

No. 37 of 2009



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FOURTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
MONDAY 07 DECEMBER 2009**

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MAURITIUS
Fourth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 37 of 2009
Sitting of Monday 07 December 2009
The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,
at 10.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played
(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

The Annual Report of the Civil Status Division for the year 2007.

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment –

- (a) The Digest of Road Transport and Road Accident Statistics 2008.
- (b) The Loan Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the Infrastructure Project
(In original).

- (c) The Loan Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the Fourth Trade and Competitiveness Development Policy (In original).
- (d) The Customs Tariff Act (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No. 149 of 2009).
- (e) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No. 150 of 2009).

C. Ministry of of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping –

The Annual Report of the Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund from November 2003 to June 2006 (In original).

D. Ministry of Business, Enterprise & Cooperatives –

The Annual Report 2007-2008 of the State Trading Corporation.

E. Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter

—

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 12) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No. 90 of 2009).
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 25) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No. 152 of 2009).

F. Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms —

- (a) The Civil Establishment Order 2009 (Government Notice No. 148 of 2009).

(b) The Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2009 (Government Notice (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) No. 4 of 2009).

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O.10 (2)

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

Mr X. L. Duval rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

*Second Reading***THE APPROPRIATION (2010) BILL
(NO. XXI OF 2009)**

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2009)

Question again proposed

(10.36 a.m)

Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka): M. le président, le 18 novembre dernier, pour la septième fois depuis le fameux ‘*setting the stage for a robust growth*’ en août 2005 jusqu’au budget de 2010, en passant par l’*Additional Stimulus Package*, la population a eu droit à la même rhétorique, à la même rengaine, les mêmes effets d’annonce, les mêmes mesures archi-répétées et, finalement, le même vin servi dans une bouteille différente à chaque fois, à tel point que l’honorable ministre des finances a dû concéder dans une récente *interview* accordée mardi le 24 novembre qu’il n’y a pas de

nouvelles mesures dans le budget. C'est tout dire mais, malheureusement, le bluff continue.

Le peuple mauricien a été emporté délibérément dans un tourbillon de chiffres manipulés, d'arnaque prémeditées en guise d'apparente mesures sociales et il y a eu les fonds mirobolants portant sur un sensationnalisme rêveur et le tout destiné à faire croire que la politique économique du ministre des finances et du gouvernement vise le bien-être de la population.

Les faits sont là, M. le président, pour prouver que la duperie systématique a fini par traumatiser la population et à entraîner le peuple dans la spirale infernale de la pauvreté et du surendettement et les chiffres du Bureau Central des Statistiques sont là pour le prouver. C'est jouer à la provocation et insulter nos compatriotes quand le ministre des finances vient dire que les Mauriciens vivent mieux aujourd'hui grâce à ces mesures qui ont été prises au niveau économique du pays. Je ne ferai pas de commentaire – peut-être il y a ceux qui applaudissent par hypocrisie, peut-être il y a aussi des complices - mais je pense que cette philosophie de libéralisme économique qu'a adoptée le ministre des finances a été cruelle pour la population mais, bien sûr, il y a certains, le gros capital, qui se réjouissent. Et là je dirais que *history, maybe, is repeating itself.* Dommage que le Premier ministre n'est pas là - j'espère que là où il est, il va m'entendre - parce que je me réfère à l'époque quand le Premier Ministre, qui était Leader de l'Opposition,

avait dans son discours sur le budget 94/95 ceci à dire. Je ne vais pas citer de longs extraits, mais seulement une phrase and I quote –

«He surprised me (en parlant du ministre des finances) in his Budget Speech, knowing his background, as I have said, by his decision to stand firmly behind big capital. »

Et c'est pourquoi je dis que l'histoire se répète, parce que pendant les quatre ans, de ce côté de la Chambre, on a toujours dit que, malheureusement, *the Minister of Finance is looking in one direction only*. Et depuis la présentation du budget 2006/2007, nous avons toujours exprimé notre opposition à la politique économique qui a été adoptée. Je l'ai fait, nous l'avons fait ici, pas par démagogie, mais surtout en tant qu'homme politique, en tant que parti politique et en tant que citoyen averti de la chose économique. Je dis bien citoyen averti. Je ne veux pas citer d'autres extraits du Leader de l'opposition à l'époque, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui parlait du savoir faire du ministre des Finances. Mon ami, l'honorable Sunil Dowarkasing, a amplement parlé là-dessus si je me souviens; il avait même dit : *'a unique economist'*. Je ne vais pas entrer dans d'autres détails parce que même dans l'opposition, il y avait certains qui étaient d'accord avec les *fundamentals* du ministre des Finances, mais j'avais mis en garde la population contre le déclin social qu'allait provoquer cette orientation économique qui a été privilégiée par le ministre des finances. Et j'avais dit que les pauvres deviendront plus pauvres et les riches deviendront

encore plus riches. Le temps m'a donné raison et le peuple réalise que j'avais raison sur toute la ligne. Je vais dire *again history is repeating itself* et je vais citer encore une fois un extrait de l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qui disait sur le même budget à l'époque and I quote –

«He is speaking too early. I know it hurts but the truth comes (..)I went on to say that it is clear that he intends to do everything to make the rich richer and the poor poorer”.

That is why I say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that history is repeating itself.

M. le président, après ce constat sommaire, je m'en tiendrai aux faits et aux chiffres pour démontrer que le ministre des finances a failli tant au niveau des ses objectifs économiques qu'au niveau des ses prétentions d'ordre social. Je vais également démontrer comment il a tout mis en œuvre pour servir les intérêts des possédants. Prenons le social en premier puisque le ministre des finances déclare avoir réalisé des exploits et voyons ce qui s'est réellement passé. Dans son discours du budget de 2006-2007, le ministre des finances annonçait en grande pompe la mise en place d'un *Empowerment Programme* de R5 milliards sur une période de cinq ans. Il annonçait que *l'Empowerment Programme* allait, and I quote –

“address the issue of housing for families with modest income. To this end, it will acquire around 2000 to 3000 arpents of land across the country near existing agglomerations, part of the land will be developed into

service housing lots of 50 to 60 toises to be sold at affordable costs after infrastructure development and in this new scheme, landless families earning less than Rs8500 a month will become owners of these service lots on a cost recovery basis.”

M. le président, depuis juin 2006 à décembre 2009, 42 longs mois ce sont presque écoulés. *L'Empowerment Programme*, en attendant, est devenu le *National Empowerment Foundation* à partir du Budget 2008-2009 et n'a toujours pas adressé le problème du logement social pour les familles à modeste revenu. Où sont passés les 2000 à 3000 arpents de terres promises? C'est pourquoi j'ai parlé d'arnaque prémedité au début de mon intervention. Que voyons-nous maintenant dans le budget 2010? Le ministre des finances revient cette fois avec un *National Housing Programme* pour la construction de logements sociaux. C'est pratiquement la même chose qui avait été annoncée en juin 2008. Le ministre parle de la construction de 10,000 logements sociaux et le développement de 2500 *service plots* sur 1000 arpents de terre que l'État compte recevoir des établissements sucriers. Il ne dit pas où sont situées ces fameuses terres. Il ne dit pas combien de temps cela prendra pour réaliser le programme mais, dans la phrase suivante, il mentionne la construction en 2010 de seulement *600 core houses of 38 square metres* et reste à savoir si cet objectif sera réalisé avant les prochaines élections générales. La tactique est simple, M. le président, comme toujours, je

dis, impressionner à travers des annonces grandioses et des sommes mirobolantes. Quant aux réalisations comme je dis il n'y a pas grand-chose. Si je m'en tiens à une réponse du ministre du logement et des terres, seulement 198 unités de logements sociaux ont été construites sous la tutelle de *National Empowerment Foundation*, notamment le projet de La Valette à Bambous et d'après les chiffres qui ont été donnés à cette Chambre une somme de R200 millions a été déboursée. Mais selon la réponse que j'ai lu avec attention, on ne sait même pas la contribution qu'a fait le *Medine Sugar Estate*, mais passons ! Donc les faits et les chiffres sont là pour démontrer l'ampleur de l'échec en ce qu'il s'agit des logements sociaux. Le ministre des finances le reconnaît quand il a déclaré lors d'une interview de presse que nous allons construire des maisons pour les pauvres. Ce qui implique clairement que tel n'a pas été le cas ; tel, en tout cas, n'a pas été suffisamment le cas au courant des ces dernières années.

L'insatisfaction, je dirais, M le président, est de mise chez les familles à qui le ministre de finances avait promis monts et merveilles. Faute de logement à proprement parler, les Mauriciens au bas de l'échelle s'attendaient au moins à une augmentation concernant le montant alloué sous le *Casting of Slabs Scheme*. D'autant plus que les frais des matières premières, je prends le ciment qui a augmenté de 65%, le prix des fers de construction de 50%. Il n'en a rien été et c'est une déception. Pour les besoins de comparaison - parce qu'un certain

nombre d'intervenants ainsi que le ministre des finances ont fait référence à la période 2000-2005 pour dire que rien n'a été fait auparavant – je voudrais donner quelques chiffres, mentionner comment le précédent gouvernement avait investi R 4.4 milliards dans le *social housing* ; des *housing grants*, comprenant la construction de 5,000 logements sociaux, 3,000 unités, sur une dizaine de sites, destinées aux familles à très faible et faible revenu, et 2,000 unités à l'intention des *lower middle class*. En plus, 300 lots de terrains ont été distribués sous le *sites and services scheme*. En sus, pas moins de R 740 millions déboursées pour aider 21,500 familles à couler la dalle de leur maison. Ce sont des réalisations. On peut dire que ce n'était pas suffisant ; j'accepte l'argument. On peut dire qu'on n'a pas fait assez, et que ce gouvernement et le ministre des finances allaient donner plus de moyens. Tant mieux ! Mais, quand on compare, on voit que la comparaison fait mal. En ce qu'il s'agit des maisonnettes de la CHA, il est bon de mettre les choses en perspective. Il ne faut pas oublier, qu'à l'époque de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, ces gens sont devenus propriétaires de leurs maisons pour la modique somme de R 500. Et, c'est vrai que le bail sur ces terrains était toujours un problème, parce que je sais qu'à chaque fois ils ont demandé à devenir propriétaires. Je félicite le gouvernement et, d'ailleurs, de ce côté de la Chambre, on reconnaît l'effort qui a été fait. Je ne veux pas citer un ministre en particulier, mais on sait que l'*Attorney General*, l'honorable Rama Valayden, a été à

l'avant-plan ; au nom du gouvernement, il a travaillé avec le SLO pour que ces habitants puissent devenir propriétaires du terrain également. Cependant, force est de constater que, sur 19,000 personnes concernées, 2,000 sont déjà propriétaires. Tant mieux ! Je sais que le gouvernement est en train de faire l'effort nécessaire pour que les autres puissent devenir propriétaires.

Prenons maintenant l'*Eradication of Poverty Programme*, également annoncé en grande fanfare dans le budget 2008-2009, après que le ministre des finances ait constaté que lui-même, à travers sa politique, a mené certaines familles vers ce qu'il a qualifié d'*absolute poverty*. Le ministre quantifiait le nombre de familles – et je cite ses propres mots – *living in extreme poverty* à 7,157, réparties dans 229 régions défavorisées. A cette époque, il avait alloué R 395 millions sous ce programme. Or, quel est le bilan à ce jour ? Seulement 291 familles auraient bénéficié selon le ministre, soit à peine 4% des familles concernées. Et la somme déboursée à mai 2009 s'élève à R 65 millions, et je me base sur la réponse à la question parlementaire B/490, en date du 26 mai 2009. Je cite les faits qui ont été avancés par le gouvernement. Et, pour la période juillet à décembre 2009, la somme budgétisée était de R 73 millions. Encore faut-il que les chiffres qui ont été avancés soient corrects ! Encore une fois, M. le président, on a eu droit, je dirai, à de belles littératures, mais, en fin de compte, c'est un bilan d'échec. La pauvreté s'accentue dans le pays, et les chiffres du CSO le confirment.

En face de cet échec, que vient proposer le ministre ? Un *Poverty Observatory* ! Maintenant, il nous faut un observatoire pour veiller, observer, *scrutinise poverty*. Ce n'est pas comme ça qu'on va régler le problème. Il faut des actions concrètes, coordonnées, courageuses et audacieuses. Bien sûr, il faut aussi une volonté politique. Il nous faut aussi revoir le seuil de pauvreté, pour qu'il reflète les réalités du pays. Il nous faut reconnaître qu'il y a des milliers de familles, comme l'a constaté le ministre, qui sont, aujourd'hui, dans l'*absolute poverty*. C'est face à l'ampleur de ce problème que nous avons fait une proposition pour qu'il y ait un mécanisme, afin que ces familles puissent au moins acheter des aliments essentiels – et je dis bien ‘les aliments essentiels’ – à meilleur marché. Mais, M. le président, encore une fois, permettez-moi de faire la comparaison que, sous l'ancien gouvernement, outre les R 4.4 milliards investies dans le *social housing*, plus de R 800 millions avaient été déboursées par le *Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups* et sous le programme de ‘*A nou diboute ensam*’. Programmes qui étaient, à l'époque, très critiqués par certains du gouvernement. Passons là-dessus ! Mais, ces programmes avaient quand même soulagé un certain nombre de familles, et le peuple, surtout les plus pauvres qui ont bénéficié. Il y a aussi le *social aid*, dont le montant avait considérablement augmenté pour atteindre les R 300 millions. Alors, lorsque le ministre vient nous dire, qu'entre 2000 et 2005, rien n'a été

fait pour combattre la pauvreté, je dirai simplement que c'est de la démagogie.

Le ministre des finances, M. le président, ose parler de justice sociale. Or, nous savons que l'instrument par excellence de justice sociale, à savoir les tripartites, ont été abolies pour faire la place au *National Pay Council*. Pendant quatre ans, les travailleurs ont été privés de compensation salariale adéquate ; le ministre s'est toujours caché derrière le NPC et, durant les trois années de soi-disant *Robust Growth*, les appels de détresse des travailleurs ont été ignorés, alors que l'inflation atteignait le taux record de 10,7%, suivant la dépréciation massive de la roupie et une politique fiscale envahissante. Le ministre et le gouvernement sont restés de marbre, et le patronat a économisé de plus de R 3 milliards sur la compensation salariale. C'est cela que nous n'arrivons pas à comprendre ; ce que le ministre avait qualifié à l'époque de situation économique, avec le *early harvest*, le *bumper crop*. Quand il y a *early harvest*, *bumper crop*, on s'attend à ce que l'île Maurice récolte de ce *early harvest*, de ce *bumper crop*, et non pas une poignée de personnes seulement. Et, c'est là, la contradiction, la provocation même, je dirai ! Mais, quand on comptabilise l'inflation cumulative de juin 2006 à juin 2009, 32% ! Les travailleurs ont à peine obtenu 15% de compensation salariale en moyenne. Et ils ont été privés de 17% de compensation pour la perte de pouvoir d'achat déjà encourue. C'est l'une des raisons pour laquelle une grande majorité des Mauriciens

n'arrivent pas à joindre les deux bouts et le ministre parle de *policy decision* concernant les 3.5% qui ont été alloués et qu'on a fait un grand pas pour accorder à ceux qui touchent jusqu'à R12,000 par mois à partir de janvier 2010. Certainement, le gouvernement a, non seulement, la possibilité, mais je pense que dans le contexte actuel, il a le droit de prendre des *policy decisions*. Je ne conteste pas cela. Mais la question que je me pose est la suivante : Pourquoi n'y a-t-il pas eu de *policy decision* similaire quand l'inflation était au plus haut niveau et que les travailleurs avaient grandement besoin d'une bouffée d'oxygène ? Pourquoi le ministre s'est toujours caché derrière le NPC ? Je laisse le soin aux travailleurs de ce pays de tirer leur propre conclusion. Que vaudra cette compensation salariale de 3.5% quand on constate que les prix ont grandement augmenté. Mon collègue avait cité certains prix qui ont augmenté de 12%, 15%, 20%, 30%. Il y a certains qui ont augmenté de 100%. Ne prenons pas le prix du sucre car cela c'est une autre affaire ! Mais, avec l'APM, le prix de l'essence qui a augmenté.

(Interruptions)

J'entends le ministre réagir. La façon d'agir de l'APM a été discréditée et l'intervention qui a eu lieu au niveau de l'APM et le NPC aussi a été discréditée. Donc, je maintiens, M. le président, qu'il fallait corriger l'injustice vécue par les travailleurs depuis 2006 et qu'il fallait octroyer une compensation salariale raisonnable. Les 3.5% représentent à peine 1% de ce que les travailleurs ont perdu durant les quatre

dernières années et pour un dernier budget, je dis que le gouvernement a raté une occasion pour répondre aux attentes des travailleurs.

Je constate par ailleurs que le ministre des finances, maintenant, après avoir créé le NPC, après s'être caché derrière le NPC et après avoir dit que c'est le NPC qui décide et qu'il ne va pas intervenir, il a intervenu et il dit que c'est une *policy decision*. Maintenant, il vient dire qu'il va mettre sur pied le comité tripartite pour discuter de la compensation salariale à l'avenir. Bien que je doute de sa sincérité, mais passons là-dessus ! M. le président, le ministre des finances, il y a quelques semaines de cela, a répondu ici dans cette Chambre à une question posée par le *Leader* de l'opposition sur la compensation salariale. Il avait qualifié d'irresponsable de revenir à un mécanisme de tripartite. Là, je voudrais attirer l'attention car peut-être qu'il y a certains membres de la Chambre qui n'ont même pas lu ce que le ministre a dit dans la presse à l'effet qu'il a demandé aux syndicalistes d'ignorer sa réponse à la PNQ concernant les tripartites. Ignorer ! Il vient à la Chambre, il répond que ce serait irresponsable! *There is at least consistency in what he says* parce qu'il a créé le NPC, à chaque fois il a dit que c'est le NPC qui décide, et il dit que ce serait irresponsable de venir *back to tripartite*. Maintenant, il parle aux syndicalistes et leur dit : 'ce que j'ai dit à la Chambre, cela ne compte pas. Maintenant on va revenir au tripartisme'. Mais, M. le président, je conclus qu'on est en train d'induire le Parlement en erreur. Pourra-t-on faire confiance au

ministre sur ce qu'il va dire dans cette Chambre ? Quelle est la crédibilité quand on tient un langage dans la Chambre et quand on va dire dehors ‘d’ignorer ma réponse ici’ ? J’espère que le ministre va clarifier cela tout à l’heure et qu’il va nous expliquer comment cela s’est passé. Mais je trouve cela franchement incroyable et je voudrais attirer également l’attention sur le fait que dans son discours du budget - cela aussi est incroyable - le ministre s’approprie à trois reprises la décision d’accorder la compensation salariale de 3.5% quand il dit ‘I’, ‘I’ et ‘I’. Mais quand il y a des mesures qui sont contestées, c’est ‘*Government*’ , ‘*Government*’ et ‘*Government*’ , c’est l’ensemble du gouvernement qui prend la décision, mais quand il y a quelque chose qui paraît favorable, c’est lui. Mais, encore une fois, pour le besoin de la comparaison, je dis que je suis fier, M. le président, j’étais le ministre des finances en 2004-2005 et je suis fière que j’ai présidé au comité tripartite et qu’on avait donné à cette époque - je ne dis pas ‘moi’, mais je dis qu’à cette époque c’était le ‘*Government of the day*’ qui avait accordé - des compensations salariales supérieures aux taux d’inflation *and this will stay on record*.

(Interruptions)

Je vais venir à l’état d’urgence tout à l’heure. Ayez la patience !

Au début de mon intervention j’avais parlé de fonds mirobolants, portant des noms ronflants, mis sur pied depuis 2008 avec un goût de sensationnalisme pour impressionner et pour faire rêver. Ces fonds, je l’ai souvent dit, M. le président, avaient été créés avec deux objectifs.

Premièrement, pour masquer l'échec sur le *capital investment* et deuxièmement manipuler le déficit budgétaire. Effectivement, le ministre a fait rêver pendant un certain temps la population qu'il y aurait un certain nombre de projets qui allait être financés par ces fonds. Je sais que le ministre Bachoo nous a donné une liste de projets qu'on est en train d'activer pour la dernière année, il faut faire vite. Tant mieux si on peut réaliser ces projets compte tenu du fait que pendant les quatre ans on n'a pas pu réaliser beaucoup de ces projets qui ont été annoncés. Je vais vous donner les chiffres pour démontrer à quel point on est resté en attente. Le ministre des finances lui-même à une question que j'avais posé avait dit que R 8.4 milliards avaient été allouées aux six fonds qui ont été répétés à plusieurs reprises dans la Chambre et que le déboursement s'est élevé à seulement R 1.3 milliards. Sur R 8.4milliards on a dépensé R 1.3 milliards pour des projets d'infrastructures publiques. La plupart de ces projets –je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails pour citer car mes collègues l'ont fait - sont revenus chaque année et pour illustrer l'ampleur de ce bluff je prendrai un exemple qui est flagrant et révélateur : le *Food Security Fund* initialement d'un R 1 milliard. Lorsque j'ai demandé au ministre combien on a dépensé - je ne dit pas combien on a *earmarked*, par exemple, on peut *earmarked* un milliard de roupies – il a dit R 27 millions, M. le président. Quand le ministre a réalisé son échec, il vient avec d'autres fonds et il commence à faire du *ring fencing* comme il le dit dans son budget - *ring fencing*

pour les programmes sur le *Food Security Fund* et sur le *Social Housing Fund*. On est en train de faire des *coustiques*. Concernant les PMEs, je ne prendrais pas le temps de la Chambre pour aller dans les détails parce qu'on vient de débattre le *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority Bill* où j'avais pris la parole et j'avais fait certaines critiques. Donc, j'avais fait certaines critiques, que rien n'a changé depuis. Les mesures budgétaires annoncées sont *more of the same thing* et la plupart des mesures annoncées depuis 2006 sont restées lettre morte, sauf une mesure, *Business Registration*. On fait enregistrer les personnes qui ont l'intention de commencer, que ce soit un petit ou grand business, et ces gens-là, maintenant, ils savent qu'après avoir été enregistrés par le *Business Registration*, il va y avoir la MRA. En fait, la MRA est la première institution qui vient vous voir. On n'a même pas commencé à faire le business, c'est le *tax trap* comme on dit. Et là, le ministre, à chaque fois, donne la perception qu'avec le *Stimulus Package*, on est en train d'aider les PMEs quand tel n'est pas le cas. Ce n'est pas vrai, M. le président. D'après la définition des PMEs, il n'y a aucun PME qui a bénéficié du *Stimulus Package*. J'espère que le ministre va nous donner les détails. Donnez-nous les détails d'après votre définition de PME et dites-nous le nombre de PMEs qui ont bénéficié. A tel point, que le président de la fédération des PMEs, M. Amar Deerpalsing – je ne vais pas répéter encore une fois ce qu'il a dit – a exprimé sa frustration. La déception en tout cas est à son comble, d'autant plus que le ministre des

finances, peut-être, - je dis peut-être – aurait pu revoir le régime fiscal. Mais nous, en tout cas, on a fait une proposition dans ce sens.

M. le président, mention a été faite dans le discours du budget, au chapitre des *social achievements* du gouvernement, à l'effet que 8,000 places additionnelles seront disponibles au niveau tertiaire. Là aussi on attend. J'espère que le ministre va nous dire où sont ces 8,000 places qui sont disponibles. M. le président, j'ai pris ces quelques exemples parmi tant d'autres pour démontrer, encore une fois, comment le gouvernement a failli. Il y a déception, comme j'ai dit sur le logement social, sur le combat contre la pauvreté, sur la compensation salariale, sur les projets d'infrastructures publiques et surtout sur les mesures qui ont été répétées régulièrement.

Donc, il n'y a pas eu de partage de richesse, contrairement à ce qu'a dit le ministre. La compensation salariale de 3.5 %, bien qu'insuffisante, est un dû et non pas une faveur, et encore moins un quelconque partage.

Le *Stimulus Package* de R 14 milliards a été maintenu en faveur du secteur privé. Le ministre des finances, bien sûr, vient nous dire que 30% est destiné directement aux entreprises, soit environ R 4 milliards. Admettons, bien que nous sachions que les investissements dans les infrastructures économiques profiteront avant tout aux opérateurs économiques. Mais, d'un côté on peut trouver que R 4 milliards est réservé, donc, pour parer aux besoins du secteur privé. Et là, une somme

de plus de R 100 millions vient d'être accordée à une entreprise qui a commencé à sombrer financièrement, non pas en raison des séquelles de la crise mais, je dirai, plutôt, que c'est pour cause d'une mauvaise gestion. Alors que tout cela est possible, M. le président, le ministre des finances n'a pas trouvé les moyens d'accorder R 100 millions pour rétablir les subsides de 50% sur les frais des examens pour la *SC* et la *HSC* pour tous nos étudiants. Et je dis quelle injustice ! Comment le gouvernement peut justifier cela ? Et pourquoi ? Attendez-vous à ce que la population comprenne, d'un côté, ce qu'on est en train de faire pour ceux qui sont les plus forts et, de l'autre côté, pour ceux qui sont les plus vulnérables, qui sont les plus dans le besoin. On est en train de dire R 100 millions, non, on ne peut pas, on va faire des dépenses excessives. En tout cas, les Mauriciens prennent bonne note. Peut-être que je peux rappeler aux membres du gouvernement qu'il y avait un engagement qui avait été pris le 1^{er} mai 2005. C'était un engagement de l'Alliance Sociale que vous alliez garder les subsides de 50%, qui seraient maintenues pour tous les étudiants. Mais cela n'a pas été réalisé. M. le président, je ne sais pas si c'est un *oversight* de la part du ministre, mais je m'attendais à ce que le ministre de l'Education, peut-être, allait nous donner des clarifications. Parce que certains parents sont venus me voir pour me dire : « Nous, on touche jusqu'à R 10,000 comme salaire. Mais qu'est-ce qui est advenu de ces subventions entre R 8,500 jusqu'à R 10,000 ? » On n'a rien dit à ce sujet dans le budget. On n'a parlé que de

R 7,500 et qu'on va augmenter à R 8,500. *Fair enough !* Mais R 8,500, cela va arrêter à R 10,000? Pourquoi on n'augmente pas les R 10,000 aussi ? Rien n'a été dit. Est-ce que cela va être aboli ? J'espère que le ministre des finances va nous donner des éclaircissements dans son *summing-up*.

M. le président, une chose qui nous tenons beaucoup à cœur au MSM, c'est cette question de subsides ...

(Interruptions)

Eux aussi, enfin beaucoup d'entre eux! Tant mieux ! Mais, M. le président, on parle de l'éducation comme l'outil pour combattre la pauvreté. Je suis entièrement d'accord. On est tous d'accord là-dessus. Donc, il faut donner tous les moyens possibles à nos jeunes pour qu'ils puissent avoir l'opportunité de parcourir leur chemin aussi loin que possible. Et comment on le fait ? C'est bien de créer. On est en train de créer 8,000 places à l'université. Tant mieux ! Mais il faut passer le cap, il faut avoir un *SC* et un *HSC* pour avoir accès à l'université. Donc, lorsque je regarde les chiffres, M. le président, je dis que c'est un crime, car à R 8,500, vous aurez droit à 100% de subsides. Si je prends une famille pauvre, allons dire un père qui travaille dans l'industrie sucrière comme laboureur. Son salaire est de R 5,870.80 par mois. Allons dire que s'il y a de la chance dans la famille, que la maman travaille aussi dans le *EPZ Sector*, elle touche R 3,220.53. Cela vous fait un total de R 9091.33. Cette famille, allons dire qu'elle a un enfant, – pire encore si

elle a deux enfants - donc, elle n'est pas qualifiée pour avoir les subside. Je trouve que ce n'est pas juste. On aurait pu faire un effort. Ok, le ministre des finances ne veut, peut-être pas par orgueil, parce que nous, on avait proposé cela depuis longtemps. Peut-être qu'il pense que s'il va faire cela, c'est comme si dirait il va admettre que le MSM avait raison. *Forget about us ! You don't want to give the whole subsidy, at least, make a move, give a little bit more than that.* Je ne vais pas faire de commentaire. M. le président, s'il faut débattre, s'il faut venir avec des arguments, on le fera. On a entendu surtout l'honorable Ms Deerpalsing qui a fait un cas contre le *targeting* en terme de pension. Why is it that we are *targeting here for education* ? Là-bas, on est en train de donner aux riches. On ne veut pas faire du *targeting* là-bas, parce qu'on donne aux riches. *Ok, if that is the reasoning.*

Ici on fait du *targeting* pour ne pas donner aux pauvres et pour quelle cause, l'éducation. C'est contradictoire. Je dis que l'engagement que l'alliance sociale avait pris le 1er Mai, n'a pas été respecté. M. le président, il est de même en ce qu'il s'agit de l'*income tax*, parce que le ministre des finances il vient dire à chaque fois à la Chambre, à la population qu'il a fait beaucoup pour l'*income tax*. Allons voir l'engagement que l'alliance sociale avait pris. C'était que tous ceux qui touchaient jusqu'à R 25,000 par mois seraient exemptés de l'impôt sur les revenus. Apres quatre budgets, le premier seuil imposable, M. le

président, est de R 19,615. Donc, on est encore loin des R 25,000 promis par l'alliance sociale. Autre injustice !

La taxation des intérêts de 15% a été maintenue alors que les dividendes qui sont perçus par les riches ne sont pas taxables, d'autant plus que le *Repo Rate* a été réduit considérablement. Tant mieux si ça profite aux entreprises, à ceux qui veulent commencer et faire du *business* ! Et là, je suis d'accord - malheureusement elle est partie - l'honorable Ms Deepalsing lorsqu'elle exprime sa frustration sur cette taxe qui n'a pas sa raison d'être dans un pays comme le nôtre. La *National Residential Property Tax*, aussi injuste, aussi inappropriée et, je dirais, contestée même parmi pas mal de membres du gouvernement mais, malheureusement, maintenue et je dirais que c'est un entêtement Encore une fois, l'injustice !

Concernant les exemptions du *Stimulus Package* sur nombre de taxes, M. le président, le *Land Transfer Tax* et le droit d'enregistrement ont été maintenus jusqu'à décembre 2010. Par contre, le *levy* d'un 1% sur les salaires des travailleurs pour financer éventuellement leur licenciement, encore une fois, été maintenu - l'injustice !

Les exemptions fiscales sur l'acquisition de villas luxueux et valant au moins R 7 millions ont été maintenues. Alors que de l'autre côté, quelqu'un qui veut vendre son terrain pour financer l'étude de ses enfants, le *Registration Duty* de 5% a été maintenu. Quelle injustice ! La *Corporate Tax* a été réduite, je dirais, à une vitesse vertigineuse parce

que le ministre avait planifié une phase plus longue, de 25% à 15%. Donc plus tôt que revu, alors que l'exemption fiscale pour des planteurs de canne à sucre, sur les premières 60 tonnes de sucre exemptées a été abolie. Quelle injustice, encore une fois ! M. le président, je peux continuer - je vois que le temps me fait défaut - je peux parler de l'exemption fiscale de 4x4 pour les planteurs qui a été abolie dans un premier temps, maintenant on ne donne pas de *duty-free* sur les caissons.

Il y avait le *School Feeding Programme* à l'époque. On parlait de quelques millions de roupies pour la pension universelle, mais pour le *School Feeding Programme*, M. le président, vous imaginez il a fallu la pression de toute la population. Je peux continuer comme ça avec une série de décisions, de mesures qui ont été prises à l'encontre des défavorisés, ceux qui sont les plus faibles mais par contre pour ceux qui sont les mieux lotis, les plus forts, on continue à donner et le ministre ose parler de partage et de réconciliation entre l'économie et le social.

Laissez-moi venir sur les chiffres, M. le président. On a quand même fait pas mal de propositions mais j'ai noté aussi, M. le président, qu'à chaque fois qu'on fait des propositions, le ministre vient dire qu'il faut augmenter la TVA. Quand il faut donner des millions et des milliards à certains riches, on n'augment pas la TVA. Il n'est pas question de parler d'augmentation de la TVA mais quand on parle de quelques mesures en faveur des plus démunis, des plus pauvres, il faut augmenter la TVA. J'espère que ce cinéma va cesser. En tout cas le

peuple ne peut pas comprendre cette logique, pour moi, cette argumentation ne tient pas la route.

Maintenant le ministre des finances vient nous dire que la TVA a été augmentée de 50% sous l'ancien gouvernement. Oui, c'est vrai, cela a été augmenté de 50%. Mais quand il dit que cela a été augmenté de 50%, j'espère qu'il a le courage de venir nous dire que la *Sales Tax* sous le gouvernement travailliste, avec l'ancien ministre des finances, l'honorable Bunwaree, est sorti de 5% pour venir à 8% et puis a été convertie à TVA pour venir à 10%.

(Interruptions)

We have to be fair. They criticise us for having increased the VAT, we accept, fair enough! Mais qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avant ? N'a-t-on pas augmenté de 100% !

(Interruptions)

I take it that it was a joke from the hon. Minister. It does not matter. Mais le ministre des finances vient nous dire maintenant pourquoi on a augmenté la TVA. Mais si la TVA est trop forte, baissez la TVA ! S'il vient avec une argumentation à l'effet qu'on a trop augmenté, mais ils ont l'opportunité de baisser. Il ne va pas baisser. Pourquoi il ne va pas le faire, M. le président ? C'est simple. Il est en train de récolter des milliards. Je dirai que c'est un plaisir pour lui. Il s'assoit, la roupie a été dépréciée et les prix augmentent et les gens dépensent et il récolte plus en terme de TVA. Voyons les chiffres !

Pour seulement avoir une idée, 2005-2006 : R 13,7 milliards ; 2008-2009 : R 18,9 milliards, soit une augmentation de R 5,2 milliards en terme de TVA ; pour 2010 il va récolter R 20,6 milliards pour la TVA. Il est en train de vanter les mérites de la CSR mais, en réalité, M. le président, cela représente 2% quand ces mêmes compagnies ont économisé 10% sur l'impôt.

Laissez-moi aborder maintenant les indicateurs économiques parce que là-aussi il y a beaucoup d'exagérations. Le ministre a parlé pendant longtemps de croissance économique de 6% alors qu'il nous a archichanté le refrain de *robust growth, de bumper crop* ...

Mr Speaker: Some silence, please!

Mr Jugnauth: Ce chiffre de 6% n'a jamais été atteint. Pour la période 2005-2009, le taux de croissance économique s'élève à une moyenne de 4.1%. Ce résultat, je dirais, n'est pas attribuable aux soi-disant réformes que le ministre des finances a procédées. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails, mais les facteurs qui ont contribué, M. le président, c'est qu'il a eu une quinzaine de nouveaux hôtels et le secteur touristique a bénéficié. Le secteur du textile a profité de la réimposition par l'Europe des quotas sur les exportations chinoises. Je suis d'accord quand le ministre vient dire que le secteur comme l'*ICT*, le *Seafood Hub*, l'*IRS* ont quand même grandement contribué à apporter des revenus, mais je ne pas entrer dans des détails, des discussions politiques en ce qui concerne qui a commencé quoi. Le peuple sait qui a initié ces

secteurs mais, tant mieux, si on peut les faire développer. Tant mieux, s'ils ont un *growth* qui nous apporte plus de revenus.

Je suis honnête pour reconnaître que le prix du pétrole a augmenté, qu'il a eu la crise financière internationale qui a impacté négativement sur l'économie mauricienne. Je le reconnais. Mais j'attends à ce que le ministre des finances ait cette même honnêteté quand il parle du taux de croissance entre 2000 et 2005. Laissez-moi vous dire, M. le président - et j'espère que si ce que je vais dire n'est pas correct, j'attends à ce que le ministre des finances va nous donner des clarifications – la moyenne de croissance à Maurice entre 2001 et 2004 a été de 4% alors que la croissance mondiale a été de 2%. Et nous aussi nous avons fait face à des situations difficiles. Il y a eu l'attaque terroriste du 11 septembre 2001, il y a eu les guerres en Iraq et en Afghanistan, la hausse de 120% du prix du pétrole à cette époque, les épidémies de la vache folle, SARS, etc., la fin de l'accord multifibre, c'est ce qui nous a fait perdre quand même pas mal d'emplois au niveau du secteur du textile, la réforme du régime sucrier, il faut reconnaître tout cela, comme moi je reconnais, qu'il y a une situation difficile et il faut reconnaître que nous aussi nous avons fait face à une situation difficile.

M. le président, le ministre des finances avait dit – peut-être que lui-même il a oublié – dans son document « *Setting the Stage for a Robust Growth* » qu'il allait créer plusieurs nouveaux piliers de l'économie. Quatre ans et demi ont passé, zéro nouveau pilier de

l'économie! On est en train de parler de *Land-based Oceanic Industry*, définitivement il y aura un autre gouvernement et on verra quel sera l'avenir de ce *Land-based Oceanic Industry*. On avait parlé de cyber cité, à l'époque le même ministre des finances disait que c'était un éléphant blanc. En tout cas, moi, je vais dire une chose, la vision du *cyber island*, c'est celle de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, le projet de *cyber tower*, c'est le projet de Sir Anerood Jugnauth comme Premier ministre avec un gouvernement MSM/MMM. Et il faut rendre donc à César ce qui appartient à César. Il faut être magnanime et il faut être reconnaissant.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, j'ai écouté avec attention presque tous les discours. De l'autre côté, on parle de Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, je reconnais que Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam a une grande contribution pour le développement politique et économique. Il y a eu des failles aussi, mais il y a eu sa contribution. Mais je n'ai presque jamais entendu dire la contribution de Sir Anerood Jugnauth pour le développement économique du pays comme s'il n'était pas là, comme s'il n'a pas sa place dans l'histoire. Je n'ai pas entendu même certains membres le dire.

(Interruptions)

Peut-être qu'il va le faire.

Laissez-moi aborder le déficit budgétaire, M. le président! Là, le ministre projette un taux de 4,5% pour 2010. Après avoir comptabilisé les recettes de R 1,5 milliards à partir d'éventuelle vente de 15% des actions de *Mauritius Telecom*. Et puis il a transféré aussi R 2,3 milliards du *Food Security Fund* et d'autres fonds qu'il a transférés au budget et les recettes de l'Etat pour 2010 comprennent également les *grants* de l'Union Européenne pour la réforme sucrière à la hauteur de R 4,1 milliards. Et si on exclut ces transferts et ces *grants*, je dis qu'il faut faire attention parce que ce sont des *one-off items*, *they are not recurrent, they are not going to come every year, they are only one-off items*. Donc, moi je dis que le déficit réel s'élèverait à 6,6%, bien supérieur que les 4,9% que j'avais atteints en 2004/2005. Et je ne vais pas comparer avec 2005/2006. Mais je ne vois donc aucun exploit, il n'y a pas à se réjouir quand on regarde ces chiffres-là. Je ne vais pas entrer encore une fois dans cette histoire des squelettes qui ont été mentionnés. Je dis si le ministre des finances était sérieux, il aurait dû inscrire officiellement un déficit budgétaire de 8,1% pour 2005/2006 au lieu de venir nous le dire à chaque fois. Parce que nous l'avions fait – l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree en sait quelque chose - lorsqu'on avait fait le constat, le *State of the Economy* à cette époque, le taux du déficit budgétaire n'était pas de 2,9%, c'était de 6,7%. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails quand on parle des squelettes. Il y a les *hedging sagas* aussi de *Air Mauritius* et la STC que le pays est en train donc de payer.

I heard a comment from hon. Dr. Babajee earlier. On a parlé beaucoup sur l'état d'urgence. Laissez-moi dire une chose, M. le président! Je me réfère à ce que l'actuel *Financial Secretary*, Monsieur Ali Mansoor, avait dit sur l'état réel de l'économie au moment où j'étais ministre des finances.

Dans une interview à un quotidien en date du 26 décembre 2004, Monsieur Ali Mansoor disait ceci, et je cite –

« The situation is not as bad as it may be perceived. Mauritian gloom is unjustified, economic performance is rosier than perceived. Over the last four years, growth has remained respectable. *Per capita* income has grown by about 10%. Exports have grown by almost a third and net international reserves by 125%. So, why malaise? ”

This is the actual Financial Secretary who said that. And I will go further. Il y avait une autre interview en Janvier 2005.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: Il faut écouter. En Janvier 2005, le même Monsieur Mansoor, qui est actuellement le *Financial Secretary*, disait ceci, *I quote –*

« Je pense que Maurice jouit d'une bonne santé économique. En bref, la performance économique s'améliore, il y a beaucoup de

mesures dans le dernier budget 2004/2005 qui vont dans le sens de la démocratisation économique. »

Voilà la vérité, M. le président, qui vient de la bouche du *Financial Secretary*!

Laissez-moi venir sur la dette publique, un autre indicateur qui témoigne le bluff et l'échec du ministre des finances! Quoi qu'il puisse dire, la vérité est la suivante. Les dettes publiques, incluant les dettes des corps paraétatiques, ont augmenté de R 117 milliards en juillet 2005 à R 167 milliards en décembre 2009, soit une augmentation de R 50 milliards. Et si je compte les R 6 milliards enlevées de la dissolution du *Consolidated Sinking Fund*, le chiffre arrive à R 173 milliards et la dette étrangère aussi a augmenté de R 9,2 milliards en 2005 à R 17,7 milliards en 2009, soit une augmentation de 92,4%, la dette en devise.

Mr Bodha: Un milliard par mois!

Mr Jugnauth: En ce qui concerne l'épargne, M. le président, c'est catastrophique. Les chiffres choquent parce que le taux d'épargne a dégringolé de 22.6% en 2004 à 12.8%. Et cela nous savons très bien parce qu'il y a eu perte de pouvoir d'achat, l'appauvrissement généralisé, l'incapacité des familles mauriciennes à économiser. Et en plus il y a eu la taxation des intérêts. Je suis d'accord avec l'honorable Ms Nita Deerpalsing quand elle dit dans cette chambre que la taxation des intérêts fait mal à plusieurs familles mauriciennes surtout la classe moyenne. Et le ministre a essayé de faire croire que le taux d'épargne

baisse en raison d'une augmentation au niveau de la consommation des ménagères. Ce n'est pas vrai, M. le président et je vais le prouver! Si on regarde les chiffres de *national accounts* par rapport à la croissance du PIB, la consommation des ménages a baissé de 6% en 2006 à 3% en 2009 et pour les individus, c'est pire, de 6% le taux est passé à 2,4% en 2009.

En ce qui concerne le compte courant, il y a eu un excédent R1.4 milliards en 2004 pour un déficit de R25.5 milliards en 2009. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails.

Nous savons tous que, grâce à l'hôtellerie et à l'IRS, on a eu une augmentation du FDI et je serais content que le projet Jin Fei bouge. J'espère que cela aille vite, cela va nous rapporter des FDI et j'espère aussi qu'il aura d'autres pays qui auront la chance de réaliser de tels projets pour augmenter notre FDI.

Quant à l'emploi, et là aussi c'est bon de le mentionner parce qu'on a eu tellement de critiques entre 2001 et 2004 dans le sens qu'on n'a rien fait, qu'il n'y pas eu de création, mais pas moins de 47,300 emplois ont été créés, M. le président. Au temps où le ministre des finances était dans l'Opposition, tous ceux qui avaient pris leur retraite volontaire dans l'industrie sucrière étaient comptabilisés comme des chômeurs. Maintenant, il n'y plus cette calculatrice. Maintenant, il ne comptabilise plus les VRS. Mais nous savons que pour le *business registration*, une fois que la personne est enregistrée, on le retire sur le

registre de chômeurs. Mais, je dis que le taux de chômage pour 2009 est estimé à 8,1% et certainement *not sliding below 8%* comme mentionné dans le discours du budget. Le ministre a eu le culot de venir dire qu'il n'y a pas de chômeur chez les hommes, que le nombre de chômeur chez les femmes est plus élevé. Je ne sais pas si on fréquente nos circonscriptions, allons dire à la population mauricienne, que dans chaque circonscription il y a plus de chômeurs chez les hommes. Je dis au ministre de regarder les dernières statistiques du CSO. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai mis ces chiffres. Les statistiques du CSO indiquent que 17,000 hommes sont chômeurs contre 29,800 femmes. Donc d'où vient ce chiffre qui dit qu'il y a plus de chômeurs chez les hommes ? Encore une fois, c'est du bluff et, malheureusement, il vient nous dire que l'*Additional Stimulus Package* a sauvé beaucoup d'emplois, mais il ne vient pas nous dire combien d'emplois ont été perdus. Je cite deux secteurs – l'hôtellerie et le *Export Oriented Enterprises*. Encore une fois je prends les chiffres qui ont été publiés par la CSO. 7,000 personnes se sont retrouvées sur le pavé durant le premier semestre de 2009, M. le président.

Laissez-moi venir sur l'actionnariat dans l'industrie sucrière. Je suis entièrement d'accord quand l'honorable Hanomanjee dit qu'il ne s'agit pas de *open shareholding in the sugar industry to planters, labourers and artisans*. A travers la SIT, ils étaient déjà propriétaires. Seulement, je reconnaissais que le gouvernement a fait un effort pour

augmenter le pourcentage des actions et, d'après ce qu'on voit, d'après l'accord qui a été passé, cela va arriver à 35%. Je reconnais que c'est un pas dans la bonne direction. Mais, je suis aussi déçu parce qu'on vient maintenant nous dire que ces planteurs et ces artisans vont devoir payer pour deux tiers de leurs actions. M. le président, on est en train de donner R5 milliards en cadeau à l'industrie sucrière, au plus fort, et on demande aux planteurs et aux laboureurs de payer deux tiers de la valeur de leurs actions. Je ne comprends pas, car pour moi il y a contradiction, on donne un cadeau d'un côté et, de l'autre côté, on le retire d'une autre façon. Je ne dis pas qu'il ne faut pas aider les établissements sucriers. Il faut les aider. Je l'avais fait quand j'avais fait la réforme de l'industrie sucrière. Mais, je trouve que c'est injuste. Allons dire, *for argument sake*, pourquoi on ne peut faire payer un partie de la réforme à l'industrie sucrière? Pourquoi ne pas avoir pris une partie de cet argent et donner encore plus aux travailleurs, aux laboureurs et aux artisans? C'est injuste ! Et là je suis d'accord avec l'honorable Deerpalsing, que je dois citer à chaque fois, et j'espère qu'elle aura suffisamment d'influence pour que le gouvernement change de cap. En tout cas, on est là pour donner un coup de main. J'ai écouté avec attention son discours sur le Cane Privatisation Fund. J'espère qu'il n'y pas de *ulterior motive*, on ne peut pas effacer l'histoire. J'espère que ce sera dans l'intérêt des travailleurs et des planteurs.

Laissez-moi rétablir aussi certaines choses que l'honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen nous a dites. Il a dit qu'à l'époque l'Etat et la SIT avaient payé R500,000 pour chaque arpent de terrain obtenu à travers le *Illovo deal* et qu'il a fait l'amalgame pour dire que c'est la BPML qui avait payé pour le VRS. M. le président, ce n'est pas exacte. BMPL était le 'warehouser' des 3,000 arpents de terre qui avait été achetés par l'Etat à R125,000 l'arpent en septembre 2001 dans le cas du *deal d'Illovo* et en février 2002, c'est la *State Land Development Company* qui est devenu légalement propriétaire de ces terres au nom de l'Etat et la SLDC a logiquement payé le VRS de ces employés qui sont concernés et non pas la BPML. Cela étant dit, M. le président, même si nous prenons le chiffre allégué d'environ R500,000 par arpent pour 10,600 arpents de terre obtenu par l'Etat, je pense l'honorable Cader-Sayed Hossen aurait dû revoir son calcul. Qu'est ce qui c'est passé dans le *deal* qui a été fait entre la MSPA et le gouvernement ? 2,000 arpents de terrain ont été obtenus de l'industrie sucrière. Pour ces 2,000 arpents, le gouvernement s'est engagé à faire R18 milliards de cadeau. Je vais lister les détails : R5 milliards pour financer le VRS, R4 milliards pour l'augmentation du prix de sucre sur le marché local durant la période de 10 ans, R 6 milliards de concession fiscale sur les terres quand les établissements sucriers vont morceler, R1 milliard au moins pour l'acquisition d'action, R2 milliards sur la dépréciation de la roupie en 2006. Donc, pour 2000 arpents, les sucriers touchent R18 milliards et, si on fait le calcul, cela va

coûter R9 millions l'arpent. Donc, comparez R9 millions l'arpent à R500,000 qui a été allégué, je ne vois pas de *deal* extraordinaire. Mais je ne vais pas entrer dans le détail aussi. On parle de *Illovo Deal*, mais - peut être certains ne savent pas de l'autre côté - quand Illovo avait acheté le Lonrho, il y a eu des concessions fiscales. Qu'est ce que le Gouvernement a eu comme terre? Zéro ! Rien ! Pas une seule toise ! Je voudrais aussi dire, parce que c'est très important de le faire, on l'a répété et on l'a dit à plusieurs reprises, en ce qu'il s'agit des projets d'infrastructures publiques, il y a un projet que nous pensons aurait dû être prioritaire pour le gouvernement. C'est le projet d'un système de transport public moderne, soit un *light rail* soit un métro léger. Malheureusement, le gouvernement est en train de faire une erreur capitale. Je ne dis pas qu'il ne faut pas développer les infrastructures publiques de *dream bridge* ou de *ring road*. Mais, ce n'est pas la priorité, et malheureusement, je n'aurai pas le temps d'aller dans les détails et je dis aussi que l'option métro léger est cohérente en ce qu'il s'agit du concept de Maurice Ile Durable. Malheureusement, M. le président, je n'aurais pas le temps de parler de la pension de vieillesse à laquelle j'ai déjà fait allusion auparavant.

Laissez-moi venir sur ce qui se passe à la Banque de Maurice parce que cela mérite d'être commenté. Encore une fois, je partage l'opinion de l'honorable Ms Deepalsing, c'est effectivement un cirque. On est en train de vivre un cirque de mauvais goût qui est en train de nuire à

l'image même de la Banque de Maurice et du centre financier mauricien sur le plan international. Comment, M. le président, peut-on accepter que des *Board members* – je ne suis pas en train de défendre le gouverneur de la Banque Centrale – puissent réclamer la démission du gouverneur de la Banque Centrale en tenant une conférence de presse dans la rue ? C'est grotesque. Je pense que l'interview de l'honorable Ms Deepalsing – j'ai là son interview dans '*Impact News*' – est très révélatrice. Il y a aussi d'autres choses aussi qui sont très révélatrices, mais sur la Banque de Maurice, je trouve franchement que c'est incroyable. J'espère que le *Fact Finding Committee* qui va être institué aura des *terms of reference* qui sont assez larges pour inclure le comportement de ces *Board members*, le gouverneur aussi, bien sûr s'il n'y a jamais eu de conflits d'intérêts comme mentionné. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails mais j'espère que tout cela va être pris en ligne de compte. Mais c'est triste, je dirais même que c'est honteux, parce qu'on a l'impression qu'il y a une grande différence entre le ministre des finances et le Premier ministre, parce qu'après tout c'est le Premier ministre qui nomme le gouverneur de la Banque Centrale. J'ai évolué dans un gouvernement et je sais que quand il y a un problème, la première chose à faire c'est d'aller discuter avec le Premier ministre. L'autre jour lorsque j'ai posé la question au ministre des finances : pourquoi le gouvernement ne prend pas de décision ? Il m'a dit : '*I know the answer*'. Je ne voudrais pas venir dire *what I know of. If I*

know the answer, if I tell what I know of, le ministre va être encore plus choqué. Mais en tout cas, c'est bien vilain. Ce n'est pas bon pour le pays, pour l'institution qui est la plus importante au niveau financier pour le pays et j'espère que cela va être réglé dans les plus brefs délais.

Laissez-moi venir sur une chose que je vois que le ministre des finances régulièrement, malheureusement, est en train de dire et continue à dire qu'on est en train de critiquer. Nous avons fait beaucoup de propositions, M. le président, faute de temps je ne peux pas aller dans les détails. En plus, il vient dire que régulièrement, mon collègue et moi, l'honorable Nando Bodha, on le critique et on l'attaque personnellement. Mais, on attaque sa politique, on le critique sur sa politique ultralibérale. Je demande au ministre des finances, dans son *summing-up*, de me mentionner une seule occasion où je l'ai attaqué personnellement. Je ne l'ai jamais traité – enfin, je ne vais pas rentrer dans l'histoire – de '*puny economist*', encore moins je ne l'ai jamais traité de '*black Tim Tailor*', encore moins je ne l'ai jamais traité de '*pussycat tail*'. Donc, qu'il ne vienne pas me dire que je l'attaque personnellement! Je ne suis pas d'accord avec sa politique économique, mais je n'ai rien à faire avec sa personnalité et j'espère que dans sa dernière interview qu'il a donnée, encore une fois, il ne vient pas nous dire que je l'attaque personnellement.

Au niveau des propositions que nous avons faites, je vais résumer, M. le président, pour dire que nous avons fait une série de propositions

que, malheureusement, faute de temps je ne pourrais pas énumérer. Je ne dis pas que le ministre, bien sûr, doit tenir compte de toutes ces propositions, mais je pense qu'il aurait dû quand même considérer certaines propositions. En tout cas, dans un prochain gouvernement, nous allons passer à l'action, parce que nous sommes des gens de parole. Ce que nous disons, les engagements que nous prenons avec la population, bien sûr, nous allons les réaliser.

Laissez-moi terminer, M. le président, pour dire que *no politician and no political leader will be remembered in history if he does not succeed in bringing meaningful changes in the lives of the people. We have a noble mission as politicians, not only to translate our ideas and vision into tangible results for the people and for the country, but we have to inspire ourselves.* Je le redis, *from the deeds*, j'ai le courage de reconnaître ceux qui ont contribué à l'avancement du pays *from the achievements of late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and from Sir Anerood Jugnauth as former Prime Minister of this country.*

M. le président, l'arrogance et l'orgueil sont deux péchés capitaux en politique. Il est malheureux que le ministre des finances ait emprunté cette voie suicidaire. La politique et l'histoire retiendront ceci de l'action du ministre des finances au sein du présent gouvernement. « De part et part il n'y a que rhétorique et bluff dans cet homme-là. » pour reprendre une citation d'André Gide en date de janvier 1906.

L'honorable Rama Valayden avait dit en ce qu'il s'agit de CSR : 'Coup de Sithanen et Ramgoolam'.

M. le président, je vais conclure en invitant le Premier ministre à bien réfléchir sur ce que je vais dire à présent : veut-t-il que la population et l'histoire retiennent de la *NRPT* comme étant un Navin Ramgoolam *Property Tax* ?

Merci, M. le président.

(11.57 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, we live in different worlds, we see things differently, we go down to little minute details. I have listened to hon. Pravind Jugnauth, I am sure what he said can be verified. But, when you take the parts and you add them together, it does not come to the total. The total is much much better than the sum of the parts and this was not to recognise whether we argue on who, when and what, under what circumstances, it does not help.

I think we should say that Mauritius today is at the crossroads, having survived storms, economic disasters, and a hostile environment. Today, I don't think anybody will dispute that whilst worldwide growth is zero or negative, growth in Mauritius is 4.5%. Nobody will question, however, the mechanism and what goes on in between that inflation this year will be at its lowest ever 2.6%, that our reserve of importation will

be 43 weeks and *le paysage a changé*. We don't hear any more, Mr Speaker, Sir, of adjustments to our foreign exchange and these were made at the time or over the years to suit export services and this discouraged productivity and competitiveness.

Today, with this sort of regular manoeuvre out of the way, our export services have to be productive, to be competitive and the result: stable rupee is here to protect consumers. The way of doing business has changed, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this, to me, is probably the biggest thing that ever happens in this country. *Cela a changé le paysage complètement*. Let me borrow a term from my good friend, hon. X. L. Duval, Minister of Tourism: *c'est un plaisir de faire business à Maurice*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, world leaders have congratulated us for having served smoothly through the financial crisis, the worst this world has ever known. I will maintain, in spite of what has been said by my good friend, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, that the maintenance of the Stimulus Package is a good thing because we do not know for sure that the crisis is over and, in spite of the positive economic indicators, we are using it as a safeguard against future uncertainties. No one will deny that jobs have been created and preserved, training provided for reinsertion of retrenched workers and emphasis laid to help SMEs. And the strengthening of SMEs, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been one of the hallmarks of this present Government, and we are proud of it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will quickly go into *Maurice Ile Durable*. This is, to me, at the root and the basis of everything that we have done so far. *Maurice Ile Durable* is a concept about what Mauritius should be today and what it should be in the years to come. It is about making sure that the heritage we leave for our children is better than what we have acquired and that, over the time, it gets better and better. When we say that *Maurice Ile Durable* concept was enunciated by the Prime Minister in 2008, yes, it was, with the help of Professor de Rosnay. But, looking back since 1995, Mr Speaker, Sir, I see that lots of the philosophy of the *Maurice Ile Durable* have been entrenched in the Prime Minister's stand and philosophy. The Prime Minister has stood from the beginning, from 1995, on an all-inclusive society, where no one gets excluded, where *les démunis, les pauvres sont aidés*.

Yesterday, we had a proof again, where ceux du 'troisième âge' *ont été accommodés*. It is incredible! Without waiting for enunciation of *Maurice Ile Durable* concept in 1995, the Prime Minister insisted that basic pension should go up. We have repeated it many times, but I think it is worth saying it again that basic pension in 1995, without waiting - as the Prime Minister said yesterday - for Parliament to meet for the Budget, was increased immediately in March 1996. After being doubled between 1995 and 2000, we further increased it by 30% between 2000 and 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir. This speaks *pour le souci des personnes âgées*. We must not forget. We seem to have *occulté*; it is so much now

part of our lifestyle that we seem to forget about the issue of transport. We don't even mention it today. We all know that our transport system as a whole and the free transport for students have got its weaknesses. Having said that, it is probably the single most important part of the policies of past Governments, 1995-2000, 2005 till now; free transport has been a key to opening access to education, and education is the key to development in this country.

With regard to the social security budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, for 2005-2006, it was Rs6.7 billion and, now, it stands at Rs10 billion for 2010. How it is distributed and how we spend it is a matter of discussion, and we keep on improving it. No one is going to pretend, Mr Speaker, Sir, that everything is bright and shiny. But slowly we have to realise that, between 1995-2000 and 2005 and 2009, things are better than what they were previously. This is a sign of progress. We can do nitpicking; we can look at little things and say that we don't agree. We, ourselves, here, on this side, often don't agree. We want for more, we want better things, and we want to improve. But we must have the means to do it. When we talk of *Maurice Ile Durable*, the key to it is economic development. Without economic development, we must forget about *Maurice Ile Durable*.

The other components, Mr Speaker, Sir, are economic, environmental and cultural. We have talked and we are talking about the economic component. Without producing wealth, it will be

impossible to look after the social. I have already mentioned that the Prime Minister himself has led the war against social injustices. *Aujourd’hui, c’est un gouvernement avec un Premier ministre qui croit dans la justice sociale et l’inclusion. Et tout ce qu’on a fait mène à une chose.* Nobody should feel excluded. Everybody should feel that he is part of Government, and *le petit peuple doit participer* in every action that we take. I would make an appeal to the Opposition to forget the negativism that prevails, to get people to join in. Nobody can complain that this Government has not done what it should. We have been asked for help across the board from fishers, cattle breeders, pig breeders and milk producers, and we are helping. I heard rightly what hon. Pravind Jugnauth has said about small planters, labourers, artisans and *métayers*. Thanks to the steady determination of the Prime Minister! Make no mistake! The Leader of the Opposition has qualified the Prime Minister as *un charmeur*. *Charmeur*, he may be, but there is an iron fist in a velvet glove. I have seen him at negotiations, and I know what I am talking about. Today, the Prime Minister commands respect in five continents ; *où il va, il est respecté*. *J’ai fait l’expérience comme représentant de Maurice à l’African Union. Comme vous entrez là-bas, tout le monde demande*: Where is your Prime Minister? He is loveable, appreciated, respected, and his opinion is sought for. *Quand je dis les cinq continents, je commence avec le Président Obama, suivi du Premier ministre Gordon Brown, le Président Sarkozy et, en Afrique,*

Khadafi. He took the trouble of sending a special envoy to Mauritius to talk to the Prime Minister and now there is Zuma. I don't have to mention Asia, President Manmohan Singh, President Hu Jintao and, more recently, the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd. In all five continents, the Prime Minister commands respect. Why? Because he stands for democracy, for an open economy, for social justice and for the underprivileged. It is known, recognised and accepted. Let's not make any mistake about what this Government stands for.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He made some very pertinent comments in his speech, and I appreciated also the lightness with which he said it and, of course, what he said, in a very amusing way. Much of it was true, but much of it also was not true, and there are difficulties in finding which bit is true and which bit is not true, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I like with the hon. Leader of the Opposition is, in a style, he came in with some words, and he started. I feel very strongly about MID. He said that it is a *coquille vide*. He repeated it, he loved it, and he rolled it. It depends what *coquille vide* is. If you take a *coquille* and you think it is *vide*, you don't know what is inside, Mr Speaker, Sir. You put it to your ear, and you hear beautiful sounds. Maybe, there is something inside; you don't know!

(Interruptions)

Coquille vide, it may be to some, but I can assure them that it is far from a *coquille vide*. I repeat that the *Maurice Ile Durable* is a long

term vision. It is not going to be achieved in a lifetime. I put it that way. We have to think long term and take the measures that are needed for the long term. We have to start somewhere. This holistic approach, that is, think about everything and then start, will never happen. We will waste our time. We start somewhere, we find our way, we proceed, and we will see where it gets us. What have we done? From this long term vision, we started with the MID Fund. It is very limited, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I agree with you that the MID Fund is not the solution.

It is part of the beginning of a solution. The MID Fund was meant to finance environmental and renewable energy products. And again, I repeat, listening to the Leader of the Opposition, I have got the feeling that he has not made sufficient distinction between the vision and the projects of MID Fund. In response to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition he quite rightly pointed out about certain deficiencies, but I would say that probably it is more from lack of information rather than lack of action. If Members of the Opposition had taken the trouble of asking questions during this session, they would have learnt much more about what is going on inside MID Fund and, more importantly, about the vision for *Maurice Ile Durable*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, quite rightly, as I said, the Leader of the Opposition said that we must have a coherent strategy and he used the words 'coherent strategy', 'set targets', 'integrated roadmap for *Maurice Ile Durable*'. Quite rightly! But, maybe, what we don't say enough is

that it is on the way. Mr Speaker, Sir, Professor Odendaal has been appointed as General Facilitator by UNDP to develop just this policy and he is working on it and, by the end, after a national consultative process, we hope to have a set policy of orientations, targets, expected outcomes with a time frame. We expect that a *loi cadre* to define the orientations of *Maurice Ile Durable* will be ready and the institutional framework for *Maurice Ile Durable* will be set in place.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the launching of the *Maurice Ile Durable* concept, lots of things have happened and the first was to create awareness. And without awareness and getting the population with you, everybody seeing himself in that vision, without that we will not succeed. We started very strongly with the *Maurice Ile Durable* week and during that week there was a seminar at the University of Mauritius where Professor Odendaal was present and the aim of the seminar was to have a definition of the *Maurice Ile Durable* concept.

I remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, saying during the last Budget Speech that the *Maurice Ile Durable* concept was so wide that it meant everything or anything to everybody and we had to define it and this is just what we are doing, define it a bit better. The seminar at the University of Mauritius was a great success and lots came out of it. Following that we have been meeting people at Rajiv Science Centre where an exhibition was organised with exhibits from the *Cité des Sciences*. We launched also a website which was designed as a citizen's

forum to enable citizens to contribute by giving their views. We had to take on board everybody, citizens, the University, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. And, interestingly, we had seminar for young people organised by the British Council and I don't think many will know here, but we had a personality called Richard Reynolds and he was an advocate of guerilla gardening and it was a great success among the young. What he did and said was, I quote –

“If you see some public place neglected, go and cultivate it; go and turn it into a green space; don't ask for permission, just surreptitiously at night or anytime, just go and do it and you will find that you will embellish your environment” .

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, this concept of everyone participating in the embellishment of his environment has yet to take root. I have myself tried it. I have visited my constituency - like they have all visited their constituency - and what I would say, as a message, is to tell the young : *‘Clean up this place and plant something there; but be careful, it is not yours it is for the public.’* There is a tendency that when you tell people clean it and embellish it, they take it over and that is a danger we have to face.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we also had a workshop for private sector operators in the tourism sector, industrial sector, business executives on climate change and corporate social responsibility. We had a workshop on energy efficient and green buildings. We had a consultative workshop

on grid code and feed-in tariff for small independent power producers and, most importantly, with all these activities, the University has created a Centre for Sustainable Development. It is important that this concept should be nurtured, should be brought in front of the public, should be defined and we have execution.

Sir, I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition. I think he was right on what he said, but it is probably from lack of information of knowing what is going on that he made a remark that we need a coherent strategy - yes, we need a coherent strategy - but it is ongoing, it will be there. Professor Odendaal, by January or February, will introduce one and then we will see how we get on. On the same scale, I am happy to see that the private sector is following. At the last Budget, I spoke about the use of solar energy at Tang Knitwear. We found that the IFS Building in Ebene has introduced solar power heaters; all this is going in the right direction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund looking after projects needs to be strengthened. I am grateful to the UNDP for financing a Technical Support Unit, which is operational since August 2008. They are there to look at projects that are coming to analyse it technically and to make proposals to the MID Fund Committee. It is a good thing, because without the technical support we were finding it difficult to proceed.

We are also grateful, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the AFD (*Agence Française de Développement*), which signed a Convention for a grant of one million Euros for technical assistance to the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund through the *Fonds Français pour L'Environnement Mondial*. So, things are moving, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have not been static for the past six months, but we have not talked enough about it though we have had seminars, programmes, workshops and lectures. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also joined IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency). We are going to do this on the recommendation of Professor Joël de Rosnay. He asked us to join quickly and we have joined. The IRENA, for the information of the House, is an intergovernmental organisation for promoting the adoption of renewable energy worldwide and for developing comprehensive policy solutions to the challenges to renewable energy. I will talk about the challenges to renewable energy later on, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can tell the House that we will ensure that our active participation in this agency will help us to benefit from technology transfer and advice on policies, adapted to our specific environmental, economic and socio cultural circumstances. I am saying this because when we talk about renewable energy, we talk about China, India, America or elsewhere, it is often not applicable here. Yesterday, I was looking about TV set up in rural villages in India. They were happy that they were getting a few hours to cook or to watch television. I am sure no one here will be happy to get a few hours; they want 24 hours, so

we have to look at what is applicable in Mauritius, using the experience from elsewhere.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while setting up the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund, we have shifted towards resource efficient energy. We have talked *ad nauseam* about it and recently we had two major projects. The Solar Water Heater Scheme - I repeat and I confirm the statement of the Minister of Finance when he said that 29,000 applications had been approved. I confirm that Rs290 m. have been earmarked for grants and Rs127 m. already disbursed to more than 12,000 beneficiaries.

There were questions about energy saving, Mr Speaker, Sir. The solar water heaters replaced mainly gas heaters. So, the impact on electricity production is less considering that many are replaced by gas heaters. There has also been a question from Members of the other side about incentives for local production. We are asking the Ministry of Business, Enterprise & Cooperatives and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce whether we could encourage local production and the steps that we have to take to ensure that this is a success, at the same time, what incentives we should give to this sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I again reassure the House that the Rs5,000 grant will not be supplier driven, hence the problem of canvassing and extorting deposits from clients will not arise. The guidelines for the new scheme are being worked out and will be issued to the public in January.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not see my good friend from Rodrigues and I raised the issue in Rodrigues. We spoke with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and see how we can help. There were 1,000 applicants in Rodrigues for application for solar water heater and 415 units have been installed already and I will probably visiting Rodrigues in January and see how we can help on that side.

To sum up, there has been a record for Rs1040 m. being allocated for solar water heaters and the number of eventual beneficiaries will be 79,000.

Regarding disposal of solar water heaters, I met the director of ADEME Réunion and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding of cooperation between Réunion and Mauritius and this would include technical assistance for the solar water heaters scheme including disposal.

I would just like to remind the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, quickly, because it has been said before, that already to reduce energy use, low energy lamps have been introduced - one million CFL lamps - and it has reduced a peak demand by about 14 MW and energy savings of 2GW, according to the CEB. In this Budget, we are providing more momentum and will introduce more energy saving lamps.

Street lighting in rural and urban roads and traffic lights will be replaced by low energy lighting. The traffic light will be Light Emitting Diode; long lasting cost, much to install, but long life time and certainly

energy saving. And importantly, we are embarking on a project for Government buildings. Already about 3000 lamps have been installed in Government buildings, but we have got a long way to go and I hope this will be introduced fairly quickly.

To create awareness, next year, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre will be distributing – and this is novel and I think our friends will be happy to hear it – working models of a solar water heater, a wind turbine and a photo-electric system to 40 primary schools and, of course, we will accompany them to explain to the youth of the country – this is where we have to start - the benefits they are likely to get from these technologies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are now looking forward to the Copenhagen Summit. I know it is a fierce hope and we hope that there will be legally binding climate deal at Copenhagen and, as I say, this is a hope, and this deal is a sort of legally binding climate with firm decisions on emission targets, financing and technology transfer. Both are essential ingredients for us to move convincingly towards low energy project. The Mauritian nation, Mr Speaker, Sir, should indeed be grateful to the Prime Minister for forcefully making this case of Small Island Developing States and obtaining a commitment for increased support. It is tremendous. This is going to help Small Island Developing States and if it was not for the intervention of the Prime Minister, we would never have achieved this target. We should be grateful to the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the introduction of the low energy bulbs, the next sequence would be the measures for energy efficiency and savings. I said it last time and I repeat it again. Probably this is the easiest way to deal with the growth of demand of electricity. If we want to curb the growth of electricity demand, the best way is to go for energy savings and energy efficiency. I think it is good for the Leader of the Opposition to ask this question - he asked it last time and he asked it again this time – what is this Energy Efficiency Management Office going to do? The functions of the office would be -

- to promote awareness of energy efficiency measures – awareness will be the first step and it is very important;
- create a database on energy use patterns in industries, commercial entities, hotels, households and others on the same basis as the – and I repeat that word because the Leader of the Opposition likes it – *Observatoire de l'Energie*. It will be the equivalent of the *Observatoire de l'Energie*;
- introduce regulations under the legal framework that will progressively ban the import of inefficient appliances;
- guide consumers in the choice of efficient appliances through product labeling. In a first phase the appliances to be targeted will be refrigerators, freezers, room air conditioners, electric ovens, microwave ovens, clothes washers, clothes dryers, dishwashers and electric water heaters. A whole

panoply of equipment that we use inefficiently in the house and we do not realise that they are energy wasting. I think this would be a major step once this is introduced, Mr Speaker, Sir;

In this context, it is also helping in the procurement of solar water heaters for hospitals and also to make people realise that we do not have energy auditors. We have to train them, to form them and to accredit them and this office will be responsible for training and accreditation of auditors.

Having said that, we will look at energy audits in the 20 most energy consuming buildings. They are helping us with that. All this is a first step, Mr Speaker, Sir, to establish a complete change in the House, in Government buildings, on the streets in terms of energy use.

We use a lot of energy building – I see my good friend shaking his head, yes, of course, we do! And we have to rethink again. We have to look at orientation of buildings in terms of light, of ventilation, of use of artificial lighting and so on and so forth. It is all coming up and the new Building Control Act will help in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of our contribution to reducing our energy bill, I feel we have made a good start. There is a long way to go, but we know exactly the roadmap and, I repeat, we know how to do it, it is doable and I hope that everyone will participate in this. Energy equipment should be removed and replaced wherever it exists and

especially for the new buildings and if we talk about the future and the island city development, or everywhere else, it should be MID-compliant. Every development that takes place from now on should be MID-compliant in terms of energy as well as everything else, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, we come to this problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, of energy. Energy generation produces a lot of heat – heated debate, heated arguments - but it lacks fundamental basic approach and thinking. And, to appreciate it, Mr Speaker, Sir, we must look at electricity generation, how it is done, the technology that it involves and then come to conclusions. What is that issue? It is a demand profile that varies. A demand profile for electricity that is very low in the early hours of the morning that goes up during day, in the afternoon, and peaks at the evening between 7 p.m and 9 p.m – roughly this is it. So, we have a changing demand of profile. The demand in the evening can be three times as much as what it is at its lowest during the early hours of the morning. It is a variable demand changing over the 24-hour. How do we cope with that? We need three types of generation equipment. First, we need base load - I see my good friend from the other side, the former Minister of Public Utilities, agreeing with me. We need three types: base load, semi-base load and peaking. For semi-base load, we cannot switch it on and off, it is there all the time, 24 hours and if we switch it off, we can start it again for a long time and we have to pay for it, you can't just

ask them to switch it off without paying for it. So, it is there, fixed for 24-hour.

We have semi-base load. Who is doing the semi-base load? Not the IPPs, but the CEB and we have to recognise that the CEB is providing semi-base load. How are they providing it? With diesel generating units and there is no other as far as I know so far - it will come maybe. We need one which can be switched on and off and that we can have at short notice and this is the diesel operating unit. I hope some other units will come up eventually. Lastly, the inevitable gas turbine, very costly to be used at peaks. Unfortunately, often used outside the peaks also because of difficulties which many of us who have been Ministers of Public Utilities will appreciate. There are base-load, semi-base load, peak with different technologies, different requirements.

In terms of renewable energy, Mr Speaker, Sir, today hydro power supplies 4% of our total requirements and I take this opportunity to remind the House that the biggest hydro power plant at Plaine Champagne was built in the early eighties, with strong opposition. For those of us who remember, it was going to be an ecologic disaster, it was going to disturb the flora and fauna and everything that you can think of. Again we have seen - it is a very familiar scene - whatever you do, wherever you do it, it is going to be an ecological catastrophe, but we are grateful and we pay homage to Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam. In spite of everything, the Plaine Champagne Hydro Power Unit was set up

in the early eighties and it is to his credit that today it is being of great use at peaking times and at other times as well during the rainy season.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now we come to bagasse and coal. Bagasse presently contributes 16% of total energy generation, 4% from water and 16% from hydro. Initially bagasse was introduced or used alone and it was used during the crop season only. In recent years, it has been used in combination with coal. So, we started with bagasse only and then bagasse and coal. The initial plan for IPP was to produce electricity from coal on a 1:1 ratio. I am sure hon. Dulloo will bear me out or contradict me later, if he feels like it. It was going to be for each unit of electricity produced from bagasse, one unit will be produced in coal. That was the initial intention, but this has been subsequently changed to 1:2 ratio, meaning one unit of electricity from bagasse and two units generated from coal and a recent request for 1:3 ratio has been turned down. So, with bagasse, it has been to bagasse and coal; an increasing ratio of coal and a request for a 3:1 ratio has been turned down. All bagasse available, Mr Speaker, Sir, for energy production will come, and any future increase of energy from bagasse will only come from increased energy efficiency. There is not an ounce of bagasse that is being unused and whatever is being used will have to be used more efficiently. The project of increasing energy production from bagasse from 350 GW hours to 600 GW hours through efficiency gains are the subject of further

discussions. We are looking at it, we are looking at all the options, we have some way to go yet, but I hope it will be sorted out.

We come to the king coal. Mr Speaker, Sir, king coal has been the subject of much debate in this House and it is good to know that today only independent power producers use coal. Coal is not used anywhere else; it is used only by the Independent Power Producers. Coal consumption of Independent Power Producers (IPP) has increased substantially over the last five years, from 300,000 metric tonnes in 2003 to 600,000 metric tonnes in 2008 and this is the result of policies adopted during 2000-2005 with a CTDS and CT Sav projects online and, incidentally - I repeat it again – I am sorry to have to lay emphasis on the point - provisions were not made for disposal of ash. I am not blaming, I am not apportioning, but I am putting the facts as they are. Today coal for production of energy is from IPPs only and it has doubled over the years for policies adopted, rightly or wrongly, in the past between 2000 and 2005. Also the technology used is inefficient and we all know that. The technology used to burn bagasse by itself is being used at low pressure. The technology used for coal and bagasse is inefficient. The technology used for coal itself is inefficient. All three are inefficient. The CTDS is a coal stock technology, I won't burden the House with technology, but the technology used in each and every of this coal bagasse/bagasse only needs to be improved and any further efficiency will be through improvement. I can reassure the House, Mr

Speaker, Sir, that any, any new project coal or otherwise will have to meet stringent international norms. Apart that, nobody using whichever technology will not get any help from this Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I note that this year we have not talked about carbon capture and storage and I am glad we have not talked about it because you see all this is for the future. If you can capture the carbon, if you can put it together, transport it and if you get approved places to have it captured and stored, you will have to use one and a half times the amount of coal worldwide that is being used today. As it is today, forget about carbon capture, storage, so on and so forth. We have to look at the cleanest technology available and we hope that with further improvement things will get better.

Mr Speaker, Sir, whilst debating all this, we have not been losing time and we have been looking at local removal energy sources. Obviously, for climate change, we will need to minimise climate change also for security of supply. It makes sense that we don't rely on very expensive materials from abroad. Having said that, in hydro, we have exhausted almost all the hydro potentials. We have put a hydro plant at La Nicolière and one at Midlands Dam likely to start in 2011. They are modest, Mr Speaker, Sir, but it is an effort in the right direction. The good thing about hydro is once it is put up, there are no operation expenses during its lifetime, it is well worth it economically apart from

many other considerations. We talked about wind power and Rodrigues is leading the way. We have already installed two wind turbines of 235kw in Rodrigues and two will be introduced next year with MID funding. So, we are heading in the right direction. Landfill gas to energy – that was a missed opportunity between 2000 and 2005, it should have been done and I am not sure where it went wrong. It was well on the agenda, but somehow it has been put aside. I do not know the reason, but once again the MID Fund is going to help to partly meet the purchase price of electricity from landfill gas to energy. Things are moving, I have talked about the Land Based Oceanic Industry and there were some queries about environmental concern and I can assure the House that it is done elsewhere in Guam, Japan, Hawaii, wherever it is and there has not been any adverse comment from environmentalists. It is a very good proposition that we must get the local population involved earlier on and once it is kept moving, we will go along with it.

Concerning wind data, the main problem about wind energy is that it is not constant, *ce n'est pas fiable* and there is a problem of how much you can adjust on the grid as it is today. In another context, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that he has read and heard experts comment and write on a certain item; he was talking about Maurice Ile Durable, I take this to wind power. Mr Speaker, Sir, you can rent an expert to say whatever you want and often there are interests involved, but we need to have a dispassionate debate. We have seen it for energy project, one

expert, one week, one expert, next week, sometimes two experts in the same week saying different things, all world-class. We have to be careful. For wind power, we had an expert recently and I am not going to say whether I agree with his report. Today we have only 20 megawatts on the grid from wind power because of the instability of the process, there is a limit to how much we can accommodate on the grid, we will have to work on it, but there have been some interests. The CEB has been looking at Curepipe point - higher, windy, very good, it won't have any negative visual impact. Britannia and Plaine des Roches are coming up with their data and we'll work on it, but it is there and we are not putting it outside. I feel that this, as well as photovoltaic, will come in in a big way when we can store electricity. I gather that electricity production and storage is becoming a reality on a magnitude which is well worth in and this takes me to the small power producers. I myself express some doubt whether we will ever be able to get people interested, but let's start at least, let us set the ground, let's put the field in a way that if there are developments, at least, we are ready for them. So, we are coming up with the grid code and the feed-in tariff.

I am the first to say that we are late with the Utility Regulatory Authority. We have tried, we have not found, as it is very restrictive to identify someone, it is very difficult to get a chairperson as per regulation; it is impossible. We have tried, we have approached people. I was in England last time, we approached universities, the Carbon Trust

and others to get them interested, but they were not and we had an international advertisement, we have had quite an impression of interested people, about 30 have applied and three or four of world class, for others, I can't say, but we are looking at it and, as I said, I do feel that we are late, but it's partly or largely due to the lack of candidates that fit in this profile which is very restrictive and limited. I am sure that if my friends dare to look it up, they will find that it is almost difficult to get any Mauritian candidate who had worked in this sector and who can be eligible, we have shut the door to our Mauritian friends. This is so much so for the energy sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I say, the debate will go along, it is fascinating, interesting, but we must know what we are talking about before we say much more.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the water sector, to me, it is a Cinderella. I am not sure why we have forgotten the water sector for so long. Is it because 99.9% of our households get water or why? But it is time that we do something about the water sector. I am grateful to a lot of our friends here and on the other side to have insistently over the months made the point that we cannot go on as we are in the water sector. It is not good enough to say in Africa you do not collect water for weeks, it is not good enough to say that we get water 18 hours out of 24, what we need is un *système fiable* and it is important that we prepare ourselves for the future. It is important, Mr Speaker, Sir. We take water for granted, we think it is there, it is a gift from God and we can waste it,

we can do what we do, what we like. This mentality should be fought and should be something of the past. It is very important. What I have done myself with the help of hon. Dr. Kasenally during the Ramdadan period is that I have asked all the mosques to make sure that they start and continue outside Ramadan to press for a culture of water savings and it is working. I hope this will spread and the population will realise that water is not cheap and certainly it is not free. Rainfall has decreased and if we take it over a number of years - 60 years or whatever - from 2,100 millimeters, the rainfall has come down to 2,000 millimeters. We can say alright, but 100 millimetre rainfall represents 100 million cubic metres of water and we cannot afford to go on as we are. This is for sure. What should we do, Mr Speaker, Sir? The last reservoir was built as from 1999 under the Primeministership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and I am grateful to him because I was the Minister responsible for water and I had the privilege of associating myself with the ceremony to start the construction of the dam and it has proved to be a big asset, but we have left it. What about the Bagatelle? It has been around for 30 years and it is now that we are ready with the plan to start Bagatelle and without the Midlands Dam which was meant for planters, for irrigation purposes as well as the development required today, we would have had great difficulty in supplying water for the Jin Fei development project in the north. I think this is indeed foresight. I have said it before, and I say it again, water problem in Port Louis and surrounding area has two

disadvantages: dry season and wet season. The water supply comes from river and groundwater, both are vulnerable. There is no rain, the water goes down and therefore we are short of water. There is rainfall, the river is muddy, the system gets clogged up. So, we are addressing the problem of clogging of filters as a matter of urgency and it will be followed by the construction of the Bagatelle Dam. I hope that the filters will be installed by the end of next year and that the reservoir itself will be operational by 2012 or 2013, but we will make sure that it happens. Both projects are not for Port Louis only. The Bagatelle Dam, the river and water from Pierrefonds will also help in northern part of Black River and also of Plaine Wilhems down to Coromandel. It is not a Port Louis only project, it is a project that will help others as well. The filter problems and water supply will be addressed. For the information of the House, the Bagatelle Dam Project is 9 million cubic metres providing 15 million cubic metres per day. The Rivière des Anguilles Dam project is more interesting. We will be looking at water requirement for the development of the south and the south west and to my delight and surprise, the Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project came up and the dam capacity is of 14 million cubic metres. It is modest, it is not tremendous, but with an exceptionally high regulated annual yield of 50 million cubic metres which means that we have a lot of water down there to be used. 14 million cubic metres dam capacity – 50 million, to compare with the Midlands Dam, Mr Speaker, Sir, of 25 million cubic

metre capacity with only a throughput of 42 million. So, 45 million for 42 million and 14 million cubic metres dam capacity for 50 million. That is indeed progress.

We need a Master Plan, Mr Speaker, Sir, to address the challenges of water sector in the long-term and a Master Plan for the development of water resources in Mauritius. I would like to stress here to the House that existing water rights are centuries old, land use has changed without any concurrent review of water rights. The rationalisation of water rights will be an important component of the study. What I am saying is that water rights cannot be as it is now, dating from centuries, we will have to relook at it again.

We next come to the very important problem of non revenue water, water lost. We have, Mr Speaker, Sir, consultants coming in over the years and I will not make a long list but just to say that in the 70's it was Taylors & Sons; in the 80's it was Severn Trent Water International; in the 90's it was French Consultants; in the late 90's it was Lyonnaise/Vivendi. All of them have come in to solve the problem and we are left today with not much improvement. So, we need to look at it again. I am going to ask that we have a look at the overall management of the CWA and also, at the same time, introduce a private sector operator to manage the two sectors, wastewater and water.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take another five or seven minutes and end here. The wastewater sector is ongoing and it is late. The hon. former

Minister, Alan Ganoo, will bear with me. The project started in 1999 and by 2005, after six years, it had already accumulated a delay of three years. It is not the fault of anybody; it is just constraints associated with it. We have looked at it, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are addressing the issues. In brief, we find that the wastewater projects require specialised skills which are scarce locally, management contract which is complex, wastewater projects involve massive investments most of which are foreign-funded and there are delays of appraisal process and obtaining no objection of funding at different agencies and it is compounded by lengthy procurement procedures and challenges to the award of contract. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are remedying it and we hope that things will improve. I take note of the repeated complaints of the public. I have myself gone to visit places where wastewater works are ongoing. I have put up a unit in my Ministry to address complaints and I hope that this will satisfy Members of the House and the public, but feel free and I appreciate that hon. Bhagwan, hon. Maurice Allet and others have offered their services to accompany us to visit and see for themselves what can be done. In short, we should not excavating roads to great length and depth and leave it open. This is unacceptable, but we are looking at all the problems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been my privilege for four and a half years to be associated with this Government and for five years previously between 1995 and 2000, and I would like to thank the hon. Prime

Minister for this *confiance*. I would like to thank all Members in Cabinet, outside Cabinet and of the Opposition. I cannot complain, I have had a marvellous four and half years and I thank you all.

At 12.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

Mr J. Cuttaree (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Speaker, Sir, for reasons beyond my control, I was away from the House for a few days, but I availed myself of the opportunity to read *in extenso* many speeches which have been made by Members on both sides of the House. I must say that I have been impressed, especially by Members of the Opposition who have, with facts and figures, and very concrete examples, demolished the economic and social pretensions of the Minister regarding the reform, the development and social justice in this country.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition made a very thorough analysis of the economic problems of present day Mauritius, how we got there and the challenges which we have in front of us. Indeed, this makes my task much easier. My speech this afternoon is not going to be dealt essentially with the various sectors of the economy, but it is going to be a speech which is going to be more concerned with the philosophy behind the action taken by the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would fail in my duty if I did not come back on one point which the hon. Leader of the Opposition stressed upon strongly. I did so last year, but I have to come back to that again. This is the last Budget of this Government's mandate and I think we have to bring some clarity on what has happened on the basis on which this Government claims its so-called economic and social success, Mr Speaker, Sir.

There is the issue of growth and investment. Fair enough, there has been increase in investment in certain sectors, rather high levels of investment. But then, investment by itself does not exist in a vacuum. If I ask somebody: "Do you want to invest?" What will that person tell me: "Where"? You have to invest somewhere! If you look at the 'somewhere', from where investment has come in this country since these last general elections, where has it gone to? It has gone into the economic pillars which the previous Government had put up to give a new boost and a new orientation to the economy of this country. When we said during the campaign of 2000 that "*il faut redresser le pays*", it was an open slogan. In fact, we said that we had to go and recreate a new economy. The economy which existed before and depending on preferences, textiles and tourism, sea and sand and what not, would not get us anywhere. So, this is why we came with a completely new philosophy of development. We tackled the issue of the reforms in the Sugar industry on which we faced so much criticism. I remember the

VRS. What was not said about the VRS, trying to paint us as *les valets* of a certain part of a section of the private sector! We were throwing people out of jobs, people who had suffered historically - and this is what our Government was doing when we were coming up with the reform of the Sugar sector! But when I read the speech of hon. Faugoo - he is not here - you will be surprised, as I was, about the pleasure he took to explain how this Government brought about a revolution in the Sugar sector, how there were the IRS and the VRS and ultimately the number of workers came down from 25,000 to 6,000.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what was important was that we created new poles of development and I will quote a report of the BOI which is in a way the report of the Ministry of Finance. It is an old report and I will quote the figures for 2006 because the hon. Minister brought his first reform Budget in June 2006. Therefore, whatever happened in 2006 he cannot claim that he did it because his Budget came in June 2006. Now he starts getting nervous, never mind I am on good terms with him and I am not going to quarrel with him. Let us look at those figures, I quote here the report of the Board of Investment at page 13. This is what is said, Mr Speaker, Sir. Already in 2006 IRS - I hope they are not going to say that this was a creation of the *Alliance Sociale* - IRS - 42% investment, ICT - 13%, Seafood - 11%. I am not talking about the hotels - I see my friend, the Deputy Speaker, looking at me; he knows what I am talking about. The number of hotels which was coming up and the

number of demonstrations there were around to prevent these hotels from being built during our mandate. It is these investments in the hotels which are now the basis for the boom in the tourism sector for which the present Government is claiming all the kudos.

These three sectors Mr Speaker, Sir, accounted for 66% of ...

(Interruptions)

They are going to get me nervous....

66%...

(Interruptions)

...66% of total investment. Mr Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me, I will read that report of the Board of Investment where it is said –

“In 2006, IRS was the major contributor to total investment into the country. However, there was a significant contribution from emerging sectors including seafood and ICT, which represented almost a quarter of total investment in this country”.

This is the ‘*fondations*’ of the growth because when the new Government came in investment had already started to come in and these sectors grew up and they brought investment in this country. I quote the report of the Board of Investment on 2007-2008, Mr Speaker Sir - look what they said, this is the report of 2007-2008 -

“The Integrated Resort Scheme has given a real boost to investment and economic development in Mauritius. IRS projects are currently attracting high net worth individuals to

Mauritius, an opportunity not to be missed for the development of the other sectors such as restaurants, commercial centres and shopping malls.

An ample opportunity exists for IRS buyers to invest in other sectors of the Mauritian economy. As from October 2008, total investment in IRS for the last three years amounted to Rs11.3 billion'.

We are not talking about the restaurants, commercial centres, shopping malls which he, himself, said have benefitted from the IRS, Rs11.3 billion with a 99% share of FDI. I do not say that. This is the report of the Board of Investment of 2007-2008. Therefore, I do not mind they are benefitting from what we have done, but what I mind is intelligent people coming and talking in this House as if they are talking on a soap box, saying that they have done all these things for the IRS and the sugar reform as well; it was the *Alliance sociale* which has brought in growth and investment in this country. The only single new pillar which has been mentioned all along these four and a half years has been the Land Based Oceanic Industry. He mentioned it in 2006, 2007 and this year and it is going to start next year! *Qui vivra verra?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, having said that, I want to go back to an issue which is very important, namely this issue of Government announcing projects all along and failing to deliver. Somebody mentioned that 70%

of all those projects which have been announced by this Government over the four and half years have not been implemented. Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Budget of 2007-2008 the hon. Minister of Finance brought in the Programme-Based Budgeting. This was a good measure because it allows us to judge to what extent Government is result-oriented, to what extent it has succeeded to bring in results rather than talking about projects. We can do that for every Ministry but it will take too long. Let me take, for example, the Ministry of Housing.

In his Budget Speech June 2008, the hon. Minister allocated under the 2008-2009 Budget, Rs107 m. towards infrastructure for the construction of 174 *Firinga* houses on 10 sites. Result: nothing. Under the Programme-Based Budgeting for the Ministry of Housing, mention is made of an award of a contract for the construction of 116 housing units at Military and Penang Road Port Louis. Result: nothing. Publishing a list of beneficiaries of housing units in March: nothing. Housing and Land Strategic Plan reflecting all priority objectives developed and approved by April 2009, this is completely out. Now it is the CSR, the private sector, which is going to deal with that!

The second one is more revealing. It is the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications. I take what was announced in the Budget speech June 2008: National E-inclusion foundation as a joint public private partnership, bringing together Government, State Informatics, Microsoft, etc - to do what? Donation

of refurbished PCs to 20,000 poor families; donation to NGOs of 10,000 PCs refurbished; operation of a NGOs IT Academy; amendments to the ICT Act; drafting of detailed terms of reference for an e-Government cell, drafting of a five-year high level plan for e-governance for all Ministries and Departments by June 2009; enhancing economies of scale and collaboration among institutions in the ICT sector through the setting up of National Information and Communication Technology Authority of Mauritius, Government Online Centre to be an ISO certified by March 2009, legislative changes on data protection etc, recommendations of the e-Health plan and e-Agricultural plan to be available in October 2008 and 2009, Information Security Assurance Framework for industry adherence to information security requirements by May 2009, contract deployment of integrated Hospital Management System at two regional hospitals awarded by May 2009. Nothing done! Zero! I have taken two ministries; I can do the same thing with all the other ministries to a lesser or to a greater extent. This is the reality. The reality is that you have a Government which was handed over a stepping stone to take this country to a higher level. What they have done is to create a situation where they talk a lot; the MBC is here, obviously, to forward what they are saying, but when it comes to deliver, nothing! I am sure that even some Ministers who have listened to what I have just said regarding this Ministry of IT, must be shocked. Four and a half years for nothing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another issue which is linked to that. It is that issue of institutions. I am sure he has read extensively the works of Rostow and Stiglitz concerning the role of institutions to ensure growth. In fact, I have been very interested to read what they have written on countries which are coming out of conflict; therefore, these are countries which have no institutions, so to speak of, and countries which are coming out of one type of regime into another type of regime. They have especially been using examples of Vietnam, Cambodia; then, comparing to what is happening in China, with their new approach, India and Singapore. The conclusion which they all come to is that if you don't have performing institutions, you are not going to deliver on your programmes, however, good these programmes are. This is a basic economic reality; this is a management reality. But, in Mauritius, we have institutions. It is not institutions which are lacking. We have competent people. It is not competent people that are lacking in this country. But why is it that we fail to deliver? The Minister announced his plans - I read the very interesting speech of hon. Bodha - about the various Funds which he had created. Why is it that the funds are not spent? Either the Funds are a bluff from the Minister, or the institutions, which are given the responsibility to implement the programme, cannot do it. If you look at these Funds, Mr Speaker, Sir, they are: Saving Jobs and Recovery Fund - Rs3.5 bn, spent Rs399 m. only; Food Security Fund: Rs1.5 bn, spent Rs27 m.; Human Resource, Knowledge Fund,

Rs1.5 bn, spent Rs74 m; Social Housing Fund: Rs1.2 bn, spent Rs400 m. These are the realities, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the programmes announced by the Minister, the funding which he announced and the results. We are now six months from the general election. To me, the main reason of the failure of this Government to deliver lies in the atmosphere which they themselves created after the election, which started with this issue of *leve paké allé* and, subsequently, the politicisation of institutions. We all know; every Government appoints political appointees. If you have institutions, very often you appoint people who are close to you as the Head, as Chairperson. This happens all over the world, and there is nothing particularly wrong with that. But, there are two things which are important. The first thing is that these people have to be competent. The second thing is that when these people go there, they have to go there to do the work, which is entrusted to them. I remember, when I was a Minister, I always told people who were appointed politically that they have an additional responsibility on their heads. Their responsibility is to do their jobs properly, but their responsibility is to make sure that the Minister who has appointed them doesn't lose face by the way they act. And it is the complete opposite, which has happened in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. You can take a few examples, Mr Speaker, Sir. Look at the municipalities and the district councils; *manger, boire, pas faire narien!* Is there an honest person who can look at what is happening in the district councils and the

municipalities and say - especially if he belongs to l'Alliance sociale - that this is what they won the elections for? To have municipalities like this, to have people you put your trust in, to have people using your party label to do the things they are doing in these places, and having absolutely no political courage to tackle them because the elections are near? But, this has been going on for years, Mr Speaker, Sir. Look at all the other institutions. You have the port, and the saga of Siddick Chady; you have Airports of Mauritius and the saga of Maraye and Seetohul; you have the MBC and the saga of Bijaye Madhou; you have the Bank of Mauritius and the saga of who you know. To me, Air Mauritius is a whole symbol. There was a competent guy there. I am not related to him. Meg Pillay was there, and he was doing a very good job. He was thrown out. No reason at all! He doesn't do politics, and even now people know that he does not have a political colour. He was replaced by Veerasamy. Everyone knows the ability of this guy. This man was hounded out of Air Mauritius. I use the words: 'he was hounded out of Air Mauritius'. At the *complot* which we all heard on the radio, you find somebody - and everyone knows who she is and her credentials - asking: 'I did not know that he was a Labour Party person or not, whether he was *nou dimoune*'. This person who is at the Head of one of the most important institutions in this country, whose job is protected by the Constitution, sitting there and saying: 'I did not know that this was *nou dimoune*'. I am talking about Air Mauritius. Now it is

not over: Nirvan Veerasamy has gone, a new one has come. Apparently, this new one would be thrown out also and another one is going to come. It is all politicising of an institution, *le fleuron de l'île Maurice*. When the Paille en Queue flies, every Mauritian is proud. This is what this Government has done to Air Mauritius.

Now we come to the fate of Raj Dahlia in the NTC. We take the case of the Beach Resort Authority. There was one Mr Subash Seeruttun who was the Chairperson. There were lots of allegations of corruption against him; nothing happened. There was another one, Mr Sangoora who was sacked because of allegedly casteist statements. At the MIE, every year you hear about incidents and scandals regarding exams. Even today, I read in the press - I am not saying I agree with it - that exams are being corrected in such a way as to favour people to find places in the best schools.

Now, let us take the State Trading Corporation. We all travel but can anyone of us imagine in a democratic country – we talk about Singapore, India – that an institution like this can exist after what they have done during these past four and a half years. The saga of rice, flour, Amul milk, the purchase of petroleum products. No one knows how much we are purchasing petroleum products but people have to pay. Then finally, it seems we all like jewels now. The STC set up a company to do what? To import gold? If it was gold, the Director would

have been sacked, the Minister would have made sure that he was sacked.

(Interruptions)

But diamonds! So, buy precious stones, diamonds. Who is the boss there? The treasurer of the Labour Party! Can you imagine! Look at SEHDA. SEHDA *veut dire* Ramgoolam *replaced* Boodhoo. He was a good cadre, Boodhoo was appointed in his place. And what happened? Boodhoo was thrown out again and Vijay Ramgoolam has come back. But have the problems been solved there? No! The problems are the same.

If we take Enterprise Mauritius, the conflicts between Amedée Darga and Beeharry, everyone knows about it. All these institutions are there to serve the people. All these people that I have been mentioning are all political appointees, appointed by this Government. Therefore, if anybody is responsible, it is this Government, for having polluted our vital institutions in such a way. Of course, I could go on with the CEB and the CWA.

If we look at the Director of Audit's Report, this has been going on for a long time. Questions have been asked in Parliament. I, as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, did not ask questions. As Members of the Public Accounts Committee we don't ask questions on specific issues, because we are dealing with these issues. But there is a report from the Public Accounts Committee which is a by-partisan

organisation with Parliamentarians of both sides of the House, where we explained that this business of wastage cannot go on like this. We explained that we are the eyes and ears of Parliament, which votes the funds to be spent by these institutions, by these Ministries, that it cannot go on like this. We even said that there are certain things which smell strongly of corruption. We came up with specific measures to ensure that there is some control on the way things happen in the public administration of finances in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. Three years have passed, nothing has happened, no one cares and, at the same time, we go to the people and we tell them: “*serrer la ceinture*, we have to give you salary compensation which is less than the rate of inflation.” At the last Budget, people who were getting Rs12,000, like attendants, were not paid their salary compensation. And this is what we do with people’s money! This is the reality, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, who on this Government side is going to look at these realities and say: “yes, there is something rotten in the State of Denmark and we have to do something about it.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now move to another issue. Time is going fast; I will try to go very fast. It is on this issue of textile. I am going to explain because I think it is important that it goes on record. Every time there is a debate in this House, I hear people talking about the number of jobs in the textile sector which were lost at the time we were in Government. Even today, five years later, the Minister of

Finance is coming again with the same thing, 30,000 people out of jobs. Let me put the record straight. Mr Speaker, Sir, when we came in Government in 2000, there were already dangers on the textile sector in Mauritius. We have to understand how we developed the textile sector. People from overseas, Hong Kong, Taiwan, came to invest in Mauritius, because there was the Multi-Fibre Agreement which was hindering markets, market access in Europe and the United States. These people came because we had market access and everyone knew at that time that the day the Multi-Fibre Agreement was going to end these investors would leave. In 2000, Mr Speaker, Sir, people were not very sure whether this Multi-Fibre Agreement was going to end or whether it was going to be extended. But then, at the WTO Meeting in Doha in 2001, when China joined the WTO, everyone realised that the Multi-Fibre Agreement was ending in a few years and there was panic.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, the panic was not only in Mauritius. In fact, a study of the Directorate General for trade in the European Union came to the conclusion that the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement would mean that only China and India would be able to benefit. This single move, that is, the pending end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement caused a crash in the textile industries of developing countries. As you are aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, Bangladesh lost one million jobs. Lesoto had 50 factories closed down, with a job loss of 50% of its number of jobs. In Africa, in one year, 250,000 jobs were lost and in Mauritius, we had to

survive. The debate which was going on here was, instead of having a labour driven textile sector, we need to have a technology driven sector because this is the only way we can compete. As all the shareholders were aware, if you want to have a textile industry with 90,000 people, in a very short time, you will have no textile industry. The only way you can have a viable textile industry is to have an industry which is technologically driven and not labour driven. This is why there has been a shedding of jobs in the EPZ sector. On the one hand, the Hong Kong companies have left, on the other hand, there was a transformation of this industry into a technologically driven one and Government came up with various funds in order to help this transformation. After the 2005 Government came in, this continued. If we have, today, a relatively – because there are other dangers coming – stable textile industry, it is because we lost the jobs which allowed these companies to become lean companies and be technologically driven. This is a situation which happens all over the place. I remember when I was in the Government of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, we went to the States to see President Georges Bush and discussed with him the issue of textile in Mauritius. President Bush said to the Prime Minister: “I would tell you one thing, if I were in your place, I would forget about textiles because textile chases cheap labour and you don’t want to be a country where your people stay poor with cheap labour.” I remember very well that was said by President

Bush to the former Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in my presence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not over. What is happening now? There are dangers again today at the level of the US congress. There is a Bill now, they are discussing the reform of what they call preferences in order to give countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia the same duty-free and quota-free facilities that Africa has. There is a big hue and cry because these are the two very important producers of textile in Asia. This might mean the end of AGOA for the textile industries. On top of that, Senator Jim McDermott who is the father of AGOA - the Prime Minister met him, I know him very well - he is now coming with another Bill to extend duty-free and quota-free facilities to all the products of all LDCs. Congressman McDermott is a very respected man, but if this happens, the US market for the products of Africa is going to be terribly threatened. These are the dangers which are on the horizon and about which I did not hear anybody in this House talking about. These two issues came up in congress in November of this year, that is, three weeks ago, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to an issue which has been at the heart of the campaign of the *Alliance sociale*, namely democratisation. There has been a commission *pour la démocratisation de l'économie* with a Chairperson and a Deputy Chair. I did not hear very much about *la démocratisation* during these debates. The only

thing I note is about the fund for canes, the word *démocratisation* has been uttered very intelligently by the Minister of Finance. At least, there is one word in the Budget about *démocratisation*. I read the speech of my friend, hon. Sayed-Hossen. There was not a single word in his speech about *démocratisation*. It was a speech about Illovo, etc. The only thing is this Cane Democratisation Fund. I will deal with this issue of the Cane Democratisation Fund in a minute, Mr Speaker, Sir, but to all of us, what does democratisation of the economy mean? It means the SMEs being given a role to play in the economy, increasing their importance. Instead of having huge consortia, you have small and medium enterprises dominating the economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't need to talk about small and medium enterprises. I have with me, here, a memorandum which was submitted to the Government by the *Fédération des* Small and Medium Enterprises by one Mr Amar Deepalsing, the president. I don't know this gentleman. He cannot be accused of being a member of the Central Committee of the MMM because I can assure you that we don't have any relationship with him.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to quote a few things which this gentleman says in the memorandum -

“The situation is desperate for the SME sector as the promised lifeline is still at the stages of good intentions but tainted with bad faith.”

A few weeks back, Mr Deerpalsing submitted that -

“The schemes for SMEs under the MASMED Fund were discontinued immediately after the Budget Speech of 22 May 2009 although introduced for a period of three years. Those schemes were of great interest and were helpful to SMEs and were scraped abruptly without any explanation. However, the scheme for the big enterprises under the MASMED Fund continued and was even re-advertised in September 2009.”

He goes on –

“The inaction is cruel towards the SMEs and the exigencies and committees responsible for the implementation of the measures contained in the last Budget are devoid of a declining vision or commonsense. We wonder if the Minister of Finance really realises the precariousness of state of affairs of the SMEs.”

He goes on to say –

“In the wake of the numerous economic hurricanes and typhoons, entrepreneurs are compelled to become hawkers, traders and importers. We fear a further reduction in domestic consumption, following job losses.”

And then he makes a list of the various projects of Government. Various schemes set up to implement the measures contained in the 2009 Budget were first, mechanism for transitional support to private

sector for firms with a turnover below Rs5 m. - total failure; second, mentoring scheme - total failure; third, micro financing scheme for women - total failure.

(Interruptions)

I am not saying failure, he is saying failure!

Fourth, re-scheduling of loans at DBM – failure; fifth, renovation and refurbishment scheme for small hotel and restorations - total failure; sixth, Mauritius Business Grow Scheme - total failure; seventh, leasing equipment modernisation scheme – failure; eighth, mechanism for transitional support for private sector for firms with turnover higher than Rs5 billion - total failure; ninth, Emergency Export Credit Insurance Scheme - total failure; tenth, implementation of level playing field - total failure; eleventh, standard norms and standards for imported products - total failure; twelfth, genuine Mauritian handicapped level - total failure; thirteenth, work cum training scheme - total failure.

This is what the sector thinks of this Government, this is what the Small and Medium Enterprises think of the commitment of Government to the small entrepreneurs.

(Interruptions)

It is as if tomorrow morning the hon. Prime Minister makes his speech ...

(Interruptions)

He is the president of the whole thing. Mr Speaker, Sir!

I think this by itself is enough. *On ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi.* This is what the membership of the *fédération* thinks of the hon. Minister and of his actions for the small and medium enterprises.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us come back to the issue of the Cane Democratisation Scheme. It is a good scheme, it is a good idea.

Concerning the 35% shareholding in the cane industry to planters, labourers and artisans, I can quote the Budget Speech, but they can all read it. There is something which I would like to highlight, Mr Speaker, Sir. If you look at the Speech in May at paragraphs 96 and 97 on the same issue, this is what the hon. Minister said –

“Planters and workers are joining the shareholding of all new ventures under the sugar sector reform plan up to a 35% shares.”

He said new ventures . In the Budget, he said, I quote –

“A 35% share in the cane industry has been secured for them through the value chain from milling to refining, distillery, ethanol and all activities engaging the conversion and marketing of cane into its final products”.

Which is which? Six months ago he was talking about new activities. What are these new activities? Production of sugar is no longer a new activity. There are only two left, ethanol and energy. The energy, apart from the Fuel project, nobody knows what is happening to that project. Concerning ethanol, I hope the hon. Minister will stand up and say that

he can give the guarantee to the planters that this development of ethanol project is going to be a success and that the planters are going to make money out of it. This is what I want to highlight regarding this project. *Il y a des zones d'ombre très inquiétantes* around this project. A couple of years ago, in his Budget, he was priding himself about how he came up with the democratisation to the sugar industry in 1994. The Labour Party then shouted: *vieille ferraille!* Enough has been said about that!

Mr Speaker, Sir, at that time, the planters, the artisans and the labourers contributed only 50% to the cost under the MSM/MMM Government; we had just left Government at that time. Now with all this money which they were getting from the European Union for the accompanying measures. Why is it that they make the planters and the artisans contribute 66.7% when the Minister himself in 1994 made them contribute 50% when there was no money? But now when there is *manna* from heaven they make them pay 66.7%. Of course, by doing that there will be a bit more money left to give to the big ones. I hope that this is not the reason why this is being done like this. On the other hand, if you look at it, the workers and the planters will have to contribute some Rs140 m. as their share of their investment apart from their loan because the Minister himself said that for the investment to be effected they have used that sum of Rs278 m. and Rs63 m., that is the sum of Rs341 m., for the purchase of these shares. The planter now will have to pay one-third, that is, Rs114 m. This is not clear. I have not

heard anyone saying or going on the television and explaining to the planters that there is a reform. We don't know exactly what they are going to get out of this reform. But what we know is that they will have to pay Rs114 m. as their share of investment in spite of the fact that billions of rupees have been paid, is being paid to Government for the small planters through the reforms of the sugar industry. Why do they take that money from them? Give it to them free! The Minister is saying every time on TV that we have got so many billions from the EU. They want to democratise, give it to them! Maybe they do not even know that they are getting shares but, at least, don't make them pay for it!

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another point. Under the Sugar Investment Trust, the shareholders have voting rights. Will these shareholders retain their rights and will they be able to accede to Board representation of the sugar companies? Another point I would like to make is that in 1994, the workers very soon after the deal with the MSPA was completed, they had their shares. Today, two years after the 2007 deal, nothing has happened, they are still waiting for the vehicle. When will the vehicle come, or as they say, when will they find their seat on the bus? Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know the issue of the VRS and the IRS. The schemes were there in order to make sure that the reform makes the industry more profitable. These workers who lost their jobs, they lost a job as a sacrifice in order to help the sugar industry becoming competitive. At that time, there were 25,000 workers - if I am not

mistaken. Today there are between 5,000 and 6,000 workers in the sugar industry. Why are they restricting this scheme only to these 6000? All these workers, labourers and all those who have been serving this industry for such a long time, they had been given the chance to participate in a scheme, to leave their jobs. The hon. Minister himself in the campaign talked such a lot about these people, how much they are suffering as a result of losing their jobs in the sugar industry. How many of them have committed suicide! They have not been able to send their children to school or to university! He has been saying all this during the campaign, but why don't he extend the scheme to them?

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now move on to food security. Mr Speaker, Sir, in his Budget Speech of 2008/2009, the hon. Minister of Finance talked over 44 paragraphs about the issue. I congratulate him for that because he realises the importance of this issue and at paragraph 194 of that Budget, he says –

“Being given the imperative of building food security, I am providing Rs1 billion for the Food Security Fund.”

I just talked about what has happened to the Food Security Fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if one looks at this present Budget Speech, it is a really disappointing speech in as far as food security is concerned because the only thing of note which he says is that he is going to give

Rs350 m. out of the Food Security Fund as benefits to projects for small farmers, breeders and fishermen. But what happened to his whole vision of 2008/2009? Mr Speaker, Sir, I will quote that because I am in complete agreement with what the Minister said then at paragraph 194 of the Budget 2008/2009 -

‘194. Mr Speaker, Sir, to make best use of opportunities in the region and to achieve our goal of food security, would require a well-structured organization that will promote investments by entrepreneurs local and foreign. To this end, a Regional Food Security Company will be set up to negotiate for land which would be vested with it and to lease land for cultivation. It would engage in discussions with the COMESA Clearing House to ensure that payments are effected smoothly; it would also help to provide infrastructural works by negotiating with development partners. The shareholding of the company would be open to Government entities, international and local financial institutions and individual and corporate investors including small and medium planters.’

Two years later, when this issue of food security is more than ever threatening the access of food by our population, there is nothing in this Budget, only Rs350 m. for cow breeders and all that, but we all know

the issue of food security is much more than that and I am going in a moment to explain how we, on this side of the House, we, in the MMM, see the issue of food security.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is something which is called net import of food, that is, whatever you export and whatever you import. Mauritius is a net food importer. If you look at the deficit, that is, the net import of food, in 2001, it was Rs6,737 m. It has today reached – my latest figures are for 2007 – Rs13,350 m. essentially rice, flour, dairy products and meat, Mr Speaker, Sir. If you look at our exports of sugar for the same year 2007, it is Rs9 billions, but we are spending Rs13 bn extra on food. Therefore, we have a very, very big problem. Hon. Boolell is there, hon. Bérenger is there and we are all there, we have all been trying to tackle this problem and the solution to this problem is not to be found in Mauritius, it is to be found outside Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The main issue is the availability of land. Even if you look locally you find that for various historical reasons – economic and otherwise – the land here belongs to the large planters and the estate owners. And you cannot have a real policy to produce locally unless you tackle this issue of land.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many ways of doing that, but the first one, which is more important than anything else, is the rational exploitation of the sugar cane lands. This is the key. I have said that before, no one even noticed when I said it. What we need to do is to use

land meant for long season canes and introduce a longer period between two cane cycles for foodcrop. This will release three to five hectares every year for foodcrops. This can be done. There will be a loss in sugar, but then this can be compensated by new varieties. This is the objective. They have a possibility. I have been talking about that for the past two years. They have to look at this. This is a part solution to put at our disposal between three and five thousands hectares of land for food production, Mr Speaker, Sir.

But then the other issue is an agricultural problem. We have talked a lot about small planters, medium planters and rightly so, but what is the state of agriculture? If you want to have modern agriculture today, what are the main issues? First of all, the rising costs of inputs; secondly, the non-availability and high cost of labour; thirdly, in most cases, mechanisation is essential.

Fourthly, modern facilities for storage and transportation are becoming essential to ensure quality of product. In fact, the Sugar Estates are doing it, for example Médine which is a pioneer in mechanisation is now a major producer of vegetables where each and every operation is mechanised. Many other companies which have mechanised cane production have land which is also suitable for vegetables after mechanisation. Therefore, although we support the traditional activities of small farmers we have to look beyond. We have, as a matter of policy, to make sure that the small farmers get involved

into large scale commercial agriculture because it is there that the real profit comes and to do that, there is only one solution. What we need is a strategic partnership between the Sugar Estates and the Small Planters Community. You do not achieve that by shouting around the corner all types of racist slogans. You do not make a '*crusade*' in your politics about trying to run down certain people for some cheap political gains. These people have got the land, the money, the know-how, they can help and we need their help as patriots in order to create this partnership between the Sugar Estates and the small planting community. This is the plank of the MMM for the democratisation of the agricultural process in Mauritius. You can do this partnership through a National Foodcrop Production Company where the planters will have their equity, the sugar companies will have their land and there will be participation from Government. The result will be that we will have a modern, commercial agricultural sector where the small planters and the Sugar Estates will be able to cooperate for the benefits of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, as far as foodcrop is concerned, it will have to come from the region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, about the food crisis, you have to understand something, in the world markets, only 60% of the world wheat production is traded; 8% only of dairy production is traded and only 7% of rice production is traded. Generally there are only a few number of exporting countries which are in this trade. Hence, severe dramatic climatic conditions in one exporting country can disturb the market. Low

level of stocks, price of energy affecting cost of production, activities of investment funds in derivative markets in commodities, restrictive trade practices in exporting countries, the reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, a successful DOHA round with its impact on the agricultural subsidies, all these will affect in the short term the availability of food for countries like Mauritius.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, if we want to aspire to find the food we need, we will get it only from regional cooperation. In fact, when you look at the region, you have to look at the producers. There are four potential countries as producers - Mozambique where we already have a concession of 300,000 hectares; Madagascar where, in spite of much effort, it has not actually taken off; Tanzania, which can be very interesting, as you know CIEL is already present there in the Sugar industry, but they may be more interested to produce food for the East African Community and Zimbabwe which has got the potential to become the grain basket of the region, but still the politically unstable situation prevents us from looking at it as a viable alternative. Then, we have the supply side countries: Mauritius, Reunion, Comoros, and Seychelles. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not that simple to have regional food production, the land is very often far from various centres. Many of the areas for production are devoid of proper infrastructure: roads, irrigation, storage and handling facilities, port facilities! The investment costs in infrastructure can be really prohibitive. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir,

again, when we talk about regional production of foodcrops, we have to talk of a joint venture; not a joint venture between Madagascar and Mauritius as this is bilateral. I think what we need to have is a joint venture between the demand side countries, if I can use that term - Mauritius, Reunion, Comoros, Seychelles and the supply side countries like Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar, to which can be added the United Arab Republic because, as we all know, the UAR have already indicated their ambition to ensure full food security and can bring in capital and the markets of the Gulf. Such a project would be in line with the approach of both the World Bank and the EU to achieve regional food security and I am sure that their support through investment funds and technical assistance will be guaranteed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a time when decision makers were equating progress with economic growth. Later on, the notion of development and ultimately social economic development came in and now everyone is talking about sustainable development. For a long time, the best known definition of sustainable development has been: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'; this is the classical definition. It is an environmental definition. Then the UN World Summit brought in a definition concerning economic, social and environmental concerns. I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that any development policy should be a policy based on sustainable

development. But, when we talk of sustainable development, what do we mean? Here, Mr Speaker, Sir, we adopt the definition of Nobel Prize Winner Amartya Sen who argues that development should be viewed in terms of real freedoms that people can enjoy in terms of economic facilities and social opportunities. We, in the MMM, Sir, believe that what is needed today in the wake of the uncertainties regarding the world economic recovery, is the implementation of a recovery and adaptation plan which should, above all, address the human dimensions of our population through support for the vulnerable, including labour market policies, skills development, income support, effective safety nets, pensions, education enhanced training projects and opportunities for all in all fields of life.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is my twenty-fifth speech on the Budget. As you know, I have been in this House for the past 27 years, and I have already announced my intention not to seek reelection. I must say that during these 27 years, I have had an extraordinary experience of being a parliamentarian. I have learnt to learn, and I have also learnt to share. Above all, I always fought for my ideas with conviction and, sometimes, with passion. For me, what is most important is the way I have been able to live with my friend parliamentarians. I have many adversaries - who does not have! - but I do not have any enemies. I have never considered an adversary as an enemy. I hope that, as the years pass, I

will look upon my career in this House, not only as a very pleasurable one, but also as a very fruitful one for my country.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr Speaker: At the last sitting of the House, your immediate neighbour on your left announced that he was also retiring from public life and now it is your turn. I think that I shall make no mistake in saying that, since I have known you personally, from 1983 onwards, as a Member of Parliament, and then as a Minister in Cabinet, you have been one of the best parliamentarians I have ever known. You have both contributed in the most important debates in the House during the last 27 years, and you have been one of the most respectful Members of Parliament. I thank you very much as Speaker of this House. I hope that we will, from time to time, hear you, although you will not be in active politics, and wish you well in your future endeavours.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

At 3.56 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.32 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start, first of all, by thanking you and the Deputy Speaker for presiding over the debates with your usual tact and dexterity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget, as were the four others preceding it, taken together with the other policies taken by my Government, represents yet another step towards the fulfilment of the pledges we made to the nation back in 2005. Our achievements over the past four years and a half speak for themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir. Any objective person would, without hesitation, I believe, qualify these as truly remarkable in the light of - let's not forget - the self avowed *état d'urgence économique* which was bequeathed to us in 2005, and also the multi-faceted and unprecedented challenges that came our way, including the worst financial and economic crisis since the great depression.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I speak, major economies - endowed, unlike us, with the natural resources and first class infrastructure - are still reeling from the impact of the tremors caused by the biggest macro-economic crisis to have hit the world since 1930's. Who would have thought, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the world would have witnessed such a downward spiral and failure of their financial systems right across the United States of America, Europe, Asia and Singapore? Who would have thought that

one day we would see customers queuing to take their money out of the banks? Who would have thought that banks would be nationalised in the UK, Europe and the United States? Who would have thought, not so long ago, Mr Speaker, Sir, that General Motors, that icon of American Industry, would go bankrupt? And now, recently we have just witnessed and heard - who would have thought that Dubai world, backed by the United Arab Emirates with huge oil reserves, would request a moratorium on its debts? The recent experience of Dubai is a reminder - if we need a reminding - that recovery is fragile, and economic conditions remain difficult.

Since 2008, the world economy has deteriorated and the global financial system has been put under severe scrutiny. The promised green shoots in the major economies are taking longer to burgeon than initially expected.

All this at a time when the price of commodities shot up, oil prices even more so - we saw what happened - the Multi-Fibre Agreement was being dismantled and we suffered the worst reduction in the price of sugar. Considering all this and the major economic crisis that we have faced over the past years - an earthquake with unending aftershocks, we are still seeing the aftershocks, Mr Speaker, Sir, an earthquake that has severely rocked even the most robust economies - it must require a lot of bad faith to criticise our performance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, even if our opponents may not admit it, they know that there are many countries that envy our performance. Be it in the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, they are all praising our recent achievements, our resilience, our sense of innovation and our capacity to steer safely through the storm.

The Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance quoted Mrs Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of States, in his speech. She singled out and praised Mauritius for its achievements, especially highlighting our capacity and, I quote –

“To attract investments by enacting reforms that protect investors and promote business” and our commitment to “create conditions where people feel that their hard work will actually be rewarded” resulting in a fact that “the people of Mauritius have been the primary beneficiaries of these reforms”.

That is what we wanted to do, Mr Speaker, Sir. Although Mauritius was naturally affected - we all knew this would happen - our success in making our economy resilient is due to a combination of sound fundamentals and courageous reforms in spite of the criticisms. Our success is a result of our vision, our hard work, the understanding and support of the population; and also the result of the effectiveness of our economic diplomacy. But here in all humility, Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that we also “stand on the shoulders of giants”. They laid the founding stones of this nation - our founding fathers who fought for

independence and took up the challenges that this young nation of ours had to face. And these include all those who have one way or the way worked in the national interest, including Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have always said it - I heard hon. Pravind Jugnauth said that nobody talks of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. We may not agree with him, we have never always agreed with him, but he also has his contribution to make in this country. As Warren Buffet puts it, Mr Speaker, Sir -

“Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, without indulging into any sense of triumphalism, that it is safe to say that we have successfully overcome most of the challenges which have come our way - and this is very important - in a spirit of a caring Government, true to the promise which we had made to the people when we fought and won the general elections of 2005. We have achieved what we promised in the circumstances of this great economic crisis that we had. We have, in spite of this unprecedented world recession, combined economic efficiency with social justice.

I would like here to thank the people of this country who in the large majority have shown an understanding and a grasp of the real issues which we have had to deal with. This is a clear sign of the growing maturity of our nation and an indication of the kind of strength

and resilience which can be aroused even in the midst of great adversity, once we have put in place the kind leadership which resonates with aspiration and the hopes of the people.

We called for a change in the mindset of our people, Mr Speaker, Sir, because this is the key to any success. I am happy to see that this change although slowly, but is surely happening.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I looked through the speeches of some of the Members of the Opposition, I was stunned to see how some of them seemed to be stuck in time past, as if they are living in another era. I don't think that they realised that the world has changed, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are not living in the same world, as if ten years ago. It seems that some still believe that if they come and regurgitate all kinds of demagogic and unreasonable arguments in the vain hope that people will follow them. We must act responsibly and tell the people what the realities are today because whatever happens, this country has to keep on going. More than ever, Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody owes us a living. I disagree with their kind of politics. As opposed to their kind of politics, I think we touch a basic chord within every true democrat who is not impressed with pseudo-scientific political gurus or sensationalism in some newspapers. One must never underestimate the collective intelligence of the people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, anyone who steps back and looks how far we have travelled since 2005 cannot deny the basic facts. And I have a few

here from the Budget Speech itself, just to show, Mr Speaker, Sir, because facts speak for themselves. No Government would say that everything is perfect. It never can be perfect. We strive for perfection, but we can never be perfect. Look at the facts, Mr Speaker, Sir, between 2000 and 2005, 20,000 jobs were created and within four and a half years that we were in power 40,000 jobs were created. This cannot have happened by itself. Unemployment rate was 9.6%, it is now less than 8%.

We have created 19,000 jobs for women compared to 5,400. Female unemployment is still considered to be high. It is used to be 16.4%, it is now around 14%. I heard hon. Cuttaree talking about FDI and all this, but they got only Rs1 billion per year with no single large investment as we have. We have 8.4 billion per year, Mr Speaker, Sir and the Jin Fei Project, Rs25 billion over 8 years with 40,000 jobs are going to be created. Private investment has also gone up. Total investment has also gone up. The Net International Reserve from Rs56.3 billion to Rs100 billion, that is, roughly up by 80%. As for the balance of payments similarly, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are at 4.8% of GDP, whereas they were negative - 2.6% of GDP. The Budget deficit is the same thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have a budget deficit of 4.5% up to December of this year, they had a budget deficit of 5.3% plus - I know they don't like me saying that - 2.8% of the skeletons, which brings it to 8.1% of GDP, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Central Government debt which is now 49.7% was hovering around 60% of GDP. But the above figures only give a partial picture of our achievements so far. They are indicators of macro-economic performance, but they do not show the plethora of investment in human capital that my Government has pushed through since 2005.

I have always said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that macro-economics, growth, FDI and so on are necessary but not sufficient. We engage in politics in order to give a sense to these numbers.

M. le président, nous avons pu investir massivement dans le capital humain - l'éducation, l'entreprenariat, l'*empowerment*, la santé, la lutte contre la pauvreté, etc. - et cela a été rendu possible par les succès obtenus dans la relance de l'économie, dans l'établissement de nouveaux pôles de développement économique, dans la création d'emplois, dans la création d'un plus grand nombre d'opportunités pour chacun and dans l'amélioration des conditions de vie de tous. M. le président, tout développement économique repose sur le capital humain; et ceci est le fondement de l'action du Parti Travailliste depuis toujours et il retrouve aujourd'hui une nouvelle dimension.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I look at the stance taken by some Members of the Opposition, I can only suppose what has really happened is that they themselves don't know *sur quel pied danser*. On the one hand, I have heard some Members said that we have not done well at all and

then, in the same breath, they say: “now that the economy has turned around we should now dish out goodies left, right and centre.”

I suppose that, in fact, many were quite shocked that we did not play Father Christmas with this Budget, specially, since everyone’s hobby now has turned to speculating about the date of the general elections. But, I had decided that we had to tread the path of prudence and responsibility. What has happened in Dubai just now confirms that we have to be prudent. As a small-sized, open economy which is affected by what happens in the global markets, I believe that global markets are still too over-leveraged, under-capitalised for us to be bullish at large. This is why, even before the presentation of the Budget, I had said it that we have to have a Budget which is responsible, *un budget responsable*.

There are three facts, I think, that the Opposition does not seem to grasp, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, it is a fact, and no one can deny, this that the world has been hit by an unprecedented economic recession. This was not an economic recession that anyone predicted; it took us all by surprise. Even the big experts, the economists, all these people, nobody predicted this economic recession. This is a fact.

Secondly, we have had to deal with this new fact. Therefore, it meant that we had to re-look at our priorities. The Opposition does not seem to acknowledge that we have had to deal with this unprecedented economic recession. Therefore, we had to look at our priorities again. It

was more important to make the country resilient, protect the jobs and the gains of the country so that we are in a better position to resist economic crisis.

Thirdly, the sooner the Opposition learns that there is no such thing as a free lunch the better, Mr Speaker, Sir. We must inculcate in our people that effort will be rewarded.

Therefore, the principles underlying this Budget should now be clear. The first is to shape recovery. We are continuing with most of the Additional Stimulus Package to boost the economy in these difficult times. We looked at it, we discussed it, myself and the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and we decided that it would be wrong at this point to stop all the Additional Stimulus Package. We are restructuring the funds to render them more effective, for example, food security, saving jobs, the MID Fund, Local Infrastructure Fund, etc. We are building modern infrastructure - a staggering amount of infrastructural work is taking place across the island. Every single region of this country is affected.

Secondly and critically, Mr Speaker, Sir, we aim to consolidate social progress by giving to every Mauritian the means to satisfy his or her ambition. To me, this means continuing this heavy investment in human capital. It should be clear that countries can only progress on the foundation of a solid human capital base. It is progress in human capital that fosters economic growth by bringing all components of the

population, specially the marginalised in the mainstream of economic activities. Economic growth is impossible without people who have an opportunity to educate themselves, to be disease-free, to pursue their entrepreneurial spirit and so on. That is why with this Budget, once again, you see so much emphasis on education, on health care, on housing, on eradication of poverty, on SMEs, on enhanced social benefits and so on. We are also maintaining a very important and landmark policy of my Government, that is, free transport for students, old age pensioners and so on. And we have decided to give 3.5% additional salary compensation which will be paid in January 2010 and we know what the rate of inflation is, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The third key principle behind this Budget is sustaining green Mauritius. I will speak more on this later, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I come to the subject of *Maurice Ile Durable*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn on some specific issues which I would like to comment. First of all, let me speak on the democratisation of the cane sector. This dossier, Mr Speaker, Sir, I dedicated my personal attention to it, because it concerns the platform on which we had all campaigned, that is, the democratisation of our economy.

Two years ago, almost to the day, I concluded a landmark agreement with the sugar industry. The agreement embodies the spirit of economic democratisation and I consider this agreement to be one of the major achievements of my Government and of the Labour Party,...

(Interruptions)

... in the interest of the whole nation. I heard what hon. Cuttaree said about this.

When I held a press conference on 27 October 2007, I then said that the sugar industry's contribution to GDP was down to about 3%. I recall that many thought that perhaps I had made a mistake. Some even then went foraging for data in order to prove that I didn't know what I was speaking about, only to find out that I was right, it is down to about 3%.

The agreement I concluded with the MSPA enables the rebirth of a moribund sugar sector facing major threats and challenges into an inclusive cane sector with a bright future and with the participation of all the stakeholders in the industry. We all remember what characterised the sugar industry then, Mr Speaker, Sir: 36% of price reduction, concentrated ownership with many challenges on the horizon.

The industry had to be reinvented, not because of the size of its contribution to the economy - as I have just said, it was about 3% - but because this industry provides jobs, occupies a large amount of land assets and the industry is also engrained in the psyche and life of many. It has moulded the character of many generations of Mauritians as well as the culture of this country. It is part of our history and what is right about it or even what is wrong about it, but it is part of our history.

The restructuring of the industry was a golden opportunity to redress this, to turn threats into opportunities, to salvage it and to make it more inclusive than it ever was. That is why in 2007, I set out to seize this opportunity and I locked horns with the MSPA. I was determined to turn the tide of history. Many doubted me, many doubted the motivations of the Government; many thought the trend of history could not be reversed; many thought that this battle was doomed even before it started.

But politics is about convictions and commitment, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

In 2005, the population gave us a mandate to put the economy on the right path and to democratise it. Those who doubted our commitment in 2007 now come and congratulate me for the struggle because I managed to turn the tide of history. Many people refer glibly to defining moments. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, this was truly a defining moment in the history of this nation.

(Interruptions)

Let me remind the House that we managed to achieve all the objectives we set out to achieve. Firstly, concerning the EU funds, you will remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, how almost on a daily basis, there was from many quarters, an unrelenting scaremongering campaign supported by daily editorials in *l'Express* - still it does - portraying me as irresponsible. They argued that I was being difficult, that my actions

would jeopardize the EU funds for sugar reforms and thus the livelihood of thousands of workers and planters in the sugar sector. You see how the campaign was run, Mr Speaker, Sir, trying to put the workers and the planters, the people we have always defended in the history of the Labour Party, against the Government. They also argued that I was putting the livelihood of these workers and planters in the sugar sector at risk and bring the country to the brink of disaster because we would not get the UE funds the way I was doing. As you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, all these, if I may call them cassandras, have been proved utterly wrong as usual. Events have proved us right. We not only secured the EUR 127 m. but under the EU Vulnerability Flex, we have also now been able to get an additional allocation of EUR 10.6 m. which will be disbursed soon.

Secondly, we enabled the transformation of the sector, moving from sugar to cane and paving the way to two refineries to produce white sugar which fetches a much higher price. Mr Speaker, Sir, we may in the future, see the day when we will import sugar to refine here whereas in the past we were sending our raw sugar to be refined in Europe. We have modernised the sector and thus moved up the value chain.

Third, we did not go for the six new power plants which the MAAS had called for because there were the implications on the import of a substantial amount of coal that was implied in this. It would also

have resulted in an even greater concentration of the energy sector in the hands of a few. As a side note, let us not forget that when we talk of energy produced by bagasse, there is also a significant amount of coal involved in the process. In fact, the coal to bagasse ratio stands at an average of 67% coal and 33% bagasse.

Fourth, we obtained 2000 *arpents* of land for social housing and agricultural projects and a commitment for more as and when necessary for infrastructural projects that we have always had. I think hon. Jugnauth was asking what happened to the 2,000 *arpents*. In fact, we are getting it. We took a commitment, Mr Speaker, Sir. The land is not to take and to give to people we know. The land is for projects that will be in the long-term sustainable and for the benefit of Mauritius. It takes a longer time, but we have used quite a bit of that already.

Fifth, we agreed that the price of bagasse being paid to the small planters had to be reviewed. Currently, the IPPs credit a mere Rs100 per ton of bagasse to the Bagasse Transfer Fund Price managed by the Sugar Syndicate and then there is an allocation to millers and planters based on a complicated and I think a messy formula, in fact. We are confident that as a result of this review, this price will substantially increase to the benefit of the small planters in a more effective manner.

Sixth, as you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, *metayers* are the most vulnerable amongst the smaller planters. I did not want them to be left by the wayside in the reform process. A committee has reviewed the

case and I am pleased to announce that there have been substantial breakthrough for *metayers*, whether in terms of rental charges, possibility of land swap, *droit de metayage* and purchase of land by *metayers*; *metayers* have now acquired rights which they did not have previously, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't need to go into the details of this agreement. I will just leave it behind.

Seventh, Mr Speaker, Sir, before this agreement, the small planters were receiving a fluctuating price for their molasses which is linked to the world market price. The Control Board has been able to successfully negotiate a premium of US\$6.43 over and above that price. With regard to the local molasses market, the small planters are now guaranteed a minimum of Rs2,000 per ton as well as benefit from any upward fluctuation in the price. Currently the price they receive for molasses sold to the local distilleries stands at Rs3,500 per ton. This is, therefore, a quantum leap from the prevailing price before we came to power, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Eighth, as a result of my unflinching commitment and perseverance in the democratisation process, all planters, labourers and artisans in the sugar industry have been able to secure a 35% stake in the cane industry, all the way through the value chain, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is an important step in the democratisation process. In this Budget, we are setting up the Cane Democratization Fund which will hold the 35% shares of all companies engaged in the cane industry value chain

starting from milling, refining, distillery, ethanol and all other activities related to the production process and to the marketing of all the final products.

Shares in the Cane Democratisation Fund will be offered in priority to the planters, labourers and artisans so that they can participate and benefit fully from the success of the cane industry. The setting up of the CDF will thus serve as a catalyst to keep the cane industry vibrant and ensure the benefits accrue to all stakeholders in this new emerging industry.

Let me seize this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to enlighten hon. Cuttaree. I heard him from my office comparing what was done in 1994. I think he said that in 1994 when small planters bought the shares in SIT they only paid half the price of the shares, whereas with the CDF, the buyers of the shares will pay 2/3 of the price, if I understood him right. But there is a difference here, Mr Speaker, Sir. Perhaps he has overlooked. In 1994, the valuation which determined the price of the shares was the then prevailing market price which was very high. With the CDF, the valuation which will determine the price of the shares will be pre-reform, that is, they would pay much less than the actual value of the shares. That is the difference. Let me assure him also that there will be no restrictions on the buyers, but current employees will be given priority as I just said, that is, former employees will not be barred from

buying shares, but priority will be given to the current employees. This is just to answer what was being said, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Cane Democratisation Fund will thus be *incontournable* in the cane industry - a significant player with a significant say representing all those who participate in the sector, but who did not have the opportunity to have a meaningful stake up to now. We will also ensure that the Fund is managed efficiently for the benefit of stakeholders.

Ninth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the review of the IPP contracts. The principle of opening up equity participation in the power generation sector was also, I must say, implicitly agreed in the negotiation of December 2007. But as we know, Government is of the view that the IPP contracts are unfair to the population; whilst on the other side, the owners of the IPP have steadfastly maintained the opposite. In December 2007, we could not resolve this difference because this was separate from the immediate *mesure d'accompagnement* that was needed. In a spirit of consensus to show our fairness, we agreed that an independent consultant be appointed to look into this matter.

After lengthy and arduous discussions, a Terms of Reference was agreed by both parties and was signed between Government and MSPA in June of last year. Following an invitation to bid, again, here I must say we had put forward three names, if I am not mistaken, and they had put forward three names of consultants. Eventually, they did not quite agree with the names we have put forward. Again in a spirit of fairness

we had agreed that the name of one of their consultants be taken on board.

An independent US consultant was selected and appointed and we both agreed to this. That was towards the beginning of this year. Again Mr Speaker, Sir, we did this to show that it was not our intention to get our way. We wanted to show that we were fair and we would agree to an independent consultant.

As per the terms of reference, both parties, the members of the public as well as other interested parties were given the opportunity to submit their views to the consultants. Then, still as per the terms of reference, the consultant prepared and submitted a draft report inviting both parties, that is, Government and MSPA, to submit their comments within a given time frame. Following receipt of comments and as per terms of reference, the consultants have now finalised the report and submitted it early last month.

Now the conclusion of the final report clearly validates our stands from the very beginning, clearly Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, the other side is not happy but there must be a process to everything. We accepted to the naming of a consultant on their list. We accepted to the whole process. I think we were given - once the consultant came up with a draft report - two weeks to respond. We asked for a bit more time because it was complicated, we did not understand some of the arguments that were put in there and we wanted to have expertise advice which we did.

Now the report is final. What I heard from the other side is that they are trying to bend the rules, they are trying to renege on their own agreement to the joint process. They are seeking therefore to defend narrow interest again. My advice to them - and I said that to some of them already - is to think again. We have moved a long way, I think it will be really short sighted on their part to try to move the goal post again and put everything in question and sour this new atmosphere of real partnership with a win-win solution at hand. I think it will be a mistake. I was elected with a clear mandate and I intend to ensure that national interests prevail over the narrow interest of a few. So, my appeal to them is to play the game, we have rules in the game, we have to play by the rules of the game. You will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, that under my first term as Prime Minister, mindful of the invaluable contribution of the small planter community to the development of the country, I increased the sugar proceeds of apportionment ratio from 76% to 78%.

I have no hesitation in saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I take great pride in having achieved all of the above in the sugar cane sector. We must not forget that there are 200 years of history of political struggle in the background and to have achieved what we have in only four years of this mandate is no small feat. Let me say that I have every intention to continue on this track. There is unfinished business and we have to deal with it with an utmost resolve and determination. Only four and a half

years ago democratisation was unjustly vilified as being racism, as a way to take away from the rich. It was looked upon with doubt and cynicism. Today everyone has now acknowledged that we were driven by a noble sense of purpose, a determination to break through the societal and institutional delimitations that prevented an even greater number of people to become wealth creators.

I firmly believe Mr Speaker, Sir, that the more entrepreneurs we have, the more wealth creators we have, the better the country will be. Democratisation, as some Members of this side of the House have pointed out, is now on an irreversible path. Over and above what we have correctly achieved in the cane sector and elsewhere, we have embedded economic democracy in the psyche of the nation. That is very important. This in itself is an achievement and true to the founding principles of the Labour Party and we have yet again achieved a major legacy that we will proudly leave for the generations to come.

Before I conclude on this aspect of democratisation, let me say that for anyone whose political engagement is based on deep convictions, the struggle for freedom, human dignity and social justice, is an unending task. You never finish with it, Mr Speaker, Sir. As you know the Labour Party was born out of a quest for dignity in the sugar cane fields; that is the start of the Labour Party. Therefore, our actions in the sugar cane industry have a lot of significance to us in this Labour Party. We bear

within us, Mr Speaker, Sir, the collective memory of the days of Anquetil, of Pandit Sahadeo, of Ramnarain and others where the stalwarts' political engagement rested upon an unflinching courage to ensure that the workers in the Sugar Industry would have their dignity and their rights. Since then as a nation we have made great strides and I have to say without any false modesty that I am proud to be leading a party which has done so much to shape the destiny of our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now want to talk on the project *Maurice Ile Durable*. As soon as I was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2005, I had to take a major decision from which I draw a lot of self-satisfaction. That was to order the immediate stop of the ignoble destruction of the Valley of Ferney. That would have been an unmitigated environmental disaster. Today when I hear some Members of the Opposition have a go at us on the question of the protection of the environment, I am sorry to say they have no credibility because the arguments are based in their selective memory. Their memory may fail them, but coming generations will not forget the fact that the previous Government had actually started the destruction of one of the most bio-diverse region of our country, not to mention a 100% coal-fired power station which they agreed to put down in the south of the country. That is why I say that there is no credential, they are not credible.

Everyone knows the importance that I attach to sustainable development for Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is why, with the help

of Professor Joël de Rosnay, I introduced the vision of *Maurice Ile Durable*. This Budget exercise reinforces our commitment in placing sustainability at the core of the development of Mauritius. In addition to the MID Fund and the different units that have since been created, I have set up with my Ministry, a Steering Committee on *Maurice Ile Durable*, the committee has been assigned to the task of looking into this important project in a holistic manner. The MID Committee has met on several occasions to move forward with key initiatives including those in Renewable Energy and the Transportation Sector for Energy Efficiency and carbon footprint reducing initiatives. This Committee is also liaising with international lending and donor agencies such as *Agence Française de Développement*, the European Union Commission, the UNDP which are aligning their assistance towards a sustainable development objectives. I wish to express here my deep appreciation to the Government of France for the support to the MID initiative. We know that following my meeting with the then French President, Mr Jacques Chirac, the AFD has set up office in Mauritius and he is financing several MID activities and the actual French President is also following the same line.

The MID Committee will assist in formulating a policy process for Maurice Ile Durable at mid 2010. A green paper will be produced and will be one that is multi-sectoral and reflect the realities and the principles of the Mauritian society. To end on this *Maurice Ile Durable*

aspect I would like to reiterate through the *Maurice Ile Durable* vision. I want to mobilise all Mauritians private and public sector, NGO's, citizens of all class and especially the young around a common vision. We have played a crucial role at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in the drafting in the Port of Spain, Climate Change Declaration. We intend to play similar role in Copenhagen in defence of the Small Islands, Developing States which remain vulnerable and are the most vulnerable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, worthy and meaningful lives are a crucial source of human dignity for citizens and the *Alliance Sociale* Government has always stood for human dignity. Amongst some of the milestone institutions which we have spearheaded in this Parliament are examples of such as the Competition Commission, the Public Appeals Tribunal, the Equal Opportunity Act. These lay the basis for longer time deep changes in our society and now the institution which we have set up is the Truth and Justice Commission, as we had promised in our Government programme. My Government is not only alive to the issues of social justice, but is also alive to the need for active nation building. It is in line with this philosophy that the Truth and Justice Commission has become operational since March of this year. The Commission has been assigned with the responsibility of making an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present and, for that purpose, conduct as complete as

possible an analysis on slavery and indentured labour. We will also carry out inquiries in relation to complaints made by persons aggrieved - we have seen this many times in the papers - by a dispossession or prescription of land. The Commission is expected to come up with recommendations on measures to be taken following its assessments and its findings, with a view to achieving social justice and national unity. The Chairperson, I should say, Mr Speaker, Sir, initially designated to chair the Commission has, unfortunately, not been able to come to Mauritius to take up his post full time and, therefore, a new Chairperson has already been appointed. This setting up of this Commission will provide a structure for different sections of the Mauritian population to understand their relationship with the past, as well as their relationship with each other. The ultimate aim of this Commission would be to bring about a more peaceful society and strengthen national unity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the subject of law and order. Going to the issue of law and order, I would like to state that - I think we all agree - it is the most basic responsibility of any Government to keep the public safe. Law abiding citizens, their families and the wider community have a right to expect to be safe in their homes and on the streets. As a responsible Government, we have to ensure that our country is safe and secure. That is why, in the Government Programme of 2005-2010, we have made it clear that Government will take all necessary steps to consolidate law and order, and to ensure that law enforcement

agencies are provided with the necessary modern equipment and properly trained human resources to be utilised in the fight against crime. We also stated that we will pursue these reforms, which we started, in fact, during my first mandate, in the field of police training and institutional build-up. Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to 1995-1996, the police were underfunded and still used traditional policing methods. During my first mandate, I found that maintaining the *status quo* will not do, was not an option. There was a need for a complete reorganisation of the Police Force in order to reinforce its institutional and operational effectiveness. We are now investing into the 21st century intelligence capabilities and innovative technologies to enable the Police to do their work effectively. We are providing the Police with the necessary sources and strategic direction in its fight against crime. Our message is clear, Mr Speaker, to the criminals. We will deal firmly with the perpetrators of crime. At the same time, we understand that crimes that outrage the population are also a manifestation of wider social problems, which need to be tackled if we are to deal effectively with the problem of crime. We know that these problems arouse passions and concerns, and require multi sectoral approach. That is why we are addressing these social problems as well. These steps are all critical to keep our country safe, and illustrate our seriousness of purpose.

We are investing heavily in the Police Force, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the figures speak for themselves. The budget of the Police Department

has gone up from Rs3.1 billion in the financial year of 2004/2005 to Rs5.2 billion in the financial year of 2010, which represents an increase of Rs2.1 billion, that is, around 240%. Since 2005, we have spent Rs275 m. on acquisition of vehicles; Rs160 m. on equipment, and Rs185 m. on infrastructural products. We know we have often heard about complaints that, in the police stations, there is a lack of vehicles, etc. All these problems are being addressed, Mr Speaker, Sir. In addition, the other infrastructural projects amounting to Rs104 m. are in the pipeline.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, during my first term in office, I started modernising the Police Force. We set up the Emergency Response Service; we set a properly equipped and staffed scene of crime service; we bought a modern automatic fingerprint recognition computer; we started the independent Forensic Science Lab, and we had passed the Human Rights Commission Act. We also started a full training programme for new recruits, a Bsc for police studies for existing police officers, and a staff development programme for other police officers, so that they continuously upgrade their skills. We are continuing with the reforms of the Police Force, Mr Speaker, Sir. As part of that ongoing reform and in order to meet the emerging internal security challenges to deal effectively with crime, we have recently taken a series of evaluation measures. These include –

- The structure of the CCID and its mode of operation, which have been reviewed, to ensure effective crime investigation

and detection, and we can see the results. As soon as we hear about a crime, very quickly we hear that people have been apprehended.

- Two new units have been created under the CCID, namely the Cybercrime Unit and the Robbery Squad, to combat these respectively, Mr Speaker, Sir.
- The activities of the Scene of Crime Office have now been decentralised, and three units are now operational. This arrangement naturally provides for a better response to the scenes of crime. Formerly the SOCO, as we call it, was based at Rose Hill to cover the whole island. Now, we have decentralised, and we have three units.
- Field intelligence officers have been posted to various divisions of CIDs, with a view to gathering and disseminating information on crime in the respective region, as part of the intelligence-led policing strategy.
- As the House knows, a counter terrorism unit has been established in my office since August 2009, with the objective to act as a nodal agency of the Government in the prevention of, and combat against, terrorism and related matters, both locally and internationally.
- The Traffic Branch is being reorganised and restructured with a view to increasing road safety intervention and

evacuation process during major road accidents. In the context of a new highway patrol scheme, 49 motorcycles have been acquired this month. In fact, they have already been acquired. Furthermore, I have named and appointed a special Adviser in my Office on road safety matters. He will be responsible for the implementation of new rigorous measures, in order to improve safety on our roads. Safety on our roads is more wide ranging than some people think. It is not just concerned with what happens when an accident happens. It is much more than this.

- A National Coast Guard Commando Unit has been set up. It undertakes specific missions in the maritime environment.
- The Central Firearm Index Database has been operationalised to improve control of firearms.
- Modern techniques are now being used by the Police, such as the *portrait robot*. This again was given by the French, on my demand, by the then Minister of the Interior, the actual President of France.
- We are also using video recording, new fingerprint, and body-fluids search tools have been provided to different units.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is clear that we need to respond and adapt to an era of rapid technological change. The public expects us to make use of technology to protect them, and that is a clear priority for Government. To deal with more sophisticated criminals, it is necessary for Police authorities to also become smarter and better equipped. That is why we are providing new technologies and modern equipment, which are vital tools for the Police to act against crime.

We have introduced the CCTV system at Flic en Flac in April of this year, and this is being extended to Grand' Baie and Port Louis, which will be operational, we hope, by May 2010. Another CCTV street surveillance project for the region of Quatre Bornes, covering the main road from St. Jean to Candos, is under way, and I am pleased to inform the House that, with the introduction of the CCTV system at Flic en Flac – I think that I have answered a Parliamentary Question on this – criminal offences in that area, which is covered by the cameras, have decreased dramatically in the region. In fact, at the very beginning, we got two cases. I think one case was hit and run, and the other one was rape; people who were actually got by the cameras.

We have acquired, Mr Speaker, Sir, a twin-engine Advanced Light Helicopter, through a grant from India, for Rs307 m. The newly acquired helicopter will significantly enhance the operational capabilities of the Police in terms of search and rescue operations at sea,

also maritime surveillance, deployment of commandos in anti-piracy operations and medical evacuation.

I think the House knows already that this twin-engine helicopter has a far longer reach than the helicopter we had before.

A Defender Fast Patrol Boat is being donated by the US Authorities. It will be available to the Police Force as from January or at the latest in February of the upcoming year. A new Digital Radio Police Communication System with more than 3,000 terminals is also being implemented and will be connected to all the units and the Police stations of the Force. This will enhance naturally the communication and coordination of policing activities and special operations in the country. That system, we believe, will be operational by May of next year.

A Coastal Surveillance Radar System is being implemented to help the National Coast Guard to enhance its surveillance capabilities of the Maritime Zones and our EEZ with radar installations at eight locations - five in the mainland of Mauritius and one each in Rodrigues, St. Brendon and Agalega. The system which is costing around Rs100 m. is being acquired through the one-time grant element of the Line of Credit provided by the Government of India. Again, this is going to be operational very soon.

We are in the process of acquiring an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) under the Line of Credit offered by the Government of India. Let

me say here, Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that the need for an OPV is greatly felt to enhance our maritime safety and security in the region. That OPV is going to be a much better OPV than the previous one we had.

We are also having greater recourse to DNA in investigations as it is one of the modern breakthroughs - we had a debate in this House. It is a powerful method of establishing either guilt or innocence and can make a huge contribution to solving crime. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, what we are doing is that we are putting emphasis on scientific evidence-led and not confession-led criminal investigation. In this regard, the Forensic Science Laboratory has been provided with the necessary resources in terms of equipment and personnel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is imperative for the Police to have the human resources it requires to deal with law and order effectively. Since July 2005, 970 Police constables were recruited. We are in the process of recruiting an additional 900 Police constables as part of our programme to improve security and reinforce law and order.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are also placing great emphasis on human resource development. Our goal is to have a competent, committed, motivated and developed Police Force. This is what the country needs. Police officers must learn the latest technologies and master the new tools. Opportunities are therefore provided for continuous professional development to all members of the Police Force to upgrade their

knowledge and skills so that they remain up to date with the latest developments and technology in the field. They must keep one step ahead of the criminals, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Since 2005, over 700 Police officers have followed specialised training courses abroad in a wide range of fields namely, investigative methods, combating drug trafficking, terrorism, fight against money laundering, ballistic, graphology and cybercrime. Here, I must thank the Governments of India, France, Egypt, UK and also of the United States in helping us to train our Police officers. To combat criminality in general, we are continuously reviewing our legislative framework. I mentioned the Firearms Act in 2006, the Dangerous Drug (Amendment) Act in 2008, and the Judicial Provisions Act in 2008 as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the assistance of the UNDP, the Police Department is in the process of formulating a National Policing Strategic Framework with the objective to reorganise resources within the organisation. It will give a new vision and direction to the Police for the next 5 to 7 years. The document is expected to be finalised by the end of this year. For the first time, we are also preparing a comprehensive National Security Strategy which will take into account new and emerging security challenges and the threats to our country.

The Police reforms undertaken by my Government are starting to yield positive results, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have noted with satisfaction that the overall crime rate has declined from 5.4% in 2007 to 4.9% this

year. I knew this was going to take time, but we are making progress, Mr Speaker, Sir. But we must not be complacent, I always say that one crime is too many. We will ensure that this trend continues in the years to come. The maintenance of law and order and the suppression of crime is a daunting task, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I have always said and I maintain that we should not treat this as a partisan issue. The fight against crime and violence is our common struggle and it affects society at large.

Mr Speaker, Sir, existing prisons' infrastructure are being upgraded and the new facilities are being put up to improve the living conditions in the prisons. Since 2005, over Rs70 m. have been spent to improve the prison conditions and environment. An amount of Rs35 m. has been provided in the current Budget for improvement and upgrading of existing prisons' infrastructure. As part of the rehabilitation programmes, literacy and numeracy courses are being provided to detainees with the assistance of non-governmental organisations. Other education and vocational training courses are also being provided to the detainees and they are encouraged to take IVTB examinations. Preventive and rehabilitation programmes are also being carried out to address the problems of substance abuse and the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the prisons. These include detoxification, the HIV/AIDS care programme, offending behaviour courses which are being carried out again in collaboration with other governmental agencies and NGOs.

2,020 detainees so far with HIV/AIDS have been treated since July 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Border Control is another important issue that I have to speak about. It is very important to ensure the security of our country. A new Immigration and Border Control Systems has been implemented in December 2008 at the SSR International Airport. Data of incoming passengers are captured automatically as well as the genuineness of their travel documents. These are verified electronically and therefore this has reduced the time spent by passengers at the Immigration Centre. It is not complete yet, we are still improving the system.

The modernisation and expansion of our national airport remains a priority project for my Government. Our vision is to transform the SSR International Airport into one of the most modern airports in the region with first class world infrastructure. Let me underline that this stems from the vigorous economic diplomacy I spearheaded since 2005. It is in this context that when I went to the People's Republic of China in November 2006, I initiated discussions with the Chinese authorities and representatives of *Aéroports de Paris* with a view to securing a mode of financing for this major development project.

Consequently, AML entered into strategic partnership with *Aéroports de Paris* Management (ADPM) for the construction of a new modern passenger terminal. Funding for the project to the tune of USD

260 m. has been secured from EXIM Bank of China. Works are due to start by mid-December of this year and will last, I believe, for a period of 30 months. This new terminal building will have the state-of-the-art architecture, meeting international security norms. Particular emphasis will be placed on the protection of environment and comfort of passengers. I am told that they will also use photovoltaic cells for the protection of energy where possible and capture of rainwater and concrete measures in line with our philosophy for sustaining Green Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say a few words about the National Aids Secretariat (NAS). Since its creation as a special unit in my office in May 2007, the National Aids Secretariat has been responsible for the implementation of USD 472,000 Grant from the Institutional Development Fund (IDF) of the World Bank. The following activities under this Grant have been successfully completed -

- institutional Strengthening;
- training of Stakeholders in programme management;
- monitoring and evaluation (M & E), and
- resource allocation and expenditure tracking for HIV/AIDS.

As a result of the advocacy carried out by Government, Mauritius was declared to be eligible to apply for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The NAS led the development of a proposal

for a grant of €7,890,632. The proposal was approved by the Global Fund Board as Category 1.

The first phase of this grant will span over two years with an amount of €3,622,069 and this will cover activities by both Government and NGOs in this sector. This grant will fund activities within the National Strategic Framework which aims to prevent the new HIV infection and provide a continuum of care to people infected and affected by HIV. This Grant will help Mauritius to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 6, i.e. halting and reversing HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2015.

Another objective, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to prevent all new infections among the most at risk populations, such as injecting drug users, commercial sex workers, prisoners as well as among the general population particularly women and the youth.

This will be achieved through -

1. A four-fold scaling up of existing services for injecting drug users, commercial sex workers and prisoners, and also
2. Strengthening prevention activities for women, youth and the poor segments of our population.

All HIV services are being decentralised, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to meet the Universal Access target of 2010. Testing for HIV is already

available in the 26 Area Health Centres of the country, as well as in the regional hospitals. Treatment and follow-up will soon be decentralised to the five health regions. Decentralisation of the HIV services will enhance the scaling up of the activities and increase the uptake for the HIV services.

A comprehensive harm reduction approach comprising Methadone substitution, needle exchange, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and voluntary counselling and testing will be offered to injecting drug users.

The health sector and the NGO response will be scaled up by four in 2-5 years. 25 methadone dispensaries will be equipped with computerised automatic dispensing machines. The NGOs would be supported to recruit additional programme officers, so they can increase their outreach workforce and achieve total coverage of injecting drug users and the others. We want to contain this concentrated epidemic among these, that is, the drug users for injecting themselves, the commercial sex workers and the prisoners.

Intensive social mobilisation of the community and advocacy to leadership at village, district, municipal, regional and national levels to raise awareness, reduce stigma and create an enabling environment for service delivery will also be carried out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me also say that Rodrigues will be given greater attention in the implementation of all the above activities, beginning with the establishment of the Rodrigues AIDS Secretariat to coordinate the Rodrigues Island Multisectoral response.

The grant will also include prison-based interventions and promote the establishment of detoxification and maintenance treatment of heroin dependence with Opioid substitution therapy. Mr Speaker, Sir, I spoke lengthily on this because it is an important subject and we want to show, not only in this country, but what we are doing to combat this epidemic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during this mandate, we have travelled a long way towards economic progress and social justice. We have undertaken major reforms in the face of lots of criticisms; we have opened up the economy, and made important strides in economic and social progress. All of this, as I mentioned earlier, in the midst of an unprecedented global economic tsunami – if I may call it like that - which has had devastating effects on economies much stronger than ours. I said to the people of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we must be bold and you cannot reap if you do not sow and nurture. And this is what we have been doing since July 2005. That is what we had said and this is why it is so. This is not a give-away populist Budget but a responsible one. That is the difference between us and them, Mr Speaker, Sir.

They brought the last Budget earlier, without even having at the disposal all the figures and the statistics. You cannot have a Budget without all the figures and statistics, Mr Speaker, Sir.

It was a give-away Budget with what results; an unmitigated disaster because we always say, Mr Speaker, Sir: *Gouverner c'est prévoir*. Some of the threats - I heard hon. Cuttaree mentioning the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement, but we knew that the Multi-Fibre Agreement was coming to an end, we knew also that the end of the era of preferences with the end of the sugar protocol, will soon happen, but nothing was done to prepare the country for this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The budget deficit, on the other hand, was rising; the public debt had reached the unpalatable level of nearly 70%, pushing up into the vicious circle of a debt trap. We were not at the edge - as some people say – of the precipice, Mr Speaker, Sir. We were actually sliding down that edge, irrevocably sliding down towards the bottom of the precipice. I said in my address to the nation in January 2006 that our priority is to stop the slide and start the climb out of the precipice. Our objective has always been to turn the economy around and not to try to be popular.

We acknowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir, as we move in 2010 and beyond, that there is still a lot of unfinished business and I want to say this firmly, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I remain steadfast in my determination to deal with unfinished business, particularly in the sugar sector. Let

there be no doubt in anyone's mind that I intend to resolutely deal with it during the rest of this mandate as well as during our next mandate.

As we move in 2010 and beyond, we look forward to the resumption of stronger growth and further improvement, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, nous avons été élus pour réussir le changement économique et social. Nous avons été élus pour faire évoluer cette société vers plus d'ouverture. Nous avons été élus pour donner plus d'opportunités aux Mauriciens. Nous avons été élus pour créer une société d'égalité de chances et d'épanouissement pour tous. Il n'y a aucun doute que nous avons, en effet, plus que jeté les bases pour le changement qualitatif de notre nation; pour que l'île Maurice de demain ne soit pas pour un petit groupe, mais une île Maurice pour tous, M. le président.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as Prime Minister, I have blended reason, responsibility and passion in my quest to shape a nation characterised by citizenship with dignity, that is, Putting People First. Having been entrusted by the people to preside over the destiny of our great little country, my Government has reached for inclusive economic growth, and we have also been alive to the challenges that we had to face. So, while we acknowledge the progress we have made, we have to understand – as President Obama stated recently - "*that we still have a long way to go. That things are better, but still not good enough*".

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now conclude with the following lines from Tagore's Gitanjali –

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
 Where knowledge is free;
 Where the World has not been broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
 Where the words come out from the depth of truth;
 Where tireless striving stretches its aims towards perfection;
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
 Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action –
 Into that heaven of freedom... let my country awake.”

There is no doubt that under my Government, the whole country is awake to its potential; and that we are leaving no stones unturned to empower each and every citizen with the means to achieve their full potential.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.38 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me kick-off by thanking all those who have participated in the debate on the Appropriation (2010) Bill. Let

me also thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir and the Deputy Speaker for the excellent and impartial manner in which you have presided over the debate.

I am going to structure my summing up as follows: how it has been received; the context and the objectives of the Budget; the road we have travelled, and the obstacle we had to surmount on that road. I will respond to some of the main criticisms levelled by Members of the Opposition and then I will cover the social dimension of the Budget, the green dimension of the Budget, the artistic, cultural and heritage dimension of the Budget before concluding.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has said it; it is a very responsible Budget. It is a popular Budget, it is a social Budget. It is an economically responsible and socially equitable Budget. The Budget also attempts to shape the recovery. *C'est un budget de continuité; c'est un budget qui est consistant; c'est un budget pour modeler la reprise.* Obviously, Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not expect Members of the Opposition to come and say that this is a good Budget.

In such cases we have to rely on independent analysts. We have to rely on those who have no axe to grind and on those who know the economy of Mauritius. When I listened to these experts, Mr Speaker, Sir, local, regional and international, they have said that this is a good Budget. It is a balanced Budget in terms of shaping recovery, consolidating social progress and making our contribution to the climate change issue. I am sure Members of the Opposition have listened to what the new representative of the EU in Mauritius had to say last week when he announced that, because of the good performance of the economy, we have received some additional funding from the EU. Firstly, that reform has saved this economy and secondly, we have remarkably managed the economy in the face of the most difficult recession the world has experienced since the 1930's. The regional Director of the World Bank was in town last week and she commended us

for what we have achieved over the last five years and also how we have been able to resist the global recession. Le président de l'Agence Française du Développement était à Maurice il y a trois semaines de cela. Il a participé à une émission à la radio. Il a dit très clairement que Maurice a très bien fait pour un petit pays qui n'a pas de ressources naturelles dans un contexte économique international extrêmement difficile. The African Development Bank, in their latest report on the evaluation of the economy has said very clearly that Mauritius is one of the few countries on the continent that has managed the crisis very well. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister said it, unless one is of very bad faith, it is difficult not to recognise that we have turned the corner as far as the economy is concerned and second, we have managed to buffer, to mitigate the impact of global recession on our economy. Of course, risks remain. Uncertainties prevail and that is why, as the Prime Minister said *qu'il n'y pas de triomphalisme*. We need to continue to work in order to enhance the resistance of the economy to these external shocks.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the context of the Budget - a Budget has to be cast in a given local, regional context and international context. Hon. Cuttaree was trying to impress us by saying that the challenges they faced in 2005 were formidable. Mr Speaker, Sir, the challenges that we have faced since we have come to power are amazing. It is like two championship teams playing and one has five players sent off and we have to play six against eleven footballers. Can you imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, how difficult that was? I am not saying that we have beaten them, but we have not lost for the time being; and we are going win. These are the challenges we have had to face, Mr Speaker, Sir. A reduction of 36% in the price of sugar, the full blown impact of the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement, a sharp increase in the price of petroleum products, soaring prices for food, Mr Speaker, Sir, and as if these were not enough we had to contend with the worst financial

debacle followed by the worst economic crisis since 1930's. When we put all these together, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have the following terms: economic earthquake, financial armageddon, apocalypse now, tsunami. We have had to fight against these, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is the context against which little Mauritius had to survive. But as a result of reform and timely, adequate and comprehensive Stimulus Package, we have been able to mitigate the negative impacts, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the recession. There was also *l'héritage*. I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am at a loss when I hear my friends on the other side of the Opposition using the twisted argument of hon. Cuttaree, hon. Bodha and the Leader of the Opposition: 'You have built on the structure that we constructed.' What structure, Mr Speaker, Sir? We all know – I'll come back with the points made by hon. Cuttaree later on - what did we inherit when we came to power. All of us know. They are not very happy when we spoke about all these skeletons. Growth was on a declining trend, unemployment was rising, job creation was very slow, investment was at a standstill, FDI was falling, debt was rising, the deficit was high, there were contingent liabilities which were funded outside the Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is this the structure on which we had to build. We need to be fair, to be serious of what we say. The economy was in tatters and, in fact, the hon. Leader of the Opposition who was then Prime Minister acknowledged, recognised and admitted it: *on était dans un état urgence économique, la situation était dramatique*. Hon. Cuttaree, when he went to defend our country, said: '*on perdait des emplois à une vitesse vertigineuse*.' This captured the health or lack thereof of the economy at that particular time. Mr Speaker, Sir, and we have turned around the economy. That is why I can't understand. On the one hand, they seem to suggest that we have continued on what they did and, at the same time they criticised the Budget. It can't be both at the same time. Just like, Mr Speaker, Sir, *ils disent que c'est un budget électoraliste. A mon humble avis un budget*

électoraliste doit être un budget qui est très bon ; mais ils disent en même temps que c'est un mauvais budget. They have to decide which is which, Mr Speaker, Sir. They also seem to suggest that because they started a particular sector, we should not have further developed that sector. Again, let me give an analogy in football since it is the time of the draw of the World Cup. We need vision, good managers; we need good strategy. We can have the same players, but they don't make it to the top. So, it is unfair for hon. Cuttaree to say that *la capitale de France est Paris*. All of us know that, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is he suggesting that we should not have continued to develop the ICT sector? But today we know the importance of the ICT sector, Call Centre, Business Process Outsourcing, software development, network development; the numbers of jobs we have created, Mr Speaker, Sir, is significantly higher than what it was in 2005. *2, 500 emplois en 2005 par rapport à 13,000 aujourd'hui.* One of the points from the Leader of the Opposition, and this has been repeated outside also, is that we delayed in responding to the crisis. Mr Speaker, Sir, when countries outside were implementing a restrictionary monetary fiscal policy, we presented a Budget in 2008 which was expansionary. We created six or seven Funds worth Rs 9 m. to Rs10 m., Mr Speaker, Sir. If this is not timely, then I wonder what is timely.

Mauritius is one of the few countries that embraced an expansionary monetary and fiscal policy much earlier than other countries. It is this timely and adequate response that has given the results that we see today, Mr Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the fact that the global economic environment is still risky, uncertain. We will have an economic growth of about 2.7, if not higher this year. We continue to create jobs this year. Unemployment will be lower this year than it was in 2005. The Budget deficit is lower this year than it was in 2005, debt to GDP ratio is lower, Mr Speaker, Sir. Foreign Direct Investment is still high. Six players of Manchester United are playing against 11 players of Chelsea and

Manchester United still score goals. Mr Speaker, Sir, FDI will be about Rs9 billion this year. And all these have been achieved, Mr Speaker, Sir, because of sound economic management, the necessary reforms and the Stimulus Package.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to some of the points raised by Members of the Opposition, both inside and outside the House. First one is SME. Mr Speaker, Sir, never in the history of Mauritius have SME been supported like they are today. Never! And I challenge anybody to prove the contrary. I would come back to the report mentioned by hon. Cuttaree from Mr Deerpalsingh. The facts, the figures and the evidence are here for all of us to see. Mr Speaker, Sir. The number of jobs from SMEs accounted for 36% of total employment in 2005 and today it is about 43%. By what magical incantation, by what voodoo, has this happened? It must be the case that, the role, the importance of SME's in the economy has risen. Their contribution to GDP, to output has also increased as evidenced by CSO figures. We are helping on many fronts, from mentoring to access to credit, from market support to product development, Mr Speaker, Sir. Across the supply chain, we are helping SMEs. But, of course, when we talk about SMEs, there are about 75,000 to 100,000 SMEs. It spans a wide range of activities and some people try to blackmail us. They say: 'if you don't do this in a specific sector, we will continue to criticise you.' This gentleman sits on many SME's committees, but he is in one sector and he blackmailed us to do two things which I refused. One, to introduce a quota on *meubles importés*. We cannot do this. Second, to put a tax and import duty *sur les meubles importés*. I refused; I cannot do this. The Minister responsible for business knows this. This was the blackmail. I don't want to give names because it is not my habit, but there was a former Chairperson who told me: "Rama, *tu peux faire ce que tu veux*, if you don't write off my debt, I will continue to criticise the DBM". How can I do this? *Et on a fait un* write off, *mais pas au niveau qu'il voulait*. So, *il y a beaucoup d'entrepreneurs qui viennent*

me voir, M. le président. Il y a un autre cas. Il fait son boulot, il fabrique des chaussures. Il m'a dit : «il faut augmenter la taxe sur les chaussures importées ». We know the problem. On the one hand, consumers benefit, on the other hand, some producers are likely to lose. What we have done, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to encourage producers to become more competitive, to embrace new technology, to go on the regional market and to improve their management. We cannot, as a responsible Government, penalise the entire population because of one firm.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning, my colleague, hon. Mrs Seebun, and I were at a function organised by women. Many women were congratulating Minister Seebun, the Government and myself, for what we have done for women who lost their jobs between 2000 and 2005 in terms of training, of placement, of access to labour market and becoming *des micro-entrepreneurs*, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are giving each of the small entrepreneur Rs 40,000 as soft terms loan. Many of them, Mr Speaker, Sir, have congratulated us. But we cannot be held hostage by one or two individuals. We will continue to support the SME sector, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) has been a success. Many SME's are queuing up to get access to LEMS. Through LEMS we have done three things which did not exist. First, they were requested to make a down payment of 40% of the value of their equipment or machinery. We have brought this down to 10%.

Second, in some cases there was request for some collateral. Now, there is no need for collateral.

Three, the rate of interest on the leasing is being subsidised, I think, to the tune of 2% or 2.5% compared to what it was before. This is what we have done, for SMEs. I think their criticism with respect to SMEs is certainly not warranted. Of course, there is room for improvement and there are committees that have been set up in order to see how we can improve the facilities granted to SMEs . But it is

not an easy subject for the simple reason that they are hundred thousand of self-employed, of *petits marchands, des micro-entrepreneurs, des petites et moyennes entreprises*. It is not easy to have one size that fits all problems of SMEs, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Second one - I really laugh - Mr Speaker, Sir, people may not like me, I don't mind about this. But to come and say that I do not understand how the crisis has affected our country, this is insulting, when I hear people say *la crise n'est pas derrière nous, la crise est devant nous*.

There are many things that I don't know, but there are certain things that I know and I also read what is happening. Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, the consensus is that while there are risks and uncertainty in the global economy, the worst is probably behind us, Of course, *c'est possible qu'il y ait un feu* here and there, like in Dubai, but it will not upset what most economists - not to say all economists - even those who were skeptical like the Nobel Prize Winners, Krugman or Stiglitz Believe is a recovery from the recession. Most of them are saying that the worst is behind us, that there will be a recovery, admittedly sluggish, slow, fragile, pallid. But recovery there is. Probably, in many of these rich economies, the recovery will not be high enough to create jobs so that we could find ourselves, not in Mauritius, but in some countries, with a slow growth and rising unemployment. Even though we have been *agréablement surpris par les chiffres de l'emploi et du chômage qui ont paru aux Etats-Unis la semaine dernière*. I think we need to be serious. I understand the embarrassment of people who had wished that we had not done well but at least they need to have the intelligence and the honesty to recognise that against their better wish, the country has done very well

Concerning the ASP, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had long discussions with all the stakeholders, and we reached the conclusion that, while the worse is behind us,

there are still risks and uncertainties and that the balance of risks suggest that we should keep the ASP for another year. But there is a contingent element in the ASP, and the great thing about it is that it is demand-driven. It is not like we knock at the door of enterprises, like some people are suggesting, and we tell them there is money, to come and use it. There is a process which is very rigorous; there is a procedure, and they have to meet some requirements before they get assistance .

I think the other insult that has been poured on this side of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, is when some people have tried to question the credibility of some economic statistics. Mr Speaker, Sir, inflation is not calculated by the Minister of Finance, it is calculated by the CSO. The same methodology is being used to calculate inflation. There is a basket which is updated every five years. The weight of commodities in the basket changes and it is the CSO that publishes these figures. We may have differences among politicians, but it is unfair to question the credibility and the integrity of those people, civil servants or independent organisations that are working on these figures. The only difference that we had is how to calculate inflation for six years. There are many ways of calculating it, and we have aligned ourselves on the best international practice, as recommended by the ILO, inflation will be 2.6% for the 12 months ending December 2009 and, for the six months ending December 2009, it will be about 1.2%. This is a remarkable achievement; one of the lowest that we have seen for many years, Mr Speaker, Sir.

It is the same thing for the figures for unemployment. We don't calculate the figures for unemployment. It is neither my colleague, the Minister of Labour, and certainly not the Minister of Finance. The figures for unemployment and the labour force are computed and disseminated by the Central Statistical Office, Mr Speaker, Sir. When the figures are in our favour, *il y a un message*; when the

figures are in their favour, it is evidence, facts, statistics. It cannot be head they win, and tail we lose..

The other point - I think hon. Cuttaree said it – is about *combien de mesures qui ont été annoncées et qui n'ont pas été exécutées. Effet d'annonce !* Mr Speaker, Sir, I must acknowledge that there are some measures that have been announced and, for a variety of reasons, from good to bad, to indifferent, have not been implemented as planned. But there are Members on the other side who have been Ministers of Finance, and they should know. When you announce a measure in a Budget, it does not mean that it has to be implemented within the time frame of that Budget itself, because there are some projects that will span two, three or four Budgets. *Je peux très bien renvoyer l'ascenseur, M. le président. Dans combien de budgets on a annoncé* with pomp and pageantry Dr. Jeetoo hospital! Now, it is this Government that is implementing the Dr. Jeetoo hospital project. Mr Speaker, Sir, we should be fair. *Dans la circonscription de mes amis, l'honorable Ganoo, l'honorable Babajee, l'honorable Madame Hanoomanjee, combien d'années ont-ils promis le pont de Macondé ? Nothing was done! Le pont de Macondé a été construit par ce gouvernement, M. le président. M. le président, j'ai pris la peine et le temps ...*

(Interruptions)

I was very quiet when all of them spoke. Give me my chance! *M. le président, j'ai pris la peine et le temps de lire les cinq budgets qui ont été présentés par l'ancien gouvernement. Allez voir combien de fois l'Equal Opportunities Bill a été mentionné ! Peut-être qu'ils avaient de bonnes intentions, mais le fait est que these were not implemented. Pour le Competition Bill, c'est la même chose. Je ne vais pas répéter les arguments que j'avais utilisés lors du summing-up en mai où*

une centaine de mesures avaient été annoncées dans les cinq discours et qui n'ont pas été implémentées.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to be fair. Le *Leader* de l'opposition, l'honorable Ganoo, l'honorable Cuttaree, l'honorable Jugnauth *ont dit: on vient ici avec de grands mots, des grandes paroles pour épater la population.* Mr Speaker, Sir, what did they promise to the nation? Economic agenda for the new millennium! Quantum leap in the next phase of our economic development! *M. le président, il faut être sérieux. Il y a eu* no economic agenda for the new millennium *parce qu'on sait très bien quel est l'héritage qu'on a eu en 2005. Il n'y a certainement pas eu de* quantum leap in the next phase of economic agenda. *Trois fois l'honorable Bérenger et une fois l'honorable Jugnauth ont dit:* 'we take the commitment to bring the budget deficit to 3% by 2005', and the budget deficit was 8.2% of GDP in 2005. 'We'll create tens of thousands of jobs' - they created tens of thousands of unemployed people

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to the NPC. They seem to suggest that we have tweaked the rules of the game with respect to the NPC. Certainly not! I have explained it very clearly. There is a policy; there is a process and there is the procedure. And we are in a transition year. The transition year means that, at some time, we need to align the financial year with the timing of the compensation. In the mind of all Mauritians, when we present the Budget, if the Budget starts on 01 January, they expect to get their compensation as from January. So, either we make this choice now, or we would have made it down the line, and it is not within the remit of the NPC to make such a policy decision. It cannot make this policy decision. It is only Government that can make this policy decision of aligning the compensation year with the financial year. And this is the decision that has been made. However, we have respected the process and the procedure. What does that

mean? In reaching its recommendation on what should be paid, the NPC uses 50% of inflation plus productivity. *C'est exactement ce qu'on a fait. On a pris 50% du taux d'inflation. Comme le taux d'inflation est à peu près 1,6%, divisé par deux, cela fait 0,8%, plus la productivité, we have reached a figure of 3.5%.* Next year, the NPC will meet as usual and will make its decision.

The other point concerns what hon. Jugnauth said: *on revient à l'ancien système.* Certainly not, Mr Speaker, Sir! Let me reassure him! That's not what we said. *Il y a quatre critères qui sont pris en considération: le taux d'inflation, la productivité, le niveau du chômage et d'emploi et la capacité de payer. Et on sait très bien – et l'honorable Jugnauth aussi le sait très bien – qu'il y a deux critères qui sont nommément inclus dans le calcul pour la détermination de la compensation : l'inflation et la productivité. Il y a deux autres qui sont en retrait, c'est-à-dire, la capacité de payer et le niveau du chômage ou bien le niveau d'emploi.* And what have we said, Mr Speaker, Sir? It is not good for tripartism that one of the three partners either makes a mockery of the institution or does not come and participate. I have discussed with them, I have also discussed with the other party and with my colleague Minister of Labour, hon. Chaumière, and the Council of Ministers. We have said that we will keep productivity, they will keep inflation and let's see whether we can reach an agreement on the other two criteria. This could mean, either we finesse these two, or replace them by some other criteria. For example, in exceptional circumstances, like if tomorrow unemployment rate is 20%, it would be folly not to recognise this fact in awarding salary compensation. What we have said is: let us meet and try to find out a solution that will be acceptable to all parties, but we will certainly not go back to the old system where it is the Minister of Finance who chairs the meeting and only inflation is taken into account.

For the salary compensation, the context is very important. There has been no pressure on me and on the Prime Minister. We have always said if the situation allows it, we will share with the population. In May 2009, we were in the middle of a tsunami, we were in the middle of a cyclone and we had to act responsibly. Now the situation has improved, compared to what it was in May 2008. The situation has improved internationally, domestically. As a result we have given back a compensation to all those who did not get one in July 2009. Instead of receiving Rs200, they will earn around Rs420 which compensate them for the fact that they did not receive an award in July 2009; and for those earning between Rs3,500 and Rs12,000 they are receiving more money. Those who are at the lower rung of the income ladder have received more compensation than they would have obtained if we had applied the normal sliding scale formula. And on top of that they have also received six months' compensation earlier. We should not forget that the compensation that was given in July 2009 should have lasted for one year. In this particular case, especially those who earn between Rs3,800 and Rs12,000, have been compensated for an additional six months in line with what the Prime Minister has just said. They have worked hard, they have understood us, they have put their trust and confidence in us - as hon. David said - and we have been able to deliver. But we had to act in a responsible manner, because Government accounts for only 20% of the labour force and 30% of the wage bill. There was need for consultation. Obviously, the private sector was not happy, but we had to reach a compromise on this issue of compensation.

On taxation, Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to be serious. Obviously, I understand some of the points raised by our friends on the side of the Opposition, but taxation must be analysed in a holistic perspective. We can't say, Mr Speaker, Sir, *ce qui est à moi est à moi et ce qui est à toi, on commence à négocier et dans la première négociation, je prends 50% et l'autre, on continue à négocier*. We can't do this,

Mr Speaker, Sir, we had a package and I am sure that hon. Pravind Jugnauth, hon. Bodha and hon. Bérenger know very well that in many countries you have high level of taxation accompanied by many niches with respect to allowances and deductions. In the UK, *le taux d'imposition est à 50%*. I am sure that all of us here know someone, a friend, a relative or a child who is working in the UK or in France and he pays 50% tax.. Don't think that VAT is low! *La TVA va augmenter à 17.5% le 1er janvier en Angleterre*. There is always a trade-off. We have introduced a system where tax is low at 15% compared to 30% and we have collapsed many allowances.

Tout le monde sait, M. le président, qu'il y avait une première déduction de R 85,000 dans l'ancien système. . Après il y avait des abattements; un abattement si votre enfant va à l'école ou à l'université, si vous prenez une assurance ou bien si vous recevez des intérêts sur votre épargne. M. le président, lorsqu'on a relevé le seuil de R 85,000 à R 240,000, on a pris tout cela en considération. Il y avait le *earned income emolument qui* était à 15% - mon collègue le sait très bien - et si vous prenez la moyenne de R 20,000 par mois et vous multipliez par 13, c'est R 260,000 ; et 15 % représente Rs 39,000. On a pris cela en considération ainsi que la déduction pour l'assurance et les intérêts qui sont payés pour un *mortgage*

Otherwise how is it that the ceiling has gone up from Rs85,000 to Rs240,000? Avant pour un enfant, c'était R 30,000. Maintenant *for the first dependent* c'est R 100,000.. On a aussi fait un effort pour ceux qui ont plus de 60 ans parce qu'on sait qu'ils dépendent souvent des intérêts sur l'épargne qu'ils ont fait. *We have created a two-special band for old-aged people.* Ils ont R 50,000 en plus. M. le président, à 5% le taux d'intérêt, c'est à peu près R 1 million d'épargne, *over and above* le rehaussement du seuil imposable. C'est pourquoi il y a eu deux effets ; 50% des gens qui payaient la taxe ne paient plus la taxe. Dans l'ancien système quelqu'un qui gagnait R 8,000 par mois payait les impôts.

Aujourd’hui si vous êtes marié et votre épouse ne travaille pas, jusqu’à R 350,000 par an, *they don’t pay any tax*. Et les autres, M. le président, pour 95% des 50% qui restent, le fardeau fiscal a baissé considérablement. *Only those who were aggressive taxpayers or those who were cheating the system are paying more. We should not have any sympathy for tax evaders or aggressive tax payers.*

I have given an example, Mr Speaker, Sir, of *l'esprit de la loi* - you have more experience than me. When we give facilities for mortgage, you can deduct your mortgage for one house, not seven houses. On top of that, even on the rental they were receiving on these houses, they were not paying any tax! As a responsible Government, we should ask these people to make an effort. We have to be fair to the nation. It is very unfair to come and criticise when, in fact, and everybody knows and I will admit this - I go abroad, Mr Speaker, Sir, to market Mauritius - lorsqu'on dit au monde extérieur que l'île Maurice est l'un des rares pays qui a un taux unique de 15%, it is very attractive, *c'est un plaisir, comme on dit*, it is sexy, it attracts. Mr Speaker, Sir, *il y a très peu de pays qui ont un taux d'imposition*. As I said, it is attractive; you stand out of the crowd. My colleague, the Minister of Sports, was in Cape Town last week where all the big players were and as soon as David Beckham comes, everybody recognises him and surrounds him. It's an attraction. This is the magnetic force of a single rate of taxation, but all of us who do economics know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a unique rate of taxation is not progressive. We have asked some people to make a small contribution through the NRPT, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't know whether it was hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun or hon. Bodha who was referring to *les petits planteurs*. Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot use the small planter as political fodder. I have said that on TV, let me repeat to my friends of the MSM: there is not a single planter that pays income tax if he is only a planter. *Cela n'existe pas* for a very simple reason. Hon. Bodha, hon. Jugnauth, hon. Boolell know this very well. *95% des petits*

planteurs ont moins de cinq arpents de terrain, M. le président, et sur un arpent de terre, la taxe est basée sur un profit de R 6,000. So, it is impossible for a small planter to pay income tax. In fact we have done the calculation. It is possible for a small planter to have 15 arpents of cane and works in Government or in the private sector, and earns Rs 20,000 per month and still doesn't pay tax. If hon. Jugnauth or hon. Bodha or hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun can find a small planter – he has to be only a small planter – that pays income tax on his cane, I'll do two things: I'll refund him the money and I'll give my salary for the next six months.

(Interruptions)

I'll do that! However, I will give them one month, if they don't find one, they have to give me 50% of their salary. So, I am giving 100% of my salary, I am asking them for only 50% of theirs. I am not asking my good friend, hon. Soodhun, because he did not say it.

M. le président, nos amis de l'opposition, comme dans n'importe quelle démocratie, souhaitent revenir au pouvoir et dans n'importe quelle démocratie, il faut une alternance, mais il faut aussi une alternative aussi. Mais qu'est-ce qu'ils nous proposent? Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us watch TV and read newspapers and many go on Twitter, Face Book and there are so many of them that I cannot remember, Mr Speaker, Sir. The world over everybody is saying that we need to do two things. First, you have to cut expenditure and second, you have to raise taxes. Let us look at the UK. I have never seen that in my life, the Opposition is campaigning to win and it is saying that it will slash expenditure and raise taxes. Usually, they don't say that. In France also they are saying the same thing. *Ici, M. le président, ils disent qu'ils font supprimer l'impôt sur le revenu, ils vont supprimer les customs duties, ils vont supprimer certaines taxes qu'on a introduites et ils vont augmenter les dépenses.* *M. le président, c'est ridicule!* It is

impossible. There is nobody who can do that. That is why I have challenged both Oppositions *de présenter un programme crédible sur l'économie. Ils ne peuvent pas le faire parce que ce n'est pas sérieux. M. le président, on a fait le calcul; on sait compter. Si on élimine l'impôt sur le revenu, les customs duties, c'est à peu près sept à neuf milliards de roupies qu'on va perdre, M. le président, et encore une fois, ce n'est pas nécessaire d'être un rocket scientist, il faut augmenter la TVA de 50%, mais ils ne vont pas le dire. Ne venez pas me dire que les Anglais sont stupides, les Français, les Américains ne comprennent pas sauf nos amis ici qui comprennent, M. le président ! Il faut être sérieux, il faut être crédible. Il faut proposer des alternatives à la population qui va faire la distinction entre ceux qui sont sérieux et ceux qui essaient de nous tromper.*

Mr Speaker, I come to gold, even though I prefer platinum. The price of platinum has gone up higher than the price of gold. So, I could say: why not platinum, why not silver, why not ferraille? Mr Speaker, Sir, let me explain very clearly. First, the Ministry of Finance, *encore moins le ministre des finances, n'a rien, absolument rien, à faire avec la gestion des réserves de notre pays.* Hon. Bunwaree has been Minister of Finance as well as hon. Jugnauth and hon. Bérenger, I have never intervened, never has the Financial Secretary or any officer in the Ministry of Finance intervened with respect to *la gestion des réserves.* It is done by a committee chaired by the Governor and constituting of two other senior officers at the Bank. Second, the Bank of Mauritius manages only 60% of our international reserves. If you open the Bank of Mauritius report - and this year, to be fair to the Bank of Mauritius, it has presented the report in due time - you will see *sur R 100 milliards, il y a R 60 milliards à peu près qui sont gérées par la banque centrale et R 40 milliards par les banques commerciales.* Assume we are stupid, *je pose la question : pourquoi les banques commerciales n'investissent pas*

dans l'or ? Assume que nous sommes des imbéciles, nous ne comprenons rien. Le troisième point, je dis souvent à mes amis : 'Lorsque vous ne savez pas ce qu'il faut faire, regardez ce que font ceux qui sont très bons.' When I don't know this is what I do : *ce que Singapore, la Chine, l'Inde, le Japon font, what we call, the New Kids on the Block, pas ceux qui ont amassé de l'or pendant très longtemps pour des raisons qu'on sait.* The New Kids on the Block, what do they do? Le Brésil, La Russie, le Chili, La Malaisie, *M. le président, ont entre deux et trois pour cent de leurs réserves en or.* Maintenant ne venez pas me dire que les Chinois, les indiens, les russes, les japonais ne comprennent pas. Ils vont dans les meilleures universités du monde. Ils ont de l'expérience. Ils nomment les plus grands gestionnaires de fonds au monde. Oubliez Sithanen ! Pourquoi le Chili et les autres ne font pas ça, *M. le président?* Pourquoi la Chine n'a que deux pour cent de sa réserve en or ? They have the largest reserve in the world.

Il faut être sérieux. Ce qui s'est passé, Mr Speaker, is that within the framework of discussion that took place at the G20, developing countries stated that there are not enough resources **disponibles** and the G20 countries have asked the IMF to sell part of its gold to get liquidity to support its poorer members. It is in this context that this operation has taken place. *Certainement pas 50% de nos réserves en or ! C'est de la folie furieuse, M. le président.* I did not speak about it in my Budget because I did not want to embarrass anybody. This simply does not make sense.

En ce qui concerne le *Food Security, M. le président, ils ont du toupet.* My good friend, hon. Minister Faugoo, made an excellent speech. Very often, they do not even read what they have said or done before. Hon. Bodha was criticising us on Food Security. *Chiffre à l'appui, M. le président, le ministre de l'agro industrie a fait la démonstration claire, nette et sans appel.* Potato production was down when

they were in office; onion production was down *et la production de lait avait baissé*. And they have the guts, Mr Speaker, Sir - hon. Cuttaree also - to come and tell us that we have not done enough for food security! Whether it is *pomme de terre, oignon ou le lait*, there has been a marked improvement on production since 2005 .

Let me come to the social dimension of the Budget, M. le président. Je l'ai dit dans cette Chambre et je le répète, personne n'a le monopole du cœur sauf peut-être le symbole; et il ne faut pas instrumentaliser la pauvreté. Il ne faut pas utiliser la pauvreté comme un fonds de commerce avec un cynisme démesuré. Il ne faut pas *romanticiser poverty. You should not eulogise poverty with rhapsodies, Mr Speaker, Sir. You should not patronise the poor, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

(Interruptions)

Panegyric rhapsodies, this is Henry James! Ils disent qu'il n'y a pas suffisamment de social dans ce budget, ce n'est pas moi qui ai disséqué le budget. J'ai lu dans un journal du dimanche un article par M. Pierre Dinan. On peut être d'accord ou pas avec M. Dinan, mais c'est un économiste respecté. Il a pratiqué l'économie depuis au moins 50 ans. Il a disséqué le budget. Il explique que sur R 83 milliards de dépenses, R 26 milliards sont consacrées à l'éducation, la sécurité sociale, la santé et le logement social. Cela représente 31,5%.

R 24 milliards représentent *wages, salaries and transfer*, c'est-à-dire 29% du total. Evidemment, il a évité le *double counting*, parce que lorsqu'on parle de l'éducation, il y a les salaires et on a déduit le salaire qui a déjà été compté une première fois. Cela veut dire que ce sont tous les salaires sauf ceux qui ont été comptabilisés dans les quatre ministères dont j'ai parlé. R 14 milliards pour la dette publique, soit 17% du total - le paiement des intérêts et le remboursement du capital. R12 milliards *for capital expenditure*, l'équivalent du *non-financial investment*. Cela représente 14.5% du total. M. le président, cela représente 92% de

dépenses. Il nous reste que R7 milliards pour les biens et services. Il faut payer pour le téléphone, l'eau, l'électricité, etc. *I do not know what my hon. friends are talking about*, qu'il n'y a pas de social lorsqu'il y a 31,5% pour l'éducation, la santé, la sécurité sociale et les logements sociaux, 29 % for wages, salaries and transfer R14 milliards pour la dette publique, R12 milliards pour les capital expenditure, et R7 milliards pour les biens et services.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne le second point, jamais, et je le répète, jamais dans l'histoire de Maurice *has a Government introduced so many instruments to alleviate poverty and to fight exclusion*. J'aime bien l'argument de l'honorable Madame Navarre- Marie lorsqu'elle dit qu'on ne fait pas assez. Ils ont rien fait avant. On fait des progrès pour alléger la pauvreté et pour combattre l'exclusion mais elle dit que ce n'est pas suffisant, ce n'est rien du tout. M. le président ! Mon amie, l'honorable Madame Labelle est en train de rire car elle aussi est une experte de ce type d'arguments . Ils n'ont rien fait, mais quand nous le faisons, ils disent that *it is not enough*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are five instruments to fight poverty that never existed before. As to the National Empowerment Foundation, combien de nos compatriotes ont bénéficié d'une formation, d'un placement ou d'un accès à l'emploi ou à une entreprise à travers le National Empowerment Foundation ? À peu près 10,000 personnes ont bénéficié. Cela n'existe pas avant et c'est pour donner une chance à nos compatriotes qui sont en difficulté.

Eradication of absolute poverty - I do not know which Member of the Parliament it was qui a dit que seulement 500 enfants ont beneficie. Mais avant narien pas ti pe faire ! Zero avant! Il y a 500 enfants pauvres entre 3 et 4 ans qui n'allait pas à l'école pré-primaire, il faut avoir un peu de cœur. We have done it and they say that it is not enough. Eradication of absolute poverty was not there before and it is this Government that is doing it.

*The Decentralised Corporation Programme, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many of our compatriots à Maurice et à Rodrigues ont bénéficié de ce programme? Le IRS et le CSR : Rs 200,000 pour chaque villa et on est en train d'utiliser cet argent pour aider nos compatriotes défavorisés au Morne, à l'est et à Albion. For the CSR, my colleague the hon. Vice-Prime Minister had the right words and called it a stroke of genius. Nobody thought about it. We have done it! Il y aurait R1 milliard pour aider les femmes, les enfants, les sportifs, pour combattre le HIV/AIDS, pour réintégrer les gens. Minister Bunwaree a lancé *un programme du second chance, jamais cela n'avait existé à Maurice, M. le président.* I can continue to give many achievements of this Government in the social field. *Budget capitaliste ! Si cela c'est du capitalisme, ce serait mieux qu'on continue avec le capitalisme !**

Transport gratuit - ils n'ont rien fait pour les vieux - M. le président, pour les écoliers. *If this is not purchasing power, then what is purchasing power ?* J'ai des familles dans ma circonscription - demandez à l'honorable Ms Deepalsing et l'honorable Duval, et je suis sûr que partout c'est pareil - qui ont trois enfants qui vont à l'école. C'est une économie nette de R2,500 à R3,000 par mois. *This is purchasing power, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Rs 1,3 milliards de subvention pour le gaz menager et la farine. *If this is not money in your pocket, then I do not know where it is, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

Concernant nos compatriotes, les éleveurs de porcs, what insult was not made here. Il faut leur donner R2,000 par tête de bétail. Quel cynisme! We have accompanied them, invested in infrastructure, trained them and given them piglets . Today there are 16,500 pigs and they are back in their business.

The small planters – *R 1 milliard pour l'irrigation and de-rocking to help them, Mr Speaker, Sir.* I can go on. *Les orphelins, les pauvres, Mr Speaker, Sir,* how many university students from poor background are getting help from us?

The social aid has been extended to other beneficiaries because in the past when you count the old age pension, they were disqualified by the threshold. Now we are extending many facilities to a wider group .

The hon. Prime Minister has spoken at length *sur une des mesures phare de ce gouvernement*, that is, the Cane Democratisation Fund where planters, labourers and artisans will become proud owners to the tune of 35% in the cane sector. Democratisation is also about SMEs. *Le rôle des petites et moyennes entreprises a augmenté considérablement sous ce gouvernement.* This is also part of the democratisation of the economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget is shaping recovery. We expect economic growth to be about 4.3% next year and higher than 5% in 2011. We will invest massively in infrastructure. *Il n'y a pas de pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir.* You go around this country and you see *c'est un chantier en permanence, partout.*

(Interruptions)

In the North, South, East, West, everywhere there is a footprint of the infrastructure project. We will continue to invest.

They raised the problem to the effect that *on n'a pas fait assez pour l'environnement.* Mr Speaker, Sir, what did they do when they were in power? I hope that hon. Soodhun has read the report that came out in France and in the UK on what needs to be done. First, using the fiscal carrot and stick to influence the choice of operators; second, energy efficiency, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has explained this morning, and third, renewable energy.

Today, the climate change conference will open in Copenhagen. We all hope Mr Speaker, Sir, that they will reach agreement on five simple things. By how much each country will reduce its emission of CO₂? All the experts believe that we need a minimum of 30% to prevent the temperature of the earth to rise above

2⁰c. What will be the base year for the reduction? *Tout le monde est d'accord qu'il faut utiliser la même base.* Over what period of time will the reduction take place? Many people are saying it should happen by 2020. Some countries will go for a more ambitious reduction over a period up to 2050. The next question is: how do you ensure transfer of technology to developing countries to adapt to climate change and to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change. Last, but not least, is *paisa*, how much resources will be made available to developing countries in order to adapt to climate change?

This is the pathos of the predicament Mr Speaker, Sir: small islands and developing economies are not a great emitter of carbon dioxide. Probably we represent less than 1% of the carbon footprint and yet the impact will be felt disproportionately on these countries. This is the problem that we face. There is some optimism. One month ago, most experts believe that there would be no agreement at all in Copenhagen. Then there has been a lot of political pressure and now it would appear that there can be some sort of a half-agreement, followed by a final agreement probably at some sort of Copenhagen II next year.

Let's hope that agreement will be reached, by how much they will reduce *l'émission de gaz à l'effet de serre*, over what period of time, starting from what year, what transfer of technology will take place and how much money would be made available to developing countries for adaptation and mitigation.

Not only we have been economically and *socialement innovants*, but one of the great things that I like in this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir - pardon me for saying this - is how innovative we have been *sur l'art, la culture, le sport et la musique*.

(Interruptions)

I am very proud of this, Mr Speaker, Sir. I listen to music like anybody else when I have some time, I go to the opera. But never in the history of this country has a Government done so much *pour l'art, la culture, l'héritage, le patrimoine et*

le sport. Never, Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of proceeds from the CSR and the Lottery Fund . Arts, culture and music, not only for qualitative improvement of life, but to empower poor kids from modest family. This is important. Some people will do well as lawyers, Chartered Accountants, Economists, Doctors, but as the hon. Prime Minister says all the time, you have to give opportunities to everybody to blossom, to bloom, to prosper and this is what we are doing *sur la dimension culturelle de ce budget*. A Mauritius Symphony Orchestra, upgrading Plaza theatre - they have controlled Plaza for almost 15 years and nothing happened. It is this Government that rehabilitated Plaza and that will rehabilitate *le Théâtre de Port Louis* and now we will convert Plaza into *un théâtre* opera, M. le president, a Mauritius Symphony Orchestra, a cultural and artistic *boulevard* performing arts. I can hear some cynical remarks but, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is performing art in India, Sri Lanka, China, and this is part of qualitative enhancement of life. Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was a small kid, there was always a discussion between who support Cliff Richard and Elvis Presley. You remember that and also between Frédéric François and Mike Brant. Little did I realise that 40 years later when Frédéric François comes to Mauritius, there was going to be such a craze to go and see him live *parce qu'il y a une absence d'événementielle* . And we will fill in this gap, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are going to upgrade stadium, *on aura deux concerts de niveau international par an*. *Je disais à mes collègues, le ministre de l'éducation, et le ministre du tourisme, that I hope* the first one will be a jazz festival .

Film festival - some people came to see me and suggested that we have a film festival every two years. I said why not. Let us position Mauritius as the cultural capital in the region and we have what it takes to do it, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a *mosaïque* of civilisation, a *carrefour* of culture. We have people from all

over the world, Mr Speaker, Sir. We can showcase this diversity, this cross cultural dimension.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have rescued the economy from the precipice. We have saved the country from the brink. We have turned the corner and we have done that, Mr Speaker, Sir, against all odds. There were many doubting Toms; there were many people who wished also that we fail. It was not based on solid analytical work, but on wishful thinking. Some people would just shuffle cards, hoping that the ship will collapse but, under the leadership of the good captain, our Prime Minister, and good crews, Mr Speaker, Sir, *on a ramé très dur. Vous savez, c'est dur de ramer dans la cale !*

(Interruptions)

Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, everybody recognises the excellent management of the economy and of the country by *l'Alliance sociale*. Mr Speaker, Sir, the World Bank will showcase Mauritius at the beginning of January 2010. They will invite Ministers from other countries to come and see two things: how reforms have saved the country and, second, how the timeliness and the adequacy of the Stimulus Package has helped the country to buffer the impact of the worst economic recession.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my good friend, hon. Dr. Boolell, represents Mauritius in many of these international fora. Never in the history of our country, has our credibility, our reputation been so high. Never, Mr Speaker, Sir! We are a small country, but we punch significantly above our weight..

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, everywhere the representative of Mauritius is requested to speak, to sort out a problem, just like the hon. Prime Minister sorted out the problem of where the Commonwealth conference would be held. How he helped small island economies double the share of funding that they will get from rich countries to adapt to climate change. We also have had the trust and confidence of the population. Let me quote an economist who knows Mauritius. He is not a Mauritian. He does not always agree with us and it is good that we have people that do not always agree with us, because they keep their independence and their authority. This is what he says, and I quote -

“Mauritius suffered a major setback between 2000 and 2005. Then, it had a Government that did not understand economics or even basic public accounting. It did not even quite know what it was doing or comprehend what was happening in the world economy that was so vital to Mauritius. The ship of State was listing badly and was threatened with sinking in 2005.”

Then, the same person made a comment in 2006 -

“The patient Mauritius is now out of the intensive care and capable of walking without support. Had the previous Government policies been continued, the patient would have been comatose, on artificial life support.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, he continues -

“The ship of the State has been stabilised and righted. The island’s prow is now pointing in the right direction. Its sails have been unfurled and the wind is gathering in those sails. A disastrous cause has been corrected and reversed in the nick of time.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is about political leadership. Political leadership is about standing in front of the mob and leading it where it should go and, Mr Speaker, Sir, he went on to say -

“Success comes to those who dare, those who are courageous and those who act”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have dared, we have been courageous, we have acted and the results are here for all of us to see. Thank you very much.

At 6.59 p.m, the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.15 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PROGRAMME-BASED BUDGET ESTIMATES 2010 & INDICATIVE ESTIMATES 2011 & 2012

Office of the President – 001 Presidency Affairs was called.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we would like to know first the methodology of proceeding. Are we going page by page or vote by vote?

The Chairperson: We will proceed page by page. I will call the vote and then we will proceed page by page.

Mr Dulloo: Thank you. I am on page 2. Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a great difficulty for us too, because the actual expenditure is not

indicated for the year ending 2009 so that we can compare and scrutinize before voting. We have to refer to page XII where we are given the global figure of expenditure for the previous year 2008/2009, but not the expenditure for July 2009 to December 2009. An indication could be given as we go along.

Secondly, as far as wages are concerned, there is the number of posts at later pages. This would apply to all the departments, but the wages of the holder of the post are not indicated. This creates difficulty for transparency and accountability. But I am addressing on Strategic Note, that is, the main functions of the President. At page 2, we see that the Office also holds activities for the Promotion of National Unity in collaboration with Ministries. This is good. But there are other functions which I don't know whether this is diffused in the expenditure for the President; he is the Commander-in-Chief by virtue of section 28 of the Constitution, he ensures that the institutions of democracy and the rule of law are protected and the fundamental rights are respected. At page 2 it refers to one of his functions. I would like to know whether there is any special provision within the Budget to support the President in this very important function that he will have to perform as far as democracy is concerned.

Office of the President – Programme Code 001: Presidency Affairs (Rs48,055,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the Vice-President – Programme Code 011: Vice-Presidency Affairs (Rs11,500,000) was called and agreed to.

The Judiciary – Programme Code 021: Administration of Justice was called.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, at page 9, under *Major Achievements for 2008/09 and 2009 – Sitting of the Judicial committee of the Privy Council in Mauritius*, we know that there has been one session already and we see that for the next financial year, there is a similar provision made of Rs3 m. as for the current financial year of six months. I would like to know whether the Privy Council will be holding any more sessions in Mauritius and how we are going about it because there is information to the effect that there are certain logistic difficulties and maybe, there won't be any more session in Mauritius.

As far as the Family Court is concerned, they are doing a good work. We know that the objective is to expedite matters and the target has been fixed. We would like to know more about the statistics of the number of cases that have been disposed of.

Under paragraph 2 - *Major Services to be provided (outputs) for 2010-2012*, I see a system of compulsory mediation and also to bring electronic filing and mandatory mediation. I would like to know in more details how this is going to operate and how would the litigants and *les justifiables* would be able to benefit from this electronic filing and mandatory mediation?

Under paragraph 3 – *Construction of new court houses, Court rooms and offices is under way*, certain details have been provided as to the upgrading of the courts, but one big question remains about the Supreme Court. There has been a project of building up a new Supreme Court. I don't see it appearing anywhere in the provisions that have been made. Can I know whether this project of a new building for the Supreme Court has been shelved altogether or whether it is still on the agenda?

Under *Programme Code 021 – Administration of Justice - Provide equal access to a fair and impartial system of justice*, there is a problem these days as far as legal aid is concerned. Maybe I would refer this for a fresh look if we really want to attain the objective of an equal access and impartial system of justice, because certain litigants are being deprived eligibility. I refer this to the Government side as to whether this could be taken up with the Judiciary because when spouses are separated, there can be a property registered in the name of a person, but the husband is still occupying it, he gets legal aid and the wife won't get legal aid because it has been registered in their name. Maybe accessibility to assistance to legal aid has to be looked at again.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, to be clear, I think this was just meant to be an overview with the details on the other side. Now I see we are going to go through the overview page by page. I thought this is policy.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order! Order! I think we are just beginning with this exercise now. I will request hon. Members not to go on talking and making speeches. They can just put questions and ask for answers. Being given that that is part of the Recurrent Budget, I think even last year, we had questions put on the overview of the Judiciary. I think this concerns the Mackay report.

The Prime Minister: On the policy, this is what I wanted to check out.

The Chairperson: No. I will not allow questions on policy.

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member has detailed questions, he can come one by one.

The Chairperson: I think what hon. Members can do is to put the question and refer to the details in the other pages. What I was saying is that, for example, there is page 9, the hon. Member can pick up the issue which he wants to raise and go to the other pages where the particulars have been given and then he will perhaps be clearer.

Mr Dulloo: If I can refer to the particular items, we have at page 14 – Privy Council, Rs3 m. made as provision and then there are items of social assistance benefits in cash and construction of non residential buildings as well as the Bambous Court, but we don't see anything about the Supreme Court. This is why I have asked this question, this is a

programme-based budgeting, what we intend to perform in the light of the budgetary provisions made.

The Prime Minister: For the Privy Council, Mr Chairperson, the sum of Rs3.2 m. was meant for the last session of 2008/2009. There has been no sitting of the Privy Council for 2009 because they are moving to new premises and therefore they cannot come to Mauritius. My understanding is that very likely there will be a session in 2010. I understand that the new administrative complex will be in Highlands and they are going to start the building.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the services to be provided, *P6: Rage of disposal (7 months) of civil cases at matrimonial Division*, may we have information from the hon. Prime Minister regarding the number of cases? Since I see that the performance baseline for 2009 was 10% and for 2010 target is only 15%, may we know the number of cases which have been heard for 2009 and the expected number of cases that will be heard next year?

The Prime Minister: These are targets that have been put by the Judiciary. My understanding is that they have a backlog and they are trying to clear it. That is why they don't want to give a figure they are not going to be able to comply with.

Mr Dulloo: At page 13, item 22060005 *IT Equipment*, we know this has been installed in all our courts, but it is not being utilised as such, apart from the Supreme Court and, exceptionally, at times, in the

IC. There is something wrong. Is this just a provision for the maintenance, upkeep and routine management, or is it really to upgrade so that they can be used even in the district courts? The IT system that has been installed in all our courts of law is not being utilised as such.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I don't know to what degree it is not being utilised. My understanding is that there have been some teething problems like anything new that is started. They are also going to upgrade the equipment.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 14, item *31112415 Upgrading of District Courts*, (a) *Flacq District Court*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister when will the project be completed? Under item *31132401 - e-Judiciary Project-Phase 1*, a sum of Rs35 m. has been earmarked for 2010. Can we have an idea by when this project will start?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: At page 14, under item *311124151upgrading of district courts (c) Other Courts*, I would like to know whether this includes Souillac District Court, because it is in a very dilapidated state.

Mr Jugnauth: Under item *22900906 Privy Council*, with regard to the sums that have been estimated and planned for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, may we know how many cases are expected to be heard in

Mauritius? Can we know also how much on average it costs to hear one case?

Mr Ganoo: I come back to item *31132401e-Judiciary Project-Phase I*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this project will need legislation and, if so, when it will be ready?

The Prime Minister: First of all, Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Flacq District Court, this project is expected to be completed by the end of February 2010.

As to whether the *Other Courts* include Souillac District Court, my understanding is that it does. But I have no indication as to when it is going to take place.

The third question was about the *e-Judiciary*, phase 1 is already completed. Phase 2 has been started and is expected to be completed by the end of next year. It appears that there will be need to have legislation. Obviously, we will have to find time. I don't know whether we will do it in this mandate or in the next mandate, but we will find time. I don't know how many cases the Privy Council has looked at.

Mr Dowarkasing: At page 15, item *122652 Court Officer* and item *121820 Trainee Court Officer*, do I understand from the hon. Prime Minister that the decrease in the number means that six Court Officers are retiring? What is the explanation given for the decrease in the number? Secondly, we are recruiting 14 new Courts Officers during this

financial year. Can we know whether it has already been advertised, the exercise is on, or else how is it going to be done?

The Prime Minister: Normally, when you see the figure going down it is that they are retiring. I presume that this is the case. As for the advertisement, we don't go into these administrative details. I understand that, out of 95 posts, 89 officers are in post, including 34 trainee Court Officers. There are 14 additional Trainee Court Officers and there has been provision for 14 additional Court Officers, which will bring the total number to 103. But when they advertise or whatever, it is administrative, and we don't go into those details.

Mr Dowarkasing: There has been a decrease from 95 to 89. They have not given the reason why there has been a decrease in the number.

The Prime Minister: As I have just said, it is proposed to enlist 14 additional Trainee Court Officers, but this will be done in 2011 and will make the number increase, in fact, to 103.

The Judiciary – Programme Code 021 (Rs 469,304,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Assembly – Programme Code 031: Parliamentary Affairs was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 17, under *Strategic Note - Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, I see that there is need for appropriate human resource for the

administration of Parliamentary Services and then it is stated that there is need to have training. Can we know the additional number of manpower that is needed and why this is not being provided for the proper administration of the Parliamentary Services?

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, I have one clarification to ask. On page 17, under *Strategic Note - Summary of Funded Positions, Programme Code 031 - Parliamentary Affairs, MP*. For July to December, there is provision for 50 MPs and, then, next year, 2010, 49 MPs. May I have an explanation as to whether hon. Dayal will be appointed Minister or what not?

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under *Strategic Note - Programme 031: Parliamentary Affairs*, it is said: Ensure that parliamentary work is carried out in all fairness for the benefit of the Nation. So, we trust you. Now that the motion for transmission of live debates of Parliamentary Affairs has been tabled at the National Assembly, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether a Select Committee will be set up in the months to come. The Prime Minister stated to us that, as there are a few parliamentary affairs, Parliament will be sitting after the New Year.

The Chairperson: The motion is before the House.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the major constraints and challenges, this is being said as a matter of policy, but

there might be constraints. There are items at the back, and that is why I think there will be some confusion until we get used to the system. In fact, we are trying to be transparent, too transparent it appears, because now you are going to ask questions about why we are being transparent. They are going to look for staff, but it appears that there is need for more staff. There is always need for more staff. Wherever you go, you will find this. I will go further in this. Vacancies for four posts of Word Processing Operators, will no longer be required on the Establishment of the National Assembly. That is my understanding. As for the one MP less, in fact, hon. Dulloo is right, it is a printing error.

(Interruptions)

As you rightly caught what I said earlier on, there will be more parliamentary sessions. I believe this will take some time because they will have to do the arrangements for the sound and all those things. We would like to do it.

(Interruptions)

I hope you won't complain that people see me too much on television.

Mr Dulloo: At page 18, I would just like to get a clarification because we are working in a very constraint situation in the Library.

The Chairperson: Where is it?

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, at page 18, *P2: Implementation of an e-Document and Management System* and *P3: Implementation of a Parliamentary Archives Unit for the archiving*, the main problem is for research. May I know whether this would be based in the Library itself or somewhere else? How are we going to accommodate it because the Librarians are working in very difficult conditions in order to make accessible to us documents when we do research. How would this be operating? Is it the Library with new staff or differently?

The Prime Minister: It is going to be in the Library.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 19, item 22060 *maintenance*. Every year, I ask the question regarding the paintings at the National Assembly. They are in a very deplorable state and every year I ask whether we are going to restore those paintings, because I think they are very old paintings and are of great value. Will this be done this year out of this sum?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that this is going to be done. In fact, I said so in the past and Mr Speaker as well. Today, I got a letter from somebody. There are Mauritians who are actually specialised in this field. They can do the work and we are going to look into this possibility.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 19, item *22040 Office Equipment and Furniture*, can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister through the Chair to know whether in future more facilities could be given to the press people? When we are in the lounge we know that the press people have difficulties to work. Maybe they can have at least telephone facilities. Is it possible that in future a counter or a room be made available to the press? I think that under the item of office equipment and furniture this can be catered for in the next financial year.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that there is any problem for the press. Maybe, they can let us know the nature of the problem and we will look into it.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, at page 20, *under Code 31, Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets* and item *31112421 Upgrading and Refurbishment of Government House*, I see that for the estimates of July 2009, a sum of Rs95 m. was earmarked. For the 2010 Estimates, it is Rs190 m. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this sum of Rs95 m. has been used already and which part of the Government House has been refurbished? May we also know for what use this sum of Rs190 m. is meant for? What section and what part of the Government House will be refurbished?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I have a question on the same item, the upgrading and refurbishment of Government House. Can the hon.

Prime Minister inform the House whether any bidding exercise has been done? Has any contractor been chosen and how has this sum of Rs95 m. been spent so far?

The Prime Minister: I am checking on the spot. I know that there has been tendering procedure. I believe, Mr Chairperson, that the works – I think one hon. Member wanted details on the works – consist of renovation and restoration of the building, including replacement, repairs, upgrading of electrical and mechanical systems, plumbing and wastewater disposal. And to answer the hon. Member's question specifically, it is for the restoration of the old paintings. Only Rs2.7 m. have been used out of the Rs95 m. earmarked in 2009. As for consultancy fees, it is at the final stage of bids valuation by the Central Procurement Board. Tentatively, the contract may be awarded in early January next year.

Programme Code 031 National Assembly (Rs333,169,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 041 National Audit Office (Rs88,310,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 051 Public and Disciplined Forces Services Commission was called.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, at page 29, *Part A: Overview of Department*, we have been given facts concerning the selection exercises, 80 selection exercises for the relevant period, 75 promotion exercises, etc. We would like to know how many have been recruited following those exercises and how many have been promoted.

When we go to the ‘Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed’, we see that redeployment is being made and there is the training of officers. In the Disciplined Forces Service Commission especially, officers are made to work under stress, without rest. So, it is good that Government recognises that there should be a quicker...

The Chairperson: I am sorry. The hon. Member is making a speech. If he needs the information, I think, he can just put the question.

Mr Dulloo: Mr Chairperson, I asked for some clarification about the selection exercises. My next question would be: how would the selection exercise, especially for the promotion of sergeants and inspectors, be made? This is being awaited. May we know where matters stand and how this is being expedited?

The Prime Minister: There was a question in the past where I had said that they are going through the list. There is a procedure that they are following. My understanding is that it is nearly over.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on the same item at page 29. We see that 75 promotion exercises were completed. Can we get the information in which Department or in which Ministry promotion exercises are being carried out?

On the same page, we also see that 18 representations from public officers have been attended to. May we be enlightened as to the outcome of those representations and from which Ministries?

The Prime Minister: I'll give it in a minute, Mr Chairperson, because I don't have the details of which Departments they are.

Mr Dowarkasing: Sir, I am referring to item 22060 *Maintenance* at page 32. I see that there is an increase of about 400% in the sum for the estimates of 2010, moving from Rs1,000,000 to Rs4,115,000. Can we know whether there is any specific project that is being carried out?

The Prime Minister: If I am correct, the hon. Member asked about maintenance? First of all, there are provisions for painting and minor repairs to buildings which comes to Rs2,715,000. Then, there is for plant and equipment which is Rs200,000. They are buying two vehicles for Rs240,000, IT equipment for Rs900,000, furniture, fixtures and fittings for Rs50,000 and grounds for Rs10,000.

Public and Disciplined Forces Service Commission - Programme Code 051: Public and Disciplined Forces Service Affairs (Rs51,119,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsman's Office – Programme Code 061: Ombudsman's Services was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I want to talk on item 3 *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed – Addressing issues arising out of maladministration in the public sector including local authorities*. Can we know how the hon. Prime Minister intends to address this major constraint?

The Prime Minister: We are talking about the Ombudsman's Office, so, it is not me who is going to address it. If he has any views, he will tell me and then we will see.

Mr Gunness: Sir, I would like to talk on *Performance Indicator P2: Proportion of cases solved: Local Authorities. 38 cases in 2008/09* at page 36. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister which local authorities are mainly concerned with these cases?

The Chairperson: Any other question on page 36?

The Prime Minister: We have got to find which authorities? I can find out and tell the hon. Member.

Ombudsman's Office – Programme Code 061: Ombudsman's Services (Rs7,409,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission – Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries was called.

The Chairperson: Do hon. Members have any question?

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, under *Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries* at page 41, can we have a latest from the hon. Prime Minister whether the motion is coming very soon?

The Prime Minister: In fact, if you'll remember, I answered a question in Parliament recently. I think it was...

Mr Bhagwan: The latest.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member is right to ask about the latest. The latest is the same as it was before. In other words, what I said in the answer to the question is that - I think, it was the hon. Leader of the Opposition who asked the question - it is still the same, they are looking at the intricacies of the question. I did mention that there are going to be constitutional amendments as well and that will come when we are able to bring it.

The Chairperson: Yes, does the hon. Member have any question? On which page is it?

Mr Ganoo: At page 40, *III Summary of Funded Positions By Programmes and Sub-Programmes – Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister about the Electoral Code of Conduct now that the Electoral Supervisory Commission has received all the suggestions, representations and memoranda from the different quarters and parties, whether there has

been any progress and when does Government intend to come forward to make it enforceable as the hon. Prime Minister has said in this House?

The Prime Minister: I do not know whether they have got all the sponsors, but I will have to ask when they will move forward. This is why I was saying that we will need more legislation.

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission – Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries (Rs2,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Electoral Commissioner's Office – Programme Code 081: Electoral Services was called.

Mr Dulloo: Sir, at page 43: *III Summary of Financial Resources – Programme Code 081- Electoral Services*, we find that the last estimate for July-December 2009 was Rs26,000,000, for 2012 it is Rs66,745,000, whereas for 2010, it is Rs335,350,000. May I ask whether this is for the general election purposes? For 2011, we see that the projected figure is Rs164,108,000. I would like to know whether this is for municipal elections.

The Prime Minister: Generally, we try to put the figures to the costs in proviso, but it does not mean that it would be so. As I said in Parliament the other day, I can go up to January 2011, but if there is, the money is there.

Electoral Commissioner's Office – Programme Code 081: Electoral Services (Rs335,350,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to -

Employment Relations Tribunal – 091: Industrial Dispute Resolutions (Rs19,634,000)

Local Government Service Commission – 101: Local Government Service Human Resource Affairs (Rs21,320,000)

Central Procurement Board – 111: Procurement of Goods, Works and Services (Rs67,416,000)

Independent Broadcasting Authority – 121: Supervision of Broadcasting (Rs8,500,000)

Independent Commission Against Corruption – Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, at page 67 *Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption - Investigator*, I see that in *July-December, we had 50 Investigators* and for the coming financial year, it has been decreased to 45. When we know that the number of cases is increasing daily at the ICAC, why is it that the number of investigators is being decreased?

The Prime Minister: For ICAC, Mr Chairperson, this is covered by section 61 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, whereas there is a Parliamentary Committee that is empowered to report to the National

Assembly. This is the forum where you can ask for it. It is independent and there is no ministerial responsibility for ICAC.

Independent Commission Against Corruption – Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption (Rs135,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Human Rights Commission - Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights was called.

Mr Dulloo: I just want to have some clarifications at pages 69 and 70 concerning the staffing of the National Human Rights Commission. We do not see any provision being made. Nothing is spelt out; we are just given the current grant. What are the human resources at the disposal of the National Human Rights Commission? This is not spelt out here.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: At page 70, Code 26 Grants, I would like to know who the members of the National Human Rights Commission Board are.

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission Board is Mr Seetulsingh, the former Judge. Concerning the staff, there are one Principal Assistant Secretary, two Executive Officers, three Clerical Officers, one Word Processing Operator and one Confidential Secretary.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member asked about the staff.

There is something else that I need to say, Mr Chairperson, so that there is no confusion on this. There are going to be amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act which are being looked at at this point in time because we intend to alter the composition of the National Human Rights Commission. We have had discussions with the Chairperson. They are thinking that probably they would have to be broken down into four divisions, namely, the Human Rights Division, the Equal Opportunity Division which will come under that same Commission. It is provided in the Equal Opportunity Act. That is the reason why there is a delay in naming. There would also be another division, the Police Complaints Division and another one for the National Preventive Division.

National Human Rights Commission – Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (Rs12,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsperson for Children’s Office - Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children’s Rights and Interests was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, one of the major constraints that has been highlighted is the high percentage of child abuse, child neglect cases. I am referring to page 73, Output 05: *Sensitization and awareness campaigns for the general public, children and parents* to try to do away with the issue of child abuse and P1: *Number of talks organised* which is 10. Can the hon. Prime Minister table a list of the

details of the talks, where they were held and who were those who attended? I do not want it now; the hon. Prime Minister can table it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to item *3 Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed* at page 71. From what I read, there is ‘difficulty to convince stakeholders to invest in prevention and to engage in rehabilitation.’ May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether measures are being taken to overcome this major constraint? Are we investing more in prevention and rehabilitation?

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to *Strategic Note – Investigations in 211 cases including some very high profile cases of sexual abuse/paedophilia*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many of those cases have actually resulted in suits and have actually been sent to the relevant authorities?

The Prime Minister: I will have to get the exact details of the numbers. I think somebody wanted to know about the protection and promotion of children’s rights and interests, about the major achievements. I can table it because it is quite long.

Ombudsperson for Children’s Office – Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children’s Rights and Interests (Rs6,847,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions - Programme Code 161: Criminal Advisory and Litigation was called.

Mr Dulloo: At page 79, I refer to items *22120011 Fees icw Privy Council Cases* and *22120012 Retainer Fees to Counsel*. We know that the DPP's office has got its own State Law Officers. In fact, we are increasing - which is good - from 17 to 22. I wonder whether this would be enough. May I know what this Retainer Fees to Counsel is because there are two items concerning the Privy Council Cases and the Fees to Counsel?

The Prime Minister: Basically, these are fees which are payable to prosecuting counsels appointed by the DPP to appear as if on his behalf in criminal proceedings.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions – Programme Code 161: Criminal Advisory and Litigation (Rs53,480,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal - Programme Code 171: Determination of Appeals by Public Officers was called.

Mr Dulloo: At page 81, we are given statistics that some 50 cases have already been heard. May we know how many cases are pending before the Tribunal right now? We are told that there are major constraints like inadequate staff and so on. May I ask whether we should not increase it by two members to assist the Chairperson so that they can expedite matters as more cases will be coming up?

Mr Ganoo: I come on the same item, but with a different question, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Prime Minister, if he has the information,

inform the House - as far as these 50 cases which have been heard so far are concerned - about the percentage of the number of these cases in which the complainants, the aggrieved public servants or members of the public have been successful in their appeal against the PSC?

Mr Gunness: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister who are the Chairperson and members of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this is available. It is Mr Namdarkhan who was a former magistrate and the members are Mr Wong So and Mrs Balgobin-Boyrul. As for the cases, I am not sure whether they will need it because, in fact, maybe this is not clear. Out of the 50 cases, the number of appeals against the decision of the PSC was 25; against the LGSC: 9, and against other Ministries and Departments: 16. Out of these, 31 appeals were not entertained. Two of them were withdrawn due to agreement between the parties; that already makes 33. Out of the 17 cases which are pending determination, there are 11 against the PSC, 3 against the LGSC and 3 against other Ministries and Departments.

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal – Programme Code 171: Determination of Appeals by Public Officers (Rs8,642,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Prime Minister's Office - Programme Code 201: Prime Minister's Office was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 87, I find that 18,045 applications for residence permits and 534 applications for Certificates of Nationality were processed. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister how many out of these have been granted?

Mr Dowarkasing: On the same issue, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister what the difference between the Certificate of Nationality and registration as Mauritian citizen is? There is a bit of confusion in my mind. Can the hon. Prime Minister just clear it out?

At the same page, I am referring to '26 projects for value of Rs19.4 m. which have been approved under the Women and Children's Solidarity Programme' which is at page 93, item 22900908. Can we have a breakdown of those 26 projects which have been valued at Rs19.4 m.?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at the same page, I see '16 approvals were given for adoption (for foreigners)'. Can we have a list of the nationalities of those persons who have adopted, that is, the 16 cases for adoption?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, please! Can you put your question?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 87, I'll say a few words on these 16 approvals given for adoption for foreigners. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister - this is a very serious case - whether any of these

applications have been made by an association called APSA? We have been made to understand that there is a great scandal concerning this adoption...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member means whether APSA has made an application...

Mr Bhagwan: I mean whether the hon. Prime Minister will inform the House as to what action Government is taking in this particular case.

The Chairperson: No, the question is whether APSA has adopted; we have to get the reply.

Mr Bhagwan: You don't have to cry with me!

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

Mr Bhagwan: Mind your tone!

The Chairperson: The hon. Member cannot take his time to stand up and sit down.

Mr Bhagwan: You cannot cry at me, I am not your child.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mrs Perrier: Le Premier ministre est-il au courant que certains mauriciens et leurs descendants qui ont émigré dans le passé et qui voudraient revenir à Maurice, ont encore des difficultés à retrouver leur

nationalité? Est-ce qu'une fois pour toutes, tous les mauriciens pourront retrouver leur nationalité?

The Chairperson: This is a policy matter.

Mr Dulloo: I would like to have some more clarifications on the figures that have been mentioned in paragraph 1- 'Major Achievements'. They are staggering figures. It says –

“The following applications were processed:

18,045 Residence Permits

534 Certificates of Nationality”.

Were they processed or were they actually issued? This is what we want to know because the last two would be 'that have actually been given'. How would this compare with other years because this is only for half a year, for six months? How would this compare with annual granting of permits, etc? And in the middle of the page there is the question of the Advanced Light Helicopter from India. I know that this project went together with a sea patrol vessel. So, what is the position concerning the sea patrol vessel? Was it in the same agreement or in a separate one?

The Prime Minister: Hon. Dulloo is asking about the sea patrol vessel. There is one which is being given by the United States of America. I suppose that the hon. Member is referring to that. The one from India is an OPV, Offshore Patrol Vessel. This is within the same

line of credit, but it takes a longer time for us to deal because it is more sophisticated than the others.

There were other questions about residence permits. First of all, let me allay the fear of some people, Mr Chairperson. I think the hon. Member was asking about Certificate of Nationality which is done under section 23, that is, a citizen of Mauritian parents born outside Mauritius, but the parents are Mauritians whereby the naturalisation is registration of a foreign citizen who takes Mauritian nationality. As for adoption, I don't know whether it is fair to ask from which country they come from, but I can table it. I don't know whether it is fair to ask, but I know that they come from different countries. I should say that the applications for adoption are made by individuals, not by any kind of organisation or whatever.

Mr Bodha: Again as regards the figure of 18,054 Residence Permits, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister how does this figure relate to Occupational Permits?

The Prime Minister: It is included in the Occupation Permit. As you know, we have recently separated that. We do not have many figures for the Occupational Permit, but we are compiling these figures.

(Interruptions)

Well, at the moment, yes.

Mr Gunness: I asked the question because I see that 18,045 applications were processed. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister how many have been granted actually?

The Prime Minister: Generally, when we say they were processed, it means that most of them are on the positive side except for some of them, there might be reasons why they are not being processed. There are criteria for this, they do not just decide. Normally, when we say they are processed, that means they have satisfied the criteria and we look at them. Generally, most of them!

Prime Minister's Office - Programme Code 201: Prime Minister's Office (Rs630,675,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Prime Minister's Office - Programme Code 564: Human Rights Awareness (Rs1,800,000) was called and agreed to.

Government Information Service - Programme Code 211: Government Information Service and Provision of International News was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 99, Mr Chairperson, there is provision for Information Service, Communicate Government policies and projects through the media. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there are criteria regarding the projects which have been advertised through the media?

Government Information Service - Programme Code 211: Government Information Service and Provision of International News (Rs298,343,000 was, on question put, agreed to.

Forensic Science Laboratory - Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 111, item 31122 – *Other Machinery and Equipment*. We see that, for the coming year, a sum of Rs7.3 m. has been earmarked for machinery and equipment as well as for *upgrading of laboratory equipment* under item 31122404. But, at page 106, under *Strategic Note 3 - Major Constraints and Challenges*, there is *non-availability of equipment maintenance expertise and repairs locally*. Can we know how this is going to be addressed, since we don't have any expertise for maintenance locally?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we have a Programme of Cooperation with Staffordshire University and with the Forensic Laboratory in London. We are looking at how they can help us in all this. In fact, they are going to send experts.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, at page 106, referring to *Strategic Note 2 -Major Services to be provided, Programme 221: Provision for Forensic Services*, we have *Construction and use of a population DNA database and the National DNA database*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this has started?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, can I put one more question on this issue? Can the hon. Prime Minister give clarification to the House? I refer to page 106. One of the major constraints is the *Non-focused approach to calling staff for court appearances*. Is the hon. Prime Minister envisaging to remove this constraint and make use of these findings in court cases?

The Prime Minister: In fact, when experts from Staffordshire University came here, they found that most of the staff was in court. There is an abuse of the process. In the UK, for example, normally, barristers accept a certificate. If there is need for asking them to come to court and for cross-examination, then they are called. Here, automatically, they are all going to court, which brings a burden on the Forensic Laboratory, because then they cannot perform as they should; most of the staff are in court. We are going to try to do the same thing that Staffordshire University is doing in UK.

With regard to machinery, I must say that there is also a South African company which answers to that.

The other question was about the database. I think they have just started, but I do not have details on this.

Forensic Science Laboratory - Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services (Rs37,187,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Pay Research Bureau - Programme Code 231: Public Sector Compensation and HRM Policy and Strategy (Rs27,928,000) was called and agreed to.

Civil Status Division - Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I will ask one question only, Mr Chairperson. At page 121, under *Major Services to be provided - Timely delivery of Civil Status services*, I still remember the last time the hon. Prime Minister stated here in the House that he was not happy with certain services, especially at night, when we, MPs, have problems; for example, people coming to us in case of burial. *Dans les cas de mortalité, bien souvent il n'y a pas d'officiers les dimanches, les après-midis, et même le matin. Il y a eu des cas récemment en ce qui me concerne.* Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether action has been taken or will be taken where there are cases - I would say - of mismanagement of this service?

The Prime Minister: In fact, action is being taken. We are compiling a list at what time these officers close, how many staff there are. All this is being compiled from the Home Affairs Division. In fact, that is why we are putting it there.

Mrs Labelle: On the same issue, I see there is a decrease in the number of Civil Status Officers. We are also aware that many officers have training courses and, some offices, particularly in villages, are just closed. Now, there is a decrease in the number of Civil Status Officers.

How can we reconcile the fact that we want things to be done speedily, when there is a decrease in the number of Civil Status Officers?

Mr Gunness: On page 121, regarding the improvement of the Plastic Based Identity Card to Smart Card, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether any deadline has been fixed as to when this will be done?

The Prime Minister: The whole process is being looked at. A first process had been done, but we were not satisfied with it. We want it to be widely publicised as the process is ongoing. For the Smart Card, I am told that the tender documents are actually under preparation.

As for the number of staff, out of the 72 posts established for the Civil Status Division, funds have been made available for 65 posts only. 14 vacancies have been advertised in November of last year. However, funds were made available for seven vacancies only. Request is being made to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment for provisional funds for filling of the remaining seven vacancies.

Civil Status Division - Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs (Rs59,970,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Religious Subsidies - Programme Code 251: Financial Support to Religious Organisations was called.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, *per capita*, each non-profit making organisation gets about

Rs60 on the number of people who have registered belonging to that faith?

The Prime Minister: It sounds to me that's what it is.

Religious Subsidies - Programme Code 251: Financial Support to Religious Organisations (Rs74,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force - Programme Code 261: Security Policy and Management was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Programme 262: Community, Safety and Security - Mobile and foot patrol to prevent crime occurrence with support of Crime Prevention Unit*, according to me, the Bike Patrol Unit is the most effective unit of the Police Force, following the results which I have seen myself. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there would be an increase in this specialised unit, which I consider is doing a fantastic job?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, under item *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, it is being stated that many police officers leave the Force before attaining the age limit. There is also a considerable amount of officers resigning before completing the bonded two years probation period, and this number is high. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a particular study to know the causes of such state of affairs?

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, under item *Major Achievements for 2008/09*, there is the *Setting up of a NCG*

Commando Unit at NCG to undertake specific mission in maritime environment inter alia, anti-piracy, terrorist and hostage situations. I presume that this unit has not been set up. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister by when it will be set up?

The Prime Minister: For the Mobile Bike Patrol, I am glad that the hon. Member is telling me that this is effective because I know the police are reviewing it. It is good that the hon. Member mentions this because we need to know whether it is actually effective or not.

As for the causes of early retirement, it is not the first time this is happening. It is like this, people retire, and they want to go into other businesses. They have got this knowledge, they get employed in a private sector with a higher pay and all these things. I myself know of many such cases. But, as far as I know, we have not actually done any study to see whether there is any particular reason why this is so.

Concerning the National Coast Guard Commando, the setting-up of this unit was initiated in February of this year. There have been 22 officers who have actually been inducted after a rigorous selection procedure. They are undergoing training with the Indian Naval Marine Commando Officer who is training them.

Police Force - Programme Code 261: Security Policy and Management (Rs1,253,122,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force – Programme Code 262: Community, Safety and Security was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, at page 131, *Programme Code 26203 Support to Community*, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister how this sum of Rs11,178,000 has been used for support to community? I don't need an oral answer; maybe the Prime Minister could table the information.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the same item, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister - because we are talking about providing counselling to victims – who are those persons who offer the services of counselling in the Police Department?

The Prime Minister: First of all, for the support to the community, I think, the best thing would be to table it, Mr Chairperson because it is a long list.

As for the persons who do the counselling, I believe they go to different people who are competent in this field. But if the hon. Member wants to know precisely, I will give her the list.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I have one more question on *Programme Code 262*. I am referring to page 131, *Programme Code 26204 – Combating Drugs*. When we see the table, we find that for the year 2009 the total of funded positions by programmes and sub-programmes are 386 and that represents 3%. We see in year 2010, it is again 386, which means that the number of programmes and sub-programmes has remained the same for the year 2009 and will remain the same for 2010 also. We know about this problem of drugs and I

would not go into details. I just want to know why we are staggering on the figure of only 386 programmes which represents only 3%.

The Prime Minister: It is a question of finding the amount of money, but, I think, we should also need to put programmes that we can actually deliver. I think that's the reason.

As for the question of hon. Mrs Labelle who wanted to know who is doing the counselling, as I said, police officers who need counselling are actually referred by the Chief Police Medical Officer to whoever the competent person is in the Ministry of Health; but, at the moment, there is a scheme of service which is being referred to the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms. Then, they will approve a post for the specific job of counselling.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme Code 26201-Crime Control and Investigation*, the number of funded positions by programmes and sub-programmes for July to December is 6,321 while for the whole year of 2010, it is earmarked only 6,018. May we know why?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 133, *Programme Code 26203 – Support to Community, Output 01: Counsel given to victims of domestic violence and child abuse*, I would like to know whether we have counsellors or psychologists who give counselling to the victims of domestic violence.

Secondly, regarding the sensitisation campaigns, may I know whether a survey has been carried out to know the impact of these campaigns?

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at the same page, sub-programme 26201, *Output 01 – Mobile and foot patrol to prevent crime occurrence with support of Crime Prevention Unit, Performance Indicator P1: Reduce the number of larceny from household*, I see the target set for the year 2010 has not gone in the direction of reducing the number. For six months, it was 2,900, which means for a whole year it was 5,800 and the target for year 2010 remains 5,800. I think we must target to reduce the number of larceny from household, but I see the target has remained the same.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, Sir, let me start one by one. For the staffing for combating drugs, there was a question earlier. It is felt that the staff is adequate as they are satisfied with the results.

As for the counselling for sensitisation, I think hon. Mrs Labelle asked about the counselling that is being done. For domestic violence, this is being done by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare. There is a study being carried out by the Mauritius Research Council at the moment.

Hon. Mrs Martin asked a question that I did not quite understand. I would not mind if she can ask it again.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 131, *Programme Code 26201 Crime Control and Investigation*. For only six months, that is, the year 2009 July-December, we can see that there are 6,321 funded positions. Now, for 2010, the whole year, it is only 6,018. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: Unless they are doing it so well that they don't need to go up, but I will tell you in a minute. I can't tell the hon. Member why; I'll have to look into it.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, I would like to talk on page 133 *Sub-Programme 26204: Combating Drugs*. Going through the reply of the Parliamentary Question we have received from the hon. Prime Minister himself and from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister replacing him, we have seen, during the past months, that the Subutex is even more on the increase than cannabis, especially in poor areas. The hon. Prime Minister has just stated that the staff is adequate. Can we know from him whether there is the setting-up of a specialised unit in the ADSU? Can we know whether, in the coming months, this question of the increase in Subutex in poor areas - following the statistics we have received in Parliament itself - will be taken as a matter of priority by the ADSU?

The Prime Minister: This is more complicated than it appears, Mr Chairperson. In other countries, they look at this problem of Subutex differently, but I know that the ADSU is looking at it with a special eye on it.

(Interruptions)

Well, for the entry in the country, you mean? That is one of the problems that we have because, in some countries, it is not illegal, but we have changed the law, as you know, in this country.

As for the question about why it has gone down, in fact, I am told that there was a decrease last year and this is why this year we have maintained the same target.

Mrs Perrier: At page 133, *Sub-Programme 26202 Road and Public Safety*, I see with great concern that the number of drivers booked for dangerous driving is slightly increasing over the years. For 2010, it is 1653 and for 2011, it is 1686. Can we know the reason? Is it that the sensitisation campaign is not good enough or whether the fines are not severe enough? Why is it that this number is not decreasing instead of increasing?

The Prime Minister: Probably the answer is because we are more proactive now in catching more people. I think that is the reason, but I expect it will go down further.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on this same *Sub-Programme 26202 Road and Public Safety*, I see that the outputs are different from the outputs we had in the previous Budget. In the previous Budget, one of the outputs was to reduce fatal and other road accidents and this year we have deleted this output. Is there any particular reason, firstly, why we have deleted this output? And secondly, do we still have this

objective of reducing the fatal road accidents by 3% as stated in the previous Budget? Have we reached this objective stated last year to reduce fatal road accidents by 3%?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Regarding the question asked by hon. Mrs Perrier, in fact, I am told that the number of vehicles has increased; now it is the driver's behaviour that they are looking at, additionally from what I told you.

The other question was that of hon. Mrs Martin. In 2009, there was a certain number of vacancies. So, the provision for 2010 represents the actual funded position; vacancies are not included in that; that is why there is a discrepancy.

Mrs Labelle: Sir, still under the same item *Road and Public Safety*, firstly, there is one objective which is not here in this present Budget, that is, the reduction of fatal accidents. And my second question was whether we have reached the objective of reducing fatal accidents by 3% as stated in the Budget of last year.

The Prime Minister: What I can tell the hon. Member is that is precisely why I have put a Road Safety Unit in my office. I think there are lots of things that we need to do now to bring the numbers down. Some of them are unpalatable, but I will not hesitate to do it even though we are coming nearer and nearer.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 137, under item *31112013 Construction of Police District Headquarters - Flacq Divisional Headquarters*, I think construction has started this year. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister by when this project will be completed?

The Prime Minister: Regarding the Flacq Divisional Headquarters, the contract has already been awarded for a total amount of Rs65 m. and provision is made for part payment; work has already started and it is expected to end in 12 months' time.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, in the same breath, can I ask a question on page 143, item *141341, Police Constable (Security/Driver), Trainee Police Constables (New)*? We find that for period July-December, 450 police constables have been recruited. In his speech this morning, the hon. Prime Minister stated that more than 900 police constables were recruited and for the next year, we find that there is provision for 700, whereas the Budget makes provision for 900. Can we know why there is this discrepancy in the figures?

The Prime Minister: I take it that the hon. Member is talking about Trainee Police Constables, just to be clear. I think this is what is mentioned here. There is a list of recruits that we have to wait from the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. 300 males and 50 females will be recruited in 2010 compared to 500 males and 50 females, as I said. Therefore, the total funded position will be 550 plus 350 which makes 900. But, as I said, usually there is a delay by the time you get it from

the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. This is what explains the discrepancy.

Police Force – Programme Code 262: Community, Safety and Security (Rs2,403,243,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force – Programme Code 263: Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: I am referring to page 131, *Sub-Programme 26303: Coastal and Maritime Surveillance – Search and Rescue*. From July to December 2009, Rs275,400,000 have been used for this item. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister how many times the National Coast Guard has been going into our economic zone for patrols? How many illegal fishing boats have been arrested and whether they have arrested any boat conducting smuggling activities?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member had put a substantive question, I would have answered it in detail.

Police Force - Programme Code 263: Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance (Rs1,546,635,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Government Printing Department - Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services was called.

Mr Gunness: At page 150, Mr Chairperson, I see we have printing of 20,000 copies of Chapter 1 (28 pages) of school textbooks for

Standard IV (Pupil's Workbook) on Health Education in order to cater for late delivery of same, ordered from abroad by Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources. Can the hon. Prime Minister make sure that for the coming year, any books or materials for schools are printed on time so that the students get the materials on time?

The Prime Minister: We always endeavour, this is the objective and we try our very best, but we are putting special effort that this is so.

Government Printing Department - Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services (Rs123,165,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to -

Meteorological Services - 281: Meteorological Services (Rs59,405,000)

Mauritius Prisons Service - 291: Management of Prisons (Rs34,472,000)

Mauritius Prisons Service - Programme Code 292: Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Detainees was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 170, item 31 *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets - 31112011 Construction of Prisons*. We see that Rs1 m. were earmarked for July-December 2009 for the New Prison at Melrose and for this year there is a sum of

Rs300,000,000. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand?

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I want to talk on page 164, *Strategic Note 3, Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - A prison manual will need to be put in place, and is being worked out.* May we know from the hon. Prime Minister who is actually working on this manual and when will it be worked out?

The Prime Minister: I'll answer the question about the New Prison at Melrose. The hon. Member wanted to know where matters stand. A Project Manager has been appointed for a period of two years with effect from 04 September 2009. The Central Procurement Board has prequalified five contractors to bid for the construction of the prison. The tender documents have been finalised and sent to the Central Procurement Board on 02 December of this year. The tenders for these prequalified bidders are expected to be launched by the end of this month. Construction is expected to start at the end of April 2010. The construction span will be over a period of around two years.

As for the prison manual, it will be contracted out to India.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, again under item *31122811 Purchase of CCTV Cameras*, for this current financial year there is a sum of Rs3 m. and for the next year, there is a sum of Rs8 m. Can we

know how this sum of Rs3 m. is going to be spent? Where do we have the CCTV cameras costing Rs3 m., and what is the sum of Rs8 m. meant for? Can we have the reasons?

Mrs Martin: Sir, I would like to talk on page 164, Strategic Note 3 - *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. With regard to training of prison officers, we have learnt that an expert from abroad has been employed. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister which country is this expert from and how many officers have actually undergone training or have planned to undergo training in 2010?

Mr Gunness: At page 171, under item 175060 *Assistant Superintendent of Prisons*, I see the number has decreased from 48 to 33 and it will be maintained to 33 posts for the next three years. Under item 174860 *Prisons Welfare Officer*, it has been reduced from 12 to 9 and it will be maintained to 9 for the coming years. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister as to why vacancies will not be filled in the coming years because we hear that they need staff in the prisons mainly Welfare Officers and Assistant Superintendents of Prisons?

The Prime Minister: It is all about the CCTV cameras in prisons. I don't know whether I should review the whole thing, but, basically, the hon. Member wanted to know where they have been spent, from what I understand. In Beau Bassin Prison, it has been extended to control the

gate and the walls. It is at different regions, part of them in the yards and others to control the gate. At Grand River North West Remand Prison, tenders have been launched on 27 November for the supply and installation, but the closing date, it does not say where actually it is going to be done, but some of them are being done in the yards; some of them are actually at different regions. If the hon. Member wants the detailed amounts that have been spent, it can be sent to him.

As for the expert, it is an Indian expert who has been recruited with the assistance of UNDP to provide training on human rights to prison officers.

The other question was about the established posts. The grade of Chief Prisons Officer has been, in fact, merged and styled Assistant Superintendent of Prisons. There is a merging of the grades; that is the reason. Out of the 48 established posts, only therefore 33 had to be funded and there will be 15 vacancies. That is going to the Ministry of Finance which will eventually be funded, but there is a merging of the two posts.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the CCTV cameras, since the hon. Prime Minister has said and I think we agree with him that where they have been installed they have given good results. The rate of crime has decreased. Why is it, at least, that we are not keeping the same amount of expenditure for future projects? Why do we decrease the amount?

The Chairperson: We are talking of prisons first.

Mr Bodha: Sir, at page 164, *Strategic Note 3 - Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, the last one regarding the majority of detainees who are considered to be drug addicts, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister how many such addicts have, in fact, followed treatment for rehabilitation?

The Prime Minister: I do not have the figures with me, but I can get them later.

Mr Dowarkasing: At page 172, Mr Chairperson, I refer to item 173751 *Prisons Officer/Senior Prisons Officer*. The hon. Prime Minister has just replied that for the other decrease, there has been a merger of the positions, but we can also see here that not less than 37 posts have been abolished for prisons officers, from 801 to 762, when we know the problems being faced in the prisons. Can we know why the number of prisons officers is being decreased on the establishment?

The Prime Minister: I wonder whether it is not with this new budgeting situation that we are having this, but I can say for the moment that out of the established 801 posts of prisons officers, 703 have been filled. Funds have been made available for 762. The scheme of service is being revised with the PRB report of 2008. There is a need, as the hon. Member rightly pointed out, to fill 78 vacancies and the request is being made to the Ministry of Finance for that.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 167 under *Programme Code 292: Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Detainees - Services to be provided*, there are different courses being mentioned for vocational training to detainees. Is there any particular difference in these courses? For example, we have at *P2: Number of detainees following Industrial training*, then, we have *P5: Number of detainees following IVTB courses in Industrial training*. Do we have different types of courses that are being carried out there? This is my first question. I would also like to know if at all possible, out of the amount of *Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Detainees*, do we have the amount spent on rehabilitation?

The Prime Minister: I believe that these are different courses, Mr Chairperson. As for the amount being spent on rehabilitation, I will have to give the hon. Member the exact figure.

Mauritius Prisons Service – Programme Code 292: Maintenance and Rehabilitation of Detainees (Rs731,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management was called.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 174, *Major Achievements for 2008/09 and 2009 (July-December) - Rehabilitation of Infrastructure on 27 CHA Estates – Phase IV*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give us

a list of these CHA estates? On the same point, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what has happened to the West Coast Sewerage Project because we see that the Grand' Baie Sewerage Project has been extended, rightly so, and made to cover other villages. What has happened to the Flic en Flac Sewerage Project? I think a feasibility study has been carried out.

The Deputy Prime Minister: There is a consultancy study going on at the moment. It would take, at least, another year to start again.

The Chairperson: Any more question on page 174?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I circulated a list of 27 estates; I will circulate it again, if required.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management (Rs39,075,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 442: Energy Services was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on page 182...

The Chairperson: No, let us start with page 174, *Programme Code 442 – Energy Services.*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I refer to Programme Code 442 – *Energy Services - Extend access to electricity supply network, including the*

displacement of poles and insulation of bare electric wires, to vulnerable persons. I would like to know the definition of ‘vulnerable persons’.

Mr Dowarkasing: On the same Programme Code 442, I am referring to page 182.

The Chairperson: No, let us finish with page 174!

Mr Dowarkasing: It is the same Programme Code.

The Chairperson: Yes, it is the same Programme Code, but I think that we have to go on in an organised manner. If the hon. Member wishes to come on this page, he can come later on. I will go page by page. Any question on page 174? Page 178, *Programme Code 442: Energy Services!*

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to item 25110008 - *Subsidy to Central Electricity Board (a) Electricity Supply for Hardship Cases.*

The Chairperson: On which page, please?

Mr Dowarkasing: On page 182.

The Chairperson: I know that it is connected, but let us see whether Members have any questions on page 178. If there is no question, then we go to page 182.

Mr Dowarkasing: I am referring to item 25110008 - *Subsidy to Central Electricity Board (a) Electricity Supply for Hardship Cases and (b) Displacement of Electric Lines/Poles for Hardship Cases.* Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what are the criteria for

people to benefit from those two schemes and how many people have benefitted in the last Budget?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I would like to add some clarification to this question. For the displacement of electric lines and poles for hardship cases, the criteria are still being defined and, therefore, there have been no applications so far because the criteria have not been defined.

On the other hand, the electricity supply for hardship cases is ongoing, Rs800,000 have been spent so far and 576 cases in all have been provided for.

Mr Gunness: On the same two items, where do those hardship cases have to apply? Previously, it was through the Citizens Advice Bureau. Is it directly to the Ministry or to CAB?

The Deputy Prime Minister: They can apply directly to the CEB or through the CAB offices.

Mrs Martin: On the same item, with regard to displacement of electric lines/poles for hardship cases, the Deputy Prime Minister has just said that it is still being defined. Can we have any idea when the definition is going to be completed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I am not very happy myself about the criteria laid down because it is too low and it does not give opportunities to many hardship cases. So, we are going to revise it upwards.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities -Programme Code 442: Energy Services (Rs104,435,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 443: Water Resources was called.

Mr Varma: Programme Code 443 on page 184...

The Chairperson: No, wait we have item 443 on page 179. Do you have any question on that? Then, we will go to page 183.

Mr Varma: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to talk on items *31113010 – Construction of Feeder Canals, 31113011 Drilling of Boreholes and 31113402 Upgrading of Dams*. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give us the details of the *Feeder Canals* that have been constructed, the boreholes that are being drilled and the dams that are being upgraded?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Drilling of Boreholes is at Bonne Mère, Flacq, Geoffrey Bambous and Deep River.

Mr Gunness: At page 184, last item, concerning the *loan to CWA for (b) Replacement of Mont Ida – Unité Pipelines*, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he has an idea by when the replacement will start?

The Deputy Prime Minister: They have already started, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: They started in some places.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I would like to talk on page 183, item 28223010 concerning the replacement of the old pipes at Camp Fouquereaux in my constituency. I would like to know when the project will start and whether the tenders have already been allocated.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the Camp Fouquereaux to Alma Pipeline is due to start early 2010, but having said that, there are emergency procedures going on at the moment to relieve the situation there.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 443: Water Resources (Rs978,557,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444: Sanitation was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 185 item 31113008 – *Construction of Waste Water Infrastructure*

(a) *Plaine Wilhems Sewerage project, and*

(b) *House Service Connections.*

I just want to know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether any project for house connections linked with the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage project has been enhanced in the region of Curepipe. There has been a

request pending since 2002. Can we know whether there will be any such house connections project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not under this scheme, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Gunness: Sir, at page 185, under item *31113008 Construction of Waste Water Infrastructure (d) Infrastructure Rehabilitation in CHA Estates*, a sum of Rs22,580,000 was earmarked for July to December. Can we get an idea as at to date how much has been spent out of this amount?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the CHA Estates Rehabilitation is being delayed because of infrastructural problems. Therefore, it is difficult to quantify at the moment, but we are ongoing with it.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 185, item *31113008 Construction of Waste Water Infrastructure (a) Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project*, my question to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is about rehabilitation of roads. We know that it is not easy, at least, to rehabilitate one road after one week, but the problem is that nearly for all the roads - near the residence of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, in my constituency there is the Meldrum Street and so on - there is a real problem of follow-up. I raised the issue, here, in Parliament concerning the rehabilitation, in general, be it in Quatre Bornes, Beau Bassin, Rose Hill or elsewhere. I think there should be a committee chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime

Minister to monitor the situation. I, personally, am not satisfied at all with the way things are being done concerning temporary and permanent rehabilitation. One of these days, there will be a great accident and then there will be a great problem in Mauritius.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I thank the hon. Member. We wrote to him and if he has not received any letter, he should get it so as to organise a site visit to see that the work is done properly.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, under item *31113008 Construction of Waste Water Infrastructure (e) Baie Du Tombeau Sewerage Project and (g) Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project*, I would like to know the status of these projects. I have also noticed that no CHA Estate is concerned with the sewerage project.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, regarding the *Baie Du Tombeau Sewerage Project*, there is the construction of 26 kms of sewerage networks, 13 kms of CWA pipes, 5 pumping stations and there are 1250 house connections in the region of Tombeau Bay and Riche Terre. The project started in September 2007 and it is expected to be completed by early 2010.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I have also asked about Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project.

The Deputy Prime Minister: As far as Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project is concerned, provision is being made for consultancy services

and the preparation of tender documents. The region covers 8,000 inhabitants funded by BADEA and OPEC. The scope of work is 1500 house connections and 5 kms of pump works. Work is expected to start by next year. The consultancy service is still going on.

Mr Bhagwan: I come again to item *31113408 Upgrading of Waste Water Infrastructure* on the same page. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that actually in certain areas for one month, before the preceding one, there have been *des fouilles* regarding waste water? Then, after another month, it is CWA. There have been temporary repairs and then, again, digging up of holes. Is there any sort of coordination at the level of the Ministry, at least, to see if there is any *fouille*? I think everything should be done at one go, be it telecom, waste water or CWA. There, again, there is a real danger.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the note is well taken. I think for years we've been trying to get this coordination and we are still trying.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444: Sanitation (Rs1,129,930,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 185, item 22120 *Fees*, could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give the details of the fees that are being paid?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is membership fee to IAA.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection (Rs9,140,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure was called.

Mr Gunness: I have one question on page 191, the last paragraph where for World Accommodation Initiative, our country has reserved 3,200 rooms. Can we get some information on that?

Mr Duval: We have, in principle, contracted to Matchville, which is a subsidiary of FIFA, for the renting of the 3,200 rooms to tourists via FIFA. Obviously, they need to find the tourists to come to Mauritius and then confirm the bookings. Secondly, we need to organise and we are still working on the air links between Mauritius and the various cities where the matches will be held.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure (Rs33,015,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 193, *Programme Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry - Tourism Signage*, this is a good initiative. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether this programme has been completed for the whole of Mauritius? Recently, I was in Belle Mare and there was not any signage.

Mr X. L. Duval: The idea is to do the whole of Mauritius. I think, now, we have done three parts, and we will complete the rest as we can. We are doing, I think, two parts in this Budget, and I am not sure whether that would be sufficient to cover the whole of Mauritius. But, the aim is to cover the whole of Mauritius.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 204, under item *31113416 Upgrading of Touristic and Leisure Infrastructure*, could the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House what infrastructure is being upgraded?

Mrs Martin: I have also a question on page 198 with regard to *P1: Upgrading/Embellishment works at La Citadelle*. May we have details from the hon. Minister as to what those upgrading and embellishment works will be composed of, since part of it has already been upgraded and embellished?

Mr X. L. Duval: La Citadelle was in a very bad state about four years ago. It was a complete disaster. So, we rehabilitated various

wings of the Fort before putting them into use. Two wings have been done already, and some have been rented to a diamond shop and other shops. They want to do the rest of the Citadelle. The expenditure, so far, on the Citadelle, is Rs24 m. The third phase will be approximately Rs30 m., and they have launched a tender for that.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the same question, can the hon. Minister say when the embellishment and upgrading works will be carried, out and whether the historical cachet of La Citadelle will still remain?

Mr X. L. Duval: Obviously, it is a listed building. So, we cannot change the outside or anything major.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 198, I have one question on the Tourism Authority. We have asked many Parliamentary Questions, and now we are being asked to vote.

Mr X. L. Duval: Not so many!

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister was not in Mauritius. It appears to us that the Tourism Authority is *un État dans un État*. It is a Government within Government. Last time, I asked a parliamentary question about transparency, about who is the auditor of this organisation, how recruitments are made, whether it is advertised and whether there is a Fund. We are talking about equal opportunity. We would like to know whether we have equal opportunity as far as recruitment is concerned at the Tourism Authority. I think it is in the public interest; we are being

asked to vote. It is good to see that walls are being painted everywhere. But it is also good, as a matter of transparency, for the public to know where we are putting our money and whether there is a sort of equal opportunity among the population of Mauritius and whether there are guidelines. What we are saying, Mr Chairperson, is very serious.

(Interruptions)

What is the Tourism Authority supposed to do according to law? Is there a Government decision to allow the Tourism Authority to do the work of the RDA, the Municipalities and Ministries? I think it is in the public interest, where we are being asked to vote consequential amounts, at least, to know what we are voting.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, I understand the main problem is that we should not work in Roche Bois and that we should leave it in the misery and dirt as it was before, which was a shame, under the previous Government. The Tourism Authority, Mr Chairperson, operates...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I think the hon. Minister misheard. He said: “*copains*”.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am sorry, I didn’t hear properly.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I know you are all tired. We started at 10.30 in the morning. If you continue like this, I am going to suspend the sitting. If you want to have some fresh air, you can go outside.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Tourism Authority started to work in Roche Bois because it was in such a dire state. I am proud of what the Tourism Authority has done all over the island, and I am very, very proud of the people who work in the Tourism Authority.

(Interruptions)

This is why they wear a green shirt so that you know where they are. They don't hide. They don't work in the dark; they wear a green shirt and work.

As far as the Tourism Authority is concerned, Mr Chairperson, it is audited by the Government auditor. It works on the same principle with regard to public money; it is subject to questions; the recruitment policy is the same as what exists in the public and parastatal sectors. There is nothing to hide. And I am very happy that the hon. Member has asked the question. I welcome many more thousands of questions.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Are we still on page 198?

(Interruptions)

Order, now!

Mrs Labelle: I am still on the activities of the Tourism Authority. Can the hon. Minister apprise the House of the criteria for the painting

or renovation of private houses? Does the Minister want me to give the name of the person whose house has been done by the Tourism Authority? We have the Toolsee family at George Guibert Street.

Mr X. L. Duval: Let me explain, Mr Chairperson! We don't do any private houses. This is not the case. We are talking about '*Maurice Ile Durable*', about how beautiful it is; we just won the World Tourism Award for the nicest destination in the world. So, we have to see how it looks from the streets, Mr Chairperson, not from inside the House; not from where he is sitting, in a sitting room. That we do not do, but from the street. But, it is *a mitoyen*, of course. Don't forget that half the street is Government property and the other half is private! We only look at the outside. They do it in Flacq, in the East and around the country. I have not seen many questions on this. At the moment, Government is working on a huge street, and they are doing the walls of everybody. Why do we only bother about George Guibert Street and not look at everything that is being done at the moment? We look at the public, how they see the place. It is always *mitoyen* between Government property public property, and nothing else.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 204, under item 31113016 *Construction of Touristic and Leisure Infrastructure*, I see that a sum of Rs3 m. is earmarked. Can we know in which places these constructions will be done?

Mr X. L. Duval: I will circulate the answer later on.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry (Rs43,853,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 343: Destination Promotion was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 205, *Sub-Programme 34302, item 22900902 Branding of Mauritius*, the hon. Minister, while replying to a parliamentary question, stated that he had no objection to circulate some proposals made with regard to the slogan. It has been one month since we have asked this question. Can we know from the hon. Minister where matters stand?

Secondly, regarding the branding of Mauritius, may we know whether there has been any promotion as far as Rodrigues is concerned? If yes, how much has been spent for Rodrigues and whether the same branding exercise has been carried out separately for Rodrigues?

Mr X. L. Duval: This is a very fair question. As far as the branding is concerned, obviously, we have passed on to the branding firm all the comments that were made. They maintained that the slogan was good. Honestly, Mr Chairperson, I see that this is catching on much better than before, and I am quite hopeful. So, they are maintaining that, but there may be some changes as to whether or not we use '*C'est un*

plaisir' in UK or whether we'll use 'It's a pleasure'. I think over time, there will be some changes to what has been done.

Insofar as Rodrigues is concerned, I must say that we have not done...

(Interruptions)

We have said that we are going to organise for her to come and to meet everybody if she wants and then she can discuss it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, she wants to come and explain it herself.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, honestly, let me say this, before she finalised, she did try to see the Opposition, but that was not possible. Now, she is coming back again and she wants to come with the thing and see all of you.

(Interruptions)

No, I did not say this. I said I will ask her.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 343: Destination Promotion (Rs365,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 344: Promotion of Leisure (Rs6,160,000) was called and agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 206, Sub-Programme 34502, item *Civil Aviation Services*, I take it on a general note. Recently, I asked a parliamentary question about landing equipments. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether these equipments have been installed? What is the latest situation?

Mr X. L. Duval: The ILS was, I am told, about 25 years old and it had to be replaced. It took about a month to be replaced. Unfortunately, during one month, we had two days of bad weather. Now it is being replaced, it is being calibrated and I am told it is working perfectly.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, I just got the information for the hon. Member. I'll circulate it.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications - Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development (Rs278,817,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment - Programme Code 361: Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress(Rs677,396,000) was called and agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment - Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on page 232, Sub-Programme 36201, under item *26323020 Capital Grant - Gambling Regulatory Authority*, I just want to know what the Rs52 m. are meant for. It is the same thing for item *26323043 Capital Grant - Mauritius Revenue Authority* where Rs57,500,000 are earmarked. My other question relates to page 240, again under the same item, the same programme...

The Chairperson: No, let's take the first item first. Any other question on this page? If not, the hon. Minister can give his reply.

Dr. Sithanen: The hon. Member has asked about the Gambling Regulatory Authority. This is for payment of consultancy services, progress payment to contractors for the implementation of the linking of all gaming machines to the central electronic monitoring system. This is to make sure that people pay what they are supposed to pay. The third one is progress payment to contractors for the implementation of the standard bookmakers' software project and Rs1 m. for the purchase of vehicles.

With respect to MRA, for the capital grant, the most important item is a new system called Integrated Tax Administration System, that's 23.5. Then, there is CCTV camera for about Rs9.5 m.; maintenance and acquisition of ICT equipment: Rs6 m. And there are

many small items, like electronic payment solution, business continuity and disaster recovery. So, it is basically investment in hardware and software to improve management of revenue.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue of investment in the hardware and software, we see this is being expanded up to year 2012. Do we mean that we won't have this centralised monitoring system of all the gaming houses until year 2012?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I don't know whether it is being done in stages or whether for the next year it is another type of capital equipment. I will check that and I will let the House know.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 232, under item 26313020 *Current Grant – Gambling Regulatory Authority*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether this Gambling Regulatory Authority has revoked any licence of gambling houses during the past year? May we also know where matters stand with regard to the '*Ti-Vegas*' in Quatre Bornes?

Dr. Sithanen: I don't know about the first case. As for the second one, I think, the case is *sub judice*.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on Programme Code 362: *Public Financial Management*, I am coming back to page 214.

The Chairperson: We have already taken page 214.

(Interruptions)

But we are still under the same item.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Dowarkasing: ‘Manage public finances in a prudent and sustainable manner to ensure efficiency of public spending and effectiveness of socio-economic reforms.’ I don’t see any measures that have been included in any of those programmes for the management of public funds in a very sustainable manner. Can we have some details from the hon. Minister?

Dr. Sithanen: This has never existed before.

Vice-Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management (Rs1,367,324,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities was called

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to pages 218 and 219 together because these items are related and my question will also be related. Under *Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities*, we see for July-December 2009, Rs460 m. have been earmarked and for the coming year it is about Rs1 billion. When we go to the next page, under Summary of Funded Positions by Programmes and Sub-programmes, we see nil for 2009, nil for 2010 and 0.0%. Can we have an explanation from the hon. Minister as to why there is a sum earmarked under the

Summary of Financial Resources by Programmes and Sub-programmes and when we come to the percentage achieved, it is nil? Can we know, therefore, how this sum of Rs460 m. has been used and how the sum of Rs1 billion will be used when there are no indicators?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, there are some programmes that are funded entirely by Central Government and there are other programmes that are co-funded with other donors. I am sure hon. Dowarkasing knows that for the DCP, some of the funding come from the European Union and some by us. For Corporate Social Responsibility, it is not the amount that will be spent under the CSR. This is outside the framework of the Budget. So, we need a small unit to make sure that whatever has been agreed between Government and the private sector will be implemented within the framework of the CSR.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 235, under item 28213005 – *Eradication of Absolute Poverty*, I find that a sum of Rs77,195,000 has been budgeted for the coming year. Can the hon. Minister explain as to why the provision goes down nearly by half in the projection for 2011 and 2012? The same thing applies to *Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups* where I find that a sum of Rs94,500,000 has been earmarked and then it goes down drastically to Rs47,250,000. I also see Rs8 m. expenditure under the item *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*. Can the hon. Minister explain what it stands for?

Dr. Sithanen: I have just explained, Mr Chairperson, that for the CSR, the money will be spent outside the framework of the Budget. We have issued guidelines and we want to make sure that these guidelines will be followed. So, we need a small unit that will work for Government to make sure that whatever has been agreed between Government and the private sector, especially with respect to the nationally approved programme is implemented. One of the most important programmes at the national level is the social housing project.

With respect to the Eradication of Absolute Poverty, there are two items here, Mr Chairperson. One is infrastructure investment and the other is current expenditure. This year, I think, we will build two pre-primary schools for children. So, the capital expenditure will not happen on a yearly basis while the current expenditure will be there.

I must also inform the House, Mr Chairperson, that many of these programmes have probably the same objectives. So, some of the money, at times, will come from EAP, some from the National Empowerment Foundation and some from the CSR.

Mr Ganoo: Can I raise the same issue, but in a different form? At page 235, *Programme Code 363, item 28213005 Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups*, the estimates for this year are Rs10,000,000 and for the next year, it is Rs94,500,000. Can the hon. Minister, therefore, explain what the projects are as far as the Trust Fund

for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups is concerned regarding next year?

Dr. Sithanen: Again, it is the same issue, Mr Chairperson. There is provision for current expenditure and there are also some investments for capital expenditure.

With respect to the recurrent expenditure which is the most important one, everybody knows what we do in terms of providing housing facilities for vulnerable families. We also give school materials to kids from modest background and loan facilities through the DBM to *micro crédit*. There are a series of activities that are carried out by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups in order to ensure that the people, who have been left out, have a chance to reintegrate the mainstream. So, you will see that there are two items. There is one item which is the equivalent of capital expenditure and there is another item which is the equivalent of what we used to call the recurrent budget.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, at page 217, under Programme Code 363, we have six ranges of activities. Therefore, since the hon. Minister has budgeted Rs1,071,900,000 for the coming year 2010, can we have a breakdown of how this money is being catered for in the items Eradicating Absolute Poverty, Providing assistance to vulnerable persons and so on?

Mrs Labelle: At page 235, under Programme Code 363, items 28213005 *Eradication of Absolute Poverty*: Rs72,900,000 and the *Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups*: Rs10,000,000, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give us the amount of money spent out of the amount earmarked for the last six months?

Mr Jugnauth: I would just like to have a clarification from the hon. vice-Prime Minister. As far as the CSR is concerned, I understand that this money is going to be spent outside the budget, but for the amount that Government is going to collect from those companies, how is it budgeted, how is it going to be spent and what amount are we predicting?

Dr. Sithanen: This is a fair question. We have agreed that we will play the game. The objective is that all the firms, whether State-owned enterprises, parastatal bodies and corporate entities, will spend the equivalent of the 2%, of their profit in CSR. This is what we would like. We know that this may not happen. We have not provided for the 2% that have to be remitted to Government in the event that they don't spend this amount. This does not mean that if they don't spend it, they won't have to pay. If they don't spend it, they will have to pay, but we have shown our goodwill. We have told them that we would like them to spend this money on good causes whether it is eradication of poverty or helping street kids to get out of street. But, in the event that this does not happen, they will have to pay the money to the MRA.

With respect to the breakdown sought by hon. Dowarkasing - unless he is asking for more detailed breakdown – the sum of Rs1,071,900,000 is broken down. For instance, there are Rs200 m. for the Decentralised Cooperation Programme for Socio Economic Empowerment and we know how this has been managed. There have been calls for proposal. There are people from Rodrigues as well as from Mauritius who will benefit from it. Women, protection of environment, sustainable development, Eradication of Absolute Poverty: Rs77 m. and Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups: Rs94 m. I am sure the hon. Member can see the breakdown. Last but not least is the National Empowerment Foundation which is a capital transfer of Rs364 m.

Mr Chairperson, you will see that, in some cases, there is a capital transfer and in other cases there is a recurrent transfer.

With respect to the question asked by hon. Mrs Labelle, I am given to understand that for the EAP, up to now, we have spent Rs20 m.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on this same item, I agree with the hon. Minister that the breakdown has been given, but it does not meet all the objectives that have been set. I will just give one example - *Promoting and consolidate entrepreneurship from ranks of unemployed/ retrenched women.* There is nothing here that has been earmarked.

Dr. Sithanen: This morning itself, my colleague, hon. Mrs Seebun, and myself, were invited to a programme where there were

many women who have benefitted from this programme for the last two years. You must have seen how grateful they were that Government has been able to support them to reintegrate society either through access to the labour market or by becoming a micro entrepreneur. There are many women who have already benefitted from it.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities (Rs1,071,900,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister of Finance has made a request that Programme Codes 951 and 952 in the Budget at page 605 to 610 be taken out of turn because he has got other commitments. We take it that there is no objection.

Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: At page 606 under item 22120003 *Commissions of Enquiry and Committees*, we see that there has been the sum of Rs1.5 m. that has been spent from July to December 2009. Can we have a breakdown of this expenditure?

My second question concerns item 26210104 *Contribution to International Criminal Court*. I see that we are contributing Rs560,000 to the ICC. Can I know since when we are party to the Rome Statute?

My other question concerns under item *26210157 COMESA Fund Project*. May I know what is the COMESA Fund Project meant for?

At page 608, under item *32155011 Road Development Co Ltd*, we see that a sum of Rs10 m. was earmarked for July to December. Can we know whether this sum has been used and, if so, can we have a breakdown? Why do we need Rs10 m. more for the next financial year?

Concerning item *32155101 International Monetary Fund (IMF)*, can I know what this contribution of Rs2 m. to International Monetary Fund that we spent from July to December 2009 is?

Dr. Sithanen: With respect to Commissions of Enquiry and Committees, the information that I have is that it concerns fees and travelling allowances for the Chairperson and members sitting on Committees and Commissions of Enquiry. Other Expenses concern hotel accommodations and telephone charges to supporting staff.

As far as the *Road Development Co Ltd* is concerned, the provision required is for the setting-up of a Road Development Company that will tap the necessary international expertise for strategic partnership for the implementation of the *Road Decongestion Programme*.

(Interruptions)

I don't think it has been set up yet. As for the *COMESA Fund Project*, Mauritius competed against some countries in COMESA to host the COMESA Fund. It has two objectives. The first is an Infrastructure Fund where we will get money to invest in infrastructure so as to bring

down the cost of private investment in COMESA countries. The second one is an Adjustment Fund. Because we want regional integration to go very fast and one of the issues with regional integration is that when you bring down tariff, you lose fiscal revenue and there might also be industrial dislocation. The idea behind the COMESA Fund is to compensate countries that are bringing down tariff and non-tariff barriers and the fund will be hosted in Mauritius.

With respect to the *Contribution to the International Criminal Court*, the information I have is that the Rome Statute of the International Court is the first permanent Treaty based on International Criminal Court with the power to exercise jurisdiction. Mauritius has signed the Statute on 11 November 1998 and ratified it on 05 March 2002.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, at page 606, with regard to item 28217002 *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*, will the hon. Minister circulate the list of cases, if any, and the amount that has been earmarked?

Dr. Sithanen: Yes, I will do that.

Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs2,252,727,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I refer to item *95201 Re-inventing Government Initiatives*. I see that for this financial year we have spent a sum of Rs216 m. Can we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister? We see that next year this sum is being increased to Rs353 m. Can we know what is it meant for?

Under item *31113310 Land Based Oceanic Industry Project*, we see that a sum of Rs10 m. has been earmarked for this financial year, but then we see that this project is forthcoming and for the estimates of 2010 and 2011 nothing has been earmarked. Can we know how, therefore, are we going to implement this project?

Dr. Sithanen: The second question is the easier one. It is not Central Government that is investing as a party. What we have funded is the preliminary costs. The investment, if my memory serves me right, will be done by SIC as a partner in a joint venture. I think, 75% will be taken by the private sector.

With respect to Service to Mauritius Programme, this is in the context of public sector reform. Provision is made for the employment of young graduates with the objective to attract the best and the brightest in the public sector for a period of 3 months to 2 years, renewable for up to one additional year in the public service, especially in those areas where there is a shortage of skills. We are likely to spend about Rs10 m. for the period July to December 2009.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 608, item 22120024 *Capacity Building Programme*, a sum of Rs40 m. was earmarked for the six months. Can we know how much has been spent up to now? On the next page 609, item 28222001 *Contribution to National Solidarity Fund for Assistance to Victims of Sale by Levy*, a sum of Rs10 m. was earmarked. Can we know as at to date how much has been spent from this provision of Rs10 m.? Under item 28222007 *Grant/Loan Scheme for Small Planters/Workers Participation in the Equity Capital of Sugar Sector Companies*, there is a sum of Rs63 m. which was earmarked. May we know how much has been spent out of this amount?

Dr. Sithanen: The first one, Mr Chairperson, is for Capacity Building Programme. The amount likely to be spent is Rs25 m. The second one is the National Solidarity Fund. We have already spent the money and, I think, I replied to a question last week where I gave the details. There have been different phases where money has been remitted to vulnerable families. I will circulate this amount.

What has happened with respect to the Grant Loan Scheme for small planters? We have to choose what the best vehicle is, but, in the meantime, investment had to take place and we have created a warehouse, Sir. In fact, for that period, Rs63 m. has been provided in the Budget, but before July, we had spent about Rs170 m. to Rs175 m. It is with respect to investment in FUEL and, I think, an investment in the south. I can give you the figures.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, can I have one clarification from the hon. Minister in view of the reply he gave? Can the hon. Minister give me a breakdown on this issue of Re-inventing Government Initiatives of Rs216 m.?

Dr. Sithanen: I will circulate it.

Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs1,128,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Contingencies - Programme Code 989: Contingencies and Reserves (Rs2,000,000,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services was called.

Mr Gunness: Sir, at page 245 – *Strategic Note 1 Major Achievements for 2008/09 and 2009 (July-December)*, one of the major achievements is *100 Bus Shelters constructed across Mauritius*. I remember we raised that question about bus shelters on the pavements and the hon. Minister, himself, promised that he will look into it. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether he is satisfied with all these bus shelters on the pavements?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I have requested the technicians of my Ministry to conduct a survey and, so far, I am satisfied that the places where the bus shelters have been put are not creating any inconvenience to the public.

Mr Soodhun: Under the same item, Sir, can the hon. Minister give us a list in which constituencies these 100 bus shelters have been constructed?

Mr Bachoo: I'll circulate it. I don't have it in mind.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, I see that for the coming year, there is a sum of Rs7.6 m. which has been earmarked for the construction of bus shelters. Can we, therefore, have a list as to where constructions will be carried out?

Mr Bachoo: I'll circulate the list.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister about the new traffic centre which was supposed to be constructed at Ebène to cater for the buses coming from the eastern regions, especially in view of the fact that Place Margéot is much congested? Can the hon. Minister let us know whether in this coming financial year a sum has been earmarked for that project?

Mr Bachoo: We are still working on the design and the details of it.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services (Rs115,467,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets (Rs401,784,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges was called.

Mr Gunness: At page 265, Mr Chairperson, I take *Upgrading of Q/Militaire Road B6 (Phase 1)* under item *31113003 Construction of Roads*. I understand that the road has been completed. The Minister, himself, in his speech, said that he is waiting for the hon. Prime Minister to inaugurate. I think it is quite fair that the road is ready since two weeks now and the hon. Minister knows how the users of the road are having great difficulty.

Mr Bachoo: I am pleased to inform the House that the road will be inaugurated on Thursday by the hon. Prime Minister himself.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson. Concerning the same item *31113003 Construction of Roads - Phoenix Beaux Songes Link Road*, can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the situation and when will the works start?

Mr Bachoo: I am pleased to announce that the work has already started.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, with regard to the construction of the ring road and the tunnel, I want to know how much contribution we are getting from SIC? Are there private promoters also contributing to this project and to which extent? How much the SIC and private promoters are contributing to this project?

Mr Bachoo: As far as the first part of the ring road is concerned, the SIC has contributed and I am going to give you the figure, but no other private groups have contributed to the first part of the ring road. The SIC is contributing Rs480 m. out of Rs1.1 billion.

Mr Varma: At page 265, Mr Chairperson, under item *31113004 Construction of Bridges - Rehabilitation of Steel Bridges and Footbridges*, can the hon. Minister inform the House which steel bridges have been rehabilitated and which footbridges have been constructed?

Mr Bachoo: I'll give the information in a few minutes.

Mr Gunness: Under the *Construction of Roads*, there is a Study for upgrading of B28 – (*Coast Road Ferney to Bel Air*). I still remember when the new Government came into office, they promised to do that road because the Ferney road to Belle Rive was cancelled. They promised to do that road immediately. Four and a half years have passed and I notice that we are still at the stage of study.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the sum involved will be over Rs700 m. It is not a child's play, so, the detailed design has to be worked out completely and a consultant is being appointed for that.

As far as the steel bridges are concerned, they are at Tamarin, Rivière des Galets and Souillac.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges (Rs2,485,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 324: Land Transport Services was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 267 - *Sub-Programme 32402: Traffic Management and Road Safety*, item *31113020 Construction of Infrastructure for Posters*, I see that for July-December 2009, a sum of R1 m. was earmarked. In view of the forthcoming elections, I don't see any provision made for the

construction of infrastructure for posters around the island. No budget has been earmarked in 2010 and in 2011 also. Can I have some clarification on this issue?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, construction for billboards for publicity is envisaged for the forthcoming year. Secondly, the Construction of Infrastructure for Posters is not meant for electoral purposes, it is only meant for road safety aspect. We are not concerned with the political agenda.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, on page 266, under item 22900013 *Supply of Bus Passes*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister who is the contractor. Can the hon. Minister give some details about the cost of the bus passes?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, this work is undertaken by NTA and I would inform the hon. Member in a few seconds whether there has been any contract for that work.

Mr Gunness: Sir, on page 267, item 31113019 *Construction of Bus Shelters and Stands of which: Others, I see that a sum of Rs7.6 m.* has been earmarked. Can we get an idea of where will other bus shelters and stands be constructed?

Mr Bachoo: I have just answered that I am going to circulate a list of the places where these bus stands will be constructed.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 324: Land Transport Services (Rs1,030,757,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 325: Maritime Services was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, at page 249, under item 32501 *Safety at Sea and Protection of Marine Environment*, we see that for July-December 2009, there was a sum of Rs21,197,000 that was earmarked. Can we know from the hon. Minister how much has been spent on marine protection out of this sum? For the forthcoming year, a sum of Rs37,484,000 has been earmarked for the same item. I just want to know what the projects that will be funded in view of the protection of marine environment are.

Mr Bachoo: I will answer the hon. Member in a minute.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you cannot find the answer?

Mr Bachoo: I will circulate it.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 325: Maritime Services (Rs66,985,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – Programme Code 381: Policy and Management was called.

Mr Gunness: On page 279, *International Trade*, we know that an Interim Agreement has been signed, that is, the EPA Interim Agreement.

Can the hon. Minister briefly give us an idea of how it is moving ahead with the final agreement for the EPA?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on the same wavelength, can the hon. Minister provide us with some information about The Mauritius Russia Political Consultation meeting and what was the agenda discussed in it? The other clarification I want to get is about the Additional (10,000) hectares of land secured in Mozambique for cross border investments. Can we know the name of the investors who have been given this land for investment in Mozambique?

Dr. Boolell: On the issue of the Economic Partnership Agreement, we have signed an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement. We tend to sign a full-fledged Economic Partnership Agreement, but there are some outstanding issues which will have to be addressed and the Chairman of the COMESA is addressing those issues, but it would be to our advantage to sign a full-fledged Economic Partnership Agreement as we are putting a lot of emphasis upon trade in services. I do not have to highlight that Mauritius is going to become a hub for services and the opportunities to be grasped are numerous.

On the issue of Regional Food Security, I am sure that hon. Dowarkasing is aware that we have set up a Regional Food Security Programme. We have invited investors to be part of the consortium and it has already been set up. People who have shown interest are the Vita Grain Group and the local investors. There is also one Mauritian

investor who has settled in Swaziland and who has expressed interest. We also want to take on board the SIC and a Body representing the Government of Mozambique. The objective is to ensure that we will be able to mobilise resources as has been highlighted earlier by the vice-Prime Minister, for example, from the COMESA Fund or fund earmarked to be released to address the problem of food security. The object is to produce what we eat, which we cannot produce locally and consume what we eat.

On the issue of bilateral negotiations with Russia, this is ongoing as we had a first meeting. It is a bilateral meeting on trade, education and other sectors which are relevant to the economy of Mauritius. We also raised the issue of Investment Promotion Protection Agreement and we will see, at a later stage, if the issue of double taxation avoidance can be addressed.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, on the issue of International Trade, I see no mention of the FTA with India. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the status of this project?

Dr. Boolell: On the issue of whether we are going to have a Free Trade Agreement with India, there is a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement which we have signed, but the negotiations have stalled on the issue of Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty. There are some contentious issues that are being sorted out. But following the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of State, Dr. Shashi Tharoor and

negotiations which the hon. Prime Minister had with the Prime Minister of India, we are going to rekindle bilateral negotiations. A joint working group will address issues which are relevant to the interest of both countries. As of now, the Financial Services Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade are looking at issues which appear to be contentious, but we will move the process without any problem.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, on Programme Code 382: *Foreign Relations*, I have a few questions, if the Minister can reply at one go. Can he inform the House whether there has been any improvement in overtime expenditure...

The Chairperson: No, I am sorry, we are on item 381: *Policy and Management*.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – Programme Code 381: Policy and Management (Rs42,610,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – Programme Code 382: Foreign Relations was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been any improvement in the overtime expenditure and telephone bills in missions following the Director of Audit's criticisms and what action has been taken? Can I know whether it is allowed by Government within the Ministry for an Ambassador posted in the

Headquarters to effect consultancy works? I heard of somebody who is effecting consultancy works for St Lucia which is practically out of the office. Can the hon. Minister inform the House of the involvement of the Ministry in the Shanghai Expo? I would also like to know where matters stand regarding the review and implementation of the MoUs signed. Has there been any delay? Because, from what we have gathered, the Chairperson is spending most of his time outside Mauritius. I would also like to know what the constitution of the Board of Directors of the Regional Development Company Ltd. is. Can we also have the total number of advisers posted at the Ministry?

Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is on contractual basis and whether he has been undertaking missions and the total number thereof for period June to December 2009? Can he circulate a list? Can the hon. Minister also state whether other persons over 65 years in the diplomatic corps can keep their work and whether their contracts are being renewed?

Can the hon. Minister state whether the famous singer, Zul Ramiah, is attached to the Mauritius High Commission in London, and, if so, in which capacity and who is paying his salary. He made the song “*changement*”, and now he is in London.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much for the questions being put to me. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs is an institutional memory. So, he is serving the interest of the country well and the hon. Member does

not have to worry about his age. There are times when Ministers cannot attend conferences, and he has the power, when Ministers do confer this power upon him, to attend conferences. So, that is not a problem.

Second, in respect of the Ambassador who was asked to travel to St Lucia on a specific assignment, this was done after a selection exercise, and he is, again, a member of the sterling team at the Ministry. He is doing a good job. So, we have no concern in respect of the good work he is doing.

On the issue of Shanghai Expo, if anything, it's an opportunity which is knocking for Mauritius. The theme of that exhibition is "Better City, Better State", and it will give visibility to Mauritius. The exhibition is going to be a landmark event. There are 70 million people who are going to attend that exhibition, and it will put Mauritius in the limelight, the more so since our stand is within reach of everybody. We have to grasp this opportunity at a time when we are trying to market Mauritius as "*Mauritius, C'est un Plaisir*".

On the issue of MoUs, it is true that, for far too long, we have signed MoUs, but when we look at the outcome, the results are not visible and tangible. We have set up an inter-ministerial committee, which I chair, and we have rationalised the objectives, because we want to obtain results. We are impressing upon all the Ministries concerned to ensure that there is proper follow-up, because we do not want to keep those MoUs in the drawers.

On the issue of telephone expenses, we have applied a ceiling, and we have impressed upon the officers of the Ministry, senior officials, to use 'Skype'. This enables us to make some savings. It is one of the Ministries that has given excellent results as per the Director of Audit. So, we are proud of our achievement.

Mr Ramiah is doing an excellent job, and he is there to give new impetus to the Mauritian culture. As far as I am concerned, we are happy with the work that has been entrusted to him, and he is there as an ambassador of goodwill.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know if there is any overseas Mission which has already closed down or which is in the pipeline of closing down? It was announced in the previous Budget.

Dr. Boolell: No Mission has closed down. In fact, we had a representative at UNESCO, but in a spirit of rationalisation and saving on costs, we have asked her - who has done an excellent job - to come back.

Mr Soodhun: On page 294, with regard to item 31112408 – *Upgrading of Chanceries*, will the hon. Minister inform the House which chanceries will be upgraded? Second, will the hon. Minister inform the House of the cost incurred for the residence of the Ambassador in Washington and whether the residence is unoccupied as there is no Ambassador in post?

Mr Bhagwan: Will the hon. Minister inform the House what is the normal tour of service of a home-based staff in Missions? How many years can they spend outside Mauritius? Is he aware that certain officers have exceeded their tour of office two or even three fold? I would like to know whether there will be a change in the policy in the coming weeks.

Secondly, I come, again, to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Can the hon. Minister inform us whether he is still a public officer or on contract? Because, according to our information, this gentleman *a instauré un climat de terreur* among the staff, which is publicly known. Even on mission outside Mauritius, *il a instauré ce climat de terreur*. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of that and what action he contemplates initiating to change the situation.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 281, it is mentioned under *Programme Code 382, Sub-programme 38201 – Asserting the sovereignty of Mauritius and its territorial integrity e.g. Chagos and Tromelin and to engage in Strategic alliances with likeminded countries.* Could the hon. Minister inform the House what are the initiatives that are being envisaged for the coming years to assert the sovereignty of Mauritius? Secondly, what are the likeminded countries with which Government is envisaging to engage strategic alliances?

Dr. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, on the issue of Chanceries or Embassies, which we have identified for upgrading, of course, it's Delhi and London. I do not have to remind our friends of the conditions that

some have to endure in Delhi because the building is really in a poor state, and we need to upgrade the place. London refurbishment will take place.

With regard to Washington, I have been told that the scope of work, as forwarded by our Mission in Washington, was passed on to MPI for drafting of tender documents and to appoint consultants for the renovation of the new chancery and the Ambassador's residence. I don't know whether somebody did put a question as to whether an Ambassador is to be appointed, but that will be done.

As regards the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I have stated that he is doing a good job. Sometimes, he needs to have a clenched fist and, rightly so, for reasons which are obvious. He does his work, I have no problem.

Now, in respect of our sovereignty, as I intervened in the Budget, I stated very clearly that our sovereignty is sacrosanct. I don't have to highlight the provisions in our Constitution and lobbying which we made vis-à-vis likeminded countries, especially members of the Non-Aligned Movement. And I don't have to, again, reiterate resolutions which we introduced to be voted by likeminded countries. On this issue we have the support of likeminded countries and when we attended the Commonwealth Conference, the hon. Prime Minister raised the issue with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and, of course, I made it a point to

impress upon David Miliband as to the relevance of our territorial claim and the sovereignty issue.

In respect of Tromelin, there is a *cogestion* that has been set up and there are bilateral meetings. The next one is due in the months to come.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, there is another question which the hon. Minister has not replied concerning the Regional Development Company Ltd., in terms of office of the personnel outside whether those who have been exceeding two or threefold of their tour of service now.

Dr. Boolell: There are set rules, but that should not stop any Government from being flexible. Let me take the case of Ambassador Servansingh! We know that the World Trade Organisation negotiations have reached a turning point and we need to have people who are well-versed, who have the acumen and who can address issues which are relevant to the economic interests of our country. It is true that there are certain officers who are due to come back and we will see to it, after their three or four years of service that they come back to Mauritius. The Regional Development Company Ltd, as I have stated, is already registered. We have an officer-in-charge, Mr Raj Veerasawmy.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I have got four questions. Let me come with the first one, on *Programme 382 – Foreign Relations*. After the Summit which Mauritius hosted on the south-south

cooperation. I just want to know what will be the follow-up with regard to the south-south cooperation.

My second question relates to page 293, item 26210045 *Contribution to African Union*. I see the contribution to African Union has been increased drastically, more than 500%. Can we know the reasons for such a rise in the contribution? Again, on page 293, under item 26210052 *Contribution to UN Capital Master Plan*, the sum of Rs1.3 m. is earmarked. May we know what this UN Capital Master Plan is?

Lastly, under item 22 *Goods and Services*, I just want to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has been able to recover the security deposit of Rs7.2 m. at Mumbai after a judgment of the Indian Court.

On the issue of rent, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the problem of excessive rental allowances paid to officers posted abroad has been resolved and whether the money has been reimbursed following remarks made in the Report of the Director of Audit on that issue.

Dr. Boolell: In respect of the Contribution to UN Capital Master Plan, as you know, the United Nations is in the process of constructing a new building. I am sure this sum has been earmarked in respect of our contribution for the Master plan which is going to be prepared.

Concerning the issue of Contribution to African Union, I will take it later, as you know, for Mumbai there has been a settlement. I have been told that a security deposit of Rs7.2 m. is yet to be recovered from the lessor. A meeting was held in the office of the lawyer on 06 June 2009 with Mr Shah and his Legal Counsel for a settlement *à l'amiable*.

The proposal was forwarded to the State Law Office. The SLO raised a number of queries which were transmitted to our Consulate in Mumbai. These were forwarded to the Consulate's legal adviser and we are waiting for a reply. There is yet to be a settlement *à l'amiable*.

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Minister has just stated that we are settling this issue *à l'amiable*. There has been a court judgment in our favour. So, why are we going for a settlement *à l'amiable* when we have a court judgment?

Dr. Boolell: I have given specific information in respect of the question put to me and I have read the reply that has been circulated. I do grant the hon. Member that - as I have stated - the decree of court is in favour of Government, but the office of the sheriff of Mumbai has been approached for the proclamation of the sale of the flat, in line with Indian legislation. Then, a meeting was held in the office of the lawyer with Mr Shah and his legal Counsel for settlement *à l'amiable*.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – Programme Code 382: Foreign Relations (Rs689,944,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – 383: International Trade (Rs32,445,500).

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Science and Research (Rs8,560,000).

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Programme Code 602: Industrial Development was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 308, under items 26313011, *Current Grant – Fashion and Design Institute* and 26323011 *Capital Grant – Fashion and Design Institute* respectively, can I know from the hon. Minister whether the students who are actually following the B.Sc. courses, that is, Fashion and Design and also Fashion and Technology are now being transferred to this Fashion and Design Institute? May we know where this Institute is situated and whether it provides all the necessary facilities for a proper conducive education?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on page 308, under item 22120008 *Fees to Consultants*, I see that for July-December 2009, the sum of Rs15.7 m. has been spent on fees to consultants, whereas for the coming year a sum of Rs21.1 m. has been earmarked. Can we know who those consultants are, the purpose of their being paid the respective sum and a breakdown thereof?

My second question concerns item 25110002 *Subsidies Enterprise Mauritius*. We see that for the six months, that is, July - December

2009, the subsidies were Rs18 m. Now, for this whole year, the subsidy has more than doubled. It has come to Rs43 m. and after that it decreases again. The provision for 2011 decreases. Can we know why a sudden increase in the subsidy to Enterprise Mauritius?

Mrs Labelle: Sir, I would like to talk on item 26 *Grants to Fashion and Design Institute*. Regarding the students who are being transferred from the University of Mauritius to the Fashion and Design Institute, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any fee that is being claimed from them and, if so, can I know what the amount is?

Mrs Martin: Sir, at page 305, under *Sub-Programme 60201 Output 04 Promotion of Mauritius as a film shooting destination*, may we know from the hon. Minister what are the foreign countries which have come to Mauritius and whether there are new markets which are being tapped and, if yes, could he name them?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, let me take the Fashion and Design Institute (FDI). First of all, the students of the University of Mauritius are not being transferred. They were registered at the University of Mauritius, so, they will complete their programme there.

As regards the fees issue, this is left to the University of Mauritius.

The FDI is situated at Ebène and it has just started operation. We are ensuring that all the facilities are available in terms of infrastructure and staffing.

With regard to Enterprise Mauritius, these are provisions for administration operating expenses of Enterprise Mauritius. The estimated expenditure from January-December is Rs52 m.; Rs43 m. are only provided so as to remain within the Ministry's ceiling. The project implementation will be met under the manufacturing adjustment and SME Development Fund. Enterprise Mauritius should identify other revenue generating activities to cover for unallocated balance.

As regards the issue of fees, these are fees payable to local assessors' use for carrying out assessments of laboratories and certification bodies as well as assessors under Twinning Programme with the Norwegian accreditation.

Concerning fees to consultants, the fees are to be paid from the grant obtained from the *Agence Française de Développement*.

Mr Varma: On page 310, under item 26323077 *Construction of Planetarium*, we can't see any sum earmarked for that project. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why this is so?

Mr Gokhool: This is a project under discussion with the Indian Government.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mrs Martin: Sir, one of my questions has not been answered.

Mr Gokhool: I can answer, there is no problem. It was a question with regard to MFDC.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Gokhool: The film crews come from India, South Africa, China, Germany and a few other countries. This is the pattern.

Mrs Martin: My question was whether there are any new markets which are being tapped and, if yes, what strategy is used to get them to come to Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, as I said, there are a few countries from where film crews come for shooting and we are reviewing the strategy of MFDC. A new Bill is being prepared. There will be a discussion on 14 of this month with the stakeholders and together we will decide how to go about attracting more film crews to Mauritius.

Mr Jugnauth: I just wanted to know with regard to the mechanism for transitional support to the private sector, how many small firms have benefited from the ASP that is under the support to industry.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, 75% of the beneficiaries are SMEs, that is, 1,030 out of 1360 companies.

Mr Jugnauth: For small enterprises?

Mr Gokhool: I have in terms of SMEs, but we can circulate in terms of small enterprises.

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research - Programme Code 602: Industrial Development (Rs250,391,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 314 on *Strategic Note 1*. It is said: ‘*some 64 arpents of private land acquired for the implementation of public investment projects.*’ Can the hon. Minister table a breakdown of where the land has been acquired, what is the size and for which project?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands (Rs48,950,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development was called.

Mr Varma: Sir, on page 322 under item 28222012 *Casting of Roof Slabs Scheme*, we can see that the sum earmarked is being decreased year after year. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why it is so?

Mr Gunness: Sir, on page 318 under item *P1: Construction of 550 low-cost housing units on 11 sites*, maybe the hon. Minister can inform the House where the 11 sites are situated?

Secondly, on page 322, under item 28222013 *Rehabilitation of Infrastructure of NHDC Estates*, a sum of Rs15 m. was earmarked for

period July to December. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how much has been spent out of the Rs15 m.?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on page 322, under item *25110004 Subsidy to NHDC*, I see that a huge sum of Rs81 m. has been earmarked for the forthcoming year. Can we know these Rs81 m. are for what purposes? Concerning the Rs8 m. that have been granted as subsidy for this financial year, may we know how this sum has been used?

Dr. Kasenally: Regarding the subsidy to NHDC, the projected expenditure for the year 2009 was Rs8 m. and 2010 is Rs81m. This is interest differential fee to administer the Roof Slabs Scheme: Rs4.3 m.; mortgage administration fee: Rs3 m. and foreign exchange losses: Rs3.7 m. That is for this year. Of course, for next year, it is going to increase.

As far as the subsidy to MHC is concerned, it is going to be Rs16 m. This is interest differential on Government sponsored loan.

(Interruptions)

Concerning Rehabilitation of Infrastructure of NHDC Estates, it is going to be Rs15 m. this year. The rehabilitation is for the installation of electric poles at La Tour Koenig and Camp Levieux: Rs15 m. The rehabilitation of sewerage network concerns two phases, site cleaning contract awarded on 23 December 2009 and expected date of completion is this month. The contract value of the sewerage rehabilitation on 48 housing estates is Rs1.5 m. The scope of work will be finalised after the

site cleaning and tender documents are being prepared and the expected date of launching tenders is December 2009. In cases of Rose Belle and Dagotière, the Dagotière sewerage network has been handed over to WMA. The latter will carry out remedial works and will claim to my Ministry the costs incurred. The same principle is applied to Rose Belle treatment plant. The estimated project cost in all is Rs15 m.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, can I know about the 11 sites?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, there is a batch of 12 sites which is Solitude, Pointe aux Piments, St Antoine, Poudre d'Or, Beau Bois, l'Aventure, Quatre Cocos, Camp Ithier, Melrose, Sebastopol, Bassin and Mon Goût.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, at page 318, under *Output 01 and Performance Indicator P1: Construction of 550 low-cost housing units on 11 sites*, the first issue is to ask whether Camp Diable village forms part of the 11 sites and, if not, why not? Because I was under the impression that one of the sites was supposed to be Camp Diable.

Secondly, under *Output 02 Serviced plots of land to the lower-middle income group for housing purposes*, I see Souillac is included as one of the sites. I would like to have information as to when works will start on those particular sites.

Lastly, at page 322, under item *28222013 Rehabilitation of Infrastructure of NHDC Estates*, I would like to know whether the sum that has been accounted for, here in the estimates for 2010, and for July-

December 2009, the NHDC complexes for rehabilitation include any NHDC Estates in Constituency No. 13 and, if not, why not?

Dr. Kasenally: Can I answer the question? Because it is a long one. As far as rehabilitation of the NHDC housing components are concerned, it will not be possible to rehabilitate each and every NHDC unit. If we go on that logic, we will have to repair the house of everyone. My Ministry, with the NHDC, has established a priority list. As the hon. Minister of Finance has quite rightly pointed out, there is a limited sum of money and priority is being given to those who are in problems. I think it is legitimate and I would feel exactly the same as the hon. Member: why not the NHDC in my constituency? But gradually, we will see. Once the urgent work is done, we shall reconsider. I have to make a correction as far as infrastructure is affordable. There were two sites, one was 12 and one is 11. May I come back on that? Fortunately, there are 60 units to be set up at Camp Diable.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on item 28222012 *Casting of Roof Slabs Scheme* at page 322. I would like to know why there is no provision for July-December 2009, whereas for 2010, there is a sum of Rs200 m., for 2011 the sum is Rs150 m. and for 2012, it is Rs100 m. Everybody knows that the price of the materials will go up. I would like to have an explanation from the hon. Minister regarding the decrease in the amount.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I didn't obtain any answer from the hon. Minister regarding the 2010 Estimates concerning item 25110004 *Subsidy to NHDC* where a sum of Rs81 m. has been earmarked. I would like to know how this sum is going to be spent.

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, I did mention it. Concerning the Casting of Roof Slabs Scheme, this scheme is being met under the Social Housing Fund for 2009, but this Fund is going evanescent at the end and it is going to come under my Ministry.

The hon. Member also put the question that there has been an increase in the cost of materials. In fact, this Government has gradually increased it, it was initially Rs25,000, it has gone to Rs30,000 now it is Rs60,000 and we have also a flexibility. We had a fixed area. In fact, Members from both sides of the House have been asking for a bit of flexibility. Somebody comes with 4 square metres extra. They have increased it up to 10. We have to use a bit of compassion and humanity in dealing with these people, but as things move forward and we get our bumper crop, we might increase it to 70, but it will depend on the Minister of Finance, subject to funds available.

Mr Jugnauth: In view of the answer that has been given by the hon. Minister and taking into account that there is going to be flexibility, I find it a bit surprising that the amount of money that is earmarked for the years 2011 and 2012 is less than the amount earmarked for next year. Taking into consideration the fact that prices of the materials are going

up and that there will certainly be more applications for casting of roof slabs ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: ...would the hon. Minister clarify to the House whether there is going to be more applications and that this sum would not be enough for the years to come?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, in fact, it depends on the number of applications that we have, but let me reassure the hon. First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka that nobody will be denied a roof slab. We will have to find Contingency Fund. Maybe we may have to increase it, but we'll have to see how things are.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, I am coming back to item 642 *Social Housing Development*. I thank the hon. Minister for the answers that he has given me, but there is one question about the Serviced Lots in Souillac which I had put. I would be very grateful if I could know when work is supposed to start on that particular site, at Souillac, as referred to at page 318, Output 02, Performance Indicator P1.

Dr. Kasenally: We have already identified the land, it has to be surveyed and, in fact, we will be launching the contract soon. When I say 'soon', it is within the next two or three months.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development (Rs1,048,588,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning was called.

Mr Gunness: On page 324, Sir, I refer to item 31132101 *Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management Systems (LAVIMS) Project*. Can the Minister kindly report as to where matters stand? By when is this project expected to be completed?

Mr Dowarkasing: On the same issue, can I know from the sum of Rs 172 m. earmarked for July to December 2009, how much money has been spent?

Dr. Kasenally: So far, Mr Chairperson, we have completed the digital aerial photography for the whole island and with this, in fact, each and every Member can even see his house and even his back door garage. There is also the main hardware for Information Management System which is being installed at Ébène. The software development is in progress. Concerning the scanning of transcription of deeds, about 55% of all the deeds have already been scanned and will be put through the system. As for the cadastral surveys of properties, 95,000 households have been completed out of an estimate of 350,000; we expect that some 100,000 properties will be surveyed soon and the data capture is about

70% completed. We hope that towards the middle or the third quarter, the whole project will be completed.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning (Rs431,783,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 330 – *Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - Disposal capacity at the existing cells at the Mare Chicose landfill is almost exhausted.* I think that the landfill will still be in a capacity until 2011. Can we know from the hon. Minister what are the plans ahead?

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, the contract has already been awarded in December 2006 and that will cover a period of 10 years both for capital works and recurrent operation costs. Cell 6 is being extended to cater for disposal needs up to December 2011.

Mr Dowarkasing: I think the hon. Minister did not get my question well. What he has stated is already found at page 330. I wanted to know what the plans ahead of 2011 in terms of waste management are. Since Cell 6 will already be exhausted and Mare Chicose also will already be exhausted, what are the plans?

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, there are several options! Let me mention the two options. In fact, we go up to 2011. Concerning the disposal facilities for the medium and long-term, there are two options that are being explored. The first one is negotiations with the private promoter. The setting up of a waste to energy plant, that is, incinerator at La Chaumière with Gamma Energy Limited is ongoing. In the event the agreement is signed in early 2010, the facility will only be ready in January 2013. But, in view of the fact that landfilling capacity is being catered for up to December 2011, additional land will need to be secured to provide a disposal capacity for year 2012. In this respect, it is proposed to have consultations with land owner and the Ministry of Housing and Lands to set the required land for land filling purpose.

Concerning option two, in the event there are problems, then appropriate decisions will be taken in due course. But we have already catered for up to 2011, 2012. If there are problems next year in the negotiations, we will certainly find alternatives, but we have already opened negotiations with the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government (Rs35,249,700) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, under item *26312002 Municipal Council of Curepipe*, I just want to ask the hon. Minister if he can table a breakdown of this allocation. My second question is under item *26323204 Local Infrastructure Fund*. I see that nothing has been earmarked for this current budget and for the forthcoming budget also and yet the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping was just boasting that there would be so many projects under this Local Infrastructure Fund, but no sum has been earmarked. Can we have an explanation on that?

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member has requested for a breakdown, I will circulate it.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know where matters stand with regard to the revision of the Local Government Act?

Dr. David: It has certainly reached the final stage and we will bring it to Parliament the moment it is ready.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, at page 329, under *Programme 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities*, I refer to *Multi-Purpose/Sports Complexes at Souillac*. I would like to have some information from the hon. Minister with regard to that particular Multi-Purpose/Sports Complexes, at what stage we are at and when those works are expected to start and finish.

The second issue is at the same page 329. I read here that under the Local Infrastructure Fund, there is a number of projects out of which 12 have been completed, including lighting of football grounds. But on the same issue of lighting of football grounds, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether he can confirm that Souillac football ground would be included under one of those projects and also the football ground at Rivière des Anguilles referred to in an answer to a parliamentary question by the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports in which he said that the Local Government would also implement lighting in Rivière des Anguilles.

Dr. David: I am waiting for the answer, but, in the meantime, may I answer a question concerning lighting of football grounds. As regards the lighting of football grounds, very often, it is a joint project, NDU and Local Government. Tender has been awarded and construction will start in January.

Mr Dowarkasing: I did not get a reply for my second question regarding the Local Infrastructure Fund where there are no budgetary provisions.

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, it is part of the fund, we have received Rs1.1 billion from the Ministry of Finance for the first time. It used to be Rs5 m. per local authority. There were several Funds, six in all, and the Local Infrastructure Fund is one of the Funds.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for the excellent piece of information about tender having been awarded and work will be starting in January. Does that answer apply to the three issues, that is, the multi-purpose/sports complexes as well as the lights in Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac? If that is the case, I would say thank you again, again and again.

Dr. David: Carry on asking.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities (Rs1,959,307,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 463: Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities was called.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 337, under item 31113409 *Upgrading of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities/Stations*, may I know from the hon. Minister, with regard to La Brasserie Transfer Station, in particular, what those upgrading of solid waste disposal facilities consist of in 2009?

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 336, item 22 *Goods and Services*. Could the hon. Minister circulate or table who are the *contractors for the maintenance, cleaning services of public*

beaches, operation of landfill sites and operation of transfer stations? Can we get a breakdown of the companies which are concerned with all these contracts and the sum allocated to them?

Dr. David: I'll table that, no problem! As regards *La Brasserie Transfer Station*, I am informed that the date awarded for the contract was April 2008 for over Rs72 m. and it started on 24 June 2008. The completion date is 23 April 2009. The contractual completion date is 01 June 2009 and I am informed that as at 16 November 2009, the work has been completed. The objective is to reduce the waiting time of lorries in view of increasing the effectiveness of the collection services which will, in turn, impact positively in a better collection of municipal waste by local authorities. As regards technicalities, engineers and other technicians know about that.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 463: Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities (Rs896,774,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention was called.

Mr Varma: At page 338, item 31112424 *Upgrading of Fire Stations*, could the hon. Minister inform the House which fire stations are being upgraded?

Dr. David: For the new fire stations, Flacq Fire Station is under construction on a plot of land around 140 metres from the main road. Regarding St. Aubin Fire Station, tender for upgrading the station at the cost of Rs3.2 m. has been launched and there is the construction of a new station at Tamarin which is due to start in 2010. Bids documents are being finalised and the project value is Rs44 m.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention (Rs334,282,100) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 311: Rodrigues and Outer Islands Development (Rs1,620,906,200) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs was called.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 345, under *Strategic Note 1 - Major Achievements for 2008/09 and 2009 (July-December) - Development of a Carer's Strategy and training programme on Psycho-Social aspect of*

Ageing. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of persons who have benefited from such training, if this training has taken place and where are these persons attached to?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, with the opening of Foyer Trochetia in Petit Verger and Pointe aux Sables catering for very old people with severe disability, some 30 to 32 carers have been trained through the MIH, that is, the Mauritius Institute of Health and some 15, I suppose, have already been in employment at the Foyer Trochetia and we have further on contacted the various charitable institutions, and the others have all been employed by these institutions.

Mr Gunness: On the same page, Sir, I have two questions. Under item 'Setting up of the Non State Actors (NSA) Unit', can I know from the hon. Minister whether this unit has already been set up? There is also item 'Opening of a new Resource Centre at Wooton to empower the community.' Has this centre already been set up? If not, where do matters stand?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, Saturday last, 05 December, was the International Day for Volunteers. It was on that day that we launched the NSA Unit which is fixed at the NPF Building in Beau Bassin. The UNDP has given every assistance. There is a Project Manager recruited by the UNDP. There is a consultant and now the project is on.

As far as the Resource Centre at Wooton is concerned, this has already been opened since one year now and it is in full operation benefitting all the inhabitants in the area there. It is run by the Social Welfare Division.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs70,675,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 502: Social Protection was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 350, under *sub-programme 50202: Integration of Persons with Disabilities and Strengthening of the NGOs - Disability Unit, P1: Number of persons with disabilities trained and placed*, I can see that the baseline is 100 for 2009. Can I know from the hon. Minister how many persons with disabilities have been trained in 2009 and placed in different posts for employment?

At page 354, I can see under item *27210003 Unemployment Hardship Relief* that a sum of Rs2 m. has been earmarked. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the Rs802,500 earmarked for July-December 2009 have been spent in this present financial year?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, as far as training of people with disabilities is concerned, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board has already initiated training programmes in the IT sector, jewellery, woodwork, and these involved some 100 trainees. We have also started a sensitisation and a training programme with the Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF), and some 50 - if I get the figure right - disabled persons have been employed in various IT companies.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on the same two items, the hon. Minister has said that about 100 disabled have been trained and placed. Can we know how many of them have been placed for a job?

Secondly, under item *27210003 Unemployment Hardship Relief*, can we know the criteria to obtain such a hardship relief grant?

Lastly, under item *26313069 Current Grant - NGO Trust Fund*, can the hon. Minister table a list of all the NGOs which have benefited from same for period July-December 2009?

Mrs Bappoo: As far as the grants given to NGOs are concerned, I will certainly table the list as soon as I get it from my officers. I am informed that around 75 persons have been placed in the IT sector, in the banking sector and in the SMEs.

Mr Dowarkasing: What about the criteria, please?

Mrs Bappoo: I need to get the criteria from the staff of my Ministry concerning the *Unemployment Hardship Relief*, but, during 2009, we have been spending Rs386,736 out of the Rs802,000.

The Chairperson: I am sure that the hon. Minister can have it circulated afterwards.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 354, under item 28211024 *Other Current Transfers - Subsidy to Religious Bodies*, I would like the Minister to enlighten us and give the reason as to why we give this subsidy to religious bodies, and the names of the religious bodies which benefit from this subsidy of Rs4.5 m.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, this subsidy deals only with the refund of water bills of the associations benefiting subsidies from Government. It concerns only the payment of water bills.

I have also been given the criteria for the *Unemployment Hardship Relief*. It is the heads of households looking actively for work and registered at the Employment and Registration Office.

Mr Gunness: I think that if it is for water and electricity, it must not fall under *Sub-Programme 50201: Social Safety Net*. Probably, in the next Budget, it has to be placed elsewhere.

Mrs Bappoo: Where?

Mr Gunness: I don't know, but not under the Social Safety Net.

(Interruptions)

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 502: Social Protection (Rs950,870,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 503: National Pension Management was called.

Mr Soodhun: At page 357, under item *22120001 Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, could the hon. Minister inform the House about the number of doctors employed under this scheme?

Mrs Bappoo: We have 49 doctors involved at the level of the Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits. We also have an average of 40 specialists plus five judges and two secretaries who are attached to them.

Mrs Martin: On the same item, can I ask the hon. Minister what are the criteria to be eligible for the domiciliary visits, please?

Mrs Bappoo: All the elderly people, as from 90 years, have free domiciliary visits from our medical practitioners, and those as from 75 years, but who are really bedridden also benefit from this domiciliary visit programme. We also have the elderly people in charitable institutions, and disabled persons who are in very severe healthy condition.

Mr Varma: At page 357, under item *22120004 Fees to Mauritius Post Ltd*, could the hon. Minister inform the House what sort of fees is paid to the Mauritius Post Ltd?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, we have some 96,104 elderly persons who have their BRP being paid through the Mauritius Post Ltd. So, the fees are being paid to the post office. It should be noted that there has been an increase in the transaction rate; it was Rs8, and now it comes to Rs14 per head.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 503: National Pension Management (Rs8,729,716,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation was called.

Mrs Labelle: On page 351, *sub-programme 50401 Probation and After Care Services - Output 02 – Support to people with suicidal tendencies*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of persons and psychologists, if any, attached to the Suicide Prevention Unit of the Ministry?

Mrs Bappoo: With regard to the number of personnel attached to this unit, I need to get if from the officers. With regard to psychologist,

the post was created in the last Budget. I am informed that the PSC has completed the selection exercise and as soon as this will be cleared, the psychologists will be attached to the Suicide Prevention Unit.

Mrs Martin: With regard to the same item, Indicator P1: *Number of sensitisation campaigns*, I see that the target remains the same up till 2012. May I ask the hon. Minister how she explains the fact that despite the number of sensitisation campaigns that have been carried out, the number of people who commit suicide is still on the increase? I would like to know whether any study has been carried out to understand why this is so and how to counter this effect?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson, the unit has carried out a series of campaigns. Actually, we are having some five to six sessions which are being held each month. Up to November 2009, there has been in total 60 sessions. Mr Chairperson, suicide is quite a very sensible issue. I need to say that the percentage of persons who killed themselves during 2008-2009 were 0.007% of the population. This represents 7 per 100,000. The international accepted rate is 0.014%, that is, 14 per 100,000. I know it is alarming for such a sensible issue, but it is not a trend that makes us being so much disturbed, because you can see how the figures go on.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: At page 346, *Programme Code 504, Output 01: Support to people with suicidal tendencies*, may I know what

is being done for the prevention of suicide apart from sensitisation campaigns?

At page 347, under Programme Code 504: *Probation and Social Rehabilitation*, may I know from the hon. Minister how the sum of Rs30 m. has been spent?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, I do not know if anyone has the solution. I, myself, do not know what the real thing to be done to prevent suicide is. It is only through sensitisation campaigns that we can make people aware of the problem and also through sessions with psychologists to give them some moral and psychological support; there is a hotline; keeping in touch, *un programme d'écoute, comme on dit*; that's all that we can do to prevent it. There is no firm solution to it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I know that the hon. Minister is aware of the NGO who is there for prevention of suicide. Will she consider the fact that this NGO lacks funds and means to operate efficiently? For example, it cannot have a 24-hour listening, because it does not have volunteers and so on. Maybe, this is one thing that we could look into, how to increase the means of the NGOs so as to help persons with suicidal behaviour.

Mrs Bappoo: I do agree with the hon. Member, Mr Chairperson, because the only NGO which takes care of suicide problems is Befrienders. With regard to financial constraints, it is always a common issue for all NGOs. But now we have the CSR Fund. The NGOs are

supposed to have their submissions for projects done and sent to the CSR Committee so that they can benefit from the CSR Fund to accelerate their programmes. There is no problem on that.

Mr Gunness: With regard to gifts to centenarians, can we know the number of persons who will be centenarian in 2010? In case they pass away, this is another issue.

Mrs Bappoo: I do not have the figure for 2010. I know that, by now, we have 79. I cannot give the hon. Member the exact figure for 2010. Maybe, if I get the information, but it all depends. Up to now, we have 79 centenarians.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation (Rs62,966,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 505: Social Welfare (Rs275,600,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 521: Policy and Management of Gender Equality, Child Development, Family Welfare and Children Protection was called.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, at page 373, under item 26323202, *Food Security Fund*, I see that no provision is earmarked. Can we have some clarification, please?

The Chairperson: We are on Programme Code 521 at page 373.

Mrs Seebun: The National Women's Council draws fund from the *Food Security Fund*. This is why the fund is not here. It is actually at the Ministry of Finance, but we do carry out activities with regard to the issue of Food Security Fund.

Mr Jugnauth: As a matter of transparency and good governance, may I know why there is an item here with no amount budgeted for the coming year and for the years to come. At least, we should know.

(Interruptions)

There is a fund, but I do not see the problem in earmarking, as for all the other items, a sum that is going to be, at least, spent for the coming year and estimates for the years to come.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, the *Food Security Fund* was created in the Budget of the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security. I mean, women do undertake such activities and we are provided all the services on the Food Security.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 521: Policy and Management of Gender Equality, Child Development, Family Welfare and Children Protection (Rs55,780,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 522: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming was called.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I would like to talk on item 26313067 *National Women's Council* on page 373. Will the hon. Minister give the number of women's associations receiving the grants because for 2010 it is Rs58 m., for 2011 it is Rs46,400,000 and for 2012 it is Rs37,120,000? I would like to know why continuously there is a decrease.

Mrs Seebun: At present, we have got 1,068 women's associations, but it keeps increasing. The sum allocated is Rs2.1 m.

Mr Gunness: Sir, at page 373, under item 31112018 *Construction of Women's Centres*, I see that a sum of Rs6.6 m. has been earmarked for 2010, and Rs4 m. for July-December 2009. Can I know how much has been spent out of this in the present financial year and where is the construction going ahead?

The Chairperson: Let's take another question in the meantime!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I would like to come back to item 26313067 *National Women's Council*. I find that the estimated amount has decreased for the next three years. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a particular reason why we are forecasting a decrease in the amounts for this item?

Mrs Seebun: The amount is indicative, in fact, Mr Chairperson. As the need would be felt, it will be increased, I am sure.

Mr Varma: On page 373, the grant being allocated to the *National Women Entrepreneur Council*, again, we can see a projected decrease

year after year. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why there is that projected decrease?

Mrs Seebun: My answer is the same. The figures are indicative and I am sure that the Minister of Finance will increase it. It will depend on the type of lobby that we are going to do.

(Interruptions)

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I am waiting for an answer on the construction of the women's centre, where that centre is situated and how much has been spent.

Mrs Seebun: Our women centre at Notre Dame is nearing completion and we are starting another one at Rivière du Poste for which Rs2 m. have been earmarked, but I am sure that it will be adjusted.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, on page 366, we can see under *List of Programmes, Sub-Programmes and Priority Objectives – Ensure that Ministries, Departments and organisations formulate policies and interventions that consider gender balance and gender equality.* When we go on page 369, *P1* and *P2*, we can see that there is a number of pilot Ministries which have been engendered. May we know from the hon. Minister which are the Ministries which have actually been engendered on a pilot basis and why targets remain the same for 2010, 2011 and 2012?

Mrs Seebun: So far, we have engendered four Ministries: Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Culture and

Human Resources, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare. As to why, it is because there are several programmes in several Ministries. So, it is not possible for us to engender all the Ministries and, according to our forecast, we can fully engender all the programmes of eight Ministries till 2012.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 522: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming (Rs101,930,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, under Programme 523, item 27210011 *Foster Care*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of children who have benefitted from this programme up to now?

Mrs Seebun: In our Foster Care Programme, at present, we have got 44 children.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 370 items *O2 Children of Violence provided with support services for their reintegration into society* and page 371, *Child Development Unit*. Mr Chairperson, under P4, we see that the number of children removed to a place of safety will be 37 and forecasted for next year is 130. It is the same for item P5. There is an increase from 5 to 40 and when you see

items O3, O4, O5 on the next page, you find that there is a considerable increase in all those items. Therefore, the hon. Minister would concur with me that the burden of her Ministry will increase, but then I see that the Grant to the National Children's Council which is a very important component to fight all these things has decreased. If we see the Budget for six months, it has been Rs4.9 m. and now, for the whole year it is going to be Rs9 m. So, the Budget of the National Children's Council is being decreased. This is my first question. The number of cases is increasing and the Grant to the National Children's Council, an important component to fight these issues, is decreasing.

Secondly, the Ministry is recruiting only one additional psychologist to cope with this increasing number of cases. Would the hon. Minister concur with me that she won't have enough power of human resources to deal with all these problems and, if so, what are the future plans?

Mrs Seebun: As concerns the National Children's Council, I agree that financial resources have decreased, but I am sure that we are going to do something about it. Regarding psychologists, we have already got 8 and we are recruiting two more.

Mr Soodhun: On page 374, item 31112428 *Upgrading of Creativity Centre at Mahebourg*, I would like to have the number of staff at the centre. Secondly, I would like to know whether the persons who are trained to carry out the activities are still at the centre. And

lastly, I would like to know the number of children who have attended the centre this year.

Mrs Seebun: First of all, I wish to inform, Mr Chairperson, that our Creativity Centre at Mahebourg is undergoing repair works and this year, especially we did not have as many children as we got in the past.

As concerns human resource, we have got 2 WPO, 1 FSO, 4 craft coaches, 1 office attendant, 2 general workers and 1 handyman. The craft coaches have been trained. On and off, whenever children come and stay at the Creativity Centre, we do send resource persons so as to entertain them and to have creative activities.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, following the reply that has been given by the hon. Minister on the number of psychologists, I see, on page 377, under item *19 49 67 Psychologist*, that there are only three earmarked in the current Budget and one additional will be earmarked.

(Interruptions)

Maybe, the hon. Minister has psychologists for other programmes.

(Interruptions)

So, they are already overlapped. Fair enough!

My second question is on page 374, under item *28211004 Charitable Institutions*. I see that a grant of Rs16.5 m. has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister table a list of all the charitable institutions that benefit from this grant?

Mrs Seebun: I will circulate the list, Mr Chairperson.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development (Rs61,665,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Domestic Violence was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on page 375, under item 22 *Goods and Services, 22900019 Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*, from July to December 2009, Rs30 m. has been spent. Can we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister how the sum has been used and how she is forecasting to use the sum of Rs70 m. earmarked for next year?

Mrs Seebun: In fact, Rs30 m. were earmarked and out of the Rs30 m. a sum to the tune of Rs18.9 m. has been handed over to different NGOs. During the coming weeks, I guess it will total up to Rs22 m. It would have been too easy for us just to allocate all the Rs30 m., but we have to be very careful, we have to hand over the funds to NGOs who have got the proven track record and we have to analyse carefully all the projects before remitting funds.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she will be agreeable to table a list of the NGOs who have benefitted from this grant together with the programme that has been carried out by these NGOs?

Mrs Seebun: Sure, Mr Chairperson, it is already available.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue, since this sum is going to NGOs to implement this programme, can we know what monitoring mechanism has the Ministry put in place so that taxpayers' money is utilised to its maximum?

Mrs Seebun: We have already put in place a technical committee, because what is more important is the monitoring and evaluation of how funds are being utilised. I am sure that our technical committee would do a very good job.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, can we know what are the main criteria that are taken on board so that the NGOs benefit from this funding?

Mrs Seebun: We have a set of criteria like they should be duly registered with the Registrar of Associations, working for the welfare of women and children in distress, have a proven track record, as I said earlier, and have a sound financial management and good governance and have ability to manage funds and contribute, at least, 10% of the total project.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Domestic Violence (Rs84,845,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources were called and agreed to –

421: Policy and Management for Education and Human Resources (Rs305,094,000)

422: Pre-Primary Education (Rs148,105,000)

423: Primary Education (Rs3,174,592,000)

424: Secondary Education (Rs5,445,768,000)

425: Technical and Vocational Education

(Rs452,330,000)

426: Tertiary Education Sector (Rs1,046,342,000)

427: Special Education Programmes (Rs64,515,000).

*Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources –
Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Culture was called.*

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I have one question.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I would like Members on the side of Government to, please, wait for the question to be put. Thank you.

Mrs Martin: Thank you very much for your consideration, Mr Chairperson. With regard to *Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Culture*, the hon. Minister has spoken of setting up new speaking unions as well, but we cannot see any provision made for any new speaking unions in this current Budget, neither for the Budget 2011 nor for 2012. Can he explain?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, in fact, we are in the course of setting up five new ones. I'll have to go to Cabinet for that first. But the

other speaking unions are functioning already; they must be having some budget for themselves.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Culture (Rs13,233,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture was called.

Mrs Martin: On page 383, under *Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture*, with regard to ‘*Facilitate the development of the cultural industry*’, the hon. Minister of Finance as well as the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture talked about a symphonic orchestra and artistic corridor development, etc., but no provision is being made here. Can we have an indication as to how this is going to be set up, where the funds are going to be extracted from and when this is going to actually take shape?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, for the cultural industry, we are waiting for a last report to get it better on course. As far as the symphonic orchestra is concerned, it is going to be funded by the Lottery Fund.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture (Rs156,455,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage was called.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, on page 383, with regard to *Programme 623 - Preservation, care and conservation of records for posterity, preparation of reference media and dissemination of information*, can the hon. Minister say whether – I suppose he knows what I am going to ask – any provision is made for the archives section in order to be constructed so that these reference media and all those materials are preserved and done in the shortest possible delay? Because we cannot see here again the same provision being made.

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, as time is going on and the archives section is in a derelict building, we have decided to rent for a transition period before we put up the building itself.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage (Rs91,460,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the Attorney General's Office were called and agreed to -

561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services (Rs29,381,000)

562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs91,375,000)

563: Law Reform and Development (Rs8,900,000)

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security were called and agreed to –

- 481: Policy and Strategy for Agro-Industry and Fisheries (Rs144,187,000)*
- 482: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector (Rs537,791,000)*
- 483: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector (Rs600,540,000)*
- 484: Livestock Production and Development (Rs374,587,000)*
- 485: Forestry Resources (Rs193,478,000)*
- 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation (Rs37,699,000)*
- 487: Fisheries (Rs275,894,000)*

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 462, on *Strategic Note*, concerning chikungunya and AH1N1 pandemic, can I know from the hon. Minister what is the plan for this coming summer season as far as the campaign for the fight against chikungunya and malaria is concerned?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, we have restructured the Communicable Diseases Control Unit. We have set up an Epidemiology Unit which we did not have in the past and also we have now community physicians as well as health inspectors and an entomologist in the team.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, at page 473, under item 27210008 *Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius*, I see that the amount that are earmarked for subsequent years, that is, 2011 and 2012 have decreased. Can we have some explanations?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, at page 473, under item 27210 *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash*, I would like to have some details as to whether this applies to mental patients?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the first query as to the reduction in the amount, we have a plan to upgrade the existing personnel. We are also opening up medical schools, and we hope that we would be in a position to do certain operations here locally.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management (Rs398,888,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 582: Curative Services was called.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, under item 58201 *Hospital Services and High-Tech Medicine*, may I ask the hon. Minister two questions? First, in 2009, the budget provision for six months is 11,971 and for 2010, for the whole year, it is 11,314 which is less for 12 months than it was for six months. Secondly, may I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand as regards very sophisticated equipments which are not working?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the second part ...

(Interruptions)

...the MRI is now functioning. I did reply to a question whereby I said that I personally talked to the manufacturers of equipment and they happened to be so sophisticated that, at times, even the manufacturers could not fix them. Mr Chairperson, we have made arrangements with a hospital in Reunion Island. Over and above that, we are taking maintenance contracts and we are training our staff to make sure that they get the capabilities of maintaining the equipment.

As regards the reduction in the Budget, I will have to look into it and come back.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 475, under item 22140007 *Renal Dialysis - Consumables and Fees*, the number of persons undergoing dialysis has increased and the sums being allocated for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 are the same, that is, Rs95,000,000. Can we have an explanation from the hon. Minister?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, at page 475, item 31112403, *Upgrading of Hospitals - Victoria Hospital and Brown Sequared Hospital*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when the upgrading will start and whether it concerns the whole hospital or only some wards because I just want to inform him that the patients are not having drinking water till now. I think that upgrading is first to provide water and we know that the conditions of the existing wards in Victoria

and Brown Sequared hospitals are in a really disastrous situation. I would like to know more from the Minister about the upgrading.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, we have put a major programme of upgrading the infrastructure of all hospitals. With regard to Victoria Hospital, we are in the process of setting up a new surgery block and over and above that with regard to the wards, we have to do it in a phasing manner. We can't do all at the same time. Mr Chairperson. I can circulate a whole list of works that are being done throughout the island, not just in Victoria and in Brown Sequared hospitals, but in all the other regional hospitals.

Mr Soodhun: I would like to come again on my question. I insist to have an answer because provision has been made for Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, Flacq Hospital, J. Nehru Hospital, Victoria Hospital, Brown Sequared Hospital and S. Bharati Eye Hospital. So, when are the upgrading works going to start? This is what we want to know.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I can circulate a list of about 40 different projects that my friend, hon. Minister Bachoo is personally monitoring every fortnight. I can circulate it.

With regard to water, Mr Chairperson, there is a certain amount of work that is being done for water reticulation as well.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 582: Curative Services (Rs5,949,996,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 583: Primary Health Care and Public Health was called.

Mr Gunness: At page 477, item 31112005 *Construction of Community Health Centres*, I see that a sum of Rs36 m. has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister inform the House where will these community centres be constructed? As far as items 31112404 *Upgrading of Area Health Centres* and 31112405 *Upgrading of Community Health Centres* are concerned, which one will be upgraded?

Mr Soodhun: On the same item, Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether on his list *la Route du Club, Vacoas exists* where there was previously a Community Health Centre and, for some reason, it has been destroyed and moved.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to those Rs36 m., it's for the construction of CHC's in the five regions. It would be a new building for Pandit Sahadeo CHC and the work is completed; a new CHC at Club Road, Vacoas to the tune of Rs15 m.; new Tombeau Baie CHC, new Eastern Suburb CHC, new Plaine Lauzun CHC, new Trou D'eau Douce CHC, new Phoenix CHC, new Bambous AHC and new Goodlands AHC.

Mr Mohamed: On the same issue at page 477, item 31112405 *Upgrading of Community Health Centres*, the sum provided for 2010 is Rs17,100,000. Can I know whether any of the Community Health Centres in Constituency No. 13 will be included therein because in a

parliamentary question, some three years back, which I asked the former Minister of Health, there was an issue which was raised at Tyack where the health centres there required some upgrading? There is not enough space for people to even wait there and they have to wait outside before they see a doctor and we were promised that something would be done about that. That is the first issue.

The second issue is about the construction of Community Health Centres. Does that include Constituency No. 13, again, because some three or four years back, the former Minister of Health was informed in a question, here, in Parliament by myself that there is a plot of land in Grand Bois that has been found and vested in the Ministry of Health for the construction of a Medi-Clinic. At that time, the Minister of Health was Mr Deerpalsing as far back as that. We have not heard anything since then, be it for Grand Bois or for any renovation works to be done to the Tyack dispensary, and hence people continue to suffer. Could the hon. Minister, please, enlighten us about these two issues?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I have got some good news for my hon. friend. I see that there is provision for the extension of Tyack AHC to the tune of Rs2 m. for the year 2009, that is, from July to December 2009, plus I see that there is a further Rs5 m. provision for the year 2010 and, over and above this, Mr Chairperson, we are in the process of creating 12 model AHC's and CHC's. It will be at Camp Diable which

is in my hon. Friend's constituency. I hope these will satisfy his requirements.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 583: Primary Health Care and Public Health (Rs918,815,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life were called and agreed to –

584: Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS (Rs93,350,000)

585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (Rs43,830,000)

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 721: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Rs8,474,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 603: Trade Development was called.

Mr Varma: At page 500, item 26313008 *Current Grant – Competition Commission*, we can see that there is a grant of Rs9.5 m. from July to December 2009, then the figure goes around Rs39 m. and then there is a decrease for 2011 and 2012. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why this is so?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, provision required for payment of salaries and allowances to staff and running costs of the Competition Commission is included in the amount of Rs17,864,000 for projects such

as consultancy services for guidelines and procedural rules for the Competition Commission and the Mauritius Economic Transition Technical Assistance projects.

Mr Ganoo: At page 497, item *Competition Commission*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Chairman of the Commission has been appointed and who are the other members?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, the Ag. Chairman is Mr Rajendra Tagore Servansing.

Mr Gunness: He is the Ag. Chairman of that Commission. Can we know from the Minister by when the substantive Chairman will be appointed?

Mr Gowressoo: Very soon, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Gunness: We hope the Minister will communicate the name as soon as possible.

Mr Chairperson under item *Import Division - O1: Import Permits and Second-hand vehicle dealers' licences*, we know that over the past months, there has been quite a good number of problems on the imported second-hand vehicles. Can we know from the hon. Minister what new measures are being taken to protect the consumers?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, we are proposing a regulation. The regulation will be amended for audiometre certificate; the authorised dealers will make a deposit of Rs1 m. instead of a bank guarantee so as to meet court judgment on award by the tribunal; to subject individual importers to same fine as applicable to authorised dealers.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 603: Trade Development (Rs302,597,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives was called.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, at page 493 – *Strategic Note 3 Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, we have the issue of the SMEs are eligible for assistance under the Additional Stimulus Package through the Mechanism for Transitional Support to the Private Sector (MTSP). May I ask the hon. Minister how many of these SMEs have, in fact, benefitted from this initiative?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, there is a list which I will table.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs72,585,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for ICT was called.

Mr Varma: At page 509, *Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Spam Control Bill*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a time frame for that Bill to be introduced in the National Assembly?

Mr Dulull: We are working on this and, hopefully, we will introduce it into Parliament as soon as we get the clearance from the State Law Office.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for ICT (Rs9,310,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 662: Scaling Up the ICT Sector was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 511 – *Programme Code 66202: e-Powering the Society*. We see that for July-December 2009, there is a sum of Rs25,550,000 and, for the coming year, a sum of Rs53,700,000 is earmarked. Still when we go down to the other table - *Summary of Funded Positions by Programmes and Sub-Programmes*, there is no programme or sub-programme earmarked, but

still the budgetary allocation is there. Can we know why there has been no programme earmarked and what the sum of Rs25,550,000 has been used for?

My second question is, again, at page 518, *Programme Code 662: Scaling Up the ICT Sector*. Mr Chairperson, you will see under item 22 *Goods and Services* that for July-December 2009, Rs44,501,000 have been earmarked and more than 50% of this sum has been used for rent. Can we have an explanation how we are using Rs24,560,000 on rent and which building is it? How much are we paying for that? For 2010, there is a sum of Rs74,895,000 just for the item rent. Can we know from the hon. Minister what are we renting for such a huge amount?

Mr Dulull: It is not just for rent, it is a grant to National Computer Board and it includes the item rent in this allocation.

Mr Dowarkasing: My first question has not been replied, Mr Chairperson. It concerns e-Powering the Society. Sums have been earmarked, but there is no programme.

Mr Dulull: Actually, the programme is an ongoing one. We have several services like access to computer facilities and training which is an ongoing programme. We have the search ‘mu’; child safety online has already been started. We have a series of programmes which I can lay on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Minister said that the item rent includes grants to the National Computer Board. Can he precisely tell us how much stands for grant to National Computer Board and how much stands for rent?

Mr Dulull: I'll get the breakdown of the different buildings we are renting and, hopefully, I'll table all the information because we do rent a lot of offices. We have the CIB, the National Computer Board, I'll circulate the answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: My concern has been taken care of.

Mrs Martin: My concern is at page 511 *Programme Code 66202: e-Powering the Society.* The Minister has just mentioned several programmes that are being carried out, but then there are no funded positions by the programme and sub-programmes. Why is that so?

Mr Dulull: We do have the budget for *e-Powering the Society.* The estimate is Rs53.7 m.

Mrs Martin: The summary of funded positions by programme and sub-programmes, this is what I am asking.

Mr Dulull: We have the summary to provide for active information security and incident handling of management of services to

public and private sectors; assist in the creation of a pool of IT professionals; facilitate the transformation of Mauritius into a regional ICT hub; assist in the development of information society in Mauritius through studies and monitoring of ICT indicators; ensure high availability and reliability of services of the Government on-line centre and availability of e-services.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, may I come to page 509, *Strategic Note 3 Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. We all know that we have a huge problem of professionals who are being trained. In fact, Government has itself recognised that there was an urgent need to develop a pool of IT professionals. May I ask the hon. Minister how many professionals were trained this year and what is the target for 2010?

Mr Dulull: We have different training programmes and in line with Government's policy to increase the number of IT professionals, we have set up the ICT Academy. We have just launched the programme and, with the Budget allocation, we hope to train some 1,200 in the year to come.

Mr Dowarkasing: Again on page 514, *Sub-Programme 66202: e-Powering the Society*, under *Service Standards, P1 and P2*, there is no baseline for 2009, and the target for 2010 is June and for 2011 and 2012, there is no target. We just cannot understand how we are going to

analyse the performance of the National Computer Board when we do not even have the baseline.

Mr Dulull: In terms of the cyber security, we have just set up the National Cyber Crime Protection Committee.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 662: Scaling Up the ICT Sector (Rs448,125,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter - Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme 701*, at page 526, mention is made of a *Review of Consumer Protection legal framework*. Could the hon. Minister inform the House which are the laws that will be reviewed as regards consumer protection?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: It is already under process, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Martin: Under the same *Programme 701* at page 526, namely *Citizens are empowered and become knowledgeable as to their rights and responsibilities*, may I know from the hon. Minister, with regard to the number of campaigns which have been carried out, how many citizens were targeted and how many have actually been reached?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: I think we have already had 50 sessions.

Mrs Martin: How many citizens have you reached through those 50 sessions?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Many.

(Interruptions)

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 526, under *Strategic Note I*, can we know from the hon. Minister whether the Editorial Board has been set up and whether the two publications of the consumer protection magazines are now ready?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: The Board is already constituted and the magazine is going to be launched within one or two months.

(Interruptions)

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter (Rs27,943,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Price Control was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: On page 528, item 52501 *Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Consumer*, we can see that a sum of Rs10 m. has been used. Can we have the details of this expenditure?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Chairperson, I will circulate the information.

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Price Control (Rs22,137,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 702: Citizens Charter was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Can we know what the status of the Citizens Charter is?

(Interruptions)

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Mr Chairperson, the document is ready and it will be circulated shortly.

Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 702: Citizens Charter (Rs885,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment was called.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I just want to ask a question at page 538, under *Strategic Note I*, where it is stated that *4,961 persons were sensitised on their labour rights and obligations in 2008/09 and an additional of 2000 persons is targeted for the period July to December*

2009. Can I ask the hon. Minister the number of workers who have been laid off since the beginning of this year up to now? Does he have the figure?

Mr Chaumière: The information that I have, Mr Chairperson, is about persons who have been laid off and, have so far, benefited from the Workfare Programme. The number is 1,761 for period February to November 2009. There are some who have opted for compensation as well, in all the number of workers laid off is around 2,000.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment - Programme Code 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment (Rs19,593,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment - Programme Code 542: Labour and Employment Relations Management was called.

Mr Soodhun: I would like to ask a few questions. At page 546, under item 26313092 - *Current Grant - Trade Union Trust Fund*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how much has been disbursed by now.

Mr Chaumière: Regarding the Trade Union Trust Fund, I think a sum of Rs3 m. has been released by Government and has been used for different purposes/activities.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 546, item 22160 *Overseas Training*. I see that from July to December a sum of Rs153,000 has been earmarked, but no provision made for subsequent years. Could the hon. Minister give us some clarifications?

Mr Chaumière: In fact, the provision has been transferred to another sub-programme.

Mr Ganoo: On page 545, *Programme Code 542 - Labour and Employment Relations Management*, it was announced in the Budget that there will be tripartite negotiations. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether negotiations have already been summoned and fixed for the next tripartite meeting, in the context of the hon. Minister of Finance announcing that the conditions will be reviewed and so on?

The Chairperson: It sounds like a policy issue to me.

Mr Chaumière: Consultations are still in progress; we have to consult all the parties before coming with this tripartite meeting.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment - Programme Code 542: Labour and Employment Relations Management (Rs130,839,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment were called and agreed to -

543: Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds (Rs18,368,000)

544: Employment Facilitation (Rs63,163,000)

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 553, under *Strategic Note 1 National Development Unit*. With regard to the item where mention is made of ‘2 bridges namely, Topaze Bridge, Pailles and Damur Bridge, Chemin Grenier completed at 15%’, will the hon. Minister circulate the list of the different projects?

Mr Bundhoo: That will be done, Sir.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management (Rs59,110,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation was called.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 559, *Policy & Planning and Environmental Law Divisions*. Under *Performance Indicators P2 to P6*, there is no indication for any target though these issues are very important. Can I know from the hon. Minister what are the difficulties to come up with proper regulations/guidelines on all these issues?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, with regard to P1 – *Standards for Air Quality*, the machine is already in Mauritius; we have already commissioned and soon it will be in operation. Regarding P2, *Regulations on Hazardous wastes*, it is in December 2011, whereas with regard to P3 *drinking water*, some of the works are already being done by different institutions in Mauritius and similarly for all the things.

With regard to P5 *Integrated Coastal Zone Management legislation*, it is still under preparation and we are waiting for finalisation of the documents.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation (Rs178,804,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit were called and agreed to -

403: Uplifting and Embellishment of the Physical Environment - (Rs228,787,000).

404: Community-Based Infrastructure, Amenities and Public Empowerment (Rs554,252,000).

405: Land Drainage (Rs273,975,000).

The following Programme Codes of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms were called and agreed to –

301: Civil Service Policy and Management (Rs16,944,000)

302: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service (Rs12,710,000).

303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building (Rs19,842,000).

304: Civil Service Administration and Human Resource Management (Rs172,158,000).

Ministry of Youth and Sports – Programme Code: 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports (Rs14,522,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Youth and Sports - Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 599, item 31113406 *Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure, (c) Others*, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Harry Latour Stadium in Mahebourg is included in that?

Mr Ritoo: Yes, the Harry Latour Stadium is included.

Ministry of Youth and Sports - Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports (Rs264,188,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Youth & Sports - Programme Code 683: Youth Services (Rs64,093,000) was called and agreed to.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! Order! May the public servants please leave silently and in order! Public officers, please! This is the National Assembly! Thank you.

THE APPROPRIATION (2010) BILL
(No. XXI of 2009)

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2009) was considered and agreed to.

PROGRAMME-BASED BUDGET
ESTIMATES 2010
&
INDICATIVE ESTIMATES
2011 & 2012

The Programme-Based Budget Estimates 2010 & Indicative Estimates 2011 & 2012 was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 15 December 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. Sithanen rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

*At 1.56 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday
15 December 2009 at 11.30 a.m.*