



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

MONDAY 12 JUNE 2017

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

MOTION

BILLS (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Tourism
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare

Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training
Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo	Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands
Hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Dharmendar Sesungkur	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Teeluckdharry, Hon. Kalidass
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Jahangeer, Hon. Ahmad Bashir
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Adviser	Dowlutta, Mr Ram Ranjit
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Pannoo, Mr Vinod

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 09 of 2017

Sitting of 12 June 2017

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Build Mauritius Fund for the 18-month period ended 30 June 2016. (In Original)
- (b) The Representation of the People (Allowances of Chairperson and Members of Commissions) Order 2017. (Government Notice No. 70 of 2017)
- (c) Digest of International Travel & Tourism Statistics 2015.

B. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

The Annual Report of the Central Water Authority for the year 2015.

C. Minister Mentor's Office, Ministry of Defence and Ministry for Rodrigues

The Police (Declaration of Protected Area) Order 2017. (Government Notice No. 69 of 2017)

D. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

The Customs (Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement (Netherlands)) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 105 of 2017)

E. Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport

The Road Traffic (Crop Season) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 72 of 2017)

F. Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

- (a) The Annual Report of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) for the year ended 31 December 2014.
- (b) The Annual Report of the University of Mauritius for the year ended 31 December 2015.

G. Ministry of Tourism

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority for the year 2015.

H. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

- (a) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 65 of 2017)

- (b) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 66 of 2017)
- (c) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 67 of 2017)
- (d) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 68 of 2017)

I. **Ministry of Arts and Culture**

The Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the year ending 31 December 2012.

J. **Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 15) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 71 of 2017)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 16) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 73 of 2017)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Export Control) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 106 of 2017)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 17) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 107 of 2017)

K. **Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training**

- (a) The Attorneys' and Notaries' Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 74 of 2017)
- (b) The Baking Industry (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 75 of 2017)
- (c) The Bank Fishermen and Frigo-workers Remuneration (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 76 of 2017)
- (d) The Blockmaking, Construction, Stone Crushing and Related Industries (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 77 of 2017)
- (e) The Catering and Tourism Industries Remuneration (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 78 of 2017)
- (f) The Cinema Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 79 of 2017)
- (g) The Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 80 of 2017)
- (h) The Distributive Trades (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 81 of 2017)
- (i) The Domestic Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 82 of 2017)
- (j) The Electrical, Engineering and Mechanical Workshops (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 83 of 2017)

- (k) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 84 of 2017)
- (l) The Factory Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 85 of 2017)
- (m) The Field-crop and Orchard Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 86 of 2017)
- (n) The Light Metal and Wooden Furniture Workshops (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 87 of 2017)
- (o) The Livestock Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 88 of 2017)
- (p) The Newspapers and Periodicals Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 89 of 2017)
- (q) The Nursing Homes (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 90 of 2017)
- (r) The Office Attendants (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 91 of 2017)
- (s) The Pre-Primary School Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 92 of 2017)
- (t) The Printing Industry (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 93 of 2017)
- (u) The Private Secondary School Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 94 of 2017)
- (v) The Public Transport (Buses) Workers Remuneration (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 95 of 2017)
- (w) The Road Haulage Industry (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 96 of 2017)
- (x) The Salt-Manufacturing Industry (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 97 of 2017)
- (y) The Sugar Industry (Agricultural Workers) (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 98 of 2017)
- (z) The Sugar Industry (Non-Agricultural Workers) (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 99 of 2017)
- (aa) The Tailoring Trade (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 100 of 2017)
- (ab) The Tea Industry Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 101 of 2017)
- (ac) The Travel Agents and Tour Operations Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 102 of 2017)
- (ad) The Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Exemptions (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 104 of 2017)

L. Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

- (a) The Annual Report of the Competition Commission of Mauritius 2014 and 2015.
- (b) The Financial Reporting Council (Rotation of Audit Firm) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 64 of 2017)
- (c) The Good Governance and Integrity Reporting (Oath of Confidentiality) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 103 of 2017)
- (d) The Securities (Preferential Offer) Rules 2017. (Government Notice No. 108 of 2017)

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.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Supplementary Appropriation (2015-2016) (No. 2) Bill (No. IV of 2017) be read a third time and passed.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2017-2018) BILL 2017

(No. VII of 2017)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2017-2018) Bill 2017 (No. VII of 2017).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(11.34 a.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, this Budget raises far, far more questions than it answers and I will try, during the course of my speech, to deal with these unanswered questions as well as whatever has been presented. I am sure,

Madam Speaker, you will find that very interesting. But, in doing so, I will try to be better at arithmetic than hon. Rutnah and I will try to get, at least, my sums right, Madam Speaker, by multiplying by ten. Now, very seriously, Madam Speaker, never in my 30-year career in politics, have I seen a Budget presented to the nation in such turmoil, turbulence, protest, allegations and accusations. I have never seen that! This is for me a first!

So, let us deal with the context of this Budget. We start with the hunger strike some weeks ago by depositors of ex-BAI. A movement, Madam Speaker, that we all saw was growing day by day. People from the civil society were joining the movement and obviously this was putting a lot of pressure on Government. These depositors met the Prime Minister and it was reported that they were satisfied that he had made some promises. In fact, coming back from the wonderful trip from India, they would be paid fully; also, that was reported. But, of course, not one single word about these poor souls in the Budget.

We finish with that and then we get allegations. I do say allegations, Madam Speaker, - because I am not saying that this has been proved, but I say allegations - of corruption raining down on Government. A few days ago, the week before last, one Indian gentleman is claiming that he has given *en main propre, s'il vous plait*, Rs1 m. to the Vice-Prime Minister. That is an allegation and I do not know if ICAC has bothered to conduct an enquiry and do something about it. Probably, knowing ICAC, he has not done anything! Again last week, this time, Madam Speaker, four Board Directors of the Financial Services Commission, that is, half of the Board of the Financial Services Commission which are eight, included in those four, the Solicitor General, the highest legal officer of this country, have resigned from the Financial Services Commission. I know why they resigned, Madam Speaker. They resigned because there was a Board Resolution which was being forced upon the FSC to reinstate fully Mr Sobrinho – the famous Mr Sobrinho - in his activities. All of these four people resigned a few days before, on Sunday and then on Monday, following that Board Resolution. The same Mr Sobrinho - and we can prove it - has been severely blamed by this Kroll Report Commission, by the FSC itself and, Madam Speaker, which says clearly that this gentleman has a reputation of an international crook, but we will have time to deal with that over the next few coming days.

Madam Speaker, I am not finished and, probably, this one can be said to be even worse. Not finished, Madam Speaker! Is this Government a two-headed monster or a four-headed monster? Nobody is quite clear! But again the Vice-Prime Minister issues on the letterhead of the Ministry of Housing, a communiqué – cutting off, *s'il vous plait* - severing

relations with the State of Qatar. This is not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – he is absent again - issuing the communiqué. It is the Ministry of Housing and Lands that issued that communiqué. And then the next day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refutes this communiqué. Now, obviously this has made us a laughing stock on the international world, but it is even more serious than that because we have hundreds of Mauritians who are working in Qatar, be it as professionals in the economy or in Qatar Airways. Hundreds of people! The situation of these people, Madam Speaker, has now been put in jeopardy. It is not clear what will happen to them. I know that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has contacted a few people and is trying desperately to redress the situation and to pass the message to the Qatar Government that the communiqué from the Vice-Prime Minister was not an official one, that it was a foolish thing and even a stupid thing to do and that any fight between Saudi Arabia and Qatar has absolutely nothing to do with Mauritius even though it seems that the Vice-Prime Minister attended a military exercise in Saudi Arabia some time ago. I do not remember the name, but I think it was ‘Tornado’ or something like that. He thought it was good for him to attend the military exercise or he tried to attend at least. I think he was stopped. I do not remember. But there you go, Madam Speaker, and that has been put in jeopardy our international relationship and has made us a laughing stock of the world and, worse of all, has jeopardised the safety and the situation of hundreds of Mauritians working in Qatar. But *la série noire continue!*

The arbitral award to Betamax of some Rs5 billion, Madam Speaker, is an amount that is equal to, if we add Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Agriculture, Minister of Industry and it will come to the amount that we now owe to Betamax. I see hon. Sinatambou is very busy talking all the time saying that we will not pay, which is bad enough because that froze our whole international reputation down the drain, but he also says that he will appeal. I am not a lawyer, but I understand that the chances of success of appeal are very, very slim. Nil! says my learned friend! Nil! But maybe what the population does not realise is that interest on these Rs5 billion is what Government owes. It is very well to go and make these spurious appeals everywhere. But every day, do you know how much interest accrues, is due on Rs5 billion at 3%? This is the rate that they are charging and it is a bit more than the other loan. Do you know how much it comes to, Madam Speaker? It comes to more than Rs410,000 per day interest. It is not hon. Rutnah who will correct my calculation. I hope he will not!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: It is my fault. I accept!

Madam Speaker, the taxpayer is being asked to foot a bill of about Rs5 billion to Betamax. At the same time, as everybody is saying, if that appeal that is going to be made does not succeed, we will have to add to this sum of Rs5 billion, Rs410,000 a day interest that is running. So, I would make my own appeal to Government: do not make any stupid moves. Make sure this time that things are done well and if there is a need to negotiate with Betamax, do so in the public interest; do not be stupid and, once again, do not put the taxpayer in even worse situation that we are at the moment unless, of course, we can change the law to make the people responsible pay for it directly; I would be very happy, Madam Speaker. I would not mention names, but I would be very happy if that were to happen.

So, Madam Speaker, we finish with Betamax and now we hear that the Government has taken a massive loan of Rs18 billion in US dollars. This massive loan, I will come to it in a moment, Madam Speaker, will increase our external debt by some 50%. On this chapter, all I can say is that no details have been given whatsoever in the Budget. Nothing! I will come to that in a moment.

But we continue, Madam Speaker. I do not want to be too long. This time, apparently the advisor of hon. Sesungkur has a violent past. But, Madam Speaker, I always knew that advisors were vetted before being appointed. He takes a recidivist who has already been *condamné* for violence as advisor and we are surprised that he does it again! That is terrible, Madam Speaker. Perhaps you can correct it at some point in time, because this is what I read in the papers. I do not know him personally. So, Madam Speaker in this situation ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr X. L. Duval: *In this situation, what was desperately needed, Madam Speaker - and I speak honestly - est un exercice de vérité. Dire exactement à la population quelle est la situation de la croissance, ce qui a été fait dans les années précédentes, de la dette exactement, and try and get everybody to agree to une feuille de route pour le pays. C'est parce que justement le budget n'est plus un exercice de vérité que nous avons vu la moitié de la galerie publique vide et qu'il y a un désintéressement général. Il n'y a qu'à lire la presse pour voir. Tout le monde est d'accord qu'il y a eu un désintéressement général dans ce*

budget-là, parce que le budget, en fin de compte, est un budget *menti menti*. *Li pas ene budget vrai*. C'est un budget *menti menti*.

Quels sont les oubliés du budget, les sujets trop encombrants qui ne méritent aucune mention dans le budget, parce qu'ils interpellent la population ? On a parlé de Betamax, on a parlé de BAI. Mais aussi, *Madam Speaker*, aucune mention des investissements massifs dans les infrastructures à Agaléga. On parle d'un pont qui va être rénové, *patati patata*, mais un développement massif à Agaléga, une piste, un *runway* de 3 kms de long, de la même longueur que Plaisance. Plaisance a une piste de 3.2 kms qui prend des A 380, Madame la présidente. Mais là, nous avons une piste de la même longueur à Agaléga. Pas de détails, donc, de ça. J'ai déjà dit tout à l'heure pas de détails des 18 milliards d'emprunt, l'utilisation, les *redeemable preference shares*, pourquoi ça n'a pas été inclus dans la dette publique. Et comme PWC a bien dit, si on a pris de l'argent et si on doit cet argent, c'est une dette, by *whatever name called*. *Madam Speaker*, aucun détail non plus du salaire minimum, qui pourtant a été promis pour la fin de l'année - rien dans le budget-, rien sur le Brexit non plus, rien, *Madam Speaker*, sur le vieillissement de la population.

And now I will come to my hon. friend who is always on the papers every day. *Madam Speaker*, last year, paragraph 413 of the Budget mentioned that ageing of the population - and hear this, *Madam Speaker*; this is why people do not believe in the Budget anymore - is a challenge that we cannot ignore. A challenge that we cannot ignore and, one year later, it has been ignored in the Budget. It even goes on to say, *Madam Speaker*, that, at the moment, we have six salaried employees working to pay for one pensioner and in 2030 it will be three salaried employees working to pay for one pensioner.

So, the situation is dramatic. Dramatic situation! We are moving from a population aged 60 or over, 14 % of the population at the moment, to 25% in 2030. So, the situation is dramatic on public finances, on the economy, on whatever you like. I know that hon. Sinatambou has felt this too hot a potato to handle. Since February, the High Powered Committee is no longer meeting. Since he took over, the High Powered Committee has run away, no longer meeting, *Madam Speaker*. Press conferences everyday, *et vieillissement de la population, zero get ladans*. There you go, *Madam Speaker*. He has run away, he does not have the courage to deal with a dramatic situation regarding ageing of the population.

But there is more, *Madam Speaker*. What about financial services? Dramatic situation! It is probably the one industry - I will come to that a bit later - that faces the most

challenges: the end of the double taxation agreement with India, the challenges, the *menace de l'Union Européenne* that they will put us on a blacklist by the end of this year if we do not change dramatically, drastically our taxation of the offshore, basically the deemed foreign tax credit and, of course, the signing of the Multilateral Instrument, which is an OCDE initiative, which I understand will be signed in a few days.

These three things, Madam Speaker, dramatically change the offshore sector. Some people are saying that 80% of the holding companies in Mauritius are global business sector and will no longer be viable if these things happen, and nothing is done to change that. So, that is how dramatic it is. All that is being promised is a blueprint.

I think, Madam Speaker, that many of these things have been omitted, hidden in the Budget because, to be frank, we have a part-time Minister of Finance. That is the situation. We have a part-time Minister. I am not blaming. I am just saying that we have a part-time Minister of Finance. We closed the Parliament four weeks or so to enable the Budget to be concocted, but obviously not enough time to deal with financial services, not enough time to deal with Brexit, all the issues that I have raised, *vieillessement de la population, etc.*, that have not been dealt with. And that is the sad situation of this country today. We do not have a full-time Minister of Finance; we have a part-time Minister of Finance and, at the same time, Minister of Rodrigues, Minister of Defence, Minister of NDU, Prime Minister, etc., etc., etc. Long, long list of responsibilities!

Madam Speaker, we have been creating false hope since the election. False hope of an economic miracle when, in fact, the situation has got worse since December 2014 elections! The only thing that got better is tourism. Apart from that, everything else - and it can be proven - is worse. Let me tell you what my good friend, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, said when he was full of pep, when he made his speech. He predicted, Madam Speaker, that we would have a whopping 5.3% growth in 2015/16, first year we were in power, and 5.7 % this year. And, in fact, he went on to describe what we had achieved - I was Minister of Finance in 2014; half of it. The growth in 2014, Madam Speaker, was 3.6%. Check your figures.

He described that as anaemic. I was a bit surprised myself. I was sitting on that side and I said, "Oh! That's a bit rude of him." But, still, he described the growth as anaemic. In fact, Madam Speaker, when he took over in 2015, the so-called anaemic growth of 3.6 % fell to 3% in 2015 and 3.2% in 2016, and I see that the Minister of Finance has estimated the growth for this finishing financial year at 3.9%. Why, oh, why has the World Bank, Madam

Speaker - *s'il vous plaît, une institution respectée* - estimated our growth for this year to be 3.4% and last year 3.5 %? Why? It has to be explained, Madam Speaker! We know that the debt figures *ont été trafiqués*. We know that. And in more ways than one. But, Madam Speaker, would you believe the World Bank or would you believe, in these circumstances, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development? I know, Madam Speaker, that I would much more easily believe the World Bank.

Now, growth is not just a statistic, as you know, Madam Speaker. Growth is what? It can be something we don't understand. Just a figure! Growth is increasing prosperity for the whole nation, higher living standards, better public services, better schools, better hospitals, better Police service, better education and a better future for all. So, Madam Speaker, growth has not happened since the last election. And I see now, in this Budget Speech, we are told that by, I think, 2023, in six years' time, we will be having enough growth to move from, I think, 9,700 or so gross national income to 13,600. To do that, if you calculate it – hon. Rutnah can give me a hand here – Madam Speaker; it is about 5% a year and nowhere in this Budget is there anything that will give you growth of even the 4% that is being promised.

I won't go too much into figures, Madam Speaker. I will just say a little bit more; public debt – 61% in 2014. Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo had said it was alarming. Alarming for him! Alarming! Now, Madam Speaker, it is 66%. I think hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo must have fallen unconscious because he is not here. If it was alarming at 61%, what can it be at 66%! And even then we have not calculated much of the debt that is coming. Perhaps, Madam Speaker, we are sadder still on the situation on the employment side because here we are talking directly of people.

Hon. Minister Mentor had promised 100,000 jobs created, about 25,000 a year, I think, when he did his economic vision 2030. Hon Pravind Juganuth, last year, promised 21,400 immediately and they were meant to be youth apparently. All this is false! Nothing happened! In 2016 - and we need to correct this incorrect statement that has been made about unemployment. What you need to look at, Madam Speaker, is employment and not unemployment and I will explain why.

As far as employment is concerned, Statistics Mauritius which is still, I believe, fairly independent, has calculated that only 300 jobs - not 100,000, not 21,000, not 10,000, not 1,000 – Madam Speaker, have been created in 2016. This is why we must not fool the population about unemployment figures because unemployment figures, as calculated by

Statistics Mauritius, is a very approximate figure. It can be manipulated. If you want to manipulate it, you can manipulate it. Because to be considered for unemployment, you must be considered to be free, not working, but also to be actively looking for a job. And that other one is very subjective whether you are actively looking for a job or not. This is what brings down the unemployment rate when you take out all these people who are supposed not to be actively and when you take out, I think, today 17,000 people have been recruited under the Youth Employment Programme which I started myself.

About 4,000 people have been recruited under the Skills Development Programme. So, when you take all these people out, when you take people who have been recruited in the public service, the distressing fact, Madam Speaker, when you take out Youth Employment Programme, the Skills Development Programme, recruitment in the civil service, you will find that in the Private sector, employment has dangerously regressed. Dangerously reduced! We all know that the private sector pays the taxes for us to be here today, for civil servants to be employed, for wealth to be created. Therefore, it is dangerous for our country that this is happening in the way it is happening. So, we are sitting on a time bomb as regards unemployment.

Madam Speaker, I think *l'indifférence vis-à-vis de ce budget-là* is the population is being fed up, is being misled. Too many, and I can take the whole day, I will not obviously; *effets d'annonce sur effets d'annonce*. When I was Minister of the Port, I was sitting and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo announced that the Port will extend for 8 kms. I have nothing in the file to show this. They will go for 8 kms from Baie du Tombeau to Les Salines or something. I was sitting there and I was listening. Apparently, when he came, he announced three projects to be held in the Port. Only one existed, in fact! A Chinese project: a fishing port which never went ahead because it was too expensive. A French project by Bolloré was only in his dreams. It never existed either on paper or anywhere. Then, there was an Indian project, I never heard of it either. So, you have a Minister of Finance and Economic Development announcing three projects and 8 kms port which never existed except in his dreams. Daylight dreaming, I think! I don't know what he does at night. This is a sort of *effets d'annonce* which has turned off the population from this budgetary exercise. But this year also - let's look at this year - we have been fooling the population again, Madam Speaker. Swimming pool in Curepipe! My foot, Swimming pool in Curepipe! My foot!

(Interruptions)

Pena swimming pool in Curepipe! Many people have actually banged on the table. Because if you look at the figures....

(Interruptions)

Yes, then they fooled me too!

(Interruptions)

We have been fooled! I accept.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr X. L. Duval: We have been stupid enough to be fooled, Madam Speaker, and that is true, I think, for the whole population. So, I don't blame anyone.

(Interruptions)

And hon. Toussaint, Minister of Youth and Sports, also banged the table, not understanding that swimming pool zero because the Rs75 m. provided for - and we know the Minister of Finance has a provision when you look at the details. Tell me when the swimming pool is going to be constructed? Not this year because there is only Rs1 m. for feasibility study! Not next year, there is zero rupee! Not the year after, zero rupee! That is the swimming pool, Madam Speaker. That is what I see! We will see. So, no swimming pool in Curepipe! No townhall in Curepipe! So, in fact, the proper wordings for the Budget Speech is not: 'I am announcing provision for a swimming pool in Curepipe', but 'I am announcing a Rs1 m. provision for a feasibility study for a swimming pool in Curepipe of which construction may start in four years. That is what the Budget Speech should have stated. Obviously, it would not have had its *effets d'annonce*, so they didn't state it like that, Madam Speaker.

In fact, this is the same for all the swimming pools. This is the same also for the Goodlands SME market. The Goodlands SME market and the poor SMEs are waiting for their tables. You know when we are going to have these tables because that is one of the things that we have now; tables for them to be able to sell their products and no SME market is going to come up. No market fair in Goodlands and in anywhere else is going to come up in the next four years! This is what is in the Budget details. So, again you have all these SMEs waiting, getting their goods ready, their *petits gâteaux piments* and all that to try and

sell at SME fair, and they will have to wait the four years. Even the townhall in Curepipe, all these are just *effets d'annonce*. Nothing actually is going to come up. It is the same thing for the Area Health Centres.

Madam Speaker, I see 38 projects in Appendix 3 of the Budget which have been announced and will not come up within 4 years' time. And perhaps people may say I am exaggerating, but let us take last year's Budget Speech. What happened to the refinery in Albion? *Zero!* What happened to the gold refinery? *Zero!* What happened to the Family Cycle Village? *Zero!* What happened to the bicycles we were all going to ride? They took us for a ride, Madam Speaker. They took us for a ride. No bicycle! No motorcycle! Nothing! All these were announced last year at page 8 of the Budget, Madam Speaker, nothing was created. This is why nobody believes. Anyway, I won't go too much on that. I just regret one thing that when we have been given the figures, now for the debt, we are given gross debt and net debt.

But if he had some regard for the public and for us, Parliamentarians, he would have given the comparatives under the old system so that we could understand what is the debt according to IMF, what is the debt according to the old Mauritius definition which is still the same Mauritius definition and what is the debt now. Instead, all the debt figures have been changed and we are all lost, we don't understand and that is not good. Instead of saying, Madam Speaker – and this - *de vérité* - that we are cannot meet the 50% reduction in the debt Mauritius definition by 2018 - we cannot do so, that is obvious - therefore, we are going to change the law to have it not 2018, maybe 2020 or whatever, no, it is the definition itself that is changed. *Et cela*, Madam Speaker, *ce n'est pas honnête*. We have to be honest with the population. We have to tell them the truth and then admit if there is a reason for it, give the reason.

Madam Speaker, I will come to some of the sectoral issues. One thing which I am very concerned with is property alleviation, perhaps where the Government has really failed, because that is probably the most important area that Government should address. What are we here for? We are not here to make the Alvaros of this world buy 131 *villas*. That is not our job! Our job is to get people, the poor, in a better situation; get even a small house to the poor. That is our real job, real objective, Madam Speaker!

Paragraph 300 of last year's Budget Speech says this, very pompous -

‘300. There will thus be no person living in conditions of absolute poverty in our country.’

This is what the Minister of Finance and Economic Development said last year at paragraph 300. You will agree it was a very naive statement that he made because if you look around you, no one would be stupid enough to say that there are no persons living in poverty. In fact, probably, there are more persons living in conditions of poverty than previously. And let us look at that. Let us look at why.

We are told that 8,000 families have received some sort of support under what is called the Subsistence Allowance Scheme which was put last year. Are these 8,000 families now well off? Are they no longer poor? Have each of us gone into our Constituency and we have seen someone who last year was really poor and this year says: “Oh God, I have received this subsistence allowance, I am so well off”? It is not the case and we have to be frank about that. It is not the case. And let us see why it is not the case. Because, Madam Speaker, ending poverty is much more than just giving money and even giving a little bit of money. So, there are many things that worry me about this measure. Firstly, the accompanying measures that were to go with this social contract, because the people are not just being given money every week, every month, on average, I think, Rs3,000, they were supposed to follow a programme that, within a finite amount of time, would get them out of poverty. This is what is called a conditional transfer. You give money, quite a bit of money, in return you want the person to change the way that he lives to improve his chances of coming out of poverty. That is, Madam Speaker, what was supposed to happen. But to date, my information is that, no accompanying measure had been proposed to these poor people. No accompanying measure! We have gone six or seven months’ payment, they were supposed to be accompanied and there were supposed to be conditions attached to the social contract.

Let me take an example. You may be a *manoeuvre maçon*, you are poor, you need to become a *maçon* to be able to earn this and feed your family. But that training must be given in the meantime. You may not be able to read or write, you are supposed to be made to read or write within a period that the social contract is happening. You may be an alcoholic and you are supposed to be weaned off alcohol, weaned off drugs. This is what the social contract is all about, but none of this has happened because the NEF has gone worse than before. None of this has happened, no accompanying measure.

Madam Speaker, I think none of these poor know that they are, in fact, sitting on a time bomb. They don't know that. They don't know that the social contract is not for ever. Who has said that it is finite in time? Who has said that it would stop at some point in time? Because it will stop. It has a life of one year, 12 months, to be renewed for a maximum of another 12 months. So, two years maximum, that's all. If you do not get these people out of poverty, on their feet, within these two years, if you do not do all these accompanying measures, then this programme is finished. I am going to table, Madam Speaker - I will take the name of the person off, it is only fair - a copy of the social contract and I will read it: Modalities of payment of allowance. "The allowance will be payable for an initial period of 12 months to the beneficiary. After assessment, if found compliant – so, you must have done some things *pour mériter cet argent* - the allowance will continue to be paid to the beneficiary for a maximum period of another 12 months". This is a subsistence allowance. I do not know how many Members of the House realise that this subsistence allowance is in a very short period of time and that after that it will stop. If during that period of time, we don't get these poor people, these 8,000 families, to stand on their own feet, they will be in the same situation as before. All this money will stop; we will have a social revolution. I will come to elections in a moment. But we will have a social revolution; please don't wait till this comes to two years! I would not advise it.

Now, another thing, Madam Speaker, ending poverty is not just giving money. What about housing! I have been going around in the country looking at squatters. Terrible situation! All these things about ending squatting in Mauritius, moving the squatters! They are moving them to worse places than they were. Many of them have refused to move. NEF has not constructed a single house since the election. There was a contract last time with the PNQ - I am not saying this because of the Minister. I am saying because I am concerned about the poor. 141 houses were supposed to be constructed. Only 60 would, in fact, be constructed, that being two and a half years after the election. The NHDC has not delivered one single house constructed since the election. All the houses that have been delivered were from the previous Government. Unless I have been fooled I think because we were meant to construct 2,000 houses a year under this Government. 2,000 one year, 2000 the other and this time it is half a year; that should have come to 5,000 houses, hon. Rutnah would agree. So, where are we? 5,000 houses and we have not a single house delivered and only 300 houses under construction. That is the disaster that the poor are facing, Madam Speaker, while on one side a time bomb with a maximum of 24 months, and on the other side, not a single

housing. Many of the places that they have been sent to, would you believe – I am sure you would not believe, I will take you myself, Madam Speaker, because you will not believe me – that hon. Soodhun is sending the squatters, have no water like in Pointe aux Sables, no electricity and no roads. No water, no electricity and no roads! We are taking care of Sobrinho and Royal Park and nobody is taking care of this, Madam Speaker. Can you imagine moving squatters to a place worse than they were before, with no amenities at all? But, of course, Press conference, camera and giving letters to all these people.

Now, this is a situation for poverty alleviation and, of course, this poverty alleviation and the problem of squatters will not get solved until we solve the problem in Rodrigues. It will not be solved by itself because many of the squatters are, in fact, people who have fled from Rodrigues. There, after 50 years of independence, there is still not an economy; we are speaking of only tourism with a subsidy, I think, of at least Rs100 m. a month from the national budget so that Mauritians can go there at a cheap rate. And that's it. No water, nothing to support an economy. It is okay, except when you see people who have to flee from Rodrigues to come here. And where do these people live? They live as squatters, with no water, no electricity, under leaking roof *en tôle*. That is the situation.

Now, what about the new Negative Income Tax? I think it is positive because it will encourage formal employment, it will reward efforts, that is, when you work, you get something. I think that is positive. Obviously, it will be unfair for the self-employed because they will have no *fiche de paie*. All these hawkers in Port-Louis and all that, I don't know what you are going to do with them. But it will be unfair for them. That is something that has to be dealt with.

I must also say a word of warning that other people have gone along this path. In the UK, there have been huge problems in implementing, what they call it there, the Income Tax Credit. There are huge problems in implementing that. So, we need to be worried about that. It is not as easy as you think to do so. But again, Madam Speaker, I think, the poor need to realise that they are not going to get a cheque tomorrow. This is not for tomorrow. The first cheque under the Negative Income Tax will be paid in August 2018. So, not even in this Budget, it will be in the next Budget that the first cheque will come out for the people under Negative Income Tax. Madam Speaker, really, this is one little positive thing that Government has done. You would have thought that they would have found a way to apply it

immediately and not give 13 months' notice before this thing is applied. So, that is not serious, Madam Speaker.

Again, what is not serious is exaggeration of its applicability. The Minister of Finance said 150,000 people will be entitled to this. It is not true. I know where he has got the figures from. They are the figures published by Statistics Mauritius showing how many people earn a basic wage of less than Rs10,000. But we all know or ought to know that, especially when you are on the lower salary scale, basic wage is not the whole wage that you are getting. Everyone in the Export Processing Zone or whatever it is called now, the export sector or the manufacturing sector, is on basic wage, plus attendance bonus, plus productivity bonus etc. In fact, your basic wage is only a small portion of your actual wage. So, it is calculated, maybe, half. It will have half the impact that it has been made out to have. Also, Madam Speaker, without the minimum wage, I think it is *un couteau à double tranchant* and I will say why. Because what we want is to give the money to the poor and not subsidise the employer. That is not what we want to do.

Let us take the Youth Employment Programme, forget the exact figures. I think, under the Youth Employment Programme, the employer pays Rs6,000 and the Government pays another Rs6,000. So, the employee gets Rs12,000. Everybody is happy because this is for one year and we are subsidising the employer by Rs6,000.

Now, this sum of Rs1,000 is maximum because it can be as little as Rs200. We do not want that to be subsidising the employer. I will give you an idea, Madam Speaker, what I mean. Instead of paying someone Rs6,000, I say: "you want Rs6,000, what I will do is I will give Rs5,200 per month. Rs800, well, you will get that from Mr Jugnauth every six month." So, we are subsidising whom here? We are subsidising the employer, not the employee. The employee still gets Rs6,000. And you know how Mauritians are! The employers will find a way to make this work somehow in their interest. So, Madam Speaker, this is why I disagree when I meet people who say that the minimum wage would not go together with this. If you have a minimum wage, then, at least, you know the employer will not be able to go beyond a certain figure. You will not be able to go beyond and play this game of paying less on the understanding that the Government will make up the difference. Let us hope we get the minimum wage quickly. I hope the minimum wage, as is being suggested here, is not going to be Rs4,000. If you read between the lines of the Negative Income Tax, you tend to think

that the minimum wage will be Rs4,000. But if that is done, Madam Speaker, that will be a big outcry which, I think, even the Government will not be able to sustain.

Madam Speaker - still on poverty alleviation - what about the Marshall Plan given to Government in December 2015? The final draft, as far as I am aware, is in December 2015, two and a half years ago. Last year's Budget - it is quite a funny document - says –

‘I am concretely launching the Marshall Plan Against Poverty.’

Concretely launching it! Where is it today, a year later? Nowhere to be found, except for what I tabled in this House, Madam Speaker! It has 32 recommendations and it deals not only with absolute poverty, it deals also with relative poverty. If my memory serves me well, 120,000 people are concerned by a Marshall Plan against Poverty which was launched by Government *en grande fanfare* and we have not seen a trace of it from the Government side at least. Not only have we not seen a trace of it, but of the 32, maybe 30 of these recommendations have not been applied, including giving a rent subsidy to the poor - there are so many valid points in that – paid for either by the United Nations or by this Government; costing a lot of money and not applied, not even published, disregarding public opinion, disregarding all the NGOs, no respect for the poor, not even publishing this, Madam Speaker.

And also, Madam Speaker, we must do something about the very large families in the poor households. I keep talking about this because it is a big issue. Poverty is not only that you have no training, it is also because the poorer people are in Mauritius, the more children they have. We must get our family planning right, we must get the message right because when you put someone on this earth, you must be able to make sure that you can cater for him, like a little prince, like a little princess and give him the best chance to succeed. If you are poor, you are out of work; you are not going to be able to do that for four or five children. You are just going to create problems for them in the future. Therefore, my plea to this Government, Madam Speaker, is to look at this poverty alleviation properly. It is being left on the side, the Marshall Plan not published, housing, nothing, Madam Speaker. The Negative Income Tax for 13 months' time that it will come. Madam Speaker, let's do this, let's work together to get poverty alleviation and eradication of poverty. Let it not just be a word, a sentence that we say now and then, but translates itself into actual fact. In fact, Madam Speaker, just to illustrate what I am saying, the Social Progress Index is an international index that is published, which measures countries that provide for social and

environmental needs of its citizens. Social Progress Index - it is in the Budget - we have fallen in our ranking from 34th in 2014 to 40th in 2016. So, this illustrates what I am saying, Madam Speaker.

Let me come now quickly to employment and unemployment and I will add that, Madam Speaker, to the issue of higher education because for education we can have a very long lead time or we can have a shorter lead time. I take an example, if you are going to take care of children who are in kindergarten today and you should do that, it is in 25 years that you will see the effect on the economy and the effect on the country because it takes that long for us to train them.

Why was I concerned, Madam Speaker, with higher education? It is because higher education is one area where the lead time is the shortest. We are talking about three years or sometimes even two now to form a degree holder. Two years, three years! So, if we are really investing - and we are not and it is very disappointing - in higher education in the next three years we would have seen thousands of bright, young, able, motivated, innovating people coming onto the workforce.

If you look at the dismal situation of higher education - we are used to being first in Africa, almost everywhere - it seems sometimes it becomes boring because we are always first. But in higher education we are not first! Our top university - I have said this and I say it again - the University of Mauritius is 51st in Africa! There are 54 countries in Africa, Madam Speaker. 51st for our top university! The University of Technology - and thank you the *pit latrine* and all that has been changed - I think, is 229th in Africa! I think the ranking is 7000th worldwide. *L' Université des Mascareignes*, the worst ranking wise of our universities. It is 340th! And, not a word in this Budget! There are 54 countries in Africa, so a simple average will say that each country in Africa will have three universities better than *l'Université des Mascareignes*. This is the situation! Facts!

What is in the Budget here to upgrade the level of teaching, of research in universities? Nothing! Some infrastructure is going to be changed as if all you need is concrete to become a bright, young employee in three years' time! So, that is wrong. We ought to have invested massively if we wanted a quick return in tertiary education and even more massively if we wanted a long-term, stable, happy and rich country in the whole stream of education from pre-primary right down to secondary, Madam Speaker.

I talked about the net jobs of 300, but if you look at the same figures published by Statistics Mauritius this time on *gradués chômeurs*, these people have spent money and time to become graduates and according to Statistics Mauritius in 2012 there were 9,600 *gradués chômeurs* and two years after it reduced to 7,800 in 2014. So, there was a fall in *gradués chômeurs* according to Statistics Mauritius official figures. What happened then in 2015? The hon. Minister of Education may be interested to learn that in 2015 *gradués chômeurs* shot up to 9,000 from 7,800 and it shot up again in 2016 to 10,000. So, we have, in fact, reversed what we have managed to do. We have reversed the trend of the falling *gradués chômeurs* to an increase in trend and we will '*tape l'estomac*' and say we have done so well! These are the figures, Madam Speaker.

What is going wrong? Massive investment, as I mentioned. Career guidance, I do not think we have done anything. Nothing in this Budget, I think, on career guidance to be able to advise the students on where and what sphere is necessary. I had launched at the time, I remember, what was called, the Six Monthly Employment Trend Survey, that was cancelled afterwards, but, at least, I was giving a document to Government about how to advise students on what to study. Of course, the Graduate Training Employment Scheme which was announced, I think, last year, or a year before, is a big flop. Out of the 10,000 *gradués chômeurs*, only 300 took this up.

So, we want a win-win-win situation, Madam Speaker. Massive investment in public universities, at least; help the private universities, in three years' time the education hub becomes a real education hub, in three years' time or whatever time, the economic and benefit for thousands of people. So, that is really a win-win-win as far as that is concerned, Madam Speaker, and we need to have a dramatic upgrading of our Career Guidance Service.

Madam Speaker, let me speak about drugs and the Police. I will talk about the Police first. We have raised this issue before. We keep recruiting every year; probably, in percentage, we are the country which recruits more policemen every year like this. But when you look at them - just go outside and look at them - they have the blue uniform, nice, but no equipment. Some of them have a *baton* and that's it.

When you look at a policeman overseas, be it in Singapore or wherever you want, these people are equipped with radios, federal streamers, batons, handcuffs and everything. That enables them to do what? This enables them, when they see a poor citizen being beaten up - when we see the videos in which the Police turn away, that is what they do. Why? It is

not their fault. They have no equipment to defend themselves. They have no equipment to arrest. The big issue of the Police is the equipment. The issue of the Police is not the number as much as the equipment. We all know that when we are given a job and we are not given the equipment to do that, then you have the Police Force that we have that tends to look away. By the way, our Commissioner of Police should take a leaf out of the book of Mr Comey in terms of undue influence. But that is another issue.

Now, Madam Speaker, about equipment and training, when we went to Germany at the request of Government we had a look at that. In Germany, Madam Speaker, a Policeman, simple Constable, will undergo three years of formal training like a university graduate, in fact, before he becomes a simple Constable on the beat. In Mauritius, nine months and we have a Police Constable. Nine months! Are we that much cleverer than the Germans that we can learn in nine months what the German Constable takes three years to learn? Or is it the truth that our policemen are far less trained, far less fit and far less versatile than policemen should be? Because in Germany they take everything, even the DNA samples, even fingerprints. You don't have to call, they will take it themselves because they are fully equipped in their vans and in their mind they are properly trained for this job.

Madam Speaker, let us talk about drugs. There have been lots of seizures, good enough. But that is also evidence of the scale of the drugs problem. I must say that the Commission of Enquiry seems to be - obviously, I have not been given a report yet, but let us see what comes up. But on drugs, I don't think anyone of us realises the extent, the amount of drug traffickers that were in Mauritius, still are! But I look at it on the other hand, what is the result of all this?

You would expect, Madam Speaker, if potatoes were in short supply, the price of potatoes would go up or *pommes d'amour* or whatever. So, let us look at it the other way. Let us see what is the effect and this is a serious point. I know that I am going to get a lot of stupid comments, but I will make it anyway because it is in the public interest. It is a serious point. Look at the drug situation. If you don't believe me, there is an article written in 'The Economist' of 20 May. Have a look at it! It is entitled 'The Expanding Universe of Synthetic Drugs'. I think we need to look at that article.

So, Madam Speaker, when you look on the street, what has happened? What is apparently happening? Heroin, same price as before, no increase; gandia, same price as before, no increase, but the price of synthetic drugs - and this is the point I am going to make

- has fallen by half. Perhaps the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor can check with the Commissioner of Police. This is the situation. The price of synthetic drugs has fallen by half. I will also congratulate hon. Ganoo who has launched a debate on this issue because it is much, much more complicated than we can think and it needs to be dealt with intelligently if we are going to get some result. If you read that article, it will tell you that if you want to import something like to make a thousand doses of synthetic drugs, all you need maybe is a small envelope because the initial ingredient is that powerful.

So, unless we can find out whether we can stop it or whether we have other means of dealing with the drug problem like so many other countries are. In Mauritius - I live in Grand Gaube; in fact, I do not want to talk about Grand Gaube - in many places we live in, the drug issue has poisoned society, has poisoned the neighbourhood, and this has to be dealt with, maybe apolitically, but it has to be dealt with, and we need to show the good faith about it and deal with it, please, intelligently, not stupidly. That is my issue on the drug, Madam Speaker.

I come to the tourism sector. Madam Speaker, 6.4% growth for the first five months, it is good, much less than last year. Last year, it was 9.9%. If you want to give marks, it is not bad, but can do better. If I were a teacher, I would say, 'can do better.' Obviously, it is already feeling my departure from that Ministry. But, still, it is not bad. We did 9.9% for the first five months of 2016 and only 6.4% this year. Maybe, *Maurice n'est plus un plaisir*, we do not know. But that is something else that we can talk also. So, Madam Speaker, on tourism, I have no worries in the short-term. I think the momentum is there, the message is there, the skills are there at the MPTA, if nothing has changed, the skills are there at the Tourism Authority. That can be improved. I have no particular worries about the next few years, but I am very worried about the industry for various reasons.

One, the projects coming up. Mauritius has suffered enormously - the tourism sector. *Ces projets bidons* which are promoted *par les petits copains*, family and what you have. The problem is not because of *les petits copains* or their family, whatever. It is because these people have no experience in tourism. So, they are given huge amounts of land, then they go and beg and steal and sell, whatever they do, to construct the hotels. And inevitably, like anything, if you want to be a *boulangier* or you want to be an accountant or you want to be whatever, you have to have the experience and the training. And these people do not have!

They do not have anything! And they will build you anything; concrete block. One project - hon. Soodhun is not there - Madam Speaker is ex-Midas.

Do you know how many rooms they wanted to construct? I am going to appeal to my ex-colleague. They wanted to construct 500 and something rooms. Can you imagine! Five hundred rooms in the south of the island! What would happen to these 500 rooms? These people have no experience, nothing to show. A lady - I do not remember her name - with no experience, nothing. I did not give any permit. But it is two sides hotel development. It is the Ministry of Land that gives the permit and the Ministry of Tourism that gives the operation permit. Madam Speaker, we cannot have our tourism sector jeopardised by having the neophytes, people who do not know anything about tourism, *ils n'ont pas fait leur preuve*, come up and build hotels with 500 rooms in the South! What will happen then?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gayan!

Mr X. L. Duval: What will happen then? And that is what I am asking. This is in the interest of Mauritius. Yes, we have a hotel development. We are lucky to have had some of the best hotels in the world in this country, from the past. We have had some terrible hotels also, resulting from this stupid policy of giving to friends and all that. And let us hope, therefore - another appeal to Government - that we put an immediate stop to these stupid projects and from now on we go on genuine projects; you show me what you know, what you have done before, where your money is, and then you get the land, Madam Speaker.

Another issue, Madam Speaker, that threatens our tourism industry is beach erosion. Hardly any mention. I think beach rehabilitation is mentioned in the Budget Speech and beach erosion in the strategy document. *Quelle est la menace pour le tourisme ici?* What is the threat for tourism in Mauritius? What is the real threat? The threat, Madam Speaker, is that our beaches will disappear, that they are disappearing at an alarming rate. I do not know. I am only 59, but I remember Trou-aux-Biches beach was three times what it is today, and most of the other beaches in Mauritius. What will happen in 20 years' time? Are we going to have a beach-hotel industry in 20 years' time? Again, the Minister of Environment should take this seriously because there is hardly any money. He will see that there is hardly any money in the Budget. And what we need is massive rehabilitation of the beaches, Madam

Speaker. In a moment, I will speak up quickly on environment, but I will speak about the port.

According to the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, at paragraph 174, I am quoting –

“(...) the port is making good progress (...)”

I think he has not been given the information that he has to be or to have been given, because the port is not making good progress and Government is out of touch. Since I left, the port has been subjected to constant interferences by politicians, advisors - you name it. There is now a breakdown of discipline in the port and a *laisser-aller général*. I am saying that, but can I back it up? Yes, I can back it up, Madam Speaker. Because productivity moves per hour, per crane - that is how you calculate port productivity - used to be 23, Madam Speaker. It reduced a little bit because we were making a lot of investment in the port and that disrupted the work to maybe 21. May 2017, port productivity is now 17 moves per hour and the port is supposedly making good progress. This is a joke! Seventeen moves per hour compared to 23 before, Madam Speaker, and this, despite the installation, at enormous cost, of something called a Navis 4 computerised system, which ought to have increased productivity by 40%.

Instead, Madam Speaker, productivity has fallen, and I am sad that Mr Dorsamy has been forced to leave. He was a tough disciplinarian. The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor may have appreciated that. Tough disciplinarian and that is what you need. You need to pay people well in the port. I am very happy that they get even more pay. But the work must be done, Madam Speaker, and it is not making good progress.

Madam Speaker, on the environment, sea level is rising. This is a real danger to our economy and for our quality of life. There are safety considerations along the coast, we have coral bleaching, we have problems with flash floods, we have food security problems. Everyone knows that Mauritius is classified as the 7th most vulnerable country in the world to climate change. I would like to bring that to the attention of the Minister of Environment. However, in global terms, we contribute only a miniscule amount to global warming. 0.01 of a per cent. That is how much Mauritius contributes to global warming. Minuscule amount! So, where should the bulk of our money go?

If tomorrow, Mauritius were to disappear from the map or if Mauritius would be 100% carbon dioxide free, global warming will still continue because we have such a small contribution. Global warming will still go up if we stop completely. But, Madam Speaker, if you look at the Budget, you have a feeling that the money has gone to mitigation, that is, trying to stop global warming, as if Mauritius could do that, and not adaptation which is adapting to what will happen anyway, whatever else we do. This is, Madam Speaker, my comment on environment. Adaptation is what we need most. Mitigation, yes, it is good for our public relations, but it is not that that will save Mauritius. It is adaptation especially now that Mr Trump has decided to go his way as far as the Paris Accord is concerned, Madam Speaker. God knows what effect that will have!

We are the seventh most vulnerable country and we must protect ourselves from global warming and we are not protecting ourselves. What we should do? Obviously, we must look – it is easier said than done, I agree – at coral bleaching, we must look at food security. We are doing something at drains. We are not investing enough in our disaster management system and the vehicles and the equipment that are required to protect our population, Madam Speaker. I think we must do all that. I mentioned just now beach erosion and I think these must be our priority areas. Madam Speaker, I hope that the Rs400 m. which I have put in the Doppler Radar comes up.

This takes me also to good governance. Here, there is one - it is also related to energy and environment – area which I am deeply worried. It is about good governance and especially good governance at the CEB. I note that there is nothing – hon. Bhagwan mentioned it – here in this Budget on good governance. Nevertheless, let us look at the CEB, Madam Speaker, and I will take a little bit of the time, not too long because it is very important.

CEB, we all know, Madam Speaker, during the debate of last year, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister told us that CEB is an exempt institution, forgetting to tell us what it is exempt for. Therefore, the three subsidiaries would also naturally be an exempt institution. Hon. Jahangeer would remember. Forgetting to tell us, Madam Speaker, that CEB is not an exempt institution as you and I would understand that phrase! It is an exempt institution like STC, etc. only where it is dealing with trade, where it is buying and selling electricity. This is why all the IPPs do not come up for tender because you are buying electricity from the IPP and you are selling it to the poor consumer and you do not come up for tender. But for

everything else, CEB is not an exempt institution. CEB falls squarely under the Public Procurement Act.

Any contract that CEB gives over Rs100 m. is not even dealt with by the CEB, it is dealt with by the Central Procurement Board (CPB). So, how can we, in one line, be told that CEB is an exempt institution, therefore, the others should be. Because the others, Madam Speaker, what are they exempt for? And I am going to read a copy of clause 6 of the famous Finance Act. What does it say? I will make it shorter. ‘A company set up under subsection (2) shall be an exempt organisation within the meaning of Public Procurement Act.’

And what does subsection (2) say? It says ‘implementation of projects’, it is not buying and selling of electricity anymore here, it is implementation of all projects that these companies do. The CEB bought turbines some time ago. I was on the Select Committee to look at whether or not there had been cheating because it was a tender procedure. CEB follows tenders over Rs100 m. or even less, but we have the CPB. So, implementation of projects, use of its network and implementation of such other projects – wide ones - as the Board may determine.

Madam Speaker, these companies are exempt for these, which is not what the CEB is exempt for. It is completely different, Madam Speaker, and I will continue. In a statement which hon. Collendavelloo gave, he says –

“Every exempt organisation shall establish its own procurement rules in relation to such types of contracts as may be prescribed.”

I looked at the regulations and there have been no rules prescribed for these companies. So, *fail encore*, Madam Speaker! I have not finished, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, I wish I had.

In a reply, again, and this time it was on CEB Fibernet. This is what hon. Collendavelloo said and this is why I am very worried about the CEB; he said this in reply to a question -

“The Leader of the Opposition might save us from his theatricals. The company dealing with Fibernet has passed a Resolution to the effect that they are adopting the procurement rules already existing in the CEB.”

Firstly, Madam Speaker, as we know, for over Rs100 m. CEB does not deal with procurement, it goes to CPB. So, what happens with Fibernet? It is giving contracts of hundreds of millions of rupees. That is not CEB procurement rule. What rule is that? Jungle rules, Madam Speaker!

Maybe the hon. Prime Minister may be interested to know; maybe he did not know. CEB Green Energy is mentioned in the Budget. What are the procurement rules of CEB Green Energy? This is a Board Minute and I will table this Board Minute, Madam Speaker, for you because it is so important. It is a Board Minute. CEB Green Energy and shame, Madam Speaker! This is what the Board Minute says. It is under 'Any Other Business', it is not even a Board paper. This is under 'Any Other Business'. It says -

“The Board also resolves that the company (...).”

This is CEB Green.

“(...) will follow the same procedures as far as possible as that in operation in the CEB.”

‘As far as possible!’ I will be honest as far as possible; I will not beat my wife as far as possible. When you put ‘as far as possible’ in a sentence, it means that it is up to you whether you want to follow, and I will give hon. Collendavelloo a copy of this Board Minute.

(Interruptions)

He knows it!

Then, he knows that as far as possible he is giving us complete information. I will table that, Madam Speaker, and you can read that.

So, Madam Speaker, I will finish before lunch to say that for the Metro Express, there is something that has confused me even more with this Budget. For the Metro Express, we are told that these 26 km will cost something like Rs17 billion, I think. But then when we look at the Three-Year Strategic Plan, section 3.8, it says –

“Rail and Road.

Government will be investing massively in inland transport infrastructure over the next 3 years, including 13 km of new commuter rail.”

13 not 26 anymore!

We put Rs20 m. in the Budget, Rs17 billion over the next three years and, here, it says: '13 km.' So, this is going to put wind in the sail of everyone saying that we are being misled in terms of what is the cost of the Metro Express. Is it going to be Rs17 billion for 13 km? So, what about the other 13 km that the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure was saying! I think this is more confusing than anything else and we will need to clear this, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the CEB has billions of reserves - I will try to finish quickly – and we should not squander these funds. We should be careful. If we want to increase employment, if we want to reboot the manufacturing industry, the economic vision which I have mentioned and which has not happened - in fact, it is being destroyed day by day - if we want to do that, the cost of energy is crucial for industry. I think we need not to squander the billions that CEB has in reserve and use that intelligently to reboot our manufacturing industry, and this will create the employment that we also need, Madam Speaker.

As far as public debt is concerned, this is the first time since 2010 that public debt has gone over 60%. Since 2014, we have gone over 60% and never before since 2010 has this happened. When we put in Betamax, the Indian loan, it will come, Madam Speaker - I think that I will have to take a little bit more time because I am not going to finish otherwise I am going to make a pig's dinner at the end of the speech.

But, Madam Speaker, public debt has increased from Rs237 billion in December 2014. We have talked about the percentages. I am going to give you this time the actual numbers, that is, Rs188, 000 per person in Mauritius. That was in December 2014. Now, Madam Speaker, it is Rs233,000 per person; a huge increase, Madam Speaker, of Rs58 billion in public debt since 2014. That is a huge increase. As I mentioned, Madam Speaker, before 2014, it was always below 60%. I am going to talk rapidly about this US dollar loan because that is an important issue and my conscious would not allow me not to speak about it, I will speak about it, Madam Speaker.

Because there is a reason why hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo in front of me refused the first Indian line of credit and there is a reason why I, myself, as Minister of Finance, turned down in a previous Government the line of credit, anywhere from wherever it was. I will tell you something, Madam Speaker, and he says so in the last Budget. Mauritius has never had any problem to raise loans. When I took over as Minister of Finance, hon. Rama Sithanen with

the economic downturn being predicted, had contracted a loan, if my memory serves me right, of 800 million US dollars at concessionary rate from the World Bank. 800 million multiply by 40 or something, you will see how much. Hon. Rutnah can help us out here.

(Interruptions)

It is a huge amount, Rs32 billion, Madam Speaker! That was what had been contracted by hon. Rama Sithanen. I did not take a cent of it, not a cent of it, although we had already paid a commitment fee. So, there is a reason why you don't take foreign loans. In fact, the last year's Budget in the debt strategy, it says clearly that the objective of Government is to reduce foreign loans especially loans in dollars. Because believe it or not, Madam Speaker - I hope you will believe me - the US economy is far stronger than the Mauritian economy. So, what will happen? You don't have to be an economist to understand that annually the dollar will keep increasing against the rupee.

If you look at the last 20 years, it has been increasing to just below 3% per year. When you repay even the interest, you are paying even more as years go by and that is why the hon. Minister of Finance last year, at the beginning of this year, made an early repayment - the money was already in the coffers - of 4.2 billion. Okay, the rates may have been different, but the principle is the same. Why is a foreign loan, wherever it is from, not good? Firstly, because of the appreciation of that currency, especially in dollars. In Euros and all that you have a better chance. Secondly, the interest rate is 1.8%, that is, not all that you pay. You pay the interest rate plus the appreciation, as I mentioned, about 3% annually in the value of the dollar and there is another thing which is a bit complicated to explain, but I will try to explain, Madam Speaker, it is the excess liquidity.

If you look at the accounts of the Bank of Mauritius last year, you will see that the Bank of Mauritius spent Rs1.4 billion of our money - you and me and everyone - in what it calls open market operations. That is basically sterilisation because when you have too much money in the economy, what the Bank of Mauritius does is it borrows that money. Billions of it! There are Rs14 billions of excess rupees. It borrows billions of it. But you will not lend your money to the Bank of Mauritius for nothing, will you? You will ask for interest. So, the Bank of Mauritius will pay you interest for that money at 3% let's say.

So, it takes the money and then it keeps it in the vault, that's why they have the vault, a lot of soldiers guarding that vault. It is because they have the money, they are keeping that

huge amount of money that is being sterilized, billions of rupees that are kept in the Bank of Mauritius, and the cost is 1.4 billion last year. This transaction, when you add it to the closure of the Build Mauritius Fund and that money coming in - in fact, not all of this transaction even a little bit that is, in fact, predicted or estimated for this year, will increase excess liquidity by what the economist calculates as being Rs15 billion. If there is Rs14 billion now, it will double the excess liquidity in Mauritius and it will double the cost of sterilization which I calculate about Rs500 m.

So, appreciation, interest rate, sterilization, all this must come into the calculation of where it is good or bad to take a loan. That is why it is not at all a good idea to borrow in dollars especially, to borrow overseas, because you could have used the excess liquidity in the end; that money that is lying in the Bank of Mauritius could have been used – you are paying interest anyway on it - and so long as it is buying for exports the money would have gone out of our country and we would have won-won-won instead now we lose-lose-lose. That is the real problem, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, on the Metro Express, I will come back to it during the course of the next few days. It is so much opacity, so much that we don't know about, that an hon. Member had said that he will resign; he is about to resign, Madam Speaker. We do not know at all, how much it is. We do not know about the environment. In fact, we do not know anything.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned about financial services, I am not going to talk about it again just to say that there are 20,000 people working in financial services in Mauritius and it is crucial that we reinvent this whole sector. Madam Speaker, rapidly, can you give me another 10 minutes and I will finish. Thank you!

Madam Speaker, Exports and SMEs - Vision 2030. We need to look at manufacturing and this is going to be the driving course. There has been a dramatic fall in the first quarter of this year; 11% fall in exports compared to the first quarter of 2016. 11%, Madam Speaker! How important is tax reduction? Are we going back now to old days when tax was high and everybody was looking for these eight years development certificates, 8-year tax certificates? These days, with 15% tax any investment you make - we have so many accountants on the other side - Madam Speaker, you get capital allowances. Sometimes you get more capital allowances than you have actually invested. That will take you many years. It should be years before the hotel, just an example, pays tax.

Here, we are giving these investment certificates, we are complicating the issue. We are complicating our promotional efforts. What hon. Sithaneni had done at the time, and I will follow him in that, was simplification. Having all the certificates just complicates the issue; nobody understands anymore what is happening. You do this, you get eight years, this is not what we want. We want a simple, understandable taxation system and we are complicating every year. Hon. Veerasamy Ringadoo, at his time, was giving development certificates. I thought that was no longer happening, Madam Speaker. I nearly fell off my chair when I heard that they are going to give now an agricultural processing development certificate. I thought that was one word that has gone out of fashion. This is not what incentive is all about. I think it is misguided to try to offer little bits like that; what we need for exportation is difficult.

Our real problem is: where is our market? Our market is Africa. What is our real problem? Our problem is sending goods to Africa. We have one problem which is the rules of origin. It is very, very radical to meet the rules of origin so that our goods enter COMESA and SADC duty-free. That is what we are used to be selling everywhere: come to Mauritius and we export duty free to Africa. The hon. Minister of Industry, I am sure, will know. It is very difficult to meet this 35%. And we need the diplomatic effort. We had started and, I remember, I had started it myself, to try and get the 35% lower - 30%! 25%! Then, you will see a huge increase in intra-Africa, intra-SADC, intra-COMESA trade. Otherwise, forget it! That is why the Freeport and all that, exporting mobile phones - I have said about it.

Then, we have the regional shipping company which was promised. *Guet ladans!* Nothing! Where is the regional shipping company? Please, tell us what happened to the regional shipping company? I think the freight that I started is working well. But what else are we going to do? We need desperately a better connectivity that will help every single hub in Mauritius and it is not sufficient what is being done with Maputo and Dar Es Salaam. It is really not sufficient. And we need to do that, Madam Speaker. So, for me, we need to make sure that we have partner countries that work with us to reduce the issues at importation, to reduce the issues at passing customs in their country, to reduce the rules of origin issues and that is when we will see the boost in exportation.

Madam Speaker, *les mots de la fin*. I think this Budget creates a real expectation gap. A budget exercise with too many, unfortunately, false promises, insufficient attention to the most important sectors and everybody outside saying the same thing; the vision is not clear.

The youths are more lost than ever, and especially, Madam Speaker, we have nothing to take us to the high income status that we are saying. I think if we want to be a high income status by 2023, we need 5% growth and we have nothing here to show that, Madam Speaker, and also realisation of what we have promised. If we look at the capital expenditure spent in this Budget, it is Rs6.7 billion. Last year, we spent Rs6.7 billion in something called acquisition of non-financial assets, that is, capital expenditure. Rs6.7 billion! Apart from last year, Madam Speaker, it is far lower than usual. I will give you the figures, Madam Speaker. In 2013, on capital expenditure, it was Rs11.2 billion. So, we can see the expectation gap. Promising a lot and delivering very little!

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I am going to end up by saying this. I understand that Mr Modi has advised the Prime Minister to have snap elections as soon as possible.

(Interruptions)

In the interest of the nation, I would beg the hon. Prime Minister to have these snap elections so that we can change this Government.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

At 1.08 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.42 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth!

The Rt. Hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir Anerood Jugnauth): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, let me congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for presenting once more a Budget that carefully addresses the social and economic concerns of the country.

The Budget espouses the philosophy and targets set out in my Economic Mission Statement: Vision 2030. It puts the people and the country first. It is a continuation of the 2016/17 Budget which was meant to usher a new cycle of growth and shape a new, modern and sophisticated Mauritius where there will be opportunities for one and all.

The 2017/18 Budget will accelerate sustainable, equitable and economic development, bring more social justice and improve the quality of life of the population. It will boost the productive sectors and stir wealth creation.

With the measures announced in the Budget, I have no doubt that this Government is steadily moving ahead to transform Mauritius into what has been described in the Government Programme 2015-2019, as a truly forward looking, environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant and innovative country with modern infrastructure, global connectivity, high skills, technology and socially inclusive development.

The post-Budget comments registered from different segments of the population and business quarters indicate that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has succeeded in creating a feel-good factor and boosting confidence.

I care more about those reactions than the demagogical and ridiculous affirmations of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, unlike the Opposition and their trumpet blowers who try to instill the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome, the population is appreciative of the efforts put in by this Government to find solutions to national problems and take the country to new heights of socio-economic development.

The population has unmasked those who dare to criticise us today when they themselves inflicted damage on this country through their conspiracies and ill-doings. That is why our detractors are unable to make ground despite their repeated attempts.

Perhaps, it is worth repeating that we inherited a country that was in the doldrums.

When the new Government assumed office in December 2014, economic growth was sub-par, youth unemployment was high, especially among the well-educated, and economic inequality and relative poverty were worsening. The Labour-PMSD Government succeeded in delivering absolute poverty rather than the promised prosperity.

Today, the Leader of the Opposition has the guts to say that nothing has been done for the poor as if, in one or two Budgets, absolute poverty is going to disappear. But they were there in the Labour-PMSD Government for almost nine years. What did they do? *Rézilta lor rézilta? Fiasco lor fiasco!*

(Interruptions)

Rier même! Mwa, mo envi crasser!

(Interruptions)

The Leader of the Opposition spoke of the Rodriguans who come here as squatters, they live in very poor houses, no electricity, no water, no tarred road. Well, it can be true! But that has happened since 2014 or 2015 or have we not inherited the situation? And what did they do during 10 years to have good houses for the Rodriguans who come here? He is talking of *prévoyance, il faut prévoir*. When he was in Government, everything was fine, everything was good. You know, it is easy to criticise. But before they criticise, they have to look back a bit on their own performance, what have they performed? Today, it is easy to come and make all sorts of suggestions. They seem to be good teachers. They should have been sent to the university, *donneurs de leçons*.

Many sectors, including health, education, water, power, transport, ICT and financial services were bedevilled by critical performance issues. There was a lack of cohesion in fiscal and monetary policies. Delayed completion of public projects and cost overruns were rife. Key institutions were faced with growing public mistrust. The country appeared to be adrift, and the coming generation was losing hope of a decent career and livelihood in their homeland.

There were some who were talking about ‘*ène gradué dan chaque lakaz*’. And even now, today, many houses have more than one graduate. Had they employed all the graduates when they were there during nine years? We have been only so far two years. It is easy to criticise, easy to say: “You have done nothing, *tout sala banne fausse promesse*.”

(Interruptions)

Well, if you were in Government, the language would have been different! Unfortunately, hon. Bhadain is not there!

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, he will be back!

Once again, as in 1982 and 2000, we were entrusted the mission to rebuild on ruins.

Through hard work and courageous measures, this Government has managed a turnaround on the social, administrative and economic fronts.

Members of the Opposition dare to say that this Government has only been making announcements and that nothing has materialised so far on the social and economic fronts.

But I will go to facts and figures, Madam Speaker, to demonstrate that they are utterly wrong and they are wrong purposely and that indeed there has been a trial turn-around -

First, the rate of economic growth reached 3.9 percent in 2016-2017 and is forecast to be around 4.1 percent in 2017-2018 despite a difficult international environment and the inevitable drawback of the BAI crash. The prospects for a higher GDP growth are promising with major infrastructural works and development projects that are being implemented.

These include, first and foremost, the Metro Express Project. Lots of voices are being heard against that. Some are even promising that they are going to fast until they die. I do not care about the death of such people and I ask him to go ahead. If he wants to commit suicide, I cannot be responsible for that. The Metro Express Project in itself will be a game changer for the country in terms of economic benefits and social enhancement.

Moreover, the initial success of the Africa-Mauritius-Singapore-Asia Air Corridor which we launched in March 2016 augurs well for our tourism sector and the economy. Already, Air Mauritius is planning to add a fourth weekly flight on the Mauritius-Singapore route. The economy will be further boosted by the Smart Cities that are being constructed, the digitalisation process, concrete developments as regards the Ocean Economy and obviously by the numerous budgetary measures to encourage new initiatives in the productive and service sectors.

Second, unemployment rate has gone down to 7.3 per cent from 8 per cent in 2013. As many as 6,500 new recruits have joined the public sector in the last two years. And in the private sector, job creation amounted to 14,000 in 2015 - these are official figures - and 15,000 in 2016. These figures nearly tally with the promise we made to create 20,000 jobs a year.

This morning, the Leader of the Opposition was enjoying himself by saying: "So many jobs were to be created. There was the promise. Where are the jobs?" But I am asking him to go and check because I do not come to bluff.

Third, inflation is at its all-time lowest at one per cent. There has been a 15 per cent increase in purchasing power since this Government assumed office, whereas cumulative inflation over the past two years stood at only 2.3 per cent.

We have given as much as Rs24 billion of additional revenue to households with the increases in Basic Pensions, salary compensations and the implementation of the PRB Report. This is unprecedented, Madam Speaker, and people at the lowest rung of the social ladder have benefited the most.

Fourth, moving ahead on our resolve to fight absolute poverty, we have introduced since the last Budget a subsistence allowance. This is also unprecedented.

And this morning, we were criticised for that. Does the hon. Member mean that we should have done nothing therefor? When you do, you are doing wrong, when you do not do, you have done nothing. How to please such people? Madam Speaker, this is something that the population will ultimately judge upon.

Already some Rs100 m. have been disbursed to some 8,200 families. The Negative Income Tax system, announced for implementation as from January 2018, is yet another unprecedented measure that will bring additional Rs1.3 billion revenue to 150,000 full-time employees earning less than Rs10,000 a month.

It further demonstrates that this Government is taking care of people who badly need a helping hand to improve their living conditions.

And here, I must also mention that the Leader of the Opposition criticises us. Yes, we are giving such help, but for what use, how long it will carry on, we are not forming the people, we are not having them trained to make them *homme de métier*. But he forgets that, together with Navin Ramgoolam, he committed the greatest crime that could be committed to this country. Before I lost the election in 1995, I had caused a big building in Phoenix, called the IVTB, to be built because I said we could not have only graduates in this country. We must form people, we must train people, make them good *homme de métier*. But, unfortunately, I lost the election, because at that time those who voted were very wise and Navin Ramgoolam came in together with the present Leader of the Opposition. The Labour-PMSD Government was formed. What did they say?

(Interruptions)

The MMM. I am sorry!

(Interruptions)

I tend to forget the MMM.

(Interruptions)

Yes, they committed the greatest crime against this country. What did they say? No use for training! Instead, the whole building was used as offices. But, at least, the hon. Member who is trying to give us lessons today should have taught Ramgoolam! He is not giving him lessons!

(Interruptions)

To continue, Madam Speaker, fifth, in this same endeavour, 52,000 families have been exempted from the payment for potable water. Do not all these go towards helping the poor?

Sixth, 10,000 families are not paying any wastewater charges.

Seventh, 70,000 families are benefiting from a reduced tariff for electricity.

Eighth, 40,000 families are exempted from the payment of MBC licence tax.

All these people were paying before that! And yet we have done nothing! The poor have become poorer! As if in 2014, there was no poverty in this country. In which country there is no poverty? Do you know how many poor people there exists today in France, even in UK, all over the world?

When I hear some people on the private radio! I heard one the other day, saying that people occupying big posts receive so much money, Ministers, Prime Minister, Members of Parliament are being paid so much, and why we, at the bottom of the ladder, we receive so much. The way he was expressing himself, I think, he should be at par. In which country does such a thing exist? And can it exist? The other day, someone who is very intelligent - I used to like listening to him on the radio. But I got so disgusted that I do not listen to him at all. I think his name is also Ramgoolam; Vijay Ramgoolam. He was advising the population. Next time, do not choose any party to come to power, choose individuals, bright fellows who are going to shine and show you light! Now, giving such advice! Well, supposing these stupid people were to listen to him and do exactly that, will there be a Government in this country? Can the country be ruled? If you get ten 'Roshis' - I call him '*Rashis*' - what will happen? But I am making an exception for hon. Duval.

(Interruptions)

Ninth, Madam Speaker, 3,700 families have been paid Rs225 m. under the 'Casting of Slab Scheme'.

Tenth, the construction of 1,141 NHDC houses has been completed and yet, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was saying no house has been built, except a few, some ten or twenty!

(Interruptions)

1,141 have been completed!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't interrupt!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I don't know when it started. But this is the information that I have.

(Interruptions)

Another 1,000 are under construction and 3,000 more are earmarked for 2017-2018.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you keep on interrupting! Please, don't interrupt!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: All these speak volumes, Madam Speaker, of the achievements of this Government and the positive work being done for the benefit of the nation. Some people believe that all Mauritians are fools and that all Mauritians really believe what they say and it is good to come and tell the people that on 01 May they received twice the number of people that MSM and the others got. But I like that. It is good that they keep on believing in that. But when the time will come for election, they will be taught their lesson.

(Interruptions)

What they are shouting everywhere?

(Interruptions)

Last elections were they not shouting everywhere 60-0! *Pena barer 60-0! Barer pe vini là!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, please!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: All these, Madam Speaker, as I said, speak volumes in favour of this Government for the positive work done so far for the benefit of the nation. But it is not over yet! We are continuing. When we come to the end of our mandate, then, we will have to show to the population really what has been done. Don't expect that because we said that we are going to do that at the beginning of our mandate, therefore, after the next Budget, you come and say: "but where is it"? A baby is born after 9 months and not 3 months.

(Interruptions)

In addition to what I have mentioned with regard to purchasing power, we have all the subsidies that bring accrued benefits to the population. These subsidies, including those that are provided for rice, flour, cooking gas, SC and HSC exams fees and water tanks, exceed Rs2.5 billion, Madam Speaker. If you count all these, you will see how many billions they become. Yet, we have done nothing! But, of course, all those who come on the private radio, I keep note of the names. You will see 99 percent are the same persons all the time. Of course, they are the die-hard Labourites! I don't know how many of them are PMSD, and the MMM, I can't recognise them.

(Interruptions)

Also, five service reservoirs will be constructed and with the operationalisation of the Bagatelle Dam, I can confidently state that in 2019, we would not be far from our objective of providing water supply all round the clock. There also they criticise us. When we said that we will do our best to provide water 7/7 days, 24 hours, some people started exploiting that the very first year: "Where is the promise?" And some stupid people also come on the radio and repeat the same nonsense!

Madam Speaker, let us now see how the economy performed and how public finances were managed when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance -

- not a single new economic sector was created. Yet, he announced in his 2012 Budget Speech that he is setting up the framework for new high-value added industries;
- he promised a growth rate of 4 percent but after failing to deliver on that figure, he stated, in his 2014 Budget Speech, that: “our economy is expected to expand by a good 3.2 percent in 2013”. For him at that time 3.2 percent growth was a big achievement. Today, he dares to point his finger at us when we are delivering nearly 4 percent growth for 2016 and most likely even better in 2017;
- let us now look at investments, Madam Speaker. Despite the concessions that were given to the private sector in Budgets 2012 to 2014 to boost investment, so to say, private investment had not responded; private investment growth plummeted to a negative growth of 8.4 percent in 2014, one of the lowest over the past 15 years;
- monetary management was in shambles due to a tug of war between the Bank of Mauritius and the Minister of Finance. Economic operators and the population paid the price for that mismanagement;
- negative real interest rates brought down the savings rate (excluding GBCs) to 9 percent in 2014, one of the lowest figures recorded in our economic history;
- excluding transactions of GBCs, the current account deficit was at 12.8 percent of GDP in 2014. This was much higher than the 9 percent allowed by SADC macroeconomic convergence targets;
- consolidated Budget deficit (including the Special Funds) stood at 4.6 percent in 2013 and 4.2 percent in 2014.
- Capital spending averaged a mere 2.8% of GDP over the three budgets of hon. Xavier Duval.
- Public Sector Debt according to international definition already reached 60.7% of GDP in 2014. The statutory 50% debt target under the Public Debt Management Act 2008 had already been missed in 2013.
- Income inadequacy measured by the Gini coefficient increased from 0.37 in 2001/02 to 0.44 in 2014. As Minister of Finance, hon. Duval failed to make a meaningful dent on absolute poverty.

It was unanimously acknowledged among economic analysts that the lackluster Budgets - lackluster Budget they call it - of hon. Xavier Duval were devoid of a credible part for reform and the building blocks for realising a better future.

That was the *bilan* of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister of Finance. That was his *rézilta lor rézilta*. In fact, it was in those three years that we had *menti menti* Budgets.

Madam Speaker, the former Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger commented that the 2017-2018 Budget has nothing to revive the economy. I think he is living in another country. The *relance économique* is already happening, Madam Speaker. Business confidence has increased by 6% as evidenced by the 23rd edition of the Business Confidence Indicator of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The tax reform announced in the Budget to encourage our domestic enterprises to expand their export capacity is again unprecedented. Nobody before even thought of reducing tax rate to 3% for those enterprises. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced it and I have no doubt that this measure will impact positively on the economy.

Likewise, the introduction of an 8-year income tax holiday to create new growth poles will inevitably boost the economy and create new jobs. Therefore, it pains me to see that hon. Bérenger pursues on the path of utter demagoguery when he knows pretty well that the Budget presented by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is a good and innovative one that opens up new prospects of wealth creation for the country.

Madam Speaker, I will now dwell on the criticisms that have been levelled against Government's decision to implement the Metro Express project. I explained last year in my intervention on the Budget that the project was revived after I received information and confirmation that cost optimisation can make it affordable. Some, including the former Prime Minister, the *coffre-fort* man, alleged that the Metro Express project will be a financial disaster. But let me inform the House of what was going to happen in July 2014 when the Labour-PMSD Government was about to sign a contract with an Indian firm...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Leader of Opposition, please do not interrupt!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: ... Indian firm to implement the *métro léger* project for USD 830 million, at least that is correct, which, at today's exchange rate, stand at Rs31 billion. The then Government had decided to finance the project through loans from India and local financial institutions. Rs31 billion would have been borrowed and interests payable on the loans for a period of 15 years, according to the Ministry of Finance, would have amounted to nearly Rs9 billion; the interest. That means the previous Government would have put a debt burden of Rs40 billion on the population.

For me, that would have been financial disaster. And it is good to know that the Leader of the Opposition, then Minister of Finance, was condoning that disastrous decision. He was prepared to let public debt skyrocket and today he dares to criticize us. We are not prepared to accept such criticism, Madam Speaker.

With us, the project will not unduly indebt the country. I, personally, believe in that project. I know it is good for the country and I know this Government is determined to go ahead. Nothing will stop us, Madam Speaker. Thanks to the Government of India and to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, we have received a grant of 9.9 billion Mauritian Rupees for the project and whatever additional funds would be needed would be met through a line of credit negotiated on very special terms. We are not borrowing Rs40 billion. Not even a quarter of that sum for the Metro Express Project!

I wish to reassure that we are a responsible Government. Our country badly needs a modern mass transit transport system. We would be having a Metro Express that would not put an unbearable financial burden on the country. I have looked into the financial model and I can say that the Metro Express will be viable right from the beginning of operations.

I want to say in this House that no pressure, no lobby, no resignation or conspiracy will prevent us from implementing the project that will transform the socio-economic landscape of Mauritius. Once the bidding exercise is completed, we would provide all the information needed on the Metro Express and people will realise to what extreme the Opposition has gone in its fallacies.

Madam Speaker, much is being said by the Opposition as regards the financial help being provided to Mauritius by India. First of all, I wish to say that the Opposition is insulting India and they will pay a heavy political price for that.

What is wrong if India is providing grants and very concessionary loans to Mauritius? What is wrong if India wants to help us in modernising our country and developing our economy? Some have tried to make people believe we are ceding Agalega to India in exchange of the financial support we are getting. What nonsense! Only insane persons can utter such an accusation. I firmly condemn such smear campaign against India.

And I seize this opportunity to heartily thank the Government of India for accompanying the Republic of Mauritius towards its next objective of joining the league of high income economies. As a Nation, we have to express our gratitude to Mother India and I would have expected it to be unanimous. I believe it is not too late for those who have insulted India to tender their apologies.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to comment on the BAI crash and the accusations levelled by the Opposition on us on this issue.

I maintain that had we not taken decisively surgical and timely decisions in the face of a mega Ponzi scheme through which billion of rupees of people's money were siphoned to the benefit of BAI's ultimate beneficial owner, his family and friends, our economy would have collapsed like had been the case in Trinidad and Tobago where a similar Ponzi scheme was operated.

We saved our country from havoc and we managed the post BAI crash in such a way so as to minimise its impact in our economy. We saved jobs. We also had a compassionate approach towards all those people who had been lured to invest in the Ponzi scheme. This Government committed itself to reimburse them and indeed more than Rs10.5 billion have already been reimbursed to date.

Now, we are being told that the Prime Minister, before he left for India, promised that he is going to get money and that he would come back and pay back all that was left. It is most unfair to invent such a story. I had listened very carefully to everything that the Prime Minister said. He said he is going right now to India. He will study the situation and find out what best can be done for those persons. When he comes back, he will continue to study and see what means can be available. He never said he was going to beg from India to come and reimburse people who have acted diligently with their own money. Today, as if we are indebted to them. So far as I am concerned, I was telling my Ministers not to pay anyone, to

wait until everything is over, what asset is left, what money is left, then to be shared equally among them all.

But, unfortunately, my Ministers who were responsible to look after that in those days, did not pay heed. To everything they said: ‘Yes, yes, don’t worry.’ And in some cases, they did exactly the contrary of what should be done. I always said to them that no money whatsoever should be used from public funds insofar as the BAI matter is concerned. They always promised, they said: rest assured, there will be no cent taken. And what do we see today? That is why I am sorry that hon. Bhadain is not here.

(Interruptions)

The Leader of the Opposition must look at himself in the mirror and if he is sincere with himself, he cannot shirk his responsibility with regard to the BAI affair, if I may call it scam.

In reply to a PNQ by the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger, on 21 November 2013, hon. Xavier Duval, then Minister of Finance, took umbrage at the mention of the possibility of Ponzi schemes in the insurance sector . He even went on to the extent of assuring this House that – these are his words –

“BAI is a company that is regulated and that its financial statement for 31 December 2012 showed Rs6 billion of excess assets over liabilities”.

Well, if that were correct ...

(Interruptions)

It cannot be true!

(Interruptions)

Well, I put the question: did he tell the truth or did he mislead the House? I ask him the question, today, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, on a point of order! It is true.

Madam Speaker: It is a point of clarification rather.

Mr X. L. Duval: I did not mislead. It is true and the hon. Minister should withdraw that because I will produce the financial statements tomorrow.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I will not withdraw because I maintain it.

Mr X. L. Duval: It is absolutely 100% true and there is a question tomorrow on the role of the auditors. I do not know which Minister and I do not know if he is travelling, otherwise he should stay and listen and he might learn something.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I will not withdraw anything. I will only withdraw when I get the truth in black and white in front of me that this hon. Leader of the Opposition was correct. So long, I do not get that, I take it for granted that all the information I have got ...

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, on a point of order! When I have spoken, you have ruled yourself, that when I say the word ‘mislead’ I must produce the document to prove that I must mislead. I am not misleading. I am saying that someone is misleading. The hon. Minister is reversing the role. This is not correct. If he still has information that I have misled the House, he should produce it. It is not for me to produce it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, what you just said is a point of clarification and on a point of clarification there is no debate. So, understand! Please, proceed!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, Madam Speaker, I made myself very clear. Let me inform the House that the then Minister of Finance was fully aware of the situation with regard to the BAI.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: In its Report in 2012, the IMF drew attention to the investment vehicles being operated by the BAI and stressed on the fact that there are “potentially serious issues for the policyholders, depositors and investors and that the weaknesses that allowed the problem to remain unresolved, could also result in more serious failure of a systemically more important institution”. Hon. Duval cannot pretend he was not aware. He has been condoning the acts of the cronies of the former Prime Minister. He cannot

come and blame us now for the crime that had been committed against the country.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, the former Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérénger, cannot blame us for the BAI scandal. He himself referred to the BAI Ponzi in his PNQ of 21 November 2013. He showed concern for what was being condoned by the Labour-PMSD Government. He has to be consistent with himself.

Madam Speaker, let me now come to the Betamax case. The Opposition is more interested in knowing how Government will pay damages to the promoters. Well, damages if we have to pay - but then, I can put the same question: all these millions that were lost in Air Mauritius, STC, hedging, how was it paid? Who paid that?

(Interruptions)

But it is obvious. If it has to be paid, it will be paid the same way. Why not? But what we are doing, we are investing. The people will get the benefit of it whereas what was paid for hedging, what benefit was got from that? People must think twice before talking. The Opposition is more interested in knowing how Government will pay damages to the promoters. They do not want to know how the country was being looted by the cronies of the Labour Party. They are not interested to know in what obscure circumstances the Betamax deal was struck. In this case also, I want to tell the Nation that we have acted in the best interest of the country, on the basis of facts and figures that were before us when the matter was discussed at the level of Government.

I wish hon. Bhadain will confirm when he addresses the House that he presented the case to us and convinced Government to terminate the contract. Hon. Bhadain cannot now put the responsibility on the Attorney General and the Prime Minister. We took a collective decision and hon. Duval never disapproved it - either in Cabinet or outside; this is the truth.

As a responsible Government, we did what we thought was right. Since the termination of the contract, the STC has saved Rs600 million over two years in terms of transportation costs for our petroleum products. I read in the papers the comments of the former Prime Minister, the 'soonook man' where he is reported to have said that this Government is putting a burden on the taxpayers with damages to be paid to the promoters of Betamax. The population knows pretty well who had overburdened the country and the taxpayers. People have certainly not forgotten that only with irresponsible hedging

transactions at the STC and Air Mauritius, these institutions lost a massive Rs11 billion. The population has had to bear the brunt.

Madam Speaker, I wish to join the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in saying to the Nation that we would be ruthless against drug traffickers and offenders of law and order. Here again, the previous Labour Prime Minister has the guts - I hear him - repeating every time that all the time when he was Prime Minister, there was no problem of drug in this country, that every time the MSM comes to power, the problem of drug becomes acute in this country. What nonsense, people will not forget in 1982 when I first became Prime Minister, how drug was creating havoc in this country, how I appointed a Commission of Enquiry. How I risked my life, I had so many threats to put order and to get rid of the big traffickers of this country.

People will remember when the Labour Party and the PMSD were in power so many times questions were put in this House about drug. So many times requests were made for a Commission of Enquiry, every time they were turned out by Navin Ramgoolam. And today he has the guts to come as if this drug problem has come up here in this country since 2014. He should be ashamed of himself, this man! How can he say such lies, such nonsenses?

Unlike the previous Government, we are taking the bull by the horns. Recent drug seizures and arrests of suspected drug traffickers are testimony to our resolve to combat the drug problem and protect our youth. Not only we will be recruiting 583 additional Police Constables, but we will invest massively in the acquisition of modern equipment and technological tools that will enable the Police to track traffickers, criminals and other law offenders. We wish to learn from the Singapore model of law and order enforcement and in this context I have been invited by the Singaporean Government to visit its law and order institutions with a view to develop meaningful cooperation between our two countries in this area.

The installation of some 4,000 CCTV surveillance cameras all throughout the island under the Safe City Project will undoubtedly contribute to deter criminals and help the Police to intervene promptly. It will come along with an integrated Digital Radio Communication System and Emergency Response Management System. Moreover, my Ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Tourism, the Tourism Authority and hoteliers to come up with an Action Plan to prevent tourists from being robbed or assaulted.

Concerning our Prison service, provision is being made for the recruitment of 35 additional Prison Officers. A Residential Drug Rehabilitation Centre will be set up at the Eastern High Security Prison, Melrose. With regard to our EEZ and Territorial Waters, the surveillance capacity will be strengthened with the arrival in Mauritius of the CGS Valiant.

The Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration is actively engaged in the effective and judicious exploitation of marine non-living resources in our maritime zones while safeguarding our sovereign rights and territorial integrity.

The Department will pursue with the implementation of its strategic plan and focus its action on the following three main areas –

- the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary and Continental Shelf;
- the Administration of the Maritime Zones, and
- the Exploration of the Seabed for non-living resources.

Madam Speaker, our resolve and commitment to develop Rodrigues is once more demonstrated in the 2017-2018 Budget. I am pleased that the grant provided to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been increased by Rs525 m. to reach Rs3.4 billion. Three major projects that are being given prime importance are –

- the extension of the airport terminal;
- the development of the Port Mathurin Harbour, and
- the laying of the submarine optic fibre cable.

Madam Speaker, the 2017-2018 Budget is guided by our resolve to generate meaningful economic growth that translates into a marked improvement in the quality of life of our citizens. It sends a strong signal to rise to the challenge of our ambitions. It aims at eradicating poverty, reducing income inequality, ensuring gender equality and creates better opportunities for our people.

The Budget is also based on solid economic foundations, reconciling social objectives with macro-fiscal fundamentals, demonstrating that good management of public finances can indeed lead to significant benefits to society.

We also understand that infrastructure is of utmost importance both to improve the lives of citizens and to provide a conducive platform for businesses. We are investing massively in upgrading our road network, improving our utilities network, enhancing our

health and education facilities and modernising strategic infrastructures such as our port and airport. Through these, we will not only achieve our target of becoming a high-income economy by 2023, but also leave a legacy for a better Mauritius for future generations.

I am convinced Mauritius is on the right track and that we are advancing towards realising our dream of a second economic miracle. Madam Speaker, we are making history and another historic event awaits me on 22 June at the United Nations Headquarters. I will be presenting to the UN our resolution with regard to the illegal excision of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius prior to our independence for the matter to be referred to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

Mauritius will have to prove that ‘might’ cannot be always ‘right’ and that the rule of law and respect for human rights that are advocated by the democratic nations have to be adhered to in all circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I am putting all my energy and passion in this sacred mission that I am undertaking for my motherland and for the Mauritians of Chagossian origin who were forcibly evicted from their homeland.

Our territory and our exclusive economic zone represent our common wealth. We should be able to enjoy fully the benefit they can offer our country and our people.

When it comes to sovereignty and territorial integrity, there cannot be any compromise. We want the world to understand our plea and support us in our endeavour to complete the decolonisation process of Mauritius and allow us to exercise our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

In this historic moment, I wish that patriotism and national interests prevail over party politics. I want the People of Mauritius to stand united behind me in the battle I am leading to complete the decolonisation of Mauritius and as we move ahead on our socio-economic agenda, let us draw our inspiration from Ralph Bunche, the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize Winner who said, I quote -

“To make our way, we must have firm resolve, persistence, tenacity. We must gear ourselves to work hard all the way. We can never let up.”

On this note, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

(3.46 p.m.)

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, Rs5 billion! Rs5 billion is what has been reported in the Press as being the amount which the State Trading Corporation will have to pay to Betamax following the arbitration award. Rs5 billion! How many houses can we build with Rs5 billion? The budget of the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands; five years' budget for construction! We can eradicate the problem of social housing for five years with Rs5 billion. With Rs5 billion, we can complete most of the projects that have been announced for key community-based projects in the Budget. With Rs5 billion, we can do roads, we can do drains. With Rs5 billion, we eradicate absolute poverty for a while, and yet not a single word in this Budget about the Betamax saga. Not a single word about who will be paying for that money. Not a single word about how this money will be paid.

The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor commented on Betamax. Let me remind him that only one Party in this country stood against the contract of Betamax when it was signed in 2009. Only the MMM did! In those days, the MSM was doing what they called '*opposition loyale*'. That was before they joined hands with Navin Ramgoolam in the 2010 Elections. We, at the MMM, criticised the Betamax contract, not because we had anything against the people behind Betamax, not because we had anything against Betonix, but we were not agreeable with the way that we were going to bind this population for the next 15 years; a contract that was signed in total opacity, without any tender procedures being followed. Of course, in 2010, as a responsible Opposition, we asked a PNQ. The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked a PNQ about the Betamax contract, and the Government replied. They set out a series of reasons to justify the decision to give the contract to Betamax and they concluded, and I will quote this -

“We, in this country, have a lot of businessmen, many *cousins*, *cousines*. They never invested Rs2 billion. It is the first time in Mauritius that a Mauritian is going to invest, and we already have a contract. Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract was awarded after STC was exempted from the Public Procurement Act and, I think, - look at the sarcasm - as a lawyer, the hon. Member should know.”

Who was saying that? Was it Dr. Ramgoolam? Was it hon. Bachoo? Was it hon. Dr. Jeetah? No! That was hon. Showkutally Soodhun saying that! Hon. Showkutally Soodhun was defending Betamax and teaching lawyers a lesson, telling lawyers that they should know that STC is exempt from procurement procedures. But, in those days, the MSM was with the

Labour Party! Honeymoon period! When the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor was the President of the Republic, that was fine! Only the MMM – do not change history – objected to the contract with Betamax. And I was not happy with the answer, Madam Speaker. So, one year later, I asked the same Minister, hon. Soodhun: did you seek the opinion of the State Law Office? This is what I said -

“May I know from the hon. Minister whether the final form of the contract that was signed was cleared, vetted and approved by the State Law Office?”

That is what hon. Soodhun said –

“In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the advice of the State Law Office was that the agreement is legally in order.”

That is what was said in this august Assembly. Before the Government, before the STC signed the contract with Betamax, they took advice from the State Law Office, and the State Law Office told them that it was legally in order. But, then, what happened after this Government took office? Cabinet decision of 30 January 2015 -

“Cabinet has taken note that the Contract of Affreightment regarding the transportation of petroleum products for Mauritius signed between the State Trading Corporation and Betamax Ltd, is being terminated forthwith in the light of, *inter alia*, the unlawful procedure and processes regarding the allocation of the contract.”

Same MSM Party, when they were with the Labour Party, defended Betamax, answered PQs and PNQs and stated that they had received all proper legal advice from the State Law Office. And once they were back in Government, they rescinded the contract. So, the hon. Prime Minister today has a duty to this Nation. He has to tell the Nation: did the Government, did the STC go back to the State Law Office and get a legal advice before they rescinded the contract with Betamax? Because when hon. Fowdar asked this same question to hon. Gungah last year, the hon. Minister refused to answer this. He hid behind the arbitration proceedings. He said, “I can’t divulge. There is an arbitration going on.” So, we ought to know today, in this august House: did the Government, did the State Trading Corporation take legal advice from the State Law Office before they decided to terminate the agreement with Betamax?

Madam Speaker, now we have an award for Rs5 billion. The hon. Minister Sinatambou has announced on the radio, in a Press conference, that the State Trading Corporation will apply to the Supreme Court to set aside the arbitration award. This is a right that they have, and they should use it if they feel that there is legal ground to set it aside. They should do it. But the hon. Minister, who is a lawyer, knows about the New York Convention. He knows about the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards that we have signed, ratified and promulgated in Mauritius. He knows about all the decisions of the Supreme Court of Mauritius, including the landmark case of Cruz City where the Supreme Court stated in what exceptional circumstances you can set aside an arbitral award. But let us assume that this arbitral award is not set aside.

Who is going to pay for it? How is it going to be paid? There is not even a contingent liability. On the contingency, there is not even a provision made. We are not talking about potential award, it is an actual award. So, the very least we would have expected from this Government if they were responsible, is to include, to make provision for contingency in case the arbitration is not set aside. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, Betamax is not an isolated case.

La façon dont ce gouvernement s'est comporté après les élections, on croirait un éléphant dans un magasin de porcelaine, qui écrase tout sur son passage et le peuple, aujourd'hui, doit ramasser les pots cassés.

We have CT Power. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is not here. We, in the MMM, objected the way the former Government gave the contract to CT Power. We objected again, not because we had anything against CT Power, the promoters behind CT Power; we objected the way the contract was awarded, the opacity surrounding the award, the fact that it was an unsolicited bid; that is why we objected. But what did this Government do? Instead of renegotiating with CT Power, instead of ensuring that the procedures are followed, they rescinded the contract, they terminated the contract with CT Power. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Ivan Collendavelloo, who is not here, has been criticised. The CEB has been criticised by the Supreme Court for the way they treated CT Power because CT Power won their Judicial Review. The case is before the Privy Council, the case is on appeal. But the lawyer for CT Power has already made it known that CT Power will come after the State for damages. When it does so, what would happen? Who will pay for that? Hon. Collendavelloo?

The Government? And, again, no contingency, nothing planned, not a single word about this possibility in the Budget. And CT Power is not the only one.

What about Hogan Lovells, their claim for Rs400 m. in relation to termination of contract for Pointe-Jérôme? What about the numerous cases which the numerous people who had been arrested, only to find that their provisional charges were struck out? All the numerous people are suing the State in millions of rupees.

What will happen to the claim of people like Ish Sookun, like Rundheersing Bheenick, like hon. Shakeel Mohamed and like the Rawat family? What would happen if these people were able to establish their claim against the State? No provision at all has been made, no contingency plan at all. We all know that there is a big arbitration going on where Dawood Rawat is suing the Government for USD1 billion. Again, we have to provide for these things. *Gouverner c'est prévoir*. This is why last year, the then hon. Leader of the Opposition asked a PNQ to the Prime Minister who was then Minister of Finance and Economic Development. He wanted to know whether provision is being made in case all these cases are successful against the State. But the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development then did not find fit to answer. *C'était le cadet de ses soucis l'année dernière, ça l'est toujours cette année*.

Madam Speaker, since we are on the issue of BAI, I am very sad that there is not a word about the policyholders in Super Cash Back Gold and Bramer Asset Management. Answering to a PNQ earlier this year, hon. Sesungkur, Minister of Financial Services, confirmed that there are about 5,000 policyholders who have not yet been paid and the amount that has to be paid to these people is around Rs9 billion. This is what he said. This is in Hansard. Around Rs9 billion left to be paid to the policyholders. We know that most of the assets of BAI have been sold. We know that most of these assets have been sold for peanuts, *bradés*.

We know what happened to Courts, not sold to the highest bidder. We know what happened to Iframac. It lost all the concessions. We know what happened to Apollo Hospital; we have asked questions here. And we know what happened to BAI Kenya which was supposed to be sold for Rs4 billion and was actually sold for only Rs2.1 billion. Here, I pause to comment.

There is a Commission of Inquiry set up to look into the BAI Kenya. And who is heading this? Sattar Hajee Abdoula! We all heard the tape-recording that he is circulating in

the Internet about the conversation between Sattar Hajee Abdoula and his boss. Yet, nothing! Up to now, nothing! Not a single word about this tape, about why Mr Sattar Hajee Abdoula was sent to Paris, why he was asked to negotiate with Dawood Rawat, what was the deal. Nothing! Not a word up to now!

The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor goes around and talks about BAI. Yes, the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Paul Bérenger, questioned the Government about BAI. Yes, we were concerned. We were concerned that the insurance levels, the related party ratios were not being addressed correctly. And yes, hon. Xavier Duval who was then in the Government, he was Minister of Finance and Economic Development, he defended *bec et ongles* BAI, just like hon. Soodhun defended *bec et ongles* Betamax.

But what happened after the change in Government? We should not forget who removed the money from Bramer Bank. We should not forget the rundown on Bramer Bank. We should not forget how many parastatal bodies removed their money from the Bramer Bank. We should not forget that the Central Bank had given them time to find money and on the same day they were given a letter telling them that they have a delay to find the money, on the same night, I should say, their banking licence was revoked, late at night.

So, do not come and say BAI is not your making. BAI was a problem, but this Government destroyed it. BAI was a problem that could have been tackled and resolved in a different way, but this Government chose to gun down BAI and, today, 5,000 people are still left with Rs9 billion not paid. People have gone on strike in Port Louis; people will have gone on strike, Vidur Co-operative Thrift & Saving Society Ltd has gone on strike. Why did these people stop the strike? Because they had a meeting with the hon. Prime Minister! What did the hon. Prime Minister tell them? I hope he will be able to tell us in his summing-up.

I spoke to the representative of these people and what he told me is very different from what I just heard from the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor. What he told me was that the hon. Prime Minister told them that he was going to go to India and talk and see if he can get financing from India and then when he will come back, he will find a solution to pay them in one go. That is what, at least, they understood. If they misunderstood, at least, the hon. Prime Minister should have told them: “You know, I am not taking any commitments.” Maybe, they would have continued their strike. But, at least, today, as a caring Government, the hon. Prime Minister had told them that he is working on a solution. You have given them hope.

Don't let them down. Because a lot of these people are victims, innocent victims! They invested in BAI.

The FSC had licensed these products. So, today, we should not come and say: "Ah, these investors, they ought to have known better." It is the FSC which ought to have known better before allowing the public to invest and the FSC is the Government. The Government is the one which appoints Board members of the FSC. The Government has a Minister responsible for FSC. So, we cannot just say that it is the people who have lost money, who have themselves to be blamed.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move to the Budget itself. The Budget, Madam Speaker, is a very important exercise. Every year, a lot of time and resources is put in the preparation of the Budget. Consultations are held, Ministries send their recommendations, there is consultation with stakeholders and members of the public, trade unionists, private sectors, and then the hon. Minister of Finance come and tell this House, what he wants to do; how will he do it, and what objectives he is going to attain by doing it.

So, how is he going to spend money? How is he going to get money to spend and what result will come out of this spending. And we here, we debate till late at night. We stand long hours in committee stages. It is a very serious exercise. After one year, the hon. Minister should have a decency to come and tell us what I had told you I will do, why I did not do. If I had told you that I am going to spend on such and such things, I have to tell you why I did not spend. If I told you that I am going to achieve this economic performance and I do not achieve it, I should have the decency to come and explain why I got it wrong. Maybe there is a reasonable excuse. Maybe it is just sheer incompetence, but, at least, we need to know why you missed the target.

The hon. Minister Mentor has been going on about the growth. Let me remind him, his first hon. Minister of Finance, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, had, for last year, predicted growth rate of 5.7%. 5.7%, he had predicted. Last year, the hon. Minister of Finance had predicted 4.1%, this year he has confirmed that we only receive 3.9%, that is below 5.1% and that is a third below 5.7%. So, you know there is an underperformance. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, I have doubts, I am not going to challenge the figures prepared by the Minister of Finance, but it is a truth that other independent economists and the World Bank have predicted a lower growth, had advanced a lower growth figure than 3.9%. But, now that we know what has been the growth, we should not stay here we should understand

why had the Government underachieved, and we should look at the Capital Budget. The Capital Budget, Madam Speaker, is the amount of money that we spend on goods that are going to generate growth as opposed to recurrent expenses that come every year. For capital, it is usually a one-off over a period of time and it is supposed to stimulate the economy and bring growth. Last year, it was announced that the capital expenditure would be Rs10 billion.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order, if the hon. Member would give me two minutes. The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor shockingly said that I had misled the House because I had referred to BAI having surplus reserves. I am tabling copy of the report of BAI Mauritius Co. Ltd year ended 31 December 2013, and he should not say things he does not know. And it shows clearly, Rs6 billion...

Madam Speaker: Don't address yourself...

Mr X. L. Duval: No, I want to say, Madam Speaker, because you have allowed him to defame me. I will say, there was Rs6 billion...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, wait!

(Interruptions)

No, I am just...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Hon. Thierry Henry! I am just asking you not to address yourself to the Minister, but to address yourself to the Chair.

Mr X. L. Duval: I will ask it again. I am submitting proof, an audit firm called KPMG...

(Interruptions)

That may be so. Then, Madam Speaker, I answered the question at that time and this is 2013. So, I would ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, now that I have provided the information, to kindly excuse himself, present his excuse.

Madam Speaker: You are laying a copy of the document on the Table of the Assembly, the document will be examined by the hon. Minister Mentor and then he will see to it whether he will withdraw or not.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just saying before being interrupted that last year the hon. Minister of Finance had budgeted Rs10 billion for capital expenditure, but the figures that are in the estimate show, far from Rs10 billion, only Rs6.7 billion. The actual amount spent for last year in the Capital Budget was not Rs10 billion as he had planned, but only Rs6.7 billion. We are talking about almost a third (33%) under spending and it is normal that if a Government does not spend on capital spending, it is not going to achieve growth. In fact, in the Budget estimates themselves, they have already conceded that they would not be achieving the growth. And I am not saying it for myself; this is what is stated in the estimates at page 7. If we look at the growth, for next year, it is estimated at 4.1% 2017-2018. Last year, for the same period, it was not 4.1%, it was predicted that we are going to have 4.6% growth.

Then, for 2018-2019, this Budget anticipates a growth of 4.3%, last year in his Budget for the same period 2018-2019, the hon. Minister of Finance anticipated 5% growth. Already one year to the other, this Government, itself, had to bring down the ambition of its growth, what they anticipate the growth would be. It is no surprise because if you do not spend on capital, you will not get growth.

Now, let us turn to public debt. Public debt, Madam Speaker, is the amount of debt as a percentage of GDP. In 2015, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo used the term 'alarming level' when he was describing that our debt level in 2014 was 61% of GDP. Yet, from 61% his Budget increased the public debt to 65% last year. This is what the hon. Minister of Finance just stated. When it was 65% last year, the hon. Minister of Finance came and said 65% - I am going to reduce it to 62.8%. So this is what we were told. This is the Budget we voted last year to reduce public debt to 62.8%. Was public debt reduced? We have just been told on Thursday that the public debt has now reached 66.1%.

Now, if 61% was alarming, what will the Government describe 66.1% public debt as? And I could understand if this public debt had been used to invest in capital project, in capital expenditure, at least, I would have hoped that this money is being used to produce future growth. But, no, as I have just mentioned, we are under spending our capital Budget.

Now, Madam Speaker, if someone earns Rs10,000 a month and 66% of that salary, Rs6600, goes into paying his debt, what will he do? Will he borrow more or will he work harder? He will work harder, wait till he has more money and then spend, but this simple basic economic logic seems to be beyond the grasp of the Government. So, our debt level is

already 66.1% and we are told that we are now getting more borrowing from India. In order to fool people, to try to fool the IMF, you are going to say it's not public debt. It is redeemable preference shares, as if the IMF will not look at substance over form. The problem, Madam Speaker, is that this is unsustainable. This is bad fiscal stewardship.

Madam Speaker, we cannot live off other people's money. We cannot and should not burden the population. We cannot and should not mortgage our children's future. *Après moi, le déluge*. This is what comes to my mind after I have heard what the hon. Minister of Finance said about the debt level and taking more debts. *Après moi, le déluge !*

The move to amend the Public Debt Management Act to use gross debt instead of net debt is a welcome step. But, tell the truth, you are not doing it because you want to please the IMF. You are doing it because there is a legal requirement in our law, in this Act, that by June 2018 you have to reduce public debt to 50 per cent and this Government has not been able to do it, will not be able to do it. So, they are going to amend the law to just move the post.

Concerning inflation, both the hon. Prime Minister and the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor mentioned inflation at one per cent. I am a bit at a loss because when I look at the Estimates which have been circulated at page 7, I see inflation rate percentage 2016-2017 is 2.2 per cent, 2017-2018 it is 3 per cent. So, it is not 1 per cent, it is 3 per cent. Again, I would have preferred the hon. Minister to explain what he meant just by throwing a figure of 1 per cent and not comparing it to like figures. But, what we have now is a system of low growth and rising inflation. This is a recipe for economic disaster!

Concerning unemployment, there is only one line in the Budget talking about the unemployment rate has fallen to 7.3 per cent. We would recall in 2015, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo spoke about the creation of thousands of jobs. In his Vision 2030, the then Prime Minister spoke about the creation of hundred thousand new direct and indirect jobs. In last year's Budget, hon. Pravind Jugnauth was even more precise at paragraphs 49 and 50 of his speech –

“(...) the new policies to boost up economic growth and employment in this Budget would generate some 7,000 new jobs in the short term. (...) 21,400 youths, men and women will be taken out of unemployment.”

Now, the facts, the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor challenged the figures advanced by the hon. Leader of the Opposition but the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not wrong, Madam Speaker. He has been relying on what I have been relying which is Statistics Mauritius which published its report in May 2017. In May 2017, what did Statistics Mauritius say? It stated that in 2015 there were 538,300 employed people and in 2016 there were 538,600 people in employment. So, from one year to the other, he is right there has been only a net increase of 300. There are only 300 more people who are in employment compared to last year.

But, it is true that unemployment rate has gone down. It is true that it has gone down from 7.9 per cent to 7.3 per cent. But it is not going down because you are creating more jobs. It is going down because the number of people looking for jobs has gone down. The active labour force has gone down, the economically inactive has gone up by 10,800 people and labour force has gone down by 3600 which is logical because we are an ageing population. So, lots of people will not want to work. Last year, they were looking for a job and today they are retiring. A lot of people have moved overseas, a lot of people are in training. But, the net amount, the reason why unemployment rate is going down is not because you are creating more jobs; it is because the labour supply is shrinking. The facts remain that almost 24 per cent of people below the age of 24 are unemployed.

Madam Speaker, on Friday, the day after the hon. Minister of Finance presented his Budget, a girl came looking for a job in our Chambers. She has been on the register stamping cards, as they say it, for the past four years and has not got a job. I was looking at her and I was thinking what is there in this Budget to encourage the private sector to recruit this young girl, a young girl with no experience, a graduate with no experience?

YEP will absorb a number of people for one year and after one year they will go back. But, there is absolutely nothing and we do not need to have a lot of imagination, we can just see what other countries are doing to solve the unemployment problem among the youth. We could have, for example, introduced the fiscal incentive and told companies that for the first year if they recruit a young unemployed graduate, we would allow them a double deduction for the salary for the first year. At least they would have an incentive. But, no measures! Absolutely no measures announced in this Budget to solve the unemployment problem amongst the youth, among the graduates of this country!

Next economic indicator is the budget deficit. In layman's term, this is the difference between what you expect to earn and what you plan to spend. Obviously, if you are earning a

certain amount of money, if you are earning Rs10,000, you are not going to spend Rs11,000 or Rs12,000 because you will have to take a loan to finance this excess. So, budget deficit is very important. The amount of money that we spend compared to our revenue is very crucial and in this year's Budget the hon. Prime Minister stated that the overall budget deficit will be Rs15.5 billion, representing 3.2 per cent of GDP compared to 3.5 per cent.

Now, is this really the case? Are we really going to have only 3.2 per cent budget deficit? If we look at the table, Madam Speaker, of the Estimates, table 8, we see that revenue will be Rs99.5 billion, expenditure both current and capital will amount to Rs127 billion. So, Rs127 billion minus Rs99 billion - my friend, hon. Rutnah, can help me - will be around...

(Interruptions)

...Rs28.2 billion.

(Interruptions)

Rs28.2 billion! This is the real budget deficit, Rs28.2 billion and not Rs15.5 billion! Rs28.2 billion represents a shocking 5.8 per cent of GDP! Of course, if we take into consideration the exceptional grant from foreign Governments and institutions, the deficit goes down to 21.2 per cent which still represents 4.4 per cent of GDP and not 3.2 per cent.

Why has he been able to reduce or at least pretend that he is reducing the budget deficit is because he is transferring funds from the two Special Funds to the Budget. But, you can't do that! What you are doing is not reducing the budget deficit, what you are doing is financing the budget deficit. It is as if I have Rs10,000 a month and I want to spend Rs11,000 and I take Rs1,000 from my savings account. That does not mean that I am spending less than Rs11,000. It simply means that I am financing my excess spending by using my savings account.

This is what the Special Funds are. These are accumulated money sitting there. What we are doing is we are using this to finance our budget. So, it is really, Madam Speaker, very disappointing that the hon. Minister of Finance would come before this House and pretend that the budget deficit will only be 3.2 per cent of GDP when we know that the actual deficit would be 4.4 per cent and we know that we won't have these Special Funds next year. We know that we won't get the same help from India or China or Japan or Australia because they also have helped us donating money for this budget. We are not going to always get money

from them. We can't run our budget based on money which other people will give us. This is unsustainable, Madam Speaker. This is irresponsible.

Madam Speaker, I spent considerable time on economic indicators because this is how we judge our economy. Not by what we hear on the street, not by what we have, people on radio go and talk about, not about what is pleasure to the ears because someone had 10 cents on bread. No! Economic indicator is where we can gauge the soundness of our country. Economic indicator is what the IMF will use to rate Mauritius. Economic indicator is what rating agencies such as Moody's Standard and Poor are going to rate Mauritius. And I have demonstrated, Madam Speaker, that the economic situation is far from being the rosy picture which the hon. Minister of Finance tried to repaint.

This is why all respected economists unanimously agreed that this Budget is not addressing the fundamentals. I would like to make a few brief comments, Madam Speaker, on a few sectorial measures announced in the Budget.

The first one is the SME sector. The SME, Madam Speaker, has every reason to be disappointed with this Budget. You will recall, Madam Speaker, in his Budget 2015, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo spoke about *Ile Maurice, une nation d'entrepreneurs*. He described it as the most ambitious goal of this Government, making the SME sector the backbone of the economy. And he was right! The SME sector should be the backbone of the economy. He even went on to announce the creation of an SME Bank. He announced that he is going to put Rs10 billion over five years to this SME Bank. Two billion every year! He announced a comprehensive one-stop shop for the SME House in SICOM Tower. He announced fiscal incentive for SMEs. Last year, the hon. Minister of Finance announced even more fiscal measures. Two years later, where are we? Where are we today? There is no SME bank.

The sum of the Rs10 billion which was supposed - Rs2 billion every year - to be used to help SMEs has been used to help MauBank. The money has been injected in MauBank. And how much MauBank has disbursed? How much money has MauBank given to the SME sector? Rs2 billion? Rs5 billion? 1 billion? I asked a PQ on 11 April, addressed to the hon. Minister Bholah: how much money has MauBank disbursed since last year? His answer was

—

“Only Rs71.2 m. disbursed”

Only Rs71 m. disbursed to the SME! When the Minister of Finance, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, had announced Rs10 billion, after two and a half years we should have at least Rs5 billion. Only Rs71 m. and only 42 SME Development Scheme certificates! And they were talking about making SME the backbone of the economy! The backbone of the economy with only Rs71 million! And now, what are they announcing in this Budget? What are they announcing to make this SME again become the backbone of our economy? Billions of rupees? No, Madam Speaker! Only Rs100 m.! And also, all the three years for the implementation of the 10-year Master Plan for the SME sector.

Also, another landmark, there will be a new SMEDA which will be replaced by SME Mauritius. SMEDA which was supposed to be a one-stop shop set up by hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, is going to be replaced by another entity called SME Mauritius. But what is in a name? They are just changing names. They are just changing institutions. They are not going to the fundamentals. The fundamental is we have people in this country that need financial assistance to grow. We have an SME who is in dire need of finance. They have good ideas, they have good products, but they do not have the money. They do not have the money because they do not have the collateral to get the money. And Government must, once and for all, start trusting these people. They should start trusting our SME! They should start going and backing our SME sector!

The manufacturing sector - what happened to the measures announced last year? I hope the hon. Prime Minister, in his summing-up, will tell us what happened to the mobile oil refinery in Albion, what happened to the gold business, what happened to the pharmaceutical parks, what happened to the Indian delegation which was supposed to open several manufacturing projects, including the production of bicycle and motorcycle and what happened to all these projects that were announced last year. Madam Speaker, the hard fact is - according to the Bank of Mauritius - today, there is more money going out of Mauritius to invest in factories outside Mauritius than money coming in Mauritius. Hundreds of millions of rupees are being used to invest in factories, in Bangladesh, in other countries, instead of investors coming into Mauritius.

So, Madam Speaker, we are very far from the vision 2030 announced by the then hon. Prime Minister where he had a dream to increase the share of manufacturing from 18% to 25% of GDP. I have to admit that Government's decision to come up with the 3% tax for companies involved in the export sector is a welcomed step, a welcomed decision. In the past,

in the 80's, we used to have EPZ which had complete tax holidays; zero tax. But, will we today get the same result as we had in the 80's? By using the same policy, will we attract the same people? No. Why? Because investors today prefer to invest elsewhere as the other countries are not sleeping on their laurels. They are competing with us. They are giving facilities, incentives. They are competing for investment and this is no surprise because in Mauritius, we have gone down in doing business indicated by the World Bank.

Moving on to the finance service, Madam Speaker, the FSC is in a crisis like never before. Never Before! Four directors resigned in a space of a week, including the Solicitor General. Four directors! And we do not know why! The FSC has not deemed it fit to issue a communiqué to explain the reason of their resignation. The hon. Minister also has not commented on the reason. This has given rise to all kinds of speculations and this is tarnishing our image as a financial jurisdiction.

The truth of the matter, Madam Speaker, is that, under this Government, the FSC has gone from worse to worst. We had had in the past strong FSC board headed by people of the calibre of Anil Gujadhur, who was former Deputy of the Bank of Mauritius. The FSC have had strong CEOs like Iqbal Rajahbally, like Hilton McCann. But today what do we see? A CEO who is only acting, whose contract is renewed on a monthly basis. And the board! Who is the Chairperson of the FSC? The Financial Secretary with obvious conflict of interest because he is also a member of the Board of Companies that are regulated by the FSC. He is a member of listed Companies that are regulated by the FSC. He is a member of Investment Committees that are regulated by the FSC. How can you be judge and party? How can you be sitting as Chairperson of the FSC and also as the board member of Companies which are regulated by the FSC?

The FSC has totally mishandled the BAI saga. There is a strong perception of political interference on the highest sphere of the State in the Alvaro Sobrinho saga. And although his licences were suspended, this gentleman was still allowed by the FSC to acquire all the shares of the management company Tyson Corporate Services. He is still the owner of Tyson Corporate Services. He is still the owner of a management company. His licence has not been suspended. He can still go around, getting people to invest in Mauritius through his management company.

We have also had the New Mauritius Hotels saga where earlier this year, in February, the FSC issued a communiqué telling us that they have been monitoring the situation for the

past one year, everything has been done perfectly well, all the relisting rules have been observed only to backtrack when they receive a formal notice threatening to sue them. Then what do they do? They appoint an investigator.

The investigator investigates, questions people and comes up with a report. Up to now, the FSC has not deemed it fit to publish the report. Why? What is the credibility of the FSC today? What is the credibility of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius today after the New Mauritius Hotels saga? All this is happening, Madam Speaker, at a time where the sector is facing numerous challenges. We all know the impact that the revision of our treaty with India has on the offshore sector, and we do not even have the full extent of the effect. We will have to wait for the next two years.

But there is even greater challenge ahead, far greater than the renegotiated double taxation treaty with India, that is, the OECD initiative in base erosion and profit shifting. Basically, what the OECD is saying is: “You, low tax countries, you are preventing us, developed economies, from getting tax. Our companies are not paying us tax because they are using you as vehicle not to pay tax. So, we, OECD, we are going to put pressure on you, small islands, like the Mauritius financial centre. You will have to adopt minimum standards.”

The European Union has come back and said, “If you don’t follow these standards, we, the European Union, we will put you on a blacklist. So, forget about funding from the European Union.” Now, Mauritius was forced to sign the Multilateral Instrument. The Multilateral Instrument basically says that it will overwrite the double taxation treaty. The European Union has already identified two weaknesses in our taxation system –

- (i) the Global Business Companies that are being taxed at only 3% compared to normal companies which are taxed at 15% , and
- (ii) the Global Business 2 Companies which are tax exempt.

Yet, we did not hear anything about what the Government is going to do to address this challenge except that the hon. Prime Minister has announced that there will be a blueprint. It is as if *la tisane après la mort*.

Now, they are going to come with a blueprint because they do not know what to do. They have no clue how they are going to address this challenge. Yet, *gouverner, c’est*

prévoir! One illustration of the amateurish way in which this sector has been handled is in respect of the Financial Services Promotion Agency (FSPA). In 2015, the agency was under the Board of Investment. This Government comes and creates a new agency. Rightly so, we have a new agency dedicated for financial services.

Today, two years later - the same Government -, what are we obtaining? We are going backward. We are doing a U-turn. Now the FSPA will be under this new entity, which they call the Economic Development Board, instead of the BOI. And what a waste of time and money! What will happen to all the staff? We have spent a lot of money to set up the Financial Services Promotion Agency, taking it away from the Board of Investment, and now we are going back to the Economic Development Board.

Madam Speaker, there is one measure with which we are very concerned on this side of the House, and this is the setting up of the Investment Authority. The hon. Prime Minister was very economical about what this National Investment Authority would do, what its composition would be. He only mentioned that it would be used to invest locally and globally the surplus funds of NPF and NSF, which amounts to some Rs130 billion. We, on this side of the House, are very concerned about this Investment Authority because when he mentioned NSF and NPF, these are public funds, these are the pensioners' money, and the pensioners' money has to be invested in a very conservative way. This is why we have an Independent Investment Committee. There are rules and guidelines. Now we are taking it away from this Investment Committee and giving it to this Investment Authority.

What will the Investment Authority do? We all know how this Government tried to twist the arm of SICOM and NPF to tell them to invest in the National Insurance Corporation. So, is it not a backdoor way of now ensuring that they are going to invest people's money, pensioners' money in the National Insurance Company? This is why we think that it is very dangerous and we will wait for a clarification.

Madam Speaker, the last thing I would like to talk about is the measures for eradication of poverty. This has been hailed as a historical measure. The hon. Prime Minister stated, and I quote -

“I am pleased to report that more than 8,000 families are now benefiting from subsistence allowance.”

More than 8,000 people!

Answering to a PNQ earlier this year, hon. Wong Yen Cheong stated -

“Indeed, there are 8,214 families. These are families with a threshold of Rs9,520 a month.”

So, today, around 8,000 families are benefiting from this subsistence allowance. But how was it last year? We have had the Social Register since 2012. Since 2012, people on the Social Register get some sort of social allowance, their children get school materials, and they get contribution from the National Empowerment Foundation and social housing. It is not a new idea. We already have Social Register since 2012.

When, last year, the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked the then Minister of Social Integration how many people were on that Register, the answer was that the threshold was 6,200. Now, it is 9,000. So, when the threshold was 6,200, there were 13,267 households in Mauritius and 1,400 households in Rodrigues registered. In other words, before the historic measure announced by this Government, by the hon. Prime Minister last year, 13,267 families were receiving some sort of allowance from the Government. They were on the Social Register. Today, after this historical measure, instead of 13,000, we have only 8,000 families. This is how we are eradicating absolute poverty by giving less money to less people! Eight thousand, that is, almost 40% less families today are receiving subsistence allowance than previously. Less than 40%! And we know, Madam Speaker, that there are thousands of poor families who are not on the Register.

The hon. Minister Wong Yen Cheong, himself, stated that 14,462 families applied to be on the Register, but they were found to be ineligible. 14,462 families are excluded from the Register. Is this how this Government intends to tackle and eradicate absolute poverty? Many families in my own constituency, Madam Speaker, are living in abject poverty, in subhuman condition, and yet they are not on the Social Register. It is not for want of trying. They have gone there, but each time they go, they are asked for new documents, as if these people do not want to have too many people on the Social Register.

Madam Speaker, the theme of this year’s Budget is ‘Rising to the Challenge of our Ambitions.’ What is the Government’s stated ambition? In paragraph 11, that is what the hon. Prime Minister said -

“Our aim is for Mauritius to be a high income country by 2023, with an income per capita of around USD 13,600 against the current level of USD 9,740.”

So, this is the ambition. To make Mauritius a high-income country with per capita of USD 13,600 by 2023.

A few years ago, the same hon. Prime Minister, when he was then Minister of Finance under the Labour Government, under the leadership of Dr. Ramgoolam, told us about his dream. It was his first Budget in November 2010. I remember very well because it was the first time I was participating in a Budget. I remember very well what he said.

He said –

“As we rebalance growth we must also make a great leap forward on productivity in order to propel the economy on a modern development path - a path to emerging opportunities - to a GDP of one trillion rupees by 2020s and to an income per capita of USD 20,000 and higher. This is the Mauritian dream.”

In 2011, the Mauritian dream, the dream of the then Minister of Finance was to make Mauritius a country with one trillion rupees of GDP with per capita income of USD 20,000. Today, the same Prime Minister, his dream is no longer to make us have USD 20,000 per capita but only USD 13,600 and with this Budget he will not even be able to live up to this promise. A budget which is neither creative nor bold and if this is the best budget which this Government can come up with, Madam Speaker, I am afraid that their best is simply not good enough.

L'île Maurice mérite mieux que ça. Merci.

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. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to debate on the 2017/2018 Budget Speech. I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, for his brilliant presentation. This Budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, will –

1. maintain a responsible direction for our economy;
2. it will improve social justice by a better redistribution of wealth;

3. with a massive investment in infrastructure, it will definitely change the landscape of our country which will benefit the generations to come, and
4. it is an eco-friendly green orientation that is being inculcated to our population with future strict measures to be applied in the field of renewable energy.

As it is well stipulated by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Budget 2017/2018 is about rising to the challenge of our ambition and it is accompanied by a 3-year rolling plan to support our medium-term and long-term objectives.

With this exercise, the Government is giving the means to improve the quality of life of each and every citizen. It has the merit, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of having nobody behind, neither any individual nor any sector of activity. We all have to thank the Government of India for the exceptional financial support given to our country.

This confirms the strength of the relationship between our two countries and the confidence that India has in our Prime Minister and his Government to manage these funds. I must point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without fear of denial from any quarter that hon. Pravind Jugnauth is the first Prime Minister who, over a very short period of time, has brought over 30 billion Mauritian Rupees to our country. This is a personal success as well as a success for the foreign policy that he has been promoting in general and especially towards India.

I wish, here, to condemn desperate moves from some people in the Opposition, not all and some in the local Press not all which are trying to attribute a tainted motive behind the aid graciously given to Mauritius by India. Their agenda is only to instill doubts in the minds of our people by imputing dark motives. They clearly want to create an anti-Indian hysteria in a section of the population. I will tell them here that this is simply anti-patriotic.

A big hype is being made around the infrastructural works to be carried out with the help of the Indian Government in Agalega, as if part of our territory is being given anyway. This is not the case. So, why is this issue constantly being raised?

The only reason, I believe, is that some people are in vain trying to derive some political mileage by appealing to the basic instinct of a section of the population. This Government is committed to defend and protect our sovereignty over our whole territory. This is illustrated by its firm stand on the Chagos dispute. I wish to remind some that in the

years 70s and 80s, France, a former colonial power, a country with which we still have an ongoing sovereignty dispute over Tromelin Island, France, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, had been our country's first donator through its *programme de coopération* and it is still going on. The anti-Indian voices have never had a word to say when the help comes from France. Even when there has been interference in our local politics, so why when it comes from India?

The other issue being raised is about the line of credit which will increase public debt as said by hon. Uteem. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the IMF handbook on security's statistics, at page 36, it is well-defined that redeemable preference shares are considered as equity and not as debt. So, IMF cannot contradict itself by changing its own definition when it comes to the economy of Mauritius. The line of credit in the structure designated to receive it, will not be included in our public debt.

Regarding Metro Express, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all Governments have agreed that there is a need to tackle the congestion problem. Previous Labour Government, as well mentioned by the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, was going to sign a project on the eve of the election 2014 for an amount of 33 billion Mauritian rupees. Metro Express will change the landscape and the mindset of the country. It will be entirely funded by the Government of India. As part of the understanding, major works will be carried out under the supervision of an Indian company.

In that case, it is Afcon or Larsen and Toubro. This as well is bringing a *florilège de commentaires*, but, Madam Speaker, how many works have not been carried out by the Beijing Construction Company or Sinohydro when the line of credit comes from China. So, why when it comes to India, Indian funding and Indian companies, so much questioning and suspicion is caused to be raised.

Regarding the Betamax case, as stipulated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I understand he made a plea asking the Government to rush and abide by the ruling of the Singapore arbitration and pay them against public interest using public funds. He has always been in Cabinet during the whole process of negotiation of the contract. This has just been said. I, as a citizen of Mauritius, fail to understand why - Betamax, which is a local company with majority shareholders being Mauritians entering into agreement with the State Trading Corporation, a State-owned company - litigation between Mauritian and Mauritian State have to be dealt in Singapore.

(Interruptions)

Who accepted it? Most probably, because the odour of corruption and scandal would not reach there! We all know it is in the contract, it is a minority partner. Singapore Judges will not get the same feel of what our judges would get, where one shareholder of Betamax happens to be the spouse of one Minister sitting in Cabinet at that time.

The Betamax contract was designed where in all equations the State of Mauritius was going to lose money. Had it continued to maintain the contract, the Government could have lost money. When it has been stopped, the Government will lose money.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition does not want us to fight back in the Courts of Mauritius; this should be put on record. About what we just witnessed regarding BAI when he walked in with a report, the whole issue, I believe is about manipulation of figures, *les trucs du métier de comptable, maquillage des comptes*, showing profits instead of losses. I think it is not for a doctor to explain to an accountant that he is - Accountants can make figures speak what the client wants.

This Budget is one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which will definitely *relance l'économie à travers la création d'emplois et donnera un boost à la croissance qui a presque atteint les 4%*. Some *prophètes de malheur* are crying as if we were in recession.

(Interruptions)

Some *prophètes de malheur* are crying as if we were in recession while we are having almost 4% growth. In the recent past, someone in 2015 predicted a total blackout that would supposedly happen in 2016 due to mismanagement of CEB.

(Interruptions)

The creation of an Economic Development Board is welcome and will definitely make a great advance in a smooth, coherent and realistic way. Private sector and businessmen have well appreciated the passing of the Business Facilitation Act.

Furthermore, new measures are introduced to enhance the business climate. All sectors have been catered for. Besides major infrastructural provisions such as Metro Express and Côte d'Or City, this budget is highly impregnated social justice.

The historical introduction of the negative income tax system is a mechanism of redistribution of wealth which will help some 150,000 employees at the lower rung of the ladder. The Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, is now giving them a *quatorzième et quinzième mois* bonus. This has been the privilege of some employees of the blue-chip of the private sector till now. Money is being given to those who work and earn less. We want to encourage work, not *l'assistanat*.

The subsistence allowance given to some 8,000 families is doing well contrary to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is insinuating. The solidarity levy implies that money is being taken from the rich and given to the poor, hence helping to reduce the gap between the two categories. This is a caring Government driven by a responsible Prime Minister. A huge sum of our expenditure, some Rs6.8 billion will be designated for construction or refurbishment of social housing. Again, this goes to the *plus démunis, les plus défavorisés*.

The price of flour, the base of our daily alimentation, has been brought down. Quality of life is a central concern of this Government. Water supply will be enhanced with massive investment in renewal of pipes; investment in reservoirs in industrious areas. The ultimate goal remains to provide 24/7 adequate water supply in the medium term. The eco-friendly green orientation of this Budget is illustrated in the measures to encourage production of renewable energy. The solar project is a challenging and interesting one hereby 10,000 solar units will be installed in the next five years. Our aim in the medium term is to increase the production of renewable energy to 25% of our general consumption.

The health sector has been granted a budget of Rs11.6 billion, an increase of almost 10% from last year. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will note that the quality of service in the health sector is closely related to the conditions of work of the healthcare professionals. Heavy workload directly impacts on the level of service. The recruitment of over 600 professionals, medical and paramedical, will help to alleviate this situation and definitely improve quality of service. Expenditure on drugs will be increased by Rs200 m. giving access to costly treatment in the field of cancer especially. New infrastructures are being provisioned in order to decentralise delivery of service, thus reducing the pressure on our regional hospitals. A PET scan, the latest technology in the detection of cancer and their follow up, will be installed at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in the coming three years. The new intensity-modulated linear accelerator radiotherapy equipment will be acquired. The setup of a state-of-the-art Neurosurgery Department was long overdue. This will now avoid many

patients the hassle of having to travel abroad for medical service when it concerns neurosurgery.

Medical tourism has not been forgotten and the introduction of a new patient visa will help these patients coming from Madagascar and Comoros Island, especially to benefit from treatment locally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to be in good health one has to practise sports. *Le gouvernement fait la part belle aux sportifs que ce soit amateurs ou professionnels.* New infrastructures are being provisioned in view of the *Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien 2019*. A National Sports Policy will be implemented. The hall of fame and the allowance which will be given to our former stars is only their due. It is a new measure and it has been welcomed by a former sportsman, Bruno Julie, in the Press.

Local infrastructural funding is a major concern for the Government. The NDU has been granted an envelope of about Rs5 billion, part of which is Indian funding. Road improvement and development, street lighting, drainage infrastructure, building or upgrading of recreational parks and children's playgrounds have been catered for and will be executed in a reasonable delay.

I will not end without relaying to the House the appreciation of the people of my Constituency, No. 13. Tea planters, *métayers* have welcomed the increase of 6% of the price of tealeaves to be delivered to the manufacturing plants. This indeed will help the local economy. The inhabitants of Rivière du Poste have been relieved to learn that the existing bridge known as Pont Rouge will be refurbished and works will start in the coming financial year.

Drainage work in Bois Chéri, Grand Bois, La Flora, l'Escalier will be completed in order to avoid flooding of houses during heavy rains. Studies in view to start construction of Rivière des Anguilles dam will help to solve the water supply problem in the Constituency and the southern region in general.

Again, I wish to thank the hon. Prime Minister for this historical Budget, and I thank you for your attention.

The Deputy Speaker: The sitting is suspended for one hour.

At 5.03 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.04 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Boissézon!

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr E. Boissézon): M. le président, je félicite le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour la présentation du *Appropriation (2017-2018) Bill 2017*.

Ce Budget historique est le dessin de l'Ile Maurice de demain et non pas le chapitre apocalyptique décrit par l'honorable Reza Uteem. Je comprends maintenant pourquoi son parti n'a pas présenté de budget voilà plus de douze ans. Toujours la même rengaine, contestation des chiffres, d'autres prophètes de malheur, solutions à tous les problèmes mais pas divulgués, un discours plus orienté vers les variables de la haute finance, toujours pas de propositions pour les démunis, pas un mot pour les travailleurs, les mauriciens des îles et les jeunes sont oubliés.

Dans ce Budget se trouve les plans d'architectures de notre pays en 2023.

Ce budget est la continuité du précédent, une ère de changement se fait sentir. Le secteur de la construction montre une croissance positive suite à une longue série de chiffres négatifs, même les sous-traitants de cet important pilier, éprouvent des difficultés à recruter.

C'est le signe que les opérateurs travaillent à plein régime et se préparent à faire face à une augmentation dans la demande. Sachant que d'importantes injections de capitaux ont été budgétisées l'année dernière et que d'autres viendront.

Ce présent budget vient renforcer la tendance et cette croissance dans l'industrie de la construction perdurera pendant plusieurs années.

La mise en application et le suivi des projets ne sont pas vain comme ose le dire l'Opposition. Le gouvernement a pris des dispositions déjà l'année dernière pour qu'un comité veille à la bonne implémentation des mesures budgétaires. Cette année encore, très certainement, des instances similaires seront créées afin de s'assurer à ce que les mesures prises soient implémentées dans les plus brefs délais.

Un *Economic Development Board* a d'ailleurs été créé avec pour effet de planifier notre développement future, de promouvoir nos industries à l'extérieur et d'attirer les investissements étrangers.

Cet organisme deviendra un centre névralgique de la croissance économique, où les stratégies se formeront, où les campagnes de promotions s'organiseront et nous permettra de

grimper à nouveau dans l'indice *Ease of Doing Business* grâce à une plateforme numérique pour l'octroi des permis de création d'entreprises.

M. le président, je vous ai dit que ce budget contient les plans de l'Ile Maurice de demain. Que ce budget contient les plans d'une république moderne, stable, économiquement puissante et innovante. Je parle de république car ce budget touche tous les habitants de notre territoire, qu'ils soient Mauriciens, Rodriguais, Agaléens ou Chagossiens.

Le Premier ministre leur envoie un message fort, qu'ils sont citoyens à part entière de notre nation et que tous jouiront des bénéfices du développement économique.

Je parle de modernité car le pays sera transformé après la réalisation des grands projets d'infrastructures qui vont démarrer d'ici la fin de l'année 2017, nommément –

- le Projet Metro Express qui coûtera R 18 milliards.
- les tours administratives dans la nouvelle ville de Côte d'Or aux coûts de R 3,6 milliards, et
- les projets Smart City à Médine, Jinfei, Mon Trésor et Moka aux coûts de plus de R 2.6 milliards, entre autres.

A noter que les travaux ont déjà commencé à Mon Trésor.

Je parle de modernité car notre port sera transformé, ses infrastructures modernisées.

Une enveloppe de R 3 milliards est déjà prévue avec une injection partielle de R 1,6 milliards durant le cours de cette année financière. Grâce à cet investissement, nous comptons faire de Port Louis, le port le plus actif de la région avec une capacité de stockage de plus de 1,5 millions de conteneurs.

Avec l'agrandissement du port suivra le développement des régions avoisinantes.

Le parc industriel de Riche Terre jouera un rôle important. Tout porte à croire que cette région intéresse fortement les investisseurs mauriciens et étrangers et que dans les trois années qui suivront, la région connaîtra des investissements de l'ordre de R 4,4 milliards.

M. le président, la république, grâce à ce budget et le précédent, maintiendra la stabilité sociale, dont elle a joui depuis l'arrivée de ce gouvernement au pouvoir. Le Premier ministre a démontré qu'il a voulu régler le problème de la fracture sociale qui s'est accéléré entre 2005 et 2017.

Nous voulons devenir un pays à revenu élevé mais le précédent gouvernement avait oublié que cet objectif est inatteignable sans l'amélioration des conditions de vie de ceux aux plus bas de l'échelle sociale.

C'est pour cela que ce gouvernement donne aussi une attention particulière à ceux dans notre société qui sont économiquement plus vulnérables.

Nous avons compris que l'obsession aveugle pour la croissance nous coûtera cher à l'avenir si nous n'aidons pas ceux qui ont besoin de maisons décentes, d'une meilleure éducation, de meilleurs services de santé, plus de facilités de transport, de nourriture et de loisirs et de services publics.

Et c'est pour cela que le *Marshall Plan* contre la pauvreté a été mis en place. Et aujourd'hui, ils sont déjà 8,000 à avoir bénéficié des allocations sous ce programme d'aide. Et maintenant, le Budget 2017-2018 prévoit de venir en aide à 150,000 personnes grâce au *Negative Income Tax*. Ce qui aura pour conséquence de donner une marge de manœuvre financière additionnelle à ceux qui touchent moins de R 10,000. 150,000 personnes seront concernées et certains osent dire que c'est un Budget sans vision.

M. le président, il faut être obsédé par la dérision pour ne pas voir le danger que représentent la fracture sociale et le travail que fait ce gouvernement.

R 1,8 milliards seront investies dans le logement social au cours de cette année-ci. R 5 milliards seront investies dans les trois prochaines années. Ce qui portera les investissements dans le logement social à R 6,8 milliards à juin 2020.

La stabilité sociale passe aussi par le combat contre la drogue dont le succès, malheureusement, est visible grâce aux saisies de la douane et de l'ADSU dont le fameux 135 Kilogrammes d'héroïne évalués à R 2 milliards.

Le temps de l'impunité zéro face aux barons de la drogue est venu. L'état de quasi-impunité qui a donné lieu à une culture de permissivité sous le précédent régime est révolu.

Le Premier ministre et son gouvernement veulent protéger la nation contre ceux qui veulent s'enrichir sur la corruption des mœurs. Ainsi, la douane qui est en première ligne dans cette lutte aura R 100 millions pour mieux s'équiper. L'ADSU disposera d'une plus grande flotte de véhicules et pourra compter sur 50 nouvelles paires de bras.

Dans les prisons de Melrose et de Beau-Bassin, deux nouveaux *body scanners* seront installés et 35 nouveaux gardes-chiourmes seront recrutés.

M. le président, la République de Maurice de 2023 sera économiquement puissante. Elle le sera car elle a été ambitieuse en cette année 2017. Ce gouvernement encourage nos entreprises à aller en Afrique de l'Ouest, certes loin de nos côtes, mais qui connaît une croissance moyenne de 6%.

Déjà, 117 entreprises mauriciennes sont présentes sur le continent. Grâce aux accords que nous avons signés avec le Sénégal, le Ghana et la Côte d'Ivoire, ils seront sûrement plus que le double avant la fin de ce mandat.

Quoi de mieux que de se tourner vers le marché Africain !

Le succès de nos entreprises, hors de notre territoire, jouera un rôle majeur dans la grandeur du rayonnement future de Maurice dans le monde.

Certainement, cet effort vers l'internationalisation de notre économie n'arrivera pas sans que les mauriciens ne soient appelés à aller y travailler comme cadres, techniciens d'où le besoin de formation et de préparation.

M. le président, le secteur de l'exportation est un des principaux piliers de notre économie. Elle emploie plus de cinquante mille employés. Ce secteur regroupe les grosses entreprises comme les PME. Ce secteur ne cesse de reculer après 8.16% en 2016, la tendance se poursuit.

Dans le passé, soit en 2008, au cours de la crise dans la zone Euro, nous avions à faire face à cette situation, mais aujourd'hui, nous ne pouvons pas parler de crise ponctuelle.

Le mal est grave, nos exportations vers nos marchés ont baissé depuis le début de l'année soit 24.5% vers l'Afrique du Sud, Royaume-Uni: 21.2%, l'Italie: 14.1 %. Maurice doit se ressaisir afin d'enrayer cette hémorragie. Les entreprises manufacturières éprouvent des difficultés pour capter les investissements directs étrangers, ainsi elles n'arrivent pas à se moderniser pour augmenter leurs productivités et être compétitives.

C'est un secteur clef, quant à sa contribution au PIB. Le budget prévoit plusieurs dotations pour sa relance -

1. Le regroupement de la BOI, *Entreprise Mauritius*, *La Financial Services Promotion Agency* et *Mauritius Africa Fund and the Economic Development Board*. Cet organisme aura pour tâche la promotion de l'exportation.

2. Capitalisation sur notre force manufacturière et industrielle. Ainsi nous accueillons favorablement la réduction de *Corporate Tax* à 3 % sur les profits dérivés de l'exportation. Toute une série de mesures sont élaborées.
3. Les huit ans de *Tax holiday* pour les compagnies qui s'engagent dans la production de produits pharmaceutiques, médicaux et les produits Hi-Tech, pourvu qu'ils soient incorporés après le 08 juin 2017.
4. Le non-paiement de droit d'enregistrement et de la taxe sur le transfert des bâtiments pour abriter des usines manufacturières de produits Hi-Tech.
5. Nos ambassades et consultants consacreront plus de ressources quant à promouvoir notre exportation et notre besoin en investissement orientés vers la production de produits exportables.
6. L'augmentation des produits qui ne sont pas inclus dans *Le Speed to Market Scheme*. Ainsi les produits tels que la bijouterie, les fruits, appareils médicaux bénéficieront de rabais sur le fret vers l'Europe tout comme l'habillement et les lingerie.

M. le président, ces mesures relanceront l'exportation et contribueront à notre PIB, réduiront notre déficit commercial et surtout seront un apport considérable dans notre objectif de réduire notre taux de chômage.

M. le président, notre République en 2023 sera innovante car ce Budget fait provision pour que nous commencions à investir massivement dans la recherche et le développement. Il est bon de savoir, M. le président, qu'un des secrets du succès des pays industrialisés, est qu'ils ont su investir au moins 3% de leur PIB annuellement dans la recherche et le développement.

Maurice en 2023, sera un *High Income Economy* parce qu'elle a su investir massivement en 2017 dans le *Research and Development*.

N'oublions pas aussi les nombreuses facilités fiscales pour encourager ceux qui produisent de la haute technologie. Je peux citer quelques exemples d'entreprises de haute technologie opérant déjà sur le territoire.

Africasia, qui produit des téléviseurs qui fonctionnent à l'énergie solaire, Rotrax International Ltd qui produit des plaquettes PCB destinées à des robots de l'industrie

militaire, Astek Mauritius, qui peaufine en ce moment une application pour faire fonctionner des lunettes intelligentes.

Je suis sûr que ces opérateurs sont satisfaits de ce Budget car les mesures préconisées sont en leur faveur pour qu'ils aillent plus loin.

Bientôt de telles entreprises sillonneront notre pays.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Budget 2017-2018 has no doubt laid the strong foundations for the creation of new pillars for a sound economic growth pattern continuous cycle of prosperity for future generations.

With globalisation and the emergence of regionalisation, Africa is thriving to gain in competitiveness and to adjoin our progress.

Economies which are modernising, are transforming their public services to adapt fully to the emerging global trend. Mauritius is asked to sharpen its means and mediums so that it remains investors' favoured destination in the region.

We cannot undermine the role of the public sector at such a threshold of dynamism.

A dynamic and innovative public sector should, therefore, deliver quality service that wraps around the client, citizen and end-user in a way that is efficient, transparent, fair and equitable.

The public sector, through my Ministry, will lay down the solid base for our objective 2023 and Vision 2030. With globalisation and the emergence of regionalisation, we must have a dynamic and innovative public sector, therefore, deliver quality service. The public sector through my Ministry will lay down the solid base.

Today the asset of the public sector is its highly qualified human resources with very fine skills and knowledge, ready to participate in the exciting and passionate adventure set up in this Budget to meet the challenges of ambitions.

The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has already embarked in the transformation journey. Our focus is result-oriented and the creation of a conducive environment to promote sustainable, economic and social development of Mauritius. We want to instil a culture of excellence in the Civil Service.

For the Public Sector Business Transformation, my Ministry, with the support under the Technical Assistance Programme of the Commonwealth, is embarking in a comprehensive exercise to -

- a) Review existing reform initiatives and build an understanding of the reform context using a holistic and coherent approach;
- b) Formulate a draft Civil Service Reform Strategy document, incorporating a Human Resource Strategy as well as a Capacity Building, and
- c) Develop a draft implementation matrix for the short, medium and long term activities.

Today we are facing barriers to development such as -

- Straddled Ministry boundaries.
- Fortress Syndrome
- Information Silos
- Administrative unreadiness, and
- IT unreadiness

To address them effectively, Ministries have to work more closely with one another and with the society at large.

The Public Service Transformation Strategy focuses on a set of whole-of-Government outcomes, plus indicators to track our progress in achieving them.

These outcomes and indicators will reflect Government strategies and programme.

Transformation rests on these three pillars of development -

1. capacity Development
2. human Resource Development
3. information Technology

The Systems wide Capacity Development will focus on developing an adaptive and responsive public service and the development of policy, service and performance excellence.

The three key elements of the Human Resource Development resides in -

1. capacity to attract the best capable,
2. efficient training of the staff, and

3. an adaptive, responsive and high performing strategic human resource management.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Information and Communication Technologies are powerful instruments to drive both change and transformation in people as well as deliver savings, efficiencies and growth in the economy.

Technology is the catalyst that will facilitate a shift away from low value processes and work to investing time in high value productivity and quality.

- Digital transformation will accelerate service excellence.
- Knowledge mobilisation and innovation within the public service will move us towards the strategic goals and objectives.

This Strategy will set the vision of Government for the transformation of the Public sector as it emphasises on a collective response to the business of Government, on themes of national importance and create joint ownership models for implementation, actions and results.

The Strategy reflects Government's need to continuously evolve, innovate and transform to respond to and anticipate the needs of our citizenry. It lays the foundation for a new Public Service 3.0 that is more capable, competent and connected and which is aligned to a common purpose and vision and to customer-centric goals.

It is considered that the proposed Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy will pave the way to all the economic and social development in Mauritius by -

1. creating an enabling environment for the successful and long lasting transformation of the public sector;
2. informing and guiding all areas of Government requiring improvement, innovation and transformation regardless of the sector;
3. providing for continuous evolution and adjustment while making the best use of resources and reducing overlaps and duplication;
4. integrating a One Government Approach to policy making that will facilitate priority setting and decision making in order to drive effective implementation, actions, results and performance;

5. the strategy will generate an added benefit in change of mindset regarding the role, purpose and function of the public service,
6. and public officers will thus be transformed into business thinkers and facilitators through a capacity development framework that aligns strategic human resource management and talent development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has already started its implementation since April 2017 and, by April 2018, we intend to put in place all the appropriate institutional arrangements to support the Transformation Plan, involving the creation of the Public Sector Transformation Bureau and other related governance structure to ensure effectiveness and success of the plan.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, training is and will remain a core component in the overall Human Resource Development Process aiming at providing public officers at all levels with the opportunities to upgrade and develop their skills. This is at the centre of capacity building, enhancing productivity and changing of attitudes. Training is linked with reforms in the Civil Service. Along with improvement of performance and productivity of staff, we must ensure relevant updated skills in our workforce. So, training will provide the means and tools to change entrenched mindset and boost motivation and innovation.

As stated in Vision 2030, civil servants are expected to be active drivers in the nation building process and to adopt a new mindset that focuses on national target. Civil servants are asked to be facilitators. The Civil Service College Mauritius has been set up to cater for the growing training needs of officers at all levels, including those from the local authorities and parastatal bodies. The main aim of the College is to ensure training to a critical mass of around 80,000 officers in all grades in the medium and long-term, thus aiming at becoming a regional centre of excellence in public sector management and governance.

My Ministry aims at ensuring that public officers are provided with adequate and appropriate training in order to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them improve their job performance, ensure quality in service delivery to citizenry, promote excellence in culture of performance and create positive change in the mindset of public officers. I would like to point out here that the Civil Service College Mauritius is not limited to providing training to the Mauritian public officers only. It also runs courses in Rodrigues

and, since beginning of 2017, training has been conducted for public officers in general administration matters.

The 2015-2019 Government Programme provides that Government is committed to building a responsible and responsive Civil Service, and this Budget clearly calls for transformational change in the Civil Service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am proud to inform the House of the construction of a new complex for the Civil Service College Mauritius. The Ministry of Housing and Lands has vested to my Ministry a plot of land of an extent of 6.76 *arpents* at Réduit Triangle for the construction of the College. We thank the Government of India which has agreed to provide assistance to the tune of USD4.74 m. to the Government of Mauritius for the construction of the proposed building.

As we build our fixed capital, the three-year strategic plan 2017-2020 lays emphasis on increasing the human capital as well. The Civil Service College Mauritius will cater for the training needs of the public sector at large and serve as a regional centre for excellence in Public Sector Management and Governance.

After such an extensive input in training of our human capital, I have to point out that it goes hand in hand with performance. The Performance Management System is one among the various reform initiatives that aim at inculcating a performance-oriented culture in the Civil Service. The system was formalised in 2013 through the phasing out of the annual Confidential Report and increment-oriented form filling exercise. PMS has been firmly established as an official tool to appraise individual performance and assess the training needs of the employees.

In 2016, we brought the system to a higher level by introducing the PMS Quality Review to ensure quality and consistency of PMS implementation and to ensure quality of performance information generated through appraisal exercise. By July 2018, we expect to achieve 100% compliance to the exercise.

Since innovation is the key to success and adaptability, continuous evolution is necessary to shift towards the challenge to our ambitions. We continuously have to improve and fill in all the loopholes that may arise in efficiency of Human Resource Management.

One of the pillars of Performance Management System is feedback through conversations at all levels. Very often, this part is missing in the implementation process. Meaningful constructive conversation will enable appraisers to communicate the goals and objectives of the organisation to appraisees and more importantly reduce the gap between top management and employees, where dialogues are quasi non-existent.

With PMS conversation, the performance management exercise will be more people centric. The main aim of the PMS exercise has been and will be to cater for any training needs identified by both the employer and employee through our Civil Service College Mauritius. We aim at tapping the full potential of our human resources and allowing them to evolve up to their full capacity to meet the challenges of the future.

At a time where Mauritius is embarking on a complete transformation and to enhance the capacity to compete on an international scale, the Public Service has to live up to the expectations and provide timely and quality service. It is imperative that there is a dialogue between the public service providers and the beneficiaries of these services.

A customer charter constitutes a form of dialogue between the public bodies and the public at large. It sets the quality standard that public bodies have to adhere to for the efficient and effective delivery of service to customers.

Hence, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is ensuring that all Ministries and Departments of the Government bodies have a customer charter. With a view to ensure that the Civil Service provides services which meet the needs of the customers and complies with an internationally recognised framework, my Ministry has also been providing guidance and assistance to public service organisations to help them achieve certification according to the ISO 9001 standards.

This international quality management standard specifies the requirements and best practices in the application of quality management systems. It is to be noted that 56 Governmental organisations are already certified based on the ISO 9001 2008 version and presently my Ministry is leading a major initiative to migrate all these organisations to the latest 2015 version. We provide support through training and coaching to officers in the implementation of the standards. We have, as partners in this mission, the Mauritius Standards Bureau and the Civil Service College Mauritius. We are now working towards the strengthening and expansion of ISO certification to all Ministries and Departments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming back to the 3-year Strategic Plan 2017-2020, one of the strategic plans of the General Public Service is to accelerate implementation of a public accounting and financial reporting framework benchmarked with international best practices. In this context, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has been working on the implementation of a Human Resource Management Information System. It forms part of an initiative to strengthen Government operations by ensuring that it is technology enabled, open and innovative while accelerating digital transformation for service excellence and innovation.

The HRMIS Project consists of five oracle based modules, namely human resource, payroll, self-service, learning management and performance management. The overall aim of the system is to enhance Human Resource Management in the Public Service by adopting new technologies and decreasing, if not, eliminating all the existing manual processes.

Once on successful implementation, there will indeed be a transformation in the management of Human Resources. While keeping a centralised control, it will empower a more effective management.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a definite fact that my Ministry, though it represents the backbone of operations, human resources and administration for the Government will always remain the back office which never comes in the limelight. Growth and a good and sound modern innovated and dynamic administration goes hand in hand to the achievement of our goal, mission and vision 2030.

M. le président, dans ce contexte économique difficile, nous avons la responsabilité de réformer. Il en va de notre survie. La fonction publique aura un rôle clé à jouer. La fonction publique sera le trait d'union entre la formulation de la politique économique et sociale du gouvernement et la concrétisation des projets.

Dans cette ère de grands défis, nous avons besoin d'une fonction publique performante, capable de répondre aux besoins d'une économie nouvelle. La nouvelle fonction publique qui émergera sera équipée de tous les outils qui lui seront nécessaires afin de mener à bien son travail. Les employés savent qu'une lourde responsabilité pèse sur leurs épaules. Nous avons tous une lourde responsabilité. Le vent tourne. Car notre objectif est de léguer aux générations futures une république souveraine, prospère, influente et ouverte au monde.

Nous ne viendrons pas sur notre lieu de travail « *to earn a living* » mais pour créer la valeur ajoutée nécessaire à faire de Maurice un *high-income economy State*.

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Selvon!

(6.40 p.m.)

Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci M. le président. Si on veut gouverner pour le peuple, je propose une réorientation radicale de la politique et de la philosophie budgétaires par trois projets pilote que j'expliquerai. La réflexion socio-économique qui sous-tend le budget devrait être innovante, profonde et moderne. Cela manque à nos discours du budget. Je demande au ministre d'ajouter un fonds pour l'ébauche d'un projet de « *Smart eco-social villages* » pour rendre Maurice plus productive que consommatrice, en procurant des emplois par milliers, la sécurité alimentaire et un *agro-business* de haut niveau.

Selon le rapport du *National Audit Office* de février 2017, la production alimentaire, en dépit des mesures budgétaires, a chuté de 14%. 53% des « *schemes and subsidies* » du ministère de l'Agro-industrie, n'ont pas été dépensés. Le gouvernement a été incapable d'obtenir la relance de la production agro-alimentaire.

Le rapport de l'Audit écrit –

“There was no data to support whether the Ministry had investigated extensively on the interest and commitment of small planters/group of farmers before coming up with the various schemes to boost crop production.”

Le peuple ne fut pas impliqué dans ce projet budgétaire.

Le budget contient une bonne distribution d'allocations financières sociales contre la pauvreté, ce qui est bien, mais il a un manque de projets de développement socio-économique pour susciter une revitalisation du pays et atteindre deux objectifs de vie ou de mort pour l'économie. Le ministre est venu avec des suggestions insuffisantes, comme des '*schemes and subsidies*' agro-alimentaires, et parle de macadamia, alors qu'il n'y a pas de plantes de fruit à pains et de bâton manioc dans les pépinières du gouvernement où l'on vend trop cher.

Cette tendance néfaste et dangereuse, sous-estimée dans le budget se déroule aussi dans le secteur énergétique. Dans les deux cas, Maurice se retrouve excessivement et dangereusement dépendante sur des importations massives et excessives de l'étranger. Cela alors que le ministre a promis de redresser l'économie dès le début de son discours du budget. Je propose, moi, une participation populaire, active et non une situation où un gouvernement fait la révolution agricole et la révolution énergétique dans ses salons et ses bureaux. Je propose des projets, oui des projets qui permettront ces révolutions dans les mois et les années qui viennent. Le maître-mot de ce que je propose est ceci : Maurice doit devenir plus productrice que consommatrice d'importations massives.

Aujourd'hui, deux événements se produisent dans le monde –

- (i) la création depuis 2014 de *Smart Villages* en Europe, et
- (ii) la ruralisation de zones urbaines comme aux États-Unis et la planète s'en inspire sauf l'Ile Maurice.

Les Parisiens quittent Paris pour créer des fermes dans les régions rurales revitalisées et on élève des cabris à San Francisco et Los Angeles. Et en Espagne, il y a une usine solaire sur deux kilomètres carrés, German Solar, qui alimente en électricité 27,500 maisons par la technologie *Concentrating Solar Power* (CSP), une technologie qui coûte cher pour l'instant, mais qui est déjà descendue à 13 *cents* le kWh et descendra dans trois ans à six *cents* selon le département américain de l'énergie. Une réduction totale de 75% du coût, mais je ne vois aucun projet énergétique aussi substantiel, efficace et moderne dans ce budget.

German Solar en Espagne utilise des solutions concentrées. Celle d'hiver chauffée au sommet d'une tour pour produire des températures de centaines de centigrades pour faire tourner des turbines. Entourant la tour solaire, il y a des miroirs héliostats qui suivent le soleil du lever au coucher, l'usine avec 19,9 mégawatts de puissance peut fournir 110 GW heure par an. Un discours du budget qui se respecte devrait viser à ouvrir au pays ces nouvelles technologies. Le but de mon discours, c'est de proposer la création de *Smart Villages* comme le fait l'union européenne d'après un plan s'étalant sur 2014/2020 mais aussi comme l'a déjà fait l'île Maurice dans le passé, les *Smart Villages* devront être autosuffisants au niveau alimentaire, énergétique. Ils devront vendre localement et exporter leurs productions agroalimentaires et artisanales. Si on me dit que ce n'est pas possible, M. le président, je réponds qu'au contraire la technologie moderne nous permettra de faire encore mieux tout ce

qui s'est fait dans le passé surtout qu'on n'aura plus besoin de couper des arbres pour produire de l'énergie.

Ces *Smart Villages* répondront également à l'abandon actuel de milliers d'arpents de plantations de cannes qu'on pourra revitaliser comme souhaité dans le budget. Cela se fera grâce notamment à une diversification par certaines cultures interlignes comme cela se fait en Queensland, en Australie pour faire face, comme nous aussi devons le faire, à l'abolition des quotas de sucre de betterave le 01 octobre 2017 dans l'Union Européenne. Au lieu d'abandonner ces plantations de cannes, revitalisons-les avec un grand projet de diversification agricole en maintenant la canne et avec des usines solaires. À l'étranger, on appelle aussi les *Smart Villages*, des villages *off-grid*.

Il faut aussi avoir un sens de l'histoire. Je rappelle que les villages et les abords de la ville de Port Louis furent le grenier de l'île Maurice jusque vers la moitié de XXe siècle donnant à manger à toute l'île Maurice. Les historiens nous disent que les esclaves libérés créèrent les premiers villages de l'histoire et inondèrent Maurice de leurs produits agroalimentaires. Il se sert de manger le manioc des gros sucriers. Ce mouvement de *Smart Villages* autosuffisants redoubla avec la libération des travailleurs engagés. Une lettre du Gouverneur en date du 07 janvier 1846 à Lord Stanley à Londres sur les esclaves libérés dit que : *'The meagre bazar of Port Louis so eagerly supplied in former years now daily afford an abundant display of all sorts of fruits and vegetables.* L'évêque Anglican Ryan écrivait on the slopes of the Trou aux Cerfs, *the emancipated slaves and their descendants have cleared the ground to cultivate rice, potatoes and sugarcane on the sale of which articles they made their living.*

Lors des crises sucrières, des terres de cannes furent abandonnées et passèrent aux mains de ces petits producteurs ex-esclaves et ex-travailleurs engagés qui les revitalisèrent avec leur production de veaux, vaches, cabris, cochons, lait, fruits, légumes. Aujourd'hui, nous avons le même objectif que nos ancêtres et nous devons avoir planifié avant le 01 octobre 2017 lorsque le prix du sucre risque de s'effondrer. Quand le gouvernement va-t-il comprendre l'importance de l'économie informelle qui peut aider notre lutte contre le chômage et la misère, mieux que quelque petites allocations financières de subsistance vite absorbées par la hausse du coût de la vie.

Aujourd'hui, la police expulse des rues les villageois qui se lèvent à quatre heures du matin et viennent à Port Louis vendre leurs produits agroalimentaires arrivant pas taxis

trains ou autobus de Rivière du Rempart ou Goodlands comme me l'ont expliqué ces villageois surtout dans la grève de la faim à laquelle j'ai participé à Belle Vue Maurel. Ce sont souvent des vieilles femmes ex-laboureurs qui sont ainsi chassées en tentant de gagner quelques roupies bien méritées.

Je fais ici une petite digression, M. le président. L'honorable Premier ministre, je fus très ému lorsque votre père, à plus d'une reprise, a pleuré en public en évoquant son enfance et ses parents petits planteurs. Ainsi je vais faire un appel spécial pour vous demander de payer aux coopérateurs de la *Vidur Cooperative Society* la totalité des sommes de pas plus de R100,000 que 997 de ses membres réclament pour avoir perdu leurs petites économies avec l'affaire BAI.

Je reprends le fil de mon discours, M. le président. Pour un pays plus producteur que consommateur, je proposerai les projets pilotes suivants –

- (i) un *Smart Eco-Social Village* géré comme une coopérative inspiré par les *Smart Villages* de l'union européenne et de l'Inde ainsi que nos traditions historiques;
- (ii) un projet de *Homestead Agriculture* ou agriculture urbaine sur un espace délimité à proximité d'une ville. Le *Homestead Farming* familial comme pratiqué aux États-Unis est conseillé par la FAO et là encore nous avons une belle tradition historique, et
- (iii) un générateur solaire d'électricité dans le *Smart Village Pilot project* qui utiliserait la technologie CSP.

Un seul projet pilote, M. le président, absorbera plus de la moitié des chômeurs. Mes projets reposent sur les technologies et concepts nouveaux de développements sociaux, économiques et humains du XXe siècle avec à la clé le système des gestions coopératives. Pour que les mauriciens participent, il faut les recruter pour des projets pilotes par un système de recrutement strict et impartial.

Ce gouvernement avait fait des *Smart Cities* dans ces deux premiers Budgets, la panacée de tous les maux du pays. Au même moment, en 2014, l'union européenne mettait en pratique sur son plan 2014/2020, des *Smart Villages* pour relancer les activités productives rurales avec un budget de R 100 millions d'euros pour 118 projets. Aux États-Unis, on

cultive massivement sur les toits des grands *buildings* pour la production agroalimentaire. La FAO applaudit et parle d'agriculture urbaine qu'elle recommande à tous les pays.

Notre philosophie budgétaire repose excessivement sur les spéculations foncières pour des projets IRS et RES pour vendre nos terres agricoles à des étrangers. Et si ces projets ont produit des bénéfices sur les courts et moyens termes, ouvrant le pays davantage avec l'arrivée d'investisseurs, partenaires d'affaires et résidents étrangers éclairés, ils ne sont pas la panacée. Il y a aux États-Unis un essor des *Homestead Farms*. La presse mondiale évoquait le cas d'une famille américaine en Californie en région urbaine qui, je cite, cultive environ 90% du contenu de leur assiette sur moins de 400 m².

Ils arrivent à faire pousser environ 400 variétés de fruits, légumes et fleurs comestibles, ce qui représente près de trois tonnes d'aliments par an. En plus, ils élèvent 8 poulets, 4 canards et deux chèvres qui leurs offrent du lait et des œufs au quotidien. Ces fermes familiales ont existé même autour de Port Louis jusqu'à dans les années 50. Aujourd'hui, en Amérique, des familles utilisent des techniques comme les hydroponiques pour l'agriculture et l'aquaponique, comme cela se fait à Madagascar et ailleurs pour la pisciculture intensive sur des surfaces très réduites.

M. le Président, le pays vit encore au rythme des budgets du 20^{ème} siècle. Maurice vit à l'ère de l'huile lourde pour produire de l'électricité. Courtiers et courtisans avides de contrats et commissions, courent après les générateurs qui polluent et menacent la santé des mauriciens.

On abandonne ces derniers temps, des milliers d'arpents de plantations de cannes et le pays réduit ses productions rurales. On a conditionné l'opinion au déclin nécessaire de nos activités agricoles alimentaires, par des discours budgétaires déconnectés avec le 21^{ème} siècle.

Or, un discours du budget sérieux devrait proposer l'alternative à la seule production du sucre sur ces terres. Il faut que le gouvernement impose, comme condition aux soutiens accordés dans le budget, la culture en interlignes de cannes à l'approche du 01 octobre 2017. C'est au gouvernement d'imposer les grandes orientations pour ces soutiens.

En passant, ma réflexion est rejointe par le parti politique « *Lalit* » dans une lettre de très bonne facture, aux Membres de ce Parlement, en prévision du budget. Ma réflexion est

rejointe également dans *l'Express*, par l'économiste, politologue et auteur français, Thomas Guénolé, qui a conseillé aux mauriciens et je cite -

« un développement économique par une transition écologique à 100 % ».

Le concept de *Smart Villages* doit être réalisé par et pour les petits et moyens planteurs, les mauriciens les moins riches, les pauvres, les chômeurs diplômés ou pas et les sans-fortune urbains et ruraux qui seront alors rassemblés dans un effort d'une envergure sans précédent depuis l'indépendance en matière de développement socio-économique et humain et de la création d'emplois.

Le *Smart Village pilot project* doit se faire avec une unité constituée à un tiers de planteurs expérimentés, un tiers d'éleveurs expérimentés et un tiers de sans-emploi diplômés ou non-diplômés enregistrés, avec une aide budgétaire adéquate, avec une condition de rentabilité au bout de 36 à 48 mois au moins.

À partir de 2020/2021, la coopérative devrait produire de l'électricité par une usine solaire de type CSP grâce à une subvention budgétaire de l'État, remboursable à terme. Elle sera l'exemple à suivre, oui l'exemple à suivre, pour le reste du siècle. C'est là que les mauriciens trouveront le plus d'emplois productifs.

J'ai déjà proposé des *Cottage Industries* et autres activités, surtout agro-industrielles, pour la production de viande et de lait, la culture de plantes riches en fibres naturelles très prisées au niveau international, y compris par les industries comme le secteur automobile ou le textile. Ces plantes interlignes sont La ramie, qui donne six récoltes par an, et le chanvre. Ajoutons les plantations de plantes médicinales pour lesquelles le marché est grandissant, de vétiver, de raphia, de vacoas et d'aloès pour, par exemple, remplacer annuellement 300 000 sacs en plastique et stimuler diverses autres activités artisanales.

Les *Smart Villages* devraient attirer ainsi les habitants des villes pour la pratique de productions agro-industrielles intensives adaptées au contexte et aux besoins mauriciens. Une usine solaire génère 45 à 50 emplois, certains sophistiqués. Car ces usines sont entièrement contrôlées et leur performance suivie de près par ordinateur.

Et vive une île Maurice redevenue plus productive que consommatrice.

Je remercie la Chambre de m'avoir écouté. Merci !

Deputy Speaker: Hon. Tarolah !

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is with a very deep sense of pride and satisfaction that I rise in this august Assembly to speak on the Budget 2017/2018 which the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, has presented to this House and to the Nation on 08 June 2017.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can easily recall the presentation of the 2016/2017 Budget on 29 July 2016, how the task of managing the finances of the Nation and steering the economic development of our country was entrusted to the Leader of the MSM, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, and, obviously, which was prepared within two months' time and the third Budget of this Government is in front of the Nation only about 10 months after.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 30 mois, c'est à la fois beaucoup et peu. Beaucoup, si l'on considère les attentes de nos concitoyens dont le désir de progrès à tous les niveaux est compréhensible quand on sait c'est dont ils ont été les témoins pendant presque une décennie.

M. le président, nous avons pris pleinement conscience quand nous nous sommes retrouvés confrontés à la réalité d'une décroissance alarmante dans des secteurs clés. N'oublions pas qu'en décembre 2014, le secteur de la construction et de l'industrie sucrière affichaient ainsi respectivement moins 8.5 % et moins 3.5 %. Une étude claire que notre économie a entamé une phase de ralentissement. Le seul vrai remède qui s'inscrivait dans la durée était une restructuration. Il a fallu que deux ans pour redresser la barre et l'orienter vers des horizons plus sûrs. La tâche n'a pas été sans complications mais nous sommes heureux de constater que les signes de redressement sont réels au niveau de nos indicateurs économiques comme on atteste le bilan du ministère des Finances et du Développement Économique.

Mais il est judicieux de tenir compte des défis importants que présente un contexte international toujours plus incertain. M. le président, l'accession du présent gouvernement au pouvoir découle ainsi de la décision des mauriciens de placer leur confiance dans le *leadership* de notre Premier ministre et son projet économique et social à la hauteur de leurs attentes. Aujourd'hui, encore une fois, le MSM avec la collaboration du ML répond présent à l'appel du peuple dans une situation toute aussi dramatique où l'avenir du peuple et de notre

île était presque hypothéquée par la dictature de l'ancien régime avec la complicité des autres.

À chaque fois que le pays a vacillé dangereusement sous le régime travailliste, le MSM et la famille militante, les vraies militantes et patriotes ont répondu présent pour assainir et redresser. M. le président, l'intention est d'abord de faciliter la vie de nos citoyens, mais le projet présent et avenir s'inscrive aussi la logique d'offrir aux investisseurs locaux et étrangers les infrastructures requises à la fois moderne et pratique pour leur permettre de prospérer. Et à travers eux, à notre économie de prendre son envol. Nos réalisations se résument en des mots phares qui aujourd'hui expriment pleinement notre fierté, vision, innovation, développement, progrès, prospérité, modernité, bonheur pour tous, unité, sécurité et volonté pour avancer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the light of hope is brighter today. After the introduction of a new era of development last year, today we are rising to the challenge of our ambitions. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, expectations are many and the aspirations are high, thus priorities and concerns have been voiced out. It is essential that we have a clear vision of the future we want for our Nation. A proper policy of National sharing is also crucial for maintaining social peace.

At the dawn of our country's 50th Independence anniversary, we have high ambitions for our country. Our aim is for Mauritius to be a high income country in the years to come. The main challenges ahead are –

- fostering higher growth for more and better jobs;
- investing massively in the infrastructure of the future;
- improving the quality of life of our people;
- ensuring a new social paradigm, and
- consolidating macroeconomic fundamentals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must be thankful to the Government of India for the exceptional financial support for the implementation of many crucial development projects and programmes. This support is over and above the grant of Rs12.7 billion that was given to us last year and the Rs22.5 billion making a total of Rs35.2 billion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many negative words and qualifications have been used to disgrace this noble help. Some even are of opinion that Agalega is being sold in return for this help. Let me illustrate it by an analogy; it is often said that when someone is drowning, he even grasps a leaf which passes by the side in order to save himself. And here the country had been brought to the point of downfall by the previous Government. So, what is the harm done if a younger brother requests the help of his elder brother? All Mauritians must be really proud of the privileged relationship and tie between the two Prime Ministers, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and his Excellency Shri Narendra Modi Ji without forgetting the bond of *chota bharat*, that is, Mauritius and India.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a list of about 24 projects which have been earmarked to be financed by the help of India among which is the Metro Express, housing for the needy, new administrative block at Cote D'Or and water supply sector among others. I am really proud to note that with the help of India, funds have been made available for the construction of three essential amenities in the eastern region of our country, namely, the headquarters of the District Council of Flacq, the market fair and the Medi-clinic of Bel Air. I would like to highlight for the benefit of the House and the population at large, there was a super Minister during the previous regime who was named '*Le Roi de l'Est*'. I would like to request the people living in the district of Flacq to ask: "what has he done?" What initiatives have been taken while splitting the Moka-Flacq District Council into two Councils? A building had been rented where to reach there, you need to go through sugar cane fields.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, if I am not mistaken some time back, our Minister responsible for the Local Authority, conducted a surprise visit at Flacq District Council, but he was, in fact, surprised to notice that toilets have been converted as offices. He is proud of his officers; we are proud of them too. But let us be thankful to India for providing funds to construct proper headquarters for the Flacq District Council and I am much more thankful to the Prime Minister for his vision and kind consideration in allocating funds for that long awaited project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say something about the Constituency No. 10. Constituency No. 10, Montagne Blanche-Grand River South East, was one of the constituencies where there were three Ministers in the previous Government. One was busy with the *université marron*; the second one with téléphérique and better not to say anything for the third one. Nothing has been done from 2005 to 2014. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thanks

to this Government, and I will be very thankful to the Prime Minister who himself conducted various site visits in the Constituency No. 10 and have taken notes of various necessary amenities needful for the inhabitants of the constituency. Thus, in this Budget 2017-2018, funds under Indian financial assistance have been earmarked for the construction of new market fair, new Health Centres at Camp de Masque and Trou D'Eau Douce, new Medi-clinic at Bel Air with the objective to get regular water supply. Construction of steel tanks at the following sites have been earmarked namely at Beau Champ, L'Etoile, Melrose.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, facilitating the day-to-day life of our citizens and improving basic infrastructure all over the island through the Citizen Advice Bureau and also introduction of Citizens Support Unit by our Prime Minister, this year, had played an important role. Furthermore, it is good to note that within one month more than 1,500 cases reported through CSU have been solved.

For the construction of drains and upgrading and construction of bridges and other NDU projects, for the first time an amount of Rs1,085,000,000 (Rs1 billion and 85 million) has been earmarked for the National Development Unit. At the NDU, let us not forget how there had been an abuse and a backlog of lots of unpaid items by the previous regime. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Local Authority with the collaboration of the NDU and the Prime Minister, lots of work are being done in every village of the district of Flacq. And this year, we have targeted the opening of, at least, one amenity every month. We have started by the opening of a sub-hall at Caroline in January, a recreational shelter at St Michel in February, a sub-hall at La Lucie Roy in March, a sub-hall at Camp de Masque in April, a family corner at Poste de Flacq was recently opened and we are preparing the opening of a recreational shelter at Médine Camp de Masque by the end of this month. Construction of about a dozen of new roads across the constituency, resurfacing of more than 20 non-classified roads and four classified ones have been completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget has a strong dose of incentives to tackle poverty especially with income support and social housing projects. It is interesting to note that the Minister of Finance has introduced a solidarity levy of 5% on those earning more than Rs3.5 m. annually which will be used for the benefits of those earning less than Rs10,000. And many other measures have been taken to alleviate the standard of living of every Mauritian.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me seize this opportunity to thank the Leader of the House, the Prime Minister, Madam Speaker and the Chief Whip on behalf of people of the

Muslim faith for allowing a break during the presentation of the Budget 2017-2018 to break their fast.

M. le président, avant de terminer, je voudrais citer le message du Premier ministre adressé à tout le monde à l'occasion du 30^{ème} anniversaire du MSM. *I quote* –

“J’ai un rêve pour mon pays. Mon pari, ma mission est de contribuer à faire de l’île Maurice un havre de démocratie et de modernité où chaque citoyen pourra clamer avec fierté: je suis mauricien. J’ai l’intime conviction que chacun d’entre nous pourra s’épanouir en toute confiance dans une société saine et prospère. Je réaliserai ce rêve à vos côtés.”

I will further add – “*Ensam la main dans la main, nou pou réussi*”

Merci pour votre attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier !

(7.13 p.m.)

Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président. M. le président ce qui retient surtout l’attention dans ce budget, c’est un budget qui est marqué par un endettement sans précédent, alarmant, dangereux et qui met en péril l’avenir économique du pays.

C’est un gouvernement qui ne gère que les affaires courantes du pays, de l’État et là aussi avec des résultats peu convaincants suivis des rapports de l’audit qui sont de plus en plus choquants, d’année en année, et l’incompétence est plausible au niveau de la majorité pour pouvoir atteindre les objectifs que ce gouvernement s’est fixé en décembre 2014.

Mais le plus grave, c’est le massacre économique qui en découlera et qu’on va passer à la génération future dans les 10-20 ans à venir. Mais il est clair que le gouvernement actuel ne se soucie guère de l’avenir économique du pays, donc, insensible à la génération actuelle du pays et encore moins envers ceux qui vont nous succéder dans cette auguste Assemblée.

Depuis l’arrivée de l’Alliance *Lepep* au pouvoir et jusqu’à ce qu’il en reste aujourd’hui de cette alliance, les ministres des Finances se sont succédé et ils ont voulu à chaque fois essayer de donner une dimension sociale à leur budget pour épater la galerie. Mais année après année, la plupart de ces mesures annoncées, avec des *tapes la table* sonores,

finissent par s'effacer dans le décor. Et cela, M. le président, parce qu'il y a tellement d'incompétents au sein du gouvernement que l'implémentation des mesures annoncées reste *frozen* dans le frigo. Les projets peinent à démarrer. Résultat : beaucoup a été dit, mais peu a été accompli ; en d'autres mots, *kozé sirop, action zéro* !

(Interruptions)

Non ! Pour apporter plus de substance à ce que je dis, laissez-moi prendre quelques petits exemples du discours du budget 2016-2017. Dans ce budget, je vais prendre, par exemple, à la page 5 du discours de 2016-2017, les items 34, 35 et 36. *I quote* -

“Third, a National SME Incubator Scheme will be created under which a matching grant of Rs50 million will be offered with the aim of supporting and mentoring young entrepreneurs.”

Item 35 - *part of it* -

“(...) a pilot Agri-Business Park will be set up at Highlands over an area of 100 acres;”

Toujours à l'item 35 –

“two new SME Industrial Parks will be constructed at Plaine Magnien and Vuillemin;”

Et je continue –

“the DBM Industrial Zone at Coromandel will be converted into a modern integrated SME industrial park.”

Je continue à la page 7, item 50, et je cite –

“Madam Speaker, with these measures, some 21,400 youths, men and women will be taken out of unemployment.”

21,400! Nous n'en sommes même pas à 10%, M. le président. Je prends un dernier exemple à la page 10. Je m'arrête à la page 10, parce que sinon je vais prendre tout le temps de la Chambre.

Item 78 –

“To boost dairy production, Rs10 million are being earmarked for the setting up of a heifer farm at Melrose (...)”

Tout cela se fait toujours attendre ; des fermes pour produire des génisses qui vont être distribuées aux fermiers. Paroles et paroles et paroles. Comme dit Dalida, « Encore des paroles ». Nous n'en sommes pas encore...

(Interruptions)

Heureusement...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Barbier: Heureusement que ce n'est pas encore *the Music Day*. Si on était le 21 juin, j'aurais chanté avec joie pour vous ce morceau de Dalida. Mais que des paroles, il faut le dire ; on le constate. Je vous donne les faits. Après un an, malheureusement, M. le président, ce gouvernement n'a pas convaincu la population. Et je ne comprends pas pourquoi le gouvernement se fait de plus en plus flexible à l'embauche des travailleurs étrangers, surtout dans la construction, mais aussi dans le secteur manufacturier et même dans le secteur commercial.

Aujourd'hui, nous témoignons tous, nous voyons des travailleurs étrangers dans les rayons de supermarché, des serveurs dans des restaurants, des menuisiers dans des petites entreprises, des jardiniers, et j'en passe ! Il y en a tellement. Il y a un sérieux problème quelque part. Nous avons pourtant des Mauriciens et Mauriciennes qui sont justement en quête d'emploi dans ces secteurs. Ils se voient refuser leur demande d'embauche. A chaque fois qu'ils se présentent dans des entreprises, on prend leur nom, on leur dit qu'on va les appeler, qu'ils vont être convoqués, qu'on va les écrire, mais rien ne s'ensuit. Je suis sûr que d'autres parlementaires des deux côtés de la Chambre sont aussi au courant de cette situation, et les Mauriciens en savent autant que moi.

Donc, je fais une demande au gouvernement. Il faut qu'un mécanisme soit mis en place au niveau de l'Etat pour déterminer la véracité des demandes des employeurs par rapport à la main-d'œuvre étrangère. Il faut que l'Etat puisse mettre en place une structure pour s'assurer de trouver la main-d'œuvre requise au niveau du marché local d'abord, et ensuite, si vraiment on constate qu'il n'y a pas de possibilité, évidemment on pourrait, à ce moment-là, considérer la possibilité de recruter au niveau des étrangers. Il ne faut pas uniquement se fier à la liste qui est au ministère de l'Emploi. Ce répertoire ne reflète pas la réalité, parce qu'il y a beaucoup de Mauriciens qui ne vont pas se faire inscrire. Ils ne croient pas dans cette pratique, et des fois, croyez-moi, ils n'ont pas tort de réagir ainsi.

Donc, comment déterminer au niveau de l'Etat si vraiment les demandes pour embaucher les étrangers sont vraiment acceptables, s'il y a une certaine véracité dans leurs demandes ? Je suis désolé, mais jusqu'à maintenant nous n'avons mis aucune structure en place pour pouvoir s'assurer que nous ne sommes pas en train de donner du travail aux autres au détriment des Mauriciens et des Mauriciennes. Il faut que l'Etat soit vraiment sûr de la justification de ces demandes des entreprises.

M. le président, étant donné que nous sommes une population vieillissante, il est certain que le nombre de jeunes qui viennent sur le marché du travail chaque année est moins que les années précédentes. C'est un fait. Ceci dit, mathématiquement, d'année en année, il y en a moins qui viennent sur le marché du travail de par le fait que nous sommes une population vieillissante. Et par cette équation, normalement cela va montrer une baisse dans le taux de chômage, et c'est un peu plus par rapport à ce mécanisme, à cet état de choses que par rapport à la création d'emplois par l'Etat. Donc, très peu de création d'emplois, mais il y a aussi, en parallèle, moins de jeunes qui viennent sur le marché du travail étant donné que nous sommes une population vieillissante.

M. le président, je voudrais dire un mot par rapport à la taxe supplémentaire imposée sur l'alcool et les cigarettes. C'est un fait que les consommateurs d'alcool contribuent R 4.8 milliards chaque année dans la caisse de l'État et il en est ainsi pour les consommateurs de cigarettes, environ encore R 4.8 milliards. Je dirai que rien que pour ces items les fumeurs et ceux qui *'batte ene ti grogue de temps en temps'* ou même plus, ils contribuent, en taxe indirecte près de R 10 milliards à l'État, ce qui représente plus de taxe de contribution que le gouvernement ne collecte par rapport au *Income Tax*. Alors, moins de revenu par rapport au *Income tax* que par rapport à la cigarette et à l'alcool. Je me demande jusqu'à quand encore on va continuer à plumer ces pauvres gens. C'est incroyable! On continue!

(Interruptions)

Oui. *Ban ki bwar gros mario*, je vais venir là.

Le Premier ministre et les autres membres du gouvernement le savent très bien que ces produits d'addiction sont des produits comme on dit en économie *'inelastic products'* which means a change in price will not change the demand for that product. Tout le monde est au courant de ça. Donc, ne vient pas me dire, qu'en augmentant le prix de ces produits que la consommation va baisser car nous savons tous que tel ne sera pas le cas et ça a été prouvé, économiquement parlant.

Is the Government aware that now the cheapest rum, which the poor consume, will cost more than a synthetic cigarette drug?

Donc, M. le président, le gouvernement sait très bien que l'augmentation du prix de la cigarette et de l'alcool ne va pas réduire la consommation de ces produits. Les consommateurs vont couper ailleurs dans leur budget pour satisfaire leur addiction et de par ce présent budget, le coût d'une topette de rhum, le moins cher, connu comme *gros mario* par la population, dans notre jargon mauricien coûte maintenant plus cher, comme je vous dis, un joint de drogue synthétique. Allez vérifier !

Donc le signal est donné. Est-ce que c'est ainsi qu'on va combattre les maux de la société. Je me pose la question, M. le président. Donc nous sommes sur un terrain glissant.

M. le président, la décision du gouvernement de baisser la taxe à l'exportation de 15% à 3%, ça me rend perplexe. Et je m'explique. Je pense qu'une telle décision ne peut pas être inconditionnelle. Je considère qu'une telle décision doit être accompagnée de certaines conditions. Je n'ai pas entendu parler dans le discours, mais j'espère que ça va être le cas. Comme, par l'exemple, l'obligation de passer ces profits en partie aux employés, à l'innovation de l'entreprise pour booster la production de l'entreprise, pour la diversification de l'entreprise. Les exemples que je vous donne peuvent être beaucoup plus grands que ça, plus large, mais pas uniquement pour augmenter les dividendes des actionnaires.

M. le président, concernant le *Negative Income Tax*, là aussi j'aurai certaines observations à faire. La population n'était pas en présence du tableau, que nous avons eu en tant que parlementaire en annexe, et tout le monde a compris que tous ceux qui touchent moins de R 10,000 par mois qu'ils allaient recevoir une aide mensuelle de R 1,000 par mois. Grande a été leur déception. *Et ici pas bizin dir ou tab latab la*. J'ai dit de rectifier la chose dans les réunions récentes. Donc, les gens étaient convaincus que tous ceux qui touchaient moins que R 10,000 allaient avoir R 1,000. Ils vont recevoir entre R 100 et R 500. Mais la question qui me vient tout de suite à l'esprit, c'est qu'étant donné maintenant qu'en janvier 2018, on va avoir le rapport du '*National Minimum Wage Council*' qui travaille sur le salaire minimum. Quand ces rapports vont être rendus public, est-ce-que ce rapport ne rendrait pas caduc ce procès de provision annoncé dans le budget. Et qu'en sera-t-il s'il y a une recommandation qui avoisine les 10,000, ce qui rendrait à ce moment caduque complètement cette mesure. Et là si tel serait le cas, ça va être considéré comme une arnaque à la population. Une arnaque et c'est pas fort, M. le président.

M. le président, concernant le 'Blue Economy', can you imagine that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced only a few things concerning fishermen or cooperatives to buy fishing boats. It is the same thing like in the past Budget, existing policy for the aquaculture and that's all. Is that all we can expect from this Government in terms of 'Blue Economy'. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am really disappointed. This troubles me a lot. This inefficiency of this Government in terms of appropriate decision to develop our exclusive economic zone, I am shocked. This is one of the possibilities of developing a new pillar of our economy. I am not only disappointed but I am sad for our future generation, that we are not taking the right decision to be able to boost our economy, to create new pillars and to boost existing ones.

We are losing too much time; it will cost us a lot in terms of economic objectives, which we are supposed to reach in the next decade. So, I am putting the question: are we really taking the right decision so as to be a high income economy. I am not sure. I am not sure at all!

Concernant l'investissement dans nos infrastructures publiques, il est clair que ce sont tous des investissements sans aucune rentabilité financière. Je parle d'une façon absolue, je ne parle pas de *consequences of these investments*, je parle en terme absolu.

Et même pour nos investissements dans le métro express. Il est maintenant clair que les revenus escomptés par l'opération du métro express ne seront pas suffisants pour couvrir les frais d'opération. En clair, il va falloir subventionner l'opération et même si tous les *grants* que l'Inde est en train de nous accorder, et mis à contribution dans ce projet, il va falloir encore emprunter pour compléter les projets et qui dit emprunt dit remboursement et nous n'avons aucun plan pour augmenter nos revenus d'une façon, je dirais, substantielle pour pouvoir donner les moyens aux générations futures pour pouvoir *service this debt*, assainir ces dettes.

Et au chapitre 19, du présent discours du Budget 2017-18, je suis étonné, que le Premier ministre et le ministre des Finances nous dit sa fierté, *he said he is proud*, d'avoir emprunté 18 milliards de Inde en termes d'une ligne de crédit. Dans une telle situation je ne comprends pas de quoi peut-on en être fier. Quand on emprunte de l'argent il va falloir le rembourser. Étant donné les situations d'endettement dans lesquelles nous nous trouvons je ne comprends pas de quoi on peut en être fier, M. le président.

En 2014 quand ce gouvernement prit les rênes - c'était vers la fin de 2014 –selon le rapport de PricewaterhouseCoopers, le site de ma source, l'endettement par rapport au PIB était de 56.15% fin 2014. Donc, le gouvernement prit les rênes à partir de là et commença à travailler à partir de janvier 2015. Aujourd'hui nous sommes à 66.1%! Je me demande comment pouvons-nous en être aussi fiers d'une telle situation! Mais c'est dangereux, M. le président. Je ne comprends pas comment nous avons pu arriver là en deux ans. 2015, 2016 et 2017, 10% d'augmentation de la dette publique par rapport au PIB je considère cela grave et dangereux. C'est très dangereux pour l'avenir.

Tout ceci nous indique qu'il n'y aura pas de deuxième miracle économique. Non! Il n'y aura pas de deuxième miracle économique! Et c'était le thème principal économique du gouvernement *Lepep*. Dois-je vous rappeler que le peuple avait voté pour que Sir Anerood Jugnauth et mon ami Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo produisent ce deuxième miracle économique? Aujourd'hui ces deux portefeuilles reviennent à l'honorable Premier ministre, Pravind Jugnauth, qui assure en même temps le rôle du Premier ministre et celui du ministre des Finances.

(Interruptions)

Non, je n'ai pas de problème mais ce n'est pas ce qui avait été promis au peuple! Le deuxième miracle économique, les gens ont fait confiance parce qu'il y a un passé de l'honorable Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo qui avait fait le premier miracle économique avec Sir Anerood Jugnauth et c'est pour cela que les gens ont voté. C'est pour cela qu'il y avait tant de confiance dans cette équipe et aujourd'hui, de toute façon ce n'est plus la même équipe, enfin ce qu'il en reste de l'équipe de l'Alliance *Lepep*...

(Interruptions)

et en même temps nous constatons que cet endettement a progressé de 51.5 %. C'est pour moi tout simplement effrayant pour l'avenir de ce pays! Effrayant parce que d'autant plus qu'il n'y a aucune mesure pour augmenter le revenu des piliers existants ni la création de nouveaux piliers économiques. Ce qui veut dire qu'on va passer à la génération future un héritage lourd de dettes sans leur donner les moyens de rembourser.

M. le président, je faillirai à mon devoir si je ne dis pas deux mots concernant les artistes. Il y a eu une certaine volonté dans ce budget du gouvernement pour donner un coup de main à la communauté des artistes, je le reconnais. Le gouvernement avait promis par

contre la révision du *Copyright Act* et on avait dit que cela allait être voté au plus tard à la fin de 2016 et en juin 2017 nous constatons que cette promesse n'a pas été tenue par le gouvernement. Comme je le disais, nous en saurons davantage. A la fin de ce présent exercice budgétaire, on saura, à ce moment-là, si le gouvernement va tenir parole ou pas. Donc, à bon entendeur salut mon ami le ministre des Arts et de la culture. On a déjà accusé six mois de retard par rapport aux promesses du gouvernement.

Pour terminer, je vais rapidement dire quelques mots par rapport à ma circonscription. M. le président, l'ancien bâtiment de la sécurité sociale à Les Salines dans ma circonscription a été déserté par le ministère et le bâtiment, qui est tombé en décrépitude, est en train de devenir un repaire pour les malfrats dans la région. Donc, j'avais compris que la station de police, qui actuellement se situe dans un bâtiment en location, allait être transférée dans ce bâtiment mais on attend toujours. Je souhaite qu'au courant de ce budget le gouvernement va faire diligence pour pouvoir résoudre ce problème.

J'ai archi demandé et je redemande encore une fois - et aujourd'hui nous avons un ministre et d'autres députés qui habitent la circonscription - l'élargissement de la route de Pointe aux Sables. Les deux côtés de cette route côtière de Pointe aux Sables sont *State land*. Donc, s'il avait vraiment la volonté politique, depuis belle lurette on aurait fait cet agrandissement et pourtant c'est extrêmement serré. *This is the main coastal road*, il y a des endroits où deux véhicules n'arrivent pas à se croiser. Il y a eu plusieurs accidents et même des cas fatals mais malheureusement malgré ma demande répétée au cours des années et des années pour pouvoir trouver une solution cela reste entier.

Le problème de circulation à la hauteur de Grande Rivière, j'avais soulevé le cas récemment au Parlement et le ministre m'avait invité à faire une descente des lieux. Moi je n'inviterai pas d'autres élus du gouvernement et de l'opposition de la circonscription parce qu'à mon avis c'est un problème qui n'est pas politique. Il y a vraiment un problème grave et il va falloir trouver une solution rapide. Cela fait trop longtemps encore qu'on attend.

En dernier lieu je voudrais demander au gouvernement de considérer la possibilité de faire la distribution de la méthadone dans les stations de police parce qu'actuellement par exemple c'est distribué au dispensaire de Bouloux dans le No.1 et cela cause énormément de problèmes aux habitants. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails. Je n'ai rien contre ceux qui ont besoin de ce traitement. C'est une bonne chose de les aider et de les accompagner mais il y a malheureusement d'autres inconvénients que cela cause aux habitants et je pense que ce

serait peut-être une bonne chose si la distribution aurait été faite dans les stations ou à côté des stations de police.

Donc, M. le président, après deux ans et demi de règne, le gouvernement est arrivé à mi-mandat et il est clair que l'Alliance *Lepep* ou du moins ce qu'il en reste a perdu la confiance de la population et de ses partisans, et j'estime que l'endettement va causer tellement de tort au pays que ce gouvernement ne réalisera pas son deuxième miracle économique. Donc, pour moi, c'était la raison principale pour laquelle ce gouvernement avait été élu en 2014. Maintenant on constate tous des deux côtés de la Chambre que ce miracle économique ne sera pas réalisé. Donc, pour moi ce gouvernement n'a plus sa raison d'être.

(Interruptions)

C'est pourquoi je dis qu'il est maintenant le temps, M. le président, de se pencher sur l'alternance pour ce pays. Il faut une équipe efficace, digne, capable, *committed* pour que ce pays puisse sortir du marasme où l'Alliance Lepep nous a foutu.

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Monty!

(7.43 p.m.)

Mrs M. C. Monty (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):

M. le président, permettez que je réponde à mon collègue, l'honorable Barbier, député de la Circonscription No.1 puisque mon collègue semble-t-il a oublié qu'il n'était pas en plein air car il a continué à faire des vers, 'des 'tapes la table' sonores qui finissent dans le décor !

Mais rassurez-vous mon cher collègue que vos paroles ne finiront pas dans le décor. Nous avons bien entendu vos demandes pour la Circonscription No.1.

M. le député, aucun membre de ce gouvernement ne s'inscrit dans l'incompétence et rappelez-vous que nous ne faisons pas d'attaques personnelles. Passant de la poésie, vous avez évoqué des paroles chansonnières - paroles, paroles ! Les paroles assassinées ne nous arrêteront pas, cher collègue, dans notre démarche de défendre la cause de ceux qui sont au plus bas de l'échelle. Une impatience morbide caractérise vos propos. Evidemment, vous aimez à vous référer à la chanson et cette fois-ci vous avez parlé de '*ziska kan*' et vous avez parlé du rhum. Le rhum *gros mario* ou *ti mario* qui a souffert d'une hausse de prix. Rappelez-vous, cher collègue, que cela vise à décourager la consommation excessive d'alcool qui,

rappelons-le, nuit à l'individu. Ce n'est pas une mesure caduque. Elle sera bien maintenue, M. Le président.

Votre déception sera bientôt caduque quand vous verrez le développement en plein essor. Vous serez boosté et sachez qu'on ne perd pas de temps et on n'a pas le temps de donner du temps au temps pour nous mettre à l'œuvre. Votre étonnement prendra une autre forme très bientôt car il sera alimenté de résultats aimantés de positivité, et non pas teintés de négativité comme cela a été le cas dans les propos de l'honorable Barbier qui vient de prendre la parole. L'honorable Barbier pourra circuler librement bientôt sur la route qu'il vient de mentionner à Petite Rivière et Pointe-aux-Sables car le problème de congestion sera bientôt 'décongestionné' par le projet qu'on mettra à l'œuvre.

(Interruptions)

Paroles, paroles, paroles seront...

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my hon. colleague will allow me to refer to the state of things in different areas of his constituency which he has served himself for so many years and where stagnation seems to have been the key word *dans le panier des bonnes intentions* - so many years, yes, I mentioned it - and to mention that he is right in his description of some areas and to simply remind him that miracles do not happen in a few weeks or months and that never infrastructure ...

(Interruptions)

I have never learned to speak at the same time with others, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Monty: May I start talking?

The Deputy Speaker: Please, resume!

Mrs Monty: Thank you! I wish, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind him that miracles do not happen in a few weeks or months and that never infrastructure has been given so much

attention and importance in a Budget, and so much more such a considerable monetary provision of Rs3.3 billion at national level and Rs500 m. to Local Authorities.

The traffic congestion at Pointe-aux-Sables, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which is a nightmare for the inhabitants, will soon be addressed to the satisfaction of one and all. As far as installation of drains and resurfacing of roads are concerned in Constituency No. 1, many projects have been realised. Out of 24 projects set for the Budget 2016-2017, 17 projects have been completed concerning resurfacing and 4 have not yet been completed. Why? It is because of sewage works. There are five ongoing projects as well and one big project to the cost of Rs3 m. where clearance has already been issued to the city of Port-Louis for the football ground called Nelson Mandela at Cassis. Many other projects earmarked for the region of Pailles, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, have been cancelled due to sewage works.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now, to start my intervention on the Budget. I wish, first of all, to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for having brought to the House a well-structured, easy to follow Budget plan which any unspecialised eye can follow without difficulty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, the title given to this Budget is 'Rising to the Challenge of our Ambitions', which clearly states the vision, the ambition, the mission profoundly anchored in the Government's will to address the needs of this country at all possible levels of intervention, be it at employment level, infrastructure, quality of life, social issues and macro-economic challenges. It clearly stipulates also the Government's will to leave no stone unturned to better cater for the needs of its people from bettering the environment, housing conditions, educational and health needs, sports facilities, arts and culture, agriculture, amongst others while keeping in mind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the realities of the present and remaining realistic about its ambitions and the challenges ahead.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Plan of Action has been clearly structured in five main challenges. The vision is neither a blind nor a blurred one and the measures to rise to the challenges are clearly defined. Last year's Budget already put us in a new era of development and this year's Budget comes to set the path that will allow us to rise to the challenges of our ambitions for the future. The Budget exercise encompasses vision but not dreams, meaning well grounded in reality and purpose.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, going through the Budget plan, one can clearly see how far the numerous pre-budgetary consultations have been taken into due consideration. The wide span of action to be geared towards growth translate this Government's will and determination to better the living conditions of its people, to modernise its environment and ensure the development of its economic growth, to provide ways and means to help its people to embark on the way to progress.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this present Budget comes to highlight the continuation of a well-defined road map towards creating the necessary framework for development and progress. It contains a wide range of incentives and packages addressed to keep productive sectors from agro-industry, bio-farming, ocean economy and tourism to finance financial services, manufacturing and digital economy thereby clarifying its vision to make of its people a highly developed Nation, capable of treading on new grounds in a fast moving world where digital imprints are the norm. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, if infrastructure aims at bettering the physical environment for the ease and comfort of the people, possibilities for development in training principally aim at providing the individual with tools for his personal growth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, during my intervention in the Budget, I made the wish that the multi-talented artists should have to be encouraged and supported in the development of their talents, and in the provision of this Budget, it is with much satisfaction that I welcome all the incentives that are being given to artists. First of all, the creation of a *Village des Artistes* at the site *Batterie de l'Harmonie* at Les Salines, Rivière-Noire. This is also the extension of the initiative taken by Government and which is taken over as well by the private sector to set up the Art Zone to sustain both recognition of artists and creativity.

M. le président, il est réconfortant de constater que l'enfant pauvre des arts et de la culture - l'âme même dans ce domaine, l'artiste - sera maintenant valorisé dans sa création et dans son talent. Quelle grande satisfaction pour les artistes de voir qu'ils auront un lieu bien à eux et que l'art et la culture sont enfin appréciés à leur juste valeur. La création du *TV Channel*, les facilités de formation à travers le ministère des Arts et de la Culture seront autant de signes pour montrer l'intérêt du gouvernement pour les artistes.

M. le président, Paul Verlaine a dit : 'L'art c'est d'être absolument soi-même.' Et pour être soi-même, on a besoin de pouvoir évoluer librement sans contrainte dans un

encadrement où on se sent chez soi et c'est ce que vient apporter ce lieu approprié pour l'éclosion et le développement des talents et de la créativité.

M. le président, j'aimerais aussi axer cette partie de mon intervention autour du mot 'reconnaissance' et pour se faire, je voudrais me référer aux grands oubliés de la République car une initiative prise par le gouvernement mérite d'être saluée, celle qui est bien sûr d'accorder une reconnaissance visible et tangible à tous ceux qui ont honoré de leur talent sportif, le drapeau et la mémoire de notre île et qui ont été trop longtemps les grands oubliés, je répète, de la république. Cette mesure, M. le président, vient corriger un manquement et restera gravée comme la réparation de mémoire faite aux fils et aux filles du sol par ce gouvernement. *Le Trust Fund For Excellence in Sports* prend donc ici une nouvelle allure avec l'allocation mensuelle prévue pour ceux qui, ayant dans le passé, dans leur domaine sportif respectif, servi et honoré le pays au niveau international.

M. le président, les deux maîtres mots 'mémoire et reconnaissance' ne sont pas limités aux personnes, mais aussi aux sites et monuments à travers la réhabilitation des sites historiques et culturels si éloquents dans leur stature imposante et pourtant non reconnue et laissée en ruine. La route de l'histoire de notre pays sera donc redorée afin de la faire revivre et la léguer à la postérité. Ainsi figurent, sur une liste soigneusement répertoriée, 14 sites à être revalorisés commençant par Grand Port pour se terminer à Moulin à Poudre à Pamplémousses.

M. le président, autour des mots 'mémoire et reconnaissance', l'histoire retiendra les fibres de base de cette vision 2030 qui se veut éclairante, motivante et qui vise à propulser Maurice comme le pays phare de l'océan Indien. Le sport, les arts et la culture y tiennent une place importante.

M. le président, ce présent exercice nous offre une panoplie de projets de développement pour changer non seulement la face externe du pays en lui procurant une infrastructure propre à sa topographie et à ses besoins, mais en venant apporter le progrès, le développement, l'amélioration du quotidien des habitants dans leurs déplacements comme dans leurs lieux d'habitation. Aussi un vaste chantier de travaux infrastructurels sont prévus à travers l'île en plus d'une dotation budgétaire conséquente de R 3.3 billion et R 500 millions aux autorités locales, toute l'île en sera bénéficiaire. Aucune région ne sera négligée venant ainsi assurer la sécurité des habitants en cas de grosses pluies où un grand projet d'aménagement de drains est prévu pour éviter l'accumulation d'eau et faciliter son

évacuation. Je salue la venue prochaine du *Land Drainage Authority* et le *National Land Drainage Plan* pour pouvoir parer à toute éventualité en cas d'inondation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also welcome the unprecedented importance given to research in many fields, namely, in education, agriculture, ocean economy, amongst others, thereby creating a new avenue of innovative fields of study for our youth and promote as well continuous development and progress, a new field to which importance is given, so as to encourage continuous studies and to allow Mauritians to keep pace with new discoveries and new trends.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an important aspect also which I would like to mention is the investment plan to support the development of skills so as to keep up with new demands and needs of our economy. Rs310 m. for upgrading educational hardware and a few training centres, a new campus for the University of Technology is most welcomed. And also the additional sum of Rs130 m. to finance the operating cost of Polytechnics so as to respond to the needs of various sectors and make necessary provision for training. I would not like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to miss mentioning the unprecedented importance given to research again.

J'en arrive maintenant à la circonscription dont je suis la députée et la PPS, la circonscription No. 4. La circonscription No. 4, M. le président, demeure encore l'enfant pauvre en ce qui concerne les infrastructures sportives si nécessaires pour sortir nos jeunes des ornières de la misère culturelle et sportive. Le cri de nos jeunes au No. 4 est axé sur le manque d'infrastructures sportives, les terrains synthétiques des régions avoisinantes créent des frustrations souvent justifiées. Avis est donc lancé au ministre des Sports.

Un autre appel pour cette région chaude which has to be watered and I think of a swimming pool which will surely help to keep youngsters busy and healthy. My wish is to have two swimming pools, one in the centre and one in the north.

M. le président, je crois qu'il est grand temps que je conclue mon discours. Faut-il rappeler, M. le président, qu'un exercice budgétaire n'est que le tracé d'une route avec les dotations monétaires y relatives, mais pour la réussite et la réalisation, faut-il encore et surtout que les responsabilités soient assumées par tous les acteurs à tous les échelons de l'implémentation et que tous les ralentisseurs du progrès se mettent à l'œuvre, que la stagnation devienne mouvance et que les roues du développement se mettent à tourner pour le

bien-être de tout un chacun pour la relance et le développement économique d'un pays qui se veut phare, moteur et plaque tournante. Et comme Auguste Comte, dans son manifeste sur le système de 'politique positive' dit et se réfère au 'progrès' comme étant le 'développement de l'ordre,' eh bien, nous sommes bien partis...

À nous la route et le développement. Sur ce, je vous remercie.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

(8.02 p.m.)

Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, je vais répondre à l'honorable Mme Monty concernant les leçons qu'elle a essayé de donner à l'honorable Barbier, mais moi, je pense que même, politiquement parlant, elle est très loin, elle-même, d'être un exemple et tout le monde sait de quoi je parle.

M. le président, le budget de l'État peut être défini comme l'ensemble des documents votés par le Parlement qui prévoit et autorise les ressources et les charges de l'État pour chaque année. C'est donc un acte de perdution et d'autorisation annuelle, de perception des impôts et des dépenses des deniers publics. Les lois finances sont des actes juridiques et politiques.

Leur contenu ne se réduit pas à la description du budget de l'État. Il porte sur les emplois, l'information et le contrôle du Parlement sur les finances publiques. Il peut être aussi compté de recettes directement affectées à des personnes morales autres que l'État. Un budget sérieux, c'est un budget où on répartit les recettes en réservant 10% pour les arbitrages à faire ensuite.

Concernant le précédent budget, c'est dommage que certains projets majeurs annoncés dans le budget 2016/2017 n'aient jamais été réalisés. Les autres parlementaires vont sûrement élaborer sur les projets réalisés, mais moi je vais surtout mentionner ceux qui n'ont pas été réalisés dans ma circonscription. Je vais certainement citer deux cas dans ma circonscription concernant le ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie, annoncés par le ministre d'alors, l'honorable Anil Gayan. Je cite -

“In terms of project, Madam Speaker, we are going to have a Bel Air Mediclinic, a Coromandel Mediclinic. An amount of 10 million has been allocated in the Budget for the construction of a Mediclinic at Coromandel. We are going to have an Area

Health Centre at Petite Rivière. The estimated cost is Rs14 million and the final drawings are being awaited from MPI.”

Donc, il est mentionné dans l’ancien budget que 67 millions étaient *earmarked* pour le projet, 10 millions pour 2016/2017, 20 millions pour 2017/2018 ainsi de suite. Ensuite, cette année-ci, dans le nouveau budget, on voit toujours *earmarked* 67 millions et les 10 millions de l’année dernière et 8 millions seulement pour cette année. Est-ce un autre rêve que nous allons vendre encore une fois aux habitants de ma circonscription sans que cela se réalise ? M. le président, je ne sais pas si c’est par rapport au remaniement ministériel que ce projet a été retardé ou mis au placard. Mais nous avons tous pu constater que beaucoup de décisions de l’ancien ministre de la Santé ont été renversées par le nouveau ministre.

(Interruptions)

Je ne sais pas si c’est avec raison ou pas, mais c’est à se demander si certains remaniements ne sont pas une punition par rapport à certaines décisions qui n’étaient pas au goût du nouveau Premier ministre. Au niveau du ministère des Terres et du Logement, là encore, lors de la campagne électorale, l’Alliance *Lepep* dont je faisais partie - et je le reconnais - avait annoncé la construction de 10,000 maisons en cinq ans. Donc, à ce jour, on aurait dû avoir livré 5,000 à travers l’île. Mais d’après mes sources, aucune maison n’a été construite et livrée à ce jour par le nouveau gouvernement.

Dans ma circonscription, 68 maisons à Résidence Beryl à Chebel livrées le 29 août 2016 avaient été construites par l’ancien régime. Par contre, dans le précédent budget, le gouvernement avait annoncé la rénovation des appartements de la *NHDC* à hauteur de 155 millions, et cela a été fait. Dans le nouveau budget, encore 157 millions ont été budgétés pour les autres appartements de la *NHDC*. Là, ma question est : est-ce que c’est un acte réfléchi, M. le président ? Car, d’après mes renseignements, beaucoup de propriétaires de ces appartements n’y habitent plus. Ils ont un autre lieu de résidence et ils ont mis leur appartement en location. Donc, le gouvernement finance les appartements des propriétaires qui perçoivent un loyer mensuel qui varie entre R 4,000 et R 6,000. Je sais que humainement parlant c’est une bonne chose de redonner un peu de confort aux habitants de ces appartements, mais venir en aide aux vrais propriétaires qui se font des sous sur la tête des pauvres, là je ne suis pas d’accord. 155 millions plus 157 millions, ce qui nous fait 312 millions, représentent encore 260 maisons sociales. Encore, c’est 260 familles qui auraient pu devenir propriétaires. Admettons qu’on continue avec la rénovation des appartements de la

NHDC, qu'en est-il des maisons de la défunte *CHA* qui sont aussi dans un état délabré ? N'ont-elles pas droit à une rénovation, M. le président ?

Je me demande où cela va s'arrêter. En parlant des appartements de la *NHDC*, je souhaiterais savoir si ceux de Mont Choisy et de Trou-aux-Biches vont être rénovés. Avant que ce soit fait, j'invite le ministre des Terres et du Logement - malheureusement, il n'est pas là -, l'honorable Soodhun, lors de son intervention, de nous communiquer les retombées de son enquête sur les fraudes alléguées sur les appartements de la *NHDC* à Mont Choisy et à Trou-aux-Biches, où les mineurs sont devenus propriétaires de 70 appartements. Ça a été mentionné dans un hebdomadaire en 2015. On voit bien la photo de l'honorable Soodhun et le directeur Gilles L'Entêté.

Concernant le ministère des Collectivités locales, je parlerai sur les manquements dans ma circonscription. En ce qu'il s'agit des infrastructures sportives, on retrouve beaucoup qui sont à l'abandon et ne sont plus praticables pour faire du sport. Je citerai surtout les infrastructures qui tombent sous l'égide de la municipalité, à commencer par celui de Chebel. Depuis des années, ce complexe n'a pu être utilisé, car il n'y a plus de paniers de basket-ball, les poteaux de volley-ball sont complètement pourris et le sol doit être complètement refait. Concernant le terrain de foot de Vuillemin, la rénovation a commencé le 27 janvier 2016 et aurait dû être livré fin juin 2016, mais n'a toujours pas été livré.

Le montant initial du projet était pour R 1,602,000, mais le premier contractuel a abandonné le travail inachevé après avoir empoché R 1,017,000. Un deuxième contractuel a pris le relais le 27 octobre 2016 ; deuxième abandon après avoir empoché R 426,000. Actuellement, c'est la municipalité qui est en train de compléter les travaux, et à ce jour, après 17 mois de travaux, ils n'ont toujours pas terminé, et bientôt 18 mois que les habitants de Vuillemin sont privés de leur terrain de foot.

(Interruptions)

Je l'espère ! Il n'est jamais trop tard pour bien faire de toute façon. A Résidence Barkly à Chebel, un terrain de foot qui aurait dû être livré en même temps que les 68 maisons, c'est-à-dire le 28 août 2016, n'a toujours pas été livré.

En parlant des infrastructures sportives de ma circonscription, on est la circonscription la plus pauvre de l'île Maurice. Pourquoi la plus pauvre ? Tout simplement parce qu'il n'y a pas un seul gymnase pour le sport collectif, c'est-à-dire le basket-ball, le volley-ball et le

handball. Pourtant, M. le président, dans ces trois disciplines mentionnées, 50% des athlètes représentent la ligue nationale et plus de 50% des athlètes représentent Maurice dans les équipes nationales.

Le gymnase du Quorum se trouve dans la circonscription No. 19, avec un seul terrain de jeu utilisé par 16 équipes de différentes disciplines pour deux circonscriptions. Donc, je vous laisse deviner le nombre d'heures qu'une équipe peut avoir pour s'entraîner lors d'une séance. Donc, je pose la question. A quand trois ou quatre salles d'entraînement dans cette circonscription, c'est-à-dire Beau Bassin, Coromandel, Albion et Petite Rivière ? Que faut-il faire pour que ce soit dans un budget ? Pourquoi un complexe multisport à Côte d'Or, où il y a bien moins d'athlètes de haut niveau ? Dans ce nouveau budget, au niveau de ma circonscription, mis à part les deux projets annoncés dans le budget précédent, *Mediclinic* à Coromandel et *Health Care Centre* à Petite Rivière, rien d'autre n'est prévu depuis belle lurette.

M. le président, parlons maintenant de notre combat contre la pauvreté. Au niveau du combat de la pauvreté, on a beau parler du plan Marshall. Il n'y a pas eu de grands changements dans ma circonscription mis à part les maisons construites par l'ancien gouvernement qui ont été livrées à Petite Rivière, cité Betel. Là encore, il y a eu des mécontentements, car une partie des bénéficiaires proviennent d'autres circonscriptions. Qu'en est-il des 100 millions de *Lovebridge* ? Dans le nouveau budget, rien n'a été dit. Un premier rapport allait sortir fin mars 2017, mais à ce jour rien. Dans ma circonscription, on n'a eu aucun soutien de *Lovebridge*. Concernant le SRM, il y a eu des recensements et uniquement une partie des bénéficiaires ont pu bénéficier du *scheme*.

Ceux qui n'ont pas bénéficié n'ont jamais été informés de la raison pourquoi ils n'ont pas été éligibles. Pourtant, je peux vous confirmer que ce sont des cas *genuine*, M. le président. J'ai l'impression que cela a été un mode *pick and choose* pour lancer le projet comme prévu et que certains sont laissés-pour-compte.

Le projet annoncé dans le budget est supposé d'être concrétisé à au moins 90%. Je suis sûr que beaucoup d'intervenants que ce soient les ministres, PPS ou députés de la majorité vont élaborer sur la liste des projets réalisés par le ministère ou dans leurs circonscriptions. Mais je ne vois pas le pourquoi de venir se vanter sur les réalisations qui sont supposées d'être faites car c'est leur travail de faire ce qui a été annoncé dans un budget. On est grassement payé pour ça. Mais il faut surtout venir expliquer pourquoi certains projets

n'ont pas été faits et donner des vraies raisons s'il y en a. Sinon venez présenter des excuses à votre employeur qui se trouve être le peuple de l'île Maurice. Ne vous qualifiez pas comme des bénévoles qui font du social pour rendre service au peuple.

Au niveau du sport, parlant en des jeux des îles de 2019 et ceux du passé. C'est très bien d'avoir mis à la disposition des fédérations R 18 millions pour la préparation des jeux des îles. Mais comment les utiliser pour ne pas faire les mêmes erreurs du passé ? Pourquoi je dis les mêmes erreurs du passé, M. le président, car certaines disciplines sportives sont arrivées à un niveau le plus bas surtout les disciplines collectives. Il ne faut pas se laisser berner par les 66 médailles d'or que nous avons récoltées en 2015. Faisons une analyse de ces 66 médailles d'or. Au niveau de handisport, on en a eu 11, l'haltérophilie : 21, boxe : 3, badminton : 7, Judo : 4, athlétisme : 9, cyclisme : 1, natation : 6, tennis de table : 3, qui représente 66 médailles d'or. Calcul bon, Ravi !

(Interruptions)

Pendant neuf ans, les médailles de handisport, d'haltérophilie, on se retrouve à la troisième place avec Madagascar qui avait bien moins d'athlètes que nous. Alors que nous, on avait le même nombre d'athlètes, c'est-à-dire 316 comme la Réunion.

Les plus mauvaises performances de l'île Maurice c'est par rapport aux sports collectifs qui n'ont pas ramené d'or depuis 2003. Tout le monde connaît la raison, c'est que nous avons des centres de formations fantômes. Pourquoi je dis fantôme ? C'est parce que le ministère des Finances a des centres qui sont inexistantes. La preuve que certaines disciplines collectives, nous retrouvons les mêmes athlètes qui représentent Maurice dans les compétitions internationales depuis 2003. Auparavant, les centres nationaux de formation étaient sous l'égide du ministère à l'époque, l'honorable Ravi Yerrigadoo - il peut en être témoin - était ministre et c'est la dernière fois que deux équipes de sports collectifs avaient ramené deux médailles d'or en occurrence le football et le volley-ball. *L'époque-là ti bon, Ravi !*

(Interruptions)

Peu après les jeux des îles de 2003, le ministre d'alors, Sylvio Tang, s'est laissé berner par les fédérations où il a donné les responsabilités de ces centres de formation aux fédérations. Ces mêmes fédérations ont décidé de fermer ces centres pour un soi-disant de réouverture dans les meilleures conditions et aujourd'hui, en 2017, il n'y a jamais eu de

réouverture. Depuis plus de 18 ans, il n'y a pas eu de championnats nationaux jeunes dans les sports collectifs à l'île Maurice. C'est pour cela qu'aujourd'hui on se retrouve sans relève.

Maintenant, revenons en arrière depuis l'existence des jeux des îles pour voir s'il y a eu une évolution de la performance de l'île Maurice. En 1979, on sort second avec 31 médailles d'or. En 1985, Maurice organise les jeux des îles et on sort second avec 36 médailles d'or. En 1990, on sort troisième. Madagascar organise les jeux. Madagascar sort premier. En 1993, les Seychelles organisent et on sort second. En 1998, la Réunion organise et on sort second encore une fois. En 2003 Maurice organise. On sort second encore une fois à Maurice, chez nous. Madagascar organise en 2007. Madagascar sort premier et nous, on sort troisième. Madagascar avait ramené 100 médailles d'or. En 2011, on sort troisième. Les Seychelles organisent. En 2015, on sort second, toujours derrière la Réunion Madagascar a organisé deux fois les jeux des îles et les deux fois il est sorti premier dans son pays devant son public. La deuxième fois, avec 100 médailles d'or. Alors que nous, sur neuf participations, on a fait six fois second et trois fois troisième. Je pense sincèrement que plus ça va plus on aura des résultats négatifs si on continue sur cette lancée.

D'ailleurs, comme je l'ai dit au début, l'haltérophilie et le handisport se retrouvent avec un résultat lamentable. Pour les jeux des îles de 2019, nous avons déjà pris du retard concernant la préparation en comparaison avec nos adversaires. Mais il n'est pas trop tard pour se rattraper. Il est grand temps que les entraîneurs nationaux soient nommés, qu'ils soumettent leur budget, leurs programmes de préparation au plus vite et que les R 18 millions sont servis à bon escient. C'est-à-dire que le comité organisateur approuve le budget de préparation par rapport à leur viabilité et on pourra emmener des résultats positifs, car il ne faut pas oublier que dans quelques fédérations, nous avons des pigeons voyageurs. Dans le passé, l'argent des contribuables a été gaspillé par rapport aux stages à l'étranger dans les déplacements qui ne valaient même pas la peine.

Les sports collectifs sont les plus coûteux, car certains se déplacent avec une délégation entre 20 et 25 personnes et ils négocient des stages en Chine où les grandes équipes refusent de jouer contre Maurice car le niveau est trop bas. Alors on vous fait jouer contre les écoliers où le niveau est trop bas pour l'île Maurice. Et c'était le même cas en Inde lors d'un stage. On vous fait jouer contre les écoliers alors qu'il existe d'autres préparations moins coûteuses mais plus bénéfiques.

Au niveau du recrutement des athlètes, les athlètes Rodriguais sont trop souvent négligés. Le potentiel est énorme là-bas. On a juste besoin de plus de soutien au niveau technique. C'est à Rodrigues qu'il faut investir dès maintenant pour les prochains jeux des îles. Moi, j'aurais conseillé d'investir une partie de ces R 18 millions à Rodrigues. Je suis sûr qu'on aura une bonne dizaine d'athlètes qui pourront nous amener des médailles.

Parlons de la relance du sport à Maurice ! C'est bien d'avoir fait la régionalisation, mais il faut le faire dans le vrai sens du mot. L'île de la Réunion a très bien réussi la régionalisation, M. le président et je pense qu'on devrait prendre l'exemple. Pour relancer le sport, il faut bien commencer quelque part, remettre le compteur à zéro et cela implique les collectivités locales, c'est-à-dire les municipalités et les *District Councils*. C'est facile de mettre en application, mais cela va me prendre encore 30 minutes pour vous expliquer. Donc, si ça vous intéresse, je suis là pour vous donner des idées.

Concernant la construction d'un complexe multisport à Côte-d'Or, j'ai cru comprendre qu'il y aura un investissement de R 500 millions. Un complexe multisport comprend des salles de compétitions pour toutes les compétitions en salle, des salles d'entraînement, des pistes d'entraînement pour athlétisme *indoor* et *outdoor*, pistes d'entraînement extérieures, des terrains de foot *indoor* et *outdoor* et un camp résidentiel, plus une école secondaire formant partie des complexes pour les athlètes de haut niveau où ils pourront continuer sport et étude.

Avoir un centre multisport avec des espaces de facilité emmènera le sport mauricien vers le professionnalisme et assurera l'après carrière des sportifs professionnels. À partir de là, ils pourront faire des études supérieures dans les métiers qui ont trait au sport. Mais pourquoi à Côte d'Or ? Ce n'est pas un endroit où se trouve la majorité des sportifs de haut niveau de notre pays ou alors c'est purement un choix politique.

Au niveau de la pension après carrière que le budget prévoit qui varie entre R 3,000 et R 10,000, c'est un bon début. Mais il faut reconnaître que les athlètes comme Stephan Buckland, Eric Milazar, Arnaud Casquette, Bruno Julie, Dolly Darden qui ont sacrifié 15 ans de leur vie méritent beaucoup plus pour pouvoir vivre correctement. Pourquoi ne pas les offrir un job au ministère des sports plus leur pensions quand ils sont encore jeunes. Ils peuvent emmener leurs contributions aux jeunes nouveaux talents dans leurs disciplines respectives. Je vais surtout faire référence au cas de Dolly Darden qui a contribué énormément à porter le quadricolore mauricien très haut et qui a été mis aux oubliettes et qui

se retrouve sans emploi depuis sa retraite parce qu'elle n'a pas de qualifications académiques. Je sais qu'elle est disposée de travailler comme *attendant* au niveau du sport. Au lieu de recruter ces personnes qui ont transpiré pour leur pays, ce sont des agents politiques qui sont recrutés comme *attendants* dans le sport et eux, ils n'ont jamais fait aucun sport dans leur vie.

Maintenant, c'est bien de donner une pension aux anciennes gloires, mais qu'est-ce qu'on a prévu pour les jeunes pousses, c'est-à-dire les futurs talents ? Moi, je propose qu'à l'âge de 17 ans, à l'âge où ils commencent leur professionnalisme au lieu de les donner une allocation de R 10,000, on les donne R 5,000 et les autres R 5,000 investies dans une assurance de vie sur 20 ans, qui d'après mes calculs, arrivé à terme, ils reçoivent R 2 millions. Et aussi en cas de blessure, incapacité physique, ils sont dédommagés à hauteur de R 2 millions. Au cas de décès, c'est leurs familles qui seront bénéficiaires. Avec ces avantages, les athlètes seront plus motivés à s'investir dans le sport pour représenter le pays au niveau national.

Maintenant, je voudrais être le porte-parole de certains athlètes concernant les jeux des îles. Je vais commencer par le tennis. Je fais un appel au ministre de la Jeunesse et des sports. Le tennis, qui a connu une transformation sans précédent, est devenu le sport qui est le plus représentatif, influent au sein de la société mauricienne. La fédération a déclenché une nouvelle installation construite à travers l'île, dans le pays et cela a été fait avec l'argent du privé. Le tennis est un sport qui engendrait plus de 3,000 licenciés sur les neuf organisations. Sur les neuf organisations des jeux des îles, l'île Maurice s'est fait représenter huit fois et si ma mémoire est bonne, ils ont ramené cinq médailles d'or, plus deux dans le handisport dans le passé.

Deuxième requête, c'est celui du handball qui avait participé aux jeux en 2015 et, vu l'ampleur de cette discipline qu'a pris le pays, je pense que ce n'est pas juste de les priver de cette participation surtout que c'est l'île Maurice qui est organisateur. Alors, je fais un appel au ministre de donner à ces athlètes de tennis et de handball la possibilité de s'adonner à leurs sports favoris devant le public de l'île Maurice. Je sais qu'on peut aller jusqu'à seize disciplines car on l'a déjà fait dans le passé. Après tout, ce sont les jeux de l'État alors donnez la chance au maximum de sportifs pour qu'ils soient de la fête.

Je ne me suis pas contenté de critiquer, j'ai fait beaucoup de suggestions surtout sur le sport, c'est à vous de voir si vous voulez les appliquer, le plus tôt sera le mieux. Rendons aux

athlètes leur lettre de noblesse parce que sans athlètes il n'y a pas d'entraîneur, pas d'encadreur, pas de ministre des Sports. Sans athlètes, il n'y a pas tout cela.

Dernière chose avant de terminer, M. le président, cela fait longtemps que je voulais répondre au *Deputy Prime Minister*, qui avait fait un discours, l'honorable Ivan Collendavelloo, qui disait que les parlementaires PMSD ne préparent pas leur discours et qu'ils ne savent même pas ce qu'ils lisent. Figurez-vous, honorable ministre, que je prépare moi-même mes discours en faisant mes propres recherches, en disant ce que j'ai sur le cœur, sans hypocrisie et sans lèche botte. Je sais qu'il adore s'en prendre au PMSD parce que, pour lui, c'est son adversaire principal, alors que pour nous, ni lui, ni son parti ne représente rien. Heureusement, quand il a dit cela, c'était devant son grand public de 15 personnes, rien à voir avec les attaques et insultes qu'il reçoit sur Facebook pour connaître sa popularité. A bon entendeur salut !

To conclude, I would like to touch on what has been said by the Minister Mentor, especially regarding the BAI scam. In his own words, the Minister has misled the House throughout his intervention on the BAI scam. He has misled the House as he did not disclose everything that has happened. He never said, for example, that on the day leading up to the revocation of the Bramer Bank Banking Licence which caused the whole BAI Group to collapse and to lose effectively all its value, he, as, Prime Minister and Ministers of his Government, withdrew all their monies from the Bramer Bank and ordered Ministries to do the same. Millions were removed overnight from bank which further increased the liquidity problem of the bank. Days later, his Government, with his blessings, revoked the licence of the bank causing that huge haul of economy. He should tell us the whole truth.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Aliphon!

(8.28 p.m.)

Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, je suis abasourdi par les propos de l'Opposition. Déjà le Budget 2017-2018 et malgré le harcèlement impitoyable, catastrophique de l'Opposition qui promettait à chaque conférence de presse qu'elle tiendrait des élections au plus vite dans deux jours, dans deux mois. Mais nous revoilà déjà encore avec le Budget 2017-2018 sans aucun changement pour le gouvernement, sauf un, en 2016, ceux qui devaient mener la vie dure au gouvernement actuel, ne sont plus aux commandes de l'Opposition. Ils ont dû céder ce rôle au PMSD, et

nous voilà déjà avec un nouveau budget où le gouvernement a su, durant l'année passée, délivrer ses promesses, gérer des situations et a sainement et sereinement dirigé les affaires de l'île Maurice et les mauriciens le comprennent bien. Hélas que le Leader de l'opposition n'est pas là et même son fils s'en va, malheureusement ! Je commence à prendre peur. Ce matin le Leader de l'Opposition disait que ce budget devrait être retapé, refait complètement et maintenant on vient d'entendre le député Lepoigneur nous dire qu'il y a eu des moins bons peut-être, mais des bons et de très bons dans les données du gouvernement.

Pour le sport, je vais laisser le soin au ministre des sports de lui répondre la prochaine fois, mais je crains que M. Lepoigneur aille devant un gros problème avec son Leader qui va lui tirer les oreilles tout comme il a tiré les oreilles à la députée de Curepipe quand on avait annoncé qu'il y aurait une piscine à Curepipe.

(Interruptions)

Je le crains !

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Aliphon: Voilà où ça pince ! Voilà où ça fait mal ! Les vérités pareilles !

Mais, enfin, M. le président, on continue notre bout de chemin. Nous, on avait fait des choses et il serait bon de le rappeler aux mauriciens avant tout...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

Mr Aliphon: *Zot malelevé mem zot!*

(Interruptions)

... et ensuite de rappeler à cette Opposition que nous devrions qualifier une Opposition en deux temps et quatre mouvements : le premier temps se composant des *PNQs* posées par le PMSD et le deuxième temps les *PQs* animées par le MMM et enfin les quatre mouvements les quelques paroles du reste de l'Opposition.

Mais, contrairement à cette Opposition actuelle, oui, nous gouvernons avec à la tête, le modernisme de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth,

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, please!

Mr Aliphon: *Crabe la morder!* Oui nous proposons des choses, oui nous faisons des erreurs et oui nous les corrigeons aussi car il n'y a que ceux qui ne font rien qui ne font pas d'erreurs comme celles de l'Opposition.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

(Interruptions)

Allow me to listen to the speech of hon. Aliphon!

Mr Aliphon: Quelqu'un pourrait me demander croyant me piéger : qu'avez-vous fait de bon dans le dernier budget ? Allons voir : un coup d'œil rapide : en économie 4 % de croissance - *ala zot aller!* Le Plan Marshall R 2.2 milliards pour trois ans contre la pauvreté; éducation 1,015 professeurs pour le *Nine Year Schooling*; 137 millions payés aux planteurs avec d'autres mesures. La liste sera longue. Je vais la raccourcir en demandant aux questionneurs de chercher dans le sport, les coulages de dalles, les maisons de la *NHDC*, les *trade fees* et la liste est encore longue. Mais je ne pourrais passer sous silence la technologie de pointe que nous propose ce gouvernement pour envahir notre île Maurice dans le futur: 300 points de Wifi déjà installés et à venir quelque 300 autres. L'Assemblée nationale en direct qui permet la population de voir les grossièretés de l'Opposition et surtout leur opposition à l'avancement de la femme au service du pays et comment passer sous silence l'envie de certains de se découvrir un rôle d'acteur, profitant du *live* du Parlement. Malheureusement, ils ne sont plus là. Enfin, le métro express qui va générer 7,000 emplois et plus.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, please!

Mr Aliphon: Sans compter le combat que mènent le Premier ministre et son gouvernement contre la drogue. L'honorable madame Perraud devait écouter parce que si je prends son Leader ce matin, il a dit qu'il n'y a que lui qui a travaillé comme ministre du Tourisme et personne d'autre, et elle était ministre, elle aussi. Alors, que vient dire l'Opposition ? Ce gouvernement n'a rien fait. Démagogie, quand tu nous tiens et oui, M. le président, voilà la triste réalité de l'opposition.

Je vais me permettre d'énumérer les projets que la *NDU*, en collaboration avec les ministères, avait entrepris, entreprend et va entreprendre. Je demanderai à l'Opposition d'être

surtout à l'écoute. A Curepipe, les drains à la rue Lees et Cité Malherbe et Anderson St ont été faits ; réfection du pont allée des camphriers a été faite ; terrain de foot et lumière placée à 16ème mile, à Les casernes et à Robinson ont été faits.

(Interruptions)

On va s'arrêter là ! Le gros piquant qui fait mal dans l'Opposition du PMSD, c'est le tout fraîchement annoncé qui dérangerait apparemment nos amis du PMSD, du moins le leader actuel de l'Opposition et sa députée de Curepipe, c'est la piscine à Curepipe.

(Interruptions)

A Rose-Hill, la rénovation de la salle des fêtes du Plaza, un bijou national a été fait et prochainement la naissance du théâtre du Plaza que les mauriciens attendaient depuis longtemps.

(Interruptions)

Les drains à la rue Malartic sont en phase de finition. C'est par ce *caring Government*. Le parcours de la paix à plaisance, le *football ground* synthétique, le centre social de Trèfle, tout neuf, les drains, surtout un beau bébé qui est en construction, la route de l'avenue Berthaud qui est en attente depuis 30 ans. Où était l'Opposition à cette époque ?

(Interruptions)

La rue Berthaud est en phase de départ ...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Aliphan: La reconstruction de cette route se faisait attendre depuis belle lurette et c'est ce gouvernement qui va, une fois encore, le faire.

A Beau-Bassin, l'honorable Lepoigneur vient de dire que rien n'a été fait. Sa mémoire est courte. Il y a eu le jardin de Balfour, il y eu la salle des fêtes du Plaza. Ils ont le syndrome - on m'avait dit ça ce matin - de *narien pas bon*. Maintenant, ils sont en train d'oublier. Le syndrome de l'oubli !

(Interruptions)

Je tiens à préciser qu'avec la rénovation du jardin de Balfour, les drains à Vuillemin, à Coromandel, dans le centre de Beau-Bassin et à la rue Châteauneuf, en attente depuis longtemps, ont été faits. A Barkly, réfection des routes, des drains et du terrain de foot, sans

oublier la rentrée d'une ligne de bus en plus dans cette région incessamment. C'est ce gouvernement qui le fait. A Chebel, comment passer sous silence, les drains, en attente depuis 30 ans dans les environs de La Chapelle de Chebel, ont été faits par ce gouvernement.

Pour l'information de l'Opposition et surtout pour l'honorable Lepoigneur, à Vuillemin, la rénovation du complexe sportif de Vuillemin est faite. L'ouverture est prévue et les drains dans cette région sont en phase d'être terminés. Coromandel aura prochainement son centre de santé tout neuf, comme à Petit-Rivière. Les drains en route déjà, tout comme son parcours de santé à Coromandel. Réalisé par ce gouvernement !

Pour la région de Petite Rivière et de Gros Cailloux, pour ceux qui ne savent pas, tous les drains demandés sont au vert. Il y aura un nouveau *health centre* et un *health care centre* est en préparation, tout comme son parcours de santé.

Concernant Canot et Albion, après les trottoirs d'Albion, le terrain de foot va être réfectionné, tout comme son espace vert. Tout comme le terrain de foot à Canot, va débiter incessamment l'abribus à Mon Plaisir, Belle Vue. Une attente de plus de 20 ans - la NDU et le *District Council*, avec les fonds du gouvernement - que nous allons réaliser à partir de la fin du mois.

(Interruptions)

Juste pour vous rappeler, les quelques centaines de maisons de la NHDC ont été déjà livrées, mais reste à peaufiner. Le dossier sur le *petroleum hub* à Albion, si la plateforme est *off*, par contre, je crois fermement que le développement du *petroleum hub* est suivi minutieusement par le ministère de tutelle et quand le projet verra le jour, ce projet aura un *green light* comme il se doit. *Napa per !*

M. le président, nous arrivons maintenant au budget de cette année. Allons voir quelques points de ce budget grandiose. L'année dernière, le gaz ménager a baissé de Rs60, maintenant, le prix de la farine a connu une baisse d'une roupie. Et nous espérons que le pain et le farata devraient baisser et les mines et les pizzas, etc., aussi. Nous espérons que les marchands jouent le jeu.

(Interruptions)

Concernant les '*Made in Mauritius*', une contribution de R 5,000 a été faite par le gouvernement par participant.

Le *speed to market*, réservé au textile, *now open* pour les bijouteries, fruits et fleurs ou les dérivés du poisson ou médical, fret en baisse vers l'Europe. Baisse de la taxe de 15% à 3% pour les *domestiques entreprises*. Pour le CSR, le ministre des Finances a entendu les doléances et a reconduit pour un an les 50-50%.

Pour nos vieux, ceux qui ont aidé à développer notre île, R 50 m. pour la construction des maisons de retraites. Je parlais de retraites et je suis fière en tant qu'ancien sportif, mais toujours en action, de voir que le Premier ministre vient aujourd'hui donner une pension à nos vaillants athlètes, à nos anciennes gloires entre R 3,000 et R 10,000. La création en plus d'un *Hall of Fame*, car ils le méritent, M. le président, pour ces athlètes et ces artistes et pour votre action. Merci, honorable Premier ministre !

(Interruptions)

Le monde parlait de prendre des riches et donner aux démunis, c'est pratiquement fait. Le *Negative Income Tax* touchera 150,000 employés car ceux touchant plus de R 3.5 m. par an comme *chargeable income* aura une taxe supplémentaire de 5%. Pas une grande chose. Et cette démarche a le soutien de deux ou même plusieurs économistes et j'ai choisi deux économistes, messieurs S.H et N.G. L'un et l'autre disent que ce budget est très fort du côté social ou encore excellente initiative pour alléger le fardeau de la classe moyenne. Mais l'Opposition trouve à redire. Et ce matin, malheureusement, nous avons des semeurs de doutes. Car le leader de l'Opposition avait dit '*mo pa kone mone lire dan journal*' et il a lu, juste ce que il ne fallait pas et on n'a autant d'investisseurs qui ont dit que le budget était une bonne chose. Mais il n'a pris que ce qui était mauvais et pour contrer ces semeurs de doutes, je voudrai être le semeur de bonnes nouvelles à la population mauricienne.

Pour l'*Income Tax*, un créneau en plus, l'augmentation sur l'assurance médicale qui passe de R 12 m. à R15 m. comme déduction. Encore et encore. Le leader de l'Opposition a mal lu ses journaux je pense en disant que ce budget ne vaut rien. Commenant par les sportifs, on a honoré nos sportifs et on a aussi honoré nos artistes aujourd'hui. Et il ne faut pas oublier qu'on a un gouvernement qui entend ses citoyens artistes. Bravo pour cette mesure encore une fois, l'honorable Premier ministre !

Le Plaza, après la salle des fêtes, rénovées en deux ans seulement. Ce gouvernement l'a fait. Maintenant près de R 300 m. pour la rénovation du théâtre.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur, I have listened to you, allow me to listen to hon. Aliphon!

Mr Aliphon: Maintenant la rénovation pour le théâtre, voilà encore une action, qui comme le Métro Express, les jeunes vont découvrir bientôt et je suis heureux pour eux.

Je fais un appel à vous mauriciens, à vous jeunes, d'arrêter de croire ces semeurs de doutes de l'Opposition. Et aidez-nous à donner à votre jeunesse votre courage pour la réussite de nos propositions.

M. le président, je vais m'arrêter pour laisser la place à mes autres collègues qui ont des choses à dire. Mais, M. le président, je vais dire à ceux qui pensent que le Premier ministre est mal entouré ou mal conseillé ou encore que les élections sont pour demain, comme le souhaite l'Opposition, dans chacune de leur sortie, je leur dis sincèrement qu'ils sont à côté de la plaque. Ils font une mauvaise lecture et ont un mauvais jugement sur ce gouvernement et sur le Premier ministre car hélas, pour eux, ils devront garder leur bougie allumée et veiller à ce que ce soit une longue bougie.

(Interruptions)

Avec ce nouveau budget, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances nous proposent d'avoir une île Maurice moderne pour des jeunes modernes et pour cela chaque Mauricien jeune ou vieux devra venir aider le gouvernement à donner tort à cette Opposition dépassée. Oui, dépassée par le modernisme, M. le président. Pardonnez-moi de revenir sur le sujet, je ne ferai pas comme mon ami de l'Opposition et devenir un '*gorère*'. Je voudrais plutôt, permettez-moi, de faire du plagiat aujourd'hui en citant Laurent Fabius qui lui-même citait Chateaubriand et je cite –

« Pour être l'homme de son pays, il faut être l'homme de son temps. »

M. le président, le Premier ministre est cet homme. L'homme de la situation, l'homme de ce temps moderne que les mauriciens attendent pour les années à venir, n'en déplaise à l'Opposition, pour les 15 à 20 ans à venir. Ce modernisme vous l'avez commencé et avec le plus gros œuvre de tous les temps que la jeunesse mauricienne actuelle va découvrir avec le métro express, les postes de Wi-Fi, *l'allowance scheme* des sportifs, les ouvertures pour les artistes, la rénovation du théâtre. Cette jeunesse goûte déjà à ce modernisme et le vivra pleinement bientôt. Avec ces initiatives, le Premier ministre fait que

chaque Mauricien reprenne confiance en lui et le goût d'un avenir sain et propre avec des valeurs et des principes sûrs car ce budget ouvre la voie à une génération future responsable.

Avant de terminer, je vais demander à tout un chacun de ne pas baisser les bras maintenant quand il risquera de le faire juste avant le miracle qu'il recherche depuis longtemps.

M. le président, à vous, mauriciens et mauriciennes, ayez confiance, n'ayez pas peur car avec ce budget notre Premier ministre et son gouvernement nous ouvrent la voie pour une île Maurice moderne de l'an 2030.

Je ne pourrai terminer sans avoir marqué mon appréciation, M. le président, à vous remercier pour le travail bien fait ainsi que le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances, son équipe et l'ensemble du gouvernement pour leur soutien.

Merci.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rampertab!

(8.47 p.m.)

Mr R. Rampertab (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to open my address to this august Assembly by both thanking and congratulating hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for delivering an inspiring, innovative and unprecedented Budget Speech for the year 2017-2018 which contains bold measures to reach all levels of society and all sectors and segments of our economy to achieving this Government's vision of 2030.

It also marks our country's ambition to be a high income country by 2023 with an income per capita of around 13,600 dollars against the current 9,740 dollars. Overall this promising Budget is very much likely to rekindle business and consumer confidence in the economy. Since our Government took the reins of this country, we have embarked on a transformational journey to change the very core of how the country operates and how our fellow Mauritians can be empowered and ultimately contribute to the progress of the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the launch of our ambitious roadmap, Government has relentlessly pursued its commitment in achieving the Vision 2030 to transform our country. It is refreshing to note that we are on the right track with all the main sectors posting positive growth namely agro, textiles, financial services, ICT and tourism. The macroeconomic and sectorial fundamentals, as mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, are all forecasted to be positive for the year 2017 and upwards. Growth rate of GDP is forecasted at a higher rate of 4.1% for 2018 now, as we know it is 3.9%. The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development is resolved to power growth through investments in infrastructure which will sustain economic development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a year ago I shared my views on the firm intention of Government in rolling out the Public Sector Reform Programme and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, please allow me to applaud our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development whose firm determination in implementing these reforms has produced the expected positive results and the following action being taken in his Budget Speech is worth noting.

In order to strengthen economic growth, namely, the setting up of an Economic Development Board to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in implementing our policies and actions and the setting up of a National Economic and Social Council to address key socio-economic issues and strengthen dialogue with the private sector and the civil society. I must tell you here, Sir, that the relationship between the private sector and Government has never been so good where the private sector is really contributing immensely towards the development of our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very optimistic that following the advent of the Business Facilitation Act and the impetus steered from the Budget of 2017-2018 this forecasted economic fundamental will get stronger. Indeed, through the Business Facilitation Act, Mauritius is equipped with one of the best pieces of legislation to attract and facilitate local, regional, international trade and investment. The impact of this piece of legislation has been instant with the business community and I will certainly agree with the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development that we should definitely challenge ourselves to be more ambitious and aim to complete a business registration in less than two hours, for example.

In light of the above, I am glad to see that Government is introducing the following additional measures to improve the doing business environment. For example, elimination of processing fee for new application for CEB in respect of all categories of customers including domestic customers, but excluding parceling of land and property development schemes projects. For example again, plans approval from the CEB, CWA or WMA will not be required anymore when applying for building and land use permit in zones which are well networked and serviced as well as microelements. To further attract foreign investment, hi-tech machines and equipment brought by investors from abroad will now be considered as part of the minimum investment of 100,000 US dollars required to obtain an occupation permit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth noting that in the light of Brexit and its immediate challenges for our economy, there is an urgent need to reposition our manufacturing sector in order to improve its competitiveness. This point has been well argued by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development in his Budget Speech and I shall demonstrate its relevance to our rural economies, the SME sector as the national macroeconomic perspectives.

Accordingly, Government has come forward with the right measures to boost investment, growth and job creation in the main sectors of our economy starting with manufacturing. For example, I would like to mention a few measures such as introducing a major tax reform to encourage domestic enterprises to expand export capacity and seek new markets, especially the SMEs. The profits from exports of goods will be taxed at a lower rate of 3% instead of 15% which will be really a great advantage to those SMEs.

Secondly, an 8-year income tax holiday for new companies engaged in the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products, medical devices and high-tech products. I will stop here because there are so many of them and it is all mentioned in our Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget has also put much emphasis on consolidating Mauritius presence in Africa. These measures will be taken up; for example, a series of joint commissions will be held with countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar and Zambia, so as to enhance bilateral cooperation with these countries in various sectors, including trade, investment and capacity building. The first Special Economic Zone in Senegal will be inaugurated in a month, which is very good news to us. A

business and investment platform for Africa would be set up to facilitate implementation of joint projects by Mauritian enterprises in Africa.

The initiatives, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will certainly bring considerable value to our economy, namely to the SME sector, with suitable transfer of technology, FDI and side-line business opportunities for our young entrepreneurs in search of new horizons. And here, I wish to thank the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for again taking the initiative to implement new measures to boost business activities in the region, as mentioned in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the Budget Speech.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, in my speech on the Budget, I spoke at length on the need of restructuring the functioning of our Citizen Advice Bureau, which was set up by our Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister of Rodrigues, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in 1989. The recent launch by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development of the Citizen Support Unit not only allowed our Citizen Advice Bureau to step into the digital era, but also opened new avenues for the citizens to have a direct mechanism of communication for complaints, issues and feedback to the Prime Minister's Office and the respective institution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Citizen Support Unit empowers our Citizen Advice Bureau through a modern and practical platform. The Citizen Support Unit will also allow the Government to feel the pulse of the citizens, identifying the main bottlenecks clogging their lives and enable us to devise appropriate policies to tackle inefficiencies in delivering our public services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2014, this Government made a solemn promise to our fellow Mauritians to empower them, give them their voice back and make their life simple and easier, and we are resolute in pursuing this objective till the end of our mandate and beyond that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, accordingly, I am glad to see the following additional budgetary measures being brought forward by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development such as the introduction of the People Facilitation Bill to spare the population the hassles of office hopping to get public services and reduce cost and queuing time and enable them to use fully their rights. The above-mentioned launched

the citizen portal for citizens to submit their views and suggestions on how best to improve their daily lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government can proudly say that it has once again delivered one of its electoral manifesto promised to the Nation, that is, to give a voice to our citizens through a modern and simple platform and a re-energised CAB network. This Government's concrete action in revamping the CAB is a clear example of our determination in identifying and tackling the public services inefficiencies. The feedback we have received from the citizens throughout the island is extremely promising and heartening. The CAB should be called upon to gradually pick up more responsibilities to become an ultimate citizen hub and the bridge between Government and the citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will also take the opportunity to refer to the Budget Speech of the hon. Prime Minister and Minister Finance as follows when it comes to the NDU, which I just cannot go without mentioning. In fact, improving our basic infrastructure all over the island, which is long overdue, and a provision of an envelope of Rs1 billion and 85 million for 2017/18 to the National Development Unit says it all, as mentioned in paragraph 243, and a special grant, which I have to especially mention, of Rs500 m. to our local authorities, so that all councils can address long outstanding minor infrastructural works in their localities, as mentioned in paragraph 244. I must say here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has never been such a good working relationship between the NDU and the Local Government. And, for this, I have to thank hon. Mahen Jhugroo, the Minister of Local Government, who has kindly agreed and instructed all the local authorities to work in collaboration with the NDU.

I must especially thank the hon. Prime Minister who has listened to us about all those problems that we were having in the past. I must say we have all witnessed why work has been delayed for so long. But, in the last 12 months, I must say that if you go around the island, you can see the development that has been made by the PPSs - all of us - and the local authorities. The fact that we have worked together, things have moved very fast and it will keep moving very fast until the end of our mandate, and then that is where people can say that we have done well or not. But I am sure and certain that, at the end of our mandate, people will thank us for all the big work, all the major works that we will complete.

I must say that I am fully satisfied with the work carried out by us, and not only that, I will take an example of the constituencies where I was Parliamentary Private Secretary, namely number 8, 9 and 10 until lately, but now I am in number 8 and number 9. Today, I

can say, as far as roads, lightings, drainage are concerned, the inhabitants are fully satisfied with the support and services that we have been providing. Here again, I would say a special mention to the Land Drainage Authority, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Here, again I must thank the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the setting up of the upcoming dedicated Land Drainage Authority.

In light of the climate change and its impact on our island, whereby floods have recently disrupted the everyday life of our brothers and sisters, I am relieved to know that the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has allocated the investment, over the next three years, of some 1.3 billion in construction, upgrading and cleaning of drains. And I also took note of the task that the Land Drainage Authority will prepare a flood-risk map and a Nation Land Drainage Plan, which will address flooding problems around the island. Here, on behalf of my constituents, I would like to convey my special thanks to the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, only a few weeks ago, the flood caused a lot of extensive damage in the eastern part of Mauritius, and my two colleagues and I had to deal with this crisis. I must say it was not easy, but we did manage to sort out things. I am glad to say, after consultation with the concerned stakeholders, we have successfully been able to find a solution to protect the people of the village of Poste de Flacq especially and the surrounding areas.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also note that the Government has been to date very active in my constituency, namely in the following projects: examples of the St. Julien d'Hotman bypass, which was very important and long overdue. I must say that this project was supposed to be done by the last Government at a cost of around Rs462 m., which was already voted, and it was provided by one of the European banks, I think the Bank of Luxembourg. But, for no reason, this project was frozen.

I must thank our Prime Minister to whom I did address this problem and to the Minister of MPI that this road should be done because it will solve big problems in the area. It will really avoid other accidents. So, I am grateful for that.

I would like to mention the number of houses that we have built, especially the NHDC in Camp Ithier and Quatre Cocos. Over 300 new houses have been provided to the population and I know there are more coming. So, we cannot say that this Government is not

doing anything because Members on the other side of the House gave a picture that this Budget is useless, it is not worth anything, but it is not true at all. There is a long list of projects that have been achieved. If I mention, it will take us a few hours. So, I will just say that you cannot say that it is a '*menti, menti* budget'.

So, one big item which I cannot miss and which was announced in the Budget 2016/2017 is the Flacq Hospital. I am glad to say that things have moved very fast. We have acquired 26 acres of land from Constance Ltée and it has already been spotted. Soil test has already been carried out and the next stage is the laying down of the first stone which will be done very soon. Do we realise that this Flacq Hospital covers an area partly Constituencies No. 7, No. 8, completely No. 9, No. 10 and partly No. 11. So, imagine a hospital in Flacq catering for around 300,000 to 350,000 people. I am glad to say that we are going ahead with the hospital and that we really resolve a lot of problems because today for MRI scanning, people must go from Flacq to Rose Belle, Jeetoo Hospital or to Candos Hospital which is not right. So, I must thank the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for giving the green light for the going ahead of the hospital.

The last project which I will mention in my Constituency is the one-stop shop in Flacq. This project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the conversion of the old fire station in Central Flacq from 4,500 square feet to 20,000 square feet, a very modern building with access facilities to disabled persons. The said one-stop shop will have the CEB, the CWA, the CAB Office, the Accountant General's Office, the Civil Status Office, a library and a conference room to be used by the local village councillors. Here, I must mention that the Civil Status Office will also have a wedding room which is a new concept in Mauritius. There will be a full-time officer available for the Muslim community to grant death certificate at short notice. This building, I must tell you, was a place where nobody dared going because it was full of rats. Luckily, my two colleagues and I stopped there and thought about what we are going to do and we came up with this idea. I must announce to the House that there is only a few months left before the opening is done. I am looking forward for our Prime Minister to come and do the opening.

I have a lot to say, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know we are all waiting for this time. I would conclude here by saying that we must thank the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that he has set the target very high and to achieve this, he has to come to five main challenges: create jobs, invest massively in infrastructure, improve the quality of

life of our people, bring about a new social paradigm and lastly, consolidate our macroeconomic fundamentals. Each and every player of our economy has been provided with a suitable package of incentives. It is now the challenge to convert these same measures into a dynamic growth matrix.

Accordingly, the Budget 2017/2018 should be highly praised by all Members of this Assembly. It is a demonstration of economic bravery. The measures elaborated by the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are daring only to those who have at heart the development of our country.

I would urge the Members of this House to certainly provide the constructive feedback, but ultimately to support this transformational roadmap by engaging in its implementation.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gungah!

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

Mr Seeruttun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 13 June 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Sawmynaden rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Hon. Bhagwan!

MATTERS RAISED

(9.11 p.m.)

ALBION – STREET LIGHTING

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue concerning the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. It concerns road safety along Albion Road, starting from Canot junction to the Albion beach.

Only a week before, there have been two severe accidents at night. Now, this Albion area is a densely populated area with a new *Morcellement* and other developments coming in the coming months.

So, I will appeal to the hon. Minister if he could ask the Road Safety Unit to make a survey with regard to safety of not only the drivers, but of the inhabitants and also with the District Council, through his Ministry, as far as street lighting is concerned. This is a very urgent case of safety, especially these days we are having a lot of cases of road accidents involving motorcycles.

Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): I would like to ask if it is the road leading from the main road to Albion.

Mr Bhagwan: To Albion.

Mr Bodha: Well, I will do the needful, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

MAURITIUS & QATAR - DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to raise an issue which was also briefly touched by the hon. Leader of the Opposition during his budget speech and that is in relation to the diplomatic ties between Mauritius and Qatar. What happened? There were two communiqués. One communiqué which was published in all Internet newspapers, whether it is Saudi Gazette, Bahrein Gazette, Arab News which stated that the office of the Vice-Prime Minister announced that the Government of Mauritius has decided, pending further development not to entertain any further diplomatic relations with Qatar.

Then, on the same day, later on, there was a communiqué by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saying that rightly so Mauritius is not going to get involved and has always believed through dialogue to a settlement between the Gulf States.

This is a very serious issue, hon. Prime Minister. I really would like, in due course, the Government to come up with a statement because we cannot have two separate Ministers giving conflicting views about the policy of Mauritius, not their own personal views, but Mauritius. This is very serious.

I hope that, in due course, the hon. Prime Minister will come with a statement to the House to clarify issues.

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Member has said it all, he is aware that there is an official communiqué from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which states that *nous n'avons pas rompu notre relation avec l'émirat de Qatar*. That is the state of affairs as it is today.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Baloomoody!

MOKA ROAD - FOOTBRIDGE

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My intervention is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. It concerns the safety of pedestrian users of the footbridge at Moka Road near the one we have after Kalachand which, on the right side, is Odette Ernest Street. There is that footbridge which is tainted on both sides; it is discovered but tainted.

We have received complaints that many ladies have been attacked, have had their personal belongings snatched, be it their bag or their chain and, in some cases, there have been even sexual assault. So there is a request from the inhabitants of Odette Ernest Street and in the vicinity to remove that tainted glass and have it transparent because during the evening it is used by certain people to attack women, young girls and, in the late night, it is used as a centre for drug consumption. Can these tainted glasses on both sides be removed to have them transparent for the safety of the users of this footbridge?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure!

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it the one along Moka road, the one which was removed?

Mr Baloomoody: Exactly.

Mr Bodha: It is such a pity because we could have done it then, but I will look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES/MILIARY ROAD - TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will raise an issue in relation to the Police but though the Minister Mentor is not here, given the fact that it is a serious problem I will address the hon. Prime Minister. It is in relation to the road *Route des Pamplemousses* and Military road in Port Louis. It is in the border of Constituencies Nos. 3 and 4. What happened is that this road serves the region of Vallée des Prêtres, Cité la Cure, Saint Croix and all the region of the North. With time and with the increase in inhabitants in the regions I have just mentioned, the traffic has gone very heavy. There is a terrible traffic every day especially in the evening.

I must say that I have raised this issue during the previous mandate so many times and even presently. It has been the subject of PQs even in the Press. The problem is not that there should be traffic lights; the problem is that Police officers should be posted there in this junction every day from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and also on Saturday mornings because there is the Cité Martial market fair. I am telling that because I live in my Constituency and every day I get calls from my mandates who insist that there should be Police officers especially in the evenings. I would urge the hon. Prime Minister to look into the matter and to do the needful. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Well I will request the Commissioner of Police to look into the matter and to report to me. I think that is one additional reason why we need to have a modern system of transport in Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

BEAU BASSIN - ROAD MARKINGS

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci M. le président. Ma requête ce soir s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Infrastructures publiques et je dois dire que l'asphaltage de la route principale à Beau-Bassin a été effectué la semaine dernière mais malheureusement le marquage de la route tarde à se faire et principalement en ce qui concerne le passage pour piétons à certains endroits spécifiques et dans le centre de Beau-Bassin. L'honorable ministre le sait sûrement pas loin de Tang Way c'est un endroit où

les piétons généralement traversent la route et aux heures de pointe, cela représente un danger. Donc je compte sur l'honorable ministre pour faire activer les choses. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure!

Mr Bodha: M. le président, l'asphaltage a été fait de nuit donc je pense que ça été bien fait, je vais m'en occuper pour la signalisation, les *road markings* surtout sur les passages cloutés. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

BOUCHON ROAD, TROIS BOUTIQUES – SPEED CAMERA

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have an issue for the Minister of Public Infrastructure. In fact, it concerns Le Bouchon Road at Trois Boutiques, which is found in the Constituency No. 12. In fact, this early morning itself, there was a fatal road accident where a young man of 23 years old had passed away.

The inhabitants have approached me and they are requesting for the Minister to consider the possibility of placing speed breakers or even a speed camera. I understand that there have been many reported cases of accidents occurring there because the road is quite straight and very long, so maybe if the Minister could consider their request. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure!

Mr Bodha: Yes. I have already said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that one accident is always too many. When we have a straight stretch of road, people tend to speed so we are not putting breakers but I will look into the matter. Maybe we can have some sort of speed camera system and I will talk to the hon. Member. Thank you.

At 9.21 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 13 June at 11.30 a.m.