



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

THURSDAY 04 AUGUST 2016

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THE CABINET

(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)

Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
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 Health and Quality of Life
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Santaram Baboo	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain, GCSK	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 20 of 2016

Sitting of 04 August 2016

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

COIN IDEAL INCIDENT – INQUIRY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the incident which occurred on 27 May 2016 in which Mr S. S. was involved, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) who has been in charge of the inquiry when the incident was initially reported to the Police and since;
- (b) if the inquiry has now established that Police instructions and procedures in relation thereto have been flouted;
- (c) if the mobile phone of Mr S. S. was recovered and returned thereto;
- (d) if Mr S. S. made a fresh statement on 26 June 2016;
- (e) why no arrest was effected until 11 July 2016, and
- (f) the charges lodged against the arrested suspects.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to my reply to Parliamentary Question B/714 on 12 July 2016 wherein I stated, *inter alia*, that the Rose Hill CID was currently enquiring into the circumstances which led to the *Coin Ideal* incident which happened on 27 May 2016. I also stated that I would ask the Commissioner of Police to look personally into the matter.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the enquiry is under the responsibility of Superintendent of Police, Mr Bansoodeb, in charge of CID Western Division and under the overall supervision of ACP Ramsurrun, Divisional Commander, Western Division.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on the night of the incident, Mr Saven Seerungen verbally reported the loss of his mobile phone to a Police officer on patrol at Coromandel. On 30 May 2016, one Mr J. M. B. called at Rose Hill CID and produced a mobile phone make I-Phone S6 colour silver and black. The Police officer to whom the mobile phone was handed over reported same to SP

Bansoodeb. The latter established that the phone belonged to Mr Saven Seerungen to whom same was returned.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 27 May 2016 at 1.53 a.m, Mr Saven Seerungen verbally stated to Coromandel Police Station that his car had been stolen. Police inserted a Diary Book Entry on the reported loss and immediately proceeded to patrol the area to trace out the lost car, in company of Mr Saven Seerungen. The car could not be traced out. As the incident had occurred in Rose Hill, Mr Saven Seerungen was taken to Rose Hill Police station to report the case. There, another Diary Book Entry was inserted to the effect Mr Saven Seerungen's car make BMW and registration number unknown to him had been stolen by two unknown persons. Mr Saven Seerungen did not give any statement.

At 3.27 hours on the same morning, another Diary Book Entry was made at Coromandel Police Station that during the course of a patrol at Morcellement Montreal Coromandel, car bearing registration number 7824 DC 11 make BMW colour black had been recovered some 300 metres away from Winner's supermarket. Upon instructions from the Rose Hill Divisional Operational Room, the car was brought back to Coromandel Police Station. The Rose Hill Police Station was informed accordingly. As Mr Saven Seerungen was still in Rose Hill Police Station, he was also informed that the car had been recovered but he stated that he did not wish to make any declaration regarding the incident and expressed the wish to take possession of his car. He was then taken to Coromandel Police Station where the car was handed over to him. Another Diary Book Entry was inserted at Coromandel Police Station to the effect that the car had been returned to Mr Saven Seerungen. The latter stated that he was satisfied with Police action, and did not have any complaint.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 25 June 2016, officers of Rose Hill CID recorded a statement from Mr Saven Seerungen at his residence at Morcellement Mewasingh, Solferino, Vacoas. In his statement, he explained in detail the circumstances which led to the incident which occurred in the vicinity of Notre Dame de Lourdes Church, Rose Hill on 27 May 2016.

As regards parts (e) and (f) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, that Police enquiry was initiated after the statement was recorded from Mr Saven Seerungen on 25 June 2016. The enquiry led to the arrest of two suspects on 11 July 2016.

On the same day, a provisional charge of larceny with violence was lodged against each one of them. They appeared before Rose Hill District Court on the same day and were remanded to Police cell. Subsequently, they were remanded to jail on 18 July 2016.

I am further informed that the enquiry has been completed and the matter has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice on 13 July 2016.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the facts that have been disclosed so far, given the complexity and certain unclear elements surrounding this case, I have decided, in regard to part (b) of the question, that a sitting Magistrate be appointed to conduct an independent enquiry on the whole incident and to determine whether Police instructions and procedures have been flouted in this case.

Furthermore, pending the completion of the independent enquiry, the Commissioner of Police has been requested to advise DCP Seerungen to proceed on leave. The Commissioner of Police will also give instructions to the Police Force so that DCP Seerungen does not have access to any document nor interferes with any witness in the matter. I have decided to have an enquiry because there are so many facts that have not been brought forward and it's not so far clear how the whole incident took place and in what circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I wish to assure the House and the population that there will be no cover up in this matter and if enquiry reveals that there has been any breach on the side of Police, appropriate action will be taken.

Mr Bérenger: I must say I have to refrain from saying 'better late than never' once more. We have been informed that the file is with the DPP and now I am glad to hear that a sitting Magistrate will be appointed. So, I won't put all the questions, but I have to put a few questions, because I am sure the sitting Magistrate will take notice also. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the two Police officers whom he said have been in charge of the enquiry since the incident, one CID Assistant Superintendent, I think, of Rose Hill, and then an ACP - I will refrain from mentioning his name, at this stage - were involved in the corrupt exercise right from night one until now and terrorising policemen at Rose Hill?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have no such information that is why I feel there must be an enquiry to bring to light all the facts in this case.

Mr Bérenger: Do we know, at this stage, which Police officer directed unlawfully that this car, a government car under the responsibility of the Acting Commissioner of Police, be illegally returned to his son? Have we established which Police officer did that?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can't say which Police officer; there are so many names here. Who did it? Well, all this will be enlightened in the enquiry.

Mr Bérenger: My information is precisely that ACP that I referred to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. Can we know whether at least the Rose Hill and Coromandel Diary Books have been seized, by whom and in whose custody they are now?

The Prime Minister: I can't say whether they have been seized, but I have been told that they are there and the entries are there; they are with the CCID. I think they are safe, nobody will interfere on this.

Mr Bérenger: Well, I am glad to have heard that the DCP concerned has been asked *de prendre ses distances* for the time being. Has it at least been established that on that night because last time the Rt. hon. Prime Minister got me wrong completely, he felt that I wanted to know whether the then Acting DCP had gone to the Police station as if this is what should have been done. Not at all! My information is that he interfered illegally, he turned up and this was alleged by a Member of Parliament, not refuted since, and he turned up at both Police stations to take an active part in the cover-up?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't have such information and that is why we must have an enquiry to enlighten all this.

Mr Bérenger: Now, we have been provided with information, Madam Speaker, that a mobile phone was seized and then obtained from a person and returned to the owner, that is, the son of the Acting Commissioner of Police. Returned by *a fille de joie*, not arrested until much later! But she returned and the Police took the decision to instead of getting hold of that and other telephones, instead of examining them as should have been done - has it been established which Police officer took that decision to return that mobile phone?

The Prime Minister: Which Police officer? I must read the whole thing to find out...

(Interruptions)

It must be one of those who are involved in this matter.

Mr Bérenger: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister is an experienced lawyer he knows that somebody took the decision. We will know. If I can allow the little paper to fly!

The Prime Minister: The one who was enquiring - *Bansoodeb*.

Mr Bérenger: Good. It is a good thing, you didn't have to read through the whole thing. We have been informed that after all this, a month went by without anything happening until a Press article. Then another month nearly before arrests were made and then a month after the incident a statement is taken at the residence of the gentleman concerned. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, in the Rose Hill Occurrence Book dated 26 June, that is, a month later and recorded by Police Constable so and so, I will omit his name - can I read?

“Mr (...) reported (...)”

A month later!

“(...) through DCP so and so to the effect that on 27 June (...)”

In fact, it is 27 May, even that is wrongly recorded!

“(...) on 27 June at around 00.00 hours he was in his car (...)”

His car!

“(...) registered so and so, make BMW, at *Celicourt Antelme* an unknown woman and a man, the latter with a cutter threatened him and stole his mobile phone make Apple, colour grey, sum of Rs1000 (...)”

He was even bargaining!

(Interruptions)

“(...) and a pair of shoes (...)”

Ki shoes! Professionals not like the Police! They took the precaution to get hold of his shoes, to retain his shoes so that he would not run away!

(Interruptions)

I apologise, Madam Speaker, can I carry on?

(Interruptions)

It is a good thing he did not lose his trousers as well!

(Interruptions)

“(...) then after drove away in the said car towards Coromandel and left abandoned thereat.”

False! The car was not left abandoned, it went.

“The car was recovered together with the purse and the ignition key. The mobile phone make Apple was recovered.”

As if it was recovered on that day! Which it was not!

“And was returned to him. He has not been injured, he can identify the aggressors, value and so on.”

Does the Rt. hon. Prime Minister find that acceptable? I am sure no because of his reply and what is shocking is that Mr Seeruttun goes to the Press...

(Interruptions)

Thousand apologies!

(Interruptions)

Of all people!

(Interruptions)

Of all people! I withdraw unreservedly my tongue because it was the slip of the tongue! Madam Speaker, yes.

(Interruptions)

So, the Acting Commissioner of Police wakes up and gives for the first time a Press statement on 02 July in *Le Défi* –

“Il était traumatisé.”

Il est un petit chef-d’œuvre, Madam Speaker.

« Il était traumatisé. Lorsqu’il s’est senti mieux il a donné sa déclaration. »

A month later! The son of an Acting Commissioner of Police! I hope the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has taken good note.

The Prime Minister: I am taking good note now!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I must say that from all the circumstances of this case it is clear that there has been attempt to cover up, that is why I have decided there must be an independent enquiry.

Mr Bérenger: Well, I think that I will stop there if you will allow me. But, I will end up, let us not have just a young sitting Magistrate. I insist that it should be a Senior sitting Magistrate. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree to that?

The Prime Minister: Okay, we will try to get one, if available.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL 2016

(No. XVII of 2016)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2016-2017) Bill 2016 (No. XVII of 2016)

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gungah!

(11.50 a.m.)

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr A. Gungah): Madam Speaker, it is indeed with immense pleasure that I am commenting on the measures announced in the 2016-2017 Budget.

At the very outset, I would like to seize this opportunity to extend my personal congratulations to hon. Pravind Jugnauth, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. This Budget will always be referred to as being the game changer, which propels Mauritius into a new era of development by laying the foundation for the next phase of development and prosperity.

Madame la présidente, ce budget venant d'un homme de vision a placé l'humain au centre du développement. La pierre angulaire réside du fait que la pauvreté absolue sera résolue, tout en proposant des mesures pour stimuler l'économie vers davantage de modernisme et de prospérité, tenant en compte les enjeux économiques, domestiques et internationaux. Un budget humaniste et social.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance had to take into account several challenges while preparing this Budget. Economic challenges on the global stage have been on an unprecedented scale since the last decades, impacting negatively on the Mauritian economy and in particular on exports. At the same time, the local landscape has been plagued by mega Ponzi schemes and scandals to the tune of billions. It is unfortunate that these scandals have diverted much public funds from developmental purposes.

Madam Speaker, the room for manoeuvre in preparing this Budget was, therefore, very slim. In such a situation, some countries had recourse to trimming of the Welfare State and cuts in public expenditures. In many European countries, funds for social security and housing were brought down due to difficult economic situations. Greece, Spain and Italy, amongst others, have resorted to social security cuts.

Malgré les contraintes que j'ai mentionnées au début, le ministre des Finances a su mettre le citoyen au centre du développement avec un budget à visage humain, Madame la présidente.

He has maintained all social welfare measures and has over and above come up with new measures to boost social inclusion, social cohesion and social progress. All social partners are unanimous that this Budget is effectively putting people first by empowering particularly the 6,400 families who are still living below the absolute poverty threshold.

Comme un gouvernement responsable, on ne pouvait rester insensible, et nous nous sommes attelés à bâtir une société plus juste. Dans cette optique, les mesures en termes de création d'emplois, de logements et la mise sur pied du *National CSR Foundation* viennent démontrer la volonté du ministre des Finances pour combattre la pauvreté.

Ce budget est aussi une continuité dans notre lutte contre la prolifération de la drogue et le maintien du *law and order*. Nous ne devons pas nous voiler la face. La jeunesse mauricienne est de plus en plus vulnérable face à ce fléau. Quelques mois après notre prise de pouvoir, le Premier ministre a mis sur pied la Commission d'enquête sur la drogue, et ceci démontre sa volonté tenace pour assainir la situation. Le renforcement de la force policière

avec des équipements adaptés vient donner plus de moyens dans cette lutte. Toutefois, permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, de souligner que, malgré les efforts du gouvernement, le combat contre la drogue et d'autres produits illicites serait vain si les parents, les enseignants, les associations socioculturelles et la société civile ne prennent pas conscience du danger et ne s'impliquent pas dans ce combat.

Madam Speaker, this Government is one which lives up to its words. In our manifesto, we committed ourselves to reduce the price of foodstuff and basic necessities. Purchasing power being one of the main concerns of the population, last year, Government took the decision to decrease the interest rate on hire purchase. We also introduced the free six-metre cube of water and the new social tariff by CEB for the most vulnerable. In the same vein, this year, in the budgetary measures, VAT has been removed on many products, including cereal and some household items.

I must say, Madam Speaker, that the population in general and even some Members of the Opposition have responded positively to the Budget and the social measures announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Madame la présidente, nous savons tous que le gaz ménager est une commodité utilisée par la majorité de la population. La baisse du prix du gaz ménager est ainsi parmi une des décisions majeures, et démontre la volonté du gouvernement pour augmenter le pouvoir d'achat de nos citoyens. Depuis samedi matin, le prix de la bonbonne de 12 kg est passé de R 330 à R 270, soit une baisse de R 60 ; celle de 6 kg, de R 165 à R 135, et celle de 5 kg passe de R 137.50 à R 112.50. Une baisse conséquente, Madame la présidente.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, to give some information to the House on the subsidy on LPG provided by Government and how we achieved to bring down the price of LPG. The retail price of a 12 kg cylinder of LPG was revised on 03 March 2012 from Rs300 to Rs330. In 2012, Government subsidised an amount of Rs717 m., in 2013, an amount Rs640 m., and in 2014, an amount of Rs564 m.

Madam Speaker: I wish to interrupt you, hon. Minister. I think I can hear a phone ringing somewhere, and I wish to remind Members that when the phone rings, it disrupts the smooth proceedings of the House.

Mr Gungah: Tax should be imposed on phones, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as I was saying, in 2012, Government subsidised an amount of Rs717 m., in 2013, an amount of Rs640 m., and in 2014, an amount of Rs564 m. I wish to

inform the House that, as at December 2015, Government was still subsidising domestic LPG to the tune of Rs90 m., that is, around Rs20 per cylinder of 12 kg, to maintain the price at Rs330. For the period January to June 2016, the CIF prices of LPG have been fluctuating, and for the same period, a surplus of Rs48 m. has been realised.

Madam Speaker, the reason for the decrease in price of LPG on international market is due to an oversupply of LPG. And this oversupply is due to the following reasons, among others -

1. Iran is back on the LPG market following the lifting of the US sanctions;
2. there is a rise of supply from shale gas producers;
3. there is a decrease in the price of crude oil, and
4. there is an increase in availability of LNG on the market.

Madam Speaker, now that there is a clear indication of a downward trend in the price of LPG on the world market, as a responsible and cautious Government, we hence took the decision to reduce the price on the local market. We took a decision that can be financially sustainable and at the same time allow consumers to benefit from such reduction over a longer period of time, of course, depending on the trend.

Madam Speaker, similar to LPG, the prices of petroleum products in Mauritius depend on the international market rate. That is why in September 2015, I took a decision to set up a technical committee to review the formula for the calculation of the retail price so that the decrease in prices of petroleum products on the world market be passed on to consumers while, at the same time, be able to contain any eventual rise in prices.

Based on the recommendations of the technical committee, the Petroleum Pricing Committee (PPC) has been able to reduce the price of Mogas by a total amount of Rs7.10 per litre and Rs6 per litre for Gas oil since November 2015.

Madam Speaker, though there has been an increase in the price of petroleum products on the world market in June, the new formula has enabled the PPC to maintain the retail prices by using funds from the price stabilisation account. I wish, Madam Speaker, to inform the House that from November 2015 to July 2016, a total amount of Rs927 m. has been used from the price stabilisation account to reduce and maintain the retail prices of Mogas and Gas oil. The decrease in the price of Mogas and Gas oil wouldn't have occurred if changes in the regulations and amendments in the formula for computation of the retail price had not been done, Madam Speaker.

Let me now come to consumer protection. We have been very sensitive to opinions voiced out by our customers. We have not hesitated to reduce the price of live cattle during Qurbani. In fact, as hon. Members of the House are aware, in 2015 the price per kilo of live cattle was reduced from Rs139.50 to Rs125. And we are now in the process of fixing the price of live cattle for Qurbani for this year.

Madam Speaker, we will also ensure that all the conditions set out in the communiqué issued on 18 July 2016 by my Ministry concerning the importation of live cattle, goats and sheep for Qurbani 2016 are respected. And, for the first time, the price of live goat and mutton was fixed at Rs185 and Rs200 per kilo respectively during the end of year festivities 2015.

I can assure the House, Madam Speaker, that this year as well, we will do the same exercise, of course, after discussions with all stakeholders concerned.

Dans le même sillage de protéger nos consommateurs, nous n'avons pas hésité pour assurer un meilleur contrôle sur l'importation et la vente des voitures de seconde main à travers les amendements requis au cadre légal. Ces mesures ont été prises après consultations avec les différents partenaires dans le secteur. Il fallait, Madame la présidente, protéger nos citoyens, et nous l'avons fait.

To further ensure protection of consumers, my Ministry has been working on a new Consumer Protection and Fair Trading Bill, which I propose to introduce in the House as soon as it is finalised. Madam Speaker, the objects of the new legislation will be to address issues such as unfair prices, supply of goods of sub-standard quality, consumer education, prevention and misleading commercial practices among others. It will also provide a system of fixed penalty for prompt settlement of offences.

Madam Speaker, the agenda to rank higher on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index is highly important for this Government. In this context, it is noteworthy that we have considerably simplified trade procedures through the single window system which operates as an electronic platform. Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that the trading environment comprises also many defaulters, which prompted my Ministry to take appropriate and relevant control measures.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, following complaints and representations received from the associations of motorcar dealers of new as well as second-hand motor vehicles and the general public on the importation of damaged and accidental vehicles, and alleged fraud in

the sector, my Ministry has brought several major amendments to the legislation. These new measures will provide a level playing field in the activity and business of importation and sale of second-hand motor vehicles as well as protect the interests of our citizens.

In the same line, Madam Speaker, my Ministry has also reviewed the holding of trade fairs and exhibitions following representations of *Front Commun des Commerçants de l'île Maurice* and the Shop Owners' Association, as well as the public in general. Indeed, Madam Speaker, the holding of numerous trade fairs across the island had even led to some local businesses having to close down and employees laid off. With the measures brought, consumers are now protected from fraudulent traders and, at the same time, we have restored a more competitive trade environment.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to comment on the measures announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development in this Budget that will give a new boost to the economy. We know that a budget is a fiscal instrument that shapes the economic contours of a country. Though challenges have impacted negatively on our macroeconomic fundamentals, the hon. Minister Finance and Economic Development has taken bold and innovative measures to bring them to a healthier state which speak volumes on his vision to steer the country towards safer economic foundations.

Madam Speaker, promoting investment is a *sine qua non* condition to redress weak economic indicators. *On doit reconnaître que l'instabilité au niveau mondial a été néfaste sur l'investissement étranger à Maurice.* In fact, Foreign Direct Investment in the manufacturing sector in Mauritius declined from Rs1.6 billion in 2012 to Rs0.04 billion in 2015, impinging on the growth rate. In this difficult context, our business community has also been more on a wait and see mode, leading to the low private sector investment.

Madame la présidente, le budget ouvre la voie à un redressement de cette courbe descendante, à travers des investissements massifs dans des secteurs tels que le port, l'aéroport et les infrastructures routières, en ligne avec la Vision 2030 du Premier ministre. Certainement, ces investissements favoriseront le secteur manufacturier. Nos entrepreneurs doivent être aussi parties prenantes dans l'effort de diversification économique en investissant dans de nouveaux créneaux. Les mesures budgétaires vont amplement dans cette direction.

Madame la présidente, notre pays peut ambitionner un nouveau tournant dans son histoire économique en adoptant un modèle basé sur la technologie et l'innovation. Nous

sommes unanimes à reconnaître que le ministre des Finances a été prévoyant. Une panoplie de mesures favorise l'émergence d'une économie digitale et le développement de nouveaux pôles innovateurs tels que le village pharmaceutique, et un '*commodity exchange*' pour le secteur de la bijouterie, entre autres.

Madam Speaker, our manufacturing sector has gone through different phases confronting multi-faceted challenges. En effet, ce secteur a connu des années de croissance robuste mais il y a eu aussi des périodes très difficiles avec le démantèlement de l'accord Multifibre en 2005, la crise financière de 2008-2009 et la turbulence économique en Europe. Nous sommes maintenant confrontés à une période de grande instabilité et d'incertitude, accentuée par la sortie de la Grande Bretagne de l'Union Européenne. Très peu d'économistes et d'analystes peuvent prédire les retombées économiques du Brexit. Mais c'est certain que nous ne sommes pas immunisés de cette période d'instabilité.

Madame la présidente, le secteur manufacturier, excluant le secteur sucrier, a toutefois démontré de la résilience. Concernant le secteur '*Export Oriented Enterprise*', une baisse de 0.8% a été enregistrée en 2015, cela dû principalement à des problèmes conjoncturels de l'industrie du poisson. Toutefois, le segment d'export du secteur de textile et de l'habillement a enregistré une croissance de 2% en 2015. Je dois admettre que l'année 2016 semble être plus difficile, Madame la présidente. Mais je suis convaincu que les mesures budgétaires annoncées aideront à faire face à des défis qui ont émergé subitement. Je voudrais ici souligner qu'une attitude alarmiste n'est pas appropriée.

Madame la présidente, ce budget nous gratifie de deux mesures phares et innovateurs pour accélérer l'exportation. Premièrement, l'*Air Freight Rebate Scheme* vient soutenir nos exportations du textile vers l'Europe. Nos exportateurs bénéficieront d'une baisse de 40% sur le coût du fret de la compagnie nationale d'aviation. Ce qui est dans la même lignée avec le *Freight Rebate Scheme*, qui a été étendu vers 45 ports en Afrique en 2015. Cela avait permis à nos entreprises de bénéficier de R 11.7 millions de janvier 2015 à juin 2016 sur leur coût total de production. Cet *Air Freight Rebate Scheme* sera vital pour répondre aux défis d'un marché qui requiert davantage de réduction du délai de livraison. Le volume d'exportation par voie aérienne sera en hausse et les produits seront aussi davantage accessibles et compétitifs sur le marché européen. Le coût de fret représente près de 5 à 10% du coût total de production et sera ainsi conséquent pour la compétitivité.

Madame la présidente, nous sommes dans un monde où prime le digital, et nos secteurs économiques ne peuvent rester à l'écart de cette évolution. Notre pays doit bâtir de nouvelles structures pour répondre aux exigences commerciales et manufacturières. Nous ne serons jamais à la pointe du développement sans l'apport des outils modernes. D'où, Madame la présidente, la deuxième mesure importante pour notre secteur manufacturier, c'est-à-dire l'*E-Commerce Platform*. Nous envisageons une plateforme qui pourra être un lien indispensable de commerce entre nos opérateurs et ceux du monde entier. Je suis convaincu que cela apportera un nouveau dynamisme à nos exportations avec une plus grande visibilité de nos produits. C'est donc une mesure catalyseur. Je suis confiant que les compagnies qui aspirent à se tourner vers de nouveaux marchés pourront en bénéficier, incluant nos petites et moyennes entreprises. Ce sera une première pour l'île Maurice et un tremplin pour élargir nos frontières au-delà de nos missions de prospection. Cette mesure va créer des opportunités car ce sera une fenêtre vers le monde du commerce. La structure de cette plateforme sera évidemment déterminée ultérieurement en collaboration avec la MEXA.

Madam Speaker, as far as our export is concerned, I am pleased to say that the jewellery sector is showing promising signs of development. Exports increased from Rs5 billion in 2014 to Rs5.5 billion in 2015. We want to give a further boost to its development and, in this regard, my Ministry has prepared a Strategic Roadmap for the jewellery sector. Already, new training programmes have been initiated for capacity building.

Madame la présidente, le budget ouvre maintenant une nouvelle perspective pour ce secteur. La mise sur pied d'une plateforme pour le commerce de l'or, du diamant et des métaux précieux, entre autres, donnera une autre dimension au développement du secteur. Notre petite île sera propulsée comme une plaque tournante dans la région et aussi sur le marché international. C'est établir une plateforme entre les fournisseurs d'Afrique et les acheteurs de l'Asie, en particulier. Cela aidera à attirer d'autres investisseurs et créer des emplois rémunérateurs. Je considère que le secteur de la bijouterie a un potentiel énorme avec un nombre grandissant de touristes et un marché international en croissance. Notre expérience et savoir-faire est déjà un avantage. Nous allons accentuer la formation, aider les entreprises à monter en gamme, rehausser la visibilité de nos produits, et surtout, optimiser sur la plateforme pour attirer de nouveaux investisseurs. Je suis certain que nous pourrons relever le défi.

Madam Speaker, without doubt, this Budget has come up with an array of measures to provide a new strategic direction to the manufacturing sector. La modernisation du secteur

industriel est essentielle pour un développement sur des bases robustes et durables. La réintroduction du LEMS, le nouveau *Investment Tax Credit* et la mise sur pied du *3D Printing* dans deux technopôles vont dans cette direction.

Un village pharmaceutique sera un atout pour attirer de nouveaux investisseurs et élargir la base du secteur à travers d'autres créneaux tels que des intrants, des dispositifs médicaux et des médicaments traditionnels, entre autres. C'est un projet qui a requis une vision nouvelle pour le pays, et je souhaite que le secteur privé participe pleinement à sa réussite.

Madam Speaker, capacity building in design and fashion is crucial for the production of trendy and fashionable products. As far as our textile industry is concerned, it is satisfying to note that the Fashion and Design Institute is playing its role as a *pourvoyeur de designers et stylistes*. Now more than ever, it is called upon to drive the process of design led production which is crucial to compete in higher market segments. We can proudly say that the number of students has increased from 104 in 2009 to 386 in 2015. New courses have been implemented up to degree level. It is also good to note that former students of the Fashion and Design Institute are now providing their expertise in textile enterprises which are increasingly being oriented to design led production.

Madam Speaker, export promotion is also an important aspect which we could not neglect for the manufacturing sector while our competitors are very much active in this field. Despite the increasingly volatile export market, we have been successful in providing visibility to our products through participation in international fairs, contact promotion programmes and buyers and sellers meetings organised by Enterprise Mauritius. Many enterprises have obtained trial orders of Rs18 m. and orders to the tune of Rs288 m. were confirmed. Orders worth Rs1.05 billion are under negotiation. New markets have also been explored, including Australia, the Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark, Tanzania and Zambia. South Africa has already emerged as a promising market for diversification where exports increased from Rs5 billion in 2014 to Rs5.9 billion in 2015.

Madam Speaker, let me now comment on a key project that has the potential to change the business landscape of our island. As initiated in the Government Vision 2030, much emphasis has been laid on transforming Mauritius into a bunkering and petroleum hub in the region. The bunkering and petroleum hub is poised to become one of the new

economic pillars with a high potential growth which will attract state-of-the-art technology and FDI and contributing to job creation.

Our geographical location and business friendly environment provide a unique opportunity to position our country as a major operator in this sector. Annually there are around 35,000 tankers using the ship route of the region. But only 10 per cent have recourse to our maritime services. We want this sector to develop rapidly. In this perspective, Madam Speaker, one of the measures to boost the bunkering operations in the Port Louis Harbour is that any vessel engaged in the delivery of bunker fuel within the port limit will be exempted from excise duty and VAT as in the case for export of bunker fuel. This measure is expected to render trade in bunker fuels in the Mauritian port more attractive.

I wish to point out that recently one operator namely, Bomin Ltd, registered in London and which is one of the leading independent bunker traders and suppliers in the world with more than 35 years of experience in the sector has started bunkering transactions in Mauritius. It is expected that with such a big player in our waters, there will be a substantial boost in operations, which will contribute to promoting Mauritius as a reliable and renowned bunkering hub.

Madam Speaker, in this context, Government has received a proposal from a consortium comprising of five world-class companies, Nearshore Resources Ltd. The latter subscribes to the vision of the Government and has expressed its intention to contribute to its realisation by constructing a modular near shore mobile refinery, which will be first of its kind in the region. Expected foreign direct investment for this project is around 574 million US Dollar. At the same time, Madam Speaker, jobs will be created. Government will ensure that the project is implemented in a safe and secure manner in accordance with best oil industry practices which respond to highest national and international environmental standards.

Moreover, together with Government, the promoter has engaged to promote local activities and enhance interest and welfare in the region. It is expected that the Nearshore Refinery will produce a cumulative 1.5 million tonnes of top quality refined products namely gasoline, kerosene for aviation, gas oil and low sulphur bunker fuel, that is, LS380 with less than one per cent of sulphur content, meeting the incoming international MARPOL 6 Standard.

Madam Speaker, in the coming years, all tankers will be required to use this type of fuel and Mauritius will be one among the few countries in the world like Singapore and Fujairah Port in the United Arab Emirates to supply this product. Madam Speaker, it will be very beneficial for our tiny Mauritius to be among the league of major players in the bunkering sector. As a responsible Government, we want to leave a legacy to the next generation without jeopardizing the environment while developing a new economic pillar. Madam Speaker, we all here are patriots. Let us work together, let us make this project a success. This will position Mauritius as a petroleum hub.

Madame la présidente, je vais conclure en disant ceci : certaines personnes choisissent de faire de la politique par soif du pouvoir, d'autres pour des gains pécuniaires et d'autres par amour pour le pays. Comme l'a si bien dit le Premier ministre, il aurait pu prendre sa retraite politique et jouir de tous les comforts, mais il est resté parmi nous pour reconstruire le pays et la nation. Cela peut être fait seulement avec du courage, de l'audace, un leadership fort et un sens aigu du patriotisme. Des qualités que possède aussi le ministre des Finances, Madame la présidente. Le budget vient réconforter le peuple avec un dosage de justice sociale jamais connue auparavant.

Madam Speaker, history will bear testimony.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

(12.31)

Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'or): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to say a few words on this Bill. I would like also to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his team for the preparation of this excellent budget. At the same time, I would like also to thank hon. Gungah who has intervened before me and all the hon. Members for their valuable contribution in this Bill.

Madam Speaker, I am going to intervene on two issues on this Bill today. Firstly, on the vision of our country and how the budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance is totally in line with that vision. The second issue that I am going to address is the issue of implementation and how important it is that the proposals contained in the budget are implemented so that we reap the benefits of what has really been the intention of this Government.

Madam Speaker, there have been critics from some quarters that the budget lacks long-term perspective and vision. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I have not seen any among those people who have been critical about this budget, stating that it lacks vision and I have not seen any among them defining what they mean by that vision. I am tempted today, Madam Speaker, to go 50 years back just before our country became independent. Our forefathers and those people who struggle for independence, including our sitting Prime Minister, 50 years back what was their vision for our country? Was it different from the vision we have for our country today? Was it different from what today we expect our country to become in 50 years from now?

Madam Speaker, today we are dreaming of a smart Mauritius. I don't think that the vision was different. I do not mean translating 'smart' literally, but each and every alphabet in that word 'smart' means something to me. 'S' stands for sustainability. Were those struggling for independence 50 years back, dreamt of a sustainable Mauritius? This is what we are looking forward to in 50 years from now. If we have a look at this budget, Madam Speaker, series of proposals that are in the budget goes in line with our vision for a sustainable Mauritius. But our forefathers were struggling for a sustainable Mauritius equally. Otherwise, possibly we would have converted the Botanical Garden of Pamplemousses and Curepipe into housing estates. They were sustainable in their thought as well and vision. This is what this Government also has.

With this budget, Madam Speaker, I am going to list some measures which go in that direction, which are in line with our vision for making Mauritius sustainable in 50 years from now -

- (i) the hon. Minister of Finance spoke about the promotion of renewable energy with hundreds of millions of rupees invested to increase the capacity of the national grid to enable injection of an additional 18 to 20 megawatts from renewable resources;
- (ii) inclusiveness and fair distribution of wealth. There have been numerous measures announced to combat poverty and improve the working conditions of the poor. The Government will disburse an additional Rs500 m. annually as support to those who are at the bottom of the social ladder;
- (iii) major investments in the water sector to ensure 24/7 supply of water around the island;

- (iv) mass transit system with a view to meeting the requirements of a modern and vibrant economy and responding to the needs of the coming generation for a hassle-free and effective traffic management system, and also
- (v) the setting up of a High-Level Committee on the whole issue of pensions and ageing population.

Madam Speaker, what do we mean by sustainability? It is not only taking into consideration the economic component of any development, but a mixture of economic, social and environmental. This is what the hon. Minister of Finance has dared to do. When we have a look at the budget, it is visionary and in line with the vision that we have for our country. We are preparing our country for the 50 years to come, Madam Speaker.

When we speak of 'smart', the second alphabet 'm' refers to mobility, Madam Speaker. Our forefathers wanted a society where there is social mobility, that is, you attempt at improving the plight of the downtrodden. There is social mobility. This is what the hon. Minister of Finance as well has tried to do. In this budget, Madam Speaker, there is adequate provision for us to be socially as well as economically mobile.

For social mobility, Madam Speaker, I can list a series of measures that have been taken by the hon. Minister of Finance -

- ensure the improvement of the plight of the downtrodden;
- measures to alleviate poverty;
- social housing projects;
- projects, as I have just mentioned, relating to the series of measures to alleviate poverty;
- restructuring of the SRM, and
- National Empowerment Foundation.

In terms of economic mobility, Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance has been speaking about the need for us to go beyond our shores, encouraging entrepreneurs to take advantage of COMESA. In the recent years, we know that there has been an increase in exports to COMESA countries. In the budget, once again provision has been made to encourage entrepreneurs to export their products in the region. But at the same time, Madam Speaker, provision has been made to further improve our economic diplomacy with the appointment of seven new consulates.

So, I have been talking about sustainability and mobility, Madam Speaker, but we have got, in this whole vision of smart, also our ambition for an agile nation. And all this, Madam Speaker, contributes in ensuring that we meet on the vision that we have to make our Mauritius smart in the 50 years to come. An agile nation, Madam Speaker!

Once again, if we have a look at the measures that have been taken of what will make our country agile. That was also the vision of our forefathers 50 years from now. This is what has contributed, encouraged them to invest in education, to empower our people and we have reached where we have reached today, Madam Speaker. It is because we have struggled to become an agile nation. In his Budget Speech, Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister Finance and Economic Development took a series of measures to empower the nation, to empower the youth. And what are those measures, Madam Speaker? Let me come to a few of them -

- the reform of our education system;
- vast training programme for quality teaching;
- the different empowerment schemes at the level of Government for training engineers;
- service to Government: SCM, YEP;
- creation of a regional aviation training Academy;
- setting up of a faculty of digital technology and ICT engineering at the University of Mauritius.
- Rs50 m. provided for the empowerment of young entrepreneurs.

All these measures, Madam Speaker, go directly in line with our vision to become an agile nation. This was the case 50 years from now and this will be the case today also and we have to prepare the nation for the vision that we have. This Budget, Madam Speaker, is a Budget which is in line with the vision that we have for our country and it is forward-looking.

Fourth, Madam Speaker, is risk; apart from becoming an agile nation. We are a nation, we have always been taking risk, Madam Speaker. And even now in this Budget as well, there have been critics on this issue of nine-year schooling and everybody knows that during the implementation phase, when we will be implementing the nine-year schooling, we will be coming very near to the next general election, but the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the Government have been very audacious and we have been taking the decision. We are convinced that taking decisions timely is what will bring results. That is a reason why, Madam Speaker, we will be going forward and implementing the nine-

year schooling because otherwise without taking risk we will not be able. We should not forget, Madam Speaker, at the same time that in the past there are numerous examples of where we had had to take risk and this is what has contributed in bringing development, in making of this country where it stands today.

Let me refer to the case when this country had to take the decision in the past whether to sell its sugar in the world market or to join the European market. We should not forget that at that time we took a big risk and there is no politics to be done in this, Madam Speaker. It is a question of vision. At that time we had the option either to sell sugar in the world market at a much better price or to join Sugar Protocol, join the European Union and sell sugar at a much lower price. But the decision we took, the risk that we took paid dividend in the long run. It was in line with the vision of our forefathers to make our country where we are today. It is the same thing that we are doing today with this reform that we are about to bring in the education sector.

Finally, Madam Speaker, on this issue of vision is T for technology. If Mauritius has once again been able to develop itself the way it has developed itself today, it is certainly due to it being at the forefront of technology, Madam Speaker. And I believe that it is essential that this particular issue of technology be given same consideration and be in line once again with the vision that we have for our country. The hon. Minister Finance and Economic Development has taken a series of measures and let me list some of them, Madam Speaker.

- The reintroduction of the LEMS, Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme;
- investment tax credit to manufacturing firms for renewal of equipment and new technology;
- the proposal for the setting up of a biotechnology Institute;
- 250 additional free WIFI hot spots;
- major investments by Mauritius Telecom and the CEB to improve connectivity drastically.

Madam Speaker, when we listen to all these measures in the Budget, it would be interesting for everybody in the House to ask ourselves whether the measures that have been proposed by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his team in the Budget has a vision or not. What I have been talking here, Madam Speaker, whether it is in terms of sustainability, whether it is in terms of mobility, agile nation, technology, risk, all

these, Madam Speaker, components of our vision are present in the Budget. It is a budget that is very much in line with where we want to position our country in 50 years from now.

The other issue, Madam Speaker, that I want to address is, of course, the issue of implementation. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister was very right last time when he said that one is the list of very good bold measures that has been very much appreciated by the nation. This is one. But the issue of implementation is extremely important.. I was recently listening to an exposé by Prof. Arun Sareen who was the former CEO of multinational company Vodafone and he stated three things on leadership. I am saying this because I believe that leadership is extremely important to be able to implement what we are about to implement. And with this Government, this is what we are about to promote at all levels, Madam Speaker.

First component of leadership: there should be strategy. The first component is strategic leadership. The second component is operational leadership and the third is people leadership. I have heard somewhere that the Budget *est un peu en désordre, on ne comprend pas trop*, but the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has been very right in demonstrating his strategic leadership capabilities, Madam Speaker. You have to be strategic in approach and the ten strategic drives that he has listed in the Budget were the very first thing that we had to do to address the growing challenges of our nation. But the two other components will come with the implementation as well. And of course, the hon. Minister and his team alone will require support from all spheres. I believe for operational leadership to be possible, there are four issues that we will have to address. Firstly, for operational leadership; better efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in the public procurement process. I fully agree with the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on this.

Second, better management of public infrastructure and investment and promotion of the principle of good governance.

Third, appropriate and adequate technology and operating systems, that I am sure is being addressed.

Fourth, smart and effective public and private sector collaboration, and

Fifth, we have to be very innovative.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Development, I know, has taken it as a priority. We have to be innovative, innovative, and very innovative in approach.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the third component of leadership, people leadership; and I believe what we require is the following as well -

- (i) hard work, discipline and timely delivery;
- (ii) empowerment and better accountability;

And this is where we have to make a request to Chief Executives, Deputy Chief Executives and higher officers in the public sector; that it will not be the role of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to run after them to see whether the projects are being completed on time. They have to be responsible. The CEOs, the Deputy CEOs, the Senior Chief Executives have to ensure, and where there is a need for empowerment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry there will give all support, as has been clearly demonstrated in the Budget.

And, finally, with regard to the third issue on people leadership - and that is a humble request that I will have to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister -, I think we will have to review the process. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has always laid emphasis on the need to be transparent in approach. I fully agree, but sometimes we might be having some issues; like we want to be transparent, but there is recruit without conducting interviews, because the issue of academic qualification, I believe, is not the only criterion that might be helpful in determining, in promoting a transparent recruitment process. So, I believe we will have to review completely the recruitment process in the public sector, not only for better transparency, but ensuring that we have the right people at the right place.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the House for your attention. Thank you very much.

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

At 12.53 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Seeruttun!

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Madame la présidente, c'est avec une grande fierté que je voudrais avant tout féliciter le ministre des Finances et du Développement économique pour avoir présenté à la population le budget 2016/17, et je voudrais étendre mes félicitations aussi au Premier ministre pour son support indéfectible au ministre des Finances et du Développement économique.

Madame la présidente, la présentation d'un budget reste toujours un événement phare dans la vie d'un pays, d'un peuple, car cela touche au quotidien de tout un chacun. Il y avait une attente de la population, et elle était impatiente de savoir comment se jouait son avenir.

Madam Speaker, ce budget a, en effet, reçu l'approbation de toutes les composantes de la nation arc-en-ciel. Le *feel good factor* a été restauré. On n'avait qu'à écouter les gens dans la rue, dans les foires, dans les boutiques. Et à lire les commentaires le lendemain de la présentation du budget, des déclarations positives ont été notées, à commencer par celle du leader de l'opposition qui l'a qualifié 'd'intéressant', et cela ne pouvait pas être autrement pour avoir déjà qualifié le budget de notre ministre des Finances dans un passé pas très lointain de 'coup d'essai, coup de maître.'

Samedi dernier, un journal en ligne a donné la parole aux jeunes, et ces derniers ont tous utilisé des mots, tels que 'bon', 'apprécié' 'excellent', pour qualifier le budget.

C'est un budget qui fait donc l'unanimité.

Les firmes d'experts-comptables se sont jointes à cette cohorte de bon sens. Cette unanimité, Madame la présidente, est le résultat d'un travail abattu par un homme qui croit dans l'avenir de son pays et de l'ensemble de sa population. Il a consulté, il a écouté, il a noté - et je dois dire en cette courte période de deux mois qu'il assume cette responsabilité - et au final, tout le monde se retrouve dans les 10 stratégies et les 300 mesures annoncées.

Les gens au bas de l'échelle, les bébés, les jeunes, les personnes handicapées, les ménagères, les entrepreneurs, la classe moyenne, les planteurs, les éleveurs, le secteur corporatif, les ONG, l'île Rodrigues, Les Chagos, et même les expatriés.

Ce qui est intéressant, c'est que ce n'est pas un budget Bonhomme Noël. Bien au contraire, un budget bien réfléchi, où la rigueur, la discipline et prudence étaient les maîtres mots.

Mon bon ami, l'honorable Francisco François, a trouvé le juste mot pour qualifier ce budget, et le terme utilisé est le PRAVINOMICS.

C'est encourageant, *Madam Speaker*. Un budget qui est bon pour le pays, bon pour notre avenir, bon pour notre peuple, malgré l'incertitude qui prévaut sur le plan global, et ajouté à cela l'impact du Brexit. Un budget qui répond aux attentes de la vision 2030 de ce gouvernement. Mais j'irai plus loin pour dire que c'est un budget qui va au-delà de 2050.

Madame la présidente, le budget qu'a présenté l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth porte l'ambition d'un gouvernement sérieux, d'un homme sérieux, d'un leader politique sérieux et discipliné. Il nous faut saluer son travail, son sens du devoir et sa discipline. Ce ministre des Finances ne prend pas avec les pauvres pour donner aux riches, contrairement aux autres.

Madame la présidente, le Premier ministre nous avait promis dans son *Mission Statement Vision 2030* un *high income economy*. Ce budget est une opportunité pour le progrès. Il nous faut agir maintenant en hommes et en femmes responsables, travailler dur pour assurer notre avenir et celui de nos enfants.

Madame la présidente, avant d'aborder les mesures préconisées pour le secteur de l'agro-industrie et de la sécurité alimentaire, laissez-moi rappeler à la Chambre où nous étions en 2014 et où nous en sommes en 2016.

- la croissance était à 3, 6% en 2014, et la tendance était à la baisse ;
- le secteur de la construction connaissait une décroissance de 8, 5%, tout comme le secteur sucrier, une décroissance de 3, 5% ;
- l'investissement total était de 18, 9% avec celui du privé à la baisse à 14,1% ;
- au niveau de l'épargne, tendance également à la baisse, avec un taux de 10,5 % du PIB;
- la balance de paiement était en déficit, équivalant 5,6% du PIB ;
- le déficit budgétaire était de l'ordre de 3,2% ;
- la dette publique, 5,3% du PIB, et
- les réserves en devises étrangères équivalant 6,2 mois d'importation.

Au niveau des institutions, la situation était alarmante -

- la MPCB, avec des prêts non-productifs de l'ordre de R 3, 2 milliards ;
- la DBM, avec des pertes de R 538 millions ;
- Mauritius Post, avec des pertes de R 202 millions ;
- les casinos, avec des pertes de R 628 millions ;
- la MBC, avec des dettes de R 1, 2 milliards ;

Et là, sans compter le gaspillage au niveau infrastructurel –

- le Bagatelle Dam, qui initialement devait coûter R 3,1 milliards, a presque doublé de coût ;
- la route Terre-Rouge-Verdun, avec un coût initial de R 2 milliards, a finalement coûté R 4 milliards. Et la réparation de la partie effondrée a nécessité une somme additionnelle de R 300 millions ;
- et pour ne pas dire la fameuse carte biométrique, qui devait coûter R 400 millions, nous a coûté R 1.2 milliards.

C'est ça l'héritage que nous a légué l'ancien régime du Dr. Ramgoolam !

Madame la présidente, l'Alliance Lepep, depuis le début de son mandat, a pris des mesures pour redonner confiance à la population.

Au niveau sectoriel, il y a eu des efforts -

- au niveau de la construction, la décroissance est passée de 8,5% à 4,9% ;

Et là, nous sommes convaincus de pouvoir renverser cette tendance négative.

- le tourisme a enregistré une croissance de 8,5% en 2015 contre 6,1% en 2014 ;
- le secteur des TIC, hausse de 7% en 2015 contre 6,4% en 2014 ;
- les réserves en devises étrangères à fin juin 2016 équivalant 8,5 mois d'importation ;
- la balance de paiement a enregistré un surplus de R 20 milliards, équivalant 4,9% du PIB ;

L'économie reprend après tant d'années de règne du Parti travailliste, elle aurait connu davantage de détérioration si ce peuple ne s'était pas montré intelligent en décembre 2014

Madame la présidente, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth a annoncé dans le Budget 2016/2017 dix stratégies qui visent à -

1. promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat;
2. la création de l'emploi;
3. booster la croissance;
4. favoriser une société digitale;
5. améliorer le climat des affaires;

6. construire des infrastructures modernes;
7. améliorer la qualité de la vie des Mauriciens ;
8. lutter contre la pauvreté;
9. apporter une réforme majeure de la fonction publique, et à
10. garantir la stabilité économique.

Madame la présidente, les indicateurs économiques tels que le taux de l'épargne et de l'investissement sont des signaux de l'état de santé d'une économie. Prenons le cas de l'épargne, Madame la présidente. De tout temps, les Mauriciens avaient une culture de l'épargne ; nos grands-parents, nos parents faisaient toujours en sorte qu'ils ont un compte en banque pour mettre de côté leurs économies pour assurer l'avenir de leurs enfants. Cette culture permettait d'avoir un taux de l'épargne adéquat qui assurait aux banques d'accorder des prêts aux investisseurs qui emmènent la croissance. Mais que s'est-il passé ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker : Order !

Mr Seeruttun : Madame la présidente, on a eu entre 2005 et 2010 un Docteur en économie comme Ministre des Finances et il a fait de Maurice une île cobaye en essayant toutes sortes de mesures farfelues. Une de ses mesures phares était de taxer les intérêts sur l'épargne. Qu'a-t-on vu ? Une réaction tout à fait normale, naturelle et humaine, les épargnants ont retiré leur argent de la banque pour investir ailleurs.

(Interruptions)

Et par pur hasard, au même moment, Bhai Rawat, *BAI* plutôt, est venu proposer des produits d'investissement les uns plus alléchants que les autres et au vu et au su des autorités.

Avec recul, on peut se demander s'il n'y a pas eu de complicité entre le gouvernement d'alors et le Groupe *BAI* d'arnaquer les Mauriciens avec ces *ponzy schemes* qu'on connaît aujourd'hui. Ce mécanisme mis en place a permis à Sunkai, *Whitedot* et *Je t'aime Marketing*, entre autres, de rentrer sur ce marché. Même si en 2011 l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avait pris la décision d'abolir cette taxe sur l'intérêt, le mal était déjà fait. Les épargnants n'ont pu se débarrasser de cette mentalité pour des retours faciles sur leurs investissements Et nous avons vu les conséquences par la suite. Espérons qu'avec le nettoyage qu'on a commencé

depuis l'an dernier, cette culture à l'épargne dans des institutions viables, crédibles va refaire surface.

Madame la présidente, l'autre indicateur est l'investissement, surtout du privé qui a connu une tendance à la baisse ces dernières années. Une des raisons, c'est le temps que ça prend pour obtenir les permis d'opérations. Dans un monde qui bouge à une vitesse grand V, comment peut-on accepter qu'un investisseur, qui présente un projet avec un *business plan* basé sur les chiffres et les données d'aujourd'hui, doit attendre 3 à 5 ans, voire plus dans certains cas, pour démarrer son projet ? Ils ne vont pas rester, Madame la présidente ! On n'est pas le nombril du monde, ils ont d'autres options. Ce budget vient corriger cette carence avec, entre autres, la relance du *Silent Agreement Principle*, l'adoption du *Regulatory Sandbox Licence* et aussi la mise en place d'un *e-licensing platform*.

Un autre aspect qui pèse dans le choix des investisseurs, c'est la sécurité. Personne ne voudra mettre son argent et opérer dans un pays où sa sécurité est menacée. Encore une fois, les mesures budgétaires viennent renforcer notre force policière en leur donnant les ressources nécessaires pour qu'elle puisse assumer son rôle pleinement et faire respecter l'ordre et la paix dans le pays.

Bien souvent, Madame la présidente, on prend des pays tels que Singapour et Dubaï comme un modèle de réussite. Une des raisons de leur réussite c'est qu'ils ont pratiqué une politique d'ouverture. Le Singapour est un tiers de notre taille en surface, mais sa population est trois fois la nôtre. L'ouverture d'une économie n'est pas une menace quand c'est bien planifié et le budget prévoit des mesures pour permettre aux étrangers d'acquérir un appartement ou un espace commercial et des facilités à s'y implanter.

Le *tax credit* offert à certains secteurs sur leur *capital investment* est encore une mesure pour favoriser et encourager l'investissement. L'*Air Corridor* reliant l'Afrique et l'Asie vise à positionner Maurice pour attirer les affaires. L'ICT fait partie de notre quotidien et le *E-commerce* génère des transactions en trillion de dollars. L'introduction d'un *national payment switch* favorisera le *E-commerce* et préparera Maurice pour l'avenir. Il y a d'autres mesures encore, Madame la présidente, pour favoriser, pour soutenir, pour venir en aide aux entrepreneurs, aux petites et moyennes entreprises. Je parle de *factoring*. Un des gros soucis des petits et moyens entrepreneurs c'est la trésorerie et aujourd'hui on sait que, quand ils sont en train de produire et vendre leurs produits, ils n'arrivent pas à avoir leur argent tout de suite. Il faut attendre un mois, deux mois ou plus des fois et aujourd'hui en donnant la

possibilité de collecter des dettes à travers le *factoring*, cela va leur permettre de continuer à opérer et de produire encore plus pour pouvoir générer plus de profitabilité et d'étendre leurs activités économiques.

Donc, c'est autant de mesures aujourd'hui que propose ce budget et sans compter l'investissement public qui a été annoncé par le Ministre des Finances. Si avec toutes ces mesures il n'y a pas de relance, il n'y en aura jamais. Donc, ceux qui ne veulent pas voir qu'il y a de relance, qu'il y a des mesures pour inciter la relance, c'est qu'ils ne veulent pas voir ce qu'il y a dans ce budget, Madame la présidente. C'est en se basant sur ces mesures que le Ministre des Finances a avancé un taux de croissance de 4.1% à la fin de l'exercice 2016-2017.

Madame la présidente, j'aimerais maintenant aborder des réalisations de mon ministère durant l'année financière écoulée et des perspectives pour l'année financière 2016/2017. Je commencerais par le secteur sucre qui reste un secteur clé de notre secteur agricole en terme d'emplois et de création de la richesse. L'industrie de la canne continue à faire face à d'énormes défis, surtout en prévision de l'abolition interne des quotas de sucre sur le marché européen en 2017, c'est-à-dire l'année prochaine, qui risque de rendre notre sucre moins compétitif.

Hélas, la situation pourrait se corser davantage suite à l'avènement de Brexit. Donc, il faut être vigilant et nous devons continuer à nous battre pour défendre les intérêts de ce secteur tant au niveau du groupe ACP à Bruxelles qu'au sein de l'accord de partenariat économique de la région avec l'Union Européenne. Nous explorons aujourd'hui les possibilités d'exportation de sucre vers les pays africains à travers des blocs régionaux comme le COMESA et la SADC.

Madame la présidente, le secteur sucre a, encore une fois, été sérieusement touché en 2015 en raison du faible prix de R 13,100 obtenu par tonne de sucre et la chute dans la production sucrière à 366,000 tonnes qui ont contribué, bien sûr, à une baisse de la recette totale. Quand nous savons que le prix de viabilité étant de R 16,000 par tonne, les planteurs - surtout les petits planteurs - auraient fait face à de grosses difficultés, s'il n'y avait pas eu l'intervention de l'État.

En effet, le gouvernement est venu de l'avant avec les mesures suivantes afin d'alléger les difficultés des planteurs -

- (i) D'abord, il y a eu la mise en place du *Sugar Cane Sustainability Fund* sous la gestion de la *Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (MCIA)* pour l'octroi d'une subvention aux planteurs de –
 - (a) R 1,100 par tonne de sucre aux planteurs produisant jusqu'à 60 tonnes de sucre, et de
 - (b) R 300 par tonne de sucre aux planteurs produisant au-dessus de 60 tonnes.

Les paiements ont été effectués au début de l'année pour un montant total de R 137 m.

- (ii) Il y a aussi, Madame la présidente, le paiement d'une compensation de R 2,000 par tonne de sucre à chaque planteur assuré au *Sugar Insurance Fund*. Des amendements nécessaires seront apportés à travers le *Finance Bill* à cet effet.
- (iii) Il y a aussi l'exemption de paiement de la prime d'assurance accordée aux planteurs produisant jusqu'à 60 tonnes de sucre.

Madame la présidente, afin d'encourager la vente de notre sucre sur le marché local, une taxe de 15% sera frappée sur le sucre blanc importé. De plus, des normes de contrôle seront introduites pour s'assurer que le sucre importé soit de bonne qualité vu que de nombreuses doléances ont été reçues concernant la qualité de ce produit.

A cet effet, la *Mauritius Standards Bureau* travaille actuellement sur l'élaboration de ces normes en consultation avec le MCIA et mon ministère.

Madame la présidente, afin d'assurer des revenus supplémentaires aux planteurs, la *MCIA Act* sera amendée à travers le *Finance Bill* pour augmenter la contribution des distillateurs et embouteilleurs de R 20 à R 40 par litre d'alcool absolu.

Madame la présidente, le gouvernement a récemment agréé à l'introduction d'un *Ethanol Framework* qui permettra le mélange de l'éthanol avec le mogas et ce à partir du 01 juillet 2017. Un comité de mise en œuvre a déjà été établi à cet effet pour travailler sur les modalités et proposer un mécanisme approprié. Ce projet, qui s'insère dans le cadre du COP 21 en vue de réduire le "*carbon footprint*" dans le pays, offrira aussi une source additionnelle pour chercher de revenu supplémentaire aux planteurs sur le prix de la mélasse.

Madame la présidente, la superficie de terre sous culture de la canne à sucre a diminué considérablement durant la dernière décennie et il est estimé que 20,000 hectares ont ainsi été, soit convertis pour des projets infrastructurels ou immobiliers, soit carrément abandonnés parce que les planteurs n'arrivaient plus à cultiver leurs terres. Cette catégorie de terres abandonnées sont estimées à être à environ 10,000 hectares.

C'est une aberration, Madame la présidente, qu'autant de terres soient abandonnées et restent inutilisées alors que le pays a besoin de terre pour faire accroître sa production agricole en vue d'assurer l'autosuffisance alimentaire.

Madame la présidente, nous accueillons favorablement l'idée de la mise sur pied d'un *Agricultural Land Management System* à être géré par la MCIA. Ce projet vise à identifier les terres abandonnées et leur gestion viendra renverser la vapeur et les rendra productives.

Mon ministère compte aussi apporter bientôt des amendements au *Sugar Industry Efficiency Act* en vue de faciliter des réformes dans l'industrie de la canne en conformité aux recommandations faites par les consultants de *Landell Mills Consulting* (LMC) et qui contribuera à rendre ce secteur viable.

Madame la présidente, en ce qui concerne le secteur non-sucre qui couvre notamment les fruits et légumes, l'élevage, les services des bois et forêts et la conservation, mon ministère a introduit, en janvier dernier, un plan stratégique pour la période 2016-2020 où l'accent est mis sur les pratiques soutenues pour faire accroître la production agricole afin d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire, une meilleure qualité des produits et l'autosuffisance.

L'accent est aussi mis sur les mesures à prendre pour la transition vers la production bio afin d'atteindre l'objectif fixé de produire 50% de nos produits alimentaires en mode bio d'ici 2020.

Madame la présidente, à cet effet, mon ministère a pris les mesures suivantes -

- (i) l'introduction du *Bio Farming Promotion Scheme* en mai 2016 pour encourager la production agricole en mode bio en offrant des facilités fiscales et financières en termes de 'tax holiday', d'exemption de la TVA sur les équipements et intrants agricoles et un taux d'intérêt de 3% sur les emprunts auprès de la banque MauBank. 22 demandes ont déjà été reçues sous ce programme;

- (ii) la mise en place d'un '*Compost Subsidy Scheme*' pour la distribution gratuite du compost aux planteurs afin de les inciter à utiliser plus d'intrants organiques et moins d'intrants chimiques. A ce jour, quelques 3,300 planteurs ont bénéficié de ce programme;
- (iii) l'introduction du *Sheltered Farming Scheme* pour la culture vivrière sous des structures protégées afin d'atténuer les risques liés aux changements climatiques et réduire à terme la dépendance sur les agrochimiques. Quelques 68 planteurs ont jusqu'ici pris avantage de ce *scheme*;
- (iv) la réservation de 66 arpents de terre à Britannia pour l'usage exclusif des projets agricoles bio.
- (v) l'élaboration d'un programme de formation en cinq modules par le FAREI sur le *Mauri Gap Niveau 1* qui est la norme basique pour la culture bio. A ce jour, quelques 250 planteurs ont déjà complété ce programme et 67 autres sont en train de le suivre actuellement;
- (vi) la sensibilisation et la formation des planteurs sur les pratiques de «*zero budget natural farming*» développé en Inde par le Dr. Subhas Palekar. A ce jour, 3,000 planteurs ont participé à ce programme de formation;
- (vii) la mise en œuvre du projet « *SMART Agriculture* » en collaboration avec la Chambre d'Agriculture de Maurice en vue de réduire la dépendance sur les agro-chimiques dans la production agricole. Ce projet, implémenté sur une base pilote conjointement par la Chambre d'Agriculture et le FAREI, vise à suivre, à travers l'île, dix petits et dix grands cultivateurs.
- (viii) la création d'un *Agriculture Certification Body* au sein de mon ministère pour la certification des fruits et légumes produits d'après les normes de Mauri Gap Niveau 1.
- (ix) la mise en œuvre d'un projet sous le Programme d'Assistance Technique financé par la FAO, intitulé « *The Development of Organic and Institutional Capacity Building in Mauritius* ». Ce projet vise, Madame la présidente, entre autres, à l'élaboration d'une législation sur l'agriculture organique et le développement d'une stratégie de marketing pour les produits organiques.

- (x) la mise en place d'un comité technique pour l'élaboration des règlements sous la *Dangerous Chemical Control Act* pour mieux contrôler l'usage des pesticides par les agriculteurs ainsi que les résidus des pesticides sur les fruits, les légumes et autres produits agricoles. Ces règlements seront prêts d'ici la fin de 2016.
- (xi) l'enlèvement de 13 pesticides de la liste des produits par le *Dangerous Chemicals Control Board* suite à des recommandations faites par mon ministère.
- (xii) la préparation des législations appropriées avec l'assistance technique de la FAO pour l'introduction des normes pour les bio-fertilisants, les bio-pesticides et autres intrants bio afin d'assurer que des produits de bonne qualité soient mis en vente sur le marché local.

Madame la présidente, le site à Britannia destiné uniquement à la culture bio sera bientôt doté de toutes les infrastructures nécessaires afin d'être mis à la disposition des planteurs et une provision de R 20 millions est faite dans le Budget 2016-2017 à cet effet. Les planteurs sélectionnés seront encadrés par le FAREI et il y aura un contrôle et un suivi strict pour assurer que ces planteurs travaillent en conformité avec les normes établies.

Madame la présidente, afin de dissuader les planteurs à utiliser les intrants chimiques et à les encourager à se tourner vers les produits bio, un *levy* de 15% sera introduit sur les pesticides, herbicides et mûrisseurs. Mon ministère travaille actuellement sur une autre liste des pesticides à être retirés du marché.

Madame la présidente, le *Food Technology Laboratory* de mon ministère s'activera, à l'avenir, à analyser davantage d'échantillons pour la détection des résidus de pesticides dans les fruits et légumes. Une provision de R 25 million est faite dans le budget pour l'achat d'un nouvel appareil moderne qui aidera le FTL à mieux faire le travail.

Madame la présidente, une vaste campagne de sensibilisation sera entreprise par mon ministère afin d'encourager les planteurs à adopter la culture bio et à prendre avantage des incitations offertes par le *Bio Farming Promotion Scheme*. Cette campagne sensibilisera aussi les consommateurs sur les bienfaits des produits bios.

Madame la présidente, mon ministère opère actuellement 12 *schemes* qui offrent des facilités et des incitations aux planteurs en vue d'augmenter la production agricole. En 2015-2016, 3881 planteurs ont ainsi bénéficié de ces *schemes* et la somme déboursée est d'environ

R 44 millions. Vu que les planteurs continuent à faire face à des défis et des contraintes, mon ministère a revu quelques-uns de ces *schemes* afin de les rendre plus attrayants et mieux répondre aux besoins des fermiers.

Madame la présidente, le *Sheltered Farming Scheme* qui vise à encourager les planteurs à adopter le système de culture protégée pour mitiger les effets des changements climatiques, augmenter la capacité de production et aussi améliorer la qualité des produits a été revu, et le grant accordé aux planteurs a été substantiellement augmenté, passant de R 250,000 à R 400,000. Le *scheme* sera dorénavant étendu aux producteurs des fleurs et aux planteurs engagés dans la culture bio et l'hydroponique.

Madame la présidente, la production des fruits, notamment les letchis, les mangues et les longanes a été sévèrement affectée l'année dernière à cause des chauves-souris. Le *Fruit Protection Scheme* qui finance l'achat des filets à hauteur de 75% pour un maximum de 10 filets a été revu. Les filets importés, doivent dorénavant satisfaire les normes de qualité et les propriétaires de vergers auront droit à des filets pour couvrir 50% de leurs arbres fruitiers. Par contre, les personnes, qui ont des arbres fruitiers dans leur arrière-cour, pourront bénéficier du *scheme* pour couvrir la totalité des arbres.

Madame la présidente, la culture de bananes est affectée par une maladie «*La Freckle Disease*», caractérisée par la noircissure de la peau. En dépit de plusieurs traitements à base chimique préconisés par le FAREI, cette maladie a persisté. Le FAREI a constaté que les fruits sont protégés de la maladie s'ils sont couverts par des sacs en plastique. Un *Banana Bagging Scheme* est ainsi introduit dans ce budget pour subventionner, à hauteur de 50%, l'achat de 450 sacs polythène par arpent.

Pour booster la production des fruits, nous avons établi un calendrier pour 2016 et 2017. Nous comptons produire 7500 provins de letchi, 800 de longane, 6000 de pitaya, 2800 de mangue. Il y a aussi des bananes (24000), fruits à pain (3500), *passion fruit* (200 mensuellement), des anthuriums (12500) et des orchidées (4600). Tout cela est fait pour pouvoir augmenter la production locale, Madame la présidente.

Le *Freight Rebate Scheme*, qui subventionne le coût du fret à hauteur de 25% pour l'exportation de certains produits à l'étranger, sera ouvert à d'autres produits comme prévu dans ce budget.

Madame la présidente, le *Technology Introduction and Diffusion Scheme* a été réintroduit à travers le budget 2016-2017 pour offrir l'assistance technique dans des secteurs

spécifiques afin d'améliorer les systèmes de production agricole, et introduire de nouvelles activités et de nouvelles pratiques culturelles. Le *Purchase of Agricultural Equipment Scheme* a aussi été revu pour couvrir une plus large gamme d'équipements agricoles afin de permettre aux fermiers de mécaniser leurs activités et ainsi faire face au manque de main-d'œuvre.

Madame la présidente, mon ministère met beaucoup d'importance sur le développement de l'agro-industrie en vue d'encourager les planteurs, les jeunes et les femmes à s'engager dans la transformation des produits primaires pour y ajouter de la valeur et ainsi proposer des substituts aux produits importés. Le *National SME Incubator Scheme* avec une dotation de R 50 millions aidera les jeunes entrepreneurs à développer leur talent et leur idées en vue d'établir leur propre entreprise. Mon ministère donnera tout le soutien nécessaire aux jeunes afin de les encourager à cultiver la terre et professionnaliser le secteur agricole.

Avec la création de l'*Agri-Business Park* à Highlands sur une superficie de 100 arpents a aussi pour objectif d'encourager les jeunes à s'embarquer dans la production de produits à forte valeur ajoutée.

Mon ministère saisira cette opportunité pour développer des '*clusters*' pour les agro-processeurs pour divers produits. Mon ministère travaillera en étroite collaboration avec le ministère du Business, des Entreprises et des Coopératives, pour mener à bien ce projet.

Madame la présidente, pour rehausser la qualité des fruits et légumes, il faut promouvoir la qualité des semences. Au fait, mon ministère a l'ambition de transformer Maurice en un hub pour les semences.

Nous avons ainsi signé un accord, le *Reimbursable Technical Assistance Agreement* avec le FIDA pour, entre autres, l'élaboration des règlements sous le *Seeds Act*, le développement d'une politique et stratégie nationale pour les semences et la création du *National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office*.

Madame la présidente, la biotechnologie joue un rôle prépondérant dans le développement de l'agriculture et il est donc nécessaire d'établir un institut de la biotechnologie à Maurice si nous voulons devenir plus compétitif et avoir plus d'accès au marché international.

A cet effet, mon ministère recrutera des consultants pour faire une étude de faisabilité sur l'éventuelle création d'un *National Institute of Biotechnology*.

Les mouches de fruits causent d'énormes pertes aux fruits et légumes. Il est estimé que 30% de la production de cucurbitées est affectée annuellement avec des pertes d'environ R 160 millions. Ce problème persiste en dépit des diverses mesures introduites au fil des années pour éradiquer ces mouches.

Mon ministère se propose de construire une nouvelle facilité pour la reproduction des mouches stériles qui seront éventuellement relâchées dans la nature en vue de stériliser à leur tour les mouches femelles.

Cette facilité produira quelques 50 millions de mouches par semaine contre 2 millions actuellement. Le coût de ce projet est estimé à R 30 millions et les provisions nécessaires ont été faites dans le budget.

La production de miel a été sévèrement affectée ces derniers temps en raison de l'apparition d'une maladie en 2014 - le varroa.

Pour relancer ce secteur prometteur des zones pour la réserve d'abeilles seront établies à Bras d'Eau, Cap Malheureux, La Ferme et le Morne. Quelques 10 000 arbres mellifères seront mis en terres dans ces zones d'ici la fin de 2016.

Madame la présidente, le secteur de thé qui a été négligé depuis très longtemps a un regain au niveau du gouvernement. La demande de thé sur le marché local est de 1,500 tonnes annuellement et la production est de 1,300 tonnes. Le manque est comblé par l'importation.

Mon ministère se propose de relancer cette industrie et 600 arpents de terre agricoles non-utilisées actuellement seront mises à la disposition des planteurs et des acteurs du secteur de thé. Les plantules sont en voie de préparation et seront distribuées aux planteurs avant la fin de l'année.

Madame la présidente, afin de permettre aux métayers d'avoir une meilleure productivité, mon ministère, va introduire un « *Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme* » qui permettra de donner un support et d'aider à rehausser les champs de thé de ces métayers.

Mon ministère a aussi lancé un appel d'offres pour l'achat d'équipements servant à une meilleure cueillette des feuilles de thé et pallier au manque de main-d'œuvre. Ces équipements seront distribués gratuitement aux métayers.

Madame la présidente, l'ancienne usine de thé à Dubreuil sera rouverte et donnera de l'emploi aux habitants de la région.

En ce qui concerne l'élevage, Madame la présidente, la production du lait en 2016 était environ 4.5 millions de litres et celle de la viande, excluant le poulet, était de 1,300 tonnes. Cette tendance dans la production sera maintenue en 2016. Notre objectif est d'augmenter la production du lait et de la viande par 5% d'ici juin 2017.

Mon ministère viendra de l'avant avec un nouveau *scheme* pour compenser les éleveurs qui nourriront leur génisses jusqu'au stade de lactation. Une compensation de R 5,000 par animal est prévue dans ce contexte et des dotations budgétaires sont incluses dans le nouveau budget qui a été présenté.

Madame la présidente, des règlements ont été promulgués récemment pour interdire l'abattage des moutons, des cabris et du bétail dont le poids est inférieur aux normes requises. Cette mesure assurera le maintien de la production de la viande d'une façon durable.

Mon ministère exécutera deux projets majeurs à Melrose sur une superficie de 40 arpents pour donner une nouvelle impulsion au secteur de l'élevage.

Le premier projet concerne la création d'une zone pour bétail qui comprendra dix unités pouvant accueillir dix bêtes chacune avec toutes les facilités requises dont une unité pour la production des fourrages. Ces différentes unités seront allouées aux éleveurs après un exercice d'expression d'intérêt. On estime qu'avec ce projet, la production laitière augmentera par 200,000 litres annuellement.

Le second projet concerne la mise en place d'une ferme pour génisses qui seront élevées jusqu'à qu'elles soient pleines. Les génisses pleines seront ensuite vendues aux éleveurs à un prix subventionné. Ce projet vise à atténuer les difficultés des éleveurs à trouver des génisses de bonne qualité pouvant s'adapter aux conditions locales.

Madame la présidente, afin de permettre aux éleveurs de prendre mieux soin de leurs animaux et de leur prodiguer les premiers traitements en cas de maladie, 62 fermiers ont reçu une formation de base cette année en premiers soins et 30 autres suivent actuellement ce cours de formation.

Ce programme est financé sous le projet VET-GOV pour l'Union Africaine et le Bureau Interafricain Pour les Ressources Animales.

Mon ministère proposera d'étendre ce programme de formation afin d'atteindre un plus grand nombre d'éleveurs.

Madame la présidente, les éleveurs de porcs éprouvent beaucoup de difficultés pour rembourser les emprunts pris auprès de la Banque de Développement pour relancer leurs activités suite à la fièvre porcine il y a quelques années de cela.

Je suis heureux que le ministre des Finances ait entendu leurs doléances et a décidé d'abolir les intérêts ou de *write off* 50% du montant dû et j'espère que cette mesure apportera beaucoup de soulagement aux personnes concernées.

Néanmoins, les éleveurs de porcs n'arrivent toujours pas à écouler leurs produits dans les hôtels et les supermarchés en raison de la qualité inférieure de la viande, supposément, et l'absence de certification à l'abattoir central.

Mon ministère retiendra les services d'un consultant pour offrir les conseils techniques nécessaires aux éleveurs en vue d'améliorer la qualité de la viande.

De son côté, la *Mauritius Meat Authority* a lancé un appel d'offres en vue d'avoir la certification HACCP de la section porc à l'abattoir.

Madame la présidente, le projet du nouvel abattoir à Belle Rive est en bonne voie et le contrat sera bientôt alloué à une firme de consultants pour rédiger les spécifications et les documents d'appel d'offres pour la construction de l'abattoir. Je dois ici, Madame la présidente, informer la Chambre de l'éruption d'une maladie grave à Rodrigues, la *Foot and Mouth disease*, qui affecte normalement le bétail, les cochons, les moutons et les cabris. Des animaux suspectés d'être contaminés par cette maladie ont été exportés vers Maurice récemment. Les services vétérinaires de mon ministère suivent la situation de très près et des mesures appropriées seront prises dans l'intérêt national.

Madame la présidente, les planteurs, les éleveurs aujourd'hui subissent l'effet du changement climatique. Ce sont eux qui nourrissent la population. Quand il y a de grosses pluies, des inondations ou la sécheresse, ce sont eux qui perdent leurs récoltes, donc leurs revenus. Jusqu'aujourd'hui il n'y a pas eu une couverture d'assurance adéquate pour les protéger dans des cas de catastrophe naturelle. Aujourd'hui on est venu proposer de mettre sur pied un fonds d'un plan d'assurance pour pouvoir couvrir les planteurs et les éleveurs. Le budget a mis en place R10 million pour pouvoir démarrer ce plan et j'espère que bientôt on arrivera à mettre sur pied un fonds de protection qui viendra justement protéger nos éleveurs et nos planteurs.

Maintenant je voudrais, Madame la présidente, tourner vers l'autre sous-secteur de mon ministère, c'est-à-dire nos forêts et aussi tout ce qui concerne notre biodiversité. La

protection de nos forêts et de notre biodiversité reste une priorité pour mon ministère. Ainsi, des nombreuses mesures ont été initiées pour maintenir et rehausser l'étendue de nos forêts et prévenir la perte de la biodiversité. Un programme pour la plantation d'arbres a été élaboré avec l'objectif de mettre en terre 500,000 arbres sur une période de cinq ans dans les forêts nouvellement identifiées. L'exercice a commencé cette année et quelques 45,000 arbres ont été plantés jusqu'ici. Dans le cadre de cette même campagne 32,000 plantes ont été distribuées à diverses institutions et organisations à leur demande.

Une nouvelle loi, La *Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act* adoptée l'année dernière a été proclamée. Cette loi fait provision pour une meilleure protection de notre biodiversité. Les plans d'aménagement de nos deux parcs nationaux ont été élaborés et seront mis en application bientôt. La stratégie pour l'expansion des zones protégées a été finalisée et inclura des corridors pour la biodiversité pour une meilleure protection de nos écosystèmes et de nos habitats.

Madame la présidente, le contrôle de la population des chauves-souris reste un énorme défi en raison des dégâts causés aux fruits et aussi aux espèces endémiques. L'IUCN a délégué un expert à Maurice pour nous conseiller sur la méthodologie appropriée pour compter le nombre de chauves-souris. Le comptage se fera en octobre prochain et mon ministère décidera des mesures à prendre à la lumière des résultats de cet exercice.

Madame la présidente, le jardin botanique de Pamplémousses est en train d'être réaménagé et deviendra bientôt un centre d'attraction touristique majeur dans le pays. Les nénuphars géants ont poussé en abondance après avoir été sévèrement menacés de disparition vers la fin de 2014. Le Château Mon Plaisir est en rénovation. Le SSRBG Trust a retenu les services d'un botaniste français de renom, M. Gilles Clément, pour faire un constat de l'état du jardin et proposer des mesures pour son '*lifting*'. Les recommandations de M. Clément sont mises en œuvre par le Trust actuellement.

Madame la présidente, avant de terminer je voudrais saluer le courage du ministre des Finances pour avoir relancé le débat sur notre système de pension. Tout le monde le dit tout bas que le système actuel n'est plus soutenable et il faut le revoir mais par manque d'audace on dit tout haut qu'on ne peut toucher au système actuel. Si on est responsable il faut que, tous ensemble, on se met d'accord pour trouver une solution durable. Plus question de faire du *cheap politics* sur un sujet aussi important que la pension. Pour conclure, Madame la

présidente, je dirais c'est un budget **PRAVIND** - il y a **P**rudence, **R**igueur, **A**ction, **V**ision, **I**nnovant, **N**oble, **D**iscipline.

Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(3.26 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am deeply honoured and privileged to intervene this afternoon on the Budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development in this Assembly last Friday. Honoured and privileged, Madam Speaker, because my first speech as a freshly elected member of this House was back in August 1983 and it was precisely on the Budget when I made my first speech in Parliament. Quite some vivid memories come to my mind and I cannot refrain from the recollection of a few of the major events since then. My presence in this House continuously since 1983 would not have been possible without the trust and the unflinching support of women and men from my constituency and I wish wholeheartedly to thank them for this long lasting partnership.

Madam Speaker, by far and very far indeed, everybody now agrees that the prime concern of the moment is the prevailing economic situation in our country and its social impact on the population especially on the lower and middle income groups. But, despite the need for intensive care patient Mauritius has not clearly been receiving the appropriate care and medication since the sitting Government has assumed office. Had it been a real medical case, most probably the Medical Council would have initiated an enquiry for alleged medical negligence. This remark, Madam Speaker, is not meant to hurt anybody or to make you laugh. *Ce n'est pas de gaieté de cœur que je vous le dis, rassurez-vous.* It is just the gut feeling I get when I visit families in my constituency and around the island. When I meet people from all walks of life, in the streets and stores and when I discuss with the economic operators from almost every sector of the economy.

Things have been getting worse for low and middle income families, for young job seekers and contractors and in spite of the fact that inflation remains low, people are finding it more and more difficult to cope with the cost of living and have had to drastically change their consumption trends. Economy, Madam Speaker, is unfortunately not just about figures

and percentages. It is foremost about lives of men and women, about hope and despair for families, smiles on faces or sorrow at work places and homes.

But, while that patient Mauritius, Madam Speaker, was expecting quick recovery, the more so a *miracle économique*, everybody agrees that since 2015 patient Mauritius has not been very lucky in the hands of its first doctor post general elections. One and a half year gone, *un crime contre l'économie nationale*.

Madam Speaker, we all remember here, in the National Assembly, the golden dreams *du miracle économique* in terms of growth rates, employment creation and all sort of smarties that were sold by hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo. Everybody in Government fell under the spell of the so-called magician who later admitted that he did not believe in figures, but in building love bridges. He took the whole nation for a pitiful ride and was more interested in his gold placements financed by Euro loans.

Madam Speaker, let me put it bluntly. While ailing patient Mauritius was expecting to have a dedicated doctor at its bedside, it had a mortuary assistant who had already an eye the patient's gold watch. The incumbent was forced to vacate his office, completely smeared with tar and gold flakes. Before leaving the financial scene *dans la honte*, the so-called magician took out a note from his *chapeau de paille*: The economy required a hard-working full-time Minister of Finance and his state of health then - as said by him - was not allowing him to deliver as the nation could have expected, and so he needed to quit. He did not say that he was forced to go.

In the prevailing financial circumstances, patient Mauritius did expect that a Lepep Government would assure its fiscal responsibility and act accordingly. But patient Mauritius was thoroughly deceived. Game was over for the so-called magician. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister, who is normally heavily burdened by his own responsibilities at the Prime Minister's Office, also took this office to restore some confidence. Deprived of a full-time Minister, the economy was put into a quasi-automatic mode since, save the few initiatives by high-ranking officials of the Ministry and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

Due to drastic cuts in public expenditure, lack of skills and leadership at the Ministry of Finance, slowing the take-off of projects admittedly, many of which were just illusions staged by the so-called magician and the dull performance of some Ministers, patient Mauritius was deprived of appropriate care and due diligence.

This sluggish state of affairs has been impacting on the morale of the population, and there was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction in the country. The electorate felt somewhat betrayed by the Government Lepep. One, among the load of recriminations, the scandalous practices here raised by numerous PQs brought to light by us, Members of Parliament from both sides of the House, on the appointments and also the expenditures like *voyages ministériels* and the appointment of some advisers who had police cases.

Furthermore, the *bal kuler* episode as well as other suspicious transactions give a clear indication that an atmosphere of sleaze and corruption was still around, and *certaines nettoyeurs étaient en fait des salisseurs*.

Finally, Madam Speaker, patient Mauritius has a new doctor, our Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth. The new doctor has been called upon to help the ailing patient. And what is the very first thing that he has done? Scrap the previous prescription. *Déchire l'ordonnance* and give us a new *ordonnance*. This is the rupture.

One may be tempted, in the present circumstances, to say, '*Enfin, un ministre des Finances à plein temps. Cela déjà, Madam Speaker, en soi, est un facteur déterminant. Fort heureusement, il ne s'agit pas de cela uniquement.*

As a first opening remark on the first Budget Speech of the hon. Minister of Finance, I would say that, while keeping in mind the morose backdrop and the short term deadline for *le bouclage* of the Budget, the Minister has managed to give some breathing space through the introduction of some positive measures, especially with regard to the introduction of innovative poverty eradication programmes. Some other measures, namely the decrease in the selling price of household gas, long overdue perhaps, have had a very ephemeral effect, mainly because of major price increases concerning alcoholic drinks and tobacco. I am sure my colleagues from both sides of the House will express their views on this very sensitive issue, particularly with regard to the full and comprehensive implementation of the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Several measures schemed to boost the SME sector, thus providing additional employment opportunities, are on the drawing board, but the biggest hurdle, Madam Speaker, remains poor project management, resulting in long delays.

The merging of related parastatal organisations is a nice move, provided it is carefully planned and fully endorsed by the employees actually in post. We all know three rotten fishes put together do not render them edible. We all know the reputation of many of these

parastatal bodies, especially the Chairpersons who have been appointed and some driving big, big limousines, BMW 7 or Mercedes. I find it difficult for them, at least, to get rid of all these limousines.

Going through the 56 pages of the Budget Speech a few times, Madam Speaker, while preparing my intervention, and having read so many such speeches previously, it is clear to my mind that the Minister wanted to achieve two main objectives –

- (i) demonstrate that he is fully aware of the current socioeconomic temperature in the country, and
- (ii) announcing as many measures as possible for the different sectors in an effort to change the perception regarding overall Government performance.

Madam Speaker, *le plus dur reste à faire : en clair, relancer la croissance économique.*

Since several Members from both sides of the House are taking part in the debates, I will restrain myself to comment specifically on two issues –

- (i) public infrastructure, and
- (ii) environment.

Madam Speaker, before that, I would like to invite my hon. Colleagues, as well as opinion leaders outside the House, to reflect more particularly on the final overall allocation of resources and revenue collection to ensure the sustainable development of our country. I strongly feel, Madam Speaker, that we cannot continue year after year to provide incremental increases to all Ministries and Departments without periodic strategy review in view to enhance ultimate budget allocation. Resources are precious, and the guiding principles of sustainable development compel us to think smarter.

Let me now come to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Madam Speaker. The current state of the M1 Highway is in itself a clear proof of an underperforming Ministry. Not only it is simply foolish to postpone these urgent remedial works as it will be more expensive later on, but most importantly they constitute a real security risk to drivers. If we go along M1 from the airport down to the North, we will see, not only on the motorway, but also inside, the state of the road, which is degrading day by day, especially with this very bad weather. It also, Madam Speaker, constitutes a real security risk to the drivers.

This Budget of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is providing almost an additional billion rupees to public infrastructure, and hopefully resurfacing works can start in a very near future. The Road Decongestion Programme was stuck in the budget jam for a whole

year, and now we understand that a fresh feasibility study is to be carried out following the decision to shift from the *Metro Leger* to Express Mode. Madam Speaker, this project was shelved, according to us, without proper evaluation, and it could have been started earlier.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure has also been *dans l'oeil du cyclone* with the unearthing of large-scale malpractices at the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Road Development Authority (RDA), and we do hope to see the conclusions of the enquiry very soon. And if we go to records, we will see that, at the head of the RDA, still there is nobody appointed full-time as Chief Executive.

Madam Speaker, another issue falling under the responsibility of Ministry of Public Infrastructure is road safety, *les accidents de la route. L'année 2016 a démarré sous de mauvais augure : 80 victimes d'accidents de la route, dont plusieurs cas de Hit and Run depuis le 01 janvier. 139 victimes en 2015, dont 9 cas de hit and run. Les motocyclistes et les piétons demeurent les plus vulnérables. The fatality rate tourne autour de 11.2%, sans compter les dizaines de blessés, dont certains ayant subi des traumatismes irréversibles.*

Madam Speaker, we cannot say that the Ministry has not done anything, but the outcome is yet to be seen and, in the meantime, the death toll continues to rise day by day. In terms of key actions, the Ministry plans to set up a National Road Safety Observatory by December this year, whereas road hazards have already been identified and remedial works have to start.

Admittedly, Madam Speaker, reversing the trend of road accidents is a long-term project that requires a cross sectoral approach. Campaigns advocating increased caution from all road users are necessary, but not enough to reverse the trend. The Ministry is well aware of the fact that the level of service of our highways and major roads is largely inadequate at peak hours. This has a serious impact on the behaviour of drivers.

L'insécurité routière est et demeure un sérieux problème à Maurice, et cela depuis de nombreuses années. In the Budget, sums have been provided for the upgrading of the lighting network on the motorway. Madam Speaker, hon. Members on both sides of the House have been querying the hon. Minister, week after week, to have the lamps repaired on the motorway. According to me, too much time is being wasted. Now, we have been told that there is a committee at the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, but what about road users and their safety. I think immediate actions should be taken; actions within the least possible time should be taken as it was mentioned that the CEB would be responsible for the road

lighting. I have been in the local government for so many years, and my friend also. I think this is a very bad decision to give to the CEB the responsibility for the maintenance of the road network lighting on the motorway. They can give a technical advice. If the budgets of the local authorities are beefed up and they are given equipment, I think the centralisation is one of the prospects to have results.

La décision de l'Alliance Lepep de faire de la révision du mode opératoire des radars une promesse électorale a envoyé un très mauvais signal de départ. En dépit de quelques initiatives des autorités, dont la recherche de l'expertise réunionnaise et une énième campagne de sensibilisation annoncée, et qui finissent toutes par se ressembler, aucun progrès notable n'a été constaté sur nos routes.

I think we have sufficient know-how in Mauritius. We don't need to have recourse to somebody from Reunion Island as expert to come and teach us on how we have to go with regard to road safety. There, they drive cars on the left side while our mode of driving is different here. This gentleman, apart from being paid too much money, I think he is more on holidays here than giving results; apart from press interviews, day by day accidents are being increased. The other day I was talking the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and I said that he should have had put an item to have a *Maha Yaj* for the Minister of Public Infrastructure to prevent more accidents...

(Interruptions)

Our colleague, I am sure will recall the time when we were saying that there was *Yamraj* here in Parliament; we were having so many accidents, bus accidents and so on. *Yamraj*, you know what that means !

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, c'est vrai que la sécurité routière requiert une approche pluridimensionnelle et des mesures *ad hoc* ne produiront pas les résultats escomptés. Le constat est accablant en ce qu'il s'agit des résultats. C'est probant. Il n'y a pas un jour sans qu'on constate à travers la radio ou la presse qu'il y a eu un accident mortel. Il y a la responsabilité des automobilistes mais il y a aussi la qualité de gouvernance et le degré de civisme qui prévaut dans un pays tel que l'île Maurice.

Madam Speaker, *nous avons des institutions déphasées et opaques*. Madam Speaker, *comment et qui obtiennent des permis d'auto-école ?* Sometimes we ask ourselves these questions and more, Madam Speaker. We think that these permits have been given through

political interventions over the years in all Government. I think there must be a stop to that. I hope the hon. Minister will be working on that; the giving of permits for *auto-écoles* to political agents should be stopped and be given to professionals.

Madam Speaker, this question of road safety *a un enjeu mondial*. Even at the General Assembly of the United Nations, that issue was raised *et le 02 mars a même été proclamé la décennie 2011-2020 'Décennie d'action pour la sécurité routière'*. There are several initiatives which have been proposed by the United Nations to all the members with regard to that aspect.

With regard to the United Nations, Madam Speaker, la Décennie d'action pour la sécurité routière 2011-2020 a pour but de permettre d'atteindre l'objectif de sauver 5 millions de vies et il a été recommandé à l'assemblée générale d'inviter les Etats membres, entre autres, à -

- aborder la question de la sécurité routière d'une façon globale ;
- améliorer l'application de la législation existante et à intensifier les actions de sensibilisation en vue de réduire le nombre de blessés et de morts ;
- améliorer la qualité des données sur la sécurité routière ;
- améliorer les soins pré-hospitaliers et les soins de traumatologie et de rééducation ;
- améliorer les infrastructures ;
- mobiliser les appuis politiques et financiers nécessaires à la réalisation des objectifs, et
- observer la journée mondiale du souvenir des victimes des accidents de la route chaque année le troisième dimanche de novembre.

Madam Speaker, we are not far from November and I am sure the Ministry is working on that to have this *journée mondiale du souvenir des victimes des accidents de la route*. We still remember this very tragic accident at Sorèze.

Madam Speaker, there have been several proposals. I think the Minister should act urgently – the Minister has started to act but, according to us, he is not going so fast. There need to be action. We have been told since months that legislation will be brought to toughen the penalties.

According to me, these ordinary penalties will not be sufficient. Madam Speaker, I think that somebody who has been found drunk and involved in a car accident, should have

his permit suspended for life and even a sentence of imprisonment because the lives of people are at stake.

Madam Speaker, I now come to the Ministry of Environment. While we are trying to figure out how smart our Smart Cities will be in the future, we are neglecting the single most important natural asset and this may compromise the future of our tourism industry as well as the quality of life of our citizens. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, since the *tristement célèbre épisode de bal kuler*, the Ministry of Environment's credibility has been – I would say – gone to the air. I have been Minister of Environment, and there are other colleagues too who have been Minister of Environment. In fact, the Ministry of Environment is one of the most important Ministries in a Government.

Now, we call it Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. It is a Ministry which has *un rayonnement mondial*. But, unfortunately, what has happened with the episode of *bal kuler* is a disgrace, not only for Mauritius, it's a disgrace on Mauritius. And since then, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has been entrusted to a part time Minister. His handling of the Benita wreck and the minor oil spill was most inappropriate. We just hope – I am sure Government has the person in mind, to have a full Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, who must be in office very soon.

(Interruptions)

And my plea is that things must change for the better.

(Interruptions)

So, we must have the right person, a dedicated person and a honest person. Honest, because it is one of the main, I would say, criteria, I am sure the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will use, following what has happened, the episode of *bal kuler*; it is honesty, and this criterion...

(Interruptions)

Right person in the right place!

Madam Speaker, taking a closer look at the Budget proposals, one cannot conclude that *le budget a fait une priorité nationale du ministère de l'Environnement. Au contraire!*

The proposals regarding our COP 21 commitments are rather sketchy and no reference is made to the ongoing Environment Investment Programmes.

It is proposed that some Rs110 m. will be allocated to address the issue of beach erosion and carry out coastal rehabilitation works, and Rs22 m. will be allocated to the National Emergency Operations. Here, I have to put on record the SMF work which is being performed by the Head of the SMF who is overseeing this National Emergency Operations.

The Land Drainage Authority is again on the agenda but no details are provided with regard to its effective implementation. Madam Speaker, I think Government should not wait for another flash flood to act. The creation of this Land Drainage Authority is of paramount importance and of utmost urgency to give this Authority *les moyens pour mettre en opération*, and then to thrash out this long outstanding problem of drains. Work has started through several Governments.

Unsorted landfilling of waste remains a real time bomb for environment. Mauritius cannot continue with this unsustainable costly practice. While the Ministry of Public Utilities is requesting for Expression of Interest for waste to energy projects, no mention is made in the Budget. The population would not be prepared to accept any incinerator project anywhere if there is a lack of transparency in the selection process. Already, Madam Speaker, there is some kind of conflict of interest as the Ministry is, at the same time, the regulator of environmental standards and a service provider in the Waste Management Sector and this has been criticised by the World Bank.

Madam Speaker, there is no need to spend Rs110 m. in coastal protection works if our lagoonal water quality is not being properly monitored. Our lagoonal water quality is not being properly monitored. Up to now, we have the Lower Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Network. The extension to Flic-en-Flac area, all western area is long overdue. If you ask me the quality of water at the Flic-en-Flac beach, it *laisse à désirer* and I hope the Ministry responsible, even the Ministry of Fisheries has the necessary laboratory to check regularly the quality of water at the lagoon of Flic-en-Flac and the nearby region because this is *un endroit très fréquenté*.

Madam Speaker, sustainable environment is no more an option. It is now imperative to act especially and we see how climate change is turning the atmosphere into a dangerous weapon. The earlier we realise it, the better for humanity.

Madam Speaker, I'll come to two minor comments concerning Constituency No. 20 - the problem of drugs. The problem of drugs in our constituency is very, very alarming. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated rightly the other day the responsibility of parents. The parents

have their responsibility. *Et nous sommes très, très tracassés du problème de la drogue dans certaines régions de notre circonscription et il y a urgence. C'est vrai qu'il y a une commission d'enquête, c'est vrai qu'il y a des initiatives des ONG*, but there is need for concerted action: the State, the NGOS, the local authorities, MPs of the region, *oui*. I am talking of myself and my colleague. We have been active in the constituency for many, many years. Now, we have new MPs. I hope that certain would have had the opportunity – you have a Minister of Health and Quality – you can have the opportunity to walk more often, within the regions of the housing estates, more, more often and see and hear what people are saying, what the NGOs are saying. You cannot just say that you are satisfied because the problems are there and if you don't act, we shall be blamed by the generations to come. I wanted just to draw the alarm bell, myself and my colleague, hon. Quirin, on this side of the House; we are MPs of the constituency. We are not making it a political issue. The problem is there. Everybody in the constituency, in the region, is traumatised, unless there is no concerted and national effort, I am sure in other regions as well. I sincerely hope that the Commission of Enquiry will come with concrete suggestions and ultimately we'll be here. If there is any report, we'll have to debate and change legislation, if need be, I am sure.

Madam Speaker, there is another question concerning another region, Albion. The region of Albion has been traumatised for years. We have had this Covanta Project and then we have the CT Power Project. We have witnessed, *nous avons vécu le traumatisme des habitants, des gens qui ont investi sur les terrains, qui ont construit des maisons, qui ont vécu avec ces projets qui ont été annoncés, finalement qui ont créé beaucoup de problèmes*.

Madam Speaker, we have told at page 8 of the Budget, paragraph 59 –

“Firstly, an international private consortium is setting up a modular near shore mobile oil refinery and onshore storage facilities at Albion. Besides its impact on employment and growth, the project can make of Mauritius the first source of low sulphur bunker fuel (LS380) in the Indian Ocean region.”

The intention is there in the Budget.

At page 26, paragraph 191 of the Budget, I see –

“And a new petroleum port will be developed at Albion.”

I think, Madam Speaker, without being against development because without development, there is no progress. But I think, with past experience, we have to hear the views of all the inhabitants of the region. We have witnessed what has happened near this boat in the South.

And Albion, c'est une région difficile. L'accès sur la mer est très difficile ; il y a des falaises. J'espère que le ministre du Commerce qui est responsable de ce projet va tout faire qu'il y ait une concertation, et là, je vois déjà des écologistes qui sont contre une raffinerie à Albion. Ils disent -

« Une raffinerie de pétrole serait une catastrophe pour la santé des habitants et pour l'environnement. »

Madam Speaker, I think there are ways and means for the Minister responsible to discuss with the people of the region, ask for EIAs before going - I would say - blindly into that project. We have seen certain governments which have gone blindly into projects and ultimately we have seen this case of CT Power in Court and I don't know how much money will be spent as compensation if ever there will be compensation to be paid.

Madam Speaker, one last item concerning the CEB for the planters. There has been an increase for the planters. I am very happy with this decision. I, myself, have raised the issue for the bagasse transfer price. The issue had been raised by me and the Minister, at least, has made the follow-up and planters have been given the increase. I hope that any further increase will not be taken into the pension fund; this is what they have been told from the SIFB Fund and so on. I think the Minister must urgently reassure the planters concerning the decision of Government, which I am sure he will do, because in my own Constituency we have received queries from the planters even though it is a good decision. I think the money must come from the CEB. The CEB has made billions of profits and the payment to the planters must come from the CEB Fund.

Again, while I am talking on the CEB, Madam Speaker, before concluding, I was very sad to hear on the radio that the CEB has suspended two senior officials. *Zot péché* is that they have supposedly given information to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Madam Speaker, I, myself, am an ex-employee of the CEB. I have worked for 17 years in that organisation which is a very important one. These people are professionals. We cannot just do an enquiry that they have given information to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

We don't have this fiscal responsibility; we don't have Freedom of Information Act; so how can we *faire dominer* like this? So, I am appealing to the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister to, at least - this morning we have raised a very important issue which we raised some time back, the Prime Minister has taken a very bold decision and it has come from the Opposition. So,

why suspend professionals working at the CEB? *Zot seul péché c'est donne l'information au Leader de l'opposition.* I think it is a shame if we come to such decisions!

(Interruptions)

And this information has saved the country millions of rupees!

Madam Speaker, before leaving the floor, let me remind my hon. colleagues that we are fully aware that external factors are bound to affect the growth of our tight economy. The patient Mauritius is pressing for results. This patience is nearly exhausted. The population wants to see jobs, opportunities and renewed growth. Taxpayers wish that Government walks the talk with regard to good governance and public accountability. Palliative care and playing for time tactics will serve no useful purpose.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is hoping to transform the economic landscape into a new era of development with his Budget proposals. As patriots, Madam Speaker, we are born here. *Nous vivons ici* and we wish he could succeed in his Budget. The country deserves that this Budget succeeds but, the Government has to be serious. The Ministers responsible for the follow-up of the decisions of the Budget must be serious.

They must not be *pigeons voyageurs* just travelling and then sometimes not giving figures to the Parliament. Madam Speaker, the real proof of the pudding is in the eating. The biggest deficit for Government remains, however, the huge gap between what is being said and what actually is being done and seen to be done. Madam Speaker, we shall be here next year analysing the results and what we have done with the first part of my speech concerning the magician; we shall be here next year analysing the results prescribed by the new Doctor, hon. Pravind Jugnauth.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(7.05 p.m.)

Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Merci, Madame la présidente. C'est un immense plaisir pour moi de m'adresser à cette auguste Assemblée pour la douzième fois concernant les débats budgétaires et surtout le quatrième budget du ministre des Finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth.

Tout d'abord, après avoir écouté mon très bon ami, je peux lui dire : patient Mauritius is telling the MMM to be patient because we have 40 months to go before election.

(Interruptions)

And I would like to tell my hon. friend that, with regard to the refinery at Albion, the promoters will have to follow all procedures including EIA certificate and due diligence exercises will be carried out before any implementation of the project.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, through the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who has a proven leadership, congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for this bold, imaginative and innovative Budget which has undoubtedly created a feel good factor in the country which shows that this Budget has been widely accepted by the population.

By introducing momentous measures such as making Mauritius a duty free paradise, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is bringing the country into a new era of development whereas with the social measures provided in the Budget, he also shows that he really cares for the welfare of the downtrodden and the population at large.

Here, Madam Speaker, I would like to remind this House how the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development *est un homme de terrain*, that he has listened to everybody, *il est personnellement descendu dans les poches de pauvreté à travers l'île*. He has met as many people from the various poles of the economy, *les jeunes, les sportifs, les NGOs, les petits éleveurs, les agriculteurs, les travailleurs sociaux, et la liste est encore longue, Madame la présidente*. He has, thus, come with concrete measures to alleviate the burden of the most vulnerable group of our population with a social Budget. He has spared no effort to respond to the comments and proposals of his people and that is why, I repeat myself, this is a Budget for the people, with the people.

We are *l'Alliance Lepep*, Madam Speaker; *l'Alliance pour le peuple*, and we hear what is being said outside the House. Nous n'avons qu'à lire les commentaires des internautes, qu'à écouter nos mandants et entendre les intervenants sur les ondes des radios privées et sur la place publique pour comprendre que, dans son ensemble, ce budget a été très bien accepté par la population en général. Du jamais vu, Madame la présidente!

Il est clair, Madame la présidente, que notre honorable opposition est à contretemps des aspirations de *Lepep moris*, et l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition a raison lorsqu'il avoue

que ce budget contient des mesures intéressantes, mais j'ai de la peine à comprendre comment un budget qui, dit-il, contient des mesures intéressantes, ne répond pas aux aspirations du peuple. Mais probablement il va peut-être nous apprendre pour qui donc ces mesures sont intéressantes.

Par ailleurs, Madame la présidente, j'ai écouté avec attention le discours de l'honorable Ramful. Malheureusement il est absent aujourd'hui parce qu'il est pris ailleurs et il n'a pas à cœur sa responsabilité en tant qu'élue de la circonscription numéro 12.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Jhugroo, I don't think you should say this!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Moi-même, depuis que je suis élu, cela fait plus de dix ans, je suis toujours présent à l'Assemblée nationale. Je crois que chaque député doit assumer sa responsabilité. On est payé avec de l'argent public.

(Interruptions)

Même le Premier ministre est là depuis son élection!

J'ai été déçu du contenu du discours de mon jeune collègue, qui provient, peut-être d'une méconnaissance de l'histoire récente et les frasques de son *Leader*, qu'il adore toujours au lieu de lui dire '*leve paké aller.*' Il n'y a pas de comparaison possible entre la culture travailliste et la nôtre, que ce soit sur la gestion du pays, sur notre philosophie politique ou notre sens du leadership. Notre culture, c'est de construire un pays pour les générations futures, avec le sérieux et le travail. La culture du Parti travailliste, c'est une culture de dilapidation des biens du pays. *Khalé pilé, tousse sali, amène copine dans campement ek majja karo.* C'est ça la culture du Parti travailliste.

L'honorable Ramful ne comprend pas la philosophie du *Nine-Year Schooling* et je le comprends, parce qu'il ne faut pas oublier que durant la période 2000 à 2005 - avec l'Alliance MSM/MMM au pouvoir - afin d'alléger le fardeau de nos enfants, on avait construit 40 écoles secondaires pour que nos enfants puissent avoir un développement harmonieux. Le Parti travailliste - son parti - a réintroduit le *rat-race* en les écrasant avec une formule qui vole l'enfance de nos petits Mauriciens.

Deuxième chose, Madame la présidente, je voudrais lui rappeler la faillite de certaines institutions avec la gestion désastreuse de certains nominés politiques qui ont vu des compagnies telles qu'*Air Mauritius* avec son *hedging* calamiteux.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, I don't think your comments are warranted!

Mr Jhugroo: Des casinos déficitaires et la STC qui ont, de tout temps, coûté très cher à la population. L'honorable Ramful - malheureusement, il n'est pas là - sera très heureux de savoir que depuis la prise de pouvoir de notre gouvernement, l'Alliance Lepep, toutes ces entreprises, aujourd'hui sont profitables. C'est ça la différence!

Venons-en maintenant, au recrutement. Nous n'avons pas de leçon à prendre du Parti travailliste. La population ne va pas oublier les manipulations honteuses d'un député travailliste sur des institutions dites indépendantes. Ce n'est pas moi qui le dit, mais un ancien député du Parti travailliste et ancien PPS, M. Khamajeet, qui je vous le rappelle n'a même pas été inquiétée par les autorités du pays jusqu'à présent. Laissez-moi vous dire, M. le député travailliste, qu'avec votre bilan, enfin, le bilan de votre parti, le Parti travailliste, vous êtes mal placé ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you don't have to address yourself to any Member of the Labour Party, but you address yourself to the Chair!

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, I was just answering to hon. Ramful.

Madam Speaker: No, but even then do not address yourself to hon. Ramful, you address yourself to the Chair!

Mr Jhugroo: *I want their friends to convey him the message.* Le bilan de votre parti, le Parti travailliste, vous êtes mal placés pour nous donner des leçons.

Et comme l'honorable Ramful est aussi député de la circonscription, il doit commencer par remercier le ministre des Finances, qui lui, a pensé à notre circonscription en rendant flambant neuf le stade Sir Harry Latour et le centre de jeunesse de Pointe Jérôme, qu'ils ont oublié pendant les dix dernières années et que ce gouvernement va donner à nos jeunes deux bijoux qui vont leur permettre d'exprimer leur potentiel et de devenir des citoyens épanouis.

A court d'argumentaire, l'opposition risque de tomber dans la surenchère politique et dans la démagogie. Mais la population n'est pas dupe, Madame la présidente. Elle ne veut pas accepter d'avaler toutes les couleuvres de l'opposition comme ce fut le cas en 2014.

Ce budget, Madame la présidente, a touché tous les créneaux de notre économie en passant par le pouvoir d'achat, le développement du pays en termes d'infrastructures, les logements sociaux, la réforme des institutions, la lutte contre la pauvreté et les gaspillages de fonds publics, pour ne citer que ces exemples.

Concernant les voyages, suite à l'interpellation parlementaire de mon ami, l'honorable Bhagwan, sur le sujet des missions à l'étranger, Madame la présidente, nous jouons la transparence. *We are a responsible Government. The measures announced by the Minister of Finance to curtail overseas missions of our Ministers and MPs are proof enough.* Et j'espère que nos honorables collègues de l'autre côté de la Chambre emboîteront les pas.

(Interruptions)

Il est bon de rappeler que suite à mon interpellation dans cette auguste Assemblée, il est devenu du domaine public que le *Leader* de mon ami, l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed, l'ancien Premier ministre, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, a effectué pas moins de 75 missions durant son mandat de neuf ans à la tête du gouvernement et cela a coûté à l'État la somme de R 206,411,584.17. R 77 m. en billets d'avions ; R 75 m. *per diem* ; *other allowances* R 5 m. ; *miscellaneous expenses* près de R 40 m. et tenez-vous bien *satellite costs* R 10 m. Je dis bien *satellite costs* – *ki ti pe guetter dan mission?* Il voyageait toujours avec son *baraat* sans oublier sa sœur et son beau-frère.

Comme on le dit, Madame la présidente, l'exemple vient toujours d'en haut. Savez-vous que notre actuel Premier ministre - qui s'assoit dans ma gauche - et *Leader* de l'Alliance Lepep, n'a pas encore effectué un seul voyage à l'étranger depuis le début de cette année! C'est ça l'exemple!

Dans la même foulée, Madame la présidente, suite à une autre interpellation parlementaire, nous avons appris l'ampleur d'un autre cas de gaspillage de fonds publics. Imaginez-vous, Madame la présidente, que sept voitures furent mises à la disposition de l'ancien Premier ministre, pour véhiculer son beau-frère, sa sœur, ses beaux-parents, sans compter les voitures officielles avec les services de la VIPSU mises à la disposition de ses petits copains tels que M. Geoffrey Cox, M. Andrew Scott et M. Laurent Obadia entre autres.

Madame la présidente, auriez-vous imaginé que la police mauricienne puisse être affectée à la surveillance des magasins de sa copine!

(Interruptions)

C'est de la classe!

(Interruptions)

J'allais dire: '*How do you call this?*' L'honorable Premier ministre a dit, « c'est de la classe!» *This is called 'putting people first'*

(Interruptions)

Et ils vont venir nous donner des leçons! Et sans oublier les nombreux feuillets à Trou aux Biches Hotel. *Si matelas ti conne cozer, ou ti pou conner ki passer!*

Je félicite chaleureusement l'honorable ministre des Finances...

(Interruptions)

....pour la décision de *merge* plusieurs corps paraétatiques. Il y a eu certes une prolifération des corps paraétatiques sous l'ancien régime. Vous imaginez, Madame la présidente, qu'il y a actuellement plus de 125 institutions paraétatiques à Maurice, et finalement on ne se sait même pas qui fait quoi dans ces institutions. Grâce à la vision de notre Premier ministre et la clairvoyance de notre ministre des Finances, plusieurs de ces institutions paraétatiques seront revues. Un ministère de la Bonne gouvernance et des Réformes institutionnelles, comme annoncé dans notre programme gouvernemental est devenu une réalité.

En parlant des réformes de la bonne gouvernance, je profite de cette occasion pour rendre hommage au Premier ministre et au ministre de tutelle, l'honorable Roshi Bhadain qui ont fait voter le *Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Bill*.

Madam Speaker, what was the Opposition not saying outside this House during the debates on the said Bill last year. Que les chauffeurs de taxi auraient à émettre un reçu pour chaque course effectuée, que les invités aux mariages devaient demander des reçus en échange des cadeaux d'argent.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No dialogue....

Mr Jhugroo : Madame la présidente, le *Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Agency* est déjà opérationnel. *Have we yet witnessed one single example of what the Opposition has been saying outside? No, Madam Speaker!* C'était de la pure démagogie. Madame la présidente, contrairement aux commentaires de l'opposition ici, j'ai reçu, durant ma récente mission officielle en Angleterre en compagnie de mon ami l'honorable Aadil Ameer Meea...

(Interruptions)

...des messages l'appréciation et de félicitations pour le vote de cette loi à l'île Maurice.

(Interruptions)

Les Anglais nous ont salués pour avoir eu le courage de venir de l'avant avec une telle législation.

Les mesures annoncées de *mergers* des plusieurs institutions, *whose mission and objectives tend to overlap* visent à rendre ces dernières plus efficaces et plus effectives afin d'offrir un meilleur service à la population dans son ensemble et les acteurs économiques en particulier.

Permettez-moi, Madame la présidente, d'aborder les sujets de la drogue. Malgré plusieurs questions adressées à l'ancien Premier ministre, Navin Ramgoolam, ce dernier n'eut jamais le courage ni la volonté d'instituer une commission d'enquête. Notre actuel Premier ministre qu'on a surnommé 'Rambo' très longtemps, n'a pas hésité un seul instant à instituer cette commission d'enquête et qui est en train de faire un travail remarquable. Et après avoir entendu ce qu'a dit mon ami, l'honorable Bhagwan, je connais la capacité de travailler de notre Premier ministre. Je crois qu'il va mettre de l'ordre dans plusieurs coins et recoins de ce pays.

Avec une société en pleine évolution, Madame la présidente, on a constaté plusieurs incidents dans plusieurs écoles. Les cas d'indiscipline au sein de nos institutions éducatives nous interpellent. Je suis d'avis qu'il faut permettre aux professeurs de maintenir l'ordre et la discipline comme c'était le cas dans le passé. *And I am for a multi-approach system* pour encadrer nos enfants et nos jeunes.

Madame la présidente, beaucoup pourrait être dit sur la manière dont le portefeuille des infrastructures publiques et du transport routier qui a été géré par le précédent régime,

notamment les tragiques accidents des autobus de la CNT, le *crash* du Ring Road, le scandale des fissures sur le Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road et plus récemment la NTA.

Cependant, je préfère mettre l'emphasis sur la réalisation et les projets de ce présent gouvernement. Bravo au ministre Nando Bodha pour le rude travail accompli en si peu de temps malgré le lourd héritage de l'ancien ministre.

Quel plaisir de voyager dans le nouveau bus plus confortable et facilement accessible aux personnes âgées, aux enfants et à ceux souffrant d'un handicap dans le bus de la CNT, Madame la présidente!

(Interruptions)

L'autoroute de Verdun redevient graduellement de plus en plus utilisable, bientôt le public pourra se rendre compte des avantages de la refonte et de la décentralisation des services d'examen technique de la NTA. Et dans ce sens, malheureusement le ministre n'est pas là. Je l'invite à accélérer le processus de transformation et à considérer favorablement la possibilité d'ouvrir d'autres centres de *fitness* car à ce jour, à Forest Side, les queues sont interminables et certaines personnes n'ont d'autre choix que de prendre un jour de congé pour le *fitness test*.

Gageons que dans un avenir très proche, les propriétaires de voitures passant le *fitness test* verront cela comme une obligation plaisante et non un stress, un stress qui par le passé a probablement été un facteur de passe-droits.

Avec le nombre grandissant de véhicules, le pays doit impérativement avoir une nouvelle vision du transport de masse. L'introduction du métro express sera la meilleure formule, Madame la présidente, pour décongestionner notre pays qui est en pleine expansion. Je suis d'avis que son tracé bien défini doit être étendu dans plusieurs villages et quartiers du pays, pour faciliter le déplacement de la population et par la même sera un *incentive to leave one's car at home and use public transport instead*.

Quant à nos routes, Madame la présidente, tout en remerciant l'honorable ministre des Finances pour avoir alloué R 30 millions pour le maintien du système de *street lighting* sur nos autoroutes, je souhaite ici proposer au gouvernement de venir de l'avant au plus vite avec un *sole authority* pour ce maintien. Nous avons ici même soulevé, à plusieurs reprises, la question de *lighting* sur nos *motorways* qui sont dans le noir depuis très longtemps et qui représente un danger potentiel pour les *road users*.

Madame la présidente, l'eau c'est la vie, and it is a fact that the supply of water in this country has for long been a pebble in the shoe for people in numerous regions. I, therefore, welcome the decision taken by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to inject some Rs3.4 billion in this Budget to address the problems in various regions of the island.

However, I make a plea in the name of the inhabitants of my Constituency Mahebourg/Plaine Magnien. This region, Madam Speaker, is suffering from acute and drastic water cuts all the year round due to distribution pipes that date back to colonial days. I am confident that my good friend, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, is hearing me and will do what needs to be done.

May I humbly suggest that the subsidies on the purchase of water tanks be extended to the purchase of rainwater harvesting system.

Tout en félicitant l'honorable ministre des Finances pour avoir prévu l'argent nécessaire à la construction et à la décentralisation des services médicaux spécialisés, j'aimerais que le gouvernement considère le cas de ce vieil hôpital de Mahebourg qui est dans un état délabré. J'ai même posé des questions parlementaires à ce sujet.

Si l'honorable ministre des Finances a aussi annoncé de nouvelles mesures pour la lutte contre le cancer - ce qui est un grand pas en avant car beaucoup de gens souffrent de cette maladie - j'aimerais suggérer au ministre que la mise sur pied d'un centre médical hautement spécialisé en cancer soit envisagé le plus tôt possible. L'apport de l'expertise étrangère dans ce domaine serait souhaitable.

J'exprime également le vœu que la mise sur pied d'un centre spécialisé en soins gériatriques soit matérialisée, car il est un fait indéniable que notre population vieillit, et nos aînés qui ont servi le pays méritent un meilleur traitement.

En parlant de nos aînés, je profite de cette occasion, Madame la présidente, pour rendre un hommage particulier à notre actuel Premier ministre qui a sacrifié sa vie, sa famille, pour l'avancement de ce pays depuis plusieurs années ; ce pays qui était au bord de la faillite en 1982. Et depuis, il a toujours répondu présent quand le pays a eu besoin de lui, et encore aujourd'hui. Merci, M. le Premier ministre.

Madame la présidente, comme j'ai mentionné au début de mon intervention, c'est un budget social qui cadre avec la vision du gouvernement, de mon parti, le MSM, et aussi celle de l'Alliance Lepep.

Je connais l'actuel ministre des Finances et du Développement économique, également mon leader depuis de nombreuses années, et je dois dire qu'il est quelqu'un qui a un très grand sens de réflexion avant de parler, qui ne zigzague jamais ; pas de 'On', pas de 'Off' avec lui. Il est quelqu'un qui tranche quand il le faut dans l'intérêt du pays, mais aussi quelqu'un avec qui le principe passe avant tout.

Le parcours politique du ministre des Finances et du Développement économique, jalonné de réalisations, tels que le VRS, le concept de *duty free island*, la réintroduction des mesures fiscales abolies par l'ancien ministre travailliste, Rama Sithanen, démontrent que la population peut toujours compter sur lui et avoir la confiance nécessaire *in his dedication and sound judgment*.

Rien ne pourra empêcher Pravind Jugnauth de devenir le prochain Premier ministre de ce pays, car il possède toutes les qualités requises en prônant l'unité nationale, et avec un cœur de patriote.

Madame la présidente, nous sommes là depuis 19 mois, mais nous avons été plébiscités par le peuple pour un mandat de cinq ans. Un mandat pour nettoyer, reconstruire cette île Maurice où il fera bon vivre, dans la modernité et la prospérité.

Madame la présidente, nous savons tous qu'un avocat doit être consommé *at the right moment*.

(Interruptions)

If too early...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Jhugroo:...ce sera très dur à consommer. *If too late*, ce sera un fruit pourri.

Le ministre des Finances et du Développement économique a, par sa perspicacité, compris que notre avocat - comprenez par là l'économie mauricienne - est à point. Mûr pour entamer *a new era of development*. *Now, it is the time*, Madame la présidente. Régalons-nous!

Merci.

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

At 4.34 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.11 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): Mr Deputy Speaker, if you allow me, I would like to refer to hon. Uteem's speech on the Budget of yesterday with regard to infrastructural development. I think there has been some misinterpretation of figures.

(Interruptions)

If a Ministry, let's say the Ministry of Public Utilities or Public Infrastructure, has a Budget of Rs300 m., and spends only Rs20 m. That does not mean there has been no progress in infrastructural development, because you have a tendering time for consultation, a tendering time for EPC and, at the end of the day, it takes 10 months to come up with a project. By that time, you are in another fiscal year. So, that's one reason.

Second reason, when you see that you paid only Rs20 m. for the construction of a road, for example. We talk about the Mare d'Albert Link Road to the airport, and it is Rs600 m., but you will see that only Rs10 m. or Rs20 m. has been disbursed. Why? Because it is 5 kilometres and today the contractor has completed only one kilometre. So, we pay according to progress of work. That's why you will see the figures small, but that does not mean that the work is not going on. So, I would like to reassure the hon. Member that infrastructure projects are on the go, but only at a natural pace.

(Interruptions)

Exactement!

Mr Deputy Speaker, last year's Budget focussed on the elderly. This year, it is for their children and their grandchildren. Furthermore, by giving different incentives to the Real Estate and Property Development, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is definitely giving a big boost to the construction industry, which was badly needed. Construction industry is the heart of economic development because when we have construction, it means you are giving - it is like a domino effect - jobs to the transport company, to the hardware shops, to everybody. They will end up with employment and money in, money out. It is the flow of cash. That's why we have to applaud this Budget for giving a big boost to the construction industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in line with the determination of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to fight corruption when it comes to public procurement and tendering process, I would like to make a suggestion to reinforce this policy. My suggestion is the constitution of a Technical Audit. What is a Technical Audit? It is a committee comprising of six to seven engineers of different fields: civil, chemical, electrical and so on, with good reputation. Now, what this committee will do? They will assess projects that have been completed, that have gone beyond their warranty period, three to five years after the warranty period. Why? Simply because in tender specification, there are time dependent parameters which only with time you can assess.

I will give two to three examples. For example, street lighting poles, what we see in the streets, on highways. They are supposed to be rust proof. Yet, you commission it, the project is finished, they get their money back, certification is issued, but after five or six years - which we can see right now on the highways - the poles get brown, rusted. So, in the specification, it is specified 20 years rust proof. So, how we follow these projects? This is how we need this Technical Audit.

I give another example. St Louis Power Station at Pailles. People now are protesting about noise, air pollution. Why? At the time of commissioning, everything was perfect, because it was a new engine. So, the contractor complied 100% with, suppose 50dB, but with time, after two/three years, the engine gets old and then the sound level gets higher. So, what we do in this situation? We penalise the contractor. We insist on new projects. For mega projects, we need a guarantee certificate, around 0.5% of the contract value, which will last for 10 years, because during that time, you have a time to assess if the contractor has performed correctly or wrongly.

Some of our hon. colleagues talked about monitoring Ministry, different Ministries' projects, Monitoring Committee, Steering Committee. Very good! But we have to think also after the completion of that project. Let us take the case of Melrose Prison; roof leaking! So, this is how the Minister of Finance and Economic Development can get extra revenue by cashing the Guarantee Certificate for these projects. It is you give me a certificate of 2% of the contract value and I will cash it. If you fail, if whatever criteria is in the specification which, at the time of commission, I could not check, now you pay. So, this is the point that is very important for the Technical Audit. I'll kindly request the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to give due consideration to this suggestion. It will improve our

method of procurement, public procurement, and also it will make sure that we get value for money from the contractors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have promised the people of Mauritius water supply 24 out of 7. We are working towards same.

(Interruptions)

The process of changing defective pipes is already on. I have witnessed some tenders on, some change of pipes are going on. This Budget caters for more change of defective pipes, but this is not sufficient. This is not sufficient. I deeply believe in the construction of a desalination plant. Our country badly needs a desalination plant, at least one, around 7 to 10,000 metre cube. Desalination means seawater to drinking water. So, we cannot rely on the caprices of nature. Today, we are having rainy water. Today, we are having a lot of rains, but tomorrow El Nino can affect us deeply. So, what we do? If we have a desalination plant, at least, we can cater for these severe conditions. Rodrigues is ahead of us. Rodrigues will have four desalination plants. They are already ahead of us. Now, what you do with your water in case the reservoir is full?

We do like the Israel, we do like the US, we do like the Moroccan, like Senegal, we stock the water hundred metres down the ground for future. This is vision, my friend! This is vision! We have to think ahead. We need this desalination. What is the cost of a desalination plant of around 10,000 metre cube? Rs300 m. only!

(Interruptions)

Sorry?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, hon. Jahangeer!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jahangeer: But...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Jahangeer: This desalination plant is a sustainable one. How? Because it will be powered by solar panels, photovoltaic; this means that, we are not spending money on the pumps and on the electricity costs, it will be only by nature.

(Interruptions)

As I said, at least in the case of severe drought we have something that people will appreciate. We do not have to depend every time on water cuts and all these things. We can also sell the water to the sugar industry, to agriculture and to the people who need water. So, it is a must. We have to come with a desalination plant because Mauritius is an island surrounded by water. We cannot suffer the caprices of nature and say that we cut the water today because we have no water. Come on man!

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 1720, Sir Edward Walpole designed the first Budget. But, at that time, it was based on taxation for wine and tobacco. But, today, the process of budgeting is very complex it is more than cash in cash out.

(Interruptions)

So, projects budgeted at 'X' amount and are paid at twice the amount will never happen with our Government, with *l'Alliance Lepep*! And, this kind of waste - the present Budget is so designed that the waste control is very important.

Moreover, we also have to avoid procurement of equipment that is not used at all. We know that certain equipment, whether it is in the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life or in other Ministries, had been bought in the previous years but they have never been used. Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to give a few striking examples of such projects still existing now.

In 1999, the CEB embarked on an ambitious project to upgrade its network from 66kv to 132kv at the cost of Rs240 m. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am referring in layman terms so that all hon. Members of this august Assembly can understand. The voltage you have in your house when you pick yours is only 230 Volts...

(Interruptions)

240! The one that you would hang out in the street and you get burnt is 22Kv and the one on the metallic tower that we see around the island is 66,000 Volts.

Why do we need to upgrade? It is very simple. If you plug in your computer, you will see that your adapter gets hot. The hotness is a loss of energy, loss of money. So, the same thing in our electrical network when we transfer power from one end to another, the cable gets heated so we lose a lot of energy and money. So, that is the reason they wanted to

upgrade, according to the World Bank's recommendation; at that time it was urgent to upgrade the network. But, so far, what has happened to the upgrading? You go at Pailles when you leave Port Louis during the night, you will see there is a tower to your right, and still there is no cable! This tower is 85 km across the island. This means it is lying there dormant and the process of upgrading has never happened! What happened to this process? And we are talking about the smart grid! This is where the smart grid should start. It is to upgrade the voltage. So, why this has not been done, so far, since 1999?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Jahangeer: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, everybody talks about poor water supply due to leaky pipes. One thing we ignore, however, is the metering system...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jahangeer: What is the metering system? For any utility it is the heart of rate. This is where the revenue comes from. If we do not meter properly we lose a hell of money. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you have the meter tender - it is all mechanical in your house by the way - the tender calls for a lifetime of 20 years for the water meters. Now, the water meter that is in your house or your parents' house is 30 years or more. So, how do we conciliate the lifetime of a metre? This means that the meter that is at your place is without value! It can give wrong reading...

(Interruptions)

Yes, this is very important. We can be at this stage; so far, we have not encountered it, but civil groups can take measures against the Public Utilities because of the defective water meters; because when we register a lost in the pipes, it is not only the pipes that are leaking it is also that the meters are defective. That is why I am requesting humbly to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to give us a financial package in his Budget to move from the mechanical meters to the electronic meters which cannot be tampered with by the way. You cannot tamper with the electronic meters and also it gives accurate results.

This change in technology, if we consider 300,000 subscribers, will amount to Rs300 m. only. So, I don't see it that big because you are going to have a modern water network and also you will reduce your losses in the network.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, this Budget caters for all walks of life. I must salute the bold measure of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to attempt to remove sugar from the daily intake of adults and children, thus, reducing the risks of diabetes and other health complications. I am grateful to have soon a swimming pool in Rivière des Anguilles, ...

(Interruptions)

...I would have preferred the Rivière des Anguilles Dam, which was part of our electoral manifesto. I would have preferred that!

(Interruptions)

Let me conclude,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No comments, hon. Ameer Meea. No comments, let the hon. Member speak!

Mr Jahangeer: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will conclude by congratulating the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for giving this Budget his *bénédiction*. But, what about the maestro, the financial engineer behind this Budget?

(Interruptions)

No one but hon. Pravind Jugnauth, and I thank him very much for getting us closer to our goal of *roti, kapda aur makaan* for all.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier!

(5.30 p.m.)

Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that this Budget presented by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Minister of

Finance and Economic Development, brings faith in himself, but also to all reasonable citizens of that country.

This Budget contains realistic and achievable goals, but I am much worried, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, about the attitude of the officers who will have to implement the decisions announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Unfortunately, we have witnessed so much, in these past months, of the attitude and bad faith of some officers since the last 20 months to deliver according to their responsibilities. I have in mind especially those from the NDU who are not helping the Government and the population. The PPSs are continuously complaining and the Citizens Advice Bureaux are not playing their role as they were in the past years.

(Interruptions)

Maybe!

We are in the month of August and the Finance Bill will not be voted before the end of August. So, Government will have only 10 months left to implement the contents proposed in this Budget. I hope the feel good factor installed in this country will not be only words at the end of this financial year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Management Rights Society, the Minister of Arts and Culture, despite all his efforts and good intention announced, it is only after 20 months that he finally informed the House that amendments to the Copyright Act will be introduced in this House this year, which means here again we have been waiting for two years to bring simple amendments to this Act, which was promised to the artists since the end of 2014. Again, I am sceptic and I hope that this year we shall debate on these amendments which are long overdue now.

I welcome the decision of the Minister to come with proper legislation to give to artists their appropriate status in the Republic of Mauritius. I hope this decision will be implemented within this financial year. Artists, especially of the musical industry, are having their creation used worldwide, but most of them are not being paid royalties from abroad due to non-implementation of our catalogue to be visible on the appropriate international database website. So, since years now, very few are having their royalties paid from abroad and they are only those who are registered with the SACEM, but the other sister societies around the world are not paying royalties to our local artists. We are paying royalties to abroad artists, but our artists are not receiving the international royalties.

Artists through the collection of royalties inland (Mauritius) are paying for the running costs of the Management Rights Society - which was the MASA in the past - to the tune of around Rs15 m. yearly and Government is only contributing a meagre amount which is around Rs1 m. yearly to the Management Rights Society. I hope that the hon. Minister will revise this grant upward side using the additional grant of Rs10 m. budgeted for this financial year. May I hope that this year our artists will receive a more rational grant from this Government for which they are fighting for since years now?

May I again request the Minister that while coming with amendments to the Copyright Act, to make sure that artists are rationally represented on the Board. Because last time this new legislation was brought, I mean the Copyright Act, unfortunately, we all noticed that the representation of artists on the Board has gone down considerably. Thus, making the voice of the artists less heard on the Board of the Management Rights Society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to pig breeders, I recently drew the attention of the hon. Minister of the difficulties of those in this industry. I know and I welcome that some efforts are being made actually to help the breeders. But regarding the quality of meat produced, I would like to come back on that issue. It is usually not to the market needs standard. I think Government should give to this industry the required equipment; equipment which is needed for the testing of live pigs in order to measure the contents of fats in the meat. This is being done next door in Reunion Island. I think we just can have a mission there. So many missions have been organised recently. We can have a mission there and see what are the mechanisms set and try to import those conditions here. I am sure that the Minister will agree with me that this will help this industry. We must give the proper training to the pig breeders. And why not subsidise the food that is produced locally! This will be a win-win situation for the Government and for the breeders. The breeders will recover their market share and Government will save currencies from importation cost and I am sure it will also bring additional employment in this industry. I am relying on the good faith of the hon. Minister to see to it that we give due attention to this sector during this financial year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the fisheries, I do not know why Government is hesitating in investing massively in this sector. Foreign fishing vessels are exploiting our exclusive economic zone since years now. They are making a lot of money from our natural resources, paying a meagre licence fee to the country. This situation is going on for years and years now. Government, in this Budget, only announced the purchasing of one vessel for research purposes. The fact is here. Others are making big money for themselves in our

territory and, according to me, there is no need for research. The facts are there, the foreign vessels are making a lot of money. So, I think we need to invest massively. We have to stop foreign vessel activities in our exclusive economic zone and conquer the international fish market. Who knows it can become our first economic pillar! This is what I feel. It can create growth, employment and wealth.

Concerning the fishers of Port Louis and Tombeau Bay, again, I draw the attention of Government to give due attention to these fishers. Actually, important development is ongoing in the port region and much more is to come in the future, especially in Constituency No. 1. I would like to make a request to Government to set a permanent consulting panel including all stakeholders to follow-up, monitor and compensate what need to be compensated for the damage it is causing and it will cause especially to fishers of the regions of Bain des Dames, Grand Rivière and the surrounding.

As regards the problem of illicit drugs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem is now around the island. I am surprised that the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has not given any particular consideration to this evil of our society despite all harms it is causing to youngsters from all quarters. I hope that the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will come to it while summing up the debate.

As hon. Rughoobur stated in the House, the situation is alarming and I will add that, for the first time, the problem today is island wise. I think we have to give special attention to this problem actually in this country. We cannot stay quiet. All our children are exposed to this evil. Whatever precautions we may take as responsible parents, the evil is here. So much harm is being caused to many families, I beg the Government to give due consideration to this problem. Our future generation is in great danger actually.

With regard to the SMEs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so many measures have been announced last year and so many others this year again. But the fact remains that access to financing and access to markets remain the two main obstacles for the development of SMEs. Many good intentions, many incentives, but with a rigid financing policy and a very timid marketing policy; how will this sector develop in the future? I put the question! It is not so easy if we do not tackle these two main problems. It is very difficult and Government is relying on the SMEs for job creation. So, let's cure the ills first. Remove barriers and obstacles, then the incentives will be helpful to one another.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank warmly hon. Pravind Jugnauth for the unprecedented efforts he is making for poverty alleviation and particularly for eradication of absolute poverty. Money is not the only problem. It is only part of the problem. These families need guidelines. These families need monitoring. These families need to be accompanied. *L'encadrement est aussi important, M. le président, et je voudrais pour terminer faire un pressant appel au gouvernement pour la réintroduction des travailleurs de rue, mais aussi pour la mise en place d'un organisme permanent pour faire le suivi de ces familles qui sont dans la pauvreté, absolute poverty comme on dit. Donc, j'espère que ce gouvernement means business. On pourra faire, au bout de l'année financière, le bilan et on saura si vraiment toutes ces bonnes intentions ont été traduites dans les faits. Je souhaite bonne chance au ministre des Finances.*

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Ramkaun !

(5.45 p.m.)

Mr S. Ramkaun (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for allowing me to address this august Assembly, proposing my views and opinions on the Budget for the financial year 2016-2017 presented by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, on 29 July 2016.

First of all, I have to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for having, in only a few weeks after having taken over this Ministry, worked hard together with the officers of the Ministry; for having read before this Assembly the bold decision in the 10 strategies which shall lead this country toward a new era of development.

This Budget has been widely commented by several financial institutions, economists, stakeholders, trade unionists and people at large as being one from a caring Government and taking into consideration all the factors leading to a sound economic growth. In fact, my views and opinions are those of a large majority of around 66,000 voters of Constituency No. 5, Pamplemousses-Triolet, where myself and my colleagues, fellow hon. Members of this august Assembly, hon. Callichurn and hon. Teeluckdharry, got elected in the December 2014 general election defeating even the Prime Minister of the previous Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my views and opinions reflect the actual state of mind of Constituency No. 5 at large. Since last Friday evening until late during the night, this has been the case until this morning. I have been receiving calls *à longueur de journée* requesting

me to convey messages to hon. Pravind Jugnauth for the outstanding Budget he presented for the betterment of the Mauritian people especially for the poor.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to share with all of you, here, present in the House, *une rencontre anodine que j'ai eue avec une dame de 63 ans* living at Petit Gamin, a suburb in Arsenal Village. It happened last Saturday morning; the lady came to see me at my place. We, elected Members of Constituency No. 5, are used to meet people every Wednesday at the Citizen Advice Bureau of Pamplemousses and Triolet, not to be part of the problems for our mandates, but to be part of the solutions to any grievances expressed to us. During the meeting with the lady at my place, she stated that she came to see me only to convey a message to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for all the measures announced in the Budget in favour of the poor people. She narrated to me that very often she had been out of stock of LPG in the middle of the month and she had to collect dry branches *pour faire bouillir la marmite familiale*. But with the price drop of the LPG she will be able to buy another one, thus she will not have to look for dry branches. Maybe, for the hon. Members of the House, it can be a kind of joke, but I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this was the bitter truth in some families in the villages of Mauritius. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have received thankful messages more than a hundred times coming from every corner of Pamplemousses and Triolet as far as the price drop of the LPG is concerned.

On Saturday 30 July, as we favour *une politique de proximité avec nos mandants*, accompanied by the hon. Minister Callichurn, we went to some functions to honour the invitations. There also, there were only words of satisfaction, of consideration in respect of hon. Pravind Jugnauth and for the Government led by Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development is being blessed by one and all for the “*magnifique*” job he did. *Comme un seul homme, la circonscription No. 5 est désormais derrière notre futur Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. Ces gens ont hâte de laisser derrière eux les années néfastes connues sous le règne du Parti travailliste et de Navinchandra Ramgoolam.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *la vérité est dure mais elle mérite d'être dite haut et fort*. The poor people will not have to consider themselves doomed because now they have a “messiah”

in the name of hon. Pravind Jugnauth to cater for the betterment of their everyday life. This is what has been done in the last Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Coming back to the ten strategies of this budget, entrepreneurs, employers, people of all the different social classes and particularly those down the ladder have been taken on board.

The strategies, be it jobseekers, modern entrepreneurs forging a new economic cycle focusing in innovation, boosting exports of existing businesses, private investment, moving towards a full-fledged digital society, fundamental reforms in business facilitation and expansion of economic horizon, building the infrastructure fits into the future, lifting the quality of life for one and all, addressing the root causes of poverty, launching major public reform programmes and lastly ensuring the macroeconomic stability and sound public finance; all these strategies have been clearly and boldly reengineered to cater for stronger economic performances and challenges on the social and environmental fronts.

I shall focus my views on only some of the key strategies. Addressing the root cause of poverty - it is not *“une fatalité”* to be poor, but there are measures *“à la pelle”* in this budget to help the poor *à faire face à l’avenir*. The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development *a pris le taureau par les cornes au bénéfice de ceux qui vivent au bas de l’échelle. L’histoire retiendra que seul l’honorable Pravind Jugnauth a eu le courage de venir avec un budget qui a fait pâlir ses plus féroces adversaires*. This Minister of Finance has much conviction to alleviate poverty and to bring a smile to all those who are at risk.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the price drop of the LPG, I would like to pinpoint some other measures courageously announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to show that *“les plus grands soi-disant humanistes auraient échoué là où l’honorable Pravind Jugnauth a réussi avec brio et de quelle manière!”* As far as alleviating poverty is concerned, I must insist that the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has left no stone unturned. *“La hausse de l’allocation de subsistance à partir du 01 décembre prochain, l’aide financière pour améliorer les performances éducatives, l’augmentation du montant pour les coupons et la possibilité pour les enfants en situation d’échec de reprendre gratuitement les examens de fin d’études secondaires”*, among other measures, show clearly that this Government wants to have an intelligent future generation. Opportunities are at the feet of the future generation to be able to face *“les aléas du futur”*. Only hon. Pravind Jugnauth had the guts as Finance Minister to take such decisions. But, Mr

Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's only "*les passéistes et ceux qui ont développé le comportement des oiseaux de mauvais augure qui ne verront que du mal dans ces mesures.*".

Increasing the monthly grant under the crèche voucher scheme for poor families from Rs1,500 to Rs2,000, meal allowances for students attending ZEP schools increased by 50%, i.e. from Rs40 to Rs60, are other measures to alleviate the burden of these vulnerable groups.

Under the housing policy of this Government, the construction of 800 housing units over the next three years shows the deep commitment of this Government to provide a decent shelter for the absolute poor. Rs1 billion for the construction of 1,900 housing units of up to 50 square metres each, on the 16 sites across the island and Rs155 m. for the rehabilitation programme of NHDC housing estates are other concrete measures for alleviating poverty.

The requests from several families not falling within the income limit for eligibility of obtaining a house from the NHDC for social housing scheme has also been considered, that is, raising the limit from Rs10,000 to Rs20,000. We have also come across many individuals who were facing tough and traumatising sale by levy experience and they shall now be relieved by this laudable measure of waiving all the arrears of interest on loans being contracted from the NHDC and the MHC Ltd. Many other measures reflect the commitment of this Government to support families in their effort to invest in construction and acquiring their residences.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know *qu'il n'y aura pas un développement sain sans une bonne fourniture d'eau*. In allocating Rs3.4 billion for a better water supply, the hon. Minister of Finance has shown that nothing as such under this chapter has been done by the previous Labour Government. The regions of Rivière du Rempart, Plaines des Roches and Roches Noires have long suffered from drastic water cuts due to lack of water or inadequate water networks coupled with major losses in the networks. The people of these regions were left so abandoned.

This Government means business. The CWA has confirmed that the design of the new network, drawings and tender documents are ready. Procurement procedures are already on for a project with an estimated cost of around Rs136 million. Similarly, the regions of Pereybere and Morcellement Swan have been provided with this service through water tankers for the last decade. In this millennium, such a situation is really unacceptable. Drawings and tender documents for this region are also ready. All existing pipe networks are

going to be replaced taking into consideration the forecast requirements for this region which have considerably developed in the recent past.

The SME sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is also a sector contributing 40 % of the GDP. This sector can be further reinvented to create business opportunities to the many young persons who in turn can provide employment to those in search of jobs.

The creation of a National SME Incubator Scheme is being welcomed. It will help our young entrepreneurs to show their skills and these people will be able to contribute in the financial success and development of the Mauritian nation. With such a measure, along with the idea of converting the DBM of Coromandel into an integrated SME Industrial Park, the hon. Minister of Finance is giving every opportunity to the young generation *de faire leurs preuves. Il n'y aura plus de place pour les paresseux et pour ceux qui veulent être des éternels assistés, une situation nourrie jadis par l'ancien régime.* Under this chapter, I would have failed in my endeavour if I did not give credit to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development who has put at the disposal of entrepreneurs financial avenues to help them. *A titre d'exemple, comment ne pas mentionner la facilité aux finances avec le prolongement du SME Financial Scheme*, the 8-year tax holiday in respect of business income to new enterprises set up by individuals and even co-operative societies qualifying under the scheme and registered with SMEDA and 4-year tax holiday for existing enterprises registered with SMEDA with an income of less than Rs10 m.

To promote modern production techniques in agriculture, for the first time, this Government is providing a pilot Agri-Business park at Highlands over an area of 100 acres. This will facilitate some 200 planters to undertake crop production under protected structures. This will also include facilitation of sales of their products in a common sales point provided within the parks.

SME Parks shall be constructed at Plaine Magnien and Vuillemin whereas the DBM industrial zone shall be converted into a modern integrated SME Industrial Park. The National SME Incubator Scheme which shall be provided with the aim of supporting and mentoring young entrepreneurs will involve a grant of Rs50 m. Furthermore, to improve access to finance, SME Financing Scheme will be continued for a further three years and which will be extended to individual entrepreneurs with the interest brought down from 7.4 per cent to 6.0 per cent.

All facilities for starting a new small business have been considered in these strategies. Permits, industrial park for housing businesses, technical support, mentoring, even leasing equipment, modernisation schemes, SME Capital Fund increased to Rs500 m. for equity or partnership with ongoing businesses. And also, line of credits to be used for providing factoring services to these businesses. With all these facilities provided, it is expected that many small businesses are created to cater for all those aiming to become the big businesses of tomorrow. The reintroduction of the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme will surely be *un plus* and same for the *comptoir spécial* at the DBM for the micro enterprises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, along with what I enumerated above, I am more than convinced that the suspension of the trade fee for licence of Rs5,000 or less for a period of three years will give an outstanding boost for Small and Medium Enterprises. This measure will relieve 20,000 small businesses for the district of Pamplemousses alone and will cost the Government some Rs14 m. annually. As I stated before, *pas de place pour les passésistes, les paresseux et les assistés. Ce gouvernement veut une nation laborieuse, saine, et le ministre des Finances a créé les conditions et l'atmosphère nécessaire pour le succès de ce secteur du SME.*

The unemployment problem is being also taken at heart by this Government, creating more job opportunities for our youth and women. It has never been considered by the previous Government as has been provided in this Budget. For better matching the skills and creating more jobs, this Government is enlisting 4000 persons under the Skills Development Programme for training of technical skills that is in high demand, 1,200 seafarers for cruise jobs and shipping companies, the scheme of 200 young engineers, training opportunities for pre-registration training as professional engineers, 2,000 employment under ZEP and filling 7,200 vacancies in the Civil Service are all bold measures to reduce unemployment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Considering other new policies to recruit some 7,000 people in a short term and some other 21,400 youth, men and women will be taken out of unemployment. Engineering the infrastructure that fits the future is another measure to make investment, raise productivity and reduce unemployment in the short term. Major projects like the new Mass Transit System with its network of urban terminals, Victoria Terminal on a BOT model basis, the Heritage City, the Road Decongestion Programme as well as the New Integrated Government

Clearance Centre in the Cargo Village plus a modern Control Tower are surely projects that will revamp the whole infrastructural setup of this island and creating job opportunities.

Our appreciation as Members of the National Assembly for Constituency No. 5 to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the construction of a long awaited new District Court in Pamplémousses and Souillac as well as the renovation of SSRN Hospital. The construction of a new Supreme Court Tower and upgrading and renovation of the New Court House, District Courts of Moka, Mahebourg, Rose Hill and Flacq are other projects which should have long been implemented.

Other major investments, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Road safety Strategy like the introduction of *Moto Ecole*, the construction of pavements, rehabilitation works for road shoulders, new handrails, restoring road markings and new signage as well as repairing the lighting along motorways have not been overlooked by this Government. This concerns the safety of road users and this Government won't leave any stone unturned for the safety of pedestrians, motorcyclists as well as vehicular traffic.

One last measure which I would like to address is the review of the National Development Unit and the 36 CABs offering the various services to the public at large. Surely, the National Development Unit is a major tool for developing both the urban as well as the rural areas. This Unit has to be ready for any intervention in cases of flooding, inundation, natural calamities and other infrastructural problems. This organisation has also to be re-engineered to intervene in such problems as a fast track basis and remedial measures cannot wait so long as has been the case of flooding at Fond du Sac, Rivière du Rempart, Grand' Baie and Pereybere. Ways and means have to be devised to avoid a second flooding in these areas as well as those other flood prone areas. Such remedial measures should be prompt.

As regards CABs which are also important tools for the Government led by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, had initiated in 1989 has not been given any boost to keep up the actual exigencies of the public. Same has to be revamped so that any request of information by this office, which is under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, be provided on a very fast track basis. Even if need be, desk officers be provided in each Ministry to provide information requested by the officers of the CABs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, caring as this Government led by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, there is none! This Government led by the Rt. hon. Prime

Minister and with hon. Pravind Jugnauth has left far behind those who used to call themselves protectors of the poor and the children of this country. Hon Pravind Jugnauth *a fait ce qu'aucun ministre des Finances n'aurait fait, en accordant une attention particulière aux enfants invalides. Ces derniers ne devront plus attendre qu'ils soufflent leur quinzième bougie pour recevoir une pension d'invalidité. En accordant cette attention particulière à ces enfants, le ministre des Finances a montré qu'il est fait d'un autre métal. Et comment ne pas souligner le lancement de cette bourse spéciale pour les enfants ayant des besoins spéciaux ?* In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is nothing more human than to see smile on the face of these needy children. Hats off to you hon. Pravind Jugnauth!

Concerning the measures announced for the other sectors, I am convinced, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the implementation of these measures will give birth to another Mauritius. We believe that we can make it and we will see to it that things will be done because *Lepep* is with us and we are with them. We believe in hard work and not in Macarena parties and bluff.

(Interruptions)

We will deliver!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, en guise de conclusion, j'ai ceci à dire à l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. Vous avez montré que vous êtes fait pour être leader d'un grand parti comme le MSM. Vous avez les qualités requises. Vous avez la conscience claire. Pour vous, la sincérité, le sens des responsabilités et la reconnaissance n'ont pas de bornes. Laissons certains self-proclaimed leaders, leaders politiques patauger dans la boue à leur sale besogne. Ils ont été là une décennie durant et jamais ils n'ont connu une acclamation populaire comme vous l'avez connu depuis vendredi dernier. La circonscription No. 5 est désormais derrière vous, et elle vous soutient à 100%. Elle a déchiré du cahier de sa vie et a jeté à la poubelle les pages des années vécues sous le règne du Parti travailliste. La circonscription No. 5 vit désormais l'ère Pravind Jugnauth, qui, je dois dire, est soutenu par le Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Pamplemousses/Triolet est confiant et est avec vous. Elle renaîtra de ses cendres, et le pays arrivera à bon port.

I would like to thank you all for your kind attention. Let us force together our future slowly but surely, with serenity.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksing!

(6.12 p.m.)

Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to give my views on the Budget 2016/2017. On the very outset, allow me to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance who, in a very limited time, prepared his Budget. He made sure that no stone remain unturned. Budget 2016/2017 will pave the way forward for the Mauritius economy.

La marge de manœuvre was also limited as the world economic situation is difficult, especially into main markets. Europe is in turmoil, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, facing challenges with the migrant crisis. And who does not know about Brexit! China is experiencing a slowdown in growth. Our economy has known major changes since the past decades. We do not depend upon one sector only, but each sector has its own importance. And here, there are some few who pretend to be *les plus grands argentiers du monde* who come to challenge this Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget caters for everyone. Name it, you get it; from the cradle to the coffin, from the toy to the Metro Express. The poor and the vulnerable, of course, but also schoolchildren, young graduates, taxpayers with an increase in their threshold. High representatives of the private sector have expressed their satisfaction talking about the feel good factor. Even some Members of the Opposition have given their favourable views.

(Interruptions)

Surprisingly, *intéressant, comme vous le dites honorable!*

Indeed, for 20 months, nothing seems to be good, and suddenly everything seems to be fine. I was expecting today to find one of my idols, hon. Bhagwan, to be like the bulldozer, come and challenge the Budget, *mais je suis restée sur ma faim.*

(Interruptions)

Even hon. Barbier was very positive.

At this stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like here itself to react on some comments that I heard on hon. Wong. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Wong is holding two Ministerial portfolios and is excelling very well. I am not going to get into polemics, but one very vivid example is the way he handled the case of MV Benita.

In Mauritius, the major issue is to revamp the economy and give full confidence to economic stakeholders. We can keep on talking and discussing about means and ways of different financing models. We can talk about GDP, growth rate and deficit, but concrete things come up when the feel good factor is acquired.

Coming directly to some main measures announced in the Budget, the Minister of Finance said it boldly that this Government will act urgently and directly to eradicate absolute poverty. The fight against poverty is one of the priorities of this Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am personally proud that hon. Xavier-Luc Duval was the first Minister of Social Integration and that he has paved the way for the eradication of absolute poverty which is today one of the main objectives in this Budget.

Concrete measures have been announced, including a variety of programmes and actions to assist and empower poor families. I am sure that all of us in this Assembly, in our specific constituencies, have come across cases of families living in absolute poverty. The new scheme under which every adult on the Social Register will be entitled to a monthly allowance, based on a minimum average of Rs2,720, with a maximum average of Rs9,520 for a family of two adults and three children, is most welcome. We are relieved to note that the Marshall Plan will at last be implemented, and this was long overdue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is a list of measures in the Budget for eradicating poverty, and I am sure if they are well implemented the outcome will be successful.

Another important chapter of this Budget is education. A lot has been said in this Budget about education, and rightly so, because education is the gateway to success. A sum of Rs16.1 billion has been earmarked for the Ministry of Education, and this shows the seriousness of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are some measures which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Xavier-Luc Duval, took when he was Minister of Finance and that now we can see the actual Minister of Finance has taken forward to. In this Budget, there are some 21 measures which reflect the same philosophy of both hon. Xavier Duval and the actual Minister of Finance. This shows that great brains have common visions too.

The provision made for the nine-year continuous basic education, initially known as the Nine-Year Schooling Programme, is another measure that hon. Duval introduced, that we must all be proud of and are satisfied of, and which this Government is implementing. This measure and other fundamental reforms will bring a holistic approach towards children and

education. A lot of stress on children and their parents will be eliminated with the nine-year schooling. It will be a major breakthrough in our system. Another measure, which rejoices many parents, is the complete abolition of SC and HSC fees. Students from poor families will be awarded a cash prize to achieve higher education, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hard things are put in our way not to stop us, but to call for our courage and strength. This Government knows that vulnerable people have to get their chances too in life. And it is this Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. P. Jugnauth, who has removed age discrimination concerning the Basic Invalidity Pension. There will be special scholarships scheme for disabled students and appropriate measures will be taken to include the needy children in the 9-year schooling. These measures will come as a blessing for these children. A good health system makes a better nation. The sum of Rs10.9 billion which has been earmarked for the Ministry of Health shows another commitment of this Government. It shows that this Government cares for its nation. With the openings of new hospitals, renovations, extensions, setting up of new units, recruitment of personnel, our health sector will not be under artificial ventilation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this Budget says a lot about decent housing. The concept of supporting families in their efforts to invest in construction and acquiring their residences will become true with all the measures taken in this Budget concerning the Housing Schemes. Technology is another key element in this Budget. We are talking about Mauritius 2.0. This Budget is paving the way to a full-fledged digital society. This Budget is an SME friendly one and caters to reform our business sector. Our Minister of Finance and Economic Development clearly understood that due to bureaucracy and regulations constraints, many businesses have suffered and investors were reluctant to invest.

Measures like the National SME Incubator Scheme, the 8-Year Tax Holiday in respect of business income is being extended to new enterprises. Suspension for payment of Trade Fee Licences of Rs5,000 and below will definitely benefit to new businesses and for 75,000 existing business enterprises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another key element of this Budget is job opportunities. Unemployment is a very pertinent issue. One thing that seems clear is that unemployment in Mauritius is under control with a rate which is decreasing in 2016. Job creation is a major issue which is at the centre of Government's policy. With the accent of youth and the great achievement at the level of the Youth Employment Programme, around 16,000 young

graduates have been successfully integrated, of which 44% have a permanent job and, as per this Budget, some 21,400 youth, men and women, will be taken on board and will be out of unemployment. What else do we need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

I have elaborated on many big projects which, as per my opinion, will focus on our vision 2030, but also there are those regular simple measures that have been taken care of in this Budget, will ease the life of so many citizens. I am not going to list them all; they are all there in the Budget. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for once, has been in a very clear, simple and explicit language. It does not contain technical speeches, which are sometimes confusing and understood by only few people.

I was overwhelmed that an Embassy will be opened in Saudia Arabia soon and a Consulate in Jeddah and Reunion Island too. Several councillors will be recruited for economic matters in few countries. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, diplomatic relations are very important. In the same context, I would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, if he could consider opening a Consulate in Italy where there is a Mauritian diaspora. Having been there myself on a private visit some months back, I could see the pain of those Mauritians who are working hard over there. I was told that there are Mauritians who are taking foreign nationalities due to lack of support. I am sure this will not leave our hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development insensible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are all talking about matters that are very close to our heart and, today, I will speak my heart about my constituency. My focus will be my constituency, Curepipe/Midlands. Our constituency, Curepipe/Midlands, with some more than 68,000 people is a landmark. It links the south to the north. It is the centre point of the country. Curepipe is, no doubt, full of talents, potentials and it has led the way in the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We can all relate to that beautiful town at the time of Sir Gaëtan Duval. Curepipe has its own ambition to be grand once again. Today, thousands of people cross this town every day. As I said, it links the south to the north. It is a town which has a high number of schools and institutions. It is a town with its own style due to the climatic weather. One of the two botanical gardens of the country is found over there. We have the Trou aux Cerfs crater. We have a very nice Carnegie Library. Almost all tourists visit the town during their sightseeing. But, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with time, Curepipe, known as the '*Ville de Lumière*' has been dim to off. Almost 20 years in the hands of the Opposition, nothing was done. And today, with yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and hon. Toussaint, we are striving hard to meet the requirements of our mandates who have a lot

of faith in this Government. And it is with great pleasure, indeed, that we learned in this Budget that the ex-Dubreuil Tea Factory will be re-opened and a tea nursery will be established at La Brasserie. These will definitely create direct and indirect jobs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the metro express will start from Curepipe. A new Radar Tower Building with an Exhibition Hall for the public will be constructed at Trou aux Cerfs. The replacement of water pipes are there, but what Curepipe needs is a relooking - a relooking being a landmark – as it is a town where thousands of people, including tourists come. The Jan Palach main bus stand does not make any sense now. And here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to add that we have a very dedicated Minister of Public Infrastructure, hon. Bodha, who keeps an eye on us from time to time.

(Interruptions)

I take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir – because it is not often – to thank the hon. Minister for his outstanding support that he is giving to the three of us in Curepipe. He has already understood the importance of this place and why we should turn Curepipe into a modern urban terminal just like the model of Port Louis under the BOT.

Situated in a strategic location, Curepipe/Midlands has the full right to progress. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a pool of talents in Curepipe/Midlands, including artistic, sporting, and entrepreneurial, and other talents that Mauritius as a whole can, of course, benefit. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what you sow in Curepipe you reap. It is a majestic place with ambitions, of having a sport academy, a theatre, a business park, a museum, SME incubators, swimming pool but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reality we still do not have a synthetic track for our athletes in Curepipe. There are many athletes in Curepipe. I am sure the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports will agree - and athletes of national level, but, unfortunately, there is a lack of proper infrastructure. Minister of Youth and Sports say that the National Olympic swimming pool will be constructed in Saint Pierre as Saint Pierre is found in the centre. But, as per my geography, Curepipe is more in the centre point. As the name itself says ‘Midlands’. Minister will put all his efforts to support us.

(Interruptions)

Thank you. This is what we wanted. It is a must for the inhabitants. I am very much convinced, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is only this Government, the Government of *Lepep* with the Finance Minister of such a calibre and of such a vision can make these things happen. If it is not now, it will be never. We cannot trust others.

There are so many proposals which I know, like big projects, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there should be a start somewhere. I make an appeal to all my hon. colleagues, with some determination and willpower, let us together give some light to Curepipe again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot end my speech if I do not greet and thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who has been there all throughout and has helped in making such a genuine Budget.

The commitment of *l'Alliance Lepep* is found in this whole Budget which, as I mentioned, is very clear and explicit, understood by everyone.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget is in a spirit of frankness, both our challenges and the opportunity to turn our economy's direction towards hope, confidence and a better future for all. Let us unite as a team, sharing our skills and resources, building social solidarity, defending the institutions of our democracy and developing our economy inclusively to bring a new era of development.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Tarolah!

(6.34 p.m.)

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is with deep sense of pride and satisfaction that I rise in this august Assembly to speak on the Budget 2016-2017 which the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, has presented to the House and to the nation on 29 July 2016.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to congratulate hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and the whole team of his Ministry as well as everyone who contributed in the preparation of this long-awaited Budget and the great job realised to the satisfaction of the nation.

The credit also goes to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who had started the consultations of the Budget 2016-2017 and which were finalised by hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

We can easily recall that the date of 06 July 2016 was announced for the presentation of the 2016-2017 Budget, but was finally fixed for 29 July 2016 as the task of managing the finances of the nation and steering the economic development of our country was entrusted to

hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and, obviously, no doubt this Budget bears out the determination in living up to the trust that has been put to him.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said earlier a deep sense of satisfaction because it reminds me of the days during the electoral campaign when we announced the creation of the second miracle as a major theme. The electorate gave us a clear mandate to clean up the mess and give our country a fresh start. And the result is in front of us. The light of hope is brighter today and a new era of development has paved its way, a big thanks to hon. Pravind Jugnauth.

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. That is where the choice of coming on top, moving forward and up has been applied.

This is where hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth chose to break with the past that has stifled development for the last decade and see the future in a new light which hon. Ramful could not get it right.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us not forget the introduction of nine years continuous basic education until the elimination of the CPE examination as from 2017. This is a long-awaited reform in the education sector and today this reform is being materialised due to the vision and determination of this Government. So, it is better that hon. Ramful be fair and partial rather than mixing up personal issues. It is the wish of this Government to give equal opportunity to each and every child of this country access to education. I do hope that hon. Ramful would have had advised his dear friends, the former Ministers of Education who were from his constituency, but who had failed to bring such an important reform in the education sector in order to alleviate the burden of once called 'the rat race' at the level of Standard VI.

Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not only, on this side of the House, but all the stakeholders are proud of the task taken up by the hon. Minister, Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, who is handling alone the Ministry which was once driven by two Ministers of the Ramgoolam Government.

I wish also to point out that thanks to the initiatives and measures taken by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to give cash awards to encourage the students coming from the poor families to further improve in their studies so as to be able to

get a job, be it in the public as well as the private sector rather than waiting their name to appear on the list of the famous local DSK.

There are risks and uncertainties at the global level, if we do not choose an alternative path, more and more families will be left outside the mainstream, poverty will keep on rising and income inequality will widen further. If we continue with business as usual, we will be perpetuating the decay of our environment and quality of life.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, to make the hard choices and put our country on the right path ahead, major changes are required in the way things are done as well as the things we do. *On peut le dire haut et fort*, on this side of the House, that we totally agree to the statement 27 on page 3 of the Budget Speech 2016-2017. I quote –

“Where we have to be bold we must be bold.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ten key strategies as elaborated by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development cater for the new era of development. The empowering of more and more of our citizens to become entrepreneurs to have a wider participation and better sharing of the wealth we create as a nation.

The measures taken in the Budget 2016-2017 will benefit, broaden the fiscal incentive to new and existing businesses which will address the need to take the country safely through the crisis which the world keeps changing and we must adapt. Every sector of the economy is having its own specificities and we are doing things differently, we give maximum support to the SMEs. It is a revolutionary measure that addresses both access to and cost of finance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, dealing with the root causes of poverty, this Budget is concretely launching the Marshall Plan against Poverty, a major innovative approach in dealing with the problem of poverty. This Government through the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has decided to go for a more direct approach in extending support to the very poor families leaving in conditions of absolute poverty by acting urgently and directly. The support will be comprehensive, designed to lift in a meaningful way, living conditions and quality of life of those unfortunate families; in other words, this historic measure will eradicate absolute poverty in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there must be an abiding commitment to the values of our society: compassion, kindness and generosity. These values will be the cornerstone of our actions to eradicate absolute poverty, to support families who live at the margin and to pull up all those whose life is grounded in poverty and trapped at the lower rung. This Budget

aims to empower these families to break away from the poverty cycle and stand on their own feet. It is not only a problem of material well-being but human dignity as well on improving educational achievements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to encourage students from poor families to achieve higher levels of education, Government will give them a cash award for successfully completing the grade 9 level, the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate or equivalent technical qualification. A second chance will be given to students from poor families for exam re-sit at the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate levels. Their examination fees will be borne by Government. This Government has managed the economy not only for growth but also for uplifting the life of every citizen and a better life for all our citizens.

One of the key metrics of our success in achieving growth for the greater good will be the narrowing of the gap between the rich and the poor. Mauritius has reached a stage of its development that we need to push it forward and not pull it down.

M. le président, il ne faut pas oublier que, dans notre budget 2015-2016, nous avons soulagé le fardeau du peuple dès les premiers jours de l'installation de ce gouvernement suivant les dernières élections générales en augmentant la pension de vieillesse, la pension des veuves et des invalides à R 5,000. Nous avons mis –

- R 9 milliards de revenus additionnels pour les familles sur la pension et la compensation salariale ;
- R 200 millions d'économie sur les factures d'eau ;
- R 310 millions de subsides pour le SC et la HSC ;
- R 240 millions pour les jeunes diplômés chômeurs ;
- R 340 millions pour les petits planteurs ;
- R 250 millions de dons pour les familles à faibles revenus pour couler la dalle ;
- R 85 millions d'économie sur les SMS.

Voilà, M. le président, quelques exemples pour démontrer comment nous avons amélioré le pouvoir d'achat des familles de façon conséquente. C'est un effort colossal et nous en sommes fiers, parce que nous croyons dans un socialisme à visage humain dans la justice sociale et dans le partage équitable du gâteau national. Le prix du gaz a connu une baisse conséquente. Nous sommes plus que jamais un gouvernement du peuple qui travaille

pour le peuple et qui est avec le peuple. Les Mauriciens savent que nous tenons à cœur leurs intérêts et c'est la raison pour laquelle ils continuent à nous soutenir massivement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is now abundantly clear that, following the presentation of the Budget, we are at the dawn of a new era which sets the path for sustained, equitable and all inclusive economic prosperity for our country. We shall, of course, leave no stone unturned in our resolve to ensure that we serve the people; not only those who have put their trust in this Government, but the whole nation and to create a truly smart Mauritius where the welfare of the nation will be at the very centre of every action we take.

This Budget contains a good mix of seemingly development measures that could restore confidence and social justice through a series of measures to further better our welfare system. The effect of this approach is the feel-good factor, a necessary condition in creating a climate of social stability and an enabling environment for investment which will create a new mindset in Mauritius, a different mindset for the adoption of new technologies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget provides some major projects in our regions which are in the Public Sector Investment Programme such as the Bel Air Mediclinic which will cater for more than 50,000 inhabitants in the East and South East regions of our country. On the same line, the Pont Lardier Water Treatment Plant is one of the long awaited solutions to the water supply in the East and South East regions of our country.

In line with the commitment to support and to lift families out of poverty, at Unité, Sebastopol, Camp de Masque and Melrose, more than 500 housing units will be constructed to allocate a decent shelter just to mention a few of them but rather these projects will definitely allow the Constituency No. 10 to be on the same level of development together with the country. Therefore, let us all work together, hand in hand, to achieve our destiny.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will further add that every Mauritian is proud of you, hon. Pravind Jugnauth. Let me, therefore, congratulate and thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, our leader, leader of the MSM Party, the same party which was once called the small party in this very august Assembly but today, I wish to pass on this kind of information to the hon. Member who is not here, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, *que la roue a tourné* and he is very well aware that the same small party is actually the locomotive of this *Alliance Lepep* as well as this Government.

Before I conclude it will be very unfair if I would not comment on the matter where the Minister of Finance and Economic Development with great pleasure announced the setting up of not only an embassy in Riyadh but also a consulate in Jeddah.

Hon. Pravind Jugnauth had proudly honoured the commitment taken by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, during the electoral campaign in December 2014 which reminds me of what the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Showkutally Soodhun, who is not here, usually states and I quote –

‘Pran jaye par vachan na jaye’

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me on behalf of everyone who will visit Saudi Arabia and especially those going to perform Hajj to thank hon. Pravind Jugnauth and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for their noble consideration.

Furthermore, I would like to ask hon. Uteem, who is not here, to, at least, salute with due respect the effort made by the Vice-Prime Minister hon. Showkutally Soodhun instead of just criticising. Allow me to wish the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Showkutally Soodhun, a quick recovery from his illness.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, has displayed an avant-garde mindset and a very dedicated and innovative approach to give our country a new hope for a better future and the Budget has enunciated many bold measures that lay the foundation for the second economic miracle that is well cherished by our hon. Prime Minister.

With these words, I thank you for your attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Monty!

(6.50 p.m.)

Mrs M. C. Monty (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): I would like, first of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to thank you for allowing me to intervene on this present budget and to extend my warmest congratulations to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his Budget Speech delivered, I must say, in a most relaxed atmosphere as the tone was set right at the start.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance made it clear that we are really starting a new era and a special way to look at the whole nation in all its needs and at the country in its need for sustained development and change. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if Budget Speeches have for long been *un grand oral* understood by a rare few, this time after more than two hours of delivery, a meeting was held to reach out to the others and the budgetary measures explained in our mother tongue. I wish, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to congratulate again the hon. Minister of Finance for having chosen to tread on a new road for having made those first steps on the avenue of newness and for having opened the gates of hope and change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government wants to positively leave its imprint in the political history of this country. We have been elected to work for the continuous development of our motherland and its people. The Government, through the Ministry of Finance, wishes to prove that it does not only want its nation to be in a high state of development, but together with the poor and the needy, with its inspired and motivated youth, being guided towards success through learning, help them grow and develop their talents in fields that will better serve the country.

This vision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not a blurred one. Our society needs its youth to meet all the exigencies of a modern Mauritius. Through this budget, a clear signal has been given: **NO MORE MISMATCH**. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this present budget covers numerous fields from green and blue economy, to a fully-fledged digital society, from new tourist attractions to small and medium enterprises with a National SME Incubator Scheme, from road security to rethinking of energy supply, from bio-agriculture to poverty alleviation, to name but a few. No stone has been left unturned and new avenues of hope opened.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if “Development is about transforming the lives of people and not just transforming economies”, as rightly pointed out by Joseph Stiglitz in his book ‘Globalisation Work’, the hon. Minister of Finance would have successfully woven the tapestry of change with the necessary colours and threads. In the conception of this budget, a new beginning had to be envisioned, *en rupture avec un passé lourd de stagnation et non avec la réalité telle que ce budget a été lourdement et négativement commenté*. We needed to shake off the dust, if not remove the sticky mud of the past to be able to move from a state of high decay to a new state of wellness and development. It was necessary to wear new lenses and have the necessary paradigm shift to envision a better future for our country and its people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has proved that this Government ‘builds with the mind’ and also ‘creates with the heart’, as Criss Jami rightly said. We only have to look at the different measures proposed to alleviate poverty: it is clearly seen that a reassessment of all those at the lower rung of the social ladder has been made to better respond to the needs of the poorest and to the most needy. This Government does no longer want its people to live under absolute poverty and the financial threshold for the benefit of allocation has been positively reviewed. The measures concerning poverty alleviation go even to the pre-primary sector where Government help increases by Rs500 in favour of young children in need. I highly appreciate the fact that the same spirit of care to our infant is maintained. We will recall that hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, the then Minister of Social Integration decided to set up *les crèches* in various deprived areas of our country, thereby helping working mothers and favouring social integration of our young children.

Toutefois, je souhaite que la petite enfance reçoive plus d’attention et je fais un appel à la ministre de l’Education pour que la puériculture, jusqu’ici enfant pauvre du vaste chantier d’éducation, reçoive surtout et aussi toute l’attention nécessaire. Nos jeunes ne sont pas généralement attirés par ce premier stage au niveau de l’éducation et le nombre de puéricultrices dans la panoplie de service à la petite enfance reste toujours insuffisant et se fait de plus en plus vieillissant. Des mesures incitatives et motivantes pourraient mieux attirer les jeunes vers cette première étape dans l’éducation de nos enfants sur qui repose notre société de demain.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another measure which I would like to mention is the extended School Feeding Programme to meet the needs of our youngsters in ZEP schools. However, students needing food are not found only in ZEP schools and those coming from the ZEP schools do not disappear from our educational fields when they finish the primary cycle. Their needs do not change, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when they make the leap to secondary education. They still come from the same family background and often from the same deprived area. But it is also a sad and unknown reality that many secondary students come to school with empty stomachs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not the region that should necessarily determine entitlement for age benefit. For example, if a child is driven to a ZEP school in a BMW, does he really need assistance? That is the question. Regions do not necessarily determine eligibility for help or assistance though it may generally be the case. A child in a star school in Quatre Bornes, for example, may be coming to school with an empty stomach. Surveys

will definitely help to identify hardship cases and my plea to both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education is to have a special eye for those unknown children in their covert needs. We cannot imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a blooming Mauritius, a smart Mauritius with all facilities and help given to its people and where the needs of the most needy students are not ignored completely because unknown.

M. le président, dans la sagesse des décisions prises, ce budget vient éclairer ce souci bien pesé qu'aucun développement économique ne pourrait se faire sans le développement humain. Offrir un éventail de possibilités, favoriser le développement des aptitudes techniques, accompagner les parents dans leurs difficultés économiques, les aider encore plus au niveau de l'éducation de leur enfants, en prenant en charge les frais d'examens de fin d'études secondaires vient motiver le parent à permettre à son enfant de poursuivre ses études.

C'est une mesure qui vient soutenir le parent à un moment décisif dans son parcours parental et dans une période financièrement difficile où il faut encourir les frais d'examen. Vient ensuite une mesure que je salue particulièrement, étant témoin, du degré de désintéressement que peuvent atteindre certains étudiants faute d'encouragement et d'encadrement familial : celle de la prime financière offerte aux jeunes, à tous les démunis qui seront fortement récompensés s'ils fournissent les efforts nécessaires pour atteindre un certificat de fin d'étude au niveau, d'abord, du Grade 9, et ensuite au niveau du SC et du HSC. Quoi de plus motivant, M. le président!

J'accueille aussi favorablement ces mesures visant à alléger la pauvreté car elle soulagera ceux qui se trouvent au bas de l'échelle et aussi les mandants de ma circonscription qui en bénéficieront également.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bringing technology to the doorstep of knowledge and allowing young children to benefit from the use of tablets at an early age, is a most laudable initiative. Nevertheless, educators must try to find ways and means to provide more interaction among our young children and activities should be rendered compulsory so as to avoid the risk of our children developing too much individualism.

M. le président, nos enfants ont souffert d'un système trop élitiste, trop académique ; le côté technique, s'il a été introduit aussi, a laissé nos enfants sur le pavé après leurs trois années à l'IVTB, étant nettement insuffisant comme formation. Le volet technique prendra, certes, un nouvel élan certain, un meilleur statut avec l'introduction du *nine-year schooling*.

However, our educational system has for long been too academic or technical and now we should cater for multiple intelligences. We have many born artists in schools, even though we do not want illiterate artists, our nation itself is highly literate, bilingual or multilingual. Multi-talented artists will now have to be encouraged and supported in the development of their talents.

Nos mœurs ont besoin d'être adoucies, M. le président, par la musique. Nous avons besoin de nous occuper de la santé sociale, psychologique et culturelle de nos enfants. Le ministère de l'environnement, des administrations régionales, du tourisme, des arts et de la culture peuvent ensemble apporter cette différence et faire que nos enfants arrêtent de ne regarder que du béton.

M. le président, je faillirai à ma tâche en tant que rare parlementaire femme de cette assemblée, si je ne mentionne pas ce que propose l'honorable ministre des finances en ce qui concerne la place devant être accordée à une femme au sein du conseil d'administration de toutes compagnies publiques listées en bourse, de la mise en place d'un *Parliamentary Gender Caucus*, le premier en son genre, et la provision faite à cinq ministères importants pour effectuer des analyses sur le genre par rapport au service offert tout en élaborant des réponses politiques. De plus, un indice sur le développement du genre sera introduit pour mieux évaluer le progrès en ce qui concerne l'égalité à ce sujet.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government means business and intends to fix many areas of different legislations that need to be closely analysed and amended accordingly. The numerous Acts to be reviewed during this financial year clearly specify the decision to bring change, to plug loopholes and translate into reality this new era of development; another proof that we are not at all *en rupture avec la réalité*, but we really want to better serve the nation and better suit the needs of our present and near future and better fit the exigencies of our time.

To end my speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to quote Brooke Foss Westcott who said -

“Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards; they simply unveil them to the eyes of men.”

And this Budget presentation has been that occasion for the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. May he be thanked for having turned on the ignition key for a safer, more inclusive and brighter Mauritius.

On these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to leave the floor. I thank you and wish to extend my thanks to all the hon. Members of this august Assembly for their kind attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Boissézon!

(7.06 p.m.)

Mr E. Boissézon (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Merci M. le président, de me permettre d'intervenir lors des débats du *Appropriation (2016-2017) Bill 2016*. D'emblée, je féliciterai l'honorable ministre des finances pour la présentation du budget 2016-2017 acclamé par tous.

Nous avons l'habitude de citer des personnes connues, des sommités mais aujourd'hui je citerai A. M., une dame retraitée, âgée de 55 ans, interrogée par le quotidien 'l'Express'. Et elle a cela à dire –

« C'est un budget qui apporte de bonnes nouvelles. Je suis contente de l'annonce de la baisse du prix de gaz ménager, des facilités pour les citernes d'eau et les mesures pour les handicapés et les enfants défavorisés. »

M. le président, au cours de son intervention lors des débats relatifs à la présentation du budget 2015-2016, le leader de l'opposition a terminé son allocution avec une prophétie apocalyptique pour le pays en ajoutant –

« (...) mon intime conviction est que le pays ne s'en sortira qu'avec un gouvernement qui parle un langage de vérité à la population et qui prenne avec lucidité et courage et dans autant de consensus que possible des décisions parfois difficiles qu'il faut prendre, mais indispensables pour permettre au pays de prendre un nouveau départ et de donner un nouveau souffle à la croissance et à la création d'emplois. »

M. le président, l'honorable ministre de finances a pris son temps pour écouter les différents composants de l'économie mauricienne, les ONG, les syndicats, la mauricienne et le mauricien, et tout un chacun est content aujourd'hui d'avoir été écouté.

A la Pierre Mendès France, il a utilisé un langage de vérité économique pour parler à la nation. Il a bien fait comprendre à la nation que nous étions dans une impasse économique et qu'il fallait se réinventer pour pouvoir s'adapter aux conditions économiques internes et externes pas toujours glorifiantes. Cela ne l'a pas empêché de préconiser des mesures

courageuses avec beaucoup d'accent pour le social, une volonté profonde d'éradiquer la pauvreté.

Aujourd'hui nous redonnons espoir à tous les mauriciens. Nous mettons en œuvre un plan à long terme qui repose sur des investissements judicieux et sur une conviction inébranlable selon laquelle il est possible de réaliser des progrès pour faire de Maurice une République à la grandeur de ses ambitions, soit un *high income economy nation*.

M. le président, l'année dernière, le précédent ministre de finances nous avait prévenus que le pays était à la croisée des chemins. C'était un *wake up call*. Il demandait à la nation de se réveiller et de sortir de cette zone de confort éphémère créé pour l'endormir et l'entraîner vers une ruine certaine alors que certains devenaient plus riches et les pauvres beaucoup plus pauvres. Des signes d'éveil furent notés pendant l'année écoulée et certaines améliorations notables furent notées. Aujourd'hui nous parlons de budget de relance. Un budget dont les mesures vont créer un espoir pour tous les mauriciens: plus d'ouverture, renverser le déclin des investissements, une plus grande discipline fiscale et une prudence financière.

Les mesures annoncées dans le discours du budget démontrent que nous avons mis de l'ordre dans la maison que nous avons héritée et que nous établissons des bases solides constituant le socle de notre prospérité.

Je note avec plaisir le fait que l'entrepreneuriat soit la stratégie prioritaire du gouvernement. Les petites et moyennes entreprises, malgré leur nombre élevé, plus de 75,000 unités dispersées à travers le pays, est une grande méconnue. Le Mauricien ne réalise pas de la contribution de ce réseau d'entreprises à l'économie nationale. Dans la zone de l'OCDE, les PME jouent un rôle majeur dans la croissance économique et ce sont elles qui créent la plupart des emplois nouveaux. Plus de 95% des entreprises de cette zone sont des PME qui représentent 60% à 70% de l'emploi dans la plupart des pays de l'OCDE. A mesure que les grandes entreprises réduisent leurs effectifs et externalisent de plus en plus de fonctions, le poids des PME dans l'économie s'accroît.

Si nous voulons d'une croissance accrue, nous devons produire plus, démontrer plus d'efficience, être innovant, et surtout avoir une approche plus professionnelle, car c'est mondialement connu que moins de 50% des petites entreprises nouvelles s'offrent une pérennité, et un petit pourcentage seulement constitue le noyau d'entreprises devenant des leaders de l'innovation et des performances aux normes industrielles. Cet état de fait freine

les entrepreneurs potentiels liés au fait que, dans le même temps, ils ont à faire face à l'insuffisance de financement, difficultés d'exploitation des technologies, capacités managériales limitées, faible productivité, lourdeur de la réglementation, à évoluer dans un contexte de compétitivité mondialisée, où la technologie devient prépondérante.

Ce gouvernement, conscient des problèmes précités, a introduit des mesures additionnelles pour catalyser le développement de ce secteur économique important. Evoquer toutes les mesures prendrait trop de temps à la Chambre. Aussi, je vais énumérer quelques-unes.

Bien souvent, des entrepreneurs s'aventurent dans la formation d'une entreprise avec l'apport de leur savoir-faire technique, un capital précaire, du matériel rudimentaire, et une faible connaissance de la jungle commerciale dans laquelle ils évolueront.

Le *National SME Incubator Scheme* est une aide pour les soutenir lors de cette période de rodage. L'augmentation du nombre d'entités à travers le pays est un signal fort pour le gouvernement, et montre le désir réel de promouvoir le développement des PME. Certains entrepreneurs ont trouvé le temps d'incubation trop court. Il serait nécessaire de revoir la stratégie adoptée et d'apporter des améliorations nécessaires. Il faudrait aussi nous assurer que les accompagnateurs aient, au-delà des capacités techniques de gestion, un fort bagage pédagogique, afin de prodiguer le savoir-faire nécessaire pour la gestion d'une entreprise.

Dans plusieurs pays, le nombre d'entreprises dirigées par des femmes augmente. Des obstacles subsistent néanmoins, et si l'on veut cibler efficacement les mesures à prendre, il est indispensable de mieux connaître et promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat féminin et son rôle dans la société et dans l'économie. Le *SME Incubator* est nécessaire, voire primordial, pour la survie des petites et moyennes entreprises ; sa présence est la clé maîtresse pour la réduction des faillites dans ce secteur.

La suppression des *trade fees*, le comptoir rapide pour les micro-entreprises, le *leasing* des équipements et le *Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme* qui permettra aux entrepreneurs d'acquérir des équipements et du matériel de pointe sont de bons points pour l'avancement et l'épanouissement des PME.

Comme je l'ai dit avant, l'entrepreneur se lance dans l'aventure avec très peu de liquidité. Combien de petites entreprises se sont écroulées sous les dettes, incapables

d'honorer les échéances, alors qu'elles avaient des factures en attente chez de gros clients qui ont imposé des conditions de paiement, tels que 90 jours après facturation, etc.

Le service de *factoring* sera d'une grande aide au *cash-flow* des entreprises concernées et les aidera à plus de vigilance dans la gestion de leurs débiteurs.

La fusion du *NRF Equity Fund* et du *SME Partnership Fund* ne sera que bénéfique aux PME. Il sera sûrement important d'adopter une approche consensuelle au moment de la fusion, afin de dissiper toutes les craintes de certains qui craignent que leurs intérêts soient lésés.

Pour clore ce chapitre sur l'entrepreneuriat, je citerai Monsieur Amar Deerpalsing, président de la Fédération des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises. « A première vue, il y a des mesures en faveur des PME. Elles vont encourager l'investissement qui va déboucher sur une croissance plus élevée et soulager l'économie. Elles vont pallier le problème du chômage. C'est une manière d'inviter ceux qui se retrouvent sans emploi à se lancer dans la création des PME. »

M. le président, la deuxième stratégie de la nouvelle ère de développement choisie par l'honorable ministre des Finances est la création ou plus précisément la réduction du taux de chômage. Il est un fait que ce n'est pas au gouvernement de créer des emplois. Sa vocation est de créer un environnement propice pour la création d'emplois rémunérateurs, glorifiants, et stables.

Je note que le gouvernement fait un effort considérable en retirant plus de 15,000 jeunes des affres du chômage en leur procurant la possibilité d'acquérir un savoir-faire dans les secteurs offrant le plus d'emplois, et surtout un savoir-être, si nécessaire, pour postuler à des postes, dépendant de leur aspiration. Nous savons qu'à Maurice, les entrepreneurs se plaignent du manque de savoir-faire et d'expérience dans la supervision, plus communément appelé *middle management*, d'où un manque de productivité. Il serait intéressant de mettre un plan de formation en entreprise pour les jeunes cadres, comme le plan proposé pour les ingénieurs afin qu'ils acquièrent l'expérience nécessaire à leur enregistrement comme ingénieurs professionnels.

M. le président, tous les ans, lors de la présentation du budget, nous entendons le même refrain de l'opposition : les mesures préconisées ne favoriseront pas l'investissement ; ainsi, pas de création d'emplois. Pas une année ne passe depuis 10 ans sans que nous n'entendions ce refrain. Aujourd'hui, l'opposition doute de la capacité de ce gouvernement

d'atteindre une croissance de 4.1%, et encore plus, de créer des emplois. L'argument présenté est que l'investissement du secteur public n'a cessé de chuter depuis 2008 pour atteindre le chiffre de 17.5% du produit national brut en 2015.

L'investissement du secteur privé n'a cessé de baisser depuis 2008 quand il avait atteint 20.3% pour atteindre 12.7% en 2015. Oui, le gouvernement ne nie pas ce chiffre, mais ne fait pas de fuite en avant. Le ministre des Finances a pris la décision courageuse d'investir le gouvernement dans un vaste plan d'investissement public malgré le fait que le pays soit déjà endetté. J'entends déjà des voix qui s'élèveront pour dire au public du montant de la dette qu'il y a sur leur tête, mais je citerai le ministre des Finances –

“We must look beyond the short-term and make investments that would strengthen growth and raise productivity.

These investments must come from both the public and private sectors.”

L'Etat investira R 34.9 milliards pour ce présent exercice financier et R 153 milliards pendant les cinq ans à venir. Permettez-moi d'énumérer certains.

1. R 35 milliards dans le secteur d'eau pour accroître la capacité de stockage.
2. R 25 milliards dans le secteur énergie renouvelable, nous offre la possibilité de créer des emplois bien rémunérés, de diminuer notre facture d'importation de fuel, et surtout, elle sera d'un apport important dans notre entreprise d'économie verte.
3. R 25 milliards pour améliorer le système de transport. Les réseaux routiers n'arrivent plus à répondre aux besoins du trafic. Tout en mettant l'emphasis d'un besoin d'un plan stratégique de développement urbain, il s'avère qu'un système de transport de masse est nécessaire. Un mode de transport moins polluant, plus rapide, en prenant en ligne de compte les interminables congestions et surtout une réduction substantielle de notre importation de carburant.
4. R 6.6 milliards dans le Port pour l'approfondissement du Canal Anglais et l'achat de portique plus performant.

L'Opposition semblait mettre en doute l'investissement privé. M. le président, au début de l'année, la Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie avait publié le rapport de l'indice de confiance des entrepreneurs pour l'année 2015 et une hausse de 6% avait été notée, comparée à l'année 2014. M. Padayachy, le *Manager* de la division d'analyses

économiques et recherche de la *MCCI* avait fait remarquer que nos taux de croissance d'alors étaient trop faibles pour une relance de l'économie. Il préconisait un besoin d'investissement. Il parlait d'un *investment led growth* et suggérait un taux de 25% d'investissement du secteur privé. Le secteur privé n'avait pas investi car il y avait une tendance à la désinflation, une politique de baisse de prix et, qui dit baisse de prix dit baisse de profit, d'où l'incapacité à investir et par ricochet à booster la croissance et créer l'emploi.

La *MCCI* a pris l'engagement de suivre de près l'évolution du taux d'investissement au cours de l'année et de ceux à venir. J'ai confiance au partenariat du secteur privé et je citerai M. Arnaud Dalais, *Chairman of Business Mauritius*. Je cite –

« C'est un vrai budget de réforme courageuse. Nous avons noté cette volonté de réforme dans la facilitation des affaires. Nous apprécions également l'effort fait par rapport à la pauvreté. Le secteur privé travaillera de concert avec le gouvernement. Entre le secteur privé et public, c'est un vrai partenariat essentiel pour l'avenir de Maurice. Dès que possible, *Business Mauritius* entamera des consultations pour voir dans quelle mesure le secteur privé participera à ces efforts de réformes. »

Je suis sûr que les investissements et l'emploi seront à l'ordre du jour, ainsi dans le moyen terme, le pays bénéficiera d'infrastructure de pointe et moderne, nécessaire à notre entrée dans les sphères du *high income economy* ; dans le court terme, la construction et la mise en place des infrastructures vont créer les emplois nécessaires pour réduire le nombre de chômeurs. Selon l'adage économique, quand l'industrie de la construction est en bonne santé, l'économie du pays se porte bien. Nous avons noté une croissance de 1.6% en 2006 après cinq années de contraction dans le secteur de construction. Avec d'autant de projets d'infrastructure, les incitations à la construction domestique et logements sociaux, nul ne doute que le gouvernement a créé l'environnement propice pour l'épanouissement de ce secteur.

M. le président, j'aurai voulu parler des mesures sociales de ce budget. Elles sont en fusion, les unes plus courageuses et bienfaitantes que les autres. Je ne prendrai pas le temps de la Chambre, car beaucoup a été dit et beaucoup sera dit. Mais, je ne pourrais me taire sur l'allocation de subsistance d'un minimum de R 2,720 et au seuil maximum de R 9,520 pour une famille de deux adultes et trois enfants. Ajouté à cela, l'application du salaire minimum au cours de l'année confirmera que le gouvernement 'Lepep' est un *very caring government*, comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable Premier ministre.

M. le président, je parlerai sur la *NDU* et le *Citizen Advice Bureau*. Comme *PPSs*, notre mission est d'avoir des consultations avec la population dans les circonscriptions où nous sommes affectées. Nos responsabilités sont –

- assurer un lien de communication entre le gouvernement et le public, informer, sensibiliser le public du programme et de la politique gouvernemental ;
- garder un contact permanent avec les responsables des *CAB* se trouvant dans les circonscriptions qui nous sont allouées ;
- établir une liste de projets d'infrastructures à implémenter dans les circonscriptions précitées, et
- suivre la mise en place de ces projets en coordination avec les officiers responsables de la *NDU*.

Lors de notre entrée dans nos nouvelles fonctions, nous nous sommes attelés à préparer une liste de projets. Ce fut une douche froide quand nous avons appris que nos projets ne pourraient être entrepris faute de financement, car le gouvernement précédent avait vidé les caisses et encouru des dettes pour des vastes projets électoraux. 90% de notre budget capital fut englouti à repayer ces dettes.

Du peu de financement disponible, la *NDU* a entrepris de construire des drains et entrepris l'asphaltage des rues pour un montant total de R 37.4 millions dans les circonscriptions Nos. 19 et 20. Durant le cours de l'année, un dialogue et un partenariat a été établi entre la *NDU* et la municipalité de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill et le *District Council* de Rivière Noire pour nos projets à implémenter au cours de l'année financière 2016/2017.

Priorité sera donnée à la construction de drains. Une attention particulière sera donnée aux régions à risques comme celles s'étendant de Chebel/Pavé d'Amour à Coromandel, de Hermitage à Coromandel qui est considérée comme une zone sinistrée. La *NDU* supervisera un projet d'agrandissement de la route Berthaud dès que le processus d'achat par le ministère des Terres sera effectué ; le document pour le lancement des appels d'offres est déjà prêt. Ce tronçon, déjà utilisé par les automobilistes, une fois agrandi, décantera le trafic entre Rose Hill à La Louise, Quatre Bornes.

Le fonctionnement des *Citizen Advice Bureaux (CAB)* sera revu pour les rendre plus accessibles au public. Il faut dire que ces bureaux n'ont pas suivi les développements de communication de cette dernière décennie, alors que la mission même des *CAB* est la

communication avec la population. Un grand effort devra être fait dans ce domaine. Des cadres devront être formés afin de répondre aux attentes des habitants. Dans les jours qui viennent, des sessions de *brain storming* seront organisées avec les principaux *stakeholders* de la région pour mieux comprendre les besoins et aspirations des habitants.

M. le président, je serai très bref pour ma conclusion. Une façon aussi de dire au revoir au Président Barack Obama en disant -

‘A new era of development! Yes, we can! We will make it happen!’

Merci.

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

Dr Husnoo 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 Friday 05 August 2016 at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Hon. Ameer Meea!

MATTER RAISED

(7.31 p.m.)

HASSEN SAKIR ROAD - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am raising an issue, which relates to the Ministry of Public Utilities. I am glad that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is here so that I can address this issue. It is a problem regarding the sewerage system mixing with water on a canal in a residential area on a street called Hassen Sakir Road, ex-Pagoda Street.

In fact, this is an old problem. It has been here for two years or so. I must say that I have, myself, intervened on two occasions on this issue. The Wastewater Authority has done the needful and the problem has been fixed. But a week ago, this problem has arisen again, whereby the sewerage system is being mixed into water and in a canal in front of houses and this long canal runs down up to Paul et Virginie Street where there is a mosque. There is a foul smell coming on the street because of this leak of the sewerage system.

So, I would kindly ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to look into the matter so that needful could be done.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Well, I will certainly do that almost immediately. By tomorrow, I will look into it.

At 7.32 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 05 August 2016 at 3.00 p.m.