



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2020

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THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government, Disaster and Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
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Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
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Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
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Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Tourism
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
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	Protection
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Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 05 of 2020

Sitting of Friday 28 February 2020

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - MINISTER OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY OF NEPAL & DELEGATION

Mr Speaker: I am pleased to announce the presence of hon. Rameshwar Ray Yadav, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal and members of his delegation in our midst this afternoon.

On behalf of hon. Members and, in my own name, I extend a warm welcome to the hon. Minister and members of his delegation and I wish them a fruitful stay in Mauritius.

(Applause)

HON. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER - SUPREME COURT USHER - PRIVILEGE COMPLAINT

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to inform the House that, on 24 January 2020, pursuant to Standing Order 74 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly (1995), the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities –

- gave notice, in writing, of his wish to raise a privilege complaint arising out of the fact that, on Monday 02 December 2019, whilst he was within the precincts of the Assembly, at 11.25 hours, a registered Usher of the Supreme Court, Mr A.S. Samtally, handed him an election petition, which had been purportedly served on him;
- stating that, by so doing, Mr Samtally, registered Usher of the Supreme Court has, in his opinion, committed an offence in breach of Section 6(1)(t) of the National Assembly;
- (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, and requesting that I proceed accordingly.

Having considered –

- the circumstances reported to me by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, and
- copy of the return available at the Registry of the Supreme Court filed by Mr A.S. Samtally, registered Usher of the Supreme Court - provided by the Master & Registrar, upon request - in relation to the service of true and certified copy of a Notice in Denunciation together with Election Petition and

Judge's Order on Mr Collendavelloo in person, found at his office situate at Government House, Port Louis,

I now take the view that an offence may have been committed in breach of Section 6(1)(t) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of your Ruling, I move...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order...

The Deputy Prime Minister: ... that the matter whereby Mr A.S. Samtally, a registered Usher...

Mr Mohamed: I am raising a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir!

The Deputy Prime Minister: ...of the Supreme Court,...

Mr Mohamed: A point of order! The least the Deputy Prime Minister could do is sit down!

Mr Speaker: Which Section are you referring to?

Mr Mohamed: I am referring to the very simple and well-known Section that this matter is *sub judice* because there is a case before the Court. And when it is *sub judice*, it cannot be raised here. It is before the Court; it is a live issue! So he is seeking your protection! He is a coward!

Mr Speaker: The Deputy Prime Minister will take his responsibility. Carry on!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

...did, on...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: He should sit down!

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member sit down, please?

Mr Mohamed: Shameful!

Mr Speaker: Listen! There is a motion before the House. Those who want to listen, they can listen; those who don't want to listen, they can contest it in the Supreme Court.

Mr Mohamed: ...Supreme Court! Such a coward! He is a coward!

Mr Speaker: Please! Please, I am on my feet! You cannot! You have no right hon. Member to speak from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

You have no right to speak from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Should I stand, therefore?

Mr Speaker: No! No right to stand! Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your motion!

Mr Mohamed: Don't scream at me!

Mr Speaker: You may not shout also! You have no right!

(Interruptions)

You have no right! You are usurping the right of the House!

(Interruptions)

You are usurping the right of the House!

(Interruptions)

You are usurping the right of the House! So, hon. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your motion!

Mr Uteem: On a point of order, you have just read that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister referred you to an incident that had happened on 02 December. You have also said that you have checked the record. May I seek the guidance of the Speaker and find out at what time was this notice supposedly been served...

(Interruptions)

No, it is a point of order! Because...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Listen, this is not a point of order!

(Interruptions)

This is not a point of order! The point of order should come from the Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

The point of order should come from the Standing Orders! There is nothing in that! Nothing in that!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Hon. Member, not in a sitting position!

Mr Mohamed: But don't shout!

Mr Speaker: You can't shout in a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You are shouting!

Mr Speaker: You are shouting also!

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position.

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

No speaking from a sitting position! Respect the House!

(Interruptions)

You have to respect the House!

(Interruptions)

You have to respect the House!

(Interruptions)

Respect the Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

Respect the Standing Orders, all hon. Members! This is what you have in the Standing Orders! Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your motion!

Mr Mohamed: Shameful!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the light of your Ruling, I move that the matter whereby Mr A.S. Samtally, a registered Usher...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Order! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Order! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Order! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Order! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

It is against the Standing Orders! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, don't shout! It is against the Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

It is against Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

You sit down!

(Interruptions)

You sit down!

(Interruptions)

This is my voice. Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your motion!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you. Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of your Ruling, I move that the matter whereby Mr A.S. Samtally, a registered...

(Interruptions)

Shut up! ...a registered Usher from the Supreme Court...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please, sit down! Can you withdraw the word 'coward'?

Mr Mohamed: I am not withdrawing the word 'coward'; he is one!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: One time. Are you...

(Interruptions)

Please sit down, Leader of the Opposition! You withdraw the word 'coward', it is unparliamentary.

Mr Mohamed: I say again. What he is doing when there is a...

Mr Speaker: I need no explanation!

Mr Mohamed: I am talking!

Mr Speaker: I don't need any explanation! This is the Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

This is the Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Don't shout!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Mohamed: Coward!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You said the word 'coward'! Can you withdraw it?

(Interruptions)

You have to withdraw the word 'coward' first!

Mr Mohamed: I am saying something, Mr Speaker, Sir. Allow me, at least, to speak. Then, you can scream...

Mr Speaker: No, no, this is against Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

No, no, this is not a word to use in Parliament!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker...

Mr Speaker: This is not a word to use in Parliament!

Mr Mohamed: Please!

Mr Speaker: And we cannot negotiate!

Mr Mohamed: Allow me ten seconds.

(Interruptions)

Allow me ten seconds. What he has done...

Mr Speaker: You sit down, I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

You sit down, I am on my feet! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, this is the Standing Orders! The word 'coward' is unparliamentary, and so you have to withdraw the word unconditionally.

Mr Mohamed: What I say is...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No explanation!

An hon. Member: *Capon!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No explanation!

(Interruptions)

Standing Orders! No explanation!

(Interruptions)

No explanation! You withdraw the word 'coward'!

Mr Mohamed: I withdraw the word 'coward'...

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

Thank you very much hon. Mohamed! Thank you very much. Please resume your seat!

(Interruptions)

Resume your seat!

(Interruptions)

It is okay. Resume your seat! Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

You cannot stand!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: ...is coward! I will add 'ly' to it, and I am not withdrawing that!

Mr Speaker: So, you withdraw your word a second time.

(Interruptions)

You withdraw your word a second time! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you withdraw the word 'coward' a second time!

Mr Mohamed: I added the letters 'ly' to it. It is not the same word.

Mr Speaker: There is no explanation! You withdraw the word 'coward' or 'cowardly'! You withdraw it unconditionally!

Mr Mohamed: I withdrew the word 'coward'. But he is cowardly!

Mr Speaker: So, hon. Mohamed, I have no other alternative than to ask you to withdraw from the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

No! Leader of the Opposition, let the hon. Member withdraw from the House.

Mr Mohamed: He is a coward.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your Motion!

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order.

Mr Speaker: What section of the Standing Orders are you referring to?

Dr. Boolell: I am telling you there has been a word which is unparliamentary.

Mr Speaker: I am asking you what Section for your point of order! It should be related to a Section!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the temple of democracy and you have to be fair...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order!

Dr. Boolell: You have...

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, please sit down! Resume your seat! This is not a point of order! This is not a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Don't show fingers at me! This is not a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition, you disrespect the Chair one time!

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition, you are challenging the authority of the Chair, a second time!

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition, you are challenging, and you withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Withdraw! You withdraw from the Chamber!

(Interruptions)

Yes, you withdraw! You withdraw from the Chamber, Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

You withdraw from the Chamber, whatever!

(Interruptions)

Whatever, this is the Standing Orders. Hon. Member, this is Standing Orders! You withdraw from the Chamber! Let proceedings continue!

(Interruptions)

You withdraw from the Chamber!

Dr. Boolell: Come and get me. I want the Police to come and get me!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: So, this is one time! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, withdraw from the Chamber! Second time!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, withdraw from the Chamber! Third time!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am naming you! I am naming you, Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: You are biased! Unfit to be in the Chair! You are a shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, I am naming you!

Dr. Boolell: I will do with it, with the support of the Police.

Mr Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, get ready!

Dr. Boolell: Shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms!

At this stage, all Members of the Opposition left the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for 15 minutes.

At 3.20 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.53 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, continue with your motion.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I shall start from the beginning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of your ruling, I move that the matter whereby Mr A.S. Samtally, a registered Usher of the Supreme Court, did, on 02 December 2019, serve on my good self a Notice in Denunciation together with Election Petition and Judge's Order within the precincts of the Assembly, in breach of the provision of Section 6(1)(t) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, be referred to the learned Director of Public Prosecutions for appropriate action, pursuant to Standing Order 74(4) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly (1995).

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister rose and seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

MOTIONS - S.O. 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3), to take the time of the House for urgent business.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government, Disaster and Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo) rose and seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, having obtained your permission, I beg to move, under Standing Order 29(1), to present a motion without notice.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government, Disaster and Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo) rose and seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I beg to move that the hon. Leader of the Opposition be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's and the next sitting.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government, Disaster and Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo) rose and seconded.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

A. Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for the period 01 January 2016 to 30 June 2017.

B. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

(a) Digest of International Travel and Tourism Statistics 2018.

(b) Digest of Crime, Justice and Security Statistics 2018.

(c) The Value Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 38 of 2019)

C. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 37 of 2019)

D. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training

The Workers' Rights (Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 39 of 2019)

E. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

The Consolidated Annual Reports of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust for the Financial years January 2016 to June 2018.

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER**CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - ADVISORY OPINION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE & UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 73/295**

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a statement to make with regard to the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

The House is no doubt aware that on 10 and 11 February, two replies were respectively made in the United Kingdom House of Lords and House of Commons to questions relating to the UK's policy in respect of the Chagos Archipelago following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 25 February 2019 and the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295 of 22 May 2019.

In the two replies, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office represented by Lord Ahmad and hon. Christopher Pincher, made the following points –

- (a) The UK has no doubt about its sovereignty over the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” and will cede it to Mauritius when no longer required for defence purposes.
- (b) The UK is disappointed that the matter was referred to the International Court of Justice contrary to the principle that the Court should not address bilateral disputes without the consent of both parties.
- (c) The United Kingdom does not share the approach of the International Court of Justice since the Court has given insufficient regard to material facts and legal issues.
- (d) The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice is not legally binding and the United Nations General Assembly resolution cannot create legal obligations for UN Member States.

These, Mr Speaker, Sir, are not new statements. They have been repeated by the United Kingdom several times.

On 21 November 2019, I made an extensive statement to Parliament on the position of Mauritius in regard to all these issues. While I do not wish to repeat all that I had said in that statement, I consider it necessary to reiterate the correct situation lest the UK's repeated replies create any doubt about the true situation.

First, the International Court of Justice has addressed fully and comprehensively all the claims that the UK continues to make, namely that it has sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, that the principle of consent was not respected, and that material facts and legal issues were not sufficiently considered. It is only after carefully examining all those issues that the Court came to the conclusion that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always been an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and that the decolonisation of Mauritius was not lawfully completed in 1968. The Court went on to say that the UK's continued administration of the Chagos Archipelago is a wrongful act of a continuing character under international law and should be terminated as rapidly as possible.

With regard to the binding nature of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295, I pointed out in my statement of 21 November 2019 that while an Advisory Opinion is not legally binding, the International Court of Justice is the supreme authority to state the status of international law at a given point in time. In this case, the Court established that at the time of the excision of the Chagos Archipelago in 1965, the principle of self-determination had already become part of customary international law and that the United Kingdom had, therefore, violated that particular law.

The authority of the Court in clarifying the status of the law is as authoritatively stated in the words of a former President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Nagendra Singh, in the book entitled "The role and record of the International Court of Justice" which was published in 1990, and I quote –

"The findings of law contained in such opinion have of course the authority and prestige of the Court behind them to the same extent as a judgment, and the State which chooses to contravene what has been defined by the Court as a rule of law in an advisory opinion will find it difficult to claim that it is not in breach of international law." Unquote.

A similar position was taken by the current President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Abdulqawi Yusuf, who, in a statement made to the United Nations General Assembly last October, said, and I quote –

“Advisory proceedings provide legal clarity by enabling the Court to determine the current status of specific principles and rules of international law.” Unquote.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that the United Kingdom does not and cannot have sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, in respect of which it is an illegal occupier, is not an assertion that Mauritius is making. It is a statement of fact established by the International Court of Justice which follows from the UK’s violation of international law. This is why the United Nations General Assembly voted by an overwhelming majority to require the United Kingdom to terminate its administration of the Chagos Archipelago by 22 November 2019.

As for the obligations created by the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295, the International Court of Justice established that Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, on which Resolution 73/295 is grounded, had a declaratory character with regard to the right to self-determination as a customary norm. Since the right to self-determination has a normative character under customary international law and respect for that right is an obligation *erga omnes*, Resolution 73/295 sets out the binding obligations of all States, including the United Kingdom.

Once again, we urge the United Kingdom, as a country reputed to uphold the rule of law, respect for democracy and human rights, to comply with the conclusions of the International Court of Justice and the provisions of the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295. Until such time, Mauritius will continue to press for the full implementation of the Advisory Opinion and the UN General Assembly Resolution.

We are supported in this endeavour by many other countries, including Member States of the African Union which adopted, at its recent Summit, a Decision in support of the complete decolonisation of Mauritius.

As far as the question of defence needs is concerned, we have, on numerous occasions, assured the United Kingdom and the United States, that Mauritius is conscious of their defence and security interests and that these will not be affected by the exercise of our full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. We stand by these commitments.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS – MOTION OF THANKS

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the Fourth Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes (Mrs M. A. T. Diolle).

“That an Address be presented to the President of the Republic of Mauritius in the following terms –

“We, the Members of the Mauritius National Assembly, here assembled, beg leave to offer our thanks to the President of the Republic of Mauritius for the Presentation of the Government Programme 2020-2024 on the occasion of the Opening of the First Session of the Seventh National Assembly.””

Question again proposed.

(4.06 p.m.)

Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for the opportunity given to me to address Members of this august Assembly.

To begin with, I would wish to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for your election as President of this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to be very honest, as I listened to Members of the opposition today, I started getting worried, worried from their behaviour, worried that they came to the point of being aggressive and disrespectful to the Chair, but I leave them to their own responsibility. I must tell I was worried that there wouldn’t be any quotes left, or I might run out of those spongy taglines after listening to so many orators. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do believe, apart from commenting on the Government Programme, a maiden speech offers an understanding of any newcomers’ visions, priorities and mostly about themselves. About myself, there isn’t much to be said, I am one of those common man with a common story only with a different casting. Like many others here, I am also a lover of music, a fan of Sandra. Music, which in its various shades, overpowers the numerous differences, uniting people of the world.

I would have loved to quote one of our greatest singers whose remembrance we commemorated over the last days, Kaya. However, every single word of his lyrics is so pregnant with meaning and is interlinked that he remains unquotable. I would have to sing the whole song, but I would spare you all of this today.

The past years of my life have been devoted to setting up the scaffolding and it’s now the work really begins. Mr Speaker, Sir, last year, at this very moment, I was working in the

back office of a group of supermarkets with no idea of what lays ahead. Like many of the political opponents taunted during the campaign, I am an accidental candidate. To them, I would reply, okay, *je vous l'accorde pour quelques instants*, an accidental candidate, but the alternate narrative to that would be something a wise man would call destiny. While I acknowledge being an accidental candidate, the fact also remains I have been elected by the people of this country and, Mr Speaker, Sir, that does not happen by accident. It was a choice by the people and for the people, that's what democracy is all about. And today, here I am, standing in the temple of democracy, *Vox Populi Vox Dei, c'est la voix de Dieu*.

Still, we need to also recognise somewhere along the line it boiled down to my choice. I chose to become a Member of Parliament in response to my Motherland's call to unite its children, so as to face the growing challenges looming ahead. I chose to become a Member of Parliament because it was the next logical step for any patriot desiring to enlighten the future of our children. I chose to become a Member of Parliament because I was confident I would be led by a man who leads by example, a self-discipline man, a man with exemplary vision, a man true to his word, a man on purpose, a man I would wish to thank today for having believed in me. Politics being such a wide jungle, to trust is never easy. More so, if during your career, treason has been a constant companion, yet that man without any hesitation did offer his trust. I wish to thank the hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

As I repeated many times whilst campaigning, my choice to join the party was simple given the unprecedented accomplishments achieved within such short span of time. Just to name a few, increase of old age pension. *J'ai entendu l'honorable Ramful - qui malheureusement a choisi de ne pas être là aujourd'hui - l'autre jour dire que*, the Government was playing with the pensions to get votes. Je me pose la question et je pose la question : En dix ans, de 2004 à 2014, alors qu'ils étaient au pouvoir, qu'est-ce qu'ils ont accordé comme augmentation ? Si ma mémoire ne me fait pas défaut, c'était R 1,400 sur 10 ans, une moyenne de R 140, et en 2014...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order !

Mr Doolub: Et en 2014, alors que le gouvernement MSM a repris, c'est R 1,400 qu'ils ont accordé en 10 ans. En 2014, le gouvernement n'a accordé en quelques heures pour faire passer la pension de R 3,600 à R 5,000. Aujourd'hui, nos aînés touchent R 9,000 et d'ici la fin de ce mandat ce sera R 13,500. Et l'honorable Ramful ose dire, *we were playing*. Au

contraire, j'ai comme l'impression que *they were playing with the mouse by a simple exercise of copy and paste when presenting their programme.*

There has been much more, there has been the introduction of Minimum Wage, Workers' Rights Bill, launching of the Metro just to mention a few, Mr Speaker, Sir, all landmark decisions which have eased the daily pain of the common man, uplifted the dignity of workers in the country, established pride for women and offered hope to our young ones. What more could one ask for? My loyalty as for the oath taken by each of us will be towards our people and God. I will treat this mandate like a borrowed book, with correctness and consideration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to commenting on the Government Programme, I would like to read but a few statements made in this House early this week. I listened to hon. Ramful's motion – again, unfortunately, he is not here - I expected it to be special since he does not often talk about economy, but I should say, like many, I was let down, left utterly confused by his strings of rhetoric fitted with a few figures here and there, merely to sound impressive or knowledgeable. He can be excused, Mr Speaker, Sir. He did at the very outset of his speech, state he was not versed about economy. Maybe he just used the classic formula of those economic columnists who throw their weight and figures around and considered by some media to be demigods.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Ramful has himself listed a series of threats affecting the global as well as local economy and yet expects us to outsmart all the countries in the world. When developed countries are not immune to what happens around the world, how can we expect not to be affected by the constant dynamics of which we have no whatsoever control. When I hear the obsessive and abusive usage of the word 'GDP' in this House by Members of the opposition, I ended up coining a definition for 'GDP', 'Grossly Deluded Persons'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish to spare some time on the obsession about GDP and its growth. Since the 16th Century, there have been endless debates between scholars from different schools of thought on the definition of the economy and indicators which would enable policy makers evaluate the impact and economists framed their theories. But we should not ignore the fact that since the late 1960s, many economists began to question the over reliance of Governments and agencies on narrow, exclusively GDP-based measures of economic welfare. It was at this time that the adverse environmental effects of uncontrolled economic growth began to be considered, prompting the search for a wider measure of

welfare, not exclusively based on raw GDP figures. In 1972, Yale's economist, William Nordhaus and James Tobin, introduced their Measure of Economic Welfare, what we call MEW, as an alternative to crude GDP. Let me remind the House how Vocal Nobel Prize Winners, Amartya Sen and Stiglitz have been in the critics against the abusive use of GDP as a reliable indicator.

As recent as 25 November 2019, in an interview, Joseph Stiglitz stated –

“It is time to kill GDP.

The problem - according to Nobel Prize Winner - is that politicians see positive GDP figures and continue with the status quo. GDP gives no hint of environmental degradation or resource depletion, nor inequality and neither middle-class suffering.

If growth is not sustainable because we are destroying the environment and using up scarce natural resources our statistics should warn us”, he says. “It is clear that something is fundamentally wrong with the way we assess economic performance and social performance.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a matter of fact, the myriad of crisis the world is continuing to experience since the last decade has brought around the need to question every single economic theory known till now. Mr Speaker, Sir, as an island State, there is no room for lagging. We need to evolve fast and in the right direction. The faster we get away from the still rhetoric of the past, the better our chance to succeed as a nation.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, for those with thicker skulls, I would wish to remind them, one of the most brilliant minds of our times, the man who had predicted years earlier the financial meltdown, outstanding economist, Raghuram Rajan, during his visit to Mauritius in November 2014, stated to the Press –

“With the changes happening, you should stop longing for high growth. We should rather habituate ourselves with the sustained growth however meagre it is.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, economy is about people, economy is about sweat and blood, not just statistics or figures. I remember his saying on statistics –

“Statistics are like bikinis, they show all, except what is essential.”

Of course, no offence meant to statistics Mauritius or anybody else.

For the common man, economy is first and foremost about bread and butter issues. The accomplishments of hon. Pravind Jugnauth is often understated. Since he took over as Minister of Finance, he has seen the economy from a social standpoint and equality as a substitute for growth. This standpoint has allowed formulation and activation of policies such as minimum wage and consolidation of workers' rights. What would the economy be without workers?

With the new labour laws, minimum wage, negative income tax, we have re-established their dignity and their rights. Jobs are the best form of inclusion and this Government as well as the previous one in the driving seats since December 2014 have been focussing primarily on job creation. Since 2015, thousands of jobs have been created, that is economy. Hon. Ramful, unfortunately, is not here. And during this mandate, we will go even further.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world is looking up to Africa for its future. The mainland countries have evolved at unbelievable pace and we are today thriving in terms of democratic principles, economic progress and emancipation of their people. Our African brothers and sisters are, all over the world, occupying key and strategic positions in prestigious companies, something which was unthinkable 25 years back.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we still need evidence of such potential, here is one we are all currently witnessing. In April 2020, one of the world's most prestigious football clubs, Liverpool, will put an end to its 30 year-old wait for the prize league with the most blistering manner, never to be seen before. The beauty of this feat is enhanced by the significant contribution of 3 African players, namely Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah and Naby Keita. Africa is taking on the world and who knows in some years, one of our local lads may help Manchester United to climb to greatness again.

Following the presentation of the Government Programme, the hon. Prime Minister led a delegation to the UK Africa Summit which was followed by the African Union Summit where the opportunity was seized to host one-to-one meetings with key partners. Mr Speaker, Sir, for decades, pan-Africanism has mostly been a political failing. Despite constitution of various continental or regional economic communities, such as the African Economic Community, the SADC and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), amongst others, it is time to shift gears and call for a more robust economic pan-Africanism.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been many talks about the chaotic situation arising from Brexit. However, I personally believe this is democratic decision of a sovereign State and has to be respected. The challenge for an island State like Mauritius with strong historical and economical relations with the UK, would be to find the silver lining within the Brexit all while nurturing our relations with other European countries. Despite the arguments put forth by economists graduating from the school of pessimism, I do believe with a market size of 2.4 billion people, the new Commonwealth momentum can provide new avenues for our industries and trade. With absolute dexterity, we will have to play a more prominent role within the Commonwealth market.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as we are still debating over the Government Programme, work has already started. The hon. Prime Minister's address to members of the African Union has been welcomed by many. The number of foreign students from Africa is on the rise and more big names from the business elite are reaching our shores. This is economy. Hon. Ramful boasts about the accomplishments of the Labour party. Let me remind him, back in 2003-2005, when the MSM-MMM Government was moving forward with the Cyber City project, the Labour party was calling it "*Éléphant blanc*". Today, the very same Ébène Cyber City is the workplace for thousands of our young professionals. They talk about the Airport, but we did not hear anything about what happened inside the airport. It is an undisputed fact that the priority of hon. Ramful's leader was not the economy but rather - let it be, I won't cite names. It is a shame, Mr Speaker, Sir, questioning this Government's integrity, casting doubts on our seriousness about the economy when all what hon. Ramful's indisputed leader ever did was just, we all know, *tousse sali*. Let us not forget the famous Stimulus Package where hundreds of millions were given out to the Senior Adviser of hon. Ramful's leader, even more gifted to a Labour MP. Strange how absence of transparency did not worry hon. Richard Duval who also decided not to be here. Increasing the green energy output by providing our countrymen with photovoltaic panels also has to do with economy.

Taking on criminality and fighting relentlessly against violence, be it upon men or women, also has to do with economy. There is a yearly ruckus when the Audit Report is published and for a week, everyone, from the Opposition, the media, will harp on the need to cut on wastage. Yes, of course, we need to reduce wastage, but the biggest savings will not come from toilet papers or water bottles.

Every year, billions are spent on resources to fight crime and violence against women.

That is where we need to score as to invest these resources in productive fields.

During the years of hon. Ramful's leader tenure, have you ever heard a single line on violence against women? No. Anyway, how could he? Sadly, for some people hitting on women is playing djembe. They find joy and even greatness out of it. How disgusting that can be? Speaking of djembe, this Government is setting up the foundation for a cultural industry and never before so many incentives have been offered to artists and potential players of the industry. I am confident my colleague, hon. Avinash Teeluck, will do marvels during his tenure and that is purely economy.

Investing in health of our younger generation and focusing on the lifestyle is also about the economy. Our progress in this field is beyond comparison and the Prime Minister has led by example.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I address Members of the House out there, our country has been turning into a vast construction site with major infrastructure works in every corner, addressing needs of our people. These accomplishments have been possible thanks to the vision of the Government with a discipline and selfless man at its hand. The accomplishments are visible and tangible.

A travers le dynamisme de mon colistier l'honorable Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram, vous allez prendre connaissance sous peu de la volonté de notre gouvernement à améliorer davantage les infrastructures à travers le pays.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when Members on the other side talk about the level of debt, they purport and, at times even convincingly, behave as if we inherited a clean slate back in December 2014. That is what fascism is all about. I am sure some of them must be fans of Madonna's song 'Like A Virgin'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, unlike the Labour Party Government, we do not govern for the few. We have been elected by the people and shall work for the people.

When, in Opposition, hon. Ramful's leader keeps hammering *bef travay, souval manzer*, Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know which *souval* had stacked hundreds of millions in its coffers. As the expression in creole goes *fodrai pa pran dimun pu bourik*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this very House stands as witness to the demagogical repeated effort of the Labour Party by casting baseless aspersions with the intent to smear distort and confuse.

In this very House, the Minister of Finance, from 2005 to 2010, when defending his measures, kept harping about virtues of jobless growth which, in simple terms, can only mean increasing profits for businesses and no jobs for the people. The very same Minister who was the Santa Claus of the wealthy corporates and, Mr Speaker, Sir, those days - in those days - every day was Christmas day for the happy few.

The Opposition talks about farmers. Hon. Boolell seems to forget he was in power and in office for 9 consecutive years. It's only now when they are seated on the other side that farmers come to their mind.

I also heard hon. Ramful mentioning price increase in supermarkets. I have been in this industry for more than a decade, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I can assertively tell you that despite the hon. Member is painting a dark picture, the other coin - the other side of the coin - is that supermarkets are opening in very corner of this country. In his Constituency itself, a brand new shopping mall has been inaugurated 2 months ago. People are buying more and more; more value added products. Almost everybody buys and consumes Premium 1121 Basmati rice today. Bio-products are now categorised for sellers. Food courts are jumped back. So, let's be realistic and not try to see the glass always quarter empty when it is also three quarters full.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have led undisputable facts before this House but, as the saying goes, you can bring a thirsty donkey to a pond but if it doesn't want to drink, there is not much you can do about it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now wish to move on to areas, I deem, should be of concern to all of us. We have all had the opportunity to take cognisance of the Government Programme which unfold through action plans and budgetary measures to be announced shortly. As stated earlier, let's not fail to observe some of the actions already initiated since the past weeks.

One of the key objectives of this Government is to pursue the alleviation of poverty by targeting primarily the 10,000 households trapped in absolute poverty, all the while extending measures to other 22,600 households in difficult conditions. I am confident and pray within 2 years be able to shift our focus from eradication of absolute poverty to absolute eradication of poverty.

However, meeting such an objective will require the support of each and every component of the State, starting from everyone in this House to the people out there, transiting through the corridors of all administrative hearings and NGOs.

Though some of the desperate pockets of poverty are also found within my Constituency, I stand here as the voice of every single victim of poverty across our Republic. One the niche segments of the victims of poverty are street children and street adults. Many of those street children originate from split families, some are disowned children. Many of those street adults are people who have encountered unfortunate events and circumstances. Let me remind everyone, even we can fall prey to such circumstances. Between us and them, the line is very fine.

As a responsible Government, decisions are being taken and implemented to steer the country to new heights through state-of-the-art infrastructures or even measures to develop a high income economy.

Investing in education and bringing a better quality of life, we should all honestly recognise success would be incomplete should our small island State still have anyone's of its children to beg for a meal *et en passant qui a enlevé les pains offerts aux écoliers?*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been doing few researches in my academic journey and whenever it was a question of combating poverty, there would be two main measures preconized: investing in health, that is, providing a better quality of life and, second, education. And this Government is not incoherent as observed by a few Members of the Opposition out there. *Bien au contraire, en toutes les mesures préconisées, il y a de la cohérence, M. le président. C'est juste une question d'interprétation.*

In the same vein, as the drawing number of fund raising for medical purpose was on the rise, our Government has responsibly increased the grant for overseas treatment. I am confident this Government and hon. Minister of Health will endeavour to further improve current services offered by our public hospitals through the modernisation of our health infrastructures and construction of new state-of-the-art ENT, Cancer Hospital and Mediclinic among others.

Allow me to repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir, the burden of combating poverty cannot rest on the shoulders of the Prime Minister or any other Minister alone. The onus is on each one of us in this House, both individually and collectively.

I now shift towards to another form of poverty; a form of poverty which money cannot fight; a form of poverty which is rampant and viral; a form of poverty which is serious threat to our civilisation and mankind; a form of poverty which strikes regardless of wealth, religion or creed. That is what I would call intellectual poverty.

Over the past sessions, a lot has been said on education. I did find interest in many of these arguments, Mr Speaker, Sir. Yet, I believe the picture can be wider. Education, Mr Speaker, Sir, cannot be limited to the whiff of hon. Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun shoulders. For years now, it's become a tradition to hold the Minister of Education for any drop in results. Each time results are announced, it reminds me of a scene in an evergreen movie of 1942 Casablanca, roundup the usual suspects and we all know what is done to usual suspects but education does not occur only by attending school. Education is not only about getting grades, being a graduate or holding a professional degree, especially when I see behaviours of certain people, today in the House, I prove myself right in my beliefs. I have come across people who are highly literate and yet uneducated. Just as I have friends who have never seen the doorstep of a school, but who I would rate as highly educated.

Education cannot be simply outsourced to teachers, institutions or the Minister, it is the collective duty of every individual to be educated and educate others. Education starts from the womb and goes beyond the grave. Even if we are to talk about literacy, we could go on for days. We could even do a test. All of you here are equipped with connected devices. Do you know which is the advertisement that pops up most of the time when we visit YouTube? Grammarly, an application that corrects mistakes. Mistakes are so common that they have become a market, but the issue I am referring here is great generational challenge the world has to face. When I observe the actions and reactions of people, be it in the mainstream media or social media, there are reasons to be damned worried. We have a generation which believes rapes happen only in India, all Chinese are snake eaters and every guy with a beard is a potential extremist. The multiplication of misconceptions and falsification of knowledge is a global phenomenon and our Island State is at a greater risk given our only resource is our people who have been our only competitive advantage for half a century.

The vulnerability of our country is far too often understated. From a virus in far East through a misguided drone in the Arabian Sea to the mood swings of a cowboy in far West, we are under constant threat. Everything that happens elsewhere does impact on us. Even the greatest of reforms and engineer strategies would fail if our people do not regain their spark and our legendary smile. I would make an earnest appeal to our youngsters, parents and the

society at large, let us be more responsible in our positions. It is only through engagement of each one of us that we can succeed. Government will certainly do his part of the job and he is firmly committed to improve the quality of education. I won't go on the measures; my colleagues have been talking about it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to share a piece of wisdom I happen to grasp a couple of days ago. It is from the speech of Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India, when he was addressing hundreds of thousands of pilgrims gathered for the celebrations of the celestial night of Lord Shiva. I quote –

“Without culture and nature, there can be no future.”

which brings me to my last theme, nature. I am indeed blessed to stand elected from a Constituency which reckons some of the most amazing lagoons, land and sea, natural sites of our country. Our ability to preserve and also extend such places will define our future existence. While with the Government's commitment to multiply initiatives to secure our natural heritage and to engage in eco-responsible development, I would invite countrymen as well as various non-governmental organisations to extend their support in making our country a much better place.

Being a Small Island Developing States, Mauritius is more prone to climate change and natural disasters and it impacts on our economy thereby creating huge management challenges. Again, this Government has announced a series of measures as per the Government Programme. I would like, however, to emphasize on one measure, as mentioned in Paragraph 154 of this Government Programme -

“Government will endeavour to make of Mauritius a plastic free country within the nearest possible delays.”

Mais, malheureusement, j'ai entendu l'honorable Foo Kune : « Est-ce qu'on doit se contenter que de ces mesures? » Alors, je me pose la question : Que doit-on faire, croiser les bras et s'asseoir ?

Our concern for the environment dates back as far as year 2000 when Sir Anerood Jugnauth, a man of vision, introduced a full-fledged Ministry for the environment. *Et après tout - malheureusement l'honorable Foo Kune n'est pas la - toute chose doit commencer quelque part.* Even Rome was not built in a day.

Mr Speaker, Sir, reforestation through planting of native plants along river banks and mountain sides would be welcomed. It is sad that our younger generations have never heard, seen nor tasted the wonderful fruits we were lucky to have in our childhood. Transmitting to them what was given to us by our parents is simply what sustainability is all about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I realised that huge challenges are awaiting us the more so when connecting to the level we intend to propel our country. One of the requisites will be certainly productivity, both at individual and collective levels. I believe that yet again the presented Programme carries another set of coherent approaches when encouraging the practice of sports as detailed in paragraphs 45 to 51.

Pour réaliser nos ambitions, il nous faudra passer de l'efficacité à l'efficience en termes de rendement. And to achieve same, we will need healthy minds in healthy bodies, *mens sana in corpore sano*, a widely Latin maxim to express the theory that physical exercise is an important or essential part of mental and psychological wellbeing. To this end, I am confident that my friend, hon. Stephan Toussaint, will lead by example and achieve ambitions set in our Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I am nearing to the end of my speech, allow me to share my beliefs to this House. One can have the best Programme, the best strategies but also important, we need to have the right attitude and a culture of hard work. And this is what we are endowed from this side of the House.

As an end note to my maiden speech, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish to thank once again the Leader of my Party for the opportunity offered to me. Thank you, hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram and hon. Stephan Toussaint for your unflinching support and guidance. I thank my constituents for their love and trust. They have proved some accidents do have happy endings. By the way, I would also like to thank them on behalf of hon. Ramful, as he could not find a minute to thank those who voted for him in the same Constituency during his speech. I just hope people will take good note of. A special thanks to the Chief Whip who allocated me this seat. It is said: 'behind every successful man lies a woman'. So, I just hope, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in between these two special women, will arise a responsible Parliamentarian.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity given to me to reiterate the oath to serve our country selflessly. May wisdom continue to light up this House.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, that was your maiden speech and I did not want to interrupt you. However, you made a remark comparing statistics with bikinis and that may appear gender bias, please remove the remark.

Mr Doolub: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. At this stage, I will suspend the sitting for some 30 minutes.

At 4.44 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister Hurreeram!

(5.35 p.m.)

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr S. Hurreeram): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the floor this afternoon.

First of all, let me congratulate you for your election as Speaker, and after what we saw earlier, I think I should also be wishing you courage to deal with such a shameful Opposition. What they don't realise is that, out there, our young friends, the youngsters of this country are watching. *L'exemple vient d'en haut*, goes the saying. And then, the same Opposition will be surprised that people are misbehaving outside, that there are cases of bullying in school buses. This is exactly the type of behaviour that brings that type of attitude in our youngsters in our colleges. This is exactly the type of attitude that is bringing not only this House to disrepute but our country. I say this, Mr Speaker, Sir, because today we have had in this gallery guests from Nepal. What must they be thinking of us as a country? I think what we saw today, that behaviour is because they don't have any argument. When you don't have argument, then you start getting violent. When your violence doesn't work, then you start insulting. This is exactly what we have seen today.

And allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to congratulate you for the way you have been doing all that is needed to maintain the dignity and decorum of this House. May they know that their cowardice allegations from a sitting position, under Parliamentary immunity, will not disturb us, will not prevent us from taking this country to higher levels.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 07 November, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei, les urnes ont parlé, et l'île Maurice, comme un seul homme, a élu un gouvernement fort, 'l'Alliance Morisien'*, under the able leadership of our Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

This mandate, Mr Speaker, Sir, is indeed a historic one. Why historic one? Because it represents *un renouveau* that only our Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth has had the political courage to bring in. For many years, many political leaders have been talking about *politique de rupture*, bringing a *sang nouveau*, but no one has ever dared to do what hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth did in the last elections, the *renouveau* of our political landscape, Mr Speaker, Sir, and dare I say, a dynamic renewal of this Parliament. There is an exciting mix of young dynamic professionals raring to make a difference and seasoned politicians to provide guidance and experience. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what our opponents cannot deal with and this is their behaviour today. And this is where it hurts, and it is not mere coincidence that a certain section of the Press that are their master's voice, that section of the Press has been going out, trying to belittle our younger friends who have been taking the floor for the first time. You know what has been disturbing them? It is because they have been seeing that dynamic energy, and they are not afraid to face the Opposition, they are not afraid to say what need to be said.

Mr Speaker, Sir, but what the same Press will not tell you is that among our Members here, none of us has been opening the door of the VIP lounge to allow drug dealers to get in with 50,000 Subutex. None of us has ever done that. None of us has been prosecuted and sentenced by a Court of Justice for corruption. None of us has in front of our name "*l'Ampoule*", replacing our family name. No one! None of us lives on the alms of *beau-père*; none of us has benefited from the rental of a house, opportunity to rent a house when *beau-père* was in office. So, it is not to us that they should be pointing fingers.

The outcome of the last election, Mr Speaker, is a clear message to the watching world that our democracy works and it enforces the reputation of Mauritius as being a stable country with a strong leadership. The leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth cannot be disputed; same cannot be said for the other historic party leaders; even their knife at the cake-cutting was falling apart. Was that a message from the universe to them? And they dared, like they did today, to question the sanctity of this House! They are so desperate to cling on their royal status in their respective parties that they went to the extent of questioning the integrity of the Electoral Commissioner, a son of this country who is respected not only across Africa, but across the world, who is the pride of this country, and they dared *zette la boue* on our institutions. That's what I call a shame.

The truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that they cannot digest that their leader, Navin '*katori*' has lost two consecutive General Elections. They cannot accept that the MMM now has been

defeated in seven consecutive elections during the last 15 years. The Opposition cannot conceive how, for once, the PMSD, *zoli mamzel*, chose the losing side, how once a Deputy Prime Minister is now a faraway backbencher. I am very much tempted to tell them: “*Navin Ramgoolam vous a vendu un rêve et vous avez accroché.*” *Mais le réveil a été brutal. Et pourtant*, the writings were on the walls during the by-elections in Constituency No. 18. Our leader’s vision for Mauritius is clear and his determination is strong.

It is with this determination that he has put together a team to execute his vision. It is today with immense pleasure that I stand in this House as Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development. I seize this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to say thank you to hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister, for his trust, and I wish to assure him and I assure my colleagues that I will leave no stone unturned to achieve our ambitious objectives.

My philosophy for this mandate and for my Ministry is centred on four core guiding principles: sustainable progress, accessibility, inclusiveness and innovation. It is with this *état d’esprit* that I will approach the projects falling under the aegis of my responsibility.

We aim to bring the comfort and security that the citizens of this country expect and it is our duty to ensure we plan for the future and have enough foresightedness to make the necessary decisions.

Our country just witnessed an election in which three major political blocs faced each other. The vile outpour from some sections has indeed left scars in the social tissue of our country, and what we witnessed earlier during the day today is part of that frustration that they still haven’t digested. Some of them were already dreaming to be Minister; some of them apparently already ordered their suit; some of them were already saying in our constituency that they will be Minister and even chose their Ministry; they were even promising advisers around; some were already hiring their VIPSU; some, while we were campaigning, were sitting in car galleries to choose their duty-free cars. So, it must be very frustrating and I can understand. It must be absolutely very frustrating for them to be sitting in Opposition again.

But the choice was clear. Once again, the writings were on the wall. The choice was between a Prime Minister – I want to repeat what my friends have already said; negative income tax, pensions increasing, minimum wage, there is a long list of them. You know. People outside, watching us today, know what this Government has done for them. And, on the other side, what was it?

(Interruptions)

My friend is mentioning *coffre-fort*. Well, I won't get into that. I don't want to. But people outside know and the choice was clear. From choosing a Prime Minister who has at heart the interest of this country and a group of people who were like *panier crabes*, just trying to win power. Some were dreaming to be king maker and ended up being a juice maker.

So, the choice was clear and the people out there made the right choice. So, I understand their frustration, but us, as a Government, us, as a country, it is time for us to deal with the scars that they left in our social tissue. It is indeed time to heal; it is not time to engage in petty fights with frustrated politicians who are just trying to save face after their defeat.

So, through you, Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to say to the people watching us out there that we do expect that type of cheapness weeks in weeks out, but we have a determined team, a strong team, like I said earlier, dynamics of our young friends, experience of others. So, I think, never before we have had such a strong Government, never ever before we have had such a competent Cabinet that is ready to take the challenges facing the country, be it coronavirus, be it whatever virus it is, be it whatever political agenda some may have got against our country. We are ready to deal with it. As one people, as one nation, we are going to face it all.

(Interruptions)

They do not realise the harm that they cause to the image of our country, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the international stage. I had that in my speech, but we had to see it live today in front of international guests who have had to leave the Parliament. Such a shame!

(Interruptions)

Such a shame! On one side is the reputation of our country on the international stage, but then, on the other side, when they question the integrity and the sanctity of our institution, I think this is unforgiveable for any patriot.

I did not mention, Mr Speaker, Sir, that they have shred the very last bit of dignity that they have left. In their desperate attempts, they only serve to show their greed for power and how they value their own personal gains over that of the country. If we engage in these fights, Mr Speaker, Sir, we can only act as an unnecessary distraction from the mission of taking the country forward. Maybe this is their agenda: to block the country. Sorry, Mr

Speaker, Sir, when mentioning about ‘maybe this is their agenda’, maybe this is why they were praying for some mishap to happen and then to run on the accident site; *souhaite malere dimounn*. This is what they do. It is indeed time to heal. It is time that we unite the country to face the challenges that will come our way.

The Government Programme for this mandate is inclusiveness at the heart of the nation. This is really commendable and very, very important. It shows the wisdom and leadership of our Prime Minister in his firm belief that no one should be left behind. We might have had difference in opinion during the elections. It is absolutely normal, but now elections are behind us. We need to unite, to work for the country *la main dans la main*. As our slogan says, *la main dans la main, tout sera possible*. When we grow, we will grow together, when we succeed, we will succeed together.

This Government values the well-being of its citizens above all things. Often people question the economics of the Light Rail Project, the Metro Express. What they fail to see is that not everything is about cost and profit. These people fail to see the bigger picture, unfortunately. The investment in sustainable human welfare considers the amount of time saved by each individual on their travel time; time which can be spent with family and in leisure. This time is invaluable. We have to show the world the intent of Mauritius to move at ‘express’ speed into modernity and be part of a global change and evolution, and there is more to come.

The aspirations and expectations of the youth of our country for *l’Alliance Morisien* is high. The Government Programme for this mandate has the intent to rise to those expectations. The resounding success at the last Indian Ocean Games was not an overnight feat but was the fruit of hard work and the right framework to support and assist our youths in achieving their potential. This Government will continue to provide these opportunities for our youths to shine locally and internationally under the abled leadership of my hon. brother, Stephan Toussaint; not only in sports, but also in research, education, entrepreneurship and arts.

The objective is to provide a higher standard of living and opportunities for the upcoming generation. This objective will go hand in hand in the protection of our environment and with achieving sustainable goals.

During my tenure in the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, my team and I will strive to see the completion of valuable projects initiated by

my esteemed predecessor. They are all well underway and will bring the value in the lives of the citizens as intended.

However, I wish to push further the agenda of this Government to work towards ecologically sustainable infrastructure development. We intend to transition in “environmentally conscious” infrastructures both in the public and private sectors. Buildings should aim to be as energy efficient as possible. Imagine social houses with energy saving mechanisms built in the design; it will help the beneficiaries of those houses to actually save on their energy consumption. Imagine our public buildings powered by self-sufficient renewable sources. Imagine we are able to upgrade our schools and colleges with innovative design add-ons which allow classes to be cooler in the hot summer days without the need for ACs. Our students will have a more comfortable and conducive learning environment.

If we make these a reality, we could be the regional leaders in green technology adoption. Mauritius will once again lead by example. We could be again the key of the Indian Ocean.

The construction sector is one of the pillars of the Mauritian economy. Its growth rate which was negative when this Government came to power has been rising constantly over the last years to reach a peak of 9.5 % in 2018. There have been several major public projects, but the sector has also been growing due to major private sector investments, particularly in the Property Development Schemes and the Smart City Projects.

The sector is expected to grow significantly during the coming years with the implementation of various prestigious projects, both in the public and private sectors. These include the construction of the Modern Urban Transportation Centres along the path of the Metro Express Project. Similar Transportation Centres will be implemented in the rural areas, such as Flacq, Goodlands, St Pierre, Mahebourg, among others.

The Construction Industry Development Board, as a key regulatory body for the construction sector, will be further empowered and equipped to deliver its mandate more efficiently. The regulatory framework will be made more conducive to the sustainable development of the industry, whilst being consistent with Government’s policy of ease of doing business.

A new National Schedule of Rates with features, which will enable continual updating of construction rates, will be prepared and be available soon. Such rates will enable the preparation of Budget estimates or bid prices for construction projects.

A new Electronic Registration System will be put in place to enable online registration of Contractors and Consultants, as well as Suppliers and other Service Providers. The issue of digital Certificates of Registration and payment of fees online will also be considered. And finally, a Quality Management System will be implemented in order to continually review and improve its internal processes, thus leading to ISO 9000 Certification.

The Building Control Advisory Council is presently working on other regulations pertaining to energy efficiency in buildings, sustainability and functional requirements in buildings.

Technical assistance from South Africa has also been obtained to develop appropriate Mauritian Standards and Building Codes to further strengthen control on the construction of safe and convenient buildings and other structures.

Protracted delays and disruptions in completing projects, resulting in major disputes regarding extensions and costs variation which adversely affect project delivery, have been a major pain point.

I intend to set up a Project Management Division with modern project planning methods to review and monitor the major infrastructure progress. This Division together with the technical sections of my Ministry comprising of Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers and Civil Engineers will provide consultancy services to other Ministries/Departments for the implementation of their infrastructural projects.

A new legal framework governing building and engineering contracts will also be proposed in due time to this Assembly.

At present, the Ministry is involved in some 285 projects, of which 55 are at construction or maintenance stage whereas 220 projects are at design and tender stage.

Being an island, Mr Speaker, Sir, land comes at a premium and the utilisation of this scarce resource for building infrastructure should be done in an efficient manner. The use of innovative technology and data- driven analysis to prioritise projects cannot come sooner.

Road maintenance and management are very challenging. However, with the use of the right tools and technology, we can bring in the much-needed efficiency and much better return on investment. Building new roads is not always a possible solution due to land scarcity and funding challenges. We have to strive to find innovative ways to achieve the best possible results.

However, ensuring easier road access across the island is the key to our economic development. Our tourism, our agro-industry, our manufacturing and services industries are very much dependent on the efficiency of our road infrastructure. We also believe that the connectivity between our airport and the port will be a determining factor in the rejuvenation of our export sector. Our roads will be the backbone of this transformation.

The Road Development Authority will be a key agent to ensure and enable this transformation to happen. It is common knowledge that a significant number of main roads in Mauritius were originally constructed by merely tarring sugar cane tracks to cater for growing needs. Consequently, these roads do not meet engineering standards, let alone the kind of efficiency that we dearly need.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is high time to modernise our road networks further by developing a new strategic road network for Mauritius with a 2040 horizon. The RDA is working closely with the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning to safeguard corridors. The objective of this Master Plan would be to –

- provide the road users fast, easy access through the construction of a network of trunk roads and feeder roads connecting with the network;
- reduce traffic congestion and travel time by increasing carriage way capacity;
- improving management through the provision of Intelligent Traffic Management System and the use of innovative technology;
- improve safety through geometric realignment and widening of roads where dangerous bends and slopes are present;
- decrease ecological impacts and promote sustainable construction and maintenance by using environmental-friendly and durable construction materials and technologies;
- new methodologies will be adopted to improve resilience in the wake of the challenging global climate change.

As mentioned earlier, this Government Programme is about providing accessibility. There are plans to build new roads such as the new M4 motorway to connect the airport to the north along the eastern coastline. These will relieve the pressure on existing route and reduce travel time of our citizens.

Studies are already underway to consider the number of roundabouts on our motorway with option of building flyovers and bypasses, with the aim to improve traffic

flows. Some current projects and forthcoming projects are Pont Fer Roundabout at a cost of Rs2 billion; Ebène flyover; Quay D flyover; Wooton flyover; Flic-en-Flac bypass; La Vigie-La Brasserie-Beaux Songes link road ; Cap Malheureux bypass ; La Croisette link road, Verdun/Bois Chéri link road. All these will help Mauritius to have a better transport system and a better transport integration. The transformation of the airport into a regional, logistic and aviation hub will allow the increase of passenger traffic from four to eight million annually.

The Airport City and Cargo Village development in my constituency will be a boon to the region and will create employment. The National Development Unit has supervised numerous road and drain projects across the island. For the period 2018 to 2019, 586 such projects have been delivered for a total amount of Rs1.4 billion. 158 other projects are still ongoing for a total amount of Rs1.8 billion. For the coming financial year, the NDU will work on approximately 470 projects across all constituencies, including Rodrigues, for a total amount of Rs6 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with so much investment in our road networks and the undeniable role it plays in the country's growth, our road network needs to be treated as an asset rather than just utility. This is why we have embarked on an Asset Management Strategy. The main objectives of the Asset Management Strategy for the Road Development Authority would be the preservation of asset value and integrity through sustainable cost-effective maintenance practices; the allocation of resources based on interventions with the highest economic benefits; the management of the road network according to the best asset management principles.

Mauritius is facing the consequences of climate change and intensified weather conditions. Much effort is being put in the upgrading of our drains and building flood mitigation mechanism. These efforts are coordinated by the Land Drainage Authority, which falls under the aegis of my Ministry. It has, with the assistance of *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), started to elaborate a Land Drainage Master Plan. This Master Plan will be the corner stone of our strategy to alleviate the effect of climatic change in our country. We expect a draft to be ready by the end of this year. It will include an inventory of all existing drains in the country. We have currently 1,360 km of drains across the island, a number which we intend to increase over this mandate. It will also allow us to identify new vulnerable areas and act based on the areas' topography. It will enable us to take informed decision on the types of drain structures to be used and the additional safety measures for

buildings constructed in flood-prone areas. A topographic mapping of our territory is in preparation and will be included in the Master Plan.

With the help of preliminary information obtained during the mapping process, we have been able to analyse the state in flood-prone areas. The LDA has established a list of more than 200 sites that have been identified as potential risk zones, 22 regions out of which have been declared as flood-prone areas and necessary drain works have already been initiated.

Drains at Cottage, l'Amitié and Fond du Sac will be completed this year. Soon, major drain works will start at Piton, Terre Rouge, Riche Terre, Poste de Flacq, Nouvelle France, New Grove, Albion, Flic-en-Flac, Mare Tabac, Plaine Magnien, Trois Boutiques.

The Master Plan will also cater for urban planning policy recommendation and set up a building framework. We are geographically an island, but we live in an interconnected global village. Any global crisis, Mr Speaker, Sir, will test our resilience and we need to be ready for that. This programme lays the foundation for our country's readiness to step in industry 4.0 investment, promoting the development and adoption of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. My Ministry will fully contribute to this national effort to build and develop technology parks as committed in the Government Programme.

Before I conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to devote this part of my speech to my fellow constituents of Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien. I will for ever be grateful for the way they have welcomed me for more than a decade ago. Since then, I have been elected twice and have served them in various capacities. I have a special thought for the inhabitants of Mare Tabac, Mare d'Albert, Plaine Magnien, Trois Boutiques, Malakoff, Plein Bois, Carreau Acacia, Carreau Esnouf, Camp Carol, le Bouchon, Desplaces, Mon Désert, Mahebourg, Beau Vallon, Résidence La Chaux, Blue Bay, Petit Bel Air, Grand Bel Air, Ville Noire. And, of course, my two hon. brothers in arms with whom we have been fighting during the elections together, and all three of us are now sitting in this Parliament despite all we have had to face during that election.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are no more at crossroads. This country has now a direction and a strong leadership in Pravind Kumar Jugnauth who has the ability, courage and vision to lead us not only in this new decade but beyond, and we have a strong and dynamic team, eager to make the difference. Our country is ready for the future.

I humbly urge Members of the House to put aside election grudges and petty party politics and work towards building a better Mauritius, a safer Mauritius, a modern Mauritius, a Mauritius for one, a Mauritius for all.

I am done, Mr Speaker, Sir. Thank you for your attention.

Mr Speaker: I will remind hon. Members, when addressing a Member, to say 'honourable Member'. Now I invite hon. Minister Toussaint.

(18.15 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint): Merci, M. le président. Permettez-moi d'abord de vous féliciter pour votre nomination comme président de cette Chambre.

Est-ce un hasard, est-ce le destin, ou tout simplement une synergie extraordinaire que les trois députés de la circonscription numéro 12 font leur discours l'un après l'autre ? Permettez-moi de féliciter mon honorable ami, l'honorable Doolub pour son discours, le tout premier pour ce mandat. Et, bien sûr aussi, permettez-moi de féliciter mon autre honorable ami, l'honorable Bobby Hurreeram pour son discours.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, please resume your seat. I just told you not to address like friends or brothers. Hon. Members! Okay?

Mr Toussaint: Merci, M. le président. Donc, il va s'en dire que je démarre mon discours par la circonscription numéro 12, plus particulièrement par les jeunes, quelques jeunes qui, récemment, ont soit marqué l'actualité ou tout simplement ont fait des choses extraordinaires. Il va aussi de soi que nous avons des jeunes exemplaires dans notre République que, malheureusement, faute de temps, je ne pourrai les citer tous.

D'abord, ce qui me vient à l'esprit, c'est notre jeune lauréate, habitante de Plaine Magnien, qui a fait honneur à sa famille et qui a fait honneur au pays ; un enfant qui vient d'une famille pauvre, modeste et qui, pour ses examens de la Forme V, a eu, ce qu'on appelle ici, 6 unités. Et, donc, récemment, elle a été lauréate, malgré le fait que durant l'un de ses examens l'année dernière, elle avait appris la mauvaise nouvelle que sa mère était décédée. Ceci pour dire que le jeune de la République de Maurice a beaucoup de potentiel, a beaucoup de capacité, a beaucoup de résilience. Et nous sommes fiers de notre jeunesse, M. le président.

Un autre exemple, c'est une demoiselle de la circonscription qui, malheureusement, au début de son parcours au secondaire, a été admise au *Prevoc*, et qui, d'année en année, avec les efforts, elle commence l'année avec une très bonne nouvelle. Donc, elle avait participé aux examens de la Forme V l'année dernière et, fièrement, on peut dire qu'elle est sortie avec ses 5 *credits*. Voyez le parcours, M. le président, et aujourd'hui, nous entendons toutes sortes de critiques injustifiées par rapport au critère de 5 *credits*. Et moi, je dis à la jeunesse mauricienne : 'Vous le pouvez.' C'est sûr, vous avez le potentiel de travailler, vous êtes intelligents et vous le pouvez. Bien sûr, je fais référence à cette jeune demoiselle qui a pu sortir du *Prevoc* pour arriver à un résultat de 5 *credits*.

Un autre groupe de jeunes de la circonscription qui, après le cyclone *Calvinia*, d'eux-mêmes, un petit groupe d'amis, sous le leadership d'un jeune qui s'appelle Samuel, ont décidé d'aller nettoyer la plage de Blue Bay. Je l'ai appris bien après, et de même, sans tambour ni trompette, sans photo sur Facebook, sans publicité, sans journal, sans la presse, d'eux-mêmes, ils sont partis nettoyer la plage de Blue Bay, parce qu'ils aiment leur pays, ils aiment leur ville, ils aiment leur village, ils aiment l'endroit où ils habitent, et ce sont des jeunes responsables.

J'ai foi en notre jeunesse, M. le président. Nous sommes sûrs, ici, que notre jeunesse a tout ce qu'il faut pour avancer et pour faire le pays avancer. Et ceci me fait penser, malheureusement, au discours de l'honorable Madame Navarre-Marie, qui a parlé elle aussi de la jeunesse ; de la jeunesse de cette Chambre. Il y a, bien sûr, de nouveaux députés, de nouveaux jeunes. Et lors de son discours, je cite rapidement –

« (...) le Parlement allait accueillir une certaine fraîcheur, des idées nouvelles, mais je me suis très vite ravisée. »

Je puis dire qu'en écoutant le discours de l'honorable Madame Navarre-Maire, je me suis ravisé moi aussi. Parce que, M. le président, une politicienne d'expérience, avec une longue carrière, qu'est-ce qu'il y avait dans ce discours ? Rien que des généralités ! Rien que des critiques ! Et si je parcours le discours en long et en large, il n'y avait aucune proposition dedans. Il n'y avait absolument aucune proposition dans ce discours. Elle parle aussi, et je cite –

« (...) des jeunes parlementaires avec un état d'esprit dépassé - d'après elle. Ce sont les mêmes produits dans un emballage différent. »

Moi je dirai à l'honorable membre que son parti n'est même pas dans un emballage différent. C'est un produit expiré, M. le président. Et si je me réfère à son discours, okay, allons dire que nous allons faire un effort pour améliorer notre produit. Mais tandis qu'un produit expiré – le ministre du Commerce est là – à la poubelle !

M. le président, puisque j'ai commencé avec la jeunesse, je vais poursuivre mon discours. Le ministère devient le ministère de l'autonomisation de la jeunesse, *Youth Empowerment*. Au niveau du ministère, nous avons dans le précédent mandat initié de nouvelles actions qui visent justement à rendre les jeunes autonomes. Et contrairement à l'opposition, je ne vais pas faire de la généralité ; je vais donner des faits. Je vais citer des chiffres, et ce sont des chiffres que nous pouvons vérifier pour montrer ce qui a été fait et comment, pendant ces cinq ans à venir, nous allons pouvoir avancer dans tout ce que nous avons besoin de faire.

Duke of Edinburgh International Award, M. le président. Rien que pour l'année 2019, nous avons au total de nouvelles recrues ; 4,615 nouvelles recrues pour le *Duke of Edinburgh*. Ce ne sont pas des chiffres inventés, parce que nous savons, bien sûr, que le *Duke of Edinburgh* est un programme international et que tout est en ligne et tout peut être vérifié. Pendant l'année 2019, 77 jeunes de la République de Maurice ont pu terminer le niveau or. 445 de la République de Maurice ont pu terminer le niveau argent. 706 jeunes de la République de Maurice ont pu terminer le niveau bronze. Au total, pour l'année 2019, ceux qui ont terminé ces différents niveaux, cela nous fait un total de 1,228 personnes. Et je dis bien de la République de Maurice, parce que le *Duke of Edinburgh* est, bien sûr, disponible, est aussi pratiqué à l'Ile Rodrigues.

Un autre programme qui vise à l'autonomisation de la jeunesse, M. le président, c'est le *National Youth Civic Service* que nous avons introduit en 2019. Et c'est un programme avec différents modules qui vise à donner les jeunes des outils nécessaires afin qu'ils puissent affronter la vie active, afin qu'ils puissent être employables. Rapidement, quelque chiffres aussi pour démontrer que ce que nous faisons ce n'est pas du bla-bla. La première édition a eu lieu de février à juin 2019 et le nombre des participants était 294. La deuxième édition a eu lieu d'octobre à décembre 2019, le nombre des participants était 194. La troisième édition est prévue à partir de mars 2020 et, encore une fois, M. le président, Rodrigues n'est pas oublié. Il y a d'ailleurs un de mes officiers qui est actuellement à l'Ile Rodrigues pour commencer le programme de *National Youth Civic Service* dans l'Ile Rodrigues.

Parmi aussi un des modules de ce programme, il y a aussi *Physical Activity*. Comme vous le savez, M. le président, notre gouvernement et, particulièrement, notre Premier ministre met beaucoup d'emphasis sur l'activité physique. Et là, pour cette année, pour le module *Physical Activity*, nous allons commencer des formations de vélo avec nos jeunes. Des formations de vélo, bien sûr, par rapport à l'activité physique, mais aussi par rapport à la sécurité routière. Donc, ceci pour faire un lien avec ce qui a été annoncé dans le programme du gouvernement, c'est-à-dire, je cite M. le président –

“A National Cycling Policy Framework will be developed to encourage cycling for leisure and recreation (...)”

Un autre programme, M. le président, qui vise à rendre les jeunes autonomes, c'est l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse. Le programme de l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse reçoit le soutien et l'appui de la CONFEJES depuis de nombreuses années, et nous formons des jeunes sur une période de trois mois et, en 2018, nous avons 63 participants. A la fin de leur formation, ils ont la possibilité d'envoyer des projets à la CONFEJES. En 2019, huit sur dix projets soumis à la CONFEJES, ont été primés. Et la CONFEJES a alloué une somme de R 1,118,641 à ces jeunes dont les projets ont été primés.

Notre programme, M. le président, qui vise toujours à rendre le jeune autonome et l'emmenner à participer activement dans la vie du pays, c'est *Volunteer Mauritius*. *Volunteer Mauritius* lancé en 2015 et nous nous avons à ce jour 2,618 jeunes qui sont enregistrés sous *Volunteer Mauritius*, et ces jeunes dynamiques, disponibles, remplis d'énergie sont partout, dans les campagnes de nettoyage, ils sont là après les cyclones pour aller aider à nettoyer, ils sont là dans le cadre du pèlerinage de Maha Shivratri, ils donnent de l'assistance aux pèlerins, ils font du bénévolat dans les hospices. Ils ont aussi fait un projet l'année dernière qui s'appelle 'Un Livre Un Cadeau', c'est-à-dire échange de livres scolaires à ceux qui n'ont pas les moyens de se payer leurs livres.

M. le président, au niveau du ministère, nous avons lancé en 2018, un programme, une activité qui s'appelle '*Zenes Montre To Talan*', et dont la deuxième édition aura lieu à partir du 07 mars. En 2018, nous avons eu 600 jeunes qui ont participé aux différents castings faits à travers le pays et la nouvelle édition va débiter de mars à juin. Donc, c'est une activité qui permette aux jeunes, comme je l'ai dit, de venir montrer les dons et les talents dont ils ont, et de leur donner une plateforme afin qu'ils puissent s'exprimer.

Nous avons aussi lancé, M. le président, en 2018, la première édition du *Street Dancing*. Le *Street Dance* qui est devenu une discipline olympique et, en 2018, nous avons commencé, et pour la première édition, nous avons eu 300 participants. En 2019, l'année dernière en décembre, nous avons eu 185 participants. Pour des raisons évidentes, nous venons de passer avec les élections.

Pour cette année, M. le président, toujours dans le cadre de rendre nos jeunes autonomes, j'ai le plaisir d'annoncer que nous aurons une grande rencontre de *Street Dance* au niveau de l'océan Indien où nous allons avoir des participants des Comores, de Madagascar, de la Réunion, des Seychelles, de Mayotte, bien sûr, des jeunes de la République de Maurice, et cela est prévu en mai. Il faut dire aussi que le ministère a commencé à préparer et à former les jeunes puisque nous voulons aussi les emmener aux jeux olympiques. D'abord, aux jeux olympiques de la jeunesse en 2022 et, ensuite, aux Jeux Olympiques de Paris en 2024.

M. le président, le ministère, le gouvernement, notre Premier ministre met beaucoup d'emphase sur l'activité physique et les sports. Mais, avant de venir avec l'activité physique, permettez-moi de dire quelques mots sur le sport et les sportifs de la République de l'Île Maurice. Ces cinq dernières années, nous avons entendu à chaque reprise, le sport est mort, rien ne va plus, les athlètes se plaignent. Et pourtant, M. le président, l'année dernière, après 40 ans, la République de l'Île Maurice remporte les jeux des îles pour la toute première fois de son histoire. Ces jeux ont été historiques de par l'ambiance, de par les résultats. Donc, je viens de l'apprendre récemment, qu'il n'y pas eu un seul cas de dopage. Nous venons de recevoir les résultats, il n'y pas eu un seul cas de dopage durant les jeux, M. le président.

Et j'ai entendu la dernière fois un membre de l'opposition, toujours *in a sitting position*, dire : *'To ti galoupé twa ?* Je ne sais pas si l'honorable Sawmynaden s'en souvient, mais laissez-moi dire à la population, M. le président, et surtout à ce membre de l'opposition qui la fâcheuse manie de dire des insanités et surtout, comme on dit, *in a sitting position*, et de lancer de généralités. Si nous avons pu avoir ces résultats, c'est parce que l'Etat a investi dans ces athlètes. Nous avons dépensé R 75 millions dans la préparation de nos athlètes, M. le président, et cela, deux ans avant les jeux. Toutes les fédérations, tous les athlètes sont unanimes à dire que c'est la première fois que cela arrive, que deux ans avant un jeu aussi important que cela, nous avons un budget de préparation. Budget de préparation veut dire le transport pour les athlètes pour qu'ils puissent aller à leur l'entraînement et retourner très tard à la maison, les vitamines, la nourriture, les stages à l'extérieur, les séances de gym dans des

gymnases privés, les physios, les médecins, et tout cela a fait que nous avons pu avoir ces résultats l'année dernière durant les jeux.

Quand je pense aux jeux, je pense aussi aux rénovations que nous avons dû faire, M. le président. Nous avons dépensé autour de R 700 millions dans la rénovation de nos infrastructures sportives. Et pourquoi nous avons dû dépenser autant d'argent ? Pourquoi ? Les dernières rénovations remontent à 2003, M. le président. A 2003, car à l'époque, encore une fois, le MSM était au pouvoir, avait organisé les jeux des îles. En 2005, nous savons tous ce qui s'est passé. Il y avait eu le gouvernement Travailleiste-PMSD, avec comme Premier ministre à l'époque, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Zéro dans le sport ! Aucun sou n'a été dépensé dans la maintenance de nos infrastructures sportives. 9-10 ans, M. le président, nos stades tombaient en ruine, et c'est pour cela que dans le cadre des jeux nous n'avions pas le choix et cela nous a coûté dans les R 700 millions. Voilà la culture du Parti travailleiste, et ils osent venir nous pointer du doigt. Voilà la culture du Parti travailleiste, voilà la place qu'ils ont pour le sport et la jeunesse de notre pays, M. le président. Et quand je pense aux Jeux des Iles, je pense aussi, bien sûr, au complexe de Côte d'Or. Qu'est-ce qui n'a pas été dit sur le complexe de Côte d'Or, M. le président ! Qu'est-ce qui n'a pas été dit durant la construction !

(Interruptions)

Effectivement ! Qu'est-ce qui n'a pas été dit par le leader de l'opposition d'alors, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval ! Qu'est-ce qui n'a pas été dit par les membres de l'opposition à l'époque, au niveau du MMM, l'honorable Quirin ! Et pourtant, M. le président, ils étaient devant, assis, tout le monde, à assister aux compétitions de natation ou de judo au stade de Côte d'Or. Il m'est arrivé moi-même qu'un jour je suis monté en haut, il n'y avait plus de place et j'ai dû rester debout pour assister à la compétition tellement que c'était rempli au bas, et quand je regardais un petit peu à gauche et à droite pour chercher mes amis, qui je voyais ? L'opposition, M. le président ! Et on parlait de Côte d'Or comme un 'stade fantôme'. Eh bien, le 'stade fantôme' était bien rempli ! Et je me demande si Casper le fantôme n'était pas là-bas, M. le président. Mais ceci, encore une fois, pour montrer la mauvaise foi de cette opposition ; l'opposition fantôme d'aujourd'hui. Je lance un appel au public mauricien, je lance un appel à la jeunesse mauricienne : « Ne vous laissez pas embobiner par les membres de l'opposition qui ne sont là que pour parler de généralité, qui ne sont là que pour jeter la boue sur nous, qui ne sont là que pour mettre des bâtons dans les roues, comme on dit, et pour bloquer ce pays. » Mais je suis sûr que notre jeunesse est une jeunesse intelligente et qu'elle ne va pas se laisser influencer par ce genre de personne.

M. le président, puisque nous parlons du sport d'élite, permettez-moi aussi de féliciter notre boxeur, Richarno Colin qui vient d'avoir sa qualification pour les Jeux Olympiques en remportant sa demi-finale dans la catégorie des 63 kilos et ce soir il va être en finale et, si tout se passe bien, il sera le nouveau Champion d'Afrique. Mais d'ores et déjà, il est qualifié pour les Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo 2020. Toujours quand on parle de sport d'élite, permettez-moi aussi, M. le président, de féliciter le Quatre Bornes Volleyball Club qui a participé à la compétition de Zone 7, et pour la troisième fois consécutive, l'équipe de Quatre Bornes de Volleyball Club est championne - et l'honorable Ramano est ravi.

(Interruptions)

Oui, au niveau des filles. Au niveau des garçons, M. le président, c'est l'équipe de Trou aux Biches, Sharks, qui obtient la médaille de bronze à cette même compétition. Autres félicitations, c'est bien sûr à nos jeunes nageurs qui ont participé à la compétition CANA Zone 4 au Botswana du 20 au 23 février, et dites-vous bien, M. le président, ils rentrent au pays avec 11 médailles d'or, 6 médailles d'argent et 9 médailles de bronze ; un total de 20 médailles, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No comments!

Mr Toussaint : Et certains osent dire que le sport est mort. Si c'est ça le sport est mort, je me demande qu'est-ce que cela va être quand le sport sera vivant.

M. le président, le pays aura l'honneur et le privilège d'organiser, du 23 au 29 mars, le *Road African Championship* en cyclisme et nous attendons à peu près 175 participants, autour de 16 pays qui seront sur notre sol pour cette belle compétition. En avril, du 13 au 20 avril, nous accueillons aussi, M. le président, une vingtaine de pays qui vont participer au *African Weightlifting Championship* qui va se tenir sur notre sol. Permettez-moi d'ouvrir une petite parenthèse, M. le président, pour faire référence au discours de l'honorable Juman par rapport à la compétition de l'*African Judo Open Mauritius* qui aurait dû se tenir en novembre 2020. Je cite, M. le président –

« C'est le même doute qui me vient à l'esprit quand le même dirigeant de notre *Sports Hub* en devenir a refusé d'accueillir l'*African Judo Championship*. »

Je continue –

« La seule demande qu'ils ont faite au ministère, c'est d'utiliser le gymnase à Côte d'Or, mais le ministère a tout simplement refusé (...) »

M. le président, il va de soi que l'honorable membre - il n'est pas là, dommage, sinon je lui aurai expliqué - ne comprend rien au sport, absolument rien. Pour commencer, ce n'est pas le ministère qui donne l'autorisation pour utiliser le complexe de Côte d'Or. Le complexe de Côte d'Or a son propre *Board*, a son propre *Chairperson*, a son *COO*, et toutes les demandes pour l'utilisation du complexe de Côte d'Or va directement à Côte d'Or, c'est-à-dire au MMIL, et ce n'est pas le ministère qui donne cette autorisation de l'utiliser. Quant à l'organisation de cette compétition, M. le président, cet honorable membre ne sait absolument pas comment le pays, comment l'Etat, comment le ministère accepte une demande de compétition sur son sol. Tout comme le cyclisme l'a fait, comme l'haltérophilie l'a fait, il faut bien sûr, en avance, mettre cela dans leur budget, parce que tout est une question de budget, et ce n'est certainement pas le ministre des Finances qui va me contredire. Il faut mettre cela en avance et il faut qu'on ait un dossier complet dessus. Or, ce n'est pas comme cela du tout que la demande a été faite. Et j'ai même demandé à mon bureau. Jusqu'à l'heure, je n'ai jamais reçu un dossier complet sur ce projet. Or, c'est complètement contraire de venir dire que nous avons refusé d'accueillir cette compétition.

Je continue, toujours par apport à ce que l'honorable Juman a dit, M. le président, et là, même s'il n'est pas là, je vais lui demander des excuses officielles et publiques. M. le président. Lors de son intervention, je cite - le ministre par rapport aux problèmes de la compétition de Futsal -

« Le ministre du *Youth Empowerment and Sports Recreation* a fait preuve d'une légèreté inacceptable, je dirais même criminelle dans cette affaire, (...) »

Et là, M. le président, je ne vois pas ce qu'il y a de criminel dedans et je le redis, je demande à l'honorable Juman de présenter des excuses publiques pour ce qu'il a dit. Et quand je regarde son discours par rapport au sport, je le redis, M. le président, il ne comprend absolument rien dans ce domaine, peut-être.

M. le président, nous avons les Jeux Olympiques de Tokyo qui arrivent du 16 au 25 juillet. Bien sûr, nous allons suivre la situation de près par rapport au Coronavirus pour savoir ce qui se passe. Mais je tenais à dire que pour cette compétition, nous avons alloué un budget de R 5 millions pour la préparation de nos athlètes. La voile a utilisé R 907,330. Le handisport qui a déjà eu son minima pour le paralympique a utilisé R 1.4 millions pour leur

préparation et compétition. La boxe, d'ailleurs nous avons eu le résultat; ils ont utilisé R 1.7 millions ; la natation R 300,000 ; le judo R 700,000. Tout ceci pour dire que nous avons mis à la disposition de nos fédérations R 5 millions pour la préparation et les compétitions par rapport à Tokyo 2020.

L'année prochaine, M. le président, le pays va accueillir la compétition de la CJSOI qui comprend les différentes îles – Comores, Madagascar, Maurice, Djibouti, Seychelles, Réunion et Mayotte. Cela va se tenir du 16 au 25 juillet 2021 et c'est une compétition pour les jeunes de 14 à 17 ans, et je suis sûr, M. le président, que tout comme les jeux de îles, les Mauriciens seront là, présents, à venir soutenir nos jeunes athlètes lors de cette compétition.

Et par rapport aux Jeux Olympiques de Paris 2024, nous avons commencé à monter une structure qui vise à encadrer nos athlètes. M. le président, pour qu'un athlète puisse obtenir une médaille aux Jeux Olympiques, cela coûte entre R 1.2 millions et R 1.5 millions et, bien souvent, c'est sur deux cycles. Il y un projet qui s'appelle 'Horizon Paris 2024' et nous avons commencé à lancer les appels aux potentiels sponsors pour venir vers nous, et nous commençons aussi à prendre les athlètes qui ont un certain potentiel pour qu'on puisse leur donner tout ce qu'il faut pour qu'ils puissent se préparer pour les Jeux Olympiques de Paris 2024.

Aussi, sous mon ministère, M. le président, c'est le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* et là, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de penser à l'honorable Ms Foo Kune qui, dans son discours, avait parlé des athlètes de haut niveau, etc. Alors je cite –

« M. le président, lorsque l'athlète met un terme à sa carrière, la transition n'est pas toujours évidente à gérer. La retraite sportive d'un athlète de haut niveau est souvent synonyme de dépression. »

J'ai cru comprendre, M. le président, que l'honorable membre voulait dire qu'il n'y a aucun encadrement pour les anciens athlètes, qu'il n'y a aucun suivi pour les anciens athlètes. Permettez-moi de vous dire que le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*, chaque année, dépense R 7 millions pour 116 *retired athletes*, M. le président. Et ce sont les athlètes qui ont fait honneur au pays et qui reçoivent une certaine somme d'argent chaque mois. Et pour éviter aussi que nos anciens athlètes, à la fin de leur carrière, ne tombent, comme est en train de dire l'honorable membre, dans l'oubli ou autre, nous faisons la formation de nos athlètes, et il y a des bourses qui sont offertes aux jeunes qui sont dans le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*, afin que ces personnes-là puissent aller à l'université, puissent apprendre quelque

chose, et que quand l'athlète a terminé sa carrière, l'athlète a un diplôme en main et l'athlète peut éventuellement trouver du travail. Ce que l'honorable membre est en train d'expliquer, ça c'était avant, malheureusement. Donc, je crois qu'elle a raté une certaine période. *There is a disconnect* comme on dit, et ce qui est dommage, c'est que l'honorable Ms Foo Kune doit savoir cela mieux que d'autres personnes puisqu'elle avait été athlète de haut niveau, et en étant athlète de haut niveau, elle bénéficiait, M. le président, de ce qu'on appelle le *HLSU, High Level Support*, à tous les athlètes de haut niveau. C'est une certaine somme d'argent qui est mise à la disposition de l'athlète, des élites, pour que l'athlète justement puisse s'entraîner et, maintenant, d'après les notes que j'ai eues, elle est aussi bénéficiaire du *Retired Athlete Scheme*, M. le président. Je ne comprends pas. Je ne comprends pas et ce qui est dramatique dedans, c'est que l'honorable Madame Navarre-Marie vient nous dire que nous, nos jeunes membres ici, ce n'est que de l'emballage. Mais je suis vraiment navré de dire qu'un jeune membre du MMM est déjà rentré dans ce moule du MMM, M. le président. C'est quoi ce moule du MMM ? C'est tout noir ; *narien pas bon*. C'est ça ce moule du MMM, et il est dommage, dommage qu'une jeune athlète comme l'honorable Ms Foo Kune est déjà rentrée de plain-pied dans ce moule. Je me demande où ça va l'emmener, M. le président.

M. le président, notre programme gouvernemental parle de - je vais citer rapidement -

« *Government will also aim at increasing the practice of physical activities rate to 35 per cent within the next five years.* »

Et contrairement à ce que disent les membres de l'opposition, ce n'est pas du réchauffé, ce n'est pas du bla-bla, ce n'est pas des paroles en l'air. Nous, au niveau du ministère, nous avons déjà commencé, déjà avec les différents programmes que nous avons sous « *Active Mauritius* » et ce sont des programmes, des activités qui visent à encourager le Mauricien à pratiquer une activité physique et sportive. Je ne vais pas lire tout ce qu'il y a, parce que, bien sûr, il y a énormément de programmes et là j'ai ramené que le *summary*. Donc, je n'ai pas amené tout le livre. Et ce qui me vient à l'esprit, c'est surtout que depuis deux ans, le Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, s'est impliqué lui-même, personnellement, dans tout ce qui est *physical activity*. Et cette année, nous allons poursuivre avec la troisième édition du *12-hour run, Jog and Walk for Health* ; une activité où le Premier ministre a démontré lui-même sa capacité de tenir pendant au moins une heure sur la piste au stade Maryse Justin, et ceci pour donner l'exemple.

Nous ne sommes pas, M. le président, comme certains qui ne font que des discours. Nous voulons montrer l'exemple. Nous voulons donner l'exemple aux Mauriciens. Quand on va leur dire 'Allez, commencer à pratiquer un sport, à faire une activité physique', nous voulons donner cet exemple, et je dis bravo à notre Premier ministre, M. le président. Bravo à notre Premier ministre qui, deux années de suite, est venu et a donné l'exemple à toute la population, M. le président. Et, bien sûr, j'invite en avance tous les collègues pour la troisième édition qui aura lieu, et les dates sont en train d'être finalisées.

M. le président, rapidement pour terminer. L'honorable Richard Duval, lors de son intervention, avait parlé de la circonscription numéro 12, un peu vague seulement, je dois le dire, un peu vague. Il avait parlé du stade Harry Latour, mais quand j'ai relu son discours, je me suis dit : est-ce que j'ai bien vu ou bien c'est l'honorable membre, Richard Duval, qui ne sait pas ce qui se passe dans sa circonscription ? Il a parlé du stade Harry Latour qu'il faut refaire et ainsi de suite. Laissez-moi lui rafraîchir la mémoire. Il peut prendre sa voiture et aller vérifier ; pour une fois il sera dans la circonscription. En 2016, lorsque l'honorable Sawmynaden était ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports, il y a eu une somme de R 4,858,750 qui a été dépensée pour –

- *construction of boundary wall;*
- *construction of ticket booth, qu'il n'y avait pas;*
- *fencing works along ground stand,*
- *reinforcement of bases and columns for stand.*

Je redis, plus de R 4 millions. Travaux qui ont commencé le 23 février 2016 et qui ont terminé le 05 Octobre 2016. J'espère que l'honorable Richard Duval comprendra ce dont je parle. Je continue, toujours le stade Harry Latour. Le 24 mars 2017, un contrat a été alloué et le travail s'est terminé le 12 juin 2007 pour une somme de R 684,200 ; alors, *supply of tiles, painting works, supply of paving bricks, etc.*, toujours au stade Harry Latour. Je continue avec le stade Harry Latour qui se trouve dans notre circonscription numéro 12. Le 21 octobre 2019, il y a eu un contrat qui a été donné pour la somme de R 449,100 par rapport à *electrical works* ; les lumières. Je continue, toujours le stade Harry Latour qui n'a pas changé de place et qui est toujours dans la circonscription numéro 12. Mars 2020, qui arrive là, des travaux vont démarrer pour une durée de six mois à hauteur de R 11,300,000. La liste est longue: *repair of broken slabs, reconstruct boundaries wall* et ainsi de suite, M. le président, juste pour vous dire que quatre années de suite, il y a eu des travaux majeurs qui ont été faits au

stade Harry Latour et, malheureusement, l'honorable Richard Duval ne voit pas cela et il voit que rien n'a été fait dans la circonscription. Je me demande quel est son problème.

M. le président, les membres de l'opposition ont décidé de contester les élections. Ils ont décidé d'envoyer des pétitions, etc., pour dire que l'élection n'est pas *fair*. Ils ont parlé - certains, toujours en étant assis - de *money politics*. M. le président, je me pose la question. Je ne dis pas que c'est le cas, mais je me pose la question. En 2012, lors des élections municipales, le MSM était en alliance avec le MMM. Nous n'avions pas gagné ces élections municipales à Curepipe, c'était un *draw match* et je suis sûr que l'honorable Obeegadoo s'en souvient très bien. Dans le *ward* où j'étais responsable - au *ward* 3, à la veille des élections, il y avait eu un partage général de macarons jusqu'à deux heures du matin. A l'époque, l'honorable Obeegadoo et l'honorable Gobin étaient mes avocats, et j'ai dû rester au poste de police d'Eau Coulée jusqu'à trois heures du matin pour donner une déposition, à cause des macarons distribués par l'honorable Arvin Boolell. Mais, après les résultats, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Voilà, exact, vous vous en souvenez. Mais après les élections, si ma mémoire ne fait pas défaut, à aucun moment le MSM, et à l'époque avec le MMM, nous n'avions contesté ces élections...

Mr Speaker: Please address the Chair!

Mr Toussaint: *Sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Nous n'avions contesté ces mêmes élections, et pourtant c'était flagrant. Il y a même ma déposition qui est toujours quelque part au poste de police.

(Interruptions)

Arvin ine manze tou.

Je continue. On parle de *money politics*. Je voudrais demander aux membres de l'opposition de me dire que faisait l'honorable Sik Yuen en 2014, le jour même des élections, aux appartements de la NHDC à Forest-Side. Et je me souviens qu'à, l'époque, pareil, j'ai dû, le jour des élections, perdre deux heures au poste de police de Curepipe pour donner une déposition. Je repose la question. Je demande à l'honorable Sik Yuen de venir nous dire ce qu'il faisait dans les appartements de la NHDC ce jour-là.

M. le président, plus près de nous, en 2019, pour les élections, les résultats dans la circonscription numéro 12, moi, j'ai fait un sixième rang, je suis sorti sixième.

Mais, malgré ces résultats, à aucun moment, le jour du dépouillement des résultats, ne me suis-je dit que j'ai fait sixième parce que peut-être, je ne sais pas, l'honorable Ramful a donné de l'argent. Je ne me suis pas posé cette question. ! J'ai accepté les résultats de 2019, M. le président. J'ai accepté ces résultats et je suis resté avec mes amis. Et dites-vous bien que nous, nous avons dû aider le candidat Travailleiste à partir, puisque que l'honorable Ramful avait disparu depuis longtemps lui. Mais j'avais accepté ces résultats, M. le président. On peut aller voir les discours que j'ai faits ce soir même pour les résultats où je remerciais tout le monde, et d'ailleurs je remercie l'électorat de Mahébourg/Plaine Magnien, de la circonscription numéro 12, qui m'a donné un pourcentage raisonnable et je suis ici aujourd'hui grâce à eux. Je dis merci !

Et, donc, mon appel aux membres de l'opposition, c'est qu'il faut savoir accepter la défaite. Et je lance cela à la population. Je vais leur dire : regardez et voyez quel genre de politiciens que vous avez, quel genre de politiciens qui s'assoient dans l'opposition et qui ne sont là que pour semer la zizanie partout et que, pour une bonne fois, on respecte ce que les urnes ont décidé, M. le président.

Pour terminer, je remercie encore une fois les mandants, la population de la circonscription numéro 12. Je remercie mes deux honorables amis et collègues, l'honorable Doolub, l'honorable Hurreeram, pour tout leur support. Nous sommes un trio de choc dans la circonscription numéro 12, M. le président. Et il va s'en dire que pendant ces cinq ans, ce trio de choc montrera l'exemple et nous allons montrer à nos mandants que nous sommes là pour eux et pour travailler pour eux.

Ce n'est pas un membre ou deux membres de l'opposition qui vont amener le développement, qui vont faire réussir la circonscription. C'est nous, M. le président, qui allons le faire.

Je remercie toutes les personnes qui ont été là pour nous aider pendant les élections. Je remercie ma famille, mes trois enfants, et un merci spécial à mon épouse pour toute son aide. Et comme avait dit l'honorable Doolub, derrière chaque homme il y a une femme, et je rends hommage à mon épouse aujourd'hui. Cela fait maintenant 25 ans aujourd'hui, jour pour jour, que nous sommes liés légalement. Grâce à elle, je peux avancer dans ma vie politique, j'ai le courage de faire mon travail.

Merci beaucoup, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

(7.03 p.m.)

Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the privilege to address this august Assembly, the very symbol of our democracy. One can easily imagine my stress while delivering my maiden speech today. However, I trust that I can rely on the indulgence, support and encouragement of my more experienced colleagues of the House to see me through this important moment of my burgeoning career as a Parliamentarian.

At the outset, I would like to have a very special thought for all the people of Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North/Montagne Longue in entrusting me with their votes, allowing me to represent them at our National Assembly. I solemnly give them the assurance of my unconditional support and zeal to rise to their expectations during my tenure. I am here to serve them all and to cherish to the best of my opportunity their welfare.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate you for your election as Speaker of the House and wish you all the best in this endeavour. I am also conveying my best wishes to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius for his Address, unfolding the Government Programme 2020-2024 to the nation. Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to extend my congratulations to the hon. Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth for his election and second mandate as Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius. More importantly, my deep and heartfelt gratitude goes to the hon. Prime Minister for believing in the youth of this country by giving me the chance and privilege to serve my fellow constituents, and more broadly the Mauritian population as a whole. Further, this reinforces my faith in his capacity to lead us as a team with humility, mutual respect, proximity, listening acumen, vision and flair. My trust in him is unblemished from the very first day we met.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also like to pay tribute to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the former Prime Minister and Minister Mentor for his unrivalled leadership, vision and determination. His blessings are ever present as well as his wisdom and guidance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2015, Sir Anerood Jugnauth paved the way for the presentation of Vision 2030, a roadmap to consolidate the foundations and modernise our country. In 2017, the Government of Mauritius embarked on a Transformative Journey for a Modern and Inclusive Mauritius to achieve the High-Income Status. Two years later, in 2019, the people

of Mauritius, through their solemn electoral choice held last November, overwhelmingly adopted and supported this first transformative vision. The Government Programme 2020-2024 champions a holistic approach, by consolidating the achievements reaped since 2014 and making our national ambitions clear by 2024 in order to meet the challenges of this new decade head on. Our detractors will claim that the present Programme 2020-2024 is just ‘more of the same’. But reading through the Speech - more especially if we read between the lines - its content is pregnant with a host of measures that will precisely help Mauritius engage into its transformative journey towards building, and I quote -

“An inclusive, High-Income and Greener Mauritius”.

The Government Programme 2020-2024 is going to rewrite the faith and future of our citizens, more importantly our youth. The strategic roadmap demonstrates the determination and commitment of this Government to spur a new virtuous era of economic prosperity, putting the environment and our citizens at the forefront of this transformation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also welcome the well settled freshly elected Members from the other side of the House, as well as the more seasoned opposition Members who are very well-versed with the House proceedings. However, it is indeed unfortunate to hear the Opposition question the legitimacy of the November 2019 General Elections. I thank my fellow Members from this side of the House for successfully bringing to light the attempts of the Opposition to declare their own election illegal and illegitimate. However, my main concern is whether the Opposition is truly playing its constitutional role. I humbly believe that they should not forget that their role is not always to oppose, but to propose as well. When on the other side of the House they claim that they will act as real watchdogs, I would encourage them to also be part and parcel of decision-making process by being upfront in making constructive proposals.

In fact, as a reminder to the House, on 30 November 2018, the hon. Prime Minister presented the Electoral Reform Proposals to the population. He then opened the door for any firm official criticisms or enhancements from other political parties. Unfortunately, it is extremely disappointing to note that the Opposition did not make any official counterproposals. Instead, they have only used the media to notify the public about their disapproval of the proposed reform. They successfully opposed, but failed to propose. Not at any point did the Opposition rise up to the challenge to present any papers to the House, even after two electoral defeats, none of the Opposition Parties have demonstrated to the

population that they do indeed have an electoral reform or political financing proposal. I hope that the newly elected colleagues from the other side do question their senior colleagues on the existence of such proposals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what we have today is an Opposition that only reacts to Government business without being upfront towards the population as to why they should be considered as a democratic alternative. What the population expects from the population is to prove in the present mandate that they are credible as a democratic Opposition and will fully play their role and be brave enough to support the Government policies which champion the best interest of the population.

Our Government's 2020-2024 Programme mentions the introduction of 'A new Bill on the Financing of the Political Parties', which is welcome with relish. The November 2019 Elections demonstrated the urgency of a newly go framework. In 2019, the hon. Prime Minister proposed 'The Political Financing Bill', after numerous consultations and meticulous analysis of all the reports commissioned over the last 50 years. Again, the Bill was not voted through due to the lack of support from the Opposition.

I strongly believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the rejuvenation of this Assembly arrives at a very opportune moment in our history. After all, through the present tenure, we shall be laying the foundations of a transformed Mauritius 4.0 in the hope of leaving a cleaner, greener Mauritius - an island '*où il fera encore bon de vivre*', where sustainable development process will have been instilled for the next decade and beyond.

On the other hand, Mauritius 4.0 will require a complete and major paradigm shift from all of us, from our thought leadership down to our societal, financial and economic processes. Indeed, this brave new world ahead of us is one of networking, co-funding, sustainable development and collaborative initiatives among the actors of change. Our present Smartphones are only a drop in that ocean of change that awaits us. I would, therefore, describe our generation as a 'Transformative Generation - *la Génération de la Transformation*, if you prefer - a noble objective, to say the least.

The good news is that in our implementation of a sustainable economy, we are in a position to jumpstart quite a few processes by leveraging on what the developed economies have been doing from 2007 to 2018. The solutions are there and, of course, all the technology we need has already been created, tested and certified.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as we speak, the first part of a major Social Inclusion Programme has already been implemented, which involved, amongst other measures, the widening of the social protection safety nets through the legislation introducing the *salair minimum*, the Negative Income Tax, the significant increase in old age pensions, while at the same time modernising the transport system through the introduction of the Metro Express. The Metro, as we are able to witness daily, has been an instant success and will for the next few months have transported more than a million passengers. Indeed, this remarkable feat will mark a historical milestone for our nation. It is a clear message from the population that they have wholeheartedly embraced this revolutionary mode of transport and that irrespective of the empty criticism from the opposition, the population is eager for additional lines throughout the island, as announced by the hon. Prime Minister. In whichever way we read the objectives of the Programme, the task ahead may be daunting. Economics apart, there are three areas of concern that bear a sense of urgency. For these immediate challenges, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tempted to say that “The future is Now”. They are –

1. The proliferation of drugs;
2. Gender equality, child and family protection, and
3. Climate change and environmental protection.

All three will require the undivided attention of the nation, whatever be our political hues, our gender, our age or social status. Failing to master this scourge that drug abuse and domestic violence can spread, within the very fabrics of our homes, could inflict major and irreparable damage to our society as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I hasten to add that after my weekly discovery visits across the country, and more specially, across my constituency, several areas show a particular vulnerability to these dangers. I not only welcome the Government’s Marshall Plan against poverty, but I take here the commitment to accelerate its implementation in every possible way at local level all through my tenure.

As for the impact of drug trafficking on our society, this is of national concern. In spite of tremendous efforts already made by Government to combat this scourge, not a week goes by without the media reporting yet another death or hospitalisation of several of our youth. On one hand, we are losing our brightest generations who are leaving the country in droves to study and live abroad, but towards the other end of the 17-35 age spectrum, we are losing them to drugs and domestic violence. Which is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do consider the implementation of the Drug Control Master Plan focusing on demand and supply

reduction, rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts as being a matter of national emergency.

The other accompanying measures as stipulated in the 2019-2020 Budget objectives will certainly reinforce our determination and commitment to engage into relentless and concerted efforts to reduce the traffic and consumption of illicit substances by our youth. The measures are extremely encouraging.

Nos enfants, M. le président, ne nous pardonneront jamais de ne pas avoir érigé des remparts contre tous ces marchands de la mort et de désolation. Faisons du combat contre la drogue, une exigence collective et individuelle ; faisons de notre mieux chaque seconde, chaque minute, chaque jour de notre vie.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the chapter dealing with domestic violence is unambiguous as it states Government's determination to be relentless in its fight against any kind of violence including domestic violence.

Furthermore, the hon. Prime Minister, *avec sa sagesse habituelle*, has taken the initiative to personally chair the high-level committee which will formulate the relevant strategy to eliminate gender-based violence. In fact, the first meeting was presided by the hon. Prime Minister on 19 February with the aim being set very high. The legal framework will thus make sure that the victims are provided with necessary physical, professional and legal assistance, a commendable objective indeed.

I also very much welcome the future introduction of the Children's Bill to be debated within this august Assembly. We are committed to ensure that our children's rights are respected and that they are given the best safeguards, support and attention to develop and optimise their potentials. Hence, the Bill will set the solid foundations through the right institutions and services to ensure the welfare and a sound holistic development for our children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on a slightly different note, given my personal previous involvement in fundraising for cancer patients, I welcome with relish the upcoming launching of a specialist cancer treatment hospital in Solferino. Unfortunately, cancer cases are heart-wrenchingly increasing in Mauritius and the need for a specialised treatment facility is urgently needed. The hospital will be equipped with nearly 180 beds alongside the latest technology and trained staff to provide the care and comfort to cancer patients and their families.

M. le président, à l'entame de la dernière partie de mon allocution, je voudrais mettre l'accent sur ce que je décris comme étant la troisième urgence absolue pour notre île à l'aube de cette décennie. Je veux parler du changement climatique, du développement durable et de l'ère post-carbone. Au prime abord, je voudrais rappeler à notre auguste Assemblée que l'île Maurice a été, depuis ces dix dernières années, plutôt bon élève en ce qui concerne le développement durable.

- L'île Maurice a été parmi les premiers petits États insulaires à cosigner les accords de Paris - nom de code COP 21 qui faisait état des 17 Objectifs de Développement Durable, les ODD, *SDGs* en anglais.
- Autre fait indéniable, notre île fait partie des Petits États Insulaires les plus menacés par le changement climatique. A cet égard, nous figurons parmi les tops 100 des îles dont l'avenir est le plus menacé. Il était donc urgent d'entamer les mesures correctives nécessaires sur un certain nombre de secteurs afin d'atténuer en partie les effets néfastes du changement climatique.

Les mauriciens d'ailleurs sont les témoins vivants de l'érosion de nos plages, du blanchissement de nos coraux et de la mort lente de nos lagons.

M. le président, je voudrais ici rendre hommage à notre collègue, l'honorable Kavy Ramano qui, dès le mois de décembre dernier, a réuni tous les acteurs concernés autour des Assises de l'Environnement afin de faire un premier bilan de l'état des lieux. Il s'est ensuite rendu à la COP 25 à Madrid avant de participer à deux réunions importantes sur le carbone à Maurice et la gestion des déchets à l'île Sœur dans la perspective d'une collaboration régionale.

Voilà pour l'urgence des actions amenées. Il ne fait donc aucun doute que le champ d'action mis en exergue dans le discours programme est tout à fait pertinent et cadre bien dans le concert de mesures à prendre et à mettre en œuvre pendant notre mandat. Tout y est. Il s'agit d'une transition qui reposerait sur les piliers suivants –

- l'investissement dans les énergies renouvelables ;
- la transition vers une île Maurice plus verte ;
- le renforcement des mécanismes pour l'atténuation des risques dû aux changements climatiques, et
- la protection de nos ressources marines.

Je voudrais ajouter à cela qu'il serait aussi urgent de préparer nos milléniaux à la transformation de la Révolution Industrielle 4.0 en les encourageant à s'orienter vers toutes les nouvelles filières qui émergent déjà de cet océan de nouveaux métiers numériques. L'intelligence artificielle, la robotique, Blockchain et l'Internet des objets ne sont que des moyens d'y arriver et ils retiennent toute leur importance dans le concert d'une île Maurice numérique.

A cet égard, j'ai constaté que parmi nos lauréats, la majorité continue à opter pour les études traditionnelles. Ce n'est pas ce dont le pays a besoin. On ne réussit pas à mettre en place une société et une économie digitale en fuyant les matières technologiques. Un changement de cap est donc impératif.

M. le président, n'en déplaise pas à notre collègue de l'Opposition qui trouve nos jeunes parlementaires dans un état d'esprit dépassé, dit-elle. Voilà pour les nouvelles idées que nous nous apprêtons à approfondir pendant ce mandat. Permettez-moi, M. le président, de rassurer à notre collègue de l'autre côté de la Chambre que oui les nouvelles technologies font bien partie du plan général de ce nouveau gouvernement surtout les jeunes, ceux qui sont de la génération de la transformation mais plutôt que de nous gargariser de ces nouveaux termes pour épater la galerie et prétendre être jeune et dans le coup, nous les avons inclus dans notre programme avec la ferme intention de nous appuyer sur les possibilités insoupçonnables et insoupçonnées de leur puissance de calcul et de leur intrusion dans nos vies futurs au niveau économique, financier, environnemental et social, notamment avec l'internet des objets.

Enfin, M. le président, *with all due respect*, faut-il rappeler à ma collègue de l'Opposition que nous ne sommes qu'au tout début de notre mandat et que le respect le plus élémentaire nous est dû, surtout les jeunes, c'est de nous permettre au moins de faire nos preuves et de nous montrer notre puissance d'action sur le terrain. Ou devrais-je dire puissance de calcul pour faire intelligence artificielle, n'est-ce pas, avant de lancer des épithèses à notre égard.

M. le président, je voudrais, pour conclure, partager une citation de Jeremy Rifkin, un des plus fins penseurs de notre temps et auteur prolifique. Il est aussi l'auteur de la Troisième Révolution Industrielle qui, dans son dernier ouvrage, « Le New Deal Vert Mondial » nous propose un véritable mode d'emploi. Son livre est –

« Un manuel de transition globale qui permettrait de produire 100% de l'électricité à partir de sources propres et renouvelables ; d'améliorer et d'augmenter l'efficacité du réseau énergétique, du réseau des transports ou du bâtiment et de l'internet; d'investir dans la recherche et le développement de technologies vertes ou de proposer des emplois nés de cette nouvelle économie.

Le temps nous est compté », dit-il, « et le consensus scientifique ne peut plus être remis en question. Mais partout les solutions existent et sont à notre portée. Aujourd'hui, les intérêts des dirigeants politiques, économiques et financiers convergent avec ceux des citoyens. »

Mr Speaker, Sir, the vision is to make Mauritius a better place to live with modern high-tech infrastructure, ensuring safety to safeguard the quality of life of the citizens by the determination to establish the minimum wage requirement and widening the safety nets and financial assistance to our elderly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2019 Election result shows a victory of humility over arrogance. It is a victory of selfless leadership over self-centered leadership. It is the people's victory. This Government under the peerless leadership of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is genuinely committed to spearhead our country to unprecedented height while, at the same time, protecting the vulnerable, empowering the youth and ensuring descent working conditions for all the citizens.

So, whether we are on this side of the House or on the other side of the House, we are all here pledging allegiance to the Mauritian nation, all of us defending the cause of our people. We are here because we share a single vision for our country.

We all want our Mauritian children to have good education and schools that push them, inspire them and prepare them to the limitless possibilities of this world. We want our elders who have worked hard all their lives to retire in dignity because they have contributed immensely to build our nation; they deserve to enjoy their golden years. We believe that hard work should pay off.

We want gender equality, women's empowerment as well as respect, security, honour and recognition for our mothers, daughters, and sisters.

We want a greener Mauritius because protecting the environment is the best legacy we can leave to the future generations.

Today, amidst all these concrete realisations, this Government is firmly poised and committed to spur an impetus of sustainable growth and development to continue its transformative journey towards elevating Mauritius to a high-income country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your kind attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I now invite the hon. Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, good evening, please be seated. Hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte !

(7.27p.m.)

Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): M. le président, avant de faire la lecture de mon discours, permettez-moi de rebondir et d'ouvrir une petite parenthèse sur les paroles de l'honorable Hurreeram and l'honorable Toussaint concernant le comportement des membres de cette Chambre, de l'autre côté, tout à l'heure.

Cela m'a fait penser aux américains pour qui j'ai beaucoup d'admiration. En fait, quand on les voit lors des campagnes électorales, ils ont un comportement assez surprenant c'est-à-dire qu'il y a un contraste entre la férocité de leur campagne et ensuite leur réaction positive et le sens du fairplay après les résultats.

Je constate malheureusement, en tant que jeune députée, que cela n'est pas le cas ici. Cela n'a pas été le cas aujourd'hui et pour vous dire franchement, je ne cacherai pas que j'ai été énormément choquée par ce comportement, par leur comportement. J'ai été déçue en effet. Alors ce que je voulais dire c'est que aujourd'hui nous avons pu faire la comparaison, constater leur comportement ; différente de celle des américains qui au départ mènent une campagne féroce mais après montrent leur sens du fairplay alors qu'ici l'attitude était tout le contraire. Ce qu'on a vu aujourd'hui c'est encore une fois cette expression de non-respect envers un résultat de l'électorat qui, il y a quelques temps de cela, a montré clair et net son choix et aujourd'hui c'est leur manière de venir exprimer leur refus de cette réalité. Et je trouve cela très inélégant et je dois dire que c'était un spectacle des plus affligeants auxquels nous avons eu droit un peu plus tôt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel deeply privileged to stand today in this august institution, the National Assembly, symbol and hallmark of our democracy and make my

maiden speech as an elected Member of the National Assembly Constance number 14 Savanne/Rivière Noire.

Allow me, in the first place, to extend my heartiest congratulations to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for occupying such a dignified post and also to present my warmest greetings to the hon. Speaker and similarly to all the Members of this Assembly.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you above all to God who blessed me. May I also be a blessing to others. I would avail myself this opportunity to say *merci* to the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, for the confidence he has put in me as well as to all my colleagues of *l'Alliance Morisien*.

We won the General Elections, *point à la ligne*.

May I likewise place on record the unflinching support of the electorate of Constituency number 14 Savanne/Rivière Noire for the trust placed in me and heartfelt thanks to all of them from Residence Kennedy to Surinam. I earnestly hope that, with their continuous encouragement, I will be able to live up their expectations in my career as an elected Member.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in early December under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, we sealed a pact with the people of the Republic of Mauritius and we pledged that, having listened to their expectations, we would endeavour to make their lives better.

It is apposite for me to express to the population that it is our determination to work hard under the able guidance of our Prime Minister in order to fulfil the responsibilities vested upon us with integrity and dedication.

M. le président, je ne suis à aucun degré une politicienne aguerrie encore moins une experte et j'ai conscience que j'ai beaucoup à apprendre mais il y va de soi que je ferai de mon mieux pour apprendre les rudiments du métier.

M. le président, j'ai une pensée spéciale aujourd'hui pour mes parents qui m'ont inculqué les valeurs, qui m'ont appris que nous n'obtenons rien dans la vie sans efforts, sacrifices et méritocratie.

Pendant les élections et même parfois après, on a dit de moi que je suis une artiste et cela, quelques fois, avec une pointe d'ironie. C'est vrai, je suis une artiste, je le revendique fièrement. Et permettez-moi là de dire merci à l'honorable Kavi Doolub pour ce petit clin

d'œil tout à l'heure au cours de son discours et de lui rendre l'ascenseur en quelque sorte en citant cette phrase d'une des chansons de Kaya pour revendiquer fièrement ma profession.

'Sa mo kilitir moi kin donne

Mo langaz zot tou koze

Mo zistoir pa fasil pu zot retaper'

Let me translate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, or if you prefer, I can sing it for you. So, the translation is like that: this is my culture that I pass on to you; my language that we all speak; my story which is not easy to rewrite.

Vous dire que ma notoriété je l'avais déjà acquise riche d'une belle carrière dans l'audiovisuel et dans la musique mais ce n'est pas une première mondiale vous savez. Le président Ronald Reagan était un ancien acteur. Il est devenu président des Etats Unis d'Amérique. Hema Malini une des reines de Bollywood élue du BJP au parlement indien. Gilberto Gil, né à Salvador de Bahia, guitariste, chanteur et compositeur brésilien. Il fut ministre de la Culture du Brésil. Donc, je ne fais que suivre un précédent déjà fortement établi. Voilà!

La circonscription numéro 14 est une circonscription extraordinaire qui porte encore les traces du passé, des villages aux doux noms évocateurs: Surinam, Chamouny, Chemin Grenier, Bel Ombre, Baie du Cap, le Morne, Chamarel, La Goulette, Case Noyale, Grande Rivière Noire, Tamarin, Flic en Flac, Cascavelle, Bambous, Beaux Songes, Palma, Bassin, Kennedy. Des lieux au toponymie lourde de sens et d'histoire qui ont placé l'île Maurice sur la carte mondiale. La montagne du Morne classée patrimoine mondiale, la Tour Martello, les Salines de Rivière Noire entre autres. La plus grande superficie de verdure du territoire, mais aussi une des parties de l'île les plus arides, les plus dépourvues de logement, d'eaux, d'encadrement au grand dam de ces habitants. Difficile pour mes colistiers, l'honorable Allan Ganoo, l'honorable Prakash Ramchurrin et moi-même de rester insensible à cette dure réalité à laquelle nous faisons face chaque jour.

Ces électeurs ont placé leur confiance en nous et il est de notre devoir aujourd'hui de répondre à leur attente, de respecter l'engagement du gouvernement. Je cite –

“It is only through fairer access to prosperity and wealth distribution, and enhanced standard of living for every citizen that our country will be able to move forward and achieve its goals.”

Government will strengthen the regulatory framework pertaining to charitable institutions and residential care homes.

Combating poverty and improving the standard of living of the population shall remain one of the priorities of Government.

This Government will therefore set up the implementation of the Marshall Plan against Poverty.

Government will facilitate access for everyone to a decent and affordable housing in a sustainable living environment.”

Cela dit, M. le président, le gouvernement accélèrera le programme de logement pour les familles à faible et moyen revenus en accordant une attention particulière aux nécessiteux et aux personnes vulnérables. C’est ce que nous appelons l’égalité des chances.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the sitting before last week, a hon. Member from the other side mentioned that how come inhabitants of Black River and Tamarin were hired at the Cargo Handling Corporation. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out that any job which is vacant is advertised to people island-wide unless it is mentioned that the vacancy is only for the people in a particular area of the island. Black River and Tamarin, both villages mentioned by the hon. Member of the Opposition, are found in my Constituency where many people are poor, are looking for a job, need a job.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if people on the other side play a political game on that issue, let me remind them that people from northern villages travel everyday to work to the airport of Mauritius, even more that what was hired in the catchment area of the airport itself. So, I will ask the hon. Member of the Opposition to watch his word before discrediting the inhabitants of Rivière Noire and Tamarin.

M. le président, le discours programme à la page 14, paragraphe 36 parle et je cite –

“The 'Afterschool' program, for young people aged 8 to 14 years, will be expanded to include new activities aimed at the practice of arts, stimulating creativity and the enhancement of learning about our national cultural heritage.”

L’éveil artistique permet d’inscrire l’enfant dans une culture avec des références, des codes, mais aussi surtout de s’ouvrir et découvrir d’autres cultures. Plus l’enfant baignera dans une richesse culturelle dès le plus jeune âge, plus il sera ouvert au respect de la diversité. Il est donc une bonne chose d’initier les enfants, dès leur plus âge, à l’art, à la culture.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant parler des professionnels de l'industrie culturelle. La sociologue, Nathalie Heinich, spécialiste de l'art, notamment de l'art contemporain, propose plusieurs angles pour comprendre la place des artistes dans les sociétés modernes, condition de travail, statut juridique, encadrement institutionnel, position hiérarchique, catégorie d'appartenance, mode de vie, accès à la notoriété, critère d'excellence, représentation qu'eux-mêmes et les autres se font de leur position.

M. le président, la situation de l'industrie artistique est dans l'urgence. Le ministre des Arts et du Patrimoine Culturel, l'honorable Avinash Teeluck, dont j'apprécie l'effort depuis le début de son mandat, car nous avons eu l'occasion de discuter sur des sujets préoccupants et de partager nos idées, en est très conscient. Je sais que les professionnels de l'art seront reconnus pour leur effort et leur participation à l'économie du pays. Une catégorisation et un statut de professionnel pour les artistes mauriciens serait également une bonne chose. Cet objectif prioritaire viserait par en finir avec la précarité qui, signe d'un certain sous-développement d'une société qui laisse des artistes dans un état de dénouement déplorable. On pourrait, par exemple, faire de l'artiste un travailleur tout aussi engagé, régit par les mêmes règles et les mêmes droits que tout autre travailleur en termes de protection sociale et de retraite, qu'il perçoive de royalties de manière régulière et décente.

La création des infrastructures adéquates pour les manifestations culturelles à travers l'île. La création d'un environnement culturel favorable pour stimuler la création, promouvoir la diversité des expressions culturelles, renforcer la dimension économique de notre patrimoine et de notre culture, inscrire l'action culturelle dans la politique de développement, telle est la conviction du gouvernement.

Le rôle des centres culturels dans la mise en œuvre de la politique culturelle nationale, s'appuyant sur les réalités locales et régionales est déjà à l'œuvre. Inventorier les spécificités du patrimoine national et des expressions culturelles est déjà une réalité. Donnons à l'artiste toute sa place dans sa fonction sociale. Ceci engendrera bien entendu des devoirs notamment ce qui s'attache à sa qualité de contribuable.

M. le président, permettez-moi d'insister sur la valorisation de la diversité culturelle. L'objectif fondamental ici est de montrer au plan national que notre pays regorge d'expressions, de pratiques et de produits culturels qui font de l'appartenance identitaire de tout un chacun. Des artistes participent eux aussi au développement du pays, à son économie. Permettez-moi de réaffirmer un principe fondamental qui guiderait notre action, la raison

d'être du ministère de la culture qui réside dans la connaissance et la valorisation de notre riche patrimoine à travers la promotion de la diversité culturelle et le soutien aux acteurs qui font vivre la culture au quotidien.

M. le président, je remercie le Premier ministre et le gouvernement pour son engagement au répertoire et à la valorisation du patrimoine dont l'objectif est de sensibiliser et d'informer la population locale et les diasporas sur leur origine culturelle de montrer que la protection du patrimoine n'étant rien un frein à la modernisation, de structurer les pôles en matière de gestion et d'organisation et de développer les échanges et partenariat. Le village des esclaves à trou Chenille et l'avènement du musée de l'esclavage a l'hôpital militaire en sont la preuve.

M. le président, avant de me porter candidate aux élections législatives 2019, pendant deux ans et demi j'étais à la présidence du *National Women Entrepreneur Council*. J'ai eu le privilège de rencontrer des femmes extraordinaires, talentueuses et courageuses et surtout déterminées à devenir autonomes tout en contribuant à l'économie de leur foyer. Des femmes, membres de ce conseil, qui participent à de nombreux expoventes chaque année à travers l'île dans des espaces ouvertes, dans des centres commerciaux et même dans les hôtels où leur savoir-faire est présenté à une clientèle étrangère.

Je suis convaincue, M. le président, que ces femmes constituent des agents à fort potentiel de développement économique de notre pays. Les faits sont là pour le prouver. Regardons autour de nous ces femmes courages, souvent chefs de familles, réveillées les premières, qui s'endorment après tout le monde, telles des fourmis, elles travaillent toute la journée et sans relâche pour nourrir la famille, scolariser les enfants, les soigner et surtout leur assurer une bonne éducation.

M. le président, l'île Maurice a ainsi une longue tradition de femme entrepreneur. Quand les femmes se lancent en effet dans la voie de l'entrepreneuriat, elles font preuve de beaucoup de vision, de talent, d'énergie et pardessus tout d'une exceptionnelle volonté d'entreprendre et de réussir. Elle constitue une force motrice à plusieurs niveaux en particulier dans le commerce. Quand les femmes avancent, le monde avance avec elle. Quand les femmes avancent, le monde avance avec elle. Ce proverbe africain montre l'importance de l'émancipation de la femme dans le développement de l'économie. En effet, de nombreuses études montrent que la femme a tendance à utiliser ce qu'elle gagne pour les

besoins de sa famille, le réinvestir. Or, les femmes sont particulièrement touchées par l'exclusion financière, la pauvreté et de plus en plus victimes de violence domestique.

Dans le discours-programme, le gouvernement sera implacable dans sa lutte contre toutes sortes de violence, y compris la violence domestique.

Des études ont montré que l'entrepreneuriat féminin bénéficie à l'économie d'un pays, mais peut surtout aider ces femmes victimes de violence domestique.

Cela dit, M. le président, il est une évidence que le monde peut et doit changer, mais qu'il faut y préserver les valeurs de tolérance, d'humanisme et d'acceptation de l'autre et de nos différences.

L'Ile Maurice est un pays formidablement accueillant et tolérant, un pays qui, dans sa grande majorité, accepte de fait sa multi-culturalité, et cela autorise sans doute une forme de vivre ensemble.

Dans l'histoire de nos sociétés, le sport fut parfois, on pourra le regretter, un véhicule idéologique, culte de la force, d'héroïsme. Néanmoins, si le sport s'est parfois vu instrumentaliser à des effets néfastes et sombres, selon les membres de l'Opposition, il est indéniable qu'il a un rôle important à jouer dans notre société actuelle.

Comme nous le savons tous, l'honorable Premier ministre, Pravind Jugnauth, a lancé la politique nationale des sports et de l'activité physique en novembre 2018. L'un des objectifs de cette politique est, en effet, d'encourager davantage de citoyens à pratiquer une activité physique pour une meilleure qualité de vie et de réduire en même temps le nombre de personnes souffrant de maladies non-transmissibles telles que l'hypertension, le diabète, les crises cardiaques. Malheureusement, nous sommes champions dans cette catégorie.

Tout comme les lois qui régissent nos règles de vivre ensemble, le sport influence notre quotidien et peut plus encore contribuer à la cohésion et à la mixité sociale, à l'éducation, à la lutte contre le racisme, mais aussi à la recherche de l'excellence, de la performance, à l'éclosion de talents, au développement économique et à la création de valeur. Nous l'avons d'ailleurs bien ressenti lors des derniers Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien. Je félicite d'ailleurs le gouvernement et le ministre de la Jeunesse et des sports qui, à travers le discours-programme, appelle la population à s'adonner aux activités sportives.

M. le président, la jeunesse mauricienne est l'avenir de notre pays et le sport, comme tout autre domaine, doit être aussi au service du développement économique et culturel d'une

nation. En effet, les activités liées au sport sont pourvoyeuses d'emplois et génèrent de l'activité économique à plusieurs niveaux. Les événements sportifs mobilisent les personnes de toute obédience et c'est là un signe de ce qui constitue la force de la nation mauricienne, une diversité acceptée et nourrie des valeurs partagées, un vivre ensemble sans commune mesure. Le sport aide également à bâtir une culture de paix et de tolérance en rassemblant les acteurs sur un terrain commun par-delà les frontières nationales, afin de promouvoir la compréhension et le respect mutuel.

Aussi, nous pourrions dire sans risque de nous tromper que le sport n'est pas seulement un but en soi, c'est aussi un outil qui aide à améliorer la vie des familles et de communautés entières. Dans cette société où les fléaux sociaux rongent lentement notre jeunesse, le sport peut être vecteur d'une meilleure société, un esprit sain dans un corps sain.

Ensemble, relevons le défi du meilleur, car le meilleur c'est de ce côté de la Chambre qu'il se situe.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Ramyad!

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

Mr S. K. Nuckcheddy rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday 02 March 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 7.51 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 02 March 2020 at 11.30 a.m.