



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2019

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 14 of 2019

Sitting of 19 June 2019

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPER LAID

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

Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

The Annual Report 2016/2017 of the Wastewater Management Authority. (In Original)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

CÔTE D'OR MULTI-SPORTS COMPLEX - MR DING HONG GUANG - DEATH

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the construction site of the Côte d'Or Multi-Sports Complex, he will state –

- (a) the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Ding Hong Guang thereat, indicating whether –
 - (i) he was the holder of a valid work permit, and
 - (ii) the crane involved in the accident which led to the death thereof was duly certified, and
- (b) whether the working and living conditions of the workforce thereat are such that they expose the workforce to fatal accidents.

Mr Callicurn: Madam Speaker, the project for the construction of a Multi-Purpose Sport Complex at Côte d'Or is a major infrastructural project consisting of an Aquatic Centre, a multisport arena, a football stadium and an athletic track.

Construction started in May 2018 and presently there are around 1,170 foreign workers on site.

Madam Speaker, I must inform the House that in accordance with construction laws and International Conditions of Contract, once the site has been handed over to the contractor, the latter has the sole responsibility for those in his employment and must subscribe to an insurance policy to cover associated risks.

The employer, among others, has the following duties –

- (i) to provide and maintain a safe working environment;
- (ii) to provide and maintain any plant or system of work;
- (iii) to ensure that use, handling, storage or transport of articles or substances is safe and without risks to health, and
- (iv) finally, to provide information, instruction, training and supervision as necessary, and ensure the safety and health at work of his employees.

Foreign workers are authorised to take up paid employment in Mauritius either –

- (a) on the basis of a work permit or exemption granted under the Non-Citizens Employment Restriction Act; or

- (b) on the basis of an Occupational Permit delivered by the Economic Development Board under the Immigration Act and in accordance with guidelines issued under the EDB Act 2017.

The law also requires every employer having 500 or more but less than 2,000 employees at one and more places of work to employ at least one or more Safety and Health Officers in full-time employment. In fact, one Mr L.P. has been registered as full-time Safety and Health Officer for that employer.

Madam Speaker, in respect of part (a) of the question, I am informed as follows –

On 13 June 2019, at about 15.00 hrs, a bundle of galvanised tubes measuring six meters in length was being transferred from Aquatic Centre South to Aquatic Centre North by means of a crane. The bundle was attached to the arm of the crane by means of two chains. Late Mr Ding Hong Guang was involved in verifying tiles at the Warmer Swimming Pool when suddenly the bundle of galvanised tubes got detached from the arm and fell on him. He died on the spot.

However, the exact reasons and circumstances can only be known once investigation and inquiries will be completed.

Madam Speaker, this is indeed a very tragic incident and it is very unfortunate that Mr Ding Hong Guang lost his life in such circumstances. I wish to convey my sincere condolences to the family of late Mr Ding Hong Guang on behalf of the Government and myself.

As regards part (a)(i) of the question, I am informed that, on 16 March 2019, China State Engineering Corporation Ltd (Mauritius Branch) made an application for a business visa for technical support in the name of Mr Ding Hong Guang, who arrived in Mauritius on 16 April 2019 on a business visa issued for technical support by the Passport and Immigration Office, which was valid for 30 days. The business visa had expired on 15 May 2019. As such, Mr Ding Hong Guang had overstayed.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed that the crane involved in the accident was of the make Telescopic Tower Crane model QTP300L7526 and had a valid report of examination which will expire on 08 November 2019.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that since construction works have started in May 2018, six inspections have been carried out by the Occupational Health and Safety Unit of my Ministry at regular intervals. Inspections are

carried out in line with the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 and specific regulations falling under the Act, and appropriate recommendations to improve working conditions were issued to the employer. It was also observed that the employer had conducted a risk assessment on 30 August 2018, which was reviewed on 03 April 2019.

Contraventions were established on 16 January 2019 for the following breaches -

- (i) Failing to provide a riving knife which shall be behind an indirect line with the saw blade for the circular sawing machine bearing no., make and serial number, in use at the construction site in breach of Regulation 16(1)(b) of the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare (Woodworking machines) Regulations 1989.
- (ii) Failing to cause the part of the saw blade of the circular sawing machine bearing no., make and serial number, which is above the machined table to be guarded with a strong and easily adjustable guard in breach of Regulation 17(1) of the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare (Woodworking Machines) Regulations 1989.

The case has been lodged at the Industrial Court on 17 June 2019.

As regards to the living conditions of the workforce, China State Construction Engineering Corporation Limited was issued with 14 lodging accommodation permits after inspections of the different accommodations on 21 August, 23 August and 11 October 2018, and after obtaining health and fire clearances from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service in respect of 14 buildings at Cote d'Or, Saint Pierre to lodge 932 guest workers as follows. The list is long, if you don't mind, I will table it.

The lodging accommodations are located around one kilometre away from the construction site.

The 14 lodging accommodations were visited on 18 June 2019 in company of officers from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, and the following observations were made –

- (i) Poor standard of cleanliness inside the lodging accommodations and sanitary conveniences.
- (ii) Overflow of the sewer system leading to foul smell.
- (iii) Insufficient number of wardrobe/lockers for guest workers.

Management has been requested to comply with the discrepancies noted and another joint visit with officers of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will be carried out next week.

During visit carried out on 18 June 2019, it was also observed that the company has made provision to lodge 165 Chinese guest workers in four buildings without holding a lodging accommodation permit in respect of each building. Contraventions have been established for each building for breach of Regulation 6(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2011.

According to our records, the China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd had not provided proper lodging facilities to its workers for the Jin Fei Project. Legal action was initiated against the company, and the company was fined. In view of recurrent breaches committed by the company, my Ministry is closely monitoring the living and working conditions of the workers employed by the company.

An investigation is also being carried out and if findings reveal that there has been any breach of the relevant legislation, legal action will be initiated against the company.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, hon. Minister. Firstly, let me also offer my sincere condolences to the family but also to the co-workers of Mr Hong Guang.

Madam Speaker, Mr Hong Guang entered Mauritius illegally under a business visa and he has been employed illegally by the China State Engineering Company. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether anyone has been arrested at the China State Engineering Company and, if so, why not? Because the case appears extremely clear that this person was working illegally for them in Mauritius.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, actually, under section 3 (1) of the Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act, which provides as follows –

“Subject to this Act, a non-citizen shall not –

(a) engage in any occupation in Mauritius for reward or profit; (...)
unless there is in force, in relation to him, a valid permit (...).”

Further to that, there is a power to grant exemption under section 7, and it applies to Government projects. I understand, in this particular case, the deceased was entitled to benefit from the exemption under the Government projects of Mauritius. He was granted a visa of 30 days when he was entitled to a visa of 90 days.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, it is clear that his business visa did not entitle him to work. Anyway, it had expired. What exemption had the hon. Minister given to China State Engineering Company - tell us, please - and can he table a copy of the exemption that he gave for that project?

Mr Callichurn: The Ministry did not give any exemption, but the law provides for it. They did not ask for an exemption because it is a Government project.

Mr X. L. Duval: My point was that it is illegal employment and it is not now that the hon. Minister is going to give a clearance to something that happened illegally and someone has died. So, please, the hon. Minister should assume his responsibility and it must be prosecuted, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the hon. Minister, since he seems to condone the illegal employment of people at China State Construction Engineering and maybe Metro Express or whatever also, how many workers at China State Construction Engineering are actually working without a valid work permit. Has he enquired since the death of that person?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, first of all, with due respect to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have never stated that no action will be taken as regards the overstay or illegal employment by the current employer. I reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that actions will be taken against the company because 30 days after the expiry of the business visa, it is obvious that the worker was working illegally.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, so, we look forward to some arrests being made in the next few days. Can I continue? How many people are in the same situation as this unfortunate gentleman, working at the moment, today or yesterday for this China State Construction Engineering Corporation without a valid work permit? Please!

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, regular visits are being carried out by the Inspectorate Unit of my Ministry, and we are tracking down those who are working illegally in Mauritius. In any event, there have been cases reported to the Police for missing expatriates but, in this particular case, we are monitoring the situation and we are constantly doing what can be done to trace out those people.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, is he seriously telling the House that one person died, illegally working, and his Ministry has not inquired to see whether there are other similar cases at that same company? Is that what the hon. Minister is saying to the House?

Mr Callichurn: I am not stating that we are sleeping on our laurels. We are doing what is required to trace those illegal workers. Like I said previously, everything will be done according to the legal provisions.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am incapable of finding out whether - the hon. Minister is also incapable of telling us how many other people there are in the same case as this unfortunate gentleman. The inquiry is complete, as the hon. Minister knows, the Police have left the site, the site is reopened, the crane is working again. So, please don't tell me that the inquiry is not complete. I also know that his people went there today, this morning. Let me ask the hon. Minister whether it is not the case that these metal tubes were not securely fastened - obviously - to the crane and that is how it fell. So, is that the case that there has been human mistake and that has led to the death of this person?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, this is a matter for the inquiry to reveal. I cannot answer whether this crane was opened or not. Let the inquiry be completed and then we will know what actually happened on site.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the unfortunate issue is that this crane is operating. Thousands or more people are working there, as we speak. Therefore, it is not a question of waiting for the Police inquiry, for the magistrate or whatever, for years and years. Action needs to be taken immediately, if I may say so. The question is obvious that there has been a lack of training or negligence on the part of some people there, who may still be working on the site as we speak today. Therefore, I would expect the hon. Minister to have taken action immediately following the accident, whether closing of the site, whether suspension of the people responsible, whether whatever action else was taken. It has to have immediate action because I don't want, even for the Government, for there to be another accident at this site because, according to my information, this is the third death on this particular site.

Mr Callichurn: We will closely monitor the situation; I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition this.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I come to this now. This is the third death, fatal accident on that site. Bangladeshi, some time, I think, in May, last year, Chinese person in September and, now, today. This is the third fatal accident there. Is not that clear that there is something horribly going wrong at the construction site?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, the other three fatal accidents mentioned by the hon. Leader of the Opposition are from different circumstances. They have nothing to do with this particular circumstance.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, it seems to be four now, one and another three. Does he not think it is all to do with the very long working hours, very bad working conditions, illegal practice, which has caused the company to be fined, all this together, principally due to the enormous amount of pressure that is being put on China State Engineering to complete the works for this opening of *Jeux des Iles* in a few weeks' time?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, I do not find any correlation between the living conditions and the working conditions. The working conditions and the living conditions are two distinct things. We should put things in its right perspective.

Mr X. L. Duval: It cannot be, Madam Speaker. If the persons are working in unsafe conditions and living in something equivalent to a pigsty, or both, it will affect their ability to concentrate on the work. Therefore, I am going to ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken note of an article in *L'Express*, a few days ago, of the horrible, horrendous living conditions of these persons. Obviously, you have had an inspection, I think, yesterday; you said 18 June. How come the Ministry, with such a big construction site, had to wait for a death and had to wait for a horrible article in *L'Express* to act and to issue warnings, etc.? How is it that all these inspectors are working and nobody - is it *complaisance*, is it a conflict of interest, is it corruption? What is it? The fact that your inspectors, when they have gone there, have not found anything wrong.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, I need to clarify one thing. We have thousands of construction sites all across the island and we have a limited number of inspectors going to inspect those sites. It is obvious that we will not be able to secure all the sites and, for this particular site, we have carried out six inspections, three this year itself, and we have drawn contraventions for breach of different sections of the OSHA.

Mr X. L. Duval: Therefore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what conclusion does he draw from the fact that improvements have not been made. I will table a copy of this picture taken by *L'Express*, Madam Speaker - clearly, faecal matter near to the dormitory. This is not acceptable in Mauritius 2019, Madam Speaker. What conclusion, what is he going to do about it? Are we going to continue in this system?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, in my reply, I stated that a notice has been issued to the employer and, in case of non-compliance, prosecution will be initiated for the matter being referred to by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I have mentioned it in my reply.

Mr X. L. Duval: There have been three or four deaths already. How many deaths are required before the hon. Minister can issue and revoke the lodging permit and put a Stop Order on that construction site? Notwithstanding the fact that it will not be open, it is not worth lives of people just to be able to open on 19 July. Why does not he issue an immediate Stop Order on the construction and close down these lodgings which are unfit for human habitation, so that, in fact, we can actually have some decent and safe conditions for over a thousand workers working there, who are our guests in this country?

Mr Callichurn: I again repeat, Madam Speaker. Management has been requested to comply with the discrepancies. Another joint visit is scheduled together with the Ministry of Health next week. Coming back to the previous question, Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that the total number of visits carried out by the inspectors of my Ministry amounts to 1,417 from January 2018 to May 2019, despite the limited number of officers I have. We have also investigated 40 complaints, issued 62 Prohibition Orders and established 67 contraventions altogether.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is not time to start actions for criminal negligence against these persons and also ask him whether it is not time to substantially increase - I think it is called like that - the Special Migrant Unit at his Ministry. We have been criticised by the UN, by the US for many, many years back because of our failure to properly provide for the safety and comfort and living conditions of foreign workers here.

Mr Callichurn: Well, this is the case, Madam Speaker. We have requested the Ministry of Finance to provide us with more officers, and I am glad to announce that, in this Budget, provisions have been made for more officers to be attached at the Department. But, still, we need to do more. But we are working in close collaboration, because the issue of lodging and accommodation permit does not just concern my Ministry. It concerns the Ministry of Health, the Fire and Rescue Service as well, and we are working...

(Interruptions)

Listen to this! Although with the limited number of officers, together with the Ministry of Health, we are being able to go on site and to do proper investigation, proper inspection where it requires.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have six minutes left and it is up to you to decide whether you want to give the floor to others.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you. I will try to, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, recently, the hon. Prime Minister, during the Eid gathering, I have raised the issue, nicely, about the issue of foreign workers working. I was told, in fact: ‘No, the Government has taken all the necessary provisions.’ And now, the hon. Minister is telling us he does not have enough people; the laws do not allow him, apparently, to take action, and the situation is worse than before. I am not playing politics with this. People are dying; people are suffering on Mauritian soil. I am asking the hon. Minister what, concretely, is he going to do so that, as from tomorrow, *maltraitance* of the foreign workers in Mauritius stops in Mauritius, and we put a full stop to this.

The Prime Minister: May I, on a point of personal explanation, Madam Speaker. On that very day, I did not say that Government had taken all the necessary precautions. I hope the hon. hon. Leader of the Opposition will correct. I stated in reply, in fact, to his intervention, that a number of improvements have been made, namely the minimum wage and so on. This is what I stated. I hope, honestly, Leader of the Opposition, you will acknowledge that.

Mr X. L. Duval: This is what he is reported to have said, Madam Speaker: “*A notre arrivée au pouvoir, nous avons introduit des normes.*” Obviously, *introduire des normes et appliquer des normes*, we find it is not the same thing. Now, I think we can agree.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, therefore, let me continue with my questions.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr X.L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have given way once.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: You don’t want to give way?

Mr X.L. Duval: But you will not deduct it from my time, please.

The Prime Minister: Yes, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was there, present himself, and he is quoting from newspaper, what is reported. I mean, he has to be serious!

Mr X. L. Duval: I am quoting this time, but I am not supporting. Madam Speaker, I will...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, then, do you agree with what the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Then, we will have to check and then...

Mr X. L. Duval: Please check! It is my pleasure that you check.

Madam Speaker, I am not saying this. I am just saying that we should not be complacent, that's all. *Introduire des normes et appliquer des normes*, two totally different things, Mr Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, let me continue. Therefore, all I am asking here again is what are we going to do as from tomorrow? Because I do not want to see in the papers another article saying how inhumanely we are treating foreign guests in this country. What is the commitment, whether it is doubling, trebling, the number of people in the Unit, I don't care. What are the immediate and strong steps that the hon. Minister will take, please?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, since I have been appointed Minister and since this Government is in place, we have done considerable progress on the issue of health and safety of foreign workers working in this country. In 2016, Madam Speaker, we took the initiative of setting up a full-fledged construction unit and a lodging/accommodation unit.

The issue of fatal accidents is not an issue which was here yesterday. It was there when the Labour Party and the PMSD were in Government as well. Unfortunately, I don't have the figures with me, but...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Hon Jhugroo, please! Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Callichurn: The issue of fatal accidents, it is a mishap, it happens. To correct the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker, at no point in time, I mentioned that the law does not permit my Ministry to take action against defaulters of the OSHA.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a little question to the hon. Minister of Labour. With regard to the crane operator who was operating the crane, have your officers found out whether this crane operator was licensed to operate and, if he was so licensed, when was the licence issued to him and by whom?

Mr Callichurn: Unfortunately, I don't have the information at hand now, but there is an inquiry going on. I am sure that the Police will inquire on this aspect.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding the regular site visits that your officers do on site, what is the rationale between the number of visits and the number of workers who are on site? We all understand now that there are thousands of workers. At what regular intervals do your officers go there?

Mr Callichurn: I have just mentioned that the number of visits carried out from January 2018 to May 2019 is 1,417.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, last question!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, all through this PNQ, we have heard the hon. Minister saying that he has done this and that, but to no real effect. If he is serious and genuine about it, he will see that the situation there is dangerous and the living conditions are terrible. There has also been a death, I think, at Metro Express site. I would like to ask the hon. Minister to take this whole thing very seriously to ensure that he has enough resources from the Ministry of Finance in terms of human resources and financial resources, and that the law is toughened substantially so that this unfortunate death becomes the last death on a construction site in our country.

Mr Callichurn: We are, Madam Speaker, at the Ministry, taking the issue of fatal accidents very seriously and we are doing our utmost best to address the issue. Inspections are being carried out on a regular basis. Let me reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that any company which breaches any provision of the OSHA will be prosecuted.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

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

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

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2019-2020) BILL 2019

(NO. X OF 2019)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2019-2020) Bill 2019 (No. X of 2019).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Benydin!

(12.10 p.m.)

Mr T. Benydin (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is indeed with a feeling of satisfaction that we note that again hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is meeting the expectations of the population with a series of measures contained in the Budget, particular those geared at improving the economic situation coupled with a series of bold, social policies to enhance living standards and to boost purchasing power of workers and their families in general.

En fait, c'est un budget robuste, réaliste et réalisable. The outcome of the impressive policies in the budget is also the result of consultation with the social partners and civil society representatives conducted in a true spirit of social dialogue and the principles of participatory democracy. Hon. Prime Minister, you have proved, through the exercise of consultations, that you are, yourself, a symbol of social dialogue and a man of consensus.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Benydin, you don't address yourself to the hon. Prime Minister, you address yourself to the Chair, but you can refer to the hon. Prime Minister, please.

Mr Benydin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this Budget also addresses a lot of measures aimed at modernising the country at a time when the world economy is undergoing serious difficulties particularly with the trade war between China and the US, conflicting views in the UK on the issue of Brexit, etc.

In comparison with other countries in the region and even with the industrialised countries, it is remarkable that Mauritius is doing relatively well with a forecasted growth rate of 3.9% in 2019 and expected 4.1 for year 2020.

Madam Speaker, hier l'honorable Jhuboo, qui est un député rouge voit tout en rouge. Il dit qu'il voit la dette en rouge, il voit le taux de croissance en rouge tandis que nous, notre gouvernement a introduit le *negative income tax*, eux, dans l'opposition, il conjugue tout en négatif comme ils n'ont rien d'alternative à offrir au peuple et de l'autre côté de la Chambre aussi on a vu, par exemple, encore l'honorable Jhuboo et d'autres encore, ils parlent d'un budget réchauffé, mais moi je vois plutôt ce sont des slogans réchauffés. Year in, year out, they come with the same slogans. Avant même d'avoir écouté le budget, ils ont déjà préparé leur slogan, dégoûtant, révoltant, ils ne sont pas satisfaits. Donc, c'est ça qu'on appelle du réchauffé.

Madam Speaker, hier aussi j'ai entendu, comme j'ai dit l'honorable Jhuboo voit tout en rouge, hier il a fait référence à une liste de pays africains entre autres et disait que Maurice n'était pas sur la liste de la croissance économique, mais pourquoi il n'a pas dit, 'moi je ne vois pas' il disait hier. Il disait qu'il ne voit pas Maurice, il voit d'autres pays, mais pourquoi il n'a pas vu, par exemple, la France. La croissance qui devait s'affermir de 2,1%. C'est dans ce même document. Moi aussi j'ai eu accès à ce document. C'est maintenant à 2% en France. L'Allemagne a chuté de 2.5% à 2% cette année. En Italie, la croissance est tombée de 1.5% à 1.1%. Au Royaume-Uni, la croissance qui était 1.6% est maintenant à 1.5%. Je me souviens parmi cette liste, l'honorable Jhuboo avait aussi cite un pays que je connais bien, le Togo. Je connais bien ce pays parce qu'en temps de syndicaliste, j'étais, moi-même, le président de la régionale africaine qui est basée au Togo. Je connais ce qu'on appelle la croissance. Quand on fait des débats à l'échelon international, mes amis africains avaient l'habitude de dire, quand on parle de croissance économique – eux qu'est-ce qu'ils veulent ? Ils veulent avoir du travail. Ils veulent avoir quelque chose à manger, de la bonne santé, de l'éducation. Ils disaient toujours la croissance ça ne se mange pas. Donc, est-ce qu'à l'île Maurice, nous avons des problèmes de malnutrition ? Est-ce que nous sommes si pauvres ? Ils parlent aussi du fait que le taux de tourisme est en train de baisser. Pourquoi ? Parce que, eux, dans

l'Opposition, ils donnent une image très négative : l'environnement, le pays est sale. L'autre disait l'autre jour pour l'eau, il n'y a pas de 24/7, il y a 24 sec. Mais s'il y avait 24 sec, je vois les membres de l'Opposition très propres, bien baignés. Où ils ont eu l'eau ? Cessez de faire de la démagogie.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Benydin: Et puis, j'ai entendu aussi de l'autre côté de la Chambre parler de vendetta, vengeance politique quand certains sont arrêtés. Vous pouvez rire, qui rira bien rira le dernier. Moi-même en tant que syndicaliste, combien de fois n'ai-je pas été arrêté par le gouvernement rouge parce que je défendais les travailleurs ? Alors, à cette époque-là, c'était bien fait. Donc, il faut que vous vous regardiez dans le miroir. Je n'ai jamais été arrêté par Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Pour la petite histoire, même certains de mes amis syndicalistes quand Sir Anerood Jugnauth était encore jeune, ils allaient le voir pour dire - parce que moi, j'étais un peu trop *voiceful*, la grande gueule - il faut finir avec Benydin et Sir Anerood Jugnauth avait dit : 'Si vous pouvez faire vous comme lui, qui défend les travailleurs, faites pareil comme lui' et ils sont rentrés bredouilles. Donc, c'est un homme qui reconnaît la valeur des gens, des patriotes qui travaillent pour leur pays.

(Interruptions)

Faute d'arguments. In economic terms, the Opposition is now suffering from the syndrome of the laws of diminishing returns. To this end, what are they doing? They keep rocking the boat to make you believe that there is a tempest at sea, but the tempest is on their side. Why do not hon. Jhuboo and other honourable Members on the other side make reference to the low rate of inflation in Mauritius which is now at 2.3% and forecasted by Statistics Mauritius to 1.5% for year 2019. They are keeping silent purposely because low inflation permits economies to perform best and, in particular, to generate high levels of economic growth and employment generation. It is not Toolsyraj Benydin who is saying this. The source is from the economic and labour market papers of the ILO which says that when the inflation rate is low, it is good, the economy can perform better.

Now, Madam Speaker, the employment rate is also declining and it stands now at 6.9%. The economy has also generated a total of Rs91 billion as balance of payment surplus.

Another remarkable breakthrough is the increase of our country's reserve to Rs241 billion representing 11.2 months of import cover. Through this Budget, Government will

meet growing challenges by charting the avenues to address a brighter future together as a nation by strengthening pillars of economic development. Over the last two decades, the financial sector of Mauritius has developed into one of the main pillars. Mauritius has forged a strong reputation as a premier international financial centre and today, Mauritius is internationally recognized as a trusted investment centre for cross border investment with a proven track record. The island remains committed to tax information exchange transparency and adherence to best practices as set out by leading institutions including the OECD, IMF and other standard setting bodies.

The Mauritius Vision 2030, Madam Speaker, relies a lot on the digital economy and lays much emphasis on innovation, creativity, sustainable development and high value addition. The BPO sector has opened new horizons and includes financial and legal services while multimedia development is a major trend.

Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that the phenomenon of digitalisation is the biggest driver of innovation across businesses. Today, virtually all commerce is digital – e-commerce, computing online payment services, high speed trading, online advertising, participative networked platforms. Therefore, the digitalisation of public services will play a crucial role through the implementation of a series of measures such as implementation of e-health.

Madam Speaker, permit me now because of time factor, I cannot speak a lot, but I would like to go to my Constituency. During the debates, I have also listened carefully to comments made by some hon. Members on the opposite side regarding the rate of youth unemployment, but they should understand that this issue is not only a national problem but also an international one faced by many countries. This subject has been raised on various international forums at the United Nations, the World Bank and the ILO. Youth unemployment to a certain extent is related to the high number of graduates not finding jobs because of the mismatch issue and the growing number of graduates emerging every year. There is also the fact that many young people still favour public sector employment due to its social status and job security. So, this is one of the factors contributing to unemployment among the youth.

Madam Speaker, I would like to stress on the role played by Parliamentary Private Secretaries to bring development at the doorsteps of citizens of our country. Gone are the days when PPSs were considered as mere bureaucrats. With the growing challenges,

particularly complicated by the vagaries of the weather and climate change, PPSs today concentrate most of their time on the field, effecting regular site visits, overseeing works that are being done, and attending to numerous requests from our mandates and the population in general. So much so, Madam Speaker, that I would like, here, to thank the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for his total support in helping me as a PPS to develop Constituency Nos. 15 and 18 in terms of projects related to roads, drain works and public amenities.

Only for Constituency No. 15, in the past four and a half years, Government, through the NDU, has already invested nearly Rs400 m. Because of lack of time, I would not be in a position to give all the breakdowns, but I will just name some. For roads and resurfacing it costs around Rs50 m. Drain works, around Rs18 m. and public amenities, 12 completed projects; NDU funded the projects also. We gave clearances to Local Authorities, Municipalities for around Rs10 m. for road works; Rs102 m. for drain projects and 8 public amenities projects of around Rs21 m., totalling a sum of around Rs134 m.

I still remember, Madam Speaker, in his first year as Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth visited the gymkhana site where the synthetic mini soccer pitch, the open gym and children playground were still at a conceptual stage. He asked when these projects would be finalised. A year after, the hon. Prime Minister inaugurated all these projects. It is good to note that the NDU also financed another synthetic mini soccer at Parisot Road, Mesnil, and we have upgraded the Petit Camp and Hermitage football grounds, just to show how caring this Government is to look after the welfare of our youth as well as in the effort to combat social ills and provide safer activities to youngsters.

Let alone the already materialised projects, many projects are still ongoing to the tune of more than Rs100 m. and we are awaiting the final clearances to implement another major project, that of the Hollywood bridge itself, a project which will cost around Rs53 m. As we can see, this Government do not construct narrow, domestic walls to divide people; we construct bridges to bring people together. That is why we are involved in that.

The wastewater projects at Highlands, which our mandates have been looking for years, will soon be completed. Works at Nehru Road, Saint Paul have already started, and here, I would like to say that the previous Government did not do anything to replace the old pipes. Our Constituency No. 15, la Caverne/Phoenix is also undergoing vast road infrastructure works at Pont Fer, Phoenix, Dowlut and Jumbo roundabouts. In line with

Government's programme of traffic decongestion which inspired my colleague, hon. Soodhun to vision Vacoas/Phoenix as a New York City. May his dreams come true! I and my colleagues, hon. Minister Boissézon, hon. Soodhun and Dr. Sorefan will be further spoilt with the construction of two new hospitals.

Yesterday, I heard my good friend, hon. Abbas Mamode, saying that there is no ENT hospital. He should come and have a walk in Vacoas, he will see. It is almost reaching completion.

(Interruptions)

Nous pu coupe ruban bientôt!

ENT Hospital, Cancer Hospital! They are workings at night on Jumbo road to Paillotte.

(Interruptions)

The work started already. You are walking too much in Port Louis! Come for a walk in Vacoas and you will see for yourself!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Benydin, please resume your seat! I have told you earlier that you should not address yourself to any - well, I said to the hon. Prime Minister earlier - other hon. Member on this side. You cannot have a dialogue with them. You have to have your speech, but you address yourself to the Chair, please!

Mr Benydin: Because he is a friend, I just have a look at him!

Madam Speaker: Please sit down! When you say so, it means that you are contesting my decision. Everybody is friends over here. But when you are in this Chamber, you have to adhere to the rules.

Mr Benydin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes, where I am also the PPS, important projects have been completed. For the construction of new roads along Perimeter, La Source, Sports complex: Rs5.4 m. Upgrading and tarring of Quatre Bornes Police Station - we take care of Police Stations also - premises: Rs5.7 m.; resurfacing of a number of roads at St Jean lateral road No. 2, SSR Avenue, Quatre Bornes; drain works at Hilary road which has just been completed, where it was flooding during heavy rainfall. We have completed this work, near Candos Stadium for nearly Rs5 m.; construction of absorption drain at Rotin No. 1; fixing of a new panel fence at Ollier children playground: Rs2 m; extension of cremation no. 1, La Source; ongoing projects, including volleyball and basketball pitch; Navin Soonarane Sports Complex, Ebene:

Rs10 m.; lighting at Quatre Bornes market fair and mini soccer pitch at Ollier: Rs5 m. Also, we have to play fairly with regard to construction of bridges. A big bridge in Hollywood, now, there will be another project for bridge enlargement at Old Moka Road, St Louis to be estimated at around Rs62 m. is now at design stage. Two new covered funeral pyres at Palma Cremation ground at bid evaluation stage and a new incinerator, almost 75% of work completed, at Corps de Garde, Berthaud. Financial clearance amounting to around Rs20 m. is also granted to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes to undertake projects related to amenities, drains and upgrading of roads. Quatre Bornes will be further modernised with Metro Express project.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, contrary to the former PPS of Constituency No. 18, I learnt it from the former Vice-Prime Minister who is now in the Opposition, that during a function, he publicly voiced out that the former PPS never put his feet at the CAB, Quatre Bornes. As you can witness, with the achievement realised, I have not, as PPS, neglected Constituency No. 18 at all. Hon. Dr. Boolell would appreciate, I am sure.

For the forthcoming elections, we, MSM/ML, will still be here to form the next Government. *Nous avons le vent en poupe suite aux réactions positives de la population en faveur des mesures budgétaires. Donc, cela constitue, comme on le dit, un élan irréversible vers une victoire écrasante de notre alliance.* We are not afraid of elections and, for sure, we shall overcome. *J'avais l'habitude de chanter cette chanson quand on menait des grands combats au sein du mouvement syndical, même au niveau de la politique, cette chanson tient toujours dans mon cœur. C'est pourquoi je voudrais la réitérer aujourd'hui.*

Madam Speaker, when they were speaking, I heard also about underemployment. I look at you, Madam Speaker. Even Members, on the opposite side, who were sitting here, had a contract, they were elected by *l'Alliance Lepep*, and among them, they were in full employment, Deputy Prime Minister, now underemployed. On the other side, we had Ministers, even hon. Baboo, you could have done well in the Ministry of Arts and Culture, but you choose to be underemployed, you are on the other side. Mrs Perraud also, yesterday, asking questions on CEDAW, yes, a discussion with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. But she could have done well, but she chooses also to be underemployed. My colleague, who never walks in Vacoas, was a PPS, PPS could have done a lot, but he chooses to be on the other side, just to criticise. So, what I want to say is that it is also a choice.

When people are graduated, they get a job, it is up to them to choose the type of job they want. And also, I would like to say, because they are criticising, you must never forget, two years you were in this Government. So, if you say that nothing has been done, you must assume 50% of the responsibilities and say: 'We have been inactive also, we have been ineffective.' Why? When you were Minister, oh, that was nice! When you were PPS, it was very good. When you are on the other side, you say nothing has been done. I leave it to the population to come with their own judgment.

Madam Speaker, I am sure and certain because of the work we are doing, you can go in all the constituencies. I talk for Constituency No. 15, ask my friend, hon. Boissézon, ask my friend, hon. Soodhun, even if he is not here, I am sure he is on the field in No. 15, working very hard. So, the work of a MP is also in Parliament, but the majority of work has to be done on the field. You have to be near to your mandates, and we have no doubt that all the Members here are working for the welfare of our country; they are true patriots and patriots, never fear!

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

(12.37 p.m.)

Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Madame la présidente, en écoutant l'orateur qui m'a précédé au début de son intervention, je me suis dit que cela ne vaut même pas la peine de lui répondre. Je ne m'attendais pas à ce niveau de discours. Et la question que je me suis posée quand il s'est référé aux membres de l'opposition qui prennent une douche pour venir au Parlement, je me suis dit : 'Tiens, est-ce que les membres du gouvernement ne prennent pas de douche pour venir au Parlement ?'

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please! Order!

Mrs Perraud: Au départ, je ne m'attendais pas à ce niveau de discours. Mais autre chose à quoi je ne m'attendais pas, qu'aujourd'hui, moi, Aurore Perraud, membre de l'opposition : *mo pou tap la tab pou enn membr gouvernema zordi*. J'explique pourquoi *mo pou tap la tab pou un membr du gouvernema zordi*.

Je voudrais remercier l'honorable Benydin d'avoir évoqué le sujet. Oui, l'honorable Benydin, nous avons choisi de venir de ce côté de la Chambre, l'ancien *Deputy Prime*

Minister, les ministres, les *PPS*, les députés du *PMSD*, c'était notre choix. Nous avons pris cette décision parce qu'au *PMSD*, nous sommes des gladiateurs de liberté. Nous avons voulu sauver la liberté du Judiciaire. Nous avons voulu sauver l'indépendance du *DPP*. Vraiment, je vous remercie, je ne m'attendais à ce que j'ai cette chance aujourd'hui d'en parler.

Et, Madame la présidente, il ne s'est pas passé une seule minute, un seul jour où on a regretté cette décision. Alors, je vous le dis, c'est la meilleure décision que nous avons prise, d'avoir quitté le gouvernement parce que, pour nous, notre slogan, c'est 'L'île Maurice avant tout'. Ce que vous dites, vous qualifiez de *underemployment*, nous, on le qualifie d'intégrité, de patriotisme. J'espère que vous pourrez, honorable Benydin, comprendre ces termes. *I am done with you*.

Madam Speaker, the title, the theme chosen by the Government for the Budget 2019-2020 is beautifully spelt out: 'Embracing a Brighter Future Together as a Nation'. *Un titre accrocheur, un titre politiquement correct!* However, Madam Speaker, I doubt that the content of the Budget is in line with the title. 'A brighter future', you say. Many orators have demonstrated how the future is gloomy and full of uncertainties. Both in this House and outside of the House, people are ringing the alarm bell concerning the economy of the country. So, my question is: how can we embrace? Embrace means 'welcome with open arms' this budget. Madam Speaker, many groups of Mauritians are being left out in this Budget. How can the Government talk about 'together as a nation'?

Madame la présidente, le leader de l'opposition l'a souligné, un des grands absents de ce budget est sans nul doute le rapport Lam Shang Leen sur la drogue. Un autre oublié est le rapport de la Convention internationale sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale dans la République de Maurice, et pourtant, c'est un rapport des Nations Unies.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, to quote from the report. I am quoting paragraph 27 from the report.

Madam Speaker: Of which report?

Mrs Perraud: It is the 'Concluding observations on the combined twentieth to twenty-third periodic reports of Mauritius'.

Madam Speaker: Concerning?

Mrs Perraud: ‘Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination’. I already stated it in my speech.

Madam Speaker: No, you’ve mentioned two reports, that’s why I wanted to know which report.

Mrs Perraud: Okay, thank you, Madam Speaker. So, I quote paragraph 27 –

“The Committee urges the State party to adopt and implement, with the participation of representatives of the Creoles, a well-resourced strategy to address the deep-rooted discrimination faced by the Creoles, including those living on Agaléga and Rodrigues Islands. The Committee also recommends that the State party assess the effectiveness of the measures taken, and design and implement other measures, including special measures, in close collaboration with the communities concerned and relevant civil society organisations, to ensure that the Creoles have effective access to employment, adequate housing, health-care services and quality inclusive education.”

Donc, Madame la présidente, pourquoi je préfère utiliser la langue française au Parlement, c’est surtout parce que beaucoup de mes mandants, ils regardent les travaux parlementaires et c’est plus facile pour eux de comprendre quelles décisions on est en train de prendre pour eux, ce qu’on est en train de dire, comment est-ce qu’on défend leur intérêt. Parce que bien qu’une autre recommandation de ce rapport que je vais vous lire où on mentionne, on dit bien, *paragraph 28, I quote –*

“The Committee notes with satisfaction the measures taken to promote the use of the Creole language. It remains, however, concerned that it still does not enjoy official status, despite being the common language spoken by most Mauritians and taught at schools.”

Donc, on ne peut pas utiliser la langue créole au Parlement malgré cette recommandation. Je me rappelle, lorsque j’étais ministre, lors d’une de mes interventions sur un projet de loi, j’avais suggéré, demandé à la Chambre qu’on puisse utiliser la langue créole. Et je me rappelle très bien quelle a été la réaction et la réponse du Premier ministre à l’époque, le ministre Mentor, il m’avait regardé et il m’avait dit ‘*zamaï!*’.

On ne peut pas utiliser la langue créole au Parlement. Donc, je préfère utiliser la langue française qui est beaucoup plus accessible à un plus grand nombre de mes mandants dans ma circonscription.

Donc, pour revenir à ce rapport, la question que je me pose sur le budget est : comment peut-on prétendre vouloir accueillir à bras ouverts - *embracing*, n'est-ce pas - un avenir brillant ensemble, comme une nation, si ce rapport, le rapport que je viens de mentionner qui concerne une grande partie de la population est méprisée.

Madame la présidente, le budget, c'est le moment important, idéal pour redresser la situation, pour faire justice à ceux qui sont les plus vulnérables et les plus désavantagés pour des raisons historiques, culturelles, politiques et économiques. Le budget, c'est bien le moment pour partager le gâteau national de façon équitable et juste.

Madame la présidente, si on pratique la politique de l'autruche, on ne veut pas voir, on ne veut pas comprendre, on ne veut pas admettre que la discrimination existe belle et bien. Si on va jusqu'à mépriser le rapport des Nations Unies, s'il n'y a aucune volonté politique, c'est ne pas surprenant que le budget n'apporte pas de justice sociale. *So, Madam Speaker, how can this Budget be embracing a brighter future together as a nation?*

Madam Speaker, last month the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, presented a well-being budget.

"Budget priorities were based on what would make contribution to New Zealand's living standards and wellbeing", she says.

The Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern stated, and I quote –

"We said that we would be a government that did things differently, and for this budget we have done just that."

Madam Speaker, do you remember *l'Alliance Lepep*? Do you remember that *l'Alliance Lepep* campaigned for a change, *viré mam*. Where is the change?

The Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern also added, and I quote –

"Today we have laid the foundation for not just one wellbeing budget, but a different approach for government decision-making altogether."

Madam Speaker, this is what we call a compassionate and strong leader.

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from a book, this book 'Political Coaching: Self-Actualizing politics and politicians'. It is a book which is written by Dr. Michael Hall. And I was honoured to meet Dr. Michael Hall a few weeks ago in a very effective, interesting and fruitful training. I would like to quote from page 15. He says this –

“Politics is designed to cultivate the good life. We create politics to develop our social group so that the people in the group can live the kind and quality of lives that they wish to live to satisfy the basic human needs and to then fulfil the highest of human dreams and potentials.”

This is what Dr. Michael Hall said.

Madame la présidente, tout est dit dans cette citation, encore faut-il l'appliquer. Dans ce budget, j'aurais voulu voir plus d'argent injecter dans la réhabilitation des jeunes aux RYC, *Rehabilitation Youth Centre*, plus de considération dans le budget pour améliorer leur environnement. J'aurais voulu voir plus de fond pour les personnes souffrant du VIH/SIDA, pour la réhabilitation des prisonniers. J'aurais voulu voir un meilleur système de *CSR* qui aidera vraiment les ONG, ceux qui font un travail formidable dans la société. Et tous ces sujets que je viens de mentionner, j'en ai longuement parlé lors de mes différentes interventions dans cette Chambre.

Madame la présidente, j'ai choisi une autre citation, celle d'Emmanuel Cherehus. Cet auteur ne fait pas la fiction, et il dit ceci –

« Tant qu'il n'y a pas une justice sociale, la répartition équitable de la richesse collective entre les membres de la société, il n'y aura plus de paix dans la cité. »

Cette citation illustre bien le sujet d'aujourd'hui, comment distribuer et répartir de façon équitable la richesse collective. Est-ce que le budget 2019-2020 parvient à le faire. Le budget, c'est le gâteau national. Qui sont ceux qui ont de larges parts ? Qui sont ceux qui doivent se contenter de peu ? Qui sont ceux qui restent sur leur faim ? Et qui sont ceux qui ont été les oubliés ?

J'ai choisi d'axer mon discours sur l'aspect humain et social, car je crois fermement qu'il ne suffit pas de baisser le prix de la bonbonne de gaz, de baisser le prix de l'essence, d'augmenter la pension de vieillesse à R 500 l'année prochaine, de donner une augmentation ridicule de R 30 aux pêcheurs pour se bomber le torse et dire que ce budget *put people first*.

Madame la présidente, je vais développer mon discours en quatre temps, d'abord, je vais élaborer sur le budget pour le secteur éducatif, ensuite, le ministère de l'Égalité des genres, du développement de l'enfant et du bien-être de la famille, et aussi, sur ma circonscription.

Donc, Madame la présidente, une enveloppe de R 17.1 milliards a été allouée au secteur de l'éducation, ce qui représente une grosse part du budget national. Une très bonne chose, un bon investissement pour la nation mauricienne, car nous savons tous que l'éducation est un pilier important dans toute société qui a de grandes ambitions pour la réussite de son peuple.

Mais, Madame la présidente, lorsque nous étudions de près ce secteur, nous constatons que d'année après année de nouveaux concepts, de nouveaux projets sont introduits sans toutefois donner de très bons résultats. Rien que pour mentionner un exemple les trois centres polytechniques qui luttent et peinent toujours à attirer les étudiants.

Aujourd'hui, on vient annoncer en grande pompe la construction d'un *Education Hub*, à Côte-d'Or. La question qui se pose est, avons-nous besoin de ce projet ? Avons-nous besoin d'injecter de l'argent public dans ce projet, et est-ce une priorité ?

Madame la présidente, pourquoi ne pas mettre plus d'effort, de ressources et prendre des mesures courageuses pour attirer les étudiants vers les trois centres polytechniques existants ? Est-ce que la création d'un *Education Hub* à Côte-d'Or est prise parce que le leader de l'opposition a attiré l'attention du gouvernement lors d'une *PNQ* le 22 juin 2018 - l'année dernière - que le complexe de Côte-d'Or risque d'être un complexe fantôme après les Jeux des Iles ? Est-ce que c'est une mesure prise à la va-vite pour répondre aux critiques ? Donc, le gouvernement concède que le leader de l'opposition a raison.

Madame la présidente, nous savons tous que l'université de technologie attend toujours un nouveau campus, mais jusqu'à maintenant, rien. Donc, nous sommes non seulement sceptiques quant à la création de ce *Education Hub*, mais surtout, nous remettons en question l'urgence et la priorité qu'on donne à ce projet alors que le secteur de l'éducation fait face à d'autres défis, à d'autres problèmes plus urgents et plus pressants, et qui méritent qu'on leur accorde une attention particulière.

Madame la présidente, mon point est de savoir quelle est notre priorité dans ce secteur. Est-ce que nous mettons de l'argent là où il le faut ? Le gouvernement annonce dans le budget que les fonds sont alloués pour la construction et la rénovation de huit écoles publiques, de six *multipurpose halls*, de quatre cours de récréation, de trois nouvelles salles de science et de trois gymnases. Nous accueillons ces mesures, c'est une bonne chose, mais on aurait pu faire mieux. Il fallait que chaque école soit dotée de toutes ces facilités, qui sont des facilités de base, procurer à tous les élèves de toutes les écoles un environnement où ils

peuvent grandir, s'épanouir, se développer et où l'éducation peut prendre place. Alors pourquoi investir dans un *Education Hub* ? Gaspiller de l'argent, alors que dans certaines écoles les toilettes sont dans un piteux état. Rien que les toilettes ! Pourquoi investir dans l'aménagement d'un nouveau bâtiment si les écoles sont dépourvues d'infrastructures sportives et de loisirs ? Un bâtiment ne résoudrait en rien les gros problèmes urgents dont fait face le secteur éducatif en ce moment. Le secteur de l'éducation est secoué par le problème de manque de discipline, problème de violence, de drogue. Malheureusement, nous avons pu visionner, avec effroi, et nous avons été choqués - je sais que vous aimez bien ce mot-là, choqués - par les différentes vidéos qui circulaient sur les réseaux sociaux ces derniers temps. Ces vidéos démontrent l'extrême violence, le langage ordurier, vulgaire, injurieux des 'acteurs' dans la vidéo, mais aussi la passivité des spectateurs et le voyeurisme, et la délectation des internautes ne nous laissent pas insensibles. Cela nous interpelle, ou du moins, cela devrait nous interpeller. Et ça, c'est un problème urgent.

Madame la présidente, il faut prendre le taureau par les cornes et s'attaquer à ce problème, trouver des solutions le plus vite possible. Nous, les adultes, nous les décideurs politiques, nous avons la responsabilité de protéger, d'éduquer et de donner le meilleur environnement à nos enfants. On peut lire à la page 44 du budget, paragraphe 242, que pour promouvoir le bien-être psychologique et social des étudiants, le ministre des Finances fait des provisions pour le recrutement de huit psychologues, six travailleurs sociaux et de 34 *Discipline Masters*.

Madame la présidente, lorsque j'ai entendu cette annonce, j'ai dit : 'Formidable, vraiment formidable ! C'est ce qu'il faut.' - j'ai même failli taper la table. En tant qu'éducatrice de carrière, ayant une formation psychologique et maman surtout, je me suis réjouie de cette mesure budgétaire. Et Madame la présidente, c'était trop beau pour être vrai. Ma joie a été de très courte durée. Je cherche dans les *Estimates 2019/2020* pour voir dans quel secteur on va pourvoir à ces postes. Dans le secteur primaire, on prévoit la création de nouveaux postes d'*Educational Social Worker* ainsi que d'*Educational Psychologist* et dans le secteur secondaire aussi, c'est la même chose, création de quatre nouveaux postes d'*Educational Psychologist*, mais pas de changement pour l'*Educational Social Worker*. Le nombre reste le même. Et j'ai épluché l'*Estimates 2019/2020*, mais je n'ai pas trouvé la création des postes pour les 34 *Discipline Masters*. J'espère que, l'honorable ministre, lors de son intervention, elle va nous éclairer dessus et que ce ne sera pas une déception, et qu'il y a

aura effectivement ces 34 postes de *Discipline Masters*. Mais quand j'ai cherché dans l'*Estimates*, je ne l'ai pas trouvé.

Souvent, j'interviens, Madame la présidente, ici, dans cette Chambre, et ailleurs, sur le dossier de l'éducation, à travers de nombreuses questions parlementaires et ma contribution sur les projets de loi. J'ai déjà fait part de mon inquiétude par rapport à la situation qui prévaut dans les écoles en ce qui concerne l'*Extended Programme*, que tout le monde connaît sous le nom de *Pre-vocational*, *Pre-voc*. L'annonce au paragraphe 235, page 43, qu'on va injecter R 20 millions dans ce secteur est une bonne chose. Mais rien n'est dit, aucun détail, ni dans le discours du budget, ni dans *Budget Estimates* sur la façon dont cet argent va être utilisé. Est-ce que ce projet, ce financement du moins, toucherait toutes les écoles ainsi que les écoles de la *PSEA*. C'est une bonne chose aussi qu'on reconnaît et qu'on fait appel à l'expertise des ONG dans ce domaine.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, can I know for how long you have?

Mrs Perraud: 30 minutes more.

Madam Speaker: 30 minutes more. So, I will allow you to finish with the education sector, and then I will break for lunch.

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Je l'ai déjà dit de nombreuses fois, ici, au Parlement, lors de mes interventions. Il faut revoir cet *Extended Programme*. Il faut mieux équiper, encadrer, donner une attention particulière à ce secteur. Il faut investir massivement dans les infrastructures, dans la formation des enseignants, dans les cours qui sont dispensés à ces élèves. L'*Extended Programme* est, et doit être une des priorités dans le secteur éducatif, mais pas l'*Educational Hub*, pas Côte-d'Or. Les enfants qui se retrouvent en *Extended Programme* sont malheureusement les victimes de l'échec de notre système qui les a broyés et les a éjectés du système. Ils portent en eux la souffrance et la frustration, ils subissent le regard malveillant et les préjugés tenaces de la société. Ils vivent et voient un système à deux vitesses qui produit de la discrimination envers eux. Pour rajouter à cela, Madame la présidente, souvent, pas tous, mais souvent ces enfants viennent des familles brisées, issus de la pauvreté et connaissent l'enfer de la drogue et autres maux de la société. Alors, comment s'attendre à ce qu'ils réussissent avec autant de problèmes, personnels, familiaux et au niveau de la société si, nous, les adultes, on ne les aide pas, si on ne les encadre pas, si on ne leur donne pas les moyens ? Et il faut qu'on arrête d'être des hypocrites et se dire : « *Oh! Mais comme*

ils sont vulgaires, ils ne respectent pas l'autorité. Sa bann-la! Touzour zott meme! » Il ne faut pas les condamner, les juger. Mais détrompez-vous, je ne suis pas en train de dire que j'approuve, encore moins que j'encourage ce genre de comportement. Non ! Ce que je suis en train de dire, Madame la présidente, et je le dis haut et fort, examinons notre conscience, nous verrons que nous avons notre part de responsabilité en tant que société.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais partager avec vous cette pensée –

« Quand une fleur ne fleurit pas, on corrige l'environnement dans lequel la fleur pousse, pas la fleur! »

Et j'aimerais que nous tous, ici, nous réfléchissons dessus. On ne corrige pas la fleur, on corrige l'environnement dans lequel la fleur pousse. Pour rester sur ce sujet, le *Extended Programme*, j'avais soulevé lors d'une question parlementaire que beaucoup d'enfants se retrouvent en dehors du système éducatif, après avoir fait deux ou trois années du *prevoc*, une année de *MITD* mais parce qu'ils n'ont pas atteint l'âge de 16 ans, ils ne peuvent pas poursuivre les cours offerts par les centres de *MITD*. Je me rappelle très bien ce que la ministre avait répondu. Je vois encore que la ministre n'est pas d'accord. Mais des parents qui ont entendu la question parlementaire que j'avais posée ici, ils ont pris contact avec moi pour témoigner de leur expérience et qu'effectivement...

(Interruptions)

Oui, oui, c'est vrai, c'est ce que je vais vous dire.

Qu'effectivement, leurs enfants ne partent plus à l'école parce qu'ils n'ont pas 16 ans. Or, légalement, nous savons qu'un enfant doit aller à l'école jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans. Alors je suis très contente que la ministre vient de me dire que les parents viennent la voir. Vous serez étonnée, Madame la ministre, d'apprendre que ce sont des parents dans votre circonscription qui habitent à Quartier Militaire, qui m'ont contactée.

Madam Speaker: Please, hon. Mrs Perraud. I have said earlier...

Mrs Perraud: Yes, I am sorry.

Madam Speaker: ...you address the Chair, not the Minister.

Mrs Perraud: Yes, of course.

Alors, *addressing you*, Madame la présidente, est-ce que vous imaginez que les enfants qui ont quitté l'école une année, deux années, quelle chance ont ces enfants de

reprendre le chemin de l'école après ? Presque zéro. Presque zéro parce qu'ils entrent sur le marché du travail et c'est fini pour eux, l'école. C'est fini l'espoir d'avoir un diplôme. Donc, je suis bien contente, n'est-ce pas, Madame la présidente, que la ministre va recevoir ces parents et va voir que ce problème existe réellement. Lorsque ce gouvernement avait introduit le *9-year schooling*, la ministre avait présenté le projet ; alors les objectifs principaux de la réforme, donc je suis en train de lire dans un document du ministère –

- s'assurer que tous les enfants reçoivent une éducation de base de neuf ans constituant un fondement solide pour la poursuite de leurs études ;
- s'assurer que tous les enfants s'épanouissent harmonieusement dans un environnement propice et agréable, et
- s'assurer du développement intégral et complet de tous les enfants au-delà de l'aspect uniquement académique.

Donc, deux ans après ou quatre ans après, nous voyons l'introduction du programme '*Leader in me Programme*'. Vaut mieux tard que jamais, nous dit l'adage. Ce programme, s'il est dispensé par des professionnels, peut donner de bons résultats et c'est dommage que ce soit seulement 20 collèges qui vont en bénéficier. C'est un programme qui devrait faire partie intégrante de l'éducation secondaire. Beaucoup de questions restent posées. Quelles écoles qui vont être choisies ? Qui va donner ces cours ?

Je note aussi avec satisfaction qu'une attention particulière est portée aux écoles ZEP, avec l'introduction du *fortified learning environment*. Toutefois, la question qu'on se pose est : est-ce qu'une évaluation de ce programme ZEP (Zone d'Éducation Prioritaire) a été faite. Selon mes informations, la dernière évaluation date de 2005. Donc, quelles sont les forces et les faiblesses de la ZEP (Zone d'Éducation Prioritaire) ? Quelles sont les 50 écoles primaires qui ont été choisies ? Autant de questions qui demandent à être éclairées.

En ce qui concerne l'éducation spécialisée, une enveloppe de R 138 millions a été accordée à ce secteur pour les ONG qui œuvrent dans l'éducation spécialisée. Les ONG souhaitent savoir comment cet argent va être distribué et comment il va être utilisé ? Au début de cette année, le gouvernement a annoncé l'éducation gratuite pour tous les élèves au niveau tertiaire. Une somme de R 600 milliards est allouée dans le budget pour subvenir à la gratuité de l'éducation tertiaire. Est-ce suffisant ? Les langues commencent à se délier et on murmure déjà que certaines universités font des étudiants payer des frais additionnels. On impose aux étudiants des frais déguisés pour avoir accès au matériel dans les centres de ressources, des *laboratory fees*. L'éducation gratuite, le tertiaire gratuit, oui, mais est-ce que les universités

sont bien équipées ? Est-ce que les programmes, les *softwares* sont mis à la disposition des élèves ? Est-ce que les étudiants ont accès aux livres et aux journaux académiques ?

Madame la présidente, nous accueillons positivement la décision du gouvernement de donner l'éducation tertiaire gratuitement aux étudiants, mais il faut que ces étudiants puissent avoir de bons matériels, de bons cours, soient exposés à un bon environnement. Il ne faut pas que bon marché coûte cher ! Il faut qu'ils soient bien équipés académiquement et socialement pour affronter le monde du travail qui devient de plus en plus compétitif.

Alors, je vais m'arrêter, puisque vous m'avez dit vous me donnez juste jusqu'à ce chapitre.

Madam Speaker: I'll suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.11 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.41 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Donc, merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente, je dois dire que c'est assez difficile de reprendre après avoir été interrompue, le flot des idées et tout, mais quand même, je vais poursuivre mon discours.

Alors, j'avais déjà mentionné dans l'introduction que je parlerai sur les mesures budgétaires, les allocations budgétaires concernant le ministère de l'Égalité du Genre, du Développement de l'Enfant et du Bien-être de la Famille. Donc, je vais commencer sur ce sujet.

Madame la présidente, à la page 54, paragraphe 294, le ministre des Finances avoue que la mesure budgétaire de l'année dernière concernant le *gender budgeting* n'a pas été mise sur pied. L'étude sur le *gender budgeting* vient de commencer cette année, le mois dernier, ce qui veut dire clairement que le paragraphe 294 doit être enlevé de ce budget. Il n'y a pas lieu d'y être puisque c'est une mesure de l'année dernière et non une nouvelle mesure. En ce qu'il s'agit du *gender mainstreaming programme* qui figure au paragraphe 296, cette mesure existe déjà, elle a été étendue à tous les ministères, toutefois le plus important, c'est la mise en pratique. Il ne suffit pas d'allouer R 200,000 à chaque ministère. Il faut veiller à ce que cet argent soit bien utilisé, ce qui n'est pas le cas pour tous les ministères et la ministre le sait bien.

À la page 55, paragraphe 297, nous pouvons y lire que R11 m. seront alloués au *Women's Empowerment Centres*. On se dit que c'est une très bonne chose, mais malheureusement, Madame la présidente, lorsque nous cherchons les R 11 millions dans les *Estimates* 2019/2020, on ne les trouve pas. Dans ce paragraphe, le ministre des Finances dit bien –

“ *I am providing Rs11 million...*”

Donc, il fait provision, mais ce n'est qu'une déclaration d'intentions. Oui, j'ai peur que cela ne peut être seulement qu'une déclaration d'intentions. Comme je l'ai dit, R 11 millions pour financer des équipements pour promouvoir le bien-être des femmes, pour mettre en place des *day care centres* pour les aînés, pour mettre sur pied des Ateliers des Métiers/Savoir pour les femmes sans emploi. 'Pour maintenir les facilités offertes pour les crèches' ne figurent pas dans les *Estimates* de 2019/2020.

Si tel était le cas, nous réalisons tous sauf le Ministre des Finances que la somme de R 11 millions est nettement insuffisante pour réaliser tous ses projets. Rien que pour le premier item sur la liste, doter les centres de femmes d'équipement pour promouvoir le bien-être des femmes coûte beaucoup d'argent, même si ce n'est pas tous les centres qui seront équipés. Madame la présidente, pour cet item, on parle de quoi ? D'équipement de sport en salle, de grands miroirs, de profs ou de coaches de sport, tout cela requiert un budget conséquent. Et le maintien du projet de crèche dans les *Child Day Care Centres*, le dernier item sur cette liste que j'ai mentionnée plus tôt demande aussi un gros budget parce que le matériel ludique, pédagogique, les infrastructures et la mise en place d'un bon environnement pour l'éveil et le développement de l'enfant coûte cher. Donc, Madame la présidente, c'est tout un autre long paragraphe à enlever de ce budget puisque ce sont des projets qui ne pourront pas être réalisés faute d'argent. Pourtant, ce sont de beaux projets, des projets intéressants et très importants qui méritent d'être concrétisés. Malheureusement, c'est juste un leurre, ce sont des intentions.

Madame la présidente, les *Women's Empowerment Centres* remplacent les *Women Centres* depuis que, moi, j'étais ministre de l'Égalité du genre. Toute une série de nouvelles activités dans les centres ont été lancées à l'époque, on voulait faire revivre les centres de femmes. Ils mettent plus de dynamisme, d'activité, les rendent attrayants et plus fréquentés par et pour les femmes. Je rappelle que les deux PPS - Benydin sourit - étaient présents à l'inauguration de cette activité, l'honorable Benydin et l'honorable Boissézon qui aujourd'hui est ministre. Donc, l'honorable Boissézon était PPS à l'époque et vous étiez présents à

l'inauguration de ces activités, et je me rappelle aussi à quel point vous me disiez que ces activités étaient très, très importantes...

Madam Speaker: Ne vous adressez pas...

Mrs Perraud: Of course, of course. Alors quelles sont les activités qu'on avait inaugurées dans ces centres de femme ? Il y en avait 10, je vais nommer que quelques-unes, il y avait par exemple, *coffee cake and connect, support to overcome distress and anxiety, mobile legal advice, leadership development through role models, minor repairs by MITD, your safety our concern.*

Mais, Madame la présidente, malheureusement, après mon départ, on a mis fin à toutes ces nouvelles activités, on a cessé le projet et aujourd'hui on vient nous parler de *revamp the Women Centres* sans leur doter des moyens d'y parvenir et je trouve cela ridicule !

Aujourd'hui, les centres de femmes meurent d'une mort lente, ces centres ne sont pas fréquentés comme il se devrait par les femmes. Les temps ont changé, le monde a changé, la demande, les attentes ne sont plus les mêmes, les femmes sont plus actives, elles travaillent, elles ont des besoins différents. Les centres de femmes doivent évoluer avec le temps pour s'adapter à la nouvelle demande, aux nouvelles exigences.

De nos jours, les femmes ont d'autres aspirations que la couture, la broderie, faire des achards. Pour ce faire, ces centres de femmes ont besoin plus de ressources et d'infrastructures pour mieux desservir la société. Des 14 centres de femmes existants, certains sont dans un état déplorable, lamentable, ce qui ne donne nullement envie de s'y rendre. Alors, je voudrais bien que le ministre des Finances nous explique comment il va procéder pour faire un *relooking* de ces centres, les rendre attrayants et accessibles ainsi que de les doter d'équipements avec seulement R 11 millions, et aussi la moitié des centres se trouve dans des bâtiments qu'on loue.

En ce qui concerne la mesure visant à permettre aux mamans travaillant dans le secteur public d'allaiter leur bébé jusqu'à une période de six mois est une excellente mesure, mais il faut que cette mesure se traduise dans la réalité, il faut mettre en place un mécanisme de suivi pour veiller à ce que les femmes puissent réellement bénéficier de cette mesure budgétaire et avoir la possibilité d'allaiter leur bébé en toute quiétude et avec toutes les facilités nécessaires.

Madame la présidente, pour reprendre les mots du leader de l'opposition, un budget recyclé, réchauffé et raté, j'ai démontré que rien que pour le ministère de l'Égalité du genre, il y a des mesures qui sont réchauffées, telles que l'étude sur le *gender budgeting*, annoncées l'année dernière, des mesures recyclées, telles que le *gender mainstreaming*, et en ce qui concerne la mesure qui est ratée, c'est bien celle concernant l'obligation d'avoir une femme sur les *Board* des compagnies publiques et des *statutory bodies*.

Madame la présidente, je trouve que c'est une mesure aberrante. Je dirais même que c'est une blague. Une femme rien qu'une femme, est-ce cela notre aspiration ? À ce rythme-là, nous n'irons pas bien loin. Je sais que vous allez me dire, il faut bien commencer quelque part. Bien, voilà le problème, il ne faut pas faire rien que pour faire. Il ne nous reste pas beaucoup avant de réaliser les *SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals*, goal five et aussi d'atteindre la parité des genres pour créer ce monde - 50/50. Pour moi, cette mesure est une insulte et en plus *zot ine tap la tab*. Je serais étonnée qu'on me réponde, qu'on me dise : qu'est-ce que moi j'avais fait lorsque j'étais ministre, pourquoi moi je n'y avais pas pensé ?

Alors, Madame la présidente, pour rester sur les faits, sur du concret, j'étais ministre de l'Égalité du genre, qu'est-ce que ce budget a de révolutionnaire, d'avant-gardiste en termes d'idées, de projets, de *policy* pour promouvoir l'égalité du genre et l'autonomisation des femmes.

Madame la présidente, le ministère de l'Égalité du genre, du Développement de l'Enfant et du Bien-être de la Famille a trois grands et importants départements : le *Gender Unit*, le *Family Unit* et le département qui s'occupe des enfants. C'est un ministère très important, pour ne pas dire un des plus importants ministères, parce qu'à Maurice, nous n'avons pas de mine d'or, de pierres précieuses, du pétrole, mais par contre, nous avons des diamants, mais des diamants à l'état brut. C'est la ressource humaine. C'est l'être humain. Si l'être humain ne va pas bien, la société, la population ira mal. Si la société va mal, tous vos grands projets, Métro Express, Côte-d'Or, rien ne va marcher ; absolument rien ne va marcher. Que vous le vouliez ou pas, tout va à partir de l'être humain, tout découle de l'être humain. C'est notre capital. C'est un ministère où on pétrit, on façonne, on transforme, on pense, on réfléchit. Mais aussi, c'est un ministère où on panse, c'est-à-dire soigner l'être humain. Ce même ministère est un important ministère, mais a une place insignifiante, minime, presque inexistante dans ce budget. Deux pages pour le *Gender Unit*, deux mesures concernant le département qui s'occupe des enfants, et rien, pas un mot sur la famille. Pas une seule mesure sur la famille !

(Interruptions)

J'ai dit que ce ministère est le plus important des ministères, qu'il a trois départements, deux mesures pour le *Gender Unit*, deux mesures pour les enfants et rien sur la famille. Donc, les mesures budgétaires concernant ce ministère commencent à la page 54 et se terminent à la page 56.

Madame la présidente, nous savons très bien que la famille se désagrège à Maurice, qu'il y a de plus en plus de familles éclatées. On constate une perte de valeur à une vitesse vertigineuse. Le taux de divorce augmente, le taux de natalité baisse. Beaucoup trop d'enfants sont envoyés dans les *shelters*. Femme et enfant sont victimes de toutes sortes de violence. La liste est vraiment longue. Il ne se passe pas un jour sans qu'on ne lise ou qu'on entende la nouvelle de violence au sein des familles, violence sous toutes ses formes. Qui dira, ici, aujourd'hui, que je suis en train d'exagérer, ou que je brosse un tableau noir ou glauque de la situation, que, parce que je suis dans l'opposition, que je suis une prophétesse de malheur. Personne ne peut dire cela, parce que vous savez que je dis vrai, vous savez que j'ai raison.

Madame la présidente, la société change, on n'y peut rien. On assiste des fois, impuissant, à ce changement. Mais comme l'a dit Winston Churchill, et je cite –

« Mieux vaut prendre le changement par la main avant qu'il ne nous prenne par la gorge. »

Madame la présidente, l'investissement dans les secteurs sociaux, qui ont des impacts sur la famille et l'enfant, contribue au développement social, économique et culturel d'un pays. La question qu'on devrait se poser est : Est-ce que la famille, homme, femme et enfant, est notre priorité ? Lorsqu'on regarde le budget, la réponse est négative. On ne donne pas les ressources et les moyens nécessaires à ce ministère pour jouer son rôle pleinement et fonctionner pour bien servir le peuple. Un autre exemple, lorsque j'étais ministre, j'avais lancé 'l'Atelier Partage Parents'. C'était un grand projet destiné à mieux équiper les familles, à leur donner des outils, à ressouder les liens dans la famille. Ce projet consistait à aller vers les familles dans la communauté et les encadrer pour prévenir les maux de la société au sein de la communauté, pour protéger les victimes de violence et d'abus et éliminer la violence elle-même. Mais, Madame la présidente, lorsque j'ai démissionné comme ministre, le projet 'Atelier Partage Parents' (APP) a été stoppé. Il n'y a plus d'Atelier Partage Parents. Alors

qu'à travers ce projet, bien des violences conjugales auraient été évitées. Bien des mariages sauvés. Bien des enfants ne se seraient pas retrouvés dans des *shelters*.

Autre exemple, c'est la recommandation contenue dans le rapport Domingue, qui est dans le *Advisory Committee on Reinforcement of Framework Against Domestic Violence*, qui recommande de mettre sur pied un one *Stop-Service Centre* pour les victimes, qui n'a toujours pas été concrétisé. Ce que la ministre appelle le '*Integrated Service Centre*' n'est pas du tout le concept initial. Le modèle que nous sommes partis voir à La Réunion et qu'on voulait mettre sur pied à Maurice, c'est loin d'être ce modèle-là.

On pourrait aussi citer l'amendement à la loi pour punir le viol conjugal, qui se fait attendre depuis deux ans. Après avoir amendé la *Protection from Domestic Violence Act*, il a été décidé au niveau du ministère qu'on viendrait avec les amendements pour rendre le viol conjugal comme un délit. Mais je vois que ce n'est plus d'actualité.

Madam Speaker, yesterday, I put a Parliamentary Question to the Minister, with regard to CEDAW. I asked a very simple question, which required a very simple answer. My question was: What did she do to disseminate the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee? Why I asked this question, it is in because this report is the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. With your permission, I will quote paragraph 41 –

“The Committee requests the State party to ensure timely dissemination of the present concluding observations in the *de facto* official languages of the State party to the relevant State institutions at all levels, national, regional and local.”

Donc, this is why I asked this question. It was a simple question and I thought that the Minister would have given a simple answer. But the answer was that the recommendations are on the website, and that if people want to comment or contribute, if they want to give their input, they can do so. This is not at all what the Committee asked. I am sorry, but I find that it was a frivolous answer. *Et la désinvolture de la ministre, dans sa façon de répondre, la ministre était complètement à côté de la plaque.*

Madam Speaker, when I heard this answer, I should say that I was appalled, stunned, but I chose the weaker form and I say I was shocked, and everybody laughed. *Oui, je suis choquée, choquée de cette réponse.* But, what follows was unbelievable. I could not understand why the Minister was on the defensive. Why did she overreact and lost all self-confidence only because I put a question on one of her staff. It was just a question after all.

Madam Speaker: No, you can't say that the Minister lost all self-confidence. I don't think that is appropriate.

Mrs Perraud: Madam Speaker, if you want me to withdraw, I withdraw it.

The Minister did not answer to my question, but she chose to attack me instead, and she said: "What did you do when you were the Minister?"

It is not the first time that the Minister, or her colleagues, asked this question, what did I do when I was the Minister. And I am bewildered, I am shocked, *oui, je suis choquée*, that the Minister is competing with me, telling me that she can do better. I think that she can do better and she has to do better. And I am not competing with her; I am competing with myself, being better tomorrow than what I am today. I want to be very good in the opposition, as I was very good as a Minister. I am paid to ask questions in this House. This is my job. I am paid for that and I am not paid to ask questions in the corridors or in the toilets!

However, the Minister did say something which is very true yesterday and I totally agree with what the Minister said. She said that this Ministry is a very difficult one. I totally agree. It is very tough, very difficult, challenging and often heartbreaking because this Ministry deals with people, with human beings.

J'ai écouté attentivement le discours de la ministre, de l'Égalité du Genre, du Développement de l'Enfant et du Bien-être de la Famille et elle a dit fièrement que le gouvernement a fait voter 26 projets de loi pendant son mandat de cinq ans. La ministre a pris le temps de partager avec la Chambre quelques projets de loi qui ont été votés. J'étais surprise et déçue que dans la liste de projets de loi que la ministre a cité, elle ne fait pas mention de la loi, les amendements à la PDVA, *Protection from Domestic Violence Act* alors que c'est une loi qui concerne son ministère et que c'est une loi très importante qui a le mérite de mieux protéger les victimes de violence domestique. Et cette loi a été votée ici le 27 mai 2016.

Madame la présidente, les victimes de violence domestique n'ont pas de couleur politique. Elles ne sont pas bleues, oranges, rouges ou mauves. Elles n'ont pas de couleur politique. Je suis aussi choquée, Madame la présidente, que la ministre a l'intention de venir de l'avant avec un projet de *shelter* du type de dortoir pour plus de 50 enfants, *model shelter*. C'est ce que la ministre a révélé lors d'une de mes questions parlementaires alors que nous savons tous que c'est un modèle qui ne marche plus. Il faut créer de petites unités familiales.

La place d'un enfant n'est pas de grandir dans un *shelter*, mais de grandir dans une famille. *And this is one of the recommendations of the Ombudsperson for Children Annual Report 2015/16. So, I will quote this recommendation –*

“I recommend that the shelter should set up small residential care units to rehabilitate victims of abuse. The need of vulnerable and abused children cannot be fulfilled in such a large residential care setting. Boys and girls should be kept separated.”

Et concernant le *shelter* La Colombe, j'ai posé beaucoup de questions à ce sujet. Comme je l'ai dit, j'ai entamé les démarches pour obtenir le terrain annexant le *shelter* et c'est dommage qu'après deux ans que je sois partie, un mur n'a pas encore été érigé sur ce terrain. Je déplore le fait qu'après deux ans, on n'a pas peint le *shelter*, pas une couche de peinture. Pourtant, les budgets précédents en ont fait provision.

Je suis aussi choquée, Madame la présidente, que malgré que j'ai institué le *Fact-Finding Committee* sur les *shelters*, beaucoup de recommandations n'ont pas été suivies. Un exemple, c'est le ratio enfants : *carers*.

Je suis choquée aussi que le budget ne fait aucune mention d'allocation budgétaire pour redresser la situation dans les *shelters*. Il n'y a pas eu une semaine qui passe sans qu'un problème surgisse dans le *shelter* La Colombe. La ministre a été forcée, obligée de fermer ce *shelter*. Donc, il y a définitivement un gros problème dans ce *shelter* mais pas un sou du budget pour apporter des solutions. Donc, Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de ne pas être choquée mais d'être outrée.

Je suis aussi déçue que le terme *child beyond control* existe toujours alors que j'avais commencé un travail au niveau du ministère pour éliminer ce terme car beaucoup de parents qui sont dépassés par la situation familiale, qui n'arrivent pas à gérer la frustration, la colère, l'indiscipline de leurs enfants, utilisent ce terme *child beyond control* pour envoyer leurs enfants au *RYC, Rehabilitation Youth Centre*, ce qui très souvent leur fait plus de tort et les marque à vie. La ministre, l'honorable Fazila Jeewa-Daareeawoo se souviendra que nous avons eu des réunions communes avec Bill Cullen. La ministre était ministre de la Sécurité sociale et j'étais ministre de l'Égalité du Genre où ce sujet était au centre des débats. Donc, c'est dommage que rien n'a été fait et que ce terme *child beyond control* est toujours d'actualité.

Madame la présidente, comment parler sur le ministère de l'Égalité, du Genre, du Développement de l'Enfant et du Bien-être de la Famille, sans parler de ce fameux *Children's Bill*.

I listened carefully to the speech of the Minister. She did talk about the Bill and I was eager to know the date. Everybody wants to know the date. When will the Bill finally come to that House and I was disappointed to hear the Minister announce, I quote –

“We are working on it.”

And the Minister added –

“I do hope that in the months to come, we will bring the Bill to Parliament.”

Donc, Madame la présidente, on attend toujours. Pourtant, je l'ai déjà dit et je vais le redire, en 2016, lorsque j'ai démissionné, ce projet de loi était presque fin prêt. Deux ans après, on ne l'a toujours pas finalisé. Lorsque j'étais ministre, on l'avait appelé le *Child Care and Protection Bill*. Alors, on s'est dit, c'est le projet d'Aurore Perraud, on l'a balayé d'un revers de main. Comme le projet atelier partage parents, comme le projet le mur des valeurs, comme tout ce que j'ai initié. C'est dommage. C'est la société qui perd et non pas Aurore Perraud.

Maintenant, Madame la présidente, je vais parler un peu de ma circonscription, la circonscription N° 4 Port Louis Nord/Montagne Longue. Je suis fière de pouvoir servir cette circonscription qui est une très grande circonscription avec beaucoup de complexités, certes. Donc, je suis contente de voir qu'il y a des projets qui sont faits. Par exemple, le pont à Notre-Dame. On se rappelle du *site visit*. À Crève-Cœur, le pont Madoo. Beaucoup de projets de drains, le jardin d'enfants à Vallée des Prêtres et beaucoup d'autres projets.

Cependant, Madame la présidente, un des plus gros problèmes dont font face les habitants de la Circonscription N° 4, Port Louis Nord/Montagne Longue, est le problème d'inondation. A chaque grosse averse, les maisons sont inondées. Beaucoup de sinistrés affluent vers les centres de refuge. Chaque année, c'est la même scène de désolation pendant et après le passage de l'inondation. Cette année, les gens sont descendus dans la rue et ont manifesté leur colère, leur frustration et ce sentiment de ras-le-bol. Suite à cette démonstration de force, le gouvernement vient, après quatre ans, en fin de mandat, avec des projets de drains dans la circonscription, ce qui est une bonne chose. La question qu'on se pose est : est-ce qu'il faut que les habitants utilisent la violence pour que leurs droits soient respectés.

Pourvoir au peuple des aménités de base telles que routes, drains, connections au système de tout-à-l'égout, ce n'est pas faire une faveur aux habitants, ce n'est pas un privilège, c'est le devoir de tout gouvernement qui se respecte. C'est respecter les droits fondamentaux du peuple.

Madame la présidente, le projet de construction de drains est à saluer dans la Circonscription N° 4. Toutefois, la construction de drains est loin de résoudre le problème d'inondation dans la circonscription. Nous savons tous que dans la plupart des cas, ce problème est dû à la vulnérabilité des habitations. Deux rivières traversent la circonscription : la rivière Latanier et le ruisseau de Terre Rouge. Tout le long des berges des rivières, des familles vivent dans une grande précarité dans des bicoques. À chaque grosse pluie, la rivière sort de son lit et déborde sur les berges de la rivière et inonde les maisons.

Madame la présidente, personne ne peut se réjouir de vivre dans de telles conditions. Non, personne ! Ils n'ont pas élu domicile là où ils sont parce qu'ils sont contents. Non ! Ce sont des personnes qui vivent la peur au ventre. Elles sont traumatisées de l'annonce de la pluie. La construction de drains ne va pas améliorer, changer leur situation. La solution pour ces victimes est un logement, un logement décent dans un endroit sécurisé. Si la volonté politique n'y est pas, le problème va perdurer. Oui, Madame la présidente, c'est juste une question de volonté politique.

Madame la présidente, le député de la circonscription numéro quatre qui a parlé avant moi, l'honorable Vikash Oree, fidèle à lui-même, nous a beaucoup amusés avec son discours. Connu pour être un homme de prières, j'en suis témoin, dans la circonscription, un homme pieux, il a cité quelques projets faits dans la circonscription comme étant sur sa propre liste d'accomplissements - sur sa liste à lui. Il a dit avec beaucoup de fierté qu'il a fallu qu'ils viennent pour que des projets soient réalisés dans une partie de la circonscription.

Madame la présidente, s'appropriant, se vantant, d'être l'auteur de ces projets, c'est tout simplement de la malhonnêteté intellectuelle ou de la malhonnêteté tout court. Dans son discours, il a parlé du terrain de foot synthétique de la Cité Briquetterie, du centre de jeunesse de la Cité La Cure, de la construction du pont Marjolin pour ne mentionner que ceux-là. Les deux PPS de la circonscription doivent reconnaître que ce sont des projets que j'ai initiés lorsque j'étais encore au gouvernement. Ils ont hérité de ces projets...

(Interruptions)

Je ne m'attendais pas à de la gratitude.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mind your language hon. Member. I am giving you a warning.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Perraud: Je l'ai fait parce que c'est mon travail, c'est mon devoir de le faire. Par contre, je ne m'attendais pas à ce que l'honorable Oree, le connaissant, s'approprie de ces réalisations. Des fois le pouvoir peut corrompre l'âme d'une personne. Ce serait dommage pour cet éducateur de profession comme moi, comme mon autre collègue aussi, Marie Claire Monty - nous sommes tous les trois éducateurs - qu'il suit l'adage de son parti *moralité pa rempli ventre*.

Madame la présidente, je ne vais pas m'attarder dessus parce que les habitants savent qui s'est battue pour la construction du pont Marjolin. L'honorable Dayal n'est pas là. Il se souviendra sûrement de notre visite lors des inondations à la Cité La Cure lorsqu'il était encore ministre de l'Environnement. Pour le Centre de Jeunesse de la Cité La Cure ainsi que le terrain de foot synthétique à Cité Briquetterie, les documents et photos attestent bien que c'est moi qui ai initié ce projet.

Donc, madame la présidente, la circonscription numéro 4 est une grande circonscription. Chaque région a sa propre spécificité et besoins en termes de projets, d'infrastructure et c'est un honneur pour moi de servir cette circonscription.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, *les élections cette fois-ci vraiment derrier la porte* and I will describe what people expect as the best Government. Madam Speaker, the best Government is led by men and women who want to serve the large group and not use their political position to enrich themselves. The best Government is open, transparent, and fully accountable to the people. The best Government treats everyone as equal in the eyes of the law and eliminates unjust treatment of people. The best Government is self-reflective, applies rules to itself and willing to be held accountable for its behaviours. Madame Speaker, I am done.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Boissézon!

(3.18 p.m.)

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr E. Boissézon): Madame la présidente, je me réjouis d'ajouter ma voix aux orateurs qui ont félicité le Premier

ministre pour le verdict du conseil privé du 25 février de cette année-ci, verdict unanime et au ML, nous avons toujours cru en l'honnêteté, l'intégrité et la probité du Premier ministre et pour nous, c'est un résultat que nous nous attendions.

Je félicite aussi le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour la présentation du budget 2019-2020, un budget équilibré qui démontre son sens de responsabilité. C'est un budget de relance qui est la suite logique des budgets présentés depuis que nous sommes aux commandes du pays et non un budget électoraliste comme certains l'ont dit ou encore un budget sans plan.

J'aurais un mot pour l'oratrice avant moi pour lui dire que si elle compare son parti à une équipe de gladiateurs, il faut qu'elle sache que c'est un métier qui a disparu, an *extinct job* et peut-être que c'est précurseur de ce qui arrivera à votre parti dans quelque temps. Ne soyez pas choquée. Ne soyez pas déçue. J'ai su remarquer aussi chez vous qu'il y avait une certaine nostalgie de ce côté de la Chambre, surtout quand l'ancienne ministre a parlé de certains projets personnels où elle vient dire que c'est elle qui a initié ces projets en oubliant que quand on est dans un gouvernement, on est dans une équipe.

Madame la présidente, en 2015, quand j'ai dit que le présent budget est un budget de suivi ; un budget que nous avons initié, comment dire, Madame, depuis 2015 et le premier budget avait pour titre un budget où nous étions à la croisée des chemins. Oui, Madame la présidente, nous étions à la croisée des chemins suite à une année gâchée par la saga des mamours *on-off*. Qui ne se souvient pas de ces *on* un jour, *off* l'autre jour et des va-et-vient de certaines personnes pour essayer d'avoir une clé ou de retenir un cœur. Qui ne se souvient pas de ce fameux *chemistry* ou plutôt alchimie digne d'un conte du Moyen Âge.

Madame la présidente, quand je parle d'année gâchée, en 2014, le pays a eu seulement huit sessions parlementaires - trois sessions en avril, quatre sessions en juillet et une session en décembre. J'ai noté, j'ai écouté l'honorable Uteem quand il intervenait, et il a voulu donner l'impression qu'il est dans un parti démocrate, un parti pour qui la démocratie n'a pas de prix. Mais il faut qu'il sache que lui et certains membres de son parti ont essayé, à un certain moment, de bafouer la constitution. Avec l'accord qui avait été signé par le MMM et le Parti travailliste, il avait eu pour tâche de préparer quelque chose de très choquant. Qui ne se souvient pas qu'avec l'accord qui avait été signé entre l'honorable Bérenger et Navin Ramgoolam, cet accord avait fait mention qu'il y aurait *two legislative agendas*. C'était la seule priorité de cet accord de 2014. Cette annexe à l'accord disait : *priority of agenda - as*

early as possible, after the next election, the newly elected Government shall enact the following two groundbreaking legislations, the Constitution (Electoral Reform) (Amendment) Bill so as to give force of law to the new electoral system...

Madam Speaker: Can I know, hon. Minister, to which document you are referring? Because, I think, you are quoting from a document.

Mr Boissézon: Yes. It was a document that was signed between the MMM and the Labour Party when the *accord* at that time was *la fameuse alliance 40%, 40%, 60/0. Le mariage !*

The Constitution (Electoral Reform) (Amendment) Bill so far has to give force of law to the new electoral system to be introduced in Mauritius, the second Republic that will spell out the additional powers, roles and responsibilities of the President. C'était ça la priorité de cet accord que, heureusement, le peuple n'a pas accepté. Dans cet accord, on parle aussi du rôle du Président et comment balancer les pouvoirs du Président et du Premier ministre. Pour nous, à ce moment, heureusement pour la nation que cette équipe n'a pas pu arriver à son but.

Madame la présidente, j'ai parlé du premier budget, suivis d'autres budgets, pour créer une ère de développement et poursuivre notre chemin de transformation. Aujourd'hui, nous sommes prêts à nous embarquer pour un futur brillant, glorieux et prospère.

Madame la présidente, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a parlé d'un pays qui veut voir un pays innovant, moderne, d'une réforme profonde pour l'amélioration de la vie de la population, contrairement à ce que l'opposition pense, une amélioration de la vie des jeunes et des générations futures.

Madame la présidente, nous savons, comme cela a été dit précédemment, que l'environnement économique n'est pas propice en ce moment, guerre froide économique entre l'Amérique et la Chine, incertitude du Brexit et aujourd'hui forte tension dans le Moyen-Orient. D'autre part, nous sommes à l'orée d'une quatrième - si nous ne sommes pas déjà entrés dans une quatrième révolution industrielle - révolution qui va au-delà de la numérisation en misant sur l'innovation. Aujourd'hui, on parle de cobotique, un mot d'origine anglaise, qui désigne l'interaction entre les opérateurs humains et un système robotique. Je note, avec beaucoup de plaisir, que le Premier ministre veut que Maurice soit dans les pays de tête dans la course à l'innovation. J'apprécie cette dotation de R 100 m. qui est allouée à la *National Innovation and Research Fund*, aux centres de formation pour la maîtrise de l'intelligence artificielle et de la robotique, sans compter le FinTech.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui, le smart phone simplifie la vie de la population. Ces petits appareils arrivent à réunir les personnes, les données, les objets et créer un nouveau mode de consommation. De par son ouverture sur le monde, elle modifie la façon de voir le monde. Les développements des plateformes technologies perturbent les structures actuelles de tous les secteurs d'activités.

Nous parlons de service en ligne, de *paperless office* et nous ne pouvons pas laisser une partie de la population sur la touche du terrain du progrès. Nous savons tous aujourd'hui combien de fois, dans le passé, les personnes démunies ont été à côté des progrès. Je cite, par exemple, de l'eau. Il y a eu une époque où, dans une révolution industrielle, les personnes aisées avaient de l'eau chez elles. Ils pouvaient prendre leur bain pour venir au Parlement, alors que les gens pauvres devaient se contenter des fontaines publiques ou de la rivière. Combien de fois nous avons vu, j'ai fait l'expérience, avec l'avènement de la télévision à Maurice, où les personnes aisées avaient un téléviseur chez elles et nous avions à aller dans un centre communautaire pour voir la télévision. Aujourd'hui, les personnes possèdent des *Smartphones* et c'est très généreux de la part du ministre des Finances de s'assurer qu'avec *l'inclusive innovation*, la technologie ira dans la maison des gens pauvres et que 11,000 personnes qui sont inscrits sur le *Social Register of Mauritius* aient la possibilité de pouvoir utiliser leur Smartphone chez eux. Dans le même ordre d'idées, je me réjouis de la distribution des tablettes aux élèves de *Grade IV*.

Madame la présidente, je ne prendrais pas le temps de la Chambre pour énumérer tous les points positifs de ce budget. Et aussi, ce budget regorge de projets, les uns plus innovants que les autres, et je sais que les dix avenues choisies par le ministre des Finances nous amèneront vers l'objectif de notre vision d'État à revenu élevé.

Madame la présidente, il faut être sourd et aveugle, ou faire croire qu'on est sourd ou qu'on est aveugle, parce qu'il n'y a pas plus sourd que celui qui fait semblant d'être sourd, pour qu'on ne trouve pas que c'est un budget innovant, un budget de relance. Je prendrai, par exemple, la mauvaise foi, la démagogie de certains orateurs de l'opposition. Hier, un honorable membre a parlé de la croissance du pays. Il a été en Afrique, il a été cherché des chiffres en Afrique.

Le leader de l'opposition a fait un discours pour venir dire qu'il n'y avait rien dans ce discours. Madame la présidente, l'honorable madame Perraud a même qualifié, a dit que son leader a parlé d'un budget chauffé, réchauffé, bâclé, recyclé, raté. Et, voyons un chiffre, le

chiffre du budget 2014 présenté par l'ancien ministre des Finances et, aujourd'hui, le leader de l'opposition. Alors qu'aujourd'hui, le produit national brut de Maurice est à 3.9 et il y a une prévision de 4.1. Pas bon ! Pas bon, il faut aller en Afrique pour aller chercher des chiffres. Mais, restons à Maurice, voyons le dernier budget du Parti travailliste et du PMSD. En novembre 2013, *and it was a very good gross GDP of 3.2. Very good!* Le chômage, Madame la présidente. En 2013-2014, 8.3%. Et aujourd'hui, c'est extra bon ! Et quand nous, ce présent gouvernement, présentons ses chiffres à 6.9%, il dit : *'N'a pas bon, chiffre faussé, chiffre pas bon, mone alle faire recherche pou mo gueter pour croire'*. Il y a, le chiffre n'est pas bon. Alors que le commun des mortels, que tous les mauriciens savent qu'à Maurice, aujourd'hui, nous avons la preuve. Le leader de l'opposition a posé une question tout à l'heure. Il n'y a pas deux heures, il a posé une question sur le recrutement des travailleurs étrangers. Alors, sachant très bien que nous recrutons des travailleurs étrangers tous les jours, comment venir dire que notre chiffre de chômage, les statistiques que nous présentons sont faussés.

Inflation, Madame la présidente, 3.6% en 2013-2014. Et, très bon, très bon, on est sorti de loin, très bon, joli travail, du ministre des Finances d'alors - *tape la table*. Et pour nous, ce gouvernement-là, son chiffre, après une moyenne de 2.3 se retrouve avec une inflation de 1.5%. Et là, *là li bizin tape la table, sa bizin tape la table. Et sa pas bon, bizin alle roder*. Il faut aller chercher partout.

Maintenant, encore mieux, Madame la présidente, la balance, la construction. Et là, Madame, je *quote* un renseignement du Hansard – « *All sectors except ...* » Ecoutez bien : « *except construction are expanding* ». Alors qu'à l'époque on se félicitait qu'il y avait une expansion de plusieurs industries, mais la construction ne pouvait pas décoller, alors qu'aujourd'hui, nous avons une croissance de 9.5% et nous prévoyons la maintenance de cette croissance.

Madame la présidente, la bonne chose quand on est dans l'opposition, c'est d'avoir une politique : *'tout pas bon, nous croire nous pour capav faire mieux.'* Mais, vous n'allez pouvoir le faire.

Madame la présidente, dans ce même discours de budget, le ministre des Finances préconisait un nouveau départ pour le football. C'est pourquoi que je comprends, aujourd'hui, que l'ancien ministre des Finances n'est pas intéressé à la construction d'une nouvelle infrastructure sportive. C'est pourquoi ils ne veulent pas qu'on investisse de l'argent

dans les nouvelles infrastructures sportives. Côte-d'Or, par exemple, ils ne veulent pas entendre parler. Oui, Madame la présidente, vous savez, depuis 2013, il y avait un problème qui perdure avec le football et vous savez ce que le gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD avait vu comme solution pour remettre le football sur les rails. Madame la présidente, malgré le fait que je vais prendre le temps de la Chambre, je suis obligé de citer, et je cite lors du discours du budget, le ministre des Finances (d'alors) a dit –

“Mr Speaker, Sir, for a long time in our past football had ingrained itself into the natural culture. Many of us still remember the days when football games filled our stadiums with enthusiastic crowds. Unfortunately, football has today lost its glamour notwithstanding a deep desire in our population to revive the game”.

Et à la section 445 du discours du budget, le ministre des Finances est venu dire, je cite -

“Government is today taking that bold decision. It is making arrangement for the traditional clubs to be revived albeit with appropriate and adequate safeguards to ensure their national representativeness and provided the names do not carry communal undertones.”

Voilà la vision du ministre des Finances d'alors, la vision du Parti travailleiste et du PMSD concernant le sport : retourne vers les clubs d'ascendants communaux.

L'ancien ministre des Finances, le leader de l'opposition, a parlé de communication, d'information et vous savez quelle est la politique du ministre d'alors concernant la *freedom of information*. Pas plus tard qu'avant-hier, il parlait de *freedom of information*. Mais *freedom of information* pour le PMSD veut dire *free from information*. Et là, Madame la présidente, je suis obligée de retourner encore vers ce fameux discours du budget de 2013/2014 et je citerai la section 465, le bouquet concernant *free from information* –

“I am therefore pleased to announce that the Prime Minister's Office will soon proceed with the licensing of local broadcasters. Application criteria are being finalised and will be made available to those who wish to broadcast solely films, sports and entertainment programmes.”

Pas d'information ! Et voilà, le *freedom of information* de cette époque. Bien sûr, à cette époque, le leader de l'opposition d'alors a eu ceci à dire : qu'il trouvait qu'avec le budget d'alors, présenté par le leader de l'opposition d'alors, il n'y aurait pas eu de relance pour le pays. Et intéressant à l'époque, le leader de l'opposition qui était aussi le leader du *Remake 2000* et je cite *Le Mauricien* qui disait que comme le leader, il estime lui aussi que le plus tôt

un nouveau gouvernement s'installe, le mieux ce sera pour la relance et la croissance. C'était en 2014. Et je pense qu'aujourd'hui encore cela tient parce qu'il y a deux équipes qui ont quitté le *Remake 2000*, le MMM, par trahison et le PMSD pour des raisons propres à eux. L'*Alliance Lepep* continuera son travail et poursuivra son travail pour plusieurs années encore.

Madame la présidente, maintenant, je parlerai du ministère de la Fonction publique et des réformes administratives. Madame la présidente, nous avons une très grande chance qu'à Maurice, nous avons une fonction publique intelligente, capable de s'adapter aux changements et une fonction publique qui est prête à se moderniser. Le gouvernement s'est procuré d'un logiciel pour la gestion, la planification stratégique des ressources humaines des ministères et autres départements du gouvernement. Cet achat, au coût de R 207 millions, est en préparation et aujourd'hui, ce logiciel nous permettra de faciliter la gestion et la planification stratégique des ressources humaines, des ministères et autres départements du gouvernement. L'objectif de cette base de données est de créer une base de données commune pour la fonction publique afin de permettre aux différents ministères d'utiliser cet outil pour leur propre gestion et la planification des ressources humaines. Le but, c'est d'éviter la duplication entre chaque département et ministère.

Le *HRMIS*, comme on l'appelle, nous permettra d'actualiser nos données en temps réel, et aujourd'hui, le côté moderne de ce projet, c'est que tout un chacun pourra modifier la base de données le concernant. L'officier sera amené à actualiser ses données, comme un changement d'adresse, une nouvelle qualification, un mariage, et cela pourra se faire des smartphones, même des employés.

Le *HRMIS* facilitera le paiement des salaires par une interface avec le Trésor et aujourd'hui, je suis fière qu'avec le temps beaucoup de progrès ont été fait parce qu'il faut savoir, Madame la présidente, que ce logiciel *HRMIS* nous l'avons hérité et il avait été acheté en 2013, mais avait été laissé dans un tiroir. En 2015, mon prédécesseur a mis en place une équipe pour actualiser ce logiciel.

Mais il faut savoir que c'est un logiciel difficile à manier, c'est un logiciel qu'on appelle, dans le jargon informatique, un *off-the-shelf-application*. C'est une application qui travaille sur le système Oracle, mais qui n'a pas été conçue spécialement pour le secteur public de Maurice. Et aujourd'hui, c'est un outil difficile à manier et pas facile à modifier. Nous devons faire très attention concernant les modifications parce que si nous modifions

trop le système, nous ne pourrions pas rehausser l'application avec les améliorations que l'Oracle pourrait nous amener.

Malgré cela, nous avons pu faire les entrées de base sur les employés et aujourd'hui, nous pouvons être fiers que les entrées concernant les *biodata* des 56,000 employés sont sur le système. Nous avons commencé à faire des entrées concernant les salaires des employés et nous avons prévu d'avoir ce que, dans l'informatique, on appelle un *parallel run*. Cela veut dire des opérations parallèles entre le système actuel et le système du *HRMIS*. Malheureusement, nous avons été retardés par un problème avec le syndicat, mais heureusement, ce conflit industriel n'a duré que quatre mois et nous avons pu résoudre les problèmes. Aujourd'hui, nous pensons que le *HRMIS* sera opérationnel en décembre et que nous pourrions utiliser au *full extent* cette nouvelle application.

Madame la présidente, quand je parle de modernisation et que je parle de numérisation, nous mettons en place un système de présence électronique. Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui encore, nous avons des registres de présence dans beaucoup de bureaux et cela n'est pas bon. Premièrement, parce qu'il y a un manque de productivité. Aujourd'hui, nous ne sommes pas en mesure d'avoir des statistiques, des données de présence actualisées quotidiennement, mais avec le nouveau système que nous mettons en place, nous serons en mesure d'avoir des données instantanées. Aujourd'hui, par exemple, grâce au système de présence électronique que nous avons mis en place, bien que cela ne couvre pas tous les ministères, tous les départements, nous sommes en mesure, à dix heures, de savoir la présence dans les différents bureaux. Cela nous a aidés. Grâce à ce système, aujourd'hui, avec le trafic routier, nous pouvons savoir dans quel département qu'il y a des problèmes et prendre les mesures nécessaires.

D'autre part, les officiers du ministère se plaignent du paiement des heures supplémentaires. Aujourd'hui, certains officiers ne sont pas payés les heures supplémentaires quatre mois, cinq mois après avoir travaillé. Avec le nouveau système de registre électronique, nous serons en mesure de payer les employés durant le mois qu'ils auront fait des *overtime*. Nous avons certains ministères qui sont prêts, et qui, déjà, seront en mesure de faire l'interface entre les registres de présence électronique et le *HRMIS*. Vous réalisez quelle avancée que nous aurons aujourd'hui ! Quelle augmentation de productivité ! Alors qu'avant, un employé remplissait le registre de présence, un autre officier prenait ce registre pour prendre les données de présence, et il avait à compter. Et vous savez, comme on appelle dans

le gouvernement, dans le service public, ce n'est pas facile ; ce n'est pas un système où quelqu'un entre à 9.00 heures et part à 4.00 heures.

Avec le *flexi-time*, vous avez des employés qui rentrent à différentes heures. Maintenant, nous avons aussi un système pour que quand un employé entre en retard, il a la possibilité de compenser ce retard dans l'après-midi. Il y a d'autres employés qui, eux, quand ils sont en retard, au bout d'un certain temps, il faut compiler les heures de retard pour les déduire de leurs congés. Et tout cela se fera par les *business rules*, comme on appelle, par les formules informatiques. Et Madame la présidente, je souhaite ardemment que les 56,000 employés que nous avons dans le service public utilisent cet outil. Je sais qu'il y a une certaine crainte. Certains employés voient en cet outil comme un '*rotin bazar*'. Non, Madame la présidente ! Ce gouvernement est intéressé par la productivité, par le travail des employés. Nullement l'intention de se servir de '*rotin bazar*' contre les employés. Ce registre de présence électronique est simplement un outil de productivité et un outil qui nous permettra d'avoir des statistiques fiables concernant la présence.

Madam Speaker, quand nous parlons de productivité, quand nous avons d'efficience dans le service public et, qu'aujourd'hui, nous savons qu'il y a des changements majeurs qui sont effectués de par le monde sur la scène internationale, notre service public ne peut pas rester à l'écart. Aujourd'hui, notre objectif doit être l'excellence et l'efficience. Et pour pouvoir atteindre ce degré d'efficience et d'excellence, nous devons revoir toutes nos procédures, notre façon de travailler. Nous devons montrer que le secteur public de Maurice est à la hauteur des secteurs publics des États de *high revenue economies*. Et pour ce faire, nous devons pouvoir avoir un *benchmark* avec des institutions internationalement reconnues. Et c'est pourquoi aujourd'hui tous les ministères, tous les départements seront initiés à ISO 9001 et nous espérons que tous les ministères et les départements seront certifiés ISO 9001 d'ici à deux ans. Et entretemps, certains ministères avant-gardistes, 53 départements, ont déjà migré sur une nouvelle version d'ISO et ils sont maintenant certifiés ISO 9001 : 2015 par le *Mauritius Standard Bureau*. Nous avons fait une étude pour savoir quel est l'impact de la certification ISO sur le travail dans les différents départements, et je peux vous dire que les observations et les résultats sont probants. Nous espérons que pendant la prochaine année financière, 10 ministères et départements s'ajouteront au chiffre de 53 départements qui ont migré vers la version ISO 9001 : 2015.

Madam Speaker, I now come to a very critical phase of the change management initiative being undertaken by my Ministry since last year. And here, I am referring to the

ongoing transformation of the public sector. Madam Speaker, Mauritius has inherited of a public service from our colonial masters at the time before independence in 1968. More than 51 years have elapsed, and yet, our public service, despite its indisputable and immense contribution to the socioeconomic development of our country, has fundamentally retained its original architecture and has remained by and large unscratched, despite several initiatives. We stand at the centre of a perfect storm in the midst of an unfolding digital revolution which is dramatically changing the old fabric of our society.

Et là, Madame la présidente, je pense à un vieux proverbe chinois qui décrit, qui dépeint la situation actuelle, et je cite –

“When the wind of change blows, some people build walls, others build windmills.”

This Government, Madam Speaker, has made a resolute pledge to the population to build windmills in every sector of our economy, including in the public service. Never before has any Government gone to such an extent than taking a series of bold and courageous measures in order to bring meaningful transformational changes in the public sector. I am extremely pleased to announce that, since last year, a lot of progress has been achieved by my Ministry in the implementation of the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy and Plan. This is a very challenging and ambitious initiative because it is in line with the ten avenues announced by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech. There is no doubt that the Mauritian public service will be called upon to adapt and brace up to the challenges unleashed by a fiercely competitive and globalised economy. In this regard, Government is resolutely determined to ensure that transformation becomes a reality in the larger interest of the citizenry.

The Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy is meant to create the enabling environment for successful and long lasting transformation of the public service treading across all sectors of the economy. The strategy is coercive; all of Government approach that emphasises collective response to the business and activities of Government, and issues of national importance, creating a shared vision for common action and result, to help the country leapfrog into high-income economy. The main objective of this transformation is to drive, coordinate and oversee the successful implementation on transformation in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, we have set up a Public Sector Business Transformation Bureau in my Ministry. The bureau will work closely with Ministries, Departments to spearhead meaningful and coherent changes in management processes and practices, leading to

enhanced service delivery and optimisation of resources. In this regard, each Ministry or Department has already prepared an action plan that emphasises the use of innovative technology as accelerators of suitable growth and development. And today, my Ministry is continuously, constantly building the capacity and capability building of public officers to ensure the success of transformation.

Madam Speaker, when I speak of capacity and capability building, we have to see to it that employees of the public service are perpetually trained. Today, I am proud to say that, through training, our public officers should become better to challenge the status quo and stay ahead of the transformation curve.

Madame la présidente, je suis fier de dire que mon ministère, à qui fut alloué la somme de R 18 millions dans le Budget 2018-2019 sur la dotation '*Continuous professional development of civil service*', a utilisé toute cette somme et nous demandons une somme supplémentaire pour poursuivre ce travail qui a été bien fait jusqu'à la fin, jusqu'au 30. Et le point important, pour la première fois à Maurice, pour la première fois dans le secteur public, nous avons inclus les employés de la classe ouvrière pour la formation. Je suis fier de dire qu'aujourd'hui, 2,040 employés ont suivi des cours chez nous au *Civil Service College* et ils en redemandent. Madame la présidente, mon attention a été attirée par le fait que certains ministères et départements n'ont pas utilisé toute la somme budgétisée pour la formation. *It's rather unfortunate*. Aussi, je m'attèlerai pour que cette situation ne se reproduise pas. J'ai eu une discussion avec les représentants du *Civil Service College* pour leur demander de revoir leurs stratégies d'approche vers les ministères et les départements concernant la formation. J'ai demandé que tous les *training committees* dans tous les ministères soient réactivés et qu'il y ait un représentant du syndicat sur chaque comité de formation.

Je profite de l'occasion pour remercier les représentants du syndicat pour leur contribution concernant cet aspect de formation dans les différents départements. Madame la présidente, quand nous parlons de formation, je ne peux passer sous silence la construction d'un nouveau collège, le *Civil Service College* à Réduit. Le gouvernement a mis à notre disposition un terrain de huit arpents à Réduit. Nous avons déjà mis en place un comité de gestion et, aujourd'hui, nous avons déjà entamé des démarches pour recruter un consultant pour l'architecture et le plan du bâtiment. Ce document est prêt et nous pensons que les appels d'offres seront lancés d'ici à un mois. Dans ce présent budget, nous avons R 40 millions pour cette année-ci et la valeur totale du projet de construction du collège est de R 160 millions.

Madame la présidente, je sais que je prends beaucoup de temps, mais j'ai un ministère où bien souvent, on aurait voulu pouvoir dire que nous sommes dans un *line Ministry*. Quand nous disons que nous allons construire 10 km de chemin, nous pouvons suivre et voir que 8 km ont été faits, 80% ont été faits. Mais nous avons un ministère où tout n'est pas visible et je ne pourrais m'empêcher de conclure sans faire état du fameux *Government Medical Scheme*. C'est un plan qui a été annoncé par le Premier ministre dans le Budget Speech. Aujourd'hui, je peux dire que malgré les difficultés, malgré les embûches, nous sommes en mesure de dire que le *Government Medical Scheme* va être une réalité et il faut faire bien attention ici, Madame la présidente. Je ne veux pas qu'il y ait une mauvaise interprétation. Nous ne voulons pas, avec l'apport de ce plan médical, faire croire que nous voulons diminuer la qualité et la valeur de la santé publique à l'île Maurice.

Ce gouvernement est conscient que notre service de santé est un très bon service et qu'il excède le strict minimum de l'OMS et pour preuve, dans ce budget, la dotation pour le *Health Service* a fait un bond de 11%, sortant de R 12,002 milliards à R 13 milliards. La population de Maurice a confiance dans le service de santé. Et moi, je dirais aujourd'hui que ce plan médical que nous offrons à nos employés leur permettra de faire un choix de services médicaux et ce n'est nullement notre intention de nous comparer d'être en compétition avec le service de santé du gouvernement.

Madame la présidente, j'aurais voulu parler pendant très longtemps, mais il y a un chiffre que je ne peux pas m'empêcher de dire. C'est quand le leader de l'opposition a parlé de recrutement négatif, ce gouvernement est fier. Au cours du Budget 2018/2019, nous avons prévu 7,333 nouveaux employés et aujourd'hui, je suis fier de dire qu'à la fin de mars, nous avons déjà recruté 4,090 nouveaux employés et que dans le budget que nous présentons aujourd'hui, nous prévoyons 5,300 employés. Alors que le recrutement dans le service public était au point mort avant 2014, je peux dire qu'aujourd'hui, nous sommes fiers que depuis janvier 2015 à mars 2019, 26,000 emplois ont été créés et de ce chiffre, nous avons 15,000 nouveaux recrues. Cela démontre notre détermination à souscrire à l'épanouissement des jeunes et de nous assurer de leur épanouissement futur.

Madame la présidente, nous avons remarqué qu'il y a une tendance, il y a une préférence pour les employés, des personnes sans emploi, ils cherchent de l'emploi dans le secteur public à l'encontre du secteur privé. Quand nous leur demandons pourquoi ne pas aller travailler dans le secteur privé, ils nous disent qu'il y a un manque de sécurité, manque de ce côté humain. Et conscient de ce problème et conscient du fait que nous avons 500,000

employés à Maurice et que le secteur public ne compte que 10% de ceux-là, nous devons, comme un *caring Government*, nous assurer que le secteur privé soit à la hauteur des aspirations des jeunes. Aussi, je note, avec plaisir, l'introduction du salaire minimum, du *negative income tax*, du *Portable Retirement Fund* et je pense que demain, suite à ces propositions, les jeunes seront intéressés à aller travailler dans le secteur privé.

Madame la présidente, je terminerai en disant quel plaisir j'ai à travailler dans le ministère de la Fonction Publique. J'ai su reconnaître l'intelligence, le dévouement de ces employés et j'aurais un mot particulier pour les syndicats qui nous aident dans notre tâche.

Pour terminer, Madame la présidente, je ne pourrais pas m'empêcher de dire merci à Sir Anerood Jugnauth pour le travail qu'il a fait pour que nous puissions avoir la complète souveraineté de l'Ile Maurice indépendante.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus!

(4.22 p.m.)

Mrs R. Jadoo-Jaunbocus (Second Member Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, first of all, allow me to join in as everybody else has in this House, certainly from this side of the House. I commend the excellent Budget 2019/2020, presented by our Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, which developed further our Prime Minister's vision as our leader of this country to developing our small and beautiful country into one of high income country, keeping in mind sustainability issues critical to successful achievement. This vision of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth describes the pathways to reach there explicitly mentioned in its 3-year strategic plan and is a coherent continuation and consolidation of the different strategic orientations given in his past budget as Minister of Finance. We have it, the first one being a new era of development, then 2017/2018 Rising to the Challenge of our Ambitions which we did; 2018/2019, I am sorry, Madam Speaker, Pursuing our Transformative Journey and now going on for our transformative journey into Embracing a Brighter Future Together as a Nation.

Four and a half years ago, the economy and society were on a precarious and uncertain path. The economic growth was on a declining trend. Many intervening before me have said it, many addressing this House before me have said it. The economy and society

were on a precarious and uncertain path. The economic growth was on a declining trend. Many intervening before me have said, many addressing this House before me have said it. The prospects were gloomy, especially for the poor, and increasing number of families were sliding into poverty. Income inequality, Madam Speaker, was widening and kept on widening. We will recall previous budgets, not the contents thereof, because these previous budgets were really complex formerly, which came about budgets as we have known it, *ki rass dipain dans la bouss zenfan lekoi*. Budgets, as we have known it, putting levy tax on savings of all people, of poor people, who have savings in the bank; budgets where the *gros paletot* or the *gagnants* with convoluted schemes, so-called to help the poor, which they have used to do their politics with it, to advance their ambitions with it, their political agendas with it; budgets where previous Ministers of Finance say 40 plus 40 is 60-0, something like that; budgets where former Finance Ministers come up with '*Ile Maurice, c'est un plaisir*'. *Où est le plaisir de vivre* with such widening gap at that time between the rich and the poor? But, in fact, as I said, when you look around Mauritius, what was happening, what was the *plaisir*? The *plaisir* was building up Taj Mahals for ones and princesses, for one *marchand 'cotomili'*. Building up Taj Mahals with Chinese money, which have not gone through tenders, and here, they come to the House and talk about tender procedures. Taj Mahals which are nothing but sieves and *paniers percés*! We see taxpayers' money not going down the drain, as they say here, our taxpayers' money is going down the drain meaning literally constructing drains for people, but taxpayers' money going into roads which end up with imaginary tunnels which were never built. The ring roads which, when we were in the remake, the then Leader of the Opposition went and walked along the ring road and said: "Look at the crack here and there". But, look at that fool with that ring road ending up with a mountain, but no tunnel, only the imaginary tunnel in one's mind. Those were the past: Taxpayers' money used to build Bagatelle Dam, taxpayers' money to build a collapsing Terre Rouge/Verdun Road. The list, Madam Speaker, is *ad nauseam*. That's what the list is. And, on the other hand, what do we have in the country? Today, we hear the other side of the House talking about people not being helped. Do we recall in 2013/14, fathers who sent their children to study as doctors, as professionals were crying, were saying: "*Misié, mo zenfan finn fer medecin, finn vini, finn vinn bater maçon*." Of course, it's with no disrespect to the work of stone masons - with due respect. But, people with degrees compelled to work as taxi drivers, again, no disrespect to such type of work, but what was being said by these fathers, the plight of these parents and these youngsters, where they are qualified, they have spent their money and they had a dream of becoming a professional, yet, how many were recruited

within the health system of Mauritius? Zero, at the time! It was this Government with its successive Ministers, under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, that we have had so many doctors recruited and now working. And they dare tell us that we do not feel for those who are in a lesser position! And they dare tell us that, now, the gap is widening between the rich and the poor! No, on the contrary, Madam Speaker! We have forgotten the Jeetah's universities, sprouting around with the certificates that are no good to any of these youngsters, but all this money going down the drain.

And, indeed, when in 2014, after the General Elections, everybody was surprised, we were pleasantly surprised to come in and be on this side of the House. Of course, the other side of the House, I won't say surprised, they were flabbergasted to see that, 40 plus 40, indeed, does not make what we thought it would make; 40 plus 40 means sitting in the opposition and crying over spilled milk. 40 plus 40 means thinking that, we were the ones who convinced Sir Anerood Jugnauth to come down from Réduit, and to come in the political arena and fight to save the country, and yet, in that crusade against the evil, in that crusade against those who were robbing the country, one forgets one's principles, one forgets one's endeavour to save the country and one signs a contract with the right hand, whilst the left hand is cutting the cake with Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Such *trahison*, such treacheries has led to where? A kick, yes, a kick from the population out there to them! A kick, yes, a resounding kick in 2014, which has echoed today. I was planning to read this a bit later, but I can't wait to cite what that kick means today. In 2014, *le peuple a donné le kick* to them, the treacherous. We were then at a crossroad, and, today, the Privy Council has given an even bigger kick.

I will cite, Madam Speaker, the Judgement of the UK Privy Council No. 8 of 2019. It is a judgement given by not one judge, but five judges, Lord Kerr, Lord Carnwath, Lord Lloyds-Jones, Lord Kitchen and Lord Sales. Five judges! The Judgement is there for everyone to read, and I shall cite but the concluding paragraph 39 –

“The Board considers that Mrs Malhotra cannot have had a personal interest within section 13(2) in the decision whether the payment should be made from MOFED's or MOHQL's (Ministry of Health and Quality of Life's) budgeted funds. The decision, whichever way it went, cannot have affected any interest of Mrs Malhotra or the company in any way. There was already a binding contract and a legal commitment to pay the money.”

And by whom, Madam Speaker?

I quote –

“The funds to make the payment were available. The only question was from which pocket the funds should come. The money would have been paid from the Consolidated Fund in any event. No doubt, which internal account it came from would have been a matter of total indifference to them.”

It goes on to say, Madam Speaker –

“The Supreme Court was, therefore, correct to conclude that the decision taken by the defendant to approve a reallocation of funds at the stage after funds had been identified, after the payment deadline had been determined, after the contract had been awarded, and after the contract amount had been determined was not a decision in which his sister had any personal interest. It was merely concerned with a choice between two available internal sources of funding”

Therefore, what the Privy Council stated further at paragraph 41, was that –

“The prosecution has failed to establish that the defendant’s sister had a personal interest in the decision, an element of the *actus reus* - meaning the act - of the offence contrary to section 13(2). However, it should have been noted that, the defendant could not have had any knowledge of the existence of facts, by the same token, giving rise to a personal interest in the decision in his sister, because there were none.”

And for these reasons, in case the other side of the House had not heard properly, the appeal has been dismissed. And once an appeal has been dismissed, once a judgement has been delivered by the Privy Council, it is *res judicata*. We cannot go and talk about it, and accuse people about things which do not exist. That is the *claque* given by the Privy Council to the other side in 2019, five years down the line. So, the kick that started in 2014, finally resounded in 2019, Madam Speaker.

I would urge we may have any political ambition, we may have any bitterness, we may have anything, but what I urge is we should respect judgment of the Privy Council because we still and we do have confidence in the institutions of our country and the Privy Council being the apex at the highest, at least in this House, which is the temple of justice, which is the temple of democracy, one should respect and not flout what has been said in judgment already delivered.

Now, in 2014 - I am still there because it is very important to remind the other side of the House before we hear the outcry and for those who hear us out there, what did we inherit in 2014? What did the Government inherit in 2014? Betamax, CT Power, the list goes on, Bagatelle Dam, Verdun, Ring Road and the list, as I said, goes on *ad nauseam* and in the National Development Unit which falls under...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo! Come here! I think you should come here if you want to assist hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus.

Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus: What have we inherited? A series of debts! An indebted country! A National Development Unit which was falling apart with all the officers flying around like scattered chicken because there were debts contracted and not paid and no way could they be paid because of *le trou qui a été laissé* in the coffers. This is the background and the backdrop against which this Government started to govern. The country, the going was rough, the going was tough. Rs1 m debt and that is only for the NDU and that is why it took time for us to start working. When you start evaluating, we must always evaluate all the factors that should be taken into account and one of them is with this chain chaining us and hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth and hon. Pravind Jugnauth insisted - together with hon. Ivan Collendavelloo and, of course, at that time, we had hon. Xavier-Luc Duval - that we pay our debts to contractors. We were very honest and we thought and we said that if we do not pay out debt, then, of course, what will happen is all these companies which have been working, will go bankrupt and as a result, all those people working for these companies will go unpaid. So, even at the start, despite the indebtedness, what we did was to ensure we honour what we have said and *parole donnée c'est parole sacrée*. Everyone will recall that.

Still hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, still the Government drove us across these crossroads to the right direction towards a new era of development, to new heights and all elements of his construct were well spelt out in those past budget speech and those past budgets have shown utmost commitment and responsibility towards taking our country to these heights.

As I said, we had already complex and convoluted formula by former Ministers of Finance which, in fact, what they do is hide a dark agenda, an ulterior agenda and an agenda not committed to bring this nation out of poverty, an agenda not then committed to bringing us out of the dark and to a brighter future. In contrast, what we have, we have four budgets

successively which are couched in straightforward and transparent terms. That is why the other side cannot understand this budget, that is why they use all kinds of attributes from *électorale* to *confetti*, to whatever else, the latest one was the ‘wow’ effect of the budget. *Mais l’esprit électoraliste*, as they are trying to have the people believe, cannot go through four successive budgets, what we have is a continuity and a vision. They do not have this vision and they call it *électorale* because most likely for the last four years, they could not follow what was happening from the era of development to today embracing a brighter future.

And these last successive budgets, the nation, Madam Speaker, had no difficulty in understanding and assimilating. Not at all! The Opposition indeed seems to have difficulty. In fact, what it appears is that they have got a big lump stuck in their throat which is neither going up nor down with this budget. It is just stuck there and they do not know what to do. That’s why they call it trailers. No, Madam Speaker, we do not do trailers here, we do not do film here, we do not do acting. We mean serious business, not in the term that they imply, but when we mean business, we mean advancing the country towards its development, advancing the country, gearing the poorer people on to the social ladder upwards, bringing people who were formerly denied education, giving them the chance to have tertiary education.

People whose houses were being flooded in the past, giving them a chance today to have clean roads, clean drains before their house and I will later on go more into details about that aspect, but, as I said, the budget *ine tasse dans la gorge l’opposition comme une zepine* which is neither going up nor down and it is going to be stuck there and let me say this, it will take them down. Whether this is our last speech, whether or not we will have the chance to speak or not, it is not for the Opposition to say that *nous pourrions disparaître à la prochaine élection*, it is not for the Opposition to determine the will of the people. The people out there will decide who really will go down *dans la poubelle de l’histoire*, the one that keeps drafting his list of candidates the next day after the general election or the other one who is struggling with so many cases and so many coffers. Some we see and some we don’t see and who is trying to contain all the Members of his party together.

For those on the opposite side, what they see is the general election as an opportunity to quench their thirst, their thirst for power, their aspirations to be sitting wherever they want to sit. For us on this side of this House and for hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the general election will be his struggle for this country. He is going to fight so that he can continue

bringing this country to where it should attain, that is, to the height of development and progress. What he wants is taking this country to its brighter future for never have I seen a Prime Minister so accessible to its *mandants*, to its population; never have I seen and it has been said before but it is worth repeating, Madam Speaker, a Prime minister who sits through all committees concerning major decisions impacting upon the country. In fact, what has been said to the National Development Unit and much has been said that NDU has not done much across the country, but when the Prime Minister takes it from any other Ministry and brings it under his wing, he is giving it the stamp of authority and he is validating it and saying: I mean serious business when I am talking about developing the infrastructural aspect of this country. That is what the general election heralds for this side of the House.

Madam Speaker, measuring growth by GDP only as main indicator does not give us a true picture of sustainable growth. When you compare statistics, on one side, we can see the real trend of inclusive growth, that is, GNI *per capita*. Mauritius is making good progress towards its goal of becoming a high-income country by 2023. GNI *per capita* as measured by the World Bank, World Bank Atlas method, Madam Speaker, increase to USD10,130 in 2017, reaching about 84% of the high-income threshold set by the World Bank, but policies to reduce income inequality are beginning to show positive results as well. The Gini Coefficient for Mauritius which has been rising since 2002, fell to 0.400 in 2017 showing a decline in income inequality. Mauritius currently ranks among the high human development countries of the world, that is, 0.79. It is close to join in the league of countries with a very high human development index as from 0.80. the gender development index (GDI) – we have so many stones being cast on the Ministry of Gender and the hon. Minister of Gender, but when we look at the GDI which is an index designed to measure gender equality in the world. Again, as at 2017, Mauritius ranked amongst the countries with the Gender Development Index being .968 and it is very near to reach with countries with very high gender development records.

Madam Speaker, putting our country to such transformative journey requires a visionary, strong determined and committed leadership. Today, our country's economy is on stronger foundations for a better future. Our GDP has passed the half trillion rupees this year. Unemployment rate which is 6.9% is now at its lowest level since 2001. It has reached an annual inflation; rate forecast is 1.5% for 2019. Our country's reserves have reached 241 billion figures. This Government has taken unprecedented praiseworthy socio economic and environmental measures. There are so many to list, but I shall go through some of those such

as raising firstly the basic retirement pension for our elderly by 71% since we took office. Such caring for the elderly by a Government is really unprecedented. Introducing the Marshall Plan against poverty which included a programme of income support to 11,000 low income families and coincidentally giving free access to these families, implementing a negative income tax, a policy within the tax threshold again to ensure that so many families will substantially raise their purchasing power and standard of living making of the minimum wage a reality, Madam Speaker, that corrected a major social injustice. That, for one, I would have expected everyone to be happy about because it is not about us here, it is about our constituents, the Mauritian people out there who have been able to raise from a salary of Rs4,000 to Rs3,000; to their minimum wage so that these people, at least, can afford to dream. One can afford to dream even further with the portable pension plan becoming soon a reality.

Making tertiary education free and accessible to so many who despite having talents would have had to stop their academic and skills development career. As I said earlier on, providing free Wi-Fi connection to families at the bottom of the ladder thereby bridging the gap and enabling these families to socially connect to the world. The pension increase, the salary increase, improving workers right with the wage guarantee refund, ensuring remuneration being up to Rs50,000 in case of insolvency, full length of service being recognised, completion of Cancer Hospital, ENT hospital, new Eye Hospital, new Flacq Teaching Hospital, Mediclinics, Health Centres, medical and non-medical staff being recruited in the next budget, setting up of a Food Standards Agency – so much in this House, so many questions about certification of food and now this is going to be set up. So much is being done. Dropping fuel, petrol and diesel price, six months maternity leave for child feeding mothers, women being on Boards being compulsory. This has received so much criticism yet because *ce n'est jamais assez pour l'opposition. Un centre* also is not enough. We hear so much. *Quand j'étais ministre de la légalité du genre, j'ai fait ça. Quand j'étais ministre de la légalité du genre, j'ai fait ça. Mais quand t'étais ministre de la légalité du genre, tu n'as pas apporté cette mesure, c'est-à-dire* women onboard being compulsory, I have to say. This Government has brought this. Sir Anerood Jugnauth has brought this.

The point that I want to make, Madam Speaker and that I am making is that this Government has been successful in providing a better living to so many workers, families, women, children that it is heartening to think how many of them have been able to escape the poverty and hardship. Due to the deliberate action of this Government to cater for those who

are voiceless and yet who form an integral part of this socio fabric of this country. I must pose here one minute, Madam Speaker, to say something. I should ask the Members of the Opposition to grow up. Stop using terms. Stop whenever there are, for example, calamities in the country saying that *ici finn gayner, laba pan gayner* destabilising whatever measures this Government is doing. Stop and grow up because we do not want to ignite a flame which has already died in this country. We are a unified country. We walk together and we are going to grow together. We are going to grow to the height aspired by this Government together, do not come and try to destabilise our social fabric.

Sustainable development, Madam Speaker, will not happen if our ecosystems become fragile. Declaring war to solid waste even though I have heard on the other side of the House saying that this is not a priority, keeping our country clean for them is not a priority and the special attention just given to this Budget to accelerate the sensitisation on environmental pollution, climate change, carbon foot print and our civic behaviour towards the environment, there is no doubt that, as a nation, we will pave the way together for Mauritius, for a better place to live in.

Let us just take a minute, Madam Speaker, to look at household income between precedent years. I have here figures of the increase of household income between 2006 to 2012 being only Rs10,000 or so; two mandates the PTR has reigned. Compared to the MSM party - the *Alliance Lepep*, I should say, in two years of administrationship, the increase in household income has raised by Rs9,400 and that was in 2017, the last statistics. That, not taking into account the impact of the minimum wage, the measures of pension rising to Rs6,700; salary compensation in 2019 and all the other measures that are here. It is clear that the hon. Prime Minister is working and his Government is working for the people. It is so easy to cast stones when we stand here in Parliament and talk. Those who herald from boards, for instance from their MID which started with a budget of *six milliards* or so and which has been termed as being a white elephant, stand here and say PTR has achieved this and they have achieved that. What I have to say is: the PTR has managed to fill in coffers with all its scandals, with its Betamax and all other litany or deals it has gone on, but we have with this country with four and a half years or so our achievement. What we have managed to achieve is we have the PWC in its review, a chronicle of social measures states that, in the financial services, no one has talked about that. No one does see that because they do not want to see. All they want is to stay in a glasshouse and cast stones in that the financial services have achieved 71% of its target and that is for the Budget 2018 to date. The agreed business has

reached 70% of its target. The real estate has reached 76% of its target. The SME has reached 83% of its target and they dare say nothing has been done for this economy. When we go on to look at Moody's, it has confirmed Mauritius in March 2018 as being in note B81 for Mauritius which is sustained by *une forte croissance et une résistance* macroeconomic *au choc*. The Mauritius Government credit's profile is supported by a diversified upper middle-income economy that has demonstrated resilience to external shocks despite being small and open. We have the World Bank's Doing Business Annual Report in 2018 where we rose from 25th to 20th in the rank. We have the Global Competitiveness Report in 2017/2018. We have maintained our position successfully. The 2018 Index of Economic Freedom of the Heritage Foundation, we have maintained our 21st position in spite of all that we have gone through. So, when we look at it and the Social Progress Index, and that should interest many who say that what we have are just a few measures, such as Rs30. for fishers, only Rs500 for old age pensioners. The Social Progress Index, we have risen from 40th to 39th worldwide and we have maintained our first position in Africa. We should not be oblivious to all of that.

Now, we have heard so much again that has been said. For instance, this morning, we have heard about the education hub at Cote d'Or being criticised. We have heard a Member, I cannot recall who, on the other side, has said that the education hub was set up quickly, *comme on dirait à la hâte*, overnight, just because the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in a PNQ, has said the Sports Complex will be a white elephant. No. That is not true. One should not be blindfolded. I know the other side of the House often asked questions about blackout and that has been successfully dealt with by the Minister of Energy. We no longer have such blackouts as we did when we inherited this country. So, we should add that to the list of what we inherited, successive blackouts. But now, I say the blackouts are shifted from this country to their minds because what they do not see is the whole plan that this Government has.

At paragraph 17(a) of the Budget Speech, page 31, what the hon. Prime Minister says

—

“I am providing funds for financing offsite works at the Côte d'Or City as well as for the development of the Côte d'Or Industrial Park.”

So, it is not just because the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that this sports complex will be *un elephant blanc* that the hon. Prime Minister suddenly and surreptitiously put in this measure that we will have an education hub. No. Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth does not

work like that. This Government does not have knee-jerk reactions. Knee-jerk reactions, let us keep it to the Opposition. We are a Government which has been planning and building up, and this is the build-up and that will be the crescendo. Where it hurts the most, where the shoe pinches the most is what? Is it because it is in Côte d'Or? Is that why the shoe pinches? Because it is in Constituency No. 8. Does not Constituency No. 8 form part of the country? What is wrong? Are we not entitled to have development across the country, from the North to the West, from East to South? We only have to have development in certain areas which the Members of the Opposition will decide? No. This is part of the strategic plan to develop Côte d'Or, and it will happen just like Ebène City which is the creation of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and which was then termed as *éléphant blanc*. Now, today, they have to buy their knuckles because they see that to rent a space there is practically impossible. They have to hide their comments now because youngsters are having a chance to gain employment through the vision of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. We have had phase 1, phase 2 and Landscape is going to transform, just as it has transformed Caudan, it is going to bring about the development that is due, *ce que mérite Côte-d'Or*.

In fact, I heard what has been said *parski leader l'opposition fine dire sa, fine fer sa*. The other day, when the Budget Speech was being delivered, we heard *fin donne congé public jour le Pape va venir parski noune dire sa*. It is a trend in the Opposition these days. Whenever Government does something, *nous kine faire sa*. Whenever it is good, *nous kin faire sa*, whenever it is not good, *zotte kine fer sa*. When it is bad: *pas moi sa, li sa*. When it is good, *pas li sa, moi sa*. Enough of that! Enough of this childish behaviour!

We have heard, and now I shall turn to Constituency No. 2. In Constituency No 2, we have heard, in this very House and I cannot but rise and speak on behalf of Constituency No. 2. I have been told by Members of my constituency that I should reply and say that Constituency No. 2 has also gone through its transformative journey, and it has gone through its era of development. In fact, Madam Speaker, if I may just put aside this debate and say, at a moment in time, when I had such an incidence happening in my professional career, and I decided to be a bid, let us say, on the quiet side, I was told by members of my Constituency: *Madame, a travers sa gouvernement la, ou fine transforme Circonscription no. 2. Cote ou guetter, ena ou la main. Azordi, napas reculer*. One may laugh and one may mock and one may go around in Constituency No. 2 and say: *Madame la pas pu gagne ticket*. But when you love your constituency, we do not care, because wherever we are, we will work for our constituency. Wherever we will be, we will work for our constituency. Be it as a candidate,

be it as an MP, be it as a Minister, be it as a PPS, on this side, we work in our constituency and for our people. *Nous pas déclare travail nous camarade pour nous. Nous déclare nous travail.*

Madam Speaker: Speak English, please!

Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus: I will stick to English, Madam Speaker. The transformative journey has gone a long way - it has not bygone - in Constituency No. 2. In fact, I do not have to say it. One has to look at the media page of Members of the Opposition to see what is being done in this constituency by this Government. One just has to look at the media page where they are pointing out to what is right and what is not right according to them. We will see how much work has been done in Constituency No. 2. We start from Boulevard Victoria, we go to *l'école de La Paix*, we go to *l'école de La Salle*, we go to Vallée Pitot, we go to Tranquebar, we go to Champs de Mars, we go to Ward IV and we go up to the Municipality of Port Louis, we go to the Supreme Court of Mauritius, we go to the Intermediate Court of Mauritius, we go everywhere we want, we go to La Citadelle and we go to Marie Reine de la Paix. There are so many other places that I have missed out, but still work has been carried out in every nook and cranny of the constituency. And we come here and say nothing has been done. That is an injustice not to this Government, but to the people out there who are benefitting from so many projects.

In fact, when we heard that no infrastructure has been built in Constituency No. 2, one must really have had a complete blackout, complete shut down because one has not gone, for instance, to Champs de Mars to see that there is a second football pitch that has been constructed. One has not gone to Vallée Pitot to see what has been constructed. *New jardin d'enfants!* One has not gone to Tranquebar to see that football grounds are being constructed, children's playground are being constructed. Not only that, in the last budget, we had, through the Minister of Gender, CDFW budget, the Minister of Finance had pledged we were going to have a new centre CDFW. This is already into implementation. Let us just hope we do not have a picture on Facebook, saying *moi quine pose question, moi kine faire sa*. Because I do not know how it works, Madam Speaker.

Mr Jhuboo comes here and says: *face à ma demande pour ceci, rien ; face à ma demande pour cela, rien*. Yet, another Member of his Party comes and says: I asked a question and it happened. Is the asking of questions led to implementation of projects? I must ask the hon. Member who is sitting in this House and he was Member between 2005-

2010 and 2010-2015, how many projects were implemented by his question? Let us tell the House. How many did the PTR implement through questions? Zero, Madam Speaker! Today, we can proudly say despite Vallée Pitot being a flood prone area, despite Tranquebar being a flood prone area, most part of these areas now *sont à l'abri des grosses pluies*.

Before, in 2014, we had to get canoes to remove people out in Tranquebar when they were caught out in heavy rain. Before, we had the Police to come and take people to shelters in Vallée Pitot because we were told landslide, there is nothing that can be done. Today, that very area has been developed that one will not recognise the constituency. We go round Champs de Mars, a CD has been deposited. I don't know what is in it, but I can guess. All round Champs de Mars, we have had footpaths around. Because you know why Madam Speaker? For years and years and years, Champs de Mars has been *delaissé*. Not only we have had footpaths all-round the Champs de Mars, today it is being used by everyone. Everybody is using it. We have 200 lighting, actually, as I speak now, being put up in this constituency, plus 50 all-round just for Champs de Mars. I can go on and on, but I have the famous note from Chief Whips. Every time on my feet, I tend to have these notes. So, now I will wind up. I will not go on because the list is endless. Let me just say that implemented projects in Constituency no. 2 amount to 121, and amounting to about *R 1 milliard*. And then, we have 20 ongoing projects and 83 new projects. These are what are ongoing, what have been done and what is to be done and I shall, in due course, file a copy in the House for it to be inspected.

I shall conclude, Madam Speaker, because the famous note is blinking to me now that I should resume my seat but, I have to say something else. And what I have to say is this: so much has been said about grants from overseas. So much fingers have been pointed out that we have received grants and that we are going round with *katora* and all that! But let us just cast a look at what has been done and what has been said. Look at Agaléga! Look at the Metro project! All these would not have been possible had it not been due to the Indian Government who has reaffirmed our ancestral ties with Mauritius, who has reaffirmed their faith in our economy by demonstrating such support. They have shown their faith in the resilience of our economy in giving grants to Mauritius, in tending out a helping hand. And I dare say we should be thankful to the assistance given to Mauritius. Even if in Mauritius people are not thankful and people stand up and say so many things against the grants being given, be it India, be it from Saudi Arabia, be it from China, yet, what we have is we have the African Development Bank Group, in their Mauritius Economic Outlook stating that the

economy constitutes its steady expansion will real GDP going on. And it says that this country, the economic outlook in Mauritius is positive because of the input from the Indian Government. Because of the faith of the Indian Government, that is how our economy is building up and it is picking up. So, if we are not grateful to the help that has been tendered when in 2014 we did not know where to start, that means we do not really love our country.

So, I shall say I big thank you to all those who are helping this country and especially to India, who has been very supportive and who is committed to bringing Mauritius out of its black days into brighter future, into consolidation as a brighter and stronger nation.

What is there to say is that the country is being revolutionised through its transport and landing stations landscape of Mauritius. What is left to say is now we have to jump in the Metro Express and go on to our next mandate to, I will not say govern the country, but bring the county to even brighter future, bring the country to even better days than what it has seen in the past and then that is what is left to be done. So, that is all that I have to say, Madam Speaker. I thank, Madam Speaker, and the House for bearing with for having exceeded my time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 5.09 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.51 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - MR JEAN FRANÇOIS CHAUMIERE - OFFENDING GESTURE

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, my attention has been drawn to a deplorable incident wherein, Mr Jean François Chaumière who, to all intents and purposes, is a stranger to this House, within the meaning of the Standing Orders and Rules of the Standing Orders presently in force, is seen on the footage of the Parliament Television earlier today while the camera was capturing the images of hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phoenix, Mr Benydin, who had the floor, making an unwarranted and offending gesture at the expense of and in a way that causes prejudice to the hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle, Mrs Boygah.

I have further been informed that this incident which is being widely circulated on the social media is attracting awful remarks, thus bringing this August Assembly to ridicule and disrepute. In the light of the above, I am declaring that Mr Jean François Chaumière is interdicted from being present in this Chamber and from the entire precincts of the Assembly for the remainder of the session.

Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, I have a Point of Order. On this count, being given that he is a Senior Adviser of the Prime Minister, can the House at least, take cognisance what action the Prime Minister deems fit to take, whether he will keep such an Adviser in his office?

Madam Speaker: I have already given my ruling on this matter and I do not think that the point that you have raised concerns me as Speaker. It is up to the hon. Prime Minister to decide.

Hon. Ramful!

(5.52 p.m.)

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, before the break, we heard the intervention of hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunboccus, an MP of Constituency No. 2. I would not bother to reply to her, not out of disrespect to her, but I will leave it in the able hands of my learned friend, hon. Osman Mahomed and hon. Uteem to deal with her on the campaign trail. And I am sure they have a lot to say about her. Now, let me start, Madam Speaker.

Après quatre ans et demi de règne, les masques de ce gouvernement sont finalement tombés et nous pouvons désormais constater l'état désastreux de notre économie. Avec une croissance balisant les 3.8% pendant ces 5 dernières années, une balance commerciale de R 129 milliards - R 17 milliards de plus que l'année dernière, Madame la présidente. La dette publique avoisinant les R 323 milliards et avec les secteurs traditionnels qui sont en difficulté tels que le textile, le sucre et aussi le tourisme, c'est la catastrophe assurée, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker, clearly, the measures that have been announced by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in the Budget did not meet the expectations of the people. The hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has completely missed the target.

Responsible people, responsible citizens of this country, those who have at heart the future of this country, those who are concerned about the economic situation of this country, those who are concerned about the youth, those who think for the good of this country, they were disappointed, and they were deceived.

And what did we hear? These persons, those responsible citizens, were so anxious to hear the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to come up with macroeconomic measures to address the problem of debt, to address the problem of trade deficit, to address the problem of GDP growth, those who are expecting the hon. Minister of Finance to come with long term measures - not one-off solutions - to address the problem that the textile industry is facing, that the sugar sector is facing, that the tourism sector is facing, they were favoured with what, removal of VAT on *tukmaria*, *sagoo*, *aplon*, *vermicelle*. This is what they were favoured with. Even those few budgetary measures, I will call them sweeteners, Madam Speaker, like the reduction in the price of mogas, diesel, cooking gas, Rs500 increase in old age pension, the meagre Rs30 for the fisherman have not sufficed to put the population to sleep.

This vicious plan of cunning the people with a few sweeteners, Madam Speaker, unfortunately, for the Minister of Finance, the hon. Prime Minister, does not work any more. These were in the old days. The people, nowadays, are more enlightened, they are clever.

This Government, Madam Speaker, will be judged not on those few sweeteners, they will be judged on their realisations. They will be judged on their unfulfilled promises and certainly, Madam Speaker, they will be judged on the numerous scandals that have shaken this Government for five years. The time has come, Madam Speaker, for the population to ask questions about the unfulfilled promises.

What happened, Madam Speaker, to the promise 'Second Economic Miracle'? What happened to the 5.7% growth promised in their first Budget - a new era? What happened to the 13 mega projects of smart cities and technopoles, the 100,000 jobs - 15,000 *emplois par année* promised in the economic Vision 2030? They were blaming the Labour Party for apparently turning the nation into a *nation zougadere*. What happened to their policy on *nation zougadere* - turning the population from a *nation zougadere* to a *nation d'entrepreneurs*? We know how many betting licences have been given and, in what circumstances, Madam Speaker. The Marshall Plan against poverty, the 10,000 social housing promised, I will come to that later. Import-substituted industries to cater for our

balance deficit - on Tuesday, I put a question to the Minister responsible for trade and he is talking about food. What's that? Sheltered farming to remedy the dire situation that we are facing with the trade deficit. What happened to the SME industrial parks at Plaine Magnien and Vuillemin, agro business park, onshore oil refinery at Albion, gold refinery, production of bicycles and motorcycles, pharmaceutical village at Rose Belle, 3-D printing Rivière du Rempart and the MINDEX at Rose Belle, Africa-Mauritius-Singapore-Asia air corridor, a flop.

The list is very long, Madam Speaker. I better keep some for the campaign. If you go through their last four Budgets, you will realise how many of those promises have remained unfulfilled and there are obvious reasons why these promises have not been fulfilled.

Premièrement, madame la présidente, l'instabilité dans le gouvernement pendant ces cinq dernières années. Never before in the political life of this country have we seen so much instability in a ruling Government. There has been a stripping of the Government since 2014. People today no longer recognise the Government that they elected in 2014, not less than - let me count properly *attention ki mo fer erreur la* - 15 MPs have left Government. One third of those who were elected in 2014 have left Government.

We have had two Prime Ministers, two Presidents of the Republic, one acting President, three Ministers of Finance, five Ministers have resigned pour *des raisons scandaleuses* - hon. Soodhun, hon. Dayal, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, hon. Bhadain, hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus, hon. Yerrigadoo, and you expect this Government to deliver with so much instability. Secondly, scandals have been the motto, the mantra of this Government. *Lalanguegate, Karocanegate, Bal Kouler, Euroloan, Yerrigadoogate*, findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Drugs.

The Commissioner of Police holding a constitutional post signing the passport of a drug trafficker and that person, the Commissioner of Police, still in post today. Though there have been allegations of *trafic d'influence* against him at the ICAC, he is still in post. Would you imagine this? Even *dans une république bananière* you will not find this. Attempt on the independence of the DPP with the Prosecution Commission. Let alone independence, attempt to arrest the DPP. A public broadcasting corporation, MBC, has lost all its credibility. *L'affaire Alvaro Sobrinho*, another scandal. *Une panoplie de scandales*, never seen before. These are the reasons, Madam Speaker, why this Government has not delivered on its

promises. They are more concerned about these scandals, *instabilité*, firefighting in Government.

Madam Speaker, let me expatiate on a few measures which were mentioned in the Budget. *Premièrement*, reduction in the price of mogas, diesel and cooking gas. Good measure, they want us to clap them for this reduction, for the reduction of those prices. But we have to speak not part of the truth, we have to speak the whole truth.

The other day I heard hon. Gungah comparing the prices of those commodities, mogas, diesel and cooking gas under the Labour regime with the prices under the current regime. You see, Madam Speaker, Mauritians are more enlightened nowadays, they are not duped and don't try to fool. What the Minister failed to mention is the evolution of the prices of those commodities on the international market under the Labour regime compared to the prices under this current regime.

From 2010-2014, under the Labour Government, I have done some research. It is very easy for every Mauritian to go on the Internet, look at the prices of those commodities on the international and compare them with the prices today. In 2011, when Labour was in Government, the price of one barrel of Brent Crude Oil was 111 dollars per barrel. 2012: 111 dollars per barrel again; 2013: 108 dollars and 2014: 98 dollars.

When this Government came in, they were lucky. We have to admit, they were lucky. The price of one barrel of crude oil went down to 53 dollars. 45 dollars in 2016; 54 dollars in 2007; 71 dollars in 2018. Massive windfall gains. So, the price has decreased by nearly half. In a simple mathematical calculation, if you calculate the average intentional price on the international market during the Labour Government, and now, the price has decreased by about 43%. On the international market, the price has decreased by 43% and locally, Madam Speaker, the price has decreased at an average of only 9%. 43% compared to 9%, including the Rs3.

I am going to repeat it for the people. They have been robbing the people, including the Rs3, that's what in the MID Fund. Internationally the price went down by 43% when this Government, here, they've reduced the price of these commodities by only 9%. This is cheating the people. Well, I will leave it for the population to appreciate.

Old age pension. I heard some of the Ministers, not only the Ministers, including the hon. Prime Minister, saying that they had inherited *un lourd bilan de l'ancien régime*. You know, Madam Speaker, sometimes, exaggeration has a limit. They want to blame the Labour

Government for their own mismanagement of the economy. This is a shameful attempt to lay the blame at the door of the Labour. After four and a half years that they have been in power, now they are coming and saying that the Labour Party should be blamed for the mismanagement of the economy. They are saying that, apparently, the Prime Minister went on the national TV telling the people when they took power in 2015: '*La caisse de l'Etat était vide.*' But let me ask this question, simple question: *si la caisse était vide en 2015*, where did they get Rs4.7 billion to pay for compensation. Salary compensation: Rs600 across the board. *Cela a coûté à l'Etat Rs1.7 milliards* in January 2015.

(Interruptions)

Yes, *li bizin*. But where did you get the money if *la caisse was vide*? *R 3 milliards* to pay for the increase in old age pension. *R 3 milliards plus R 4.7 - R 7.7 milliards*. If *la caisse était vide*, where did you get that money to fulfil your electoral promise. You should not dupe the people. As I have said, there is a limit to exaggeration, Madam Speaker. This is called *de la malhonnêteté intellectuelle* and you shouldn't expect the population to buy everything that you said.

Now, let me come to this very thorny problem of public debt. I think the situation has been adequately summed up in one sentence by the former Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, Mr Basant Roi. He gave a recent interview in *L'Express* of Monday 27 June 2019. He summed the situation of debt in one sentence and I read it, it is on the front page of *L'Express*: 'If the Government had been a private enterprise, it would have been in receivership already.' One sentence to sum up the situation of debt in the country.

Madam Speaker, before I deal with the issue of how Government is planning to reimburse part of its debt, the population should know how we have reached to such an unprecedented level of indebtedness. The people should know. Again, don't hide the truth. I am surprised again to hear the Prime Minister saying the other day, during the PNQ, that they are digging into the reserves of the BoM to pay for the debt left by the Labour Party. What a joke!

Madam Speaker, the facts are clear. The records would show it. In 2014, when the Labour Party left power, the debt stood at R 237 milliards wholly 61.5% of GDP. Today, the debt stands at an alarming figure of *R 323 milliards*, 65% of GDP, excluding, Madam Speaker, the loan through the SPBs, *R 18 milliards*, SBM Mauritius Infrastructure Company for Metro Express, loans from the Saudi Fund by Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure, Côte

d'Or project. And not to forget, my good friend, hon. Jhugroo, National Housing Development Company, which normally should have been counted in the Budget. And they are saying that they are reimbursing the debt left by the Labour Government! Let us see the reasons, and the population should know again, we shouldn't hide the figures. One of the main reasons for the accumulation of the debt for the last four and a half years is the cost incurred by the dismantling of the BAI Group. NPF...

(Interruptions)

Oui, labas central ti bon. NPF, a Government-owned company, today, has a total debt liability of around *R 100 milliards*. National Property Fund Limited, the company that was set up to pay back the policyholders, *R 10 milliards de dettes*, *R 4.4 milliards* loan from BoM, capital plus interest, and *R 6.4 milliards* loan from SBM Bank Mauritius Limited. MauBank Limited *R 1.6 milliards* equity participation from the Government of Mauritius in MauBank Mauritius Holdings Limited. Loan of *R 3 milliards* from SBM Bank Mauritius Limited guaranteed by Government. The total debt liability; NPFL plus MauBank Holdings Limited stands at an alarming of *R 15 milliards*. *R 15 milliards* and yesterday - was it yesterday? - answering to a PQ, the hon. Minister of Financial Services said that since four years, they are still calculating the valuation of the assets of NPFL, *depuis quatre ans*, still calculating the value of those assets. The fact is that all the assets have devaluated.

You will remember what happened to some of those assets, *une braderie* of the assets. There has been *une braderie*: Courts, Britam (Kenya), Iframac, Apollo Bramwell all sold out undervalued. *Braderie des assets de BAI*. So, who will pay for these liabilities? *R 15 milliards, qui vont payer?* If it is not the public, if it is not going to come from public funds, who will pay for this? And they are blaming the Labour Government, the Côte d'Or project, initially planned to be financed by the Government of China at a cost of Rs1.9 billion. It has gone up now to Rs4.9 billion.

(Interruptions)

Pas encore fini. Apres jeux des îles pou continue. Now, Government is planning to reduce the public debt to the statutory comment of 60% before end of 2021 by digging into the reserves of BoM.

Firstly, if they are so serious, they are saying that the economic environment is good or the indicators are rosy, but this decision of having to dig into the reserves of BoM to pay the debt *de l'Etat*, in itself, this decision clearly shows the situation that we are.

Catastrophique! We are in a situation of panic; it is a last resort measure. Madam Speaker, since the creation of the BoM, for the first time, a Government is having to dig into the reserves of the BoM to pay, to finance the debt of a Government. I was reading the other day, when this issue cropped up in the Press, I said: let me go and read the speeches of the forefathers when they had set up the BoM. The BOM was set up in 1966. In 1966, the hon. Minister Mentor probably will remember, we had a big problem with the price of sugar on the international market, and it was at that time that they were passing the BoM, and there was hon. Paturau, while intervening, he said, and I quote - *With the bank, the auto regulation will no longer exist in such a straightforward way and there may well be some pressure from Government for deficit financing, especially with the present low prices of sugar.*” So, he was concerned about the independence of the BoM. He said probably Sir Seewoosagur will go and dig into the reserves of BoM to finance the price of sugar because...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful, you are addressing your colleagues or the Chair?

Mr Ramful: No, sorry!

Madam Speaker: You may not like to see my face, but you have to bear with it.

Mr Ramful: When I am reading about Sir Seewoosagur. So, they are happy.

(Interruptions)

And you know what Sir Seewoosagur answered, Madam Speaker? He said - “Even if the price of sugar is low, it is not my intention to resort to it.” Mr Paturau came charging again - “I am very pleased to hear that, but I think eventually if the prices of sugar remain low, we will have to do something about it.” You know what Sir Seewoosagur answered? “Even with the price of sugar, I am not having to resort to it in this Budget.” So, these were men of principle. They had respect for the...

(Interruptions)

I know the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor has a problem. I do understand.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Ramful: But anyway, these are facts. I am reading from Hansard. These are facts, men of principle. And that hurts, normally...

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course. And today, this Government...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Ramful: This Government is digging into the reserves of the BoM. Secondly, now, the way this has been announced in the budget. A Minister of Finance, although he is a Prime Minister, coming before the House and saying to the nation: ‘Look, we are going to take out money from the BoM and finance the debt of the country.’ My question is this: has there been a prior Board decision of the BoM before the Minister of Finance comes before the House and announces this? But how can you talk about the independence of such an institution? Yes, it is an invasion on the independence of the BOM.

Thirdly, there is a total confusion with regard to this issue. It was announced in the budget that money would be removed from accumulated undistributed surplus and for that purpose; the section relating to Special Reserve Fund will be amended. This is what was said in the Budget Speech. Then, the BoM, two days after, came with a *communiqué* which talks about Foreign Exchange Reserve which is another Fund completely. Then, you have the PNQ where the hon. Minister when he tried to justify this measure, he referred to a report from the IMF which gave general guidance on financial management. But, Madam Speaker, hon. Prime Minister referred to a general guidance from the IMF on financial management. I have in my possession here - it is on the Internet, you can read - the Executive Summary of the IMF, April 2019, specific to Mauritius. I am going to read this last paragraph. This is what they said, I quote –

“Directors highlighted the widening external imbalance. While international reserves have been proved significantly on the back of strong financial inflows, ...”

And this is important, given the large size of the offshore sector. Because we know the offshore sector is very volatile and they are facing enormous difficulties.

“Because of the large size of the offshore sector, Directors agreed that the foreign exchange intervention policy should continue to build reserves buffers as conditions permit to strengthen resilience to shocks.”

So, what is the IMF saying? You have to build up your reserve to make it resilient against external shocks, especially given the volatility of our offshore sector, you can always have capital outflow. But if you are depleting the reserve and there is a crash, where will you

get money? Where will you get money from? So, don't try to fool the people, it's a dangerous move; a very dangerous move from the Minister of Finance.

Madam Speaker, the law as it stands, only entitles the BoM to use that Special Reserve Fund for monetary purpose and any amendment would be an invasion on the central bank's independence, and depleting that Fund would be detrimental to its main purpose, which is for monetary policy only and not for fiscal policy.

Let me come to the Betamax case now, Madam Speaker. I have heard a lot about the Betamax case, as if they have won the election. Forget about ML, MSM Members are trying to gain political mileage on the outcome of this judgement. Good! But the judgement is based on a simple question about interpretation, whether, at that time, STC was an exempted organisation or not, and the Supreme Court has decided that it was not an exempted organisation.

Madam Speaker: Don't make any comments on the Judgement of the Supreme Court.

Mr Ramful: To try to gain political mileage from this Judgement, especially from the MSM, is a mockery because, in 2010, when Navin Ramgoolam was their 'God', in alliance with the PTr...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhuboo as well was there. Who was the Minister of Commerce and Industry? Hon. Soodhun! And he was...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't get excited, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Ramful: ...and he was defending this agreement between STC and Betamax, *bec et oingles*. One can only refer to a PNQ. I think hon. Uteem made reference to this, and it is good that I repeat it for the population to know. During the PNQ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Ramful: Hon. Jhugroo, have some patience, I will come to my constituency in a minute. Have some patience!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo! Please! Debates should be held calmly in this House, without passion.

Mr Ramful: Hon. Ganoo is a good friend.

Hon. Ganoo said this –

“Can I ask the hon. Minister one question which I think is fundamental to the whole issue? He is talking of good procurement practice and so on. Since we have given a guarantee of 15-year cargo to Betamax Ltd and this project amounts to nearly Rs1 billion, since this expression of interest was issued in March 2008 and the Public Procurement Act came into effect in January 2008, and we are dealing with a major contract, doesn’t the hon. Minister think that this transaction should have been monitored by the Central Procurement Board and everything should have gone through this Board? The STC should never have issued directly an expression of interest, and thus acted in breach of the PPA which came into effect in January 2008.”

Nearly the same issue which was decided by the Supreme Court. And you know, what hon. Soodhun replied, Madam Speaker?

He said –

“The hon. Member says the contrary to what the hon. Leader of Opposition thinks. What is done is done. Let me explain the hon. Member...”

And he explained.

“We, in this country, have a lot of businessmen, many *cousins*, many *cousines*, they never invested Rs2 billion.”

Referring to the Bhunjun group, *cousins/cousines*!

“It is the first time in Mauritius that a Mauritian is going to invest and we already have a contract. Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded after STC was exempted...”

He, himself, said it!

“...from the Public Procurement Act, and I think, as a lawyer, the hon. Member should know.”

And now, you are trying to gain political mileage on the Betamax case? It is a shame!

(Interruptions)

It is a shame! It is a shame, Madam Speaker. Unemployment, it hurts!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Ramful: It hurts. I know it hurts. Unemployment! Madam Speaker, previous orators have raised concerns about youth unemployment. 25% *à peu près* of the unemployed are youth. I will not repeat this, but I am, however, concerned, Madam Speaker, with the alarming level of nepotism in the recruitment. People have not forgotten, Madam Speaker, how this Government, when they took power, those who were on contract in various Government institutions and parastatal bodies, such as the RDA, duty-free, IML, were asked to leave, and they were tagged of being close to the Labour Party. We should not forget. Today, in my constituency, you have in some families, close to the MSM, and my constituents know what I am saying, all the members are in full employment. Some of those close to MSM Members are even given the opportunity to choose which job they would desire, while we have some poor families, with young graduates, who are still sitting at home unemployed, waiting for a job. This is the kind of nepotism in the recruitment procedure.

Madam Speaker, we have a clear example. We should not forget the recruitments that were done in the CEB and the CWA. It cannot be a coincidence, Madam Speaker, that, those who were recruited at the CEB and the CWA were mostly from Constituency Nos. 19 and 20. It cannot be a coincidence. The recent recruitment that has been made by the Ministry of Health is a glaring example of nepotism, which was criticised by in the Audit Report. Let me come to housing because my friend, hon. Jhugroo, wants me to speak some more. So, I will talk about housing.

This Government promised to construct and deliver 10,000 houses during this mandate. This mandate, not next mandate! And we know that, answering to a PQ, hon. Jhugroo, Minister of Housing and Lands, confessed that out of the 1,449 houses constructed and delivered, nearly 746 of them were projects of the Labour Government...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

No, no! Hon. Jhugroo! Hon. Jhugroo, please! Please! Hon. Ramful, please resume your seat!

Hon. Jhugroo, you cannot say that the hon. Member is misleading the House, unless you stand up, raise a point of order if you have. But from a sitting position, you cannot make comments. If you have to make comments or remarks then you stand and say so.

Mr Jhugroo: On a point of clarification. I want to ask the hon. Member which PQ and which date?

Madam Speaker: No! Hon. Jhugroo, this is not according to the procedures of this side. You cannot ask questions to the hon. Member. Some other Members will surely reply to him.

Mr Ramful: I refer the hon. Member to Hansard. This Government, which promised 10,000 houses during their mandate, constructed and delivered only 600 houses, Madam Speaker. And, to be more precise, all the NHDC houses delivered in my constituency, be it at Mare d'Albert, Plaine Magnien, Petit Bel Air, Grand Bel Air and Mare Tabac, all of them - I have said constructed and delivered - were projects earmarked and financed under the Labour Government. Not a single one which has been delivered in Constituency No. 12 is project of this present Government. It is a shame! It is a shame, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! Last warning!

Mr Ramful: Let me come to my constituency, Madam Speaker. These are days....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, I give you now a last warning. Right?

Mr Ramful: The other day, my good friend, the Chief Whip, was talking about the difference between himself and hon. Jhugroo, and he said –

« Entre les hommes de caractère, c'est normal qu'il y ait des étincelles. »

Luckily for him, I don't hit below the belt. Luckily for him, otherwise it would have been a pleasure for me...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Ramful: Otherwise it would have been a pleasure for me to have talked about their relationship in the House, and the House would have appreciated. Anyway, I will leave it for my constituents to appreciate.

A few projects, tourist village! Madam Speaker, last year's Budget, it was said that Mahebourg will be converted into a tourist village. Hon. Gayan even came to my constituency, he met the inhabitants; he called for a meeting. The inhabitants of Mahebourg came, they were happy. Even though during his mandate, he did nothing for Mahebourg, but then, he met the constituents. And that was the one and only meeting with the inhabitants, and since then, he never came back. The inhabitants are still waiting for the tourist village.

Artificial beach! Hon. Jhugroo, the Chief Whip, hon. Gayan, they went to Mahebourg Waterfront; they walked along with the inhabitants along the coastal region of Mahebourg. They said: 'You know, we are going to convert this into an artificial beach.' They are still waiting, Madam Speaker, for the artificial beach.

The Market Fair of Mahebourg! Tender is still floating for five years. *Depuis cinq ans, on entend que* they are waiting for the tender. Go and have a look! Forget about the Market Fair, go and look at the state of the market itself. The market is in a poor state, a dilapidated state. Well, I won't go into all now, I will keep some for the campaign.

Let me conclude, Madam Speaker, by referring to a short quotation from the late MIT Economist, Rudiger Dornbusch. He said –

“Crisis takes a much longer time coming than you think, but happens much faster than you would have thought.”

Madam Speaker, with the current state of the economy, I sincerely hope that we have enough time not only to think, but to react. Luckily, the general elections are at our doorstep, and I am sure the population will react.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I will now ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. François!

Mr F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today is a great day. Let me first of all, as a representative of the good people of Rodrigues, to thank them all, for placing their trust and confidence in me.

I am duty bound to deliver a plan to ensure that what each and every Rodriguan aspires for, is possible from this Budget and future Budgets, and that the plan is a mean to access their fair share of a better future and leaving no one behind.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a future, but I must secure and defend, which a Budget reminds me, so that each and every Rodriguan continues to build his life on the foundation of social, political, economic and environmental plan in this Budget of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, coupled with what the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues, Louis Serge Clair, presented in the Regional Assembly for Rodrigues.

This 2019-2020 Budget, in these extraordinary times, where so much is now possible and with the right leadership feasible, is a challenge. It challenges each one of us to ensure that we can do our best on behalf of those that this Budget is meant for.

Today, I am pleased to participate in this meaningful, last Budget debates for this mandate, with a high note of satisfaction, bearing in mind with humility and aspiration, that I could always have done better in the interest of our Republic. What has been achieved so far is not the end of the road, but only the beginning of a long road ahead, which I firmly believe shall continue after the next general election. The fundamental and core mission that drive my ambition and passion during this mandate for our Republic and, in particular, the autonomous Rodrigues Island, is by listening to the authenticity of my people, by considering their guidance and by responding positively to important issues for our progress.

Having said so, I would like to thank officers from all Ministries, the PMO, NDU, the Ministry for Rodrigues, the Executive Council of Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the leadership of Serge Clair, local authorities, parastatal bodies, international organisations, such as AFD, GEF, UNDP, EU to name a few and NGOs like the Rodrigues Council of Social Services, *Mouvement Solidarité Rodrigues* for their valuable support at all times.

This 2019-2020 Budget presented by the hon. Prime Minister reflects the continuous ambitions, visions, concerns, intentions, priorities and hopes for our Republic in line with Vision 2030. I believe Government is not only focusing on electoral cycles, but rather on generational ones and these budget measures align the natural continuous lines and approach

for the integration of Agenda 2030 for implementation of SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals.

I seize this opportunity to appeal that our Parliament shall set up a parliamentary committee for SDGs to, amongst others, monitoring and reporting budget performance against the SDGs which shall greatly contribute towards making us a resilient nation as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the UN next month will hold a High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York for Parliamentarians to focus on the main field of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. I hope that Mauritius will be present so that we are not left behind in that direction.

The hon. Prime Minister stimulates the right national mindset and commitment for us all for more inclusive decision-making processes and for us not to sit in our office, not to sit in our cars, not to sit in our homes waiting for miracles to happen when he rightly qualifies that his vision is in motion. As Parliamentarians, we are in quest to make history and I understand that history is only concerned with visions that are being timely implemented.

Now, let me ask a few questions to the population, either here or in Rodrigues. Are we a Government with purpose? Yes, we are! Are we a Government that builds houses to shelter people without a home?

(Interruptions)

Are we a Government funding massively the health sector to deliver better health care to our people?

(Interruptions)

Are we a Government that funds free education for our youth and children?

(Interruptions)

Are we a Government committed to supporting our families, our senior people with disabilities and low-income people and families?

(Interruptions)

Are we a Government creating a smart agriculture and food security in response to climate change? Are we a Government assuring a healthy population through sport activities and facilities? Are we a Government that is contributing to enhance the development of Rodrigues?

(Interruptions)

And the list goes on. I will stop here. I guess the answers from the population surely portray the plan for the future founded in some of the key budgetary measures that I will comment on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to strengthen our economic growth, the hon. Prime Minister started his speech on a major sector, the ICT, through innovation, with the objective for an innovation-driven society and economy. This is in line with ICT and innovation roadmap through digital technology in the private sector and in the public administration processes to improve public service delivery. I am deeply touched by the strategy to ensure inclusiveness of innovation, where 11,000 families who are on the Social Register of Mauritius shall be given free access to broadband Internet to bridge the digital divide. Can you imagine the change and opportunities that this will bring for these families?

The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Bill recently debated will play a major role in innovation and here I call for the setting up of a right Research Innovation Council structure for Rodrigues, so as not to leave Rodrigues behind.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need to achieve excellence in the public sector to serve the public by embracing innovation through the use of Internet; be it here or be it in Rodrigues Administration, I concur with the project of e-health by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. A similar e-health project is also actually being implemented by the Commission of Health in Rodrigues. The introduction of e-patient thereon will have to be a revolutionary step ahead, where patients can take control over their health decisions and behaviour. This would fundamentally change the economics, our healthcare. However, the prevalence of cancer remains alarming for me. And one further innovation action, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the smallness of Rodrigues could also allow us to embark in a specific system of engineering methodology for a system of e-democracy by using technology.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bad weather allowance for fisherman to be increased to Rs340 is welcome by fishers with other facilities, such as the grant of two fishermen in cooperatives to purchase outboard engines and fishing nets which is being increased from Rs60,000 to Rs80,000. In Rodrigues, 1250 in-lagoon and off-lagoon fisher are concerned with bad weather allowance.

The tourism market is becoming more and more competitive and is diversified on international front. Should there be a new tourism brand to reposition Mauritius as a

premium destination. I appeal for the strengthening of Rodrigues authenticity and difference as a plus in the national marketing and promotional activities at international marketing events together with Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The introduction of the SEN Act, Special Educational Needs Authority, there is provision for investment of Rs138 m. for inclusive education for learners with disabilities. This is a very good thing, and this is action in motion.

Together with free tertiary education, I welcome the reform in the higher education sector focusing on the promotion of entrepreneurship training and research for national relevance.

In addition, I will suggest that, in line with the Vision 2030, a new environmental school programme be introduced as a green school national programme for our youth to pledge and engage as environmental and Climate Change Ambassadors.

Sports - IOIG is on in a few weeks, with the flame to arrive in Rodrigues on 06 July and that will surely unify the nation. I highly note that Judo and Marathon will be held in Rodrigues on 25 and 26 July respectively As rightly said by hon. Toussaint, the Gymnasium of Malabar has been upgraded as well as Camp Du Roi Stadium. It is a *bijou*.

Allow me, to congratulate the 43 Rodriguan athletes forming part of the national team and rest assured of our full support from Rodrigues for the Game. *Nou sir ki Gymnase à Malabar pou plein à craquer aussi bien ki Stade Camp Du Roi et nou pou la aussi à Maurice.*

I seize this opportunity also to plead for the creation of a *Comité Régionale Olympique Sportif à Rodrigues (CROS)*, as a branch of the National Olympic Committee of Mauritius for Rodrigues. I say so because there is need for a rupture against the discriminations of certain sports federations as per the weaknesses of the Sports Act 2016 with regard to Rodrigues. I hope that the Ministry of Youth and Sports will address these situations, while reviewing the Sports Act 2016 with the new Sports and Physical Activity Bill.

Police - I am happy that an Advance Passenger Information System at the airport will be implemented, and I hope that our Smart ID Card will also be equipped as a passport document.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Rodrigues there is the Police Band with some musicians. I appeal to strengthen this band with more musicians as well as the renewal of their musical instrument that has become a must.

More importantly, I am also pleading for the transfer of the Rodriguan Police Officers who have completed their training here, who requested to be posted back to Rodrigues to strengthen the Rodrigues Police Division and also on humanitarian ground to be reunited with their families.

Judiciary - I support the creation of a Land Court, the *démarche* to see justice restored in the cases of dispossession of land, as in Rodrigues as well, there are some interesting cases of land dispossession.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one project that I cherish dearly is the setting up of Law Clinics in Rodrigues at least twice a year. I have started discussion with the Attorney's General Office in that direction and I hope that by September or October this year, a first Law Clinic could be held for the benefit of my fellow brothers and sisters in Rodrigues - *kone to drwa ek compran to drwa*.

Climate Change - the phenomena of cyclones, flash floods and heavy rainfall, are true challenges for the future. One issue that concerns us here in Mauritius is the lack of professionals with the interdisciplinary skills needed to tackle the environmental, social and economic aspects of the problem.

Let me refer to Professor Chris Zevenbergen, of flood resilience of urban systems at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands. He wrote, and I quote: "*we're moving now in a period where we cannot control nature. We have to deal with uncertainties in terms of climate change and socioeconomic development.*"

Analysing the current situation of our Republic here, I am deeply concerned with our vulnerability with regard to climate change. I note that the air temperature has increased by 1.2 degree centigrade over the last decades, which is above the global average increase of 0.85 degree centigrade - sea level rise of 5.6 mm per year as compared to global average of 3.3 mm.

However, I believe that Government is gradually translating the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction through its budget allocation.

This is where the future Land Drainage Master Plan, Action Plan and Spatial Planning are *sine qua non* tools for us to provide assistance for better planning and emergency response and also to enable us to mitigate the Impact and Adaption to Climate Change.

It's worth noting that for Rodrigues, the aerial and photogrammetry surveys have been 100% completed to create a Digital Elevation Model.

In as far as Rodrigues is concerned, for the first time there is an investment of Rs168 m. for drains projects under my leadership as PPS, through NDU. We are bridging the flood investment gap to alleviate the hardship and flooding problems of our inhabitants. Surely, there is huge amount of work ahead and investments required, to transforming flooding sensitive zones to be flood resilient and that would take time.

I am seriously looking at the current situation and protection system and I have to say, following the construction of the drains projects by NDU in Rodrigues, this has brought a new perspective and consciousness towards adaptation and mitigation measures in flood prone regions.

Drain projects have already been completed so far, in Port Mathurin (Phase 1), Allée Tamarin, Fond Baie aux Huîtres, Lataniers, St Gabriel (Pas Jérôme), Petit Gabriel. Actually, two major drains and bridge projects are being implemented in two vulnerable sites, namely at Rivière Cocos and Camp Du Roi.

In this Budget, community based drain projects, earmarked for Rodrigues, will be implemented namely at Port Mathurin (Phase 2) and Raising of Radier at Port Sud-Est which are under emergency procurement, Anse Ali to be relaunched, Grand La Fouche Mangles, drains works at Anse aux Anglais and Accacia, raising of Fords, namely at Baie Malgache, Mourouck 1 and 2, Baie Du Nord, Baie Diamant 1 and 2 and Baie Topaze and Grand Baie.

M. le président, maintenant, permettez-moi de parler plus précisément de Rodrigues dont nous célébrons, aujourd'hui, une nouvelle centenaire en la personne de Mme Vinolia Momus à l'Union, Rodrigues, elle qui représente avec les autres le symbole de la femme Rodriguaise. Bon anniversaire madame Momus.

M. le président, Rodrigues est guidé par le thème du programme quinquennal de l'OPR, qui est *Nou Kapav - Continous à Bâtir une Ile Rodrigues de nos Rêves*".

En mars dernier, le Chef Commissaire, Serge Clair, a présenté son huitième budget consécutif au service du peuple de Rodrigues avec pour thème : *"Préserver nos Acquis,*

Renforcer notre Résilience et Poursuivre le Progrès” qui s’articule et se résume autour de quatre piliers, le Capital Humain, la bonne gouvernance, l’environnement et la création de richesses et emplois, entre autres.

M. le président, le Chef Commissaire a fait mention avec raison que, je cite - “*grâce au travail acharné des Rodriguais et Rodriguaises, l’économie de Rodrigues est aujourd’hui plus forte que jamais. On peut en observer les résultats réels dans la vie quotidienne de nos citoyens*”.

Rodrigues a sa propre structure économique selon son authenticité et spécificité, et qui se diversifie graduellement.

Les indicateurs démontrent cela et sont au vert, la diversification est dans les secteurs, tels que la construction en pleine croissance, le tourisme, le transport, le service, et là, progressivement dans le domaine de l’informatique.

Selon *Statistics Mauritius* en 2017, 15,800 emplois sur 18,400 se trouvent dans le privé, les petites et moyennes entreprises et le nombre des chiffres d’affaires des entreprises augmentent. Dans le domaine de l’entrepreneuriat, Rodrigues met en place un projet innovateur, la production d’huile à base de limons pour des besoins cosmétiques et pharmaceutiques pour des grandes marques françaises.

M. le président, au fait, je ne voudrais pas prendre le temps de la Chambre sur certains points soulevés par rapport à l’attitude de certains vis-à-vis de Rodrigues, mais je dois me joindre dignement comme un vrai Rodriguais, comme l’honorable Léopold, afin d’éclairer la population et certains honorables membres.

D’ailleurs, je félicite l’honorable Léopold pour son intervention sur la partie sombre de l’histoire politique de Rodrigues par un parti politique de Maurice. Permettez-moi, de rafraîchir et d’éclairer la mémoire de la population, surtout le jeune honorable Baboo et certains de ses acolytes.

Certes, Rodrigues a connu des avancées sociales et économiques aussi bien que politique. On n’est plus dans les années 1976 à 1982. Ce n’est plus cette époque, où un parti politique de Maurice avait poussé les Rodriguais à émigrer vers l’Australie pour assurer l’avenir de leurs enfants. Ce parti politique est responsable des *brain drain* Rodriguais. Je suis ravi qu’à cette époque, les Rodriguais éclairés et déçus des fausses promesses, allouaient à ce parti politique le sigle de « *Parti Malpropre Sorti Dehors* », dicit de Benjamin Gontran dans son ouvrage « *Sir Ben Raconte Rodrigues Tome 1* ».

Ce même parti qui disait aux Rodriguais en 1976 “*arête mange patate ek manioc, mange du riz pou ou plus civilisé*”. Aujourd’hui, il continue et traite les Rodriguais de *lougarou*, comme énoncé l’honorable Léopold : *nou pas pou blier zot*.

Ce parti avait brigué et gagné les élections générales à Rodrigues en 1976 avec un pourcentage de 57.27%. C’est bon de remonter l’histoire un petit peu. Et vous savez comment c’était après l’épisode de faux espoirs aux Rodriguais!

Ecoutez-bien ce qu’a fait ce parti politique de Maurice, selon l’historien Ben Gontran, et je cite –

« Ce parti avait fait comprendre aux Rodriguais ce que l’indépendance signifiait et que Rodrigues se dirigeait vers : « la fermeture des églises, le port obligatoire du *langouti*, l’arrêt de l’élevage du porc et le français et l’anglais seraient remplacés par que la langue indienne dans les écoles... ».

Des faussetés qui irritaient les Rodriguais.

M. le président, ce qui était très cocasse dans cette histoire, en novembre 1977, le *leader* de ce parti, fustigea dans un meeting public à Port Mathurin que « *le peuple Mauricien pa fine conne voter, zot pas mauvais mais zot encore bête* ».

Heureusement, que l’OPR est venu en 1976, même si, seulement après trois mois, Serge Clair et Darcil Perrine subissaient une défaite électorale, et parmi ces militants se trouvait aussi mon père, Christian François, comme militant première heure.

En 1983, l’OPR inversait la situation avec 65.49% de vote et infligeait une défaite monumentale à l’ancien leader de ce parti politique de Maurice, qui scorait seulement 36.63%.

Par contre, en 1991, bizarrement, une nouvelle alliance PTR/PMXD brigait les élections à Rodrigues et scorait que 119 voix sur 14,017 votants inscrits, soit 0.84%. Je répète 0.84%, moins de 1% de vote. Je me pose la question, pourquoi PMXD ?

M. le président, il est bon de rappeler à la Chambre que lors de ma réplique au discours-programme en 2015, j’ai fait un humble appel à toute la République de respecter cette avancée démocratique qu’est l’autonomie de Rodrigues. Cette autonomie, que Sir Anerood Jugnauth et Paul Bérenger, dotait en novembre 2001, comme le plus beau cadeau au peuple de Rodrigues, après une longue lutte de 25 ans de nos aînés.

Je salue tous ceux qui ont compris les vraies valeurs de Rodrigues et qui nous poussent à aller encore plus loin dans cette démarche démocratique, et non pas ceux qui nous critiquent en disant - « *tanque ou bisin alle talle la main dan Port-Louis pou gagne casse, ou pas ena lotonomie* ».

Contrairement au souhait et rêve irréalisable de l'honorable Ms Seewocksing, M. le président –

- i. Rodrigues est appelée à être dirigée par des hommes et des femmes Rodriguaises capables, sérieux et responsables.
- ii. Rodrigues n'a pas besoin des autres politiciens déconnectés de la réalité Rodriguaise. Rodrigues n'a pas besoin d'être dirigée par un *Remote Control*.
- iii. Rodrigues n'a pas besoin des politiciens rétrogrades et dangereux qui disent, et je cite –

« *Dossier la terre pas pou kapav gérer par politicien Rodriguais sa. Dossier la terre bisin mette dan enn corps indépendant* ». Propos du leader d'un parti politique de Maurice lors d'un congrès politique à Rodrigues récemment et qui croit pouvoir conquérir Rodrigues comme en 1976.

- iv. Rodrigues n'a pas besoin d'une nouvelle forme de 'paternalisme et colonialisme politique, et d'ailleurs, le peuple de Rodrigues ne validera jamais aucune forme de paternalisme et colonialisme politique. Nous sommes conscients de ce que nous sommes en tant que peuple et de notre avenir, auquel nous avons déjà réfléchi.

Nous rejetons toutes formes de colonialisme qui sont contraires à notre identité et à notre valeur rodriguaise - « *Nou l'unité pas pou réussi cassé* », même avec vos millions. Heureusement, qu'il y a seulement une petite minorité ici, qui pense ainsi.

M. le président, nous allons résister, préserver et renforcer notre résilience contre tous ceux qui ne respectent pas notre sens d'unité et d'identité Rodriguaise de par notre homogénéité sociétale.

Il ne faut pas mélanger l'identité créole dans le contexte de la société mauricienne, la créolité et l'identité rodriguaise. Rodrigues est unique dans ce sens. A Rodrigues, nous sommes tous Rodriguais, tout court.

Je félicite chaleureusement mon leader Serge Clair, aussi bien que la défunte Antoinette Prudence, pour tout leur combat de faire reconnaître cette identité et dignité Rodriguaise.

Pour terminer sur ce volet, je lance un défi au leader de l'opposition : venez poser votre candidature à Rodrigues lors de la prochaine élection générale, non pas ces deux néophytes à Rodrigues, sans l'âme et la dignité d'un vrai Rodriguais.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us come to serious provision of the budget provision for Rodrigues as guided by core value of central Government's decisions and actions towards autonomous Rodrigues through a great sense of solidarity, respect and cooperation.

This Budget makes provisions for the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport to enable landing and take-off of larger aircrafts. Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, airport development is on, with funds to be secured from the *l'Agence Française de Développement*. However, as pointed out by hon. Jahangeer, I would have preferred the one and only futuristic iconic structure to be built on tilts at sea, but, unfortunately, for some geotechnical reasons, that is not possible. It is a missed opportunity for an Iconic-Futurist Infrastructure for Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the challenges of climate change in Rodrigues, let me put on record that the whole population of Rodrigues, appreciates the humanistic efforts of the hon. Prime Minister to visit and support Rodrigues, right after the cyclones Gelena and Joaninha that hit us hard. I also put on record all those, be it from the Government or Opposition sides, who expressed a certain degree of solidarity towards Rodrigues, through my persons. It is well appreciated!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I pay tribute to those 546 refugees during Cyclone Johaninha and the 259 refugees of Cyclone Gelena, for their good sense of discipline and dignity. They all left the emergency refugee centres to go back home as soon as no cyclone warning was in force in Rodrigues.

I pay tribute to the Rodrigues Emergency Operation Command REOC, the many public officers who worked relentlessly during these hard times. I plead for their continuous empowerment through more training and exchange of experience with others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following these cyclones, both the hon. Prime Minister and the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues, announced a New Housing Scheme for Rodrigues to

upgrade and strengthen the Corrugated Iron Sheet and ex-Trust Fund houses, and this meets the vision of the project - *“Enn Fami Enn Bon La Case”* . *“Ce projet de logement touchera environ 1,500 familles rodriguaises, et ce sera un très grand soulagement pour ses familles”*, selon Daniel Baptiste, Commissaire de la Sécurité Sociale et de Logement à Rodrigues.

En passant, le gouvernement régional a déjà complété la reconstruction de 16 logements en décrépidité, construits dans les années 80 ans, sans toilette et cuisine, qu’encensait l’honorable Baboo, dite cité, du village de Cité Patate et dans les prochains budgets d’autres villages seront touchés.

During, one of my interventions in this House, I also proposed that the State Trading Corporation, to construct a warehouse in the upper location of Rodrigues, just in case of any severe climatic situations at Port Mathurin.

I am glad to see in this Budget that STC will invest Rs1 billion in the construction of new warehouses in Mauritius and Rodrigues for rice, flour storage and others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, OPR Party continues to forge its ecological and aesthetic vision for Rodrigues. We are more than happy that provisions have been made to allow CEB and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to continue to implement the undergrounding of the electricity network for essential services. This will link Pointe Monnier Power Station to the airport, La Ferme and Mont Lubin Hospital, desalination plants and other major water pumping stations around the island.

Tourism remains an important economic pillar for Rodrigues. Tourism operators welcome the promises of the hon. Prime Minister through the provision of Rs92 m. to maintain the Special Rodrigues Holiday Package and the Subsidy on Airfare from Rodrigues to Mauritius and vice versa.

Contrary to what the Leader of Opposition voiced out in his speech last week, that *“Tourism is not well in Rodrigues”*, that’s not correct. Tourism statistics for Rodrigues as per Statistics Mauritius show positive trends in terms of arrival for the last seven years. In 2011 - 50,437, and in 2018 - 76,264 visitors.

Training in the tourism sector has moved a big step forward with the newly established *Pôle de Formation du Tourisme* in Rodrigues dispensing a Degree Course in International Hotel and Tourism Management by Vatel Hotel and Tourism Business School of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Commission for Training of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, led by Commissioner Franchette-Gaspard Pierre-Louis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues faced the disastrous phenomena of Food and Mouth Diseases and recently Fall Armyworm that affected severely our agriculture. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Commission for Agriculture in Rodrigues are collaborating to remedy the problem of Bio-Security. As regards FMD, I am informed that since December 2018, at 5% significance level, Rodrigues is now FMD Free, as no case has been reported or identified, the situation is under control.

However, things are getting better, that actually the demand for shipment of live animals exceeds the carrying capacity on the ship per trip. I have requested the Mauritius Shipping to look into the possibility of increasing the number of containers, to avoid long queues and waiting time by potential buyers. I only hope a new passenger and cargo ship to replace Mauritius Pride on the route Mauritius-Rodrigues-Mauritius will be constructed soon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the MBC, in the past, I have put many questions, for an increase in the number of MBC channels broadcasted in Rodrigues. I am happy to note that the hon. Prime Minister has announced that the MBC will increase its channels from 4 to 11 by November this year.

During the cyclone Gelena, the AM Antenna at Citronelle was completely destroyed. I have requested the MBC and MCML to expedite matters with regard to the replacement of the Antenna at Citronelle. Secondly, for security matter to look into fencing of the site, and thirdly, to review the quality of the TV images and equipment thereat, and, finally to provide continuous progress development for all personnel thereat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the OPR Government led by Serge Clair and the actual central Government led by hon. Pravind Jugnauth and political partner, hon. Collendavelloo of ML, have made history to digitally connect Rodrigues to the world through the MARS, sub-marine optical cable 12 months ahead of schedule, and which, was inaugurated in February 2019. Hon Sawmynaden, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation witnessed same.

Now, allow me, to contradict what the hon. Leader of the Opposition raised in his speech, while trying to claim paternity of this historic MARS project. Rightly so, in the Budget Speech of 2012, he announced, and I quote him in paragraph 337 –

“(..) a submarine fibre cable will be laid to link Rodrigues to Mauritius.”

And he further stated –

“the estimated cost of this ground-breaking venture is Rs600 m. Government will provide financing which will be reimbursed over twenty years.”

Let me remind the House of what happened, by what I qualified in 2011 as *effet d’annonce* from the attitude of the then hon. Minister of Finance, who is today, the Leader of the Opposition, who was then trying to save his good friend, the Leader of *Mouvement Rodriguais* (MR) Party, Von-Mally from losing regional election in Rodrigues, and today, they have become foes for treason.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I remember well the reaction of hon. Bérenger, the then Leader of the Opposition, and I quote: *“What I would like to know is: who is going to do the thing?”* And more interestingly, he said: *“I think we should think well about that, we should not lose time”*. He was farsighted about the issue of time.

I remember also, in my response, I questioned the then Minister of Finance: *“where is the money announced”*, as the budget for Rodrigues was only Rs1.649 billion, with a capital budget of only Rs360 m. I remember well he was proud about the increase of the budget by only a meagre sum of Rs45 m.

It is good to know that hon. Paul Bérenger, then Leader of the Opposition, again, reacted, and I quote: *“For God’s sake, that increase represents 2%! Même pas les 10 sous du SMS. Il y a de quoi à provoquer nos frères et nos sœurs de Rodrigues. 2%, M. le président! This is, I believe, adding insult to injury. But there is adding insult to insult because the Minister says: “This increase of Rs45 m. will enable the RRA to have a stronger development focus.”*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how daring today, the same hon. Member comes to this House to blatantly criticise the economic situation of Rodrigues. I also questioned the then Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues, hon. Von-Mally, and I asked him: *“Where is the Rs 600 m.? Why is it not under the acquisition of financial assets, that is, loan?”* And there was no provision earmarked anywhere in the budget. And hon. Von-Mally replied: *“It is a loan. It is under the Ministry of Finance. The matter is being taken by the Ministry of Finance.”* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what happened in reality. *Que des effets d’annonce et rien de concret!*

Let me conclude by saying and remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that *“History is not concerned with visions or mere words that are not implemented”*, as rightly

said by Sheik Bin Rashid Mohamed Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, in his book: “My Vision - Challenges in the race for Excellence”.

Again, Rodrigues is connected via the MARS cable to the rest of the world, and this is history in action. Rodrigues is in a new digital era. E-government will be one of the many necessary steps that Rodrigues is engaging in for a brighter future, to keep pace with the trend of development.

Landscape Ltd will construct a Technology Park at Baladirou, with the first ICT building, construction to start by approximately end of October this year.

And amongst other major projects for Rodrigues, another future gigantic project for Rodrigues that we should ponder seriously upon, is a complete master plan and construction plan for wastewater networks for Rodrigues. We better start to plan it now because there will come a time when we might not be able to afford it. This is becoming critical despite central Government has allocated around Rs100 m. under NEF for environmental projects for Rodrigues.

Another pressing issue is beach erosion, namely at Grande Baie, Baladirou, Petite Butte, Graviers, which I will urge the Beach Authority together with RRA to urgently take concrete adaptation and mitigation measures thereat.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are at the beginning of the rise of a modern, authentic Rodrigues and here, I suggest the Economic Development Board to shoulder something concrete with Rodrigues for other sustainable avenues for a progressive socioeconomic development.

I will fail in my speech, if I do not say how people in Rodrigues welcome the decrease in gas and fuel price and the maintenance of subsidy on various commodities, despite that the cost of living in Rodrigues remains relatively on the high side.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, Rodrigues development is on the right track and I will definitely continue and get it to be on the right track. The total budget allocation for Rodrigues for 2019/2020 has increased from Rs5.008 billion in 2018/2019 to Rs5.238 billion, out of which Rs3.8 billion grant for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Rs1.346 billion for other Ministries and organisations. Thus, an increase of Rs230 m.

I will nearly conclude. Let me just say a few words on Chagos, where references have been made. We, also in Rodrigues, extend our solidarity towards the Republic of

Mauritius for claiming sovereignty over Chagos Archipelago to complete the decolonisation process of Mauritius.

On behalf of Rodrigues, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the Chagossian leader, Olivier Bancoult and *tout lepep chagossien* for the international victories and achievements. This is a new chapter for our Republic.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the House that we, Rodriguans, are all in a mode to strive for the advancement of Chagossian people as our brothers and sisters of our Republic. They can rely on Rodrigues to fully participate and share our autonomous experience with them. God bless them, God bless our Republic, and God bless Chagos!

Permettez-moi de conclure et je terminerai mon discours sur un sujet très émotionnel et symbolique, la visite du Pape François, le Saint Père Pape François, en mission de paix sur notre terre républicaine, le 9 septembre prochain, et d'ailleurs, j'accueille favorablement, l'annonce du Premier ministre que ce sera un jour férié.

Quelle inspiration pour notre République, surtout moi, qui suis très attentif au Pape François, sur son encyclique *Laudato Si*, qui nous demande un regard élargi sur l'origine de la crise écologique et ses causes humaines plutôt que sur les effets de la dégradation des divers écosystèmes, le comportement de chacun de nous par rapport à la dégradation environnementale, l'éducation environnementale et l'éthique écologique.

Dans cette même foulée, il est bon de souligner ici, que la vision écologique de Rodrigues, où on met l'accent non seulement sur la conscience écologique, mais aussi sur l'écoresponsabilité, par exemple, à travers diverses actions comme le projet Village Écologique de Rivière Cocos, bannir les sacs en plastique et, la semaine prochaine, bannir l'utilisation des *take-aways*, cuillères, et autres objets en plastique, création du plus grand parc marin dans la région à Rodrigues. Nous voulons une Ile Rodrigues écologique, propre et sans pollution parce que *Nou Contan Nou l'Ile Rodrigues*.

Je trouve fort louable que ce présent budget national consacre des ressources et contribue à cette démarche pour un développement durable et intégral, ce qui démontre la volonté et décision du gouvernement central de la planification nationale pour agir pour l'écologie.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, notre république s'engage dans l'ère d'Innovations Technologiques. Un sujet que le Pape François, lui-même, nous rappelle que les innovations

technologiques, même si elles ont été conçues pour un bien, peuvent être utilisées à des fins malveillantes.

À Rodrigues, on se souviendra pour longtemps son message adressé au peuple de Rodrigues à l'occasion du raccordement de Rodrigues à la fibre optique MARS en février dernier, et je cite –

« Le Pape forme le vœu que ce progrès technologique permette une plus grande solidarité entre les hommes, favorise le développement économique de l'Ile Rodrigues – en particulier l'emploi de jeunes – et la diffusion des valeurs humaines fondamentales ainsi que des enseignements de la foi. Il souhaite aussi que, par l'intercession de la Vierge Marie, les Rodriguais sachent se garder des mauvais usages, parfois contraires à la dignité humaine, de ce magnifique moyen de communication. »

Le Pape dénonce aussi les vices de la vie politique comme « la honte de la vie publique et mettent en danger la paix sociale », la corruption, la négation du droit, le non-respect des règles communautaires, l'enrichissement illégal, la xénophobie, le racisme, etc.

Sur le plan économique, le Pape exhorte un pacte pour l'avenir et l'avenir de l'économie. D'ailleurs, il invite les jeunes entrepreneurs, économistes, entrepreneurs du monde entier à Assise, en Italie, du 26-28 juin 2020, à révolutionner l'économie de demain, respectueuse de l'humanité et de l'environnement.

J'espère que la République répondra à cette invitation du Pape pour la participation de nos jeunes entrepreneurs à emboîter cette démarche urgente pour révolutionner l'économie actuelle et donner une âme à l'économie de demain, par exemple, à combattre la culture du déchet.

Sincèrement, j'espère que notre Pape François va nous rappeler tous que la bonne politique est au service de la paix. La politique est un moyen fondamental pour promouvoir la citoyenneté et les projets de l'homme aux services collectifs, humains et surtout pour les jeunes.

M. le président, je termine ici, en disant que pendant ce mandat, je suis guidé par la définition de faire de la politique comme un « acte de charité de porter le peuple dans mon cœur ; servir le pays, protéger notre peuple et de travailler pour assurer les conditions d'un avenir digne et juste ».

Et comme les élections générales arrivent bientôt et la circonscription numéro 7, ici à Maurice, est déjà en campagne électorale, faisons un rappel des béatitudes du politique, selon le Cardinal Vietnamien François-Xavier Nguyen Van Than, que je cite –

- « i. heureux le politicien qui a une haute idée et une profonde conscience de son rôle ;
- ii. heureux le politicien dont la personne reflète la crédibilité ;
- iii. heureux le politicien qui travaille pour le bien commun et non pour son propre intérêt ;
- iv. heureux le politicien qui reste fidèlement cohérent ;
- v. heureux le politicien qui réalise l'unité ;
- vi. heureux le politicien qui s'engage dans la réalisation d'un changement radical ;
- vii. heureux le politicien qui sait écouter, et
- viii. heureux les politiciens qui n'ont pas peur. »

M. le président, en toute humilité, je renouvèle dans cette Chambre, la confiance et satisfaction de mon engagement, en cette fin de mandat, de continuer à travailler pour le bien commun alors que nous dirigeons vers une échéance électorale bientôt. Dans l'intérêt et pour réaliser le rêve de Rodrigues, ensemble avec OPR, *mo pou là*.

Je vous remercie pour votre aimable attention.

The Deputy Speaker: It is a lengthy conclusion, hon. Member. Hon. Bholah!

(7.32 p.m.)

The Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Mr S. Bholah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me as I start my address today to associate myself with the previous orators on this side of the House who intervened before me to commend and congratulate the Prime Minister for his brilliant budget.

I am proud to be part of his Government which stands by the principles, and I quote –

“Democracy is the Government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

As stated by Abraham Lincoln, former President of the US.

The Budget 2019/2020 addresses issues of the people and for the people, starting from the lowest stratum up to the pinnacle of society. There are measures for the elderly, working class, fishermen, farmers, growers, breeders, entrepreneurs, students and unemployed.

In spite of economic and financial headwinds in the world, our country continues to invest in people, foster inclusive growth and continuously mould a resilient society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have, in a previous Budget speech, in this very House, stated that there is no point of having a remarkable economic growth where the benefits of that growth do not reach out to the poor, to the needy.

I have listened carefully to the speeches of hon. Ramful and previously of hon. Osman Mahomed yesterday, they claim that we took over Government back in 2014, the coffers were full. When we campaigned that we were going to increase the old age pension to Rs5,000, they claimed that we cannot do that. This is a confession from the Labour Party, from the previous Government, that they did not manage the fund properly, the country properly. But with the fund that they had left, we managed to pay as from December 2014 the old age pension as promised to the tune of Rs5,000, which they could not. And they campaigned that we could not do that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, disabled persons, disabled children who are getting pension only when they attain the age of 15; we took the decision to pay pension right from birth once they are recognised as disabled. Added to that, whenever these kids above the age of 3 or 4 had to travel to hospital, the bus claimed transport from these poor people, and today they claim that they had managed the economy, their coffers were full.

You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *on reçoit nos mandants dans le bureau de CAB* (Citizens Advice Bureau) *chaque mercredi*. A lady came to see me on three different occasions; first time she came to see me, and she wanted a job, a decent one. She was full of tears. When I asked her what she was doing, she told me she was working as a manual worker in one of the primary schools. And when I asked her how much she was earning, she told me that she was earning a bare Rs1,850. Second time, months after she came to see me, but again with tears in her eyes, but these were the tears of joy because, in the meantime, we had established their salary up to Rs7,500 per month, and she congratulated me for that. Third time, months after she came to me, with a few payslips that she had got, pertaining to her wages, and she told me how could she get a NHDC house in the region of Sebastopol and I directed her to the good officers of NHDC. Again she was full of joy that, with her payslip,

she had managed to save some money in her bank account, and she had all the potential of obtaining a house. This is the type of work that we have been doing; that this Government has been doing so far, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

While we were campaigning, we came across other unemployed. I met one person in a hardware shop, *quincaillerie*, so many times after December 2014. He never said to me up to what level he has studied, what are his qualifications, etc. And one day when I returned to this *quincaillerie*, I saw his mum and when I asked for him, she told me that he is working in the hospital as a doctor. And then she told me how much money she had borrowed from the bank; what are the terms of refund from the bank and for how long after having been qualified as a doctor, he has not been working. This Government has managed to give employment to 400 doctors in the public service, which the previous Government could not find any solution to. If really, as stated by hon. Ramful, the coffers were full at the end of 2014, why did they remove the SC, HSC exam fees and force the poor parents to pay for the fees for SC, HSC? Why could they not do that? The income support that we extend to 12,000 families for a total of 44,000 persons, this is another scheme which has been established by this Government; a recognition of our athletes who have done so well, who have excelled at the international level on Olympic Games, etc. - the recognition as an allowance as from age 35 provided they meet certain conditions. *C'est l'oeuvre de ce gouvernement*. Full are the coffers you say, and you did not manage to look at the poor, the downtrodden, the needy, those people who live on the lower rung of the ladder? You could not do that, and we have been able to do that with the same money?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a strange similarity in what I say; full of coffers and yet no scheme for the poor and the coffers full in the house of a political leader and yet the headquarters crumbling with decay, there is a similarity between these two.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also heard about Betamax. I would like to ask a few questions on that. Was MSM or ML in Government or present in Cabinet when a decision was taken to grant Betamax the contract for the conveyance of petrol, of oil from Mangalore? Was MSM or ML present on that Cabinet that day? Who commissioned a forensic audit in the case of Betamax? Who took the initiative? Hon. Soodhun did. And I will ask the question, why hon. Soodhun was then redeployed, that is, removed from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and shifted to the Ministry of Cooperatives? I will wait for the answers to come.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments please!

Mr Bholah: Mr Ramful spoke about BAI, I would request him to read the audited reports of KPMG and also the nTan Report. I invite him to do that. He speaks about nepotism? Do we still remember, does the population remember about the agreement, *les accords du dufry frydu* - promoters, owners doing nothing but getting a 4% commission on whatever sales being done at airport, Rodrigues Duty Free and Mauritius Duty Free Paradise?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments from a sitting position!

Mr Bholah: You are right! In order to unfold the whole story about *frydu*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, elections are coming. A lot of these people from the Opposition will need *sagoo* and *aplon* because these two things keep on check stress and the level of blood pressure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have maintained a stable growth level at 3.8% in 2018. We have managed to contain unemployment at 6.9% which is, in fact, at its lowest since 2001. We have progressed significantly on the World Bank rating of Ease of Doing Business to figure on the list of the top 20 economies. We have progressed significantly on the World Bank rating of ease of doing business, to figure on the list of the top 20 economies. We have also improved our foreign currency reserves without compromising our welfare state and the spirit of inclusiveness which has guided this Government since we came into power. Hon. Osman Mahomed was mentioning the different countries in Africa, who have done far better than Mauritius in terms of - you did that yesterday - in terms of economic growth. But can hon. Osman Mahomed tell us what is the scope...

Mr Deputy Speaker: May I correct you, hon. Minister. I think it was hon. Jhuboo who stated that, yesterday.

Mr Bholah: I am sorry! Sorry for that correction. I am sorry, hon. Osman Mahomed. It was hon. Jhuboo who mentioned that. But can hon. Jhuboo mention what are the scope and the span of the welfare state in the respective countries over there?

M. le président, nous avons pu réaliser tout cela parce que nous avons été fidèles aux principes sur lesquels nous avons mené campagne en 2014. Le progrès, la stabilité, l'unité, l'harmonie et le bien-être étaient les maîtres mots qui ont guidé ce pacte que nous avons conclu avec l'électorat. Aujourd'hui, sur le plan international, Maurice s'est bâtie une réputation solide et s'est forgée une crédibilité exemplaire auprès des pays de l'Europe, de

l'Asie, du Moyen-Orient et du continent africain. Tout comme l'Inde, la Chine ou le monde arabe sont prêts à nous épauler d'une manière ou d'une autre. Nos relations bilatérales entre Maurice et la Chine ont permis la réalisation de plusieurs projets de grande envergure. D'ailleurs, pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, le gouvernement chinois a décidé d'annuler une partie de la dette contractée par le gouvernement mauricien entre 2006 et 2008, pour un montant d'environ R 400 millions. Parallèlement, un *grant* de R 513 millions sera accordé à notre pays.

M. le président, nous bénéficions aussi de la coopération bilatérale avec les pays du monde Arabe. Emirates Airline finance la construction d'une piscine et d'un complexe sportif à Closel, au coût de R 189 millions. Par ailleurs, l'Arabie Saoudite finance la construction d'un hôpital ophtalmologique à Moka, dont le coût s'élève à R 800 millions. Qui aurait accordé une considération aussi importante à Maurice, si ce gouvernement n'avait pas réussi à forger nos relations diplomatiques et à consolider notre stabilité sur tous les fronts ? Quel exemple le plus frappant que les récents votes aux Nations Unies où notre revendication de notre intégrité territoriale et la restitution des Chagos à Maurice ont reçu l'appui de 116 pays contre six, renforçant ainsi notre position ! Cela démontre que Maurice jouit de l'estime et de la confiance de la communauté internationale.

M. le président, des intervenants qui ont adressé la Chambre avant moi, ont déjà mentionné des mesures réclamées depuis belle lurette et qui ont été concrétisées par ce gouvernement. L'exemple le plus remarquable, c'est dans le cas de la retransmission en direct des travaux parlementaires, où il y a eu pas moins de 30 interpellations de l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan à ce sujet depuis les années. Mais aujourd'hui, cette mesure en vue d'approfondir la démocratie est une réalité, grâce à ce gouvernement. Autre étape qui a été franchie concerne la nouvelle loi sur la déclaration des avoirs qui est en vigueur depuis le 1er juin, cette année. Il s'agit, encore une fois, d'une promesse qui figurait dans notre manifeste électoral, qui a été concrétisée. Tout comme les élus de Maurice et de Rodrigues, les dirigeants de corps paraétatiques, les hauts fonctionnaires, ainsi que tous les conseils des collectivités locales, entre autres, sont appelés à déclarer leurs avoirs.

M. le président, l'année dernière, nous étions confrontés à un rendez-vous avec l'histoire, avec l'introduction du *Constitution (Amendment) Bill*. Pour la première fois de notre histoire, poste indépendance, ce gouvernement composé du MSM et du ML, s'est réellement engagé à réformer notre système électoral. C'était une occasion en or pour adopter un système plus juste, inclusif, garant de la stabilité et de la démocratie populaire. Il est

navrant qu'un consensus n'ait pu être dégagé pour donner à ce projet de loi de belle chance de réussite. Il me semble que l'émotion a pris le dessus sur la raison.

M. le président, dans le cadre des débats sur le projet de loi, sur la réforme électorale, en décembre l'année dernière, on avait eu droit à un des plus beaux discours prononcés dans cette Chambre. J'ai fait référence ici au *summing-up* du Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. Ce discours restera à jamais gravé dans l'histoire de ce Parlement quand il portait l'empreinte d'un visionnaire et d'un progressiste.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during his intervention, hon. Uteem, referred to one constitutional amendment back in 1982. In fact, it was a landmark amendment and if you look at the elections prior to 1992, in 1967, then 1976 and then 1982 ; the first and historical *60 zéro*. It was really important to come up with such a legislation. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth and hon. Paul Béranger and I still see this image of hon. Paul Béranger, how he stood up and said even if there is one member who is opposed to re-establishing to what it was prior to 82, we cannot do that and since then, of course, there has been election in 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and the latest we had in 2014. What happened in 2014? I think hon. Minister Boissézou referred to that. In the whole of 2014, there were only eight Parliament sittings. Only eight days. Five sessions for Question Time and three sessions *pour les débats mini amendements*. *Cinq sessions pour Question Time seulement en 2014*. For eight months, this temple of democracy was closed, but I failed to understand and I failed to reconcile the stand taken by hon. Uteem when he spoke about 1982, making it mandatory to have elections every five years and for establishment of by-elections. And the subtle consent to what happened in 2014. I have perused all the papers. No one from the MMM party did raise any voice to condemn what has happened in 2014.

M. le président, j'ai brossé un tableau sur quelques-unes des lois qui vont marquer l'histoire de ce gouvernement, qui a introduit pour démontrer que nous sommes des dirigeants responsables et soucieux de la démocratie. Mes collègues, qui ont pris la parole avant moi, ont déjà élaboré longuement d'autres projets qui ont été introduits pour concéder l'engagement social de ce gouvernement. Donc, le bilan est incomparable.

M. le président, le gouvernement dirigé par le Premier ministre, Pravind Jugnauth, a fait de ce pays un grand chantier. Permettez-moi de me tourner vers ma circonscription, la Circonscription N°10, Montagne Blanche/Grande Rivière Sud-Est, qui était sous le feu des projecteurs après les élections de 2014. En tant qu'élu de cette circonscription, les efforts que

j'ai consentis et le travail colossal abattu sont visibles. Juste pour vous donner une idée de l'étendue des travaux au numéro 10. Je dois souligner que jusqu'ici, 69 chemins ont été soit construits ou mis à jour par la *NDU*. L'autre jour, l'honorable Tarolah a dressé une longue liste des travaux et, donc, je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus, mais permettez-moi quand même de mentionner un ou deux projets.

M. le président, cette région sud-est est très convoitée par les touristes pour de bonnes raisons, mais aussi par des Mauriciens, ceux qui sont établis à l'étranger qui viennent passer des vacances à l'Ile Maurice pour quelques semaines. Chaque jour, il y a des véhicules qui convergent vers cette région. Il y a les cascades de Grande Rivière Sud-Est. Il y a les deux îles, Ilot Mangénie et, évidemment, Ile aux Cerfs, et aucun touriste ou presque ne rate de visiter ces deux endroits.

Pendant plusieurs années et, je me souviens, que quand l'honorable Bérenger était au gouvernement en 2000 à 2005, il avait pris la peine de visiter ce lieu, surtout le *waterfront* de Grande Rivière Sud-Est. Pendant de longues années, sur le point d'embarquement, chaque jour, il y a des centaines de voitures, des tour-opérateurs, des taxis, des voitures privées, des 4x4 qui arrivent là-bas. Maintenant, imaginez, s'il y a un touriste qui est dans un hôtel à Grand'Baie, par exemple, qui fait le trajet jusqu'à Grande Rivière Sud-Est - pas moins d'une heure, même plus - il doit s'embarquer sur le bateau, le plaisancier qui l'emmène et doit le retourner. *And if there is a call of nature, there is not a single toilet over there for so many years. While we were campaigning - hon. Tarolah will concur with me - we had been confronted with this problem.* En 2016, on a vu le projet sortir de la terre, ces toilettes.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comment please!

Mr Bholah: Même ça, il n'y avait pas. Venir dire que voilà la situation est plus correcte avec l'ancien gouvernement et ne pas construire une toilette pour autant de gens !

À Trou d'Eau Douce, plus précisément à Sept Croisée, les travaux sont, en ce moment-même, en cours pour l'aménagement d'un rondpoint. Cela va permettre aux autobus de mieux desservir cette région, car en l'absence de ce rondpoint, les usagers devaient marcher à peu près 500 mètres pour prendre un autobus, avec tous les risques que cela comporte, en particulier, pour les dames et les enfants.

Je me réjouis qu'après trois ans de discussions avec la *RDA* et le groupe Alteo, un terrain a été mis à notre disposition pour la construction de ce rondpoint, ainsi qu'un nouvel arrêt d'autobus à Sept-Croisées. Les travaux devraient prendre fin en octobre cette année.

Toujours à Trou d'Eau Douce, l'aménagement d'une nouvelle jetée est considérée vu le nombre grandissant de plaisanciers et de piqueuniques.

Autre projet qui me tient à cœur et qui sortira de terre très prochainement, c'est le marché de Bel Air. La pose de la première pierre aura lieu dans les prochains jours. Juste à côté, on aura une mediclinic.

J'exprime également mon appréciation au Premier ministre, qui a inclus dans ce budget, le projet d'*upgrading* de la route de Deux Frères à Beau Champ. M. président, il était nécessaire de venir de l'avant avec ce projet, car la route existante se situe tout près d'une falaise et représente un danger potentiel pour les usagers.

Figurez-vous, M. le président, les projets d'infrastructures que j'ai susmentionnés auraient dû être les priorités de l'ancienne équipe gouvernementale. Malheureusement, après avoir été élus, les députés ont joué aux abonnés absents. Ce n'est qu'après sa débâcle que maintenant, le Parti travailliste vient convoiter l'électorat de N°10 et placarde des affiches pour des meetings à Bel Air/Rivière Sèche, qui se tourne finalement en congrès parce qu'il n'arrive plus à mobiliser les gens.

M. le président, je vais à présent toucher les mesures concernant mon ministère. Et une fois n'est pas coutume, je vais débiter par les coopératives. La République compte environ 1,200 sociétés coopératives qui évoluent dans 40 secteurs d'activités, regroupant 120,000 membres et qui représentent un chiffre d'affaires de R 5,8 milliards. Ce secteur a été complètement laissé en abandon par l'ancien régime, malgré la contribution significative des sociétés coopératives dans le développement socioéconomique du pays. Quand j'ai pris les rênes de ce ministère, je me suis lancé le défi de redonner au mouvement coopératif ses lettres de noblesses. Quatre ans et demi après, c'est avec fierté que je peux conclure que j'ai réussi le pari.

Quand j'ai accédé au poste de ministre des Coopératives, j'étais choqué par le cas de mauvaise gestion et de malversations au sein de certaines sociétés coopératives. Qui ne se souvient pas de *Vacoas Multipurpose Cooperative Society*? Afin de restaurer la crédibilité du mouvement, j'ai jugé utile de venir de l'avant avec une nouvelle loi sur les coopératives en novembre 2016.

Désormais, le mouvement coopératif est réglementé par une loi qui prend en considération la bonne gouvernance, la gestion des fonds, les anomalies financières ainsi que la responsabilité des directeurs. Il s'agit d'une démarche qui alimente dorénavant ce climat de confiance en nos sociétés coopératives. Parallèlement, la nouvelle loi a permis la création d'un organisme tertiaire, la *Mauritius Cooperative Alliance Ltd* qui agit comme le porte-parole du mouvement coopératif. Je note aussi avec satisfaction que grâce, au nouveau dynamisme insufflé, 414 nouvelles sociétés coopératives ont vu le jour de janvier 2015 à ce jour.

Dans le but de donner une meilleure orientation au mouvement coopératif, un plan d'action 2015-2017 avait été élaboré par mon ministère. Les objectifs énoncés ont été réalisés. On est ainsi venu de l'avant avec un autre plan d'action pour les années 2018-2020. Les mesures sont actuellement mises en œuvre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will elaborate on how the Budget allocated for the Cooperatives Division of my Ministry has been used. At the same time, I will give details of certain measures, which aim to strengthen the cooperative movement.

The Ministry has provided assistance to cooperatives under the Cooperative Development Fund Schemes. As at date, 53 cooperatives have benefitted from schemes under this Fund. The Ministry also provides annual grants to the Mauritius Cooperative Alliance and three cooperative federations to the tune of over Rs4 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are aware the cooperative societies need a platform for the sale of their products and services. In this context, since January 2014 till to now, 266 cooperative fairs were organised by my Ministry to provide free marketing outlets to cooperatives.

Moreover, financial assistance was provided on a yearly basis to the Mauritius Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative Federation Ltd for operating a cooperative shop - the Elle Cooperative Shop and a tailor shop at Port Louis and a shop in the craft market at Flacq to provide a permanent place for women cooperators to sell their products.

In line with Sustainable Development Goals, cooperative societies are encouraged to embark on green projects. I will highlight some main projects initiated.

With regard to fair trade certification in the sugar sector, sensitisation programmes and meetings have been held with cooperative societies. Presently, there are 29 fair trade certified cooperative credit societies which regroup some 5,000 small cane planters,

producing an average of 37,000 metric tons of sugar during the last four years since implementation of this project. Seven workshops on Zero Budget Natural Farming/Bio Farming projects were held at the MGI Auditorium, Solitude, Mapou, Montagne Blanche, Flacq, Union Park and Rodrigues.

To encourage cooperatives to produce green energy, the Ministry operated a Green Energy Scheme for Cooperatives in 2016/2017 and a Solar Photovoltaic Rebate Scheme in 2017 and 2018, whereby financial incentives were provided to cooperatives for installation of photovoltaic panels. Seven cooperatives have benefited from grants under this scheme. Rainwater Harvesting Systems have been installed at *Maison des Eleveurs* at Henrietta, *Maison des Eleveurs* at St. Pierre and Ex-Regional Cooperative Centre, St. Martin.

In line with the objectives of our Action Plan, we have provided assistance to cooperative societies at different levels. In line with the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sensitisation programmes for the setting up of cooperative credit unions in poverty region were held and seven CCOs have been registered in poverty regions. Also, the Ministry, through the Cooperative Development Fund, finances the payment of registration fees and the first annual fee for Co-operative Credit Unions to be set up in poverty regions. Now, much has been said regarding the Rs30 to be granted to fishermen for bad weather allowances. Much has been said, some negative comments also. I will not refer to the previous Budgets, where some lesser sums have been provided for. But let me say that a refrigerated vehicle has been purchased by my Ministry at the cost of R3.2 m. last year. It has been handed over to the Mauritius Fishermen Co-operative Federation on 24 October 2018 for the *Maison des Pêcheurs* Project.

Madam Speaker, on this chapter, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for having allocated a sum of Rs12 m. in the Budget 2019-2020 - in this Budget - for the setting up of a Co-operative Seafood Processing Unit at Tamarin. This project will allow fishermen co-operatives to produce higher value added products. In the same vein, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has increased the grant allocated to fishermen co-operatives from Rs60,000 to Rs80,000 for the purchase of outboard engines and fishing nets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on. But let me come to AARDO. In this context, consultancy services from AARDO (African-Asian Rural Development Organisation) has been secured for the restructuring and consolidation of our co-operative dairy sector. AARDO had delegated an expert in April 2016 to look after this sector. And we

have, thereafter, obtained a financial assistance of US \$40,000 for the purchase of a refrigerated vehicle. We believe in the Co-operative Movement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. AARDO has also offered its consultancy services for the ornamental fish farming project. An expert from Taiwan was delegated to Mauritius in September 2018. The expert from Taiwan was here and has conducted a six-day training in Ornamental Fish Farming, which are reared in the aquariums. This is a very lucrative business and gives a lot of opportunities for SMEs to engage into that business.

In the field of foreign expertise, an MoU, between the Ministry of Agriculture and Family Welfare, Republic of India and the Ministry, was signed in January 2017 on co-operation in Co-operatives and Related Fields. The areas of cooperation under the MOU are under implementation. We have had experts from India who visited Mauritius in order to help us in soil analysis in order to increase our yield in sugarcane.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the use of technologies is of essence to modernise the co-operative movement. In this respect, the Co-operatives Division e-Registration Project has been implemented for online submission of application for registration of co-operative, payment of application fees and submission of Financial Statements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, since the creation of the co-operative movement in 1913, it was high time to endow it with a new and modern institution to cater for the training and educational needs of over one hundred thousand members that it encompasses. The Prime Minister believed in this project and allocated a sum of nearly Rs20 m. for the infrastructure works for the setting up of the National Co-operative College at Terre Rouge. In fact, the inauguration of the National Co-operative College (NCC) was performed by the Prime Minister himself in August last year. I must highlight that this was a historical day for the co-operative movement and the pride on the faces of our co-operators was visible as they could now turn to the NCC for the updating of their skills and know-how. The National Co-operative College (NCC) is presently awarding certificate courses, and it will soon after award diploma courses as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to promoting excellence in the co-operatives sector, my Ministry has initiated a series of actions such as the organisation of the National Awards for Cooperatives, the publication of the magazine 'Top Hundred Co-operatives' 2016, 2017 and 2018 and the Directory of Cooperative Products and Services for Cooperatives in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

M. le président, à un moment où le mouvement coopératif a atteint sa vitesse de croisière opérationnelle, mon ministère compte maintenant procéder à un *rebranding* complet de ce mouvement. Un nouveau logo et slogan pour les coopératives ont été développés et on souhaite à présent les vulgariser auprès des sociétés coopératives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me now turn to the SME sector.

SMEs are considered as one of the most challenging and promising sector with a contribution of 33% of Gross Value Added and 49% of total employment in 2017. The SME sector is destined to become the backbone of our economy. As we have seen from various examples, today's micro enterprise could grow into tomorrow's large and international company. Today's local, domestic operation could tomorrow become an international operation, putting Mauritius on the world map. Today's small operation that only provides three or five jobs could tomorrow provide hundreds of jobs for our people. Since the start of our mandate, the Government has put SMEs at the centre of our economic development, as we believe in the potential of our local entrepreneurs and talent available in our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over the past decade or so, Mauritius did introduce many pro-business reforms on various fronts - fiscal, monetary, business deregulation, labour markets, international trade, etc. Yet, SMEs were not able to reap the full benefits of these generic reforms in improving their productivity and competitiveness. Entrepreneurs were still stuck at the lower end of the ladder. SMEs, therefore, required deeper changes if they were to assume a far more prominent role in our economic development.

To elaborate the necessary policies to consolidate the SME sector, it was important to make an assessment of the situation. This is how we came up with the 10-Year Master Plan for the SME Sector in March 2017. The 10-Year Master Plan is a roadmap for SMEs with realistic targets for a quantum leap of entrepreneurial vibrancy. Spearheading this transformation requires strong leadership, good governance, accountability and transparency, which I strongly believe in.

The objectives of the 10-Year Master plan are as follows –

- Improve SME competitiveness and growth.
- Foster high growth potential SMEs.
- Upgrade skills and job opportunities by supporting SMEs

- Improve design value addition by supporting SMEs in research and development innovation.
- Increase market access and exports by providing SMEs with intelligence market development supports.

Today I am proud to report that around 50% of the recommendations of the 10-Year Master Plan have been initiated, of which 23% have been completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise that our objectives set would not be attainable if we were to rely on an institution like the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). When I decided to do away with the SMEDA which was a moribund institution, there has been an uproar from many stakeholders and several Members of this august Assembly. Even some Members on this side of the House expressed their concern regarding the phasing out of the SMEDA. But this did not hinder me in the pursuit of my objective. It was clear to me that a revamped support organisation with new staffing and governance structures was a necessity. I was aiming at excellence when it comes to real support to SMEs.

In this endeavour, since the very beginning, I maintained that employees of the ex-SMEDA will not be adversely affected as a redeployment exercise would be effected for those who opt for such a choice. I have assured that this has been really the case, and I can state that no employee has been left “*sur le pavé*”. It is with a visionary spirit and boldness that I presented the SME Bill in this august Assembly in November 2018 to set up SME Mauritius Ltd in line with our Master plan. SME Mauritius Ltd is a private company wholly owned by the Government, and it came into full operation as from the second quarter of 2018. In fact, the Bill I presented was in 2017. SME Mauritius Ltd is now a strategic player and the preferred point of contact of entrepreneurs of all horizons when it comes to support and advice in the fields of enterprise development, access to markets and business opportunities.

The SMEDA was having an operating budget of Rs105 m. for period 2015/2016 and Rs97 m. for 2016/2017 while SME Mauritius, with far better results and achievements, is having an operating budget of Rs60 m. and Rs45 m. for this year. I firmly believe that all those who objected to the setting up of SME Mauritius will now do justice to me only in acknowledging the tremendous amount of work undertaken by this institution.

The staffing structure for SME Mauritius has been reviewed so that more resources are allocated to respond to the needs of our SMEs. Efficiency, proximity, adaptation to the realities of the context, transparency and accountability are the principles that guide SME Mauritius Ltd. I have been adamant about the adherence to these principles from the beginning.

With its Headquarters in Port Louis and through the establishment of 4 Business Development and Facilitation Centres at Coromandel, Goodlands, Bel Air and Mahebourg, SME Mauritius Ltd is providing its services to enterprises and to help them achieve new heights.

I am also pleased to inform the House that in the name of transparency and accountability, the financial statement of SME Mauritius Ltd, is being audited by the National Audit Office.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we want to foster an entrepreneurial culture in the country and to better guide us about the support mechanisms, statistics are of essence. This is why the SME Act had provided for the setting up of the SME Registration Unit.

The unit's role is to register SMEs and to equip any person who intends to set up an enterprise with the necessary support and information.

According to the statistics of the SME Registration Unit, since January 2015 up to May 2019, 9,036 enterprises have been registered as an SME.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need a core layer of strong local enterprises in the next phase of our economic development. We must also groom more start-ups and companies.

SME Mauritius Ltd combines the resources, expertise and networks to better prepare our SMEs to embrace the changes and to take advantages of emerging opportunities.

SME Mauritius Ltd has been assigned the responsibility to implement key actions recommended in the 10-year Master Plan and to provide a holistic support for business needs. For the Financial Year 2017/2018, SME Mauritius Ltd received a budget of Rs30 m. to operate several schemes.

Up to now, the various schemes have targeted around 1000 direct beneficiaries and the applications of a further 58 are in progress.

I will list here on the schemes which have been put in place –

1. The Barcode Registration Scheme caters for 100% funding of the registration cost of Rs6,750 per SME, to acquire a Global Standard (GS1) barcode with the MCCI.
2. The Online Visibility Scheme offers SMEs with 80% funding to a maximum of Rs40,000 per SME for developing any virtual marketing presence to establish visibility and reach out to wider local, regional as well as international markets. 82 SMEs are beneficiaries of this scheme.
3. The aim of the Inclusive Business Scheme is to encourage SMEs to integrate other SMEs into their value chains in order to enhance the competitiveness of their products or services. As of date, 31 SMEs have benefitted from this scheme.
4. The Solar Photovoltaic Scheme for SMEs allows for installation of PV solar panels on the roof of applying SMEs.
5. We have the SME Productivity Improvement Programme, in collaboration with the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) which extends assistance to SMEs wishing to review their processes for enhanced productivity. This fairly new scheme, launched in May 2019 has already registered the subscription of 18 SMEs.
6. Under the SME Mentoring and Hand-holding programme, 54 mentors and industry-experts have been assigned to assist SMEs in improving their business and contribute towards increased sales.
7. The SME Certification Scheme provides for technical assistance to SMEs for the purpose of accreditation to international standards and certifications necessary for customer confidence.
8. SME Employment Scheme

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this scheme announced in the Budget 2018/2019 aims at instilling an entrepreneurship spirit in unemployed graduates as well as supporting further development of SMEs.

As of date, some 478 graduates were placed under the Graduate Employment Scheme in Mauritius and 43 graduates placed in Rodrigues.

M. le président, le « *SME Employment Scheme* » est une formule qui vise à donner un coup de pouce aux PME afin qu'elles puissent bénéficier d'un employé qualifié et qui les aideront à professionnaliser leurs opérations, sans pour autant alourdir leurs coûts de production.

Les gradués perçoivent R 14,000 comme allocation mensuelle de la part du gouvernement alors que les PME paient uniquement les frais de transport.

Je me réjouis que le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a étendu le « *SME Employment Scheme* » aux détenteurs de diplômes. Et désormais, des entreprises qui ont un chiffre d'affaires allant jusqu'à R 100 millions pourront aussi faire une application pour ce plan d'aide.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, access to finance remains one of the main hurdles faced by SMEs given their nature of operation. Micro enterprises are even more vulnerable.

We wish to create an entrepreneurial culture in the country. One way to create the necessary conditions for this to happen is to explore financial possibilities which start-ups can benefit from.

I, therefore, applaud the measure enunciated by the Prime Minister to increase the maximum loan amount to micro enterprises from Rs250,000 to Rs500,000 under the existing DBM Micro-Credit Loan Scheme.

The Prime Minister has also announced in the Budget Speech that the guarantee of Government for the SME Financing Scheme through commercial banks is being extended for another three years.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition boasts about having introduced the SME Financing Scheme to service SMEs. May I remind him of the catastrophic administration of the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS) during his mandate as Minister of Finance?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the aim of the MBGS was to provide support to enterprises in improving productivity and competitiveness for growth. The Scheme, which was being jointly managed by the Ministry in collaboration with the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) through an MoU that was signed by both parties in January 2014.

As at September 2018, out of Rs156 m. disbursed, around Rs34 M. was recouped and there was still some Rs120 m. that had to be recovered from beneficiaries. The most alarming information is that because the loans were unsecured, over 80 defunct companies will not pay

back the credit facilities. This represents 40% of the loans disbursed, and the estimated amount which might never be recovered stands at around Rs50 m.

As opposed to such extravagant moves which end up into gimmicks, this Government is more cautious when it comes to devising policies to make finance accessible to SMEs.

And I will come to the SME Development Scheme Certificate, which is the measure recommending loan access at the MauBank under the SME Financing Scheme. Priority areas in the manufacturing, food processing, agri-business, ICT, ocean economy and handicraft sectors were identified for credit facilities under this scheme.

I wish to inform the House that as at now, 408 projects have been approved, amounting to Rs1.2 billion, with a potential of creating some 2,400 jobs. Maubank Ltd has approved loan for some 169 entities under this scheme for a total amount of Rs411 m. and disbursed some Rs275 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has worked closely with the Ministry of Finance and the Investment Support Programme Committee of the State Investment Corporation to finalise the details and modalities for the introduction of the Leasing Equipment and Modernisation Scheme (LEMS) and Factoring Services Scheme.

This scheme aims at enabling enterprises to modernise their business processes and enhance their competitiveness by investing in productive equipment. An amount of over Rs80 m. has been processed by the different leasing companies for which Government guaranteed 30% on the cost of the asset for SMEs.

The SME Factoring Scheme enables SMEs to factor their invoices, benefit from immediate cash, and hence, relieve them from cash flow problems. 39 applications were approved for a sum of Rs94.6 m. for the period January 2017 to May 2019. During the same period, with regard to the SME Equity Fund, 21 SMEs have engaged with the Fund for the financing of some Rs114 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Budget 2019/2020 further reduces the financial burden of the potential beneficiaries by reducing the annual interest rate under LEMS I and SME Factoring Scheme from 5.5% to 3.9%.

The Prime Minister has also announced that the cost of financing under the SME Equity Fund will also be decreased from 8% to 6% as from July this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we talk about building a *nation d'entrepreneurs*, we do not just make vague statements. We make sure that we create the conducive environment and provide the necessary resources for businesses to thrive. One important measure which this Government took to further assist entrepreneurs was the suspension of the trade fees up to Rs5,000 as from August 2017. This will be extended for another three years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, training and upskilling are core to the creation, sustenance and survival of SMEs. At SME Mauritius Ltd, a lot of dedication has been put into devising training programmes to cater for the varied needs of prospective and existing entrepreneurs.

From September 2018 to this date, 15 craft and skills courses have been extended to the Mauritian population across SME Mauritius branches in Coromandel, Bel Air, Mahebourg and Goodlands. A total number of 604 beneficiaries were enrolled in these courses.

Adding to our quiver, specialised training courses have been conducted through the enlistment of foreign experts and partner institutions in the context of the Foreign and Technical Expertise Scheme. Some of the courses we have run are Madhubani arts and Transformation of Banana Fibre, under the guidance of an Indian and Ugandan trainer respectively. 22 trainers benefitted from these courses and will soon be dispensing their skills to other interested parties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to share with the House the resounding success of, and demand for, Aquaponics training which was initiated in January 2019 and has touched 150 beneficiaries. Building on the same momentum, the Bio-Farming training course has just been launched.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whatever the incentive framework set up for our SMEs, we need to face the fact that the Mauritian market, like those of the Small Island Developing States, is restricted. In 2017, SMEs contributed to 10.9% of our total exports. Our objective is to bring that figure to 18% by 2026.

My Ministry and SME Mauritius have worked with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade on the Trade Com 2 project. The aim is to enhance the business environment for exporting SMEs in Mauritius, especially in the context of the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement.

SMEs were selected under this programme, to be trained in export development and sustaining competitiveness. Following this, a national quality strategy and a framework for monitoring and improvement of SME trade support programmes will be developed.

L'artisanat – M. le président, permettez-moi de faire un tour d'horizon sur le secteur de l'artisanat – un secteur que je tiens particulièrement à cœur, car l'âme créative de nos artisans aide à consolider la richesse de notre patrimoine culturel et à rehausser la vitrine de Maurice sur le plan international. L'artisanat requiert un savoir-faire exceptionnel pour réaliser des produits authentiques selon les dernières tendances et de qualité.

Lors d'une première prise de contact avec les artisans en janvier 2016, j'ai pris bonne note de leurs contraintes exprimées. Parmi, il y a l'invasion des produits artisanaux importés principalement de l'Asie et de Madagascar ; problème d'accès à l'information sur les tendances du marché et le manque de soutien pour l'amélioration des compétences sur la production, le design et le marketing des produits artisanaux, entre autres.

C'est un secteur qui méritait qu'on accorde une attention particulière afin de mieux encadrer nos artisans. On a débuté par la mise sur pied d'un comité technique dès février 2016 pour dégager des stratégies, pour dynamiser le secteur de l'artisanat. Il y a aussi eu l'ouverture d'une *Handicraft Training Academy* et d'un *CraftLab* en juillet 2016 pour les besoins d'une formation intensive et spécialisée destinée aux artisans.

Les artisans ont pu aussi se familiariser aux nouvelles méthodes de production, de design et aux besoins du marché grâce à un programme de formation intitulée « *Advanced Craftskills for Artisans* » lancé en collaboration avec le *MITD* en octobre 2017 et dispensé aux artisans gratuitement.

Pour accroître la visibilité et pour booster la vente des produits artisanaux, grâce à un accord parvenu avec le *Mauritius Duty Free Paradise* en janvier 2017, un stand y a été aménagé, au-delà de la boutique *Craft Shop*, qui est opérationnel à l'aéroport de Plaisance.

Par ailleurs, le budget 2018-2019 avait prévu que *SME Mauritius* administre l'allocation d'un hologramme aux produits artisanaux fabriqués à Maurice afin de les différencier des produits importés. Ce projet de grande envergure a déjà vu le jour l'année dernière.

Les attributs de ces hologrammes sont très spécifiques. Dotés d'une grande fiabilité et d'un visuel attractif, ils garantissent un haut degré de sécurité. Ces hologrammes ne peuvent

pas être falsifiés et ne peuvent pas être reproduits frauduleusement. De mai 2018 à ce jour, 219 produits de 48 artisans enregistrés comportent un hologramme.

M. le président, en vue de consolider davantage le secteur de l'artisanat, en mai 2017, mon ministère et *SME Mauritius* se sont associés à *MCCI* pour le lancement de «*Creative Mauritius*» sur le *Tax Free Shopping Portal*. Les artisans y disposent gratuitement d'une page web avec la description de leurs produits, des informations pratiques à leur sujet, la géolocalisation, des photos et les numéros de contact, etc.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the leather industry in Mauritius was almost dying, but we have taken the firm step to revitalise this sector as leather is one of the world's most widely traded commodities, with an estimated global trade value of approximately 130 billion US Dollars annually.

My Ministry, with the assistance of Consultants from the African Leather and Leather Product Institute (ALLPI), COMESA, came up with a National Leather Value Chain Strategy following extensive consultations with key stakeholders since last year.

The strategy is aimed at revamping the Mauritian leather sector, which has a huge potential for wealth generation, youth empowerment and employment creation. Mauritius is currently spending over USD \$60 million per year on imports of leather and leather products while, on the other hand, it is exporting raw hides and experiencing wastage in the supply chain due to the non-collection of some of the hides and skins.

This leather strategy will serve as a roadmap for our local SMEs and will eventually help to improve the leather value chain contribution to GDP as well as foreign currency earnings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to kick-start this Leather Value Chain Strategy, a Steering Committee will be established at the level of my Ministry.

I wish to express my appreciation to the hon. Prime Minister for announcing the setting up of a Design Centre for leather products, first of its kind, on the premises of SME Mauritius at Coromandel. The Design Centre will be deploying 3D technologies with a view to boosting innovation, productivity and competitiveness of the leather tiers of trade.

The National Entrepreneurship Campaign has been a milestone outreach project. Launched in February this year and ending in May, the campaign comprised three months of intense, multifarious activities, reaching out to entrepreneurs, youngsters and women alike.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I try to cut down my speech because it is too long.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yet, another measure in support of our SMEs is the SME International Fair Grant Scheme under which SMEs participating in international fairs and authorised marketing events are refunded for their accommodation and travel costs. It is to be noted that a total of Rs20.2 m. has been disbursed to the intent of 221 SMEs. I will now elaborate on the setting up of an e-platform for the SME sector. An interactive digital platform to connect to SMEs in the need of the day, as our SMEs are constantly on the move and require easy and quick access to information. In order to meet this expectation, we will be soon launching the full-fledged and final part of the e-platform of SME Mauritius.

Before I conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, reference was made to the housing projects of this Government. I have received information that 2,496 housing units have been constructed during the Labour/PMSD regime for the past 10 years only, out of which 850 started during the mandate of the MSM/MMM Government, that is, between 2000 and 2005.

Construction of 1,979 housing units have already been completed. Construction of 3,230 housing units is in progress and will be completed by mid-2020. Construction of 1,050 housing units are at procurement stage and will start soon, therefore. This makes to a total of 6,250 housing units. Construction of 6,000 units for the next three years is already underway.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot see each year's budget in isolation. This budget builds on the foundation of earlier budgets. We have a multi-year plan which tackles the priorities as systematically as we can. Progress made in developing this country is evidenced by the notable achievements that this Government has made. We have consolidated the feel good factor in the country, and we will continue to build on these achievements. Now, we have reached a defining moment of this long journey, opening a new chapter of our country's economic history where we can look confidently to the future and set our course for where this remarkable country will go next.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius may be a small island, but we should never let our physical size limit our ideas and ambitions. Our forefathers were not afraid to take risks, dream big and work hard to transform the country. We must continue to have the same pioneering spirit and the courage to pursue our dreams so that Mauritius can remain a land of opportunities. One of Mauritius Key strength is the strong tripartite partnership between the Government, the private sector and the civil society. It is based on this collaboration that we can take our country to new and celestial heights.

The Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, has understood the requirements of this transformative journey and he has left no one behind.

Aujourd'hui, je ressens une immense fierté d'exercer comme ministre, sous un Premier ministre qui, en la personne de Pravind Jugnauth, est un homme visionnaire, respectueux, déterminé, et qui tient les intérêts de son peuple avant toute autre considération. Si le leader de l'opposition a opté d'utiliser trois 'r' pour qualifier ce présent budget, je résumerai aussi le budget en trois 'r', responsable, raisonnable et rassembleur. Qu'on poursuive, sur cette lancée, pour offrir à notre pays de belles opportunités de réussite.

Merci, M. le président.

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

At 8.38 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.45 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is a pleasure to have you in the Chair tonight; especially you are wearing a nice waistcoat.

(Interruptions)

It is a big day for you today. We don't know why, but it is a big day for you today.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I hope you keep this good mood throughout your speech.

Mr Ameer Meea: *I will try my best.* M. le président, la présentation d'un budget est en elle-même un exercice éminemment solennel. Les mesures et les décisions qu'il contient auront une incidence directe ou indirecte sur l'ensemble de la population en général. Vu son caractère sérieux, il incombe à nous tous de faire preuve de responsabilité, que chacun assume son rôle dans le respect de la démocratie parlementaire et que le pays en sorte gagnant. Mais quand même, faut-il nous rappeler que ce gouvernement est arrivé au pouvoir grâce à une campagne savamment menée autour du slogan, 'Deuxième Miracle Économique'.

Ce gouvernement croit pouvoir leurrer la population avec des écrans de fumée, mais il sera confronté aux dures réalités lors des prochaines élections. C'est un gouvernement qui n'est pas à l'écoute de la population ni des acteurs économiques ; résultat, pratiquement tous

les principaux secteurs économiques sont en grande difficulté, que ce soit le sucre, le textile, l'offshore, le tourisme et la dégradation sociale va s'accroître. Pour masquer son incapacité de présenter un budget à la mesure de la conjoncture économique, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a distribué des cadeaux à tout-va. *Li fine rode faire la bous doux.* Force est de constater que les sucreries de sa fameuse cuisine ont déjà un goût amer comme celui de la margose dans la bouche de la population, car ce peuple éclairé est conscient *qui pe donne li enn bonbon avant faire li avale de l'huile boire.* Ce peuple éduqué sait pertinemment bien que le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances tente de les séduire pour avoir ses votes aux prochaines élections. Est-ce démesuré de dire que nous avons un gouvernement bombe à retardement ? Non, M. le président, ce n'est pas un secret de polichinelle que le deuxième miracle économique promis par ce gouvernement qui était, au départ, un mirage, s'est avéré être une faillite totale, comme en témoignent nos indicateurs économiques, pour la bonne et simple raison que ce gouvernement n'a pas su gérer notre économie. Réalisez-vous que nous avons eu deux Premiers ministres et trois ministres des Finances, et pas de lumière au bout du tunnel ? 2020 s'annonce très difficile sur le plan international. L'économiste, Nouriel Roubini, qui avait prédit la crise économique en 2008, vient de prévenir des risques grandissants d'une récession internationale. Malheureusement, il n'y a rien dans le budget 2019-2020 pour armer notre économie de la résilience. Tout rassurant, tout généreux qu'il puisse paraître à première vue, ce budget ne peut occulter le fait que nous avons des dettes massives qui pèsent sur chaque citoyen et sur les générations à venir. En absence des mesures audacieuses et des décisions courageuses pour développer des nouveaux secteurs, porteurs, pour relancer notre économie, nous serons contraints de vendre nos bijoux et nos joailleries, sans compter de puiser dans nos réserves pour éponger partiellement nos dettes. Voilà où nous en sommes ! En fin de compte, c'est un budget bien emballé comme toujours qui cache bien des choses avec de l'effet adoucissant à court terme, mais sur le long terme, on constatera qu'on avance à reculons par manque de volonté politique, réelle pour assainir notre situation, marquée par le marasme économique qui va faire voir ses effets après les élections.

Maintenant, M. le président, laissez-moi passer à l'item logements sociaux dans le budget. Les successifs budgets de 2015 à ce jour contiennent tous des chapelets d'intentions concernant le logement. Mais, en réalité, toutes ces intentions sont restées lettres mortes. Toutes ces intentions n'ont jamais été réalisées. Dans tous les budgets du présent gouvernement, sous l'item *Social Housing Unit*, que des milliards et que de belles paroles !

J'aurais espéré que cette fois-ci la donne va changer, mais je suis très sceptique par rapport à tout ce qui se passe depuis 2015. Il faut avoir une volonté politique pour résoudre ce problème de logement. L'argent est là, les terres sont là, mais il n'y a pas de volonté politique pour résoudre ce problème.

Sur les 10,000 logements sociaux qui ont été annoncés durant la campagne électorale et dans le *Government Programme* de 2015, là, je me réfère aux annexes du budget, à la page 79 pour le ministère de *Housing and Lands*, c'est un peu dommage que l'honorable Ministre, mon ami Jhugroo, n'est pas là. C'est vraiment choquant, M. le président, parmi les *main achievements* de ce ministère en quatre ans et demi, *main achievements since 2015*, 1,979 *social housing have been constructed*. Ce sont les *main achievements* de ce ministère, 1,979 *social housing have been constructed since 2015*. M. le président, vous allez être encore plus choqué. Dans ce chiffre qui a été mentionné - je n'invente rien, il n'y a pas de démagogie par rapport à cela, cela peut être vérifié - j'avais posé une question parlementaire au ministre, le 15 mai, 2018, PQ B/374, et la réponse du ministre est édifiant –

“I am informed by the NHDC Ltd that between January 2015 and March 2018, construction of 1,358 housing units has been completed out of which construction of 746 housing units started prior to January 2015 and were delivered in 2015.”

Donc, dans ce chiffre de 1,979 maisons qui ont été construites et délivrées, 746 maisons datent de l'ancien gouvernement, ce qui nous ramène à un total de 1,233 maisons, M. le président. 1,233 maisons construites en quatre ans et demi de ce gouvernement. Et dedans, ce qui est encore plus incroyable, ce que le ministre persiste à dire qu'ils vont construire 10,000 maisons, alors qu'il nous reste que six mois pour terminer ce mandat, M. le président.

Donc, comme j'ai dit, c'est vraiment incroyable de constater que 1,233 maisons ont été construites en quatre ans et demi et il nous reste que six mois et ils ont cette fâcheuse habitude de vendre des rêves à la population, ce qu'il faut cesser.

Autre fait regrettable, M. le président. Je trouve cela vraiment regrettable et déplorable. De toutes ces maisons qui ont été construites, il n'y a pas une seule maison qui a été construite à Port-Louis. Il n'y a pas une seule maison qui a été construite à Port-Louis. À Port-Louis, il y a quatre circonscriptions, c'est la capitale du pays. Numéros 1, 2, 3, 4, quatre circonscriptions, pas une seule maison à Port-Louis, M. le président. Je ne sais pas pourquoi les Port-Louisien(ne)s ne méritent pas cela. Un gouvernement est supposé être là pour toute la nation mauricienne, mais pas une seule maison n'a été construite, M. le président. Je n'aurais pas

aimé reprendre les mots du *Mentor* quand il dit qu'il allait, vous savez, 'p' et puis quatre petits points sur 'e'. Donc, je n'aurais pas pu prendre ce mot à cette heure-ci, M. le président, mais, en tout cas, c'est l'impression qu'on a zéro maison à Port-Louis, dans les quatre circonscriptions de Port-Louis.

Maintenant, passons au Métro Express, M. le président, qui est au coût des milliards de roupies, qui polarisent l'attention. Le gouvernement y joue son va-tout. Désormais, plus qu'un impératif, c'est devenu un symbole de haut prestige. C'est une course contre-la-montre pour que le projet s'achève à la veille des élections pour des raisons évidentes. Mais, ce qui est choquant dans tout cela, c'est la contradiction notée en ce qu'ils ont dit contre ce mégaprojet et la rapidité avec laquelle ils ont passé à l'action pour que ce projet tant décrié soit réalisé. Un clip devenu viral sur les réseaux sociaux démontre avec quelle arrogance l'ancien Premier ministre a repoussé ce projet, et je n'arrive pas à reprendre sa voix, sinon je l'aurais fait. Il avait dit : *'Tan ki mo pou la, pas pou ena sa kouyonade la.'* Qui ne se souvient pas de ce clip-là, M. le président ? *'Tan ki mo pou la, pas pou ena métro léger.'* Et que dire qu'on a remporté les élections sur le thème 'Deuxième Miracle Économique', alors qu'à cette époque-là, le *dilo* était une priorité dans leur manifeste électoral. Et c'est finalement le métro qui a volé la vedette. Vraiment, on joue au yoyo avec la population, M. le président. C'est pour cela que je dis que c'est un gouvernement de contradictions, M. le président.

Aussi, M. le président, la faillite de ce gouvernement trouve son origine depuis les premiers mois de son installation. Et là, venons à l'affaire *BAI*. Au lieu de concentrer leur énergie et leurs efforts à jeter les bases d'une supposée miracle économique, le Premier ministre d'alors, son ministre des Finances et quelques autres ministres se sont embarqués dans une croisade contre la *BAI*, cet évènement qui a vraiment secoué le pays et l'économie en général. C'est une autre saga qui se joue et on n'en finira jamais de dire que tout le dossier a été mal géré. On n'a pas évalué les risques qu'une telle décision comporte.

Avec du recul, on est presque convaincu que le démantèlement de cet important conglomérat relève plus d'une vendetta politique que d'un réel souci d'assainir ce secteur. Le pouvoir s'est substitué à la justice et s'est constitué en tribunal populaire. On a tout de suite procédé à son démantèlement tout en prenant le soin de retirer l'argent de la banque incriminée.

Au lieu de bâtir, ce gouvernement démolit. Par vengeance, ils ont démantelé une des *top* cinq compagnies du pays. La *BAI* n'a pas été bâtie en un jour, mais ce gouvernement a

pris quelques jours pour la faire écrouler comme un château de cartes. C'était une véritable opération de démolition avec des artilleries lourdes sans accorder à la direction de la *BAI* la moindre possibilité de rectifier le tir pour certains manquements relevés. Mais la mauvaise foi de ce gouvernement est flagrante, à la manière d'un médecin fou, ils ont prescrit l'euthanasie à un patient souffrant d'une maladie non pas majeure.

M. le président, oui, la vengeance est un plat qui se mange froid. Obstiné par le désir meurtrier d'en finir avec la *BAI*, ce gouvernement ne s'est pas rendu compte qu'il va ouvrir la porte aux enfers pour des milliers de Mauriciens, surtout ces personnes à la retraite qui ont investi leur *lump sum* dans le *Super Cash Back Gold*.

Ce gouvernement est responsable de la détérioration du nombre de ces personnes âgées qui ont vu leurs économies d'une vie partir en fumée. Ce gouvernement a provoqué une détresse humaine sans précédent dans ce pays. Et là, M. le président, pour pouvoir payer les *Super Cash Back Gold*, un plan a été conçu de façon incroyable pour mobiliser plusieurs milliards de fonds publics. Hier même, au Parlement, on avait une question de l'honorable Uteem, combien d'argent a été investi dans MauBank, dans *NIC*; combien d'argent a été emprunté par le gouvernement à la *State Bank*, à la Banque de Maurice. Juste pour la Banque de Maurice, il y a R 4 milliards qui ont été empruntés, donc, ce sont des fonds publics, M. le président. Aujourd'hui, tout le monde sait que la *NIC* et la MauBank sont quasiment en faillite. D'ailleurs, ils ont changé d'auditeurs. Après quatre ans d'opération, ils changent d'auditeurs parce que les auditeurs ne veulent pas signer les comptes de la *NIC* et de la MauBank.

Par manque de leadership compétent, ce gouvernement n'a pas anticipé une crise financière. L'État a dû utiliser les deniers publics pour venir en aide aux victimes de la *BAI*. Du coup, ce gouvernement a tué dans l'œuf le projet d'un miracle économique. Et les conséquences ne s'arrêtent pas là. Ce gouvernement a envoyé un très mauvais signal aux investissements étrangers. Qui est cet investisseur étranger qui prendra le risque de venir investir dans un pays où le gouvernement fait cesser les opérations d'une firme par vengeance ?

M. le président, comment oublier les propos de l'ancien Premier ministre à l'effet, quand il est capitaine d'un bateau et quand le bateau va faire naufrage, c'est-à-dire la banque, alors il retire tout son fric en premier. Tout cela, M. le président, c'est ce qu'on appelle un délit d'initié, comme on dit, *insider dealing*.

On n'arrête pas au Premier ministre d'alors. Qui ne se souvient pas aussi de son ministre de *Good Governance* à l'époque. Lui, il avait fermé ses comptes cinq jours avant la fermeture de la banque. Le 18 février 2015, il a retiré tous ses frics dans cette banque. Et encore plus grave, celui qui était, à cette époque, *high rank official* de la Banque de Maurice, monsieur Googoolye, a *encashed un fixed deposit* de R 2.5 millions en mars 2015. Au lieu d'être sanctionné pour cela, savez-vous ce qui s'est passé ? Il a été promu Gouverneur de la banque pour le démantèlement de cette banque, M. le président.

Donc, M. le président, maintenant, passons à l'item 'financement des partis politiques'. Les finances des partis politiques ne semblent plus être une priorité de ce gouvernement sortant. Tout laisse croire que nous nous acheminons vers une campagne électorale massivement influencée par l'apport de l'argent. On tentera par ce moyen plus honorable d'influencer l'issue des urnes, du *money politics*. Tout le monde le sait, et les journalistes, en particulier, qui sont ceux qui disposent d'énormes quantités d'argent à leur disposition. On va essayer de corrompre l'électorat. Nous avons peu d'espoir que les instances appropriées, censées veiller au grain, puissent empêcher cela, M. le président.

Maintenant, laissez-moi passer à un item qui me tient à cœur vraiment, c'est le dossier de la drogue, M. le président. Comme vous savez, ce fléau est en train d'affecter toute l'Ile Maurice, pas seulement ma circonscription, les régions de Plaine Verte et Roche Bois. M. le président, ce qu'il nous faut par rapport à ce dossier, c'est un nouveau souffle contre le combat de la drogue. Moi-même, j'avais félicité le gouvernement pour l'institution d'une Commission d'enquête par rapport à la drogue, mais ce n'est pas suffisant. Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé après cette Commission d'enquête sur la drogue ? Rien ! La toxicomanie persiste et là-dessus, j'aurais bien aimé dire que la drogue est un fléau qui doit être classé *above party politics*. Le problème de la toxicomanie est loin d'être réglé. Même si on apprend que les saisies spectaculaires de la drogue ont eu lieu, la drogue synthétique est disponible sur le marché comme jamais. Cette problématique touche tout le monde, y compris le milieu étudiant. Les parents ne savent plus où donner de la tête tellement la situation est devenue inquiétante. Nous avons eu un ancien ministre de la Santé qui avait banalisé cet épineux problème, qui, aujourd'hui, est en train de décimer des familles, et par ricochet, la société mauricienne.

Nos côtes sont comme une passoire : des bateaux, des yachts, semblent-ils, font le va-et-vient. Nous avons un Commissaire de police qui est dépassé, qui facilite l'octroi de passeport à un trafiquant notoire, et qui reste en fonction en toute impunité. Le ministre de

tutelle ne bronche pas, comme si c'est normal. Qui a peur de qui, nous sommes amenés à penser.

Les centres de désintoxication et de réhabilitation n'ont plus de soutien, tant logistique que matériel pour fonctionner à plein régime. Des guerriers de la trempe d'Ally Lazer, mènent une croisade sans armes égales. De guerre lasse, certains sont sur le point de baisser les bras. Un nouveau régime devrait reprendre ce combat à bras-le-corps pour donner l'espoir aux parents et à protéger les plus jeunes à travers une campagne soutenue de conscientisation.

La question qu'on devrait se poser : pourquoi les jeunes se droguent-ils? Y a-t-il un manque cruel de moyen de distraction à leur portée, ou tout bonnement sont-ils angoissés face à leur avenir ? Il a intérêt à se tourner vers ses collègues de l'Education, de la Jeunesse et des Sports afin de solliciter leur aide dans sa quête de solutions durables. Ils sont des milliers, parents, jeunes adultes, adolescents, petits Mauriciens, à ne plus savoir à quel saint se vouer, tant la menace de drogue synthétique est présente dans leur environnement immédiat. Nombre de parents se tournent vers les travailleurs sociaux, les membres du personnel soignant ou des Forces Vives dans l'espoir d'un secours immédiat, car la priorité de ces gens c'est surtout d'obtenir une écoute, un espace de partage, un plan d'action défini dans le court terme et le long terme. On ne répètera jamais assez, si on veut s'attaquer au fléau des nouvelles drogues synthétiques, il faut d'abord, et surtout, une volonté politique, un leadership affiché et une synergie multisectorielle. Les ressources humaines du secteur public et privé, société civile et membres du public doivent tous être mis à contribution pour que l'effet des actions, surtout celles qui seront éventuellement prises, aient une répercussion qualificative. Le problème a déjà pris une ampleur trop importante pour que l'on se permette de perdre du temps à discuter. L'heure est à l'action, prompte, adéquate et ciblée, afin que la réponse soit efficace.

Le mouvement anti-drogue mène une croisade et ne bénéficie d'aucun soutien, digne de ce nom, de l'État. Au lieu d'utiliser la *MBC/TV* à des fins de propagande, on aurait dû la mettre au service de ceux qui militent au péril de leur vie contre tous ces fléaux qui gangrènent notre société, telle que la drogue.

M. le président, le temps passe tellement vite qu'il va falloir que j'accélère mon discours. M. le président, permettez-moi de parler de quelque chose de très important, le cas des marchands ambulants. Plusieurs parlementaires de la majorité se félicitent des mesures

prises par le gouvernement pour s'attaquer à la pauvreté. Mais j'ai relevé une contradiction dans les actions gouvernementales. D'un côté, le gouvernement accorde le salaire minimal et le *Negative Income Tax* aux employés au plus bas de l'échelle, de l'autre côté, le gouvernement ne fait rien pour les *self-employed*, ceux au bas de l'échelle. Pire, il a appauvri certains d'entre eux, dont les marchands ambulants. S'il y a un dossier qui symbolise l'incompétence, la mauvaise administration, c'est bien le dossier des marchands ambulants. Quatre ans et demi et rien n'a été fait ! Bientôt ce seront les élections générales.

Je suis profondément attristé par les difficultés que rencontrent les marchands ambulants. Il s'agit de la subsistance de nombreuses familles, voire d'une question de survie. M. le président, pour moi, être un gouvernement responsable, quand on prive quelqu'un d'un travail, il faut lui donner un alternatif. On les a privés des jobs dans le secteur public dans les années 80 et ils sont devenus des marchands ambulants. Aujourd'hui, on les empêche de travailler ; il faut leur donner un alternatif pour qu'ils puissent gagner leur vie correctement et convenablement. Et là, je vais revenir sur les deux sites qui ont été alloués, le site de Decaen et le site de la gare du Nord. M. le président, c'est dans un état déplorable. Il n'y a aucune infrastructure et ce n'est même pas couvert. Il n'y a rien. Ils sont couverts avec des abris de fortune, il y a une insalubrité totale et un manque d'hygiène. Les gens n'osent même pas y entrer. Les différents projets annoncés en fanfare depuis 2015, n'ont même pas débuté. On n'entend même pas dire que cela va être prêt en 2022. M. le président, en 2015, on les chasse sur leur lieu de travail, et maintenant, on les informe que ce n'est qu'en 2022 que cela va être prêt. Et je vous dis tout cela en connaissance de cause, parce que bon nombre de personnes qui viennent me voir pour une aide quelconque, ou pour une aide financière, a considérablement augmenté. Ces gens-là, jamais ils ne venaient me voir. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'ils travaillaient, ils gagnaient leur vie convenablement. D'accord, il fallait mettre de l'ordre, mais en tant que gouvernement responsable, on aurait dû prévoir un alternatif et un alternatif crédible, M. le président. L'action contre les marchands ambulants, menée par ce gouvernement, par le truchement du ministre d'alors, l'honorable Dr. Husnoo est inhumaine.

M. le président, je vais déposer sur la table de l'Assemblée nationale un document. Vous allez être vous-même choqué. Que n'a-t-on pas promis aux marchands ambulants avant les élections, juste pour avoir leurs votes ! L'honorable ministre, Dr. Husnoo, lors d'une interview au journal '*Star*', du 21 au 27 décembre 2014, avait proposé, M. le président, que les marchands ambulants soient pourvus de véhicules *duty free*. Véhicules *duty free* ! Je vais, donc, déposer ce document - qui est en couleur. Il comptait proposer au gouvernement de

permettre aux marchands ambulants, qui sont dûment enregistrés, de pouvoir faire l'achat d'un véhicule hors taxe pour le transport de leurs marchandises.

Aujourd'hui, après quatre ans et demi, M. le président, ils sont toujours dans la galère, ils sont pourchassés, à droite, à gauche, et jamais, ils n'ont eu leur *duty free*, M. le président. Je dépose ce document à la Chambre pour que certains d'entre eux se rafraichissent la mémoire.

Répondant à une question parlementaire - je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails – le ministre avait dit qu'il allait faire les marchands ambulants une de ses priorités. M. le président, ces gens-là ont décidé de se mettre à leur propre compte, faute d'un emploi ou encore pour ne pas grossir la liste, déjà longue, des bénéficiaires de prestation sociale. Les marchands ambulants sont des gens honnêtes, M. le président.

Et maintenant, laissez-moi passer à un autre item qui avait polarisé notre attention, ici, dans cette auguste Chambre, M. le président, c'est la réforme électorale. La réforme électorale tant attendue, et malgré l'engagement pris, a été délibérément sabotée. À quelques mois des élections, on ne peut s'attendre à quelque chose. On a, semble-t-il, délibérément saboté le projet de réforme pour maintenir le *statu quo*, ainsi le *Best Loser System* sera maintenu. M. le président, l'attitude de l'honorable Dr. Husnoo à ce sujet est vraiment déplorable. Son volte-face en dit long sur son sens de l'opportuniste. Il a été le plus vociférant durant la campagne électorale sur l'item de *Best Loser* ; il était totalement opposé à une quelconque abolition, et quand l'heure est venue pour s'opposer officiellement, ici, au Parlement, il a perdu sa langue. Presque tous les honorables membres ont participé aux débats ; même l'honorable Dr. Joomaye, qui, entre-temps a changé opinion, a participé aux débats, il a dit son opinion, et je respecte son opinion.

L'honorable Dr. Husnoo, après les élections générales, entretemps, il a été nommé ministre et il a eu son chèque de R 15 millions pour l'achat d'un terrain par le gouvernement. Lui, il ne dit rien sur le *Best Loser*. Mais quand même, il faut rappeler que cela était passé au Conseil des ministres, au Cabinet et il a donné son approbation. Et là, j'aurais aimé tout de même venir sur un mensonge qu'il a débité dans la circonscription numéro 3 durant la mobilisation du meeting du 01 mai à l'effet qu'au centre Idrice Goomany quand il avait fait sa réunion en 2013, que je n'étais pas venu, j'étais allé me cacher. Mais c'est une honte, je n'étais pas au pays, j'étais à l'étranger pour une mission officielle pour le Parlement. Et je l'ai même appelé pour lui dire que je n'allais pas être présent. Il a présenté mes excuses et

aujourd'hui, il va dire aux gens dans la circonscription numéro 3 que je n'étais pas venu à cette réunion. Mais c'est vraiment *cheap* de sa part, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, can you be moderate in your remarks, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: I cannot, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! I cannot!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: These are the rules of this House.

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet. Can you sit down?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: These are the rules of the National Assembly. You have to be polite and moderate in your remarks.

Mr Ameer Meea: I think I have been polite. But you know, as an inhabitant of No. 03...

The Deputy Speaker: You do not have to argue with me.

Mr Ameer Meea: No, I am not arguing with you.

The Deputy Speaker: Resume your speech, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: As an inhabitant of No. 03, I remember what happened during the electoral campaign; how he campaigned against the abolition of Best Loser. This is why I am so emotional about it.

M. le président, un autre item sur lequel il garde le silence. On ne sait dans quel parti il est. Parce qu'au N° 3, on entend dire qu'il est au ML, avec le sourire du *Deputy Prime Minister*, Ivan Collendavelloo. On entend dire qu'il est au ML, mais de temps en temps, on entend dire qu'il est du MSM. Quand même, il faut être honnête, soit du ML, soit du MSM. Il n'y a pas à avoir honte. Il faut clarifier...

(Interruptions)

Il faut clarifier sa position, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: Donc, M. le président, je sais que cela fait mal, mais la vérité, cela blesse toujours, M. le président. M. le président, quand j'entends les députés de la majorité vantant la liste des projets dans leurs circonscriptions respectives, je suis vraiment jaloux. Je suis vraiment jaloux quand j'entends dire - comme hier, l'honorable Aliphé, il nous disait...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: This is not correct at all, hon. Ameer Meea. Please take your seat! When you refer to an hon. Member, you have to spell his name correctly. Please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Je m'excuse. Je retire mes mots.

(Interruptions)

Mais tellement il nous a dit « fait, fait, fait » que je me suis trompé et je me suis dit Aliphé, mais je retire mes mots. Donc, M. le président, tellement on a entendu « fait » qu'on se croyait dans un conte de fée à la sauce de Cendrillon. De toute façon, M. le président, je peux vous dire que l'année prochaine, il va terriblement nous manquer.

(Interruptions)

Donc, je suis extrêmement jaloux, car la circonscription N° 3, Plaine Verte-Roche Bois, est vraiment l'enfant pauvre de la République. Et je n'exagère rien en disant cela. Pas un projet d'infrastructure, pas un seul projet de développement, pas un projet sportif, rien ! Rien n'a été fait dans la circonscription N° 3. Et je dis cela en connaissance de cause, aujourd'hui même, j'ai parcouru tous les discours de l'honorable Dr. Husnoo depuis 2015 à ce jour sur le budget. Vous allez être choqué ! Il ne dit pas un mot sur la circonscription N° 3 de ce qu'il a fait. Allez voir ce que je suis en train de dire. Je ne mens pas. En 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 : pas un seul mot sur la circonscription N° 3, M. le président, mais cela, il faut le faire, M. le président.

Quand je dis que les députés, les ministres du gouvernement, quand ils sont au gouvernement, depuis tout le temps, ils essayent de faire quelque chose pour leur endroit, ils essayent de laisser une empreinte de ce qu'ils ont fait. Mais essayez avec une torche d'avoir l'empreinte de l'honorable Dr. Husnoo à Plaine Verte et je le mets au défi d'aller prouver le

contraire de ce que je dis. Combien d'inaugurations il a faites ? Il a fait une seule, je crois deux chambres ; c'était un truc pour les personnes âgées qui a été fait par la municipalité de Port-Louis qui porte le nom du père de M. Yousuf Nazurally, qui a été fait à Plaine Verte. Mais à part cela, M. le président, rien n'a été fait dans la circonscription N° 3.

Et avant de terminer, M. le président, rapidement, j'ai dû skipper beaucoup de trucs. Mais rapidement, j'aurai aussi envie de dire ma déception par rapport à la force policière dans la circonscription N° 3. Ma déception par rapport à la rue Desforges et à la Route des Pamplemousses. Il n'y a jamais un policier tout le long de la semaine et même la veille de la fête Eid, j'ai appelé à la station de police de Plaine Verte pour dire au préposé « Allez mettre des policiers. Il y a tellement de trafic. » Rien, M. le président ! L'honorable Dr. Husnoo, il est ministre dans la circonscription, il aurait dû faire son travail ; moi, je fais le mien, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Donc, M. le président, avant de terminer, je tiens à remercier - j'aurais aimé dire beaucoup de choses, mais le temps fait défaut. Il y a mon collègue, l'honorable Veda Baloomoody, qui doit parler après moi. Avant de terminer, M. le président, j'aurais aimé remercier l'électorat de la circonscription N° 3, Plaine Verte, Roche Bois et Agaléga, de m'avoir élu à deux reprises. En tant que député et habitant de la circonscription, j'ai toujours été à côté de mes mandants et au Parlement, je me suis fait un devoir de soulever leurs problèmes, à travers des questions parlementaires et à l'ajournement, pour essayer de trouver des solutions à leurs problèmes. D'ailleurs, si le ministre aurait fait pareil, je suis sûr que la circonscription N° 3 aurait sorti grand gagnant, M. le président. Et pour terminer, M. le président, je souhaiterais voir une Ile Maurice émergente, prospère, juste et généreuse, une nation unifiée et avec chaque individu jouissant des droits égaux. Les innombrables scandales et l'arrogance du pouvoir font que l'usure commence à se faire sentir.

M. le président, pour terminer, la politique est une roue qui tourne en permanence et cette roue est en marche pour botter ce gouvernement hors du pouvoir et ce sera justice naturelle.

Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Husnoo!

(10.22 p.m.)

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you hear people talking about Best Loser, I do not know what to say. In 2012,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Husnoo: ...when the Labour Party was trying to remove the Best Loser, I organised a platform *pour les* Best Losers. I phoned the last speaker to tell him, "Look...

(Interruptions)

It does not concern you. Shut up! Let me speak!

(Interruptions)

Faire foutre! Laisse mo kozer! Line kozer!

(Interruptions)

Tone kozer! Fermez!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

I said order, please!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! I said order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

I am going to stay on my feet until order prevails in this House!

(Interruptions)

Order! That is why I have said no comments from a sitting position! This is what happens when you make comments from a sitting position. You should not do that.

(Interruptions)

If you want to take the floor, you stand up on a point of order.

(Interruptions)

You can resume your speech now. But I do not want any comments ...

Dr. Husnoo: I was saying that when he spoke, I let him speak; I let him. So, he should do the same.

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: He should do the same...

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair!

Dr. Husnoo: Anyway, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2012, when the problem of Best Loser started, I organised the Best Loser platform to defend the Best Loser and I phoned the last hon. speaker, who just spoke. He came to my consultation room. I told him: 'You have to support the Best Loser'. He told me: 'No, no, I can't, because MMM is against Best Loser.'

(Interruptions)

These people!

(Interruptions)

No, no, no! He is talking about the previous system.

The Deputy Speaker: Please take your seat! What is the point of order?

(Interruptions)

What is the point of order?

Mr Ameer Meea: The point of order is, what the hon. Minister is saying is a total lie. It is a total lie, I never said it! I? I said it?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat, hon. Minister! Take your seat.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea! Wait! Please!

(Interruptions)

Can you stop making remarks from a sitting position, please? Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea! Please!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet and I said that I am going to stay on my feet until order prevails in the House. Hon. Etienne Sinatambou, please! Order! Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, during your speech, you made reference to a meeting where you said the Minister lied. He stayed quiet and now he wants to reply.

(Interruptions)

I don't know. You should take your seat. Take your seat. This is closed. Resume your speech now.

Dr. Husnoo: There you are, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. That is the kind of people. I stand by what I have said. I phoned him, yes! He came to my consultation and he told me: 'No, MMM does not support Best Loser'. That's number one, in 2012. 2014 now. What did he do about Best Loser? Did he support Best Loser in 2014? I was supporting, yes, Best Loser! I fought for Best Loser. What did he do? Did he support Best Loser? He is talking so much, nowadays!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments from a sitting position.

Dr. Husnoo: He is talking so much. He is talking so much, nowadays! Did he support Best Loser, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? No! Today, he is the best supporter of Best Loser. That's the kind of people. Double talk! Double standards! That's what they are! That's what they are, and coming to show a finger at me! Trying to point a finger at me...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Can you sit down, hon. Member? Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, I said, when you were making your speech, the hon. speaker kept quiet. Why can't you keep quiet and listen to what he has to say? You had the opportunity of saying things when you made your speech. Now, you should keep quiet and listen to what he has to say.

Dr. Husnoo: *La vérité offense, n'est-ce pas?* Yes, I'm telling him his position. Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

He was worried. Just a few minutes, he was worried about Dr. Husnoo. All the speech was about Dr. Husnoo, Dr. Husnoo, Dr. Husnoo. When I tell him to give the answer, now 'don't worry about me'!

(Interruptions)

Talking about *marchands ambulants*. Yes, I mean, I have talked to them as well, *marchands ambulants*. How long were they going to stay on the road? He wants them to stay on the road? How long can they stay on the road?

(Interruptions)

Exactement! Fer politique lor ledo malheureux, exactement, c'est ça. C'est ça tout le temps!

You know, in the rain, in the sun and everything. That's what they want, and this Government is trying to give *marchands ambulants* two places, *La Gare Decaen et la Gare du Nord*.

(Interruptions)

But it's going to come, yes!

The Deputy Speaker: Don't provoke, please!

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, it's going to come! He should wait! On 27 August, it's going to come. Yes, wait and see. *L'inauguration Decaen!* Do you know what I mean? And these people *ki vive lor malheureux, zot kontan fer dominer ek dimoun malheureux, zot content vivre lor malheur dimounn*. Excuse me, that's what they want to do. And when the new project is going to come - it's going to come whether you like it or you don't like it. 1,800 people...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I said it because I believe in it! Yes, I said it! I believe in it! But that's what we are going to do.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm again on my feet. Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea, you should stop provoking the speaker. And may I request the speaker to address the Chair, please?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The project is coming and, on one side, you are going to have 800 passengers everyday coming at La Gare du Sud, Decaen, and with the Metro Express. You are going to have about 800 or so stalls there and at *Immigration*, 1,000.

There will be 1,800 stalls for these *marchands ambulants* and after they will be renting this place, okay, for about 15 years, these stalls are going to be for them, for their children, for life. Not on the road, not on the pavement, not in the sun, in the rain; not fighting with the taxis, with the pedestrians, but to have their own stall for them and when they pass away, to their children. Are their children going to get a thing? Talking about *marchands ambulants*!

Coming to drugs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know the hon. Prime Minister has said how many kilograms of drugs were seized. *Je crois que c'est 750 kilos, si je me rappelle bien, pour R 5.5 milliards.* When did that happen? *S'il n'y avait pas de volonté* on the part of this Government - you name me. Was there no drug coming into the country before 2014? *Il n'y avait pas? C'était fermé, la porte était fermée, il n'y avait pas de drogue à l'Ile Maurice!* What was being done? And you compare yourself. Compare and then you talk. As far as treatment is concerned, synthetic is a new phenomenon. Was there a place? Now I have started drug treatment - psychosocial treatment. I'm trying to get them from the Police Station to come to the Area Health Centres, the Community Health Centres. I have done it only in nine Community Health Centres, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to spread it all over the island to get them not to be given drugs in the Police Stations but to come in the Community Health Centres, but there was objection from the civil society. They don't want people who take drugs to come near them. That's why I haven't not been able to progress more than that. But I'm trying. Slowly, I am trying. I am trying to bring the drug addicts to be given the treatment in the Community Health Centres, the Area Health Centres. We have already started and it's doing well. That's number one, because in the Community Health Centres, they are going to get psychosocial treatment. That's what they need, not just be given drugs only; not just methadone every day, but the psychological treatment. And we have started it. But nobody knows about it, nobody talks about it. It's easy to criticise when in the Opposition. *Et pour les enfants, pour les jeunes*, was there a detoxification centre for the young people in Mauritius? Was there? I opened it at Montagne Longue, for those below 23. They come there, they have their treatment, inpatient treatment, and they are followed by the psychologist, the social worker and everything. Nothing is being done? Either you are blind or you are deaf. I don't know. I am opening two hospitals, one for the blind - eyes - and one for the ENT. I am opening both. That is just about the last speaker.

Another speaker from my constituency, hon. Abbas Mamode, yesterday, new Cancer Hospital, zero! For God's sake, go to Vacoas! Do we have to take the hospital and bring it

here so that you can see? I mean, does he expect me to do magic? Am I supposed to do magic? A project like that takes time. I am talking. What are you talking? You do not have to talk to me! Let me talk to the...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order! I said order, please! Hon. Minister, I have told you, several times, to address the Chair because when you address Members, you tend to provoke. Please, address the Chair!

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he has not seen Cancer Hospital. Next time, I will bring it here. I will bring a picture, next time, and show to the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Let him speak!

Dr. Husnoo: ENT Hospital, he has not heard about it. Nobody has heard about the ENT Hospital. That is what the hon. Member said yesterday. He does not know ENT Hospital is going to be opened in a couple of months' time. He has never heard about it!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I said no comments from a sitting position, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Dr. Husnoo: We don't do magic on this side of the House. A project takes time. If you can do magic, anybody can do magic, good for them! I am no magician. We have a project, we started it. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we started that project of the new ENT Hospital in March, last year, and now, in August, one year and a half, it is going to be operational. One year and a half! You name me a hospital which has been done like that.

For Cancer Hospital, the same, we started it. Maybe not this year, next year it is going to be operational because you have more sophisticated equipment to come. But people do not understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are supposed to do magic and bring it here, in this House, to show them.

(Interruptions)

For the last 50 years, we did not have these facilities...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Dr. Husnoo: Now, we are giving these facilities. For how many years have you been in Government? Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For how many years have they been in Government for the last 50 years of their history? 10 years! 40 years in the Opposition! And now they are talking. What have they done? They are talking now, criticising! They are just good at criticising.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin, I am telling you, do not make any comment from a sitting position.

Dr. Husnoo: ENT is *fausse*! Cancer is *fausse*! Everything is *fausse*! The hon. Member talked about Mediclinic yesterday. It has already been advertised. If the hon. Member just goes online, he will see it has been advertised, for God's sake!

(Interruptions)

Demain mo fer li, mo fer magic mo vini! You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il y a pire...*

The Deputy Speaker: Please, take your seat! I have warned you before. You don't speak from a sitting position. If you want to say something, you stand up and take a point of order, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he is imputing motives in his speech. I am blind, I am deaf, and you are allowing these terms to be used. He...

(Interruptions)

...be allowed such term!

(Interruptions)

And he wants to bring hospital over there!

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat! I have not heard him saying all that hon. Abbas Mamode. Otherwise, I would have corrected him. Resume your speech!

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il n'est pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir*. Now, whoever wants to take it for them, they can take it.

Yesterday, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member said *pani, pani nai ba! Pena delo!* In my constituency where he is a Member as well, there are 50 roads being dug and pipes are being laid now, at this particular time, and he said there is no water at all. Can you

imagine? I don't know how to qualify this kind of attitude. The work is being done now. *Environ 25 chemins à Roche Bois, 25 chemins à Plaine Verte*, being dug now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. New pipes are being laid. *Pani nai ba!* Can you imagine? And he is supposed to be *sur le terrain*. What can you say to this kind of reaction? I don't know what to say.

These two projects are costing nearly Rs250 m. Nobody knows about it. No project is being done in the constituency. We heard it just now. No project is being done. *Mais ces deux projets à Plaine Verte et à Roche Bois, R250 millions*. No project is being done! I am not going to go with the other projects because they have not seen it yet. Next time, I will bring a big picture, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will put it here. Then, they can see it. A billboard on the motorway would be better. Even then, they won't see it.

(Interruptions)

Exactement! There is a Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund at Camp Yoloff, 200 metres from the hon. Member's house. I am doing an extension there, and he does not know or he pretends he does not know. I don't know. 200 metres, he does not know. The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is doing an extension at Cité Martial, in his constituency. He does not know. A Municipal centre is being built by the Municipal Council of Port Louis at Route Militaire, he does not know. Centre Goomany is being repaired, he doesn't know. What am I supposed to do? Mamad Elahee which has been closed for 10 years, the work has started now.

(Interruptions)

Yesterday, he said there was nothing. *Astere 'moi sa'!*

The Deputy Speaker: Please, sit down! What is your problem, hon. Abbas Mamode? Do you have any problem? Then, keep quiet, let him finish his speech. You had the opportunity to say that when you were making your speech. Let him make his speech now.

Dr. Husnoo: The two Area Health Centres, Community Health Centres are coming at St Francois and Roche Bois. I hope he is not going to say that it is his project as well! Anyway! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have tried to...

The Deputy Speaker: Can you please sit down? With your behaviour, you are degrading this Assembly, hon. Abbas Mamode. I have told you several times not to argue with the hon. Minister when he is making his speech, especially from a sitting position. Let him finish with his speech.

(Interruptions)

That is what he is doing.

(Interruptions)

Why is this not fair, hon. Member? I have told him several times not to argue from a sitting position. You cannot do that. You can resume your speech now, hon. Minister.

Dr. Husnoo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, a few days ago, when the hon. Prime Minister presented the Budget, I was surprised by the behaviour of some hon. Members in this House. Chagos, which is a subject which concerns the whole country, the whole Republic - the hon. Prime Minister, after he won the battle at the ICJ, at the United Nations, I would have expected, at least, the hon. Members would appreciate that. It is a national issue. It is not party politics. All of us who were here have noticed the behaviour of some of these hon. Members. I won't go so far as to say unpatriotic, but we were all surprised by the attitude of these hon. Members when Chagos was mentioned. When the hon. Prime Minister mentioned about the Rs50 m. that was going to be earmarked in the Budget for resettlement in Chagos, I thought 'what a measure!' But, again, everybody was quiet in some part of the House. I don't understand. *Ki fer, le ker fer mal? Mo pas gayne kompran mwa!*

The Deputy Speaker: In English or French, please!

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry! I don't understand their attitude, not just on Chagos, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Betamax! CT Power! Some hon. Members sometimes come in the House and they are the ones fighting against corruption, but when it comes to Betamax, when the Supreme Court gives the judgement against Betamax, everybody went quiet. What were they fighting all this time? CT Power, when we got the judgement from the Privy Council, again what happened? *Silence radio* for some hon. Members of the House! All this pretention about fighting corruption sounds hollow when you see the reaction of some hon. Members when this issue was discussed. And these hon. Members, now, are coming to give us lessons in this House when you see the double standard.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are so many items in the Budget, but I will not go through all of them. If you allow me, I will now talk a bit about the Budget. It is a pleasure

for me to contribute to the debates on the Budget 2019-2020, under the theme 'Embracing a brighter future together as a Nation'. I acknowledge and commend the Bill to this House.

Who, in this House, will disagree that the GDP, which was Rs390 billion in 2014, is currently Rs482 billion in four years' time? Who, in this House, will disagree that the economic growth rate, which stood at 3.6% in 2014, is now 3.8%? Who would disagree that the per capita income has increased from Rs7,292 in 2014 to Rs9,660 in 2018? Who, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is going to disagree? The unemployment rate has declined to 6.9% now, the lowest since 2001. Our net foreign currency in Mauritius, which was Rs121 billion in 2014, has now reached Rs241 billion. Who would disagree with these facts and figures?

Our current reserve in terms of imports has increased to 11 months, when it was 8.6% in December 2014. When was the last time it was 11 months in the history of Mauritius? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are some amongst the numerous achievements. The Gini coefficient now is 0.400, which is better than what it was in 2012, when it was 0.414. Are we going to disagree to this? These are all facts. As I mentioned, these are some of the numerous achievements of our mandate. The performance of Mauritius in sustaining the socioeconomic development and its transparency in doing business are globally acknowledged. Besides, international socioeconomic benchmark continues to improve year by year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, I am just going to go a bit on my Ministry. Government continues to give the health and welfare of the population the importance that it deserves within the overall sustainable development framework of our economy. Budget 2019-2020 places health high at the core of our socio-economic development agenda. The financial envelope of Rs13.1 billion allocated to my Ministry testifies to the firm commitment of the Government to provide free universal access to quality health care service to the population. Government spending on health has increased by 42.38% over the last five years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from Rs9.2 billion in 2014 to Rs13.1 billion in this coming Budget. Government expenditure on health, as a percentage of GDP, has improved from 2.1 in 2014 to 2.6. Per capita government expenditure on health, which was Rs7,292 in 2014 has increased by at least 40% to Rs10,351 in this financial year. Within one mandate, it has increased by 40%. I think I will leave the population to judge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are three health indicators in Mauritius which are commonly used to compare the health status among countries. These indicators are the life

expectancy at birth, the infant mortality, and the maternal mortality rate. Life expectancy at birth has improved and is currently at an average of 74%, that is, 71.3% for male and 77.7% for female. Infant mortality rate is 14 per 1,000 and the maternal mortality rate is 0.39 per 1,000. These figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, position Mauritius above the level of health performance of the upper middle-income countries and as a pole position in the African region.

Mauritius is often quoted as a reference on the international fora for its remarkable achievement in improving the health status of its population. In line with the Vision 2030, we are aiming to bring the maternal and child health indicators to 1-digit figure, similar to those of developed nations within the next few years.

The massive infrastructural development in the health sector that we have started in this mandate is unprecedented, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Never, since independence, that is, 50 years ago, have so many important health infrastructure projects been initiated, be it in Mauritius, in Rodrigues or now in Agaléga. Never, since independence! It goes without saying, following the fact that not much was spent on the health sector, that the state of our hospitals and our primary health care centres really need a massive revamping as they no longer satisfy the demand and the exigencies of modern Mauritius. Most of our health infrastructures need to be reassessed. Only the bare minimum has been done to keep them afloat, with no vision to revamp or upgrade them properly.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is leaving no stone unturned to improve the universal access to quality health care service in Mauritius. We have made significant investment to upgrade existing infrastructure and build new and modern hospitals. Budget 2019-2020 will pave the way, leading to a more specialised health care with super speciality services.

I will come back to the new ENT Hospital, just in case somebody has not heard about it. Government is investing an estimated amount of Rs889 m. for the new ENT Hospital at Vacoas. The new ENT Hospital will be the first paperless hospital in Mauritius. The commission of this new centre of excellence in the field of ENT is expected in the next couple of months. As I mentioned earlier, it was started in March 2018 and it will be delivered, hopefully, in August 2019, less than one and a half months, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The new Cancer Centre, again I am going to come on it in case somebody does not know anything about it or has not heard or has not seen it. In 2017, we had 2,461 new cases of cancer, and we had about 1,371 deaths, people dying of cancer. That is why we need a new centre, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The new Cancer Centre will be one of the most advanced oncological services in the region. Through the combination of service of highly skilled personnel and cutting edge technology, patients will benefit from new ways to diagnose and treat the earliest signs of cancer; more effective therapy and treatment that will be patient centred.

This centre of excellence will operate according to the best international practice, with two new linear accelerators. Just now, we have only one linear accelerator, which is 23 years old. The new principle of treatment will be minimum effective dose instead of maximum tolerable treatment which, obviously, will improve the quality of life of our cancer patients. It will also have a Stem Cell Unit for research and treatment purposes. If everything goes all right according to plan, the new hospital should be operational by the middle of next year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The next hospital, the third one, is the teaching hospital at Flacq. A new regional and teaching hospital, which cost Rs4 billion in the first phase only. We are going to build it in Flacq. I am just waiting to get the land, because we have got the money from a Consortium, from BADEA, Koweit Fund and Saudi Fund. They are financing this project. I am just waiting for the land and we are going to start the project.

Another hospital is the new Eye Hospital. We are proposing to construct a new Eye Hospital on a plot of land of approximately 6.7 *arpents* at Réduit Triangle. The only Government hospital that we have at present at Moka is not amenable to upgrading and renovation or other expansion work. The bed capacity is limited to 68. The new facilities will house all the facilities required for a modern eye hospital, including 120 beds, ICU beds and five operating theatres.

These are the four hospitals that are in the pipeline. It is the first time we have so many hospitals coming in the pipeline at the same time. Apart from hospitals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we want to improve our national health infrastructure in addition to modern hospitals, we also have to develop the supporting and ancillary services. So, with this in mind, we are going to build a new warehouse for storage of pharmaceutical products. This is number one.

Secondly, the e-health system, which is going to link all our hospitals with our primary care unit and other service units.

Thirdly, a new National Health Laboratory Service and, fourthly, very important as well, a centralised National Health Care Waste Facility at La Chaumière.

The construction of a modern warehouse for storage of pharmaceutical products, as announced in the Budget, is indeed a must. In fact, when I came to the Ministry of Health about two and a half years ago, this was one of my priority projects, to start a warehouse to keep our drugs properly because the current storage facilities at Plaine Lauzun have been there for more than 40 years. It does not address our requirements, especially with increase in activity at the hospitals. We encounter a lot of problems with the current storage facilities. For example, the space is limited for storage of the pharmaceutical products and we have to store our drugs at Tobacco Board, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the Agricultural Marketing Board, at the Sunray Building at Coromandel because we cannot store our drugs at Plaine Lauzun. We have to spread them around and they are not kept in the proper condition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And when they are not stored properly, we have over stockpiling of drugs in some cases and that leads to expiry of drugs. The condition of storage is poor and we do not have any proper inventory system as well. That is why a new model facility for storage of drugs is needed, and we hope that is going to help to solve the problem.

As far as our laboratory facilities at Victoria Hospital are concerned, it is being stressed beyond its limit. That is why Government has taken the decision to construct the National Health Lab Service Centre. This will not only provide extra space for expansion, but will also raise the standard and the level of investigation carried out in this facility and, as I mention again, the disposal of medical waste. This has been a problem and has even been in the news in the recent past. It is urgent to look at this issue and find a sustainable solution to this problem. If not, this may even cause a serious threat to the health of our population. Hence, the development of the centralised medical waste disposal facility at La Chaumière.

Apart from this major hospital infrastructure, the ancillary service, you have a lot of projects that are coming on. You have a lot of improvement that is being done in the different hospitals, like new departments in the different hospitals. Just to name one, like the dialysis facility. As you are aware, dialysis facilities are provided free of charge to all our patients requiring the treatment by the Ministry at the six public hospitals and in the six private clinics. At present, there is a total of 1,352 patients who are undergoing dialysis

treatment, of which 1,092 patients are having the treatment in the Government hospitals, and 259 in the private clinics.

With the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and an ageing population, the number of patients requiring dialysis treatment is expected to increase, to reach a figure of around 1,600 patients in the coming years. It is to be noted that, among the dialysis patients, 50% of them are diabetics and 80% of them are known cases of hypertension.

As far as dialysis equipment is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, we bought 60 new dialysis machines. We used 20 of them to open a new wing at Dr. Jeetoo hospital and the remaining was distributed across the island to replace the old machines. Similarly, now, we are going to buy 90 new additional dialysis machines. Twenty will be installed at the new Dialysis Unit at Long Mountain Hospital and the remaining 70 machines will be used for replacement of the old machines. With this increase in dialysis machines, we hope that we will reach a stage in the future where all our patients can be treated in the hospitals and we do not have to send them to private clinics, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Apart from dialysis machines, my Ministry has also embarked on a new project, as mentioned in the Budget by the way, for the infrastructural facilities, to locate a Renal Unit and a Transplant Unit as well as a new Dialysis Unit at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital. As you are aware, the Human Tissue Removal Preservation Transplant Bill was passed last year. We have been working on that. I must say, previously, during the last two years, we have sent about 20 patients to India for renal transplant. Now, we have sent one doctor. He is going to Marseilles, France for training and in July, hopefully, we are going to get a team from Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in UK. They are coming to Mauritius to carry out transplant surgeries locally on our patients. Besides renal dialysis, there are so many other units which have been developed in the hospitals like the Neo Natal Care Unit at Flacq Hospital, at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital; a Stroke Unit at Victoria; a Spine Unit at Victoria; angioscopy all over the island, in all the five district hospitals. Apart from the major hospitals, I am going to say a few words about the primary health care service. The primary health care service brings health care as close as possible where people live and work. Presently, we have about 140 primary care units, that is, mediclinics, area health centres, community health centres. As mentioned in the Budget, we are going to build four new mediclinics. Apart from these four mediclinics, that is, at Coromandel, Quartier Militaire, Stanley and Bel Air, we are going to build seven primary health care institutions, including one at Roche Bois and one at St.

Francois Xavier. Besides these seven, 12 new primary health care centres are being planned to be built. That will make 19 new primary health care centres which are going to be built.

As far as diabetes is concerned, non-communicable disease, the last NCD survey in 2015 has shown that the diabetic prevalence in Mauritius is not increasing, but appears to have been stabilised. This is good news because it has been increasing for the last 30 years. Mortality from diabetes mellitus has also stabilised over the last five years.

As far as tobacco control is concerned, it is noteworthy. Mauritius has implemented some of the strongest and most progressive tobacco policies in Africa and has emerged as one of the regional leaders in Africa. Besides, our country is the pioneer of the successful implementation of pictorial health warning on cigarette package in Africa. According to NCD survey 2015, the prevalence of smoking has decreased from 21% in 2009 to 19% in 2015. I am pleased to inform the House that earlier this month, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life was awarded the World No Tobacco Day Award 2019 by the World Health Organisation in recognition of the outstanding contribution to tobacco control.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now say a few words about one project which was mentioned in the Budget as well, namely the Food Standard Agency. Taking into account the high prevalence of non-communicable disease, the hon. Prime Minister has personally made provision for the establishment of a Food Standard Agency. Our people have the right to expect that the food they purchase and consume are safe and of high quality. Good, safe food is the foundation of a nutritious diet. Food safety has a critical role in assuring that food stays safe at every stage of the food chain, from production to harvest, processing storage and distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption as well. With technological advance, consumers are more informed and more conscious of the quality of food they consume. They look forward for more transparency in the food production processes and they aspire for reassurance about humane practice. Many Mauritian consumers are now following their food from farm to fork as we say. Since vegetarians as well as halal food require rigorous production standards, consumers are beginning to see these food products as healthy, organic and ethical. As such, a certifying body stamp of approval is important. That is why we are going to develop the halal food sector and the vegetarian food sector for those people who want to use them because a lot of people ask for halal food and a lot of people ask for vegetarian food - so, they can use it.

In order to ensure all aspects of food safety, it has become imperative to establish a Food Standard Agency as an independent department which will be responsible for food safety in the country.

I also wish to inform the House that one of the objectives of the National Plan of Action for Nutrition 2016-2020 is to introduce nutrition-labelling, front of pack signpost labelling. This labelling system on food will indicate the amount of calories, sugar, the amount and types of fat and salt present in that particular food using colour code. The idea is to provide at a glance information about the nutritional content of food on packaging label.

Another measure that was mentioned in the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was about the fortification of wheat flour with iron and folic acid. Two previous nutritional surveys have indicated a rise in micronutrient deficiencies in the form of iron deficiency, anaemia in women of childbearing age as well as in adolescent girls in Mauritius. Even though Mauritius has a well-established system for micronutrient supplementation for pregnant women, it is still not immune to the problem of neural tube defect in new born, which is preventable if the diet of the pregnant woman is sufficient in the micronutrient folic acid. One of the main objectives of the national plan of action for nutrition 2016-2020 is to reduce the nutritional anaemia in female adolescent from 28% to 10%. And in order to achieve this objective, Mauritius is adopting its food fortification. To do that, wheat flour is the most appropriate food vehicle for inclusion; in fact, it has been shown to be better than rice.

As far as HIV/AIDS in Mauritius is concerned, as we know, it is a concentrated epidemic with the prevalence of 0.88% in the population 8-15 and above. There are eight day care centres for the immunosuppressed located in the regional health hospitals and are currently providing service to people living with HIV. It is new because one hon. Member, yesterday, mentioned that nothing is being done; no new drugs are being given to HIV patients. New antiviral molecules such as Atripla, which is three molecules in one tablet, that is, three drugs in one tablet, make it easier for the patient to take care. We started that last year. Dolutegravir tablet with fewer side effects has been introduced in November, last year. Some people were saying that we are not doing anything in HIV. These are new molecules, new tablets which are better for the patient, causing less side effects. It was introduced only in November, last year, just to make the patient more adherent to the treatment.

Access to antiretroviral is also available in prison settings, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Around 293 inmates are on treatment. All HIV/AIDS infected patients in prison are provided with the same facilities and have access to treatment, care and support as per our guideline. As from 16 January 2018, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life put at the disposal of the AIDS Unit a caravan, this year - some people were asking about caravan earlier - to carry out HIV testing in the community. A total of 10,000 rapid tests have already been carried out.

As far as the fight against drugs is concerned, I have already mentioned it earlier, so, I would not go on it again. As far as the public health measure is concerned, recently, we had an outbreak of measles in April 2018, where we had 1,473 laboratory confirmed cases of measles. But we managed to control it and that outbreak is controlled now. We had an outbreak of dengue fever. From 26 February to 13 June 2019, we had a total of 133 cases of dengue. They were mainly located at Vallée des Prêtres, Cité La Cure and Roche Bois. But, now, that is under control as well and we do not have any case of dengue since 31 May 2019. Here, I would like to thank the staff of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Environment and all the other stakeholders who worked very hard to control these two outbreaks. It was very difficult and with everybody's help, we managed to control it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As far as population study is concerned, Mauritius has been too successful with our Family Planning campaign. Now, we have reached a stage where there is not enough babies being born. So, the population is going down. From 2021 or 2022, the population of Mauritius is going to plateau and the population will start going down. So, it is going to cause a major problem as far as manpower for the future is concerned. Secondly, apart from decrease in population, we have an ageing population as well. So, that is causing quite an imbalance. It is going to have a lot of economic consequences in the future.

What we have done, I have contacted UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). They have given us technical support, and we have worked on population studies. We have got a first draft and we are working on it. Once we get the draft, then we will have to come back to it and see what measures we can take to improve the situation as far as the decrease fertility rate is concerned.

As far as the Medical Insurance Scheme is concerned, the universal health coverage is on the global agenda. One among the important components of universal coverage is financial risk protection. The two previous National Health Accounts Reports underscored

the significant amount of money spent by households in the private sector. According to Household Out-of-Pocket Survey 2015, 3.6% of the population in the country experience catastrophic expenditure on health. So, now, the National Health Accounts Report 2017 recommended that the Government Medical Insurance Scheme, as has been discussed by my colleague earlier and was in the Pay Research Bureau of 2016, be implemented. And I am pleased to note that the Budget 2019 came with this proposal as well.

Before concluding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would just like to mention about Rodrigues as well. I remember the first time I went to Rodrigues, when I looked at the infrastructure, I was surprised. When you look at the operating theatre, you just wonder: Is that an operating theatre? It was in such a state. So, we get down to work. We had prepared the plan in two phases; the first plan is going to cost about Rs100 m. and we are going to start the first plan in Rodrigues soon this year. In Agaléga as well, as mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister, we are going to build up a new mediclinic to improve the facilities to our patients there. We have discussed about telemedicine between Mauritius and Rodrigues. We have not started yet, but we are working on it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Before I conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this Budget, the hon. Prime Minister has come up with so many measures which will help to ease the burden of the population, especially those at the bottom rung of the ladder. Many of my friends, on this side of the House, have already elaborated on that. As far as the health sector is concerned, the development in this sector, as I mentioned, is unprecedented. The whole health service landscape is being transformed. Sure, there will be further improvement in the future. We need further improvement with new modalities of treatment and investigation. But never in the history of Mauritius, in the last 50 years, has such a wide array of new construction and service been initiated with the sole aim to make our citizens live better, longer and healthier. For these, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for his vision and his leadership to transform Mauritius and provide the population of Mauritius with the highest standard of health service, which the population expects and richly deserves. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will now resume her seat.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

(11.22 p.m.)

Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for entrusting me the opportunity to say a few words on this Budget 2019-2020. From the outset, let me take the opportunity to thank the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for this audible Budget Speech. The hon. Prime Minister has shown his unquestionable leadership and determination as usual. He has a vision, as a young Prime Minister, for the old, the young and the future generation for their welfare and their wellbeing. A Prime Minister who has a sensitive heart and feeling for the poor citizens, a Prime Minister who listens to his fellow Ministers, PPS, Members of Parliament and also MPs from Opposition.

Madam Speaker, a Government is by the people and for the people. The Mauritian chose this Government in December 2014. From then on, this Government has been always for the people. The hon. Prime Minister has succeeded to create the feel good factor among the citizens for a sustainable good living.

Madam Speaker, the inheritance of bad economy from the last regime made it very difficult in the beginning of 2015 to start the engine to propel for a better future. The last regime, Madam Speaker, what did they do apart from accumulating huge sum of money? There were no decisions, the system was more or less paralysed by the *maltraitance* of his Ministers.

Madam Speaker, there was no sustainable decision and no action taken in various sectors, for example, textile industry, agriculture and sugar cane sectors, SMI, offshore sectors and without forgetting our most important economic sector, amongst others.

Madam Speaker, with the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, as Prime Minister after the election, within six months, Mauritius economy was on the track for a brighter future for all of us. When his son took over the responsibility as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, he brought happiness to one and all. Thank you, hon. Prime Minister, that was really a *tour de force*.

Madam Speaker, this Government, under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, has succeeded to increase the wealth of the population at large. He has always encouraged and practised open management, listened to his Ministers and Members of his Alliance Party and the public at large. Our hon. Prime Minister is someone who is totally opposite to the ex-

Prime Minister. The ex-Prime Minister inculcated all his Members of his party, especially his Ministers to praise him.

Madam Speaker, this Government with the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister does not allow idolatry of art to obscure issues of political significance. He means business through determination, hard work and respect for his fellow Ministers and Members of the Parliament and citizens.

Madam Speaker, allow me to come to the issue of accumulated reserve fund that many, on the Opposition side, in this House and outside, are talking about. Madam Speaker, when I listened to the arguments of a few Members of the Opposition, I can only conclude of their intellectual dishonesty on this issue. Why this intellectual dishonesty, Madam Speaker? How do we reconcile the fact that hon. Uteem, in his speech, said that certain sections of the law governing the Bank of Mauritius must be amended so that the accumulated surplus may be used for repayment of our debt. Well, either he failed to read the amendment that will be brought as mentioned on pages 46, 47 regarding the Banking Act or he deliberately did not want to quote the amendment that will be brought in this House.

Madam Speaker, on the same issue of the use of accumulated surplus held by the Bank of Mauritius, I would like to quote from the revised Foreign Exchange Reserve Management of the IMF that was quoted by the hon. Prime Minister to answer the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition, I quote, it is recommended as a guideline –

- limit external vulnerability by maintaining foreign currency liquidity to absorb shocks during times of crisis or when access of borrowing is curtailed and in doing so;
- provide a level of confidence to markets that a country can meet its current and future external obligations;
- demonstrate the backing of domestic currency by external assets;

And this important one, Madam Speaker –

- assist the Government in meeting its foreign exchange needs and external debt obligations.

Madam Speaker, this is a measure that has been proposed in the Budget by our hon. Prime Minister, that is, the Bank of Mauritius will assist to attend the partial repayment of our external debt.

Madam Speaker, section 36 on page 6 from the Budget Speech booklet, I quote, section 36 –

“During the same time span, – that is, from 2015-2018 - in spite of running trade and current account deficits, this country has generated a total of Rs91 billion as Balance of Payments surplus.”

Section 37 –

“As a result, since this Government took office to date, our country’s reserves broke all records, increasing by Rs117 billion to reach Rs241 billion, that is by 94 per cent and now representing 11.2 months of import cover. These are also the safest levels of foreign currency reserves our country has ever known.”

Madam Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of this House about minimum reserve requirement. The minimum recommended reserve requirement for Mauritius is four months of import. And I just quoted above, we have 11.2 months of reserve, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, if we have the safest level of foreign currency reserves, it is sound policy to assist the part repayment of our external debt. Reducing our external debt is not only to the 60% of the GDP as per law, but this fiscal assisting policy of the Central Bank to the Government, as it is stipulated in the guideline of the IMF, will also bring increase in global credibility and respectability without forgetting the reduction of external vulnerability to this Government for further assistance from other foreign friendly Government for development of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, mutually consistent and supporting policies for debt and reserve management can be important elements of crisis prevention.

Madam Speaker, if the Bank of Mauritius through this Government has a very good reserve, that is well above the requirement, maintenance of import, the recommended benchmark is four months. We have got about 11.2 months. We have more than required reserve amount for the maintenance period for external shock on our local currency, minor crisis management and others.

Madam Speaker, I think this Government with the assistance of the Bank of Mauritius is taking the right measures in good time for smoother navigation of an ongoing policy challenge.

Madam Speaker, we cannot go on increasing the reserve and, at the same time, with external debt. The Bank of Mauritius will not get into bankruptcy like a few countries which had a poor reserve, that a few Members of the Opposition mentioned, went bankrupt.

Madam Speaker, let me now try to show how this Budget is increasing the happiness of our citizens of our country. The well-being and happiness of our citizens is primordial for better running of our country, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Government set the institutional and policy framework in which individual happiness and Government themselves operate. This link between Government and happiness operate in both directions. What Government does, affects happiness and, in turn, the happiness of citizens determines what kind of Government they support.

Madam Speaker, positivity of this Government has and will bring happiness as opposed to the negativity of the Opposition of this House that translates into unhappiness. Happy citizens always vote for responsible parties, this Government is a responsible Government which is improving happiness. The ranking of the happiness 2016-2018 of the World Happiness Report that is quoted from the booklet, Madam Speaker, we are ranked number 57 out of 156 countries, better than China, Russia, Japan and Malaysia.

Let us see how people out there are happier through announcement of measures in this Budget. Madam Speaker, our real GDP has been increased at an average rate of 3.7% since 2015 and firmly rising. Construction industry was in recession, now with this Government from 2017, 7.5% to 9.5% in 2018. With increase in construction, Madam Speaker, there is increase in labour, more money, and when you have more money in your pocket, definitely, it brings happiness.

Madam Speaker, unemployment rate is down to 6.9%. When more people are employed, they are happier earning a living. Madam Speaker, inflation is down to 1.5%; that means stability of price of food and other commodities on the market. Madam Speaker, affordability, among others, increases happiness. Madam Speaker, increasing investment to the tune of 20.5% greater than Rs100 billion will definitely increase indirectly money in the pocket of citizens and more happiness.

Madam Speaker, we have a huge reserve to the tune of Rs241 billion representing 11.2 months of import. We are happy; we won't be starving even if there is a crisis. Madam Speaker, the happiest of all people are our old aged pensioners. Some dishonest politicians are mentioned Rs500 increase. This increase, Madam Speaker, will come to the tune of

Rs120 m. to the old age pensioners. They don't want to mention Rs6710 monthly as from January 2020 because it really hurts them, knowing well how old age pensioners were happy and will be happier in January next. It will be their happiest when the hon. Prime Minister will lead the next Government with a gradual increase of the pension to the minimum wage. A political party outside, the Lion Party, said Rs500 can buy three pounds of tomatoes and two cucumbers. Why did he fail to mention Rs6,710? This is real intellectual dishonesty. Have the courage to say to old age pensioner, 'you will be glad to have Rs6,710 in the month of January'.

By the way, the hon. Prime Minister never raises expectation during increase of old age pension to the level of minimum wage as it has been claimed in the last two press conferences by the Leader of the MMM. As far I remember, the hon. Prime Minister said he will gradually increase the old age pension to tally with the minimum wage. It is the media which raised that expectation so as to frame this Government. If the hon. Prime Minister went for an increase to the tune of Rs9000 or so, then they would have criticised this Government as irresponsible with a cost of about Rs9 billion, Madam Speaker. Criticism would have raised from every corner of the Opposition Members, even the Leader of the MMM would have criticised.

Madam Speaker, with the introduction of the Marshall Plan against poverty there has been a programme of income support to 11,000 low-income families who are happier now. Madam Speaker, implementation of the Negative Income Tax and Special Allowance to some 70,000 employees who are very happy with more money, raising their purchasing power and good living. Minimum Wages, Madam Speaker, we all know how this Government brought dignified life to some 73,000 workers. Have we forgotten, or do we remember? Cleaners earning only Rs1500 per month, now they are living a decent life, with a smiling face, with hardly any household distress. I am happy to see how happy they are, and very thankful to the hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, we must not forget the advance of Rs1000 as from January next for civil servants awaiting the PRB Report. This is a good initiative of the hon. Prime Minister and let me say many of the lower salary scale civil servants will get in January about three or four increments of their salary. Civil servants have welcomed this measure quite happily, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, 11,000 families on SRM will be given totally free access to broadband internet. Accessibility to internet, Madam Speaker, to one and all of the 11,000 families will bring information, news and educative material to the poor group.

Madam Speaker, small planters were quite unhappy with reduced income and losses, now how happy are they with the waving of the 50% of advance on fertilisers, with the waving of the insurance premium paid by planters producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar. This measure, Madam Speaker, will relieve the planters to the tune of many millions rupees. Madam Speaker, the best incentive that made them happier is the Rs25,000 per tonne of sugar to those producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar; this will bring about Rs800 m. to the small planters.

Madam Speaker, how can we forget the happiness brought to all vehicles and motorcycle owners with the Rs3 per litre decrease in the price of mogas and gasoil? Road tax for school bus has gone down from Rs3,000 to Rs2,000 and no tax on importation of vans. This measure, Madam Speaker, will definitely reduce spending by vehicles owners and also will help family who pay for transportation of children to schools and that there will be no increase in transportation fee claimed by the van owners to the family of those children going to school.

Madam Speaker, cooking gas LPG has gone down from Rs240 to Rs210, a saving of Rs30 that families and small businesses can save happily and spend on other commodities. Madam Speaker, free university education has been most welcome last year. Now, lower and middle class youngsters can attend university without the financial stress on parents. No more loans to pay for higher education. More children of the same family can attend for a diploma or a university degree, as in some families only one member was attending university because of financial constraints.

Madam Speaker, the Bad Weather Allowance is now increased by Rs30 per day. This will add to what the fishermen and women get. If I am not mistaken, I heard the Leader of Opposition say: *"2 cigarettes pas pu gagner avec sa R 30 la"*. Here also, what an intellectual dishonesty, failing to mention the total amount they will get. Anyway, Madam Speaker, I am sure the fishermen and women welcome this increase. Presently, I think it is Rs310 per day of Bad Weather Allowance. With the Rs30 increase, they will now get Rs340 per day. They are happy because the hon. Prime Minister has not forgotten them. Madam Speaker, we may have lots of money, but if we are not secure and safe wherever we are, this may lead to

apprehension and stressful situations, which in turn make us unhappy, reluctant to venture places alone or with family, which in itself may lead to confinement.

Madam Speaker, to remedy or alleviate the situation, the hon. Prime Minister has come with the Safe City project. 4,000 intelligent surveillance cameras and 300 intelligent traffic cameras will be implemented very soon.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister has not forgotten the 23,000 bedridden pensioners. Here also, there has been an increase of Rs500 on the monthly care allowance. And what more, Madam Speaker, house visit of doctors has been extended to bedridden persons of 60 years and above.

Madam Speaker, we must not forget the medical insurance scheme for the public sector employees. An amount of Rs200 m. will be spent by Government to help those people.

Madam Speaker, many consumers were complaining that meat and other products sold at supermarkets were wrongly labelled as halal. The hon. Prime Minister, through this Budget, after having listened to religious bodies, has come with a Food Standard Agency for certification of vegetarian and halal food, without forgetting fast food and soft drinks, among others. This is most welcome by all religious institutions. People will happily consume food and drinks without any apprehension. Madam Speaker, religious bodies are most grateful to the hon. Prime Minister for the increase of grant to the tune of 10%, that is, from Rs85 m. to Rs93 m. This above move of our hon. Prime Minister shows how he cares for the preservation of the social and moral fabric of our multicultural and religious society.

Madam Speaker, as regards the payment of income tax, more people will pay less tax or no tax at all with the increase of the new threshold, ranging from Rs5,000 to Rs45,000. Madam Speaker, I can go on and on with the many more positive happy measures of this Budget, but because of time constraint, let me now concentrate on the two constituencies, Nos. 10 and 16 that the hon. Prime Minister entrusted me as PPS in November 2017.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that the NDU and local authorities, that is, Municipal Councils and District Councils, have implemented, since 2015, some 2,900 projects to the value of Rs3.5 billion. Madam Speaker, all these projects are within the close vicinity of inhabitants.

Our motto at the NDU is, “*Amenn développement devant ou la porte*”. That is what, we, all PPSs, have been doing with the help of our staff, the Regional Development Officers, Engineer and Administrative staff of the NDU, whom, I am sure, all my colleagues will join

me to thank them, without forgetting our hon. Prime Minister who assists us with all the financial means.

By the end of this mandate, Madam Speaker, many ongoing projects, those in the pipeline, and other major projects that the consultants are finalising, which will be around another 1,000 projects for all constituencies, and to the tune of - I am telling the truth, my hon. friend here is sneezing, blessed you, thank you - Rs2 billion that we should add to the Rs3.5 billion I mentioned above. Madam Speaker, many projects and works orders have been finalised, but cannot be entrusted to contractors because contractors are saturated with many contracts, and because of constraints of registration requirement with the CIDB, that is, Grading Designation. I am sure all PPSs will be very happy when the amendment to the CIDB Act, that has been proposed in the Budget, will become law very soon. The amendment will be –

“(a) increase the minimum threshold, requiring any person undertaking construction works to be registered with the CIDB, from Rs500,000 to Rs1 million;”

And this one is very important; the grade ceiling for value contract that a contractor is allowed to undertake will be reviewed. This amendment, Madam Speaker, is to raise the ceiling of each grade. We have about eight grades, A to H. An example, Madam Speaker, let us take grade H; we presently can take a total amount of contract works to the tune of Rs5 m. The ceiling will be increased to a new level that will be defined in the new amendment.

Madam Speaker, let me come with the projects that have been completed in Constituency Nos. 10 and 16, since I took office from November 2017 as PPS. Madam Speaker, the first controversial issue was about Bel Air market. Some people were adamant to have it at Railway Road. I chaired my first meeting with all stakeholders concerned and after a site visit, we all concluded that the site was not appropriate because of the narrowness of the road at the two extremities. The TMRSU had a strong objection. On the same day, we all visited another site along the main road leading to Trou d'Eau Douce, and everyone was agreeable. I then called for a meeting with Alteo, the owner of the land, in the presence of the CEO, and the Chairman of the District Council of Flacq.

I am very pleased today that after several such meetings, I managed to get Alteo for the agreement of 5 *arpents* along the main road leading to Trou d'Eau Douce. Madam

Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister will, on Saturday 29 of this month, honour us for the *pose de la première Pierre*. We are all invited, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in the same vein, when I was helping the District Council of Flacq for the Bel Air market, hon. Dr. Husnoo told me that money is earmarked for Bel Air mediclinic and I don't know why again somewhat adamant to have it at the railway road, but hon. Dr. Husnoo told me that the TMRSU objected and whether I can help to get one *arpent* in Bel Air. I talked to CEO of Alteo and he agreed to my proposal, not for one *arpent* and I am sure hon. Dr. Husnoo will be happy. You got two *arpents*, right opposite the future Bel Air market, on the main road and very soon, I learned from hon. Dr. Husnoo, the deed will be signed and I understand tender has already been launched for the construction.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of my contribution towards these two major projects for the residents of neighbouring village and for Bel Air. Madam Speaker, more projects will be, I hope at this site, constructed namely –

- a swimming academy by the Ministry of Sports;
- Muga by Telecom, and
- other sporting infrastructures like tennis court; mini soccer pitches; volleyball pitch, and many others by NDU which I have proposed in our list of projects for 2019-2020 Budget.

Madam Speaker, let me elaborate a bit on the Gandhi statue at Bel Air Roundabout at my own cost. We have a statue in the centre of the roundabout and very soon, I think people from the environment department are working to embellish the roundabout. Why I gave the Gandhi statue, because Gandhi tells us about peace and he always said the future depends on what you do today. And a verbal and physical non-violence sculpture of mind in the yard of the District Council of Moka.

Madam Speaker, Constituency No. 10 has been an unprecedented change since 2017. I am sad to say that one Member came with a list of projects for various villages in Constituency No. 10, but deliberately failed to mention who initiated the project done by NDU, District Council of Moka and Flacq. I can say many of the projects mentioned were started and completed after I took office.

Madam Speaker, I won't list the projects one by one. It will take too much time. Madam Speaker, for the year 2018-2019, we have at the NDU and myself as PPS completed many road resurfacing to the tune of Rs30 m. Many drain works have been completed and

some are ongoing to the tune of more than Rs10 m. Madam Speaker, construction of new roads and drains, we have given financial clearance to the District Council of Moka and District Council of Flacq and I am happy to say that many, many new roads and drains had been completed and a few only are ongoing.

Major project drain works, Madam Speaker at Sebastopol to the tune of Rs2.8 m. – design completed, awaiting land acquisition from the Ministry of Housing;

- Major drain works at Clemencia – designs finalised, land acquisition identified and I am informed that the dossier is at evaluation office for each plot of land to be evaluated;
- Morcellement Sans Souci, Montagne Blanche – the network of drain work to the tune of Rs40 m. consultant coming soon with the final design after we had a meeting with them on the primarily design on site with all stakeholders, and
- Drain network at Morcellement Dowtal, Bramsthan – Rs12 m. work order will be issued soon. We got the clearance from the Ministry of Housing.

Madam Speaker, many more major drain works are at design stage. We have also a few bridge constructions at design stage but proud to confirm to this House, bridge at La Nourrice Road, Olivia is near completion to the tune of Rs18 m.

Madam Speaker, Constituency No.10 is a very big *chantier* of construction. I better stop here for No.10. The inhabitants of No.10 are more than satisfied and pleased.

Madam Speaker, let me turn to No.16, Vacoas/Floréal.

Madam Speaker: I hope you won't be long. You have already taken more than the 30 minutes allocated to you.

Dr. Sorefan: Only a few minutes! I have nearly finished, Madam Speaker. For Floréal, I won't list the works here also but many works have been completed and ongoing. Suffice to say that I have initiated 3 major projects that were on hold for more than 30 years. When I took office, I looked into the project for footbridge at Camp La Savanne, Henrietta. The footbridge is under construction through mutual agreement with RDA to construct and the NDU is financing the project.

The second project, Madam Speaker, is the enlargement of the Abattoir Bridge at La Caverne, Vacoas, was long overdue since 30 years. This bridge is very narrow. Many accidents have occurred. I discussed with the hon. Prime Minister who kindly agreed to give

me the green light to initiate procedures. I am glad with NDU financing the enlargement of bridge, the RDA is entrusted for construction. The implementation of the project will bring fluidity of traffic and relieve the bottleneck during Maha Shivratri.

Madam Speaker, the third project which is initiated and final design completed is the enlargement of Saddy Tunnel which dates back to 1929. Those who use the road will agree with me. However, enlargement will eliminate the blind spot and ease driving. Rest assured that we will keep the same stone architectural structure. Madam Speaker, I am glad that the Police Station at Phoenix will be newly constructed. I did ask a PQ in 2011 and the ex-Prime Minister said that it will take time but today our hon. Prime Minister is initiating the project.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, this budget is very good for society. Good measures to increase happiness, purchasing power, and sound economic and also improve physical environment to the people of Mauritius. The enhancement of quality of life is governed by the intersection of three circles. One circle is for the economic circle, the environmental circle and the social circle. Madam Speaker, something to ponder about, I will table this diagram and this is really what we need to enhance quality of life. Madam Speaker, this booklet speaks for many measures that the hon. Prime Minister has elaborated. It is innovative with good creativity of happiness and this guide on the Budget measure, Madam Speaker, has been distributed this weekend. I think all around Mauritius, many people got it and those who don't have it, it is better for them to have it because it is a summary of all our actions that our Prime Minister has forecast.

Madam Speaker, with Betamax and CT Power, the population at large has understood what the ex-regime did. Madam Speaker, now with *les jeux des îles*, one month to come, *délire du public*, we will raise the Mauritian flag and will say, '*Allez Maurice, allez Maurice!*' Next, Madam Speaker, the arrival of His Eminence the Pope on September 09 which will be a public holiday, all communities will be galvanised. Next is the inauguration of Metro Express hopefully by the hon. Prime Minister of India, Mr Modi, in September which will galvanise further the population for such a prestigious project. At last, why not calling Mohamad Salla and his team to Mauritius to lay the foundation stone for the football academy that has been mentioned in this Budget.

Madam Speaker, with all this achievement and forthcoming event, we will be back without any hesitation to run the new Government under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

(00.05 a.m.)

Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, Madame la présidente. Avant de rentrer dans le vif de mon discours, je souhaiterais faire quelques commentaires sur certains intervenants du côté du gouvernement par rapport à leur discours.

Madame la présidente, un budget annonce les prévisions pour l'année à venir 2019/2020. Un budget annonce les projets à venir 2019/2020. Certains membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre ont peut-être raté ce petit bout-là, ils ont axé leur discours, la majorité de leurs discours, en faisant des éloges, beaucoup plus d'éloges qu'ils ont faites les années précédentes sur le Premier ministre. Beaucoup plus que d'habitude, certains d'entre eux ont déjà promis à donner une médaille d'or au Premier ministre. Cela veut dire que, eux, ils sont déjà en campagne. Oui, Madame la présidente. Ils sont déjà en campagne, je ne suis pas en train de parler de la campagne électorale, d'une campagne interne entre eux à la chasse aux investitures pour les prochaines élections. Certains d'entre eux savent qu'ils sont sur le *border line* et c'est difficile d'avoir une investiture. Donc, c'est pour ça au lieu d'axer leur discours sur le budget et venir expliquer à la population pourquoi certains projets n'ont pas été faits, c'était le plus important à venir expliquer pourquoi depuis 2015, beaucoup de projets ont été reportés ; pourquoi certains projets n'ont pas été faits et aussi venir dire quels sont les projets qui vont être faits et pourquoi d'après les priorités. Mais contrairement à ça, surtout les *PPS*, ils sont venus en élaborant item par item pour faire durer leur discours. Ils ont détaillé chaque projet. Il y en a même peut-être quand ils ont fait le nettoyage de leur circonscription, ils ont pu même rajouter qu'ils ont ramassé 45 ou 50 mégots de cigarettes, pourquoi ne pas ajouter ça sur la liste ?

Les *PPS*, Madame la présidente, ont une mission. Ils ont un travail à faire par rapport aux projets de la *NDU*. La façon dont ils ont présenté les projets qu'ils ont réalisés, c'était comme si c'étaient eux le sponsor, le parrainage de ces projets, c'était comme qui dirait, ils sont en train d'offrir une faveur au peuple de l'île Maurice en venir dire que j'ai fait ça pour vous, comme si ça sortait de leur poche alors que nous savons tous qu'ils sont grassement payés pour faire ce travail-là.

Pourquoi venir expliquer tout ce que vous avez fait alors que ça a été voté pour être fait et ça forme partie de votre travail. On n'a pas besoin d'annoncer ce qu'on a fait, on a été

payé pour ça. Payé par qui ? Payé par le contribuable, payés par le peuple de l'île Maurice, mais venir dire qu'on a fait, fait, fait, pour faire perdre notre temps avec beaucoup de 'fait' qui était déjà sur le plan d'être fait, mais il fallait surtout venir expliquer pourquoi certains projets qui datent de Mathusalem, qui datent depuis 2015, n'ont pas été faits. C'était ça l'essentiel, parce que le peuple s'attend à ce qu'on dise pourquoi certaines promesses n'ont pas été tenues, pourquoi certains projets n'ont pas été faits. Donc, ça, c'est mon point avant d'entrer dans le vif de mon discours.

Une dernière chose, Madame la présidente, la campagne malsaine a déjà commencé. Pas plus tard que lundi de cette semaine, l'honorable Anil Gayan, je regrette qu'il ne soit pas là aujourd'hui, est venu me dire *to bizin fer attention avec to bann commentaire lor Facebook parski moi mo pu fer la police arett twa*. Ma réponse a été que je n'ai rien à me reprocher, je n'ai rien mis de compromettant sur Facebook ; si lui, il a déduit que certaines visées contre lui ont été mises par moi ou ordonnées par moi...

Madam Speaker: Please this hasn't been said in Parliament.

Mr Lepoigneur: Here.

Madam Speaker: It was said in Parliament?

Mr Lepoigneur: No, but here in a sitting position.

Madam Speaker: You should have raised a point of order.

Mr Lepoigneur: So, Madam Speaker, ma réponse a été, je l'attends de pied ferme : je souhaite que tu le fasses, que tu fasses la police m'arrêter et je vais te rappeler tous les jours pour que tu n'oublies pas de le faire. Et j'attends de pied ferme qu'il aille de l'avant avec la menace qu'il m'a faite.

Madame la présidente, un budget se fait par rapport à l'économie d'un pays, mais ce budget qui nous a été présenté par l'honorable Premier ministre n'est pas à la hauteur des difficultés que le pays fait face en ce moment, c'est un budget électoraliste avec des connotations populistes alors que l'économie du pays se dégrade. La croissance de la consommation publique reste au-dessus de 4%. Au niveau de l'importation, on dépasse les 200 milliards alors que les exportations sont au moins de 100 milliards. Avec une économie qui encourage la consommation à l'importation par rapport aux facilités douanières qui encouragent l'achat bon marché à l'importation met en péril les PME.

Madame la présidente, l'économie nationale va plus vers la consommation au lieu de la production, c'est pour cela que les gros secteurs tels que le textile et l'agriculture ralentissent. Tout cela nous montre aujourd'hui un tableau économique très préoccupant. Au niveau de la pension de vieillesse, nos aînés s'attendaient à ce que leur pension soit alignée au salaire minimum, mais cela n'a pas été le cas, mais je dois admettre que ça a été une sage décision, **car** cela nous aurait représenté dans les 10 milliards par an.

Madame la présidente, je pense qu'il y avait d'autres façons de faire plaisir à nos aînés, premièrement, c'est d'éliminer le transport gratuit pour les retraités et de servir cette subvention qui est payée aux autobus et redistribuer ce budget à nos aînés. Madame la présidente, il faut reconnaître que payer une somme conséquente aux opérateurs d'autobus est ridicule, car nous savons tous que pas tous nos aînés qui voyagent par le bus. Certains pas du tout et là encore, Madame la présidente, ceux, qui voyagent régulièrement, se plaignent souvent sur les radios privées ; les autobus ne s'arrêtent pas quand il y a que des retraités sur les arrêts d'autobus. C'est une des raisons pour laquelle qu'il faut annuler la gratuité du transport pour nos aînés en augmentant leur pension de vieillesse avec ce même budget. Ils auront le loisir de voyager quand ils veulent ou de se servir de cet argent à d'autres escients, Madame la présidente. Je suis sûr que c'est une mesure que nos aînés accueilleront favorablement. Si nous voulons vraiment aider nos aînés à faible revenu, c'est-à-dire ceux qui dépendent uniquement de leur pension de vieillesse, le mieux c'est d'amender la loi, en éliminant la pension de vieillesse aux personnes à haut revenu, c'est-à-dire qui ont des revenus à plus de R 50,000 par mois et redistribuer cette somme à ceux à revenu faible. Mais par contre, aligner la pension de vieillesse au salaire minimum, serait un dangereux précédent, Madame la présidente. Concernant le remboursement de la dette publique à travers les réserves de la Banque de Maurice, je trouve cela aberrant, car le rôle de la Banque de Maurice est de combattre l'inflation et d'assurer la stabilité de la roupie ; elle n'est pas là pour payer la dette publique. Je ne vais pas m'attarder sur ce sujet, car le leader de l'opposition, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, a été très explicite sur le sujet, et aussi d'autres orateurs de ce côté de la Chambre.

Une des mesures prises dans ce budget, que je trouve favorable, c'est d'avoir enlevé la taxe sur les vans de 15 places. Mais pourquoi que les vans de 15 places, et pourquoi pas aussi les camions qui contribuent au développement actuel, tels que la construction et les grands chantiers, tels que le Métro Express ?

Madame la présidente, lorsque les mauriciens ont élu une nouvelle équipe le 10 décembre 2014, ils ont voulu qu'un souffle nouveau anime la gestion de leurs affaires, ils s'attendaient à ce que *l'Alliance Lepep* fasse preuve de réalisme et de rigueur, qu'elle ne manque pas d'imagination et qu'elle respecte la parole donnée. Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, beaucoup de ces promesses ne sont restées que des rêves.

Madame la présidente, je vais citer quelques promesses qui n'ont pas été réalisées, car la liste est trop longue. La construction de 2,000 maisons par an. À ce jour, même pas 1,000 maisons livrées, et cela, bientôt cinq ans. Offrir des chances égales à tous et amender la loi pour assurer la transparence de la méritocratie lors des recrutements effectués à la *PSC*, le *LGSC* et le *DFSC*, c'était plutôt chance égale aux petites copines et petits copains.

Introduire la télévision privée pour élargir l'espace médiatique n'est plutôt que la monopolisation de la *MBC*. Mention aussi était faite pour la création d'une académie de football, parrainée par le Club West Ham United, puis Montpellier, avec pour objectif de donner l'opportunité à nos jeunes les plus talentueux de faire carrière en tant que footballeur professionnel. Aujourd'hui, on nous annonce que le *Liverpool Academy* - je vais revenir dessus un peu plus tard. Mention aussi était faite en ce qui concerne les mesures qui seront prises pour soutenir les clubs de football dans leur démarche à la professionnalisation. Aujourd'hui, cet espoir a disparu, Madame la présidente. Là encore, je vais y revenir plus tard pour dénoncer les injustices auxquelles font face nos clubs de football. Un soutien plus professionnel et un meilleur suivi des athlètes ! Tel n'est pas le cas pour les Jeux des Iles. On parle d'organisation 5-étoiles, sans aucune préparation 5-étoiles. C'est complètement un manque d'égard vis-à-vis de nos athlètes qui sont les principaux acteurs de ces jeux. Certains qui sont partis en stage à l'étranger ont vu leurs salaires déduits par leurs employeurs. Un peu plus tard, je vais revenir sur cette injustice qu'ont subie certains de nos athlètes.

Professionnalisation et lancement du sport par le biais du *CSR* et de développer une politique favorable pour le sport d'élites ! Rien, Madame la présidente. Rendre accessible au public les infrastructures sportives des écoles et des collèges après les horaires scolaires n'a jamais été mis en pratique. La relance des sports inter-collèges est toujours un effet d'annonce. Il ne faut pas oublier que dans les années précédentes, le sport inter-collège a été la pépinière qui a rapporté beaucoup de talents au niveau du sport à l'île Maurice.

Une des promesses que la population a eues, sa plus grande déception, c'est la fourniture d'eau 24/7, mais je vois que c'est plutôt du 24-sec, comme l'a si bien dit mon collègue, l'honorable Baboo.

Madame la présidente, Le combat contre la drogue ! Je trouve aberrant que le rapport Lam Shang Leen ait été mis aux oubliettes, et les recommandations sont laissées pour compte. Je me demande pourquoi.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de faire le bilan sur notre sport à l'île Maurice. Le sport est malade, je dirai même que le sport est dans le coma. En tant que bon patriote, je souhaite de tout cœur que l'Île Maurice arrive à gagner les jeux pour la première fois comme pays organisateur. À l'heure qu'il est, il n'y a que l'île de La Réunion qui a gagné plusieurs fois les jeux, que ce soit à domicile ou à l'étranger, et Madagascar, une fois chez elle en 2003, avec un record de 100 médailles d'or. Je souhaite de tout cœur qu'on brise la glace sur nos terres pour cette dixième édition. Mais, je me permets d'en douter, car la préparation n'a pas eu la même attention que l'organisation dont le ministre a nommé 5-étoiles. La preuve, nous avons certains athlètes qui ont fait les jeux de 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, et certains sont encore présents pour les jeux de 2019. Cela nous montre que la relève n'existe pas, car il n'y a pas de vrai centre de formation. En 2004, à l'époque où j'étais encore technicien, j'avais soumis un rapport à la fédération de volleyball, pour dire que Rodrigues est bien mieux structurée au niveau des écoles de volley, qu'il faut leur donner plus d'encadrement au niveau technique, et que sur cette lancée, ils vont dépasser l'île Maurice dans les années à venir.

Dans mon discours sur le budget 2017-2018, j'avais dit qu'il fallait compter sur Rodrigues pour les Jeux des Îles. En 2001, Maurice avait participé aux qualificatifs pour les Jeux Olympiques de volleyball au Kenya. J'avais été le premier entraîneur à avoir sélectionné une Rodriguaise, Huguette Roussety, après avoir présélectionné plusieurs Rodriguaises. Madame la présidente, vous savez combien, sur un total de 24 filles et garçons combinés, sont présents dans la section de volleyball final pour ces 10^e Jeux des Îles ? Onze, Madame la présidente, ce qui représente presque 50 pour cent de la sélection. Au total, toutes les disciplines confondues, il y a 43 Rodriguais qui défendront l'île Maurice dans ces Jeux des Îles 2019. Ils sont présents dans 9 disciplines sur 14, Madame la présidente. Nous, à l'île Maurice, avec une population de 1,300,000 habitants, nous n'arrivons pas à produire la relève. Rodrigues, avec moins de 50,000 habitants, devient notre pépinière. Madame la présidente, cela nous démontre que nous avons des dirigeants véreux qui sont à la tête de nos fédérations, qui dilapident des fonds des contribuables, qui font la honte à notre pays et cela a

été le cas à Gold Coast, où il y a eu des attouchements sur une de nos athlètes par un de nos dirigeants. D'ailleurs, le ministre et les dirigeants ont voulu étouffer l'affaire. Heureusement, que la fille était forte pour le dénoncer – une fois au moins, on a dénoncé ces dirigeants véreux. Alors que d'autres avaient été pris en flagrant délit, Madame la présidente, lorsqu'ils avaient volé des lampes de chevet en quittant leurs chambres d'hôtel. Là encore, on n'a toujours pas eu les retombées du rapport de ce comité mis en place pour enquêter. Ces mêmes dirigeants impliqués sont toujours en action dans leur fédération, sans aucune sanction.

En parlant des dirigeants véreux, Madame la présidente, en ce moment, beaucoup de clubs de football se plaignent actuellement de la façon d'agir du président de la fédération. Au niveau du *Registrar of Association*, le statut approuvé en 2012 par la MFA n'a pas été approuvé par le *Registrar*; ce qui veut dire que la MFA n'est pas en conformité avec le *Sports Act*. Le ministère continue à déboursier pour des fédérations qui ne sont pas dans les normes. Le président lui-même fait partie de deux clubs, et là encore, il n'est pas en conformité avec le *Sports Act*. Son deuxième club, l'Henrietta Football Club a été enregistré le 31 janvier 2019, en dehors des enregistrements pour participer au championnat, mais il a déjà commencé à participer au régional de D1 à Vacoas/Phoenix, sans passer par le régional. Après avoir eu son enregistrement le 31 janvier 2019, ce même club, qui n'est pas un club professionnel, a fait une demande au ministère du Travail pour faire venir cinq joueurs étrangers. Je ne sais pas si le permis a été approuvé par le ministère, mais ce que je sais, c'est que ces joueurs sont déjà sur la liste des clubs et participent déjà aux tournois du régional DI. Tous les clubs qui ont refusé de jouer contre ce club, vu que les étrangers ne sont pas détenteurs d'une licence en bonne et due forme, ont été pénalisés. Certains clubs ont même été mis à l'amende. Certains ont même dû mettre une action en cour. Ce qui se passe en ce moment, c'est de la pure dictature de la part de ce président. Madame la présidente, déjà le football est tombé au plus bas. La professionnalisation ne nous a pas réussi, Madame la présidente. Je pense qu'il est grand temps de mettre de l'ordre dans notre football.

Pour les Jeux des Iles, depuis quatre ans, nous savions que l'île Maurice avait reçu l'organisation de ces jeux. Ce n'est que 18 mois avant la date des jeux que la préparation des athlètes a commencé. Beaucoup d'argent a été déboursé sans aucun soutien financier aux athlètes. C'est complètement un manque d'égard vis-à-vis de nos athlètes sur nos principaux acteurs pour ces jeux.

Comme je disais un peu plus haut, certains qui sont partis en stages à l'étranger ont vu leurs salaires déduits par leurs employeurs. Le ministère et les fédérations ont été avisés de cette pratique, mais les lettres sont restées sans réponse.

Alors que le *Sports Act* stipule, je cite -

“Any athlete in employment who has been selected to form part of a national team or sport shall be granted release without any deduction in salary or allowance or leave entitlement during the period of training for and participation in a competition.”

C'est très explicite dans le *Sports Act*. Vous réalisez, Madame la présidente, ces pauvres athlètes qui sont en train de mouiller leur maillot pour faire flotter le drapeau de l'Île Maurice, voient leur salaire être déduit, c'est ça qu'on appelle préparation et soutien cinq étoiles ?

Madame la présidente, à ce jour, aucun athlète, mis à part les *high-level ones*, ne reçoit aucun soutien financier ou dédommagement financier par rapport à leur manque à gagner sur leur salaire. Ce sont les jeux des îles les plus coûteux depuis l'existence des jeux. Je pense que cela aurait été souhaitable de voter une somme pour nos acteurs principaux afin de re-boosteur leur moral pour qu'ils aillent en tant que grands guerriers nous ramener le maximum de médailles.

Autre chose qui m'intrigue, Madame la présidente, c'est le prix des billets pour les compétitions. Imaginez les parents d'un athlète qui a plusieurs membres dans sa famille, voire cinq dans sa famille et nous savons tous que la majorité des familles des athlètes sont les personnes à revenu moyen ou faible, cette famille aura à prévoir un budget d'environ R 5,000, voire plus pour assister les compétitions à différents niveaux. Il ne faut pas déplumer le public de l'île Maurice pour essayer de récupérer une partie de la somme dépensée sur l'organisation.

Aujourd'hui, on nous parle d'académie avec la célèbre équipe de football, en l'occurrence Liverpool FC à Côte-d'Or. On parle de football que je reconnais et le sport roi à travers le monde, mais est-ce que Côte-d'Or qui est annoncé comme un stade à multiples sports n'abritera que l'académie de football? Qu'en est-il des autres disciplines, Madame la présidente?

Parlons-en de ce fameux complexe de multisports qui est à Côte-d'Or, Madame la présidente, au coût de plus de R 5 milliards. Comment rentabiliser ce complexe qui aura un coût d'entretien de R 200 millions par an ? Si l'on compte sur les prochains jeux des îles, le

prochain tour de l'île Maurice pour l'organisation de ces jeux qui se fait chaque quatre ans et comme il y en a sept pays qui sont affiliés, ce sera donc dans 24 ans que l'île Maurice organisera son prochain Jeux des Iles. Donc, quel sera l'état de Côte-d'Or en 2043, Madame la présidente?

Au niveau de cette compétition internationale, ce sera difficile pour Maurice d'abriter un grand rendez-vous aux multiples sports dans l'immédiat, car le calendrier national se fait déjà bien en avance. Les candidats pour l'organisation sont alloués quelques années avant. Maintenant, pour obtenir une organisation, il faut que le site en question soit homologué par les fédérations internationales et le comité olympique international. Et si toutefois le site n'est pas aux normes, nous savons tous qu'aucun record ne peut être homologué.

Madame la présidente, en regardant ce gigantesque projet qui est un complexe multisport à Côte-d'Or, la première question que je me suis posée, c'est qu'avant que le projet aille de l'avant, est-ce que le plan de construction a été soumis aux autorités internationales concernées pour confirmer si les normes internationales ont été respectées. Madame la présidente, je reconnais que l'île Maurice a grand besoin d'une nation sportive pour surtout éradiquer les consommateurs de drogues. Pour cela, Madame la présidente, au lieu de ce gigantesque complexe au coût de R 5 milliards dans un endroit hors de proximité, le gouvernement aurait dû construire une trentaine de gymnase à travers l'île au coût de R 250 millions comme annoncé à Triolet et cela aurait été à proximité de tous les citoyens. Dans le monde moderne, Madame la présidente, les sports en salle sont privilégiés, même le football, cela par rapport aux intempéries. Le sport en salle est pratiqué pour les personnes qui auront l'occasion de faire du sport à des heures tardives. Oui, Madame la présidente, il faut construire différents gymnases qui abritent le sport individuel et collectif à travers l'île pour que le peuple devienne une nation sportive. Mais, Madame la présidente, Côte d'Or est déjà en fin de grossesse, presque à terme, je dirai. L'enfant va bientôt naître. Maintenant, il faut voir comment le nourrir. Donc, comment rentabiliser ce complexe pour que ce ne soit pas un éléphant blanc? Je propose que ce complexe soit converti en une université avec un campus pour les athlètes de haut niveau qui pourront faire leur sport et étude en même temps, peut-être même s'affilier à une université à l'étranger tel que l'Unicef ou d'autres. Cela permettrait à nos athlètes d'assurer leur carrière professionnelle après leur carrière sportive pour éviter des cas comme Bruno Julie qui se retrouve sans emploi après avoir ramené la première médaille olympique pour l'île Maurice. Maintenant, comment la rentabiliser? Après avoir réservé 25% et 30% des places pour nos athlètes de haut niveau, pour les études

supérieures, les places restantes peuvent être vendues à des sportifs étrangers de la région telle que l'océan Indien ou l'Afrique ou même l'Europe. Et pourquoi pas l'Europe, Madame la présidente! En tout cas, je pense que c'est la seule façon de rentabiliser ce complexe et d'avoir un établissement pour guider nos athlètes à une vie professionnelle après leur carrière sportive.

Quelque chose qui m'a un peu choqué, aucune mention de sympathie pour les travailleurs étrangers qui ont perdu leur vie sur le chantier dans le discours de notre honorable ministre des Sports, ce qui vous donne l'impression que ce ne sont pas des êtres humains qui sont décédés, Madame la présidente.

Le ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports hier, lors de son discours, quand j'ai écouté son discours, j'avais l'impression d'être au théâtre. À un moment donné, je me voyais dans une foule qu'il était sur un camion en train de faire sa campagne électorale.

Maintenant, en parlant de Liverpool, on parle d'académie. Académie, c'est quoi au niveau du sport? C'est-à-dire recruter les talents en voie de les transformer en professionnels. Pour cela, il faudrait que nos écoles de formation existent et aient une bonne base. Avec plus de 500 jeunes qui pourraient alimenter entre 100 à 150 talents à notre académie. Avons-nous le moyen de financer ce projet, avons-nous des écoles en bonne et due forme bien structurées à l'île Maurice? Non, sinon on n'aurait pas eu à compter sur les athlètes qui ont fait les Jeux des îles de 2003 pour aller jusqu'à 2019.

Je n'ai pas vu de budget dans les *Estimates* 2019-2020 pour notre fameuse académie. Je pense que c'est un autre rêve que le gouvernement est en train de vendre au peuple mauricien ou peut-être le gouvernement a fait une étude du marché où ils ont eu pour résultat que la majorité des votants de l'île Maurice sont les fans de Liverpool. Alors, c'est un appât pour leur campagne d'avoir la majorité de l'île Maurice qui sont des fans de Liverpool qui vont voter pour eux.

Maintenant, Madame la présidente, je voudrais parler un peu de Rodrigues. Cela fera exactement plus d'un demi-siècle que nos compatriotes Rodriguais votent pour les élections générales et la première fois, c'était en 1967, où ils durèrent cependant par une apte bataille légale, constitutionnelle pour obtenir le droit de vote. C'était l'exclusion totale de Rodrigues du processus démocratique qui incita Sir Gaëtan Duval du Parti Mauricien Social-Démocrate, le PMSD. Je redis, Sir Gaëtan Duval du Parti Mauricien Social-Démocrate du PMSD. Le parti de l'opposition d'alors a déclenché à partir de 1966 toute une campagne pour les

Rodriguais. Le combat du PMSD devant la Cour suprême devait aboutir après avoir donné du fil à retordre aux autorités coloniales britanniques. Sir Gaëtan Duval, Jules Koenig et Elias Oozeerally étaient les véritables déclencheurs de ce combat, après que Rodrigues obtient le droit de vote en 1967. Ouvrez-bien vos oreilles, messieurs les députés de Rodrigues ! Ouvrez bien vos oreilles ! Comme signe de reconnaissance tout récemment, l'OPR a trouvé le moyen d'enlever le nom de Sir Gaëtan Duval à l'aéroport de Plaine Corail.

Et pire encore, Madame la présidente, quand l'honorable Léopold, lors de son intervention, et aujourd'hui l'honorable François, lors de son intervention, en même temps, vient salir la mémoire de Sir Gaëtan Duval, alors que le combat de Sir Gaëtan Duval était qu'il y ait deux députés au Parlement aujourd'hui.

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Léopold et l'honorable François ont aussi dit que beaucoup de Rodriguais ont quitté Rodrigues pour immigrer en Australie parce qu'ils avaient peur de la politique du PMSD. C'est plutôt le contraire, Madame la présidente. Sir Gaëtan Duval avait conseillé à beaucoup de Rodriguais qui avaient du bon potentiel d'aller faire leurs études supérieures en Australie. Figurez-vous, Madame la présidente, que tous les Rodriguais, qui sont partis en Australie, ont tellement bien réussi leur vie qu'ils ne veulent plus retourner à Rodrigues. Pas seulement à Rodrigues que le PMSD a son régional, Madame la présidente, mais aussi en Australie ; ils nous donnent un coup de main à distance lors des élections et ce sera le cas pour Rodrigues aux prochaines élections.

Savez-vous, Madame la présidente, qui est le président de notre régional en Australie, c'est un Rodriguais un grand fan de Sir Gaëtan Duval et du PMSD qui a fait carrière en Australie. C'est un avocat de renom qui possède un *Chambers* en Australie. C'est Daniel Place et je suis sûr que l'honorable Léopold et l'honorable François le connaissent bien.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can we have some order at this late hour?

Mr Lepoigneur: Madame la présidente, quelque part, je comprends cette ingratitude de la part de l'honorable Léopold et l'honorable François, de leur ignorance sur l'histoire, car, à l'époque, ils n'étaient même pas nés. Ils n'étaient même pas là quand Sir Gaëtan Duval s'est battu pour Rodrigues. Sa réaction est par rapport à la frayeur que l'OPR par la force de notre régionale, PMSD à Rodrigues. Ils sont obligés d'avoir peur. Ce n'est pas fini. Quand je vais m'impliquer, cela va faire encore plus mal, car je connais pas mal de monde à Rodrigues

avec qui j'ai de très bonnes relations. Quand vous allez en Australie, dans le *Chambers* de Daniel Place, quand vous entrez dans son bureau, dans la salle d'attente, vous savez qu'est-ce qui est exposé, Madame la présidente...

(Interruptions)

Pas la photo de Serge Clair, la photo de Sir Gaëtan Duval en grand format. Tout récemment, lorsque ma collègue, l'honorable Aurore Perraud, était à Rodrigues, les Rodriguais ont fait des remarques que l'honorable Léopold est payé par l'argent public, mais n'intervient pas ou très peu, il ne défend pas les intérêts de Rodrigues. Il ne voit pas les problèmes de Rodrigues. Il a posé très peu de questions-là aussi, pas pertinentes pour Rodrigues. En agissant ainsi, un jour, l'honorable Léopold m'a même dit que l'OPR n'a pas d'adversaire. Pourquoi avoir peur ? Et moi, je confirme que maintenant, vous aurez un adversaire coriace.

(Interruptions)

Il a dit tout récemment qu'eux, c'est du 100% rodriguais. Déjà là, il se démarque de l'île Maurice. Ils sont à part entière. Mais figurez-vous, Madame la présidente, nous aussi, on aura deux candidats à Rodrigues, deux candidats 100% rodriguais. On n'a pas l'intention de mettre des Mauriciens là-bas, nous. Ce sont les Rodriguais qui vont être candidats contre vous.

Now, Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the GRA, the Gambling Regulatory Authority. This Government when they came into power, promised to eradicate *la nation zougadere*. They started by eliminating the scratch card. Now, what is happening Madam Speaker? In every corner of the country, you got plenty of betting stations – SMS Pariaz, Teletote and Totelepep. Loto betting also, we have all around the island. Before we were having one draw every Saturday, now we are having another draw every Wednesday. Is this the way that you want to prevent the citizens of Mauritius not to be a *nation zougadere*, Madame la présidente. The GRA has too much power, Madam Speaker. It is as if we have put power in the hand of mad people. They use this power to give licences to whom they want and when they want. What is the difference, Madam Speaker, of giving licences to all these stations which I mentioned before; which are operating off-course and refusing off-course to bookmakers.

By doing so, you are encouraging illegal betting, Madam Speaker. You know, Madam Speaker, the betting operator who is operating abroad, are selling bets on our local horses without paying any tax to our Government whereas our local bookmakers are not allowed to

operate off-course. This foreign betting is bet365, Madam Speaker, which is the same operator who caused the crash of our former Attorney General.

Madam Speaker, I think it is ridiculous to prevent bookmakers to operate off-course and allow operators to operate around the island. Either the GRA centralises all gambling activities at one place, that is, the Champ de Mars or gives the same right to all gambling operators to operate off-course. This would prevent illegal betting and we should not forgetting that the betting industry generates consequent income to a Government.

Last year in the Budget 2018-2019, the Minister of Finance put a tax of 10% on a winning amount of Rs100,000 at the casino. I am sure that this did not bring one rupee to the accounts of the State, Madam Speaker. This year, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance brings down this amount to Rs50,000. This measure will also not bring one rupee in the accounts of the State. Do you know why Madam Speaker? Because if someone wins Rs50,000 he will make two or three people change his gain at the cashier of the casino. This is what is happening for the amount of Rs100,000 Madam Speaker.

Avant de conclure, je voudrais parler de ma circonscription, c'est la circonscription numéro 20, Madame la présidente. Depuis 2017, la circonscription vit un calvaire par rapport au projet métro express. Je peux vous assurer, Madame la présidente, que les habitants...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please proceed. Do not pay any attention to what others are saying if possible.

Mr Lepoigneur: He is disturbing me, Madam. Je peux vous assurer, Madame la présidente, que les habitants de ma circonscription ne sont pas contre le développement, mais sont contre le manque de respect et les inconvénients que ce projet leur cause. Nous savons tous qu'il faut faire des sacrifices pour le progrès et le développement, mais il y a une limite qu'il ne faut pas franchir. À la rue Vandermeersch, la quantité de personnes âgées qui ont dû abandonner leurs demeures temporairement parce qu'elles n'arrivent pas à dormir avec le marteau-piqueur qui les incommode tout le long de la nuit. À la rue Nelson Mandela à Cité Barkly, c'est devenu un calvaire pour les maisons qui longent cette rue. Ils ne peuvent plus rentrer chez eux en voiture. Le rondpoint de Beau-Bassin qui a toujours été un calvaire au niveau des embouteillages est pire en ce moment, Madame la présidente. Imaginez ce que ce sera avec l'arrivée du métro. Madame la présidente, nous avons un ministre et un PPS dans la circonscription numéro 20. Quels sont les développements majeurs qui ont été faits dans la

circonscription depuis 2015 ? Mis à part le mediclinic qui est en construction avec beaucoup de retard à Petite Rivière ou celui de Coromandel annoncé depuis 2015, qui a disparu dans nos *Estimates*. Le *PPS* a annoncé différents projets réalisés tels que le pont d'Albion, les drains, les trottoirs, le chemin asphalté et le complexe de Pavé d'Amour. C'est normal que ces projets soient réalisés, vu que c'était prévu dans le budget précédent.

La façon dont le *PPS* présente la réalisation, c'est comme si c'était le *PPS* qui sponsorise le projet, qu'il fait une faveur au peuple alors que c'est son travail à le faire. Il est grassement payé pour ça. Ce serait plus judicieux de venir expliquer pourquoi certains n'ont pas été faits, vu que c'était annoncé dans le budget. Le quartier est défavorisé, tel que le Camp Créole, Petite Rivière, Mont Roches, Barkly ont été laissés pour compte. Les calvaires au niveau des inondations, principalement Camp Créole et Mont Roches, ont été complètement ignorés.

La circonscription N° 20 est une circonscription où il y a beaucoup d'athlètes qui sont représentés au niveau national et international, Madame la présidente. C'est la seule circonscription où il n'y a même pas un gymnase pour le sport collectif et on a un ministre et un *PPS* dans la circonscription. Le *PPS*, lors de son discours, a mentionné plusieurs fois que pendant 30 ans - oui, 30 ans - rien n'a été fait dans cette circonscription et que lui, il a fait autant en deux ans comme *PPS*. Il n'a même pas réalisé qu'en parlant ainsi, il a aussi critiqué Sir Anerood Jugnauth, qui, durant cette période de 30 ans, a été aussi un des Premiers ministres de l'île Maurice.

(Interruptions)

Critiquer l'ancien Premier ministre, son ancien leader, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, c'est un manque d'égard, manque de respect. J'ai beaucoup de respect pour Sir Anerood Jugnauth, mais là, un de ses fidèles lui manque du respect, je trouve cela aberrant.

Pour conclure, Madame la présidente, j'ai une pensée spéciale pour nos athlètes et les anciens qui nous ont quittés et je suis sûr que nos athlètes qui vont défendre les couleurs de notre quadricolore avec force et rigueur pour le dixième Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien en leur honneur, vont faire le maximum pour leur rendre hommage.

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

(00.45 a.m)

Mrs M. C. Monty (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):

Madame la présidente, merci de me donner la parole à une heure si tardive. Je demande un peu de patience de la part de tous mes collègues des deux côtés de la Chambre.

Madame la présidente, c'est, en effet, un privilège de pouvoir ajouter son analyse et sa réflexion à une proposition budgétaire déjà si étoffée et qui prend sous son ombrelle, les nombreux secteurs d'un pays décrit, par tous ceux qui veulent bien le voir, comme étant un très grand chantier de développement.

Madame la présidente, si nous prenons en rétrospective les événements depuis 2015, nous verrons bien, à travers les différents exercices budgétaires que nous avons commencé à la croisée des chemins pour entrer de plain-pied dans une nouvelle ère de développement ponctuel et d'une ambition de nous hisser à des sommets jamais atteints en empruntant les ailes de l'inclusion qui couvrent sous ses pans les plus démunies et les plus nécessiteux.

Madam Speaker, commenting on this present budget tonight, I cannot but think of an Arabian proverb which says: the words of the tongue should have three gatekeepers: is it true, is it kind or is it necessary? What I will say, Madam Speaker, will be true because I will speak of what has been said, what has been done, what is seen, what is visible, what is tangible, what has been printed and imprinted in the social and economic fabric of our island. Is it kind? I don't know. I hope it is. But I will try to be. Is it necessary? I think so. And I am sure about it, Madam Speaker, and I will start by what I consider as necessary.

It is necessary, Madam Speaker, because a nation, worthy of respect, deserves more in terms of truth being said, being repeated and being proclaimed and that human beings should be preserved from dangerous thick fog coming from obscure minds.

Madam Speaker, this population is living in a season of light and not of darkness as mentioned by the Opposition. It is not living in a winter of despair, but under an umbrella of warmth, with a caring Government, stretching its hands to those at the lowest rungs of the social ladder.

Madam Speaker, this population is living a season of newness, a season of brightness in togetherness. This Government, Madam Speaker, has swept away all seasons of stagnation, indecision and the lack of courage to see to it that the underprivileged no longer lives and under the threshold of poverty. This Government has the chance to be under the leadership of a young and able Prime Minister, a man of vision, a man of decision, a man of

heart, a man of words who has come to prove that ‘Bon sang ne saurait mentir’ et que ‘la valeur n’attend point le nombre des années’ et dont la carapace n’a d’usure que ses attaquants.

Madame la présidente, nous ne le répèterons jamais assez. Maurice est un très vaste chantier de développement. Nul ne peut se voiler la face à moins qu’on choisisse de ne pas voir et que nous venions prouver qu’il n’y a pas de pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir.

Madame la présidente, il a quelquefois été question, lors des débats, des fables de La Fontaine et il est bon de rappeler que, de ce côté de la Chambre, on ne fabule pas, on agit. La vraie cigale, ayant trop chanté, se trouve aujourd’hui hors du Parlement. Il est retourné à la danse, Madame la présidente, traduisant ainsi la fable de la fontaine la plus connue, la Cigale et la Fourmi.

Autre fable, Madame la présidente, ayant inspiré un autre membre de l’Opposition est celle du Corbeau et du Renard qui dit ‘tout flatteur vit aux dépens de celui qui l’écoute’, et je voudrais ici rappeler que, grâce à son sens aigu de l’écoute, notre Premier ministre sait discerner le vrai du faux et reconnaître le corbeau et le renard qui rodent en ces temps pré-électorales, et s’il n’y en a un qui tient vraiment le fromage en son bec, c’est bien lui et c’est un fromage bien convoité et dont l’odeur alléchante semble titiller bien de narines.

Madame Speaker, words have been said, tags have been put and the word ‘Deception’ has been uttered so many times. Madam Speaker, a budget cannot be limited to a word, cannot be stuck to a word and cannot be closed in a word.

Madame la présidente, on ne peut noyer la vérité dans son verbe conjugué à l’imparfait, car notre réalité se conjugue dans un présent simple, réussi et plus qu’éloquent.

Madame la présidente, en un mot, nos oreilles ont été martelées depuis la présentation de ce budget par ce même mot ‘déception’. Et je demande : est-ce une ‘déception’ que la pension de retraite arrivera bientôt à R 6,710 après avoir stagné dans des miettes, les années lourdes précédant ce présent gouvernement ? Est-ce une déception que le visage de l’île Maurice se transforme, se modernise ? Est-ce une ‘déception’ quand on vient en aide aux salariés qui perdent leur emploi, en cas de fermeture, avec une enveloppe de R 50,000 ? Est-ce décevant d’octroyer une avance aux fonctionnaires en attendant la publication du PRB ? Est-ce aussi décevant d’octroyer une allocation de R 25,000 aux sociétés coopératives pour la mise sur pied des *Cooperatives Seafood Processing Unit* ? Est-ce décevant de faciliter

l'accès à l'Internet aux 11,000 familles sur la liste du *Social Register Mauritius*? Madame la présidente, la liste sera trop longue, et je m'en passe de nommer d'autres mesures.

À ce stade du débat, j'estime superflu de venir énumérer les mesures budgétaires proposées lors de ce présent exercice. Je tiens toutefois à saluer les propositions faites à différents niveaux et je les trouve justes, équitables et non irréalisables, mais je dénonce cette attitude accusatrice, hypocrite de venir pointer du doigt et de venir dire : '*Quand mo la, tout bon. Quand mo pas la, narien pas bon. Quand mo la, mo flatter. Quand mo pas la, mo crazer.*' C'est pourtant ce même peuple qui nous a tous plébiscités et que nous avons promis de servir fidèlement. Quand c'est l'autre qui fait et que ce n'est pas moi, eh bien, tout est catastrophique. C'est comme venir dire à ce peuple : 'Tu ne mérites pas ce que l'autre te donne, puisque ce n'est pas moi qui ai initié une telle mesure.'

Madam Speaker, allow me now to come to the Budget itself and to speak about the Gender issue. I refer to paragraph 300 of the Budget Speech, which once more comes to draw attention to the poor representation of women at the top level of administration and for better gender mainstreaming.

And here, I would like to highlight the precious work of our Parliamentary Gender Caucus in raising awareness on gender issues and the necessity of gender mainstreaming and also, having lobbied for a gender focal point in each Ministry for gender budgeting and for having initiated a Gender Audit in the private sector.

This budgetary measure on gender representation on each Board sets it right and clear that Ministries, organisations should remain gender conscious, gender sensitive and gender responsive. I am thankful to a Prime Minister who thinks equal and builds smart and who has in focus equity, innovation and change for a better and equitable Mauritius

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for having positioned gender mainstreaming as the sixth priority in this present Budget. In line with the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee to increase the resources allocated to the national machinery for the advancement of women. Rs2.6 m. has been allocated for gender responsive projects to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

Moreover, a provision of Rs11 m. has been made for the revamping of Women Empowerment Centres. This is, indeed, laudable as this amount will be used to upgrade the existing infrastructure of those centres on a priority basis and implement appropriate projects

targeting specific needs of women. It seems that Members of the Opposition find this amount insufficient. I beg to differ, as all women centres cannot be upgraded at the same time, Madam Speaker. This will be done phase-wise and the sum of Rs11 m. has been allocated in line with the plan of work elaborated at the level of the Ministry, as the Minister herself confirms.

Madam Speaker, the present Budget is not insensitive to the plight of the vulnerable children. I am here referring to children placed in shelters. A sum of Rs10 m. has been allocated in the present Budget for the construction of a model shelter at La Colombe. Madam Speaker, this model shelter, unlike existing shelters, will give additional facilities, such as indoor and outdoor recreational sports and leisure activities, ICT programme, kitchen garden amongst others.

Moreover, the model shelter will accommodate only for 30 children and not 50, as stated by hon. Mrs Perraud. I understand fully that the hon. Member would have wanted the creation of even smaller units, but, Madam Speaker, I am also of the view that the place of a child, as she rightly said, is not in a shelter, but with his or her family. Our focus should be on re-integrating children into their families or placing in foster care. It is, therefore, commendable that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has allocated funds for the back of home programme and the foster care programme of the Ministry of Gender Equality.

Madam Speaker, shelter La Colombe has been in the limelight for quite some time. I am given to understand that the children placed thereat have been only temporarily relocated in view of upgrading works. It is important for Members of this House to ascertain they have accurate information before making statements in the National Assembly. I tend to believe that hon. Mrs Perraud stated that shelter La Colombe has been closed, and no provision has been made in the present Budget to renovate the building. However, Madam Speaker, if we look at the estimates, we will note that a sum of Rs3 m. has been allocated in the Budget 2019-2020 for the upgrading of this same shelter.

In the same vein, I have listened attentively to the intervention of hon. Mrs Perraud. She spoke of *l'Atelier Partage Parents*, a laudable enterprise, I affirm on her part, when she was Minister. 'The programme *l'Atelier Partage Parents* was stopped', she averred in her statement. But, Madam Speaker, I have been informed by the Vice-Prime Minister, who is also the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare that from January 2018 to June 2019 - I mean June 18 to June 19, five *Atelier Partage Parents* were

implemented in Cassis, Allée Brillant, Goodlands, St. Hilaire and Bambous where 205 parents were sensitised. Moreover, provision has been made to sustain the programme through the National Children's Council in this financial year. So, Madam Speaker, the programme *Atelier Partage Parents* had never been stopped.

Madam Speaker, as regards the promotion of family welfare, the estimates of the Ministry of Gender Equality for the next financial year cater also for ongoing projects aimed at strengthening family values, sensitising the public on social ills and enhancing the quality of life of our families.

Allow me now, Madam Speaker, to speak on one of the subjects which is of main interest to me and which is education and to one particular measure which has retained my attention, namely the additional support to the learning environment of certain schools.

Madam Speaker, everyone knows the importance of having a conducive learning environment for our children. The importance of emotional comfort, so necessary for true learning to take place, but I will, of course, let the able Minister of Education give the details of the schools to be grouped to the existing ZEP schools from a toddler...

(Interruptions)

So, I let it to the hon. Minister of Education to give all the details about the number of schools which will be grouped together with the ZEP schools for the implementation of the extended programme of fortified learning environments.

Madam Speaker, the public in Mauritius, the public at large should be rejoicing of the measure taken by the Prime Minister long before the budgetary exercise when he announced the gratuity of education at tertiary level. And now, parents are stress-free because they don't have to provide for huge sums to cater for tertiary education of their children, and they are stress-free really because from toddler to University runner their children will be ensured proper education.

Finis les jours, Madame la présidente, où l'avenir des garçons passait avant celui de la fille. Cette mesure vient rassurer toute la population, surtout les jeunes filles qui n'avaient pas accès à l'éducation, parce que souvent c'est le sexe qui détermine le choix, où l'avenir de la jeune fille est souvent sacrifié à l'autel du genre. *Madam Speaker, it is good to remind one and all that our country is well grounded in the translation of most, if not all, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.*

Et je voudrais suggérer une Ecole de Puériculture qui donnerait, à mon avis, plus d'importance à la petite enfance et qui viendrait consolider la structure existante et qui viendrait aussi encourager beaucoup plus d'adhérents vers les études *in early childhood*. On sait, Madame la présidente, que de la base dépend l'édifice et que tout se construit dans les premières années de la vie. Donc, c'est pourquoi je préconise et je suggère cette mesure pour donner un peu plus d'importance à la puériculture.

Another field of study which, according to me, could attract youngsters for studies is Educational Psychology and Sociological Studies, *parce que, Madame la présidente, nul ignore les problèmes liés à l'éducation de nos jours.*

Et avec les 26 *Educational Psychologists*, les *four Senior Educational Psychologists* que nous avons déjà et les *four Senior Educational Social Workers and 16 Educational Social Workers* existant, nous avons besoin d'un plus grand effectif. *And we really certainly need more trained people in that field.*

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi maintenant de toucher un peu au volet santé et je salue toutes les initiatives les plus louables du ministre de la Santé en ce qui concerne les hôpitaux spécialisés venant compléter le nombre des hôpitaux déjà existants.

Je dois dire, Madame la présidente, que les nouveaux hôpitaux en construction viennent combler une grande lacune et viennent à la rescousse de nos cancéreux, de nos déficients visuels, de tous ceux qui souffrent des troubles otorhinolaryngologies, mais, Madame la présidente, en dépit de toutes les bonnes mesures au niveau de la Santé, la question qui me tараude, c'est celle de la Nutrition.

Je pense à l'adage, 'Nous Sommes ce que nous Mangeons', et ceci m'interpelle. Je m'interroge sur l'aspect nutritionnel de notre alimentation et je pense qu'il est grand temps qu'on accorde toute l'importance voulue à la nutrition. Il est vrai qu'il y a des nutritionnistes dans nos hôpitaux, des programmes d'information, mais je suis d'avis que les campagnes devraient être plus étendues, plus soutenues, plus vastes et non sporadiques.

Il faut que nos mauvaises habitudes alimentaires changent, que nous sachions de quoi sont composés nos repas, quels sont les apports nutritionnels, des fruits, des légumes, des légumineuses, des produits laitiers, animaliers et quels sont nos besoins nutritionnels de base. Donc, je saluerai toutes les initiatives dans ce domaine puisque la santé est primordiale et nous sommes ce que nous mangeons. *So, let us unite our force and build a healthier Mauritius that will help our people to have a longer and healthier life.*

Last but not least, Madam Speaker, is my Constituency. Ma circonscription pour laquelle j'épargnerai la Chambre de la liste des nombreux projets que même la députée du numéro 4, l'honorable Mme Perraud, n'a honnêtement pas niés. La liste comparative de l'avant et de l'après est bien trop éloquente et je me passe de les énumérer. J'aimerais quand même remercier le Premier ministre pour son soutien indéfectible à la *NDU* pour avoir institué le *Citizen Support Unit*, pour la première fois dans les annales de l'histoire et où la communication est constante entre le public et le *Citizens Advice Bureau*. Lesquelles plaintes sont reprises aussi par les PPS pour le suivi des interventions, soit aussi louées pour le nouveau souffle redonné au CAB, étouffé et presque mort sous l'ancien régime.

Madame la présidente, vu l'heure tardive, je ne souhaite pas abuser de la patience de la Chambre et avant de terminer, j'aimerais quand même ajouter que le peuple mauricien saura, dans sa raison, discerner le vrai du faux, la démagogie de la vérité visible et palpable. Il saura reconnaître où se trouve l'effort et à quel prix il se conjugue, avec quelle vision il se traduit dans la réalité économique, culturelle, politique, dans notre Ile Maurice plurielle.

Ce sont là, Madame la présidente, les quelques aspects sur lesquels j'ai voulu m'attarder et pour lesquels je vous remercie.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 20 June 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(1.12 a.m.)

PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS – REGISTRATION

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise an issue addressed to the Minister of Housing and Lands. It relates to the registration of land surveyors.

Madam Speaker, in August 2014, this House adopted the Professional Land Surveyors' Council Act, which was supposed to repeal and replace the Land Surveyors' Act of 1976. Under this new Act, a person with the prescribed qualification has to apply to the Professional Land Surveyors' Council for registration as a Professional Land Surveyor.

The problem is that five years later, the relevant provision of this Act has still not been proclaimed, and the necessary regulations have still not been made and published, and as a result, for now several years, there are a number of qualified professional Land Surveyors who are not able to register and practice their trade.

So, I am today making an appeal to the hon. Minister to implement the Act, to come up with the necessary regulations and register persons with requisite qualification as Professional Land Surveyors because it is most unfair that these graduates still be unemployed, five years later.

Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I shall communicate the intents of this intervention to the hon. Minister.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

(01.13 a.m.)

CEB - CANE TRASH - ELECTRICITY

Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise a matter that concerns the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy regarding production of electricity from cane trash. I am going to table a letter from the CEB dated 19 February 2019 to the effect that CEB has already approved that cane trash will be remunerated at Rs4.45 per kWh...

The Deputy Prime Minister: On a point of order. This relates to a matter of utmost confidentiality, which is a commercial agreement, which is still under negotiations. I believe it would be most improper to disclose confidential matters of national interest to the public in the manner that the hon. Member seeks to do.

Madam Speaker: I would add on this, that at Adjournment Time, usually policy matters are not raised, and usually, and this is the practice of this House that for adjournment, only matters relating to your constituency or not matters relating to policy are addressed. So, I would request you to keep this for Question Time rather.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Just because what has been replied to me yesterday, it is factually incorrect and...

Madam Speaker: No.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is most improper for the hon. Member. We have been used to better standards from him, he should know. If he does not agree with what I have said, there are procedures in this House to deal with it.

Madam Speaker: I have already given my ruling on this matter, hon. Osman Mahomed and I expect you then to adhere to the ruling and the practice of this House.

Hon. Abbas Mamode, you have something?

(01.14 a.m.)

PUBLIC GARDEN – ST FRANÇOIS & MILITAIRE STREETS – LIGHTING

Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): My issue is addressed to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government. Unfortunately, she is not present.

Je compte sur l'honorable Deputy Prime Minister de transmettre le message. Cela concerne un jardin public annexed to Gorah Issac Hall, entre Rue Saint François et Militaire, where all lights are off, some are broken, need to be replaced because it is annexed to a social hall where many ceremonies are performed. So please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I shall transmit it.

At 1.17 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 20 June 2019 at 11.30 a.m.