



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 17 AUGUST 2010**

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<i>Members</i>	<i>Members</i>
	THE CABINET
	(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)
Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid 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
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 12 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 17 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 –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of The Code Civil Mauricien (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2010).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No.159 of 2010).
- (b) The Customs Use of Computer (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No.160 of 2010).
- (c) The Companies (Resubmission of Documents) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No.161 of 2010).

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

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 19) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 162 of 2010).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PROCUREMENT - CONTRACTS

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to procurement and since the proclamation of the Public Procurement Act, he will state the –

- (a) composition of the Central Procurement Board, the Procurement Policy Office and the Independent Review Panel;
- (b) value of the contracts awarded through –
 - (i) direct procurement;
 - (ii) restricted bidding, and
 - (iii) emergency procurement, giving details thereof in each case, including the applicable updated cost estimate, and
- (c) reviews effected by the Panel and the cancellations of bidding processes by public bodies, if any, giving details thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will concurrently reply to PQ No. 1B/518 which also relates to the subject matter.

Before addressing the specific questions, it is important to set the stage regarding how procurement issues are being addressed internationally and our own experience in improving the process.

Mr Speaker Sir, the challenge that all Governments across the world face with public procurement is how to strike the right balance between speed, transparency and equity. Streamlining of procurement processes has been at the centre of reforms in many countries

including the US, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. The objective being to provide more responsive support to end users, eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to programme accomplishment, improving inter-departmental coordination, and empower service delivery managers to procure what they need without impediment by a centralised organisation, whilst, at the same time, ensuring value for money and fairness to all suppliers.

The challenge is both to learn from doing and improve the system as required whilst also adhering to the rules and regulations established by the regulatory authority, which is in our case the Procurement Policy Office (PPO). There is a permanent learning curve with public procurement. We need to be ready to keep updating the system and especially using new technology such as e-procurement and innovative procurement methods.

As part of this mandate, the PPO has obtained assistance from COMESA and the World Bank.

The main recommendations were to revamp our legislation to align it fully with United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) model and the COMESA Procurement Directives, including -

- review of the procurement institutional structure;
- provision for disposal of assets in our legislation;
- make amendments to cater for e-procurement implementation;
- rulings of the IRP should be binding on the CPB and Public Bodies;
- elaborate a strategy to lay out the medium and long term goals related to the decentralisation of procurement.

Mr Speaker Sir, it is good to note that, following the international trend, Mauritius has already launched on the path of the recommendations of COMESA and the World Bank. The Government has embarked on a decentralisation process by gradually increasing the prescribed amounts for major contracts. Whilst maintaining checks and balances through adherence to the provisions of the Act, this move has -

- (i) empowered public bodies, through capacity building, to assume greater control over their projects;

- (ii) trimmed the queue at the Central Procurement Board;
- (iii) reduced the procurement lead time by over 15 percent at the CPB and over 25 percent at the level of Public Bodies, and
- (iv) increased implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme from some Rs11 billion in 2008 to Rs19 billion in 2009 whilst the rate of implementation for the Government Investment Programme improved from 52 percent of planned spending in 2008/09 to 77 percent in 2009.

In addition to these reforms, we are also working to specify, as part of the tender process, the technical specifications required to promote sustainable procurement and to be compliant with different regulations including Environmental Impact Assessments and Labour Laws. This will allow the winning bidder to rapidly move to implementation whilst complying with all relevant rules and regulations.

I am also informed that the evaluation of the procurement activities carried out by the PPO following the decentralisation has not revealed any abuse of the system or any case of corrupt practice in the approval and/or award of contracts which previously required CPB's approval.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that since the coming into operation of the Act to date, the Independent Review Panel reviewed 60 cases. I am tabling the details of the cases reviewed by the IRP and the recommendations made.

It will be noted that in 7 cases, following the recommendations of the IRP, the bidding processes were cancelled by the public bodies concerned.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is important to note that we have gained in efficiency as I have just mentioned whilst also gaining in transparency and fairness. Over the period 2009 to date, the IRP ruled against the CPB in 45% of cases whilst rulings against public bodies were only 37%. Before the decentralisation reforms the IRP ruled against the CPB in 53% of cases. I am also informed that the proportion of cases where the IRP ruled in favour of applicants has more than halved from 1.9% of total procurement before the decentralisation reforms to 0.9% after. Moreover, there appears to be a decreasing trend as the public bodies gain experience and build capacity. In 2010, only 0.7% of applicants prevailed at the IRP compared with 1.3% in the first year of the reforms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the PPO has been working with the public bodies to provide guidance and training to officers directly concerned. *Ad hoc* training has been organised in key areas of procurement, and guidance has been issued for bid evaluation and contract negotiation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, no country can pretend to have a perfect procurement system. However, we are committed to the continuous improvement of our system and are open to any concrete and constructive suggestions in that connection. Already, in the wake of the recommendations of COMESA, the World Bank and experiences gathered so far in the implementation of the Public Procurement Act, I have set up a Committee to build on our early success and further improve our procurement legislative framework.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a) of the question, the composition of the three bodies is as follows -

Central Procurement Board

Chairperson	:	Mr Ramanand BUNJUN
Vice-Chairpersons	:	Mr Michel WAN BOK NALE
	:	Mr Dawood ZMANAY
Members	:	Mr Harold Lucien ROZEMOND
	:	Mr Devarajoo RAJAH GOPAL
	:	Mrs Lalita SUTEERAM

Procurement Policy Office

Director	:	Mr Premcoomar BEEHARRY
Members	:	Mr Jean-Claude Eric GERMAIN
		Mrs Beebee Frozeea ABDOOLAKHAN

Independent Review Panel

Chairperson	:	Mr Moussa E. ALLYBOKUS
Members	:	Mr Henry Denis VELLIEN
		Mrs Esther HANOOMANJEE

As per the provisions of the Act, all the above are appointed for a three-year term as from 05 November 2007.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House as follows -

- (i) *Direct Procurement* method, as per existing law, is resorted to mainly for low value procurements not exceeding the prescribed threshold of Rs500,000 per contract for goods, provided that total cost per line item does not exceed Rs100,000. In case of procurement of works and services, the value should not exceed Rs500,000 per contract. Contracts issued under this method amount to Rs1.2 billion for the period since 2008. These items essentially relate to purchase of cars and procurement of spare parts for cars, plants and equipment where only a single supplier is usually able to comply.
- (ii) The Restricted Bidding method is used where a public body has reason to believe that the goods, other services or works to be procured are available only from a limited number of bidders or where the time and cost of considering a large number of bids is disproportionate to the value of the procurement. In a small country, this mode may be necessary to ensure that several responsive suppliers participate in a tender and the process becomes competitive. Contracts issued under this method amount to Rs13.3 billion for the period since 2008. Under the Act, there is a competitive tender process where all qualified participants are invited to participate and the number of bidders invited should not be less than 5. For example, procurement under this method includes –
 - Rs177 m. for specialised medical supplies by the Ministry of Health.
 - Rs99 m. by the CEB for specialised supplies such as gas turbines, upgrading of Governor System and computer networks.
 - Rs44 m. by the CWA for specialised services such as design of water treatment and distribution.
 - Rs10 m. by AML for specialised repairs including taxiway.

(iii) The Emergency procurement method is resorted to in cases of extreme urgency as defined in the Act. Contracts issued under this method amount to Rs44.6 m. for the period since 2008. This includes, *inter alia*, emergency response by the Ministry of Health to the H1N1 virus through procurement of the appropriate medication. It also, includes procurement by the Agricultural Marketing Board to deal with perishable products. Mr Speaker, Sir, refurbishment of the National Assembly to enable the works to be completed during the recess was also undertaken under this method.

I am tabling details of contracts awarded through Direct Procurement, Restricted Bidding and Emergency Procurement above the prescribed thresholds requiring use of competitive bidding. Details regarding updated cost estimate are being collected from the public bodies concerned and will be tabled in due course.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been provided with the composition of the different bodies. Can I know whether there have been any changes since their appointment at the end of 2008?

Mr Jugnauth: There has been no change, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Has the hon. Minister of Finance or his Ministry received complaints about any members of the Central Procurement Board and has any case been referred to ICAC?

Mr Jugnauth: Since I have assumed office, I have not received personally any complaints with regard to any member of the three institutions.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, he has said that in 45% of cases - I am not sure that I heard correctly - the Independent Review Panel has ruled against the Central Procurement Board. Surely, that is correct. It cannot be accepted as normal.

Mr Jugnauth: What I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir - let me repeat again – is that over the period 2009 to date the IRP ruled against the CPB in 45% of cases whilst rulings against public bodies was only 37%. Well, before it was 53%, and there has been an improvement. Personally, I do not see why this reaction of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. If I can draw a parallel, there are cases that are decided, for example, in one jurisdiction in our law courts. They go on appeal. There are a number of cases that succeed and a number of cases that do not. As long as we have

the proper instances for review, for checks and balances, this is what is important. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has doubt in any particular case, we are prepared to listen.

Mr Bérenger: It cannot be acceptable that, in 45% of cases, the Review Panel rules against the Central Procurement Board, and it is business as usual, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the law was passed in 2006, only ICAC was an exempt organisation. Then, in June 2009, the State Trading Corporation, the CEB and the MBC were included amongst others. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is happy with that? In the case of CEB and State Trading Corporation, only goods purchased for resale are supposed to be exempt, and then you have this insidious wording ‘including services incidental to the purchase’ and so on and so forth, which probably allows the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce the other day to say that in the Betamax affair, STC is exempted. We are purchasing petroleum products and then, supposedly, it is being argued that services incidental to the purchase or distribution of such goods are also covered. In the case of MBC - we know what has taken place at the MBC - they had the cheek to say that MBC is exempt for purchase of films. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has had a chance to look at that regulation, and whether he is prepared to reconsider the situation as far as those exempt organisations are concerned?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me point out to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that for me it is not business as usual. That is why I have stated in my reply that I have set up a Technical Committee and I am chairing a Committee to see to it, in the light of recommendations that have been made by COMESA and the World Bank, how we can improve the system, make it more transparent, make it fairer for everybody and, of course, bearing in mind that we have to accelerate the procedures so that there is delivery at the earliest for all the projects that are going to be implemented by Government.

Secondly, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking whether I am happy. Of course, I am happy. I am happy where I am and I am happy to be able to answer to that question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please! Order, on both sides!

Mr Jugnauth: Let me say that when the Bill was passed in the National Assembly, there are a number of institutions that are exempted. Again, with regard to the amendments that have been made, we have to see to it that everything is done in a fair manner and according to law. This is the purpose why, at the level of the Ministry of Finance, we will obviously monitor the situation. Then we have the PPO where policies are being devised and we have the IRP in case there is any tenderer or any bidder who is not satisfied with the process, as has been the case in a number of situations. They can lodge a complaint to the IRP which, of course, will adjudicate on that.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister saying: “I am tabling details of contracts awarded through Direct Procurement, Restricted Bidding and Emergency Procurement above the prescribed thresholds requiring use of competitive bidding.” I’ll have to study those cases. I am sure the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will understand that what I am more interested in are the cases, the details of the awards, which should have fallen before the amendments, for example, the hundred million rupees threshold. Is the Vice-Prime Minister prepared to also table details of contracts up to hundred million that, in the past, fell under the Public Procurement Board and are now outside?

Mr Jugnauth: Just as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has put a specific question by giving advance notice, if he comes with the same specific question and gives advance notice, I will be very pleased to have all the information compiled, and then we will be able to give the information to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: I am asking now, but the Vice-Prime Minister read it differently. I said -

- ‘(b) value of contracts awarded through –
 - (i) direct procurement;
 - (ii) restricted bidding, and
 - (iii) emergency procurement,’

All contracts, that is, including those that fell under the law, but now the threshold has been raised to a hundred million. I am sure the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will have no problem in tabling that also.

Mr Jugnauth: I have answered, Mr Speaker, Sir. Again, I can only read the question as has been put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. There is a list of all the contracts with all the details and the sums that have been awarded that has been circulated. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition will put a specific question with regard to all these cases, I will look into it.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say that there has been no case found by the Procurement Policy Office of abuse, corruption and so on. It is a bit hard to believe. Will he agree to the setting-up of a Select Committee to look into those cases...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger:and not leave it for the Procurement Policy Office to whitewash all those cases?

Mr Speaker: The Minister will answer. There is no need for the hon. Member to answer in his place.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, we can't go by the belief of each and everyone. I know the hon. Leader of the Opposition is a serious person. If he has cause for concern with regard to either one or more particular cases, I'll be ready to have a look at those cases. If there is need to have an investigation in the light of what I can see, of course, we will do so. I can assure the House that this Government is not going to tolerate any malpractices at any level.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Since the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said 'if there are any cases' – I am sure he reads the press like everybody, he hears things, he receives documents like the Leader of the Opposition and so on - is he happy that everything is going fine at the RDA, for example, where, in fact, the case has been referred to ICAC and there have been allegations of corrupt practices at the RDA?

Mr Jugnauth: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did not listen properly, there was some noise.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me repeat again. From the information that I have, I don't see any problem with regard to all the contracts that have been awarded. Again, let me say, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition has any doubt on any particular contract, I am willing to look at it. With regard to whether everything is fine, I have said in my reply that there is no system of procurement in any country in the world that is perfect. This is something that has to be looked at every time.

It is a situation which requires dynamism and it is a situation where we will have to review and come up with new amendments, first of all, in order to be in line with what prevails in our times and in order to see to it that we make the system become more transparent, fairer and, as I have said, we get the results as quickly as possible also.

Mr Bérenger: I won't have time to go into a lot of details, but, in the case of the Road Development Authority (RDA), has the hon. Minister looked into the case of the Schoenfeld bypass where, without going through the Central Procurement Board, a contract of more than Rs80 m. was awarded?

Mr Jugnauth: I am informed that there have been no shortcomings and that all the procedures have been followed in the allocation of the contract. This is what I am informed of.

Mr Bérenger: I was listening to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and I did not hear him mentioning the Central Electricity Board amongst the cases where emergency procedures were followed. Has the hon. Minister looked into the case of the purchase of 215 MW engines that cost Rs1.7 billion whereas the estimated cost by the CEB officials was Rs1.2 billion?

Mr Jugnauth: Let me give as much detail as possible so that everyone can be enlightened. With the view to ensuring the security of power supply in 2010, especially in view of accumulated delays and so on - several power generation projects - the CEB, in May 2008, revived an old project at Fort Victoria Power Station, that is, the supply, installation and commissioning of two generators and requested the adoption of a fast-track by the Central Procurement Board. Initial costs were prepared, as has been stated. The lowest bid was Rs1.8 m. That was substantially higher than the initial cost of Rs1.2 m. The CEB assigned a consulting

firm, Messrs Mott MacDonald, to review and advise. The consultant concluded that the bid price was within the prevailing market rates and that the initial estimate based on the St. Louis project was not the right yardstick. Now, given that the CPB was of a different opinion and had decided not to convey its approval and has advised for a rebid exercise, the CEB resorted to emergency procedures as any further delay would have caused disastrous consequences to the economy. However, as the CPB later approved the award after obtaining the opinion of the consultant, the emergency procedures initiated by the CEB were purely stopped.

Mr Bérenger: In the case of the Government building, the rehabilitation of the old Government House and so on, the Ag. Prime Minister, the other day, replied that the two bidders, who were cheaper than the firm that got the contract, were given the reasons why they were not chosen, although they were cheaper. Can we have those reasons?

Mr Jugnauth: There was Tianli Construction Company that made a bid for Rs305,692,383.89. The second one was Mamode Ally Brothers: Rs316,300,901.06, and Ireko Construction: Rs327,976,539.42. I am informed that Ireko was, in fact, the lowest evaluated bidder. Let me give the reasons, because I have also requested for the reasons.

(Interruptions)

Lowest in price does not mean to say that they are lowest in terms of the evaluated bid, because there is a number of conditions that the two others were not able to abide by. Let me give the details so that there is no doubt in the mind of any Member. I will shorten so that...

Mr Speaker: Yes, time is running.

Mr Jugnauth: For Tianli Construction Company, the bidder did not satisfy the minimum average annual turnover of Rs200 m. calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed within the last five years.

Second, under ITB, sub factor 2.41, experience of section 3 -

“The bidder has not demonstrated experience as a subcontractor or management contractor for, at least, five years prior to submission deadline with activity in, at least, nine months in each year.”

I won’t go into the other details.

Third, under ITB, sub factor 2.42, specific experience -

“The bidder has indicated a contract value for the whole projects but not that of the required key activities for works executed in Mauritius.”

Fourth, under ITB, sub factor 2.5, personnel of section 3 -

“The experience of the Health and Safety Officer has not been indicated.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can go on.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister can circulate it.

Mr Jugnauth: No, let me say for Mr Mamode Ally, because that was the other bidder.

Mr Speaker: Please, carry on!

Mr Jugnauth: For Mamode Ally Brothers, as per ITB sub factor 2.3.2 of evaluation and qualifying criteria –

“The bidder was required to have a minimum average annual turnover of Rs200 m. calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed within the last five years. The bidder has an average annual turnover of about Rs148 m. for the last five years.”

Second reason: “no information has been given for restoration of existing antique furniture.

Third: “specifications, documents regarding sanitary wares, ironmongeries ceramic floors and wall tiles and wall coverings have not been submitted.”

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, if those two bidders felt any frustration or injustice, they should have gone to the IRP; none of them went to the IRP.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, one last question before the others. Have there been any cases of splitting of contracts - that is, anybody, RDA or whatever - in a way to fall below the threshold?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, everyone can realise - I have circulated a bunch of documents, that is, a compilation of all the contracts from 2008 up to date. Reasonably, how can I be expected to have gone through each and everyone to see whether there has been any splitting

of contract? Again, I am willing to give all the information to the House. If there is any specific question with regard to one particular contract, we will, of course, be able to furnish it to the House.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance enlighten the House why, in spite of the clear conditions spelt out in the regulations to the effect that procurement awards must be published in a national newspaper within seven days of the award of the contract, all Government Ministries and State agencies consistently flouted the regulations and has failed to publish within seven days of the different awards the names of the successful bidders?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware of that situation and, of course, I take note and I am going to check on that.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Vice-Prime Minister has given the names of the members of the Board and also the names of the members of the Independent Review Panel. Can I ask him whether section 44(2) of the Procurement Act has been implemented with regard to the Independent Review Panel whereby it is stated that “the Chairperson and the 2 other members shall hold office for three years, except that during the existence of the first panel one person will be replaced after the first year and another after the second year, so that over time a regular rotation of persons serving on the Review Panel will be set up”?

Mr Jugnauth: I have just received information with regard to publication. This has been amended on the website. Now we use modern technology. So, it is on the website.

(Interruptions)

With regard to section 44 there has been no change, but let me assure the hon. Member that, although there has been no change, according to the Interpretation and General Clauses Act, and I quote Section 31(3) so that everyone can understand –

“Where the chairman or a member of the body referred to in subsection (1) is to be appointed at a specified time or at specified intervals at the expiry of the specified time or interval the chairman or member has not been appointed, any chairman or member then in office shall continue in office, and shall, until a chairman or a sufficient number of

members to form a quorum have been appointed, be deemed to be the duly appointed chairman or member as the case may be”

So, according to this section, the membership is in line with the legal requirements.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has informed us that he is chairing a committee to improve our procurement legislative framework. After what I have put forward, that is, the way the threshold has been raised to Rs100 m. through the Additional Stimulus Package Amendment Bill, through the Finance Bill on different occasions and now there is this very high Rs100 m. threshold and the June 2009 Regulation which exempted STC, MBC, CEB from the coverage of the law, does not the hon. Minister agree that this committee that he is chairing should develop amendments to be brought to the Public Procurement Act 2006?

Mr Jugnauth: We will look at what COMESA and World Bank have advised, not to say that a number of the advice has already been in the form of legislation. I feel that we shall have to be also guided by experiences in other countries, particularly Singapore, because there they have been able to decentralise and the Ministries that conduct procurement have been able to deliver in a very short and accelerated manner without impairing on the checks and balances and seeing to it that there is transparency and equity to all those concerned and that, of course, anybody, who has any complaint, can have a remedy. Of course, we need to be *vigilant*. We need to see to it that there are the checks and balances and that there are no shortcomings in any contract that is being awarded. In fact, it was Cabinet who decided that I should have a look at the procurement legislation and Cabinet has instructed me that I should come later with any recommendations and then, of course, Cabinet will see to it whatever amendments have to be brought to our legislation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. 1B/477 has been withdrawn. Hon. Mrs Labelle!

CIVIL MARRIAGE – PRIVATE PREMISES - FEES

(No. 1B/473) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the civil marriage, he will state if consideration will be given to amend the legislation with a view to reviewing downwards the fees charged for the celebration thereof in private premises other than private residential premises and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, Section 35 of the Civil Status Act provides for fees to be charged for the celebration of a civil marriage in any private premises, and no fee for the celebration of a civil marriage at any Civil Status Office.

Accordingly, Regulations were made under the Civil Status Act for the charging of fees for the celebration of civil marriages with effect from 01 September 2003 as follows -

- (i) Rs1,000 for each civil marriage performed in private residential premises, and
- (ii) Rs2,500 for each civil marriage performed in hotels and premises other than private residential premises.

In accordance with prevailing practice, out of the fee of Rs1,000, an amount is paid as allowance to the Civil Status Officer performing the civil marriage at private residential premises; and from the fee of Rs2,500, an amount of Rs1,000 for civil marriage in hotels and premises other than private residential premises.

Mr Speaker, Sir, “Private premises” as referred to by the hon. Member is not defined in the Civil Status Act. However, in the Regulations, reference is made to hotels and premises other than private residential premises, and it is assumed that this is what the hon. Member has in mind.

These fees have not been revised since 2003. I am informed that the Civil Status Officers’ Union has recently requested a rise in the allowances of these officers so as to be in line with the actual cost of living. Last year, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development also requested Ministries and Departments to review fees and charges and to update these, where appropriate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, taking into consideration that the fees charged for the celebration of civil marriages in private premises date back to 2003, it is not proposed, at this stage, to review downwards the present fees.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission Mr Speaker, Sir, my concern is for civil marriages which are being celebrated in a small hall. May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether, when this fee will be reviewed, we can consider a different rate for hotels? Some families because they are poor do have these weddings in a small hall like parish hall and so on. Can we have different fees for the small halls and big five star hotels?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take note of what has been said, but I would like to inform the hon. Member that if you look at the weddings in hotels for foreigners it is about between 2,000 and 3,000 foreigners. For Mauritians it is hardly 100 to 250 not many, so most of them have it done at home.

COMMISSION FOR THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE ECONOMY - MEMBERS

(No. 1B/474) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the names of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members thereof, indicating the respective
 - (i) salaries and allowances drawn and any other benefits to which they are entitled and
 - (ii) facilities put at their disposal
- (b) the number of staff posted thereat, indicating their respective grades and
- (c) if it has produced any report, as at to date.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, the Chairperson of the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy is hon. Sayyad Abd-Al

Cader Sayed-Hossen and the vice-Chairperson is hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree (Nita) Deerpalsing. There are no other members on the Commission apart from five supporting staff. The other information requested by the hon. Member in parts (a) and (b) of the question is being tabled.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the House will appreciate that the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy is a non-executive unit of the Prime Minister's Office and, in that respect, assists the Prime Minister in the implementation as well as monitoring of the Economic Democratisation agenda of the Government.

It is the responsibility of the Commission to work on issues related to the democratisation of the economy. Its reports are submitted to the Prime Minister and are meant for internal use and policy support.

To date, the Commission has assisted policy decision making in sectors and sub-sectors as varied as -

- Sugarcane Industry
- Agriculture, other than sugarcane
- Food Security issues
- Agricultural Diversification
- Energy
- Competition issues in general
- Competition issues in the retail trade distribution sector
- SMEs Empowerment
- The emergence of a democratised tourism industry
- Fisheries and the Empowerment of small fishermen
- The emergence of new-subsectors to support vulnerable groups in Mauritius.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister how many consultancies have been commissioned?

The Ag. Prime Minister : I am a bit perplexed at this question. I have given the list of the issues that have been addressed and given to the Prime Minister.

Mr Ameer Meea: The consultancies that have been commissioned to support the democratisation of the economy.

The Ag. Prime Minister : I have said that it was for internal use and it is for the Prime Minister.

Mr Ganoo: One of the issues which were looked into by the Commission, I understand, was the question of the foreigners who have acquired property by way of trust. This was given a lot of publicity last year and the hon. Chairman, himself, went to give a declaration to the Police, to the central CID as far as I remember. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell us where matters stand on this particular issue, that is, what is the result of the inquiries carried out? Has there been any action taken?

The Ag. Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, I can hardly expect to reply to this question. If a question is put next time, it will have a specific reply.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I heard the hon. Ag. Prime Minister say that he will circulate the salaries and allowances drawn by the Members of the so-called Commission. Can I know under what item of expenditure public funds are picked to pay for those allowances?

The Ag. Prime Minister : It is paid from the Prime Minister's...

(Interruptions)

From the Prime Minister's budget.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Ag. Prime Minister is going to table some information, I would like to ask him if he can table information as to the number of countries visited since July 2005, the purpose...

Mr Speaker: No, it does not form part of the question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: It is the facilities put at their disposal. The question is whether travel facilities have been put at their disposal?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, I am interpreting facilities. In my view, it does not include mission abroad. He must come with a specific question. Hon. François, do you have a question on this? Carry on.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister ready to table, at least, the main reports of the Democratisation Commission to the Assembly?

The Ag. Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer cannot be clearer, it is for internal use.

Mr Speaker: He has already answered the question. Hon. François!

MBC - TELEVISION BROADCAST - DISRUPTION OF IMAGES

(No. 1B/475) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the television broadcast on the channels of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if there have recently been recurrent disruption of images, and if so, indicate the -

- (a) frequency thereof;
- (b) reasons therefor;
- (c) number of households which have been deprived of the images, and
- (d) remedial measures taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, according to information received from the Chief Executive Officer of Multi Carrier (Mtius) Ltd., cases of recurrent disruption of images of MBC Television Channels have not been reported either in Mauritius or in Rodrigues. However, on 31 May 2010, there was a technical problem at Mont Cherie Relay Station in Rodrigues which had caused a disruption of broadcast of the MBC Television Channels in the region of Mourouk, Port Sud East and Batatran Village.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am also informed that the disruption of broadcast of the MBC Television Channels was caused by a power fluctuation leading to severe damage to the transmission equipment.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am further informed that some 500 households had been deprived of the images of the MBC Television Channels for four days as the equipment had to be brought to Mauritius for repairs.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am additionally informed that, by the end of September 2010, all Relay Stations in Rodrigues will be equipped with Uninterruptible Power Supply to cater for electrical power fluctuations.

Mr François: I thank the hon. Ag. Prime Minister for his answer, but more specifically Mr Speaker, Sir, there is the problem about the new digital TV which is replacing the old analogue one. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether the digital TV is fully operational to a satisfactory level in Rodrigues at present?

The Ag. Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that about 7,530 customers have the digital system which is about 80%-85%.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - ADVISERS

(No. 1B/476) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the advisers and/or persons appointed on contract, either on a full-time or part-time basis, at the Prime Minister's Office, he will state -

- (a) their names;
- (b) their qualifications;
- (c) the capacity in which they are appointed;
- (d) their terms and conditions of appointment, including the salaries and any other allowances drawn, if any, since assuming office to-date;

- (e) the number of official missions undertaken by each one of them to date, if any, and the *per diem* allowances drawn, and
- (f) make and model of the car put at their disposal, if any.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, following the assumption of office of the Government in May last, the policy and procedures relating to the contractual employment of advisers and other categories of persons both in the Prime Minister's Office and other Ministries are being reviewed in regard to -

- (i) length of tenure;
- (ii) terms and conditions, and
- (iii) the number required.

Once the review exercise has been completed and contractual employees are in post, the list will be laid.

DRUG TRAFFICKING

(No. 1B/477) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to drugs, he will state if Government will consider taking urgent measures to usher in a nation-wide campaign to -

- (a) discourage recourse thereto;
- (b) prevent drug dealing and trafficking, and
- (c) treat and rehabilitate the drug users, in view of Mauritius ranking as one of the foremost drugs consumer countries in the world by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime.

(Withdrawn)

LA TOUR KOENIG SHOPPING CENTRE - INCIDENT

(No. 1B/478) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)

asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the incident which occurred at the La Tour Koenig Shopping Centre, during the night of 07 August 2010 to the morning of 08 August 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers who were on duty at the La Tour Koenig Police Station during that night, indicating -

- (a) their respective ranks;
- (b) when was the Station informed thereof, and
- (c) the actions that were taken to prevent any deterioration of the situation.

The Ag. Prime Minister : Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 22.15 hours on Saturday 07 August to 06.30 hours on Sunday 08 August 2010, one Police Sergeant and three Police Constables were on duty at La Tour Koenig Police Station.

In regard to parts (b) and (c) of the Question, I am informed that, on Saturday 07 August at around 22.35 hours, two Police Officers of the Emergency Response Service, while on mobile patrol at La Tour Koenig, found a crowd of about 10 persons causing disturbance near the La Tour Koenig Commercial Centre. They called upon the crowd to keep peace, but to no avail. At around 22.45 hours, they proceeded to La Tour Koenig Police Station to report on the situation and seek support.

Two Police officers of the local Police Station proceeded to the spot together with the crew of the Emergency Response Service. The support of the Pointe aux Sables Police Station was also sought and two Police Officers from that station, who were on patrol, drove to the spot.

On reaching the spot, the Police saw a crowd of about 35 persons among whom four men and a woman were quarrelling. They tried to arrest the instigator of the disturbance, but the crowd prevented them from doing so and he managed to escape. The Police talked to the crowd which then dispersed.

The local Police, the Emergency Response Service crew and the two Police Officers from the Pointe aux Sables Police Station continued to perform and maintain mobile patrols in the

vicinity of the La Tour Koenig Commercial Centre to prevent any further gathering and to search for the instigator. Despite all their efforts, the instigator, who later was identified as J.C.M, the accused, could not be found.

At around 23.42 hours, the same night, the Police Officers, who were still on mobile patrol, received a phone call from the local Police Station informing them about the presence of an injured person along La Tour Koenig Road near Dodo Flats. On reaching the spot, the Police saw a wounded male person, later identified as J.N.P, lying on the road. The Police conveyed the victim to Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital where the Medical Officer certified that he had already passed away.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police has increased its vigilance and is carrying out more regular patrols in the area, with particular attention to the vicinity of La Tour Koenig Commercial Centre.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, with due respect to the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, I am sure what he is reading does not reflect exactly what has happened on that day. In fact, according to my information, there were two incidents on that day.

(Interruptions)

Had the Police been doing the patrol at 22.45 hours, would that incident have occurred? It is clear that the Police were not around when that incident occurred...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member can put his question, but he should rephrase his question, as he cannot comment on the answer.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Ag. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, it was a lady, who, after having tried to get the Police on the phone for 20 minutes prior to that incident, walked from her house to the Police Station to inform them that there has been an incident at that material time? The lady has given a statement to the police to that effect.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'm not in possession of that information. What I am told is that there was patrol; they saw the gathering, they got help from two Police Stations and, in the end, there were about eight Police officers on the spot. Unfortunately - and

this is the point I want to drive home - the crowd was hostile; the crowd would not cooperate; the crowd would not allow the Police to do their duty. This is the problem.

Mr Baloomoody: The crowd was hostile. Did the Police ask for *renfort*? Did they ask for assistance from the other units of the Police, or they just run away?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes, they did ask for assistance from the Divisional Centre, from the Pointe aux Sables Police Station, from the ERS.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he will verify the information that I am giving to the House, and ask the Commissioner of Police to have a proper inquiry to see whether there has not been negligence on the part of the Police on this fatal night?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. Barbier, order! Hon. Lesjongard, order!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, do you want to raise a point of order?

Dr. A. Boolell: The hon. Member has used unparliamentary words. The decorum of the House imposes that he should withdraw those words.

Mr Speaker: If the hon. gentleman, who is a Member of this House, has used unparliamentary language, I would ask him, as a hon. gentleman, to withdraw, please.

Mr Baloomoody: I just told him to *ferme so la bouche*, and I withdraw same.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! I don't want to hear or ask for the repetition of the word. I just want the hon. Member, who is a gentleman, to withdraw the word, please, that's all; and to put an end to this.

(*Interruptions*)

I didn't hear exactly.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Member cannot keep interrupting us when we are doing our work. He should be called to order first.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Labelle, please! Order, please! If the hon. Member has been interrupting, you can stand up...

(*Interruptions*)

I will definitely take care of that, but that does not mean that the hon. Member is authorised to use unparliamentary language. Please withdraw the words. I will take care of the other issues.

(*Interruptions*)

The hon. Member is not withdrawing?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: I sincerely hope that the hon. Member will not keep interrupting us in our work...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: I have given a ruling. I hope the hon. Member will respect my ruling otherwise I will have to take other actions. That is my point. I will take care of the question of interruption. I have told that to the hon. Member. I will see to it that he is not interrupted; I have been doing that every time. I have given a ruling to withdraw the words. I have made an appeal to the Member, as a gentleman.

Mr Baloomoody: If the words I have said, that is, '*ferme to la bouche*', is unparliamentary, I withdraw them.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, that is not fair on your part. You are qualifying your withdrawal.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Normally, a Member is asked to withdraw unparliamentary language when the Chair has found that there has been

unparliamentary language. In that case, you ruled ‘if there has been unparliamentary language’. You have not ruled that ‘ferme to la bouche’ is unparliamentary.

Mr Speaker: I didn’t want to hear the words, because I don’t want to exacerbate the position. Now that I am forced, can the hon. Minister repeat the word that has been used?

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, for the decorum of the House, I won’t repeat the words uttered by the hon. Member. Certainly, the language was unparliamentary, and the Member has to apologise.

Mr Speaker: Now, my point is: I have been challenged on this, and if you are not going to repeat the words...

Dr. A. Boolell: I will! The words were ‘*bousse fesse*’.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, now! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order! I am going to suspend the House to carry out an inquiry. Has hon. Baloomoody said what the hon. Minister has stated?

(*Interruptions*)

I am asking you hon. Baloomoody! There is no need for you to seek advice! I am asking you whether you have said those words or else I’ll have to hear the recording and carry out an inquiry. I’ll have to carry out an inquiry, because you were in a sitting position, and I did not hear what you said. Have you said it? If you have said it, please withdraw it!

Mr Baloomoody: Carry out an inquiry! I hope that the inquiry will also reveal...

Mr Speaker: No. I am going to carry out an inquiry on the specific issue, that is, whether you have said these words. I suspend the House to carry out an inquiry.

At 12.38 p.m. the sitting is suspended.

On resuming at 12.54 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, I withdraw if ever I have said that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am warning some Members sitting in front of me if they do not behave themselves in the House. Next question!

(Interruptions)

Order, now!

SECURITY GUARD SERVICES – FIRMS - REGISTRATION

(No. 1B/479) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the private security services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) persons registered to perform the duties of security guard;
- (b) firms registered to offer security guard services, and
- (c) reported cases of breach of the Private Security Service Act, if any, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, since the coming into force of the Private Security Service Act on 01 July 2008, 1,202 persons have been registered to perform the duties of Security Officer, and 16 firms have been registered to offer private security services.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that, to date, 11 cases of breach of the Private Security Service Act have been established. Out of these, 10 cases are related to “Acting as Security Officer without permit”, and one case is related to “Employing a Security Guard without Certification of Registration”. Ten of the cases are pending inquiry and one is *sub judice* before Court.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to creating awareness and sensitising the public on the provisions of the Private Security Service Act, the Police issued a press communiqué on 06 April 2010 emphasising the need for a Security Guard employed by the operator of a night club, discotheque, private club, restaurant, café, bar or a licensee under the Gambling Regulatory Act, to be registered with the Police. The Commissioner of Police has also pressed on Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers to carry out regular checks at licensed premises where Security Guards are employed.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether action has been taken against the security guards working at the casinos run by the SIC?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, they have been given three months to regularise their situation and to have their papers.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether this facility of three months has been extended to other security guards?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I understand there is a problem regarding security guards generally and the Commissioner of Police is addressing these. He does not want people to lose jobs whilst going into verification procedures and the answer is yes.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Barbier!

SEA TRAINING SCHOOL – TRAINEES – SELECTION

(No. 1B/480) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Sea Training School, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the School -

- (a) information as to the criteria laid down for the selection of the trainees, and
- (b) details of the courses held thereat over the past five years, indicating the outcome thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Sea Training School is now known as Mauritius Maritime Training Academy.

I am informed that the criteria laid down for selection of the trainees depends on the courses offered. The requirements include, *inter alia*, age limit, and specific relevant qualifications for each course. With your permission, Sir, I am tabling the criteria requirement and details of the courses run by the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy.

The House may wish to note that, over the past five years, 685 candidates have been trained in the various fields mentioned and are available on the market for job in the shipping sector.

FISHERMEN INVESTMENT TRUST – BOARD - ELECTION

(No. 1B/481) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Board of the Fishermen Investment Trust, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to the reasons why the election thereof could not be held.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that the elections will be held on 22 August 2010 for Mauritius and 28 August 2010 for Rodrigues.

The relevant notices have already been published in the press and put up in all Fisheries Posts around the island.

The nomination day for candidatures in Mauritius was previously fixed on Saturday 24 July 2010 between 9 a.m. and noon at the Electoral Commissioner's Office, Port Louis and poll day was fixed on Sunday 08 August 2010.

It was reported by some fishermen that they were debarred from entering the Electoral Commissioner's Office by a hostile group of 15 persons and, consequently, they were forced to leave the premises. Moreover, one of them called at the Electoral Commissioner's Office informing that he had come to submit his candidature on the designated day but he was prevented from doing so by some other fishermen.

In the circumstances and in line with the electoral legislation, the Electoral Commissioner's Office has suggested that a fresh date be appointed for the receipt of notices of

candidature and that the Commissioner of Police be contacted for the maintenance of law and order at the Electoral Commissioner's Office for the said exercise.

The day for the receipt of fresh notices of candidature was fixed on Friday 06 August 2010 and poll day was fixed on Sunday 22 August 2010. Police officers were in attendance at the Electoral Commissioner's Office on 06 August 2010.

Eight candidates have filed their candidatures and poll will be conducted by the Electoral Commissioner's Office on Sunday 22 August 2010 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. at six Fisheries Posts which will be converted into polling stations.

As regards Rodrigues, the day for the receipt of candidatures and poll day are maintained to Saturday 14 August 2010 and Saturday 28 August 2010 respectively.

Mr Barbier: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware why members from *Syndicat des Pêcheurs de l'île Maurice* were refusing to stand as candidates for the election of the Fishermen Investment Trust?

Mr Von-Mally: Can the hon. Member repeat his question? Is it whether they want to put their candidature?

Mr Barbier: Can we know the reason why members of the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs de l'île Maurice* refused to stand as candidates for the election of the Board of the Fishermen Investment Trust?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, they gave no reasons, because they just tried to coerce the other fishermen from standing as candidates; maybe because some members of the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* have stood as candidates during the recent elections, but they were unsuccessful. Maybe this is the reason.

Mr Barbier: At least, has the hon. Minister tried to meet these fishermen to discuss with them to know what their *grief* is about?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, I have met, at least, six times the president of the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* and he submitted a memorandum. I have put in place a committee to work on the memorandum. He went out to see journalists and said that we refused to meet him despite the fact that we have worked for about one hour with him. It is difficult to work with some people,

to try to help them, maybe this is the reason. Since I have taken office, the president wants me to meet him almost every day. This is the problem.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he would confirm that the Electoral Commissioner's Office will be in control of the vote in general, including control of the proxy votes?

Mr Von-Mally: Yes. The Electoral Commissioner will take care of all these.

Mr Speaker: I suspend for one and a half hour.

At 12.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE - STUDY

(No. 1B/482) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to cardiovascular and other related diseases, she will state -

- (a) the percentage of the population suffering therefrom, and
- (b) if a projection has been made on the evolution of the diseases over the next 20 years and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (c) if she will consider causing a study to be carried out to assess the cost to the economy, between now and the year 2020, having regard to the drop in productivity of the workforce as a result of the diseases.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to data collected by my Ministry, cardiovascular and other related diseases are very prevalent in Mauritius as indicated by some 80,000 attendances yearly due to heart problems at the Outpatient Departments.

Moreover, some 500 heart surgeries and nearly 2000 angiographies/ angioplasties are being carried out yearly.

The recent survey on Non Communicable Diseases carried out in 2009 shows that the prevalence of diabetes in Mauritians aged 20 to 74 was 21.3% while that of hypertension was 37.9%.

With regard to part (a) of the question, available data reveals that nearly 10 per cent of admissions in our public hospitals are due to cardiovascular diseases. This may be taken as a minimum indicator of the percentage of the population suffering from cardiovascular diseases. Only a systematic survey can reveal a more accurate percentage.

Concerning part (b) of the question, no specific projection on the evolution of these diseases over the next 20 years has been made for Mauritius. However, given the ageing population, it is expected that the number of persons suffering from cardiovascular and related diseases will increase.

Figures available from WHO indicate that, worldwide, an estimated 17.1 million people died from cardiovascular diseases in 2004. This is expected to reach 23.6 million people by 2030. However, our National Health Statistics, published yearly, show that there has been a stabilisation with, in fact, a slight decrease in the percentage of deaths due to cardiovascular and related diseases over the last three years, that is, from 59.0% in 2007 to 56.5% in 2009. This highlights the positive effects of the measures taken so far in reducing deaths.

With regard to part (c) of the question, my Ministry is looking into the possibility of carrying out a study to assess the cost to the economy due to the drop in productivity of the workforce as a result of cardiovascular and related diseases. This study will provide information on national baseline prevalence of cardiovascular and other related diseases.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the introduction of the mobile clinic for early detection of persons suffering from diabetes and hypertension which has a direct link on cardiovascular diseases, will the hon. Minister state to the House the number of such persons who have been detected since and what mechanisms have been put in place in her Ministry to have a continuous follow-up of these patients?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the figures that I have, with regard to our health promotion through mobile clinics, between February 2007 and June 2010, there have been 643 visits carried out, excluding 89,000 students who have been screened and counselled.

From February 2007 to June 2010, 739 work sites have been visited, and 59,369 employees have been screened. I should say that there is a follow-up, because with this detection programme, those concerned are referred to our health services. Moreover, we have a National Plan of Action which is being developed. It includes certain schemes which are being put in place, and on which we are actually undergoing an aggressive campaign.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I again ask the hon. Minister whether she will come to this House every six months and make a statement with regard to the evolution of this disease?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have no problem with this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to regular compulsory screening for major risk diseases for the whole population, can I ask the hon. Minister whether she will consider the issuing of a National Health Card to all citizens? This can be done on an established frequency that is justified as per the age group. For example, it could be done every four to five years for the age group 15-25 years; for the age group 25-35 years, every three years; for 35-45 years, every two years, and for those above 45 years, yearly. I think that this exercise could touch around 300,000 to 350,000 screening a year.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through our regular programme, we are touching as many people as possible, but this is not mandatory; it's not that people have to go, according to law. It depends on the individuals and whether they want to go for screening or not. With regard to the National Health Card, I am working on it, but it is not restricted only for screening purposes.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she thinks that the different cardiac units that we already have over the island are sufficient to cater for the number of patients with cardiovascular diseases, or does not she think that we have to set up new cardiac units in other parts of the island, like at the Souillac Hospital?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already set up a cardiac unit at the Souillac Hospital, and this was done some six weeks back.

Mr Ganoo: Is it operational?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, it is operational.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just said that a study will be carried out on its impact on the economy. Can I know whether she can give a time frame for the study to be carried out? We already know that, in America, some \$150 billion are spent each year in direct medicine on disease related to excess weight.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this point in time, I will not be able to give any specific time frame. This study will have a cost, and I am proposing to contact WHO to see whether they can give us consultancy on this issue.

OBESITY – SURVEY

(No. 1B/483) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to obesity, she will state if a study has been carried out to make an assessment of the number of people who will suffer therefrom by the year 2020, indicating the measures that have been put in place to address the issue, as at to date.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National NCD Survey 2009 carried out by my Ministry indicated that the prevalence of obesity was 43.3% in the Mauritian adult population aged 25-74 years. The prevalence of obesity was 38.4% in men and 47.9% in women.

My Ministry has taken the following measures, amongst others, to address the issue of obesity -

- a National Plan of Action for Nutrition 2009-2010 is in the process of implementation;
- appropriate regulations have been passed to control the sale of food items in school canteens, as per guidelines prepared by the Nutrition Division of the Ministry;
- sale of soft drinks in all pre-primary, primary and secondary school institutions has been banned;

- comprehensive screening programmes for risk factors of NCDs, including obesity, are being carried out regularly through the mobile clinics for their early detection and prevention at schools, worksites and the community at large;
- people are encouraged to undertake physical activities. My Ministry has set up health clubs, and is in the process of setting more health tracks for this purpose;
- a National Action Plan on Physical Activities is being prepared;
- a ‘Know Your Number Campaign’ to sensitise the adult population about their weight is being implemented, and
- lastly, there is an ongoing campaign to sensitise the population at large on the risk factor for NCDs, including obesity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, WHO’s latest projections indicate that, globally in 2005, at least 400 million adults were obese, and this will nearly double to reach more than 700 million by 2015.

No study has been carried out so far to make an assessment of the number of people who will suffer from obesity by the year 2020. However, my Ministry is proposing to approach the WHO for technical support to undertake such a study.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the ban on fizzy drinks in schools, will the hon. Minister liaise with the Minister of Education to see to it that not only are such drinks not sold, but that parents be sensitised and that children be not allowed to bring those drinks to be consumed during school hours?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when that programme was put in place, there were discussions, in fact, with the Ministry of Education, and I believe that the Ministry of Education is monitoring the issue closely.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 18 April 2006, I put a similar question, namely P.Q. No. B/293, whereby I asked whether a study is being carried out to determine the risk of young children becoming obese. In some countries like America, as I mentioned some time back, about one third of the school children and two thirds of the adult population are obese. Here, it is a little less than two thirds. So, it is about time that the study be carried out. Can I

know from the hon. Minister whether something concrete is being done to carry out the study and to remedy the situation, and whether she envisages having a follow-up?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is saying that the reply was given in 2006, and I cannot reply for this, but I can say that I am taking up the issue and, in fact, I have contacted WHO already, and we are now in the process of trying to find out whether we can get consultancy from them on this matter.

Mr Dayal: I did not mean to hit at the Minister, because I know that she has been newly appointed as Minister. Being given that this is of national interest, that's why I have put the question. It shows my interest, because since 2006 I am following this dossier, and that is why I am asking this question. Is something concrete being done in this direction?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already replied to this question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, the Minister will surely agree that this is as a real threat to our youth. Will she agree to look urgently at the new guidelines being issued by the OEDC these days to ban a number of products consumed by children for eventual implementation in Mauritius?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The Nutrition Division of my Ministry is looking into this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned health clubs. May I ask her how many such clubs do we have, and how do members of the public get access to them? To whom are they opened, and how are they operating?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are seven health clubs, where there are physical exercise equipments, and people come for yoga, aerobics and physical exercises. I can give the hon. Member a list of the places where there are the Health Clubs. These are: St. Pierre Area Health Centre, Roches Noires, Nouvelle France, Camp de Masque Pavé, Wooton Health Club, Bambous Virieux and Flacq Health Club. There are 56 health places where facilities are being given. I can circulate the list. On top of that, at the level of the Youth Centres, there are the Health Clubs.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other side of the coin is, of course, the need for a sports culture in this country. Will the hon. Minister liaise with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to see to it that, firstly, sports infrastructure, which should have been completed in schools since 2005, are completed at the earliest? Secondly, that physical education in secondary schools stops being taught as a theoretical subject on the blackboard and examined with theoretical examinations, and that instead children be encouraged to play and to practise sports, and, thirdly, that sports facilities in schools be placed at the disposal of the wider community outside school hours, as was Government practice previously.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is already a standing Committee with the Ministry of Education which is looking into this aspect, but I will take the suggestions of the hon. Member.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether she considers the advisability of setting up a Public Health Laboratory dedicated for this and similar purposes, which can be automated and results computerised? This can give updated reliable medical data on the whole population and may replace many of the surveys that have been currently carried out to document the prevalence of these risks and conditions in the population.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this point in time, I don't think I can take this commitment because all this will depend on the level of funds being provided for such purposes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the seriousness of the situation as pointed out, will the hon. Minister agree that there is a need for a new imaginative mass sensitisation campaign, using the mass media concerning nutritional habits in Mauritius which are now being made worse by recourse to fast food, especially among children?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have dedicated the month of September for this purpose.

BONNE VEINE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - DRAIN WORKS

(No. 1B/484) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the drain works being carried out opposite the Community Health Centre at Bonne Veine, Quartier Militaire, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Moka/Flacq District Council will reconstruct the existing drain and pavement at a cost of around Rs1.2 m. subject to availability of funds.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been knocking at the doors of the District Council and the NDU, and this problem is with us for about 10 years. There are serious health hazards. I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it if he could liaise with his colleague, the Minister of Local Government, to speed up matters.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now, there are over 30 projects in that constituency. I will request the hon. Member to bear with me a little bit.

BASSIN LOULOU - UPGRADING

(No. 1B/485) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the site at Bassin Loulou where immersion ceremonies are carried out during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, he will consider the advisability for the upgrading thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of the forthcoming Ganesh Chaturthi Festival, the following upgrading works will be initiated -

- (a) construction of additional steps near the platform to facilitate access to the water for immersion ceremony;
- (b) repairs to the broken steps, and
- (c) painting all existing infrastructure.

Mr Dayal: Can I know from the hon. Minister when works will start and when it is scheduled to be completed?

Mr Bachoo: We have already given instructions for the workers to open up that site.

BEL AIR - RAILWAY ROAD - WIDENING

(No. 1B/486) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the railway road, commonly known as *Chemin La Poste*, which is a by-pass from Bel Air St. Michel to *Morcellement Roy*, Bel Air, he will consider the widening thereof, with a view to alleviating the traffic congestion in the centre of Bel Air/Rivière Sèche.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Railway Road at Bel Air is a non classified road having a length of 1,460 metres. The road is tarred and is in good condition. However, at some places where the road is narrow, a survey will be carried out to improve the width.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES - DIGITALIZATION

(No. 1B/487) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the National Archives, he will state if Government is proposing the digitalization thereof, having regard to the need for the conservation of the high valued documents found thereat.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having due regard to the need for the conservation of the high valued documents found at the National Archives, I wish to inform the House that the digitalisation of these documents has already started since July 2010 under the Electronic Archives System project.

In this context, the National Archives has enlisted the services of the De Chazal du Mée Consulting Ltd. in May 2009 for the delivery, installation and commissioning of computer equipment and system and application software, provision of training to the National Archives staff and for the scanning and uploading of existing documents into the system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is expected that, by July 2011, some 10% of the National Archives holdings, representing Phase I of the project, will thus be digitalised. Phase II of the project will follow later.

Mr François: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the digital information will be online and, if not, whether he considers transferring archives specifically related to Rodrigues or copies thereof and, at the same time, creating a useful Archive Unit in Rodrigues?

Mr Choonee: I couldn't get the second part of the question; but, with regard to the first part of the question, definitely, it will be online, Sir.

LA VANILLE BRIDGE - RECONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/488) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the La Vanille Bridge, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of several complaints and petitions from the inhabitants of Très Bon and La Vanille, Reunion, Vacoas, concerning the problems and difficulties encountered thereat during heavy rainfall and cyclones and, if so, if the reconstruction and re-alignment thereof are being envisaged, indicating where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following representations made by hon. Mrs Bappoo and hon. Ms Anquetil, two site visits were already conducted and I am pleased to announce that bids for the construction of La Vanille Bridge will be floated in October this year by the NDU.

BASDEO ROSUNEE PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRAMSTHAN - CLASSROOMS RENOVATION

(No. 1B/489) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the derelict state of certain classrooms, the toilets and of the fence of the playground of the Basdeo Rosunee Primary School at Bramsthan and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the renovation thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to state that the building accommodating Basdeo Rosunee Government School is an old one, having been constructed more than 36 years ago and, therefore, requires regular upgrading works.

With regard to classrooms, I wish to inform that the Primary School Renewal Project (PSRP) makes provision for the construction of six additional classrooms in the school. The draft Tender Documents are now being prepared by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) and works are expected to start in November/December, this year, should everything proceed smoothly.

I am also informed that many projects for maintenance and upgrading works have been carried out by my Ministry at the school during the years 2007 and 2008. These works comprised the construction of block wall, laying of paving blocks, waterproofing, replacement of chain link fencing, electrical installations and clearing of the yard.

As regards the upgrading works in the existing toilets, which is on the priority list of my Ministry, I am informed that the scope of works and cost estimates are presently under preparation. These upgrading works will be undertaken during the forthcoming school holidays. During that same period, my Ministry is proposing to undertake the fencing works in the playground.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that there used to be a special funded programme for the **upliftment** of school toilets, including the one at Bramsthan, as far as I can recall? Will he tell us whether this programme still exists - a distinct programme with budgeted funds for the upgrading of school toilets?

Dr. Bunwaree: It has been reinforced and if I give the hon. Member the figures, he will be shocked.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND – DISBURSEMENT

(No. 1B/490) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic

Empowerment whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the -

- (a) procedure put in place for the disbursement of funds to the Non-Governmental Organisations, and
- (b) composition of the Corporate Social Responsibility committee, indicating if it is fully structured to manage the Fund.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that, under the provisions of Sections 50K and 50L of the Income Tax Act, it is incumbent upon a company to set up a CSR Fund equivalent to 2% of its book profit. I understand that profitable companies have, in compliance with their legal obligations, set up their CSR Fund.

I am informed by the NEF that, in accordance with the guidelines established by the National CSR Committee, disbursement of funds for the implementation of CSR programmes are effected through the following vehicles -

- (i) Approved NGOs;
- (ii) Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or Corporate Entity, and
- (iii) Corporate Partners.

Moreover, the responsibility for approving the accreditation of NGOs and the CSR programmes of a company and special purpose vehicle rests with the National CSR Committee.

I understand that the National CSR Committee has a monitoring mechanism whereas companies and approved NGOs are required to submit six-monthly progress reports. The monitoring mechanism is being further improved with the setting up of a dedicated unit to keep track of the flow and use of CSR funds to the different approved programmes by all the relevant stakeholders.

Moreover, in the wake of the *Espace Rencontre* CSR/NGOs held in June last, the National CSR Committee is embarking on a number of initiatives consisting of, *inter alia*, the setting up of a pool of project facilitators to assist NGOs to prepare their project proposals for

submission to companies and the publication of a monthly e-journal to provide for exchange of information and promote interaction between companies and NGOs.

In addition, the National CSR Committee is presently working on a capping on the allocation of funds to the different programmes to cater for priority areas of intervention and at the same time ensuring a fair geographical distribution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the National CSR Committee draws its membership from public and private sectors and from the civil society and is supported by a technical unit that is mandated to screen all applications for registration of NGOs and to ensure that CSR activities are properly coordinated and set objectives in the guidelines are achieved. I am tabling the composition of the National CSR Committee.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Given the public concern regularly expressed about the allocation of funds to NGOs, would the Minister agree to review the procedures concerning accreditation of NGOs and the actual mechanism for allocation of funds and disbursement of funds to NGOs?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, obviously the basic requirement is for NGOs to have existed for two years just to ensure that we are dealing with people who are reliable. There can be some exceptions made. At the moment, I must say, we are not planning to change this particular provision of the regulations.

Secondly, as far as the allocation of funds is concerned, as I mentioned, there will be a cross grid, firstly to ensure that priority areas are met so that there is a fair distribution of the CSR funds and secondly, in the grid we will try to ensure that all the geographical areas of Mauritius are covered adequately by the CSR.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the Minister agree to state the number of NGOs presently accredited for CSR purposes and will he table a list of all those NGOs?

Mr Duval: Yes, with pleasure. There are 400 NGOs which are presently accredited and, with pleasure, if this is not public information already, I will give the information.

Mr Obeegadoo: My last question concerns this technical unit to support the CSR Committee. Would the Minister be in a position to give us some information as to the size of this unit, the number of staff members and their qualifications?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are about four persons; I think we may need to increase this number. As I mentioned, there will be attached to that unit a monitoring unit to ensure that funds are being used properly. It is headed by Mr Robert Palamy who has a lot of experience.

Dr. S. Boolell: Can the Minister inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether there is a mechanism to assist those NGOs who do not have the logistic ability or the intellect to be able to produce a request for CSR funds? Is there a desk somewhere?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope they have the intellect, but, as I mentioned in my reply, we are setting up a project facilitation unit to ensure that some of these projects are better written so that they have a better chance of attracting funds from the companies concerned.

Mr Ganoo: Although there is no legal framework within which this fund should operate, does not the hon. Minister think that from time to time he should regularly lay on the Table of the Assembly the number and list of programmes that have been executed by the different NGOs and the amount of funds disbursed for each of these programmes?

Mr Duval: As I mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are working on a better dissemination of information that is why we have the *Rencontre CSR/NGOs*. We will have an e-journal, and why not, we can provide information as to where the money has gone but, contrary to what the hon. Member has said, there is a legal framework which is in the Income Tax Act.

Mr Ganoo: I mean that there is no legal obligation for the Fund to table the financial situation and the achievements of the NGOs!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us an indication of the estimated amount of funds to be collected under the CSR Fund this year?

Mr Duval: As the hon. Member knows, it's two percent of profits, but the total this year should be around Rs800 m. plus or minus.

DEUX FRERES,GRSE – FERRY BOAT SERVICE

(No. 1B/491) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the ferry boat service at the level of the village of Deux Frères up to the Grand River South East, he will state the -

- (a) procedure to be followed for the award of the permit for the operation thereof;
- (b) conditions that the operator must adhere to, and
- (c) monthly fee payable to the operator.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, contract is awarded through invitation for bids from potential bidders through open Advertised Bidding Method.

As regards part (b) of the question, with your permission, Sir, I am laying on the Table the set of conditions to which the operator of the ferry boat must adhere to.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform that currently the operator is paid a monthly fee of Rs59,500 (inclusive of VAT).

Mr Seeruttun: May I ask the hon. Minister when will the current permit expire?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have the information with me right now, I need notice of that.

FLAT ISLAND - LEASE

(No. 1B/492) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Flat Island, he will state if all the conditions of the lease thereof to a private company for a duration of 7 years, as from 01 July 2007 have been complied with and, if not, the action Government proposes to take.

(Withdrawn)

PALMA - NHDC HOUSING ESTATE – BUS SERVICE

(No. 1B/493) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the hardships caused to the inhabitants of the NHDC Housing Estate, at Palma, due to the irregular transport service by the National Transport Corporation and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question was raised earlier by hon. Nita Deepalsing and we had given an extensive answer to this question. I would like to inform the House that, according to the NTA, no hardship is caused to the inhabitants of NHDC Palma due to irregular transport service by the National Transport Corporation.

Checks carried out have revealed that all trips from NHDC Palma were performed and buses left with vacant seats. Commuters were found not to encounter any transport problems and the level of service provided by the NTC is found to be satisfactory. The Inspectorate of the NTA is monitoring the situation.

I am also informed by the NTC that, following a request made by the NTA on 17 June 2010 for a regular service to NHDC Housing Estate, Palma, a service was provided on a trial basis for a period of one week as from 21 June 2010. Buses were provided on an hourly basis. However, it was observed that the loading was so poor that the services had to be discontinued as from 29 June 2010.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que provision pourrait être faite, peut-être les après-midis, pour prévoir le bus surtout pour les personnes qui retournent du travail?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will request the NTA to have a fresh look at this issue.

CORNER MILITARY/NICOLAY ROADS, PORT LOUIS - ACCIDENTS

(No. 1B/494) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land

Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the corner Military and Nicolay Roads, Port Louis, he will state the number of reported cases of road accidents which occurred thereat, since January 2009 to date, indicating -

- (a) the ones which were -
 - (i) fatal, and
 - (ii) otherwise serious, and
- (b) if any survey has been carried out to assess the causes of the accidents, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken, with a view to reducing the number of accidents thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2009 to date, only two accidents have been reported at the corner Military and Nicolay Roads, Port Louis. One occurred last year involving a pedestrian who was hit by an auto cycle where the former was killed. The accident which occurred this year involved a car and an auto cycle where only a slight injury was sustained by the rider.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the TMRSU that it is constantly monitoring the situation.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister ready to instruct the concerned department of his Ministry to upgrade the robot light with the possibility of turning right for vehicles coming from both sides of Nicolay Road with proper road marking as a first measure to avoid fatal and severe accidents at that place?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, the TMRSU is monitoring the situation. Normally we don't give them instructions because they are technicians, they know their job, but I will definitely convey the hon. Member's apprehension to them.

RODRIGUES - LAND LEASE - SALE

(No. 1B/495) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if his Ministry has recently held discussions with the

Rodrigues Regional Assembly on a programme for the conversion of the tenants for life into owners with proprietary rights on their houses and the lands on which the latter stand and, if so, where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no formal discussion has been held up to now with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly regarding the sale of land leased for residential purposes. However, during courtesy calls in my office on 15 June and 22 July, 2010 Mr. Franceau Aubret Grancourt, Commissioner and Mr Johnson Roussety, the Chief Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly respectively raised the issue with me and requested assistance from my Ministry.

I wish to confirm that my Ministry will extend all possible technical and administrative advice to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in this context.

Mr François: The State Land is a national *patrimoine*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Being aware that the State Land is under the responsibility of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, is the hon. Minister aware of this *patrimoine* dilapidation and *braderie* without any enforced planning law at present in Rodrigues?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as Minister of Land, I am fully aware of the value of our *patrimoine* whether it is Rodrigues or Mauritius. As I say, Rodrigues forms an integral part of Mauritius, but I have to respect the Constitution of the country and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is fully independent. I have no jurisdiction whatsoever over the administration of the land in Rodrigues.

RODRIGUES - FOOD SECURITY FUND - PROJECTS

(No. 1B/496) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, with regard to the projects funded under the Food Security Fund for Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to –

- (a) if the projects have been successfully completed;
- (b) if the objectives thereof have been met;

- (c) who supervised and certified all the completed works before the release of funds for payment, and
- (d) the total amount of money disbursed as at to date, in respect of each project.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Food Security Fund Strategic Plan which was launched in January 2009 includes several project proposals that were submitted by stakeholders for Rodrigues. These projects are to be implemented over a three-year period. Some projects have already been completed, some are in progress and others are yet to be launched. All these projects will be implemented by 2011.

The five projects that have been successfully completed on the basis of the completion report submitted by the Departmental Head of the Commission for Agriculture and Natural Resources of Rodrigues to date are as follows -

- (a) the setting up of a Milk Pasteurisation Unit which includes the installation and extension of electricity to St. Gabriel Livestock Production Unit and the setting up of a Milk Pasteurisation Unit;
- (b) the improvement of agricultural land for staple food production. This concerns the rehabilitation of 56 ha of abandoned agricultural land at Baie Malgache and includes provision for fencing, rehabilitation of drains and construction of lay-by, radiers and terrace building;
- (c) the upgrading of facilities for onion production. This involves the setting up of nine (9) onion growing areas at Graviers, Pointe Cotton, Anse Ally, St. Francois, Mourouk, Port Sud Est, Rivière Banane, Anse Enfer and Grand Var. Under this project, fencing has been provided over a total perimeter of 5.6 km;
- (d) the setting up of a chilli farm at Baladirou. This involves the installation and commissioning of small drip systems to increase the productivity and quality of chillies. Some thirty units were installed;
- (e) the rehabilitation of abandoned agricultural lands. The purchase of agricultural machinery and equipment was the main activity under this project. An onion seed

sowing machine, tractors, a maize sowing and shelling machine were purchased with funds from the Food Security Fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are also a few other projects that have been approved by the Food Security Fund Committee which are currently being implemented. Disbursement of funds for these projects will be effected as and when claims are received.

As regards part (b) of the question, the completed projects have all met the objectives set. The implementation of these projects has made it possible to reverse a ten-year old trend of decreasing production and area cultivated. In respect of two commodities namely bean and maize, the production has more than tripled. It is well accepted by the Rodriguan farmers that the Food Security Fund has triggered a revitalisation of the agricultural sector. Support received has enabled the farmers to cultivate more land and improve their production system, thus generating increased revenue.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that all works are supervised by the Commission for Agriculture which is the implementing agency of the Fund in Rodrigues. The completed works are certified by officials of the Commission and cross-checked by the Officer in Charge of the Agricultural Services of Rodrigues. The claims are then approved by the Departmental Head prior to submission to my Ministry for release of funds.

As requested in part (d) of the question, I am advised that a total sum of nearly Rs27 m. has been disbursed in connection with the projects which have been completed. I am tabling a paper showing the total amount of money disbursed as to date in respect of each completed project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am also informed that, in respect of the ongoing projects, no disbursement has so far been effected.

MAURITIUS SECONDARY SCHOOLS SPORTS ASSOCIATION – INTER COLLEGE COMPETITIONS

(No. 1B/497) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sports Association, he will state the -

- (a) names of the President and Members of the Executive Committee thereof;
- (b) name of the representative of his Ministry sitting on the Committee thereof, indicating the number of meetings of the Committee that the latter has attended, since January 2010 to date, and
- (c) number of regional and national inter college competitions it has organized, since January 2010 to date.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the name of the President and Members of the Executive Committee of the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sport Association MSSSA are being tabled.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the MSSSA is a multisport organisation, governed by Rules and Regulations of the Sports Act. The Board of the MSSSA is composed of Rectors of affiliated private and public secondary schools; as such, like other sports federations, no representative of my Ministry is entitled to sit on the organisation. However, there is a Desk Officer in the grade of a Senior Sports Officer, who deals with all issues concerning the MSSSA and there is also one Sports Officer who acts as a liaison officer and a facilitator.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that, since January 2010, 70 inter college competitions have been organised at regional level in various sports disciplines and two competitions at national level namely cross-country and swimming. Moreover, national competitions in football, volleyball, basketball, badminton and table tennis are scheduled for September 2010.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he is aware that winners of the table tennis competition in March 2009 have still not received their awards?

Mr Ritoo: This is very serious. I will look into the matter.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the hon. Minister if he is aware that the volleyball competition in some regions have never taken place and, instead, there has only been a festival?

Mr Ritoo: As I stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the MSSSA which organises the inter college competitions and I have only a Desk Officer who does the liaison with the MSSSA, but, I will check if the volleyball competition has not been organised. Anyway, it is a national competition, it should have been organised.

Mrs Ribot: I would like also to know from the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if he is aware that the Acting Administrative Secretary of the MSSSA had already informed the P.E. teachers as early as 13 July that no National Sports Competitions were going to be held this year?

Mr Ritoo: Well, as I stated in my reply, there will be a National Competition in football, volleyball, basketball, badminton and table tennis scheduled for September 2010.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, contrary to the previous years, if the State Colleges are going to be allowed to participate this year?

Mr Ritoo: Well, the inter college games is open for all the colleges. It is on a regional basis. All colleges are supposed to take part.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant que les collèges confessionnels ont l'intention d'organiser des championnats inter collèges d'athlétisme durant le mois de septembre?

Mr Ritoo: Well, this is not proper. I have already informed the concerned people that it is not proper to organise the sports differently for *les collèges confessionnels* or whatever.

Mr Quirin: Malgré tout, M. le ministre, cela ne prouve-t-il pas que ce que fait le MSSSA est insuffisant?

Mr Ritoo: As I stated, MSSSA is a separate body. There is a Desk Officer who does the liaison. They wanted to organize the inter college games, so all the responsibility goes to the MSSSA.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that even if the MSSSA is an independent body it still falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Sports and as such I would like to ask the hon.

Minister to see to it that *le sport scolaire ne continue pas sur la pente qu'il a prise puisque, comme il est de nos jours, nous allons vers une mort certaine.*

Mr Ritoo: I thank the hon. Member. Well, I am very much concerned about the inter college games. I have set up a committee to see to it that the inter college games are being regularised. We must not forget that we have very good athletes. In fact, all the athletes who represented Mauritius in the CJSOI games emanate from the colleges and all those who are actually participating in the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore are also from the inter college national games.

ROSE BELLE SUGAR ESTATE BOARD – FOREIGN PROMOTER – LAND LEASE

(No. 1B/498) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board, information as to if it has given out land to a foreign promoter in association with Mauritian partner/s for development purposes and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when;
- (b) the extent of the land given;
- (c) the type of development that will be carried out thereon;
- (d) the names and addresses of the local and foreign promoters, and
- (e) if the project has been implemented.

(Withdrawn)

MUNICIPALITY OF CUREPIPE - GRANTS AND ALLOCATIONS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/499) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the grants and allocations given by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from

the Council, a list of the sociocultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefitted therefrom, since October 2005 to-date, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) names
- (b) nature thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 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.

HOSPITALS – SECURITY AND CLEANING SERVICES - CONTRACT

(No. 1B/500) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the contracts awarded for security and cleaning services, since July 2005 to-date, for the hospitals and the other departments falling under the aegis of her Ministry, she will, in each case, state the –

- (a) names of the bidders, indicating the bid value, and
- (b) names of the companies which have obtained same in each case, indicating –
 - (i) if it was the lowest bidder, and
 - (ii) the contract value thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is the same reply Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

(Interruptions)

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that, despite adverse report on performance of security and cleaning companies in the Ministry, they got their contract extended on a month to month basis instead of being cancelled. A sum of about Rs25 m. has been spent from January 2008 to December 2009. Is the hon. Minister aware of that and no action has been taken?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, usually the contract is extended on a month to month basis pending the fact that there is renewal or no renewal. If the tender exercise is not completed, the existing company goes on, on a month to month basis, until the contract is allocated.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that it was done on a month to month basis because of the bad performance. In view of the fact of a persisting poor performance for cleaning and security service in hospitals, can the hon. Minister state if a fresh tender has been invited on the basis of the new bidding document as recommended by the Procurement Policy Office?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we go according to Procurement rules and no other regulations apart from Procurement rules.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we, at least, have the name of the company giving service in the hospital?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I can't get the question.

The Deputy Speaker: The name of the company.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The name of which company?

Mr Guimbeau: Can the hon. Minister give us, at least, the name of those companies who got the cleaning and security contracts in hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have said that I am compiling the information. I don't have the information because the hon. Member has asked from 2005 onwards. So, the information has to be compiled.

The Deputy Speaker: You don't have the information. Okay, next question. Yes, hon. Barbier.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister since when these companies are operating on a month to month basis?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't say because there are so many companies. There are companies for security services as well as for cleaning services. The question addressed both of them. There are so many companies, I can't have the names.

SPORTS MEDICAL UNIT, VACOAS – STAFF AND EQUIPMENT

(No. 1B/501) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Medical Unit, situated at Vacoas, he will give a list of the –

- (a) full-time and part-time medical and paramedical staff, and
- (b) equipment available thereat.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the list of full-time and part-time medical and paramedical staff at the Sports Medical Unit as well as a list of equipment available thereof is being tabled.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant de combien d'années datent ces équipements qui sont au centre médico-sportif et s'ils sont en parfait état.

Mr Ritoo: They date for a long time back because we received a part of this medical equipment as donation from France in 2003 and some of them are much before 2003.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que le ministre prévoit un renouvellement de ces équipements?

Mr Ritoo: As far as I am informed by the officers at the Sports Medical Unit, these equipments are still in good running condition.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais aussi savoir du ministre si le centre médico-sportif dispose des services d'un nutritionniste, d'un diététicien et d'un *sport psychologist*?

Mr Ritoo: Well, at the Sport Medical Unit, we don't have such officers. We have only a Sports Medical Officer, two male Nursing Officers, two female Nursing Officers, a Physiotherapist working as part-time staff and the rest is being channelled through the Ministry of Health.

Mr Quirin: J'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il prévoit d'en recruter dans un prochain avenir ?

Mr Ritoo: We can consider.

Dr. S. Boolell: Est qu'il y a une intention de la part du ministre de décentraliser les services du *Sports Medical Unit* pour aller vers le centre de sports au lieu de se cantonner à Vacoas?

Mr Ritoo: As at date, there is no sportsman who has been complaining about the Sports Medical Unit, but anyway, the staff of the Sports Medical Unit does attend to the athletes at their sporting site. I mean that whenever there is a national or international game and when the athletes need any treatment, they come to the Sports Medical Unit and even transport is provided to them.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is the hon. Minister aware that often, when there has been some form of injury during sports meetings, there has been no Medical Officer in attendance?

Mr Ritoo: Well we have not received such complaint so far.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS – CENTRE NATIONAL D’ENTRAÎNEMENT ET DE FORMATION - GRANT

(No. 1B/502) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the training of the young athletes, he will give a list of the Sports Federations which have a *Centre de Formation National*, indicating the sum of money allocated to each centre.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Sports Federations which have a “*Centre National d’Entrainement et de Formation*”, as referred to at section 25(2)(a) of the Sports Act 2001, are as follows -

SPORTS FEDERATIONS

1. Mauritius Athletics Association
2. Mauritius Basketball Federation
3. Mauritius Boxing Association
4. Mauritius Football Association

5. Mauritius Volleyball Association
6. Mauritius Handball Association
7. Mauritius Judo Jujitsu Federation and Associated Disciplines
8. Mauritius Table Tennis Association
9. Mauritius Badminton Association

However, most Federations practising sports disciplines listed at part 1 of the Second Schedule of the Sports Act have their own regional training centres also known as “*Centre Régional de Formation*” and “*Ecole de Formation*”.

Over and above such training centres, the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports caters for the training of 78 young athletes in eight different sports disciplines under its “*Sports Etudes*” programme. These are potential high level athletes who received individual attention and who would otherwise have been in the training centres.

With regard to money allocated to the *Centre de Formation*, I have to inform the hon. Member that such provision is included in the budget allocated to the various federations.

Mr Quirin: J’aimerais savoir du ministre s’il est satisfait du fonctionnement des différents centres de formation?

Mr Ritoo: As far as the Sports Federations are concerned, we have a *centre de formation* and I am satisfied that we are giving help wherever it is needed. We are also providing the services of a *Directeur Technique National* and they are all doing quite well.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans ce cas, le ministre peut-il expliquer la très mauvaise performance de la sélection volleyball aux derniers jeux de la CJSOI ?

The Deputy Speaker: I can’t allow this question. We move to the next question.

HAJJ PILGRIMAGE – AIR TICKET

(No. 1B/503) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the air ticket for the Hajj pilgrimage for each of the years 2005 to 2009, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from

the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to the mode of calculation that was used to arrive at the price thereof, indicating the amount that was paid to the airlines.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information received from the Islamic Cultural Centre regarding the mode of calculation of air ticket for Hajj pilgrimage for years 2005 to 2009.

Mr Uteem: Would the hon. Minister confirm, at least, for the year 2009, the amount paid to Air Mauritius and Emirates?

Mr Choonee: Well, the hon. Member wants to have figures for 2009? I understand that payment effected by ICC, payment for Air Mauritius, is Rs95,374,023 and the payment for Emirates, in USD, is USD594,050.

Mr Uteem: Would the hon. Minister confirm that the price per ticket paid by Air Mauritius was Rs42,900 and the price for Emirates was about Rs37,000?

Mr Choonee: That is exact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Uteem: Given circumstances, would the hon. Minister confirm why were all the pilgrims, all the hajjis, asked to pay a flat rate of Rs40,800 when Emirates were charging only Rs37,000?

Mr Choonee: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the ICC that the practice has been as in the previous years. There has been a uniform price for all pilgrims. If I can, the price then came down from Rs42,000 for Air Mauritius to Rs40,000.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Air Mauritius flight is a direct one, whereas for Emirates it is a stopover, and the pilgrims have to stay 11 hours in Dubai before getting a connecting flight to Jeddah. May I know from the hon. Minister who decided which pilgrims will get the luxury to travel by Air Mauritius and which pilgrims by Emirates, and what criteria were used to determine this?

Mr Choonee: Decision was taken by ICC Board, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and it was always on the first come first served basis.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since we are talking about air tickets, and it has been the practice of Government since independence to make financial provision in relation to

pilgrimage, would not it be fair that part of this provision be made available *sous forme de* sponsorship on air tickets to hajjis?

Mr Choonee: As at now, it is not the policy of Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the components of the price of a ticket paid to Air Mauritius is royalty paid to the Saudi authorities. May I know from the hon. Minister if any action is being taken by the ICC or by any other committee to negotiate with the authorities in Saudi Arabia to reduce this royalty?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a very interesting question, because we just had the visit of the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Mauritius and the request was made to him, through the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Kasenally and other Ministers. He is very favourable in removing the levy for getting the best rate for our pilgrims.

Mr Uteem: One final question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. One of the components of the amount paid to Air Mauritius is the fuel surcharge. Would the hon. Minister see whether, this year, an effort can be made to exempt hajj pilgrims from the fuel surcharge?

Mr Choonee: The other good news, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that, henceforth, the hon. Prime Minister is presiding over the committee to thrash out all problems relating to pilgrims.

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - FOOD AND BEVERAGES - SUPPLIERS

(No. 1B/504) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the supply of food and beverages for the events organised by or sponsored by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, for the period 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the suppliers, indicating the -

- (a) criteria used for the selection thereof, and
- (b) amount paid to each of them.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once more, the question goes far back to 2005, and needs time to be compiled. The information requested by the hon. Member will be completed, and will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Mr Uteem: I can understand that it takes time to compile so much information about *manger boire...*

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Uteem: If the hon. Minister cannot give me the figures, can I, at least, know what criteria have been used in selecting the suppliers of the food?

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister has replied that it is being compiled.

(Interruptions)

If the Minister has got the information, I have no qualm if he provides it.

TRADE DEFICIT

(No. 1B/505) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the trade deficit, he will state -

- (a) the latest estimates for the year 2010, and
- (b) if there has been a widening trend over the period of the Euro crisis and, if so, the measures being taken to limit the reliance on external borrowings to fund the widening trade gap.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, on the basis of the latest estimate, the trade deficit for 2010 is expected to be around Rs67 billion. Total export of goods (FOB) is projected at Rs63 billion, while total import of goods (FOB) is projected at Rs130 billion.

As regards part (b), indeed estimates of the trade deficit, as compared to the same period of last year, have been showing a widening trend over period of the Euro crisis.

For the first semester of 2010 as a whole, the trade deficit amounted to Rs31.5 billion compared to Rs 24.9 billion during the same period of last year, that is, it represents an increase of around 26.4%. However, both exports and imports of goods registered an increase during the period. Exports of goods increased from Rs29 billion to around Rs32 billion, which represents an increase of about 7.4 %, while imports of goods rose from Rs54 billion to around Rs63 billion, which represents an increase of about 16.2%.

On the issue of external borrowings to fund the widening trade gap, I would like to inform the hon. Member that no borrowings are made specifically to finance trade deficit. In fact, our trade deficit, which forms part of the current account deficit, is also being financed by net inflows from direct investment, portfolio investment and other investments, besides external public sector borrowings. In recent years, large capital inflows to tourism, real estate and the financial services sectors have more than offset the widening current account deficit resulting in balance of payments surpluses.

As the House is also aware, we have a comfortable level of international reserves that may be used to finance any short term deterioration in the balance of payments.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a widening increase in the trade deficit, and the balance of payments also is in deficit. Would the Minister of Finance consider that this deterioration in our external balance is sustainable in view of the fact that the Euro zone is in crisis and is affecting our capacity to export, while our imports are still rising, as he has stated?

Mr Jugnauth: That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I came with a number of measures, which I announced last week, to face the Euro crisis situation. We have to diversify our market; we have to widen the different sectors of the economy; we have to consolidate, first of all, the traditional sectors that have brought us revenue, and then we have to come up with new sectors. I need not repeat what I have stated before, namely the new pillars that we want to start, in order to see to it that there is growth in the country, that there is more revenue and that, ultimately, that levels up with the trade deficit.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the view of the Minister of Finance is that, in the long term, we would like to diversify the markets and find new products in

order to increase our capacity to raise foreign currency earnings, but we have an immediate problem which is a deteriorating deficit in the balance of trade, in the current balance and in the balance of payments. In the immediate period, what does the hon. Minister of Finance consider doing in terms of the exchange rate management system in view of disparity between the export and import price indices?

Mr Jugnauth: Insofar as the exchange rate is concerned, it is within the purview of the Bank of Mauritius, therefore, the hon. Member knows perfectly well that all the factors are being taken into consideration. The Monetary Policy Committee, which examines the economic situation, analyses the trend with regard to different economic indicators, takes a decision in the interest of the country. I will again refer the hon. Member to short term measures. This is precisely why we have, within *les 100 premiers jours*, worked hard and come up with a number of measures in order to address the immediate situation, but it is not only short terms measures. If the hon. Member will look carefully at the plan, he will see that the medium and long terms are also being addressed. That is only part of the problem. We will be coming shortly with the Budget, where we will trace the vision for the next coming five years. Let me also remind the hon. Member that the fact that the trade deficit has increased is not new, and I am sure the hon. Member is well aware. If we compare the situation from 2000 to 2005, the trade deficit is more than doubled, but that does not mean to say that we should go along the same line. That is why I have said that we need to have growth, and we need to have new sectors, new pillars of the economy, so that we earn more revenue in order to be able to balance and even out this deficit.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I understand the predicament of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, but the fact is...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The fact is, in the immediate term, with the euro zone crisis, with the demand falling and with the euro falling; there is an imbalance, a disparity in the currency situation to be able to redress the trade deficit now. So, the result is there, the deficit is widening and until we wait for these long-term measures to redress the situation, in the meantime, does the Minister have any view on what has to be done to redress the situation now?

The Deputy Speaker: This question has been answered and the Minister did explain that he came last week with measures and that some factors are not within his control but within the control of the Bank of Mauritius.

Mr Jugnauth: May I add, because the hon. Member has been emphasizing on the exchange rate. I know the difficulty of the Opposition. We have seen what they have prescribed. I won't go into that, but then the evident thing is that, true it is when the euro declined in value the revenue that we are earning also declines because we earn approximately 60% of our revenue from the European market. Therefore, I have said that there are very short-term measures to address this situation, but then, we can't *combler un déficit qui est aussi large que ça* in the short-term, it will take time. We need the measures to be fully implemented and they will bring us result in the short-term, but most specifically in the medium and long terms. I agree with that part - probably if the hon. Member is saying that more visible results will appear in the medium and long terms. That is true.

CYBER TOWER - RENT

(No. 1B/506) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Cyber Tower, he will state –

- (a) if any governmental department, parastatal body or any state enterprise is
 - (i) housed thereat;
 - (ii) proposing to rent office space thereat, giving a list thereof and indicate the rent payable per square feet, and
- (b) if the owners thereof have deviated from the policy of charging rent in US Dollars and renting only to BPO & ICT operators and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to inform the House that BPML is a company which operates in a very competitive environment and, therefore, disclosure of certain items of information relating to its operation may be detrimental to its profitability.

Notwithstanding, what I have just said and in the spirit of transparency, I shall state in reply to this question that the following governmental, parastatal and public enterprises are occupying space at the Cyber Tower.

- (i) The Permanent Court of Arbitration is housed in the Cyber Tower and is paying rent at the rate of Rs33 per square foot.
- (ii) The National Computer Board, which is a parastatal body, under the aegis of my Ministry, is renting space there since 2004 to house the Government On-line Centre (GOC) and is paying rent at the rate of Rs36 per square foot.
- (iii) Air Mate company, a subsidiary of Air Mauritius, which is classified as a State enterprise, is renting space there as from February 2006 and is paying rent in foreign currency at the rate of US Dollar 1.29 per square foot.

As regards part (a) section (ii) of the question, I am informed that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology will soon be renting space at Cyber Tower at the rate of Rs40 per sq foot.

Regarding part (b) of the question, it is the practice for BPML to charge rent in foreign currency as it also deals with foreign companies. However, for Government Departments and State Enterprises, they pay rent in rupees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although the tenants generally operate in ICT or BPO, BPML does not have any such policy which excludes other activities from being accommodated in the Cyber Tower. I am further informed that the decision to rent office space to companies, which are not in ICT/BPO, comes from the fact that there is presently office space available for renting at the Cyber Tower.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is ample proof that the landmark building that is meant for ICT and BPO operations is now being deviated for use as Government office.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In view of the fact that ICT and BPO are being propped up to be the key pillar of the economy, is this not a contradiction in terms that the most intelligent building in Mauritius is being rented as a Government tower?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Being given the need to optimise revenue, we cannot keep the building closed and empty so we have to seek further accommodation for all those who are willing to rent it.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what measures and what campaign are being proposed by the Minister to attract more ICT companies to replenish the vacancy of the building?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I would like, at this stage, to point out that two floors at Cyber Tower II, totalling about 28,000 sq. ft have remained vacant throughout the year. BPML responded to an open tender launched by Fashion Design Institute for renting 27,000 sq. ft. BPML was successful in this exercise, but another bidder has challenged the decision of FDL. The matter now rests with the Independent Review Panel for a decision.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rationale in charging rent in USD was that BPML borrowed under an Indian line of credit which is denominated in USD. Now that Cyber Tower is receiving rent in rupees, what measures are being taken by BPML and Cyber Tower properties to hedge against any adverse currency risk?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: This has nothing to do with the main question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If the hon. Member would come with a proper question.

The Deputy Speaker: If the Minister needs notice, I can't do otherwise. We move to the next question.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, the question says that if the owners have deviated...

The Deputy Speaker: No! Next question! The Minister stated that he needs notice of the question and I have no control over that. Next question, please!

HOSPITALS – CHARGE NURSE – MIDWIFERY CERTIFICATE

(No. 1B/507) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the post of charge nurse, he will

state if it is mandatory for female nursing officers to hold a midwifery certificate to be eligible for promotion thereto.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for bringing up this issue. I thank him for his concern as I, myself, personally had raised the issue when I was in the Opposition.

The services of both male and female nurses are enlisted to provide nursing care in our health institutions. In order to qualify as Nursing Officers, both male and female Student Nurses are recruited on the basis of same entry requirements and they have to follow the same training course at the Central School of Nursing for a period of three years. Upon successful completion of their training course, they are eligible for appointment as Nursing Officer and this has been the practice since the setting up of the Central School of Nursing.

While serving as Nursing Officers, only female nurses are required to undergo training in Midwifery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, as per the existing Schemes of Service for the post of Charge Nurse, both male and female, it is not mandatory for female Nursing Officers to hold a Midwifery Certificate to be eligible for promotion to the grade of Charge Nurse.

However, for promotion to the grade of female Charge Nurse, it has, so far, been a practice, that female Nursing Officers should hold a post basic certificate in Midwifery. I consider this to be discriminatory towards the female Nursing Officers vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to redress the situation, a Technical Committee, chaired by the Director Health Services (Curative), is presently studying this issue and it is expected to come up with a plausible solution in the best interest of the health services and the nursing cadre. I will personally follow up the matter closely and I expect the Technical Committee to give me its report in three weeks' time.

Dr. S. Boolell: Will the hon. Minister ensure that the Technical Committee also looks into the lack of midwives in the hospitals in view of the fact that they have only become

midwives in the past so as to be promoted to charge nurses? It is only a step. So, there is a lack of midwives at this level.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been a delay in training, therefore, there has been a lack of midwives, but the Technical Committee will sort out first the discriminatory issue and then we will look after any other issue.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me in relation to midwifery, concerning the promotion of midwives in Rodrigues - being given there is question of PRB and policy involved - there are 30 midwives in Rodrigues who are performing duties in the grade of nursing officer with no prospects

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry! This question concerns charge nurse.

Mr François: Because there are sort of midwives.

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

Mr François: There is no prospect of promotion as reported by PRB. Some have more than 10 years of experience. There is a change of name from community to senior midwives in Mauritius and there is promotion every five years. Will the hon. Minister see with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to remediate the case of these 30 midwives to avoid continuous frustration?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have already told the hon. Member that I may be proceeding to Rodrigues where I will have discussions with all the stakeholders on this issue and will be coming with a possible solution.

SPEED ZONES - CRITERIA

(No. 1B/508) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the speed zones of 40, 50, 60, 70, 90 and 110 Kms, he will state the criteria used for the demarcation thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, speed zones in Mauritius are governed by the Road Traffic Regulations 2004. It is the TMRSU which recommends speed limits based on the following technical criteria –

- (a) speed surveys are effected along a given road and the speed adopted by more than 85% of drivers is used to determine the appropriate speed, and
- (b) speed zones have been introduced before and after residential areas, where heavy pedestrian movements take place and in rural areas which are accident-prone. The applicable speed within the zones is 40 kilometres per hour.

The TMRSU also recommends speed limits based on engineering studies which include factors such as –

- geometric features of the road stretch which include vertical and horizontal alignment and sight distance.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is the hon. Minister satisfied with the mess which is usually caused on the motorway M1 on Sundays where there are speed limits of 40 and 60 kilometres within 100 metres and no work is being done and you are scared to be caught by the cops?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that there are certain guidelines for the engineers to follow. I am not a technician myself, but, on many occasions, I have requested them to have a look at the system. I have also observed in certain places from one limit to the other, it goes on at once and it becomes difficult also at times for drivers to control. I have requested them to have a look again at it and I do hope that we will come with certain amendments to the existing figures that we have.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is fair to the drivers for some areas which are being used by the Police as trapping areas rather than controlling the traffic. I could actually give an example; the road which joins Route St. Jean to the Motorway, 50 kilometre-bar, and no car which calls itself a car can go that slow.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are certain criteria which have to be respected and I am informed that normally they use the yardstick of international engineering methodology. I am not a specialist in that field and repeatedly they have been telling me. I don't even want to take any risk as well.

NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION - ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

(No. 1B/509) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Foundation information as to the anti-poverty strategy that will be adopted for the effective discharge of its responsibilities, following the changes that have taken place at the head thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme, the mandate of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is to provide assistance to the needy by exploring all possible avenues open to them to access resources and facilities. It is responsible to put up a strong and diversified platform so as to formulate targeted strategies and initiatives to, *inter alia* -

- (i) combat poverty;
- (ii) eliminate exclusion;
- (iii) promote inclusive and sustainable growth, and
- (iv) facilitate social progress.

In the light of this philosophy, the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) will pursue the implementation of its different programmes, such as Empowerment Programme (EP), Eradication of Absolute Poverty (EAP), Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups (TFIVG). However, these programmes are being fine-tuned and consolidated to render them more effective, wide ranging and result-oriented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, in this context, the NEF has, as a first step, undertaken an all-encompassing “Needs Assessment” to update its data-base on all households falling below the poverty line through individual interviews of heads of poor families. The development of a poverty map will provide a comprehensive view of the situation thereby allowing the NEF to redesign, strengthen and rationalise the existing programmes to ensure that they address priority objectives such as child welfare and development, employment of the

handicapped, training in demand-driven sectors and social housing. Moreover, there is a requirement for development of the computerised data-base and management information system to establish measurable monitoring indicators and an evaluation plan for the Foundation.

I am given to understand that we go a long way in ensuring a systematic approach, provision of services to needy and poor persons as well as gauge efficiency, effectiveness and impact of all the ongoing programmes on the beneficiaries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that a gigantic task has been bestowed upon my Ministry and I propose to proceed by way of extensive consultations and in dialogue with the stakeholders. Accordingly, my Ministry in collaboration with the NEF, the civil society, the private sector and other partners will organise in October this year the national *Assises* which will be instrumental in building greater synergy and coordination in poverty reduction strategies and in the formulation of a road map for the social integration and economic empowerment of the poor and needy persons.

In the meantime, since my assumption of office, a number of priorities have been determined, namely -

- (i) child welfare starting as from three months to 18 years in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare;
- (ii) employability of disabled persons in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions;
- (iii) enhancement of the “Training and Placement” Programme of the NEF, the doubling of persons trained and placed to 3,600 for the next 12 months,
- (iv) social housing in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Lands to ensure the construction of 10,000 houses mentioned in the President’s Address including 5,000 for the very poor, and
- (v) work from Home Project and fair trade opportunities for the poor.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a few questions, Sir. Would the hon. Minister inform the House what changes have taken place or are taking place at the level of the Board of the NEF?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure a homogenous team, there has been two departures, namely Mr Makoon and Mr Darga from the Board. There have been a few appointments, namely, Mr Louis Rivalland, Mr Jacques d'Unieville, Mr Shyam Surrat and Mr Patrice Legris.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the hon. Minister explain why some programmes that were interesting and promising such as the Special Entrepreneurship Programme are being reviewed, while the philosophy of other programmes, the Training and Placement Programme which was meant not to train as an end in itself, but to offer training only where there has been a placement why such programmes are being modified with the risk of the NEF becoming a training institution?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as review of programmes, it is normal for a new Minister to review early programmes. He would not expect it otherwise, the efficiency and effectiveness of every programme is being looked at and not just a particular one.

As regards the second part of this question, the hon. Member is not accurate in what he is saying and he has obviously read the wrong newspapers.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me be much more precise then. Will the hon. Minister not agree that the role of the NEF is not to dispense training and that, under the Training and Placement Programme, training was provided only where jobs had already been found by the NEF and that this is a fundamental change of the existing programme?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I was very clear. It's not true. Training and placement are still ongoing together. There is no change at all. Don't believe all you read on the newspapers! That's the point!

Mr Obeegadoo: We will come back to this. This is not a matter of believing newspapers. Will the hon. Minister explain to the House this idea of having a centre for research and analysis telling us how much it is going to cost, how many people are going to be employed there and the...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question. This is a general question.

Mr Obeegadoo: If the hon. Minister can answer.

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think, at present, there is one person employed there so it is not a huge cost. Probably, he might have an assistant in due course. As I have mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the importance is to have accurate information. At the moment, I do not know how many children need school materials. I do not know what sort of training is required, except from some pockets of poverty where exactly other people are so we do need important information. That's the first thing. Secondly, we must have it on a database so that we can follow. The hon. Member was previously Minister of Education. I will give an example. We take poor children who will be able to follow and have a performing class; we will be able to see whether some of the programmes that are being offered actually give results or not. We do need this information and every Government department needs information and is able to analyse it. I am surprised of this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Minister should not be surprised. Let me explain. Being given that the five-yearly CSO poverty survey is due next year and being given that the NEF study effected in year 2008, is presently being updated and will be completed in a matter of weeks, and that, instead of a new centre, a one or two person centre, the research analysis can be carried out and entrusted to the MRC, that the new Minister of Higher Education is emphasising applied research and has a budget of Rs100 m., would it not be much more cost effective to give this opportunity to the MRC to commission analytical work, to have recourse to the University of Mauritius rather than employing a young person, with no experience whatsoever of Mauritius, to be the one person centre?

Mr Duval: No, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very surprised when the hon. Minister says he does not have the figures right now. How many needy children and homeless citizens are there in this country? Isn't he aware that, in the Programme Based Budget Estimates 2010 and the Indicative Estimates of 2011 and 2012, the former Government and the former Minister of Finance had already estimated and identified 229 pockets of poverty, and had already drawn up the plan of how to come to the rescue of needy children, the homeless and so on? The question I want to put to the hon. Minister is although the Indicative Estimates in this document seem to indicate that the process to eradicate poverty, according to the very figures in this document, is

very slow and I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of it. Now that there is a focused and dedicated Ministry to combat poverty, how does he envisage to accelerate this process of giving facilities for upgrading the living environment, education to the poor and so on and what does he intend to do with all these programmes like Eliminating Absolute Poverty, Decentralised Cooperation Programme and all the other programmes that were set up by his Government?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Member does not want me to do my Speech on the Presidential Address now. Obviously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we mentioned before these are estimates. We may have the number of families, but we don't have the exact information about, firstly, the situation of these families in an easily managed data. Secondly, we also need information on individual members of the families, and thirdly, we are not only dealing with pockets of poverty. People may also be poor, but living in a rented room somewhere or whatever and which may be missed by the budgets on pockets of poverty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a very wide task. Everybody is invited to contribute and we are very open that is why we are going to have the Assizes in October. Even before the Assizes we have tried to target some areas which we think we can get on with like we mentioned the children and the other groups in my answer. That is how we are proceeding. Obviously, nobody can expect that, within a few weeks or a few months, we can eradicate poverty. The idea is to move along the path and do as much as we can during the time that this is being actioned.

Mr Obeegadoo: Listening to the Minister, the previous Board did not even establish a poverty profile. In any case, the Minister has referred to housing as the central plant of an anti poverty strategy and the commitment is for 10,000 units to be built over five years. After his first 100 days in office, will the hon. Minister please tell us how he proposes to move forward in that respect?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, housing is an issue. We are talking to the Ministry of Housing, but there are various concerns with housing, one being the cost of the housing. So far as we are concerned, we are only concerned with housing for the very poor. It is for about 5,000 families. The cost of the housing is important for us and it has to be affordable, but we are looking at it. We are going to establish our programme and Government will achieve the promise of the construction of the 10,000 housing units. That is our commitment to the nation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Since there is no programme yet in housing, may I ask about education? Education being the central plant in an anti poverty strategy, would the hon. Minister tell us what strategy has been thought through by his new Ministry having regard to using education and working with his colleague as a lever to combat poverty?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that's too easy. I think obviously we have to deal with the Minister of Education for education. What we are doing is a job of coordination. There is not only education as far as senior schools are concerned, we are taking it from three months and we are looking at how to actually have not only education, but, from an early age now, see also how their parents can help after school. Then we are looking at *enfants des rues* and people who fail. It is a big thing. The hon. Member was Minister of Education for five years. Look at what we have ended up with! A terrible disaster! So, it is going to take time.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Duval: You can make your funny comments, but, as a former Minister of Education you should be ashamed that we are looking at it only now. So, we are looking at it. Have some patience and you will see the results my friend!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to come to dollars and cents, now that we have a new Minister with a new Ministry, new committees and new programmes, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us whether additional new funds have been provided under the ERCP for the programmes that he is heading?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ERCP has been published; the hon. Member can have a look at it.

HOSPITALS - GYNAECOLOGISTS

(No. 1B/510) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the gynaecologists, she will state the number thereof posted at each hospital every day, on a 24-hour basis.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are in all 26 gynaecologists posted in the five Regional Hospitals and one in Rodrigues as follows -

Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital	:	5
Victoria Hospital	:	6
Flacq Hospital	:	5
J. Nehru Hospital	:	5
SSRN Hospital	:	5
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Rodrigues	:	1

In all hospitals in Mauritius, Specialists in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology work from 0900 to 1600 hours on weekdays and from 0900 hours to noon on Saturdays.

With a view to ensuring the continuity of services, especially night coverage on weekdays, weekends and public holidays, the Specialists are on call at home and are ready to attend to any emergency arising at the hospital. In addition, the Specialists on call are also required to do ward rounds during day time on Sundays and public holidays.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the ideal situation to ensure night coverage would be to have gynaecologists physically present at the hospital. In view of establishing such a roster for night coverage, my Ministry issued circulars inviting gynaecologists to express their interest for night coverage against payment of an allowance as prescribed by the PRB Report 2008. However, due to poor response, the roster could not be implemented.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that, in numerous cases these days, after delivery at the labour ward, women are left unattended until the following day for the necessary medical care, especially stitching and so on?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not come across any such case for the time being and I have not received any complaint on such cases.

Dr. S. Boolell: Would it be possible for the Minister to consider immediately creating a new grade at the registrar level of doctors who would be qualified as post graduates in

gynaecology and who would be physically present at the hospital while waiting for the day when they would be appointed Specialists so that there would be specialist care?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member must have read my mind.

(Interruptions)

In fact, following discussions at the level of my Ministry, we have come up with this proposal to improve the health care and we believe that, with the implementation of the registrar scheme, night coverage will be taken care of.

APOLO BRAMWELL HOSPITAL – INTERSECTION - CONSTRUCTION

(No.1B/511) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of an intersection at Réduit, leading to the Apollo Bramwell hospital, he will state –

- (a) the names of the -
 - (i) consultant thereof, indicating the amount of consultancy fees paid, and
 - (ii) contractor thereof, indicating the contract value, and
- (b) if there has been any delay in the execution thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the Réduit Triangle of an extent of 65 *arpents* of land caters for various development projects including Government offices, religious, educational and commercial institutions. An intersection with the A7 road at Réduit is being constructed to serve the Highlands Administrative City and all the stakeholders at Réduit Triangle, including the Apollo Bramwell Hospital. The provision of the intersection is very important as the A7 road is already highly congested. Apollo Bramwell Hospital has contributed Rs32.8 m. to the project.

The Consultant is Mega Design Ltd. The consultancy contract was awarded to the latter for the sum of Rs6,750,000 exclusive of VAT. As to date, an amount of Rs3,999,381.60 exclusive of VAT has already been paid to the consultant.

The contract for the construction works was awarded to Colas (Maurice) Ltée on 10 September 2008 for the sum of Rs287,339,425.50 inclusive of VAT.

As regards part (b) of the question, there has been delay in the execution of the construction works due to the following reasons -

- permission from the Supreme Court to divert River Cascade;
- rerouting of existing services such as CEB poles and cables, MT poles and cables and irrigation pipe belonging to Mon Desert Alma;
- relocation of the pumping station to cater for future development of SLDC (State Land Development Company Ltd);
- provision of a new access to the Mauritius Marathi Mandali Federation;
- relocation of the existing kalimaye, and
- bad weather conditions .

It is to be noted that there is no additional contractual cost as a result of the delay to the project.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the delay in the execution of works was not also due to wrong design carried out by the consultant?

Mr Bachoo: No Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the rerouting of services was not taken care of at the design stage?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, though these things are mentioned at the design stage, unfortunately, in most of the projects that we are undertaking, we get too many problems in order to remove the services. I can give one example - the grade separated junction which we want to construct at Caudan. We are facing the same problem because it takes too much time and this explains the reason why there has been such a delay.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has an indication of the additional cost to be paid with regard to delays?

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned no additional contractual cost is incurred as a result of delay for the project.

MONTAGNE LONGUE FOOTBALL GROUND - FLOODLIGHTS USE - PAYMENT

(No. 1B/512) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Montagne Longue football ground, he will state if the football teams, making use thereof at night, are required to pay for the use of the floodlights and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when the decision was taken and by whom, and
- (b) the monthly cost of electricity consumed in relation thereto.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that the football teams using the Long Mountain football ground at night are required to contribute a nominal fee of Rs125 for two hours session on once weekly basis.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that this decision was taken by the Long Mountain Village Council in 2006 in order to prevent serious abuse on the part of the football teams and due to the fact that very often the light was not switched off after use.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the monthly cost of electricity consumed is Rs1500.

I am also informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that, prior to this measure, the monthly electricity bill amounted to Rs5000.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the members of Constituency No. 4 and the football teams had a meeting in that same area. Is the hon. Minister aware that when we had that meeting last week, the football teams had to have recourse to a generator set because the Village Council had not paid their electricity bill for the past month and the supply was disconnected?

Mr Aimée: I do not have this information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: I heard the hon. Minister saying that this football team has been asked to pay Rs125 for two hours. Can I ask him why is it that, in the case of Black River, I asked the Minister the same question about the teams which are asked to pay Rs200 for two hours?

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: The hon. Member would understand that the question had been put three weeks ago and I don't have it in my mind actually. He can come with a substantive question and I will reply.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le fait de faire payer les clubs est un problème récurrent, à mon avis, en particulier dans les régions rurales; c'est ce que j'ai constaté ici. Je pense personnellement - et M. le ministre sera certainement d'accord avec moi - qu'il est temps d'exempter ces clubs de ces frais d'éclairage, surtout les petits clubs de quartier. Je pense que M. le ministre prendra la bonne décision.

Mr Aimée: M. le président, à mon avis, je ne crois pas que c'est une bonne décision. Quand on obtient quelque chose en cadeau, on n'arrive pas à l'utiliser à bon escient. Il y avait abus, comme je viens de mentionner. Au lieu de payer R 1,500 par mois, auparavant le District Council de Pamplemousses payait R 5,000. Nous avons plus de 150 terrains qui sont éclairés, et vous pouvez vous imaginer tout l'argent du contribuable qui irait dans le paiement de l'électricité !

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is the general policy adopted by all District Councils to make all the football teams around the island pay for electricity charges when they are using the football grounds?

Mr Aimée: It is a normal practice. It's the policy.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je peux confirmer au ministre qu'il y a une disparité. Je confirme que, dans les villes, tel n'est pas le cas. Si M. le président me permet de faire un commentaire ; les municipalités permettent aux clubs de pratiquer le foot ou le volley, quel que soit le sport, sans payer les frais d'éclairage. C'est juste pour vous éclairer, M. le ministre.

Mr Aimée: *Je ne suis pas dans le noir.* Normally, for football grounds or any other playgrounds where there are lights, there must be people to look after them, maintain them, and switch on and off the electricity. For that, we have to pay, and this is the general policy.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now we understand that it is the policy of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. My question was related to the District Council, because a letter had been sent to all the football teams in Montague Longue from the District Council. I would like to know whether it is the policy of that particular District Council or all the District Councils to charge fees for the use of football grounds having floodlights.

Mr Aimée: It is the policy of all District Councils, and particularly at Montague Longue. The place belongs to the District Council and not to the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has clearly said that it is the policy of Government. We move to the next question!

NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAMS – GRANTS

(No. 1B/513) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the national football teams of the first and second divisions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to -

- (a) the amount of grant allocated annually to each team, and
- (b) if the Council is proposing to increase the quantum thereof, over the next financial years.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that grants are provided to national football teams registered and recognised by it during this financial year as follows -

- (a) an amount of Rs500,000 to the 1st Division football team, ASPL 2000. This payment has been made annually to the team since financial year 2004/2005 to date;

- (b) an amount of Rs500,000 to the 1st Division football team, PAS Mates. This payment has been made annually to the team since financial year 2007/2008 to date, and
- (c) an amount of Rs50,000 to each 2nd Division football team. The names of these teams are: Black Horns, La Cure Sylvester and Bolton Football Club.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the quantum is reviewed each year by the Council depending on its Budget.

BUS MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

(No. 1B/514) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the buses, he will state if Government will consider introducing low floor ones, on the acquisition of the next fleet thereof, with a view to catering for the convenience of the elderly and disabled persons.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been Government's intention to launch a Bus Modernisation Programme which would enable bus operators to renew their fleet with new generation buses and which would, among others, be low floor to speed up and facilitate boarding, especially for the elderly and handicapped. My Ministry has already initiated action to give effect to that decision.

In this respect, the Road Traffic (Construction and Use) Regulations 2010 has also made provisions for both low and semi-low floor buses with a maximum of two steps.

However, following representations received from bus operators to the effect that low floor and semi-low floor buses would be too costly, they would not be able to purchase these buses in view of financial difficulties they were facing. Accordingly, the appropriate provisions in the Regulations had to be amended to provide for high floor buses also.

I wish to assure the House that, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government is going ahead with a Bus Modernisation Programme to upgrade bus service throughout the island.

MONT CHOISY PROJECT

(No. 1B/515) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Beach Authority, he will state the action his Ministry has initiated against the Authority, if any, following the recent case of mismanagement of the Mont Choisy project.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to this question, I would like, at the very outset, to state that there has not been mismanagement of the Mont Choisy Project. Prior to 2002, the control and management of public beaches were vested with the Minister of Local Government, and the Ministry had entered into agreements with private commercial interest to occupy and run tuck shops on public beaches, for example at Blue Bay and Belle Mare public beaches.

When the Beach Authority Act was passed in 2002, it stipulated that every agreement to which the Ministry of Local Government was a party, prior to the coming into operation of the Act, shall have effect as if the Authority were a party to it. Accordingly, all responsibilities of the Ministry of Local Government with regard to the management of public beaches were transferred to the Beach Authority.

The Beach Authority has, since 2002, taken over the management of public beaches, including the management of agreements for the occupation of tuck shops which the Ministry of Local Government was doing before. *A priori*, there does not seem to be anything illegal about it, and, in some cases, restaurants and tuck shops have been constructed on public beaches by different authorities. For example, a restaurant and six tuck shops were leased out at La Cuvette public beach in year 2003 and six tuck shops were constructed at St Felix public beach in April 2005, to mention a few. Pursuant to this policy that already existed, and acting in good faith, the Beach Authority had, therefore, called for public tenders for the renovation and occupation of premises found on public beaches, including Mont Choisy, for commercial activities. Every step of the tender exercise was approved by the Beach Authority Board. The Board, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, comprises, *inter alia*, the acting Chief Surveyor, representing the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and, at no time, did the Board consider the exercise as being unlawful.

Subsequent to this tender exercise, agreements were entered into with the highest bidders for the renovation and operation of the buildings for commercial purposes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the light of what I just stated, it is clear that the Beach Authority had acted in good faith, and in accordance with prevailing practices since the Beach Authority Bill was passed in the Assembly in the year 2002.

On 19 May 2010, in the light of questions put on the renovation works carried out at Mont Choisy beach, my Ministry wrote to the Attorney General's office, explaining the circumstances under which the agreements were entered into by the Beach Authority, and taking into account the previous advice tendered by it in the case of renting the old building at Belle Mare public beach. The advice of the latter was accordingly sought in the matter. The Ministry of Housing and Lands also sought the Attorney General's Office advice on the same issue.

Subsequently, the Attorney General's Office advised that the Beach Authority is not empowered to grant commercial leases over State land within a public beach, unless amendments are brought to the Beach Authority Act with consequential amendments to the State Land Act and the *Pas Géométriques* Act.

My Ministry so informed the Beach Authority and invited it to take such steps as required in order to comply with the advice.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, then can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Beach Authority had obtained all the necessary permits before construction?

Mr Aimée: No, as I said.

Mr Nagalingum: Did the Ministry seek advice from the SLO when representation was made concerning the illegal construction and what was the advice tendered to the Ministry?

Mr Aimée: The hon. Member was not listening, I think. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last part of my question says clearly that I have sought advice from the SLO. Even the Ministry of Housing and Lands also sought advice from the SLO on the same issue. It is mentioned clearly in my answer.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister whether, at least, they sent a site plan to obtain a building permit from the District Council?

Mr Aimée: In fact, no, Sir. As I said, it was the practice since the enactment of the Beach Authority. All the former Ministers have acted similarly.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

The Ag. 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 Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.32 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.08 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

EURO ZONE CRISIS

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am addressing the House today to inform hon. Members of our proposed response to the crisis in the Euro zone and UK as austerity programmes begin to bite and their currencies weaken. Given our strong dependence on the UK and the Euro zone for most of our exports, these developments are having a negative impact already this year.

The crisis is already hitting us this year with growth likely to be in the range of 3.5 to 4 percent, instead of the 4.6 percent previously expected. Next year, the effect could be worse with growth likely to be around 3 percent instead of the above 5 percent forecast at the time of the last Budget.

This current crisis compels us to expand in non-euro based markets, a development that, in any case, would be called for, given the shifting of economic power to emerging economies in Asia.

In consultation with stakeholders, we have developed a Rs12 billion programme for the next few years based on burden sharing. The public sector will contribute Rs7 billion and the private sector some Rs5 billion. A document has been released by my Ministry and is available on the Ministry of Finance website. A copy has been dispatched already to hon. Members and this document describes our response in detail.

In implementing the programme, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will continue to rely on the support of Members, the population and the stakeholders. We also expect our development partners to continue providing financial support, technical assistance and capacity building.

During what was described as the Great Recession in 2008, the challenge was to provide transitional financing to survive the temporary external shock. Now we need medium-term restructuring of the entire economy. To be competitive, firms will need to reduce debt and increase equity as well as reduce operating costs and modernise their equipment. We also need to work with enterprises to diversify to the rapidly growing emerging markets, particularly in Asia.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a platform to match workers losing their jobs with demand in expanding sectors will be crucial. Moreover, we will need to focus on providing jobs to the large number of women involved.

The seven pillars of the response I have presented to the nation are -

- industry and enterprise restructuring;
- deleveraging;
- supporting the creation of new financing instruments;
- fast re-skilling and re-employment of retrenched workers, with a focus on retrenched women workers;
- acceleration of public infrastructure;

- protecting consumers, and
- modernising regulations to improve competitiveness.

The core features of our policy response are the following -

- It is based on the expectation that there will be a protracted period of sluggish GDP growth in the euro zone economies;
- It is formulated on the thinking that we need to take advantage of the rebalancing of the global economy to diversify our exports and economy at the same time as we address the euro crisis;
- It assumes that external shocks and unprecedented events are a recurring feature of the new world economy to which our enterprises must build lasting resilience;
- It will be implemented on a burden-sharing basis with the participation of the industries, the enterprises and the banks as well as the non-bank financial institutions;
- It places a deep responsibility on the enterprises which are facing difficulty to restructure and deleverage;
- It recognises that there may be some retrenchment of workers in the course of restructuring, therefore requiring Government and the private sector to collaborate in redeploying them to the growing parts of the economy;
- It will review and modernise regulations and licensing arrangements focusing on e-government approaches and streamlining of the regulatory framework to ensure compliance at lower cost. This work will build on the progress achieved in improving our Doing Business Ranking;
- It provides for parastatals operating on a commercial basis and Government-owned enterprises to finance their operating costs on their own and not depend on budgetary transfers. Each enterprise will need to bring its operations in line with Government's policy to deleverage, restructure and to be efficient by the global

standards. The restructuring of Government-owned enterprises is also vital to improving the management of public sector debt. Government will continue to provide financing for their investment programme, with the requirement that, in the coming years, they will provide a real return of, at least, 5% on capital invested;

- It factors in the importance of fast implementation of public infrastructure projects to the restructuring of our economy and to building long-term resilience;
- It recognises that while sectors that are exposed to the crisis need support, the growing industries will also need to restructure to maximise benefits from the global economic rebalancing.

The main economic sectors that will be directly affected by the policy response are -

- Export-oriented enterprises;
- SMEs;
- Tourism;
- Sugar;
- Consumers;
- Public enterprises, and
- Public infrastructure

However, the restructuring and deleveraging constitute a reform that must cut across all sectors of the economy so as to be ready for the global rebalancing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to clarify the difference in the approach between the Additional Stimulus Package (ASP) and the ERCP.

The ASP was a response to a transitional external shock. This required financing through the period of the shock. The ERCP is a response to a long lasting period of weak demand in our main export markets and a permanent shift in market power from Europe to Asia. Financing

cannot address this type of structural change. Deep restructuring is required; most often accompanied by debt reduction and increased capitalisation. It is crucial for good policy making to understand the difference between adjustment to a permanent shock (ERCP) and financing to deal with a transitional shock (ASP).

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may find it useful to consider some examples of the differences -

- ASP provided financing including for assets leased back temporarily and until, of course, the assets could be bought back. ERCP, on the other hand, encourages permanent sales of assets to reduce debt and increase equity.
- ASP encouraged debt restructuring with additional debt to tide through the temporary shock. ERCP encourages debt reduction via instruments such as an equity Fund.
- ASP encouraged preserving employment to be prepared for recovery after the shock passed. ERCP encourages efficiency gains and competitiveness through productivity gains that may often require more capital intensive operations.
- ASP did not require massive investment in retooling. ERCP requires such investment via LEMS IV and V which are being set up.
- ASP focused on ensuring survival in Mauritius based on existing markets. ERCP requires new markets and may involve delocalisation of low end production.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the expected outcomes from a determined national effort to implement the ERCP are the following -

- A strengthening of the resilience of our export-oriented enterprises to external shocks through restructuring and deleveraging.
- A new business culture where firms will be able to access finance in times of difficulties through the mainstream banking system rather than resort to assistance from Government.

- More diversified markets for our industries, in particular reducing dependence on euro-based markets.
- A greater integration of the Mauritian economy in the new global architecture being moulded by BRIC countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China - and the shifting of economic power.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has the required competent team working with determination under the leadership of the Prime Minister and I have no doubt that we will deliver and live up to the expectations of the nation.

We look to a coordinated national effort and will rely on the support of Members, the population and stakeholders to help us implement this programme. By working together we will overcome this latest challenge and emerge with a stronger, more resilient and diversified economy.

Thank you.

(5.18 p.m.)

9th AFRICA GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ACT FORUM

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am, for the benefit of the House, making a statement on the account of the 9th Africa Growth Opportunities Act Forum held in Washington from 02 to 03 August 2010.

The AGOA Forum was preceded by a meeting of AGOA Consultative Group on 02 August. The objective of the meeting was to define the position of AGOA beneficiary countries on the various agenda items slated for discussions at the AGOA Forum. The focus was on the new strategies that are necessary to expand the US-Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) Trade, measures to be taken to consolidate gains from Sub Saharan Africa and US trade and strategies to improve AGOA business opportunities, amongst others.

The meeting took note of a report published by the Mc Kinsey Global Institute on the progress and potential of African economies. The report indicates that Africa's economic growth

is creating substantial new business opportunities that are often overlooked by Global companies. The return on foreign investment in Africa is higher than in any other developing region and the rise of the African urban consumer is already fuelling growth.

I had the opportunity to emphasise the wind of change blowing over Africa in a panel of discussion on new strategies to tap business opportunities on the continent at the Forum. By highlighting the economic reform taking place in many African countries, including in Mauritius, I indicated the huge trade and investment potential that had yet to be tapped. In this regard, there was consensus on the need for an information and communication strategy to sensitise the US Business Community on the existing potential and the real opportunities for business.

The meeting observed that since the enactment of AGOA, US trade with Sub-Saharan Africa had increased, but remained concentrated on a few products. The full potential of AGOA which covered some 6,400 products had, therefore, yet to be fully tapped. It was also noted that some agricultural products in which many Sub-Saharan African countries had a comparative advantage were not covered by AGOA. It was, therefore, proposed to make a strong plea to the US Authorities to expand the scope of AGOA to cover high value added agricultural products which were either grown or processed in Sub-Saharan Africa. It was further surmised, given the net increase in US exports to Sub-Saharan Africa from USD10 billion in 2000 to USD18.5 billion in 2010 to transform AGOA from a unilateral US initiative into a US-Sub-Saharan Africa Partnership Agreement.

Mauritius made the following proposals at the Forum which were captured in the report of the AGOA Ministerial Consultative group and communicated to the US Authorities -

- (a) the need to extend AGOA beyond 2015 to provide the necessary legal security and predictability to exporters and investors;
- (b) the need to extend the third country fabric derogation which was set to expire in September 2012 over a long term and sustained basis. It is to be noted that Lesotho which was initially against the extension of the derogation for non LDC's, finally agreed that the extension should not be done on a discriminatory basis, but should not unduly disadvantage the LDC's, and

- (c) the need to simplify the rules of origin for canned tuna to promote exports on the US market.

Mauritius also called on the US Authorities to ensure that the AGOA benefits were not undermined as a result of the intended review of the US preference programme which was aimed at harmonising the various US preference programmes. It was indicated that the extension of AGOA type benefits to competitive garment producers in Asia such as Cambodia, Bangladesh could negatively impact on exports of garments from AGOA beneficiaries and may result, in some cases, in the demise of the garment sector, with the ensuing socio-economic implications. While not being against the extension of preferential access to LDC's, the view of Mauritius and the other African countries was either to exclude from the ambit of the preference programme the most sensitive exports or to cap exports from these countries at a certain level.

All these points were raised at the AGOA Forum by several Ministers. I also had the opportunity to discuss these issues at a bilateral meeting with the Deputy Secretary of State for Africa, Jonnie Carlson, and the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Ron Kirk.

In addition, Mauritius sought the support of the US Authorities, in particular USAID to assist in the operationalisation of the COMESA infrastructure fund and to provide technical assistance for the establishment of a regional pipeline facility.

I also discussed with them the negative impact which the suspension of Madagascar as an AGOA beneficiary was having on regional integration. In this regard, a proposal was made to include a clause in AGOA to safeguard the interests of entrepreneurs and cross-border investors in the event of political turmoil.

At the meeting of the Africa consultative group meeting, the various proposals made at the Forum were noted by the US Authorities and there are some indications that consideration was being given to the extension of AGOA and the third country fabric derogation.

I also proposed the holding of a US-Africa Summit on a regular basis to provide the necessary political momentum to boost up US-Africa relations. The proposal was welcomed and it was decided that the matter be pursued at the level of the African Union.

Mr Speaker, Sir, President Obama convened a meeting with the Ministers present at the AGOA Forum on 03 August. In his address, he reiterated some of the points he raised at the

meeting with the Parliamentarians in Ghana, in particular, the need for strong institutions in Africa, good governance, transparency in policy making and the need to uphold the rule of law. Regarding AGOA, while acknowledging that it had contributed in increasing exports from Sub-Saharan Africa, its full potential had yet to be unleashed. The reasons for the modest performance were being examined by the various US Authorities concerned with a view to addressing some of the constraints that were impeding higher exports growth under AGOA.

Mr Speaker, Sir, AGOA does provide an important framework to substantially increase trade on the US market. The third country fabric derogation has helped Mauritius to sustain exports of garments while some progress has been noted regarding exports of other items such as fish, spectacles, food preparation, amongst others. The potential of AGOA, however, has yet to be fully tapped. I am convening a joint public-private sector meeting on Thursday to brainstorm on possible strategies that Mauritius may have to adopt to derive the maximum benefits from AGOA as well as measures to be taken to fully exploit the huge potential that exist for the exports of special sugar. The US is a huge market for special sugar and Mauritius should explore to the maximum this remunerative market.

The meeting will also examine the current pattern of trade of Mauritius, especially on our traditional markets and action that will have to be initiated to tap trade and investment opportunities on the regional and emerging markets such as India, China, Pakistan, Turkey and Russia and the EFTA group amongst others, given the huge potential that exist.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.26 p.m)

CITE CHEBEL –SHELTERS

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to the issue raised by hon. Member Bhagwan at the sitting of 27 July 2010 regarding the occupation of the temporary shelters at Cité Chebel.

A site visit was carried out on 05 August this year and has revealed 5 CIS Shelters, 3 of which are in duplex. These shelters are presently occupied by 8 families. Three families have

been occupying the shelters since 2002 from the time of Cyclone Dina. The 5 other families have moved within the last year in the shelters abandoned by previous occupiers.

Regarding the 3 families who are there since 2002, 2 of them were each allocated a house by the National Empowerment Foundation in April 2009 and one was allocated a building site lease at Bambous. They have all refused to move from the shelters.

A notice to squatter has been served on the other 5 families, who have moved there during the past year, whereas, in respect of the 3 families who have refused to move building, sites are being identified for an eventual allocation to them. These shelters are derelict and will be pulled down. I wish to inform the House that, from information obtained, one of the new occupier is reportedly paying a monthly rent of some Rs1,500 to a previous occupier. This is a new emerging phenomenon – private tenants on squatted State lands.

Thank you.

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the Code Civil Mauricien (Amendment) Bill No. XV of 2010 was read a first time.

(5.28 p.m)

MOTIONS

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr A. Gungah: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to move the Motion standing in my name -

“That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Amendment No. 2) Order 2010 made by the President of the Republic on 09 August 2010 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 10 August 2010 be approved.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, Section 3(1) of the Civil Establishment Act 1981, as subsequently amended, stipulates that the President may by Order –

- (a) establish offices in the Public Service of Mauritius;
- (b) determine the number of persons to be appointed to such offices; and
- (c) determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment No. 2) Order 2010 reflects the changes on the approved Establishment of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Civil Establishment (Amendment No. 2) Order 2010 is, therefore, now submitted for approval by the National Assembly.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the Motion to the House.

Mr J. Von-Mally 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.

(5.30 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue):

M le président, permettez moi de vous féliciter pour votre élection aux fonctions de Président de cette auguste assemblée pour la deuxième fois, élection qui a fait l'unanimité de la Chambre et c'est tout à votre honneur, M. le président, car cela démontre la maîtrise que vous avez sur la façon de diriger nos travaux. Je voudrais, par la même occasion, féliciter l'honorable Roopun pour son élection comme vice président de la Chambre et je félicite aussi tous les députés nouvellement élus.

M. le président, j'ai une pensée spéciale pour ces militantes et militants qui se sont donnés corps et âme pendant la campagne électorale pour une grande cause, une cause noble – la méritocratie, M. le président. Nous connaissons tous les résultats mais ce n'est que partie remise. Les clamours électorales sont derrière nous. Plus de trois mois se sont écoulés depuis les élections générales et nous avons en face de nous le discours programme présenté par le président de la république le 08 juin 2010.

M. le président, je vais au cours de mon discours faire référence non seulement au discours programme de 2010 à 2015, mais aussi à celui de 2005 à 2010. Le discours programme de 2010 à 2015 énonce la politique gouvernementale et la vision de ce gouvernement sur plusieurs sujets et j'aurais l'occasion de parler sur ces sujets.

Je voudrais là me référer à deux paragraphes précis, M. le président, les paragraphes 2 et 3 du discours programme et je cite -

« 2. The policies pursued by Government, during the last five years, have been endorsed by the population at large. They have expressed their approval of Government's philosophy and of the concrete measures already taken to address historical inequities and open new opportunities accessible to all.”

Ce paragraphe fait mention de la population dans son ensemble. *I beg to differ, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Déjà les élections démontrent que ce n'est pas la population dans son ensemble, car si nous retirons ceux qui n'ont pas voté aux dernières élections, l'alliance de l'avenir a scoré 50.7% et quelle a été la philosophie de ce gouvernement parce qu'on parle d'un gouvernement de continuité? Il nous faudrait retourner en arrière, retourner dans le temps, M. le président, retourner en 2006 où le premier budget du gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale a été présenté à la nation mauricienne. Les mots utilisés pendant la présentation, M. le président, sont des mots très forts et qui restent gravés, aujourd'hui, dans nos mémoires : budget de rupture, M. le président, une toute nouvelle vision de notre économie basée sur l'ouverture de notre économie. Pour confirmer ces dires, M. le président, je fais référence du discours de l'ancien ministre des finances au paragraphe 297 où il vient proposer à la nation un nouveau modèle de développement axé sur l'ouverture, l'initiative et les risques calculés. Il continue : ‘nous avons lancé une réforme en profondeur de notre économie, de nos institutions et de notre société pour

que l'île Maurice toute entière puisse se transformer et affronter les défis présents et à venir.' Fin de citation, M. le président.

Au fil du temps, cela a été le même langage. Par exemple, M. le président, le discours de l'honorable Deerpalsing vient aussi confirmer que cela a été un travail d'équipe, de tout un chacun, du Premier ministre, du ministre des finances, de l'honorable Sayed-Hossen et des autres parlementaires du gouvernement. Elle vient confirmer qu'il y a eu beaucoup de travail fait afin de prendre cette décision où le gouvernement propose à la nation un virage de 180%. Quand je me réfère, M. le président, aux autres discours - et là j'ai avec moi le discours de l'honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen où lui aussi, vient parler d'un '*new development model*', *Mr Speaker, Sir*. Pourquoi je fais le point, M. le président? C'est parce qu'on a eu, ces derniers temps, le sentiment que toute cette vision du modèle de développement qu'on a eu ces cinq dernières années était l'œuvre de l'ancien ministre des finances. Moi, je tiens à prouver que ça a été la vision du gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale et c'est cette même vision aujourd'hui. Je me réfère à une publication en date de mai 2010 du rapport numéro 14 du National Economic and Social Council. Je tiens à préciser, M. le président, que ce rapport contient deux paragraphes fondamentaux – le paragraphe 6. Je cite –

« The influx of foreigners whether as workers or new residents of real estates is creating imbalances often unwelcome by local residents.”

The massive purchase of residential property by foreigners has had the effect of sharply boosting prices of housing to the extent of placing them outside the reach of even middle income Mauritians. L'effet de cette philosophie, de cette vision d'ouverture de l'économie – voilà une première conséquence comme énoncée dans ce rapport. Deuxièmement, au paragraphe 8 – et c'est là où le bât blesse, M. le président, quand vous faites référence à ce qui a été dit dans le discours programme. Je cite –

“Globalisation has also brought about a wider dispersion of the distribution of income with the gap between the rich and the poor constantly widening. This gap between the haves and the have-nots is becoming a cause of concern, the more so as market forces seem incapable of alleviating the problems of the poor.”

What is more disturbing is that the income of the richest segment of Mauritian household is progressing at a higher rate than that of the poorest segment. Have we addressed inequalities, Mr Speaker, Sir? The answer is no. Now, with regard to what is stated in the Government Programme where I made reference earlier, the policies pursued by Government, during the last five years, have been endorsed by the population at large. The philosophy and the concrete measures already taken – we have the result, Mr Speaker, Sir, of those concrete measures. Now, what they are asking the population is to continue that process. In the same report, Mr Speaker, Sir - I'll make reference to that because it is important - at paragraph 2.4.4 and I quote –

“if one is to make simplistic projections of the observed trends that conclusion may appear rather disturbing”

If this trend is maintained, that is what we are asked to follow, at the time of the next survey, that is, by 2011-2012, the 20% of richest Mauritians will be earning Rs53,592. per month against Rs7,270. per month for the 20% of poorest Mauritians. *Est-ce que c'est cette politique qu'on voudrait implanter dans le pays M. le président?* We have seen, Mr Speaker, Sir, that over the past five years, the gap between the rich and the poor of this country has widened mais de quelle justice sociale parle-t-on? Est-ce qu'on parle de cette justice sociale où la croissance, où les fruits de la croissance ont bénéficié principalement aux pauvres ? Je me rappelle d'une phrase que l'ancien ministre des finances aimait mentionner dans la Chambre ‘*the trickle-down effect*’. *This has never taken place, Mr Speaker, Sir.* La croissance que nous avons eue n'a pas réduit la pauvreté, au contraire, elle a engendré une augmentation de la pauvreté que je qualifierais de croissance appauvrissante. We have reached a point, Mr Speaker, Sir, where those who can afford will get what they want in this country; where economic efficiency means economic anarchy; the survival of the economically fittest; the rest can suffer and die, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Il y a comme un sentiment de découragement dans le pays, la morosité s'installe. Même ceux qui ont voté pour l'actuel gouvernement perdent confiance. Les gens ont peur pour leur avenir et le régime en place peine à les rassurer. Ce qu'on appelle le ‘noubanisme’ commence à prendre racine. La méfiance est à l'ordre du jour. On guette les nominations. On surveille son

allié. Le mécontentement entre les partisans est visible. L'impatience des uns et des autres se fait sentir et nous, le peuple, appréhendons l'avenir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me make reference to another paragraph, that is, paragraph 10 of the Government Programme and I quote -

10. Government will reorganise the Management Audit Bureau into an Office of Public Sector Governance. The office will operate under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office. It will have the responsibility to ensure that public sector management becomes more outcome-oriented and is in line with best practices of governance, in particular those relating to transparency and accountability.

Quand nous évoquons nos institutions aujourd’hui nous savons ce que pensent nos compatriotes; la plupart de ces institutions subissent une ingérence régulière du pouvoir. Beaucoup parmi ces institutions subissent ces ingérences sans pouvoir rien faire. Certains mauriciens sont très sceptiques quand on évoque l’indépendance de ces institutions. Tout cela démontre que ces institutions soi-disant indépendantes ont pris un sale coup ces derniers temps.

Concernant la transparence, M. le président, je pense que ce gouvernement est très mal placé pour en parler. Ces derniers temps, à l’intérieur de cette Chambre, il y a eu beaucoup d’interrogations sur les sujets où on aurait souhaité voir beaucoup plus de transparence mais pas seulement nous, M. le président, même la population. Vous serez d’accord avec moi que, s’il y a un moyen pour que la population sache comment le gouvernement dépense son argent, c’est à travers les membres de cette Chambre, M. le président. Je prends l’exemple de plusieurs dossiers traités ici, tels que le contrat signé avec le Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd.; a contract worth billions of rupees. We had so many questions in this House requesting for information, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we are spending taxpayers’ money. We have not, until now, had a single look, seen a single word, a single sentence in that contract, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Tianli/Jin-Fei Project, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a mega project, as stated by Government. We have asked so many questions, and we were even told that, with regard to on-site and off-site infrastructural works, the group is going to foot the bill, but what have we seen later? Government has had to foot the bill with regard to those infrastructural works.

Tout récemment, il y a eu le cas du *double hull vessel*. Cela démontre, M. le président, que quand le gouvernement parle de transparence, on n'a pas les réponses nécessaires. Je prends comme référence deux autres projets également mentionnés à l'intérieur de la Chambre, M. le président, notamment le CT Power Project et le Gamma-Covanta Project ; deux projets qui ont été traités dans une totale opacité. Je vais retourner un peu plus tard sur ces deux projets.

They were unsolicited bids, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Financial Secretary said that unsolicited bids are a recipe for disaster. That's where we are today, Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the power sector and, as I have stated, I will get to that later.

Ça c'est le volet transparence, *but when we get to accountability*, c'est la même chose. Là aussi, je me réfère à ce qui a été dit ici. Par exemple, les *hedging losses* qui ont coûté des milliards de roupies aux consommateurs mauriciens, M. le président. Là aussi, on a posé des questions qui sont restées sans réponse, que ce soit les *hedging losses* au niveau d'Air Mauritius ou au niveau de la STC.

M. le président, qui sont les responsables? Est-ce qu'ils ont eu à répondre? *How do we define accountability, Mr Speaker, Sir?* *How do we put that in practice*, si ceux qui ont été responsables de ce que j'ai évoqué n'ont pas eu à répondre, M. le président? Ce n'est pas seulement nous qui allons payer tout cet argent mais c'est aussi nos enfants et peut-être leurs enfants aussi – les enfants de nos enfants, M. le président. *Who are those responsible? Like I said, there are questions which have been put in this House, and I even have with me...*

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. I see the hon. Member is using a laptop or whatever it is. He is not allowed to do that. No Member has the right to bring in a laptop until the House decides on the issue. For the time being, could you please remove the laptop from the House? If the hon. Member uses a laptop and the infrastructure of the National Assembly, it can bring down the system that we have. As a matter of principle, no laptop is allowed in the House. Carry on, please.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Like I said, we even had questions in this House regarding the hedging saga, if I may call it this way. A Member from Government side put a question to the Minister, and asked him - I quote -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree that there is a serious governance issue in this case? The decision was taken, and then the Board was made aware of that decision. Could he inform the House whether it is envisaged to review the way of proceeding at the STC?”

It is not only a question of reviewing the proceeding; it's a question of being answerable; it's a question of being accountable, Mr Speaker, Sir. We cannot use billions of taxpayers' money the way it had been used with regard to hedging losses, and nobody to be answerable, Mr Speaker, Sir. Il faut qu'il y ait des actions, M. le président ! Vous avez des devoirs dans la vie, mais vous avez aussi des responsabilités. Je pense que c'est une phrase qu'aime mentionner le Premier ministre, M. le président.

We have also seen that with the land purchased by Government at BAT. We have seen that also, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the programme that was put up for the launching of branding Mauritius, and I have a copy of a document laid in this House, where an amount of Rs3,835,929.91 was spent for a party, which is equivalent to 1,534,371 *di pain maison* for our children going at school; equivalent to 667,000 pounds of ration rice for the poor of our country; equivalent to 350,313 ‘yoplait’ cups, Mr Speaker, Sir. What a wastage of money, Mr Speaker, Sir, when you realise that the cocktail dinner was worth Rs800,000! We talk of transparency and accountability, Mr Speaker, Sir! This is an example.

We have seen the same thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Additional Stimulus Package where the hon. Minister, responsible for this dossier, had to admit in this House - and I have proof here, he replied to the hon. Leader of the Opposition - that he will inquire in the matter because the question was raised with regard to those who have benefitted from the Additional Stimulus Package and not only close to the Government, we had an ex-Member of this House and a special Adviser to the Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Yes! Cars were bought, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish to refer to paragraph 15 of the Government Programme 2005 *parce que c'est toujours d'actualité. Je vais vous expliquer pourquoi, M. le président.* It is stated that –

“My Government will ensure that there is equity in the recruitment and career path of all employees, whether in the private or public sector. In the first year of my Government’s mandate, an Equal Opportunities Act will be adopted providing for equal opportunities in employment and in access to resources.”

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would refer to what has been stated some time back by the former Attorney-General, whereby I was shocked by the remarks he had made. I quote -

« *L'Equal Opportunities Act* ne fait pas l'unanimité chez les politiciens. Le projet de loi aurait été préparé pour être initialement présenté par le Premier ministre mais comme il ne faisait pas l'unanimité au sein même du gouvernement, c'est finalement l'Attorney General qui a dû présenter ce projet de loi. »

Till now the legislation has not been enacted, Mr Speaker, Sir. Why are we asked to vote for a legislation which is taking so much time to be enacted? We don't have the real or exact reasons. That is why we have to rely on what the ex-Attorney General has stated, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At paragraph 6 of the Government Programme 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is stated, and I quote –

“As part of this process of constitutional review, Government will start wide ranging consultations and will appoint a team of constitutional experts which will assess the application of the Constitution since 1968 and consider the appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system.”

Depuis le 15 novembre 2005, nous avons eu plusieurs questions venant du *Leader* de l’Opposition et des membres de l’Opposition sur les réformes électorales. A chaque fois, on nous a fait comprendre que le gouvernement travaille dessus, qu'il n'y a pas de consensus entre les partis politiques et qu'on est à la recherche de ce consensus. Je pense que vous savez très bien, M. le président, qu'à quelques mois des élections législatives, le gouvernement nous avait promis

une législation *on the Code of Conduct*. Les élections sont derrière nous et nous n'avons jamais eu ce *Code of Conduct*. *We have had the general elections without the Code of Conduct, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is almost five years. Again, we have now a similar paragraph in the Government Programme* et on attend toujours, M. le président. Anne, ma soeur Anne, ne vois-tu rien venir!

Mr Speaker, Sir, for my part, another issue relating to the electoral reform was that part of our Constitution dealing with classification of communities. I have put three questions in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I have also made reference to what is provided for in our Constitution and I quote –

“The population of Mauritius shall be regarded as including a Hindu community, a Muslim community and a Sino-Mauritian community and every person who does not appear from his way of life to belong to one or other of those three communities shall be regarded as belonging to the general population which shall, itself, be regarded as a fourth community.”

Ma première observation: il y a ce terme “*way of life*”. Il y a eu un cas en Cour où un honorable juge avait observé que le mode de vie d'un individu ne pouvait pas tout le temps se résumer à sa religion. Il y va de ses habitudes alimentaires ou encore de ses tenues vestimentaires, voire ses goûts musicaux.

This is what he stated, Mr Speaker, Sir -

“It has not been possible for me to look objectively at the way of life of the respondents to determine their community. I have to confess that our Constitution is lacking in those respects and that this has to be remedied.”

J'avais aussi posé une question, il y a quelques semaines de cela, au Premier ministre qui est d'accord, M. le président, qu'il nous faut faire quelque chose pour régler cette situation.

If you will allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will quote. My question was -

“Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the use of the term “residual community” which was used in Court, hinders the nation building?”

This is where my point is - it hinders the nation building process of our country and could be the cause of humiliation to a section of our population.

The Prime Minister replied –

“As far as I remember, even Père Gregoire said that he does not like the term ‘general population’ because it is as if when you are not a Muslim, a Hindu or a Sino-Mauritian, you are dumped in that basket. He said that in front of me. I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there, so, I agreed.”

Voilà, M. le président, des commentaires à faire sur ce sujet mais tout d'un coup cette communauté dite *residual* fait le bonheur des autres. Cette nomination, M. le président, a soulevé un tollé au sein de cette communauté dite population générale. Même les associations représentant cette communauté, qui ont travaillé pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir, ont été les premières à éléver la voix. Comme quoi, M. le président, dans ce panier à crabes on retrouve des requins marteaux. Le comble, M. le président, c'est que le parti politique, à qui ce siège devait revenir, ne pipe mot. Comme dirai l'autre, *souffler manzer!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will get to another section of my speech. *Je vais traiter le volet énergétique et le concept de ‘Maurice Ile Durable’.* What is said *dans le discours-programme?* We have to go to the Government Programme of 2005-2010 at paragraph 141. *Cela aussi a été sujet d'actualités. Depuis qu'on a repris les travaux parlementaires, nous avons eu une PNQ et pas mal de questions parlementaires traitant ce sujet.* At paragraph 141 of the Government Programme of 2005 it is stated, and I quote –

“In view of the constantly growing energy needs of the country, Government will take action for the timely commissioning of additional power generating plants. The CEB will be encouraged to increase its own production capacity and to ensure security and reliability of supply, at the lowest possible costs. Emphasis will be laid on an enhanced exploitation of renewable energy sources. The potential which exists in Mauritius for wind energy will be optimally exploited to reduce not only the greenhouse effect, but also to mitigate reliance on fossil fuel for electricity generation.”

The first important aspect of that paragraph is the ‘timely commissioning of additional power generating plants’ and the second one is ‘to ensure reliability of supply at the lowest possible costs’. Again here, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to go back to 2006 where Government itself came forward with a review of the Generation Expansion Plan whereby, at that time, it was stated that these are the projects that were in the pipeline and that should be commissioned year after year to ensure a reliability of supply at the lowest possible costs. So, for CT Savannah, we were supposed to commission 74 MW in 2007 and 15 MW in 2008; in 2009 a 20 MW plant at FUEL and we were supposed to close down the power plant at Beau Champ because of the centralisation of the Beau Champ Sugar Estate and in 2011, another new power plant at Médine together with the commissioning of CT Power which was initially a 3 by 50 MW power plant and modified to be a 2 by 55 MW power plant. With these in mind, in 2007, the CEB submitted a Paper to the parent Ministry and drew the attention of the Ministry that if nothing is done to cope with the actual situation; the country might find itself in a very difficult situation in the years to come. There are, in this paper, some strong paragraphs, Mr Speaker, Sir. Today we realise that those people were very right in drawing the attention of the Ministry at that time with regard to electricity supply in the country. It was stated in that Paper that one can always argue that if no maintenance is scheduled during the critical periods - they had foreseen those critical periods, Mr Speaker, Sir - if no maintenance was carried out, we could possibly meet the demand. Can you imagine running a car for a period of one year without carrying any maintenance in that car, Mr Speaker, Sir? This is what they had told the parent Ministry, but there was a very slow reaction from the parent Ministry. We were told months later - and that was the subject of a question today morning in Parliament and some time back also.

In the case of the two generators that the CEB had to purchase, they had to have recourse to an emergency procurement under section 21 of the Public Procurement Act, where the price of the generators was estimated by the consultant of that public utility at Rs1.2 billion and the tender was allocated for the sum of Rs1.67 billion, that is, more than Rs400 m. from taxpayers’ money, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can you imagine an electric utility allocating a tender for more than Rs400 m. when you consider their financial situation with regard to overdraft, borrowings and net losses? I’ll give you the figures, Mr Speaker, Sir. The overdraft for that utility in 2006: Rs937 m; in 2007: Rs1.378 billion, and in 2008: Rs1.55 billion. The total borrowings, Mr

Speaker, Sir, in 2006: Rs5.5 billion; in 2007: Rs4.89 billion, and in 2008: Rs5 billion. An organisation in such a difficult financial situation is allocating a tender in excess of Rs400 m. and they were warned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this situation is going to prevail, that is, we won't be having enough capacity.

Même aujourd’hui, M. le président, ce que je ne comprends pas, c'est qu'on continue, à ne pas accepter cette situation. Pourquoi? Je ne sais pas. Nous avons eu un rapport commandité par le *Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities and submitted by one Mr Sahid Hafeez Ahmed, a power consultant*. Suite à ce rapport nous avons fait une conférence de presse et, par la suite, pour montrer l'urgence de la situation, pour évoquer les problèmes qui sont à l'horizon et faire le gouvernement réagir à partir de cette situation parce qu'on court le risque, M. le président, d'être dans une situation comme en Afrique de Sud où on a des délestages. Voilà ce que le directeur général de cet organisme a à dire. Selon le directeur du CEB, les abonnés n'ont pas à s'inquiéter car l'étude en question n'a pris en considération que le projet de ce corps paraétatique, visant à augmenter la capacité de production de l'électricité à Fort Victoria de 30 mégawatts à partir d'octobre de cette année-ci.

What the Director General of the CEB is saying is that, this report is not taking into consideration an ongoing project, which will be commissioned in the month of October of this year, and that is why this report is saying that we might be facing serious problems in the months and years to come. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, when you have a look at this report...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: *Mais li pas lire! Cash li kone prend la fin du mois seulement!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a report submitted by a serious gentleman from the World Bank. At page 3 of the report, he has analysed the situation and at paragraph 1.5, the very first sentence of that consultant is: "Assuming 30 megawatts addition at Fort Victoria in 2010". It is there in the report, Mr Speaker, Sir. How can the General Manager of the CEB come and make such a statement? He should have read the report and then made his comments, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me go to another aspect of my speech, which deals with le projet si cher au Premier ministre, c'est-à-dire, le projet Maurice Ile Durable. S'il est vrai que, pour ce projet, le gouvernement se donne les moyens financiers, malheureusement, les supports administratifs et institutionnels sont les maillons faibles de ce projet. Je constate, M. le président, premièrement, qu'il y a un manque d'experts dans ce domaine. Deuxièmement, cette guerre avec l'industrie sucrière n'a que trop duré. L'industrie cannière, *where we have sugar production, electricity production and ethanol, Mr Speaker, Sir, should be put in place.* Cela a été annoncé et fait partie intégrante de ce projet de Maurice Ile Durable. Je comprends les problèmes mais le gouvernement doit trouver des solutions aux problèmes. Nous avons entendu pendant pas mal d'années les problèmes sur les IPPs. Le rapport est là, mais il faut conclure quelque part pour que ce secteur puisse démarrer. Troisièmement, il nous faut une politique plus cohérente afin que tout le monde puisse adhérer à ce concept. M. le président, je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, le rapport concernant les IPPs est entre les mains de l'actuel gouvernement.

Avec l'industrie sucrière, ils ont commandité ce rapport et c'est à eux de conclure ce qu'il faut conclure et d'informer la population, M. le président, parce que c'est un rapport qui a été payé. Il y a des experts qui ont travaillé dessus, mais il est temps maintenant *that he takes whatever actions he has to take because he has made bold statements in this House in the past. It is time for him to move ahead with the statements he has made.*

M. le président, le Premier ministre a recruter un expert en la matière, le Professeur Joël de Rosnay. Cette personne a fait des observations et je pense sincèrement que c'est un projet de grande valeur. La population va bénéficier de ce projet de 'Maurice Ile Durable'. J'ai expliqué les problèmes qu'on a à faire face et, ces dernières années, il n'y a pas grand chose qui s'est passé concernant ce projet mais j'espère que les choses vont bouger vu que cela a été rattaché à un nouveau ministère. *Why am I saying that, Mr Speaker, Sir? I'll give examples where we have failed.* Je prends trois exemples. En premier lieu - le projet de l'heure d'été. En fin de compte cela n'a donné aucun résultat. On a dû abandonner ce projet et, dites vous bien, M. le président, pour sensibiliser la population sur ce projet d'heure d'été, le gouvernement a dépensé R4.4 million. Il y a eu ensuite les *CFL lamps*, un très bon projet qu'il faut continuer mais seulement on n'a pas bénéficié de certaines choses. Ce projet a été classé comme un projet à bénéficier des

carbon credits mais on n'a rien reçu, M. le président. Je le confirme et je pose la question aujourd'hui...

(*Interruptions*)

Oui, mais je fais référence à ce que l'ancien ministre des finances avait dit sur le projet. *CEB will put on the market half of their cost price of one million compact fluorescent lamps in two phases starting with 200,000 lamps. This project will be implemented by the CEB in association with pioneer carbon.* Qui est ce *pioneer carbon*? Il faut qu'on vienne nous l'expliquer. It will contribute 50% of the cost from carbon credits mais il n'y a jamais eu de *pioneer carbon* comme cela a été dit la semaine dernière ! *Pioneer carbon ine tuite.* On n'entend plus parler. Le gouvernement a dû payer la totalité et il n'y a jamais eu de remboursement à partir des *carbon credits*, M. le président. C'est pareil pour les chauffe-eau solaires.

C'est vrai que c'est une nouvelle expérience, il faut s'adapter mais, ce sont quand même d'énormes sommes d'argent qui sont dépensées, M. le président, en terme d'un demi milliard de roupies. Il faut qu'on arrive à avoir plus de contrôle, M. le président, sur ces projets. Malheureusement, on constate, M. le président, que ce n'est pas le cas. Avant de terminer avec le secteur de la CWA, je voudrais faire référence à ce qu'un membre de l'Assemblée avait dit, il y a quelque temps de cela, quand il avait fait son intervention sur le discours programme concernant le projet de Rodrigues. Je voudrais savoir parce que ce membre vient nous dire qu'il faut arrêter ce train, un train qui a déjà pris de la vitesse parce que...

(*Interruptions*)

Non, ce n'est pas cela. The hon. Member was asking the Deputy Prime Minister to review completely the project because he does not find the necessity to invest into a power plant worth Rs600 m. in Rodrigues, because we do not have the demand for that. This should have been looked into well before in advance, before even launching the project, Mr Speaker, Sir. You cannot, when you've reached the final stage of the project, ask for stopping it completely, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Je vais terminer avec le secteur de l'eau où nous avons beaucoup de problèmes actuellement. Il y a eu beaucoup de questions à l'intérieur de cette Chambre venant des bancs de l'opposition aussi bien que du gouvernement, M. le président. Où se situe le problème ?

Pourquoi n'arrive-t-on pas à gérer ce problème d'eau dans le pays ? Peut-être qu'il faudrait remonter le temps, M. le président, pour comprendre exactement de quoi il en est. J'ai avec moi plusieurs questions parlementaires *and the answers have been always linked with what we call non-revenue water. You will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, some four and a half years ago, the CWA had taken a loan worth Euros 20 m. from the European Investment Bank for the reduction of the average level of non-revenue water.* Il y a deux composants - la première concerne toutes les pertes d'eau dans les tuyaux de la CWA et la seconde est liée au vol. Il y a des personnes qui sont connectées illégalement au réseau et on avait pris cet argent pour pouvoir résoudre ce problème. Le comble, M. le président, *we have figures with regard to percentage of non-revenue water. I'll get you the figures and then you will understand the situation. I had put a question in 2007 with regard to non-revenue water and we were told that, out of those Euros 20 m., the CWA had spent only Euros 1.7 m.* et la Banque européenne d'investissement n'était pas contente du tout. Il fallait améliorer cette situation mais, en fin compte, la CWA n'a jamais pu améliorer et le *loan* a été annulé. *What do we see, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the reply? Non-revenue water percentage, instead of decreasing over the years with works carried out by the CWA, has been increasing. Can you realise, Mr Speaker, Sir, that back in 2005 the percentage of non-revenue water was 44.7%, in 2009 it stood at 49.6%, that is, it has increased over the years rather than decreased.*

M. le président, avant de terminer mon discours, permettez moi de partager avec vous quelque chose que je pense fondamentale non-seulement pour notre petite île Maurice mais aussi pour le monde. M. le président, nous avons eu la crise financière, la prochaine crise qui nous guette est liée à la dégradation climatique, c'est-à-dire, la fonte des glaciers, les inondations comme on en voit maintenant, la chaleur insupportable. M. le président, la crise financière, au pire, provoque, comme on dit, la perte d'emploi pour des milliers de personnes, c'est vrai mais, M. le président, une éventuelle dégradation climatique peut anéantir l'humanité et cet impact augmente d'année en année. Certains ont compris cet état de choses, M. le président. C'est pourquoi, tout à l'heure, j'ai dit que le projet de 'Maurice Ile Durable' est un projet valable. Notre île est fragile. Il est de notre devoir de protéger notre île. Il faut qu'on cesse avec ces développements qui nuisent à l'environnement; des projets comme CT Power, allouer des îles à des petits copains qui ne savent pas comment les gérer. Aujourd'hui, toute décision prise pour le

développement de notre île, M. le président, est étroitement liée à notre environnement. Décideurs politiques que nous sommes, M. le président, il est de notre devoir de protéger l'avenir de nos enfants.

Merci, M. le président.

(6.42 p.m.)

Ms K. R. Deepalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by congratulating you and the Deputy Speaker and all hon. Members for their election to this House. I have a particular congratulation and welcome to the new women MPs - hon. Ribot, hon. Radegonde, hon. Bholah, hon. Perraud and hon. Anquetil. It is very nice to have more women and I want to say a particular welcome to the new women Members of Parliament, but also, the men. I already congratulated all the hon. Members, but I have a special word for the women.

(Interruptions)

Sorry, *protège montagne, non!* Just being kind.

I would also like to thank my family, my good friends and all the people who voted for me, with a particular salute to the CLP Number 18 who stood firm in the face of the onslaught of money and threats. Even on the day of voting, Mr Speaker, Sir, my yard agents and my class agents were being called personally to abandon station, being offered sums of money. Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, the elections ...

(Interruptions)

No, it was not him. The elections in Number 18 had the particular challenge that it did not come from our opponents, but strangely enough from the sheer amount of money - and I wonder where the source of funds were - dumped by someone who was not even candidate and was nursing a terribly bruised ego.

The previous orator has spoken about the 2006 Budget of the previous Minister of Finance and he seems to be criticising him which is fair enough, but, incidentally, in case the hon. Member who spoke before me does not know, the same person was okay for the MMM to

run to; to seek help to vigorously campaign against us. So, it is good to criticise him, but it is also good to run to him to ask for help.

(Interruptions)

Mr Makhan was there every night at his place. We know!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the previous orator had spoken about the Equal Opportunities Act and about the fact that there was no consensus. It is the same person who helped the MMM in Number 18 and was against the Equal Opportunities Act. I know. He did not even intervene in this House on that Bill by the way. Go and check the Hansard.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we talk about the Equal Opportunities Act - and I hear it time and time again - it is true that there has not yet been an appointment for the Equal Opportunities Commission because it has not been proclaimed, but, there is a reason for this and a very valid one. The reason is that when you are talking about Equal Opportunity you must find that rare bird who does not have one iota of prejudice. You must find that rare bird who will not have the prejudice of saying - '*Sa ène créole, sa ène malbar, sa ène musulman sa!*' How many Mauritians can we count on? Let us be very candid, as somebody would say about it. Right? It is a very sensitive issue and you have to find that rare bird because this particular institution, if it starts on the wrong footing, it is gone. It is totally gone. So, it is better to delay its start than for it to start on the totally wrong footing. This is why the Commission has not been named yet.

Mr Speaker, Sir, up to now in the debates, we have heard a lot of very generous doses of demagogery from the Opposition. I will come to that, I will take examples. We have an Opposition which is obviously and understandably sour grapes about its yet-another-defeat in an election which they thought they would win except that when you use the same recipe, you get the same result. As Serge Lebrasse so beautifully sings - '*dans dizef poule pas kapav gagne ti canard*'.

En effet, M. le président, nous avons en face de nous, un MMM qui se pérennise dans l'opposition ; un MMM qui vient de connaître sa cinquième défaite électorale consécutive. Depuis toutes ces années, le MMM, et dans notre très grande presse Mauricienne, à travers le très cher éditorialiste, Monsieur Meetarbhan – grand donneur de leçon en matière de décorum démocratique – jamais on a vu à l'Express le besoin se sentir, de multiplier les éditoriaux, les

grand titres. Pas une petite phrase pour suggérer que le MMM, après sa cinquième défaite électorale consécutive, aurait besoin d'un peu de réinvention mais qui peut les blâmer, M. le président ? A en voir ce qu'il y avait comme relève (Ramjuttun, Ashok Jugnauth, Boodhoo dans l'ombre), mieux vaut encore, moi je dis - 'mille fois Paul Bérenger'. Je le dis très franchement. Dulloo aussi.

By the way, on a side note, Mr Speaker, Sir, have you noticed? I do not know how many hon. Members of this House have noticed, that every Monday or Tuesday, the editorial of *l'Express* - since the House started sitting - is a copy-paste of the Leader of the Opposition's PNQ? Coincidence? The Opposition likes to refer to 'free and fair principles of democracy'? Is it a coincidence that the editorialist of *l'Express* has the same subject in his editorial every Tuesday? The PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition. May be it is a coincidence, I do not know. I am just asking the question.

M. le président, ces personnes vont venir nous donner les mêmes disques rayés - 'Les élections n'étaient pas free and fair'. C'est ce qu'ils ont dit. 'Les élections étaient communales.' Ah oui ! Je voudrais bien croire, M. le président, que ce n'était pas par calcul communal que le MMM a décidé d'aligner trois candidats d'une même communauté au Numéro 2. Je voudrais bien croire que ce n'était pas par calcul communal, et que c'était pour donner un grand exemple de mauricianisme que les adversaires du DPM sont tombés dans la bassesse d'attaquer son appartenance religieuse - qu'il était ou qu'il n'était pas un bon musulman. On m'a dit aujourd'hui que, soi-disant, ce n'était pas le MMM qui avait fait ça. Si n'était pas le MMM, où étaient-ils pour venir dénoncer cela, en grands mauricianistes qu'ils sont ?

M. le président, je suppose que c'était aussi par hasard, pour démontrer leur attachement profond aux valeurs d'intégrité - on a bien entendu les valeurs, telles que *accountability*, *transparency*, *integrity*, *anti-corruption* - qu'on a proposé à ce peuple mauricien M. Ashock Jugnauth comme *Deputy Prime Minister*. Vous vous rendez compte, M. le président ! On dirait que franchement, au MMM, comme au Loto, «tout devient possible».

Nous avons une opposition qui souffre de conviction et de *consistency*, de la démagogie bien sûr, mais aussi d'un opportunisme déplorant et qui, sans aucun doute, explique pourquoi ils en sont à leur cinquième défaite électorale consécutive. D'ailleurs, on a encore eu un exemple ce matin avec la *fizette*. As I said, applying the same recipe, which is way past its sell-by date, will

give the same result. Scientific communalism, *bi-langue*, as the beloved late hon. Burty David used to say; little insinuations here and there, like in the PNQ today, that eventually lead slowly and gradually to the discrediting of institutions. This is the age-old recipe of MMM. No wonder it produces the exact results, that is, the people sending them to sit on the other side of the House time and time again.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during the course of the debates, every once in while I hear one hon. Member of the House talking about another usual *refrain*: “*Paradis en Dey*”. Mr Speaker, Sir, there are laws in this country. Fair enough! Maybe, the laws are outdated and, have to be amended, but the law is the law, and I was particularly shocked, I have to say, to hear a hon. Member of the Opposition, *de surcroit un avocat* - and now all of us are legislators - say “But you know, it shouldn’t have been applied”. No, Mr Speaker, Sir! We are legislators here! The law may not be perfect, but the law has to be applied.

There is a law in Mauritius and the Film Classification Board when you produce a film. I am not saying that the law may not be outdated. When you produce a film, you have to submit it to the Film Classification Board before you project it. You have to abide by the law. That is the main basic point. If there is a problem with the law, we come here and propose for amendments, but, in the meantime, we have to comply. I am sorry. There is a law and we have to comply with the law. We, in this House, are the last ones who should dare to say “No, they should not have applied that law with him”. We are the last ones to say this. We are legislators, and we have no right to say these kinds of things.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would be the last one to say “Okay, if you didn’t do it, then we shouldn’t do, for example, electoral reform”, because the previous speaker has mentioned electoral reform. My point is: if the MMM really cared about convictions, when it was in a position, when their own leader was Prime Minister of this country and that that Prime Minister commanded almost absolute majority, they could have come forward with electoral reform. They say that the MSM wasn’t agreeable. Fair enough! It is precisely when the waves are rough, that you recognise whether the captain has the mettle or not. Either they cared about convictions then or the comfort of sitting in Government! This is what we call hypocrisy, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I may be naïve, but this is what it boils down to. I would argue that, almost every time that the MMM has been faced with a test of consistency of what it says in the Opposition and when it comes to Government - in the rare occasions it has come to Government - it has been put to the test. It has failed the test of consistency between one language when it is in the Opposition and one language when it is in Government. Hence, what my hon. friend used to say “*bi-langue*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another example comes to mind, from what the previous speaker was talking about “*pain maison*”. Mr Speaker, Sir, do you know how many “*pains maison*” you get in Rs57 m., when a “*pain maison*” is worth, let’s say, 7 to 10 cents? 5.7 million “*pains maison*”, Mr Speaker, Sir. Rs57 m. in export duty in 1982! I am just using an example of demagogery and hypocrisy. I am not going to belabour on it.

Let’s come to more precise and recent examples. There are many, but I am not going to belabour. Let me give you examples.

(Interruptions)

I didn’t interrupt when hon. Lesjongard was speaking so I hope he will have the courtesy to do the same. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will come to the example of Ti-Vegas. When I asked a Parliamentary Question to the previous Minister of Finance on the subject of Ti-Vegas, not one MMM Member stood up. They were not outraged then. Now, when the hon. Minister of Finance is hon. Pravind Jugnauth, the outrage is beyond recognition. It is worse when the poor innocent Mr Bernard Evariste was killed, an inhabitant of the Constituency of the Leader of the Opposition, on 01 January 2010. What would have been the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition if anyone of us had been the Leader of the Opposition then? What would it have been? Or even a PQ! Would it not have been on the murder of Mr Bernard Evariste at Ti-Vegas? The previous speaker was just talking about *communauté résiduelle*. Mr Bernard Evariste, poor guy, was too much of the *communauté résiduelle* then! You know why? The MMM never came with a question to the then hon. Minister of Finance, because the MMM did not want to embarrass him as they were flirting for an alliance to get into Government! That’s why! Then, Ti-Vegas was not a problem! Then, the MMM did not want to embarrass Dr. Sithanen because they were flirting with him to concoct an alliance! Mr Bernard Evariste of the

communauté résiduelle, that they talked about so outrageously, did not have worth to his life then in their eyes! I am not sure that they are well placed to be giving lessons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what about this incessant harping about transparency and accountability? The previous Speaker spoke about Jin-Fei, Mangalore, CT Power. That would be fine if their interrogations were not selective. What about the IPP contracts, Mr Speaker, Sir? Who knows what are under IPP contracts! I asked a Parliamentary Question in this House about the IPP contracts. Has anybody in the MMM asked or wanted to know what is in the IPP contracts? They are not interested. They are only selectively outraged. They are outraged about Mangalore, but the MMM cannot touch the IPP! They don't want to know what is in there. Then, transparency and accountability is not an issue. My problem is not that they care about transparency or not, it is a good thing to care about. We should be; even the backbenchers on the majority side care about transparency and accountability, but, please, spare us the hypocrisy of selectiveness. Come and ask Parliamentary Questions about the IPPs! Then, I will believe the genuineness of their outrage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I come to the overall issues of the Government Programme, I want to briefly just touch upon some of the projects, according to the Government Programme, which are either going to impact on or relate to my Constituency.

The first project that I hold very dear to my heart is the project of the new market, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not going to be just another market for Quatre Bornes. What we want to have is an innovative project of public space. When the citizens come, they will engage in art, sports, community events and all kinds of events in a very modern building which encourages people to engage with each other and have a lot of community time together. The other issue - *je vais être sans relâche, j'ai mentionné Ti Vegas*. The Government Programme, in paragraph 28, speaks about the relocation of gaming houses in other places and I will not rest until *Ti Vegas* is out of St. Jean Road in Quatre Bornes. In terms of the enlargement of Avenue des Tulipes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to really thank the hon. Bachoo for his prompt decisions and prompt action. We have worked very well together and we are going forward with the enlargement of Avenue des Tulipes to have a real traffic decongestion programme on both sides of St. Jean Road. Now, I will not talk more about it but I have in mind a specific project for all women in my Constituency, but you will accuse me of *protez montagne*, so, I will not talk too much about it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I come to the Government Programme, when we look at the creation of the Ministry for Social Integration, many Members on the other side, in the course of their speeches, have commented on this. I want to say that it was not as some hon. Members of the Opposition have argued, that it was as if a confession that poverty has increased and the previous orator has also talked about this. Instead, it is a conscious recognition that, as we spring forward in our development, there are real risks - and we acknowledge this - as elsewhere in the world that the most vulnerable, the less fortunate people have a tendency to be left behind. I consider that we here and, in particular, in the Labour Party, have won the argument for placing social justice at the heart of Government's policy. Let us not forget that, in 2003, when the hon. Prime Minister mentioned the words *démocratisation de l'économie*, how he was calumniated. We, in the Labour Party, persevered in this intellectual argument against all odds, against all kinds of accusations because we are animated with real convictions. Our approach to development policy has always been that social justice and economic efficiency are mutually reinforcing with the development of human capabilities at the heart of policies which aims for emancipatory social change, hence the continued emphasis on democratisation of the economy. I won't go far and talk a lot about it, but I hope that I will not hear superficial comments like: 'I did not hear hon. Deepalsing talk about democratisation of the economy'. If I have not mentioned it *en long et en large*, it is not because we don't care about it and making a remark like that as a criticism shows that it is just a superficial critic. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what the Government Programme is all about, a series of policies aimed at emancipatory change. What can be a stronger signal, Mr Speaker, Sir, than this Government entrusting the Ministry of Social Integration to the number three of Government? What can be a stronger signal that this Government stands for inclusive development? We want to be watchful of what happens as we go forward in our development to the ones who are the most vulnerable. This is a big signal, Mr Speaker, Sir.

By the way, some Members have also been talking as if poverty has just started in 2005 when Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam became Prime Minister. Maybe their memories need a bit of refreshing. Can anyone imagine - you were there, Mr Speaker, Sir - what this country was like when it became independent under SSR? Almost the Overcrowded Barracoon of V. S.

Naipaul, with the majority of Mauritians having no formal education, almost illiterate! Can anyone imagine what the poverty picture was then? My own grandmother, Mr Speaker, Sir, was to have 11 kids, with 11 mouths to feed plus the aging in-laws, living *dans camp*. She would, pregnant or not pregnant, go to the field to help my grandfather. Even, when she was pregnant, she would climb on the truck to *couper, charger cannes lor camion*. No wonder she lost five of the babies! Health care was not free then! Who cared about health care then! Anyway, there was no time for health care! There was only time for drudgery and excruciatingly hard work to feed those mouths and to send them to school for you see, Mr Speaker, Sir, my grandmother had a vision. Once she walked the 5 kms from the *camp* in Bel Ombre to Chemin Grenier, she had to go to the market. She saw a well-dressed professional young man and asked him what his profession was. He said he was a school teacher, my grandmother knew then that she wanted her elder son, that is, my dad to become a teacher and the only way she could do that was to send the child to school except there was no money for that which meant working doubly hard with my grandfather in the fields so that my grandfather would not insist that the 11-year old child would not quit school altogether and go work in the fields. My grandmother was not the only example. There were thousands in her predicament in those times. Can anyone imagine the life of sheer misery they lived without a welfare state at that time? Please don't misread what I am saying because I am hearing a lot of comments! I am not saying that poverty today is less debilitating than it was before. I am not passing a judgment on the quality of poverty. That is not my point. My point is that poverty did not start in 2005. This is the point that I am making and it has not just cropped up in the last few years. We would do well to remember that it was the Labour Party, with you there, Mr Speaker, Sir, that has always been at the forefront of emancipatory politics. It was thanks to the Labour Party emancipatory policies that my mother's generation was able to break out of that misery. Many of us talk about free education, free health care, universal pension but another major policy that the Labour Party brought, Mr Speaker, Sir - I don't know whether you were the Minister of Health at that time, I am not sure - was the introduction of family planning. Thank God my mother's generation benefitted from family planning advice and thank God none of the religious institutions were then able to poke their nose in policy issues otherwise the blessed little pill would never have seen the day here. When I hear about the sheer hypocrisy of the debates about abortion these days, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am

tempted to say to these guys - and they are mostly guys, I am sorry - that why don't we just outlaw all contraceptive pills in this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in her speech hon. Mrs Ribot said, and I quote –

“It’s high time to end the hypocrisy and face reality”.

I hope that she would say the same thing about the extreme hypocrisy being dished around on the subject of abortion. Women of all religions, who have the means to do it in a safe, clean environment, they just...

Mr Speaker: I will advise the hon. Member to tread very carefully on this issue as it is very sensitive.

Ms Deepalsing: Don't worry, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am just making a point about women who are wealthy. They are able to take care of themselves. It is the women, who don't have the financial means, who end up putting their lives at risk. This is a reality, Mr Speaker, Sir. Whether we want to face it or not it is up to us.

When hon. Ribot was talking about hypocrisy, I hope this also applies to the subject. This leads me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to a side note regarding the modernity theme of this programme. We will always be a mile short of modernity unless we live as secular people, as a secular nation. This is my opinion. Everybody can have his own opinion. Yes, we are a plural society and this is also part of our pride and our identity, but being a plural nation is not mutually exclusive to the proposition of being secular. I am not going to go into it because I don't want to take over an hour and fifteen minutes like the previous orator did. I will just....

(Interruptions)

I am just saying that I am not going to go over an hour.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should not criticise.

Ms Deepalsing: I take it back.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I did say I take it back. Mr Speaker, Sir. I want to speak a little bit about the economic restructuring programme. Let me, at the outset, congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime

Minister and Minister of Finance for the document he has produced. Of course, the Opposition will come out with a lot of supposed outrage and so on and so forth, but then one might wonder. If there was anything really serious to be said after the document was prepared, why wouldn't the first PNQ be on this? Well it says a lot. It is, in itself, eloquent that they are just trying to grasp whatever demagogic argument they can lay their hands on. That's understandable although I have to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I still haven't heard them repudiate the call for a depreciation of the rupee. Hon. Li Kwong Wing is not here now, but I hope that, at least, he will be able to take a public stance about whether or not he thinks we should go for a depreciation of the rupee as many other captains of the industry, some sectors are calling about.

(Interruptions)

They have publicly agreed. The MMM has publicly agreed that there should be a depreciation of the rupee.

(Interruptions)

This is what I heard. Anyway, Mr Speaker, Sir, I could see his discomfiture when the Leader of the Opposition was asking the PNQ on the MCB. I could see his discomfiture; it was there for everybody to see. Hon. Ameer Meea has asked a question this morning about consultancies for the democratisation of the economy. Hon. Li Kwong Wing was then part of our consultative committee. He did it freely; I have to salute him for that. He gave his time to talk about the democratisation of the economy. Unfortunately, now, he is a bit like a square peg in a round hole.

(Interruptions)

I have a lot of respect for him - this is what I am saying. When you look at what hon. Li Kwong Wing stance has been, he has been diametrically opposed to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been advocating for years and years - hon. Guimbeau is not here today. Hon. Li Kwong Wing has talked about the MSPA as *accapareurs*. Mr Speaker, Sir, what has hon. Guimbeau not said to us! I wonder now what hon. Guimbeau is going to say to hon. Li Kwong Wing for having said that the MSPA is a bunch of *accapareurs*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you know this is a big issue. A lot of the captains of our big groups in Mauritius have been advocating depreciation of the rupee, of using monetary policy as a proxy

for real competitiveness. When you do that, when the country is in its infancy period, that's fine, but this cannot be a business model for the future. This is what this document is saying. When you set the stage, the emphasis in this document is more on the long-term and there is a reason for that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was talking about whether hon. Li Kwong Wing will be able to take a public stance on the issue of democratisation of the economy, it's a rhetorical question, of course, because I don't think he can. Mr Speaker, Sir, I did learn something from hon. Guimbeau when he came to this side of the House. When he attended our first Parliamentary meeting, he said to me he was shocked. He said: '*Ah bon, you speak so freely. Kot moustas, enn mouche pas bouger*'. He said that to me verbatim.....

(Interruptions)

They can ask him! Mr Speaker, Sir, this is an age-old tradition in the Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

Even backbenchers like you have always enjoyed a freedom unknown in any other party. Even you, Mr Speaker, Sir, were a backbencher and it is in the Hansard. When Mr Speaker was a backbencher, he made a speech and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam....

(Interruptions)

He was a young man; he is still a young man. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam turned round and said: 'Is there going to be a revolution?' This is in the Hansard. This is the culture of the Labour Party, Mr Speaker, Sir and this is the great mark of great leaders. Great leaders know that good leadership and good decision-making rest upon a sacred fundamental principle: diversity of thoughts, diversity of ideas. Just as hon. Guimbeau was shocked when he first attended our Parliamentary meeting, most people in this House – you have known it, Mr Speaker, Sir – would be devastated if they attended one of our executive meetings where any activist from any part of the country, regardless of his background, is utterly free to express disagreement, even with the leader's decisions. I have to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I honestly take a lot of pride in this aspect of my party. Of course, there is always the risk that someone may use this freedom to pursue some personal axe to grind. There is always the risk that the Opposition, and the gossip prone press that we have, will concoct and spin all kinds of stories. Nevertheless, the Leader of the

Labour Party, Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam, as a true democrat, and as someone endowed with mature democratic principles, believes firmly in the diversity of thoughts, ideas and stances. I take my own example, Mr Speaker, Sir, or that of hon. Dayal, of hon. Varma, of hon. Mohamed or of hon. Dr. Hawoldar. We have raised many issues even though these may embarrass a Minister in our own party, because our convictions so direct us. Has any Member of the Opposition or Opposition backbenchers had the conviction to stand up and say something is wrong when their own Government is doing something wrong?

(Interruptions)

Don't tell me there hasn't been something wrong! This is the difference, Mr Speaker, Sir. At the end of the day, people will say whatever they want to say or believe, but what is important is that my Leader – our Leader – knows that I am here for the right reasons, that I am not running after titles or a particular seat in this House. I know that he knows of the sincerity of purpose that animates me; he knows that my loyalty to him and to the values of the Labour Party are unflinching. I would never dream of political engagement in any other party. I started my political engagement in the Labour Party because its founding philosophy resonates deeply within me. The day I have to end my political engagement it will still be from the Labour Party. I am saying this because I have absolutely no interest in politics for the sake of politics. The most important prayer that I say every day, Mr Speaker, Sir, is for the Almighty to give me the strength to preserve my conscience. I can make all kinds of enemies and any numbers of enemies, but I would not make of my conscience an enemy.

Coming back to the economy, Mr Speaker, Sir, lest we forget, there have been many crises that have been ongoing in the world in the past few decades pointing to the instability of the system, the structural instability of the system as we know it. I would strongly recommend, Mr Speaker, Sir, for hon. Members on both sides of the House to read the book entitled – a new book : 'This Time it's Different' ...

(Interruptions)

I had the good manner to listen...

Mr Speaker: Carry on, please!

Ms Deepalsing: This book, Mr Speaker, Sir, is entitled: 'This Time it's Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly', by Kenneth Rogoff and Carmen Reinhart. They write this book in order to understand the emphasis that long-term policies is what is needed to correct the structural underpinnings of this instable structural system that we are all living in. This is partly what this document does: to undertake, to start to correct, because this structural system that we have all been working on will take a long time.

Basically, the authors, both top-notch economists, provide a thought-provoking explanation of why economic crises keep occurring for eight centuries now, Mr Speaker, Sir. Their rigorous and comprehensive analysis of eight centuries of financial crisis essentially offer proof that debt-fuelled expansions have always ended up in financial ruin for hundreds of years. Debt-fuelled expansions always end up in financial ruin. We are not talking about just the Euro crisis, we are not talking about Lehman Brothers, we are talking about eight centuries of financial crisis.

This is a lesson to take seriously both in the private sector and the public sector. Captains of our private sector would do well to read this book. Mr Speaker, Sir, also in our private sector, a lot of the expansion has gone on the face of debt - debt, debt and more debt. The problem is that you have also the banks and, in particular, one particular bank which has sometimes ties to these industries. It is a catch 22. These industries come to the bank and say: "I need just some money, just Rs200 m. to get out". So, you get another Rs200 m. and then you get into difficulty, and say: "I need another Rs200 m." You just keep going in this leveraging and leveraging and this is a recipe for disaster. We have to look at how our industries are operating. It is not about just this Euro crisis, it is about the structural underpinnings of how we do business. When we talk about White Sand Tours, Mr Speaker, Sir – it has been on the papers – many would think that it is because of the Euro crisis. Mr Speaker, Sir, go and talk to any financial analyst on the place and they will tell you that it is related to bad management decision-making, because they decided to buy Porsches and other luxury vehicles for the odd one or two clients. This is why now White Sand Tours is collapsing. Nothing to do with the Euro crisis! Everything to do with the way the business was run and the underpinning leveraging, leveraging and leveraging. What I am saying is that we cannot go on in a cocooned environment; we cannot go on taking

monetary policy as competitiveness. It was good for infancy stage, but not a good business model for the future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the last thing I want to talk about is Maurice Ile Durable and I want to talk about it from a larger perspective. Maurice Ile Durable is not just about the environment, it is also about *la société durable*. When we talk about *maisons des jeux* and - we have not talked enough about it here, Mr Speaker, Sir - *le ravage que l'alcoolisme est en train de faire dans notre société*. I will ask a question next week to the hon. Minister of Finance. When we come here we get the Government Gazette. Every week I see – they apply to the MRA – dozens and dozens of applications for new liquor licences. Where are these going, Mr Speaker, Sir? So, *Maurice Ile Durable* is not just about the environment, it is about *la société durable* and we have to tackle these issues, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would skip through some of these things, but I want to talk about, what the economists call the Genuine Progress Indicator as opposed to the classic GDP. There is a debate going on now, Mr Speaker, Sir, about whether the GDP can still be seen as the scorecard of national progress and this is even more topical when we speak about Maurice Ile Durable.

The GDP was introduced in wartime, World War II, as a measure of wartime production capacity, and it was never intended to be a measure of a nation's economic well-being. The problem with the GDP is that it treats crime, natural disasters, gambling and so on as economic gain. Even the proliferation of gambling rings up as a positive GDP growth. This is the irony, Mr Speaker, Sir. GDP does not take into account the cost to society of such things. It ignores the non-market economy of households and community. GDP increases with polluting activities and then again when the clean ups come, also the GDP crises. Even the magazine 'Economist' in its 15 March 2008 issue, discussed the GDP as the grossly distorted picture.

When you look at the graph, Mr Speaker, Sir – I have a graph here of GDP v/s Genuine Progress indicator - GDP is way higher in the US and everywhere else than the Genuine Progress Indicator. I will make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Finance to consider all these facts. A number of economists have suggested that the Genuine Progress Indicator - a new measure of economic well-being - may be more in line with the current environmental consciousness and so on. Therefore, there may be space here to take a fresh look at how we measure genuine progress.

I would like to see along with the classic GDP figures, some measures of GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator). It may take time, but it seems to me that this is a worthy thing to pursue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Member who spoke before me talking about institutions and so on and about people in the vulnerable groups. I will have an appeal to make to them, Mr Speaker, Sir. We all have a responsibility of empowering those who are *au bas de l'échelle*. We all have this responsibility. No one has the monopoly of caring more for the vulnerable groups than others. We all have a responsibility, but my point is that empowering is not only about financial or material empowering, it is also about psychological empowering. The more, Mr Speaker, Sir, you ram into the heads of people that they cannot trust institutions, the more you positively reinforce into their minds that their fate is hopeless. So, what then have you done, Mr Speaker, Sir? Empower them or disempower them? Politics on the back of the poor? Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a responsibility here, seriously?

To the new Members of the House, I would say: “never doubt the force of your convictions can influence change as a backbencher.” I personally take great pride to have been by the side of the hon. Prime Minister in his relentless battle for the sugar cane industry. I am going to talk briefly just to respond to what the hon. Member has just said. I am also very happy to have suggested CSR as a legal obligation. I asked a PQ in this House to the previous Minister of Finance. The previous Minister of Finance in 2008 replied that that was not the way to go, but a year later he put it in his Budget. It was good. So, there is space for us to contribute.

Just on the IPP, Mr Speaker, Sir, as hon. Lesjongard has talked about it, there is a report which has been jointly commissioned by post-Government and the MSPA and both have contributed half the fees of the consultant. The report has been commissioned by both parties and maybe the hon. Member may not know that the consultant who was chosen – the Prime Minister has already said that in this House - was in the top three of the MSPA list. We, as a measure of goodwill - there was a process to choose the consultant - said: “you come with your top three and we come with a top three and we see. If there is a match, we will go with the match”. There was no match between the two lists. Their top three and our top three did not match. Hunton & Williams was in their top three, not in ours. We said: “we show our good faith, we go with one of the consultants in your top three, you chose.” They chose Hunton & Williams, Mr Speaker, Sir. There was a strict process, due process that was signed for the terms of reference between

both parties. After due process with the terms of reference, the consultant produced the draft report upon which comments were invited on both sides. We, on our side, gave our comments. We even went there and made our technical findings, opened these to them. Out of due process, the consultant called the MSPA and said: “look, the Government side has come, has given comments on the draft report, would you like to give your comments?” They refused, Mr Speaker, Sir. They then produced their final report as per due process, as per the terms of reference that they signed in conjunction with us. Low and behold, the final report comes out and the MSPA says: ‘no, we don’t agree with this report’. Mr Speaker, Sir, if this is not bad faith, what is bad faith? What the MSPA has done now is to put a case in court. The poor consultants have not even been paid the MSPA side of the fees because there is a case in court. Rest assured, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is keen and will remain determined to close this unfinished business. I know he has the determination to do it and you will see very soon.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to my concluding remarks. Particularly for the new Members of the House, but also for everyone, I would like to quote from Jeff Bezos who was the founder of the revolutionary game-changing Amazon.com, what we call a disruptive business model. Jeff Bezos spoke to the Princeton graduating class of 2010. He spoke about the difference between gifts and choices. He said -

“Gifts are easy – they are given after all. Choices can be hard. Cleverness is a gift, kindness is a choice.”

He ended his speech in a beautifully inspiring set of questions which I would like to share with you. Just a few, I quote –

“How will you use your gifts? What choices will you make?

Will inertia be your guide, or will you follow your passions?

Will you follow dogma, or will you be original?

Will you choose a life of ease, or a life of service and adventure?

Will you wilt under criticism, or will you follow your convictions?

Will you bluff it out when you’re wrong, or will you apologize?

Will you guard your heart against rejection, or will you act when you fall in love?

Will you play it safe, or will you be a little swashbuckling?

When it's tough, will you give up, or will you be relentless?

Will you be a cynic, or will you be a builder?

Will you be clever at the expense of others, or will you be kind?"

He continues by saying –

"I will hazard a prediction. When you are 80 years old, and in a quiet moment of reflection narrating for only yourself the most personal version of your life story, the telling that will be the most compact and meaningful will be the series of choices you have made. In the end, we are our choices. Build yourself a great story."

Here is a good place for me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to ardently wish, pray and urge that, on the basis of this manifest and this Government Programme, let's build ourselves a great story.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(7.33 p.m.)

Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Praises be to the Almighty God and peace be upon all of us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me take the opportunity to congratulate, first of all, the Bleu/Blanc/Rouge Alliance for having won the general election. In the same breath, I will extend my congratulation to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and his team and all Members of this House who have been elected to this august Assembly following the last general election. I would also like to deeply thank all my constituents and the public at large for putting their faith in electing me. I promise that I will not deceive them. Almighty God and the people will be judge. Let me also congratulate you, but before congratulating you, I have to congratulate the Leader of the House, that is, the Speaker, himself and then his Deputy.

I hope that all of us, the FSM, the Government and the Opposition will work together for the interest of those who have elected us to be in this House. We must uphold our values, morals and constantly search for the truth. We must also stand firm against those who take an opposite view. Only then, we can strengthen fraternity; create better interfaith relationship in our beautiful, multiethnic country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I followed most of the speeches of hon. Members from both sides of the House and I feel it necessary to voice out that I have been impressed by the words of hon. Mrs Perraud, hon. Deven Nagalingum, hon. Dr. Satish Boolell and hon. Dr. Arvind Boolell, and I have also been inspired by what I have just heard. I must be thankful to hon. Ms Deerpalsing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our people from all walks and background is expecting a lot from us. Let me make it clear from the outset that I am committed to such moral and values. I hope that we will all work as a team and I am convinced that we will make life better for everyone with the blessing of Almighty God who is the ultimate judge for our actions. Let us also not forget at all that our voters will also eventually judge us in the next election.

For my part, I am prepared to the best of my ability to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Roche Bois, Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot, Tranquebar and Mauritius as a whole.

L'idéal, M. le président, serait qu'on s'y réfère à ces régions comme des modèles de développements socio-économiques, d'émancipation où règne la justice sociale, l'égalité des

chances et la méritocratie. Mais, à la place, nous avons des stigmas qui restent encore et toujours. Malgré tous les discours et tous nos présences à l'échelle mondiale, nous avons, malheureusement, des régions qui restent en marge du développement et du progrès économique, des régions sous représentées au sein du gouvernement central, de l'administration municipale et au sein de la fonction publique.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my constituents certainly know the good job I have been doing for years. This has certainly been their appreciation translated into my election. I am not of those who practice party politics. I have to state that party politics without serving the people cannot and must not be our agenda. My simple presence in this august House is acting as a catalyst for change in favour of my Constituency improving the life of so many people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my presence in this House is by no means an accident. I have always aspired to help everyone. We might say it is a weakness but I don't think so. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am humbled by the task laid upon my shoulders. I have not chosen to come to this House on my own. As it is for the alliance who won the election and for the Opposition, it is definitely the divine will. The Almighty saw the suffering of the people and has bestowed upon me the task of being the link between the electorate and this august Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the leader of the FSM and my total independence from party politics should be considered as an asset to this House. It will allow me the freedom to speak my mind for the interest of the people and it will also allow me to enrich the debate in this House. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will focus on going back to basics and I believe that all of us here need, at some point, to return to our moral and values. Our National Anthem spells out many of such morals and values that the House must aspire to hold. We know that one of our foremost duties is to work for the interest of the country and our people. Only then can we say with pride: glory to our motherland, sweet is thy beauty and sweet is thy fragrance. Only when we create equality and a fair and equitable society, we will stand together and say: as one people, as one nation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can we claim to have peace when crime and disorder is becoming part of our daily lives? How can we claim to have justice and liberty when the poor and vulnerable of our society are chained to poverty? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all here in this House, have sworn an allegiance and have asked God to help us all. The Presidential Speech ends and I quote –

“I pray that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon your counsels.”

We just have to recall it. How then can God bless a country where we do not care for each other? Why do our people in this country still feel that we politicians care for money, power and influence only? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the House that throughout my life, myself and my party have struggled to further improve the life of the weak, poor and vulnerable of our society. It is by no coincidence that I am here representing such people in this House. As a Mauritian I feel really proud to hear the National Anthem every time it is played just like we had it at the beginning of this session. However, I believe that when we sing the National Anthem, we must commit ourselves to what we are saying. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our first Prime Minister had always struggled for peace, justice and liberty and certainly the current Prime Minister has the same vision. After all, *dilo suive canal*.

I congratulate the Government in its quest for peace, justice and liberty by creating a new Ministry to cater for the poor and vulnerable. It met my deepest appreciation. I will give all my support to the hon. Minister and the Government in its quest to make Mauritius a land of peace, justice and liberty for us and generations to come. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I meet my constituents and people from all walks of life and from all parts of Mauritius, they sometimes complain that they do not feel that there is peace, justice and liberty. Poverty is rife and growing. I visit people in Roche Bois, Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot and other pockets of poverty in Mauritius, how can we forget Dubreuil? I saw at first hand the suffering of our compatriots. How about poverty in Flacq, Rose Hill, Curepipe and Port Louis? Looking at all these, we come to one conclusion: our society is sick somewhere. The gap between those who have and those who have not is increasing at an alarming rate. We do not feel that our society is just and equitable. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have one battle in my life and it is to enhance the life of the poor and vulnerable. I am committed to it and that will be my mission. With the help of God and your support, we will, without any doubt, alleviate the suffering of the poor and vulnerable and we have to do it as we have been elected for it.

Let us look at reality today; Mauritius faces an acute problem of rising poverty. I believe that this issue must be addressed both through structural, social adjustment policies which encompass education and training, accommodation, unhindered access to public services and equal opportunities in employment and through short and medium term approaches to support the poor. Government has set up a Ministry of Social Integration, signalling its will to take a

holistic view in tackling poverty and social exclusion. The most recent Household Budget Survey 2006-2007 conducted by the Central Statistics Office showed that the proportion of households below the relative poverty line increased from 7.7% in 2001-2002 to 8% in 2006-2007. The number of poor households increased from 23,700 in 2001-2001 to 26,900 in 2006-2007. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the poor is often victim of unequal distribution of income in society. Poor families have a household income one third only of the national level. Most of that income is not even enough to buy their basic needs like food, water, cooking gas and electricity. From where do we expect them to pay for private tuition, rent and other basic necessities? Financial stress put additional burden on already depressed households. In addition, income generating opportunities to help the poor absorb the rising cost of living are very scarce. I look at my constituency and I know that there are no jobs being created. Indebtedness of poor households helps to keep them in the poverty cycle and may even have them locked up in dept trap.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, poverty is not only about the deprivation of financial and material comfort. Cultural and intellectual deficiencies are very often the manifestation and the causes of structural poverty. Limited access to education keeps people on the side track of the socio economic development. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many heads of poor households never attended school. We also know that the education system previously and still at present does not favour the poor, of the 20,000 CPE candidates only some 2,500 go on to take the HSC examinations and one third fails the CPE exams. Let us ask this very basic question: what happened to some 17, 000 young adults? We cannot fail them again in our society. Low level education means low wage jobs, if they are lucky; some of those young adults end up taking low paid grade jobs. Otherwise, most are engaged in elementary occupation comprising mainly cleaners, street vendors and labourers. I know and believe the Minister of Education is working on revamping the educational system. I pray for him to succeed. I will still request the hon. Minister to cater for education needs of the poor households and also those living in the deprived areas. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, poverty is not just about income, the Nobel prize winner Amartya Sen in his book 'Development as freedom' defines poverty and I quote –

“The deprivation of basic capabilities that provide a person with the freedom to chose the life he or she has reason to value.”

I urge the House to listen to it. These capabilities include good health, education, social networks, command over economic resources and influence on decision making that affects one's life. Income is important because money allows a person to develop his/her capabilities, but it is only a means to live a valuable life. From this perspective, poverty is a condition with many interdependent and closely related dimensions, which can be summarised in three broad categories -

- (a) lack of regular income and employment, lack of productive assets (such as lands and housing) and lack of access to social safety nets;
- (b) lack of access to services, such as education, health care, information, credit, water supply and sanitation, and
- (c) lack of political power, participation, dignity and respect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we also know that poverty breeds poverty, and it is a vicious circle. Lack of opportunity forces our young to take drugs, commit crimes, and lead them to prostitution. In our society, our poor see gambling as a hope. We cannot allow this to go on. We cannot allow them to have such hopes; we can do better for them, and we have been elected to do it for them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nous voyons *une prolifération du gambling à Maurice*, and it is worth saying that it is mostly the poor who gamble, in the hope that they can win a big jackpot to move out of poverty. Hon. Ms Deerpalsing knows the problem and voiced it out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in our quest to improve the lives of our citizens, let us make the fight against poverty our priority. Let us take a holistic approach. Let us understand the causes of poverty, and then find solutions. Causes of poverty are regions specific. The causes of poverty in Plaine Verte, Roche Bois, Vallée Pitot, Dubreuil, Cité Beau Séjour are all different to each other. In addition to having a national policy against poverty, I urge the Government to look at region specific policies to alleviate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the poor cannot hope if they feel in their inner self that there is no justice being done to them, if they feel that our public services and Government are not doing their duties well, and that resources are wasted. Let us look at the Audit Report. The Audit Report serves to prove how we are wasting our financial resources. The long awaited Audit

Report from the Municipality of Port Louis is still outstanding. Is there something to hide? We must make our Government and public services more accountable.

We have over 120 parastatals in all sectors of the economy. They include public utilities, infrastructure and transport, agricultural, industrial, financial, trading companies, and social welfare organisations as well. The budgetary burden of the parastatal sector has a major impact on public finances. This costs the Government some 3.4% of the GDP. We should ask this simple question: are we getting value for money? Most of us know the answer. We all know how the population feels about some of our parastatals. This can only infuriate the people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the election, there appears to be a lack of direction from the Government. Since 2005, our people in this country are expecting changes to their lives, as they have been promised. They feel let down till now. The lack of direction by Government, coupled with poor or no communication with the people, is very dangerous to my opinion and conviction. I personally fear that such frustration will soon be voiced out through social degeneration and religious disturbances.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new Government has taken some very positive steps to alleviate poverty in its new programme by -

- (i) creating the new Ministry that we know;
- (ii) under the social housing policy, Government proposes to construct 10,000 additional units of housing for the lower and middle-income groups in the next five years. Furthermore, fully serviced sites will be developed to allow families to build houses on their own plots of land of 60 *toises*. Such initiatives are very appreciable, and will allow the poor to use this asset as collateral to improve their business;
- (iii) the new Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital is being built at a cost of Rs2 billion. Some Rs0.5 billion is being invested in the renovation of hospitals and other health care amenities, and
- (iv) resources to the tune of Rs1.3 billion are budgeted over the next three years to upgrade primary and secondary schools.

All these are very positive measures. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to add some measures that will make a difference. First, let us ask: how can we reverse the cycle of poverty and help connect the financially challenged families to the mainstream of society?

Micro entrepreneurship constitutes a key component of poverty alleviation. Government and the private sector, together with NGOs, can act jointly at grass root level of the community to create new business space. We all know the problem faced by the *marchands ambulants*. However, small businesses are extremely vulnerable to the slightest disturbance in the economic environment.

They, therefore, need some hand-holding. Support policies provided by Government have, at best, met with limited success. Poor access to finance and ill-designed financial support and inadequate markets or well structured markets are seen as the main pitfalls in the small entrepreneurship strategy.

There is an urgent need to revamp our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Just because companies pay their 2% CSR, we cannot expect poverty to be alleviated. Companies should be encouraged to outsource some of their production and support services to micro-operators. For instance, a garments company may outsource some minor works like assembly or simple packaging to housewives in the region nearby the factory. Once the products have been assembled, they are delivered to the factory, where a quality control could be undertaken.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us revisit our democratic system. The fundamental principle in all aspects of our social life today is democracy. I indeed cherish the ideals of democracy defined as -

“An ideal and practice of life, in which all members of society are always full of hope, enjoy life decently, work and study in the spirit of independence, creativity, harmonising the civic rights each of us has received with public welfare”.

We should all make the effort to maintain true democracy that ensures the basic fundamentals: liberty, equality and happiness. We must also respect all human beings; we should also have respect for life and respect for the personality of that human. Such respect will eventually guarantee the freedom of thought and expression, and also many other fundamental rights.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our actual democratisation system can be summarised as follows

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- (i) the idolisation of democratic system and organisation;
- (ii) lack of respect for others, and

- (iii) lack of social solidarity among people, which is detrimental to our total social welfare. This is making everyone unhappy and frustrated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Almighty God will make us all accountable in his Divine court.

We are all aware of the cosmic justice. We can only look at the effect of climatic change when we do not respect and we do not feel accountable to nature: earthquakes, fire, flood devastations and suffering. Accountability is what we should be.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am convinced - this is my opinion - that by setting the divine pleasure and accountability to the divine as the objective of our life, the highest possible standard of morality could be furnished and this is bound to provide enumerable avenues for the moral evolution of humanity. It invokes the people not only to practice virtue, but also to establish virtue and eradicate vice; it wants that the verdict of conscience should prevail and makes morality reign supreme and ensures that the affairs of life, instead of being dominated by selfish desires and petty interest, should be regulated by the norms of morality.

Mankind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is squarely confronted with many serious problems and crisis today. Most people are well aware of such worldwide problems as the possibility of a nuclear war, a very real energy crisis, overpopulation and shortage of food without forgetting the threatening economic ongoing crisis. At the domestic level, there are problems of degeneration in many fields such as education and the sharp increase in immoral gambling *et la délinquance*. We will not be able to enjoy true happiness and peace unless and until these problems are solved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are today called in this House to play our role in modern politics, whose purpose should be the advancement of the welfare of the people of our nation. We have the important task to manage power with nobleness and also to show the people the ideal way of political participation. Therefore, I appeal to our reason to understand that we have been elected by the people to do the job and so let us do it together in the true spirit of reconciliation. Let us seek to cultivate a deep moral sentiment through our personal example.

I will take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to ask the Government to review the power given to the media. We are all aware of the issue facing Government and a certain press. All of you know the recent case involving a person whom I was trying to help. I have

experienced a lot of injustice by the manipulative press. Our justice system here is based on innocence until proven guilty. The press has a different motto, you are guilty first.

The Prime Minister intends to come with new media legislation. I wish him good luck. We form part of this category of Mauritians who will always be powerless before that press. *Serait-ce une question que nous sommes mal-nés, ou d'un préjugé institutionnalisé ?* Why is it that when it comes to others nothing is published or aired in the media? It is my feeling and I feel that this is the case. Even President Barack Obama thinks that this is so. In his book, the 'Audacity of Hope', he says -

"Si en grande partie grâce à la chance ou au hasard, j'occupe aujourd'hui une position qui me protège de la plupart des plaies et bosses que le Noir moyen doit endurer, je peux quand même réciter la litanie des petits affronts qui m'ont été infligés pendant mes quarante-cinq années d'existence : les vigiles qui me suivent lorsque je fais mes courses dans un grand magasin, les couples blancs qui me lancent les clefs de leurs voitures quand je me tiens devant l'entrée d'un restaurant et que j'attends le voiturier, les policiers qui m'ordonnent sans raison apparente de me garer le long du trottoir. »

All these are words of Mr Barack Obama. I take comfort, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that even if I was boycotted by the press, my people never lose faith in me. We stood stronger even with steadfastness. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all in this House must comply in our duties to make Mauritius a better place where there is real peace, justice and liberty. Making money, becoming powerful and influential in society cannot and will not, I pray, be our aim. We must all make the fight against poverty our priority. This will take time, but time well spent for our children that will certainly be rewarded by Almighty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us first understand the causes of poverty. We have this habit of believing that we understood poverty but, in fact, we don't. Poverty is not just about money. It is about people, it is about what we see and feel happening around us. It is about opportunity. It is about access to services. It is about justice. It is about hope. It is about dignity and respect.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ultimately it concerns all of us. I urge the House to work together in the quest to make "*Ile Maurice, c'est un plaisir*" and not "*Ile Maurice, c'est l'inégalité*". Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the electorate of my constituency has said that this year must be different than all the rest because they chose to listen not to their doubts or fears, but to

their greatest hopes and highest aspiration. Together we have marked a historical journey with the beginning of another, a journey that will bring a new and better day to Mauritius, this beloved country.

May Almighty God bless all of you. Thank you.

At 8.08 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues): Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to, first of all, congratulate you on your election to the position of Speaker of this House. When the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition both agreed upon your nomination, I witnessed this as a great example of a respected democracy. My congratulation also goes to the Deputy Speaker for his election. I pay tribute to those who made their speeches before me. I feel an enormous sense of privilege, gratitude and history to stand here today for my maiden speech in response to the debate on the Government Programme 2010-2015.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to extend my warm congratulation and gratitude to all hon. Members and also to the staff of the House, whose advice and kindness is helping me. To hon. Members of this House, I wish all success in their endeavour to accomplish their duty.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me on my maiden speech to refer to my electorate, the people of Rodrigues and my constituency, Rodrigues. Destiny wishes that I also represent the people of Rodrigues to bring along a new young voice with a new political mindset in the general interest of Rodrigues and the Republic of Mauritius. I acknowledge here the excellent contributions of predecessors from my constituency, patriot of remarkable talent and vision, starting right back from 1982, my Leader and Leader of the OPR party, the courageous Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K., a man of principles, frankness, passions and honesty, who spent 20 years in this House. Late Zita Jean Louis, the first and only woman so far, who has contributed in this Assembly. The former Ministers for Rodrigues, Benoit Jolicoeur, and late France Félicité, for their contributions and the other politicians also, who served as hon. Members in this House and I thank them for their work, especially my Leader.

M. le président, mon leader, Serge Clair, 28 ans de cela, dans cette auguste Assemblée, a partagé des points fondamentaux sur la philosophie de la politique de l'OPR et parmi je cite -

'L'OPR prône une politique d'intégration dans la nation Mauricienne, non pas dans l'uniformisation des identités mais dans la reconnaissance et dans la diversité.'

La position de l'OPR n'a pas changé sur ce point. Je suis fier qu'en 2010 cette position de l'OPR soit communément acceptée au sein de la nation Mauricienne. Je vais moi aussi apporter ma contribution dans cette voie déjà tracée vers une destination commune pour le peuple de Rodrigues et la nation Mauricienne. Les héritages de mes prédécesseurs sont 'la Rodriorganisation et la décentralisation'. La Rodriorganisation est une véritable révolution des ressources locales, une idéologie, qui n'a pas été comprise par beaucoup, et a parfois donné lieu à des réflexions et actions inappropriées.

Rodrigues dispose aujourd'hui d'une variété de talents intellectuels, scientifiques, artistiques et sportifs qui font la richesse de notre île. Cette richesse pourrait relever les défis de l'avenir, M. le président. Certes, Rodrigues a besoin encore de ressources humaines à tous les niveaux.

La décentralisation du pouvoir, de Maurice à Rodrigues, devenait en 2001 une réalité après un militantisme de 25 ans de l'OPR menant vers un maximum d'autonomie de Rodrigues.

Merci à ces hommes et à ces femmes de bonne volonté qui ont mené la lutte pour l'autonomie de Rodrigues vers la libération de la femme et de l'homme Rodriguais.

Je suis très reconnaissant à tous les honorables membres qui ont voté à l'unanimité pour donner à Rodrigues son statut de maximum d'autonomie en 2001.

A la nation mauricienne, j'adresse le salut le plus fraternel, le salut de l'amitié, le salut de la solidarité. Rodrigues est une richesse et une chance pour Maurice. Nous pouvons ensemble construire l'avenir.

M. le président, vu que c'est mon premier discours, je ne vais pas faire un discours théâtral déjà entendu et répétitif depuis des années comme certains. Mais je veux parler sérieusement sur mes engagements et mes principes politiques ; l'autonomie de Rodrigues, l'administration publique à Rodrigues, les élections 2010 à Rodrigues et mon analyse du programme gouvernemental.

Le *leadership* politique de Serge Claire a été depuis longtemps une source d'inspiration pour moi. Je le cite : « *Nou kapav, nous pas kapav* », ce qui a aussi poussé le peuple de Rodrigues à se mettre debout et de prendre en main son avenir.

M. le président, j'aime Rodrigues, je ne suis pas venu ici pour ternir la réputation de certains, raconter et inventer des histoires ou pour gonfler des chiffres des productions agricoles que pour gagner plus d'argent. J'ai prêté serment et je suis ici au nom du peuple de Rodrigues par engagement pour principalement travailler pour le peuple de Rodrigues, les Rodriguais à Maurice et toute la nation mauricienne ; être un porte-parole de Rodrigues et une nouvelle voix forte de la jeunesse Rodriguaise ; transmettre la voix du peuple de Rodrigues, les valeurs et principes politiques de l'OPR qui sont le travail, le respect, la discipline, la responsabilité, le sérieux et la justice sociale.

Je suis ici pour défendre les acquis de l'autonomie et renforcer cette l'autonomie au sein de la République de Maurice dans le respect, le dialogue et avec fermeté si besoin. Notre autonomie c'est qu'il faut continuer à construire et réussir. Je suis ici pour dénoncer les injustices et le manque de transparence par rapport à la gestion des affaires publiques à Rodrigues ; contribuer et participer aux débats sur les grands dossiers prioritaires nationaux. Je suis ici pour veiller au niveau des lois la plage de Rodrigues pour éviter des contradictions avec la loi de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues comme, par exemple, avec des amendements au niveau du *Local Government Act* qui interfère dans les pouvoirs de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues. L'OPR se positionnera résolument pour la consolidation de l'autonomie obtenue au terme d'une longue lutte.

M. le président, tout cela se fera dans un esprit de vérité car Rodrigues est à un tournant important de son avenir avec l'OPR vers un redressement et un vrai changement.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to speak also on the fundamental principles that I believe should govern the exercise of political power and the reasons, therefore, that I am a Member of the OPR Party and why I have sought election to this august Assembly. Kevin Rudd, the former Australian Prime Minister said and I quote –

“Politics is about power. It is about the power of the State. It is about the power of the State as applied to individuals, the society in which they live and the economy in which they work.”

Most critically, our responsibility in this House is how that power is used, whether it is used for the benefit of the few or the many. Mr Rudd is out of power and was replaced by a woman, Julia Gillard, the first Australian woman Prime Minister. I hope that this shall inspire all women here in politics in our Republic to aspire to be Prime Minister one day.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my fundamental view of political power is simply as: “There is but one just use of power and it is to serve people and change society.” We are given power neither to advance our own purposes nor to make a great show or a name. It is to serve people as it is people who give us power. A lot has been said by Members of both sides in this House on communalism. I am personally against the trivial game of communalism in our society. Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2010 in Rodrigues, it’s very unfortunate and shameful that we witness communal campaign by the MR party and others against my respected colleague Soopramanien Sooprayen. He is a Mauritian born citizen, who is domiciled in Rodrigues for more than 44 years and has contributed enormously in the education, political and social life of Rodrigues. OPR do not value or choose a candidate for his origin, sex or religion, but OPR party value the quality of the person. Soopramanien Sooprayen is a particular case of a man of great integrity. If he was elected, that would have been a landmark achievement for OPR and Rodrigues in our Republic. Mr Speaker, Sir, I appeal for all of us to fight against communalism. The sooner the better. Let us advance towards a new horizon with a new societal mindset. Let us think and act anew and we, Members of this House, are called to be the frontline role model as Parliamentarians with responsibility to be an educator of our society. My leader, Serge Clair, always says that he is a politician, but above all, he is an educator. We must, therefore, act together as united people for a nation-building and for the birth of a new and true Mauritian nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues in our Republic is a small island, but with big dreams and we have the capacity to create a better society where every child is loved, cared for and gets the best possible education.

- where every person has access to quality health care and water;
- where every person, irrespective of his origin or gender, is valued in his own right;
- where differences of opinion are tolerated and respected;
- where everybody who wants a job can get one without nepotism or favouritism.
- where our university student studying in Mauritius or abroad feel the urgency of going back to Rodrigues, to contribute to the human resources and development of Rodrigues;
- where our elderly lives in dignity and safety;

- where public officers do not feel pressured from political interference and intimidation, and
- where our youths dream of a brighter future.

M. Le président, je veux maintenant parler de cette autonomie de Rodrigues, cheminement lumineux du peuple de Rodrigues. Cette autonomie est mal connue, mal interprétée et est parfois mélangée avec le mot indépendance, mais elle constitue pourtant une partie importante de la société Mauricienne, multiculturelle et démocratique. L'autonomie est au cœur du projet politique de l'OPR pour transformer la société Rodriguaise depuis sa création pour affirmer notre identité au sein de cette république Mauricienne actuellement une et indivisible.

Le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, dans l'hebdomadaire 'La Voix de Rodrigues' le 08 mars 1997, déclarait que « Rodrigues a une spécificité incontournable, il s'agit donc pour les Rodriguais de trouver cet équilibre entre l'expression de leur propre identité au sein d'une république dans laquelle ils sont partie prenante » et Paul Bérenger quant à lui déclarait que « Rodrigues doit de plus en plus prendre son destin en main ». C'était dans le même hebdomadaire du 29 mars 1997. Cette autonomie est axée sur les principes du respect, du partage des compétences, de la confiance, de la responsabilité, de la collaboration et de la bonne entente et du partenariat entre Maurice et Rodrigues. Par contre, cette idée d'autonomie est totalement contraire à l'option de ce qui prône l'idée indépendantiste, séparatiste ou fédéraliste comme réclamaient par certains politiciens de Rodrigues.

M. le président, certains medias ont fait facilement un mélange problématique de ce combat de l'autonomie. Pourtant, l'autonomie n'est qu'un statut politique, un outil de gestion dans une démarche de modernité pour plus d'efficacité dans les affaires de l'Etat. Notre autonomie combine trois éléments importants - la capacité de décider soi-même, prendre ses responsabilités, la capacité d'agir sans l'intervention d'un tiers et la disposition des ressources nécessaires à la réflexion et à l'action pour le peuple de Rodrigues. Avec l'autonomie, Maurice s'est adaptée aux besoins du peuple de Rodrigues. Ça c'est formidable ! Avec, un approfondissement continu, il n'y aura pas de contradiction entre autonomie et intégration. Mais, par contre, avec un ministre de Rodrigues qui s'ingère dans les affaires locales sans connaitre ses limites, comme a été le cas sur le dossier de la santé et autres, tout cela est conflictuel et contradictoire. Je dirai même, M le président, que dans ce sens l'autonomie n'existe plus pour certains.

M. le président, sur le plan économique, Maurice reste un marché naturel pour la production Rodriguaise et, de surcroît, Maurice dispose des institutions sur lesquelles Rodrigues peut compter pour son développement économique. Par conséquent, on s'interroge sur les revendications de l'indépendance de Rodrigues sur le plan économique. Dans le contexte de la mondialisation, comment concevoir un développement économique sans disposer d'institutions solides ayant fait leurs preuves dans le temps ? Alors que faisant partie de la république de Maurice, Rodrigues dispose gratuitement de ces institutions. L'OPR croit que sur le plan institutionnel, certains domaines de compétences régaliennes doivent continuer à relever de l'Etat Mauricien la diplomatie, la défense, la justice, la politique de santé, droits sociaux, entre autres.

M. le président, l'expérience a montré que l'autonomie est source de dynamisme économique, social et de rayonnement culturel. Par ailleurs, il ne s'agit pas de promouvoir la règle du chacun pour soi et d'exalter les égoïsmes dans les relations. Il ne s'agit aucunement de chercher à s'en sortir tout seul.

Pour développer une véritable solidarité dans la république de Maurice, L'OPR a proposé que Rodrigues ait les financements nécessaires pour accélérer son développement afin d'atténuer les disparités entre Rodrigues et Maurice et cela dans la bonne gouvernance, la bonne utilisation de la finance et non pas de gaspillage ou la politique des petits copains, comme cela se passe à Rodrigues.

Aujourd'hui, le rapport accablant du Directeur de L'audit ne fait pas honneur à Rodrigues. Je souhaite que le *Public Accounts Committee* et *L'ICAC* fassent davantage la lumière sur certains dossiers. Par exemple, un mur de revêtement au coût de R10 millions était réalisé au coût de R30 millions sans qu'aucune étude de faisabilité ou plan d'aménagement n'ait été réalisé au départ. L'autonomie doit permettre le peuple de Rodrigues d'apprendre à se libérer de la dépendance économique et d'apprendre à créer sa propre économie, produire, transformer et exporter et aussi d'inventer une dynamique économique et une approche de niche spécifique à Rodrigues.

Le développement économique reste encore un des plus grands défis pour Rodrigues et pour son autonomie. L'approche économique pour Rodrigues doit être une approche endogène, c'est-à-dire, de valoriser pleinement les ressources de l'île et rechercher des niches à la mesure de Rodrigues. Ce n'est pas l'implantation de grandes usines, mais la mobilisation des ressources

locales et l'*empowerment* de la population. L'OPR, dans sa vision du développement durable en 2004, a initié un processus qui a abouti à un plan de développement durable et intégré de Rodrigues ainsi que d'autres grands projets comme le cadastre de Rodrigues, la préparation d'un plan pour l'aménagement du territoire et des règlements suivant une vision écologique.

M. le président, Rodrigues a besoin de préparer à nouveau le chemin vers une vraie société de production, de transformation et non une société de consommation et d'assistanat. Le projet de financement pour la sécurité alimentaire ne doit pas être utilisé que pour clôturer des terres et maisons des gens sur une base politique en guise de cadeau électoral alors que les vrais planteurs ne bénéficient pas grandement de ce fonds. Quel ont été les vraies données scientifiques pour soutenir les projets ? Quel a été le rendement en terme de production ? Pour la production du maïs, oignons et haricots, ce ne sont que des chiffres faux et gonflés. On a triplé la production. C'est faux. Pour l'annonce de 192 tonnes de récolte d'haricots pour 2010, étant moi-même de formation géomètre, je connais ce que la superficie des terrains veut dire. Je suis descendu sur le terrain à travers toute l'île pour constater la superficie cultivée et j'ai parlé aux planteurs. M. le président, les chiffres avancés sont faux. Incroyable et ridicule !

M. le président, l'efficacité de ce programme doit être revue du point de vue technique et financier pour plus de productivité. L'autonomie devait mener Rodrigues vers une vraie économie productive à base agricole rurale et qui accède à des niches de l'économie moderne comme dans les secteurs touristiques, culturels, artistiques entre autres.

L'autonomie de Rodrigues signifie de travailler davantage l'*empowerment* de la population et non pas de devenir, je répète, des assistés en plongeant dans l'attentisme. Rodrigues se développe aujourd'hui une mauvaise politique locale – écoutez bien – créer, empirer et exploiter face à la misère du peuple. Ils donnent à des familles un petit cochon ou cinq coqs ou coquerelles sans un encadrement visionnaire pour les libérer de la misère mais plutôt pour leur faire devenir des esclaves politiques que pour gagner des élections dans l'immoralité. L'OPR a crié sur tous les toits : '*Rodriguais déboute lors to deux li pieds*'. Il faut libérer le peuple de Rodrigues de cette mentalité d'assisté pour le réconcilier avec son avenir dignement.

Mon *leader* Serge Clair disait toujours au peuple de Rodrigues, je cite : '*pas compte lor manzé ki sorti dehors mais compte lors manzé ki sorti dan nou la terre*'. La terre Rodriguaise, M. le président, notre patrimoine, notre richesse de notre île et du peuple de Rodrigues, cette même

terre qui subit aujourd’hui une braderie sauvage ! Aujourd’hui nous sommes tous témoins que trop dépendre sur l’extérieur pour son alimentation est risqué. On a l’exemple de l’inondation au Pakistan actuellement et la qualité du riz ration qui a fait débat ici même et qui laisse à désirer. Le ministre du commerce lui même est d’accord sur ce point. M. le président, au passage, je plaide pour que le prix des denrées de base à Rodrigues comme le riz, la farine, le lait et d’autres soit au même prix qu’à Maurice. Nous sommes dans la même République.

L’OPR a continué d’encourager les gens à cultiver leur terre alors que certains passaient à l’arrière pour leur dire : ‘*au lieu li donne zotte ène travail dan governman, li dire zotte alle plante ti piment*’. Ces mêmes personnes clament aujourd’hui ‘*produire ce ki ou manger et mange ce ki ou produire*’. Et c’est avec un retard considérable de plus de 20 ans pour comprendre ce que l’OPR transmet au peuple de Rodrigues. C’est une honte face à cette mentalité rétrograde envers le peuple de Rodrigues pour le pousser à devenir de plus en plus assisté et tue l’esprit d’entrepreneuriat. C’est révoltant !

Depuis 1977, M. le président, l’OPR veut installer à Rodrigues une mentalité créatrice et productrice bannissant ainsi la mentalité d’assisté qui est néfaste à l’avenir du pays.

M. le président, je fustige la culture d’assistanat et de la facilité. Je dis bien fustige. La nouvelle voie est celle de la culture du travail, de l’effort, de solidarité, de discipline, de cohérence, de productivité améliorée, de savoir-faire, de formation et d’ouverture dans un climat de confiance.

M. le président, la plupart des employés de Rodrigues se trouvent dans le secteur public. Ceux du secteur privé se trouvent dans la pêche, l’agriculture, le tourisme, la construction entre autres.

M. le président, je suis d’accord avec l’honorable Gungah. Je cite : ‘*the public sector is the most important vehicle for the development and success of a country in this changing and highly competitive environment*’ et son appréciation pour les fonctionnaires dans le pays ou dans la nation mauricienne.

A Rodrigues, ces derniers temps, nous sommes témoins d’une politique de démantèlement et non respect de la fonction publique par une politique de répression, de terreur, de frayeur, d’intimidation et de harcèlement. On constate la création de compagnies privées sans transparence par l’assemblée régionale vivement critiquée même par le bureau de l’audit au lieu de renforcer les départements du service public qui ont fait leurs preuves. Tout, M. le président,

devient politique à Rodrigues même si certains ne veulent pas que je dise la vérité, mais c'est la vérité. Il y a trop d'ingérence politique dans les affaires publiques à Rodrigues, M. le président. Le gouvernement régional interprète mal les sections 38, 66 et 68 de la loi de l'assemblée régionale.

Certains politiciens, contrairement à la loi, veulent accaparer les pouvoirs des chefs de départements, de l'*Island Chief Executive*, pour qu'ils puissent exercer un contrôle total sur la gestion quotidienne des services publics à Rodrigues. On a vu le cas des deux *Island Chief Executive* ; un qui a été forcé de partir, et l'autre qui est en partance actuellement.

Les syndicats locaux sont pour le gel de l'implémentation du *Performance Management System* à Rodrigues, car il y a trop d'ingérence politique et de partisannerie.

La société civile a dû se regrouper en plateforme de *Sov Nou Société* et descendre dans la rue pour exprimer leur mécontentement, avec un rapport à l'appui qui contient leurs revendications et critiques sévères vis-à-vis du gouvernement régional.

On parle, aujourd'hui, de la naissance d'un régime dictatorial à Rodrigues. Les syndicalistes, la société civile, les fonctionnaires, et même les partis politiques, connaissent très bien la situation. L'OPR a dû aller en Cour suprême à quatre reprises depuis 2007 pour obtenir l'autorisation d'utiliser les infrastructures publiques pour ses meetings, rassemblements et, actuellement, on attend la décision de la Cour suprême pour organiser une fête récréative, prévue le mois dernier, pour les familles dans un village connu comme Anse Raffin. C'est la dégradation, M. le président.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to talk about this national election in Rodrigues. I acknowledge the people of Rodrigues who believe in the political vision, ideology and philosophy of the OPR party, and who paid me the honour with 46% of the overall 77% of votes. There were about 6,000 people who abstained. Mr Speaker, Sir, those people who voted the OPR party voted usefully, with their intelligence, their mind and conscience in support to bring changes to our degrading Rodriguan society. They did not succumb the temptation of money politics. *Politique donne l'argent, manger, bagaz, di vin B52*; exploitation and political slavery from electoral bribery and gifts in exchange of votes from MR party and others.

Big sums of money were used to buy and win elections. The banks' Automatic Teller Machines became 'Politicians' Automatic Teller Machines', with huge amounts of money being

dispensed to voters. OPR party, on the contrary, carried out a clean, silent electoral campaign, Mr Speaker, Sir. That's the difference. This is OPR.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the OPR electorate resisted, despite the code of conduct was flouted. This electorate deserves our heartfelt thanks and congratulations for their moral victory, through the remarkable and respectful campaign of OPR. From an environmental point of view, OPR did not need any big clean-up campaign to remove posters, flags and banners. This is the way forward for clean political environmental practices.

Mr Speaker, Sir, here, I make a strong appeal to all of us for the adoption of a code of conduct, as a legal instrument, to make our Republic an example of good political practices in the world. I have to also admit of being deeply worried when, in Rodrigues, I witnessed segregation of public facilities through discrimination. It is sad also to read in a local newspaper the following from politicians. I quote –

« Mo ine elu pou travaille zis pu mo dimoune, et dimoune ki ine faire nous lekip confiance. Mo koné qui role saken ine amener. Aster la, saki ine décide pour suivre l'opposition pou bizin alle guette l'opposition et pas nou, quand zotte dans problème ou enan kit démarche pour faire. Nou, nou pou guette juste nou dimoune » déclarait un commissaire.

And this is written in a local newspaper, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Peut-on dire, M. le président, que c'est de la politique ou de l'anarchie ? Cette partisannerie politique de la part des politiciens qui gouvernent le peuple de Rodrigues est irresponsable, voire dangereuse.

Le Premier ministre lui-même valorise, comme cité dans la presse -

« Je suis le Premier ministre de tous les mauriciens. Nou pou travaille dans l'intérêt de la population. Nous ti élu pou tout dimoune. Nou pas pou travaille juste pour ene ti poigné dimoune. »

M. le président, c'est cela la difference, *and I am quite glad and happy that the Prime Minister himself said it.*

Savez-vous ce qui se passe avec la dilapidation des terres de l'Etat à Rodrigues, hypothéquant notre futur et celui de nos enfants, pour satisfaire les besoins irréfléchis du présent pour quelques roupies ?

« *Il y a une braderie du patrimoine* » souligne l'honorable ministre de logement et des terres ici-même. C'est la vérité : « *Nou la terre pé vendé.* »

C'est pour cela que j'ai demandé au ministre de voir la possibilité d'étendre le projet *LAVIMS* (*Land Administration, Valuation, Information Management system*) à Rodrigues, même si Rodrigues était censé être en avance avec son cadastre initié par l'OPR. The *State Land Act* et d'autres lois mères concernant la terre sont toujours applicables à Rodrigues.

La saga de l'allocation des petits contrats taillés sur mesure pour enrichir des proches du pouvoir.

M. le président, chaque citoyen a le droit de bénéficier des biens du pays et de son avenir.

Si Rodrigues poursuit dans cette dangereuse direction, c'est garantir une crise sociale, culturelle, politique et économique. Rodrigues est en danger ! Et le danger vient de ceux qui la gouvernent. Y prévaut une mauvaise gouvernance sans précédent ; exode massif des frères et sœurs de Rodrigues vers Maurice, avec toutes les conséquences qui s'ensuivent. J'ai en main les résultats d'une enquête intitulée « Conséquences de l'exode sur la famille Rodriguaise », menée en mars 2010 à Rodrigues par le Centre Carrefour. Et la vérité est que, sur la question : quand sont-ils partis, ces frères et sœurs de Rodrigues qui sont à Maurice ?, les réponses sont : 4% entre 1975 et 1989, 8% entre 1990 et 1995, 7% entre 1996 et 2000, 14% entre 2000 et 2005, et 64% entre 2006 et mars 2010. Sans commentaires, M. le président !

On est déjà victime d'une mauvaise utilisation des fonds publics. Il ne faut pas qu'il y ait des chantages et des menaces répétitifs d'indépendance dans une logique que pour gagner plus d'argent, et tout le monde sait pourquoi il faut gagner plus d'argent. Même durant la dernière campagne électorale, il y a eu chantages sur chantages face à Maurice. Ils ont dit : « *si pas donne nou minis, si pas donne nou l'argent, nou pou pran décision ki bizin.* » Je souhaite que le Premier ministre, et son gouvernement, prennent bonne note de ces observations et assumeront leurs responsabilités envers Rodrigues.

M. le président, Rodrigues va mal, et très mal. Ce qui est en jeu, c'est la bonne application des lois à Rodrigues et des relations politiques harmonieuses entre l'Exécutif régional et Maurice. Cet esprit, l'OPR l'a défend depuis toujours. En 1977, on peut lire, je cite –

« Le besoin d'affirmer son identité et sa personnalité est sans nul doute le signe d'une maturité à assumer sa responsabilité historique avec la collaboration de ceux qui veulent l'aider à aller de l'avant. C'est un souhait que la relation qui doit

exister entre Rodrigues et Maurice soit basée sur le respect de la différence, le dialogue, la compréhension mutuelle et une confiance sans équivoque au peuple de Rodrigues et enfin une coopération bilatérale. »

M. le président, qu'a-t-on vu ? L'Assemblée Régionale était en perpétuel conflit avec le gouvernement central jusqu'à même aller en cour de justice. C'est assez incompréhensible. Donc, la solution n'est pas un *Dispute Resolution Tribunal*, comme mentionné par l'honorable membre. Selon la section 3(2) de la loi, l'Assemblée Régionale est une entité qui exerce ses fonctions au nom du gouvernement central. Je cite –

“The Rodrigues Regional Assembly shall be a Body corporate and the exercise of its functions shall be regarded as done on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius.”

Et non pas pour faire du chantage avec l'idée d'indépendance !

D'autre part, la société civile, comme je l'ai mentionné, subisse aujourd'hui, M. le président, des répressions, l'asphyxie financière. Il y a eu aussi un *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Community Development Regulations 2010*. Ces règlements, en réalité, ont été votés et adoptés sans consultations populaires pour contrôler les ONG à Rodrigues. Certains ONG comme le *RCSS* (le *Rodrigues Council of Social Services*, et l'Action Catholique des Enfants, n'ont jamais donné leurs accords pour faire partie de ces règlements.

L'OPR croit que la réussite de l'autonomie, c'est la démocratie participative avec la participation de la société civile.

Je ne suis pas là, M. le président, pour marquer des points politiques mais je suis inquiet de ce qui se passe à Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me now to come to the Government Programme.

(*Interruptions*)

It is my maiden speech, I am sorry. I won't be long, Mr Speaker, Sir. Government proposes the recruitment of 5,000 Police Constables. I pledge for a higher number of Rodriguans, as compared to previous years, for a stronger, disciplined and responsible Police Force in Rodrigues through continuous progress development.

(*Interruptions*)

Please, allow me! This is my maiden speech.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what ICAC is seriously doing in Rodrigues, despite numerous representations made regarding corruptions and undue influence in the public sector in as far as public finance is concerned, I propose that a Procurement and Public Finance Management manual, specifically for Rodrigues, be worked out by Government and introduced as quickly as possible for a better control and monitoring of public finance in Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to the health services in Rodrigues. I would say it is disgraceful. There is no direction. Tremendous efforts need to be done in addition to some of the recent measures, as proposed by the hon. Minister, and I thank her. I discussed with her also and we agreed for an urgent visit to the Health Sector in Rodrigues to meet all stakeholders for a better health care service.

M. le président, le service de la santé à Rodrigues est malade et je dirai sous l'anesthésie.

I welcome the idea of introducing Creole as a medium in the education cursus which will automatically allow its entrenchment into our Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also welcome the proposal for an electoral reform which shall be materialised for a more pragmatic and modern constitutional functionality. *Je souhaite que la réforme à venir, respecte l'unité, l'indivisibilité de la République et renforce l'autonomie de Rodrigues.*

M. le président, huit ans après la décentralisation, beaucoup reste à faire pour consolider les institutions à Rodrigues. La représentation proportionnelle est sans doute très nécessaire pour la réforme.

On souhaite que les amendements sur la loi des collectivités locales ne remettent pas en cause les pouvoirs de l'autonomie de Rodrigues, et surtout dans la situation actuelle à Rodrigues. Il ne faut pas essayer de mettre du désordre là où il y a déjà du désordre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also propose that the debate of this House be broadcast live and direct.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our education system is outdated, but I join the decision of the Government regarding the open and distance education; I won't go into the detail.

M. le président, concernant la formation technique, je souhaite que le collège Citron Donis - prévu par l'OPR - qui a été transformé en collège académique redevienne un centre technique de haut niveau et que le *Mauritius Institute Training and Development*, l'ex-IVTB, qui fait un excellent travail, se renforce à Rodrigues.

I also acknowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision of the new Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment which joins the vision for Rodrigues, “*Rodrigues dibout lor to 2 lipied*” and also the 2005-2006 Budget theme proposed to empower the population.

(*Interruptions*)

I will try to cut short! M. le président, Rodrigues est dans une situation de crise générale et de recul économique.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr François: L’honorable membre a parlé de *bad financial resources for Rodrigues* mais il n’a pas eu le courage de parler de *bad governance of financial resources in Rodrigues*.

M. le président, concernant les mesures préconisées dans ce programme quinquennal pour Rodrigues, il n’y a rien de nouveau. Un *Master Plan* a déjà été travaillé par le *Mauritius Ports Authority* depuis 2004, sous l’OPR, avec la construction d’un quai, le *Petrol Island* et l’agrandissement du *container park*. Le plan a été présenté à Rodrigues et des négociations enclenchées avec le ministère de Finances et la Banque Mondiale.

Concernant des logements sociaux, en 2006, 163 maisons ont été initiées par l’OPR. Et aujourd’hui, en 2010 - après quatre ans - on n’a même pas commencé.

Concernant l’aéroport, M. le président, on attend le nouveau rapport de faisabilité. En attendant, est-ce qu’*Air Mauritius* envisage d’acheter au moins un ou deux nouveaux ATR à court terme pour desservir Rodrigues et réduire les retards et fréquences des vols à Rodrigues ?

M. le président, je félicite le vice-Premier ministre pour l’extension du *Stimulus Package*. Mais j’aimerais bien soulever pourquoi pas aussi l’enlèvement de toutes les taxes sur les billets d’avion Maurice-Rodrigues quand on considère les bénéfices qui pourront en résulter. C’est une question de transport entre Rodrigues et Maurice. Je salue aussi l’initiative d’un nouveau bateau pour remplacer le *Mauritius Pride*. Mais, concernant le *Mauritius Duty-Free Island Project*, un projet touristique, je voudrais savoir comment Rodrigues bénéficiera de cela.

(*Interruptions*)

Dans la vision de l’OPR avec le concept de « L’École Vers l’Enfant », on a construit des écoles communautaires à Auraucaria et Mont Charlot qui n’ont jamais été terminées depuis 2006. Ces écoles de proximité qui s’inscrivent dans la philosophie de régionalisation de l’éducation et de

l'aménagement du territoire. Pour ce qui est de la pêche, alors que le lagon s'est appauvri, ce qui nécessite d'une part la création d'alternatives pour les pêcheurs et d'autre part le besoin de conserver et de préserver le lagon, on note que les réalisations sont faibles.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am really sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. I know that he is making his maiden speech. I think there were some arrangements between him and the Chief Whip of the Government that he will speak for a certain number of minutes. But I am not stopping him here; I am just telling him that the Budget will be coming in a couple of weeks. So, I think he can keep some of his arguments for the Budget Speech where he will have full opportunity to talk about the development of Rodrigues. Thank you.

Mr François: Sorry, but I got carried away, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, je vais essayer de conclure pour laisser la place aux autres. Je vais citer ceci, M. le président, l'engagement de l'OPR repose sur l'espérance, l'île Rodrigues est petite mais grande par ses capacités, son esprit et son cœur. Cet engagement est un choix pour Rodrigues, M. le président. L'OPR a une vision pour Rodrigues et son peuple.

I seize this opportunity to thank my wife for her unconditional support, my kids, my family, my leader, Mr Serge Clair and family, my fellow candidate, Mr Soopramanien Soobrayen and family and all my campaign team. Finally, I thank all the people of Rodrigues for the trust, the courage and faith they have shown in me and I assure them all that I will always represent them to the best of my ability. Together in this dedicated mission, with my committed colleagues of the OPR party in Rodrigues, it is my intention to make a difference and we will make the difference! I look forward to work towards a new Republic of Mauritius as a land of dreams, peace and prosperity for all of us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you and the House for listening to me today.

(10.34 p.m.)

The Minister of Tourism and Leisure (Mr N. Bodha): Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that we should congratulate hon. François for his very long and passionate maiden speech. We can see that there is some sort of a fire that burns in him and he wants to do a lot for Rodrigues and for the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I stand in front of you tonight, I have stood in front of you as a Member of Parliament, as the Leader of the Opposition and today as a Minister. I must say that you have

graced the House in a very brilliant manner over the years and I am very pleased that you are here. I congratulate and wish you well because of your firmness, fairness and equity. I am sure that you will preside on the proceedings of the House in a very commendable manner. May I congratulate also the Deputy Speaker for his election? I would also like to welcome and congratulate all the new Members on both sides of the House and those who have also come after *ce qu'on appelle souvent en politique, une traversée du désert. Cela nous fait souvent du bien.* May I also congratulate my two colleagues from the constituency No. 16? Hon. Mrs Bappoo is not here, but when she entered Parliament in August 1983, you were there. She entered as a Minister and left in December 1995 as a Minister, one of the longest serving Ministers for about 13 years. She came back in 2005. I am very happy that she has a second mandate to serve the country and we know her capacity. So, I congratulate her as well.

But we have made history in the constituency No. 16, Mr Speaker, Sir, because of the granddaughter of Emmanuel Anquetil, one of the stalwarts of the Labour party. My family comes from the Independent Forward Block, but I know the Labour party. I think Emmanuel Anquetil, Seenevassen, Rozemont, Dr. Ramgoolam, Curé and Pandit Sahadeo show us, generation after generation, that we should love our country and have a vision to charter a brilliant future for our people. So, welcome hon. Mrs Anquetil!

(Interruptions)

We have to congratulate hon. Mrs Labelle. In fact, I said that she has been a very good parliamentarian in my constituency and we had, I would say, a very cordial partnership and we are also old friends.

Mr Speaker: I hope there was no conspiracy between the hon. Minister and the hon. Member in the last election.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the election in 2010 is a very important landmark in our history. When we see the Presidential Address, it is from 2010 to 2015, I would like, of course, to say a few words down memory lane because we have to answer to a certain number of political criticisms. I would like to look ahead of 2015 because this speech, if implemented, should see the birth of a new and modern brave Mauritius. And I would like to talk about that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2010 election is a very important election. It shows a number of things. First of all, it shows the political flair *et le stratège qu'a été le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam pour mener à bien l'Alliance de l'Avenir vers une victoire. C'est clair et tout le monde le sait.*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, are you tired?

(*Interruptions*)

You are fit, but you must behave in the House otherwise you know where the door is.

Carry on!

(*Interruptions*)

Order I said!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the MSM has fought the Labour party in 1991, 1995, 2000 and 2005, in four elections. In fact, the Labour party and the MSM parted in 1990 to come back together twenty years later and you have been testimony to this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

When we see the pattern in the way elections have been held from 1991 up to 2010, there are only two elections which Dr. Navin Ramgoolam has lost. The first one was in 1991, which was the first general election in which he participated. The second one was in 2000. But, in 2000, the package was unbeatable. We promoted something out of the political box, if I can use those terms, and we won in 2000. But he has won all the other elections and I think that it is testimony and 2010 is again testimony – *un grand stratège*. I think today all of us can say that if we have the majority in the House, a comfortable majority for the stability of this country, we owe it to the leader of the *Alliance de L'Avenir*.

(*Interruptions*)

Maintenant que nous avons été les membres de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, il nous faut forger l'avenir de l'Alliance, et pour forger l'avenir de l'Alliance, il faut la confiance, la solidarité et l'esprit d'équipe et c'est ça qu'il faut absolument qu'on ait ici, pour mettre en pratique ce programme.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, I am sorry, I am suspending you for the rest of the day and you move out now!

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, carry on! Continue!

(*Interruptions*)

If you continue, I will name you.

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Bodha: So, we owe it to *un grand stratège*...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: He was most vociferous in the Opposition; today he is most vociferous in the Government.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, so, we owe it to the political flair and I am going to take one example, as to what happened in Constituency No. 4. I will come to that example but, as I am paying tribute to what happened on the fifth of May, let me also pay tribute to my leader who is the leader of the MSM for two things: humility and resilience.

(*Interruptions*)

Having lost the 2005 election, when you have been presented as a future Prime Minister, is not easy. *Mais il a connu sa traversée du désert, il a su inspirer tous les membres du MSM - les dirigeants, les membres du bureau politique, les activistes. Il a été dans les 20 circonscriptions* until he came back and, as I said, we have to pay tribute to his humility and resilience. I think we have to pay tribute to his vision and to what we see today in this document facing the Euro zone crisis, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, when it comes to this political flair, I would like to take the example of what happened in Constituency No 4. When we have the list of candidates in Constituency No. 4, the hon. Prime Minister, the leader of the Alliance, presented three lady candidates and you know what was the commentary which came from the MMM: *pe alle l'abattoir!* We were talking as regard to the MSM: why has he done so? Because there is one thing, which I have been able to check and countercheck, that is, the hon. Prime Minister has an astonishing good system of information. We asked ourselves: why then is he putting at risk a seat in No. 4 when everybody is saying: *tous les trois pe alle mange feuillages, tous les trois pe alle l'abattoir!* But the hon. Prime Minister knew that the three could be returned. This is again, as I said, political flair, and he showed it, the three ladies are here and they showed it after having really done so.

At the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir - that is about the election - I heard our old friend, hon. Lesjongard, talking about Gamma Coventa, CT Power, Mangalore, hedging, problem of

accountability, problem of transparency, laying all the sins of this Government. But then, how can you explain, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in 2006, after the presentation of the first Budget speech, in a debate on Radio Plus between Rama Sithanen who was the Minister of Finance and the Leader of the Opposition, what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said: “*nous sommes d'accord*, we agree on fundamentals”? That is what the Leader of the Opposition had said in 2006: “we agree on fundamentals”, that is he agrees with the policy of Dr. Rama Sithanen. That was in 2006.

In 2010, what happened? *On a parlé* de flirting, but the MMM was negotiating a virtual alliance with a virtual partner for about three or four months. The press, the media and the radio – *on partait de surenchère en surenchère, on passait du bureau politique au comité central, du comité central à l'assemblée des délégués. De semaines en semaines, la mariée était belle, attendait déjà le prétendant. Il n'avait même pas annoncé les fiançailles, il ne venait pas, mais la mariée attendait toujours.* *Le* best friend, Xavier Duval, *amusé, attendait.* But this is what the MMM was doing for the last three months. How would they have agreed then? *Comment ils auraient défendu le gouvernement travailliste d'alors pour les soi-disant couleuvres, notamment Gamma Coventa, CT Power, Mangalore, hedging, la question d'accountability and transparency?*

The fact is that they were negotiating a virtual alliance and they did it with passion. They believed in it because *toutes les structures du MMM étaient concernées par cette alliance, que ce soit l'assemblée des délégués, le comité central, le bureau politique.*

(Interruptions)

Carte blanche ! Ce même partenaire qui souhaitait ardemment dire que c’était possible de travailler ensemble, de construire le pays ensemble, venait dire aujourd’hui que tout ce qui a été fait de 2005 à 2010, ce n’est pas grand-chose. Tout ce qu’on veut faire de 2010 à 2015, ils sont en train de raconter des histoires. Mais ce n’est pas vrai et ce n’est pas possible.

History will always tell the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, let me explain one thing. *Le MMM est une caricature de l'unité nationale seul en 1983, 1987 et 2010.* It is only when the MMM is in an alliance that it enters in a mainstream of national unity. This is the truth and they know it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't interrupt the orator! They will have the opportunity to reply. Address the Chair!

Mr Bodha: Mais le MMM a toujours dit qu'il a le monopole de l'unité nationale et de la justice sociale. C'est faux!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't interrupt the orator, please! Hon. Obeegadoo, you are going to speak, you will have full opportunity to reply. Take your note, please!

Mr Bodha : *What I want to say is* quand le MMM seul reprend ses idéaux de départ de 1969, et quand on voit ce qui s'est passé aujourd'hui, je dis que c'est une caricature des idéaux de l'époque et quand on voit le *template* de ce qui s'est passé lors des élections de 2010, la campagne qui a été faite dans chaque circonscription, les calculs scientifiques qui ont été fait, quand on voit aussi pourquoi ce MMM idéaliste mythique, mais qui a eu recours à Ramjuttun pour avoir ce cinq sous, pour gagner un siège dans la circonscription numéro cinq, pour avoir recours à Vishnu Lutchmee Naraidoo pour avoir un siège dans la circonscription numéro 13, le MMM ne devrait jamais faire ça et justifier ça, parce que les idéaux de départ du MMM les empêchent de départir de ces idéaux fondamentaux, parce que l'école du MMM a produit beaucoup de grands hommes et des femmes et beaucoup de grandes personnalités et a façonné notre histoire politique. C'est pourquoi lors des élections de 2010, ils savent eux qui ont voté pour eux dans chaque circonscription ! *And this election 2010, ethnically, Mr Speaker, Sir, is even worse than 1963 and 1967.*

We know this, but the strength of our democracy, the conviviality of our people have made it that once the results were done *les gens ont effacé tout cela et ont continué à vivre tous les jours*. Mais il fallait effacer cela pour pouvoir construire l'île Maurice de demain, une île Maurice que le président a mentionné dans son discours.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Alan Ganoo said that the elections were not free and fair. He was counting on percentage, but when they won all the municipal elections, they won 226 seats with 40 % of people voting in the cities. That was democracy. The MMM won in 1985 all the 126 seats; in 1991 as well, we won with them with 40% of people voting. *But, then, I think qu'on ne peut pas changer les règles du jeu quand on perd et accepter les règles du jeu quand on gagne ! Ce n'est pas possible !* Je suis d'accord avec eux, qu'on devrait mettre de nouvelles règles du jeu.

Nous sommes tous d'accord qu'il faut amener une réforme qui sera la nouvelle frontière de notre démocratie. Je suis d'accord et on va le faire. *We want to do it.*

We did a reform in Rodrigues with regards to the PR. Tout à l'heure, ma collègue, hon. Dookun-Luchoomun, va parler sur le projet que nous avions en commun concernant la représentation proportionnelle. En 1983, le MMM avait remporté 46% des voix et, juste après les élections, vous avez été élu, je crois, dans la circonscription No. 17. Le MMM avait fait placarder à travers toute l'île Maurice que le PMSD avait gagné tant, le parti Travailliste tant, le MSM tant, et le MMM seul 46% !

(Interruptions)

Le plus grand parti ! Mais c'est une illusion !

(Interruptions)

C'est une illusion comptable et mathématique de pourcentage de chaque ethnie. C'est une illusion et qu'est-ce que vous voulez à tout prix ? C'est toujours traverser le fameux 50% seul ! C'est cela que souhaite le MMM ! Mais il faut changer pour le pays et non pas pour le MMM. Il faut changer pour le pays et non pas pour une communauté.

(Interruptions)

C'est cela l'avancement de la démocratie, M. le président.

Let me now, Mr Speaker, Sir, talk about 2015. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me make a picture of the world in five years. By the time we reach the end of this mandate, Europe will still be in a sluggish growth with its economy. India would have moved 8% for five years, almost doubled by 50% its GNP. China would have moved 50% and what we would have achieved? A new airport, a new road from Verdun to Terre Rouge, a new town in Highlands and when we are going to travel from Phoenix to Pont Colville on both sides, you will have, *ce qu'on appelle* des deux côtés, une conurbation, that is, *from the Phoenix Beer up to Pont Colville* et juste après le pont de Sorèze jusqu'à Port Louis on continue avec la ville.

At that speed, Mr Speaker, Sir, in five years, we will already have the ring road. We will already have hopefully the dream bridge and started hopefully *le metro léger* - in five years, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is only infrastructure, but infrastructure without our people living better is nothing. And, in five years, with the Ministry of Social Integration, we hope really to have put on the mainstream all those who are downtrodden today. This is what we are doing in 2010 to 2015, Mr Speaker, Sir. The world is changing dramatically. We are still the Star and Key of the Indian

Ocean, but traffic was going from Europe to the East; now they are coming from the East to Mauritius, to Africa and to Europe, but we are still here. History has changed, but geography has not.

I like a very beautiful sentence which has been written by the vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. It translates everything. It is so beautifully done -

“We should not just paper over the cracks; we must prepare Mauritius for the new global economic landscape. Mauritius must break away from the dictates of history.....”

(Interruptions)

Not that history.

“We must break away from the dictates of history that have made our development Euro centric and we should adapt ourselves to the forces that are giving a new shape to the world economy.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world is moving east. We want it or not, it is moving east. I think this crisis is an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary challenge. One wise politician told me that when we had a cyclone in the 70's we were crippled. Today we have a cyclone in Europe and we are crippled. We need to have a new total paradigm shift. Mr Speaker, Sir, and if there is a land, there is an area where this paradigm shift can happen, it is the tourism sector. There is only one product we can sell to India and to China. It is a dream destination and that's all. We can't sell textiles; we can't sell agricultural goods; we can sell some financial services; we can sell some BPO services, but there is only one product which we know how to sell and which we can sell, that is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one product that we can sell properly and we know how to sell our country as a tourism destination.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we need a new paradigm shift. It is only when Australia - after the oil crisis in 1973 - had a paradigm shift and changed towards the Far East and the dragons that Australia, even today, has a track record of economic growth, Mr Speaker, Sir. And, let me give you some examples; 12 million people travelled out of India this year, we have got 50,000; 46 million people travelled out of China this year, we got only 7,000.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we speak of democratisation of the economy, in fact, the opportunity today is to do a number of things at the same time; it is to do the economic paradigm shift; it is to get out of the European centric structure of our economy. This tight jacket that we have had for so many years, and at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is interesting is we can build a totally new pillar of our economy with people coming from India, China, Russia and the Middle East. Because there, tourism consumer pattern is totally different and, on Monday next, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Finance, the BOI and ourselves are meeting all the mall promoters and the Duty Free Paradise in the airport to make Mauritius a land of shopping with the big brands coming to Mauritius; and, in all the new malls, because the people coming from India, from China, Russia and the Middle East, do not come to Mauritius or any other destination other than for entertainment, for shopping and to spend money. Let me give you an example, Mr Speaker, Sir; if we have 50,000 Chinese which is only 1,000 Chinese per week – which is two planes. 50,000 Indians, 50,000 Russians and 50,000 from others; it is 200,000 spending 1,000 dollars; it is 200 m. dollars, Mr Speaker, Sir. And, we have left the tight straight jacket tourism alone. We are not telling them that we want to bring some sort of an imbalance. No. We continue. We will go to Europe. My friend has been promoting the destination. We will go to Europe. We will have all the flights. We still have 700,000 people coming from Europe, our traditional market. But, let us move away and have a new pillar, a totally new pillar, where you have more; a dollar market, a new pillar, new players, new tourists with a new consumer pattern, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is where we are heading and, at the end of this month, we are going to China, and hopefully, we will come back with a flight and, most probably, Air Mauritius is going to do Mauritius-Guangzhou-Shanghai and back.

But, something interesting has happened. Réunion Island has a volcano. The Chinese do not know about volcanoes. They have a formidable extraordinary landscape which has just recently become a world heritage site. And, China came to play France, before the World Cup, in Réunion Island, it was shown on TV and China beat France 1-0. So, everybody now knows about Réunion Island and now Air Austral is in China with a delegation of 200 people promoting Réunion Island in China. And, you know what we have achieved, Mr Speaker, Sir? The French Authorities have agreed that a Chinese coming to Mauritius can go to Réunion Island without a visa.

We can now make Mauritius become a hub as my friend did for the *croisière* so that people coming from China, come to Mauritius, go to Réunion Island and come back. The Seychelles people are also very interested. They want to do the flight together with us. So, we have a new vista opening up and that is why I say this is a brilliant piece of document because it shows the way for Mauritius for tomorrow. We have to go that way and we should believe in it, we should believe in our country, we should believe in our people, we should believe in the capacity to have niche - because I have always said the solution for Mauritius is to have the niche - where we excel and where we can play the game as it should be played.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for India we are doing the same; eight of the biggest wedding planners from India were in Mauritius last week. One wedding is 1,000 people, three planes, one for the people who come to work on whatever has to be done, its two hotels booked for a week, one plane for the groom, and one plane for the bride. It is 2,000 litres of Black Label, it is 100,000 flowers, and it is 1 million dollars a day. You have 60 weddings like this in a year. We are planning to have one per month; 10 we would be really in a very good position. And, we are going to India to say that weddings are made in heaven. Heaven is Mauritius.

Now, when we do all this, Mr Speaker, Sir, and as my friend had done, the air access issue. We should know, we should again start looking East. Emirates is asking for 14 flights, two flights a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. My friend talked to Qatar; they want to have seven flights. Ideal wise from Switzerland wants to come to Mauritius. A company from Russia wants to come to Mauritius. Hainan Airways wants to come to Mauritius and another second preferred airline from India also wants to come to Mauritius.

So, we have to do this paradigm shift and this document lays the pillar for this, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have talked about the tourism, the potential; we were talking about the democratisation in the tourism business. In the President's Speech we have a brilliant idea, a brilliant piece of paragraph here, where we say we are going to create a Tourism and Hotel Investment Trust, where we are going to buy shares. Government is going to buy shares in all the big hotels and later when the workers are going to buy those shares, Government can subsidise those shares so that the workers in the hotel industry are stakeholders in the industry and can benefit from the dividends.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have talked about tourism. Let me say a few words now on this poverty alleviation, Social Integration Ministry. Mr Speaker, Sir, after the Second World War

when all the houses had been destroyed in France; houses were built in all the cities and in the seventies and eighties, 40 years later, all those areas had become derelict areas and they were having a lot of social, housing, environmental problems and problems of poverty. And, France decided on a policy called *Habitat et Vie Sociale* to integrate, to find a holistic approach so that each family can be given the help they need as regards education, health, work possibilities and training so that you give the family the capacity to get out of the poverty trap because very often when you solve a problem of housing, they have a problem of health, you solve the problem of health and housing, they have the problem of job. They do not have the material means to live.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us, we meet people on a Wednesday and you have some families where you do not know where to send them, whether to send them to Social Security or to the Ministry of Housing or to the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Family Welfare. Now we have a Ministry where we can obtain help for each family. The family does not have to run to one Ministry to have '*la monnaie dal*' and to run to the Social Security for a carer's allowance; to run to another Ministry for the children going to school. We will have the possibility to work on each family and bring them on the mainstream. This is important. Why? Because it is essential for our brothers and sisters who are downtrodden to be in the mainstream and to participate in the building of the Mauritius of tomorrow. This Ministry is a brilliant idea, Mr Speaker, Sir. Very few countries have come with this idea to have all the different Ministries and departments caring for the downtrodden, to be able to get out of the poverty trap. The MSM launched a campaign throughout the island; we had a bus, and we were going everywhere. We went to one *cité* near Curepipe, and we said that Mauritius has the financial means and resources to eradicate poverty. This is a very important priority for this Government, and we will have to do it. I know that my colleague has the resilience and the will. We will achieve this, because to make the poor out of poverty is what the Labour Party has always wanted to do; it is what the MMM has wanted to do; it is what the MSM has always wanted to do. But we will achieve it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words on the environment. I have always said that we are a land - 30 miles X 24 - with one of the highest densities in the world. We are the first supplier of sugar to Europe, with 450,000 to 500,000 tonnes; we are one of the biggest textile producers in the world; we are a dream destination for tourism; we want to do pig rearing; we want also, at the same time, to be environment friendly. So, the *Maurice Ile*

Durable is a fantastic idea, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it will showcase the world that, on a small land of ours, we can live and prosper together, but we can preserve our ecosystem and see to it that this beautiful paradise island, which was given to us by God, can still be preserved for the generations to come. We have a lot do, together with my colleague responsible for environment and the MID Fund, and this is clearly shown in the Presidential address, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Presidential address charters the way forward, but, as I said at the beginning, Mr Speaker, Sir, you know how politics are. A Government, which is stable, powerful, which has the leadership, can become vulnerable if there is no trust. When the MSM enters in an alliance, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the soul of the party which enters in that alliance. The MMM is testimony to this; the way we have been with them. Our friends on this side will appreciate this for the years to come. They can rely on us and the Leader of the MSM, because this is important. We have the vision; we have the leadership; we have Dr. Navin Ramgoolam who wants to make history, but history for generations to come, because we can build a formidable Mauritius, as shown in this address. We have the grassroots wisdom of Dr. Beebejaun, who is a stalwart from the MMM, who left them in 1996/1997. We have also the PMSD, our best friend, as I said, *pour le mariage virtuel qui n'a jamais eu lieu*. We have, with the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, somebody who knows how to charter the way. We have the team, the solidarity and trust, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it is a great opportunity that it is hon. Ms Anquetil who has graced this Assembly with this motion. I am very happy to be able to support the motion, and wish all of us here the resilience, the strength, the will to make a better Mauritius for the years to come.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(11:15 p.m)

The Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues (Mr J. Von-Mally): Mr Speaker, Sir, I know we are all tired, and I will not talk long. I will try to be as short as possible.

Allow me to add my voice to all those who intervened before me to congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker for your unanimous election in this august Assembly. I will like also to thank the electorate of Constituency No. 21, Rodrigues, for having voted for my running mate and myself during the last election. I would also like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for giving me the opportunity, for the first time, to serve as Minister for Fisheries and Rodrigues. Allow me also to congratulate all those who have been able to make it to this august Assembly.

M. le président, je vais axer mon discours sur la pêche évidemment, et je viendrai après sur Rodrigues. Je vais essayer d'énumérer les idées qu'on a pour faire avancer ce secteur, ce pilier de l'économie de la République qu'est la pêche. Nous voulons faire de la pêche un des piliers les plus solides de notre économie.

Ce gouvernement, M. le président, veut aussi que Rodrigues participe pleinement au développement économique de la République. Nous voulons que Rodrigues apporte sa pierre au développement économique de la République. Ce gouvernement veut que Maurice, qui est - je dois le dire en passant - un des plus grands Etats océan du monde, assume ses responsabilités d'Etat archipel, parce que Maurice est un grand pays avec plusieurs îles. Nous voulons que Maurice assume cette responsabilité.

Donc, je vais commencer par parler de la pêche, M. le président, ce pilier de l'économie, qui est en passe de devancer l'agriculture dans quelques années, en termes d'approvisionnement du pays en devises étrangères.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the fisheries and seafood sector contribute about Rs18 billion to the national economy. The total supply of fish and fish products for direct consumption is about 18,000 tonnes, whilst about 92,000 tonnes of processed fish and fish products are produced mainly from 120,000 tonnes of imported raw materials. Processed tuna is mainly exported to our traditional European market. The sector provides direct employment to around 12,000 persons, including those involved in fishing, canning, distribution, marketing and other processing activities. The seafood hub has a turnover of Rs8 billion from the processing of fish, and Rs11 billion from port and related services. The growth in value added from fish processing averages 16% annually. Fish and fish products accounted for about 14% of commodity exports in both 2008 and 2009, and is expected to be on the same trend, if not higher, for 2010. The fishing and seafood sector contributes to about 1.5% of the GDP.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will continue to manage our fisheries resources for long term sustainability and protecting the resources for tomorrow, whilst ensuring a secure source of food now and in the future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has created the necessary effective and enabling environment to stimulate the development of the seafood sector through a unique private-public sector partnership, a dynamic business environment, a dedicated one-stop-shop service exclusively for the seafood industry and capacity-building of the competent authority for

inspection certification of fish and fish products to meet the requirements of the EU. Furthermore, an electronic platform for online application and processing of imports and exports permits, fishing licences, departure clearances and landing permits would soon be a reality.

I wish to inform the House and my friend, hon. Barbier in particular, that construction works for the fish auction market at Fort Williams, Les Salines, has started in May 2010 and are expected to be completed by January 2011. The fish auction market will provide support to the development of the seafood hub by establishing a conducive environment for the marketing of fish in a more transparent manner. The fish will be auctioned to the cooperative societies, fish traders, fish processors, fishmongers and the public at large. It will be in compliance with international norms and standards relating to fish handling, quality and storage, namely HACCP, that is, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, CODEX Alimentarius - these are guidelines by the FAO - and EU norms. This is a novel development in the region and the private sector is expected to further capitalize on this asset to attract fishing vessels in the region to make use of these facilities for landing and auctioning their products in Mauritius. The fish auction market will also provide new avenues to the artisanal fishermen to dispose their catch in a competitive environment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, recently I participated in a workshop in Brisbane, Australia, whereby I met several Japanese working in the Tuna Industry. In fact, one big company, namely the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association, has said that they will delocalise their fleet which comprise of some 150 fishing vessels to a nearby country, that is, to Mauritius. *Cela veut dire, M. le président, qu'il y aura encore plus de travail dans le chantier naval, plus de poissons débarqués à Maurice, donc quelques milliards de roupies de plus dans notre économie.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues is involved in research and development related to fisheries, to the conservation of the marine ecosystems and the environment, with strong emphasis on the coastal zone. Moreover, the technical services implement projects and activities that enable them to respond to the day-to-day requirements of policymakers, stakeholders involved in fisheries and the coastal zone as well as regional and international bodies. My Ministry will continue to count on this wealth of expertise, ideas and dedication to help us in shaping the fisheries policy geared towards the future for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre (FITEC) at Pointe aux Sables provides artisanal fishers with skills required to fish off-lagoon and in other fisheries. My Ministry will continue to provide training through the FITEC to fishermen to fish off-lagoon around fish aggregating devices, train fishmongers in fish handling, preservation and marketing techniques besides collaborating in organising courses for skippers with the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping.

The fisheries sector is called upon to take on board technological advance and innovation in order to face the challenges ahead. On the other hand, the sustainable management of fisheries is critical to the overall performance of the fishing industry and the economy of Mauritius, and Rodrigues in particular.

As enunciated in the Government Programme, my Ministry will develop a Fisheries Master Plan for Mauritius and Rodrigues. A project proposal has already been formulated and submitted for approval under the ACP Fish II Programme, strengthening fisheries management in ACP countries. The formulation of a Fisheries Master Plan aims to analyse and propose options for a comprehensive sustainable fisheries development and management approach for Mauritius and Rodrigues, including diversification of the industry. It will serve as a tool in identifying activities, selecting priorities and deciding on strategies to be adopted for the sector to optimize resource exploitation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is my earnest wish to see a real improvement in the quality of life of the fishers' community. The Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues, through the Fishermen Welfare Fund will promote the welfare of fishermen and their families and give the necessary support conducive to the well-being of officers in general. We will facilitate the development of a local fleet capacity to capture a share of the Tuna resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the region. Modalities will be worked out regarding the use of funds earmarked, that is, Rs1 billion for the development of industrial and semi-industrial fishing.

The Food Security Fund has sanctioned at date four fisheries projects amounting to some Rs29 m. in favour of the fishermen community. The Fishermen Investment Trust has already issued a Letter of Award for the construction, supply, commissioning and testing of three boats. These boats will be put at the disposal of fishermen for their fishing activities. The commitment of the private sector, through the MEXA, under the Corporate Social Responsibility to provide

the Fishermen Investment Trust (FIT) with several boats, is deeply appreciated. It has already donated one boat to the FIT in this context. The boat is currently being operated on a pilot basis for fishing around FADs and also serves to define the training needs of fishermen called upon to operate such boats.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that, pursuant to the visit of the then Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security to Japan last year, a Japanese delegation will shortly field a mission for the materialisation of the project under the Japan Grant Aid Programme. The grant aid comprises provision of fishing boats, including one training boat and fishing gears to my Ministry. The boats will be operated under the aegis of the Fishermen Investment Trust for the benefits of the fishermen. In the same line, Japan has also fielded a mission to Mauritius in July last, comprising of a delegation headed by a senior official to initiate the implementation of the rehabilitation of fisheries facilities donated by Japan and also provide related training associated with the project under the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation (OFCF) technical assistance.

Members of the House are aware of the ongoing IFAD/MARS programme, also called the Pro-Poor Reform Programme of the Government for Alleviation of Poverty amongst the lower-income households. The programme is supporting projects which will be beneficial to the fishermen community through the development of lagoon and off-lagoon fisheries management plans, support for conversion to off-lagoon fishing, assessment of fishing around FADs and value chain analysis and support for training of marine park rangers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is implementing several projects with assistance from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) to combat illegal fishing to manage our marine resources and strengthening quality control of fish products. The programme will shortly embark on the following projects -

- (i) acoustic surveys on the slopes of the Nazareth Bank;
- (ii) fishing trials for octopus on the shallow banks of St Brandon;
- (iii) the vessels monitoring system (VMS), and
- (iv) port inspection procedures.

In 2009, with the assistance of NORAD, Mauritius developed its National Plan of Action (NPOA) based on FAO international Plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

In 2009, with the assistance of NORAD, Mauritius developed its National Plan of Action (NPOA), based on FAO International Plan of Action, to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated, that is, the IUU Fishing. This plan has been approved by Government. My Ministry is already implementing a number of elements of the NPOA, such as flag State responsibilities, port State responsibilities and trade related measures to combat IUU.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition, a number of infrastructural projects will be implemented by my Ministry to facilitate the activities of fishermen, amongst others, construction of slipways and platforms at fish landing stations, dredging of boat passages where necessary and construction of fisheries posts to replace ones which are old and need replacement. It will also pursue action to construct the marine park centres at Blue Bay and Balaclava. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is assisting my Ministry in negotiating a loan with the Kuwait Fund for Arabic Economic Development for the upgrading of fish landing sites which will be on a Public Private Partnership formula.

Mr Speaker, Sir, market access opportunities and competitiveness are key fundamentals for the further development of the seafood sector. In this regard, the maintenance of an effective and adequate level of preference, both under the interim Economic Partnership Agreement, that is, interim EPA and AGOA is important. We have to work closely to preserve our existing preferences in the WTO. On the other hand, we have to use the breathing space provided by the preferences to further improve the competitiveness of the industry at the regional and international levels. Thus, it is very important for the fishing and processing industries to develop the appropriate strategies to maintain their competitiveness through the reduction of costs of production and also diversify their markets to face the challenges lying ahead.

M. le président, je ne peux m'asseoir sans dire quelques mots sur Rodrigues. Malheureusement, l'honorable membre qui m'a précédé, le député de Rodrigues, qui a fait son *Maiden Speech*, est parti, mais s'il était là je lui aurais dit *if a person lives in a glass house, he must not even think of throwing stones to his neighbour*. After the series of demagogical sayings, je me demande si, après plus de vingt cinq ans au pouvoir, on peut encore venir dans cette Chambre et dire des choses qui ne méritent même pas une réponse. M. le président, pour répondre à tout cela, je vais prendre un seul exemple.

Nous voulons que Rodrigues participe pleinement - comme je l'ai dit - aux développements économiques de la République. Nous voulons résoudre le problème d'eau une

fois pour toutes ; nous voulons connecter Rodrigues au câble optique. D'ailleurs, le travail a déjà commencé pour aller dans ce sens. Nous voulons agrandir l'aéroport Sir Gaëtan Duval à Plaine Corail pour pouvoir mieux vendre – je parle sous la correction du ministre du tourisme – Maurice et Rodrigues comme un *package*. Je suis sûr que les Chinois aimeraient venir voir les tortues et les grottes à Rodrigues. Nous voulons aussi développer le port. Je suis sûr qu'ils voudront bien goûter nos '*conocono*'.

M. le président, quand nous pensons à ces grands projets, cela nous peine d'entendre certaines personnes venir parler pour ne rien proposer, ou presque. Je vais donner un seul exemple, juste pour démontrer la différence de politique qu'il y a entre l'OPR et le MR. Nous venons de prendre le pouvoir en 2006, il n'y a pas longtemps. Depuis 2006, nous avons nettoyé à peu près dix petits barrages à Rodrigues parce que nous savons que l'eau est un problème qui existe depuis des années à Rodrigues. Le plus grand barrage est situé juste à l'arrière de Port Mathurin dans une vallée à Fond la Digue, c'est-à-dire, à Cascade Pigeon. On a dû construire une route sur les flancs de la falaise pour y accéder. On a nettoyé le barrage. On a même inclus une tour de prise pour la distribution d'eau.

C'est un barrage qui date de plus de vingt cinq ans, qui est resté rempli de terre et de roches depuis. On l'a nettoyé. Ça nous a couté R 10 millions et le parti, qui était au pouvoir pendant vingt cinq ans à Rodrigues, a laissé à peu près une centaine de ces petits barrages à l'abandon à Rodrigues. Il y a qu'un seul barrage qui est presque de la même superficie que le barrage de Cascade Pigeon qu'ils ont essayé de nettoyer. C'est le barrage d'Anse Raffin et ça l'honorable membre a oublié de le dire. Il y avait déjà une route là-bas ; ils n'ont fait qu'enlever la terre et reconstruire le mur. Dans le programme, on devait clôturer et reboiser le périmètre et même asphalte la route. Mais, M. le président, la route n'a pas été asphaltée, la clôture n'a pas été mise. Le périmètre n'est même pas reboisé. Ça devait coûter R 79 millions. En fin de compte, on l'a terminé avec R 134 millions. Cela a fait l'objet de nombreuses questions parlementaires quand j'étais à la place de l'honorable membre de l'autre côté de la Chambre. R 134 millions, M. le président ! Et nous, pour un barrage de la même superficie, on a dû construire une nouvelle route. Cela nous a coûté R 10 millions. Je ne veux pas dire qu'il y a eu vol ou quoique ce soit mais je dis que c'est étrange. On se pose pas mal de questions, M. le président. C'est pourquoi je dis que ceux qui vivent dans des maisons vitrées ne doivent pas

lancer des pierres sur les autres. Je ne vais pas m'étayer sur ce qu'il a dit. Je préfère aller vers le positif, sur ce que nous sommes en train de faire.

Depuis que nous sommes au pouvoir, M. le président, tout le monde est unanime. Et d'ailleurs si les résultats étaient si catastrophiques, comme l'a dit l'honorable membre, est-ce que je serais élu aujourd'hui ? C'est la première fois que je suis élu au sein de ce Parlement. J'étais *best loser* depuis 1995. L'honorable Barbier est entré au Parlement en même temps que moi. Il l'a dit la dernière fois. C'est la première fois que je suis élu, M. le président, mais nous avons toujours tenu le même langage. Nous sommes au pouvoir depuis 2006 mais la population a ressenti qu'il y a eu un changement d'approche. Rodrigues, aujourd'hui, M. le président, produit beaucoup dans le domaine de l'agriculture. Le ministre Faugoo l'a si bien dit il y a quelques instants. Les chiffres qu'il a énoncés ne viennent pas de son imagination. En 2006, quand on a pris le pouvoir, une année après, on a produit mille tonnes de maïs alors que pendant vingt quatre ans, quand l'OPR était au pouvoir, le maximum qu'ils ont produit c'était trois cents à trois cents cinquante tonnes de maïs. Nous, en une année, on a produit mille tonnes de maïs et cette année on approche les cinq milles tonnes. M. le président, on pense arriver au maximum de dix sept milles tonnes de maïs si on continue dans cette voie. Et je dois dire que le ministre et le commissaire de l'Agriculture travaillent main dans la main.

Le commissaire de l'agriculture fait un très bon travail et cela donne de bons résultats. Pour la première fois depuis 25 ans, on a produit quatre fois plus d'haricots - 192 tonnes d'haricots. Un plant d'haricot donne une dizaine de gousses et on a 192 tonnes de haricots cette année, quatre fois plus que l'année dernière. Je dois dire qu'on a eu l'aide de certains membres. Mon ami, le ministre Dr. Jeetah, nous a aidés à avoir un tracteur.

On aide les planteurs à labourer leurs terres, à nettoyer les petits barrages. Et je suis sûr que dans ce budget on aura encore plus d'argent pour nettoyer les petits barrages et commencer la construction du barrage de Pistache. Donc, nous, au MR, voulons faire de Rodrigues une île plus productive, M. le président ; développer l'agriculture au maximum et faire de sorte que l'île apporte sa pierre au développement économique de la République. On a créé, à juste titre, des villages de piments, des villages de limons ; on crée des vergers un peu partout dans l'île. On vient d'acheter des machines nécessaires pour la pasteurisation du lait. On relance les secteurs de l'élevage. On pousse les gens à planter davantage d'agrume, parce que Maurice restera pour longtemps encore, sinon pour toujours, un importateur de viande et d'agrume ;

deux commodités qu'on peut produire en grande quantité à Rodrigues. Donc, ce sera notre participation dans l'économie mauricienne.

On veut aussi faire de l'industrie de coco une réalité dans l'île. Avec mon ami, l'honorable Hervé Aimée, on pense envoyer à Rodrigues un million de plants de coco pour lancer l'industrie de l'huile de coco vierge, parce qu'à Rodrigues on a beaucoup plus d'espace qu'Agalega et cela va aider à embellir l'île et aussi à réduire l'érosion. Si on avait commencé 25 ans de cela, Rodrigues serait couvert de cocotiers aujourd'hui. C'est cela notre vision, ne pas faire de la démagogie et ne pas parler juste pour parler. Nos actions parlent plus fort que nos paroles.

On invite les ministres souvent à venir à Rodrigues pour qu'ils voient ce qui se fait et ils viennent assez souvent. Je suis sûr qu'il y en a d'autres qui vont venir plus souvent. Pour approvisionner Maurice en viande, on a prévu de construire un abattoir moderne à Baie Diamant et, à travers le *Food Security Fund*, on va commencer la construction très bientôt, M. le président.

Concernant l'aéroport, pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, il y a eu une équipe Franco-Australienne qui est venue de Dubai. Ils forment partie du *short list* des firmes qui sont intéressées à travailler sur le *feasibility study* de l'aéroport Sir Gaëtan Duval. Donc, le travail va dans la bonne direction parce que, comme on l'a dit si souvent, le port de Rodrigues et l'aéroport peuvent être un port et un aéroport d'appoint pour Plaisance et Port Louis. Par exemple, quand il y a des cyclones ici, les avions pourraient se poser à Rodrigues, les conteneurs pourraient être déposés à Rodrigues et ainsi on n'entendra plus parler du déficit du *Mauritius Shipping*. *Mauritius Pride*, *Mauritius Trochetia* pourront faire la navette plus souvent. Les bateaux venant de l'Australie, de l'Inde, de l'Indonésie peuvent déposer leurs conteneurs à Rodrigues et les bateaux qui font la navette entre Maurice et Rodrigues pourraient prendre ces conteneurs et venir à Maurice. Les bateaux qui viennent du Pakistan, de l'Inde, de la Chine, de l'Australie passent à côté de Rodrigues pour venir à Maurice. Cela prend 36 heures pour venir à Maurice et 36 heures pour retourner. On a calculé il y a quelques années que cela fait à peu près USD150,000 par bateau en termes de fuel, de *manpower*. Donc, M. le président, si on peut développer le port car il y a déjà le *Port Master Plan* qui a été conçu. Concernant l'aéroport, on veut aller de l'avant. Rodrigues pourra jouer un rôle plus important au sein de la

République. C'est ainsi qu'on pourra faire sentir davantage aux Rodriguais qu'ils forment partie de la République de Maurice, qu'ils le sentent davantage, M. le président.

M. le président, nous avons aussi commencé un projet pilote sur l'aquaculture. Le *Mauritius Research Council* est allé à Rodrigues pour commencer ce projet pilote. On veut aussi démarrer cela à Maurice et j'ai vu que cela a trop tardé. Il y a de plus en plus de gens qui deviennent *health conscious* et qui veulent aller à Rodrigues pour se déstresser, parce qu'on dit souvent que Rodrigues est un des endroits où on peut vivre à un rythme humain. On appelle Rodrigues, *the stress-free island*. Pour que Rodrigues garde cette renommée, on pense développer l'île en ce qu'on appelle *the greenness island in Indian Ocean, if not of the world*. C'est pourquoi on veut développer davantage l'énergie verte, comme l'éolienne, l'énergie solaire, reboiser l'île, mettre en place des réserves marines, des réserves forestières pour que Rodrigues puisse garder ce cachet d'île authentique, d'île calme, d'île où il fait bon vivre.

M. le président, je sens que les membres sont fatigués. Je ne vais pas aller plus loin, mais je voudrais dire une dernière phrase à l'intention de tous les membres qui sont dans cette Chambre. On a beaucoup parlé du problème communal à Maurice. C'est un fait. Dans tous les pays du monde, dans chaque communauté il y a des qualités, mais il y aussi le côté noir, le côté qui ne fait pas honneur. A Rodrigues aussi, c'est la même chose. On a le bon côté et le mauvais côté. Je pense que la meilleure chose à faire c'est d'essayer d'exploiter le bon côté de tout un chacun, parce qu'en chacun de nous il y a quelque chose de bon. Pourquoi venons-nous sur cette terre ? Est-ce que pour avoir plus d'argent, plus de pouvoir ? Je pense que nous venons sur cette terre pour vivre heureux. Peut-être qu'en pourchassant le pouvoir, qu'en pourchassant l'argent, on pense être plus heureux et, bien souvent, on se trompe. Personnellement, M. le président, je préfère vivre heureux que mourir riche ou *powerful*.

Donc, avec ces quelques mots, cela me fait penser à ce que Martin Luther King a dit et cela s'applique très bien à notre pays multiculturel. Martin Luther King a dit –

“Either we live together as brothers and sisters or we perish together as fools.”

Je crois qu'on préfère réutiliser la première. Je vous remercie, M. le président.

(11.50 p.m.)

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the chair

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak as a newly accredited pensioner of the Republic and yet a fresher in this House, hoping to gain your understanding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir and the cooperation of hon. Members.

May I, first, congratulate fellow Members, new Members who have made their maiden speeches?

I am delighted to renew contact with some old friendly acquaintances in the House over the recent months, which go back as far as our schooldays, many of whom in the classrooms of Royal College of Port Louis, if not in the playground, but, at least, in the nearby pleasure ground. Dr. Abu Kasenally would understand what I am saying. This will surely help in establishing a usual friendly atmosphere in spite of our political differences in the discharge of our duties to the people whom we are called upon to serve.

Hon. Members will have noticed the absence in the House tonight of our dear colleague of Constituency of Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, hon. Rajesh Bhagwan. This is due to a surgical operation that he has just undergone a few days back. I am very proud to be his new fellow Member in this House with my colleague Franco Quirin. Hon. Bhagwan is on his seventh mandate in the House and has been serving our Constituency for 27 continuous years with his usual dynamic aplomb and exemplary dedication. He is a massive rock of strength, courage and solicitude. We all wish him prompt recovery so that he can resume his seat with the resounding energy that he has accustomed us in both the House and on the ground or better still, at the grassroots level, as he jokingly likes to emphasise to me in contrast to my supposed ivory tower. I also like to retort to him, in jest, that we need both the sword and the pen to dethrone not one, but three dynasties. I don't need to tell you what he used to reply to me. You would have known him better to guess that it has something to do with '*fils à papa*'.

Short of achieving this end in dynastic rule, we managed to win the three seats in our Constituency of Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière with a greater *écart de votes* than in the last general election. I count it as a great honour to be elected as a new Member for the Constituency. I am the second Member to represent it and I am grateful to the people of Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière

for giving me this opportunity to be their representative and I shall serve them to the best of my abilities.

M. le président, ma réaction première à la lecture du discours programme du Président de 2010-2015 a déjà été reprise dans la presse comme suit : Le discours de Sir Anerood Jugnauth en 2005 avait donné l'impression de forger une nouvelle voie économique et une nouvelle vision égalitaire de la société, avec des concepts fort honorables, comme démocratisation de l'économie, *putting people first* etc. Mais il n'en fut rien que des vœux pieux et des propositions de bonnes intentions, sinon des slogans propagandistes.

Quant au discours de 2010, c'est encore un long chapelet de promesses et de vœux. Ce discours accomplit trois choses. Premièrement, donner de nouveaux habits et de nouveaux noms à d'anciens projets qui n'ont pas pu être réalisés dans le dernier mandat. En deuxième lieu, annuler dans une volte-face téméraire, des décisions économiques et les mesures pourtant prônées par le Premier ministre lui-même, comme la NRPT, la taxe sur les intérêts bancaires. Troisièmement, de lancer toute une série de plans directeurs, d'études, des comités d'élites et de *master plans* et autres sur les problèmes de longue date sur la constitution, sur le système électoral, la réforme pénitentiaire, les ressources en eau, entre autres. Tout cela n'est plus crédible, comme la proposition de reconsiderer le projet de métro léger alors que plusieurs gros projets sont déjà en cours pour décongestionner la capitale, à savoir le *Bus Lane*, le *Ring Road*, le *Harbour Bridge*, la délocalisation des services gouvernementaux à Ebène et la nouvelle ville administrative projetée de Highlands.

Cent jours après l'installation au pouvoir de ce nouveau gouvernement, rien ne laisse percevoir que cela va changer. Tous ces engagements solennels dans ce discours-programme de 2010, vont-ils subir le même sort que ceux du précédent discours ? Nous attendons voir.

Pourtant, trois mois après ces élections générales, n'est-ce pas le moment le plus approprié pour balayer notre système politique traditionnel actuel en déphasage avec les attentes et les préoccupations des mauriciens et proposer un nouveau projet de société ? Cela ouvrira de nouvelles opportunités à un plus grand nombre de mauriciens et débouchera sur une société mauricienne plus juste et plus égalitaire.

Tout d'abord, ne faudrait-il pas revoir de fond en comble l'actuel système électoral de *First Past The Post* et introduire une bonne dose de proportionnelle pour permettre une meilleure représentation démocratique de différents courants de la société mauricienne ?

Pourtant, un vaste consensus national s'est déjà érigé contre ce système inique de scrutin basé sur le critère de représentation communautaire, de l'appartenance ethnique des candidats à la députation. Ce système que nous connaissons depuis l'indépendance de notre pays ne sert qu'à pervertir la démocratie en encourageant le communalisme et le clientélisme.

Le présent système électoral comporte aussi de désavantage que certains politiciens se retrouvent à la merci de financiers qui soutiennent leur campagne électorale, quelque fois même en période post-campagne. N'est-il pas temps qu'on commence dès maintenant à revoir le système de financement des partis, nécessairement occulte et intéressé ? Il nous faut élaborer au plus vite un code de conduite qui aurait force légal pour les parlementaires, du Premier ministre au simple député, et pour les partis politiques aussi pour les obliger, plus particulièrement, à davantage de transparence au sujet de leur financement.

Autrement, à long terme, le paysage politique local risque de se retrouver avec certains politiciens qui ne sont là que pour leurs avantages personnels et qui se comporteraient davantage comme des carriéristes, soucieux de récupérer l'argent qu'ils ont investi dans une campagne électorale, avec un retour juteux sur les bords.

D'autre part, cette barrière que constitue l'argent, surtout l'argent issu des lobbys et des mafieux, constitue un obstacle pour des gens valables qui seraient disposés à servir la population.

M. le président, revoir notre système électoral permettra d'éliminer le clientélisme politique. Je trouve dommage qu'aujourd'hui certains sympathisants de partis politiques aient perdu le sens de l'engagement sincère. Leur adhésion à un parti politique ne se fait plus sur la base des idées mais sur les avantages personnels qu'ils pourraient obtenir. Ces '*rodères boute*' deviennent par la suite, la plupart du temps, des déçus de la politique lorsque leurs demandes sont soit ignorées soit pas entièrement satisfaites par les politiciens qui leur ont promis monts et merveilles dans l'espoir de racoler quelques votes. Et voilà que, tout juste après avoir été installé au pouvoir, le petit seigneur se voit dans l'obligation de nommer ses activistes de parti et ses parents et consorts à des postes fort bien rémunérés, sans en rendre compte à la population. C'est ce genre de comportement qui a jeté du discrédit sur la vie politique mauricienne et bafoue l'idéal de la jeunesse et qui finalement creuse davantage les fossés entre les élus et ceux qu'ils sont supposés de représenter. Ces gens-la sont dangereux, ils ont

transformé le gouvernement en un jeu, que seuls ils peuvent se permettre de jouer. *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these people have hijacked and hollowed out our democracy.*

Je sens une lame de fond dans la population qui demande plus de démocratie à tous les niveaux avec des réclamations très justes, telles que –

- les organisations non-gouvernementales et non-étatiques devraient opérer dans la plus grande transparence avec le minimum d'assistance financière de l'état.
- puisque le peuple est souverain, il doit pouvoir suivre toutes les actions importantes du gouvernement. Cela pourrait se faire dans le cadre des rencontres avec des *Select Committees* sectoriels au Parlement. Un gouvernement qui est à l'écoute du peuple prendra de meilleures décisions en étant toujours près de la population.
- Le gouvernement devrait, dans un seul chapitre de notre constitution, rassembler toute les sanctions que l'état pourrait être amené à prendre contre les hauts dignitaires du pays pour faute grave dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions.

D'autre part le judiciaire devrait être comptable de ses actions. Le peuple devrait avoir accès aux juges et aux magistrats avec moins de formalités et de formalisme, plus rapidement. Il y a un grand besoin d'un plus grand nombre de cours de justice et de magistrats. La notion de démocratie serait un non-sens si un groupe de citoyens ne serait pas capable de loger une action en Cour de justice si ses intérêts collectifs sont lésés.

Vous direz peut-être que je suis un idéaliste, mais je pense que le moment est venu de réveiller la conscience des Mauriciens afin que la politique retrouve ses lettres de noblesse et qu'il y ait une autre manière de faire la politique, sans avoir à subir les *lobbies* qui ne visent qu'à satisfaire les intérêts personnels surtout ceux des petits groupes 'tageurs' au détriment de la majorité silencieuse des Mauriciens.

Vous savez, M. le président, une grande partie de nos problèmes sociaux et économiques pourrait être résolue en étant à l'écoute des gens. Mais trop de politiciens s'éloignent de la réalité des problèmes des Mauriciens et se comportent comme des propriétaires du pays, qui détiennent seuls la vérité. Il faudrait donc revoir tout notre système politique, législatif et administratif pour permettre plus de participation dans la prise de décision de la part du public et surtout, des gens concernés. A l'heure de l'Internet, c'est tellement facile de recueillir les suggestions et les commentaires des Mauriciens. Il faut changer de style de gouverner. Il faut faire la politique autrement. *Yes we can.*

C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai franchi le pas pour m'engager politiquement, parce que je crois que notre pays mérite mieux que cela, je crois à ce que notre pays peut être. Ma seule conviction et motivation en politique est de me vouer corps et âme pour apporter ma modeste et sincère contribution dans la construction d'une autre Ile Maurice, d'une Ile Maurice meilleure. Et là, je dois rendre hommage à mon parti le MMM et à mon *leader* Paul Bérenger de me permettre de participer pleinement à cette tâche de reconstruction nationale et de forger cette nouvelle génération de politiciens, remplis de sincérité, voire même de naïveté, mais combien compétents comme les Satish Boolell, Lysis Ribot, Kavi Ramano, Reza Uteem et tant d'autres encore de ce côté et aussi de certains de l'autre côté de la Chambre.

Nous devons être la génération qui va travailler sans relâche pour libérer le pays enfin de la tyrannie des lobbyistes et des intérêts particularistes pour ouvrir l'espace démocratique pour que les générations futures puissent avoir un avenir serein et n'aient pas à émigrer vers d'autres lieux pour plus d'équité et de dignité. Nous devons être la génération qui va remodeler notre économie pour assurer un partage équitable de notre prospérité, mettre fin à la pauvreté et construire cette société inclusive qui ne rejette personne sur les bas côtés de la route dans un développement qui met le Mauricien au centre. Nous sommes tous d'origines ancestrales différentes, d'ethnie, de race et de foi différentes, mais nous sommes tous Mauriciens, avant tout Mauriciens, un seul peuple. Face à une politique qui nous a exclus et qui nous a divisés depuis l'époque coloniale, nous pouvons transformer cette nation pour plus de justice et plus d'opportunités. Nous devons pouvoir traduire l'égalité des chances dans la réalité. Nous voulons et nous pouvons devenir un seul peuple.

Nous connaissons les défis de notre pays. Mais nous nous gargarisons des rapports d'experts depuis des années. Nous nous sommes ensevelis dans des montagnes de recommandations et nous continuons toujours à prendre des heures à écrire des *minutes* des comités interminables. Que de temps perdus et de *lost opportunities*!

Ce qui nous empêche de relever ces défis, M. le président, ce n'est pas l'absence d'analyses, de politiques ou même de plans. Ce qui nous empêche c'est le manque de *leadership*, de volonté politique, ou plutôt, cette petitesse d'esprit de notre politique. Pour reprendre ce que dit Monsieur tout le monde, « la facilité avec laquelle nous nous laissons entraîner par tout ce qui est accessoire et banal, notre capacité chronique à éviter des décisions difficiles, notre préférence pour marquer des points politiques faciles et futiles au lieu de mettre

nos meilleures compétences au service de la nation et retrousser nos manches pour résoudre les vrais problèmes. »

Pour les cinq dernières années, M. le président, c'est un constat navrant d'un échec total sur tous les plans, éducation, transport public, services publiques, crise économique, endettement public et privé, et on arrive toujours à dire que c'est la faute de l'autre parti. Je suis arrivé à comprendre que le temps de cette politique est terminé. Il est temps de tourner la page. Et comme le monde évolue, et notre économie aussi, je comprends mieux maintenant que ce discours-programme n'aura de la valeur que seulement si le pays œuvre pour que prédomine la méritocratie et non la médiocrité de certains petits copains.

D'ailleurs, en parlant de médiocrité, notre jeunesse mauricienne de la génération *Iphone*, *3G* ou encore plus *hi-tech*, aspire à beaucoup, vraiment beaucoup mieux que ces éternels spectacles de *cheap politics* offerts chez notre station nationale de télévision.

Avec la multiplication des jeux, on encourage malheureusement nos jeunes au mirage de l'argent facile, à tomber dans l'illusion de l'appât du gain facile. Que ce discours-programme dans son application songe au moins à redonner à nos jeunes Mauriciens le sens de l'effort et du sacrifice mais surtout, l'espoir que leurs efforts seront dûment récompensés et qu'il peut y avoir un *Mauritian Dream*.

Je lisais récemment un discours du *Senior Minister* de Singapour, M. Goh Chok Tong sur le rêve Singapourien. Il parlait de son rêve d'enfance dans les années 50 qu'il déclina comme : 1, 2, 3, and 4 ce qui veut dire 1 *wife*, 2 *children*, 3 *bedroom house* and 4 *wheels*. Il disait que ce rêve a été réalisé par tous depuis belle lurette chez lui à Singapour.

Peut-on en dire de même chez nous, M. le président ? Malgré l'augmentation du niveau de vie et la création d'emplois, il y a de plus en plus de Mauriciens qui ne mangent pas à leur faim; des écoliers et des collégiens qui vont à l'école le ventre vide. Les zones d'éducation prioritaire ne sont pas suivis au niveau de l'enseignement, les mal-logés de même que les *squatters* ne diminuent pas, nos programmes de logement sont nettement insuffisants et les dossiers sont traités de façon chaotique. Nos grands hôpitaux publics sont débordés aux urgences et des salles n'ont jamais été rénovées alors que des facilités sont accordées aux cliniques privées comme investissement, créant un système de santé à deux vitesses. M. le président, les Mauriciens, surtout les petits gens, ne sont pas assez écoutés. Pour réaliser non pas un rêve mauricien, mais juste pour assurer le progrès social, dans les valeurs de justice

sociale et de solidarité, dans un monde meilleur, nous avons le devoir d'œuvrer pour une société mauricienne plus juste pour tous.

A Beau Bassin où j'habite, le prix d'un lopin de terre varie entre R20,000 et R25,000 la toise. Pour construire une petite maison, il faut au minimum 75 toises soit plus d'un million de roupies auxquelles il faut ajouter les frais de construction, comptez un deuxième million, ou plus avec tous les charges et frais d'enregistrement et de permis et autres. Pour un jeune couple qui débute dans la vie professionnelle, cela constitue un obstacle insurmontable pour devenir propriétaire d'un chez soi. Un jeune couple dont les deux conjoints travaillent et qui toucheraient chacun un salaire mensuel de R10,000, n'obtiendrait d'une banque qu'un prêt qui leur permettrait de rembourser 30% du total de leurs salaires soit R6,000 par mois. Ils ne pourront obtenir qu'un maximum de R1.5 millions pour une période de remboursement de 20 ans. Nous sommes bien loin donc de la somme requise pour être en mesure de s'acheter un terrain et de construire une maison.

C'est la classe moyenne qui commence à souffrir le plus de cette situation. Ils gagnent un peu plus que le salaire minimum qui leur ouvrirait les portes aux prestations et autres assistance sociales du gouvernement, mais bien moins pour pouvoir devenir propriétaire. Pour s'en convaincre, vous n'avez qu'à faire le tour des agences immobilières ou consulter leurs brochures. Les prix de vente des biens immobiliers sont devenus choquants mais sans émouvoir grand monde.

L'Etat devrait intervenir pour une vraie politique d'accession à la propriété et de logement social au lieu de se faire une fixation sur les flux de capitaux investis dans les IRS. Espérons que les Mauriciens ne finissent pas dans un avenir pas trop lointain par devenir locataires dans leur propre pays. Ce serait le comble!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like now to address the issue of freedom of the press. Until recently, we have been passive witnesses of an escalating tug of war between the Government and a local press group. The boycott of its flagship newspaper 'l'Express' by the Government, in terms of Government advertisement and subscriptions, as well as refusal of access to the journalists to official press conferences hosted by Government Ministers, is most unwarranted.

A clear distinction has to be made between the function as party leaders and the office as Government Ministers. Ministers are paid from public funds and are duty bound to give a fair

treatment to all representatives of the press, irrespective of their political opinion or editorial content. The freedom of information entrenched in our Constitution should serve as a guideline in the relations with the press and the media generally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the issue of granting Government advertisements to our local media, this is yet another area where there should be public scrutiny, simply because public funds are involved. Year in and year out, in this House, we are supplied with information as to what sums of money have been paid out to newspapers, but there is no transparency as to the criteria set out for the allocation or allotment of such funds to the media. In view of the fact that political partisanship has marred any attempt at introducing some degree of transparency in the allotment of Government publicity to the local media, I would like to propose the setting up of a Select Committee of the House to -

- (i) lay down in all transparency the criteria for the granting of such publicity to all media;
- (ii) ensure that the criteria as laid down are fully complied with, and
- (iii) decide on the quantum to be allocated in each newspaper and type of media on a yearly basis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to be fair in our approach. We cannot, on the one hand, claim in all international fora that we uphold democracy and the principles laid down by the forefathers of our Constitution, but, at the same time, be intolerant, vindictive, and wage a ceaseless war against those rightfully and universally termed as the fourth pillar of democracy.

La presse, dans son ensemble, tout en s'autocensurant à sa guise, doit avoir les mains libres pour informer et critiquer toute dérive totalitaire, toute mauvaise pratique, vu qu'il y a assez de lois pour condamner la moindre dérive. D'ailleurs, on attendrait de ceux qui se sentent lésés de ne pas avoir recours à tout bout de champ aux cours de justice, pour installer un genre de terrorisme intellectuel sur la presse.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the subject, which is the centre of interest these days; I am mentioning our national economy. Let me start by saying that its best days are not here yet; the best days still lie ahead. In the threshold of this new decade, and in the throes

of an impending Euro zone crisis, we need now to take a hard look at our economic fabric and at our economic growth model.

We face deep-seated structural problems. We have now a massive current balance deficit, a debt overhang of nearly 62% of GDP, which the Director of Audit himself sees as a debt trap. We have also a big budget deficit, rising unemployment, and recently we have seen the publication of records of falling corporate business revenues and profits. We have an economy that is seriously unbalanced, in terms of economic concentration and social inequalities. A FDI induced growth based on property development, linked with a debt fuelled land speculation. This cannot be a sustainable model.

On top of that, we have an appetite for high levels of public spending, very often opaque, financed by high levels of indirect taxation. We have also a chronic dependency on the public sector to provide 'jobs for the boys', as a secondary means of income support, while SMEs are being slowly throttled by being deprived of credit, which is so costly, and by being deprived of proper access to services of marketing, management, procurement, logistics etc.

We do have huge economic challenges in front of us. Let me describe the situation as the death pangs of an old economic growth model that has made its time and outlived its usefulness. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this old economic model has served us well for the last three decades. It has produced what has been termed 'The African Tiger', making Mauritius a major exporter of goods, with a respectable rate of life expectancy, literacy and health standard. This model however, is fraught with problems, and depends completely on external markets. It is also dependent on low skills, cheap labour and foreign capital - generally on imported inputs - so that the local value added is very low and the enterprises engaged in this export production have a low margin to work with. That is why they rely on foreign labour to raise productivity.

This economic model has been jogged by the previous Government, with what has been termed 'a reform strategy'. The economy itself was slowing down and was caught in a middle income trap, but there was a strategic reform programme that has been engaged by the previous Minister of Finance, which is based on the concept of opening up the economy, globalisation for international competitiveness. This reform, however, has been built upon all the concepts that contradict the true Fabian and Labour principles. Just to quote a few examples, it is based on the concept of eradication of the cooperative movement as a lame duck, which has seen the liquidation of the Cooperative Bank. It is based also on the concept that foreign investment is

the be-all and end-all of development. It is also based on the concept that trade unions should be squeezed, and that all the Government, parastatal bodies, which cannot provide the safety net to workers and which cannot survive as a provider of new jobs, have to be done away with, like the DWC.

This is why this opening up of the economy, this reform strategy has had sinister consequences in terms of widening the gap between the rich and the poor, and also of a society that is based on quick profits and short term gains.

If we look at how the different enterprises are run under this model, we see that these are all low-cost business models. Dependent also on Government aids and intervention, dependent on a cheap labour policy, a cheap wage policy, a cheap rupee policy, this is the kind of low-cost business model that has propelled our economic growth in the new world order of global competition. The private sector has been led to focus on short-term gains and high leverage and instead of going into the stock market, into the capital market to raise funds and to go towards more transparency, the moment crisis hits at the door, they just run to Government for help or walk out of the Stock Exchange. The prime example is the BAI group. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this kind of economic model which has done very little to increase productivity, and which has only encouraged rent-seeking and crony capitalism, has put off all the young skills and young talents of Mauritius, causing a brain drain and a destruction of human capital. On the other hand, the enterprises working on low margin and relying on their inefficient rent seeking, do not have any interest to build up skills and innovate and invest in research and development. This kind of economic model, therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is totally inadequate to meet the new challenges in front of us. We, therefore, cannot carry on with the same economic model.

We must, therefore, reengineer, rebuild on the strengths of what we have in the economy and effect that qualitative leap in order to go to the next level of development. What we need to achieve through this radical change in the economic model is to move to a high-income economy which is knowledge intensive, inclusive and sustainable. It demands very strong will from the Government and also leadership to galvanise support from the population in order to resist all the powers of the vested interests against change. We have to adopt the core values of dynamic governance, meaning that we must learn how to think ahead, to think again and even to think across. These are the three ways in which we shall be able to go to the next level of

development and keep pace with the aggressive and relentless world competition. However, we are unable to do so at this stage for different reasons. I will list the reasons which I believe are essential to achieve that next level of development.

Firstly, we need to change. We have heard of paradigm shift but, I think, we need more than that to change the whole mindset and the whole model of development towards more openness in terms of transparency and accountability. On top of that, I think it is relevant to quote here what recently the Prime Minister of Singapore has highlighted as the basic values that have led to the growth of Singapore as a global city State. What he said is that there are three core values that have led to the success of Singapore. I would like to paraphrase them –

“There has to be high integrity among its leaders who should have the trust and confidence of the population.

There must be meritocracy so that everyone, irrespective of his race, caste, connection or family name can get to the top, based solely on his merit and not on nepotism or corruption.

There should be a level playing field for all citizens so that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged on any ground whatsoever, be it religion, language or his place of residence”.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what do we see in front of us? There is not the political will to forge ahead with the implementation of various legislations that have even been passed in Parliament. I have in mind the Equal Opportunities Act which, up to now, has not been put into effect. On top of that, we have now a classical and traditional way of bailing out and assisting the private sector rather than re-engineering and re-energising the private sector. If we look at the kind of growth model which we are witnessing today, it is still based on the concept that it can be driven by Government through stimulus package.

The latest version announced recently provides all kinds of incentives and financing schemes to the troubled enterprises in textile, tourism, sugar and other sectors. The terms may be softer for the enterprises, but one wonders whether the same scheme and the same approach under the same implementation procedures by the same re-styled monitoring committees will work this time, when the two previous stimulus packages had produced more closures, more job losses, less profitability, less turnover and more debt. Will restructuring the debt situation of firms facing insolvency, like Infinity and RS Denim and more to come, will this solve the problem of the fundamental weaknesses of the economy and of the business models exposed by

the euro crisis, because it is not just a problem of liquidity? The banks are ready to lend, but owners do not wish to inject more capital and with the euro crisis removing the visibility of the prospect of their exports, more financing, leasing facilities, soft concessionary loans deployed on whatever conditionality will not be effective.

We are already late and behind the curve and, as we can see, most of the major corporate players are hurt in spite of cost cutting and internal restructuring and the business scene today is that only casinos and National Lottery are making huge profits and are recession proof.

The export sector needs the fiscal support but what is crucial is the re-thinking and the re-engineering of this model of development and this is what has been lacking. The private sector has also been suffering from the inefficiencies of public utilities, the rising cost of inputs, bureaucratic constraints, bank rigidities, etc., which have impeded their competitiveness. But, on top of that, the fundamental weakness of our trade deficit which is caused by the structural excess of imports over exports is not corrected, but is worsened by the external borrowings causing higher public debts and higher external private debts. We are building a debt bubble and all these fiscal stimuli are creating only more debt to the economy to cure the debt problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was not here when hon. Ms Deepalsing made her speech and I heard that she made a few favourable comments about my intervention in different forums. I know that she is waiting for me to make a comment on whether the strong rupee should be depreciated or what not, from what I have understood. Let me make it clear that we have, in Mauritius, a system of exchange rate which is called a freely floating exchange rate system. Therefore, it is determined by the demand and supply of foreign currencies in the market.

We have just heard today from the reply of the hon. Minister of Finance that the imports are almost twice the amount of exports. If I am not mistaken, he mentioned 130 billion worth of imports against a 60 billion worth of exports. So, our imports are already twice the value of exports. Therefore, meaning that the demand for foreign currency to import is much higher than the capacity to generate the foreign exchange. In a free market, necessarily the currency will have to give way. So, whatever intervention in the short-term, whatever manipulation in the short-term that can take place, the rupee will correct itself and it will be the reflection of that structural trade deficit situation in Mauritius. Therefore, what I am saying is that unless we take drastic measures, unless we rethink our economic model - I have heard the Minister of Tourism talking about moving to the east for capturing our tourist market; this is a medium to long-term

decision - unless all these necessary steps are taken, we will face this inevitable situation of the rupee correcting itself in the market. Therefore, what I am saying is that we must have a drastic overhaul of our economic model. This is what is lacking in the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme ERCP. This does not mean that fiscal support is not required.

Unfortunately, no attention has been given to the monetary policy. The Minister of Finance has taken an attitude that this is not his problem and that this is the problem of the Bank of Mauritius. But, unfortunately, when you are in command of the financial affairs of the country, I think a direction should be given to the Central Bank of what kind of financial management is sought to be achieved. And, in this case, when the budget is in deficit, when the balance of payment is in deficit; this is not a pure cyclical coincidence. It is a structural problem. We need to re-look all the strategies that we have been implementing during the reform programme of the previous Finance Minister.

In that sense, we need to pay primary attention to education because we have to shift our model from that low skill, low capital and low wage system to a system of highly skilled, hi-tech manufacturing and services. But, to be able to shift to that knowledge-intensive level, priority should be given to the reform of the education system and this is what is not forthcoming, and this is where the political will is very important. We need to have leadership shown by those at the helm of the education sector. We need to encourage further collaboration between the public sector and the education service providers in order to meet the demand for this new type of industries and services that we are requiring. A high quality education, upgraded skills and if we are unable to get them, I think, it is important to fill that gap in the meantime with foreign skills and foreign talents. And we need also to attract Mauritians abroad; I think this is one aspect which has not been given enough emphasis. The problem of talents and skills is a sore problem at this juncture.

As I have explained, the first problem is a problem of values, meritocracy, transparency, governance, political will. The second problem is a problem of education. The third important problem that we face is that of fiscal discipline and responsibility. If Government does not do all that it can to combat corruption, to be more open, to be transparent at all levels, especially in terms of public procurement, we will necessarily and inevitably lead to the same situation where we had to throw Rs7 billion to Rs8 billion out of the window by an ill-advised or ill-inspired hedging that nobody, up to now, has been able to establish where the decision came from. So, a

Government that is clean, that is lean, that can empower its administrative staff to implement the decisions in transparency; this is what is required to lead Mauritius to the next level of development and yet we have already seen the different attempts that have been made by different Governments. I have in mind, the various trade agreements that have been negotiated by different Governments during the last decade: the effort at regional cooperation in order to create a wider market, the effort to make Mauritius a platform, a bridge for business investment and trade between Asia and Africa. All these have already been started, but more vigour should be given to all these efforts through negotiation of further double taxation treaties and further trade agreements.

The point that I wish to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that, in this model, Mauritius should not just look for sojourners, that is, foreigners who come and put up their services and industries in order to serve other places in the region. We can serve as a host to these investors to tap wider market, but more importantly, we must create all the conditions and all the incentives within our means, to make Mauritius a home for all these investors and businesses. What I mean by that is that, Mauritius does not offer that kind of vibrancy and entertainment that our cultural diversity and rich resource of our plural community can offer. These assets are not tapped sufficiently, not developed sufficiently because we do not have an open, friendly policy to make Mauritius a cosmopolitan area to attract people to use Mauritius as a home base. This is another dimension that is required in that new economic model.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now move from the economic analysis to a more humdrum matter because I want to share with you some of the concerns of the inhabitants of my Constituency in this House. To be frank, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that I was quite astounded by the level of disparity between the various regions in my Constituency and the many grievances of the inhabitants of my Constituency regarding infrastructural works that have been ignored for the past five years. The more so as a resident of the Constituency for more than 45 years, I have witnessed the implementation of so many projects during the period 2000 to 2005 at the time when hon. Rajesh Bhagwan was then Minister of Environment. But, suddenly, as if by incantation, the NDU has vanished from our Constituency.

No projects have been considered and to add insult to injury, projects already implemented were neglected and left in a state of abandonment. For example, the children's playground in Canot is today a hazard for the children it was supposed to cater for. The

proposed football pitch at Maingard has remained for the past five years just a sketch on the drawing board, in spite of the fact that the land required had already been obtained from the Medine Sugar Estate. The inhabitants of Albion are now wondering what happened to the contribution of Club Mediterranean to the tune of Rs25 m. which was meant for the implementation of social projects in the village. No such projects have been implemented so far. This total lack of consideration for the plight of the inhabitants of my Constituency certainly sparks off some suspicions. And these issues have been raised on various occasions in this House by hon. Rajesh Bhagwan himself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, well-maintained roads and lanes, a sound drainage system are not luxuries. They form part of the basic infrastructure that any citizen of this country is entitled to. There is no need to conduct time-consuming surveys because the inhabitants now want to see this project off the ground and it shall be our duty to ensure that this kind of discrimination is being put to an end.

We all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that drug trafficking and addiction are today a major national scourge. And Mauritius has already reached the fifth position in the world in terms of consumption of opiates. I can talk lengthily on the social impact of this blight in the various regions of my Constituency, but what we need is to increase drastically our rehabilitation capacity and to treat the drug addicts not as criminals, but as patients who desperately need appropriate treatment. I wish to make a pressing appeal for a national awakening regarding this serious plight and threat because tomorrow it may be too late.

M. le président, permettez-moi en guise de conclusion de mon discours de parler aussi de notre ville de Beau Bassin-Rose Hill. Je n'ai pas l'intention de citer les grandes réalisations de mon papa ou des grandes personnalités qui ont laissé des marques pour le plus grand bien de notre ville. Je préfère parler des réalisations que j'attends d'une nouvelle équipe dirigeante qui va être élue, *hopefully in the near future*. Et, en parlant, des traces laissées, il est dommage de constater que le conseil municipal actuel termine son mandat sur des notes les plus catastrophiques. La ville de Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, n'a jamais connu une aussi mauvaise administration de toute son existence. Ainsi, il est à recommander, venant d'un habitant de cette ville moi-même, que le nécessaire soit fait dans plusieurs domaines.

Premièrement, il faut entreprendre le nettoyage du réservoir La Ferme. Un tel exercice effectué, la capacité du réservoir accusera une augmentation en terme de stockage d'eau parce

que, d'après certains renseignements, la capacité actuelle est limitée par plus de 50% de boue. Cette requête tombe sous la responsabilité de notre ami, l'honorable Hervé Aimée, et je le remercie d'avance au nom de notre ville, de faire réaliser ce souhait.

La ville de Beau Bassin-Rose Hill est connue aussi comme une ville de culture et de sport et, aujourd'hui, il incombe à cette nouvelle équipe dirigeante de redresser la situation. Devant cet état de mauvaise gestion des affaires de la ville, des absences répétées et prolongées de nos élus indisciplinés; les cinq ans au commandement de cette ville sont la preuve irréfutable de ce constat d'échec que nous devons tous stopper au plus vite. Une nouvelle équipe pour diriger les affaires de la ville de Beau Bassin- Rose Hill est une urgence afin de redonner à notre ville son éclat d'antan. Après tout, il faut reconnaître, M. le président, que la bonne gouvernance n'a jamais été la priorité des dirigeants actuels.

With this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your kind attention and I look forward to many more opportunities to play my part in the House on behalf of the great people of Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière and the population of Mauritius at large.

(00.50 a.m)

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs L. Dookun-Lutchoomun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me first to express my sincere congratulations to you on your election as Deputy Speaker of the House unanimously. I have no doubt that the new Assembly will benefit from your learned, professional and impartial management of the House. Through you I would like also to congratulate the Speaker of the House for his re-election and as he has always proved it, he has always shown impartiality and total equity. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to congratulate all the new Members of the National Assembly and all those who have intervened in the House before me today. I must say that I derive a great sense of honour and pride to be part of this new Assembly for a third time with the added responsibility of forming part of the Cabinet under the enlightened leadership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

M. le président, durant la campagne électorale nous avions bien fait comprendre que L'Alliance de L'Avenir apportera au pays le progrès et la prospérité et que cela se produira dans la stabilité politique en donnant à chaque individu sa chance de participer dans l'avancement du pays. C'est une île Maurice moderne que le gouvernement s'applique à mettre en place des

maintenant. Nous avons une équipe soudée ayant le courage, la volonté et la vision qu'il faut et aussi le leadership fort et éclairé en la personne du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Nous avons été investis par le peuple pour une mission précise, celle de diriger le pays pour le développement et le mieux-être de tout un chacun dans la République. Dans la lecture du discours-programme, le président rappelle que le gouvernement est déterminé à mettre en place des politiques visant à la construction d'une société plus forte, plus sécurisée et plus stable. J'aimerais citer ici, M le président, un premier ministre français, Lionel Jospin, qui avait eu ces paroles bien à propos sur ce sujet -

« La nation est non seulement la réalité vivante à laquelle nous sommes tous attachés, mais surtout le lieu où bat le cœur de la démocratie, l'ensemble où se nouent les solidarités les plus profondes »

Nous sommes, aujourd'hui, engagés à construire une nation mauricienne où chaque citoyen est en droit de revendiquer une égalité de chances pour pouvoir réussir sur le plan social, économique, éducatif, sportif ou autre.

M. le président, il nous faudra pour tout cela mobiliser toutes les énergies disponibles et volontaires. Il faudrait pouvoir aller au-delà des clivages et des dogmes. Il appartiendra aux membres de l'opposition de situer leur rôle dans cette tâche. Elle est essentielle au bon fonctionnement de notre démocratie. Il est vrai que l'opposition doit jouer son rôle de chien de garde et de contre pouvoir. Pour autant, il serait souhaitable que les députés de l'opposition évitent les débats stériles.

J'en veux pour preuve que plus de trois mois après les élections on vient encore contester la notion de *free and fair elections*. Le peuple a fait son choix. Des observateurs internationaux étaient présents pour s'assurer du bon déroulement du scrutin. Pour autant qu'on sache, aucune instance internationale n'a donné jusqu'ici un avis négatif sur les élections. Prétendre le contraire, comme veulent le faire accroire certains députés de l'opposition, c'est à la fois faire injure à ces observateurs et ces instances dont certains membres ici présents ont déjà fait partie lors des missions d'observations à l'étranger.

M. le président, et quand bien même notre système électoral reste perfectible, il est malhonnête de venir aujourd'hui contester les règles du jeu après avoir accepté d'y adhérer. Les jeux sont faits, honorable membres, soyez beaux joueurs et attelez vous à défendre vos vrais idées qui feront à la fois grandir cette Assemblée et notre classe politique.

M. le président, permettez-moi de rétablir un autre fait que l'opposition se fait un malin plaisir de déformer. Le MMM n'arrête pas de dire que c'est le MSM qui a bloqué la réforme électorale. Rien de plus faux, M. le président. Ce qui est vrai, c'est qu'à l'époque du gouvernement MMM-MSM de 2000-2005, le comité parlementaire présidé par Ivan Collendavelloo avait fait circuler un projet de réforme. Au MSM, nous avions effectivement quelques réserves sur ce projet parce que tout simplement nous ne voulions pas de chambardement et nous pensions que la proposition faite par le MMM allait apporter en son sein les germes de l'instabilité politique comme nous l'a effectivement démontré le cas Rodriguais.

M. le président, en dépit de ses imperfections, le système actuel du *first past the post* a fait ses preuves. Le *first past the post* pêche en ne permettant pas, dans certains cas, une représentativité des partis au parlement, reflétant de pourcentage de votes obtenues. Les 60-0 de 1982, 1995 n'avait permis aux perdants de trouver des sièges au parlement malgré le fait qu'une bonne partie de la population les avaient soutenus. Nous, au MSM, nous parlions d'une dose de proportionnelle afin de permettre au parti ayant recueilli le soutien d'un pourcentage important de l'électorat d'avoir une représentation au parlement. On avait fait des contre-propositions. Parmi celles-ci, relevons la forme de proportionnelle qui assurerait à tout parti ayant obtenu au moins 10% des votes une représentation au parlement. Aussi la proposition révolutionnaire d'assurer que 50% des sièges alloués sur une base proportionnelle soient alloués aux femmes, une proposition qui aurait poussé les partis politiques à présenter plus de femmes sur leurs listes de candidats. Or, le MMM a rejeté notre projet. Je me souviens encore très bien du Premier Ministre d'alors qui lui n'était pas contre et qui, il faut le dire, avait fait circuler le projet de loi. La State Law Office était venu avec un projet de loi qu'on avait fait circuler et je me souviens très bien le Premier Ministre d'alors, comme je l'ai dis, qui n'était pas lui contre et qui avait dit, et je cite « qui peut plus peut moins ». Voila la vérité, M. le président. Il y avait un projet de loi qui avait été circulé et venir dire aujourd'hui que c'est le MSM qui a bloqué le projet de la reforme électorale, c'est de la mauvaise foi pure et simple, M. le président.

Pour reprendre ce que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a dit à propos de notre système électoral qu'il voulait décrire comme étant un système électoral communal du fait que nous devons inscrire notre ethnicité, M. le président, je ne suis pas pour le *best loser system*, mais je dois dire si ne serait-ce qu'un Mauricien se sente sécurisé par ce système, cela veut dire que

nous n'avons pas encore atteint le stade où en peut se défaire de ce système. Qu'on ne vienne pas me dire aujourd'hui que ce système n'est pas correct du fait qu'il n'existe pas ailleurs et qu'il existe seulement à Maurice. Il n'y a aucune part au monde, M. le président, où la population est comparable à celle de Maurice ; aucune part au monde où nous vivons une diversité dans un accord pareil et aucune part au monde où une diversité pareille n'empêche à ce que des élections soient faites sur une base *free and fair*. Nous avons eu plusieurs élections et ces élections étaient faites sans violence et dans le calme.

M. le président, vendredi dernier, le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances a présenté *the Economic and Restructuring Competitiveness Package (ERCP)* qui vise à permettre au pays de faire face à la crise de la zone euro. C'est un signal fort que le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances lance à tous les secteurs de l'industrie pour montrer notre engagement à soutenir notre économie.

Je suis surprise par la faiblesse des arguments de l'opposition pour critiquer ce plan. Le *leader* de l'opposition parle de retard apporté pour présenter le plan et celui-ci n'est qu'un changement, dit-il, de la forme du précédent *additional stimulus package*. Il n'y a aucun retard dans la présentation du plan, M. le président. Ce *package* est le fruit d'une consultation avec les *stakeholders* de l'économie. La batterie de mesures prises pour aider toutes les entreprises concernées montrent que le ministre des finances n'a pas voulu laisser de côté quiconque et surtout pas les petites et moyennes entreprises. La crise de la zone Euro n'est pas de la même nature que la crise financière de 2008 à laquelle le gouvernement avait alors répondu par des mesures dictées par les situations d'alors. La crise de la zone Euro particulièrement de la variation des taux de change est différente de cette crise de 2008 qui nécessite une appréhension à plus long terme de changements d'où l'importance de ne pas se précipiter pour faire un plan juste pour parer au plus pressé. Je suis persuadée que le vice Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth et son équipe ont su évaluer ce qui a marché dans les plans précédents et faire des ajustements nécessaires pour que cette fois nulle entreprise ne se sente exclue, M. le président.

Les PME mais aussi les petits planteurs ont eu une attention spéciale avec des efforts additionnels que la banque de développement va consentir pour les aider encore plus. Pour autant il est important de faire remarquer que le gouvernement ne se contente pas d'injecter de l'argent aux entreprises en difficulté mais plutôt de les accompagner. Le financement du plan

qui vient également du secteur privé montre que les entreprises doivent s'ajuster aux nouveaux enjeux de l'économie mondiale et se préparer en conséquence en prévoyant les difficultés qui peuvent surgir à tout moment. Ce plan démontre que nous entendons respecter les engagements pris dans le discours programme. D'ailleurs, les premières réactions tant du côté du *Joint Economic Council* que de l'association des consommateurs prouvent que l'IACP va dans le bon sens. Ceci dit, M. le président, il n'est nullement de mon intention de réveiller les vieilles querelles et alors *let's move forward*.

M. le président, le Premier ministre m'a confié le ministère de la sécurité sociale, de la solidarité nationale et des institutions réformatrices. A travers ce ministère, le gouvernement dispose d'un bras armé pour tisser ce réseau de solidarité nécessaire pour faire exister une nation digne de ce nom. Ce gouvernement de l'alliance de l'avenir est attaché à promouvoir cette solidarité qui seule peut nous projeter dans un développement durable qui ne se mesurera pas au seul chiffre de la croissance ou du BIP mais à la somme des possibilités réelles des mauriciens de pouvoir vivre une vie décente où la notion de réussite n'est pas réservée aux *happy few*. Le discours programme rappelle que le gouvernement entend placer la personne au centre du développement durable et s'engage à combattre la pauvreté sous toutes ses formes en s'assurant que le processus de la démocratisation de l'économie atteigne toutes les sections de la population. C'est ainsi que ce gouvernement a décidé de créer un tout nouveau ministère de l'intégration sociale et de l'*Economic Empowerment* pour améliorer la qualité de la vie des groupes vulnérables. Mon collègue responsable de ce ministère aura l'occasion de vous en parler plus longuement mais je voudrais seulement dire que ce sera l'autre bras pour assurer la solidarité qui nous semble essentiel pour réussir notre projet de société. Le ministère de la sécurité sociale et celui de l'intégration sociale seront appelés à travailler en synergie sur un ensemble de projets visant la réalisation de cet objectif de l'alliance de l'avenir et à laquelle le peuple a souscrit par son vote aux dernières élections. La tâche de mon ministère est d'abord de veiller à consolider les acquis durement obtenus depuis des décennies et qui constituent les piliers de notre État-providence que nous défendons d'ailleurs envers tout et contre tout à savoir un système de protection qui assure aux groupes les plus vulnérables une protection adéquate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at my Ministry, we are called upon to attend to the grievances and hopes of people each and every day. There is a demand for greater social justice, greater equity and added protection. This Government has a programme which, by its eminently social dimension, intends to satisfy these demands. I have been given the responsibility of the most vulnerable people in society – the retired, the elderly, the disabled, the juvenile delinquency, all of whom need our attention and care. I also have the responsibility of the National Pension Fund and the National Savings Fund. It is definitely a challenging Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I am ready to meet this challenge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me start with a disability sector. The socio economic integration of people with disabilities will continue to be the backbone of our policy on disability in line with the UN Convention on the rights of disabled persons which Mauritius has ratified in January 2010.

Our vision is to build an inclusive society where people with disabilities will be valued and empowered. It is important here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to note that there has been an important paradigm shift in the approach towards people with disabilities. Previously, there was a tendency to consider such persons as being sick or incapable or as deserving our pity. Now emphasis is being laid on their talents, their aptitude, their potentials and it is clear that these persons are now considered to be full-fledged citizens and have the same rights as any other citizen of the Republic - rights to education, rights to employment amongst others and this is strongly emphasised in the UN Convention.

M. le président, laissez moi d'abord parler des jeunes personnes handicapées. Beaucoup a été fait jusqu'ici pour donner à nos citoyens qui souffrent d'une certaine déficience plus d'opportunités pour mieux s'intégrer dans la société. Pourtant, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour que ceux-ci se sentent vraiment à leur place dans tous les sphères de la vie. Que ce soit à l'école, à l'hôpital, dans les transports publics ou au travail, on est encore très loin de ce qu'une société démocratique, moderne et développée puisse offrir à ses concitoyens moins fortunés. On a encore des kilomètres à parcourir, M. le président. Nous reconnaissons les efforts nombreux des organisations qui œuvrent pour l'éducation des enfants handicapés tel que l'APRIM, le CEDEM, l'APEIM, l'école des sourds, l'école des aveugles, le centre Loïs Lagesse parmi d'autres. Ces écoles ont permis des générations d'enfants de pouvoir obtenir des outils

nécessaires pour affronter le monde. Nous souhaitons les aider encore plus mais aussi aller encore plus loin en essayant d'intégrer certains enfants handicapés dans les écoles publiques.

Mon ministère travaille sur un projet de classe spéciale avec des éducateurs formés pour les enfants souffrant de déficiences physiques ou mentales dans certaines écoles publiques. Nous sommes en pourparler avec le ministère de l'éducation pour pouvoir établir cela. L'intégration des enfants dans ces écoles permettra aux enfants de suivre une scolarité dans un milieu ordinaire. Mon collègue, le ministre de l'éducation, est en train de discuter des possibilités d'étendre l'accès des écoles publiques à un plus grand nombre d'enfants démontrant des handicaps. La réussite de ce projet nécessitera un travail de synergie avec le concours de tout un chacun - l'enfant, l'éducateur, les parents et les autorités.

Ce travail de synergie est sans doute la clef de la réussite, de l'intégration de ces élèves dans le milieu scolaire ordinaire. M. le président, l'éducation et la formation des personnes handicapées restent au cœur de notre action pour ces jeunes. Après l'école, nous pensons qu'elles doivent recevoir une formation spécialisée afin de pouvoir s'intégrer dans le monde du travail. Pour cela, nous avons déjà avec l'aide de la fédération des employeurs – *the Training And Employment Of Disabled Persons Board* - mis en place un accord de partenariat visant la formation et l'*empowerment* des personnes handicapées.

A strategy will comprise the development of a database so as to come up with the actual number of people showing disabilities and then focus on action and training for those who are willing to take up employment. We are in the process of carrying the survey and the survey is also trying to find out how many young people have already been trained and are willing to join service.

The Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board has already signed a MoU with the Mauritius Employers Federation to ensure that these disabled persons get the consideration they deserve during the recruitment of staff. I have also met the Chief Executives of parastatals and Government companies, and I have asked for their commitment to the cause of the disabled. The Government Programme clearly stipulates, and I quote –

“Government will further promote the integration of persons with disabilities by facilitating their access to training and employment.”

Section 11 of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act makes provision that the workforce of all enterprises, employing more than 35 persons, be constituted of, at least,

3% disabled persons. Yet, only few enterprises have until now opened their doors to the disabled. Also section 13 of the Act requires enterprises to register themselves with the TEDPB, specifying the number of employees they have and the number of disabled persons they have employed. However, we are aware that, often, enterprises do not have the necessary information enabling them to recruit disabled persons.

C'est là où nous comptons mettre nos efforts, M. le président. Après l'enregistrement des enfants handicapés voulant être embauchés, nous, au ministère, ferons la liaison avec les employeurs. D'ailleurs, avec la collaboration du MEF, nous sommes en train de faire un *needs analysis* qui permettrait de déterminer les filières dans lesquelles il nous faut former ces jeunes. *This will remove the mismatch which presently exists between the training received and the needs of the market.*

Il y a maintenant de nombreuses possibilités de recrutement dans divers secteurs, tels que le *ICT sector*, les *call centres* entre d'autres. *We are also relying on the Ministry of Social Integration for its collaboration, in order to provide funds for the training projects.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, until now, we have been using persuasion as a strategy to get enterprises to recruit people with disabilities. However, our next step will be the enforcement of the law. The Ministry is determined to get the provisions of the TEDP Act respected by all stakeholders.

As far as accessibility to offices and buildings are concerned, I am liaising with my colleague of Local Government to ensure that no building permits be issued by local authorities if the buildings are not equipped with facilities to provide access to persons with disabilities. No permits will be issued in case of non-conformity. My Ministry has also funded the retrofitting of primary schools with ramps, in view of improving access to these institutions.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant parler des personnes âgées. Y-a-t-il une définition de la personne âgée ? Pour des raisons de convenance, nous nous rabattons sur la définition acceptée par l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) de commencer cet état à partir de 60 ans. Mais, le vieillissement, M. le président, est un processus progressif, et une personne ne devient pas âgée du jour au lendemain. Le sociologue et philosophe français, Edgar Morin, parle d'ailleurs du *continuum* de l'âge.

Aujourd'hui, avec l'augmentation de l'espérance de vie, et l'amélioration de la santé et de la formation qui se poursuit en dehors du cadre strictement institutionnel, cette barrière

mythique de 60 ans est sérieusement menacée. D'où la nécessité de revoir notre politique envers les personnes qui ne sont plus dans le circuit du travail traditionnel.

De plus en plus de personnes qui partent à la retraite se contentent de moins en moins de jouir d'un repos mérité, ou pour les plus fortunés d'une retraite dorée. Non ! Beaucoup essaient de travailler autrement ou de s'investir dans des activités de solidarité, parce qu'elles se sentent encore fortes ou ont besoin de partager. Il s'agit de les aider à assurer cette transition.

Or, il n'existe malheureusement pas assez de structures pour canaliser cette formidable ressource humaine ; plus de 141,000 en 2009, et ce chiffre augmente d'année en année, M. le président. Mon ministère se propose de remédier à cela.

Avec l'aide de l'UNDP, nous allons instituer un observatoire de vieillissement, comme il existe en Europe et au Canada. Il s'agit de faire un véritable inventaire du processus du vieillissement à Maurice, de référencer les personnes âgées, d'établir les différents secteurs d'intérêt des uns et des autres, afin de construire une véritable politique de la personne âgée à Maurice. Notre vision est celle d'une population de *seniors* actifs, autonomes et capables de se prendre en main.

Mais, déjà, nous travaillons sur des pistes de déploiement de personnes âgées désirant se mettre au service de la communauté. Dans le service public, il existe déjà des *pools* de fonctionnaires pour les secteurs clés comme la santé ou l'éducation. Il devrait pouvoir être possible d'en créer dans d'autres domaines comme le tourisme, avec des guides pour nos villes, par exemple, ou dans l'environnement avec la création d'éducateurs.

Nous pensons également recourir à leurs services pour les besoins de la réhabilitation des jeunes délinquants. Ils pourraient mettre leur expérience au profit de ces jeunes, en servant d'interface à la société dans le cadre du processus de la réinsertion.

Accompanying the elderly in this new stage of their life also means to give them protection and security. At the Ministry, we are coming up with the Elderly Abuse Awareness Campaign, which aims at stepping up sensitisation campaigns among students, youth and the public at large. The protection of the elderly persons is fully taken care of by the Protection of Elderly Persons Act. The Welfare of Elderly Persons Protection Unit of my Ministry records and registers cases of abuse, and enquire into reported cases. It makes appropriate intervention on these cases through counselling, mediation and family conferencing. Cases of elder abuse are often not reported, due to family relationships and stigmatisation. The campaign will aim at

creating greater awareness of the different forms of abuse to which elders are often subjected to. Further, the need to preventive action and solidarity will be highlighted, so that the elders can enjoy optimal quality of life. The Prime Minister has already announced the setting up of two new recreational centres for the elderly, one at Pointe aux Piments and the other one at Riambel. The land at Pointe aux Piments has already been identified, and my colleague from the Ministry of Housing is giving his full support for the realisation of this project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the increasing number of elders, we need to have more structures to receive them and to care for them, while their children are at work. We are planning in the years to come to provide day care facilities, so that elders may be dropped in the morning and picked up in the afternoon by their children, allowing them to spend the day in the company of others engaged in activities within a safe environment. I am planning to come up with such modern day care centres in different districts of the island. In the meantime, negotiations are being held with the local authorities to provide their multi-purpose halls on specific days for the use of elders. Dramatics, IT and other courses are being offered to our senior citizens, so that they may remain active and engage themselves in pleasant activities in this new phase of their life.

For the severely handicapped persons and disabled elderly, the Ministry runs, with the help of an NGO, Le Foyer Trochetia, where they get specialised medical care and attention. In this context, the National Carer's Strategy and Action Plan provides for the training of carers and informal carers within the community. The course, which will be dispensed by the Ministry, in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Health, will be implemented within one month, with a first batch of 50 trainees. This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will lead to the award of a National Certificate of Care for Elderly and Disabled.

We have about 17 charitable institutions, which receive subsidies from the Ministry. The inmates, although well taken care of, are often lonely and need attention. The Ministry has started an Intergeneration Interaction Programme, involving schools students, so that they may be exposed to the realities of life and, at the same time, share some experiences with elders who will really appreciate it. I am convinced that such an experience will benefit both the youth and the elders.

My Ministry is aware that all our actions will not bear their fruits, unless the community is a stakeholder in the enterprise. In this context, my Ministry proposes to further consolidate

the Government/NGO partnership in the attainment of the social development goals of Government.

But we are aware that volunteers are becoming scarce in Mauritius and there is a dire need to give this sector a boost. At present, the NGO Trust Fund, the NSA nit and the MACOSS are the main actors in the NGO sector. With a view to maximising on financial and human resources, avoiding duplication of activities and creating greater synergy and effectiveness in action, my Ministry is presently evolving a co-ordination mechanism – a sort of common platform – for the various actors to evolve in an integrated and coherent manner.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are aiming at capacity building in order to ensure that all NGOs well established and those that are less established, small and new ones can tap resources from the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund and make judicious utilisation of same.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to a very delicate issue which concerns the building of a stronger, more secure and more stable society. Addressing crime is an important aspect in this perspective but we are trying to prevent offenders to drown in the spiral of crime, larceny and violence, and this is even more important.

The Probation and After Care Service of my Ministry assist the court in planning sentences for offenders, supervise offenders in the community and carry out prevention campaigns aiming at the reduction of crime. The Probation Officers are involved in counseling sessions aiming at the settlement of matrimonial and family conflicts. They work for the reduction of suicide and manage two probation institutions which cater for young offenders.

We want to modernise the service in line with international standards. We are creating attendance centres, Mr Speaker, Sir, which are of international norms. The probationers are offered counseling in a proper environment for rehabilitation. As mentioned by hon. Li Kwong Wing, convicted drug addicts are now referred to detoxification centres instead of getting a prison sentence, and they are placed on probation and required to attend a drug and alcohol centre where they are supervised by probation officers.

We also have two Rehabilitation Youth Centres: probation hostels for boys and probation home for girls.

M. le président, qui dit réhabilitation dit réinsertion. La réinsertion des jeunes reste un défi majeur car la société se meut rapidement et l'encadrement des jeunes demande à être constamment revue. De ce fait, le ministère continue à mettre en place un programme de

réhabilitation pour les jeunes en difficulté. Nous adoptons une approche plus professionnelle en collaboration avec la société civile qui est un partenaire privilégié dans ce processus. Le but ultime de tout programme de réhabilitation reste la réinsertion des jeunes en tant que citoyens responsables.

Ce programme comprend aussi une formation visant à rendre possible tout embauche afin de les rendre économiquement et financièrement indépendants. Déjà pour cette année, nous avons quelques jeunes internes qui vont suivre des cours à l'*IVTB* et le nombre va en grandissant d'année en année. A l'intérieur de nos institutions sont aussi dispensés des cours tels que le *hairstyling*, la *pâtisserie*, le *dress designing* parmi tant d'autres.

Au ministère, nous sommes très concernés du sort de ces jeunes qui quittent nos établissements après cette période de réhabilitation car, souvent, ils retournent dans des milieux peu propices à leur réinsertion sociale. Et c'est là où le bât blesse, M. le président. Souvent, ils retournent dans la délinquance et aussi ils sont malheureusement rarement responsables de leurs échecs.

Pour remédier à cela, M. le président, le ministère est allé au-delà de son mandat, en mettant en place avec l'aide d'un ONG une maison d'accueil pour jeunes filles à leur sortie des *Rehabilitation Youth Centres*. Le *half-way home* à Suffolk, Vacoas en est témoins. Cela afin de leur permettre de faire une transition entre les institutions réformatrices et à la vie en société, beaucoup plus souple. Mais avec combien de difficulté, M. le président, car une fois dehors ils se retrouvent seuls. Malgré la formation qu'ils ont reçue, la stigmatisation ne permet pas toujours l'embauche, tellement importante pour revaloriser l'individu. Souvent, le cercle familial joue un rôle déterminant à la réussite de la réinsertion. C'est là où le gros travail reste à être fait. Souvent, c'est l'entourage qui pousse ces jeunes vers la débauche, tels que la drogue, la prostitution, le vol, le viol et d'autres offenses. L'encadrement des jeunes délinquants reste le plus important à leur sortie de ces institutions réformatrices.

We need to provide them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with scaffolds so that they may rise and get out of the spiral. Si les bâtiments de la *RYCs* et du *Boys' Probation Homes* sont en état convenable, ce n'est malheureusement pas le cas pour le *Girls' Probation Home* qui se trouve dans un local loué, loin d'être dans les normes acceptables et non adéquats à l'épanouissement des enfants qui nous sont confiés.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are planning to get a new probation home set up in Beau Bassin. The land has already been vested into the Ministry and we are planning to start construction very shortly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our society has moved from an agricultural based economy till the late 80's to a modern industrial and digital society. In a span of 30 years, this gigantic leap has been extremely beneficial to Mauritians at large. However, this has not always been without adverse effects. Societal problems have cropped up and in spite of tremendous efforts from Governmental authorities and civil society, there are people who cannot always catch this *train à grande vitesse*. In certain cases, they feel rejected and in some may even resort to desperate acts like committing suicide. We have a moral obligation not to let them down.

The Suicide Prevention Unit of my Ministry is tackling this issue through counseling, awareness campaigns in schools and social welfare centres. A 24-hour counseling service is also provided through a hotline. We are implementing the recommendations of the Action Plan which was based on two reports on suicide. My Ministry is laying emphasis on training of our own officers so that they can bring the support to these people and this we shall do, even if we require assistance from foreign resource persons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have come a long way. Since independence various political leaders, starting from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Sir Anerood Jugnauth have pursued the goal of a prosperous Mauritian society. Today, we can take pride of reaping the fruits of their efforts. However, in spite of the progress made we still have pockets of poverty and vulnerable groups in society. This is reflected by the fact that some people still face inadequate nutrition, poor performance in school and inability to find employment.

Our Government is working on means to better assist individuals and households to manage those risks and in light of this work the social protection system is being improved.

An implementable strategy for Social Protection Review is being worked out with stakeholders. In this connection, foreign experts are supporting the Ministry to develop this Social Protection Plan. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is a rare country in the world where there is a non-contributory universal basic pension which constitutes a major percentage of my Ministry's budget. In spite of many discussions regarding its sustainability, our Government has given its commitment to maintain the universality of this basic retirement pension. This shows the extent to which social protection is an important issue for our Government.

Another basic pension which my Ministry manages is the basic invalidity pension. The present procedures with regard to the assessment and delivery of the pension itself have been mostly done with the criteria set in the National Pension Act. It has been subject to many parliamentary questions, with regard to the 60% invalidity criteria applied for eligibility for the pension. This criteria itself although much disputed is, in fact, on the low side. However, I am glad to inform the House that we are trying to review the whole system to try to see whether we can add other non-medical factors in this assessment. This will include ability of the claimant to interact socially and the ability of the person to engage in active employment.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention that people who are not eligible for the invalidity pension are often catered for through other forms of social aid. And furthermore, the National Solidarity Fund can also provide some assistance to people who do not come under this category.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Pension Fund and the National Savings Fund were set up in the late 1970s and since then have never been reviewed. The structure which was appropriate at that time, is no longer responding to the present needs of the stakeholders. Over the years, the Funds have grown in assets and it is now high time we review the structure of at least the investment part of the surplus of the Fund to guarantee the basic objectives of the Fund which is to pay benefits to employees in terms of retirement and injury pensions. It is to be noted that the National Pension Fund has reached the total asset amount of about Rs67 billion while that of the National Savings Fund, which is a much younger on a total asset value of about Rs11 billion. The review will definitely benefit all the employees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now, the work is manned by the Social Security Cadre who operates under the responsibility of the Commissioner of Social Security and who, in turn, is accountable to the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry. The Ministry is working with the stakeholders concerned to come up with an appropriate organisation structure and amendments to the present legislation so as to modernise the operations of the NPF/NSF management and investment team.

It is needless to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry is a key social sector Ministry which has a wide customer base comprising of the vulnerable, poor, disabled and the old people. The Ministry provides a host of services through its 42 social security offices. Of

these, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are a number which are rented and the total amount being paid as rent is around Rs619,000 on a monthly basis. Yearly it comes to Rs7.4 m.

With a view of reducing this huge amount of money which is being spent on rent, my Ministry is proposing to gradually construct its own buildings to house its social security offices, namely in St. Pierre, Rivière du Rempart, Montagne Blanche and Curepipe. My Ministry will request funds during the forthcoming 5-year budgetary exercises to construct every year at least one social security office in each of the four regions every year.

In addition, we are upgrading the social security office at Rivière des Anguilles and preliminary designs have already been completed. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is now working on the final drawings, cost estimates and tender documents which are expected to get finalised by September 2010. Funds to the tune of Rs2 m. have been provided for the construction project in this financial year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is conscious and committed to improving the quality of its counter services. Such an improvement requires both improvement in the physical set up such as making provision for accessibility, directional signs and comfortable waiting area, as well as reviewing the processes and procedures to reduce processing time. In this context, my Ministry has upgraded the counter service set up so that services are provided in a congenial environment around the island for the benefit of the customers.

Since I took office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been stressing on the importance and the need for better customer care. The officers of my Ministry are undergoing training so as to step up efforts in this context. However, unfortunately, in spite of the numerous training programmes, I constantly get numerous complaints reaching my office either through colleagues or through letters. I am, therefore, seriously envisaging the setting up of a Complaints Bureau. A steering committee will be set up to follow up the issue ensuring that remedial measures and sanctions are taken wherever and whenever required.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before giving up the floor, I would like to express my gratitude to the Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and to my leader, Mr Pravind Jugnauth for having bestowed on me this huge responsibility to direct this Ministry. I do wish to thank my mandates of constituency No. 8 who have deemed me trustworthy to represent them in this Assembly. They have welcomed me with open arms and I will live up to their expectations. I wish to

assure them that my two colleagues and myself will not fail this contract of *confiance* that they have placed in us.

M. le président, les *leaders* des trois partis, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval et l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, formant ce gouvernement, sont conscients des difficultés au niveau mondial. Mais, ensemble cette équipe a la conviction qu'on réussira notre pari de faire de l'île Maurice une île Maurice moderne où chacun a ses chances. Nous sommes encore à l'aube de ce nouveau mandat et pourtant je vois déjà les prémisses d'un contrat réalisé avec succès. Le gouvernement de cette alliance Bleu-Blanc-Rouge est mû par une synergie qui puise ses racines de la communion que l'on a pu avoir avec le peuple lors de la campagne électorale.

Notre tâche est immense et nous mesurons l'aune de l'espoir placée en nous par les mauriciens. Nous ne faillirons car il ne s'agit pas de notre réussite personnelle ni de celle de nos partis respectifs, il s'agit de la réussite de tous nos concitoyens.

Their growth will be our success. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(01.36 a.m.)

The Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is with great honour that I am addressing the House for my maiden speech. First, I would like to congratulate all the hon. Members who spoke before me. I will try my best to be as short as possible.

Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you and to Mr Speaker for your election as Deputy Speaker and Speaker of this National Assembly. I would also like to congratulate all the hon. Members on both sides of this House who have made it to this National Assembly to serve the people and our country. I would also like to thank and express my deep gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam and my leader, hon. Xavier Luc Duval for their faith in me by giving me the opportunity to serve my country as Minister. I take this opportunity to thank all the people who have stood for me during the election.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know about the track record of the first generation of *l'Alliance Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* and I am very proud to be part of this second generation, of this great team which will bring our country towards *l'unité, l'égalité et la modernité*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 05 May 2010, the citizens of Mauritius gave a clear message that they want the

Government of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* to govern this country for the next five years. La voix du peuple a été entendue et je suis sûr que ce gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir aura un bilan extrêmement positif à la fin de son mandat en 2015. And I have to point out that this Programme is for five years and not for 100 days as some people are pretending. *Les informations qu'on publie sont parfois de la pure méchanceté.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we look at the Government Programme 2010-2015, we would not fail to appreciate that every citizen of Mauritius is on board. No one is left out. Emphasis is laid on economic growth, social integration and poverty alleviation, gender equality, women empowerment, child development and law and order.

M. le président, le Premier ministre a créé un ministère de l'intégration sociale et il a nommé mon leader, l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval à la tête de ce ministère clé. On est certain que le vice-Premier ministre, l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval emmènera ce ministère à bon port comme il a l'habitude de le faire. On voit aussi la volonté de ce gouvernement de vouloir éradiquer la pauvreté à Maurice.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, insofar as my Ministry is concerned, the Consumer Protection Unit, which is the CPU, is a specialised unit within the Ministry and it caters, as its name suggests, for the protection of consumers. The CPU has the responsibility of enforcing the various consumer legislations and of providing overall consumer satisfaction and security.

The main objectives of the CPU are –

- to protect consumers through enforcement of laws;
- to educate consumers of their rights and responsibilities;
- to settle disputes between traders and consumers by mutual agreement or in case of deadlock through a court of justice, and
- to update existing laws to meet the new challenges ahead.

With a view to achieving its objectives, the role of the CPU would be revamped. Additional human resources are being provided so as to upgrade its intervention capacity.

In addition, in line with our modernisation policy, a web-based management information system and software development would be developed and implemented. Its purpose would be, among others, to provide up-to-date and timely information for decision making; ensure

effective inspection planning and better control of inspection of trade premises, improve monitoring of product prices around the island and also the monitoring of case files and improve the processing of complaints from consumers.

The automation of the Consumer Protection Unit will also allow the implementation of a new project, whereby any member of the public who feels aggrieved by a consumer transaction, may be able to register a complaint via a Short Message Service (SMS). This would allow a quicker response by the CPU. Another major project that my Ministry will carry out an in-depth and complete review of all the legislations governing consumer protection and rights, with a view to bringing them in line with the new business environment prevailing and to make them readily understandable and accessible to the population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a world characterised by financial and economic crisis and the ever present risk of food crisis, there is a need to ensure that people at the lower rungs of the social ladder are empowered by appropriate measures and interventions. These measures include training, information, dissemination and sensitisation, with a view to equipping those people who have been left outside the development process to tap available opportunities offered, by national authorities and other institutions as well as regional and international organisations.

In this context, the National Institute for Co-operative Entrepreneurship (NICE), the training arm of my Ministry in the field of cooperatives would continue to provide various types of training to youth, housewives, retrenched employees, self-employed, potential co-operators and co-operators themselves. I wish to point out that the trainees do not have to travel long distance to follow the courses. It is a “*Service de Proximité*”. Furthermore, these courses are demand driven and tailor made. These courses are organised with the collaboration of different institutions, such as AREU, University of Mauritius (UOM) and the University of Technology (UTM).

The courses cover issues such as Co-operative Entrepreneurship, Bee Keeping, Certification, Food Processing, Beauty Care, Textile Painting, Fair Trade Labelling Organisation and Import/Export. Following the Co-operative Entrepreneurship courses, potential co-operatives are sensitised on the values and principles of co-operatives which are: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. After that they are encouraged to group themselves into co-operative societies.

The amount of investment required for the creation of one employment through the co-operative business model is very low compared to that of other types of businesses. Therefore, much more employment could be created by co-operatives than in other business models with the same amount of resources. This is the reason why many redundant women have been able to become entrepreneurs and also employers. Since 2006 some 130 Women Entrepreneurs Co-operative Societies have been registered.

Co-operatives also operate in various sectors such as agriculture, pig breeding, fisheries, livestock, sugarcane, and credit unions. Co-operatives are responsible for the production of 10% of sugar product, 75% production of onions, 70% of fresh vegetables, 40% production of potatoes and 37% of fleet buses. Furthermore, with a view to ensuring transparency within co-operatives societies and improving accountability and control, training is also being provided to co-operators in good accounting practice and modern management skills.

In this context, my Ministry in collaboration with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is coming up shortly with a “Guide on Good Governance” for the co-operative sector. The guides will englobe all aspects that are required to empower co-operatives, with the management skills for operating in a transparent manner and adopt good governance practices. It will also provide a user-friendly checklist to facilitate compliance. It will bring value-added effect to the management of co-operatives and its effervescent impact will improve the performance of those organisations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the production of goods and services is not an end in itself. In fact, it is meant to satisfy demands in society and, therefore, the need to successfully market them. Previously, there was no established market and co-operatives were facing serious problems. My Ministry has taken the initiative to organise monthly co-operative fairs, in collaboration with local authorities, in different regions. Presently, they are being organised at the Vacoas Fair, the Triolet Market, Rivière du Rempart Market and the Plaisance Market in Rose Hill. It is now intended to extend such facilities to other regions where the appropriate infrastructure is available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Co-operative Credit Unions present a great support in the fight against indebtedness. In fact, people in practically all sectors are encouraged to make savings through deposits in Co-operative Credit Unions by becoming members and mobilising the savings and consequently for mutually benefitting from loans on flexible conditions and

secured by insurance cover. It is also characterised by community mobilisation, “*Service de Proximité*” and democratic principles. The turnover of the sector has constantly increased over the years to reach around Rs2 billion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the needs of sugar cane growing small planters co-operatives have also been taken into consideration. The Co-operative Credit Societies will be assisted in obtaining certification from Fair Trade Labelling Organisation, with a view to obtaining a premium price of USD60 per ton of sugar, which will be used to implement co-operative community projects.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am confident that the co-operative sector will continue to play a crucial role in the democratisation of the economy and help to transform the Mauritian society by giving equal opportunities to all Mauritians and reinforce the unity of the nation, while moving towards a more modern approach.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that it is no secret, that it is the SMEs that will be the driving force of the socio-economic development and democratisation process started in 2005. Government will continue to promote and nurture their progress and make SMEs the number one job provider and increase their contribution to GDP.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our vision is to meet the aspirations of our people and improve the lives of the most vulnerable and weaker section of the society by empowering them in the democratisation process of our economy. We are not here to dictate the way in which our citizens should live their lives, but, instead, to ensure that they have the opportunities to make the best choices for themselves.

The SME sector has been identified as the “growth gene” of our economy and instrumental in the creation of employment and distribution of new wealth for the upliftment of the most vulnerable and marginalised section of our society, including women, minorities and other disadvantaged groups. Today, there are about 100, 000 establishments employing about 215, 000 persons contributing around 22% of GDP. This sector will continue to play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development and democratisation process of our economy.

Consistently with the need to prepare our enterprises to stay ahead of competitions and supports enterprise productivity and competitiveness in areas of skills and training technology upgrading standards and marketing my Ministry is implementing the Mauritius Business

Growth Scheme (MBGS) which is a component of the World Bank funded project. This project which is to the tune Rs360 m. will be operational in September this year.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi remercier le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finance, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, d'avoir pensé au PME dans son programme de ERCP. *Cela va, bien sûr, aider les PME.* I strongly believe that this scheme will add value to their businesses in terms of supporting SME growth, innovation, position themselves to be at the forefront of business success.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je constate que le deuxième député de la circonscription No. 4 est au courant de la complexité du système de *best loser* puisque, pendant de nombreuses années, au sein même du MMM, un député s'est fait enregistrer comme appartenant à la population générale alors que son mode de vie et le mode de vie de sa famille reflète une autre communauté. En ce qui me concerne, je me sens comme un vrai mauricien, point final. Et cela ne me fait ni chaud ni froid de ce que l'honorable membre vient de dire sur moi.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2004 we all remember when the hon. Leader of the Opposition, at that time Prime Minister, said –

“L'heure est bien grave, notre économie se porte mal, ce sont des coups et des bombes qui viennent de l'extérieur. Bom pe tombe lor nou latet. État d'urgence économique, crise économique sans précédent à Maurice, nous bizin truve solution urgent et rapide »

If we look at the *bilan* of the *L'Alliance sociale*, we must all agree that *l'Alliance sociale* did extremely well. We diverted the bomb and it did not fall on our head. We managed to remove the economy from *urgence économique* and we found quick and urgent solution to what he termed '*crise économique sans précédent*'. We all know that the country has faced the global economic crisis.

(Interruptions)

We have seen great countries like the United States, England, Greece and so on who have been in great difficulties. We, in Mauritius, we have hardly felt this crisis ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! order!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen:due to the great leadership of our Prime Minister, the hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. We have been able to demonstrate what we can achieve when we work as a team.

(At this stage the MMM Opposition left the Chamber)

Durant ces cinq dernières années nous avons vu que des progrès et des résultats de la part de ce gouvernement. However, when we listen to the hon. Members from the other side of this House they give the impression that Mauritius is upside down, ‘*embas lahaut*’ and I have to say that their criticisms are very unfair and unjustified.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the hon. Members that the election is over. I don’t mind to hear criticism, but please do come with constructive criticism.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as ex-counsellor and ex-Mayor of the town of Curepipe, I would like to reply to the second Member for Constituency No. 17 but he has already “*tuite*”, as my hon. friend, hon. Soodhun would say –“ *tuite!*”

(Interruptions)

Since he has, during the course of his maiden speech, criticised that the municipal council of Curepipe has not planned to construct toilets in the market of Curepipe when doing the renovation of the market, I can re-assure him that toilets have been planned in the second phase of the renovation. May I remind him that the toilet of the bus terminus is situated next to the market and it is just ten to fifteen metres distance from the market? May I remind him that rats were dancing on vegetables in the market at night and no action was taken by the MMM administration when they were in power in Curepipe? May I remind him that in 24 years, that is, from year 1982 to 2005, the MMM was in power in the municipal council of Curepipe for 19 years and nothing was being done in Curepipe by them? We have started to see projects running only as from October 2005. May I remind him that today this market is the best one in Mauritius? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I remind him of a gymnasium project which started in August 2009 is due in February 2011? May I remind him of all the drains and recycling waste projects in Curepipe? We can see from what I have enumerated that the criticisms of the Second Member of Curepipe/Midlands are totally unfounded.

Pour conclure, je suis sûr que chaque hon. membre de cette auguste assemblée est d'accord avec moi, que nous avons une grande équipe digne de son nom ‘L’alliance de L’avenir’ sous le grand leadership de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam,

avec à ses côtés, l'infatigable Deputy Prime Minister, le Dr. Rachid Beebejaun, le performant vice-Premier ministre, Xavier Luc Duval, qui a comme tâche d'éradiquer la pauvreté à Maurice et le vice-Premier ministre, Pravind Jugnauth, qui est le grand stratège économique de notre pays. Avec cette équipe je n'ai pas de doute que l'avenir de notre pays est entre de bonnes mains et la population saura qu'elle a fait le bon choix.

Vivre la république de Maurice et merci pour votre attention.

(01.59 a.m)

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is my pleasure to be here a third time and I would like to thank all the Members present here to bear with me at this early hour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I need to first thank the Prime Minister for having given me this opportunity to be here again and, of course, I need to thank my constituents together with my two hon. Member colleagues, hon. Kader Sayed Hossen and hon. Jangbahadoorsing Seetaram, with whom, I must say, with my fellow friends, it has been a pleasure to work together to be here in this august Assembly.

I need to thank all my constituents, as I said, in No. 10 and I also need to thank my former constituents of Nos. 7 and 11 and, of course, I need to thank my family and friends who worked quite hard I must say, for about two weeks, for us to be here.

I must congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as well as the Speaker, for having been elected here in this House and I must also congratulate everybody who is here, present, especially the new Members who, I am sure, in one way or the other, would contribute towards the debate. Except, I must say that the MMM is getting into their old habits to walk out, to disappear etc. I think that it is not fair not to be able to work until this time. I think all of us have struggled to be here, in some ways, and this shows the amount of disregard, disrespect towards the institution...

(Interruptions)

arrogance, unprofessionalism. Any more offers? I think it is not fair, not because it is late and one has to rush away to get home to have a good nice sleep or whatever. I think it is not a way to behave. But, anyway, they are responsible for their actions and they will have to bear the consequences.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am proud to be here, I must say, as the first Minister responsible for Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology. I say that this is happening here for the first time in this country and it can only be a first Minister and I have had the pleasure to be here. And, my constituents, my family and friends are grateful to the Prime Minister for giving me this great opportunity. One of the reasons why I joined this Party is because I quite like the idea of trying to bring in development in the families for education. This Government, this Party that I belong to, Labour Party has put a lot of emphasis on education. Since the 1970s work started to offer free education. This Government offered free transportation and now, our Prime Minister has come up with a new vision to have one graduate per family. And, if we were to reflect like 50 years from now, as to why is it that Mauritius would have done so well? I must say I really appreciated the speech of hon. Bodha who explained what Mauritius would be in five years' time.

But, if we were to think about Mauritius in the year 2050 and we were to look back, we would have seen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have had good founding fathers and it is not only Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, I must say, but now we would have to add Dr. Navin Ramgoolam as well as one of the founding fathers of this country who would have contributed towards the wealth and the well-being of this country in the years to come.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to quickly go through the economic history of this country. You know, we started in 1968 when we got our independence and our GDP per capita used to be about 200 dollars. Then, this country used to be known as a basket case. It is not I who is saying this; it is from Professor Titmuss and Mate. They rightly said that this country is a basket case, nothing doing. You have - this is what they said - some nice beaches, beautiful people etc., but nothing going. And, he did say that they did not expect much out of this country. But, every ten years or so, we added something new in the economy. From seventies to eighties we moved from being totally dependent on the sugar; we became dependent on sugar manufacturing and tourism. And, during these 10 years we managed to increase the number of tourists by 100,000. And, between the eighties and nineties we then started depending on financial services as well in terms of addition to our economy. And then, between nineties and year 2000, we had an open and diversified platform whereby information technology was part of the activities in this country.

So, if one was to reflect on what has happened over the last 40 years or so, every 10 years we had an extra input in terms of economic activity and you would see that education has had a very important role in all this. In 1976 we had free education, in 2005 free transportation was offered, and I am proposing that today we have to add this new sector and this sector can only be Tertiary Education. The vision now is one graduate per family and we have started working on a project where we would like to attract 100,000 foreign students in about 10 years time. This is not just a little figment of my imagination where we just put a figure. It has been quite intensively worked out; and if we see between the 1970s and 1980s we managed - when we were a poor country - to increase the number of tourists by 100,000. Today we have 1 million tourists that come to Mauritius. We are a relatively prosperous nation with about a GDP of 7,500 dollars. Then, it used to be 300 dollars. So if we put our heads together, we should be able to reach these figures of 100,000 overseas students.

I have listened to quite a number of our friends from the MMM who could not understand the reason why they are still in the Opposition. They have said that there were unfair elections and so many other things. I would like to share with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my humble opinion, some of the achievements of the previous Government. I was impressed by our Prime Minister's vision when we were visiting Panchavati, it was in 2003. He saw that there were some kids who could not go to school. The school is called Beewa Madhoo. They pay Rs6 from Panchavati to Beewa Madhoo and Rs6 from Beewa Madhoo to Panchavati. Where is my friend Dr. Hookoom? These kids could not afford to pay and they used to go to school on alternate days. I was there. I do not know if the Secretary General was there, but I know that hon. Dr. Boolell, Dr. Bunwaree and many other friends were there. Dr. Ramgoolam decided that this country cannot go on like this - I think we used to be a well-off country compared to the African States - and he decided that he wanted to give free transportation and he gave it straightaway when he came into power in 2005. And, I think this is a major achievement here in this country.

The second achievement, in my humble opinion, is that over the last five years, from 2005 to 2010, we have placed a record expenditure in health, education and social security which accounts for about Rs30 billion just in the health sector. In five years we have managed to double the expenditure; that is, in 2005 it used to be about Rs3.7 billion and in 2010, when

we finished the mandate, it had gone up to Rs7.5 billion, that is, more than double expenditure in health.

The third achievement, in my humble opinion, again, would be the contribution, I must say, of Members here in this Government. I would not want to name them, but it was, of course, under the leadership of the Prime Minister of having two world heritage sites. First time ever in this country and we had two of them.

The fourth achievement, I would say, would have been contributing to the democratisation of the economy whereby 25% of the GDP now is accounted for by SMEs.

Fifth one, we managed to open a post graduate Medical School in Rose Belle. It might sound a simple achievement, but through the work of my colleagues here, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health and the Prime Minister, hon. Bappoo and many other friends, we enabled this. And today, on 05 August, we started offering courses to about 21 post graduate medical practitioners and now we will have our specialist here in this country and in Rose Belle. .

Sixth, Competition law. There was no competition law in this country, as we all know, and I recall in 2005, when I was Minister of Commerce and Industry, the difficulties we had with economic operators. There was no proper legislation, no proper framework for people to behave in a manner that is acceptable in - I would not call it civilised societies - the western world. We have brought in competition law, and now this has started producing results.

Seventh, the Equal Opportunity law. In 10 to 15 years' time, when people will question why is it that, in this country, people have chance of opportunities, it would have been because of the vision of our Prime Minister to bring about this law.

Eighth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must humbly say that we are the number one in Africa in terms of ease in doing business, and this because of the Business Facilitation Act. If we had not proclaimed this Bill into a law that was aggressively implemented in this country, we would not have been there and we probably would not have survived all the economic crises that the world had to face.

Ninth, over a period of five years, we brought in an investment of a Foreign Direct Investment of Rs45 billion. If one was to make a summation of investment brought into this country between 1968 - that is, our independence - till 2005, one would say that, in these five years, we surpassed all those years.

Tenth, we all know what this country went through and what the world went through over the last five years. We did not have the triple shock, but I think we had five, six or seven shocks. The price of sugar went down by 36%; the MFA was dismantled; we had the petroleum crisis, the food crisis; sanitary crisis - (H1N1) and Dengue - and we had the global financial crisis. We have been through it, and, yet, we came out with a positive economic growth in this country.

Overall, I think the previous Government worked hard, and we had a good leader. I cannot tell you what actually goes on in Cabinet, but this Prime Minister is firm, is a good father to this country and a good father to this nation. He means business, and he has delivered.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to come to my Ministry. I would like to, with your permission, quote paragraph 185 of the Government Programme 2010-2015.

“In order, to enable the attainment of the objectives set to achieve the development of a skilled, versatile and competent workforce and to promote social mobility, Government will strive to reach an objective of one graduate per family”.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been trying to look at speeches around the world, I have been trying to look at other countries that have done well, and I haven’t seen, as yet, one leader or one Government that has been so bold enough to mention that, now, we have set ourselves an objective to have one graduate per family. It has not happened yet, and I think this country is going to be a model for others to follow in the near future. Personally, what I like with this Government, what I like with the Labour Party in this Alliance, is the importance that we give to education. We are all here today because of free education; we all have been through our tribulations; we all know how difficult it has been for us. Most of us have been through some very hard times and, was it not for free education, many of us would not have been here. We would not have had a life expectancy of 70 plus - top most in Africa - if we had not had free education.

So, once again, Dr. Ramgoolam, the Labour party in this Alliance, which is aiming towards the future, is bringing about some real milestone towards development of this country. Now, the question would be: what is it that is being done to achieve this ambition? At the moment, the gross tertiary enrolment rate, which is the ratio that is utilised by all countries, be it UNESCO and so on, stands up to 45%. It used to be 43% a few days ago, but now we’ve had

the admissions at the University of Mauritius which has gone beyond the mark of 10,000 students. Currently, 45% of our kids manage to get into the tertiary sector, and allow me to quote the exact figure. As I am speaking to you now, we have 44,068 students who are in some form of tertiary education, and the idea is to bring this figure to 70%.

I have been through some debates about what this Government is trying to do, but I think it is important to know that most countries that are doing well have got a very high enrolment rate. I would like to give a few examples, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If one was to look at the percentage in well-to-do countries such as the US, Finland, it goes well beyond this figure. In Finland, in 2006, the enrolment rate stood at 93%; in the US, in 2006, it stood at 82%; in Sweden, it stood at 79%; in UK, it stood nearly at 59%, and the figure was about 73% in 2006; in Malaysia, in 2007, it was 42.4%. These show that if we are to do well in this country, if we are to get a GDP that is close to European countries, having a small figure of enrolment rate in the tertiary sector is not an option anymore. We have to strive to increase these figures. We are investing massively in infrastructure in order to be able to do that. Today, Government has earmarked Rs600 m. to build facilities around Mauritius. We have to go out of Réduit. I think it has been indicated in our Government Programme that we are going to have learning institutions around the island. At the moment, we have the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology, and the Fashion and Design Institute. My colleague, Dr. Bunwaree, passed on the law that is going to allow an open university in this country. We are also going to merge the SDIM (Swami Dayanand Institute of Management) as well as the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* into another university, so that in Mauritius we will have a new national university. Who would have thought that, even in Camp Le Vieux, this Government is going to create a university? Now, it is going to happen. We are also going to open up a new university, taking into account the work that is being done by the MGI and RTI.

I am hoping that we will be able to call it Rabindranath Tagore University. Therefore, we will have five national Universities, plus one Fashion and Design Institute. The delocalisation of a Tertiary Education Institution would take place at Camp Le Vieux, Pamplemousses, Rose Belle and Montagne Blanche, that is, we are going to bring education at your doorstep in this country.

Secondly, at the moment, we have about 50 private providers of tertiary education. Currently, the investment that they have started, stands up to Rs1 billion. Thirdly, we are now

looking into all the courses that are being offered in Mauritius and we are also trying to see where there are some *manquements*. It is high time that the University of Mauritius has a Faculty of Arts where we would start teaching music, philosophy, etc. It is very good to form technicians, engineers and doctors, but then, we need to have thinkers as well. We have started working to have a Faculty of Arts. Hopefully, by next year, we will start teaching architecture, nano-technology, etc. We have come up with the idea of offering opportunities to people who could not actually afford to get into tertiary sector. Very often, you find students who, for one reason or another, manage to get only one A-level. In fact, there are quite a few of those. Now we have got a scheme where students who have only one A-level can join the University by going through a foundation course. I must say that this is being done for quite a while in England and in other countries. Now, we are going through this process in Mauritius as well. We are also going to recognise prior learning. If somebody has done a job for a number of years, he or she would be able to join a tertiary institution, but final examinations would not be exempted from. We would also allow access to mature students, that is, students up to the age of 25 who have only done O-Level and who would be able to join the tertiary sector, because we think that we have to give the chance to people who probably have had some difficulties in life. But, once again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, quality would have to be present and, therefore, the final examination would not be exempted from. While we are going to increase access, quality will become an issue. My Ministry is currently working on this Student Charter where there would be a contract between the service provider and the student. If we say that we are going to offer a 3-hour course per week or per session or 45 hours, with so many tutorials, etc. we will have to bind ourselves with our statements. So, my Ministry is working on a Student Charter and I hope, in time, we would be able to fully implement it in order to offer a quality education. And, of course, the Tertiary Education Commission is here to monitor quality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, with the Information Technology, Facebook and all the social networks that exist, a Tertiary Education System or institution would not survive if one is not offering quality. The students may be of your time and my time and today they know their rights. The press and everybody speak about everything, so they would have to understand that the quality aspect would have to be taken care of, otherwise, they will be taken care of by their fellow prospective students. We are also looking at loan schemes where we would like to make it more accessible to funds. It is in the Government Programme; we are currently working on it

and we would be discussing with the Ministry of Finance to make sure that we make these things happen. We are encouraging scholarships and we have also started a project where we would like to be able to extend our Universities and break out this 9 to 4 mentality. I do not know of any University in the world, maybe apart from here, where Universities close down at four, six, seven or so. People who have studied in India, Europe or South Africa know that most of the time universities do not even close down. You get your card, you get in and you do whatever you would like to do; you do your experiment at three in the morning, which is quite common in other countries. But here, we have a system, for whatever reason - I am not putting any blame. It is a kind of limbo in this system. We have set up a pilot project where now we have at least one course which will finish later than usual. I know that at the UTM they are offering courses at half past eight and at the University of Mauritius, they are working in a course which will finish until ten. I am hoping that we would be able to bring about this change in the mindset. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when somebody goes to study in Africa, in Asia, or Manchester, etc., nobody questions what happens to the students, but here, it is as if an extension of the secondary school. We have to change this way of thinking.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we would like to be in the league of universities that do well in this part of the world, that is, among the top ten in Africa to begin with and, incidentally, I am quite pleased to announce that among the top hundred universities in Africa, we used to be 27th. Today we stand at 21st, which is a small achievement, I may say. Now, the vice-Chancellor has set his target to be among the top ten in Africa to begin with and, once we do that, we would like to get closer to the top universities may be across the world. If we want to be taken seriously, we have to do research. I think it is a natural growth. We spent a lot of effort forming teachers. Today, courses such as civil engineering or mechanical engineering, etc. are completely offered by local faculty members. So, we had to put in effort to produce our faculty members first. I think we have done reasonably well with a current enrolment rate of 45%. Now, if we are to be taken seriously we have to do some serious research like all other universities. My Ministry has earmarked a fund of Rs100 m. to trigger the business of doing research. We have done a number of things and I consider researches one of the priorities of any university or any tertiary education system. We have regrouped all PhD holders and all MPhil holders and all researches into a research alliance. We would like to be able to call it Mauritius Research Alliance, another MRA, but this one would have another role. We have got

a group of mentors from faculty members from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Oxford, Cambridge, India, a lot of IT faculty members, Cape Town and we even have one noble price winner by the name of Professor Unat who is a noble prize winner in Chemistry. He was here recently. We have got a number of mentors and advisors, together with all these fellow researchers who would have to sit and discuss now. They should start thinking seriously about how to use this money and have fun doing research to do well in whatever they want to do. We have had some good research already in this country. I am not saying that we have not done research. We were discussing earlier on, but today in Mauritius we have a planet named after one Mauritian scientist called planet Somana. It has already happened. Maybe people are not aware of it if we don't have any interest in astronomy, but it has already started happening and we would like to push it a bit further. So, first we would like to encourage research by getting the thinkers together so that we can get all these great minds together to produce meaningful solutions for societal problems.

Secondly, we are in the process of creating five research Chairs at the University of Mauritius and now we are encouraging the private sector as well to sponsor Chairs at the University. It has not happened in the past, but we have started talking to associations and multinationals to sponsor Chairs so that people would be closer into the business of research. We are encouraging and increasing our MPhil/PhD scholarships.

In this country, at the moment, we are giving grants for publication of research work and I hope in time we'll stop doing that. That is an incentive at the moment. I think that this is still the early days. In other countries, they don't do that, they fight to publish, but here, we have to give some incentives. I sincerely hope that this will have to change in time. Through Professor Unat, through contacts with this Nobel prize winner, we have set up a scheme whereby we would have one Nobel Prize winner to come to Mauritius every year to see, discuss, think and lead would-be researchers. We have put up a structure to encourage conferences here in this country. I am not saying that we aren't doing conferences, but now formally somebody would be responsible to make sure that we have a number of conferences here to invite people to come and discuss. We have set up, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a best Scientists Award. The Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre has been offering Junior Scientists Awards. Now, we are opening it up to try to trigger people to interest in science and we are offering a price of Rs200,000 plus a grant of Rs50,000 which will allow our scientists to go and visit major universities around the

world. So, it would be a grant of about Rs250,000 for people to go and spend time with other scientists to get to know more about the field of science.

We have started the process of creating a science park. I do not think that it is going to be as big as what is happening in Cambridge or Oxford, but we are going to start in a very humble manner so that it becomes part of our culture to invent things and to do things our own way and not only to rely on providers of technology from overseas. We are in the process of setting incubators and strangely enough, the first incubator that is going to be set up is going to be by MGI. It is going to be an incubator that would be offering translation services. We all know that we are quite good. We are relatively good in languages here in this country, but I do not know of people who sell these skills to overseas. It might be about \$60 to translate one single page, but I am not aware of any company actually offering this business. We have started this process of incubators which would help people consider this as a means of acquiring economic means.

We are also starting a Mauritius Intellectual Property Office and a National Intellectual Property Council for a simple reason. If we were to look at our achievement in term of patenting, this country, for the last 10 years, has created zero pay tax and one of the assessments of a country around the world is the number of patents that this country would have produced. At the moment it's nil. Nothing doing! We have to put the structure and, in fact, I am coming with a paper to Government to give a grant in a small manner to entice would-be inventors to consider the business of patenting. We are discovering things in this country, but because we could not bother going through the process of patenting, it stays there in a drawer somewhere, and we do not benefit out of it and then, in the assessment in the world league of countries, we are being downgraded to a certain extent.

We also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, started Business Angels meeting. This started by 30-40 years ago in Silicon Valley and companies like Google, Yahoo are present because of such meetings where young scientists had ideas and people who had money met together and developed companies that made these countries do well. Better late than never, we started it and it appears that people seem to have a certain amount of interest. I have talked about increasing access and about research.

The third point I want to maybe spend quickly some time on would be these hundred thousand students that I would like to accommodate in 10 years to come. I remember listening

to hon. Bodha who had made a small calculation on the number of tourists from India etc. Let us make a small calculation for 100,000 students spending time in Mauritius at any one point in time. If they were to spend about \$10,000 in 10 years' time, this shows a potential of \$1 billion - not a billion rupees. If we were to look at what has happened in Australia, UK, France, Cape Town, one can see that *on a pris un peu de retard là-dessus*. This is a big potential and we have to put a lot of effort to try to attract students. What are the challenges? The challenges would be accommodation.

At the moment, we don't have hostels to accommodate because it's very expensive, but then we know how to attract tourists and they stay in the hotels. We have got a sophisticated system already in place in this country which would be able to accommodate students and that would be done through an accommodation office at the universities. We would have as challenges visas, work permits because, at the moment, it is prohibitive and we are currently working to sort out these problems just as one is allowed to work for a number of hours in Australia or in England and then allowed to study. We would have to set up alumini offices as well as student societies, etc. We have already started, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We had a visit in India where, for the first time ever, we represented Mauritius as a destination for tertiary education. I think it was well received. It was a bit of a shock because people tend to know Mauritius for beautiful actresses running on the beaches etc, but now that we have the ambition of attracting students, I don't see why this should not work.

Another responsibility that I have is the promotion of science. Am I running out of time Chief Whip? I won't be too long. We are working together with the Minister of Education to promote science. We do it through the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. So, we have set up a *caravane de la science*. Now we are taking our scientists to the community. It is a bit similar to the *Caravane de l'Entreprenariat, clinique mobile*, etc. We are not inventing the wheel here. We are going out to talk to people. In fact, we are going to Rodrigues on Saturday. We have a small *régate* and then we will talk to people as well - some fun and science. Basically, what we want to do is to explain to people why it is important to study science. What is science? What are Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Biology? You will be surprised to hear that many students don't even read the first three pages - the *préface* of their textbooks - to understand why there are studying these subjects. People just do these subjects because somebody says: 'That is a

fashionable thing to do Chemistry, Physics and Maths or Accounting subjects etc.” So, one of the responsibilities that I have is to promote science because a country cannot go far if it does not have a strong scientific base. We can do well for a few years, but in the medium and long term, we will have to make sure that we make our own scientists because our scientists are going to solve our problems of health and in other fields.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this is a tremendous opportunity that we have here. If I was to go through this economical history, moving towards global competitiveness, we have to have this new input and it would have been thanks to the vision of the Prime Minister. Having moved on from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, I must admit, I didn’t quite know what all this was about, but now I see that this is the future. I must quite gladly say that we have got such a Prime Minister which has had this decision. Allow me to quote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I end - I will not be too long now - some learned people who have written about tertiary education. It is a small paragraph and I’ll like to read this –

“Tertiary education is a critical pillar of human development worldwide. In today’s lifelong learning framework, tertiary education provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, socio scientists.”

I have added philosophers, thinkers, musicians, music directors, architects, economics and so on and so forth. So, we have to go through it.

“These training individuals develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective Governments and make important decisions which affect entire societies.”

I think this is a very well written paragraph on the reasons why my Ministry exists and I do not have any doubt that in time it will prove itself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to summarise what I have just said in terms of the reason why this Ministry has been created. It is a vision of our Prime Minister to have one graduate per family. We would like to be able to attract hundred thousand students here and we are going to invest in research and development. We have in this Prime Minister a man, a vision and when the seas were rough, just a short while ago, he sailed through the roughest

storms and ended so softly that the very Opposition that has left this Assembly this evening wanted to jump into this ship.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I need to finish maybe on this question that I used to ask when I was doing my campaign together with my two friends. When I look at what has happened in this country for the last 40 years, I used to do this little quiz.

(Interruptions)

I gave them five issues that they needed to relate to the Labour Party and this alliance and they gave me five from the MMM. And then I cheated, I said: “No, give us ten for Labour Party and this alliance and give me one for MMM.” When one thinks of the Labour Party and this alliance what comes to the mind? What is it that we have contributed towards? What is it that we have done here? What has the Labour Party and its alliance Members have created? Free education, free transport, built hospitals, built schools, offered *pension vieillesse, droit de vote*, infrastructure, University of Mauritius, University of Technology and Open University! When I mention that, they would say: ‘causé!’ You just have to name it. Whatever good has happened in this country has got a stamp of the Labour Party and I must say that Sir Anerood Jugnauth has had a good contribution as well. I cannot ignore him; I must acknowledge his contribution in the 1980s. The PMSD, Sir Gaëtan Duval, brought in the industry, tourism, etc. But then, when I asked the question: “Name me one item that has been contributed by the MMM?” *La grève, sabotage, di feu carreau canne, communalisme scientifique, lanatte dans disic, cochon dans la farine, la grève sauvage!* And today when they lost elections, they are in the Opposition, they say that the election has been unfair. *Voilà* to summarise *un peu* what has been happening in this country!

Another thing that I did not like at all on the part of the MMM - I can tell it to them frankly - is that in front of me they described the hair style of our previous Minister of Finance; they have got this habit of *dénigrement* of the human being. I know at this late stage people are not here. This has become a habit. I think people are not stupid any more. They have friends who try to help them. I am sure we all have friends, but people are not stupid anymore in this country. It was a tough fight in this election because of the nature of the election; it was not a snap election, but I, personally, had only two weeks in my Constituency with my two learned friends. I am saying ‘learned’ because he is a barrister. It was tough, but we made it. I think they have to start reflecting maybe about the way they are behaving. We need an Opposition.

The system demands that we have an Opposition that questions, but I have seen their behaviour and their priorities and I think it appears that they have lost it.

I would like to end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When we shall look back, let us say, by 50 years from now, people - I must say it - would hardly believe that we have founding fathers such as Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Sir Gaëtan Duval, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and all the other founding fathers who really work to build this country. It is not easy to build, it takes a long time to build. I must say that I just ignored the Member who had so many negative things to say about Rodrigues. I think he was totally out of focus. I think people would hardly believe that we have had such wonderful leaders here in this country and I do not have any doubt that in the years to come we would definitely be known as a pride of the Indian Ocean.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know it is late. I wish all our Members here well. Keep on the good work, my dear friends! We owe it to this country. I think we have already done some good work here and we will continue. And if we trust our leader, as we already do at the moment and, if we continue, I think nobody would be able to stop us, definitely not the MMM. I see a very bright future ahead. We have been through some tough times. I do not have any doubt that the team that we have, that the way we are operating in this alliance, I sincerely think that we are going to do a great job and why not, I wish the Prime Minister to return back here in power in five years' time.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

Dr Bunwaree rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr A. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the House to Tuesday 09 November 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Question put and agreed to.

At 2.48 a.m. the sitting was, on its rising, adjourned to 09 November 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

Debate No. 12 of 17.08.10**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****BRINKS CO. LTD. - EMPLOYEE - SUSPENSION**

(No. 1B/516) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he is aware of the case of an employee at Brinks Co. Ltd., who has been dismissed for having complained publicly of his conditions of employment, and, if so, will he state if his Ministry has carried out an inquiry thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: No case of dismissal of any employee of Brinks Co. Ltd who has complained publicly of his conditions of employment has been registered at the level of my Ministry. However, on 23 July 2010, one employee of the company who had been suspended from work and made to appear before a Disciplinary Board, requested for the assistance of my Ministry.

I am informed that the said employee had on 21 July 2010 intervened on a private radio to complain about his conditions of employment with Brinks (Mauritius) Ltd. The company considered that the employee, in so doing, had committed a breach of clause 10 (II) (a) of his contract of employment relating to "Duties and Obligations of the employee". Consequently, he was suspended from work and convened to appear before a Disciplinary Committee on 30 July 2010.

On 30 July 2010, the employee requested for a postponement of the hearing of the Disciplinary Committee and also stated that he would no longer require the assistance of my Ministry. The Disciplinary Committee was rescheduled for 09 August 2010 and during the hearing, the employee was assisted by his trade union representative.

I am further informed that during the hearing the employee tendered his apology and a severe warning was administered to him by Management. He has already been reinstated in his employment on 12 August 2010.

LA DIGUE & LA VANILLE, REUNION - UPGRADING WORKS

(No. 1B/517) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to La Digue, Vanille at La Vanille, Réunion, he will state if upgrading works thereof, including the widening of the roads thereat, are envisaged and, if so, when.

Reply: The Consultant of the National Development Unit is finalising the project design taking into consideration the re-alignment of the road and the construction of the bridge.

The construction of the bridge will be undertaken as first phase and bids are expected to be floated in October this year. The project for the road re-alignment would be considered as second phase as it involves land acquisition and way leaves.

CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD - MEMBERS

(No. 1B/518) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to procurement, he will state the names of the –

- (a) a Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and the three members of the Central Procurement Board;
- (b) Chairperson and the Assessors of the Independent Review Panel, and
- (c) the Director and the other independent persons of the Procurement Policy Office indicating the respective date of appointment in each case.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL BOARD - APPOINTMENT

(No. 1B/519) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he will state where matters stand in relation to the appointment of the new Board thereof.

Reply: We are working on the reconstitution of the Board of the Mauritius Sports Council and this exercise will take its own time.

I would, however, like to add that members of the Board are still in office with the exception of the former Chairman, Mr. Dhiraj Singh Khamajeet, who resigned just before the

last general elections. The latter has been temporarily replaced by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry.

HOTELS – EXPATRIATES – EMPLOYMENT

(1B/520) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the expatriates working in the hotels situated on the east coast, in the belt from Poste de Flacq to Palmar, he will state the number thereof, indicating –

- (a) their respective fields of expertise and
- (b) if his Ministry has conducted any survey to verify if the relevant areas of expertise that they possess are available locally.

Reply: According to records available at my Ministry, there are presently 15 valid work permits in favour of expatriates working in the hotels situated in the east coast, in the belt from Poste de Flacq to Palmar. Additionally, there are two work permits which have expired and renewal is under process. The main fields in which expatriates of these hotels are engaged are management, food & beverages and entertainment.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that as per the procedures in place, all applications for work permits in the professional and supervisory grades are examined at the level of the Work Permit Committee where representatives of relevant Ministries/Departments make appropriate recommendation.

Factors, which are taken into consideration, include availability of such expertise on the local labour market and the merits of the applications. Insofar as applications relating to the tourism sector are concerned, I am informed that in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Ministry of Tourism & Leisure has drawn up a scarcity areas list.

BRISSEE VERDIERE YOUTH CENTRE - ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/521) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Brisée Verdière Youth Centre, he will state -

- (a) the number of youth officers posted thereat ;
- (b) the names of the different activities organised thereat, since January 2010 to-date, and
- (c) if Government is proposing to carry out the renovation thereof and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: Regarding Brisée Verdière Youth Centre, a Youth Officer is responsible for the day to day running of the centre. Moreover, a Senior Youth Officer based at Flacq Youth Centre is the supervising officer and calls at the centre as and when required.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the activities organised under the aegis of the centre since January 2010 to date are being tabled.

In regard to part (c), I am informed that the building housing the centre is in good state and does not require renovation except for usual maintenance which is attended to by the Maintenance Unit of my Ministry.

FLACQ/BON ACCUEIL – ALCOHOL - SALE

(No. 1B/522) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the selling of alcohol, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, for Constituency No.9, information as to the number of -

- (a) licences therefor issued, since January 2010 to date
- (b) applications therefor presently being processed, and
- (c) licencees thereof who have ceased operation, since January 2010 to date

Reply: The Mauritius Revenue Authority classifies its information on licensed outlets selling alcohol on a district wise rather than on a constituency-wise basis.

The information requested for Constituency No. 9, that is, Flacq/Bon Accueil is, therefore, being compiled.

I am informed that, for period January 2010 to date, for the whole District of Flacq –

- 26 licences have been issued to operators
- 2 operators have ceased business during this period
- 73 new applications are still under process

MASA - PIRACY - PREVENTION

(No. 1B/523) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River)

asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to piracy, he will state the -

- (a) measures taken to-date for the prevention thereof, and
- (b) number of cases thereof referred to court.

Reply: The following measures are being taken with a view to preventing piracy -

- (i) holograms are being affixed on all original CDs, VCDs and DVDs by the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA);
- (ii) an enforcement Unit operates at the level of MASA to ensure compliance with the Copyright Act. This Unit works in collaboration with the Anti-Piracy Unit of the Police Department;
- (iii) regular sensitisation campaigns to create awareness on the need not to have recourse to pirated and counterfeit products are conducted by MASA.

In spite of all the efforts being made piracy still prevails, if not on the rise. The law has to be amended to tighten the penalties for infringements. My Ministry is working with the stakeholders to finalise a new Copyright Bill.

As regards part (b) of the question, the information asked for is being compiled and I propose to lay in the Library of the National Assembly soon.

LOCAL ARTISTS - GOVERNMENT LOAN SCHEME –

(No. 1B/524) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he is aware that the local artists have difficulties to

benefit from the Government Loan Scheme, on application therefor to his Ministry and of the reasons therefor and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: My Ministry has one grant scheme of Rs15,000 and a soft loan scheme as follows

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(a) Grant Scheme

A grant of Rs15,000 is available for artistic projects such as, production of CD's, theatre, publication of books on arts and culture, and art exhibitions. From January 2009 to July 2010 96 artists/performers have received grant totalling Rs1,440,000.

This is a straight forward scheme and no complaint has been recorded.

(b) Soft Loan

A soft loan of up to a ceiling of Rs25,000 is provided to artists by the DBM upon the recommendation of my Ministry. This is at a preferential rate of 5% per annum. Those requiring additional funds for their projects may apply for an additional loan to the DBM on normal terms and conditions. The DBM loan is available to artists against personal guarantee.

I am informed that since May 2008, no application for loan has been received at the Bank. I believe this may be attributed to the bank's requirement for personal guarantee.

The MASA provides an advance of up to 80% to its members of expected copyrights fees at the next distribution. The repayment is made by direct deduction from their copyright fees to be received at next exercise.

Government plans to have an Artist Welfare Fund and furthermore, my Ministry intends to streamline procedures with the view to creating a one stop shop for loans to artists. I intend also to improve communication with them by way of a published information leaflet giving details on all schemes available.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM – HISTORY OF MAURITIUS

(No. 1B/525) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school curriculum, he will consider the introduction of the History of Mauritius at primary and secondary levels with a view to promoting nation building among the students.

Reply: The History of Mauritius is already anchored in the Primary and Secondary School curricula.

In the first cycle of the Primary level, the History of Mauritius is taught in an integrated manner through languages. As from 2009, ‘History and Geography’ as a combined subject has been introduced in its own right in Standard III and IV and is examined at CPE level. The syllabus that is examinable at CPE comprises the history of Mauritius and its dependencies. Throughout the Primary level, pupils are made conversant to the history of our country.

As regards the lower secondary level (Form I to III), Mauritian history is taught from a wider perspective, that is in the context of the civilisation in the Indian Ocean, trade, colonisation, the British period till the independence and the proclamation of Mauritius as a Republic.

The school curricula at both the primary and secondary levels have been devised to instill a sense of belonging to the nation which is a key component of the building of national consciousness. All new textbooks, even those pertaining to the Asian Languages and Arabic carry components purportedly to foster the concept of nation building.

VERGER BISSAMBAR, MONT ROCHE – SEWERAGE NETWORK

(No. 1A/79) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Verger Bissambar, Mont Roches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if it is included in the contract for the extension of the sewerage network, under the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Scheme, and, if so, indicate when works thereat are expected to -

- (a) start, and
- (b) be completed.

Reply: I am informed by the WMA that –

- (i) the region of Verger Bissambar does not form part of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project;
- (ii) WMA carried out an investigation recently and only 20 out of the 100 households may be connected to the existing sewer network as the region is low lying. Surveys are being carried out presently with a view to connect these houses, and
- (iii) the connection of the remaining households will necessitate the construction of a pumping station under a separate contract and will be included in the next Budget.

TOURIST ARRIVALS

(No. 1A/80) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the tourists, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to a breakdown of the profile of the arrivals thereof in the category of –

- (a) consultants;
- (b) businessmen;
- (c) travellers in transit; and
- (d) holiday purposes, indicating, the number thereof, who, during their stay reside;
 - (i) at the place of Mauritian residents;
 - (ii) residences;
 - (iv) guest houses;
 - (iv) *table d'hôtes*, and
 - (v) hotels;
- (e) the average duration of stay per category, and

(f) forecasts for the coming six months for the categories specified in (a), and (b) above.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL TRADE CERTIFICATE FOUNDATION - TRAINERS

(No. 1A/81) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the trainers under Instructor B category working for the National Trade Certificate Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Foundation, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof, indicating their;
 - (i) respective date of appointment;
 - (ii) scheme of duties, and
 - (iii) salary scale.
- (b) the number thereof presently working in an acting capacity at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, indicating –
 - (i) the duration of the actingship;
 - (ii) their present salary scale as compared to that of the trainers with same qualifications at the MITD, and
- (c) if, following representations made by these officers, he will favorably consider confirming them on a permanent basis on the MITD establishment.

Reply: The information sought is given below -

(a) No. of Instructors - 99

The 99 Instructors have been employed on contract basis as follows -

-on one-year contract - 64

-on month-to-month contract - 35

(i) Respective dates of appointment

The respective dates of appointment for Instructors employed on one-year contract:

Number of Instructors	Year of Appointment
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2	2004
12	2005
20	2006
16	2007
14	2008

The respective dates of appointment for Instructors employed on month to month contract:

Number of Instructors	Year of Appointment
10	2009
25	2010

(ii) Copy of the relevant Scheme of duties is enclosed.

(iii) The salary scale is as follows -

Rs12,300 x 300 – 13,800 x 400 – 15,000 x 500 – 16,000 x 600 – 23,200

(b) Number of Instructors presently serving in an acting capacity – 34

(i) Instructors enlisted for the National Certificate Foundation course have been assigned responsibilities to run NTC3 courses. The duration of the assignment of duties ranges from 6 months to 2 years.

(ii) The salary scale is similar to that at part (a) (iii) above but an additional allowance equivalent to 3 increments is being granted to the Instructors.

(c) The NTC Foundation course is being integrated within the course programme of the new Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) and it is contemplated to transform it to the National Certificate Vocational within the National Qualification Framework (NQF) so that there is a proper pathway for students completing that particular programme. Provision is being made for the grade of Instructors in the new organisation structure of MITD and the modalities to employ them on the permanent establishment will be looked into.

ALBION VILLAGE – CHILDREN PLAYGROUND

(No. 1A/83) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the upgrading of the children playground at Albion village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Black River District Council that the children playground at Albion Village was constructed by the National Development Unit.

I am informed that the Council is aware of the bad condition of the children play equipment and has approached the National Development Unit on 01 March 2010 for the vesting of the children playground in it, so that it may undertake the upgrading works.

The request is under consideration at the level of the National Development Unit and as soon as the playground is vested in the District Council, the latter will undertake the upgrading works.

VALLÉE PITOT - LAND LEASE – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. 1A/84) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that several families living in the region of Vallée Pitot and holding a valid lease over State land are being deprived of electricity and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: Any person holding a valid lease agreement over State land is eligible for supply of electricity, if an application is made to the Central Electricity Board and the applicant submits all relevant documents, including the lease agreement.

I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that only one application from a person holding a valid lease agreement was made on 12 August 2010 and CEB has initiated procedures to supply electricity to the applicant.

I am also informed that there are some 18 families living in the region of Vallée Pitot who do not possess any lease agreement.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN - PARCOURS DE SANTÉ - LIGHTING

(No. 1A/85) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the request for installation of lights along the “*Parcours de Santé*” of Signal mountain, Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the request for installation of lights along the “*Parcours de Santé*” of Signal Mountain has already been considered by it. The project which is estimated to cost Rs350,000 has been included in the priority list of projects to be implemented by the Council and for which funds are being identified.

INFLATION RATE

(No. 1A/86) 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 inflation rate, he will state the –

- (a) latest estimates for the year 2010, and
- (b) effect of the strengthening of the rupee on the low inflation environment and the implications thereof for Government policy, regarding the interest and exchange rates.

Reply: Based on information available in respect of the consumer price index for the period January to July 2010 and taking into account the likely price changes in the next five months, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) is projecting an inflation rate of around 3 per cent for this year while according to the Bank of Mauritius it will vary between 3 and 4 per cent.

I will like to add that the rate of inflation had been following a declining trend recently. In fact, the rate of inflation, as measured by the change in the average level of prices during a twelve-month period, continued its sustained downward momentum, falling from 9.7 per cent in

December 2008 to 1.7 per cent in June 2010 – the lowest recorded since July 1988. However, it edged up marginally to 1.8 per cent in July 2010.

In the coming months changes in the CPI will depend on multiple factors, including, the pace of recovery of the global economy and its impact on commodity prices, domestic demand conditions and the degree of pass-through of the recent movements of the rupee exchange rate. In case there are faster than anticipated recovery in the global economy, international commodity prices could overrun short-term expectations and Mauritius, being a net importer of these commodities, remains exposed to such a scenario. The IMF July 2010 World Economic Outlook Update highlighted that prices of many commodities recovered recently. There are thus uncertainties and we are following the evolution closely.

In regard to Government policy on the interest and exchange rate, I will likely to inform the hon. Member that as per the Act, the Bank of Mauritius, which is an independent institution, is responsible for conducting monetary policy and for managing the exchange rate of the rupee, taking into account the orderly and balanced economic development of Mauritius. There is a Monetary Policy Committee which has been set up for formulating and determining the monetary policy to be conducted by the Bank. The MPC meets on a quarterly basis and there are provisions for special meetings, if required. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled on 27 September 2010.

I can assure the House that the Bank is committed to its mandate to its mandate of maintaining price stability as well as to promoting orderly and balanced economic development. In the conduct of its exchange rate policy, the Bank will take into account the national interest of the country. The monetary and exchange rate framework used by the Bank has been recognised by the IMF as being well suited to the needs of the Mauritian economy.

ARKLY – CENTRE DE JEUNESSE

(No. 1A/87) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Centre de Jeunesse* of Barkly, he will state –

- (a) if there is an Officer in Charge thereat
- (b) the activities that are being run thereat, and
- (c) when free internet access will be offered and adequate chairs

and equipment provided for the carrying out of the activities held hereat.

Reply: In regard to part (a), there is a full time Youth Officer in charge of Barkly Youth Centre. However, the supervising Senior Youth Officer is based at Trèfles Youth Centre.

In regard to part (b), the list of activities that are being run thereat are as follows -

DAYS	TIME	ACTIVITIES
Mondays	13.00 – 17.00	Indoor Games
	17.00 – 18.30	Aerobics
	17.00 – 20.30	Sega Dance
Tuesdays	10.00-12.00	Meeting and Activities by Femme en Detresse
	13.00-17.00	Indoor Games
	17.00-19.00	Acrobat Kime Group
Wednesdays	19.00-20.00	Street Fighter and Akido
	13.00-17.00	Indoor Games
	17.00-18.00	Repetition Sega
Thursdays	18.30-20.30	Street Fighter and Akido
	13.00-17.00	Indoor Games
	17.00-19.00	Acrobat Kime
Fridays	18.00-19.00	Retro Dance
	19.00-20.00	Regular Meetings by Barkly Youth Clubs
	13.00-17.00	Indoor Games
Saturday	17.00-18.30	Sega Dance
	19.00-21.00	Street Fighter and Akido
	10.00-12.00	Initiation a la radio
Sunday	13.00-15.30	SOS Famille –Cours D’alphabetisation
	17.00-18.00	Volley Ball/Basket Ball
	16.00-18.30	Scout Activities
Sunday	10.00-12.00	Sega Dance

	14.00-17.00	Scout Activities
		Indoor Games/Jambe Repetition

In regard to part (c), there is no internet access at the centre as similar services are being provided in the nearby e-learning centre. I also wish to inform the hon. Member that arrangements are under way with the National Computer Board to provide free internet access for the youth of the region at Mont Roches Youth Centre which will be converted into a cyber café and which is at a walking distance from Barkly Youth Centre.

Some 50 chairs are already available and are sufficient for running the activities of the centre. Moreover, a table tennis, carom boards and dominos are also available.

SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECTS

(No. 1A/88) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to housing, he will provide the latest available data pertaining to the demand for social housing, giving a breakdown thereof per income group and indicate the –

- (a) number of houses built for the low and middle-income groups during the period 2000 to 2005 and the location thereof and
- (b) ongoing social housing projects, and the number of houses that are being built and the location thereof.

Reply: The information requested for is being laid in the Libra

CAMP LEVIEUX - NHDC HOUSING ESTATE- WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1A/89) Ms L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that there is an irregular supply of water at the NHDC Housing Estate at Camp Levieux and, if so, will he, for

the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures that will be taken to provide regular water supply thereat.

Reply: I am informed that by the Central Water Authority that the NHDC Housing Estate at Camp Le Vieux is supplied from Stanley Service reservoir of a capacity of 7000 m³. The hours of supply are presently as follows -

04.00 am to 09.00 am.

04.00 pm to 09.00 pm

Within the NHDC complex, water is supplied to each block through a system of roof tanks which receive pumped water from a main tank located at ground level. Water supply problems to these residential blocks arise from the frequent breakdowns of the water pump.

I am further informed that the pump has disappeared and the main tank is no longer in use. Consequently, those residing at the higher levels of the NHDC complex are affected by the lack of adequate water supply.

In order to alleviate the water supply problems, NHDC will have to install a new pump which should be maintained regularly. It should also carry out regular maintenance works on the internal pipeline network including the water tanks.

I am instructing the CWA to liaise with the NHDC, accordingly.

SCHOOLS – STUDENTS - PER CAPITA SPENDING

(No. 1A/90) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students, he will state the latest available figures pertaining to the per capita spending by the State thereon in the -

- (a) state primary sector;
- (b) private non-fee primary sector ;
- (c) state secondary sector, and
- (d) private non-fee paying secondary sector.

Reply: The per capita spending by the State based on actual expenditure under the vote of my Ministry for Financial Year 2008-2009 is as follows in the -

- (a) State primary sector:

- (i) Rs25,000 (excluding Capital Expenditure on Buildings)
- (ii) Rs27,000 (including Capital Expenditure on Buildings)
- (b) Private non-fee paying primary sector: Rs22,000
- (c) State Secondary Sector -
 - (i) Rs33,000 (excluding Capital Expenditure on Buildings)
 - (ii) Rs43,000 (including Capital Expenditure on Buildings)
- (d) Private non-fee paying secondary sector: Rs43,000

DISCOVER MAURITIUS LTD - CHAIRPERSON & GENERAL MANAGER

(No. 1A/91) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to Discover Mauritius Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the company, information as to the –

- (a) names of the Chairperson and General Manager thereof, indicating their respective -
 - (i) qualifications and
 - (ii) terms and conditions of appointment
- (b) amount of -
 - (i) grants received from Government, and
 - (ii) sponsorship received from the private sector, since incorporation to date
- (c) names of the legal advisers and auditors, indicating the fees payable, and
- (d) overseas missions effected, indicating the cost of the air tickets and of the allowances paid.

Reply: With regard to parts (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the question, I am informed as follows

- (a) Mr Robert Palamy was appointed as Chairman as from 5 August 2006 and he resigned on 9 September 2008. Mr Ramalingum Maistry was appointed Chairman to replace him as from 9 September 2008 and he resigned on 1 June 2009. Thereafter, Mr Roshan Seetohul was appointed as Chairman to replace Mr Maistry as from 1 June 2009 to-date.

Mr Thierry Henry was appointed as General Manager as from 26 July 2006 and he resigned on 15 April 2010. The post has remained vacant since.

The qualifications and terms and conditions of employment of the different Chairmen are as follows –

Chairman					
Name	Qualifications	Terms and Conditions of Employment			Remarks
		Period	Monthly Remuneration (Rs)	Monthly Allowances (Rs)	
Mr Robert Valentino Palamy	HSC, BSc (Hons) Economics (L.S.E.)	August 2006- March 2007	3,000		Nil
		April 2007- August 2008	25,00 0		
Mr Ramalingum Maistry	SC, GCI, Certificate in Journalism and Finance, Diploma in Public Relations and Accounting	September 2008-January 2009	25,00 0	7,000	Nil
		January 2009- May 2009	25,00 0		
Mr Jayprakash Roshansingh	Diploma in Human Resource Management (MEF, Mauritius in collaboration with Surrey University, 2002)	June 2009-April 2010	25,00 0	7,000	Mr Roshan Seetohul decided that as from May 2010, he will not take benefit of neither
		May 2010 to date	Nil	Nil	

					his remuneration nor allowances for the time being.
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The qualifications and terms and conditions of employment of the General Manager are as follows -

General Manager					
Name	Qualifications	Terms and Conditions of Employment			Remarks
		Period	Monthly Remuneration (Rs)	Monthly Allowances (Rs)	
Mr Thierry Henry	Diploma in Sales & Marketing Management	July 2006- December 2008	17,500	Nil	Mr Thierry Henry was also entitled to a 4x2 van and a shell card with a limit of Rs 15,000 monthly.
		January 2009-June 2009	17,500	2,500	
		July 2009- March 2010	30,000	2,500	

In regard to part (b)(i), grants received from the Tourism Fund -

Period	Amount (Rs)	Purpose
Year 2008	15,000,000	(I) Embellishment program around the island (II) Uplifting and upgrading works at La Citadel

June 2009-July 2010	1,934,660.70	Uplifting and upgrading works at La Citadel
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(ii) DML received no sponsorship since its incorporation to-date from the private sector.

In regard to part (c), names of Legal Advisers and Auditors and Fees paid -

Name	Designation	Fees paid (Rs)	Period	Purpose
Mr R. Bucktownsing	Legal Adviser	126,500	2008-2010	Drafting of Lease Agreements
Baker Tilly (Mauritius) Ltd	Auditor	150,650	2006-2010	Preparation of Financial Statements and VAT and PAYE returns

As regards part (d), I am informed that neither the Chairmen nor any official of the company went on mission since its incorporation to date.

IPPs - FLY ASH - TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

(No. 1A/92) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Technical Advisory Committees, set up to look into the means of disposal of fly ash as a result of the use of coal for power generation, he will –

- (a) table a copy of the reports thereof, and
- (b) state the remedial measures his Ministry proposes to take to monitor the Independent Power Producers.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, a copy of the report is being tabled.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) are being and will be monitored as follows –

- (i) a steering committee on coal ash management comprising all the organisations that formed part of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been set up under the lead of my Ministry to look into and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the TAC;
- (ii) through the enforcement of the Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Audit) Regulations 2008. The IPPs are required to -

- undertake a waste audit, i.e make an account of the waste generated and keep a record of the origin, composition, quantity and disposal route of such waste;
- submit an IWA report and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) stating the measures that will be taken to mitigate adverse environmental impacts, and
- an inter-ministerial Monitoring Committee set up under the aegis of my Ministry to oversee the enforcement of the above regulation, is following the situation closely to ensure that the IPPs abide by the above requirements.

(iii) In view of the risk of pollution and other environmental nuisances that may be caused by disposal of fly and bottom ash and in line with the recommendations made by the TAC, my Ministry has already requested the IPPs to carry out characterisation of coal ash, leachability tests and submit a report thereon. They have also been requested to observe a 200 metres set back distance between coal ash application sites and water bodies including boreholes.

STANLEY AND ROSE HILL - INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. 1A/93) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects for the construction/repairs of roads, drains and infrastructure in Constituency No.19, Stanley and Rose Hill, for the year 2010, he will -

- (a) table a list thereof, and
- (b) state the number of contracts awarded therefor, indicating the amount of money spent as at to date.

Reply: The information sought is as follows -

(A) The list of projects as regards the construction/repairs of roads, drains and infrastructure in constituency No. 19 are as follows -

1. Resurfacing of road at Lane Off, Sir Virgil Naz, Rose Hill
2. Construction and tarring of lanes at:-

- (a) Seenundun lane (lane off Corps de Garde)
- (b) Lane at Village de la Montagne at Camp Levieux
- (c) Lane Off St Anne, Stanley
- (d) Lane Off Robert Edward Hart Street

3. Construction of absorption drain at -

- (a) Alphonc Street, Camp Levieux
- (b) Wellington Street

4. Other infrastructural projects –

- (a) Construction of synthetic tract at Sir Gaetan Duval Stadium
- (b) Extension of building for library/administration in Town Hall Yard
- (c) Construction of a Tennis Court at Plaisance
- (d) Construction of an Ecole de Boxe. Plaisance
- (e) Construction of Toilets in Town Centre
- (f) Construction of a building with Metal Structure for Fancy goods at Plaisance Fair
- (g) Conversion of first floor at Plaisance Fair into a Wedding Hall/Reception Hall
- (h) Waterproofing of Mare Gravier, Plaisance & Camp Levieux Pre-Primary Schools
- (i) Replacement of drain Covers and pavements within town centre at Inkerman around Rose Hill Market
- (j) Boulodrome at Bam Cuttayen Leisure Park
- (k) Construction of Drains at Village de la Montagne, Roche Brunes
- (l) Drain at Ireline Street, Stanely
- (m) Drain at Sister Marie Clemence (From Hugnin at Maxime Remy Avenue) Rose Hill

(B) A total of 9 contracts have been awarded and an amount of Rs38,484,662.28 has been spent as at date. The other projects are being implemented in house.

The Road Development Authority has not been able to undertake any roadwork on classified roads in Constituency No 19 due to the major excavation works which are being

undertaken by the Wastewater Management Authority for the laying of sewer pipes. Once the sewerage works are completed, the Road Development Authority will start implementation of the road works.

BARE LANDS - ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE

(No. 1A/94) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to bare lands causing environmental nuisance, he will state the actions initiated against the owners, giving details of the number of -

- (a) warnings issued, and
- (b) cases prosecuted.

Reply: Information is being sought from the relevant enforcing agencies, namely the local authorities and the Police (including *Police de l'Environment*) and will be tabled.

PALMA ROAD, QUATRE BORNES - SPEED BREAKERS

(No. 1A/95) 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 speed breakers along the Palma Road, Quatre Bornes, he will state if he has received a petition, dated 09 April 2009, from the inhabitants of the region and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that have been taken in connection therewith.

Reply: My Ministry received a petition letter dated 09 April 2009 from the inhabitants of Palma Road. Subsequently, TMRSU was requested to look into and it has informed that after several site visits the following have been observed -

- (i) the speed calming devices are very visible from long distances;
- (ii) the 20 mm thickness of the rails is very effective to slow down vehicles and any decrease thereto will mitigate the effectiveness of the device;
- (iii) vehicles are slowing down at speeds similar to the traditional asphaltic road humps without having to stop;

- (iv) the devices do not show any problems onto the suspensions of vehicles;
- (v) some drivers, purposely do not slow down and therefore bear strong vibrations, and
- (vi) the speeds of heavy vehicles are also decreased except in cases of some individual buses, the drivers of which drive carelessly and at high speeds with the intention to defy the purpose of the rails. Under the circumstances, these buses are subject to high vibrations which are passed on to the passengers. This applies to some car users as well.

In order to render the devices more practical, the two sides of the rails have been chamfered, i.e. provided with mild slopes, so that the wheels of vehicles are smoothly driven over the rails.

As requested the Police are effecting regular speed checks for more enforcement.

CHEMIN GRENIER - SILVER COIN CLUB - COMPLAINT

(No. 1A/96) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the casino, Silver Coin Club at Royal Road, Chemin Grenier, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to if a complaint in relation thereto, dated 22 January 2010, has been lodged with the Council and, if so, indicate if any decision has been taken.

Reply: I am informed that the Grand Port-Savanne District Council has received no complaint dated 22 January 2010.

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - LORD MAYOR'S FUND -BENEFICIARIES

(No.1A/97) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Lord Mayor's Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, a breakdown thereof, since October 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case the –

- (a) names of the beneficiaries;
- (b) quantum thereof, and

- (c) purpose therefor.

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.

KAYA MUNICIPAL STADIUM - AMENITIES

(No. 1A/98) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Kaya Municipal Stadium in Cité Roche Bois, he will state if he is aware of –

- (a) its bad state, and
- (b) absence of –
 - (i) cloakroom;
 - (ii) lighting facilities, and
- (iii) terraces and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the Reginald Topize (Kaya) Municipal Stadium at *Cité* Roche Bois is not in a bad state, but needs to be partly levelled.

I am informed that the stadium is already provided with a cloakroom and flood lights which are operational.

I am also informed that the Council has earmarked the amount of Rs1.2 m. for the construction of terraces/tier of seats. Quotations will be invited next week and the Municipality expects work to start in about five weeks' time.

REGIS CHAPERON SSS - HAZARDS

(No. 1A/99) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Regis Chaperon State Secondary School at Belle Rose, he will state if he is aware of -

- (a) the hazards relating to electricity supply;
- (b) the defects in concrete rendering in a number of classrooms;

- (c) irregular cleaning, and
- (d) inadequate security services and, if so, the remedial measures that will be taken, if any, indicating the timeframe therefor.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, there were problems of hazards relating to the electricity supply at Dr. Regis Chaperon SSS. In view of the damaged sockets and switches resulting from acts of vandalism at the school, necessary measures were taken by the Ministry to disconnect the power supply.

The whole review of the electrical system of the school is incorporated in the major rehabilitation/extension works to be carried out at the school. According to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, the tender documents will be finalized by October 2010 and with this implementation schedule, works are expected to start early next year, should everything proceed smoothly.

As regards part (b) of the question, given the old state of the school building, problems pertaining to defects of the concrete rendering, cracks and spalling in some classrooms have been reported. With the view to remedying the situation, major rehabilitation and extension works will be undertaken. These will include the following -

- (i) construction of a new science block;
- (ii) construction of a new toilet block;
- (iii) waterproofing works;
- (iv) review of the whole electrical system;
- (v) replacement of damaged naco frames;
- (vi) conversion of the existing laboratories into classrooms;
- (vii) provision of new ramps for the disabled;
- (viii) provision for a parking area;
- (ix) renovation works to existing blocks including remedial works to any spalled concrete and cracks; and
- (x) provision of cover to existing storm drains.

Works are expected to start early next year, should everything proceed smoothly.

As for part (c), it is to be pointed out that the cleaning of premises of State Primary and Secondary Schools is normally contracted out by this Ministry. In this context, the Ministry has

recently awarded the contract to Contractor Service Maison Ltée. The Contractor, however, has failed to provide full service to all schools with the consequence that cleaning of school premises has not been properly undertaken in several schools, including Dr. Regis Chaperon State Secondary School.

This Ministry is following up the issue very closely with the Contractor. As a result of this monitoring, the school has now been cleaned to the complete satisfaction of the School Administration. In the meantime, Heads of Schools have been advised to have recourse to day-to-day non contractual labour for services not provided by the Contractor and recoup the expenditure from the payment due to him.

As regards part (d), Security Services in Schools are also contracted out by this Ministry and a contract has just been awarded to RSL Security Services Ltd for that purpose. The performance of the Contractor is being monitored by the Ministry and no adverse report has been received to date on the services provided by him.

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS – FOOTBALL TEAMS – FACILITIES

(No.1A/100) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football teams of Port Louis playing for the First Division Football League, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the facilities, if any, granted thereto and, if so, give the names thereof which have received financial assistance over the last five years, indicating the quantum thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis as follows –

- (i) since financial year 2004/2005 to date, ASPL 2000, being a first Division football team has been receiving an annual grant of Rs500,000;
- (ii) since financial year 2005/2006 to date, Pointe aux Sables Mates which was promoted to First Division has been receiving an annual grant of Rs500,000;
- (iii) during financial year 2004/2005, Pointe aux Sables Mates was receiving an annual grant of Rs200,000 as it was a Second Division football team, and
- (iv) as regards other facilities, these teams have been provided with football grounds for training sessions.