risks, will the hon. Minister agree with me that, between now and the coming into operation of the tanker, we should take every precaution? First, it is a strategic issue, vital for the whole economy, and secondly, it will have a direct impact on the consumers through the price of diesel, *essence* and so on, and that, therefore, we have to be very careful at every step.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his concern. I can assure him and the House that we are going to do our best and we will monitor it closely.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Ameer Meea!

PRIME MINISTER - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. 1B/423) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by him, since July 2005 to March 2010, he will, in each case, state the -

- (a) countries visited and duration;
- (b) composition of the delegation;
- (c) purpose, and
- (d) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem*, hotel accommodation and any other allowances.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in reply to a similar question in the House in the past, the composition of a Prime Minister's delegation is determined by the Prime Minister having regard to the nature and the purpose of each mission as well as to the profile or status of the members of the delegation and of other persons with whom meetings are to be held in the country visited.

It is an established practice that the public is informed by way of a Communiqué of my departure on each of my official mission overseas.

As regards countries visited, duration and the purpose of each mission, these are given wide publicity following consideration of the mission report by Cabinet.

As far as *per diem* is concerned, this is paid at the usual rates approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

I should like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that each of the official missions undertaken by me has been in the interest of the State and has yielded concrete and tangible benefits.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will table a list of the countries visited, the composition of the delegation and the purpose?

Mr Speaker: Sorry, the hon. Prime Minister has already answered that there were Communiqués which are public, Cabinet reports, etc. Next question!

MAURITIUS/CHINA - DIRECT FLIGHTS

(No. 1B/424) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to air traffic, he will state if Government is contemplating to have direct flights between Mauritius and China, with a view to enhancing the bilateral links between Beijing and Port Louis.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, an Air Services Agreement between Mauritius and the People's Republic of China exists since May 1995. This Agreement, *inter alia*, provides that each party can operate up to 14 weekly frequencies for passengers and cargo. However, there is no direct flight between Mauritius and China at present. Chinese tourists, especially, from the South East region have thus to fly through Hong Kong in order to travel to Mauritius. On the other hand, Air Mauritius is operating only three weekly flights on the route Mauritius-Hong Kong with the result that seat capacity during peak periods is lower than demand.

The unavailability of direct flight between Mauritius and China is no doubt constraining our strategy to tap and develop the tourism potential in China.

Accordingly, we are in the process of reviewing our policy for air traffic services on the Mauritius-China route with a view to creating more visibility on the Chinese market including fine-tuning the destination product to make it more attractive and responsive to the specific needs of the Chinese tourists.

During his recent mission to China, the hon. Minister of Tourism and Leisure met the vice-President of the China National Tourism Administration and in the course of the discussions, it came out that the number of Chinese tourists visiting Mauritius annually was around 8,000 and that figure represented, but a low percentage of the potential of the Chinese market, with some 40 million Chinese tourists travelling abroad every year.

It was felt that Mauritius is well poised to tap a greater share of this potential.

The Minister of Tourism and Leisure also held discussions with the representatives of the Hainan Airlines Company Ltd, which is the largest privately-owned air transport company and the fourth largest airlines in terms of fleet size in the People's Republic of China. He discussed the possibility of the company operating direct flights between China and Mauritius, especially, during the Chinese travelling peak seasons between October and

February of the following year. The representative of the company has shown a keen interest in the proposal and intends to visit Mauritius shortly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, talks are being held with Air Mauritius Ltd to explore the possibility of introducing direct flights to Shanghai.

I am sure all these measures will go a long way because the discussions are going on. This should go a long way towards enhancing the links between China and Mauritius.

SHAKERZ CLUB, VACOAS - POLICE LANDING

(No. 1B/425) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Shakerz Club, located at John Kennedy Avenue, Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a Police landing was effected thereat on Saturday 17 July 2010 and, if so, state the reasons therefor and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 12 July 2010 the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix drew the attention of the Police to a press notice regarding a party to be organised on 17 July 2010 at Shakerz Club, situated at John Kennedy Avenue, Vacoas, and this, in spite of the fact that the club no longer has a valid licence to operate.

On 17 July 2010, on the day, at about 13 45 hrs, a team led by the Assistant Superintendent of Police in charge of Vacoas Police Station together with other officers of the Vacoas Criminal Investigation Division, the Emergency Response Service and the Division Support Unit carried out a check at the club. About 250 persons were found drinking and dancing inside. 14 of them were taken to the Vacoas Police Station, but were allowed to go after enquiry. The Director of Fiction Ltd., which used to operate under the trade name Shakerz Club, was booked for “Operating a Discotheque without licence”. The Police enquiry is still ongoing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that since 08 April 2010, the Tourism Enterprise Licence previously issued to the firm Fiction Ltd. to operate as a private club under the trade name Shakerz Club has not been renewed by the Tourism Authority. On 04 May, 2010, the company has made an appeal to the Minister of Tourism and Leisure against this decision according to law. I understand the Minister of Tourism and Leisure has already turned down the appeal.

In view of the repeated offences, I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that a request has been made to the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands under Section 109(1) (c) of the Local Government Act 2003, for the issue of a provisional closing order.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to inform the House that the relevant authorities are also looking into the operation of all night clubs and private clubs with a view to taking appropriate action to eliminate all disturbances and to ensure that related unauthorised activities do not take place.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for this answer, but, as he is aware, this club has been flouting the law since years. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether any activity will not be carried out in this club as from now? Which activity will be carried out?

Mr Speaker: That would be illegal! There is no trading licence, no municipal licence, nothing! That would be illegal and the relevant institution is taking action to close it. Parliamentary Question No. 1B/426 has been withdrawn. Next question! Hon. Ganoo!

CHAGOSSIAN COMMUNITY - LET THEM RETURN RE-INSERTION PLAN

(No. 1B/426) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Let Them Return re-insertion plan designed to allow the Chagossian community to return on the Salomon and Peros Banhos islands, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

BLACK RIVER - LARCENY

(No. 1B/427) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to larceny and larceny by breaking, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of cases thereof reported to have been committed in the district of Black River, on a yearly basis for the years 2008 and 2009 and since January to July 2010, and

- (b) if consideration will be given to increasing the -
 - (i) Police officers posted, and
 - (ii) vehicles attached to the Black River Police Station.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there were 1008 cases of larceny in 2008, 754 in 2009 and 374 from January to July 2010 in the district of Black River.

Concerning larceny with breaking, 240 cases have been reported in 2008, 111 in 2009, and 82 cases from January to July 2010.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that there are 204 Police officers deployed in the 7 Police Stations of the district of Black River, including 29 posted at the Black River Police Station. The number of Police officers will be increased, wherever required in the Police Stations, as soon as the training of the 707 Trainee Police Constables is completed by the end of this month.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, there are 23 vehicles attached to the Police Stations in the district of Black River, including the 4 attached to the Black River Police Station.

In addition, I may also inform the House that the district of Black River is permanently covered by five Emergency Response crews and the Divisional Support Unit.

Mr Ganoo: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Mr Speaker, Sir, from the information I have, there are 38 authorised Police officers and, at the moment, there are only 28 as the hon. Prime Minister rightly answered. He answered 29, but one Police officer is on interdiction, I think. So, there are 28 Police officers presently working for the region of Black River. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it that this situation is corrected?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I just answered that there are 707 Trainee Police Constables who are about to, what we call, passing out parade and this is going to be completed, I think, this month.

Mr Ganoo: There was a project to set up a Police Station at La Gaulette because the whole area from Tamarin to Chamarel and to Le Morne is quite a huge area. Can the hon. Prime Minister also see to it that this project, once for all, comes to fruition, that is, a new Police Station at La Gaulette is finally set up?

The Prime Minister: I answered a question last week, I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Police are looking at the priorities, but I will certainly pass on that information to the CP.

TEXTO LTD. - INDIAN EMPLOYEES - DEPORTATION

(No. 1B/428) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the deportation of the twelve Indian employees of Texto Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if force was used in connection therewith and, if so, the circumstances thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 30 July 2010, the Human Resource Officer of Texto Ltd requested Police assistance on the following day at the dormitory of the expatriates at Roche Bois. The request was made because twelve Indian workers were to be repatriated on the same evening.

Accordingly, on 31 July 2010, the Police, assisting the Passport and Immigration Officers, proceeded to the dormitory at Roche Bois and escorted peacefully the twelve workers to the bus. There was no resistance on their part and no force was used by the Police against them. Nobody was injured and no complaint was received.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a few supplementary questions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member cannot have a few, he should have one first.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: I can have three in one. Let me start my question. Use of force is always a matter of controversy, my point is: is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, at the time these workers were deported, there was an ongoing strike by the employees of that factory and that, presumably, there was an ongoing inquiry by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and that it was therefore most improper and, in any case, unwarranted that these workers should have been deported with or without force?

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether that would be the case, Mr Speaker, Sir and you know how long these cases take place. In fact, I can tell you that some of them - I think there are 20 other expatriates - were still not working. They are staying at the dormitory of Texto Ltd., and have requested the company to make arrangements to send them back to India. And I know that the company has initiated formalities for their repatriation. They cannot come and decide; either they want to work or they don't want to work.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is aware of these issues. As soon as people protest, they get deported without the bonuses and without leaves being paid.

Mr Speaker: No. Can the hon. Member put the question?

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is, therefore, in this particular case and in all such cases: will the hon. Prime Minister agree to recommend that a proper coordination mechanism be set up between the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, the Immigration Authorities and the Police? The four deportations took effect at the request of the sole employer.

The Prime Minister: That is a good suggestion but, at the same time, I must say, you cannot have a soft approach in these cases, but the coordination is an important point.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, given that there is a risk that the country's reputation be tarnished by yet another international report, this time from the ILO, for instance and being given that we are all here descendants from migrant workers...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, please don't make any statement!

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Prime Minister recommend to the Police that these matters be treated with care so that the workers be treated with dignity and in a humane manner?

The Prime Minister: That is the case; they must be treated with dignity. But, at the same time, there is a law of the land.

PERSONS (DISABLED) – VOTING FACILITIES

(No. 1B/429) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the disabled persons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Electoral Supervisory Commission, information as to if measures have been taken to facilitate them exercise their right of vote at elections, and, if so, give details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Electoral Commissioner that for the last National Assembly Elections, the following instructions were given to facilitate persons with disabilities to exercise their voting rights -

- (i) vehicles carrying disabled voters to be allowed to alight the latter at the gates of the polling stations;

- (ii) an incapacitated elector to vote with the assistance of a close relative of his or her choice;
- (iii) explanations to be given in Mauritian Sign Language on television to enable deaf electors to understand the voting procedures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009 and ratified it in January 2010. I have been informed by the Electoral Commissioner that, in line with this Convention, and after consultation with all stakeholders, including disabled activists, the following additional measures are being contemplated for future elections so as to make the voting procedures more disabled friendly -

- (i) a separate voting room will be reserved for voters with disabilities on the ground floor of each polling station, as near as possible to the gate - such a room has already been identified in each polling station;
- (ii) one wheelchair for the moment - we will see if it is possible to increase the number - will be made available in each polling station;
- (iii) ramps are being constructed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure during the present school holidays in all polling stations where same will be required to allow wheelchairs to access the special voting room. I am informed that 75% of the works have already been completed;
- (iv) one booth in the special voting room will be lowered to the height of a wheelchair to facilitate voting by disabled electors, and
- (v) necessary sensitisation campaigns will be carried out by the Electoral Commissioner's Office, the Disability Unit of the Ministry of Social Security and the Organisations for Disabled Persons to ensure that disabled electors take advantage of the said voting facilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as can be seen, Government intends to fulfil its obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and will take all necessary measures to ensure that voting procedures and facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Dr. S. Boolell: Having been a witness to no less than four or five handicapped persons being turned away from one school in the Curepipe area, would the hon. Prime Minister consider advising the Electoral Supervisory Commission to bring on board *bona fide* NGOs of standing to assist in the ferrying of the handicapped persons towards the place

where they are expected to vote? Because, if I may, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only the relatives who have the responsibility to bring the voter to the *urne* and not the electoral agents and certainly the poll clerks are not very helpful.

The Prime Minister: It is a good suggestion, but the only problem is whether we would be able to do that during the voting process. It might be difficult actually to do it in practice, because how many NGOs are we going to attach to each polling station and what are their own political colours? We have to look at all these.

Dr. S. Boolell: Would it be possible for the Electoral Supervisory Commission to establish a register, per constituency, of handicapped persons that might help to know how many they have to cater for.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think that is also in the process of being done for each polling station, although it changes, as you know.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Prime Minister, at least, ask the Electoral Commissioner to sensitise, to train the electoral agents, the personnel of the electoral services? Sometimes, we have witnessed the way handicapped persons are treated. I, myself, have reported many cases, the way physically handicapped persons - who are already in difficulty and who are not accompanied at times - are treated.

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, I tend to agree with the hon. Member because I, myself, have witnessed, not in this election, but, I think, in 1991 where clearly it was not the treatment that we expected for handicapped persons. But these need training, people need to be sensitised because the problem is that the Electoral Commissioner might give instructions, but people have to be sensitised to know exactly what to do.

Mr Obeegadoo: I don't know what the hon. Prime Minister has in mind concerning the timing of municipal elections. But being given the serious problem which arose on the last occasion, will he press upon the ESC to see to it that these measures are implemented prior to municipal elections?

The Prime Minister: Yes, they will try their best, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Electoral Supervisory Commission is a small office. As for the timing, you know what they say, how long is a piece of string!

(Interruptions)

SUSPECTS - FINGERPRINTS

(No. 1B/430) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the suspects, he will state if Government will consider replacing the present system of the taking of their fingerprints by making use of scanners, with a view to dignifying the procedure.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, at present, fingerprints of a suspect are taken on fingerprint slips using fingerprint slab, ink and a rubber roller. This arrangement has been in place, as the hon. Member is suggesting, in the Police Force for years.

I have stated on various occasions in the House that my Government will spare no effort to invest in modern technologies with a view to providing the Police with the necessary tools. In line with this objective, the Police - the hon. Member will be glad to hear - have already initiated the process for the introduction of live scanners within the Force. There will also have to be necessary amendments to be made to the Criminal Procedure Act to allow the taking of fingerprints by way of scanners.

TELEVISION – PRIVATE OPERATORS

(No. 1B/431) Mr C. Fakemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to television, he will state if private operators will be allowed and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority that provisions already exist in the IBA Act 2000 for the Authority to issue licences to private television operators. However, one factor that may have, it seems, inhibited the advent of private television is the clause in the Act which restricts the limit of foreign shareholding in a company applying for a licence to 20% only.

In our Electoral Manifesto, it has been clearly mentioned that Government will facilitate the operation of private television in Mauritius.

Also in the Government Programme of 2010-2015, we have stated that Government will address the issue of shareholding in the electronic media.

In this regard, the IBA Act will be amended in the context of the overall media law reform being undertaken.

Mr Fakemeeah: Will the hon. Prime Minister ensure that there is no media cartel associated with any would-be private TV so that we can have a true democratisation of information and not by the same powerful players that are controlling the media today?

The Prime Minister: I think it is in line with our policy, Mr Speaker, Sir. We want to open up and let other people get the occasion. One of the things I have found is that, in certain areas, some people don't understand. We don't want to be against anyone, but we want to let other people have opportunities. Let them have opportunities! It can't be the same players all the time. In fact, competition is good in any case.

Mr Bérenger: I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that what is stopping private television from starting is not just the question of shareholding. The MBC has a head start; the MBC monopolises publicity. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that if we want private television to come to Mauritius, there must be the political will and Government must do the necessary for private television to operate and be profitable? No one will put their money in private television if they are not going to make a reasonable profit out of it. Therefore, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that there must be the political will and a push coming from Government that includes how we are going to treat the MBC in a new context?

The Prime Minister: I tend to agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I always say that to people; a case in point is the question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition this morning. Who would put money if there is no profit? Nobody is going to put money where there is no profit. We have to ensure that there is a level playing field.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister willing to have a look at increasing the 20% in shareholding so as to attract more potential investors?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister has just said that he is going to amend the law on this issue, which is restricting people from coming. He has said that he is going to amend the law.

Mr Guimbeau: The law will be amended to have a 20% increase.

Mr Speaker: I don't know. He has not said what percentage. When the Act will come, the hon. Member will have the opportunity to say how he wants it to be increased. Next question! Hon. Fakeemeeah!

JOURNALISTS – ALLEGED OFFENCES AGAINST

(No. 1B/432) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the journalists, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of cases reported against them in the performance of their duties, since July 2005 to date, indicating, in each case, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, for the period July 2005 to 05 August 2010, 30 cases have been reported against journalists by various parties for a variety of alleged offences, such as rogue and vagabond, harassment and defamation.

Police have carried out inquiries in all the cases, and the outcome is as follows -

- Filed : 2
- Dismissed by Court : 1
- No further action advised by Director of Public Prosecutions : 4
- Warning given to accused upon advice of Director of Public Prosecutions : 1
- Pending advice from Director of Public Prosecutions : 9
- Pending Court : 1
- Under inquiry : 12

Mr Fakeemeeah: I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister when there will be a reform and a true Press Council established.

The Prime Minister: As I mentioned in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are looking at the global media law. There is need for it. We don't know whether we should go for a Press

Council. Discussions are ongoing. We had a report from the eminent lawyer who was looking at our media law and who is himself an expert in media law. I have had a second discussion with him when I was passing through London, and he is coming to Mauritius hopefully towards the end of the year - as soon as he can, because he has got cases in court - to finalise the legislation.

Mr Ganoo: But, on the other hand, doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that we should legislate to make the aggression of journalists in the performance of their duties an aggravated form of assault?

The Prime Minister: I agree with the hon. Member, but I always say that when you have responsibilities, you have duties; you also have to respect the right of others. That is very important. I am very much concerned about privacy in this country. Everybody writes anything and very often it is false. How many times can you stand up? The sanction is not strong enough. I believe in sanctions that bite.

PAKISTAN – FLOOD – ASSISTANCE

(No. 1B/433) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the serious flood problem and the acute humanitarian situation prevailing in Pakistan, he will state if Government is proposing to financially support the Government of Pakistan and to launch an awareness campaign to that effect at the national level.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me, right at the outset, on behalf of the Government and people of Mauritius and in my own name, take this opportunity to convey once again my deepest sympathy to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the loss of life of more than 1,500 of its citizens - so far, this is the number we have - in the deadliest floods of its history.

Mauritius, of course, cannot remain insensitive to the difficult humanitarian plights that the citizens of Pakistan are facing. We have always, in the past, whoever has been in Government, shown solidarity to friendly countries which have suffered from natural disasters, and that is still the same.

I have transmitted, in fact, a message of sympathy to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 02 August 2010 after the floods started.

My Government has donated an amount of US\$300,000 as a gesture of solidarity to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to make an appeal to members of the public and the private sector to contribute generously to the “*Teledon*”, which will be organised by the Municipality of Port Louis on 26 August of this year.

MORCELLEMENT BOARD - APPLICATIONS

(No. 1B/434) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the applications for *Morcellement*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Morcellement Board, for each of the past five years, information as to the –

- (a) number thereof received, and
- (b) average time limit for the issue of the –
 - (i) Letter of Intent, and
 - (ii) *morcellement* permit.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of applications received for each of the past five years is as follows -

2005	482
2006	648
2007	589
2008	501
2009	524

In 2005, the average time taken for the issue of a Letter of Intent was 12 months. Today, the average time taken has been considerably reduced, following amendments brought to the Morcellement Act. The law now provides for a Letter of Intent to be issued within a specified time limit from the date of receipt of a complete application. The time limit is six weeks for applications in respect of schemes under the Sugar Industry Efficiency (SIE) Act and eight weeks for other cases.

Morcellement permits are issued after satisfactory completion of all infrastructural works by the promoter, subsequent to the Letter of Intent. Promoters of schemes under the SIE Act have to complete the infrastructural works within 15 months from the date of the Letter of Intent. The time limit for completion of infrastructural works for other projects is three years.

CENTRE DE PREPARATION AU MARIAGE

(No. 1B/435) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether she will state if Government proposes to set up the *Centre de Préparation au Mariage* at the national level, for the benefit of future married couples and, if so, when, and if not, why not.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government does not propose to set up “*Un Centre de Préparation au Mariage*” at national level. However, my Ministry is implementing its National Action Plan on the Family (2009), which has among its seven strategic objectives, Creating Strong Foundation – Strengthening Marriage Relationships.

In line with this strategic objective, my Ministry has enlisted the services of several resource persons and collaboration of the Diocese of Port Louis, the Anglican Diocese of Mauritius, the Arya Sabha, *l'Action Familiale*, the Indian Ocean Centre for Education in Human Values, the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association and the University of Mauritius, amongst others, to conduct capacity building for family counselling officers and psychologists of my Ministry to enable them to better conduct pre-marital counselling and marriage enrichment programmes.

Concurrently, preliminary consultations and discussions have also been initiated by my Ministry towards strengthening the institutional capacity of socio-cultural groups, the council of religions, the NGOs and universities, with a view to developing a new protocol to implement pre-marital counselling and marriage enrichment programmes.

There is no doubt that my Ministry is committed to creating strong foundations to strengthen marriage relationships through the implementation of its National Action Plan on the Family.

However, it is not the sole responsibility of Government to spearhead the pre-marital counselling and marriage enrichment programmes. Partnerships involving governmental, non-governmental organisations and civil society are, therefore, preconditions in the endeavour to strengthen engaged and married couple relationships. I seize this opportunity to

thank them all for their laudable efforts towards strengthening marriage enrichment programmes and pre-marital programmes.

I would like, Mr Speaker, Sir, to table here a list of the various programmes with the detailed information together with the different modules covered during these programmes and I am also tabling a series of the information, education and communication materials which have been published at the level of my Ministry.

PLAINE VERTE GARDEN - PROJECT

(No. 1B/436) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Plaine Verte garden, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if any project has been earmarked to be implemented at the level of the swimming pool up to that of the Paul & Virginie Street, and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the following projects have been earmarked to be implemented at the level of the swimming pool up to that of Paul et Virginie Street –

- (i) provision of high level chain link fencing to the tune of Rs500,000 in view of the creation of a play area, and
- (ii) renovation of garden (opposite of City Clinic) to the tune of Rs900,000.

I am also informed that both projects are in progress.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether a mini-football playground is being constructed there?

Mr Aimée: No, Sir. In fact, I have already answered that question of the hon. Member two weeks ago.

(Interruptions)

It is only a playground, not a football ground.

Mr Fakemeeah: Will the hon. Minister state when shall there be a swimming pool for Roche Bois?

Mr Speaker: It does not arise from this question. Does the hon. Member have another question?

(Interruptions)

Sorry! Let me hear the question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there have been many protests from the inhabitants of this area? They are against the cutting of trees as it goes against the concept of '*Maurice Ile Durable*'. We have removed a green space, a garden. There are only two gardens in Port Louis. What is happening in Plaine Verte is that each time we take land for the garden project, letters of protests...

Mr Speaker: Can I ask hon. Ameer Meea to be more precise? Are these projects going to end in cutting of trees?

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the inhabitants have protested against these constructions?

Mr Aimée: I don't have this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Carry on!

Mr Ameer Meea: I am surprised that the hon. Minister does not have the letter.

Mr Speaker: There is no need for the hon. Member to make a statement from what the Minister has said.

Mr Ameer Meea: In fact, letters have ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, order!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received the letter? Letters have been sent to the Deputy Prime Minister, to the Minister, to the Lord-Mayor and even to the Prime Minister?

Mr Speaker: Has the letter been sent to him?

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received a letter of protest from the inhabitants who are against this project?

Mr Aimée: Up to now, I am not aware, but if the hon. Member has got a letter, he can send a copy to me and I will do the needful.

Mr Ameer Meea: I shall table a copy, but this has been in the press and all the Members...

Mr Speaker: No comment! The hon. Member can lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is losing the time of the House.

GAMING ACTIVITIES - REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. 1B/437) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the revenue collected from gaming activities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount thereof collected per category of licence, for each of the years 2005 to 2010;
- (b) if a study has been carried out to assess the impact of gaming activities on the poorer section of the community, and
- (c) the measures that are being taken to curb the trend of addiction to gaming by the vulnerable groups.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, prior to 06 December 2007, the authority for granting gaming licences rested with the then Gaming Control Board which operated under the Gaming Act of 1973. The licences and taxes levied were payable to the then Commissioner of Value Added Tax Department and afterwards to the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

With the proclamation of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act of 2007 on 06 December 2007, the Gambling Regulatory Authority became the licensing authority and is responsible for the collection of licence fees and issue of licences to all operators of gambling activities listed under the said Act.

With your permission, Sir, I am placing in the Library of the National Assembly the information requested in part (a) of the question.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Gambling Authority will carry out a national survey on gambling behaviours, spending patterns, motivation and vulnerability. The tendering procedures are being finalised, at present. One expected outcome of the survey is that it would provide valuable information on the effects and impact of gambling on all the components of the Mauritian society.

As regards part (c) of the question, one measure initiated by the Gambling Regulatory Authority to curb the trend of addiction to gaming is the implementation of the concept of responsible gambling. The concept aims at initiating a number of measures for responsible gambling, such as sensitising the public at large about responsible gambling, make people aware of the existence, motivation and consequences of excessive gambling and, most importantly, to assist those who are confronted with a compulsive gambling problem at some point in time of their life.

The Gambling Authority is in the process of framing a Responsible Gambling Policy and Strategy and will shortly come up with a National Responsible Gambling Programme in line with its objectives, as spelt out in paragraph 4 of the Gambling Authority Act of 2007, namely to foster responsible gambling in order to minimise harm caused by gambling.

The Authority has already contacted relevant international Bodies which have implemented such programmes, at national level, for their assistance in the design of this National Responsible Gambling Programme. In this context, the visit of Professor Peter Collins, Professor of Public Policy Studies at the University of Salford, United Kingdom and also Executive Director of the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) is expected in Mauritius on 18 August 2010. The Professor has agreed to assist the Gambling Regulatory Authority in the conceptualisation of the Responsible Gambling Programme.

A provision of Rs2 m. has been made for the implementation of the Responsible Gambling Programme in the current year's estimates, to this effect.

Other complementary measures that are being taken to curb the trend of addiction to gambling by the community at large are as follows -

- (i) establishment of problem gambling services;
- (ii) training;
- (iii) advertising campaign;
- (iv) sensitisation of students and the public at large;
- (v) Gambling Awareness Programme;
- (vi) player information booklets;
- (vii) posters and billboards, and
- (viii) slogans.

Some stakeholders (Gaming Houses and Lottotech Ltd) acting upon the advice of the Gambling Regulatory Authority have already introduced some inbuilt system of Responsible Gambling in their product, namely that of age limit and of sanctions in case of failure for respecting same.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. vice-Prime Minister aware that there is a Ministerial Committee presided by the Prime Minister to study the whole problem of licensing and gambling? Can we know what has been the outcome of the deliberations of that Committee in view of the fact that all these studies and measures are being considered?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already answered to that question last week. There is a Technical Committee, first of all, which is looking at all the technical aspects, including the law. I am aware that they have completed their work and they have referred a number of recommendations to the High-Powered Committee. We are now going to look at the recommendations. I said earlier that we will be coming with a number of measures in the light of the report of that Technical Committee.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance was against *mentalité zougadère*, proliferation of gaming houses and so on, and he has announced a number of measures. But will he agree with me that urgently what is required is putting a stop to this aggressive, intrusive publicity campaign all over the place, on buses, on signs and everywhere, misleading nearly compulsive advertising? Does not the hon. Minister agree with me that we should start there immediately?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, that is an issue that is also being looked at by the Technical Committee. We want to take a holistic approach to the problem of gambling like, what has been stated earlier, the issue of responsible gambling also. We are aware that it is causing problem in a number of cases.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said that there is a study that will be carried out in terms of motivations for gaming and gambling. Because gambling and gaming is supposed to be a leisure activity, can he see to it that a study will categorise how many people actually really gamble and go to these gaming houses out of leisure and out of other reasons and also whether the MRA will see to it that when people go to gamble, they do so with money that is proper?

Mr Jugnauth: That study will definitely be covering what the hon. Member has stated and from there we will be more enlightened.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he is aware that a policy has been taken to stop issuing new licences for gambling houses? But the problem is not to stop issuing new licences, the problem is to stop the proliferation of new games that are being invented and introduced every week and heavily advertised on television. Is any measure being envisaged in that context?

Mr Jugnauth: Again, as a first measure, Government has decided not to direct the Gambling Regulatory Authority and not to entertain new applications. That is one. But there are licences which have been granted in the past and there are conditions also attached to those licences, and there is the law that regulates also the activities of those licensees. We have to go according to the law as it is today, but we are taking a number of steps. Last week, I answered a question that was put by an hon. Member with regard to a particular gambling house. I can assure hon. Members that we are going to look at each case of renewal of those gambling houses and we are going to take any decision in the interest of each and everybody. The hon. Member can rest assured that the conditions that have been laid down with regard to a permit - of course, as long as they operate - we will see to it that they operate within the law, but we will see to it also what effect this has on the surroundings, on the environment, on the people and so on and necessary decisions will be taken accordingly.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I make a request to the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that one of the urgent priorities, if we want to have results, is to clear the air at the Gambling Regulatory Authority itself. There is a mafia operating there.

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I rely on evidence, Mr Speaker, Sir; I don't rely on what everybody knows. If the hon. Member has information, in strict confidentiality, I am willing to look at the information and I can assure the House that this Government has the political will and the motivation to deal with the mafias.

Mr Bérenger: I'll follow upon what hon. Bhagwan has just said. The mess has been created by the Gambling Regulatory Authority. The hon. Minister of Finance will allow me to say it is a good thing that we have got a study, *après la mort la tisane*, but never mind, we have a full study on the impact, what measures and so on, but it should be done by somebody else. That study is supposed to be done by the Gambling Regulatory Authority itself. One of my good friends famously said: '*pé mette lisien vey saucisse*'.

Mr Jugnauth: No, Sir, the study is not going to be done by the Gambling Regulatory Authority. As I mentioned, there is going to be a consultant and, in fact, the tenders are being

finalised and there is going to be, I hope, a number of consultants who will tender for that and they will do their study. That study will be done independently.

Mr Speaker: Three more questions! Hon. Ganoo, hon. Mrs Labelle, and then back to hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether consideration is being given to the measures that are taken to curb addiction to certain vulnerable groups? Will the Authority pay special attention to minors and review sanctions that should be taken against these gaming houses in order to prevent minors from having access into these gaming houses? Because I know of a case where the Police raided a gaming house in the South and about ten people have been prosecuted before the IC. Young kids of 13 and 14 have been dragged before the IC as accomplices because they were there on that day! Can we just imagine that minors are not only having access inside gaming houses, but prosecuted and having to appear before the IC at such tender age?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all concerned that minors should not be involved in such gambling activities and, therefore, that aspect will also be taken care of.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned the sensitisation programme also to assist those who are compulsive gamblers. May I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he will see to it that we have most immediate appropriate support to these persons because we are aware of cases of suicide related to gambling? In my constituency, there are three persons who committed suicide. Can we see to it that these compulsive gamblers have the proper assistance?

Mr Jugnauth: We will look into that also, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Short of becoming a duty-free paradise, we should prevent Mauritius from becoming a gaming paradise. May I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he would consider setting up a Trust for responsible gambling that would deal specifically with problems of compulsive gambling? Because there are lots of gamblers in the country and this is leading to a heavy social cost to the community.

Mr Jugnauth: I thank the hon. Member. That is a proposal. We will also consider that.

At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

HOUSEHOLD INDEBTEDNESS

(No. 1B/438) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the level of indebtedness of the households, he will state if a survey has been carried out to assess the causes and implications thereof and, if not, will an in-depth study be carried out and measures taken to address the issue.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, let me inform the House that no in-depth survey has ever been carried out either by the Government or the Bank of Mauritius specifically to assess the causes and implications of household indebtedness.

However, as the House is aware, both the Bank of Mauritius and the Central Statistics Office (CSO) collect some specific information on indebtedness. The CSO collects information on household indebtedness through the Household Budget Survey (HBS), which is carried out every five years, and through the Continuous Multi Purpose Household Survey (CMPHS). Through these surveys, the CSO collects information on -

- (i) the indebtedness status of the household, and
- (ii) the amount disbursed on debt repayment each month.

I am informed that the last Household Budget Survey was conducted from June 2006 to July 2007, and its result was published in an analytical report released in March 2009, which included a chapter on “Indebted Households”. According to the survey, the following was noted -

- (i) about 46.5% of the surveyed households reported having made, at least, one loan repayment;
- (ii) the most common item of loan repayment was housing, as reported by 54.7% of the indebted households, followed by household appliances (18%) and furniture (14.8%), and
- (iii) for indebted households, the average monthly loan repayment was Rs4,353, while the average monthly household disposable income amounted to around Rs23,700. Thus, on average, 18.4% of the disposable income went in loan repayment.

The results of the 2001/02 and 2006/07 Household Budget Surveys are available on the website of the CSO. I would like to inform the House that the next Household Budget Survey will be carried out from January to December 2012.

With a view to carrying out better analysis in this area, I am also informed that, in the 2010 round of the CMPHS, more detailed information is being collected in respect of household indebtedness. A specific module on household indebtedness has been included in the questionnaire, which seeks the following information from households -

- (i) whether debt is contracted locally or outside Mauritius, and
- (ii) the amount of debt contracted locally and outside Mauritius.

For local debts, the CSO is also requesting information on –

- (i) the institution from where loan has been contracted;
- (ii) the amount of debt contracted on housing, vehicle, education and other items, and
- (iii) the duration of debt repayment on each of those items.

The results will be published by mid of next year. Once the results of the survey will be out, more detailed analysis could be made on household indebtedness.

Another indicator of the level of indebtedness of households vis-à-vis banks in Mauritius can be gauged from banks' sector-wise distribution of credit to the private sector. This is monitored by the Bank of Mauritius. It is noted that banks' credit to households, by way of loans and advances for housing and personal purposes, stood at Rs44.7 billion at the end of June 2010, up from Rs39.1 billion at the end of June 2009. As a percentage of GDP at market prices, households' borrowings from banks stood at around 15.9% in June 2010 compared to 14.5% in June 2009.

For the information of Members, I wish to point out that personal loans, (excluding housing loans) contracted with banks, stood at Rs18.2 billion as at May 2010. Personal overdrafts stood at Rs3.4 billion, while outstanding advances on credit cards to the personal and professional sectors amounted to Rs1.5 billion in May 2010. The information is related to household indebtedness, and will have to be taken on board in the 2010 round of the CMPHS.

Moreover, we should take into account hire purchase transactions, which involve indebtedness as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to the findings of the 2010 Continuous Multi Purpose Household Survey, we would be getting a much better picture of the level of indebtedness of households once all the financing institutions including hire purchase operators feed information to the Mauritius Credit Information Bureau at the Bank of Mauritius.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware that there are very aggressive campaigns being carried out these days to offer credit cards to people and also the selling of financial products, as well as very flashy offers being granted for different reasons? Is there any measure that is being envisaged to check the abusive nature of this type of advertising?

Mr Jugnauth: I don't know how we can define traditional advertising from abusive or aggressive advertising. I am sure there is also a difference between aggressive and abusive advertising, but there is also the responsibility of each and everyone also. The private institutions are there to market their products. It is also the duty of each and everyone to see to it that the right decision is taken and that we do not enter into a situation where we become over-indebted, but we will look into that. I do not know about the regulations or any of the laws that will actually control such kind of marketing. Of course, if there is need to revisit, we will do so.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance mentioned that 18% of disposable income of households goes for loan repayment. Would it be possible – whether by his Ministry or otherwise - to carry out a sort of categorisation so that we may be able to have the right information as to how much of the lower income household go for loan payment, because 18% is an aggregate figure? Would it be possible to have a breakdown - because I do not think that the CSO does that - of the level of income of people and the percentage of disposable income according to each category that goes into loan repayment?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, we do not have the details, but we have a global figure. We know the percentage. Unfortunately, I don't have the figures as per category of people receiving their income and how much, in fact, per category the percentage is devoted to housing loan. As a general remark, I should say that probably one

should not conclude that it is negative. It is also a good thing that people are probably more aware, more sensitised and looking forward that they should save and invest in an immovable property, because there is going to be a return also on such kind of investment. There is a need to look at the different categories and, probably, from there, to try to draw a number of conclusions.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform us - if he has the figures - of the number of personal bankruptcies as a result of excessive indebtedness? Because one of the implications of the Euro crisis and the squeeze on bank credit these days is that a lot of people are having their assets seized and there is a lot of personal insolvencies that are taking place. Is the hon. vice-Prime Minister aware of this? What measures are being taken to relieve this debt situation?

Mr Jugnauth: Although we know that one of the causes of personal indebtedness can lead to bankruptcy, I will need notice of that question because it is not specifically mentioned. If there is a proper question, I will definitely give the details to the House.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the problems of indebtedness is that people who take loans are sometimes illiterates and guarantors don't know what they are signing because the documents are in English and they don't understand English. May we know what measures the hon. Minister is going to take to sensitise people of the danger of taking and guaranteeing loans?

Mr Jugnauth: This is a question of educating people generally and informing them specifically about such kind of contracts that they enter with institutions and anything that they bind themselves and what are the consequences. I must say that we will all the time have to keep on sensitising people generally about the consequences of such kind of engagements.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow two more questions, one from hon. Ms Deerpalsing and one from hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance be able, through his Ministry, to have an analysis of a benchmark of how we fare in Mauritius in terms of percentage of GDP of indebtedness for households with respect to other countries? The reason why I am asking this question is that, with the *débâcle* of credit that has happened elsewhere in the world, it would be good to know evidence-based

analysis as to how we fare in terms of level of indebtedness as a percentage of GDP by household?

Mr Jugnauth: It is a good suggestion that we can compare with how other countries have been doing. I don't have the figures with me to be able to compare, but we will do that.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House what measures he is envisaging to control loan sharking and unregulated money lending and if there is need to reinforce legislation, what kind of measures he is intending to take? Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister also consider setting up within the Ministry of Consumer Protection, a consumer credit intelligence and counselling service?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question on that issue. Next question!

MAURITIUS – DUTY-FREE ISLAND

(No. 1B/439) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the making of Mauritius a duty-free island, he will state where matters stand.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Member to refer to my reply to PQ No. 1B/257 of the sitting of 06 July 2010, where I indicated clearly my vision of making Mauritius a duty-free island, how the project is to be implemented and that we are also updating the Blueprint that was prepared some five years ago. I also mentioned, therein, that this Government is committed to move forward with the project.

Circumstances prevailing today are also quite different and any views and contributions from different stakeholders, thereon, will be given due consideration in the update. Therefore, I would request the hon. Member to be patient until the presentation of the forthcoming 2011 Budget for more information on this project.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister give us an idea about the Blueprint and when it is going to be...

The Deputy Speaker: I understand there was one previously.

Mr Jugnauth: There was a Blueprint that was prepared in 2004 and 2005, but that Blueprint has to be revisited because, as I have said, the situation has changed. We are facing different challenges in view of the fact also that we now deal with the Euro crisis that has to

be updated. But, in the course of updating, we will also welcome any proposals, suggestions and views by anybody who wishes to give any idea. We will consider and, if need be, we will try to integrate - if there are valid views - them in the Blueprint.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/257 by hon. Li Kwong Wing, the hon. Minister stated –

“I can but reaffirm my determination and conviction that Mauritius must become a duty-free island.”

But where I got perplexed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is when I read *l'entretien du Président de la Démocratisation de l'Économie*, hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen who stated –

“*Nous allons perdre des dizaines de milliers de jobs. Nous n'avons pas la capacité de faire de Maurice une duty-free island à court et à moyen terme.*”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we would like to know which is which? Who is going to win the party, is it the MSM or the Labour party?

The Deputy Speaker: All right, you have made your point, hon. Guimbeau! Let the Minister reply!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please! Order! Order, please! We will listen to the answer of the hon. Minister! Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have stated the Government's vision to make Mauritius a duty-free island. That was canvassed in the electoral campaign. That forms part of our electoral programme and, in fact, some Members on this side have been talking about this project. Therefore, I would, again, request the hon. Member to be patient. We have five years to go and during that time we will see how far we can go in implementing the Duty-free Island Project.

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister of Finance tell us whether he has canvassed his partner as well? It seems to be confusing!

The Deputy Speaker: I will not allow this question! The hon. Minister has explained the situation. We will move on to the next question! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

SCHOOLS (PRIMARY & SECONDARY) - PSYCHOLOGISTS

(No. 1B/440) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school psychologists in primary and secondary schools, he will, in each case, state the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) their scheme of duties, and
- (b) the number of cases to which they have attended in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 to date.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. 1B/440 and 1B/445 together as they relate to the same issue.

The National Education Counselling Service (NECS) has 4 posts of Senior Educational Psychologist, 12 posts of Educational Psychologist and 22 posts of Educational Social Workers. Currently, only one Senior Educational Psychologist is in post and he is based at the Headquarters. 10 Educational Psychologists and 17 Educational Social Workers in post are deployed in the four zones where they serve a cluster of primary and secondary schools. Action has been initiated for the filling of the existing vacancies.

As regards the scheme of duties of the Educational Psychologist, they cover, *inter alia*, counselling and sensitisation of pupils/students at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, provision of psychological advice to teachers, counselling of parents by way of visits, provision of documentation and promotion of mental health programmes at schools. I am tabling a detailed scheme of duties of the School Psychologists.

As for the number of cases dealt with by the service, a total of about 5,955 reported cases have been attended to by the Educational Psychologists from 2007 to date in primary and secondary schools. The breakdown is 1,425 for 2007, 1,519 for 2008, 1,872 for 2009 and 1,139 to date since January. I am tabling the breakdown of the number of cases for both primary and secondary sub-sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today's global society is undergoing major transformations which bring in their wake, multi-faceted and complex forms of disruptive behaviour. This situation thus calls for remedies, psychological and others, that are not part of the usual run-of-the-mill, but more adapted to the needs of the schools and learners. The need has therefore been felt by my Ministry for a holistic and coordinated approach to service both public and private schools in order to cater for the social and psychological welfare of the student community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that, ever since 2007, my Ministry had made proposals to the Pay Research Bureau to revisit the School Psychological Service and to propose a new structure more attuned to the emerging and diverse needs of the schools.

The PRB Report 2008 has accordingly recommended a new set up for the National Education Counselling Service (NECS) and proposed the creation of a new post of Head, NECS to be assisted by a reinforced team. My Ministry is therefore proposing to fill the new post of Head, NECS and the three vacant posts of Senior Educational Psychologist and financial provision is being requested accordingly in the forthcoming Budget. The creation of six additional posts of Educational Psychologist is also being proposed.

This will enable the Ministry to have a strengthened team of 4 Senior Educational Psychologists and 18 Educational Psychologists as compared to the pool of only one Senior Educational Psychologist and 12 Educational Psychologists.

Funding is also being sought for the filling of three existing vacancies in the grade of Educational Social Workers. In addition, the NECS will also resort to the services of private Clinical Psychologists on a sessional basis, whenever the need arises. It is worth mentioning that my Ministry is also working in collaboration with the Psychologists and Social Workers of the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare on complex cases.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government fully recognises that the promotion of psychological and social well-being of the student population is of prime importance in the context of our efforts to tackle problems of indiscipline and misbehaviour at school. We have accordingly taken a firm commitment under the Government Programme 2010-2015 to revamp and strengthen the existing services. In addition, community support in this endeavour will also be enlisted to ensure the success of programmes geared towards students with behavioural and other related problems.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister the minimum qualifications of the Social Workers and the Psychologists attached to the NECS and if the Psychologists who are attached to schools are Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists or Behavioural Psychologists?

Dr. Bunwaree: As far as the details of the qualifications are concerned, I can table it at a later stage, because I do not have the information with me and at school they are all Educational Psychologists. In fact, we need Clinical Psychologists also. This is why I said

we will resort to Clinical Psychologists in the private sector for the time being. We are resorting to the Clinical Psychologists who are based at the level of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare but, of course, in the future we will need Clinical Psychologists attached to schools as well.

Mr Leopold: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister whether these services are available in Rodrigues and, if yes, how are they delivered? I would also like to know the number of Educational Psychologists and Educational Social Workers attached to Rodrigues.

Dr. Bunwaree: I can assure the hon. Member who must be aware that the services are available in Rodrigues as well, but, of course, not in the same way as in Mauritius. I think there are two Psychologists in Rodrigues who are not attached to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, but whose services are taken on board.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, out of the cases dealt with since 2007, if any case has been referred to a Clinical Psychologist or to a Psychiatrist?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are quite a few of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Ribot: Can we get the number, please?

Dr. Bunwaree: I need notice of this question, but I can assure the hon. Member being a clinician myself, I know what I am talking about.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the School Psychological Unit prepares any programme for implementation by teachers or parents? Programmes such as the therapeutic or behavioural programmes or courses for parents and so on.

Dr. Bunwaree: They work in close collaboration with the teachers. In fact, I am circulating the scheme of service of the Educational Psychologists, but I can here again assure the hon. Member that very detailed work is done by the Educators and the Psychologists.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know if the hon. Minister does not consider the actual procedures to be quite lengthy and time consuming. Should not more prompt and straightforward procedures be adopted for children with problems?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are two parts in this question, I believe. In fact, the procedures are very long. I agree with the hon. Member. This is a question of the Civil Service in general. This is why I said that we are having resort to private Clinical Psychologists employed on sessional basis in order to circumvent the problem, but I do agree with the second part of the question.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow one question to hon. Dr. S. Boolell.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether the Minister is in presence of any report from the Educational Psychologists on the cases of suicide among the young population of school age?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are various reports concerning suicide. I don't know which report the hon. Member is referring to, but I know work is being done insofar as suicide is concerned.

Mr Obeegadoo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for seeing me at long last. Would the hon. Minister tell us something about the mode of operation? I have listened carefully. What is the mode of operation? Are they deployed on given days and times in different schools? I will ask two in one since I won't have another opportunity. Are there special provisions for those who have fewer children in ZEP and prevocation schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: There is one Head Psychologist who is at the level of the Head Office, but all the other Psychologists are based in the zones and they are *les hommes ou les femmes de terrain*. They work in conjunction with all the stakeholders that are involved in the problems, social workers, other Ministries, the NGOs and special attention is, of course, given to ZEP schools.

The Deputy Speaker: A last question from hon. Mrs Ribot.

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to know if the Psychologists should not be attached to specific clusters of schools and more specifically to those schools *à haut risque*.

Dr. Bunwaree: They are, in fact, attached to clusters of schools. I think there are about 20 schools, but based in the zones.

L'ESPERANCE – COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

(No. 1B/441) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she is aware that the present location of

the Health Centre of l'Espérance causes inconveniences and hardships to the inhabitants of the region, due to its inaccessibility for want of public transport and its remoteness from the main road and, if so, will she state if Government will consider the relocation thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the L'Espérance Community Health Centre is presently located in a rented building along L'Escalier Branch Road, at 400 metres from the main road and bus stop. As such the Community Health Centre is within walking distance from the bus stop and caters to the health needs of the inhabitants of the village of L'Espérance.

However, I have received a letter from the inhabitants addressed to the Members of Parliament of the Constituency and copied to me on this issue. I have been given to understand that the Health Centre could be accommodated in the existing village hall as a new village hall is being constructed by the District Council. I am investigating into the possibilities of the relocation.

MOKA DISTRICT COURT (NEW) - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/442) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the construction of the new Moka District Court, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka for raising this issue. I am informed by the honourable Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that -

- (a) three portions of land situated a few meters from the old Moka District Court have been vested in the Judiciary for the construction of a new Court House;
- (b) plans for the construction of the new District Court are being prepared by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

I am also informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the said Ministry that the preliminary drawings are expected to be completed by February 2011 and tendering procedures will be initiated on or about August 2011.

ST. JULIEN D'HOTMAN – OVERSEAS LANE - RESURFACING

(No. 1B/443) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the resurfacing of the Overseas Lane at St. Julien d'Hotman, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that Overseas Lane at St. Julien D'Hotman which is a new road with a distance of 350 metres has already been declared public.

I am informed that the complete resurfacing of this road will cost around Rs1,335,600 and that the required funds are not available during this year. The Council will therefore include this project in its forthcoming budget. However, with a view to rendering it roadworthy, crusher run has recently been spread over the road by the Council.

RADHAY ROAD, DAGOTIERE – SECURITY MEASURES

(No. 1B/444) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bridge found on a curve at Radhay Road, Dagotière, he will state if consideration will be given for the -

- (a) widening thereof;
- (b) installation of handrails thereat, and
- (c) provision of other security measures, in view of the fact that the curve represents serious risks of accident.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that Radhay Road at Dagotière is a minor one with little vehicular traffic. It has a width of 3 metres and cannot be widened due to the presence of concrete walls on both sides at various places.

I am further informed that the Council will start works this week for the replacement of the existing handrails which have been damaged and completely worn out on a length of 50 metres at two locations along this road. The works will be completed by the end of this month.

I am also informed that necessary traffic signs will be fixed by the Council to draw the attention of the road users to the narrowness of the bridge.

SCHOOLS - PSYCHOLOGISTS

(No. 1B/445) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school psychologists, he will state if the services of an adequate number thereof have been retained to ensure that all the educational zones are sufficiently covered and, if not, the remedial actions that will be taken, if any.

(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/440)

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY – CELEBRATION

(No. 1B/446) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the celebration of the International Youth Day on 12 August 2010, he will state the events that will be held on that date to showcase the talents of the young Mauritians.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the celebration of the International Youth Day which has as this year's theme "*Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*" was planned early this year with the launching of the Youth Excellence Award 2010 in March. About 144 teams have participated in this competition and the award ceremony has been scheduled for 12 August 2010.

In this context, young Mauritians who have excelled and demonstrated their talents in the following fields will be rewarded -

- (a) Artistic Pursuit.
- (b) Entrepreneurship and Initiatives for employment creation.
- (c) Preservation and protection of the environment.
- (d) Youth and family life.
- (e) Youth Leadership and Community work.

The winner in each category will receive a cash prize of Rs 25,000. All the participants will also receive a shield and a certificate of participation for their efforts.

GRAND RIVER SOUTH EAST – FISH LANDING STATION

(No. 1B/447) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Fish Landing Station found at Grand River South East, he will state if Government proposes to carry out renovation works thereat and, if so, indicate when works are expected to start.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already initiated action for renovation and maintenance works at the Grand River South East Fish Landing Station. Works will start as from mid-August 2010.

LA CROISÉE, TROU D'EAU DOUCE – ROADS AND DRAINS

(No.1B/448) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the roads and drains at La Croisée, Trou d'Eau Douce, he will state if the proposed construction works to be carried out thereat have started and, if so, indicate the expected date of completion thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the construction works have been completed and the whole work is expected to be completed by the end of August 2010. The cost of the project is Rs7 m.

ST MICHEL, BEL AIR/RIVIERE SECHE – FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/449) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the new football ground at St Michel, Bel Air/Rivière Sèche, he will state if it is ready for use and, if not, why not.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the project is nearly completed. However, the football ground needs the turfing to be settled for three months.

Mr Seetaram: Could the hon. Minister kindly consider whether fencing and a parking area could be earmarked when the project would be completed accordingly?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that forms part of the second stage and I will come to it.

PERSONS (DISABLED) - LABOUR FORCE

(No. 1B/450) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the disabled persons, she will state the percentage thereof engaged in the labour force.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the training and employment of Disabled Persons Board caters for the training and employment needs of persons with

disabilities in Mauritius and Rodrigues. It acts as a facilitator as far as training and employment are concerned.

As at date, 2000 persons with disabilities have registered themselves with TEDPB for the purpose of training and employment. Since 2005, some 500 persons with disabilities have benefitted from training programmes carried out by the TEDPB in collaboration with MITD formerly IVTB, SMEDA, NEF and MEF. Out of the 2000 registered, 25% have been trained and some 15% have been employed.

Furthermore, a survey is being carried out by my Ministry to determine the number of disabled persons who are willing to follow training courses with a view to employment. The survey also aims at finding out the number of disabled persons who are already qualified and seeking employment opportunities.

As to date, I understand that some 50 persons with disabilities have already registered themselves at the regional social security offices around the island. The exercise will continue up till 31 August 2010.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister in a position to indicate what the trend has been? We know that over time, legislation has been introduced to impose upon employers the duty of employing disabled people. May we have some indication of the evolution of these figures over the last 10 years?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, there have been lots of discussions with the MEF and other stakeholders. Concerning the number of disabled persons already in employment, I've got the figures for the past five years. The number of persons trained is 500 and the number of persons already in employment is 286. In fact, there has been a mismatch between the training programmes and the needs of the market. So, now a needs analysis is being carried out in collaboration with the MEF so as to ensure that there is no such mismatch and the training programmes are geared to employment of these disabled persons.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I make an appeal to the hon. Minister that the NGOs involved be taken on board? This is not something the Ministry can do on its own. Will she agree to meet all the NGOs concerned and work on this priority together?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, all the discussions that have been carried out have been done along with the NGOs concerned.

RIAMBEL & TROIS BRAS – SQUATTER AREAS - AMENITIES

(No. 1B/451) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the squatter areas of Riambel and Trois Bras, in the village of Surinam, he will state if his Ministry will urgently provide access roads, pavements and street lighting thereat and, if so, when.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that action is being taken to regularise the situation of squatters at Riambel and Trois Bras.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands has yet to make available to the Grand Port/Savanne District Council the survey plan and details of road alignment. Only then can a proposal be worked out for the access road pavement and street lighting.

Mr Ganoo: I listened to the hon. Minister replying that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is working on the regularisation of the squatters, but the question is about the area itself. These squatters have already been regularised for some years now and the question is whether the Ministry will do the needful in all urgency so that these two areas, that is, Riambel and Trois Bras which is a few kilometres away, be urgently provided with lighting facilities, roads and pavements.

Mr Aimée: As mentioned earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without the road alignment, without a proper plan, my Ministry will not be able to have any work done there. So, I am waiting for the plan and the alignment of the road from the Ministry of Housing and Lands to look into the matter.

‘PARADI AN DEY’ FILM – PUBLIC SCREENING

(No. 1B/452) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the prohibition of the screening of the film ‘*Paradi An Dey*’ and subsequent treatment meted out to its producer, Mr J. P., he will consider the urgent review of the legal provisions relating to the Film Classification Board and film screenings.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the film *Paradi An Dey*, I am informed that the decision of the Police to prohibit its public screening was due to its non-compliance with the provisions of the Film Act. The film had not been submitted to the Board for classification prior to its public exhibition as required by law. Here, I would like to congratulate the Commissioner of Police for having taken prompt action to enforce the Films Act, otherwise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just imagine the chaos that can prevail in the country if local production of all types, including images of defamatory nature, is exhibited to the public without any control on the part of the authorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this respect, my Ministry proposes to launch a public sensitisation campaign with a view to inform the local producers of films and also stage plays and the public at large, for the need to abide by the provisions of the legislation with regard to the public exhibition of films and stage plays.

Regarding the review of the legislation, my Ministry proposes to review the existing legal provisions to make local producers more responsible and more accountable with a view to protect the interests of the general public. It is also envisaged to introduce a scheme whereby local producers will, on their own, remove objectionable parts of defamatory nature thereby saving their films from rejection.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point of this question is - and I will rephrase it as a supplementary question - is the Minister aware that the governing legislation dates back to many, many years and that since then technology has evolved. Now, everybody owns a mobile phone and with a mobile phone, you can film and you can project your film, and you can distribute it to hundreds and thousands of people. So, will the hon. Minister agree that the law...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...as it now stands, is not in line with social practice and modern technology? Will he therefore agree to urgently refer this piece of legislation to the State Law Office for review and appropriate amendments to be carried out?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very much aware of how fast technology is developing and believe me, if today we happen to have a law, it may not be valid the next day. Technology is moving so fast, yet, at a point in time, we have to do something. This is where we started. We have had talks with the State Law Office. We have had meetings and I

understand the hon. Member read or came across the statement I made a few weeks back concerning the same issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the hon. Minister agree that the priority is not to repress and to treat the law as an end in itself, but to have an open-minded attitude and to modernise the legislation to serve society and not to repress it?

The Deputy Speaker: This has been stated.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member knows the law. We abide by the existing law, but, definitely, we are working out a new formula to adapt to the technology at hand.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: All right, the hon. Member can proceed with his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House whether he is aware that lots of things are being done and even produced by advisers? Can he inform the House that a large majority of our population does not agree with this course of action? The Ministry, I can even say Government, certain Ministers, in the private, have said that the hon. Minister has mishandled the file. Can the Minister inform the House – I won't tell you who...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given that the Ministry and the Minister have mishandled the file, can the Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I think that the hon. Member should put his question and he should not cast aspersion on the Minister. He should put his question straightaway!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: This is my question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: It is the view of a majority of the population that Government has mishandled this file. Can the Minister give the assurance...

(*Interruptions*)

I'll come to another PQ. He has to wait.

(*Interruptions*)

Can the Minister inform the House that henceforth...

(*Interruptions*)

I am not wasting the time of the House. Go home if you want to go home!

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he will do his utmost, at least, to see to it that the legislation be modernised rapidly and that a proper unit be set up at the Ministry to look after this sort of application?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has not been the case. We have never mishandled anything. Never! I challenge the hon. Member if ever he says that. I challenge him. This has not been the case.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Choonee: What have we done so far is simply enforcement of the existing law. This is what has been done.

SAN FRANCISCO FRINGE FESTIVAL - *TRUP SAPSIWAY*

(No. 1B/453) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if his Ministry is in presence of a request from the *Trup Sapsiway*, represented by Mr G. V. for sponsorship to participate in the San Francisco Fringe Festival and, if so, state the actions taken, if any, indicating if the request has been entertained and, if so, when, and, if not, why not.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry received a letter dated 02 June 2010 from Mr G. V. for sponsorship to the tune of Rs250,000, under the International Development Grants Scheme from “*Trup Sapsiway*”, for the staging of a play “The Madogs

of Diego" in the San Francisco Fringe Festival to be held from 08 to 19 September 2010. On 09 July 2010, G. V. submitted an application in the required format.

In his letter of 02 June 2010, G. V. mentioned, I quote –

“The Madogs of Diego – written and directed by G. V. relates a moment in the History of Mauritius and the inhabitants of a part of its territory, the island of Diego Garcia. The Chagossians, as they came to be known, were driven out of the island by the British in 1965 to make way for the Americans, who then built a military base there. The saga of the Chagossians is a very sad story. They do not have the right to go back to their birthplace, and Mauritius has lost part of its territory.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as both the letter and the caption suggested a problematic issue; the applicant was requested to provide a copy of the script of the play for the purpose of determining whether the play was suitable for the intended public in US. My Ministry had consulted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue, in order to avoid any diplomatic embarrassment.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Choonee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, G. V. has also gone to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the same project. He was received by my colleague, Dr. the hon. Arvin Boolell, in the presence of his advisers. G. V. has promised to submit the script of the play. He also said he will invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to watch the play, but he never came back with the script nor the staging of the play. Instead of providing the script, the applicant informed my Ministry that he has already withdrawn his participation from the Festival and he would not be able to complete the formalities for participation, due to the fact that the US Authorities had informed him that visa facilities would take about one month to be completed. As G. V. has withdrawn his registration, action has been stayed on his application for sponsorship at the level of my Ministry. It is to be noted that G. V. never mentioned any time limit for registration with the Festival organisers when he submitted his application. The usual procedure in my Ministry is for a file to be fast-tracked whenever there is a time limit.

I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that G. V. withdrew his participation not because my Ministry had not finalised the issue but, instead, because of the fact that he had to

confirm his participation to the event well before obtaining visas. From his own admission, that was technically impossible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, from what has been announced in the press, it would seem that G. V. was not successful in mobilising enough funding for the project, the cost of which, according to his application, would be nearing Rs900,000.

I believe G. V. has been unsuccessful for other reasons, and the blame cannot be put on my Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a few supplementary questions, with your permission. How does the hon. Minister reconcile the fact that the Minister of Tourism and the MTPA have offered sponsorship to Mr Gaston Valayden? There is no shame. He is a well-known artist, a respected artist like Mr Henri Favory. How does the Minister reconcile that his colleague, the Minister of Tourism, has sponsored, through the MTPA, the participation of *Trup Sapsiway*?

Mr Choonee: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when there are sensible issues which concern friendly countries, we always channel any request, when we are doubtful, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr Bhagwan: What we are hearing on the part of a Minister of Culture and Arts is a shame!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware that this *pièce de théâtre de Gaston Valayden a été jouée dans le cadre du Cinquième Festival Créole à l'île de la Dominique dans les Caraïbes, et que l'île Maurice a été mentionnée pour cette participation?*

Mr Choonee: Yes, Sir, I am aware.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a sensible issue, because it relates to the history of Diego, of the Chagossians. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the number of films produced by Americans regarding this issue? There is a film entitled 'Stealing a Nation' by John Pilger, and it is being viewed all over the world. Now, it is a Mauritian who is producing something on the history of Diego and, we, Mauritians, consider it to be a sensitive issue.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, I go by the advice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister to lay on the Table of the National Assembly, all documents, all correspondences between his Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Mr Choonee: Of Course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that the description that he read out concerning the objective of the film corresponds precisely to the stand of this Government, supported by this Opposition, as to the dismemberment of our territory, as to the forcible eviction of our people and that, therefore, the stand of his Ministry treating it as problematic is sinful, unpatriotic and will he, therefore, agree to tender his apologies to the artists of this country and Mr Valayden?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in no case can we tender apologies to G.V. G.V. has mishandled the file; he has been inelegant. Actually, G.V. has been inelegant; G.V. has not reacted the way we expected. Just imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, two Ministers of Government, namely my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and myself, had meetings with him. We told him to bring the draft for us to have a look at the script. He never came back with the script. How can we act? We cannot act without the script.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is another case where *la créativité et l'art ont été brimés de nouveau*. We can understand that there is a Film Classification Board. In this case, this is a play, and the hon. Minister talked about “displeasing American public”. Who are the officers in his Ministry or in another Ministry who had the required expertise? Were they qualified to judge in terms of *créativité* and *l'art* to decide that the contents of this play would not “please the American public”? Was this the reason why the play was sabotaged, resulting in a loss of time so that, finally, Mr G. V. was not able to go forward with his project? Does not the hon. Minister think that his Ministry really mishandled this whole file?

Mr Choonee: Never, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have just heard the “Paradi An Dey” saga. Les bourdes se succèdent depuis que l’honorable ministre a assumé ses responsabilités,*

surtout envers les artistes. On parle d'un artiste, Gaston Valayden, reconnu non seulement à l'île Maurice mais aussi à la Réunion et au niveau international. Il y a aussi Henri Favery et Marcel Poinen. Après tout ce qu'on a constaté, est-ce que le ministre est disposé de présenter des excuses publiques à ces artistes pour le tort qui a été fait?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has never been the case, so no apology.

(Interruptions)

No! You are not having the right information!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a new scheme by the Government. The scheme was not there; it started one and a half years back.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Choonee: One and a half years back, we started the scheme and many artists who satisfied the criteria have benefited. Allow me to give them some details, Sir! Bongarçon Stephen Rolph, Aubeeluck Nalini and her group, Françoise Thierry Didier, Victoire Donovane Romel and Nathalia Vadamootoo went to France. Others went to Switzerland - Saïd Hosanee, Art Academy and there are so many more.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Choonee: Just imagine for the last one and a half years that we have this scheme, about 25 artists have already benefited from this scheme.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order! I will allow two more questions, one from hon. Ms Deepalsing and a last one from hon. Lesjongard.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the hon. Minister mentioned that the play was intended for the San Francisco Fringe Festival. May I ask him whether anyone - including the officers who decided not to allow this to go ahead – of these officers

has ever attended the San Francisco Fringe Festival and whether they know what kind of audience goes there?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have this information right now.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow one question from hon. Bhagwan if he has anything to say.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being the failure, the way this whole matter had been ...

The Deputy Speaker: No! This has been stated.

Mr Bhagwan: I have another question.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point, if he has anything new to add, he can do so.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the local artists of this country who make local production are discouraged the way Government, through this Ministry, has treated this file. Can I reiterate my request for the hon. Minister to make a public apology to the artists?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can never do this.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, I will come back to the applications submitted by Mr G. V. You won't believe it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we went out of our way...

(Interruptions)

I will show them how we wanted to help.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order! Please, proceed!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to table the application form submitted by Mr G. V. to the Ministry. It was not even signed and the date of the application was not mentioned. Yet, we were processing it. We are ready to reconsider, if he agrees to give us back the script. We are still processing...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Choonee: I am tabling that.

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH EMPLOYEES MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE
SOCIETY LTD. – BOARD MEMBERS**

(No. 1B/454) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Ministry of Health Employees Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Society, information as to if approval of an Annual General Meeting was obtained for the –

- (a) payment of fees payable to the Interim Board members, and
- (b) appointment of Baker and Tilly, as the auditor thereof.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I have been informed by the Acting Registrar of Cooperative Societies that the payment of fees payable to the Caretaker Board was approved by the then Registrar of Cooperative Societies when the Board was appointed on 10 June 2004.

In accordance with section 49 of the Cooperative Societies Act 1976 and presently under the Cooperatives Act 2005, section 47, it is clearly stated that -

- (a) Where the Registrar is of the opinion that a Board -
 - (i) has persistently failed to perform, or is negligent in the performance of its duties;
 - (ii) has committed, is committing or is about to commit an act which is prejudicial to the interests of the society or its members, or
 - (iii) is otherwise not functioning properly, he may by written order, remove the Board and appoint a person to manage the affairs of the society on such terms and conditions as he may determine.
- (b) The Remuneration of a person appointed and the costs, if any, incurred in the management of the society, shall be paid out of the funds of the society.

In this case, the approval of the Annual General Meeting does not arise and section 41 cannot be applied as stated by the hon. Member in a supplementary Parliamentary Question on 29 June, 2010.

As for part (b) of the question, the Caretaker Board has appointed Baker and Tilly (Mauritius) as auditor of the society as a matter of urgency.

Baker and Tilly has cleared the backlog in the audit of accounts of the Cooperative Society for five financial years from the years 2004/05 to 2008/09 in May 2010 and is presently working on the accounts of 2009/10. Baker and Tilly (Mauritius) has been requested to finish the accounts for year 2009/2010 by the end of August 2010.

The Acting Registrar of Cooperative Societies has already directed the Caretaker Board to convene the Annual General Meeting in order to ratify the appointment of the auditor as well as the approval of the financial statements duly audited together with the audit reports by latest 30 September 2010.

Again, according to the Cooperatives Act, section 47, it is clearly stated that the Registrar may take such steps as he thinks necessary to safeguard the interests of the society. The society has been put on stricter control under the provisions of section 73 of the Cooperatives Act. All its expenses and payments are vetted by my officers.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned lengthily the provision of the law which allows the Registrar of Cooperatives to appoint an Interim Board. Is the hon. Minister aware that the same law, which he has been citing, also mentions that this Interim Board shall hold office for a period not exceeding one year? Since the Board is here for five years, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this is in order?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did my homework yesterday and during the weekend. Section 41 (7) (a) and (b) can be applied when the society has its audited accounts in hand and fails to hold its Annual General Meeting. Therefore, section 41 does not apply in this case.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just cited part of this. May I know from him - since he has done his homework - what is the duration of an Interim Board?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said: Where the Registrar is of the opinion that a Board is otherwise not functioning properly, he may, by written order,

remove the Board and appoint a person to manage the affairs of the society on such terms and conditions as he may determine.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The Registrar can take such steps as he thinks necessary to safeguard the interests of the society.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not think I heard the Minister mention the duration of an Interim Board. Maybe he has not done that part of his homework.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put her question.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has also mentioned that the Registrar has the right to appoint the Auditor, but, afterwards, I think I heard him mention that this Board will call for an AGM to ratify the decision. So, I would like to know whether it is for the AGM to approve the decision or the Registrar can do it himself.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning the terms, I have answered this question, but let me repeat it. It is clearly stated that where the Registrar is of the opinion that a Board is otherwise not functioning properly, he may, by written order, remove the Board and appoint a person to manage the affairs of the society on such terms and conditions as he may determine.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have asked the hon. Minister whether the AGM's approval is to be sought for appointment of an Auditor because he has mentioned that the Registrar will call for the AGM to ratify a decision. I have also heard him say that they have appointed an Auditor for five years. Is the hon. Minister aware that members of the society do not have access to their money for five years now and maybe it is for the Registrar to decide whether these people can have access to their money? So, will the Minister inform the House as to whether it is for the Registrar to decide if these persons can have access to their money?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Registrar of Cooperatives is taking steps as he thinks necessary to safeguard all the interests of the society.

BEL OMBRE SUGAR ESTATE - MÉTAYERS

(No. 1B/455) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the *métayers* of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, he will state if any agreement has been signed between his Ministry and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association and, if so, indicate if -

- (a) the *métayers* have been apprised of the content thereof, and
- (b) he has received any complaints following the signature thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has indeed signed an agreement with the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) on *métayer* issues on 29 March 2010.

I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that this agreement is a direct outcome of the historical deal of December 2007 between the Government and the MSPA on the sugar cane reform. The Prime Minister had insisted that the deal should cover the *métayers* also. In fact, there is provision in the 2007 Agreement that a framework be established to ensure that the most appropriate solutions are defined in order to enable the *métayers* as stakeholders in the sugar sector to also benefit from the implementation of the reform. The concern of the Government was to safeguard their interest. A Technical Committee chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee for the Democratisation of the Economy and comprising representatives of all authorities concerned including the MSA and my Ministry was set up to look into the issue. The recommendations of the Committee are set out in the agreement signed on 29 March 2010 between the Government and the MSPA. I must point out here that this agreement concerns all *métayers* and not only those of Bel Ombre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agreement covers the following salient features -

- (i) new *métayer* rent: A uniform rental representing 10% of the sugar accruing to *métayers* based on the final assessment made by the Control Board as against rental ranging from 15% to 27%, as previously applicable;
- (ii) land swapping: The possibility of land swapping and provision that the alternative land proposed by the sugar estate is at least of similar value, both in terms of agricultural output and in terms of quality of location;

(iii) buying back of *métayers*' Right: This clause provides the possibility to the *métayers* to sell their '*droits de métayage*' to the owner estates against payment of compensation. Where such sale is concluded the *métayers* will be allowed to continue cultivating sugar cane on the land for three consecutive years without having to pay any rental.

It is to be noted that the decision to sell the '*droits de métayage*' rests entirely on the *métayer*.

(iv) sale of land to *métayers*: This clause provides the possibility for the *métayers* to buy the land they are presently occupying if it is considered as non-strategic by the sugar estate. Where the land is deemed to be strategic, it is provided that the sugar estate should use their best endeavours to offer for sale an alternative of at least similar value both in terms of agricultural output and in terms of quality of location. The value of the agricultural land will be determined by the owner estates and cross-valuation would be effected by the Government Valuer, after which a flat discount of 35% will be applied to calculate the sale value of the land.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I have to inform the House that before the Agreement was signed on 29 March 2010, extensive consultations were held by the Technical Committee with all concerned, including the *Métayers* Association before the finalisation and signature of the agreement. As regards the *métayers* of Bel Ombre, I had personally met them together with the *métayers* of St Felix at the Farmers Service Centre in July 2009. In fact, at that time a few *métayers* of Bel Ombre had already concluded a deal with the sugar estate on less favourable terms. Following that meeting, I had instructed the Mauritius Sugar Authority to freeze all proceedings initiated in view of an agreement between *métayers* and Bel Ombre Sugar Estate on the basis of this less favourable deal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the March 2010 agreement was signed, the representatives of *Métayers* Association were present and were formally informed of the contents of the agreement. Moreover, I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority, which under section 19 of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act 2001, is responsible for issues pertaining to *métayers*, that a copy of the signed agreement was sent on 12 April 2010 to the different associations representing *métayers*.

As for part (b) of the question, only 5 of the 116 *métayers* of Bel Ombre have submitted a letter of complaint to the Prime Minister's Office not contesting as such the

agreement reached between my Ministry and the MSPA but stating that they are “aggrieved by the course of action employed in the implementation process for the package for the *métayer* of sugar cane”.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the House may also wish to note that 105 *métayers* of Bel Ombre have on 10 June 2010 already accepted their compensation for the sale of their ‘*droits de métayage*’. Six others have already accepted to sell their ‘*droits de métayage*’ and are awaiting evaluation of their plots. As I said, the remaining five have sent a letter to the Prime Minister’s Office.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister if the representatives of the *métayers*, that is, the leaders of the association also signed the agreement this year. Were they party to the agreement?

Mr Faugoo: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agreement was signed between my Ministry and MSPA.

Mr Ganoo: May I also ask the hon. Minister whether he can explain the dissatisfaction shown by certain *métayers* and one of their *porte-parole*, Mr Kishore Deerpalsing who even went to depone before the *Commission Justice et Vérité* and complained about the situation?

Mr Faugoo: I cannot step into the shoes of those who are complaining, but what I can say factually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the agreement was signed on 29 March of this year. Secondly, they were given a copy of the agreement on 12 April of this year. They have complained only on 14 June. So, there is a lapse of time and, again, if my friend will have a look on the *libellé* of the letter, he will see that they are not complaining on the substance of the agreement as such, they are complaining on the process about what has happened so far between these 5 *métayers* of Bel Ombre because 105 have already accepted and they are happy about it. There are 5 who are not happy about it and they are complaining. I do not know the exact nature of their complaint as I have not heard them, they have not written to me and they have chosen to write to the Prime Minister’s Office. I have got a copy of the letter and, in due course, I am going to look into it.

Ms Deerpalsing: When the hon. Minister replied, he informed the House that there were plenty of consultations and information given to the *métayers*. Can he confirm that the 5 who are making a lot of statements are actually going into a trend of *surenchère*, that they are not contesting, but they are trying to have a *surenchère* on the price?

Mr Faugoo: This is exactly what they are doing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can confirm it and, in fact, they were present in some of the organisations and they had even congratulated us for the stand that we had taken at that particular time.

Mr Ganoo: Has the hon. Minister taken cognizance of the testimony of these *métayers* in front of the *Commission Justice et Vérité*?

Mr Faugoo: I have gone through their representations and the replies which the *Commission* has made to them. There was only one issue which was raised before the *Commission*, that is, whether this agreement between the Ministry and the MSPA is binding on them. The *Commission* has consulted their legal advisers and they have written black on white that this is not binding. Whatever we have agreed upon between the Ministry and the MSPA, is a guideline, in fact, it is not binding. They are not forced to go strictly according to what is provided for in the agreement. What we have done is the best that we could do in the prevailing circumstances. But now, if they are not happy with this, they can negotiate on their own. We are here to back them and to give them all the support. This is exactly what we have done through the agreement. If 5 out of 116 are not happy, the fact speaks for itself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

STC – PACKAGING MACHINE – PURCHASE

(No. 1B/456) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the packaging machine purchased by the State Trading Corporation Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the company, information as to -

- (a) the name of the successful bidder for the supply thereof;
- (b) the cost thereof;
- (c) the purpose therefor, and
- (d) if it is currently being used.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, at the outset, I would like to point out that the STCM Ltd was a private company registered on 10 September 2007, under the Companies Act 2001.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that out of 16 invitations requesting for quotations, only five quotes were received among whom one was selected.

However, STCM Board then decided to delegate one of its representatives to proceed to China for the inspection of the equipment. Following that visit, STCM approved, on 30 October 2007, the purchase of a different machine with a bigger output capacity from Foshan Helper Economic Trade Co. Ltd at the price of USD 55,540.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the packaging machine was meant to be used for packing of pulses.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am further informed that the packaging machine has never been utilised by STCM. However, as the private company has been dissolved on 31 May 2010, the STC is looking into the possibility of using the equipment elsewhere.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister why was the packaging machine not used?

Mr Soodhun: It was never fixed due to technical problems. STCM made a request to the company for a technician who never turned up to fix the machine.

(Interruptions)

This is a fact. Now, we have made a request to the Chinese Embassy in Mauritius on this issue. We are requesting the assistance of the Chinese Embassy to find out the technicians from the existing company.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister the name of the gentleman who went there to buy the machine and whether he has any expertise in this particular type of machine?

Mr Soodhun: Unfortunately, I do not have the information.

(Interruptions)

I am going to circulate it. I do not have it now.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a contract of nearly USD 40,000 and I heard the hon. Minister saying that it does not work. Is there no action against the company?

Mr Soodhun: I have mentioned that it is not because of the company that the machine is not working. The problem is that we have not been able to fix the machine. Once we fix it, it will work. One thing that we must realise is that the company has already wound up and the STC has taken over. The General Manager is going to work it out again and then we will see where we can utilise it. This is the fact.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm that the machine was actually delivered as far back as July 2008, which is more than two years ago and, in the space of these two years, the machine is not working and is just staying there?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, it is in 2009 and not in 2008.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister the reasons for not being able to fix that equipment? Was it due to unavailability of manpower or equipment in the country?

Mr Soodhun: Not at all! We did not have the right person from the company and once we get the engineer, we are going to fix it.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the hon. Minister's attention been drawn to the fact that that equipment was second-hand, and is he agreeable to set up an enquiry? The hon. Minister mentioned recently about forensic enquiry. This is a waste of consumers' money.

Mr Soodhun: I can assure the hon. Member that it is not second-hand equipment.

TEXTILE SECTOR – FACTORIES – CLOSING DOWN

(No. 1B/457) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the textile sector, he will state, for the period 2005 to date, the number of-

- (a) factories which have ceased operation, and
- (b) workers who have been laid off.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to data from the Central Statistical Office in regard to the textile sector, 119 factories closed down during the period 2005 to date.

As regards part (b) of the question, 14,007 workers have been laid off during the same period compared to 25,231 workers who have been laid off during the period 2000 to 2004, when I was Minister of Labour...

(Interruptions)

Jayen Cuttaree was the former Minister of Industry. This is the fact!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Soodhun: *La cerise sur le gâteau*, at the same time, is that 39 new enterprises have been established, thereby creating 3,871 jobs during the period 2005 to date.

Mr Uteem: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a lot of concern among players in the textile sector who depend heavily on European markets and that the Euro crisis is affecting them? Can we know from the hon. Minister what measures will his Ministry take to support those factories which are in difficulty?

Mr Soodhun: I thank the hon. Member. We are working very hard with all the technicians of my Ministry and Ministry of Finance to bring possible solution for this problem. This is a worldwide situation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Being given all the good work done by the Minister before 2005 - I refer to Tracer studies of redundant workers when the hon. Minister was at the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and we know this was stopped abruptly in 2005 - can he tell us whether there is any data indicating what happened to the redundant workers from 2005 to 2010?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, it is again a very good question. There is the Workfare Programme which is still on and which has been administered by my good friend, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. It provides assistance to workers who are laid off and matters related to payment of compensation are handled by the same Ministry. The work is being done.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to ask a precise question. How many of these workers have been redeployed within the same sector?

Mr Soodhun: I need notice of that question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether there has been a fall in the export receipts from the textile industry in the last year?

Mr Soodhun: On the contrary, it has been increased about five months ago. This is the situation. It might be in the future, but now I can say that it has been increased.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister agree that, following the introduction of the Employment Rights Act, textile factory owners are using economic grounds repeatedly just to lay off workers from the textile industry?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that we have to be very careful. It is not only one issue and we do have problems with certain factories and we are looking into it. There is a monitoring committee at the Ministry and the hon. Member can rest assured, the Minister of Labour, is doing a very good job.

Mr Ganoo: Does the hon. Minister have the figures for the number of industries which have closed down since the coming into operation of the Employment Rights Act?

Mr Soodhun: I need notice of that question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

VESSELS - MAURITIAN FLAG

(No. 1B/458) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the vessels flying the Mauritian Flag, he will state the number thereof, as at to date, indicating, the –

- (a) number thereof which are operating for or are owned by foreign companies, and
- (b) conditions that have to be satisfied to obtain the right to fly the Mauritian flag.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, as at to date, there is a total of 165 vessels flying the Mauritian flag, out of which 136 vessels are owned by foreign companies.

As regards part (b) of the question, there are two (2) instances whereby the right to fly the Mauritian flag can be obtained -

Firstly, as per section 16 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007, a person is qualified to be the owner of a Mauritian ship where he is a citizen of Mauritius; a body corporate incorporated in Mauritius and the place where meetings of its directors are regularly held within Mauritius; or a maritime entity. In case where the holders of majority interest in a ship are not resident in Mauritius, a ship can still be registered if a representative resident in Mauritius is appointed.

Secondly, as per section 51 of the Act where a foreign ship is bareboat chartered for a specific period of time by a person who is qualified to own a Mauritian ship.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that vessels in the Dubai port which operates as *remorqueurs* - boats that guide the

vessels in and out of the port - are actually working in Dubai flying Mauritian flag? Is the hon. Minister aware of this situation?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nothing prevents them from flying the Mauritian flag if they observe certain norms. But I can assure the hon. Member that ours is one of the rare countries where our laws and regulations are very strict and there are many cases where we have to intervene with the Director of Shipping to request him to at least tone down a little bit. But, in fact, we are very strict and we receive, at least, hundreds of complaints almost yearly regarding the registration of flags. But nothing prevents foreign vessels of owning Mauritian flag.

Mr Barbier: Is the hon. Minister aware that these foreign vessels are flying Mauritian flag because, in fact, it costs much less than flying flags of other countries? Is the hon. Minister aware of that?

Mr Bachoo: No, I do not know what are the fees charged by other countries, but I can assure the hon. Member - he can check and counter check - that our laws are very rigid and very strict, even our regulations are as such. In fact, we are thinking of trying to become a bit flexible so as to encourage other vessels also to come towards us because we have got plenty of Mauritian vessels which are having foreign flags.

Mr Barbier: The hon. Minister stated himself that he asked his officers to try to control the situation. Is the hon. Minister agreeable to the fact that there are some abuse and there is a need to have a control despite the law is strict? The fact is that there is an abuse of the procedures in Mauritius and ships around the world are using Mauritian flags because it costs much less to obtain them.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I never said that. I have maintained and I still maintain that ours is one of the safest institutions that we have in our country. I have just mentioned that we have to lower down certain standards otherwise we are so strict that it is difficult for us to operate our flags but there has not been any case of negligence whatsoever because, as I am telling you, all complaints that we receive regarding the Shipping Division have always been that we are very strict. But I can assure the hon. Member that if any case is reported to me, I am going to take actions.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the hon. Minister, therefore, if he is actually satisfied with the situation?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the registration is concerned, as I am telling you, any Government would like to have any number of ships registered under our flag because that brings us foreign currency. As far as this part is concerned, I am not satisfied and, in fact, we are trying to look for ways and means how to improve the situation. But as far as the conditions are concerned, I am 100% convinced that we are very strict and that is the reason why we just want to try to broaden it a little bit more.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister saying that there are Mauritian ships which are flying other nationalities' flags. Can we have an idea of how many of these ships fly other countries' flags? And, secondly, are Mauritian fishing vessels flying Mauritian flags or other flags?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the first part of the question, in fact, those ships that we refuse them registration run away to Comoros and to other countries and they fly their flags. As far as the second part of the question is concerned, I need notice because I do not know exactly how many of 162, which I have mentioned, are fishing vessels.

SEAMEN'S DISCHARGE BOOK – CRITERIA

(No. 1B/459) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Seamen's Discharge Book, he will state the criteria for obtaining same.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Shipping Division of my Ministry that, for a person to be eligible for a Seamen's Discharge Book, he/she must show proof that he/she has undergone training in Basic Safety pursuant to Regulation VI/1 of the International Convention on Standards of training Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers, 1978, as amended in 1995.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether foreigners are eligible to have a Discharge Book from the Mauritian Authority?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to have notice of this question.

ATHLETES - INSURANCE COVER

(No. 1B/460) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the insurance cover for athletes, he will give a list of the sports federations complying with paragraph 2(d) of the Third Schedule to the Sports Act, indicating, in each case, details of the insurance policy.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as available.

However, I wish to point out that paragraph 2(d) of the Third Schedule to the Sports Act stipulates that a sports federation should arrange for insurance cover against possible accidents by its licence holders and officials during training and competitions.

Moreover, section 4(2)(g) of the Sports Act provides that a sports federation should adopt, as part of its rules, the standard basic rules set out in the Third Schedule.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of each sports federation to insure its licensees and to negotiate with the insurance company as to the type of policy it will provide to its athletes.

However, I wish to point out that for all major international games endorsed by my Ministry and warranting the participation of Mauritius, my Ministry takes insurance cover for athletes and all other members of the delegation before their departure.

I am also informed that certain sports federations do not insure their athletes during normal training, regional and national competitions and even during participation at international competitions and I condemn this situation.

As stated in the reply I made to PQ No. 1B/255 on 06 July 2010, this issue of insurance will also form part of the Terms of Reference of the sub-committee that is being set up to look into the status of federations not in compliance with the Sports Act.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il y a eu des sportifs qui ont été blessés à l'entraînement ou en compétition mais qui n'étaient pas couverts par une police d'assurance ?

Mr Ritoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir comment ces athlètes sont pris en charge dans une telle situation ?

Mr Ritoo: The matter was referred to the federation, which was supposed to take the insurance cover, and as the latter did not react, the athlete had sued the federation before the Intermediate Court. The matter is *sub judice*.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir aussi du ministre si la police d'assurance couvre l'athlète de sa résidence jusqu'au site d'entraînement ou de compétition. Bien sûr, je fais allusion à ceux qui sont assurés.

Mr Ritoo: Normally, the insurance cover should apply to the athletes on a full time basis and any federation now looking for grant from my Ministry will have to produce the insurance policies before covering the respective licensees prior to disbursement of any such grant.

Mr Bhagwan: Many of these athletes have not received any compensation or treatment because of lack of insurance cover taken by the federation. The Minister has just stated that the case is before the court. As there are many athletes *qui ont été brillants et ont fait honneur à notre pays lors des compétitions*, can I appeal to the Minister to, at least, *sur une base humanitaire, essayer de voir ce que le gouvernement peut faire pour ces athlètes qui sont vraiment en difficulté? Certains n'ont même pas d'emploi et ont des problèmes de suivi médical*.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was myself victim of a very serious injury in football. As long as I am at the Ministry, I am dealing with such cases and we are even giving such compensation from the Ministry of Social Security. We are attending to all such athletes.

**COMMISSION NATIONALE DU SPORT FEMININ – CHAIRPERSON -
APPOINTMENT**

(No. 1B/461) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*, he will state the -

- (a) composition of the Board, and
- (b) date of the appointment of the Chairperson thereof, indicating the activities organised since her appointment to date.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the composition of the Board of the “*Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*” (CNSF), the date of appointment of the Chairperson as well as the activities organised are being tabled.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j’aimerais savoir du ministre s’il est satisfait du fonctionnement actuel de la CNSF.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the list of activities forwarded to me by the Chairperson and the Committee is concerned, I am satisfied with the way they function.

PORT LOUIS - CARBON DIOXIDE - HEALTH HAZARD

(No. 1B/462) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to Port Louis, he will state if the level of carbon dioxide and other pollutants are being monitored, in view of the increase in traffic and industrial activities, indicating, if this level represents a health hazard and, if so, state the remedial measures that are being taken.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Environmental Laboratory (NEL) of my Ministry is undertaking the monitoring of different types of pollutants level arising from traffic and industrial activities around the island including Port Louis.

For this purpose, the laboratory is making use of two mobile ambient air monitoring equipment, namely -

- (i) a particulate matter analyzer for measuring particulate matters and total suspended particles, and
- (ii) a gaseous analyzer for measuring sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide.

Results of the last monitoring exercise carried out in December 2009 at Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site showed that the different pollutant levels were well within prescribed limits. Procedures are underway for the purchase of an additional ambient air monitoring equipment to increase the frequency of monitoring exercises around Mauritius including Port Louis.

Carbon dioxide emissions for the whole of Mauritius are calculated on an annual basis especially for reporting on climate change. The emissions occur mainly from fuel

combustions in power plants, manufacturing industries and vehicles. In 2009, some 3.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted. The carbon dioxide emission *per capita* for 2009 is around 2.6 tonnes. This is insignificant compared to emissions *per capita* for developed countries like the USA with 19.2 tonnes and Australia with 18 tonnes.

Although the air quality is generally good, we are aware of the inconveniences caused by emissions from industries and vehicles. Therefore, the following measures are being taken to reduce air pollution caused by vehicular emissions -

- introduction of better fuel quality as from the end of this month, i.e. reduction of sulphur content in diesel from 2500 parts per million to 500 ppm, and
- implementation of the Ring Road and Terre Rouge-Verdun-Trianon link road which will be operational by 2015 will render the traffic more fluid in Port Louis.

Furthermore, I am personally chairing a Committee comprising all relevant stakeholders with a view to controlling vehicular emissions. In fact, we have agreed that there is a need to reinforce capacity of the Police both in terms of equipment and training to enforce the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicular Emissions Regulation). In this respect tenders will be launched soon for the purchase of 10 smoke metres and other equipment by my Ministry to be handed over to the Police and the National Transport Authority.

I would also like to inform the House that my Ministry is working on the development of an Integrated Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Framework (IAAQMF) which will include the setting up of an Air Quality Index (AQI) for priority areas such as Port Louis. Consultants from the European Union (EU) are presently working on the design of the framework including a 5-year strategic plan for its implementation.

Dr. S. Boolell: Would the hon. Minister be able to introduce an air quality index or air quality rating not only in Port Louis, but almost all over the island, where the risks are high and publish, on a daily or weekly basis, a colour scheme of alert like it is done in most States, ranging from green to maroon for people not to have any outdoor activities and who are at risk?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we shall ask the consultant to have a look at it.

Mr Bhagwan: One of the main problems about the *véhicules fumigènes* concerns the Vehicle Examination Centres of the National Transport Authority. As far as we all know, the Police, the Environment Officer serve the PF form, we all know Mauritius and how things are

done there. I am not blaming the Minister of Public Infrastructure, but there is need to reinforce action at the level of the Vehicle Traffic Centre because when these vehicles go there for checkup, they enter with fumes and they get out with a certificate.

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NTA is a part of the high-level committee which we have and I understand from my colleague that it is being privatised also.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is the hon. Minister aware of the degree of fumes in the Forest Side area emanating from some of the spinning mills in the area which causes almost a black soot to be deposited in most buildings?

Mr Virahsawmy: I am not aware, but I will ask my officers to check that.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: 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 vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms S. Anquetil).

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved”.

Question again proposed.

(4.10 p.m.)

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr A. K. Gungah):

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for your election as Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, which gathered unanimity.

Je suis aussi ravi de l'élection à l'unanimité du président de la Chambre et, avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and Leader of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*, Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and also my Leader, the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, for their trust in me by conferring to me the responsibility of Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

M. le président, j'effectue un retour après cinq années hors de l'Assemblée nationale. Pendant ces cinq années, j'ai travaillé sur le terrain, tout en développant des assises solides en termes d'une communion avec le peuple. Je dois dire que c'est pour moi un honneur de représenter la circonscription numéro 6, qui est une circonscription modèle. D'ailleurs, les résultats des dernières élections en sont la preuve, de par le score des trois premiers candidats et des trois suivants. Et là, je profite pour remercier mes deux colistiers, notamment l'honorable Lormus Bundhoo et l'honorable Mookhesswur Choonee, pour la campagne formidable que nous avons vécue ensemble en équipe. Nous sommes d'ailleurs tout à fait conscients de l'attente de l'électorat de Grand' Baie/Poudre d'Or, et c'est de notre devoir de respecter et d'honorer les engagements pris, et ainsi être à la hauteur de la confiance placée en nous.

My thanks also go to the people of Mauritius for their positive attitude, by granting a clear mandate to our team in the May 2010 General Election. The mandate of 2010-2015 is a bond of trust between our people and the Government, and we pledge not to betray this trust.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government, under the able stewardship of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, represents the aspiration of each and every segment of our society and, by extension, our great nation. The team, which is at the helm of Government, is a vibrant reflection of multi ethnicity of Mauritius along with all its diversity. We can safely claim to represent the unity in diversity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the first day of the debates, I have been listening to the hon. Members on the other side of the House. Some said that there were no free and fair elections. To say the least, I am puzzled by such a statement, and I will simply call it demagogic.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have had election observers, during the election campaign, from many reputed international organisations, and they have found that Mauritius

has reliable and lively democratic institutions. They have noted that our people have, by their very behaviour, ensured that the elections take place in a spirit of fair play and with no abuses.

L'honorable Ganoo avait d'ailleurs présenté certains calculs en ce qui concerne le nombre d'électeurs ayant voté pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir. Suivant sa logique, si quarante trois pour cent de la population a voté pour l'alliance MMM-UN-MMSD, alors qu'on compte soixante dix huit pour cent du taux de participation, cela voudrait dire que seulement trente trois pour cent de la population ont voté en faveur de l'alliance MMM-UN-MMSD, donc deux tiers – soixante-sept pour cent des électeurs ont voté pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir.

Here, I will invite the hon. Member to look at the results as they are, and not as he would have wished them to be. We should not forget that, in a democratic system, the verdict of the electorate is final and irrevocable. It should be duly respected.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, free and fair elections are the lifeblood of a democracy. It is a matter of great pride for all of us that our nation has, once again, demonstrated their unshakable commitment to uphold the principles of democracy and their unflinching support to *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*. Let us not, by our uncontrolled reflexes, say things that can dent the image of our country. Our sense of patriotism pleads in favour of each and every Mauritian doing his best to project our country high on the spectrum of international consideration.

But now that the elections are behind, I will sincerely invite the Opposition to act as *de bons patriotes* and to sweep away the acrimony and bitterness. The energy should be used to undertake the task of nation-building. If someone were to behave otherwise, it cannot but be time and opportunity lost. So, let us not engage in a *campagne de dénigrement qui ternirait la réputation du pays et, en se faisant, causerait un tort immense à tout un chacun*. We all have a common commitment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir: to give to our country, our motherland, a stable, responsible and performing Government.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, en tant que membre de l'Assemblée nationale, nous avons une grande responsabilité envers la population, et nous ne devons pas laisser le pouvoir nous guider. We should always speak the truth, be the truth and live the truth, as we are men and women of integrity. Our main concern and priority should be to make laws, which will create the necessary conditions for our country to develop properly and to ensure security and peace of mind of our population and, most of all, laws that each and every citizen will accept, understand and respect.

M. le président, nous ne devons pas oublier que le pouvoir est un instrument qu'il nous faut toujours bien gérer. C'est pour cela que nous devons avoir une opposition

responsable, qui participe aux débats, mais surtout une opposition qui fait également des propositions.

Constructive criticism is an essential input for the advancement of a country. Consensus on national issues is necessary. *Il est souhaitable, donc, de voir une opposition qui ne soit pas démagogue, sachant très bien que le pays appartient à tout le monde, que ce soit de ce côté de la Chambre ou de l'autre.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to the Presidential Address delivered on 08 June. I firmly believe that, *avec les grandes lignes énoncées*, we will enter a new era of challenges and opportunities. We are a Government that cares, a Government that will reach out to the last person in the last row. For me, this Government Programme represents the highest common factor between this Government and the people, and certainly not the lowest common denominator.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my other colleagues have already elaborated on the different aspects of the 2010-2015 Government Programme, and, by now, the House stands convinced of the good faith of this present Government and its determination to achieve its objectives. It is a programme with an enlightened vision, a new philosophy driven by the emerging needs of our citizens. The hon. Prime Minister reiterated, throughout the electoral campaign, that *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* will do its best to build a society, based on the guiding principles of unity, equity and modernity. This Government Programme enunciates in a nutshell the measures that Government will take to translate them into practical reality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being *un homme de terrain*, always close to the stark realities of the population, I can say with confidence that the measures announced in this Programme have been gratified by the appreciation of the citizens. People have acclaimed the abolition of the NRPT and tax on interest while, at the same time, congratulating Government for maintaining free bus transport for the students, the elderly and the disabled, in spite of a gloomy world economic outlook.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on another front, I would like to state that any Government machinery cannot run efficiently and smoothly if its different parts are not well lubricated and undergo regular servicing and maintenance. We cannot achieve our objectives of building an equitable, united and modern society when our public service as an institution is not properly equipped to respond to the needs of our citizens and other stakeholders. The public sector is not only a provider of essential services, but it is a key facilitator in the provision of services and production of goods.

The public sector in Mauritius has played a crucial role in the modernisation of our country and in promoting the developmental objectives of Government. Over the years, it has built a relationship based on trust with the private sector. By now, the public and the private sectors have almost blended into a powerful engine and they are complementary to each other in the developmental process of our economy. Partnership between the two sectors must continue to grow and develop for the benefit and welfare of our people. The public sector is called upon more than ever to intervene in order to facilitate economic growth and provide timely and quality services to all our citizens and other stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the environment keeps on changing as the needs of our people keep on growing and as the challenges are becoming more and more daunting, there is an absolute necessity to train our people to face these emerging situations. Our public sector must keep pace with these changes. To be able to realise these objectives, we have to make our civil service more efficient and result-oriented. The civil service operates with public funds. The public is becoming more and more demanding and they urge for a more accountable and transparent civil service where good governance practices prevail. At the end of the day, the public looks for a cost-effective public service which is fully responsive to their needs in terms of improving their quality of life.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is determined to get the reform programme in the civil service to move forward more effectively. In this connection, I would like to highlight three key issues that I believe will have profound effects for the development and progress of the civil service in coming years.

First, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an urgent need for the setting up of a Modern Public Service Training Centre to promote lifelong learning. In a constantly changing business environment, organisations, be it public or private, need to adapt to survive. They need to actively maintain a competitive edge by anticipating future developments in the wake of unprecedented challenges. To this end, training has become a burning need for the civil service because knowledge-base is constantly changing. Research and practice are never static. What is leading edge today becomes conventional in some years. So, it is imperative that a modern civil service learns and relearns its trade. I am sure that hon. Members know very well this old Chinese proverb which says –

“You give a man a fish; you feed him for a day. You teach a man how to fish; you feed him for a lifetime.”

This no longer holds good with the daunting challenges of the 21st Century which we are facing. The reasons, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are that, first, in the modern world new species

of fish are constantly emerging from the oceans. Second, the water currents are becoming unpredictable, especially, at a time when we are witnessing the phenomenon of climate change. And last, the rival fishermen are more competitive than ever before. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fisherman must constantly relearn and upgrade his skills to take home a decent catch. So, it goes for the public officers who have to be prepared for continuous learning or lifelong learning if they want to keep themselves abreast with latest developments in their respective fields. This is a reason why my Ministry is working towards promotion of lifelong learning in the civil service. However, this objective cannot be achieved unless the appropriate institutional framework and infrastructure are put in place to help the civil service to progress and move forward towards improving service delivery and enhancing performance. I must point out here that some progress has already been made on the project since a plot of land of an extent of about seven acres has already been earmarked at Ebène by my Ministry, and by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. I will actively pursue this matter with the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for this project to take off.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just as Benjamin Disraeli, the former Conservative British Prime Minister said, I quote –

“Upon the education of the people, the future of this country depends.”

I would say that upon the training of public officers, the future of the civil service depends.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the second point I wish to make is that we need to provide a conducive working environment to the public officers. This is a perquisite for an effective and efficient civil service as we must ensure that public officers are provided with a decent workplace and environment as well as the necessary tools and equipment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must inform the House that quite a number of reform measures are being implemented in the civil service right now: Two major reforms of the Performance Management System and the Programme-Based Budget. These reforms are geared towards enhancing performance of organisations as well as individual officers. If we want the civil service to perform and deliver for people and communities with rising aspirations and expectations, we have to provide the basic office infrastructure, amenities and tools to encourage public officers to perform better. In this context, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am proposing to arrange for an item enhancement of work environment to be included in the next budget for each Ministry and Department, under which funds will be made available to cater for all occupational safety and health issues with a view to ensuring that public sector organisations are fully compliant with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my third issue which I consider very essential for a healthy civil service, is to develop and enhance a meaningful dialogue with all the stakeholders. Here, I have specifically in mind the federations and the unions which represent the public officers.

M. le président, ceux qui s'engagent dans la fonction publique sont des personnes de qualité, que ce soit au niveau de la moralité ou sur le plan professionnel. Ils ont intégré la fonction publique parce qu'ils sont animés par la passion de servir. En tant que ministre, je souhaite que nul d'entre eux ne regrette son choix, que nul ne soit déçu et que chacun doit se sentir heureux parce qu'il est utile, respecté, reconnu pour ses mérites, ses talents et ses compétences, car, M. le président, les fonctionnaires jouent un rôle très important dans le développement du pays, ce qui entraîne dans la foulée la prospérité de la nation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these can only be achieved when we have all the stakeholders on board. To this end, my Ministry will strive to continually promote a harmonious dialogue with the unions and federations. Since assuming office, I have made it a point to establish communication network with all the unions and federations concerned. I make an appeal to these stakeholders to join hands with us to keep on enhancing the working conditions of public officers for a still better public service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an important element in the overall structure of the public service is the human resource function which has long adopted a passive and operational approach to people management with little input into strategic decisions. To support the broader aims of the Public Service Reform, the human resource function should become more strategic, proactive and result-oriented.

To this end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will formulate a Human resource strategy that will give new orientations and constitute a road map for the efficient use of human resource in the public sector in the coming years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is high time that the public service shifts to the state-of-the-art technology to survive and compete in this globalised and digital world. We have, at present, a few Government departments which already have an online presence and also offer e-services. My Ministry will continue to encourage and assist Ministries and Government departments to go hi-tech with fully computerised operations. Increase in the number of e-services and the use of the SMS to bring services and information within hand's reach of the public. Public sector reforms in terms of technology are long overdue. We will have to act fast on this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is very well concerned with the welfare of the public officers. In this context, the Public Officers Welfare Council, operating under the aegis of my Ministry, provides the necessary platform for public officers and their families to interact among themselves in a relaxed and friendly environment. Government has recently put a building near Gymkhana grounds in Vacoas at the disposal of the Public Officers Welfare Council. This facility will be used to organise more activities that will bring about a quality work life balance for public officers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after having said all these, it becomes obvious that the vision of this Government is to transform the civil service into a smarter civil service. How can this be achieved? I am personally inspired by the civil service in Britain. As our civil service is based on the Westminsterian model, I believe that we need to have a civil service that must be underpinned by the following characteristics. I will call them the four “Ps”. The first “P”, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is pace. By pace, I mean a civil service that provides rapid responses to problems and delivering the right solutions that meet the expectations and aspirations of the Mauritian population. The second “P”, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is passion. Our civil service, through public officers, should be passionate about providing high quality public service for all. The third “P” is pride. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, public officers must take pride in what they do and ensuring that the country is proud of its civil service. And the last “P” is professionalism. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, public officers must demonstrate highest degree of professionalism in the way they formulate policies and deliver services. The combination of the enduring values in the civil service, coupled with the four “Ps” that I have just highlighted will no doubt pave the way for a smarter civil service. In the 21st century, we are witnessing a return of public sector ethos around the world. The civil service is a reliable force which is more important than ever.

To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would say that this Government Programme reflects the vision of this Government as to where we want to take Mauritius in years ahead. This programme constitutes the measures announced in the electoral manifesto of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* which was approved by the population through the results of the general election 2010. The programme sets out not only the existing measures such as alleviation of poverty, empowering the citizens, fair and equitable distribution of wealth, democratisation of the economy among others on which efforts have to be redoubled and the pace accelerated, but it also enunciates new measures such as democratisation of electricity generation, transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island and abolition of the National Residential Property Tax and tax on interests and also other innovative measures.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must point out that we have looked beyond our horizon when working out these measures. We have gone beyond our shores in this programme. The measures announced has taken into account the millennium development goals set for the economic and social advancement and progress of all the nations, especially the developing ones around the world.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, we shall forge ahead to bridge the gaps existing between the different rungs of our social ladder. This is the advocated policy of this Government. We have a broad array of options but the preferred ones will be those which favour the social dimension and will forcefully push back the pangs of poverty which mercilessly pinch our less fortunate countrymen.

Comme on dit, M. le président, là où il y a une volonté, il y a un chemin. Avec ces mots, M. le président, je vous remercie pour votre attention.

At 4.46 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.23 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy) : M. le président, je voudrais tout d'abord vous féliciter pour votre réélection, ainsi que le *Deputy Speaker*, par l'unanimité. Je voudrais aussi féliciter les nouveaux membres des deux côtés de la Chambre.

Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier les électeurs de la circonscription No. 7 Piton-Rivière du Rempart pour avoir placé leur confiance en moi et mes deux colistiers, l'honorable Dr. Hookoom et l'honorable Mme Bholah. C'était une bonne équipe qui a travaillé dans la circonscription, avec une belle dame qui a travaillé dans le social et le bon docteur qui s'est bien occupé de la circonscription pendant plus de dix ans.

M. le président, je reviens dans cet auguste Assemblée après une longue absence et je vous retrouve comme président de la Chambre, avec qui j'avais eu des relations très cordiales pendant la période 1995 à 2000.

C'est avec une très grande satisfaction que j'ai agi, pendant les cinq dernières années, comme secrétaire général du Parti Travailliste, le plus grand et le plus vieux parti de Maurice, qui fêtera ses 75 ans en février de l'année prochaine. Je remercie aussi le Premier ministre qui a placé sa confiance en moi pour être candidat du parti au No. 7 et aussi pour représenter le gouvernement au niveau du ministère de l'environnement et des développements durables.

M. le président, l'Alliance de l'Avenir a eu une victoire éclatante lors des dernières consultations populaires grâce aux visions et stratégies de notre *leader* et Premier ministre, le

Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Il était courtisé de toute part et de tous les partis et il a su prendre des décisions intelligentes pour donner à l'Alliance de l'Avenir une victoire écrasante.

Comme toujours le MMM est mauvais perdant et invoque des irrégularités imaginaires. Le peuple a pris sa décision en se basant sur les réalisations du gouvernement dirigé par le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam et, aujourd'hui, nous avons une équipe soudée et inébranlable. Il n'y a pas lieu pour les *rodeurs bouts* d'essayer de créer la zizanie au sein de l'équipe gouvernementale. Ceux qui ont été envoyés au rancart devraient y rester.

Nous avons un gouvernement qui travaille, un Premier ministre qui n'a pas peur de prendre des décisions et une équipe solide. Ce gouvernement a fait ses preuves pour réussir une croissance positive en dépit de la conjoncture mondiale difficile. Il ne faut pas oublier ce qui se passe en Angleterre où des actions drastiques sont prises ainsi que des coupures budgétaires de 20% à 30%. Les dettes astronomiques sont qualifiées de donations toxiques aux enfants et petits-enfants des Anglais.

Prenons le cas de la Grèce ! Avec la crise financière, le pays est en banqueroute et les fonctionnaires ne sont pas payés. Plus grave, les pensionnaires aussi ne sont pas payés car ils sont pénalisés par la faute des incompétents. Avec le crash financier, ils doivent revoir tout le système macro-économique. La situation est aussi grave au Portugal, en Espagne, en Irlande et dans d'autres pays d'Europe. En Espagne, il n'y a plus de constructions et les grues se rouillent et les compagnies de construction sont en faillite tandis qu'à Maurice, mon collègue, le ministre des infrastructures publiques, a déjà annoncé qu'il n'y a pas suffisamment de contracteurs pour exécuter les nombreux travaux infrastructurels et routiers.

Je ne peux pas passer sous silence la gestion catastrophique du MMM. A part des squelettes dans les armoires et le scandale de Chagos, il y a eu le *land saga Illovo*. C'était une occasion pour corriger les actions discriminatoires contre les petits planteurs par la force colonialiste. Je considère que le plus grand scandale écologique de l'histoire de Maurice est la permission qui a été donnée par le MMM en 2003 à CTDS et CT Savannah pour produire de l'électricité par partir du charbon. L'EIA était donné à une vitesse extraordinaire. Plus grave, il a eu une pression sur le CEB pour donner des conditions très généreuses - une *production charge* en plus d'un *capacity charge*. M. le président, seulement pour l'année 2008, le CEB a dû payer R 333 millions de *capacity charge* à CTDS tandis que le pactole de R 879 millions a été payé. Qu'ils produisent ou qu'ils ne produisent pas, cette somme a été payée en plus du *production charge*.

Nous voyons le scandale qu'il y a eu. Le peuple aura à payer cette générosité pendant 14 ans. Les IPP ne respectent pas l'environnement et les cendres du charbon sont jetées dans les champs de pistaches et des légumes. Il y a eu des photos qui ont été produites dans cette Chambre, ce qui montre que tout cela est inacceptable et qu'il n'y a pas le respect de l'environnement et qu'il y a aussi des risques pour les nappes phréatiques. Il ne faut pas oublier que les nappes phréatiques produisent jusqu'à 60% de nos besoins en eau. Est-ce qu'ils veulent contaminer toutes nos nappes ? Imaginez, M. le président, que dans le sud de l'île, il y a une utilisation d'environ 280,000 tonnes de charbon par an, ce qui résulte à environ 70,000 tonnes de cendres qui sont jetées dans les champs tous les ans. Dans cinq ans, il y aura 350,000 tonnes de cendres et de charbons qu'ils auraient jetées. C'est cela le plus grand désastre écologique du sud de Maurice grâce au non-respect par les IPP.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have one common wish at heart: that Mauritius becomes and be known as a model of sustainable development all over the world. We all want a development that meets the needs of the present generation, without comprising the ability of future generations.

To that end, the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, has charted a new pathway to engage our country on sustainable development in a most effective and efficient manner. It is with such a vision and in order to strike the right balance between economic, environmental and social needs that the hon. Prime Minister has coined the '*Maurice Ile durable*' concept. We have enjoyed a reasonably high economic growth during the past few years, despite the gloomy global situation, but we realise that economic growth is not an end in itself. Our model of development needs to take into account the major aspirations of each Mauritian, especially for a better quality of life.

The House will surely agree that development is central to ensure the economic prosperity of our country. Otherwise, we will be caught in the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment with all social evils and environmental degradation, which accompany them. But development cannot be achieved at the expense of the environment. Indeed, environment provides the basic ingredients, that is, the natural assets for development to happen.

Just imagine what our tourism industry would be without our unique coastal environment and our inland natural assets and features. Yet, we often take all these natural ecosystems for granted and sometimes damage and degrade inadvertently or even purposely for short- term gains. This should no longer happen.

This Government has given the right signal by strengthening the mandate of the Ministry of Environment to include sustainable development. First, let us dissipate all doubts and misconceptions on sustainable development.

Sustainable development, Mr Speaker, Sir, as conceptualised by the hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, is about adopting a new way of life and attitudes in our drive to protect our environment and enhance our economic development for the welfare of our people. Sustainable development should be realised at community, national level and also at micro and macro level. Therefore, it consists of reviewing our consumption and production patterns at all levels and our unsustainable use of resources. It is also about cleaner production and technology, empowerment of people and green productivity.

My Ministry will, therefore, come up with a series of measures to translate both '*Maurice Ile Durable*' and the sustainable development concepts into concrete actions, build on our past achievement initiatives. Let me give a few examples –

- elaboration of a White Paper to guide us in our strategic sustainable development planning and policy making;
- ensuing coordination at national level of sustainable development activities;
- developing key indicators to monitor progress towards sustainable development;
- fostering resource efficiency;
- enhancing sustainable consumption and production;
- promoting the economy through green productivity, green growth and green buildings;
- ensuring that sound sustainable development policies support poverty alleviation and social inclusion;
- reinforcing education for sustainable development, and
- provision of enabling elements to support implementation of sustainable development.

The abovementioned policies and strategies are anchored in the concept of sustainable development and incorporate the relevant recommendations of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit,

the 2000 Millennium Development Summit, the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit and 2005 Mauritius International Meeting on SIDS.

Mr Speaker, Sir, '*Maurice Ile Durable*', is a big challenge. However, Mauritius, in spite of its inherent vulnerabilities, has derived guidance by developing first a conceptual framework -- the '*Maurice Ile Durable*' concept. This is charting the way for stakeholders to streamline their actions, programmes and projects towards sustainable development. The '*Maurice Ile Durable*' fund is giving the necessary financial support to enable us to leapfrog and make sustainable development a reality. Although we started by implementing sustainable development projects in the energy sector, we are now revamping the fund to cater for a broad range of projects and measures to sustain the three pillars of sustainable development.

Furthermore, Government is engaged in a national consultative process to formulate a policy and strategy for '*Maurice Ile Durable*'. All major groups have had the opportunity of contributing to the vision of '*Maurice Ile Durable*', which will focus on economic growth, poverty alleviation, environment management gender and governance issues.

Allow me to quote part of the speech of the hon. Prime Minister at the Executive Committee of the UNESCO –

“Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Il y a quelques mois, l'île Maurice s'est lancée dans un projet à la fois ambitieux et réaliste : Maurice Ile Durable. Avec mon conseiller et ami, le scientifique Joël de Rosnay, qui nous apporte son savoir faire, sa grande expérience et sa réputation internationale, nous avons mis sur pied cet ambitieux projet.

L'évolution du monde prend des chemins exceptionnels. Le temps nous dicte sa loi et nous vivons dans un monde où la seule certitude est qu'il n'y en a pas. Cette situation exceptionnelle appelle des solutions exceptionnelles. Elle requiert de l'imagination, de la vision, de la créativité pour surmonter tous ces nouveaux défis qui étaient, il y a une décennie encore, à peine prévisibles.

Il a fallu réagir et réagir vite. Nous avons donc jeté, avec ce projet, les bases d'une autonomie énergétique qui touche aussi bien les aspects économiques, agricoles et culturels. Selon nos prévisions, Maurice va sensiblement réduire sa note pétrolière en vingt ans avec la mise en place d'une nouvelle politique énergétique.

Notre dépendance sur l'huile lourde et le charbon qui s'élève à 80% à l'heure actuelle, va être réduite à 57% alors que la part des énergies renouvelables passera de 20% à 43% pendant cette même période.

Ces énergies renouvelables concerneront essentiellement la biomasse, l'éolienne, l'hydro, la cogénération et diverses énergies dans les vagues et la géothermie.

Le projet 'Maurice Ile Durable' repose sur deux piliers : l'économie des énergies utilisables et l'émergence des petits producteurs indépendants d'énergies renouvelables. Nous mettrons aussi sur pied un éco-parc de démonstration et des systèmes écologiques intégrés.

Mais nous voulons aussi donner un signal au monde. Comme il existe à Davos un Forum Economique mondiale, nous organisons en 2011 à Maurice, le Forum Ecologique Mondiale.

'Maurice Ile Durable' a pour ambition d'être un projet pilote pour les Petits États Insulaires en Développement. Je veux faire la démonstration, à travers ce projet que la volonté, la vision, l'esprit d'innovation d'un pays est plus puissant que toutes les fatalités.

Ceux qui connaissent Maurice le savent : cette terre est un microcosme du monde. Je suis certain que si l'île Maurice réussit, le monde peut réussir! »

This was part of the speech of the hon. Prime Minister at the Executive Committee of the UNESCO.

Mr Speaker, Sir, though we are an insignificant greenhouse gas emitter and despite our meagre resources, we want to show our concern to what is happening to planet earth and

contribute to the international effort, albeit in a modest way, to reduce greenhouse gases. The detrimental impacts of climate change on Mauritius as a SIDS are now established facts and the situation will worsen with time. Climate change impacts and their complexities are already posing considerable risk to important economic drivers, human welfare and the environment in our country. Aware of those threats we have set up a Climate Change Division in my Ministry. This Division is now operational and is coordinating activities related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Government is also aware that the transboundary and cross cutting nature of environment calls for the collaboration and the participation of everybody, not only at national, but also at regional and global levels. To this effect, the initiative of Government to enhance regional and international cooperation for the Western Indian Ocean and, the efforts to make Mauritius take the lead to promote the interests of SIDS will be strengthened. Mauritius is therefore adopting a more proactive environmental diplomacy through enhanced involvement in international environmental governance and implementation of Multilateral Environment Agreements.

Emphasis has been placed on the increasing risk posed by natural disasters and extreme weather events related to climate change. I want to bring to the attention of the House that my Ministry has, together with 19 other African countries, embarked on the Africa Adaptation Programme, which is funded by the Government of Japan. Under this programme an amount of Rs90 m. has been earmarked for Mauritius. This project will allow us to establish a framework for adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change. Priority will be given to key sectors such as agriculture, coastal zone, water resources, etc.

It includes a working group at the level of the Prime Minister's Office to assess vulnerability as highlighted in the Government Programme and to map vulnerable areas such as flood prone, coastal inundation and landslide areas. This will enhance our preparedness to deal with natural disasters.

Furthermore, my Ministry is also participating in –

- (i) The reporting mechanism for the 3 Rio-Conventions namely – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification and United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity along with five other African countries;
- (ii) This regional program on Marine Highway Project initiated by the Indian Ocean Commission. The object of this project is to have in place a dedicated

marine highway for oil tankers so as to minimise risks of accidents and oil spills.

I also wish to inform the House that my Ministry is presently reviewing and updating the existing National Oil Spill Contingency plan.

Government is also participating in high level negotiation process and is making its voice heard through negotiating blocs such as Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Africa Group, and the G77 group and China towards reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries and a series of climate related regional projects. We are also negotiating for adequate resources, technology transfer and capacity building for developing countries, especially for SIDS, to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change now and in the future. My Ministry is also supporting regional initiatives and programmes through the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN).

Mr Speaker, Sir, management of our environment starts with the protection of our natural resources and ecosystems and the most valuable ones are recognised as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). These are our rivers, lakes, wetlands, mountains, biodiversity, beaches, lagoons and coral reef systems. They offer valuable ecosystem services which sustain our society and enhance our quality of life. Without them our quality of life will deteriorate rapidly and our economy will have to bear the adverse impact of this deterioration.

To ensure sustainability, a study on the management of Environmentally Sensitive Areas was commissioned by my Ministry.

The study has now been completed with the classification, the demarcation and the mapping of all those sensitive areas. A Policy Guidance and a Legal Report on Management of ESAs have also been produced. The main recommendations relate to amendments to be brought to existing laws and regulations, including the Environment Protection Act 2002. My Ministry will now follow on the implementation aspects.

Our development model is highly dependent on our sensitive resources such as beaches, lagoons and coral reefs. In order to have a holistic approach in the management of coastal zone, a study for the setting up of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Framework has been completed. The recommendations contained therein will be implemented and necessary legislative and institutional reforms will be undertaken to ensure economic sustainability, good governance and equity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the face of new and daunting challenges lying ahead, the Environment Protection Act and all associated environmental laws will be reviewed with a view to –

- Further decentralising and empowering local authorities in the enforcement process.
- Promoting the right synergy and harmonising the actions of all enforcing agencies.
- Providing tougher measures and penalties for contraveners.

Furthermore, with a view to consolidating the enforcement and compliance mechanism, my Ministry has recently set up a Prosecution Division within the Department of Environment with the mandate to conduct inquiries and prosecute offences committed under Environment Protection Act and declared environmental laws. To ensure that all cases are fast tracked, this newly created Division will be provided with proper and adequate training and capacity building and will work in close collaboration with other enforcing agencies and the Police Department for efficient and effective inquiries on offences and subsequent prosecution.

You will appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that enforcement will be very difficult and even ineffective without the participation of the public at large, hence the necessity to create an environmentally literate and eco-friendly population. This can only be achieved through aggressive sensitisation and educational programme targeting all the segments of society, with a particular focus on the younger generation to bring the necessary change in mentality and behaviour.

Mr Speaker, Sir, today fair trade, organic products, eco-labelling, cleaner production and carbon credit have become common place in the business sector. My Ministry recognises the urgent need for transforming our mindset and our lifestyle to make them more sustainable. Accordingly, the national programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production developed by my Ministry is precisely meant to take us in that green direction.

We are, in fact, creating the enabling environment for this to happen so that we can quickly move towards a mode of production and consumption that will incorporate sustainability. We, therefore, have to assist our enterprises to better understand the challenges of sustainable production, the market trends for eco-friendly products, the main product standards and the technical requirements for such standards and the support available to meet these standards.

In line with this strategy, the Mauritius Standards Bureau has launched its Environmental Management System (EMS) certification scheme, which enables it to certify organisations to MS ISO 14001: 2004. My Ministry has also issued, under the Environment Protection Act, the Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Audit) Regulations, 2008.

Without innovative practices, we will not be able to create value addition and undertake product differentiations which are now essential factors as we no longer enjoy trading preferences. With innovation we will be able to ensure that sustainable development will rely on increasing productivity share in GDP. Indeed, moving to an innovation-led economy will produce wealth, employment and societal well-being in a sustainable way. This is precisely why this Government is laying emphasis on science, technology transfer, research and capacity building. In our endeavour to protect environment and promote sustainable development, we will be guided by the Rio principles, in particular, the Sustainable Development Principle, the Polluter Pays Principle and the Precautionary Principle.

Mr Speaker, Sir, protecting and cherishing environment is a common duty of all of us. We are fully conscious of our responsibilities and this Government Programme contains a host of measures packaged in a holistic manner to ensure progress and success. We have to break off from the rhetoric that environment is the sole responsibility of Government. The private sector, NGOs, civil society and the public at large will have to play their part. We have no other option than to create the right synergy and partnership among all stakeholders and forge ahead as a single entity to make '*Maurice Ile Durable*' a lasting reality.

M. le président, je suis fier d'être un membre du parti travailliste qui a donné l'indépendance au pays, l'éducation gratuite, le transport gratuit, l'égalité des chances, la démocratisation de l'économie. Mon parti, avec ses alliés, gère le pays d'une façon professionnelle grâce à la vision de notre leader, le Premier ministre, le Docteur Navin Ramgoolam. Nous avons un long chemin à parcourir ensemble et ceux qui ont raté ce train de développement attendront longtemps. Oui M. le président, longtemps encore ! La bave du crapaud n'atteindra jamais la blancheur du lys.

Merci, M. le président.

(5.48 p.m.)

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first of all congratulate you, as well as the Deputy Speaker, for your unanimous election. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all the hon. Members, in particular those, who like me, have the privilege to sit for the first time in this august Assembly.

Being a new Member, I hope to take advantage of your experience, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to perform my duties as parliamentarian to the best of my ability.

I seize this occasion to express my deepest gratitude to my party, the MMM, and our leader, Paul Bérenger, for having given me the opportunity to act at a more important level after having served as a Municipal Councillor and Mayor of the town of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill.

I would like also to express my sincere thanks to the electorate of Constituency Number 20, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, who has chosen me as their representative at the National Assembly, together with my good friends, hon. Rajesh Bhagwan and hon. Kee Chong Li Kwong Wing.

I can reassure my electorate that I will do my utmost best to honour their trust.

Mes camarades de parti avant moi ont déjà exprimé leur opinion sur les élections générales du 5 mai dernier, qu'ils considèrent n'ont pas été *fair and free* en raison de certaines pratiques peu honorables durant la campagne électorale. Je ne vais donc pas revenir sur cette question. Il est toutefois regrettable que, malgré les promesses répétées concernant les réformes électorales, rien n'a été fait pour introduire la législation nécessaire. C'est ainsi que le code de conduite, qui n'avait pas force de loi, a été bafoué avec mépris.

Mais l'opinion retiendra que mes colistiers et moi-même avons travaillé en équipe autour d'une campagne propre, en nous basant essentiellement sur le projet de société que l'Alliance du Cœur avait proposé aux mauriciens.

M. le président, je tiens, tout d'abord, à féliciter nos jeunes sportifs pour leur bonne performance aux 7^{ème} Jeux de la CJSOI qui se sont déroulés récemment à l'île de la Réunion. Dans la foulée, je salue aussi la qualification de notre équipe de football des moins de 20 ans pour le prochain tour préliminaire de la CAN Jr 2011.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant axer mon intervention sur la partie du discours-programme de ce nouveau gouvernement consacrée au sport et à la jeunesse.

Je suis tenté de ne dire qu'un mot : paroles ; paroles ; paroles

Comme l'a été du reste les cinq dernières années du gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale.

Et de plus, j'ai malheureusement la curieuse impression que c'est du déjà-vu et du déjà entendu ; une expression chère à l'honorable Dr. Hawoldar.

M. le président, alors que nous vivons dans un monde en perpétuelle mutation, ce gouvernement n'a malheureusement rien trouvé de nouveau à proposer au mouvement sportif. Ce gouvernement est en train de faire du neuf avec du vieux.

En effet, le président de la République est venu dire que ce gouvernement viendra de l'avant avec un certain nombre de choses, comme par exemple :

- un *Integrated Strategic Plan* pour le sport ;
- la construction de nouveaux complexes ;
- la mise en place d'un *National Institute of Sports* ;
- amender le *Sports Act*, et
- refaire la piste synthétique du stade Camp du Roi.

Laissez-moi vous dire qu'il n'y a rien, dans ces projets annoncés, que le mouvement sportif n'a pas entendu parler durant ces cinq dernières années.

M. le président, je suis cependant heureux de constater que, suite à une de mes questions parlementaires, le ministre de la jeunesse et des sports a enfin décidé d'agir pour permettre aux fédérations de se mettre en conformité avec le *Sports Act*.

Alors que durant ces cinq dernières années on a parlé et reparlé des amendements nécessaires à la loi, rien n'a été fait. C'est maintenant que ce dossier semble se réactiver. Je dirais : tant mieux !

Mais, entre-temps, 22 fédérations se retrouvent dans une situation des plus inconfortables. Il est à se demander, M. le président, si, par ricochet, cette affaire n'aura pas de conséquences directes sur le Comité National Olympique Mauricien.

C'est bien que le ministre ait décidé d'agir, mais, en tant que parlementaire, je veillerai à ce que ce problème soit réglé à la satisfaction de tout le monde.

M. le président, c'est vous dire à ce quel point le mouvement sportif est en train de travailler avec du réchauffé.

Pourtant, ce même mouvement sportif attend, depuis 2005, des actions sérieuses et réfléchies pour s'armer face à leur avenir.

Dans ces circonstances, je ne peux cacher ma crainte devant le manque d'initiatives du gouvernement, alors que notre mouvement sportif a tant besoin de repères pour se relancer et se motiver pour affronter les nouveaux défis qui l'attendent.

M. le président, en sport, chaque jour de perdu c'est probablement une médaille d'or qu'on est en train de perdre. On ne peut se permettre de renvoyer à demain les décisions qui doivent impérativement être prises aujourd'hui.

Je voudrais attirer l'attention de tous sur la préparation de nos athlètes pour les Jeux des Iles de 2011 aux Seychelles.

Le ministre est venu, ici même, afficher sa satisfaction quant à la préparation de nos athlètes dans les 12 disciplines où Maurice sera présente.

Mais laissez-moi vous dire que, sur le terrain, la vérité est tout autre. Il n'y a qu'à lire la presse sportive pour constater cette vérité qui saute aux yeux et que le ministre, malheureusement, hésite encore à reconnaître.

A part quelques disciplines qui ont déjà un projet en chantier, la grosse majorité come le football, le volley-ball, le basketball, l'haltérophilie, le cyclisme, le badminton et la voile sont à la traîne.

Certains n'ont même pas encore mis en place une présélection, voire n'ont pas d'entraîneur national, alors que nous sommes arrivés à presqu'une année des Jeux.

Faute de moyens, surtout financiers, les fédérations éprouvent beaucoup de difficultés pour enclencher une préparation adéquate en vue des prochains Jeux aux Seychelles.

Comment voulez-vous que, effectivement, une fédération prépare sa sélection nationale alors qu'elle ne dispose pas de budget pour cet item ?

Gouverner c'est prévoir. Or, dans le budget pour l'année financière en cours, le ministre n'a pas jugé utile d'*earmark* un budget spécifique pour la préparation de nos athlètes à ces jeux.

M. le président, ce n'est nullement dans mes intentions de faire de la politique avec le sport, ou encore moins de faire la leçon à qui que ce soit.

Il est cependant regrettable de constater que cette situation n'a pas évolué positivement et que, visiblement, on n'a pas bien retenu les leçons de 2007, avec une participation cacophonique aux derniers Jeux des îles à Madagascar.

Dois-je rappeler à la Chambre la piètre performance de Maurice aux derniers jeux, terminant à la 3ème place, devançant les Seychelles d'une médaille d'or seulement, sans oublier la déroute de notre sélection nationale de football ?

M. le président, je ne peux passer sous silence l'échec de ce gouvernement sur la gestion du dossier de la relance du football.

M. le président, il est vrai que nous avons enregistré récemment deux bonnes performances de nos jeunes footballeurs, mais cela ne doit pas occulter le fait que le football d'élite est toujours à la traîne.

Le ministre des sports avait fait de ce dossier une affaire d'Etat mais, après presque deux ans, que voyons nous ?

- le Club M est toujours comme un bateau sans capitaine. Les conflits sont toujours d'actualité à la MFA, alors que leur priorité doit être le développement du football ;
- L'accord de Wolmar, rédigé par les présidents des clubs de première et deuxième divisions, a été semble-t-il au frigo. Pourquoi?
- le *steering committee* a soumis des propositions qui ne sont toujours pas appliquées ;
- les clubs de première et de deuxième divisions crient toujours famine, et
- les terrains d'entraînement promis à ces mêmes clubs se font toujours attendre.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi attirer l'attention sur la situation au sein des autres disciplines collectives, dont les clubs font face à d'énormes difficultés financières pour assurer leur participation dans les différents championnats nationaux.

Dans cette même foulée, je me demande où est la réforme des jeux inter-collèges annoncée depuis des années. Une fois de plus, je dirai qu'on ne peut plus se contenter de renvoyer à demain les décisions qui doivent être prises aujourd'hui.

Il y a urgence à tous les niveaux. Pourquoi, par exemple, le gouvernement n'utilisera pas les revenus générés par la Loterie Nationale et le *CSR* pour financer en partie le sport, pas uniquement le football mais le sport dans son ensemble ?

M. le président, il est aussi grand temps que le ministre des sports prenne la décision de revoir le rôle et le fonctionnement du *Mauritius Sports Council*. Au lieu d'être un support

aux fédérations, le *MSC* se révèle être aujourd’hui un organisme sans aucune ambition et incapable de répondre aux attentes du mouvement sportif. Malgré tout, M. le président, je formule le vœu que les fédérations concernées retrouvent très vite la sérénité dans la préparation de leurs sportifs.

Je lance donc un appel, afin que le ministère des sports accorde toute l’attention et les considérations nécessaires pour que les athlètes reprennent confiance et puissent se préparer adéquatement pour les jeux des îles aussi bien que pour les autres compétitions à venir. Il y va de l’honneur de notre pays.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, at this stage, to express in my good name and in that of my party, our gratitude and appreciation to a great athlete who has decided to put an end to his career. Stephan Buckland a, en effet, produit des performances qui resteront à jamais gravées dans l’histoire du sport mauricien. Durant plus d’une décennie, il a su porter au plus haut niveau notre quadricolore. Il a côtoyé les plus grands de l’athlétisme mondial et, dans son sillage, il a su faire rêver tous les mauriciens indistinctement. Avec cette retraite, c’est toute une page de l’histoire du sport mauricien qui se referme, et je ne peux que souhaiter qu’il mette toute son expérience au service de la jeunesse et du sport mauricien.

Dans un autre ordre d’idées, M. le président, je dirai que ce ne sont pas les défis et les chantiers à ouvrir qui manquent afin de motiver notre mouvement sportif de manière permanente.

Dans le discours-programme, je constate avec beaucoup de déception que rien n’a été dit sur la régionalisation du sport qui, il faut le rappeler, passe inévitablement par l’implication et l’engagement des collectivités locales. Aucun effort n’a été fait durant les cinq dernières années pour permettre à la régionalisation du sport d’être efficace et efficiente. Il est clair que le sport ne progressera pas aussi longtemps que la régionalisation ne bénéficie pas du soutien effectif de l’État.

En effet, M. le président, la régionalisation du sport ne sera jamais un succès s’il n’y a pas de réelle volonté politique. Fort de mon expérience en tant qu’ancien Maire et président de la commission des sports à Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, j’ai pu vivre la régionalisation à travers le club omnisports de l’Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. Avec ce club, nous avons été les pionniers d’une régionalisation effective et efficace. C’est dommage que ceux qui gèrent aujourd’hui la ville de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill n’aient pas compris l’importance de ce club et le bien-fondé de nos actions.

L’Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill a été un exemple dont les autres s’en sont inspirés par la suite. Je ne peux que déplorer l’attitude négative de ces soi-disant

administrateurs qui ont tout mis en œuvre pour détruire tout ce que nous avions construit pour le sport d'élite aussi bien que pour le sport de masse.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur l'absence de politique et de mission pour ce qu'on appelle le sport de masse. Mis à part les Jeux de l'Avenir et de l'Espoir, organisés par le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports, les compétitions pour les jeunes sportifs sont quasi inexistantes.

Combien de ces jeunes sont pris en charge ou trouvent une structure pour continuer leur entraînement et passer ainsi à une étape supérieure dans leur jeune carrière ? Tout laisse croire que même le ministère ne dispose pas de statistique à cet effet. On peut compter sur les doigts d'une seule main les fédérations qui disposent d'un centre de formation digne de ce nom mais surtout capable de renouveler de façon continue son élite.

M. le président, la culture sportive doit être inculquée aux enfants dès leur plus jeune âge et devrait, à mon avis, être une matière dans le cursus scolaire. La formation des jeunes doit se faire depuis les classes primaires. Mais faut-il pour autant que nous ayons des enseignants avec les compétences voulues dans ce domaine bien sûr.

Heureusement qu'il y a le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* qui fut lancé alors que le MMM était au pouvoir et qui fait un travail remarquable à ce niveau. Mais la fondation ne peut, à elle seule, répondre à la demande et, vu l'ampleur de la tâche sur la formation, il faut une prise de conscience nationale.

Je lance un appel au ministre pour qu'il s'intéresse davantage au sport féminin, étant donné l'absence de programme pour aider les femmes à pratiquer le sport. La Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin est moribonde depuis belle lurette.

M. le président, il n'y a pas que les sportifs qui sont perdus. Notre jeunesse également n'a pas de repère. Les fléaux sociaux auxquels cette jeunesse a à faire face, en particulier la prolifération de la drogue, l'alcool, les maisons de jeux, la prostitution, tout cela associé à un manque de loisir évident, font que le pays est assis sur une poudrière.

L'heure est grave, M. le président. Que ce gouvernement cesse de se voiler la face et ose prendre les taureaux par les cornes ! Ce n'est pas en censurant la vérité ou en faisant une chasse à ceux qui mènent un combat de front contre ces fléaux, comme ce mauvais cinéma dont nous avons été témoins dans l'affaire '*Paradi an Dey*' que nous allons pouvoir redonner confiance à notre jeunesse.

La prolifération de la drogue dans notre île Maurice, M. le président, se fait à un rythme effrayant. Les travailleurs sociaux n'arrêtent pas de tirer la sonnette d'alarme sur le

fait que les drogués sont de plus en plus jeunes avec un *peak* inquiétant dans la tranche d'âge de 18 à 30 ans. Quand la jeunesse va mal, tout va mal, M. le président.

Les centres de jeunesse sont dans un état déplorable, voire délabrés dans certains cas, et dépourvus de toutes activités. A titre d'exemple, je me réfère aux centres de jeunesse de Barkly et de Mont Roches qui se trouvent dans ma circonscription. Il en est de même pour les centres communautaires, gérés par la *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, qui ne sont en fait que des éléphants blancs. L'avenir de ce pays est menacé car sa jeunesse est en danger. Donc, que ce gouvernement prenne ses responsabilités et agisse enfin.

M. le président, je ne pourrais passer sous silence cette politique de deux poids deux mesures qui frappe ma circonscription. Durant la période de 2005 à 2010, tout laisse croire que la pendule de développement s'est arrêtée. Malgré le fait qu'il y avait un *PPS* et une municipalité sous le contrôle de l'Alliance sociale, cette circonscription a été injustement pénalisée. Alors que la municipalité, elle, est passée complètement à côté de la plaque. Les querelles internes entre conseillers ont eu priorité sur la gestion de la ville. En fait, l'équipe municipale en place, M. le président, s'est auto attribuée un certificat d'incompétence.

En tant qu'élu, je me ferai un devoir de veiller à ce que les droits de mes mandants soient respectés. Je suis et je serai leur porte-parole dans cette Assemblée, afin que leurs doléances soient considérées avec tout le sérieux voulu.

En fait, M. le président, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière est une circonscription à la fois urbaine et rurale qui représente parfaitement cette île Maurice pluriculturelle.

Elle a surtout besoin de projets infrastructurels, notamment, entre autres –

- un nouveau complexe abritant un marché pour la région de Beau Bassin et incluant une salle de réception et une bibliothèque ;
- un terrain de football pour la région de Belle Etoile-Coromandel ;
- l'aménagement d'infrastructures sportives et sociales à Albion, notamment, aux morcellements Belle Vue et de Chazal;
- un terrain de foot également dans le centre d'Albion et à Canot avec ses aménités ;
- construction d'un complexe sportif et social à Plateforme, Petite Rivière ;
- un nouveau centre social à Mont Roches, incluant un bureau de poste ;
- un centre social pour la région de Duperré/Dr. Reid ;
- un terrain de foot à Morcellement la Confiance pour la région de Chasteauneuf et les quartiers avoisinants ;
- un crématorium pour les régions de Canot et de Gros Cailloux, et

- à prévoir aussi la construction de drains à travers la circonscription, et aussi de maisons pour les classes moyennes et défavorisées à Chebel, Mont Roches, Petite Rivière et Albion, entre autres.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Some silence, please!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, alors qu'une bonne éducation est la base même de toute réussite, la situation dans certaines écoles primaires se trouvant dans ma circonscription est inquiétante, ce qui provoque la colère des parents dans certains cas, comme à Albion où les absences et arrivées tardives répétées des enseignants perturbent les élèves, dont les devoirs sont corrigés quelquefois, M. le président, après plus de deux mois.

Alors qu'à *Barkly Government School* qui, faut-il le rappeler, détient le plus fort taux d'échec aux derniers examens du CPE. La situation ne semble guère s'améliorer et ce n'est pas le fait de déléguer *un remedial teacher* une fois par semaine pour s'occuper de sept classes qui changera quoique ce soit à la situation. Et cela au grand désespoir des parents et travailleurs sociaux de la région !

M. le président, la circulation routière est devenue de plus en plus dense dans le centre de Beau Bassin, principalement aux heures de pointe, ce qui occasionne de gros embouteillages depuis Meldrum jusqu'à Coromandel, et dans les deux sens bien souvent.

Donc, je ne peux passer sous silence le fait que la région de Belle Etoile/Coromandel a été témoin ces derniers temps de graves accidents de la route causant mort d'homme à plusieurs reprises. Je lance donc un appel au ministre des infrastructures publiques afin qu'il porte une attention toute particulière à ce problème.

Pour terminer, M. le président, je ne peux que formuler le vœu que ma circonscription ne soit pas victime d'une quelconque vindicte, et que le bon sens va prévaloir en tout état de cause.

M. le président, je vous remercie.

(6.13 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I wish to extend to all hon. Members on both sides of the House my sincere congratulations on their election to serve the National Assembly, our people and the country.

I am, indeed, greatly touched by the renewed trust placed in me by the inhabitants of Constituency No. 5, Pamplemousses/Triolet, whom I have the honour and privilege to

represent in the National Assembly. To them, I pledge that I will always be *à l'écoute*, *accessible* and by their side whenever they need me.

I also wish to convey my special thanks to the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, who has offered me the opportunity to stand as a candidate by his side and to serve the country in a ministerial capacity once again under his inspiring, sagacious, visionary and dynamic leadership and unequalled statesmanship. This renewed trust and confidence has doubled my energy to continue with the work started some 20 months ago. I am even more proud to form part of a team of true and dedicated patriots who are ready to brace challenges in all their forms.

I have a special word for you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and for the Deputy Speaker, for the impartial and professional manner in which you conduct the affairs of this Assembly. Last but not the least, I convey my appreciation to my *collistier*, hon. Satish Faugoo, for always being by my side in our quest to improve the life of our constituents and all our countrymen.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the youth and sports sector, which responsibility has been conferred upon me, I will add that my Ministry deals with the formulation and implementation of Government policies in the field of youth and sports. As such, our mission is to create an enabling environment and to act as a catalyst and facilitator for the promotion and development of youth and sports at regional, national and international levels. Our vision is to be responsive to the aspirations and needs of our young people, to empower them for a better future and foster a culture of sports among them and all Mauritian citizens.

Since I took office in September 2008, I can humbly say that my Ministry has made remarkable achievements and, indeed, I have the collaboration of all stakeholders in the sector who I would like to thank for their positive response and unflinching support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I explain to the House my plan of action for the next five years, it will not be futile for me to briefly dwell on what we have been able to achieve during my last ministerial mandate of twenty months. In fact, as an ex high level sportsman and due to my proximity with our athletes and our youth, I have been able to change the outlook of considering the sporting and youth activities as a secondary and negligible sector into a challenging and dynamic sector. Thus, one has to go through our local newspapers and see the extensive coverage given to sports in general to understand the ever increasing importance of sporting activities in our daily life.

Mr Speaker, Sir, indeed, the new orientation given to our youth and sports policy has instilled an insatiable enthusiasm in our sportsmen and youngsters to strive and outreach others.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a matter of example, the performance of Mauritian athletes at international level during my tenure office has been very encouraging. I don't know if the hon. Member who just spoke was here or was he not engaged in politics, but I would just like to remind him that they won 70 medals in various international competitions; things that never happened in Mauritius ever before; it was only in the year 2009, without forgetting the recent champion in kickboxing in the person of Mr Agathe. What more could I say!

Mr Speaker, Sir, at a time when economic recession has been looming on us, Mauritius has been one of the rare countries to become a sports competition platform at continental level. Thus, we organised several African and other international competitions on our soil, and we plan to organise many more in the coming years.

On the local scene as well, the objectives that we had set earlier have been attained. Thus, to promote *sports de masse* and to inculcate a love for sports in our children since their tender age, several sports competitions for young people such as FIFA Grass Root Project and in football tournaments for primary school children, the *Jeux de l'Avenir*, the *Jeux de l'Espoir* and the Inter-University Games have been organised. These games have had a lot of success and have instilled enthusiasm among young people. Side by side, these competitions have also enabled our federations to detect promising athletes who will now be groomed *pour prendre la relève*.

Now to encourage our athletes to perform better and to compensate them for their performance, we have created an enabling environment and given financial incentives to motivate them to give their best. To name a few measures taken – I hope the hon. Member will listen carefully –

- (i) the amount awarded under the cash prize scheme to deserving athletes has been increased considerably;
- (ii) the allowance allocated to high level athletes to finance their training has also been revised upwards and the criteria for eligibility has been reviewed to enable more athletes to benefit from that allowance;
- (iii) pocket money allocated for participation in international competitions has also been increased;
- (iv) the objectives of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports have been widened to enable more sports disciplines and their athletes to be eligible for benefits granted by the Trust and to encourage our prominent sportsmen to join the *Sport-Etudes Programme*;

- (v) the CNFF has been reopened to cater for promising young football players with the assistance of a DTN;
- (vi) the Club Maurice Committee has been set up to provide the proper *encadrement* and psychological support to athletes participating in international competitions;
- (vii) financial assistance to federations has continued with the introduction of a performance-based approach;
- (viii) our relationship with major international partners such as World Anti-doping Agency, CONFEJES, CJSOI, Supreme Council for Sports in Africa and *Conseil International des Jeux des Iles* has been strengthened and we have been assigned important responsibilities in each of them.

The list is long.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in parallel, if we want our athletes to progress and achieve excellence, we also require to provide them with adequate and suitable infrastructural facilities to train in best conditions. To that effect, upgrading works have been carried out on several sports infrastructure, without forgetting our first synthetic ground at St. Francois Xavier stadium and the returfing of Anjalay stadium, George V stadium, Auguste Volaire stadium and Germain Comarmond stadium. The upcoming projects lined up for implementation in the coming years are many and I will elaborate on them shortly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, young people constitute a dynamic force for social harmony, democracy and equality. They are an essential resource for suitable development and are the very foundation upon which a nation is built. In this respect, the hon. Prime Minister launched our National Youth Policy 2010-2014 at the Grand' Baie Conference Centre in 2009. The objective of this policy is to give a new orientation to our youth in the wake of changing needs, aspirations and inescapable challenges. The policy, therefore, aims at identifying existing gaps and steering our youth in the right direction so that they assume their responsibilities and be a responsive partner in the strengthening of our society and the cementing of our democracy. An action plan has been prepared for the implementation of the National Youth Policy 2010-2014. Other measures taken by my Ministry for the development and empowerment of the youth include the National Youth Achievement Award, Youth Excellence Award, Disaster Management and Leadership courses amongst others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Youth Policy on which we have embarked for the next two years is ambitious and calls for a complete overhaul of the belief and outlook and vision for our youth. With this new policy, I am sure, will emerge a young nation who will have no choice than to think and act “*autrement*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the measures announced in the Government Programme for the youth and sports sector fit like a glove within the policy, already enunciated to democratise sports, to develop a culture of sports among all Mauritian citizens irrespective of their age and to empower our youth to become responsible citizens and to fend for themselves. It will, therefore, be a ‘*politique de continuité*’ with special emphasis on sports as a means to promote health, wealth, education, social integration, human development and peace building amidst the nation.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, sports, health and wellness go hand in hand. Sports keep us fit, give us a sense of purpose and freedom and relieve us of day-to-day stresses and protect us against non-communicable diseases like obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Sport, as a means to promote education, is another aspect to which my Ministry is giving all its importance. In fact, the role of sports in education can be gauged by the way it helps in inculcating values such as dedication, discipline and responsibility in children, at the same time teaching them many life lessons. I would, therefore, commend the initiative of my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resources to have introduced physical education as an examinable subject in schools.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from being a meaningful leisure activity, sports can be used to work towards an improvement of the social integration of people who are confronted with a multitude of problems. Sport is an invaluable factor in the process of building self-respect. Sport is also the only hobby shared by people who are on the verge of social isolation. We can build social integrity by promoting active participation in sporting events.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the causes of crime and disaffection among our young people are complex and multi-dimensional. It would be unrealistic on my part to claim that sport alone can reduce the level of youth crime in society. However, sports along with constructive leisure and cultural activities have become important driven initiatives to divert offenders and young people at risk, away from crime, thus giving them a challenge, an adventure and a sense of purpose. I wish to assure the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Social Integration that he can rely on my Ministry and me personally in his noble task of poverty alleviation and the improvement of life of the downtrodden through sports.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not want anybody to be left astray. Thus, we will ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities to participate and take an equal part with others in youth and sports activities are preserved. How can I remain insensitive to the fact that, out of the 19 gold medals won by Mauritius at the recent CJSOI games, ten came from those disciplines reserved for the physically handicapped people, i.e., *les handisports*? I seize this opportunity to congratulate and thank them once again, and I can reiterate my full support to them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we will also strive to provide clean athletes and clean sports and harmonise actions for our fight against doping in sports. Of course, we will also endeavour for gender equality in youth and sports activities, thus encouraging our kids to start sports activities at their tender age, more women and girls to practise sports as leisure and as a professional activity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, practising sports calls for a lot of goodwill, stamina, patience and finance because it costs a lot to be a high level sportsman. Thus, to palliate for this inevitable *manquement* despite all efforts of Government, my Ministry will, as a measure to mobilise financial resources, promote innovative funding mechanisms including sponsorship, lottotech and CSR money. Funds coming from these sources will be a major relief for several sports disciplines which call for huge investments.

In short, Mr Speaker, Sir, our aim in the coming years is to use sports as a vehicle to foster development, safeguard the health of the nation, prevent diseases, empower our girls and women and foster the social inclusion of our fellow countrymen suffering from disabilities. The more so, sport is bound in the near future to occupy a consolidated place in cross-cutting development strategies and our national policies, and contribute effectively in the Mauritian economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to the new projects announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015. Government will continue to give a special attention to our youth, and an action plan based on our National Youth Policy is ready for implementation. This plan encompasses a series of new programmes for the personal growth of our young people and empowerment, as well as their active participation in the economic and social development of the country. These programmes will not only ensure that our youth contributes to the betterment of society, but they also develop special skills to become self-enterprising and a vital economic support for their parents.

With a view to giving a new boost to the youth sector and coupled with the National Youth Policy, my Ministry will soon review the National Youth Council Act. To better reach young people around the island, new youth centres will be constructed in regions where no

such facilities exist, so that our youngsters can spend their leisure time in such activities which stimulate their personal growth and forbid them to err unnecessarily.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in pursuance of Government's policy to democratise sports and to encourage more people to practise sports, an Integrated Strategic Plan will be prepared in consultation with the federations and the National Olympic Committee. We want to have a healthy and wealthy nation, and this can be possible only if the population at large and without any distinction is provided with opportunities and facilities to practise a sport of their choice for their physical, professional or economic upliftment.

Side by side, we will optimise the use of our existing infrastructures. And I am glad to say that my colleagues, the Minister of Education and Human Resources and the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, are giving me full support to use their infrastructural facilities so that we can bring sports to the people and to every family.

Mr Speaker, Sir, along with our policy to continuously maintain and upgrade our sports and youth infrastructure, new projects will be implemented, such as the construction of a modern football stadium in the south, a region which is deprived of such a facility till now. As I am on football, I admit that no country will ever envy the plight in which our local football has engulfed itself. As crying over spilt milk is not a solution, I will not delve into the causes for his state of affairs, as they will be painful and futile. However, I am doing my utmost best to try to clean the mess around Mauritian football. Thus, in order to revive football, the recommendations of the Steering Committee on football are being implemented.

With the help of the private sector, we have started investing in our young and promising football players and their performances speak for themselves. How can I, therefore, not mention - I think hon. Members will listen to it carefully - the recent progress achieved by our junior teams in the football in a short time. After our under 13 selection's victory in the Kleber Picard Tournament in Reunion Island last week, our under 17 team brought nothing less than the gold medal from the CJSOI games. Our under 20 football team made us proud by beating the Zambian team, the actual champion, last Sunday. I am, therefore, satisfied that investing in our young players has not gone in vain. The results are encouraging, and we will continue the task started. Mr Speaker, Sir, to provide our football teams with all facilities towards professionalisation, several football grounds will be upgraded, provided with lighting facilities and allocated to first division and second division football teams for training and competition purposes. The grant from Government to first and second division teams will be doubled to enable them restructure their clubs, improve the

package offered to players and to professionalize football. The payment will be effected on Saturday morning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while it is true that several of our senior team sports are not giving satisfaction, yet it is also true that the performance of our athletes in several individual sports has been really remarkable. Thus, my Ministry will continue to provide technical and financial support to sport federations both Olympic and Paralympics. We only expect that they will play the game, prove to be performing and comply with the Sports Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to move with time, and there is a lot of other sports disciplines in which we can outshine ourselves, I am sure, and which only need a push. Thus, we are promoting new disciplines like cricket, beach volley, beach soccer, track cycling and many more. In this context, the construction of a cricket stadium in the north is underway. Moreover, a beach soccer cum beach volley pitch is already operational in the north. Also, a *velodrome*, a new swimming pool in the south and Flacq district, a multi-sports at Triolet, a new sailing centre at Grand Bay and a *wushu* gymnasium are some of the many projects that will be implemented in the coming few years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports has been doing an excellent job to promote our high level athletes despite limited means. We want to go further. Thus, with a view to promote high-level sports, I propose to go ahead with the setting up of a National Institute of Sports in the premises of the Anjalay Stadium. This will ensure that local sports talents are nurtured and developed to pursue excellence at all levels.

Since the Sports Act was enacted in 2001, the sports sector has witnessed crucial developments which warrant an updating of the legislation. The amendments to the Sports Act are ready, and the Bill shall be introduced in the National Assembly in the near future to address weaknesses in the existing legal framework, and to cater for new developments and challenges in the sports sector.

One of the main objectives of the amendments will be to help us tackle the problem of fictitious sports clubs. We will also seize this opportunity to provide a better legal framework for the operation of certain organisations in the sports sector, like the TFES and the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*. Side by side, we will also ascertain that funds released to federations are well spent and the interests of athletes are safeguarded. Otherwise, I will not hesitate à *attraper le taureau par les cornes* and take any drastic measure that the situation warrants.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is sad to note that retired high level athletes often face financial difficulties after their career. These athletes have strived to make our motherland proud, and

we should not forget their contribution to sports and national unity. In this context, I am proposing to launch a new scheme that will help in their socio-economic reintegration by tapping on their experience as coaches and mentors for upcoming rising stars.

Our aim at the Ministry is to provide a series of opportunities for the population to indulge in healthy and productive activities with the main purpose of promoting physical, social and psychological development. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, non-communicable diseases have taken an alarming proportion in the island. Regular exercises and a balanced diet is the key to fight against them. Taking into consideration all these factors, my Ministry has come forward with a project to provide physical fitness facilities in our youth centres. The aim is to have such centres all around the island, which are accessible free of charge to the population.

Last but not least, Rodrigues Island will not be neglected, because whatever glory and fame we have achieved to date in the sports sector bears the imprint of Rodrigues. Thus, apart from our usual support to the promotion and development of sports in Rodrigues, I have decided to replace the synthetic athletic track at Camp du Roi stadium, which is currently in a really bad state. We should not forget that many of our most talented sportsmen come from Rodrigues, Veejaye Agathe being the latest example.

Mr Speaker, Sir, although our quest for excellence is not an end in itself, my ambition is to be result-oriented, bring the sports and youth sectors to the highest level possible with all the resources being invested by Government, and to be the architect of a proud sporting nation with the collaboration of all stakeholders. I have a clear mandate to attend to this task, and I have the blessings of the Almighty to succeed.

Let me end my address by quoting Muhammad Ali, the famous American boxer and three times World Heavyweight Champion –

“Champions aren’t made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them - a desire, a dream, a vision.”

Let us, therefore, imbibe the desire, the dream and the vision deep in our heart, so that our sportsmen fly the Mauritian flag high above the mast and make all of us proud to be Mauritian.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.35 p.m.)

Mr T. Henry (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): M. le président, je m’empresse de vous dire, ô combien je me réjouis de votre reconduction comme *Speaker*

dans notre auguste Assemblée Nationale, une réaction qui vient récompenser la compétence et le dévouement dont vous avez fait preuve durant ces cinq dernières années. Recevez, M. le président, mes félicitations les plus chaleureuses.

Avec l'élection de notre collègue, l'honorable Pradeep Roopun comme adjoint au *Speaker*, je suis heureux de lui adresser mes plus vives félicitations pour sa nouvelle responsabilité.

M. le président, je ne saurais manquer cette occasion de dire très haut et fort le plaisir que j'éprouve pour complimenter tous ceux qui ont été élus et tous ceux qui ont été nommés comme *best losers* pour ce mandat de cinq ans à partir du 06 mai 2010. Un gros travail nous attend.

Mais, avant d'aborder le discours programme 2010-2015, je voudrais, tout d'abord, mettre l'emphase sur un aspect important de la politicaillerie du MMM. Nous savons tous l'éloge fait au gouvernement d'alors par le *Leader* de l'opposition et les autres membres de l'état-major du MMM pendant les six mois précédent les dernières élections générales, à savoir, au moment où le MMM tentait le tout pour le tout pour conclure une alliance avec le Parti Travailliste, qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas entendu de la bouche de ces personnes et de leurs acolytes ou même de leurs 'agwas' ! Que de crédits accordés au gouvernement de l'Alliance Sociale allant même jusqu'à formuler officiellement leurs félicitations pour le bon travail entrepris par ce même gouvernement ! Je cite, M. le président, les propos du *Leader* de l'opposition –

« Rien ne nous sépare du gouvernement de l'Alliance Sociale, on est sur la même longueur d'onde. On est prêt à travailler main dans la main afin de conclure une alliance pour les élections du 05 mai. »

Une certaine presse s'est même mise de la partie de la conclusion de cet accord avec l'équipe du Premier ministre d'alors, le Dr. Navindchandra Ramgoolam. Pendant plusieurs semaines, M. le président, toute la population avait le sentiment que l'alliance avec le MMM s'était déjà concrétisée. Il était même rapporté dans quelques quotidiens que certains ministrables du MMM songeaient à la rénovation de leurs bureaux, de la couleur de leurs limousines ou autres déplacements à l'étranger, etc., etc. Je tiens à dire tout haut que le Leader du MMM était hostile au PMSD et voulait botter à tout prix notre parti hors de cet accord, mais avec une concession que Xavier Luc Duval soit seul candidat. En ce faisant, le Leader du MMM confirmait son tempérament de dictateur. Mais en six jours, le jeune *Leader*....

Mr Speaker: I am sorry you have to withdraw the word 'dictateur' !

Mr Henry: Mais en six jours, le jeune leader du MSM, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances a été un meilleur négociateur, mettant ainsi fin à la plus folle intention du MMM de faire parti de cette nouvelle alliance.

La concrétisation de l'Alliance de l'Avenir nous prouve encore une fois l'intelligence et la vision d'un grand leader, en l'occurrence, le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Il a su propulser cette alliance composée du PMSD de Xavier Luc Duval et du MSM de Pravind Jugnauth à une victoire éclatante, nous rappelant ainsi l'épisode de 1983 et celui de 1987 où Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Sir Gaëtan Duval et le Parti Travailliste conduisaient de main de maître l'alliance Bleu Blanc Rouge à la victoire.

M. le président, concernant le lancement du slogan 'Maurice c'est un plaisir', par le ministre du tourisme d'alors, Xavier Luc Duval, les dépenses encourues lors de cette manifestation ont été lourdement critiquées par le MMM. Permettez-moi d'éclaircir les membres de l'opposition, l'exercice du *branding of Mauritius* fait actuellement l'objet d'une vive polémique, alimentée par l'opposition et répercutee par une partie de la presse. Il convient de rappeler certains faits.

Le choix de retenir les services de la firme ACANCHI est le résultat d'un appel d'offres effectué par le *Central Tender Board*. ACANCHI a été sélectionnée parmi neuf autres firmes. Cette firme britannique de renommée internationale a également conçu le brand de plusieurs pays ou régions comme la Grande Bretagne, le Liban, la Zambie, l'Isle de Man, Hong Kong, l'Australie et l'Irlande. ACANCHI a, par la suite, effectué une série de consultations pendant près d'une année et elle a rencontré des représentants de l'ensemble de la société civile, du secteur privé et du gouvernement à Maurice. Cependant j'attire l'attention des membres de cette auguste assemblée qu'à la fin des consultations, le *Leader* de l'opposition a été sollicité, mais il a refusé d'y participer. Avant les élections de mai 2010, le gouvernement a décidé de temporiser. Le brand choisi a été légèrement revu pour la Grande Bretagne et pour la France. Devant une telle compétence, nous n'avons pas la prétention de nous juger apte à critiquer les conclusions de cette firme. Par ailleurs, il est intéressant de noter que l'exercice de *rebranding* d'une grande enseigne hôtelière implantée à Maurice – *One and Only* – a coûté plus de 20 millions de dollars et sa seule soirée de lancement a couté 2 millions de dollars. Et dans un autre registre, un mariage tenu l'année dernière à Maurice a coûté R 300 millions. Cependant, je dois faire ressortir que l'argent dépensé pour le *rebranding* a contribué à placer l'île Maurice sur la carte internationale au niveau du tourisme.

M. le président, étant un nouveau député de cette alliance, permettez-moi de vous dire que je suis très fier d'en faire parti, et je profite de cette occasion, M. le président, pour remercier le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam et mon *leader*, le vice-Premier ministre et ministre de l'intégration sociale et de l'empowerment économique, l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval, d'avoir placé toute leur confiance en moi, en me nommant PPS des circonscriptions 12,19 et 20.

(Interruptions)

En passant, je dis à l'honorable Quirin qui dit qu'il n'y avait pas de développement pendant 20 ans, qu'il pourra compter sur nous pour faire quelque chose; avec le ministre, l'honorable Bachoo on va travailler dessus.

Je tiens de tout cœur à remercier mon épouse et les autres membres de ma famille pour leur soutien indéfectible pendant la durée de la campagne et je remercie aussi, l'électorat de la circonscription Mahebourg/Plaine Magnien d'avoir également placé leur confiance en moi. Mes remerciements vont aussi à mes deux colistiers, le ministre de l'éducation et des ressources humaines, l'honorable Dr. Vasant Bunwaree et le PPS des circonscriptions 12 et 14, l'honorable Mahen Jhugroo qui m'ont accordé toute leur collaboration pendant la campagne électorale pour faire flotter haut les couleurs de l'Alliance de L'Avenir. Ainsi, les microbes propagés par les candidats du MMM, n'ont eu aucun effet sur ma personne, étant donné que j'étais bien encadré par un médecin et un pharmacien.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

Mr Speaker: There is a point of order! Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: I wish to seek your learned guidance, Mr Speaker, Sir. I rise under Standing Order 42 (1) which has this to say -

“Debate upon any motion, bill or amendment shall be relevant to such motion, bill or amendment.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: It is my right as a parliamentarian to seek guidance from Mr Speaker. The hon. Member...

Mr Speaker: I understand the point made by the hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I just finish. I hate to interrupt when the hon. Member is doing his maiden speech, but he has been speaking for 10 minutes and not a word mentioning the Presidential Address. I seek your guidance, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, let me remind the House that there are the two occasions: one while the Presidential Address and second when the Budget is being discussed, a Member cannot be out of order.

Mr Obeegadoo: There is no mention of the Presidential Address.

Mr Speaker: The Presidential Address contains many issues. That has been...

(Interruptions)

Order! The rule of relevancy is very wide on those occasions and it is very rare that a hon. Member can go outside the debate. These are the two occasions.

(Interruptions)

Order now!

Mr Henry: M. le président, je promets à tous les habitants de la circonscription numéro 12, que je serai leur candidat de proximité et leur député indépendamment de leur communauté ou de leur couleur politique. Mais, il est bon de souligner la démarche infecte, communale incitant à la haine menée par l'opposition pendant toute la durée de cette campagne électorale. Mais ce peuple, dans sa sagesse et son intelligence, a encore une fois botté ce MMM qui se retrouve dans l'opposition.

Maintenant, M. le président, en parcourant le discours-programme, nous notons que le développement des infrastructures publiques est un élément clé du succès de notre petite île, qui veut continuer dans la route de son décollage économique. Pour y parvenir, Maurice a su, durant ces cinq dernières années, créer et développer un réseau important au niveau des infrastructures, telle que la réalisation du projet de construction de *South Eastern Highway* qui vient de consolider l'axe routier nord-sud. L'agrandissement de l'autoroute du nord au coût de R 228 millions, le Beau-Songes *link road* au coût de R 279 millions, l'agrandissement et l'amélioration de l'état de la route de Wooton à Belle Rive, le démarrage en février 2010 des travaux pour la construction de la route Terre Rouge/Verdun, long de 16 kilomètres au coût de R 2.2 milliards visant à décongestionner la capitale et qui sera terminée en 32 mois, la route reliant Camp Thorel à L'Espérance livrée en octobre 2009 et la construction du pont de Macondé inauguré en mars dernier. Parmi les autres projets en chantier ou en passe de l'être, le Triolet *by-pass* au coût de R 226 millions, le Goodlands *by-pass* au coût de R 295 millions, etc.

Les travaux entrepris par notre gouvernement ont pour principal objectif de réduire les embouteillages et l'inconfort des usagers de la route. M. le président, ce gouvernement est conscient que même si ces développements sont des actions qui aideront dans une grande mesure à améliorer la fluidité du trafic, il est vrai de dire que d'autres mesures seront

nécessaires pour résoudre le problème du trafic routier. La décongestion de la route est, comme on peut le constater, un des axes prioritaires de notre gouvernement. Des efforts ont été consentis pour décongestionner le trafic routier, avec comme dernières initiatives, l'aménagement de la troisième voie sur l'autoroute à Pailles. Mais il reste encore du travail à accomplir pour régler ce problème aux diverses implications. Mais, je dois faire l'éloge de mon ami, le ministre des infrastructures publiques et de la NDU, du transport intérieur et de la marine, l'honorable Anil Bachoo qui fait un excellent travail.

M. le président, déjà en quatre ans, le nombre de véhicules a connu une nette augmentation passant à 366,520 véhicules de tous genres, ce qui constitue une augmentation du nombre de véhicules de plus de 40,000 depuis 2005. En 1999, Maurice comptait presque 90,000 voitures et en l'an 2010, Maurice compte plus de 165,036 voitures.

Cette augmentation a un impact direct sur la fluidité du trafic routier ainsi que des risques d'accidents. Autre souci majeur, ce sont les autobus individuels. C'est de la torture. Le *Leader* de l'opposition, l'honorable Paul Bérenger, disait que c'était la loi de la jungle, mais, une fois au pouvoir, il n'avait d'autres soucis que les malheurs quotidiens des petits mauriciens. Les autobus individuels sont connus pour rouler le plus lentement possible bien que la route soit libre, rien que pour attendre les voyageurs arrivés aux arrêts d'autobus; ces bus sont tellement bondés que parfois, il est même difficile de trouver une place où se tenir debout. Et une fois remplis, M. le président, ils rouent à tombeau ouvert.

Ce gouvernement, M. le président, conscient de toutes les misères du petit peuple a su prendre le taureau par les cornes sous le guide éclairé de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Déjà le nombre d'accidents qui se chiffrait à 20,873 en 2008 a diminué de 6.2%. Cette tendance qui se confirme par rapport aux années précédentes est due à la mise sur pied de certains plans d'actions de notre gouvernement, aux campagnes de sensibilisation et de mobilisation à travers le pays et d'autres mesures, telles que l'*alcootest*, l'installation des *speed limits* et des *laser speed radars*, au renforcement des législations sur le port de la ceinture de sécurité et l'interdiction du portable au volant, etc.

M. le président, outre ces travaux routiers, le gros projet actuellement en chantier concerne l'aménagement d'un nouveau terminal de 57,000 mètres carrés à l'aéroport Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam de Plaisance. Grâce à la diplomatie économique de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, ce projet au coût de R 9 milliards, verra le jour grâce au partenariat de Maurice, de la Chine et de la France, et changera, sans nul doute, le visage de l'aéroport. Ce nouvel aéroport sera un aéroport moderne et sophistiqué dans notre

région, et sera la fierté de toute l'île Maurice qui pourra accueillir environ quatre millions de passagers annuellement, avec des horaires de pointe de 1,640 passagers au départ.

Les priorités au niveau du trafic aérien requièrent aussi la nécessité d'une deuxième piste d'atterrissement, qui est en voie de construction. L'expansion et la modernisation de l'aéroport passeront aussi par l'aménagement d'une nouvelle zone franche et d'une nouvelle zone cargo, cela dans le but de faciliter l'arrivée et le départ des marchandises dont le volume - plus de 41,000 tonnes - connaît également une hausse non-négligeable.

M. le président, le projet d'un nouveau port à Mahebourg suscite beaucoup d'intérêt de la part de nos mandants. Notre gouvernement annonce également une étude de faisabilité, et ce, dans le sillage de la réouverture du port de Mahebourg qui a été pendant longtemps un projet en suspens. Ce nouveau port va créer non seulement un *breathing space* pour le port de Port Louis, mais aidera aussi à créer un nouveau pôle économique dans le sud du pays, avec un terminal pétrolier pour nos avions, des quais de croisière pour accommoder les bateaux de croisière qui transiteront par Maurice.

M. le président, vous en conviendrez que tous ces développements dans le sud seront un *boost-up* pour la création d'emploi pour les habitants de la région de Mahebourg et aussi pour les régions avoisinantes.

M. le président, la lutte contre l'exclusion n'est qu'un aspect de l'intégration sociale, processus qui concerne la société dans son ensemble et pas seulement ceux considérés comme exclus. Le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, dans sa sagesse, a créé un ministère de l'Intégration Sociale et de l'*Economic Empowerment* qui sera chapeauté par mon leader, Xavier-Luc Duval, vice-premier ministre. M. le président, l'intégration est souvent perçue comme le contraire de l'exclusion. Je suis sur et certain que le ministre Xavier-Luc Duval saura, en bon patriote, mener à bien ce nouveau ministère.

L'économie vient s'inscrire dans un contexte où il existe déjà des programmes de lutte contre la pauvreté, en particulier sous l'égide de la *National Empowerment Foundation*. Celle-ci a déjà mis en place plusieurs axes d'action, dont, entre autres, le programme d'éradication de la pauvreté absolue, la création d'un fonds pour l'intégration des groupes vulnérables, et le programme de développement social intégré. Mais, bien que ces programmes existent, il y a toujours des cas de pauvreté. M. le président, il est à souligner que c'est la cause première de l'exclusion - avant même l'accoutumance à l'alcool, la drogue, le surendettement, la désorganisation familiale.

Le ministre de tutelle a su, dès son installation, engager une politique appropriée pour l'intégration sociale des plus démunis, et cibler et diriger le groupe nécessaire vers des

centres d'action, en termes d'aide, d'accès au marché du travail et de formation. Dans cette perspective, le ciblage doit être assorti d'une implémentation des populations concernées dans l'identification de leurs besoins, et des moyens à mettre en œuvre pour leur résolution.

M. le président, quand on intervient dans une poche de pauvreté, il faut pouvoir analyser le problème d'ensemble, et s'organiser pour que l'aide soit coordonnée. Alors, le rôle de ce ministère sera, donc, de résoudre cette approche parcellaire, en jouant un rôle de coordonnateur. Je suis sur que mon leader, Xavier-Luc Duval, ministre de l'Intégration Sociale et de l'*Economic Empowerment*, saura dynamiser et coordonner les actions de gouvernement, définir des priorités, donner une direction à cette lutte contre la pauvreté ; à moyen terme, de réduire au maximum les poches de pauvreté à Maurice, car il existe 229 poches de pauvreté. L'élaboration d'un plan pour ces 229 familles est plus que nécessaire. Aussi, M. le président, autre constat c'est que la pauvreté concerne 100,000 personnes (soit 26,000 familles), dont 30,000 sont dans une pauvreté plus aigüe.

Le ministre Xavier-Luc Duval, conscient de l'ampleur de la tâche qui l'attend, déclare que la pauvreté c'est l'affaire de tous. C'est un de nos rôles, au ministère, de sensibiliser la société mauricienne. Sensibilisons les patrons, par exemple, à aider les handicapés. Il est bon de souligner, M. le président, que notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, a déclaré qu'il n'y a pas de pauvreté absolue à Maurice mais de pauvreté relative, et qu'il compte énormément sur son collègue Xavier-Luc Duval, ministre, pour diminuer les poches de pauvreté dans notre petite île.

M. le président, il est à souligner que ce gouvernement procèdera à la livraison de 550 maisons d'ici février 2011, ceci dans le souci d'alléger le fardeau social des économiquement faibles. Je dois aussi féliciter le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, pour la confirmation, le mercredi 4 courant, de la construction de 10, 000 maisons pour les démunis.

M. le président, dans le domaine de la santé, ce gouvernement a investi massivement dans les nouvelles facilités médicales pour toute la population ; au niveau des infrastructures, il y a la reconstruction de l'hôpital Jeetoo au coût de R 2 milliards, la construction d'une nouvelle *medi clinic* à Plaine Verte au coût de R 54 millions, la construction d'une nouvelle unité d'urgence à l'hôpital Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam au coût de R 78 millions, et la construction d'un nouveau bloc à l'hôpital de Flacq toujours au coût de R 125 millions. Il y a eu aussi une campagne pour la promotion de la santé et de la qualité de la vie, et un recrutement constant des effectifs dans les hôpitaux et autres centres de santé.

Par contre, M. le président, l'informatisation des hôpitaux pour un service rapide et pointu est plus que nécessaire. S'il y a eu du désordre dans le passé, il faut bien mettre de

l'ordre. Ce gouvernement a cinq ans pour mener à bien ce vieux projet. L'objectif ultime est de mettre fin à la lourdeur bureaucratique et à mieux classifier les bases de données de tous les patients qui visitent les hôpitaux. Tout sera classifié sur des serveurs centraux pour que les données puissent être consultées sur le clavier, et cela, peu importe l'endroit où l'on se trouve.

M. le président, ce gouvernement doit investir des centaines de millions de roupies, car les médecins, grâce à cette informatisation, pourront être équipés de terminaux, afin qu'ils puissent voir le carnet de santé complet du patient qui se trouve devant lui en un rien de temps, et ainsi donner un meilleur avis sur le traitement à préconiser. Aussi, le nouveau réseau pourrait permettre de mieux prendre avantage des centres de santé régionaux et décongestionner les consultations aux hôpitaux. Au fait, toute une réorganisation des services de santé deviendra possible quand le système sera implémenté et utilisé d'une manière plus judicieuse.

M. le président, les choses ne s'arrêteront pas là. Le système permettra une meilleure analyse des données, et pourra venir avec des statistiques précises en un rien de temps. Ceci permettra, par exemple, de déterminer le nombre de personnes atteintes d'une maladie, et où elles se trouvent. Ce sera ainsi plus facile d'endiguer ou de suivre l'évolution d'une épidémie, ou encore d'assurer la prévention de manière plus efficace et ciblée. De plus, le ministère pourra espérer réaliser des économies, notamment au niveau de la gestion des stocks de médicaments et autres produits pharmaceutiques. Le système, M. le président, pourra alerter qui de droit lorsqu'un médicament est presque en rupture de stock, ou si la date de fraîcheur arrive à terme.

M. le président, l'agriculture, qui a longtemps été le pilier de notre économie, est appelée à se transformer. Il est à noter que l'agriculture traditionnelle conservera toute de même sa place importante. Cette transformation aux nouvelles exigences fait suite à la décision de l'Union Européenne en 2005 de la réforme de leur politique agricole. Notre gouvernement, M. le président, mérite toutes nos félicitations, en particulier, le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, pour avoir mis en place toute une stratégie visant à maintenir la compétitivité de notre industrie sucrière, dans le cadre des réformes post 2005.

Deux raffineries produisent actuellement du sucre blanc raffiné à l'intention du marché européen, et des sucre spéciaux destinés à l'exportation. Le sucre raffiné, M. le président, sauve l'industrie sucrière d'une mort certaine, car toutes les analyses concordent à dire que Maurice ne pourrait demeurer un producteur compétitif du sucre roux dans le contexte de l'après protocole sucre, et des arrangements dans le cadre des accords de

partenariat économique – APE. La production de sucre raffiné garantit l'accès à la prime offerte par le marché pour ce produit et nous rapproche du consommateur final.

M. le président, la diversification des activités des principaux producteurs de sucre vers d'autres créneaux, tels que la production de l'éthanol, de l'électricité et le rhum agricole portent leurs fruits.

M. le président, je salue l'initiative de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgooleam, qui n'a lésiné sur aucun moyen, à travers le *Wastewater Management* pour l'implantation du système de tout-à-l'égout et raccorder les foyers à ce réseau. Si le pourcentage de foyers connectés au réseau d'assainissement des eaux usées était de 26% en 2008, il sera à 50% en 2013 et à 80% en 2030. Le réseau de tout-à-l'égout couvre 553 kms et comprend 12,236 bouches d'égout, 60 stations de pompage des eaux usées et 19 usines de traitements des eaux usées. Notre gouvernement investira à la hauteur de R 6.2 millions des R 28.4 millions pour l'étude d'un plan directeur financé par la Banque Africaine, qui est en préparation et qui se fera en trois phrases. Alors, les travaux déjà entrepris, continueront pendant ce mandat sous la bannière Bleu, Blanc Rouge.

M. le président, comme vous le savez, notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgooleam, durant son dernier mandat de 2005-2010, est venu mettre l'emphase pour une meilleure île Maurice avec le slogan 'Maurice Ile Durable. Pour y parvenir, il nous faudra avoir un développement durable pour une île Maurice durable. Le développement durable est un mode de développement économique visant à concilier le progrès économique et social et la préservation de l'environnement. Ce principe de développement durable consiste à développer ces activités en tenant compte de leurs impacts à court, moyen et long terme sur l'environnement. L'agriculture biologique, le commerce équitable sont des activités de développement durable, qui nous permettront, qui sait, de revenir en arrière vers ces pratiques et modes de vie d'autrefois, plus sains et plus équilibrés vis-à-vis de l'environnement. Les problèmes environnementaux sont, à la base, liés à nos modes de consommation et de production qui utilisent les ressources naturelles et génèrent la pollution et les déchets. M. le président, le projet Ile Durable s'inscrit dans cette optique, mais il reste beaucoup à faire pour intégrer cette notion de durabilité dans tous les domaines.

Le gouvernement, M. le président, est bien déterminé à relever ce défi. Je suis certain que mon ami, le ministre de l'environnement, l'honorable Deva Virahsawmy, saura être à la hauteur de cette responsabilité.

M. le président, d'un point de vue général, je tiens à faire ressortir, que, depuis le début de la mise en place du nouveau gouvernement, plusieurs ministres ont marqué, à leur

façon, leur nouvelle affectation. Ils ont été à l'écoute et leur dynamisme semble plaire à plus d'un.

En passant, M. le président, je tiens à saluer l'initiative de notre ministre de l'éducation tertiaire, l'honorable Dr. Rajesh Jeetah, de rendre l'université accessible aux élèves du *School Certificate* dans le cadre de sa *Strategic Policy of the Tertiary Education*. Il souhaite augmenter le taux d'inscription de 43% à 70% d'ici 2015. Son but est de faire de l'éducation tertiaire un des piliers de notre économie et veut promouvoir le pays comme une destination à but éducatif.

Avant de terminer, M. le président, durant la période 2005-2010, le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale a vécu des *tough times* avec la crise économique au niveau mondial et je félicite tous les dirigeants et, principalement, le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, et mon *leader*, le vice-Premier ministre et ministre de l'intégration sociale *and Economic Empowerment*, Xavier Luc Duval, qui ont su contrer avec toute leur détermination les effets néfastes de cette crise en amenant *résultat lor résultat*. Aujourd'hui, je suis en mesure de dire que ce gouvernement, sous le *leadership* dynamique de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam et le virevoltant vice-Premier ministre et ministre de l'intégration sociale *and Economic Empowerment*, Xavier Luc Duval et du *cool* vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth saura mener le bateau Bleu, Blanc, Rouge à bon port.

M. le président, pour conclure, laissez-moi vous dire que, *tough times never last, but tough people do*. Merci.

(7.05 p.m.)

Mr C. Leopold (First Member for Rodrigues): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to intervene on this debate on the Presidential Address 2010-2015. Allow me, from the very outset, to congratulate you for your re-election as Speaker of this august Assembly. I extend my congratulations to the Deputy Speaker and to all Members of this House. I would like also to congratulate mon adversaire, l'honorable François, qui vient de vivre un événement très heureux. Il vient d'être de nouveau papa il y a quelques minutes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for the trust he has placed in my political party, the *Movement Rodriguais, MR*, particularly in my leader and colleague Minister, hon. Von-Mally. This good intention of the hon. Prime Minister, in all his wisdom, has allowed a Rodriguan born citizen to occupy once again a seat of Minister within the Cabinet to serve the island and the Republic at large. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the first

time that Rodrigues has such an honour, I mean, having a full-fledged Minister shouldering responsibilities over and above that of Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the last time a Rodriguan born citizen was a Minister goes back to year 2000, a decade ago. Since then, the population was awaiting for that event such that some demonstrated publicly during a visit of the Prime Minister to Rodrigues in 2005. This is why the population of Rodrigues is grateful to this nomination, which is no more or less *une main ferme tendue vers le peuple de Rodrigues*.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, I always say and I believe firmly that actions speak louder than words. True it is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that by granting Rodrigues maximum autonomy in November 2001, Government made a very big step ahead in the sharing of powers while, at the same time, opening the door for a sort of officially recognising the capacity of Rodriguans to conduct the affairs of the island within parameters stipulated in the law. We are very grateful to this because, since then, most decisions regarding the future of the island are taken at Port Mathurin. However, the absence of a Rodriguan in Cabinet, unfortunately, enhance the feeling that those Mauritians who are some 650 kms away from mainland Mauritius, have been put aside with respect to major decisions of the Republic of Mauritius of which Rodrigues is an integral part and parcel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is now good that appropriate correction has been carried out by this present Government, because one cannot just take for granted that, we, Rodriguans, have to handle matters of only regional interests. It is not only in sports that we can excel, since many of our compatriots were duly recognised, considered as being high calibre technicians that shoulder quite harsh and sensitive matters at various Ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance just to name some. *N'est-il pas vrai que la richesse de notre République émane de notre diversité religieuse, culturelle et autres ?* This is why I am fully convinced that hon. Von-Mally as a Minister, being very young and full of energy, will deliver the goods. Mr Speaker, Sir, he can do it and he will do it.

True it is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that some people are against this decision for very obvious reasons. This is why they came on TV and occupied all available media to voice out their so-called disappointment. This is cheap politics. These people are used to control everything in a very recent past and have to dictate their opinions in each and every single matter pertaining to the development of Rodrigues. It is not a mere coincidence that some auto proclaim themselves as emperor of Rodrigues and even more, the owner of Rodrigues. What a shame! Once again they have missed the fundamental issue that nominating a Minister is the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

What is true again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the population of Rodrigues, at large, has taken due time to correct their insolence and put things back on the right track. In fact, the wind of change started to blow since 2006. This is a clear and crystal indication that no one has the monopole of intelligence nor anyone has the copyright of whatsoever regarding the destiny of a country. Thanks God the Republic of Mauritius has a functional democratic system! Mr Speaker, Sir, it took me 18 years of active politics to be duly elected to come here in this House to serve the Republic; hon. Von-Mally not less than 23 years. We are very proud of this, Mr Speaker, Sir. Indeed, we are not here by mistake or coincidence. It is due to tough, constant, conscious and very hard work. In fact, we know where we come from, where we are and where we want to go as far as the destiny, progress, modernisation and the welfare of the people of Rodrigues and the Republic are concerned. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have and we will leave no stone unturned to fulfil what we believe will promote social welfare, fairness, modernisation, equity and development in Rodrigues.

Concerning the recent electoral campaign in Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can say that it was very calm and smooth running with no major incident recorded as was the case of the RRA elections in 2006. However, it is not a surprise that very bad losers as usual turned up, refusing the verdict of same, hence refusing to recognise the will of the people of Constituency No. 21. Even now they are very upset about this for they were so sure to win the election. This is a real problem. *Hélas, c'est encore difficile à digérer! C'est pourquoi il faut toujours écouter la voix des sages pour ne pas vendre la peau de l'ours et plus précisément dans le contexte local – 'la peau taureau en avance'*. This is why some talk of political bribery as if they are whiter than snow. Time will show us that despite the banner's colour being white, their actions were quite the opposite. I will not waste my time since flagrant examples *ne manquent pas*. *Comme ils le disent si bien, cela se pratique en silence*. Could you have heard of a silent electoral campaign? Now we know the result, just ask them!

Pourtant l'équation, M. le président, était simple. C'est comme au foot étant donné que nous venons de vivre la coupe du monde. Imaginez si vous avez deux équipes sur un terrain de foot pour disputer un match et que l'une d'entre elles ne veut pas toucher au ballon sous prétexte de ne pas salir ses lacets, évidemment l'autre équipe va marquer un but! Et une fois que le but est validé par l'arbitre, on s'en balance, qu'il soit inscrit par le pied, par le nez ou par n'importe quelle partie du corps. Goal c'est goal, M. le président ! Ce sont de mauvais perdants qui ont délibérément été victimes de leur mauvais calcul – la campagne silencieuse. On doit encore les enseigner qu'en politique, il faut toujours prévoir un plan A et un plan B et pourquoi pas un plan C et c'est ce qu'on fait nous au MR.

This is why, we, on the side of my party, are fighting to increase the representativeness of Rodrigues - Rodriguans in Parliament – some are doing exactly the reverse. The results are here, Mr Speaker, Sir. We end up with three instead of the usual four. *Encore une grossière erreur de calcul de la campagne silencieuse!*

Mr Speaker, Sir, now that elections are behind us, we have to look forward towards the future – the way forward for progress, modernity and welfare of our citizens. We have to find means and ways to induce a change in mindset for what the country can do for me into what I can do for my country. There should be a sort of everyday recital, a prayer if you want – ‘what I can do for my country’.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I welcome the fact that in paragraphs 67 to 70 in the Presidential Address matters pertaining to the creation of this new Ministry of Social Integration. I think that this will give a boost-up to alleviate poverty in Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir.

C'est vrai, M. le président, il y a urgence sociale à Rodrigues et cela ne remonte pas d'hier, c'est depuis la nuit des temps. M. le président, il y a divers partenaires qui sont impliqués dans la lutte contre la pauvreté à Rodrigues. Je cite, par exemple, la sécurité sociale, le Trust Fund, l'Empowerment Foundation, le DCP. Il y a même des ONGs mais, malheureusement, M. le président, la situation à Rodrigues demeure toujours préoccupante. C'est vrai et je l'admets. Si on regarde, par exemple, les statistiques de 2006-2007, là encore il y a un problème. Quand on fait les statistiques *for the household budget*, tout ce qui concerne Rodrigues est inclus dans les statistiques de la République. On arrive difficilement à avoir des statistiques propres à Rodrigues. *There is an estimated total number of households of 10,000 and the poverty line for Rodrigues concerning half million monthly household income per adult is equivalent to Rs2,716.* Qu'est-ce qu'on peut avoir avec R 2,716 aujourd'hui?

The estimated number of households living below the line of poverty is 1790, about 18%. C'est grave, M. le président, mais venir dans cette Chambre pour donner l'impression que la pauvreté, la misère à Rodrigues a commencé en 2006 quand le MR a pris le pouvoir, c'est de la mauvaise foi. Pendant la campagne électorale et pendant ces 18 ans que j'ai fait la politique active sur le terrain, j'ai été témoin de la misère du peuple de Rodrigues. Pourtant, ceux qui étaient avant nous, ont eu la possibilité de gouverner le pays pendant 25 ans et ils ont eu le culot maintenant de dire que la pauvreté, c'est à cause du MR, alors qu'on est là, il y a à peine quatre ans. J'ai été témoin dans la même maison de deux pièces en tôle ondulée où on voit trois générations de la même famille vivant dans deux pièces, M. le président.

Même si on dit que le MR a la main magique, on ne peut pas produire trois générations de la même famille en trois ans. C'est impossible! This is the naked truth, Mr Speaker, Sir.

C'est pour dire que, d'une certaine manière, certains ont tout fait pour laisser pourrir la situation et c'est ainsi qu'en 2006, ce n'était pas un hasard que le peuple avait choisi de leur botter hors du pouvoir alors qu'ils s'autoproclamaient président ceci, empereur cela. Ils se croyaient être propriétaires du pays. D'ailleurs le premier transfuge a quitté le MR pour aller à l'OPR – le premier transfuge de l'histoire de Rodrigues. *This is again an own goal, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Personne ne choisit d'être pauvre, mais quand on regarde Rodrigues, on voit la précarité, le manque d'emploi.

Ce matin en venant à l'Assemblée, j'écoutes une émission à la radio où on parlait du problème des Rodriguais à Maurice. C'est vrai, M. le président, à maintes reprises, pendant les dix ans que j'ai fait dans cette Chambre, j'ai dit que le problème de manque d'emplois à Rodrigues n'est pas un problème qui concerne Rodrigues uniquement, c'est un problème de la République. Si on ne donne pas les moyens nécessaires à Rodrigues, il est normal que les Rodriguais aillent déferler sur Maurice et on ne doit pas après s'étonner de dire que les Rodriguais sont impliqués dans les vols, les viols, la prostitution, etc. Pour moi, c'est une affaire qui concerne tout le monde. C'est une affaire qui concerne la République de Maurice. C'est un problème social et il faut, une fois pour toutes, qu'on ait le courage voulu pour stopper ce fléau. C'est pourquoi nous sommes élus. J'ai toujours dit dans cette Chambre que je ne viens pas là pour faire de la démagogie. Je viens ici pour dire les choses comme elles sont et c'est ce que nous ressentons aujourd'hui à Rodrigues. Quelquefois, c'est vrai que nous ressentons que nous sommes rejetés. On n'a pas comme-ci notre part du gâteau. Je vais revenir là-dessus dans quelques secondes.

On vient ici pour essayer de ternir l'image du MR, comme-ci la misère a commencé en 2006. Je me rappelle qu'il y avait une émission sur notre radio locale qui s'intitulait 'Ki manière Rodrigues' tous les matins avant que le MR n'arrive au pouvoir. Le but de l'émission était d'interviewer les Rodriguais qui vivent à Maurice. Sûrement qu'il y a des *success stories*, je suis tout à fait d'accord. On interviewait les Rodriguais qui vivaient à Maurice pour leur demander comment ils vivaient ici, leurs appréhensions, leurs joies, leurs peines et d'en partager. A chaque fois on posait la question : « Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous à Maurice ? Certains disaient 20 ans, 25 ans. Quand on pose la question fatidique : pourquoi êtes-vous à Maurice ? La réponse est pour trouver de l'emploi. Mais c'était 25 ans de cela, M. le président ! Le MR n'était pas au pouvoir. Ils ont été ministres à plusieurs reprises dans cette Chambre, ils ont dirigé l'Assemblée Régionale pendant trois ans et demi

et ils viennent faire croire aujourd’hui que c’est le MR qui est responsable de la misère du peuple. C’est très malhonnête. *This is very, very cheap politics.*

M. le président, si vous allez à Rodrigues pendant la campagne électorale et vous demandez à n’importe qui: « *ki sanne la ki responsable ?* » On connaît la réponse. Quand on a pris le pouvoir, savez-vous ce qu’on a récolté comme héritage de ce soi-disant père de l’autonomie ? En 2006, il y avait pratiquement 4,000 chômeurs à Rodrigues. Sur une population active de 35,000, vous vous imaginez qu’il y a 4,000 demandeurs d’emploi, sans compter les Rodriguais qui sont à Maurice. Depuis les années 80, la population de Rodrigues se stagne aux alentours de 35,000 âmes, pourtant la mortalité n’a pas augmenté et la natalité a, au contraire, augmenté. On est très fertile à Rodrigues !

(Interruptions)

D’ailleurs, on vient d’avoir un exemple. La fertilité a augmenté. Certains estiment que le nombre de Rodriguais vivant à Maurice est aux alentours de 50,000.

M. le président, nous avions le choix, comme nos adversaires, de rester les bras croisés. Pendant ces 25 ans, ils avaient une échappatoire. Ils allaient dire à la population à chaque fois pour gagner les élections : « *dimandé, dimandé, Maurice pas donné !* ». *This is what they said.* Mais maintenant le peuple connaît la vérité.

(Interruptions)

Je le comprends, il est nouveau, il doit encore apprendre. Mais pourtant, M. le président, c’est la première fois dans l’histoire de Rodrigues qu’autant d’aspirations du peuple de Rodrigues ont été mises dans un discours-programme gouvernemental. Donc, je voudrais vivement féliciter ce gouvernement pour ce geste.

(Interruptions)

Mais, à Rodrigues, on ne compte pas uniquement sur les paroles. C’est vrai que c’est l’intention, mais nous attendons des actions. C’est pourquoi je ne suis pas là pour parler rien que pour le fait de parler. Je vais parler quand il le faut dans l’intérêt du peuple de Rodrigues et c’est mon rôle. Je ne viens pas là pour épater la galerie, ce n’est pas mon rôle. Tous ceux qui m’ont côtoyé pendant 10 ans dans cette Chambre savent que je ne suis pas là pour épater la galerie, *for the sake of talking. When I come here, it is to defend those people from Rodrigues, those people living some 650 kilometres from here who deserve recognition from the Republic of Mauritius.*

M. le président, quand on est arrivé en 2006, on pouvait faire comme eux, se croiser les bras en disant : « *dimandé, dimandé, Maurice pas donné !* » On a demandé et ils ont vu

que c'est dans le programme. C'est une différence fondamentale entre le MR et le ML. Qui ne tente rien n'a rien ! A Rodrigues, ils font la voix *zom*, à Maurice ils font la voix *fam*. Mais, au MR, non ! C'est pourquoi je dis que nous attendons des actions concrètes. M. le président, c'est ainsi que nous avons pris diverses mesures. En voyant la situation à Rodrigues en 2006, nous avons créé...

(Interruptions)

C'est un bon Rodriguais ! C'est comme cela, je ne peux pas changer l'histoire ! C'est pourquoi nous avons pris la décision en 2006 de créer certaines RRA-own companies en conformé avec la section 26(A) du *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 and the RRA Investment and Regulations 2008*. Nous avons créé, M. le président, la compagnie *Road Clean, Water Company, Discovery Rodrigues, Housing Company, Rodrigues Trade Union Marketing Co. Ltd.* Pour rappel, M. le président, avant d'avoir cette compagnie, Rodrigues *Trading and Marketing Division*, pourquoi certains venaient ici pour dire que les Rodriguais étaient des paresseux alors qu'ils ne donnaient pas les *incentives* nécessaires aux Rodriguais pour travailler ? Nous l'avons fait.

M. le président, ce n'est pas par hasard qu'à l'époque on disait que les porcs de Rodrigues mourraient de vieillesse. Ils ne trouvaient pas de marché. Ils n'avaient pas donné des *incentives* nécessaires.

On a célébré la fête du maïs, certains n'étaient pas contents. On a quadruplé la production du maïs en deux ans. La production de l'oignon était à l'abandon. M. le président, depuis trois ans qu'on est au pouvoir, combien de terres qui étaient à l'abandon sont devenues aujourd'hui des terres cultivables à Rodrigues ? Il y a la production des haricots. Tout cela, on a fait en trois ans. Cette semaine nous sommes en train d'installer une unité de pasteurisation à Saint Gabriel pour pouvoir donner du lait frais aux Rodriguais. Nous allons même faire un abattoir moderne dans les mois qui viennent à Rodrigues avec l'aide, bien-sûr, du *Food Security Fund*. Et pourquoi, M. le président ? C'est parce que quelquefois à Maurice le marché est là, mais les gens ne veulent pas que les animaux viennent sur pattes de Rodrigues vers Maurice, il faut les exporter en carcasses. Il fallait attendre que le MR soit là. Le peuple sait ce qu'il veut, qui sont les gens qui *have the guts*. A Rodrigues, on ne va pas dire : prendre le taureau par les cornes, mais prendre les boucs par les cornes. Les problèmes étaient nombreux, M. le président. Ils ne sont pas contents, M. le président. C'est leur problème. Nous travaillons dans l'intérêt du pays.

M. le président, j'ai entendu l'honorable membre posait des questions à l'honorable ministre de l'intégration sociale. C'est comme-ci il voulait démanteler le *Trust Fund*,

l'*Empowerment Programme*, etc. Ils disent que les Rodriguais sont des assistés. *Ki sanne la ki responsable* ? J'ai parlé de trois générations de la même famille dans une maison de deux pièces. *Ki sanne la ki responsable* ? Le *Trust Fund* était un outil politique qu'ils ont mis en place, ils sont victimes de leur *own goal*. Maintenant cela tourne contre eux. C'est pourquoi ils veulent démanteler tout cela. Ils disent que les Rodriguais sont des assistés. A Maurice on donne des maisons. Pourquoi ne pas donner à Rodrigues ? Est-ce que Rodrigues ne fait pas partie de la République ? On se bat pour avoir le même traitement. Quand on donne le même traitement, ils ne sont pas contents. Ils n'ont rien fait pour aider ces gens-là à sortir de la misère. J'ai fait mon *homework*, M. le président. Juste à titre comparatif - peut-être certains vont penser qu'on vient ici pour dire n'importe quoi - l'OPR a été pendant trois ans et demi au pouvoir à l'Assemblée Régionale, vous connaissez ce qui s'est passé avec les pêcheurs, cela fait aussi environ trois ans et demi que le MR est au pouvoir.

Concernant la construction des maisons, si une famille n'a pas une maison décente comment peut-on espérer qu'elle devienne une famille épanouie et heureuse ? Comment est-ce que ces enfants vont se développer et comment auront-ils une éducation saine s'ils n'ont pas un toit pour y vivre ?

Le projet était de construire 100 unités de *low-cost housing* en trois ans et demi et savez-vous combien de maisons ont été construites quand ils étaient au pouvoir ? Il n'y a eu que quatre maisons construites !

(Interruptions)

L'honorable membre aura l'occasion d'y répondre ! Il faudra qu'il apprenne le règlement de l'Assemblée ! Il est encore nouveau !

En trois ans et demi, nous avons construit 163 unités. Ils ont construit 83 unités des maisons *NHDC*. Ils n'ont pas eu le temps de les donner parce qu'ils les gardaient pour les donner avant les élections. Malheureusement, la main magique est passée avant et nous avons donné les 83 unités de logement. Ils avaient un projet pour donner des maisons en tôles et en bois aux personnes âgées, malades et handicapées, mais ils n'ont rien donné pendant trois ans et demi. Jusqu'à présent, nous avons donné plus de 500 maisons, M. le président.

Dans le budget de 2010, on essaie d'être créatif avec le peu de moyen qu'on a. On a créé ce qu'on appelle *built and rent housing*. Là encore, ils ne sont pas contents, ils vont dire que c'est de la politique. Pour eux, tout est noir, tout est politique. Il y a 200 unités qui vont être construites d'ici l'année prochaine, M. le président. On a 13 villages de cités qui ont été

construits à l'époque par feu Sir Gaëtan Duval et qui sont à l'abandon. Ils auraient dû être détruits depuis belle lurette. C'est nous qui le ferons, M. le président.

En ce qui concerne *the casting of slabs*, à chaque fois qu'on venait à l'Assemblée, le ministre des finances parlait de « serrer la ceinture » et quand il le disait, on était agacé et on répondait que ce n'était pas le moment de se serrer la ceinture avec tous les problèmes qu'on avait à Rodrigues. Il faut aussi se rappeler qu'ils ne parlaient pas de crise financière quand ils étaient au pouvoir. Comme on dit en bon Rodriguais : « *zot ti pé nage dans grand de l'eau.* » M. le président, ils ont à peine fait 500 unités et nous, en trois ans et demi, nous avons construit plus que 600 unités. La République est là pour aider la population et nous, en tant que politiciens et élus de notre circonscription, nous allons tout faire pour aider la population de Rodrigues à sortir de la misère.

M. le président, je voudrais citer le paragraphe 277 du discours programme -

« Government will give special attention to the strengthening of the autonomous status of Rodrigues and will take further steps to ensure its full integration within the Republic of Mauritius.”

Pourtant nous devons nous poser certaines questions. Ceux qui prétendaient être le père de l'autonomie, qu'ont-ils fait pour défendre l'autonomie ? Est-ce qu'ils ont fait l'usage optimum des provisions qu'il y avait dans cette loi régissant l'autonomie de Rodrigues qui, rappelons-le, M. le président, *is enshrined in our Constitution since 2001 ? How did they make it functional ?* Au lieu de critiquer, ils auraient dû prendre des leçons ! C'est vrai que dans le discours il est dit qu'il faut des ajustements. L'autonomie est là, mais il y a quand même des *finetuning* à faire. Il y a eu des disputes et problèmes et c'est pourquoi on trouve qu'il est temps – comme au Trinidad and Tobago – to set up a *Dispute Resolution Tribunal*. Ceci va être un mécanisme régulateur. Tout comme lorsqu'il y avait des conflits entre l'Assemblée Régionale et l'Assemblée Nationale, il y avait un médiateur pour essayer de voir dans quelle mesure on pouvait gérer ce conflit dans l'intérêt de la République de Maurice - donc, les problèmes avec le ministre des finances, avec ces conseillers, etc. Quand on va mettre ce Tribunal sur place - on ne sait pas si cela va arriver - tout cela va être les choses du passé, M. le président.

M. le président, concernant le *Local Government*, au paragraphe 278 –

« Government will hold consultations with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the introduction of Local Government in Rodrigues. The RRA Act will be amended in line with the experience gained over the last seven years of operation under the decentralised system.”

Je viens de lire dans les journaux que l'honorable ministre Aimée va aller très vite avec cette loi parce qu'il y a encore des lacunes à Rodrigues. Cette loi dit que provision est faite pour dix PPS pour la République, mais nous avons 10 PPS *for the mainland Mauritius. What about Rodrigues?* Il y a un problème. Si on regarde ce qui est dit au début de la *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act*, le développement et l'allocation des budgets doivent prendre en compte le niveau de développement dans l'île. Là, pour moi, il y a quelque chose. Et surtout, M. le président, à Maurice, il y a les conseils municipaux. Il y a aussi les conseils des districts. *Over and above*, il y a le budget de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues. Pendant les cinq dernières années, on nous a donné du goutte à goutte et là on voit qu'il y a encore un problème. M. le président, j'espère que ces amendements vont nous permettre d'aller de l'avant avec les nombreuses coopérations des autres îles de l'océan indien comme La Réunion et les Seychelles. Il faut aller dans ce sens parce que nous aussi nous ne voulons pas faire comme les autres ; nous ne voulons pas isoler Rodrigues. Le monde, aujourd'hui, est un village global. On voudrait que Rodrigues soit ouverte à tous, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, Order !

Mr Leopold: M. le président, au paragraphe 279, concernant la modernisation des infrastructures à Rodrigues, mention est faite et je cite -

- “construction of a new runway at Sir Gaëtan Duval Airport
- connection of Rodrigues to Mauritius via the Fibre Optic Cable
- building of 1000 low-cost housing units over the next five years
- construction of dams for water storage
- construction of a new secondary school
- development of the port area.”

C'est vrai, M. le président, pour que ces mesures soient réalisables, il faut que les moyens nécessaires soient donnés à Rodrigues.

Pendant les budgets précédents, M. le président, il faut dire que Rodrigues a été vraiment malmené. C'est pourquoi je fais un appel au nouveau ministre des finances, *it is time for action*. Il est grand temps de passer à l'action. Nous reconnaissions qu'il a un grand cœur et nous savons qu'il est un homme de bonne volonté. Le peuple attend de voir parce que si je regarde le budget capital pour Rodrigues de 2002-2003 c'était R 267 millions, pour 2003-2004 c'était R427 millions, pour 2004-2005 c'était R 421 millions, pour 2005-2006 c'était R 358 millions, pour 2006-2007 c'était R 274 millions et on était au pouvoir. Pour

2007-2008 c'était R 393 millions. On ne demande pas de décrocher la lune ou le ciel pour Rodrigues, mais on demande de nous donner les moyens pour que nous puissions développer le pays. C'est tout ce qu'on demande !

M. le président, je vais terminer en faisant des propositions à l'intention de la Chambre. Même si on vient ici pour ternir l'image de ceux qui dirigent actuellement l'Assemblée Régionale, il faut savoir que nous avons entrepris beaucoup d'initiatives avec le peu de moyens que nous avons dans le budget de développement. Par exemple, quand on a vu le problème dans les lagons de Rodrigues, on a eu le courage de faire les parcs marins. La retraite volontaire des pêcheurs avait été faite par le MR. Tout récemment on vient de donner cinq bateaux aux pêcheurs pour pêcher en haute mer. On ne fait pas que parler, mais on traduit nos paroles en action. C'est ça la différence. La maison des pêcheurs qui avait été abandonnée pendant des années...

Mr Speaker: I thought that the hon. Member was concluding, but he has started another speech!

(Interruptions)

Mr Leopold: I am not going to be long, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Les réservoirs ont été abandonnés pendant 25 à 30 ans, le projet de désalinisation d'eau a été commencé par le MR. Donc, qu'ils ne viennent pas aujourd'hui nous montrer du doigt en trois ans et demi. Le bilan est très positif. Résultat après résultat ! C'est pourquoi, je vous dis, M. le président, que j'ai quelques propositions à faire et cela ne va pas être long.

There is an urgency to reconsider the financial resources allocated to Rodrigues. Donc, il faut revoir cela. Avec le budget qui arrive dans quelques mois, on a dit qu'on va donner une attention particulière à Rodrigues et on attend à ce que cela soit traduit dans le concret. Il faut aussi que le gouvernement arrive à aider *to support* le tourisme local surtout que le *Stimulus Package* pour le tourisme arrivera à expiration dans quelque temps. Il faut que ce *Stimulus Package* soit maintenu parce que cela a beaucoup aidé l'industrie touristique à Rodrigues pendant une ou deux années que c'est en vigueur. On voit déjà le nombre croissant de touristes. En juin 2010 nous avons eu une augmentation de plus de 25%. C'est une preuve que cela marche. Avec la précarité de l'emploi à Rodrigues, le tourisme est un moteur qu'il ne faut pas casser en cours de route et il faut continuer dans cette direction.

Il faut aussi aider Rodrigues *in the water reform programmes* parce que ceux qui ont été à Rodrigues savent quelle est la situation. Il faut aussi développer le port de Port Mathurin. Le projet est déjà là et l'appel d'offres a déjà été lancé pour que Port Mathurin

devienne un port alternatif à Port Louis quand il y a des cyclones et on ne sait jamais ce qui peut arriver avec le changement climatique.

Donc, la révision du *RRA Act* pour la rendre beaucoup plus efficiente et la production des programmes locaux pour la télévision. M. le président, c'est vraiment dommage que nous ayons la MBC qui est une télévision nationale et que nous, les Rodriguais, payons aussi notre redevance télé, mais on ne voit pas Rodrigues ou quand on voit Rodrigues, ce sont des émissions rassises après deux ou trois semaines alors qu'à Maurice, c'est instantané. Il ne faut pas qu'il y ait une politique de deux poids deux mesures. Je demande à la MBC d'avoir un peu plus de respect vis-à-vis de Rodrigues. Savez-vous, M. le président, que nous faisons quelquefois des conférences de presse à Rodrigues et après trois ou quatre semaines ils ne passent rien et il faut qu'on téléphone, qu'on supplie. Ils disent qu'ils n'ont pas de nouvelles pour couvrir à Rodrigues. On fait une conférence de presse, cela ne passe pas. On fait aussi des fêtes culturelles et politiques comme pour le 1^{er} mai. A Maurice ils passent cela le premier jour mais, l'année dernière par exemple, cela n'a jamais passé à la télé. C'est une honte! Le plus grave, M. le président, quand le MR est arrivé au pouvoir, après consultation avec la MBC, nous avons financé l'acquisition des équipements pour pouvoir monter des programmes à Rodrigues pour être retransmis à Rodrigues. Cela a été fait. Les équipements ont été installés à Rodrigues, mais quelque temps plus tard, ils ont été retournés à Maurice...

(Interruptions)

Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette mentalité de la MBC, M. le président ? On pense qu'ils ont peur de montrer les Rodriguais à la télé, sauf quand il y a des crimes ou des viols, à ce moment ils passent, car ce sont des Rodriguais, sinon rarement, quand il y a un Rodriguais qui brille dans le domaine sportif, là on va dire d'abord Mauricien. C'est vrai qu'on est Mauricien de nationalité, mais avant tout, de cœur on est Rodriguais. L'honorable membre a raison, pour nous, Rodrigues, c'est un *issue* très sensible. On paye notre télé, mais on ne nous montre pas à la télé. A Maurice, c'est n'importe quoi ! Un chien est écrasé par une bicyclette et on montre cela à la télé !

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je trouve que le *social aid* qu'on accorde à Rodrigues *has to be re-engineered* dans l'intérêt public car il faut que cela profite vraiment aux pauvres et aux plus vulnérables de notre population. Je demande aussi à ce que *more funds from the CSR be allocated to fund activities aiming at promoting social interaction, harmony and for combating poverty in Rodrigues*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, je voudrais...

(*Interruptions*)

Si je prends mon temps c'est parce que vous êtes ...

Mr Speaker: Please conclude!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Leopold: *Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will conclude* avec ce poème que je trouve juste et que je voudrais partager avec tout le monde dans cette Chambre, y compris le *Speaker* -

Les gens ne sont ni raisonnables, ni logiques, ni généreux
 Aime-les quoi qu'il en soit.
 Si tu agis bien, on va t'accuser de le faire avec arrière pensée
 Agis bien quoi qu'il en soit.
 Si tu réussis tu auras de faux amis et de vrai ennemis
 Réussis quoi qu'il en soit.
 Le bien que tu fais aujourd'hui sera oublié demain
 Sois bon quoi qu'il en soit.
 L'honnêteté et la franchise te rendront vulnérable
 Sois honnête et franc quoi qu'il en soit.
 Ce que tu mets des années à construire peut être détruit en une nuit
 Persévére quoi qu'il en soit.
 Les gens ont réellement besoin d'aide, mais sont capables de t'attaquer si tu les aides
 Aide-les quoi qu'il en soit.
 Donne au monde ce qu'il y a de meilleur en toi, et tu en prends plein la tête.
 Donne au monde ce qu'il y a de meilleur en toi quoi qu'il en soit.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: En tout cas, je dois reconnaître qu'écouter les députés de Rodrigues à Maurice, c'est un plaisir. *I suspend for one hour.*

At 7.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.05 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Minister of Information and Communication Technology (Mr T. Pillay Chedumbrum): M. le président, c'est avec une grande humilité et un profond sens de

patriotisme, de respect, et surtout de service à la nation, que je m'adresse à la Chambre aujourd'hui, pour apporter ma contribution au débat autour du programme gouvernemental 2010-2015.

Tout d'abord, permettez-moi, M. le président, de me joindre à ceux qui m'ont précédé pour vous féliciter pour votre nomination comme *Speaker* adjoint et l'honorable Kailesh Purryag comme *Speaker*.

Changement, l'opposition attendait, mais il n'y en a point ; c'est un gouvernement de la continuité qui a été formé à l'issu des élections générales tenues en mai de cette année. Le Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, mérite toutes nos félicitations pour avoir brillamment dirigé l'Alliance de l'Avenir vers une grande victoire à ces élections. J'aurais aimé remercier le Premier ministre, encore une fois, pour m'avoir accordé dans un premier temps, sa confiance, en m'alignant comme candidat et, dans un deuxième temps, de m'avoir confié une responsabilité ministérielle.

M. le président, dans le même souffle, j'exprime ma profonde satisfaction d'avoir pu gagner la confiance de l'électorat de la circonscription numéro 13, Rivière des Anguilles-Souillac, que j'ai l'honneur de représenter avec mes collègues, l'honorable Dr. Abu Kasenally et l'honorable Maneswar Peetumber comme députés, et heureux maintenant de pouvoir servir comme ministre pour aider au gouvernement du pays et ainsi promouvoir le bien-être de l'ensemble de la population.

Maintenant que la joute électorale est dernière nous, les indécis et les adversaires d'hier ne doivent pas hésiter à venir se joindre à nous, car nous représentons l'avenir pour une île Maurice meilleure. Ensemble, nous mènerons le pays vers des paliers supérieurs en termes de développement.

Il est un honneur pour moi de faire partie de cette équipe qui est, depuis mai 2010, à la barre des affaires de l'État. C'est une équipe formidable, où le sens du devoir prime. C'est une équipe faite d'hommes et de femmes déterminés à œuvrer pour l'avancement du pays et de la population.

M. le président, même que je suis relativement très nouveau dans le monde politique, je suivais avec un intérêt particulier les affaires du pays en tant que citoyen et patriote. Je dois admettre ne pas comprendre la démarche de l'opposition. Je suis même choqué ; j'attendais personnellement des critiques constructives, surtout que l'opposition a été à la tête du pays durant la période 2000 à 2005.

A cette époque, l'opposition d'aujourd'hui était bien au courant que la situation économique était grave. Même le *Leader* de l'opposition actuel, Premier ministre d'alors, parlait de turbulence économique. Il peignait en noir la situation économique et sociale du pays. Force est de constater que, durant les cinq dernières années, le gouvernement a su parer à toutes les éventualités, surtout dans les secteurs suivants : l'industrie sucrière, avec la révision du régime surcier ; l'industrie du tourisme secouée par le phénomène du Chikungunya, suivi de la grippe A(H1N1) ; l'industrie du textile et les pertes d'emploi à un

taux alarmant ; la crise pétrolière ; la crise financière internationale, où plusieurs pays sont dans une situation de banqueroute.

En fin de compte, les turbulences n'ont pas pris la dimension de crise chez nous à Maurice. Les personnes âgées, les vieux qui craignaient pour leur pension de vieillesse après 2005 ont été réhabilités. Ils ont reçu même une augmentation substantielle de leur pension. Les handicapés et les démunis ont été secourus, les écoliers ont eu droit au transport gratuit et ceci grâce au *leadership* et à la vision du Premier ministre actuel et son équipe.

Cette réussite n'est pas un constat personnel ou de partisanerie. Même le *Leader* de l'opposition, avant les dernières élections générales, souhaitait faire une alliance avec ce Premier ministre en vantant ses qualités. Ceci n'est un secret pour personne. Ce qui me surprend, c'est comment l'opposition peut, elle, dresser un tableau noir du précédent gouvernement alors que cette même opposition recherchait avidement une alliance avec le Parti Travailliste. Ceci nous fait penser à ce grand homme de lettres, de La Fontaine, quand il faisait dire au renard que les raisins sont verts.

M. le président, le pays à peine sorti de ce gouffre que nous voyons poindre à l'horizon les signes d'un autre marasme. Nous sommes menacés par des moments difficiles de la crise dans la Zone Euro que représente pour notre économie. L'Euro a, en effet, perdu environ 15% de sa valeur par rapport au dollar américain depuis le début de décembre 2009. Cette situation aura, inévitablement, des répercussions désastreuses sur notre économie. Nous ne pouvons nous échapper à cette vague déferlante car notre économie est trop dépendante et vulnérable des tendances internationales. Selon le Bureau Central des Statistiques, 67% de nos exportations sont dirigés vers l'Europe et environ 60% de nos importations se font en dollars. Une telle situation est vraiment paradoxale et nous ne pouvons que faire les frais.

Comme un gouvernement sérieux et responsable, nous déployons tous les moyens envisageables pour mitiger les dégâts, et le programme gouvernemental 2010-2015 prend en ligne de compte ces facteurs et préconise des mesures qui, à moyen terme, vont nous aider à consolider notre économie pour faire face aux défis qui vont se présenter à nous. Il faut aussi souligner que ce programme gouvernemental fait la part belle au social et énonce des mesures innovatrices pour éradiquer, sinon faire reculer d'une manière concrète la pauvreté. Par exemple, la création d'un ministère dédié à l'intégration sociale constitue une grande première pour le pays, et là, chapeau bas à la vision du Premier ministre. Une pareille décision ne peut venir que d'un grand socialiste et d'un dirigeant qui porte une attention toute

particulière pour les démunis et ceux qui ont besoin du soutien de l'Etat pour se hisser à un meilleur niveau de vie.

Rien que la création d'un tel ministère nous démontre cette volonté et cette détermination sans égale de ce gouvernement à s'attaquer aux problèmes de la pauvreté. Permettez-moi, M. le président, de citer ici ce que le Dr. Fuller avait écrit. Je cite -

'An invincible determination can accomplish almost anything and in this lies the distinction between great men and little men.'

Si, toutefois, il fallait une preuve que ce gouvernement est sensible aux multiples péripéties et tracasseries des gens qui vivent dans des conditions difficiles, elle est bien là cette preuve et elle ne peut être reniée.

M. le président, plusieurs de mes collègues ont déjà parlé sur les aspects socio-économiques du programme gouvernemental. Sans vouloir revenir là-dessus, je tiens à faire ressortir que les mesures annoncées ont été conçues et travaillées de telle manière à ce que la croissance économique soit de mise, mais tout en veillant à ce que la dimension sociale ne soit reléguée au deuxième plan, c'est-à-dire, l'homme est placé au centre de tout développement. Une attention particulière a été accordée aux classes démunies de la société pour que ces gens puissent avoir leur part et ainsi améliorer leur qualité de vie.

Sans vouloir être taquin ou désagréable, M. le président, je ne peux m'empêcher de faire cette réflexion. Je suis convaincu que les résultats des dernières élections ne trompent pas. Le peuple a compris l'enjeu et a choisi l'équipe qui est disposée à tutoyer ses propres limites pour faire avancer l'île Maurice sur le chemin du progrès. Le manifeste électoral a donné un signal fort quant au sérieux que l'Alliance de l'Avenir représente et surtout sa capacité d'appliquer les mesures nécessaires pour promouvoir les développements socio-économiques du pays. Donc, si nous nous retrouvons de ce côté de la Chambre, ce n'est certainement pas le fruit d'un hasard, mais une attestation de la maturité de notre peuple.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to come to matters which fall directly under my purview as Minister responsible for Information and Communication Technology. It is known that we have been working since 2005 towards making ICT the fifth pillar of our economy. Much ground has been covered and over 120 projects cutting across various sectors of public life such as education, tourism, health, industry and agro-industry have been defined and are being implemented with a view to making Mauritius a preferred destination for ICT and IT enabled services in the region.

We are also working towards producing more value with information-based decision making processes, developing an inclusive information society and we want to be more

successful in sustaining the economic activities and growth to make the country more prosperous. I would like to share with the House some vital statistics to highlight the progress we have made in the field of ICT in our country. In this context of bridging the digital divide and democratising access to information, over 1,700 Mauritians have been provided with Computer Proficiency Skills, an internationally recognised course known as the Internet and Computing Core Certificate, IC3. Some 93,000 Mauritians have been provided with computer literacy skills, 2,700 online advance courses in IT and Management have been made available at very low-cost as from January 2009. 16 Computer Clubs have been launched in Women Centres, 22 in Youth centres and over 90,000 persons have benefitted from these facilities. Over 50 public Internet Access Points have been made operational in post offices, including five in Rodrigues with a view to bringing internet closer to the population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the telecommunications side, the local call charges have decreased by an average of 27% during the period 2005 to April 2010 and, during the same period, the cost of an international call has decreased by an average of 54% and down by even 90% for certain countries such as China and the United States amongst others. The cost of international connectivity between Mauritius and Europe has been brought down by 61% over the period 2005 to 2009.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the debate on the Government Programme provides me with a great opportunity to re-inform the House that, not later than last week, I have, with the approval of Government, made regulations to track and combat fraud in international calls terminating in Mauritius. This problem has been a source of worry for the international long distance operators in Mauritius over the past few years. As soon as the necessary technological and forensic tool has been identified and has become public domain, we have immediately set up the necessary fraud tracking mechanism and the relevant regulations have been made to give the required legal backup to the system. The merits of such a measure are that the local operators are properly shielded against fraud which can impede on the very survival of their business. But, above all, there is no extra cost to the consumer. One would agree that, such positive developments would not have been possible, were it not for the Government policy aims and objectives for the ICT sector.

Thus, over the period 2005 to end of 2009, the ICT sector has fared well with an average growth rate of 14.6% per annum, a contribution of 6% on average to the annual GDP; an increase in the IT BPO companies from 90 to over 300; an increase in employment from 7,400 to over 11,000; and with now 82 out of every hundred persons in Mauritius

owning a mobile phone compared to 53 in 2005. Through constant progress, some 48 e-services have been developed and are operational, thus facilitating on-line application of Government services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are but a few of the achievements that we have registered in the field of ICT over the last five years. We shall not rest on our laurels. On the contrary, we are committed to create conditions to give the necessary boost to further develop the sector. My Ministry will, in this context, endeavour to provide a framework that will enable ICT to contribute towards achieving the national development goals.

Our objective is to position Mauritius as a regional ICT centre of excellence and knowledge hub. For that purpose, we shall apply measures and give the necessary support to encourage the development of new ICT related business initiatives based principally on Public Private Partnership models and enhance the export markets for ICT services and Business Process Outsourcing and IT Enabled Services.

Further, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have, in the Government Programme 2010-2015, declared Government's intention to make of Mauritius an intelligent Mauritius through full broadband islandwide connectivity and to narrow the digital divide. In this context, my Ministry will support all initiatives for the continuous upgrading of the ICT infrastructure and promote the introduction of new technologies such as next generation networks in compliance with regional and international standards so as to be internationally competitive. We shall also work towards the further reduction of telecom tariffs through regulatory intervention and demand-driven market forces to provide, amongst others, affordable broadband access to households.

As announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, we want to make internet even more affordable to the public and make access to the internet a basic citizen's right in Mauritius. To achieve this end, relevant projects will be implemented. I will also give as example the project for the setting up of 150 computer clubs in social welfare centres and community centres by December this year. Computer clubs have already been set up in youth centres and women centres using specific technological products to make sure that internet facilities are readily available for free to users.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, internet penetration presently stands at 30%. With the implementation of projects which have just been worked out, it is expected that internet penetration would rise from 30% to about 60% within a year. Providing free internet facilities in appropriate public places goes a long way towards bringing IT within the reach of citizens who otherwise would have been denied access to IT tools. We have in mind here the

unemployed people, poor students, women, senior citizens and the population of Mauritius, in general, especially those who cannot afford a personal computer.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the numerous efforts being made by Government for the development of online services, it is imperative that the community at large acquires ICT skills so that they can access these services, thus bringing them at the heart of Government service delivery. Undeniably, the chances for an uptake of these online services would be enhanced with more access to internet. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICT sector is one which is very promising and which shows considerable potential for further development. Let me refer to only a few of the areas where important changes will operate.

M. le président, le gouvernement travaille d'arrache-pied sur un méga projet pour remplacer la carte d'identité nationale qui est depuis longtemps dépassée et source de pas mal de tracasserie en terme de fraude. Nous avons été témoins de nombreux cas d'usurpation d'identité ayant pour but l'escroquerie. Nous prévoyons des technologies les plus avancées, nous penchons pour la technologie de *Smart Card* ou la Carte Intelligente tout en prenant en ligne de compte nos besoins existants et futurs en matière de sécurité, mais en reconnaissant aussi le vaste potentiel qu'une carte à puce représente. Cette carte sera à usage multiple et elle nous permettra d'y ajouter diverses applications telles que l'autorisation d'accès dans des *restricted areas*, les paiements de prestations sociales, contenir les données du permis de conduire, être utilisée comme une carte de santé et même une carte utilisable pour le transport en commun. Des pays tels que l'Autruche, la Belgique, l'Estonie, la Finlande, Oman, le Portugal, le Qatar, l'Espagne, la Suède et autres ont adopté cette technologie.

Le tout dernier pays qui travaille sur l'introduction d'une telle carte à puce n'est autre que l'Inde avec une population d'environ 1.2 milliards. A part d'être un document fiable et sécurisé pour les besoins d'identification du porteur, ce type de carte ouvrirait des opportunités réelles aux citoyens pour accéder au service public en ligne n'importe où et n'importe quand. Le monde des affaires pourrait aussi construire de nouvelles applications où la carte faciliterait l'articulation entre le client et le service concerné.

M. le président, on parle beaucoup ces derniers temps de *law and order*. Nul besoin pour moi de faire remarquer que le *law and order* occupe une place privilégiée dans l'agenda du gouvernement. Un des moyens susceptibles à nous apporter des solutions durables à nos problèmes systémiques réside dans la mise en place d'un *Crime Occurrence Tracking System*. Il est bon de rappeler qu'en réponse à une question parlementaire, le Premier ministre avait informé la Chambre de ce projet. Il m'est agréable de porter à la connaissance de la Chambre que nous sommes maintenant en plein dans la réalisation de ce projet qui

doterait la force policière avec un système informatique bien rôdé, qui permettrait un suivi méthodique de tout cas rapporté à la police. Cette innovation aura aussi l'avantage de générer des données statistiques en temps réel. Le gouvernement investit dans un tel projet quand il est destiné à accentuer les démarches pour placer le citoyen au centre de toute activité qui le concerne, surtout au sujet de la paix sociale, la sécurité, l'ordre et la discipline dans le pays.

Dorénavant, toute déposition dans un poste de police se fera électroniquement, ainsi le temps que dure une enquête sera considérablement réduit, car tous les renseignements seront disponibles sur un réseau et peuvent être accédés facilement. Avec l'entrée en opération de ce nouveau système, tous les partis qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, sont concernés, seront en mesure de développer une étroite collaboration et, de ce fait, mettre à la disposition du public un service de bien meilleure qualité. La phase initiale du projet touche 28 postes de police et d'après le plan de réalisation du projet, le *Crime Occurrence Tracking System* sera opérationnel d'ici février de l'année prochaine.

M. le président, permettez-moi de faire mention d'un autre sujet qui revêt aussi une importance capitale, c'est l'éducation. Nous ne pourrons jamais cesser de nous rappeler le rôle que joue l'éducation dans le développement d'un pays et dans l'épanouissement de son peuple. La stratégie par rapport à l'éducation comprend un volet qui vise à faciliter la création d'une ambassade de talent et de compétence dans le pays et aussi à favoriser des interventions à la base même de notre système éducatif. Cette approche basée sur la technologie met l'emphase sur le *lifelong learning* des étudiants. Les services du ministère de l'éducation et de mon ministère travaillent déjà sur le projet *of one laptop per child* et sur la création et le développement d'un portail spécifique pour l'éducation qui deviendra le point de référence privilégiée pour l'éducation à l'île Maurice et qui servira à améliorer le travail en réseau de tous ceux concernés, notamment les étudiants, les enseignants et les parents. De plus, les travaux qui se font en classe ou les devoirs et toute autre documentation de référence seront disponibles sur ce *e-education portal* pour le bien de tout le monde.

M. le président, le secteur de la santé est aussi un autre domaine qui est très sensible et qui demande une attention particulière. Tout le monde s'accorde à reconnaître que les citoyens en bonne santé font une nation saine et, par ricochet, une nation saine est une nation qui contribue pleinement au développement d'un pays. C'est en fonction d'une telle équation que le ministère s'est attelé à l'élaboration d'un *e-health project*. Un tel projet a pour ambition, non seulement, l'amélioration des services de santé par le biais d'un système qui est gravité autour du besoin du patient et la dispense de services pointus, mais aussi, tenir les

citoyens au courant des tendances prévalentes en matière de santé publique. Avec l'exécution de ce *e-health project*, tous les hôpitaux régionaux et les hôpitaux spécialisés ainsi que les *Area Health Centres* seront dotés d'un système informatisé. Il est prévu que ce système s'étendrait aussi aux cliniques médicales du secteur privé.

Dorénavant, les hôpitaux et les cliniques du secteur privé seront encouragés à se joindre aux établissements du secteur public pour échanger et partager les informations afin de permettre au développement d'un *National Health Information System*. Ce sera donc possible pour les médecins de tous les établissements médicaux de l'île d'avoir accès aux données médicales complètes de leurs patients indépendamment que ces derniers ont été ou sont en traitement dans différents hôpitaux ou cliniques.

M. le président, en guise d'exemple, des progrès qui peuvent être accomplis par l'utilisation d'éthique, je ne peux m'empêcher de faire référence au *e-parliament project*. En tant que parlementaires, nous sommes directement concernés par ce projet qui consiste en la transformation des travaux et des fonctions administratives du Parlement. Cette transformation rend les différentes opérations beaucoup plus faciles et elles s'effectuent quasiment en un rien de temps. Ce projet comprend la mise en place d'un *digital recording system* et d'un *electronic document management system*. Le *digital recording system* permet l'enregistrement numérique des débats au sein de l'Assemblée Nationale et a été implémenté à partir de mars de l'année dernière. Ce système s'articule avec un *voice recognition system* et cela permet au secrétariat de l'Assemblée Nationale de réduire drastiquement le temps requis pour la publication du *Hansard*. Au fait, il a été possible de réduire le temps de cette opération d'une période initiale d'une semaine à seulement moins de vingt-quatre heures maintenant. Qui peut ne pas reconnaître tous les avantages qu'un tel système nous donne que ce soit à nous, parlementaires, ou au public en général ?

La prochaine phase de ce *e-parliament journey* est l'introduction d'un *electronic management system* qui aiderait le secrétariat de l'Assemblée Nationale dans la gestion et le contrôle de la documentation. A travers ce système, l'Assemblée Nationale pourra garder et gérer les documents d'une manière plus efficace avec l'aspect sécuritaire renforcé; convertir en numérique la documentation disponible dans la bibliothèque de l'Assemblée Nationale pour nous faciliter ainsi que le public en général et permettre d'une manière plus rapide et fiable l'accès en ligne aux informations parlementaires.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we emerge, we face fundamental questions about the kind of Mauritius that we want to build for our future generation. This is the main concern of this Government and that is why we shall take decisions that will lead us to a better tomorrow.

After listening to hon. Members on the other side, we realise that the strong and balanced growth that we need will not materialise if we also simply do nothing and stand back with unbridled criticism. Fortunately, we mean business and through the implementation of the orientation and measures spelt out in the Government Programme of 2010 to 2015, we shall deliver a fair future for all of our citizens. The Government Programme points towards the development of an open partnership of people, business and government to support the engine of economic growth, but while constantly reckoning with social dimension of every developmental action.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude I would say that Mauritius has always been at its best when it has been led and governed by the Labour Party along with the MSM and the PMSD in its pursue for the promotion of fairness and equality of access to opportunities. We are committed and we pledge to drive this ambitious Government Programme 2010-2015 forward.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(9.37 p.m.)

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me start by congratulating you for your election as Deputy Speaker and, of course, congratulating hon. Kailash Purryag upon being entrusted once again the office of the Speaker. I would also like to congratulate all Members who have made it to this august Assembly, especially the newcomers and I hope they play an important role in strengthening the democratic process.

I am first and foremost thankful to our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, for his continuing trust in me and, of course, the electorate of Constituency No. 6 who gave me such a warm welcome.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am a bit of an offshore candidate when I came to Mauritius. When I landed, I had a campaign of only 17 days and I know most of our friends had it, but others were there already on land. I was one of the rare candidates who came because I had other assignments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we landed there, myself and my two colleagues, it was quite tough. I am sincere about it. Everywhere the saying was: *ici 2:1*. It was *2:1* in the beginning. After just a few days, everything changed because we convinced people on only one issue, that is, they have to choose between Navinchandra Ramgoolam as Prime Minister and Paul Bérenger as the alternate. That is obvious. We cannot change, we cannot do anything. That was the obvious. I am talking of Constituency No. 6. I would like here to put on record, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contribution of my colleagues – hon. Lormus Bundhoo and hon. Minister Gungah. All three of us made it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I am talking of Constituency No. 6 and, before I move on to Arts and Culture and other issues, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to list some of the Government achievements which the population have had the opportunity to appreciate and will continue appreciating, because I know we have a very strong Government, a dynamic Minister of Public Infrastructure and National Development Unit.

Though we don't have questions from Constituency No. 6 as at now in this august Assembly concerning projects, I know, as a responsible Minister and all other Ministers for that matter, have a special place for Constituency No. 6.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention some projects –

- the Goodlands bypass;
- extension of the motorway from Pamplemousses to Forbach;
- completion of football playground at Grand Bay;
- renovation and lighting of football playground at Fond du Sac, Petit Raffray and Vale;
- resurfacing of roads in various villages like Goodlands, Grand' Baie Ring Road;
- construction of drains at Vale and Grand' Baie;
- drains at Pereybère, and
- the upgrading of cremation grounds in the constituency.

These are some of the projects and I am sure, as indicated by the Minister of Public Infrastructure, there many more in the pipeline and, of course, through other Ministries as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come back to what I was telling earlier, that it came as no surprise to anyone knowledgeable about Mauritian politics, that this Government was plebiscited back in office with its allies the MSM and the PMSD.

There are, indeed, very objective reasons why the country voted massively for Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam and his team. I'll quote a few, namely, the economic progress, greater access to education, maintenance of the Welfare State, widening of opportunities for greater social justice and consolidation of national unity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2008/2009, when the world witnessed its greatest economic slump since the Great Depression of the 1920's, when havoc wreaked the economic and social fabric of many countries, when rating agencies downgraded the financial credibility of developed countries, when the International Monetary Fund predicts economic growth in the euro zone to be only 1% for the current year, when we had the issue of sovereign debt crisis in a country no less than Greece, and when Spain is still in pain when it comes to employment, though it just won the World Cup - I am not mentioning the mayhem caused in the US where the sub-prime crisis originated and where some banks had to close down and others bailed out by the States - how many banks closed down in Mauritius? None! How many homes were seized due to the impact of sub-prime loans on housing? None! How many jobs did we lose in Mauritius due to this crisis? None!

On the contrary, in actual fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government of Dr. Ramgoolam has created more than 40,000 direct jobs in the past five years, as we believe that human beings get dignity through work; that is why the Government maintains that new jobs are created and people get the jobs needed.

The rate of unemployment in our country is one of the lowest in the world, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When many countries, both developed and undeveloped, are still trying to get to grips with the aftermath of the crisis, our country is showing resilience.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moving closer to us - Africa - when others are struggling to topple down dictatorship, when others are still holding high hopes for a better society after restoring democracy, when others have experienced several coup attempts, long hours of water and power interruptions, or no power and no water at all, increase in crime, deterioration in quality of life, epidemics, malnutrition, extreme poverty, all compounded by a series of natural calamities, when many countries have little hope of reaching the status of a new industrialised country, and when institutional flaws, lack of discipline, lack of initiative, colonial mentality, crab mentality, lack of self-analysis are the order of the day, Mauritius remains one of the unique odd countries where we still have the concept of a Welfare State. We care for citizens from the womb to the tomb! Against all odds mentioned above, our Prime Minister has not only preserved our Welfare State, but is intent on consolidating it, be

it in education, health and nutrition, or national solidarity; in all spirit of national unity, he is for the furtherance of democratic ideals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the Prime Minister mentioned at the African Union Summit, in his speech, which was heavily applauded, I quote –

“I have for the first time created a Ministry of Social Integration and Empowerment, precisely, because I want to eliminate poverty in Mauritius.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wonder if there is any other African country where a Prime Minister, where the Head of State, is so responsible and cares to this extent for its population. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Prime Minister, a charismatic leader who has shown that he is above communalism; he believes in national unity and he continues to nurture our rainbow nation every day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Prime Minister is building a nation while inspiring our people to action. Let us state the obvious. All Labour Governments and their allies have at least one merit: they deliver.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now turn to the subject matter of my Ministry and outline my vision for the coming years. I would like to highlight the ministerial responsibilities and put things into their right perspective which are under me definitely. Thus, the Ministry of Arts and Culture has under its portfolio the management of no less than 28 departments and parastatal bodies.

All matters relating to arts and culture -

- *Conservatoire Nationale de Musique François Mitterrand* Trust Fund which has eight branches;
- National Archives Department;
- Mauritius Institute;
- Protection of Historical Monuments;
- Mauritius Museums Council – eight Museums in all;
- Film Development, which is new again to the Ministry;
- Film Classification Board;
- Board of Stage Plays;
- Mauritius Society of Authors – MASA;
- Copyright;
- Some five cultural centres, including –
 - Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture;
 - Islamic Cultural Centre, and
 - Tamil, Telugu and Marathi Cultural Centres

- Some 11 Speaking Unions;
- National Library;
- National Art Gallery;
- National Heritage Fund – with monuments of about 178 that we cater for;
- Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund;
- President's Fund for Creative Writing;
- Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians;
- Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund, and
- Le Morne Trust Fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I were to speak on each of these, it would take one hour, I am escaping giving details. I will come back later on the projects I have for the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I turn to the Government Programme. The President's speech hit the nail right on top when it said that Arts and Culture are catalysts for peace, stability and the consolidation of National Unity. In this respect, the decision of this Government to create a full-fledged Ministry dedicated to Arts and Culture, speaks volumes about the vision of our Prime Minister.

Too often in the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Arts and Culture has been branded as the Ministry of “*Ravanne* and *Maravanne*” or “*Ministère Jhal Dholok*”. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are now making a quantum leap ahead. Now this Ministry will be branded the Ministry of light and enlightenment; Arts and Culture are going to become the trigger for an intelligent island, *une île qui sera une pionnière avec la création d'une industrie cérébro-culturelle*. I repeat the term, Mr Speaker, Sir, “*une industrie cérébro-culturelle*”.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the world has witnessed so much scientific progress so far, if man has been able to be on the moon, we owe much to the Einstein's theory of relativity, the famous “ $E = MC^2$ ”. You may all know about the meaning of these letters – Energy = Mass x Velocity. Today, my Ministry has the ambition and the vision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of changing the meaning of these symbols in this formula. We are confident that we shall make it become - Economy = Man x Culture². *M. le président, c'est sur la pendule culturelle que nos générations futures vont regarder l'heure.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, culture is the essence of life. Culture is connecting with development and is poised to become a fundamental component of sustainable development. We have set the objective of transforming arts and culture into a flourishing industry in the short-term, with the vision of making it the next pillar of the Mauritian economy, in the medium-term. The full-fledged Ministry of Arts and Culture will meet the needs and

aspirations of our multiethnic population. As a facilitator and provider of services, my Ministry will ensure the effective promotion of arts and culture at all levels of society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the programme makes mention of about 20 items –

- (i) Cultural T.V channel
- (ii) National Symphony Orchestra
- (iii) International Film Festival
- (iv) Artist Welfare Fund
- (v) National Award for Excellence in Arts
- (vi) National Unity Award
- (vii) *École du cinema*
- (viii) President's Award for Creative Writings
- (ix) Artistic and Cultural Productions
- (x) Virtual Museum on Arts and Culture
- (xi) *Conseil National de la Culture*
- (xii) Human Resource Knowledge and Arts Development Fund
- (xiii) National Drama Festivals
- (xiv) *Centre de Formation*
- (xv) CELPAC formerly called CLAC – *Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle*
- (xvi) Assistance to Artists, Performers & Creators
- (xvii) *Festival International Créole*
- (xviii) *Festival Mauricien*
- (xix) Slam Project in all schools
- (xx) *Jardin de l'interculturalité* and cultural diplomacy

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all that I am mentioning, apply to the Republic of Mauritius which includes the island of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. Whatever I am referring to is for the whole of the Republic, there is nothing that has only to do with the Mauritius Island.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, arts and culture are integral parts of our economy. The arts increase the imagination, self-confidence, creativity and the cultural engagement of a population. A foundation of cultural expression, the main players being artists, creators and performers!

M. le président, la culture n'a pas de prix, mais elle a un coût. Et tout ce qui a un coût ne sera entrepris que si seulement nous pouvons démontrer sa pertinence. Notre Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, l'une des rares personnalités qui inspirent de respect au niveau international, que ce soit pour l'aisance avec laquelle il s'exprime dans différentes langues, ou pour sa culture, est convaincu de la nécessité d'élever l'homme au statut de homoculturalisme. Comme je l'ai fait remarquer plus tôt, sa décision de créer un ministère autonome des arts et de la culture n'est pas innocente. Conscient de la relation intrinsèque entre le développement et la culture, il a choisi de mettre celle-ci à la portée de

tout le monde ; donc après la démocratisation de l'économie, le prochain grand chantier du l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam sera la démocratisation des arts et de la culture.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am feeling disturbed! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has inherent characteristics that can help transform us into a Cultural Hub.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order!

Mr Choonee: Some of these characteristics are -

- our strategic location – I call Mauritius a neutral territory, very peaceful.
- our favourable tax jurisdiction
- our business-friendly climate
- our creative people

I firmly believe that we have the potential of becoming *un carrefour de la culture* where Africa, Asia and Europe meet.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Choonee: We shall take advantage of our various assets, namely our favourable time-zone, our plural languages, our stable democracy to make of Mauritius a *premier* art destination. We are working on a road-map for creative industries with the objective of becoming a creative hotspot.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the benefit of the House, I would like to elaborate on my vision of *interculturalité*. My colleague, the hon. Minister of Education, often mentions that and I am sure he will talk about it again. The concept of unity in diversity has partly contributed to that of *multiculturalité* ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Choonee: ... like a collage that reproduces the co-existence of diverse groups.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Choonee: The new approach of *interculturalité* transcends these to focus on a cultural osmosis, *un véritable brassage des cultures*.

I shall not content myself with preserving peaceful co-existence and social harmony. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a dream, as Minister of Arts and Culture, for our Republic. Again, our Republic means Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega.

I dream of a Republic where instead of accentuating our points of difference, we shall explore what we have in common.

I dream of a Republic where there shall be free flow not only of ideas, but also of ideals.

I dream of a Republic where there is not only respect for other cultures, but where individuals are open to new learning, are flexible; have a healthy sense of humour. We dream of a Republic where we tolerate ambiguity well, where we are sensitive to our prejudices, where we approach others with a desire and openness to learn, and where we are genuinely interested in others.

I dream of a Republic that sees differences not in terms of inferiority, but as learning opportunities, and that makes continued and sincere attempts to emphatically understand the world from others' points of view.

I dream of a Republic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where there are symbiotic relationships between all cultures.

I visualise a Republic of Mauritius, where all religions, languages and cultures shall flourish side by side, where there shall be mutual respect and understanding, and where there shall be no need for any supremacy or hegemony.

For this new approach to succeed, we need a paradigm shift, a change in culture and a change in mindset, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We shall build on various 'savoirs', namely *savoir-vivre, savoir être et savoir-faire*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new hybrid cultural space can be possible only under the leadership of one person, Dr. the hon. Navindchandra Ramgooleam, a great leader. As we say: leaders do things right, but great leaders do the right things. *Un digne successeur* of SSR, the Father of the Nation!

Today, Mauritius has addressed the inherent inequalities of the system, promoted a culture of sustainable human rights and ensured that the otherness has a new significance. Our education system and free transport have all promoted *interculturalité*, and they have given people of all origins, irrespective of their religion, creed or means, the ability to participate fully in the democratic system. This is real democratisation!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will give new orientation to the promotion of arts and culture by –

- further encouraging artistic creativity in all art forms;

- preserving and promoting our National Heritage;
- sensitising the population on the two World Heritage Sites;
- upgrading and extending our cultural infrastructures;
- promoting the cultural industries as one of the pillars of economic development;
- developing cultural tourism;
- enhancing the promotion of reading and writing;
- providing financial assistance and technical support to associations of artists, socio cultural organisations and to individuals, for the promotion of various art forms and cultural values;
- enhancing exchanges through Cultural Exchange Programmes with friendly countries, and
- building bridges through interaction between all the different cultures through our national festivals, and also through the new initiative called ‘Fostering a Culture of Peace and Tolerance’.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I earlier referred to culture and cultural diplomacy. Since I have, for the past five years, almost been in India as a diplomat, I would like to have a digression to say what I have experienced in India for the benefit of our motherland. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you can continue!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please, no cross talking! Order please! Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Order, order! Hon. Hossen, please! I am on my feet, and I expect order! Hon. Minister, you can continue now!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I dealt on some issues on which I carried out some preliminary diligence work during my tenure of office as High Commissioner. The first issue concerns tourism. I spoke to the new CEO of the Board of Investment and, of course, to my colleague, the Minister of Tourism. I understand that, when it is off-peak period for the tourism industry in Mauritius, between the months of April to October, it so

happens that the Indian climate is such that people want to travel out of India. The climate is such that, in some parts of the country, temperature goes up to 49°C, extreme heat. Immediately after the hot season, you have monsoon which again falls within the period which is off-peak in Mauritius. So, why not tap the Indian market forcefully and aggressively? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, India has a population of at least 300 million people - I repeat the figure: 300 million - who are reaching the upper middle-class. Those people have the means to travel. They have already travelled throughout India and to the immediate destinations such as Thailand, Singapore and others. They want to go still further, and Mauritius would be a very good destination for them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I came across many business people also who want to invest in Mauritius. I feel that we can tap those resources from India and, of course, Mauritius can have a better chance in these fields.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that the only constant in life is called change. My Ministry is on the course for a paradigm shift, whereby it will work closely with several Ministries with a view to optimising synergies. There are two Ministries with which I will be working very closely. The first one is the Ministry of Education, to promote the concept of edutainment, which means education through entertainment. This has been successful in the Caribbean countries, and I am sure that, as a pilot project, we can work something out. The other Ministry with which I am very closely associated is the new Ministry of Social Integration, and I would like to work on a few projects aimed at putting back into the mainstream the youth who have been marginalised. Of course, we will work with all other Ministries, and I am sure that, with the support of one and all, my Ministry will realise the dream, which is to have a White Paper on arts and culture.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for your attention.

(10.08 p.m.)

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *tout d'abord, j'espère que je vais pouvoir m'exprimer ce soir. Mon collègue a eu beaucoup de courage pour le faire.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I, first of all, take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Deputy Speaker. May I say, *pour la petite histoire*, that you have been a Member of Parliament representing Constituency No. 14 at a certain time and, for a few months, the Minister of Local Government. I seize this opportunity also to congratulate the

re-election of the Speaker, who has done and is doing an impartial job *qui est plébiscité par tous les membres de cette auguste Assemblée.*

I would like also to thank Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, who has for the second time in only a few months, entrusted me again with the portfolio of Local Government. It has been a long time - nearly 20 years - since the same person has occupied this Ministry on either side.

M. le président, je profite aussi de cette opportunité pour féliciter tous les membres des deux côtés de la Chambre qui m'ont précédé dans leurs allocutions. J'espère qu'on va travailler - comme tous les mauriciens le souhaitent - dans cette Assemblée au lieu d'avoir des petites guéguerres à gauche et à droite.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the first opportunity that I have had to address this august Assembly, since the ultimately passing away of my predecessor, Dr. James Burty David. I returned to Government as Minister in January of this year, but Parliament only met for one month prior to being dissolved for the last general election and no occasion arose to allow me to lay out my vision with regard to the Ministry of Local Government.

I am happy that I was elected for a third mandate in Savanne/Black River, that is, Constituency No. 14, even though I faced an uphill battle. It is not easy when one has an adversary of the calibre of hon. Ganoo, I must say. With the help of my colleague who sits next to me, hon. Mrs Maya Hanoomanjee, as well as the other candidate, Mr Sanjeev Mulloo, who unfortunately failed to be elected, I can safely say that the *Alliance de L'Avenir* has confirmed the decline of the *MMM* in Constituency No. 14.

Even though hon. Ganoo was also re-elected, it should be noted that in the 25 years that he has represented that constituency, more than half of that period has been spent on the Opposition bench, and that proportion is obviously going to increase. As far as I am concerned, I have had the good fortune to have always been part of the Government majority and this is very important as far as progress and development in the constituency is concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had a first opportunity to serve my electorate during the period 1995-2000 as Junior Minister and now I may do so as Minister of Local Government. I will work hard to bring even more improvements to the daily life of the inhabitants of the largest constituency on the island, of which I have the privilege of also being a resident. My constituency is also unique, in as much as it reflects almost exactly the ethnic breakdown of the population of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I was appointed Minister of Local Government and, at that time, also Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, I considered it a wonderful opportunity,

possibly once in a lifetime, to be able to put into practice many proposals that I have encountered since my political career began as a Village and District Councillor nearly 20 years ago.

Recently, I was invited on a radio programme and the closing remark of the talk show host was a reproach that during the previous mandate, the *Alliance sociale* had not come forward with a Local Government Bill even though mention had been made in its programme of 2005.

In fact, it should be put on record that my predecessor, Dr. James Burty David, had finalised a draft Local Government Bill and it was scheduled to be submitted to Cabinet on the Friday just after his death. Obviously, the Bill was put on hold awaiting the nomination of a new Minister and it would have been the easiest thing in the world for me to just submit that Bill within the first few days of my term of office.

However, as I have just said, as a former Local Councillor, being propelled into the position of Minister of Local Government was an opportunity that I could not miss as regards radical new proposals that I wish to be included. I tried very hard to have the draft ready before Parliament was dissolved but, unfortunately, this was not possible. However, since being reappointed Minister of Local Government, I have wasted no time to accelerate all the procedures to ensure that the Local Government Bill may be presented to Cabinet, Parliament, the Local Authorities and the public in general within the next few months.

In the same radio show that I mentioned earlier, a member of the public called in and asked whether this was not a delaying tactic to not hold Municipal elections. The answer to this is quite simply, no! We are very close to finalising the new Local Government Bill, which is revolutionary and even spectacular. It is going to be used for the next 50 years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is no point in holding Municipal elections, or even Village elections, if a couple of months later the whole structure is going to be completely revamped. I am sure that my friends in the Opposition will not disagree with me, in as much as they themselves put off Village Council and Municipal elections several times between 2002 and 2005.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, make no mistake, I will be presenting a new Local Government Bill to this House within the next few months! Whatever be the final form, I will not delay this piece of legislation longer than necessary. But there are certain procedures that need to be followed, such as clearance from the State Law Office and the Ministry of Finance, with regard to the cost element before going to Cabinet. Discussions also need to be held with the Electoral Commissioner's Office concerning boundary changes.

The Opposition and, in particular, hon. Lesjongard, have asserted that my proposals are just a copy of the measures that were proposed in 2003. This is not the case. The 2003 Act created Municipalities covering the whole island and this, possibly, with the sole intention to tax the rural areas, irrespective of geographical location. In this regard, it is amusing to see Members of the Opposition, starting with the hon. Leader of the Opposition himself, who complained about the NRPT tax which only affected a small proportion of the population, whereas with the 2003 Local Government Act, the whole population in the rural areas would have been taxed.

Hon. Lesjongard, among others, has stated that the Labour Party campaigned against rural tax in 2003. Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we did and still maintain that the rural areas cannot be compared with the urban ones! I, myself, being an inhabitant of a village know exactly what problems are being faced.

However, in the proposals that I am making, and that I have made public so far, we do not intend to go back on our electoral promises with regard to the rural tax, but we are recognising that certain large villages are now becoming more urban than rural, and in this respect we are proposing to upgrade these areas.

The benefits are multiple, let alone the change in status, the pride, the increase in property values, the increase in amenities, the increase in leisure and sports facilities and so on. Nearly every rural constituency will have a new town within its borders.

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as these villages become towns and their status changes into municipalities, they will be liable to property taxes, but only after a period of 3 years.

This is not the first time that such an exercise has been carried out. In the early 1990's the Local Government Act was amended so that the concept of No-Man's Land was abolished, and every part of Mauritius had to fall within the boundaries of local authorities. At that time, several new villages were created, as well as one new District Council, that is, Black River, and several suburbs were annexed to municipalities including, for example, the village of Henrietta which was joined to the Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a caring Government, as was the previous one, that is why we have proposed a moratorium of 3 years for the payment of property taxes. Furthermore, all the other rural areas will remain unchanged as far as taxation is concerned, that is, there won't be any.

In this respect, we have been honest and forthcoming unlike the Opposition. Hon. Lesjongard has even stated a few weeks ago that there should not be any moratorium for three years and that we should start to tax immediately.

Furthermore, when the Local Government Act was passed in 2003 and all the rural areas became taxable, the MMM tried to give the impression that these taxes would not be compulsory, yet they hid the fact from the population that the rural municipalities which did not raise a specific quota in taxes would be penalised with regard to grant-in-aid.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, there are certain procedures that need to be followed before I can present a draft Local Government Bill to this House, in particular, all legal ramifications as well as making sure that the proper infrastructure and staffing are ready, as well as re-defining the electoral boundaries to take into account the excision of the new towns from districts.

En passant, as I mentioned earlier, the Opposition has accused me of copying their proposals made in 2003. But let us take, for instance, one of the principal measures included in their Act, that is, the creation of three new districts by splitting the existing towns. You may be surprised to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this is not a new measure, and was suggested as far back as 1973 in the Smale Report. So they are not inventing the wheel.

But to come back to some of the proposals that would be made in the new Local Government Bill without going into too many details, I would like to enumerate the following points.

Firstly, the existing towns will be raised to city status, each with a Lord Mayor at its head. Did you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that though we always refer to Port Louis as a city with a Lord Mayor, no specific provision is actually included in the Local Government Act, past or present, which legally recognises the status? We are going to correct this anomaly.

Secondly, the previous Government paid, for the first time, allowances to ordinary municipal and district councillors. I would like to extend this to all village councillors.

Thirdly, at present the percentage of women elected in local authorities is minimal, even more so, in the rural areas. The new electoral system for the municipalities and district councils will ensure that at least one third of the candidates at all levels will be women.

Fourthly, the 2003 Act took away many important powers from the municipal and district councillors in total contradiction to the MMM's promise of according greater autonomy to local councils. Quite a contrast to the powers they accorded to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly! I am going to propose that the municipalities and district councils regain a major say in matters dealing with the allocation of permits and procurement matters.

Fifthly, we come to the matter of grant-in-aid which, for a long time, has been a bone of contention between Central Government and local authorities. It is imperative that we

realise once and for all that any grant-in-aid formula must make sure that the basic parameters such as salaries, maintenance of public utilities and infrastructure, renewal of vehicles and equipment, etc., need to be guaranteed for the effective running of local Government. Over the years, all the local authorities have made great improvement in the amount of revenue they generate themselves, but some additional work needs to be done, especially with regard to taxes. This is only one of the reasons why Central Government and my Ministry in particular still needs to have a *droit de regard* in view of the billions of rupees of taxpayers' money which are given to local authorities as subsidies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in all fairness, local authorities should be given reasonable Government grant-in-aid. This, however, should not be regarded as a mere donation, or a parental gesture, on the part of the centre. Local Government finance should be managed as soundly as possible. The Council should have the capacity and the technical expertise to cope with both existing expenditure responsibilities and revenue generating authority.

Sometimes some funny situations occur. When the Opposition came with the Local Government Bill of 2003, a part from the major changes that look beautiful on paper, none of the ground work with regard to any infrastructure had been done when the Act was passed. The emphasis was put on taxation, especially of the rural areas, and what is worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the Local Government Act of 2003 was only promulgated a few clauses at a time, and without repealing the relevant clauses of the Local Government Act of 1989. The result of this is that we now have two Local Government Acts running concurrently and many problems arise because of this.

Recently a Member in the Opposition raised the matter of allocation of stalls in Port Louis, and complained about the procedure and criteria that were used to choose the recipients, but this particular problem has occurred precisely because of one clause of the Local Government of Act 2003. This particular problem has occurred precisely because of one clause of the Local Government Act of 2003, namely section 45 subsection 1, which allows a Municipal Councillor to authorise any person to occupy any stall which, if controlled on such terms and conditions that may be determined by *contrat à durée déterminée*, unlike the provision of Local Government Act of 1989 which required Local Councils to call for tenders. I take this opportunity to inform the House that I recently sent a circular letter to all Local Authorities requesting them to ensure that allocation of any commercial premises under their jurisdiction should be carried out with clearly spelled out criteria, and in complete transparency.

Les collectivités locales ne sont pas des entreprises à vocation lucrative. Pourtant, elles sont autorisées à s'engager, dans les limites prévues par la loi, dans des activités commerciales de tout genre. Les collectivités locales mauriciennes doivent, tout en étant assujetties au contrôle judiciaire et gouvernemental, rendre des comptes au public.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the State should exercise reasonable control of the acts of local government units and officials. The very *raison d'être*, after all, of the Central Government is to ensure, as far as possible, the well-being of all citizens of this Republic of Mauritius.

As Minister of Local Government, it is my duty to protect our citizens from any possible abusive tendency of the Councils, just as I should ensure that Local Government finances are soundly managed. The Additional Stimulus Package (Miscellaneous) Provision Act requires Local Authorities to submit their budgets for 2011 in the Performance Based Budget format.

With the introduction of the Business Facilitation Act, the Local Government Authorities are mandated to issue building and land use permits within a period of two weeks. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, communication, especially online communication, between the Local Authorities and the citizens, and among the Local Authorities themselves constitute a vital element in the promotion of local governance and will contribute in the provision of new services and the improvement of existing ones to the community.

The e-government portal is therefore being actively pursued and will be fully operational by the end of this year. In this context, the opportunity will be offered to the public to download applications forms and to track the status of the application.

My colleague, the Minister of Housing and Lands, has worked hard in the development of the land administration, valuation and information system, commonly known as the LAVIMS project. The digital cadastre and the valuation roll for all residential and commercial properties, which will be created at the same time, will also be used by the Local Authorities for environmental, planning and taxation purposes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first point that I would like to raise with regard to Local Government is a question of staffing. At present, we have the Local Government Service Commission that deals exclusively with this matter. However, in practice, bottlenecks arise with regard to filling of vacancy especially in the cases of leave without pay, as well as promotion and disciplinary matters, and the new Local Government Bill will try to lighten the burden of the Local Government Service Commission.

Apart from the main duties of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, there are four other departments that I need to say a few words, namely, Agaléga, Solid Waste, the Fire Services and the Beach Authority. But before I go further, I would like to point out one of the proposals that I wish to include in the new Local Government Bill, that is, the extension of grassroots democracy to both Rodrigues and Agaléga which, as you know, form part of the Republic of Mauritius.

I wish to reassure the House that none of the autonomy already granted to Rodrigues Regional Assembly will be affected. If anything, the democratic environment will be enlarged, as there is no recognised Local Government at present in Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, did you know that four Parish Councils were set up in Rodrigues informally by government as far back as 1958? But over the last 50 years little progress has been made to legitimise local bodies on the island.

However, over the last three decades, you may be surprised to know that Rodrigues has had a vibrant Local Government network well before the Rodrigues Regional Assembly or even the Rodrigues Island Council and managed by the Rodriguan Council of Social Service comprising of 97 committees at present.

The main legal problem is that civil servants, within the Republic of Mauritius, do not have the right to stand for Local Government elections, and as the high proportion of the workforce in both Rodrigues and Agaléga are on government payroll, this presents a legal problem for the setting up of a similar structure to that on mainland Mauritius.

I propose that we recognise the good work of the Rodrigues Council of social services by formalising the position within the legislation without in any way changing the current structure or procedures.

However, Government will accord a grant-in-aid to the Rodrigues Council of Social Services through the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the benefit of the inhabitants of the different localities. I need not tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how a relatively small measure such as this will go a long way in alleviating hardships in deprived areas while, at the same time, giving a certain dignity to the thousands of Rodriguans who have up to now served their communities free of charge.

In the same context, I have included Agaléga in the process though the problem is much smaller in scale. Only three village committees can be considered over there...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Aimée:to be supervised by the Agaléga Island Council. As a former Chairman of both Agaléga Island Council and Outer Islands Development Corporation, I have a special attachment to this island. Recently a project that I had initiated with regard to the use of coconut oil to power generators and vehicles is now taking off. I have even started procedures to extend the facility to Rodrigues.

Also as Chairman of the Agalega Island Council, I had constructed a shelter in case of tsunamis as well as establishing a cellular network with the generous collaboration of Emtel.

As Minister, I appointed, for the very first time, an Agalean direct descendant as chairman of the Agalega Island Council in replacement of myself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore Government will embark upon an important programme of more housing and education facilities. The Outer Islands Development Corporation will undertake projects to improve infrastructural development and facilities for the Agaleans namely improvement of air and sea access; extending classes of the existing Junior Secondary School for the students to pursue their secondary education up to School Certificate.

En passant, je dois dire qu'avant mon arrivée comme Chairman de Outer Islands Development Corporation et Agalega Island Council, les enfants, à l'âge de onze ans, venaient à Maurice et été laissés à eux-mêmes. J'ai essayé avec the then Minister Gokhool, who was Minister of Education, to work out...

(Interruptions)

In any case, I would like to tell my friend, hon. Bhagwan, that the secondary school is there. We have got Forms I, II and III. Now, I want to extend it up to School Certificate.

(Interruptions)

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

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order!

Mr Aimée: Thirdly, upgrading the access from La Fourche to La Pointe via Village Vingt Cinq; fourthly, the construction of new quarters to start in November; fifthly, construction of a refugee centre in the South Island to protect the South Islanders from tsunamis or other natural disasters

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order!

Mr Aimée: Sixthly, enhancing the telecommunication network already installed to allow access to Internet facilities and to improve international calls with the prompt

collaboration of my friend, hon. Pillay Chedumbrum. Also in the area of coconut plantation from 800 ha to 1500 ha, thus doubling the oil production and installation of a coconut oil machinery on the South Island to reduce on the transportation costs from the South Island to the North Island will be considered.

Mon ministère compte aussi exploiter l'énergie solaire pour générer de l'électricité sur l'île. On envisage de mettre en œuvre un accompagnement de projet pour la sécurité alimentaire. Je sais qu'on a dit ici qu'on est le représentant de la circonscription No. 3 qui représente aussi les Agaléens. M. le président, ils n'ont jamais vu leurs députés. Ils ne les connaissent même pas, mais ils ont voté quand même. Alors on envisage de mettre en œuvre un accompagnement de projet pour la sécurité alimentaire. En passant, je dois dire qu'Agaléga est privé – ils ont tout ce qu'on appelle les grains secs, le riz, les pommes de terre et tout le reste, mais ils n'ont pas de légumes comme nous. Quand les membres de cette Chambre auront l'occasion d'aller voir sur place, ils verront que ces gens-là ont d'abord le problème de consanguinité parce qu'ils se mélangent entre eux, mais ils ont aussi un problème de malnutrition parce qu'ils n'ont pas suffisamment de légumes pour balancer leur équilibre alimentaire.

Après, M. le président, le secteur de l'agriculture, l'élevage et la pêche, nous allons investir dans les soins de santé avec l'amélioration des installations médicales et là, c'est sûr, j'aurais besoin du concours de ma collègue de la circonscription qui est là, l'honorable Madame Maya Hanoomanjee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in St. Brandon, measures for environmental protection will be pursued and strengthened. Proposals for a sustainable eco-tourism development will be worked out with the OIDC, Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues, the National Coast Guard and other stakeholders.

My Ministry is also contributing in the national effort of *Maurice Ile Durable*. In this respect, solid waste management continues to be modernised and policies are being elaborated to collect, transport and dispose of the waste in manners which are more and more ecologically friendly. Projects such as reuse, recycling and composting are receiving closer attention as opposed to the conventional land filling.

As you are aware, up to now, practically all the waste generated in Mauritius was put into landfills, the main site being at Mare Chicose. However, this site will reach maximum capacity at latest by the end of this year. So, alternatives need to be found which will drastically reduce by, at least, 80% of the amount of the present landfill.

However, being an inhabitant of Bambous, I have no intention to allow the region of La Chaumi  re become what we could call the waste cemetery of bad neighbourhood clusters. I have already made clear my position with regard to any major controversial projects in the region, and the more information I obtain, the more I am convinced that Government has no shortage of more reasonable as well as cheaper options. It is to be noted that all of these options, including the waste to energy projects still entail between 10% and 20% of residues that need to be land filled.

Among the other options is composting and magnetic sorting. In addition, my Ministry signed the contract in May 2009 for the development of a clean development mechanism project at Mare Chicose Landfill, as provided for under the Kyoto Protocol. The project consists of enhancing the capture and flaring of landfill gas in the first phase and, subsequently, converting the methane gas into electricity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the environmental management and sustainable development, the local authorities will be empowered to play a more effective role. Each of them will be called upon to prepare their own solid waste management plan and, in particular, the local authorities will be involved in waste recovery and recycling project. A Solid Waste Coordination Committee is closely monitoring issues relating to the waste collection and cleaning of bare land.

Toujours dans le contexte du projet Maurice Ile Durable, le minist  re, en collaboration avec les collectivit  s et l'Assembl  e R  gionale de Rodrigues, a lanc   un projet qui consiste    remplacer les ampoules traditionnelles par les ampoules   conomiques sur les routes lat  rales de l'ile Maurice et de l'ile Rodrigues. Ce projet a pour but principal l'  conomie et l'efficacit   de l'  nergie utilis  e pour l'  clairage des routes. 50,000 points d'  clairage sont concern  s!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the drafting of a strategic plan for the Waste Management Sector, for the period 2010-2015, is under way. This plan will set up the policy orientations of the sector by addressing inadequacies of the present system and aligning it with the concept of the MID. The strategy will widely promote the application for an integrated waste management system that is economically affordable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable. It will embrace an approach, involving the use of a range of different treatment options and deal with the entire solid waste stream.

With regard to the disposal of hazardous waste, an agreement for the sorting, packaging and labelling of obsolete chemicals from the State Secondary Schools and their exportation abroad for treatment will reach with STARDIS, a specialised company based in

Reunion Island on 31 March 2010. The first batch of about six tonnes was due to be dispatched last month in appropriate containers, to transit in a hazardous waste facility. At a later stage, the obsolete chemicals, together with other hazardous waste from Reunion, will be shipped to France for treatment and disposal. Also all the procedures as per Basel Convention have been followed. The clearance of the Focal Point in Reunion Island is DRIRE. DRIRE means *Direction Régionale de l'Industrie, de la Recherche et de l'Environnement de la Réunion*. The clearance of the Focal Point is Reunion Island, DRIRE, has been obtained.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the Government Fire Services, Government will, *inter-alia*, undertake a full review of its fire and emergency cover across the whole country and enhance its rescue capability to deal with more complex incidents. The Fire Service is working towards increasing its fire rescue and emergency coverage and reducing intervention time and, in this context, a number of projects have been initiated, for example, at Rose Belle, Tamarin, Montagne Blanche and Goodlands. Five water tankers, with accessories including rescue gear, have been purchased. Government will also review the fire safety legislation to ensure consistency and relevance. A new Fire Services and Rescue Bill will be worked out.

I do, however, recognise that there are weaknesses in the Government Fire Services that need to be addressed such as -

- (i) lack of adequate staffing and resources in fire stations;
- (ii) lack of adequate funding for personnel, equipment and capital expenditure;
- (iii) logistical challenges of international communications and coordination due to inadequate facilities, and
- (iv) lack of management and training.

In line with Government objectives, the Fire Service has set out strategic goals and priorities including –

- (i) reduction of the number of fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents;
- (ii) reduction of the severity injuries in these cases;
- (iii) creating a safer working environment for our firefighters;
- (iv) safeguarding the environment and cultural heritage;
- (v) undertaking a full review of the fire and emergency cover across the whole Republic;
- (vi) providing fire engines with the best possible equipment;

- (vii) establishing a volunteer firefighter scheme to support the Government Fire Services in times of greater demand, and
- (viii) establishing strategic partnerships with the local authorities and other public agencies.

J'estime que les sapeurs-pompiers ont besoin d'un meilleur traitement car ils risquent leurs vies pour sauver celles des autres. Je suis en faveur d'une police d'assurance pour les pompiers qui doivent toutefois faire l'objet d'une étude au niveau des autorités concernées.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Aimée: Face aux développements rapides du pays et avec l'avènement des nouvelles villes, il est impératif qu'on augmente le nombre des stations de pompe. Il faut recruter au moins une centaine de nouveaux pompiers. Il est important de doter les services des pompes des équipements afin qu'ils puissent faire face aux exigences modernes.

M. le président, je suis aussi favorable à ce qu'il y ait un musée pour retracer l'histoire du service des pompes à Maurice. On pourra même convertir la station de Port Louis qui date de plus d'un siècle pour que notre future génération sache dans quelles conditions et avec quel matériel nos braves pompiers ont travaillé.

Finalement, pour clore ce chapitre, je condamne le fait que certains chauffeurs ou chauffards refusent d'accorder priorité aux pompiers. Une campagne de sensibilisation sera enclenchée pour rappeler à ces chauffeurs leurs devoirs civiques.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, efforts to improve control and management of beaches will be pursued. Access to public beaches will be democratised and security will be enhanced through the installation of CCTV surveillance system. The Beach Authority, which is responsible for the control and management of the public beaches, is pursuing actively its programme for upgrading and maintaining of public beaches, provided amenities on them for the enjoyment and security of the public.

M. le président, maintenant, je vais vraiment conclure. Avant de terminer, je dois encore une fois remercier notre Premier ministre qui m'a donné l'opportunité pour être - d'abord, après ma nomination en remplacement de feu Dr. David - une fois encore candidat et d'être ici en tant que ministre de *Local Government*.

M. le président, je ne dois pas oublier ma famille, ma femme, mes enfants et tous les mandants qui m'ont soutenu pendant cette campagne. Je vous dis, en passant, c'était très

difficile, mais ils ont bienveillamment fait ce qu'il fallait faire, M. le président. Je vais conclure en disant bonne chance à tous les membres ici présents dans cette Assemblée.

Merci.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr Khamajeet rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 17 August 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: I have got a long list of Members - twelve in all - who wish to intervene at Adjournment. I request all hon. Members to be as brief as possible and not to take more than one minute in any case.

MATTERS RAISED

LA MARIE ROAD – LIGHTING & CATS' EYES

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): M. le président, je serai très bref. Je voudrais soulever un problème touchant les automobilistes et le public voyageur habitant la partie sud de ma circonscription et qui utilisent la route de La Marie, longeant le lac de Mare-aux-Vacoas, Bassin Blanc, qui mène à Chamouny, Chemin Grenier et Surinam. Cette voie, M. le président, contribue énormément dans la circulation du public voyageur de ces régions susmentionnées, et aide d'une façon certaine au problème de congestion routière. Elle constitue, donc, une voie très populaire et est utilisée comme un *fast track* pour ceux qui font le déplacement de ces régions du sud pour se rendre à Port Louis, aux Plaines Wilhems, et vice versa. Mais ces automobilistes font face à un problème sérieux et, pire, M. le président, affrontent un grave danger en empruntant cette route, notamment pour deux raisons. D'abord, elle n'est pas éclairée, et ensuite elle n'est pas pourvue de *cats' eyes*.

Cette route, M. le président, comme vous le savez très bien, est sinuueuse, passe à travers les montagnes, longe d'une façon dangereuse les flancs tortueux des collines et, pendant l'hiver, avec la brume et le brouillard, constitue un vrai traquenard, en particulier pour les chauffeurs inexpérimentés ou inattentionnés. Une partie de cette route, du rond point

de Grand Bassin à Chamouny, est éclairée depuis 2003. Le CEB avait alors, comme vous le savez, raccordé le réseau à cette voie publique, mais elle n'est éclairée que durant certains événements précis et certaines périodes définies de l'année. Donc, je fais un appel pressant à l'honorable Bachoo, le ministre des Infrastructures publiques, pour rendre, de toute urgence, cette voie moins dangereuse, et assurer qu'elle soit éclairée d'une façon permanente. Deuxièmement, je demande au ministre d'installer des *cats' eyes* avec toute diligence.

Au nom de mes mandants, je remercie d'avance l'honorable ministre.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have taken real, good and proper note of this. We will look into the matter.

TRANQUEBAR, PORT LOUIS - POVERTY

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment - unfortunately he is not here - to the plights of the inhabitants of Nazareth and *Morcellement* Manna in Tranquebar, Port Louis, who are living in absolute poverty, with absolutely no hygiene, no electricity in certain houses, no proper housing, and they feel like they have been abandoned by the Trust Fund for the Integration of the Vulnerable Groups. I would make a sincere plight to the hon. vice-Prime Minister to look into the matter, and send his officers to see how to better the situation of the inhabitants of these regions.

Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): I take good note, but I have to point out that this issue is already being addressed. There is a problem about whether there is private land being squatted upon. This has to be sorted out first before we take any more decision.

BIGARA CEMETERY – LIGHTING FACILITIES

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, mon intervention concerne le cimetière de Bigara à Curepipe et s'adresse donc, d'une part, à l'honorable Dr. Beebejaun, responsable pour le CEB et l'honorable ministre responsable des collectivités locales.

Depuis quelque temps déjà, les enterrements de nuit s'y déroulent dans des circonstances particulièrement pénibles. Mis à part le froid, la pluie, la boue, ces enterrements se déroulent dans l'obscurité, puisque l'éclairage électrique n'est pas assuré. Depuis

pratiquement une semaine, mon collègue, l'honorable Dr. Satish Boolell, et moi devons intervenir sur une base quasi-quotidienne auprès du CEB pour que cette situation ne soit plus ; pourtant, elle perdure. Selon certains de nos mandants, ce serait à cause des factures du CEB non-payées par la mairie de Curepipe ; selon d'autres, c'est la nature de l'installation électrique elle-même qui poserait problème. Je crois que nous apprécierons tous les difficultés que cela crée, et je prierai, donc, messieurs les ministres concernés de faire le nécessaire au plus vite, afin que ces enterrements puissent se dérouler dans des conditions autrement acceptables.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): M. le président, je voudrais assurer mon collègue que, dès demain, je ferai le nécessaire.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS – INTERNET FACILITIES

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to express my concern regarding internet facilities in public buildings. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the declared intention of Government to provide internet facilities in public places, in my constituency, places such as the Glen Park Community Centre, the Henrietta Community Centre and the Floreal Youth Centre don't have internet connection. At the Floreal Youth Centre, there is one computer which is out of service since long, and the internet connection is not regularly available. We have just heard the hon. Minister who reaffirmed Government's policy and even said that internet facilities must be a basic citizen's right.

Based on that, I would request the hon. Minister to see to it that these persons, particularly the youth of these regions, be it at Henrietta, Glen Park, Floreal and Cité l'Oiseau, have internet connection at home, so that these rights are respected.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Information and Communication Technology (Mr T. Pillay Chedumbrum): We are going to look into, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

CAMP LEVIEUX/LA CHAUMIERE – REHABILITATION WORKS

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to raise an issue concerning the state of the link road from Camp le Vieux to La Chaumière. This link road is also used by road users coming from Rose Hill and the surrounding regions as a bypass to go to Port Louis and vice versa. This road is also

mainly used by vegetable growers of the region of La Chaumière and devotees going to the kovil at La Chaumière.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following sewerage works and lack of maintenance, this bypass is in a deplorable state and is a permanent danger to vehicle users and devotees going to the kovil, especially at night. Urgent rehabilitation work is needed. I know the hon. Minister knows the place very well. He has been to the kovil so many times, and is perfectly aware that devotees, especially for night prayers, are facing problems. I shall appreciate if he could instruct the RDA and the NDU to carry out urgent rehabilitation works.

I shall also appeal to the hon. Minister of Environment to direct the *police de l'environnement* to effect spot checks at night, especially as this region has become a site for illegal dumping.

Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have taken good note of that, and I will look into the issue as early as possible.

CAMP LEVIEUX – TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise two small issues relating to Camp Levieux, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

First, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in front of Winners supermarket in Camp Levieux, the road is very busy with cars driving by quickly, the commercial centre, the police station, shops, vegetable and fruit sellers. It turns out to be a very dangerous place even if there is the zebra crossing. I would kindly ask the hon. Minister to see to it that traffic lights be set up there for the safety of the children and the inhabitants at large.

CAMP LEVIEUX – BUS STATION

My second issue relates to the lack of a bus station in Camp Levieux. My colleague has already raised the issue in the past, and I would like to come back to it. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very often, there are six to seven buses lining up, waiting for the time to depart on a new trip. Those buses go up the pavements, and children have to walk aside to allow the buses to park. You will agree, Mr Deputy, Sir, that this can turn out to be very dangerous and we should not wait for an accident to act. I will kindly ask the hon. Minister to explore the possibility of setting up a bus station or, at least, setting up a lay-by for four or five buses in Camp Levieux.

Thank you very much.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as traffic lights are concerned, we have already placed the orders and probably by next month we will receive them.

As far as the bus station is concerned, I have to find out whether land has been acquired already. If land is available, we can precipitate a little bit.

CITÉ MARTIAL - MAMADE ELAHEE MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUND

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue relates to the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands. It concerns the extreme and deplorable conditions of the Mamade Elahee Municipal Playground at Cité Martial, Port Louis which is in my Constituency, No. 3. I have already raised this issue in a past Parliamentary Question. The problem is that there is no turf on the playground and especially in windy days the soil spreads in the surrounding by clouds of dust and it constitutes a direct threat to public health.

M. le président, permettez-moi d'exhorter le ministre à des actions urgentes et immédiates pour soulager les gens de ces maisons avoisinantes de ce calvaire quotidien.

Merci, M. le président,

MILITARY ROAD, VALLEE PITOT - REPAIRS

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

M. le président, j'ai aussi une requête pour le ministre Bachoo concernant la route Militaire. It concerns the bad state of the Military Road from Mamade Elahee Stadium to its end at Vallée Pitot on the Crown land. Every day, hundreds of vehicles pass along this road which links the Cité Martial region directly to that of Boulevard Pitot at Vallée Pitot. This road is in a very bad state due to rainfall and several potholes have been formed thereat. There have also been many drains which have been levelled onto the road.

The inhabitants have made several representations to the Municipality of Port Louis but, unfortunately, nothing has been done up to now.

I am, therefore, appealing to the hon. Minister responsible for the NDU to look into the matter so that he may come with a statement on this issue later on. Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the District Contractor Trio has abandoned the site and on the request of the Deputy Prime Minister one

site visit was conducted. Action is being initiated and I am just waiting for the CPB to appoint contractors. Once the contractors are appointed, the work can be undertaken.

PONT LOLO, ANGRAIS MARTIAL – REPAIRS

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw to the attention of the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure that *Pont Lolo*, located at Chemin Kalimaye junction Engrais Martial, Cité L’oiseau and Allée Brillant, is in a lamentable state and needs urgent repairs. This metal pedestrian bridge has been installed in 1976 when Mr Emmanuel Bussier was the then Minister. Since then, no major repairs have been done.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the *Pont Lolo* represents a clear danger and I fear the worst. This pedestrian bridge is the only access for the inhabitants of these regions to proceed to lower Floreal, which is an industrial area. Many people use this bridge to proceed to their site of work while the inhabitants, including workers and students of Cité L’oiseau, Rivière Sèche and Jhoorry Lane use the same bridge to proceed to the nearest bus stop at Eau Coulée.

We request the intervention of the hon. Minister for urgent action.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that immediate action will be taken.

LA PLACE JULES KOENIG, QUATRE BORNES - INDIVIDUAL BUS OWNERS

Ms K. R. Deepalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue that I have to raise concerns the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. It is with regard to the main traffic centre at La Place Jules Koenig, Quatre Bornes and the individual bus owners. What happens is that the individual bus owners take some passengers from the main traffic centre and they go out on Avenue Victoria and they stay on a yellow line box.

I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it if officers of his Ministry can inform those individual bus owners that severe actions will be taken against them and that even their licences and permits will be axed if they do not respect the fact that they have to take people at the traffic centre and not out of it. When that happens, it creates a lot of traffic problems, especially on fair days, Saturdays, Sundays as well as on other days. It really exacerbates the traffic problem at that junction which is a critical junction.

Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tomorrow I will request the inspectors of the NTA to conduct regular visits and inspections at that place.

HORSERACING SEASON - TAXI OPERATORS - PICK UP POINT

Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and myself have the privilege of having within the boundaries of our constituency the only horseracing tract of the island. It is with much pleasure that during the horseracing season on every weekend, we accommodate horseracing amateurs and lovers from the four corners of the island.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will be interested to learn that taxi operators who normally have their official taxi stand in Vallée Pitot and Plaine Verte regions have, for the past few years, been allowed to accommodate the public at large and driving them to the horseracing tract. They have also been allocated a pick up point which is next to the official stand and not far from Sebastopol Street. But, for a few weeks now during this present season, this access has been prohibited to them. I would humbly request the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure together with other relevant authorities to look into the matter and see to it that such facilities are extended to the public at large and also to accommodate those taxi operators.

Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): I will give due consideration to this request.

LA TOUR KOENIG - FOOTBALL GROUND

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will raise an issue which probably concerns the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports and the hon. Minister of Local Government. It concerns the football ground at La Tour Koenig.

We have at La Tour Koenig many football clubs but, most importantly, a First Division football club, the Pointe aux Sables Mates. Unfortunately, this football ground cannot be used at its optimum for training purposes and I have learnt that most of the clubs of the First Division do have a ground for training.

I make an appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it that this football ground be lighted as it was apparently in the past. There is a problem about who should pay the electricity bill - the Local Government or the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In fact, all the lights have been

removed. I appeal to the hon. Minister that remedial action be taken so that we can give better facilities to our youth in the area.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take note of this issue.

CITÉ RICHELIEU - FIRINGA NHDC COMPLEX

Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue that I am going to raise concerns the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. It is with regard to the inhabitants of Firinga NHDC Complex of Cité Richelieu.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these inhabitants who were formally living in the *longères* or on the Crown land at Bonnefin, Pailles, were allocated these houses some years back. Recently, they have received a sudden claim from the Wastewater Authority for arrears due years back, amounting from Rs10,000 to Rs15,000. These families come from a very low income group and, as you know, they will never be able to settle these arrears.

My plea is if the Minister could ask the Wastewater Authority to write off these claims. This has been the case in such situations in the past for other regions. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to see to it if this sudden bill could be written off? I must add that they are agreeable to pay the current bill, but they will not be able to pay all those past bills which have been outstanding for years.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if my memory serves me right, in the past also there has been a similar problem which has been solved satisfactorily and I hope to give satisfaction to the request of the hon. Member.

AVENUE PERE DORBEC, BEL AIR – WATER ACCUMULATION

Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is for the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

In fact, there is an alarming situation at Avenue Père Dorbec, Bel Air where due to heavy rainfall, rain water is accumulated mostly on the road and also in yards and premises of inhabitants of the same road. This is a serious impairment for the access of all the inhabitants in the area and also for their safety after heavy rainfall. It would be appreciated if the hon. Minister could look into the matter.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am waiting for the appointment of the District Contractor. Once, the District Contractor is appointed, I am going to look into the issue.

At 11.21 p.m., the sitting was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 17 August 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HOSPITALS – PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

(No. 1B/463) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to physiotherapy treatment in the public hospitals, she will state the actions her Ministry is initiating to facilitate same, indicating -

- (a) the number of Physiotherapists posted in each hospital;
- (b) the actions being taken for the replacement of the old equipment by new and up to date one, and
- (c) if it is contemplating recruiting, on a temporary basis, all the graduates who have obtained their Diploma in Physiotherapy from the University of Mauritius.

Reply: Physiotherapy services are available at the five Regional Hospitals, two District Hospitals and one Community Hospital. I am informed that an average of 400 patients is seen daily in all our hospitals for physiotherapy treatment.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am tabling the required information on staffing. In total there are 2 Chief Physiotherapists, 3 Senior Physiotherapists and 12 Physiotherapists posted in our hospitals.

Concerning part (b) of the question, there is a programme of continuous replacement of old equipment by new and modern ones. For this purpose, the appropriate budgetary provisions are made. Thus, in 2009, a sum of Rs2.7 m. was spent and for the year 2011 a sum of Rs4.3 m. has been earmarked for the procurement of physiotherapy equipment.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am further informed that presently, there are five vacancies in this grade and recommendations have also been made in the forthcoming budget for the creation of three additional posts, thus bringing the total number of post of Physiotherapists to 20.

Since my assumption of office, I have noted that the ratio of Physiotherapists to Physiotherapy Assistants is one to three (1:3) in the hospitals, while the international norm is the opposite. Hence, I am reversing the situation by recruiting sufficient number of qualified

Physiotherapists instead of Physiotherapy Assistants. I am confident that this measure will eventually enhance the quality of service at the Physiotherapy Departments of our hospitals.

MUNICIPALITY OF CUREPIPE - COUNCILLORS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. 1B/464) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the Mayor and the Municipal Councillors of Curepipe, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information, in each case, as to the –

- (a) countries visited and the duration, indicating, the dates;
- (b) composition of the delegation, indicating, their names and job descriptions;
- (c) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, per diem and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) purpose.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being placed in the Library.

DUBREUIL - SQUATTERS

(No. 1B/465) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the squatters of Dubreuil, evicted on 27 July 2010, he will state –

- (a) if a social inquiry has been carried out into the personal circumstances of each family and, if so, when, and
- (b) the immediate assistance that is being provided to the hardship cases identified.

Reply: A list of 46 squatters at Dubreuil has been forwarded since 29 July 2010 to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment for a social enquiry report on each of the families. The exercise is underway and as soon as it is completed, a decision would be taken in respect of the hardship cases.

In the meantime, 23 families have been provided with a temporary shelter at the ex-Dubreuil Tea Factory building after it has been cleaned and flushed and provided with the basic amenities.

**MUNICIPALITY OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL - GRANTS &
ALLOCATIONS - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. 1B/466) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the grants and allocations, in cash or in kind, given by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council a list of the socio-cultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefitted therefrom since October 2005 to date, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) names thereof;
- (b) quantum or nature thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library soon.

MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS – RESIGNATION & LOSS OF SEATS

(No. 1B/467) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Councillors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Councils, information as to the number thereof who have resigned or lost their seats, since October 2005 to-date.

Reply: I am informed that sixteen Municipal Councillors have resigned or lost their seats since October 2005 to date. No election was held because those Municipal Councillors belonged to the majority group and their resignation or loss of seats did not upset the relativity between the number of Councillors in the majority group and in the Opposition respectively.

In addition, their resignations have not affected the quorum for the holding of meetings of the council.

CEB – TURBINES

(No. 1B/468) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the gas turbines, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if, since January 2010 to date they have been used and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) running costs thereof.

Reply: The gas turbines are used for a number of reasons, namely, owing to reduced output from IPP's and CEB's power stations, as a result of either breakdowns, faults due to effects of thunderstorm, lightning on transmission lines or during maintenance.

I am informed by the CEB that from January 2010 to date, the three gas turbines at Nicolay Power Station have been used on 57 occasions during peak period and seven during off peak period, due mainly to the maintenance of plants operated by IPP's and CEB and to power outages.

The total units generated are 18.4 GW at a total cost of Rs212.9 m., representing 1.31% of the overall production over that period.

CEB – WIND ENERGY PROJECTS

(No. 1B/469) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wind Energy Projects submitted by private promoters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand, indicating, if -

- (a) a feed-in-tariff has been finalised, and
- (b) tenders will be launched for the setting up of a wind park at Bigara.

Reply: Two wind power projects have been submitted by private promoters, namely Aerowatt (Mauritius) Ltd and Omnicane Ltd. Aerowatt (Mauritius) Ltd is seeking necessary clearances and the project proposal from Omnicane Ltd is under consideration.

As regards part (a), a feed-in tariff has been finalised for Small Independent Power Producers up to 50 kW only. For units higher than 50 kW, the Consultant, Castalia, currently working on the Master Plan for Renewable Energy will recommend the methodology for

calculating the feed-in tariff. Based on this methodology, the feed-in tariff would be determined on a case to case basis, depending on the capacity, setting and other technical aspects for inter connection. The Consultant is expected to submit his final report by October 2010.

With regard to part (b), the Bigara wind park project dates back to 1987, when the site was first identified after a wind assessment study. In 2009, CRISIL Risk and Infrastructure Solutions Ltd from India, appointed by my Ministry as Transaction Advisor to carry out a feasibility study for a windfarm of 25-40 MW at Bigara, concluded that there are serious constraints for the setting of a wind farm at the site, in terms of interference with civil aviation and communication equipment, and the site could at best accommodate 2-3 MW only.

Accordingly, the wind park project is now being implemented south of Bigara at Curepipe Point and the Request For Proposals would be launched soon.

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL KREOL

(No. 1B/470) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he will state if the Festival International Kreol will be organised this year and, if so, when, and, if not, why not.

Reply: I have been informed by my colleague the Minister of Tourism and leisure that the Festival International Kreol organised by his Ministry in the past years has had a good impact, both at national and international levels from the tourism perspective.

We are contemplating to organise the 2010 edition in line with UNESCO's year of the "*Rapprochement de culture*" and we will take all cultures on board and make it a real Cultural Osmosis.

SALARIES – NON-PAYMENT- COMPLAINTS

(No. 1B/471) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the non-payment of salaries within the prescribed delay, he will state the number of complaints received at his office over the last three years, indicating, the actions taken, in each case.

Reply: The information has been placed in the Library of the National Assembly and is available for consultation.

IPPs – RENEWABLE ENERGY – GRID CODE

(No. 1B/472) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the promotion of renewable energy, with particular reference to the Small Independent Power Producers, he will state if a new grid code is now ready and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: A grid code describes the technical criteria and requirements for interconnection of Small Scale Distributed Generation with CEB's power systems.

Government has approved the implementation of a Grid Code prepared by Consultants EA Energy of Denmark, applicable to renewable energy sources such as solar PV, wind and micro hydro power of less than 50 kW as well as the feed-in tariffs for Small Independent Power Producers.

The Grid Code includes, *inter alia* –

- (a) the technical criteria and requirements for interconnection of small scale distributed generation with CEB's network;
- (b) the distributed generation capacity that can be safely connected to the low voltage grid;
- (c) the procedures to be followed by potential Small Independent Power Producers and the CEB to establish interconnection; and
- (d) the protection and safety conditions to be satisfied .

I would like to inform the House that Government has also approved an amount of Rs 31.5M from the Maurice Ile Durable Fund to enable the CEB to meet the cost of the differential between its own average cost and the feed-in tariff.

The Regulations for the implementation of this grid code are being finalised and are expected to be promulgated by next month.

POLICE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT – SET UP

(No. 1A/65) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the *Police de l'Environnement*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the date it was set up;

- (b) the number of Police Officers posted thereto and vehicles attached thereto,
- and
- (c) if a performance appraisal thereof is envisaged.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the *Police de l'Environnement* was set up in December 2000. A sub-unit of the *Police de l'Environnement* has also been set up in Rodrigues in August 2002.

As for part (b) of the question, there are presently ten Police Officers posted to the *Police de l'Environnement* in Mauritius and three in Rodrigues.

As regards part (c) of the question, the Police is implementing a National Policing Strategic Framework, which focuses on enhancing reactive capability and making the front-line services more responsive, accessible and visible. In this process, the structure, operations and responsibilities of the *Police de l'Environnement* are being reviewed in order to increase its efficiency and effectiveness.

BOIS MARCHAND CEMETERY - PUBLIC SAFETY

(No. 1A/66) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Bois Marchand cemetery, he will state if he is aware of the state of insecurity prevailing thereto for the people visiting and passing thereby and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures taken to ensure public safety thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of offences occurring in the region of Bois Marchand cemetery has decreased from 14 in 2000 to 6 in 2009.

As stated in my reply to Parliamentary Question 1B/316 on 27 July last, Police have, with the support of the Emergency Response Service, the Crime Investigation Division and the Divisional Support Unit, increased their vigilance in the region.

AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE - RATIFICATION

(No. 1A/68) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the African Charter on democracy, elections and governance adopted in Addis Abeba in

January 2007, he will state if Government is contemplating the ratification thereof and, if so, indicate the time-frame therefor and, if not, why not.

Reply: In a reply to Parliamentary Question B/1289 on the process of Ratification of the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, in November 2008, Late James Burty David, then Ag. Minister of Foreign Affairs, had stated that it is proposed to do so following completion of the consultation process to ensure that Mauritius complies with the provisions of the Charter.

Member States of the African Union adopted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance during the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa in January 2007.

The Charter, which deals with a number of critical governance issues as well as the rights of refugees, emanates from a concern with unconstitutional changes of government as a cause of insecurity, instability and violent conflict in Africa.

The adoption of the Charter is expected to serve as a determination by the African Union to promote and strengthen good governance through the institutionalization of transparency, accountability and participatory democracy.

While the adoption of the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance is perceived as a first step in the direction, it has to be ratified by member States before it can come into force as an instrument of the African Union Commission.

According to the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission, only six countries namely Mauritania, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Lesotho and Rwanda have ratified the Treaty, to date, which is still far from the required ratifications for the Treaty to be effective, which stand at 15.

Mauritius signed the Treaty on 14 December 2007 which, in itself, is a sign of commitment of the present Government to fully adhere to principles of democracy and good governance.

This stance was further illustrated by the positive observations of the Heads of State and Government and members of the African Peer Review Panel during the Review Exercise of Mauritius in Uganda on 24 July 2010, on the sidelines of the 15th African Union Summit.

Following the signature by Mauritius, meaningful consultations have been undertaken with the various concerned stakeholders in Mauritius, namely the Prime Minister's Office, the State Law Office, the Office of the Commissioner of Police and the Independent

Commission Against Corruption, with a view to meeting the wide – ranging provisions of the Treaty.

Ratification will be positively considered once our extensive and multi-sectoral consultations reach its logical conclusion.

NATReSA - VACANCIES

(No. 1A/69) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the vacancies that presently exist at the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Agency –

(a) a list thereof, indicating, in each case –

- (i) since when, and
- (ii) the reasons for the non filling thereof, and

(b) information as to if other officers are doing the job in respect therefor and, if so, indicate –

(i) if they are being paid allowances for performing special duties or shouldering additional responsibilities and the monthly quantum thereof, and

(ii) their respective qualifications.

Reply: I am advised as follows -

SN	POST	No. of vacancies and Date	Reasons for not filling of vacancy	Other Officers performing duties	Quantum of allowance (monthly)	Qualifications of Officer performing duties
1	Head, Substance Abuse Prevention Unit	1 since June 2003	Restructuring of the Agency.	One Substance and Abuse Prevention Officer is acting as Head	Rs 3,750	– Degree in Psychology
2	Psychologist	1 since August 2008	Scheme of service is being finalised.	Psychologist on session basis	Rs 750 per 2 hour session	Degree in Clinical Psychology

SN	POST	No. of vacancies and Date	Reasons for not filling of vacancy	Other Officers performing duties	Quantum of allowance (monthly)	Qualifications of Officer performing duties
3	Accountant	1 since August 2008	The duties of Accountant are being performed by an Officer who is not fully qualified as Accountant. However, the PRB has recommended a personal salary to the holder of the post.	Accountant (Not qualified)	NIL	Accounting, London Chamber of Commerce (Higher Stage)
4	Substance Abuse Prevention Officer	1 since March 2007	Restructuring of the Agency.	One Assistant Substance Abuse Prevention Officer is acting as SAPO	Rs 2,800	Certificate in Nursing Diploma in Social Work
5	Secretary	1 since August 1994	The work is already being covered by the Confidential Secretary	Confidential Secretary	Rs 3,420	Higher School Certificate
6	Documentation Officer	1 since August 1998	The volume of work does not warrant the filling of this post	None	-	-

SN	POST	No. of vacancies and Date	Reasons for not filling of vacancy	Other Officers performing duties	Quantum of allowance (monthly)	Qualifications of Officer performing duties
7	Assistant Substance Abuse Prevention Officer	1 since January 2006	Restructuring of the Agency.	None	-	-
8	Statistical Officer	1 since August 1998	Services have been outsourced	Senior Health Statistician from the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life	Adhoc Allowance Rs 15,000 on submission of report	Degree in Statistics
9	Field Worker	2 since August 2008	Scheme of service is in the process of being finalised.	None	-	-
10	Assistant Audio Visual and Documentation Officer	1 since December 2002	The volume of work in the Audio Visual section is amply covered by the Audio Visual and Documentation Officer and the need to fill the post has not been felt.	None	-	-

SN	POST	No. of vacancies and Date	Reasons for not filling of vacancy	Other Officers performing duties	Quantum of allowance (monthly)	Qualifications of Officer performing duties
11	Office Attendant	1 since May 2010	Restructuring of the Agency.	Duties shared by two drivers / Handy Worker (skilled)	Overtime rate	Studied up to Form V

I wish to inform the House that I have requested for the restructuring of NATReSA. Consequently, filling of the above posts, if any, will be considered after this exercise.

**GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS & NGOs – DRUG ADDICTS –
RE-INSERTION**

(No. 1A/70) Mr S. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the financial assistance granted to Government Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations for the treatment, rehabilitation and re-insertion of drug addicts by the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Agency a list of the organisations, indicating –

- (a) in each case, the quantum thereof and the criteria used and
- (b) if the Agency has signed contracts with any of them, and if so, name them and, if not, indicate for how long same has been provided in the absence of any contract.

Reply: I am informed that NATReSA is providing financial assistance to the following Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres with which it has signed contracts or MoUs -

SN	Name of Centres	Monthly Grant in Aid (Rs)	Contract or MOU

1	Centre de Solidarité pour une Nouvelle Vie Residential Centre	370,000	Contract
2	Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge Residential Centre	215,000	Contract
3	Dr. Idrice Goomany Treatment Centre Day Care Centre	165,000	Contract
4	Etoile D'Esperance – Association Alcool Femmes Residential Centre	140,000	Contract
5	Sangram Sewa Sadan Day Care Centre	120,000	Contract
6	HELP De Addiction Centre <i>Day Care Centre</i>	110,000	Contract
7	ACTReSA Human Service Trust Day Care Centre	70,000	Contract
8	Centre Alcoologie Rodrigues Day Care Centre	70,000	Contract
9	Centre d'Accueil et de Réhabilitation de St.Gabriel, Rodrigues	70,000	Contract
10	Lacaz A Day Care Centre	10,000	MOU

11	Kinouété	July – Dec 2009:Rs 3,500 Jan – July 2010: Rs 1,980	MOU
12	Groupe Elan	July – Dec2009: Rs 1,800 Jan – July2010: Rs 1,980	MOU

I am also informed that NATReSA has given a one-off *ad hoc* grant to the following organizations on the basis of specific projects -

SN	Name of Organisations	Amount of Grant	Date
1.	Prisons Department (Lotus Centre)	Rs 259,037.30	1 Sept 1993
2.	Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre, Ward XIII	Rs 175,988.85	1 March 2005
3.	Chrysalide Centre	Rs 47,964.51	Nov, 2005
4.	National Methadone Substitution Therapy Centre	Rs 164,775.25	21 Nov 2006
5.	Befrienders	Rs 43,100	31 Jan 2007

As regard to the criteria used for providing such grants, I am informed of the following -

A. Criteria for Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres

(i) Location of Centre and Registration

- (a) The NGO should run the Centre separately from other activities. The Centre should be situated in such a place easily accessible to clients and having all amenities so as to carry out its objectives as stipulated per modus operandi of the programme.
- (b) The NGO must have been in existence for at least 12 months, be registered with the Registrar of Association with a proper Managing Committee and returns with Registrar must be up to date.
- (c) The NGO should run its programme and show proof of same for at least 12 months before submitting a project proposal to NATReSA.

(ii) Licences and Permits

All Centres and NGOs affiliated to NATReSA should have duly obtained the necessary clearances / licences / permits from the relevant authorities.

(iii) Services

The NGOs should provide the following services monthly and make due return to NATReSA.

- (a) Prevention - a minimum of 20 clients
- (b) Treatment outpatient - a minimum of five new clients
- (c) Treatment inpatient - a minimum of 10 clients
- (d) Rehabilitation and Aftercare - a minimum of 10 clients
- (e) Monitoring and Evaluation (monthly and annually)

(d) Allocation of Budget

The budget of the Centre should be divided as follows -

- (a) 50% of the grant should go to salary costs of administrative staff and administrative expenses for the running of the centre.
- (b) 50% should go to services, to users, including salary costs to technical staff.
- (c) Financial quantification of volunteers' time would be calculated as contribution and input of the NGO.

(v) Agreement

Except for one off *ad hoc* grants, all centres have to sign agreements with NATReSA before the release of the grants.

B. Criteria for Working Arrangements for Preventive Projects

- (i) The NGO/Institution must be well structured and existing for at least twelve (12) months, with a proper Managing Committee and affiliated

with the Registrar of Association or hold a valid bank account in the name of the organization.

- (ii) One of its objectives should be prevention against substance abuse. It should have organised regular activities in line with this objective during the past twelve (12) months and proof of implementation of such projects should be submitted.
- (iii) A report of all its activities and achievements including monitoring and evaluation should be submitted to the NATReSA.
- (iv) Catchment area and fields of operation should be well defined.
- (v) It should indicate other sources of funding.

C. Criteria for Funding NGO on an *ad hoc* basis

(a)	NGOs Whose mandate is to work against substance abuse and HIV and AIDS	Preventive Activities	<p>Funding would be limited to not more than two activities yearly by same NGO, that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) $\frac{1}{2}$ day activity: between Rs3,000 to Rs 5,000 (b) Full Day activity: between Rs 5,000 to 10,000 (c) Mini Project up to Rs 10,000 (d) Projects between Rs 11,000 to Rs 20,000 subject to approval of the Board on a case to case basis with Board's prerogative to allocate above Rs 10,000 where deemed necessary
(b)	Other NGOs which has one of its objectives to combat substance abuse	Banners	Sponsorship of banners with anti drug/alcohol messages and logo of NATReSA
(c)	Others	Preventive Activities	Project submitted by Government Organisations and Non Governmental Organisations are considered on a case to

			case basis by the Board.
--	--	--	--------------------------

WELFARE PROGRAMME

(No. 1A/71) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Welfare Programme set up under the Employment Rights Act, he will state the –

- (a) amount of Transition Unemployment Benefit paid to-date, and
- (b) number of persons who have obtained –
 - (i) a job placement
 - (ii) training and re-skilling, and
 - (iii) facilities to start up of a small business.

Reply: In regard to part (a), the amount of Transition Unemployment Benefit paid to laid off workers under the Workfare Programme for the period 02.02.2009 to 31.07.10 is Rs100,201,944.

In regard to part (b) (i), the number of persons who have obtained job placement is 306.

As for part (b) (ii), the number of persons who have been placed on training and re-skilling is 34.

Concerning part (b) (iii), the number of persons who have started up a business is 11.

PORt LOUIS – STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. 1A/72) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the lease of State Land for residential purposes, he will state, for the period 2005 to date, the number of applicants therefor for the district of Port Louis, indicating the -

- (a) number of persons who have been allocated such lease and
- (b) criteria used for the allocation thereof.

Reply: The information regarding the number of applicants for building site lease in the district of Port Louis for the period 2005 to-date and the number of persons who have been allocated such lease is being compiled and will be provided as soon as the exercise is completed.

Building site leases are granted for residential purposes to families of the low income groups who cannot afford to acquire a plot of land to build a house. Building site leases are also granted in the process of regularization of squatters on State lands. The beneficiary must not be a landowner or the owner of an ex-CHA or NHDC housing unit. In addition building site leases are granted in respect of genuine hardship cases, mainly to victims of natural disasters, disabled persons or women in distress. In the process of examination of the applications, reports are requested on the socio-economic status of the applicants.

DUBREUIL - STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. 1A/73) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the leases of State Land granted in Dubreuil or in the vicinity thereof, since July 2005 to-date, he will state the names of the beneficiaries, indicating, in each case –

- (a) their previous addresses;
- (b) the extent of land, and
- (c) the purpose thereof.

Reply: Since July 2005 to date, 27 building site leases have been granted in Dubreuil and in its vicinity. Details as regards the names of the beneficiaries, previous addresses and extent of land allocated in each case are being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

CAMP LE JUGE, CUREPIPE - SEWERAGE WORKS

(No. 1A/74) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage works at Camp Le Juge, Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to when same will be undertaken and the expected date of completion thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority, that following requests made by inhabitants of Camp Le Juge, Curepipe, an investigation was carried out.

It was found that 300 m of sewer line would be required to connect around 42 houses in Camp Le Juge. Detailed survey is presently being carried out, with a view to connect the houses under the ongoing house connection contract.

Works are scheduled to start by the end of September 2010 and will be completed within six weeks.

KENSINGTON, POINTE AUX SABLES - PUBLIC TRANSPORT
(No. 1A/75) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state the actions that have been taken, if any, to provide an adequate public transport service, especially at peak hours, to and from Kensington, Pointe aux Sables.

Reply: The NTA has informed that it has effected a site visit together with the TMRSU to consider extending bus services along route 51 up to the junction Kensington and Baissac Streets. Approval at the level of the NTA is being awaited to start the proposed extension of service.

LA TOUR KOENIG – NHDC - COLLECTION OF WASTE
(1A/76) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the discomfort of the residents of the NHDC housing estate, situated at La Tour Koenig, due to the irregular collection of waste and the general unhygienic conditions thereat and, if so, will he impress upon the relevant authorities to take remedial actions.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port- Louis that residents of NHDC flats at la Tour Koeing are currently depositing their refuse in inappropriate common bins. In order to alleviate their problems, scavenging service is being provided thrice weekly instead of twice weekly by the contractor of the council, Atics Ltd.

I am also informed that, in the context of World Health Day, the Council had cleaned the yards of the NHDC flats during period 27 March to 16 April 2010. In order to find a permanent solution to the existing problems, the Municipal Council of Port-Louis is considering the construction of a refuse chamber similar to the one at Flat Alpha.

**MUNICIPALITY OF QUATRE BORNES – COUNCILLORS - OVERSEAS
 MISSIONS**

(No. 1A/77) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the Mayor and the Municipal Councillors of Quatre Bornes, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information, in each case, as to the –

- (a) countries visited and the duration thereof,
- (b) composition of the delegation,
- (c) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) purpose thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library, as soon as the exercise will be completed.

INDIA – COMMONWEALTH GAMES - DISABLED ATHLETES

(No. 1A/78) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the forthcoming Commonwealth Games to be held in India, he will state the names of the preselected disabled athletes, indicating the -

- (a) names of their coaches and their respective qualifications, and
- (b) type of technical equipment put at their disposal for training.

Reply: In view of the forthcoming Commonwealth Games scheduled for 03 to 14 October in Delhi, I am to inform the House that the names of pre-selected athletes and coaches as submitted by the Mauritius National Paralympic Committee to the Mauritius National Olympic Committee are -

<u>Sn</u>	<u>Athletes</u>	<u>Disciplines</u>
1.	Cedric RAVET	Athletics
2.	Nitesh MOMINE	Athletics
3.	Nazim JEHOO	Athletics
4.	Jean Marie Georgy MALEPA	Athletics
5.	Patricia MUSTAPHA	Athletics
6.	Salatchee MURDAY	Athletics
7.	Scody VICTOR	Swimming

8.	Pascal LAPEROTINE	Swimming
----	-------------------	----------

COACHES

1.	Clifford BENJAMIN	Athletics
2.	Maxwell DRACK	Swimming
3.	Jean Marie Michel BHUGEERATHEE	Athletics
4.	Ravindra BOOKUN	Athletics

With regard to part (a), qualifications of coaches as submitted by the Mauritius National Paralympic Committee and the Physically Handicapped Persons Sports Federation are being laid in the Library. It is to be noted that as far as Mr Sanjay Bookun is concerned the Mauritius National Paralympic Committee has informed my Ministry that he does not have the required qualifications to coach these athletes where as Mr Maxwell Drack is the wheelchair tennis coach.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the technical equipment put at their disposal for training and competition are namely: specialised athletics wheelchairs, gloves, spikes, legging shorts, singlets, swimming suits and swimming caps.