



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 04 APRIL 2023

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Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
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Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
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Hon. Avinash Teeluck

Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage

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Minister of Public Service, Administrative
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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 02 of 2023

Sitting of Tuesday 04 April 2023

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHOTOGRAPHS & PRIVATE DOCUMENTS – INTERDICTION

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, before we proceed with the business of the day, I have a few announcements to make.

Firstly, I have noticed that it has become a practice for hon. Members to display or exhibit photographs and private documents in order to illustrate arguments in support of their interventions.

The House would appreciate that it is a very delicate exercise for the Chair to judge the truth and genuineness of documents or statements made in the House.

Members should be articulate enough to manage without such display and should instead describe what they are referring to and this in order to make their speech comprehensible when read in the Hansard.

In the light of the above and as the House deals with public documents, I rule that henceforth, hon. Members will not be allowed to display and table photographs and private documents in support of their intervention.

MR ASSIRVADEN – 29 MARCH 2023 – POINT OF ORDER

Secondly, on Wednesday, 29 March 2023, I received a letter signed by the hon. Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix (Mr Assirvaden) in regard to the reply made by the hon. Prime Minister to Parliamentary Questions B/1, B/11 and B/19, being replied together, purporting to raise a point of order having regard to the provisions of Standing Order 22(1)(h) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly (1995).

I am tabling the said letter for ease of reference.

Hon. Members are referred to the provisions of Standing Order 41 (1) which clearly lays down the procedure that obtains in case any Member wishes to raise a point of order.

Hon. Members would appreciate that, in the light thereof, the procedure adopted by hon. Assirvaden, that is, raising a point of order by way of a letter on a day subsequent to the Parliamentary Sitting on which the purported incident occurred, drawing my attention thereto

and intimating that I take a series of actions against the hon. Member having allegedly deviated from the stated Standing Order, is utterly misconceived, inappropriate, irregular and alien to the prevailing Standing Orders and Rules of this Assembly.

I have ruled on several occasions, including on Tuesday last itself, it is deemed most improper, discourteous and unethical, to say the least, that hon. Members copy private correspondences addressed to the Office of the Speaker or Office of the Clerk to the Press and that the said are published, in their entirety, prior to same being acted upon.

**ANNOUNCEMENT ON TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023 - PRESS
MISREPRESENTATION**

Thirdly, on this same issue, allow me to correct the misrepresentation, published in the Press purportedly attributed to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in regard to the announcement I made on Tuesday last.

Firstly, Standing Order 23 refers to the Private Notice Question, including, providing as follows –

“Notices of private notice questions shall be given to the Clerk not later than 9 o’clock in the morning on any sitting day, subject to Standing Orders 10(11) and 24(3).”

Secondly, Private Notice Questions are subject to the provisions of Standing Order 21 as to the sub-editing thereof in conformity with the parameters laid down in Standing Order 22 as to the content thereof and to Standing Order 27 as to the admissibility thereof by myself.

As such, the finalisation of a PNQ in conformity with the prescribed Standing Orders takes the time that it takes.

« AU COEUR DE L’INFO » – DR. BOOLELL – UNWARRANTED ATTACKS

Lastly, my attention has been drawn to the fact that an interview which Dr. Boolell gave on the radio in the course of the programme “*Au Coeur de L’Info*” on Radio Plus on Tuesday 28 March 2023.

In the course of the interview the hon. Member has made some unwarranted attacks on my integrity in my capacity as Speaker.

(Interruptions)

You keep your laughter for yourself.

(Interruptions)

I wish to inform the House that my office is seriously envisaging the possibility of taking necessary actions against the hon. Member in conformity with the laws regarding contempt and the provisions of Standing Orders 49(8), 77 and 79.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président*, on a point of order.

Mr Speaker: There is no point of order.

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is no point of order.

(Interruptions)

I have ruled.

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: Permettez-moi ! Permettez-moi !

Mr Speaker: There is no permission!

Mr Assirvaden: Vous avez cité la section 41...

Mr Speaker: This is an announcement!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais le Premier ministre...

Mr Speaker: After an announcement, there is no point of order, there is no debate, and there is no discussion!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais le Premier ministre...

Mr Speaker: Clerk, move on!

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President

The Annual Report 2022 of the National Human Rights Commission. (In Original)

B. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Central Medical Procurement Authority Bill (No. IV of 2023). (In Original)

C. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

The Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 34 of 2023)

D. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training

Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development for the year ended 30 June 2021.

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

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

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

(11.40 a.m.)

EXTRADITION OF MR J.H.C & MR J.D

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two statements to make, one on extradition of Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D, and the other on a matter raised at adjournment by the hon. Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East at the sitting of Tuesday 28 March 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the various comments made in the media and in certain quarters regarding the extradition of Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D, I wish to set the record straight once again by informing the House that it was for the first time, by Notes Verbales dated Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 February 2023, that requests for the extradition of Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D were received from the French Authorities by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

On 23 February 2023, the requests were transmitted to the Attorney General's Office.

By letters dated 28 February 2023 and 06 March 2023, in virtue of Section 9(a) of the Extradition Act, the Attorney General, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, sought assurances from the French Authorities that the rights of Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D to a retrial would be safeguarded, given that both of them were tried in absentia in Reunion Island.

By Note Verbale dated 17 March 2023, the French Authorities stated that Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D would have the right to a re-trial.

Having been satisfied that the assurances given by the French Authorities were sufficient, that the requests had been made on a valid basis and that there is a binding Extradition Treaty between Mauritius and France, applications for the arrest and extradition of Mr. J.H.C and Mr. J.D, who were already on remand for provisional charges of money laundering, were lodged before the District Court of Port Louis on 31 March 2023.

On the basis of the application for arrest and extradition, Mr J.H.C and Mr J.D were arrested on 31 March 2023 itself and when they appeared before the Court on the same day, they applied for bail. There being objection for their release on bail, bail hearings have been fixed to 06 April 2023.

**SITTING OF TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023 - MATTER RAISED AT
ADJOURNMENT BY HON. AMEER MEEA**

Mr Speaker, Sir, my second statement is in regard to a matter raised by the hon. Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East at adjournment time on Tuesday 28 March 2023. The hon. Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East made an appeal for Police Officers to be posted at the junction of Route des Pamplemousses and Military Road and at the entrance of road leading to Vallée des Prêtres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, presently, a Police Officer from the Plaine Verte Police Station is being posted at the Junction of Military and Pamplemousses Roads during morning peak hours, and a Police Officer from the Traffic Unit North is being deployed thereat during afternoon and evening peak hours.

I am further informed that a Police Officer from Abercrombie Police Station is also being deployed at Junction Bernadin de St Pierre Street, Vallée des Prêtres and Pamplemousses Road during peak hours to facilitate the traffic flow.

Mr Speaker, Sir, road works are in fact being carried out in the region with a view to eventually alleviating the traffic problems and inconveniences at the said junction.

Thank you.

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

On motion made and seconded, the Central Medical Procurement Authority Bill (No. IV of 2023) was read a first time.

*Second Reading***THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2022-2023) BILL****(NO. II OF 2023)**

Order for Second Reading read.

(11.46 a.m.)

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy):
Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill (No. II of 2023) be read a second time.

The Bill makes provision for a supplementary appropriation of five billion and four hundred and seventeen million rupees (Rs5.417 billion) in respect of services of Government for the Financial Year 2022-2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in June last year, the National Assembly had voted a total sum of Rs152 billion for Financial Year 2022-2023 under various Votes of Expenditure. This includes Rs11.8 billion in respect of Vote 24-1: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government.

The sums appropriated under this Vote will not be sufficient to meet expenditure up to end June 2023, especially with the recent developments regarding the implementation of the Social Housing Project and the Waterfront Project at Deux Frères.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Section 105 (3)(a) of the Constitution stipulates that where in any financial year it is found that the amount appropriated by the appropriation law for the purposes included in any head of expenditure (also known as Vote of Expenditure) is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by the appropriation law, then a Supplementary Appropriation Bill needs to be introduced in the National Assembly to provide for the appropriation of those sums.

Accordingly, in line with Section 105 (3)(a) of the Constitution, a supplementary appropriation of Rs5.417 billion is required under Vote 24-1: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government as follows –

- (i) Rs5 billion as contribution to the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund to ensure smooth implementation of the Social Housing Project, and
- (ii) Rs417 m. as contribution to the National Environment and Climate Change Fund for the implementation of the Waterfront Project at Deux Frères.

Mr Speaker, Sir, access to affordable social housing is high on the agenda of this Government. In this respect, we have maintained the Roof Slab Grant Scheme, the refund of VAT on residential building and apartment, the exemption for payment of 5% registration duty for a first time buyer of immovable property, and the budget provision for rehabilitation of existing NHDC Housing Estates.

In addition, as from fiscal year 2020-2021, we have increased the subsidy rate for those households registered under the Social Register of Mauritius from 75% to 80% on the cost of construction of a social housing unit.

At the same time, we have revised upwards the subsidy rate for households with a monthly income between Rs10,000 to Rs30,000 to 67%. They were previously eligible for a subsidy rate in the range of 15-60%.

Furthermore, we have introduced the Home Ownership Scheme since Financial Year 2021-2022, whereby Government refunds 5% of the value of the property acquired up to a maximum of Rs500,000.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come back to the required supplementary appropriation of Rs5 billion as contribution to the Projects Development Fund, which we are asking the House to approve.

The House will recall that the 12,000 Social Housing Project is being financed under the Projects Development Fund. This project is being implemented by the New Social Living Development Ltd (NSLD), a company set up under the purview of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning.

In this respect, the NSLD is proceeding with the implementation of the first phase of the Project that will consist of the construction of up to 8,000 units targeting beneficiaries with a monthly household income of up to Rs30,000.

The cost of one social housing unit is estimated at Rs2.7 m. Government will provide a subsidy of 67% of the cost of construction of a housing unit, that is, Rs1.8 m. per housing unit. Thus, a total subsidy of Rs14.4 billion will be required for the 8,000 social housing units.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members will recall that in the 2020-2021 Budget, the House voted a sum of Rs12 billion for this project. This sum was transferred to the Projects Development Fund in that financial year for implementation of the project.

Out of this amount, Rs10 billion was earmarked for the subsidy element and Rs2 billion for land acquisition and other services.

There is, therefore, a gap of Rs4.4 billion on the subsidy element. An additional amount of around Rs600 m. will be required for other related expenditures such as offsite infrastructure works that will have to be undertaken to complete the project.

The contracts for construction works for this project are expected to be awarded shortly. Thus, with a view to ensuring smooth implementation of this priority project, a sum of Rs5 billion has been included in the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure of this financial year to meet the financing gap in terms of Government subsidy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius, by virtue of its geographical characteristics, is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, including an increase in flood and drought events, landslides, severe tropical cyclones, tidal surges, sea-level rise, and beach erosion.

In fact, the sea level at mainland Mauritius and at the island of Rodrigues is rising at a higher rate than the global average. This is leading to a rapid erosion of our beaches. In some places the width of the beach has been reduced by up to 20 metres over the past decades. This is already having repercussions on economic activities around these regions and more specifically on the tourism sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of the National Environment and Climate Change Fund has enabled the implementation of a number of projects to protect and embellish the environment,

address landslide issues and protect the coastal region, for which a total of Rs5.6 billion have already been spent since 2018.

Through this Fund, major coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works have been carried out in the regions of Pointe aux Feuilles to Grand Sable, Petit Sable to Bambous Virieux and Providence. Works are on-going in the regions from Anse Jonchée to Bambous Virieux and Bois des Amourettes.

The site at Deux Frères which is an ex-sand landing platform, has suffered serious erosion and socio-economic decline following the banning of sand extraction in 2001. The coastal stretch at Deux Frères is highly vulnerable to coastal inundation, erosion and climate change impacts, putting existing infrastructure at risk. Moreover, the Deux Frères site, lying on the south west bank of the estuary of Grande Rivière Sud Est, is today a nodal point for many activities for tourists and the local public. Some tourist-related activities at Grande Rivière Sud Est require trans-boarding from catamarans to small boats in the river which has safety implications.

The proposed contribution of Rs417 m. to the National Environment and Climate Change Fund is thus required to finance the construction of a waterfront at Deux Frères as an urgent adaptation measure being undertaken by this Government. The Government has recently approved the implementation of this priority project under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund.

The objectives of the project are to contain coastal degradation and increase coastal resilience against the adverse impacts of climate change and substantially mitigate the risks to the public and to the infrastructure thereat. It will also boost economic activities and generate employment for inhabitants in the region, in line with our vision for an Inclusive, High Income and Green Mauritius. This is a clear example of responsible investment by this Government to proactively mitigate climate change disruptions and uplift the economic potential of the region.

The House may note that the relevant preparatory works for the project have already been completed, including the EIA Report, the Detailed Design Report and the draft tender documents for works. The project is therefore ready to be implemented. The cost of the project is estimated at Rs417 m. Accordingly, Rs417 m. have been included in this Bill as contribution to the National Environment and Climate Change Fund for meeting the cost of construction works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, details on the Items of Expenditure that require the supplementary appropriation are set out in the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (ESE) that have already been laid before the National Assembly. Despite this supplementary appropriation of Rs5.4 billion, the budget deficit as well as the public sector debt for the current financial year are expected to be close to the budget targets as under-spending are expected under other votes of expenditure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Ganoo seconded.

(12.01 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): I have listened carefully to what the hon. Minister of Finance had to say. I am a bit surprised that he spoke more about the project at Deux Frères for Rs400 m. than the Rs5 billion that he is asking us to vote, a bit surprised *on dirait pe lav la main*.

Anyway, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not mince my words in my speech this morning. I am going to say things as they are. I don't think there is any need for sugar coating. We are asked here in this House to approve the huge amount of Rs5,000 m. in addition to the Rs12,000 m. already put into the COVID-19 Development Fund. What will happen to these Rs5 billion? It will be passed on if this Bill is voted as expected to the COVID-19 Development Fund and then, from the COVID-19 Development Fund, this money will go to an obscure company - well, recently unknown and perfectly obscure company called National New Social, I don't even remember the name fully, New Social Living Development Company or something or that's all.

This company is entirely owned by tax payers. It's not owned by any Minister. It's not owned by the Deputy Prime Minister; it is entirely owned by tax payers and it is headed by one Mr Ahmad Abdool. Who is he? Has he ever made any statement? Has he ever been transparent? Has he ever been accountable? Would you recognize this gentleman who is going to spend up to Rs30 billion of our money in the street and obviously people who purchase the house? Do we know this gentleman? Nobody knows him and this gentleman has never come out at all to explain what he is doing.

So, we can justly and rightly expect that it is the Deputy Prime Minister who steps up and provides the information that this House and the population badly require and I am happy that he will be speaking later on today or during the debate at least and I will ask the Deputy Prime Minister to come out fully with all the information that I am going to ask for, maybe other Members too, to this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister has himself declared last week, that it was his decision in 2021 to entrust his or the Cabinet decision when he was around, to entrust this huge construction to this new company NSLD. That's what he said last week in this House. He, I presume, appointed the Board of Directors. He also appointed through the Board of Directors, the Managers, one of whom, Mr D.H.H.W, was previously known as the richest man in Rodrigues. He may still be, maybe in the Indian Ocean and another person Mr S., who is very controversial. I say that because it is not proper for us not to have the information, not in this situation where huge amounts of money are being given.

I have question marks on the persons who are supposed to be managing and spending this money for us - the Chairman who is unknown - and some of those other persons have had chequered careers, and certainly, bad reputations.

Now, I am going to ask, Mr Speaker, Sir, a number of important questions and I would expect that the Deputy Prime Minister answers all of them without hesitation. Again, he is not answering the Leader of the Opposition; he is answering the nation because, in this Parliament, Mr Speaker, Sir, we represent and we carry the voice of the people in so far as requests for information are concerned. Now, I hope that his meeting with Cardinal Piat yesterday has brought some fruit and that we are going to see a new Deputy Prime Minister, open to promote democracy, open to promote transparency, because as we know transparency and democracy are the best ways of fighting corruption and of exposing incompetence wherever there are.

M. le président, *il est proposé de rétablir le droit de regard du Parlement sur toutes institutions financées de l'argent public.* Do you recognise this phrase, Deputy Prime Minister? It comes from a book that you wrote yourself in September 1994 entitled "*La lutte pour la démocratie et contre la drogue et la corruption.*" I am only saying this because I wish to remind you of what you had said yourself at page 7 –

“Il est proposé de rétablir le droit de regard du Parlement sur toutes institutions financées de l’argent public.”

Here you are! You had this fantastic chance to put your words into action and to walk the talk! I am sure by your nodding that you will do exactly that, and I will be grateful for that.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the strength of our belief in democracy, we will never accept to vote for Rs5 billion of additional funds without the transparency and the accountability that we are asking today, because it represents after all the hurdle that tax payers’ money are paying for petrol, diesel, VAT and CSG, all these are being paid! The Government is *les gestionnaires de cet argent* and there must be accountability. There cannot be democracy without accountability.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking of what? A project, if you add the cost of the land, the off site, the cost of NSLD, etc., we are talking about Rs25 billion to Rs30 billion, I see the Minister of Finance is nodding. That is the amount of money that we are speaking, Rs30,000 billion. It is not 5 cents! It is a huge amount of money!

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, the Deputy Prime Minister entrusted the project to the NSLD and appointed the people there. He is fully accountable for what happens there, Mr Speaker, Sir. He could have had other options - and we talked about those options -, but he decided on this. So, now, let us talk about the pitfalls of the possible issues arising from his decision and the Cabinet’s decision of post June 2021 Budget, as we were told last week, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me start my first question. I have a series of questions if you will bear with me. For decades now, I think, 30 years, social housing has been constructed primarily by a company called National Housing Development Company (NHDC). For some reasons, – and we can discuss about the reasons in a moment – it was thought that NHDC, which had 130 people working for it - it is not a small company – was no longer going to be able to run this project. We totally needed a new company: NSLD, a new company entrusted, as I said, to these people I will just mention. Mr Speaker, Sir, the NHDC was set aside. Why? Because we were told we are going to have a new concept; lifts in the building. Huge new concept! New concept, *zéro rezilta*, Mr Speaker, Sir!

We ended as new concept with water reticulation and a playground for kids and 20 square meters of commercial space! That is all. I am sure the NHDC would have been able to do that, don't you agree? If we are talking about adding water reticulation, a playground and a commercial space of 20 square meters, I think the NHDC would have been able to do that. But it was not given to NHDC even though the whole new living project, which was a dream - a pipe dream, never to happen, it was a wild dream - was set aside. We ended up with exactly the same project that the NHDC could have done anyway. Exactly the same apart from these three little things!

So, why not then, once the project was abandoned, give it back to the NHDC? 130 people there and it has only got two projects ongoing; I think one at Wooton and the other one at Mare d'Albert, if I am not mistaken. There is not that sort of overwhelming work at NHDC. It has only got a few hundred houses to build at the moment, 130 people working there. So, why then?

What is the advantage of having a subsidiary of NHDC? The advantage, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister probably knows very well, is found in the Public Procurement Act. A huge advantage for Government is found in the Public Procurement Act. In particular, it is found in Schedule I of the Public Procurement Act, because NHDC happens to be in Part IV of the Schedule of the Public Procurement Act. What does that mean? Simple! It means that for every contract above Rs100 m., NHDC has to abide by the Public Procurement Act. It has to issue tenders, it has to go through the CPB, it has to have projects, it has to do lots of things that ensure that there is no hanky-panky and that ensures that the public gets value for money. This is what the NHDC is actually forced to do by the law.

NSLD, being a new company, could have been placed on Schedule I Part IV of the Public Procurement Act, but no, it was not! It was kept completely outside of the Public Procurement Act. That is not the first time that this happened. It happened before even with previous Governments. It is a bad thing. In other countries, wherever there is public money, public procurement procedures apply. This has to be changed by a future Government. You cannot continue like this where for a subterfuge, a contract worth up to Rs30 billion, will get done without any of the safeguards that this legislature has set up and put into law. A loophole is that for new companies, you actually have to physically put the company on that Schedule; otherwise, it is totally unknown to the Public Procurement Act.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the poor Director of Audit has been auditing God knows what, but this is not going to be audited by the Director of Audit. This is going to be completely outside the Audit office. The Board of Directors and the Minister will themselves choose which auditor they want to appoint. It is not going to be the Director of Audit. So, that law has to be changed, this loophole needs to be plugged. It is totally unacceptable, especially as we are going to talk in a moment about how the company has proceeded with this allocation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, the second question, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have talked about an additional provision, there was apparently so much for the land, there was so much for this and that; Rs2 billion for land and additional services. We are adding Rs600 m. more for this land if I understood correctly what the hon. Minister of Finance said. So, up to now, the NSLD has been a total fiasco. Up to now! This can change by miracle maybe but up to now, it has been a total fiasco. Two failed tenders! Why? If you listen to the Deputy Prime Minister, it is because the contractors have gone mad. Somehow they went mad and they quoted figures five times more than that they should have quoted. Apparently, they no longer wish to get the contract; they just want to rule themselves out of the contract, because he said himself that the latest cost of the NHDC house is Rs1.8 m. I'm not sure that is exactly correct; I think it is a bit more but still, and for the tenders that he floated, he received offers of Rs13.5 m. per house.

Now, isn't there a QS appointed by the NSLD? Don't you have a QS there? What did you do? Did you hang the QS? Don't you have a QS? Are they not supposed to tell you the cost of material, the cost of this and that and give you a ballpark figure? Can they give you an estimate of Rs1.8 m. and when you open the tenders, you get three, four, five times that amount? Something went wrong. I understand that the figures of the QS were disregarded by NSLD and that you persisted with your tender even though, at least some of the QS told you there was no way that your dream project could be included into a price of about Rs2 m.

So, we appointed architects, project managers, QS, highly paid people and hundreds of millions of rupees went up in smoke. I am told Rs500 m., some people go up to Rs1 billion wasted because of the amateurism of the NSLD. Wasted, because they could not understand that the house they were proposing was far beyond the means of the NSLD let alone the means of the poor purchasers who are going to buy this. That is the truth! You cannot put the blame on the contractors. You need to accept the blame; the NSLD needs to accept the blame. Hundreds of

millions of rupees! Months and months of waiting! In fact, if you read carefully what the Deputy Prime Minister said last week, he said that: “we were told in June 2021 there is the money, get on with it; we couldn’t get on with it because of COVID-19 confinement”. COVID-19 confinement was only one month. It was only in March and not more than that. So, you cannot blame COVID-19 either. We can only blame incompetence, Mr Speaker, Sir. Rs500 m. to Rs1 billion wasted! Who will refund this money to the taxpayers? This money that has been wasted by the guys at the NSLD and supervised by the Ministry - who is going to refund this to the taxpayers?

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is: please, can the Deputy Prime Minister give us a detailed list of all the amounts that have been spent since June 2021 on professional fees, QS, architects, etc. and also, Mr Speaker - and I come to question 3 - on land that has been purchased? How much land has been purchased? Where has it been purchased? How much did it cost? And what is the acreage so that we can determine it is only fair, this is taxpayers’ money. I remind everyone we can find out actually how much and from whom you bought this. It is important. All the questions – I see the Deputy Prime Minister is nodding – are absolutely fair questions that any taxpayer would ask you at the moment concerning this project and I am continuing with my questions. So, what has been purchased? And if you can tell us also a number of land are apparently *non-constructible*, which ones they are if you know at the moment and what you plan to do with that? It is unfortunate, but let us see what you come up with in terms of figures and in terms of land that cannot be used for construction if that is the case.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my fourth question concerns the project itself. Now, what you want to construct – you will not be able to construct your dream project, that was a high dream – you are going to construct something like the NHDC has done up to now with water reticulation, playground for kids etc. Now, you see, the devil is in the detail. We all know that for housing projects, small is beautiful. Small is beautiful not for everything but for housing projects, that is the case. The more houses that you put on one plot of land, the greater the social problems that you have because you are putting people from different places, they are not a community. People from different places, different backgrounds all come and live in close proximity to each other and you have problems. Mr Speaker, Sir, this famous saying: the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Look at La Valette! I don’t want to stigmatise so, I will be careful what I say. Mr Ganoo probably knows La Valette well. I know you know your constituency very well.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! I am going to say. Relax! Relax! We'll talk about your case in a moment if you want.

Mr Ganoo: I am ready for you.

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, I am sure you are!

Mr Speaker: No conversation! Make your speech!

Mr X. L. Duval: If he talks to me, what do I do?

Mr Speaker: Make your speech!

Mr Ganoo: He mentioned my name.

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, I mentioned Mr Ganoo's name. He probably knows La Valette well. He knows a lot of things well.

Now, La Valette was constructed by one of our predecessors. 200 houses; NEF was supposed to take care of it. There is a *crèche* and everything. Unfortunately, it has gone down and down and down. It is not a pleasant place to live.

(Interruptions)

You see, I am not saying anything. It is not a pleasant place to live. It was...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! No conversation!

Mr X. L. Duval: It was a project that went wrong also and mainly, because of the number of houses put in one place. Would you be surprised, Mr Speaker, Sir, this La Valette which is not a pleasant place to live any more, this Government is constructing next door to La Valette the same number of houses again.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, you would agree with me...

Mr X. L. Duval: The same number of houses again.

Mr Speaker: Concentrate on your speech!

Mr X. L. Duval: This is what I am doing!

Mr Speaker: The speech is about appropriation.

Mr X. L. Duval: Of what?

Mr Speaker: The speech is about...

Mr X. L. Duval: Of what?

Mr Speaker: On the construction of...

Mr X. L. Duval: Of Rs5 billion for housing!

Mr Speaker: The construction of 12,000 houses!

Mr X. L. Duval: What am I talking about?

Mr Speaker: Not La Valette! Not La Valette!

Mr X. L. Duval: I'm saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that you cannot construct ghettos. You have to construct small units. That is what I'm saying. And if you look at what is being said here, there are 500 to 600 houses on one plot of land and this is a ghetto that is in construction.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *La vérité!*

Mr X. L. Duval: And that is what I am saying.

Mr Speaker: This one is good.

Mr X. L. Duval: A deep breath, I get my calm again.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, Coromandel, 550 houses! We just said that at La Valette, 200 houses is a problem and you are going to put upwards of 2,000 people in Coromandel. Balisson, I don't know where Balisson is, 400 houses. We are talking about 1,600 upwards of people in one place from all sorts of life, from all places coming to live there. Many of them, by definition, are not going to be very rich people. That is why they live there but they would have given their hard earned money to pay for one third of that house. We have to be decent to them. This is their life's savings that they are going to put there. We cannot ask them to buy into a place that in five years' time will be unliveable.

And so, you go at Notre Dame, Mr Speaker, Sir: 400 houses; l'Espérance Trébuchet: 400 houses; Arsenal: 350 houses, 1500 people; Henrietta and so on and so forth. Small is beautiful when you are creating communities. Small is beautiful and we are going in the other direction.

It was a serious point you see, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was neither wasting your time nor mine. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is my fourth question. Why are we constructing ghettos? Let us take a bit more time and give these people the sort of housing that we will be proud of in twenty years' time. Let us keep the same houses. I am not saying give them a *château* but the same houses in smaller plots and everyone, Mr Speaker, Sir, will live happily ever after and this, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Ki arive Lesjongard?

(Interruptions)

Ki to problem?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, no conversation! Please, continue with your speech!

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you very much. Throw him out if necessary. Let him go and speak to *kardinal laba*.

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

I am going to ask a question on the allowance. When I was Minister of Finance, I gave Rs200 per housing unit for the *Syndic*. I am sure you know about this. That Rs200 has remained Rs200 since 2013 and that is the reason why so many housing units have at least some decent environment. It's time! Now we are spending billions and billions while the Minister of Finance has got his budget in a few weeks. To increase this, come on, at least with inflation, this is a decent thing that we can do for them. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, my fourth question was – why construct ghettos?

The fifth question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the price. I come back to this tender. During the PNQ of November, when we were talking about the amounts tendered by construction companies, while answering a question of mine, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister told us and we were all shocked –

“(...) Sir, let me again make it clear. I have neither confirmed nor denied the figure of Rs6 m. because I simply do not know.”

This is what he said.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to submit to us the tendered amounts. He does not have to give us all, just the lowest and the highest for the projects because he did not know at that time but today, he does wish to have another five billion. So, let us have the tendered amounts for each side because that would tell us about the competence or otherwise of the people working at NSLD and how they can gage the cost.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now come to the next question. I think it is the sixth. Letters of Award have not been issued yet. I understand they will be issued, *Inshallah*, in a few days and only Letters of Intent have been issued to these 14 companies. Now, each of these 14 companies has been given one or more sites to bid upon. It is not as if you are asked to bid for any number. You are told or agreed that you will bid for one to three maybe because it is near your house or near whatever. Anyway, I understand that each of these 14 companies bid for a number of housing projects and they were given an amount. This is where comes the Rs2.7 m. Now, the hon. Minister of Finance is not an Accountant but Rs2.7 m. is not the cost of the house. I hope that you do not think it is so, because otherwise we will have serious problems for the national accounts. Rs2.7 m. is not the cost of the house; it is the cost of construction and the internal costs. It is not the cost of the house. The cost of the house is something else.

Now, they have been given the cost of construction and the on-site works. They said okay, keep this to Rs2.7 m. but submit your project to us. This is the area we need, we obviously need a toilet, a kitchen, we need this and the other and they said that one is going to make a house like this, the other one will make a house like that and the third one will make a house like that. Anyway, all these houses on different sites, different drainage issues, different topography but you want the same price. It is a bit odd. You want the same price wherever the houses are. That is a bit of a dream in itself. Okay, so, you want the same house.

Now, there is no competitive bidding; that is my problem. How do we know that we have value for money? How do we know that each and every contractor... One of them I think just had his account seized? How do we know that each and every contractor is going to provide you with value for money given that you have so many sites and I think five Project Managers at

NSLD who are young guys most of them? Are they going to determine value for money for a project worth about Rs30 billion in all in a few days? Does that make sense that they are going to do that? They are going to work on the sewerage, they going to work on the drainage, they are going to work on the *canalisations*, they are going to work on all this and the construction. Some will be one plus one, some will be just ground floor. I mean, it is huge.

So, the question I am going to ask here is: how do you ensure value for money without a competitive process because the only way that we have learnt to get value for money is in a competitive process? If you have one site, a few people compete for it – as many people as possible compete for the project – and you take the lowest price. That is the textbook style on how we learn how to get value for money. We do not know any other way of looking for value for money. Now, you have invented a new way of obtaining value for money. You tell me what you want to construct, I will have a look at it. The same guys that got it wrong, Rs6.2 m., Rs13.5 m., they are going to tell us that these guys will get Rs2.7 m. value. Of course, they thought the house was going to be Rs1 m., it costs Rs13 m. Anyway, how do we ensure value for money without a competitive bidding process?

The seventh question, Mr Speaker, Sir: what is the true cost of the land? Let us come to what the hon. Minister of Finance told us. The cost of land, he said, is Rs2.7 m. That is the cost of construction plus the onsite works. What about the offsite works? How is electricity going to come there? Virtual! How will it come there? How will we get water there? Is this not cost? This is something I missed maybe in my studies. What about the land? The land has a cost; whether or not it is Government land. It has value whether, you bought it or you did not buy it. It is still because if you did not, you could always sell it. I am not saying that but I am talking about the cost. What is the real cost? Do not try and put a number of costs under the carpet just to hide the incompetence of the NSLD and this is what is going to happen.

We are told that CWA will take part of the cost. How much? For CWA, it will be the water consumers who pay for it. CEB – and you have just increased the rates – will also take part of the cost. Then, it is the consumers who will pay. Tell us what is the true cost of the house; what is the cost or the value of the land, what is the cost of the buildings, what is the cost of the offsite works and what is the cost to the NSLD. So far as I know, the guys at the NSLD are not working for free. I hear that they have nice offices etc. So, what is the cost of all this? What is

the mark-up that the NSLD should be putting on these houses? 5%, 10% or less, I do not know. So, what is the cost per house?

I am not going to be that long. What about the quality of construction, hon. Deputy Prime Minister? I heard and it would be shocking if it were true, that we are going to do away with the performance bond. You will confirm perhaps. A nod or a 'no'! Perhaps give us a sign? No sign from the Deputy Prime Minister! Apparently, there will not be any performance bonds required from these contractors. So, they get 900 houses; so many houses to build and no performance bonds. Is that correct? Okay, no sign of life! So, no performance bond is required. I hope this is untrue. I hope this is untrue because we want the quality of the construction.

Apart from that, who will supervise this huge *chantier*? 8,000, who will supervise? You can have it fantastic on paper, but who will say that the contractors will actually abide to what is on paper? It is a huge amount of professional and dedicated work that needs to be done. Many of these contractors will actually subcontract the work to far smaller subcontractors; many of them will not be doing it themselves. Many of them are actually in India at the moment recruiting people. Fair enough. But what if these people in India, Madagascar or Bangladesh are not capable enough?

So, what about the quality of the work? People will be buying and will be paying about a third of their hard earned money for these houses. What if they start to crumble in a few years' time after the elections? What if they crumble? What if they leak like so many houses that have leaked in the past? What if all these happen? What will be done, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a guarantee? Are you asking for a bond? No performance bond! What about the guarantee of construction; how many years? Of these contractors, many of them, I think, have twisted their hands to construct. What is the guarantee period?

My question now is: how many years are you going to guarantee these houses? Not the NSLD! We do not want it to come out from the taxpayers' money. We want the contractors to guarantee. I am going to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that we need to have a specimen contract, which you are going to sign in the name of the taxpayers for about Rs21 billion construction costs only. What is the guarantee period? Do not forget to tell us that later, please. What about the performance bond? What about new technologies? I hear some of them will be using new technologies. I hope it is not prefabricated because they will have difficulties in

adding more rooms, etc. when you have expanded the house when it is prefabricated. Tell us what are the technologies that you are expecting; basic, cement, mortar and bricks, as we are used to, or are you allowing new technologies in some of these projects, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker: Mr Speaker!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker! Sorry, I deputised you for the wrong reason.

One of the few last questions on the cost to the person, last week you told us it was not clear about the cost to the purchaser. I know why because you do not know the cost of the house yet, because you are saying Rs2.7 m. and some people are saying that we cannot construct it for less than Rs3.2 m. This is why you cannot tell us yet what the cost to the purchaser is; because you are not sure yet about what is the cost to the NSLD. That will be interesting. The money, I presume, will be financed by NSLD itself. If it is one third or so, what is the interest rate that you will be charging to the people, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, I am saying that in 2021, there was in the Budget Speech 12,000 houses to be constructed. We were told that we had problems getting the land. The Prime Minister, when he was the Minister of Finance, told us in, I think, 2011 that he already had 1,000 acres, but I do not know what happened, maybe that did not come through. I have it here if you want to be reminded. The 12,000 units, two years later, not a single letter of award issued yet. And the problem is that we have a feeling that this is, in fact, a huge vote buying exercise – a huge vote buying exercise – that has to be done at all costs before the next election; at all costs and at any cost, Mr Speaker, Sir!

So, in conclusion, we can only proceed, Mr Speaker, Sir, with full and complete transparency. I think we will get this by the body language of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister later on. A huge amount of public money is involved; billions of purchasers' money will be borrowed and paid to buy these houses.

Democracy is transparency. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Let us try to avoid this and try to get to a situation where this Assembly, with full information, is able to support what you are proposing or decide, in fact, that all this is totally unacceptable in our country. Let us have the information.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo!

(12.42 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir for giving me the floor to participate in the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill.

Let me at the very outset say that the supplementary appropriation of funds is a recurrent feature in the yearly budgetary exercise. The House and all of us here know very well that the provision for additional funds is not only legal, but is also enshrined in our Constitution. Section 105 (3) of the Constitution provides that –

“where there is a need for expenditure and the amount appropriated is insufficient, then a Supplementary Estimates showing the sums required shall be laid before the Assembly, and a Supplementary Appropriation Bill shall be introduced and voted.”

The point I want to make, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that there is nothing wrong and certainly nothing sinister in requesting for additional funds for the normal appropriate established procedure that is applied in the circumstances whenever the need arises.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened very carefully to the intervention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I wonder what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is insinuating. Is he trying to say that there is *maldonne* on our side? The NSLD was created to facilitate the whole construction project, which we all agree is a massive project. I leave it to the Deputy Prime Minister to enlighten the House about the whole role of the NSLD. Besides, we all know that the NHDC has ongoing projects already, and handling the construction of 12,000 housing units, a project of this magnitude, would have impacted on their ongoing projects, as such, penalising the most vulnerable. So, the NSLD has been created just to facilitate the construction of these 12,000 houses.

Now, coming to La Valette, I totally disagree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition on La Valette project. La Valette, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not our baby! This project was initiated by your friends, by the Labour Party in 2008!

(Interruptions)

So, hon. Leader of the Opposition, *quel toupet!*

Mr Speaker, Sir, we could have left the families living at La Valette without any help and support but what have we done? Since we came in office, we have done our best to regulate the situation of the beneficiaries of La Valette. This is the reality! This is what we have done! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, how can you come here and say things which are inaccurate; unacceptable coming from a Leader of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I know the file in depth. I have worked on the file together with my colleague, hon. Alan Ganoo. On the contrary, most of their houses now are occupied. We have 199 houses, 197 are occupied; only two are vacant. So, hon. Leader of the Opposition, I find it very difficult to accept what you are saying.

They were living in very inappropriate conditions. I have personally met some of the beneficiaries. I have brought a paper to Cabinet. They have been able to buy the State Land for a *modique* sum of Rs2,000. So, in a word, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have provided beneficiaries with the opportunity to purchase the housing unit. Many have expressed an interest to purchase.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition said that the place was unlivable. So, if the place was unlivable, why the Labour Party had chosen that site in 2008?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

An hon. Member: *Dominer!*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Now, as far as I remember, 18 beneficiaries have already effected full payment. They have become owners of the house and four are in the process of getting their title deed, the files are before a Notary. So, this is the situation of La Valette. So, it is not correct to come in the House and say things which are not appropriate, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Now coming to the housing project, for us, Mr Speaker, Sir, nothing is more important than tackling the housing issue. We all agree that a house is a first unit of society, next to food and clothing; a house is one of the basic needs of man. Without a roof, it is very difficult for a

person to secure employment, raise their children and live a normal life. On this front, Mr Speaker, Sir, we believe that owning your home is good, good for the person, good for families, good for communities and good for the country as a whole. Therefore, it is our duty as a Government to provide decent housing to the people. In fact, social housing has been a part of our Government Programme 2020-2024. We believe it is the right and dignity of every person to have a house. As has been mentioned by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance in the Budget 2020-2021, our Government announced the construction of 12,000 residential units. I will not dwell on the eligibility criteria for social housing.

I think what is more important, Mr Speaker, Sir, is keeping the houses affordable. Simply building more houses without consideration of their affordability will not solve the housing issue. We know that the vulnerable community will never be able to pay the price of a house, that is why our Government would rather pay two third of the cost of one housing unit. It is good to know that the cost of construction of one housing unit is around Rs2.7 m. The beneficiary will pay only around Rs900,000. So, around Rs1.8 m. will be subsidised by Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us look at what the previous Government did from 2010-2014, a period just before our first mandate. Allow me to quote from their Government Programme 2010-2015. Paragraph 122 reads as follows –

“Government will complete the construction of some 550 low cost housing units by February 2011 on 11 sites across the island. 10,000 additional housing units will be constructed for lower and middle income groups. Some 1000 arpents of land to be made available within the context of the Government/MSPA deal, will be used for the construction of the new housing units.”

The question is: how many houses were constructed, Mr Speaker, Sir? Only 548! Very good on paper, Mr Speaker, Sir! Very good on paper; mere words...

An hon. Member: *Pe vin donne leson zordi.*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: ... which have not been acted upon. Now they have the cheek to question our commitments on which we are delivering?

Let us now see, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many housing units have been constructed by our Government from 2015 to date. It is good to know because I have just told the House what they

have done but let us see what we have done so far. And Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to take into account that we have been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic for some three years, we all agree, we are still being impacted by the long-term effects of the crisis. In spite of that, Mr Speaker, Sir, from 2015 to date, our Government has constructed... who can tell us? 4,100 housing units, Mr Speaker, Sir! 2010 to 2014, 548 houses only - five long years of inaction! You have failed on the housing project. *Le gouvernement d'alors, M. le président, n'avait aucune compétence en matière de logement.*

(Interruptions)

An. hon. Member: *Manze bwar!*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: No commitment! Whereas Mr Speaker, Sir, our Government has delivered on our housing project. From 2015 to date, 4,100 houses constructed. This is the truth! The simple truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that whenever MSM is in Government more homes are being built, this is the truth; this is the reality. So, coming to the House to play politics on housing project, is not your cup of tea.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we need to agree that construction of houses is not an easy task. The Ministry of Housing has encountered many challenges relating to house construction and has had to examine a range of key issues in order to proceed with a project –

- Identification of land;
- Geotechnical surveys have had to be carried out to assess whether the land is suitable and buildable;
- Unavailability of State Land due to which we have had to purchase private land.

Lawyers in the House would know that the purchase of private land is, in itself, a lengthy procedure; you need to communicate documents to the notary.

So, that's why this project has taken so much time because it is a major and massive project and besides the COVID-19 pandemic has flared up. Our building project took a very hard hit and this has significantly undermined the progress of this project. On top of this, we have had to face the far reaching consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war. The increase of price in construction has been a direct consequence of the war; that is why we now have had to ask for

more funds. There has been an increase in the cost of construction; the prices of cement and other construction materials have increased considerably. This is the truth. This is reality.

I can tell the House that despite all the challenges, the work is well under way. In fact my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Obeegadoo, keeps the Cabinet informed of all bottlenecks on a weekly basis. Hurdles are addressed through collective decisions. We do know that our colleague, the DPM, is working hard to catch up on lost time due to COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, the construction of 12,000 housing units is not the first social housing project announced by our Government. The House will recall that in the Budget 2017-2018, our Government took the decision to address the needs of vulnerable communities. What have we done? We earmarked 10% of NHDC houses for beneficiaries who are eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius and who are not owners of a plot of land. As a new measure for the vulnerable people, this measure is here to help those most in need.

On this side of the House, we recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and the family and the continuous improvement of living conditions.

M. le président, pourquoi est-ce-que le gouvernement est venu avec la mise en application de 10% des maisons réservées au SRM ? Pourquoi, M. le président ? Pour différentes raisons – d’abord pour préserver la vie des familles vulnérables et surtout l’avenir des enfants. Habiter une maison est une condition centrale. Dans les familles à faible revenu, les enfants rencontrent davantage de difficultés scolaires et les mauvaises conditions de logement sont un des facteurs qui pèsent sur leur avenir. Donc, accélérer la construction des maisons est une priorité de notre gouvernement. Les familles vulnérables sont des citoyens à part entière et non entièrement à part.

Nous sommes toujours à leur écoute pour cerner leurs besoins. Nous avons compris que le logement social est crucial pour eux. Avoir un toit au-dessus de leur tête leur permet d’avoir une meilleure vie. Ils peuvent avoir un bon emploi et subvenir aux besoins de leurs familles. Donc, réserver 10% des maisons, c’est-à-dire si nous allons construire 8,000 maisons, 10% des maisons, 800 maisons seront réservées aux personnes qui sont sur le registre sociale.

Un grand pas, M. le président, pour les personnes qui en ont le plus besoin. Nous voulons nous assurer que les plus vulnérables de notre société puissent vivre dans la dignité et profitent du développement économique de notre pays. Le rôle d'un bon gouvernement est de s'assurer que les développements économiques s'accompagnent d'un développement social équilibré. Dans ce projet de construction de logement social, notre gouvernement s'assure que personne n'est laissée pour contre, M. le président.

So, the 10% NHDC Housing Scheme brings a major change to the lives of our SRM beneficiaries who would otherwise not have been able to afford these houses, a house of up to 60 m² with all amenities. Now, at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, should I remind the House that in 2011, small, tiny houses of an extent of not more than 30 m² were built?

May be I don't need to remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He was himself the Minister of Social Integration from 2010 to 2011 and Minister of Finance from 2011 to 2014. So, may I ask the hon. Member what he has done for vulnerable families in the years when he had the opportunity to address the housing issue?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Pa ti ena covid!*

Mr X.L.Duval: Come to my office. I'll tell you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: What have you done? Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't mean to be nasty. This is not my nature but I am just stating facts after having heard what the Leader of the Opposition said earlier. During your time, hon. Leader of the Opposition, no consideration was given to uphold the dignity of the most needy. Mr Speaker, Sir, tiny houses; Hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you still remember the size of the house? How much was it? 30 m²! Only 30 m² and I don't know how many of you in the House, still remember how at that time the houses were qualified? Who can tell me?

An hon. Member: *Boite zalimet.*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Boite d'allumettes!*

So, tiny houses, small houses of an extent of not more than 30 m² were built and with the roof in corrugated iron sheets. Mr Speaker, with the roof in corrugated iron sheets! Look at the way vulnerable families were treated at that time. No respect for their dignity.

Mr X. L. Duval: I have nobody from Finance!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Members on the other side, you know what? We are facing problems with housing because nothing has been done by you and I am now talking of the houses constructed in 2010-2011. So, you know the persons, who lived in those tiny houses, they were always facing problems during bad weather. One strong wind and the roof was gone.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as Minister of Social Integration, I have myself visited those houses and I can tell you the houses are not to standard and we have done our best to help those families.

Now the Leader of the Opposition has the cheek to speak about decent houses. So, when we have debates of that sort, I think, it is important to come to the House to state facts which are correct and not to mislead the population, because the public is watching us. Since...

Mr X. L. Duval: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister is saying that we came to the House to mislead the population. Did you hear that? Can you ask her to withdraw that?

(Interruptions)

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I am just stating facts.

Mr X. L. Duval: No, not facts. She said: 'it is not correct to come to the House and mislead the population.' This is the word.

Mr Speaker: I have listened to your point of order, I will rule on that. Continue!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Have I mentioned your name?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, NHDC housing units are purchased by the NEF at the same price at which the NHDC sells to its buyers. The NEF thereafter sells the housing units to the eligible SRM beneficiaries who are not owners of any property. So, what is interesting, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the cost of the house is subsidised up to 80% and the beneficiary pays only 20% over a period of 20 to 25 years. So, as you can see, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are doing our best to support those beneficiaries and those who are on the SRM register. Since 2019 to date, we have been

able – one might say it is not enough – to provide 138 NHDC housing units to our beneficiaries. I understand that 95 more NHDC units are expected to be acquired by NEF by April 2023. As you can see, our policy is not to leave our people behind. So, we are doing our best, we are working towards an inclusive society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on a concluding note, I would like to highlight the relentless efforts being made by our Government to make a real difference to the lives of so many vulnerable families. We are sincere in our wish. I also wish to reassure the House that the additional funds being voted today will be judiciously used in the best interest of the most vulnerable. A good government has to focus on the well-being of those who need our support the most.

In all our actions, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have put people at the centre. We will continue to work hard to deliver on our commitment. I am confident that we, on this side of the House, will make a real difference in housing policy. The commitment and dedication of our Prime Minister to the most vulnerable is an example. No hurdle has ever made him backpedal. A true leader!

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I will suspend the Sitting for one and a half hour.

At 1.10 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

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

Mr Speaker: Please, be seated! Hon. Ramyad!

Ms N. Ramyad (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me at the very onset thank you for giving me the opportunity to lay my contribution as an Elected Member of Constituency No. 11 Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle on the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill.

The Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (2022-2023) of 2023 shows under Vote/Subhead 24-1 26323058: *National Environment and Climate Change Fund*, the allocation of Rs417 m. for the construction of a Waterfront at Deux Frères. I would thank the Minister of Finance, hon. Dr. Renganaden Padayachy for this supplementary appropriation for the project of Waterfront at Deux Frères.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very important to first remind you all that Deux Frères is a small village on the south eastern coast and in Constituency No. 11 found between the busy boating village of Grand River South East and Trou d'Eau Douce on one side and the lush green and hilly village of Quatre Soeurs on the other side where agriculture and fishing are the main incomes of families.

After sand extraction from lagoons was banned in 2001, the ex-sand landing platforms along the Deux Frères Waterfront have been dilapidated and the adjacent areas have suffered quite some environmental decline. There has also been a socio-economic impact on the residents and families of Deux Frères as their main professional engagement and income were derived from sand extraction activities.

This is why I lay my gratitude to the Prime Minister as well who is *la cheville ouvrière* behind the project. It has been his vision since 2003 when he was the Minister of Finance, Deputy Prime Minister and an elected Member of Constituency No. 11 to see this transformation in the south eastern coast. He continuously believed that the south eastern coast needs to get its share of environmental friendly development. It is to be devised in a sustainable way and primary focus should be laid in planning and executing any form of infrastructural development in the area.

It is to note that unfortunately during 2005-2014, this part of the island remained unnoticed by the then Government and those people who earned their livelihoods through sand extraction were forgotten and no attempt was made towards the south eastern communities to accompany or lead them to diversify their know-how or to empower them. The Waterfront project, which is now a reality, has the benefit of catering for two important aspects of sustainable development –

- (i) the environmental aspect, and
- (ii) the socio-economic growth aspect of the people and communities.

It blends with the Government policy of putting people first, at the centre of every growth potential.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to first take the environmental aspect of the project. Observations made on site have shown that Deux Frères is being impacted by erosion. When we

talk of erosion, it means sand eroding into the sea, the mixture of soil and sand causing a direct impact on our marine flora and fauna, the fading away of beaches which exposes the seashores to violent waves and risks to public and existing infrastructures. All these cumulative effects may cause a direct impact in our physical environment and our way of life.

Additionally, the coastal stretch of Deux Frères is highly vulnerable to coastal inundation and climate change impacts. The coastal erosion and flooding of low-lying areas in the region may have continued with the impacts of sea level rise and frequent storm surges. It is undeniable that Small Island Developing States are the most affected by a sea level rise. The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability confirms that SIDS are increasingly affected by tropical cyclones, storm surges, droughts, changing precipitation patterns, coral bleaching and invasive species. So, what should we have done? Sleep on our laurels and wait and see or look for *elastoplast* or *panadol* solution like it was the practice in 2005-2014, where we see that absorption drains construction in that era in various localities are barely able to hold any floodwater or, lure the population that tomorrow will be different from their past failures, as with the touch of a magic wand their leader has changed for the best? Under these fakeness and false promises of our Opposition Members, the Government has opted to act. We assess, evaluate, plan and act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to only state some projects by the Ministry of Environment, on the south-eastern coast for coastal protection, which are ongoing and nearing completion stage. Presently, coastal protection works over a total length of approximately 5.4 km are ongoing at the following sites –

- Pointe aux Feuilles to Grand Sable ;
- Petit Sable to Bambous Virieux ;
- Bambous Virieux to Anse Jonchée ;
- Providence to Vieux Grand Port and Bois des Amourettes.

Works at the mentioned sites started back in 2019 and are now expected to be completed in 2023.

I would like to commend and put on record the unconditional and dedicated involvement of the Ministry of Environment, hon. Kavy Ramano, who continuously monitored each and every aspect at each stage of the project. As part of the project implementation process, several

consultative meetings were held with inhabitants and fishers at the design stage to inform them on the coastal works and to take into consideration all requests at their end.

It is to be noted that during the initial design stage in 2018, members of the National Environment Commission were of the opinion that hardening of the beaches through rocks revetment, should be minimised and sanding of beaches should be promoted in order to enhance its attractiveness as Mauritius is a tourist destination. Subsequently, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change humbly reviewed the design of the coastal works along the southern-eastern coast in order to integrate perched sandy beaches, cycle tracks and plantation of mangroves as far as practicable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is to be noted that at the completion of the project in 2023, access along the shoreline will improve. Facilities such as boat ramps and hardstand will facilitate the daily activities of fishers of the region. Inhabitants and the public in general would also benefit an upgraded physical coastal environment with beach space for their leisure while the socio-economic status of the region would be enhanced. Following works, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning will proclaim all those sites as public beaches which will then be handed over to the Beach Authority for maintenance and cleaning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the waterfront being proposed at Deux Frères over some 900 metres would, *inter alia*, comprise –

- Rock revetment;
- A fill up of 60 metres towards the sea;
- An area of 10-50 metres square reserved for the future development of the National Coast Guard Office;
- Perched sandy beaches;
- A new access road of 550 metres long and 6 metres wide from B28 coastal road to the waterfront;
- A boat ramp;
- An anchoring area for boats;
- Parking spaces;
- Recreational areas;
- Toilet facilities;

- Children playground;
- A 156 metres berthing quay for catamarans and speedboats;
- Pedestrian walkways, and
- Spaces for commercial outlets and tuck shops.

The Deux Frères Waterfront lies on the south-west bank of the estuary of Grand River South East which is today, a nodal point for many activities for tourists and the local public, including visits to the Grand River South East waterfalls and the offshore Ile aux Cerfs. Further, some tourism-related activities at *Grande Rivière Sud Est* require transboarding from catamaran to small boats in the river, which has safety implications, as indicated by the Minister of Finance and so, also conflicts with other users.

Considering the daily influx of tourists visiting the Grand River South East waterfalls, the Ile aux Cerfs and the other related tourist activities in the region, it is expected that enhanced amenities at Deux Frères through the waterfront project will be a major enabler to boost economic activities as well as generate employment for the local inhabitants. The project would also ensure safety.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the second aspect it caters for is the socio-economic upliftment of the residents of Deux Frères and adjoining villages. The public-owned marina will allow transboarding of around 60-70 commercial boats daily: catamarans, speedboats and small boats, giving the chance to the local communities to explore the avenue of *plaisanciers* and skippers. The fishers, hawkers, artisanal workers, and artists will find the adequate platform to sell their local products.

Fresh agricultural products and added value products could be commercialised throughout the various outlets. Plumbers, electricians, mechanics will also find an enhanced and long-term avenue to build their businesses. Taxis, contract vans and transport services are also the forthcoming avenues of growth that south-eastern residents may look into. Restaurants, food selling outlets will create the emergence of new, small and medium scale entrepreneur. The above are only some avenues to empower the South East residence in their quest to a better way of life and offer opportunities to grow. The emergence of entrepreneur and new types of professional activities will definitely uplift the region and its people.

An integrated approach towards development has always striven the actions of the Government. We lead, but we also accompany the various financial initiatives to be an actual entrepreneur through DBM. No interest and low interest schemes, the no asset as bank guarantee facility will definitely help our young generation to emerge as entrepreneur. The SME Mauritius branch of Rose Belle is already helping the engaged and risks taking youth of the south-eastern coast to devise their business plan and to be ready and be empowered to embrace their new opportunities.

I would also congratulate Polytechnics Mauritius and MITD who have devised structured courses to accompany the youth in their quest for the entrepreneur real identity in new emerging field with practical training opportunities in organization.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would end my speech today by thanking the Minister of Finance, Minister of Environment and the Prime Minister for having given full support and is making the Deux Frères Waterfront Project a reality. Dreams are meant to be achieved through hard work. As the South East region gets its identity and dose of modernity, we will always ensure that it keeps its virgin, raw and traditional aspect which is the southern soul. The cycle track, the perched beaches, the greenery and aesthetics will just add on to the reigning beautiful culture in this coast.

I end my speech here. Thank you.

(14.59 p.m.)

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): The Bill before this House is no ordinary Bill. It is governed by section 105 subsection 3 of the Constitution which limitatively sets out instances where a Supplementary Appropriation Bill can be laid before the National Assembly.

The hon. Minister of Finance, who is not even here, is relying in particular on section 105 subsection 3(a) of the Constitution, which allows additional amounts to be appropriated in a financial year where the amount voted in the Budget for that purpose is insufficient. This Supplementary Expenditure Bill is for the Financial Year 2022-2023 which will end on 30th of June 2023. We are already in April. There are only two months left before the end of this

financial year. Are these additional Rs5,417 m. really required? Will they really be spent in the next two months? I have strong reservation.

If we look at the Estimates in last year's Budget, under the item National Environment and Climate Change Fund, the estimated unspent balance as at 30 June 2023, meaning at the end of this financial year will be Rs760 m. So, we already have Rs760 m. unspent and the hon. Minister of Finance is asking us to vote for another Rs417 m. When it comes to the COVID-19 Project Development Fund, it is even worse! The estimated unspent balance as at 30 June 2023 will be Rs15,184,000,000. Rs15 billion sitting in the COVID-19 Project Development Fund and you would like us to believe that we need to appropriate another additional Rs5 billion because there are insufficient funds!

So, you will excuse me if I am not convinced that there was a need to appropriate an additional amount of Rs5.4 billion before this financial year end and I am not convinced that this Supplementary Appropriation Bill meets the constitutionality test laid down in section 105 subsection 3 of the Constitution. But let us take a closer look at the estimates of the Supplementary Expenditure Bill. An amount of Rs417 m. is required for the construction of a Waterfront at Deux Frères. This project was, in fact, announced as far back as June 2017 in the Budget Speech 2017-2018 at paragraph 245 as one of the projects to be financed by the Rs3.3 billion funding we received from India.

This morning, the hon. Minister of Finance described this project as a priority project and the hon. Chief Whip also talked about the urgency of this project! This Government did nothing since June 2017, five years they did nothing to Deux Frères Waterfront, and today, the hon. Minister of Finance wants us to believe that in these two months, he needs Rs417 m. to carry out this project. But what is more telling? For those who cared to go and study the Budget Speech of the hon. Pravind Jugnauth, who was then Minister of Finance, do you know what the project value was for Waterfront at Deux Frères in 2017? What was the project value? Rs60 m. only! Today, Rs717 m.; seven times more of the initial cost! 600% increase in the project value because they did nothing for five years.

We are all very interested to know the reason for such a hike in the project cost. At Committee Stage, no doubt, we will move for full particulars and breakdown of the project costs.

Have tenders been launched? Have contracts been awarded? What is the timeframe that we are looking for this so-called priority project?

The second item of expenditure which we are called upon to approve is the staggering Rs5 billion under the special COVID-19 Project Development Fund for the construction of residential unit as well as other associated costs.

Hon. Members will recall that it was announced in the Budget Speech, delivered on 04 June 2020, that Rs12 billion was being earmarked for the construction of 12,000 residence units over the next three financial years.

- Rs6 billion was earmarked to be spent in the Financial Year 2020-2021, Rs6 billion! How many houses were constructed in 2020-2021? Zero!
- Rs4 billion was earmarked to be spent in Financial Year 2021-2022. However, according to revised estimate, out of this Rs4 billion, only Rs100 m. was spent. How many houses were constructed in 2021- 2022? Zero!
- Rs4.5 billion was earmarked to be spent in this current financial year. How many social housing units have been constructed in this financial year? Zero!

You already have appropriated Rs12 billion; you have not yet spent the whole amount and now you want us to give another Rs5 billion, which means Rs17 billion!

Rs17 billion and not even *un coup de pioche*, not even a single house?

I am not going to repeat what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said in his excellent intervention which I thoroughly concur with. I will limit myself to highlighting how the project has drastically changed since it was announced three years ago.

Last week, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister shed some light on the new project in his answer to PQ B/28. The first surprise we got is about the number of houses. We are no longer talking about 12,000 housing units. There are going to be only 8,000 housing units, a reduction of 25%.

Next, the target income group, instead of providing housing units for families having a monthly income of up to Rs60,000 per month, the housing units would now be available only to households with a monthly income of up to Rs30,000.

Next is the cost of construction. In answer to a PQ on 11 November last year, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that the construction cost would be between Rs1.5 m. to Rs1.9 m. which was aligned to the cost of a housing unit delivered by NHDC, and that was only four months ago, in November. Last week, the same hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that the cost of each housing unit will now be Rs2.7 m. and we are not even talking about the infrastructure cost, the land acquisition cost; we are talking about only the construction cost. I hope the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who is intervening will clarify. I am told that land has been acquired for the purpose of constructing housing units and part of these lands cannot be used. On some of the lands, you cannot have construction. We have already spent hundreds of millions rupees on this project and no housing unit can be built on these plots. So, how can he get it so wrong?

Next is the amount of subsidy. Last year, in answer to a PNQ, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that Government will subsidise 80% of the cost for families earning less than Rs10,000 per month and Government will subsidise 67%, two third of the cost for families earning between Rs10,000 and Rs30,000 per month. Now, if the housing unit is Rs2.7 m., we are not even sure of this because Requests for Proposal have been launched and we have not received confirmation yet if all the contractors have come forward and agreed to construct 8,000 units at Rs2.7 m. But let us assume that the cost of construction will be Rs2.7 m. and this is the selling price of one unit, Government is going to subsidise between 80% for those earning less than Rs10,000 and two third for families earning more than Rs10,000. So, if we take a family that earns less than Rs10,000, they will still have to fork out Rs540,000 for a house. A family earning - let us say - Rs11,000 or Rs12,000 per month, will have to pay Rs900,000 for one of these houses. Rs900,000 and you call this social housing for the less fortunate? The less fortunate will have to fork out Rs900,000? How do you expect them to pay that? Have you at least worked out how much a vulnerable needy family will have to pay every month for that housing unit? Last week, you haven't and I hope that today you have and I look forward to listening to you, hon. Deputy Prime Minister. You will explain to us how much each family, who is acquiring this housing unit, will have to pay every month.

Last but not least, the procurement method used. Last year, in answer to the PNQ, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister informed the House that the New Social Living Development Ltd. (NSLD) has approved the implementation of the procurement policy framework with a view and I quote, this is very interesting, –

“... with a view to ensure a transparent, efficient, fair, ethical process, with good governance practices and equitable procurement processes so as to achieve maximum value for public money.”

That was told four months ago. You were going to have efficient, ethical, transparent procurement method and what happened? Last week the hon. Deputy Prime Minister told us that the same company, NSLD, has invited 19 building contractors to express their interests to construct housing units at a price of Rs2.7 m. So, there is no longer any tender, there is no longer any specification, there is no longer any competitive bidding. So, how would the contract now be awarded? What happens if, for example, several contractors have expressed an interest to construct housing units at the same sites? How are you going to decide who will get the tender? Are you going to proceed by drawing of lots? Are you going to give it to the person you want to in all opacity? Or, as it is very topical today, will it depend on the amount of *cerfs* that they will bring to the table? There is simply a total opacity now around the award of these contracts by the NSLD and I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this total opacity is the deliberate result of excluding NSLD from the purview of the Public Procurement Act.

The hon. Minister of Finance has been trying to think - why is it that if we already have so much money in the COVID-19 Fund, why is he asking for additional fund. Is that good governance? Is that proper practice? By coincidence, I was reading the Report of the Director of National Audit who just published its report last week; it was tabled last week before the august Assembly. There is a whole paragraph on COVID-19 Projects Development Fund - Large Amount Remaining Unutilised. The Director of Audit criticises the fact that, and I quote –

“In spite of the large sum being held in the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund at the close of financial year 2020-2021, and the significant unspent balances from the Rs 8.5 billion appropriated in the 2021-2022 budget, yet the Ministry had recourse to supplementary provisions of Rs2.5 billion.”

So, despite the warning of the Director of Audit, the hon. Minister of Finance, in full defiance, is still persisting in having recourse to supplementary provisions of Rs5 billion when according to last year’s estimates, there would be an unspent balance of over Rs15 billion in that COVID-19 Projects Development Fund.

What is worst is that the Director of Audit stated that as at 30 June 2022, an amount of Rs6.7 billion belonging to this COVID-19 Projects Development Fund, was in fixed deposit. So, it was money that was not going to be used in the immediate future; it was put in fixed deposit with commercial banks. Now, how is that possible? Because we all know that the person who is the Chairman of the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund is the Financial Secretary. And the Financial Secretary, isn't he the one who on 20 May 2019 - it is his signature - who sent a circular under the heading Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Circular No. 6 of 2019, from Financial Secretary to Supervising Officers of Ministries/Departments and Officers in Charge of non-financial public sector body? In case, someone thinks it is confidential, it is not. This is available freely on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

So, in 2019, what did the Financial Secretary write? According to that Circular, Non-Financial Public Sector bodies were requested to invest their surplus cash balance in new Treasury Certificate which was going to be issued by the Bank of Mauritius or in traditional Government securities through the secondary market in order to enable early repayment of public sector debt and to reduce the excess liquidity in the banking system as well as the cost of mopping up that excess liquidity. So in 2019, the Financial Secretary wrote to everyone and told them that if they have excess cash, not to put it in banks but buy treasury bonds; invest in Treasury bills.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, excuse me, I think you are departing from the main debate. Come back with that money you're talking, show how that money could have been used or whatever, but don't depart from the main debate, please. Continue!

Mr Uteem: The point I am making, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that there are already Rs15 billion in that special fund...

Mr Speaker: That was a good point but don't stretch too far from it from the main debate!

Carry on! Carry on!

Mr Uteem: Yes, but now we are being asked to vote for another Rs5 billion which we still do not know where it is going to be put. What is worse is that on 28 February 2022, the same Financial Secretary, acting in his capacity of Chairman of COVID-19 Project Development

Fund, wrote to the Chief Executive of Silver Bank Ltd. and told them that we have Rs2 billion of this special fund with Silver Bank and asked to give them back their money. What is Silver Bank? Silver Bank is Banyan Tree Bank. What is Banyan Tree Bank? It is the Bank that went into conservative on 01 April.

Mr Speaker: No, now you are going too far! Excuse me, I have been kind enough and quite flexible with you but you're going too far. Please, come back to your debate! Come back to you speech and you know what the main point is here.

Mr Uteem: The main point is that we have already transferred Rs12 billion and we are now going to transfer another Rs5 billion. So, Rs17 billion to a company which has not constructed a single house! So, this money must be sitting somewhere. Where is that money sitting? It is in bank account and this is in breach of the Circular issued by the Ministry of Finance. Now the hon. Minister of Finance is asking us to give more money to again put in fixed deposit with Silver Bank – this is the issue – in breach of the official Circular of his own Ministry. This is the issue! How come we are asked to vote more money, to give more money to this Company to put in commercial banks in breach of the official Circular? If I had Rs5 billion, if you have not spent Rs5 billion, go and reduce the public debt. If you have Rs5 billion, go and reduce taxes; go and subsidise petroleum products; go and ease the cost of living but do not ask us to vote another Rs5 billion. We will not!

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mr Bérenger: *Huh!*

Mr Speaker: *Huh?*

(Interruptions)

Huh! Huh! Huh!

Huh! Look at you!

Mr Bérenger: Look at you!

Mr Speaker: You! *Huh!*

Mr Bérenger: *Sovaz! Huh!*

Mr Speaker: *Huh! Huh!*

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Bérenger: *Franchement! Huh!*

Mr Speaker: *Huh!*

(Interruptions)

Huh! Huh!

Mr Bérenger: *Kontinie fer kouma zako!*

Mr Speaker: *Huh!*

What did you say?

(Interruptions)

What did you say?

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou latet pa bon!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please withdraw that word!

Mr Bérenger: I withdraw *zako!*

Mr Speaker: Withdraw that word towards me! Please withdraw that or else leave the House!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: No, I am saying that you are making noises *kouma enn zako!*

Mr Speaker: Leave the House!

An hon. Member: *Deor!*

Mr Speaker: Leave the House!

(Interruptions)

I would not say the same to you! Leave the House!

Mr Bérenger: *Sovaz!*

Mr Speaker: The whole population knows I would not say the same to you!

(Interruptions)

Leave the House!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ey koz dousman do!*

Mr Bérenger: *Calmer do!*

Mr Speaker: Leave the House!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ey koz dousman ta! Koz dousman do!*

Mr Speaker: Leave the House!

(Interruptions)

Serjeant-at-Arms!

Mr Bhagwan: *Kalme twa! Ki to koz for coum sa!*

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sovaz!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

Mr Bérenger: *Ey ki ta zako !*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sovaz!*

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

(Interruptions)

Get out from here! Carry him away! Get out from here!

Mr Bhagwan: *Koz dousman!*

Mr Speaker: Get out from here!

Mr Bhagwan: *Koz dousman! Ki get out! To proprieter parlman twa kouyon!*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sovaz!*

Mr Speaker: Please, withdraw that word!

Withdraw that word!

Mr Bhagwan: Do not shout!

Mr Speaker: Withdraw that word!

Mr Bhagwan: What did I say? What did I say?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I know what you said!

(Interruptions)

You withdraw that word or you get out from here!

(Interruptions)

Please withdraw from the House!

Mr Bhagwan: Tell me!

Mr Speaker: I don't have to tell you anything! Withdraw from the House!

Mr Bhagwan: But tell me what I did.

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms! Serjeant-at-Arms!

Ms J. Bérenger: Vous êtes carrément brute !

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pu alle mwa. Mo pa ekout sa soular la !*

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms, carry this man away!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ey alle do ta!*

Mr Speaker: He is becoming dangerous!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I am going out from here!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Nou pa la pou fer komik !*

Mr Speaker: He is becoming dangerous! Carry him away!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Nou pa la pou fer komik ! Nou pa la pou fer joke !*

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Alle do ta!*

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

Carry him away, Serjeant-at-Arms! Do your work! You have police duties to observe!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *To pa touss mwa!*

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms, carry him away!

An hon. Member: *Mr Speaker, pa kumsa.*

Mr Bhagwan: You will be thrown out!

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ey alle do ta! Who are you?*

Mr Speaker: Carry him away! Carry him away! Get out from the House!

Mr Bhagwan: *Vagabon!*

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

Mr Bhagwan: *To enn vakabon!*

Mr Speaker: Carry him away!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou bizin kalme ou !*

(Interruptions)

Sa parlman la kouma enn joke!

An hon. Member: Assez!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Respect!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou bizin respekte nou avan !*

Mr Speaker: Respect!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou bizin respekte nou avan !*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Respect! Please! Show respect!

Hon. Ganoo!

Ms J. Bérenger: Lâche!

An hon. Member: *Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: Now, I am naming hon. Joanna Bérenger for the word '*lâche*'!

An hon. Member: *Ale, bien bon!*

Ms J. Bérenger: La vérité blesse !

Mr Speaker: I am naming hon...

(Interruptions)

Serjeant-at-Arms!

Ms J. Bérenger: La vérité blesse !

Mr Speaker: That was a plan! That was planned! This walkout was planned! It was preplanned!

Ms J. Bérenger: *To enn sovaz !*

Mr Speaker: The walkout was preplanned! The whole population is witnessing!

At this stage, the Opposition Members left the House.

(Interruptions)

You are defying the President of the House!

This was planned! This walkout was planned! Get out from here!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou pe pran sa parlman la pou enn sirk !*

Mr Speaker: Get out from here!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou pe fer joke ! Nou la pou travay nou !*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou pe pren ou pu enn kloon !*

Mr Speaker: Come on, get out!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Ou fer joke!*

(Interruptions)

Nou la pou travay nou ! Nou pa la pou fer sirk !

Mr Speaker: Get out from here!

Ms J. Bérenger: *Sovaz!*

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Oh!*

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms!

I suspend the Sitting! Serjeant-at-Arms, do your work!

At 3.24 p.m. the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.42 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated!

MOTIONS – S.O. 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal, Ms J. Bérenger, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3), to take the time of the House for urgent business.

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

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

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal, Ms J. Bérenger, I beg to move that the hon. First Member for Vacoas and Floréal, Ms J. Bérenger, be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's Sitting and the next three Sittings unless unreserved apologies are tendered to the House.

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENT

HON. MR R. BHAGWAN – S.O. 48 - NAMING

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to announce on his way out from the Chamber, the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr R. Bhagwan, uttered offensive words to my address. I am therefore naming the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr R. Bhagwan.

MOTIONS – S.O. 17(3) & S.O. 29(1)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr R. Bhagwan, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3), to take the time of the House for urgent business.

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

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

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of your decision to name the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr R. Bhagwan, I beg to move that the hon. First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, Mr R. Bhagwan, be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's Sitting and the next five Sittings unless unreserved apologies are tendered to the House.

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

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Who is next?

(4.45 p.m.)

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr A. Ganoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to intervene briefly on the present debate on the Estimates of the Supplementary Expenditure (2022-2023). I will make a few remarks.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I intended to dwell on the issue of the project regarding the waterfront at Deux Frères and in the same breath, to touch on the important subject of climate change and global warming, Mr Speaker, Sir, which as we know today everybody in the world, all the countries of the world, all the governments qualify as an existential threat for humanity.

But, before doing that, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I am duty bound to rebut what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said when he intervened earlier when all of them were present in this House. We know today, Mr Speaker, Sir, what has happened during the day. I have been in this House since 41 years in two months, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I have never heard any Member of this House calling a Speaker ‘*sovaz*’, ‘*soular*’...

Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr Ganoo: ...‘*kouyon*’, and other words which I cannot remember, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, we would have been failing in our duty to this House if the proper measures would not have been taken as the House just did a few minutes ago.

Mr Speaker: Allow me to reassure the House, I am not intimidated at all by those sayings. Please, continue!

Mr Ganoo: Although you have been treated as a ‘*zako*’, Mr Speaker, Sir, you are right not to be intimidated.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. X. L. Duval talked about the project of La Valette and he was focusing on this issue in order to criticise the Government on our housing policy. He said a few things in fact which are incorrect and not true. He has been abundantly corrected by hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo. But since I have been in this Constituency for so long and I know La Valette and the project itself, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I was a Member of the Opposition when the then Labour-PMSD Government initiated this project, let me correct a few lies. In fact, hon. X. L. Duval was wrong *sur tous les niveaux*, on all scores when he was intervening on this project; when he was commenting on the La Valette project.

The La Valette project, in fact, as he himself admitted when he was forced to do so by Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, was a project of the Labour-PMSD Government. In fact, it was a project which had flopped, Mr Speaker, Sir. What happened with this project? I am going to very briefly tell the story of La Valette. In fact, when this project was initiated, there were many flaws

in it, Mr Speaker, Sir, but to be honest and candid, the idea was good. Perhaps Mr X. L. Duval does not know; there were about 192 or 190+ houses and the houses were built on ground floor with 7-8 perches given to each resident. And what happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? The plan was to encourage these residents, these owners to be owners, to grow vegetables, help them in many ways, *des mesures d'accompagnement*, as we say in French, Mr Speaker, Sir, and give them training, *la formation* so that the people of La Valette would become skilled workers and they could stand on their own feet. The project was laudable, no doubt about that, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was a question of *autonomiser les résidents de La Valette*, this is the first part.

But, as soon as the houses were built and the occupiers entered into these houses, they were left on the ditch, on the pavement. They were ditched, Mr Speaker, Sir. They were forgotten. They were left in oblivion, and the authorities in those days never respected the pledges that they made vis à vis these people. And worst of all, the rental claim from these residents was exorbitant, was oppressive, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have never seen *un projet de logement social* with the rent being so exorbitant. In fact, every year there was an increase in rent, about 20%. So, how can you expect a poor family, vulnerable as they were because they were former squatters, coming into a house, and then, asking these people every year to increase the rent by 15 or 20%? And besides that, there were other conditions also attached to the lease, for example, if the owner is the father in this house, and the head of the family died, the authorities would take back the house from this family. They were not allowed to bring in other members, *les autres membres de la famille*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

So, that is why this project finally failed, Mr Speaker, Sir. The people, of course, were squatters; they wanted to be provided with a house. They signed the lease knowing perhaps fully well that it would be very difficult for them to respect the conditions of the lease because they were homeless at that time. So, they entered the house, and with the oppressive conditions in this lease, of course, they could not pay the rental. After one year, every month, they were being served with notice by Attorneys and they were traumatised all along the weeks, the months and the coming years that they would be kicked out of this house and so on and so forth, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Fortunately, I remember one day when I was in the Opposition, I went to talk to Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, she had then become a Minister at that time, and then, a new schedule

of payment was worked out and gradually, the necessary help was provided and this is how Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo succeeded in humanising the conditions in this complex, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is what had happened, Mr Speaker.

Secondly, he said another thing concerning La Valette. He said we were building ghettos near La Valette, and you are now compounding this dreadful situation in La Valette. This is what he was asking us to believe. The *longère* or the ghetto that he referred to Mr Speaker, Sir, do you know what this project is? Let me tell you because a few months ago, myself, my two colleagues, hon. Mrs Mayotte, hon. Ramchurrun, the Minister of Housing, the DPM, and the Minister Lesjongard as a former MP of this Constituency, we went to launch this project.

Now, I will tell you what ghettos Mr X. L. Duval is referring to. This is a project, listen to me, Mr Speaker, Sir, of 233 *maisons* on 20 acres each and they are individual houses - *chacun pour soi* - on 4 perches, 44 toises. We all know, one perch is 11 toise; *4 fois 11 cela fait 44 toises. Sur 44 toises, une maison*, one unit, Mr Speaker, Sir, for 233 *familles*, ground only. It is not ground plus four, plus five or plus one or plus two. It is ground only. This is what Mr X. L. Duval called ghetto, Mr Speaker. Shameful on his part!

Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr Ganoo: A Leader of the Opposition coming in this House speaking live, because thousands and thousands of people are watching us as we are speaking *et venir dire enn gro manti koumsa*, Mr Speaker, Sir. Shameful on his part! This is not a ghetto! And you know what I want Mr X. L. Duval to do? These houses have been built and have been provided for squatters who are living near La Ferme Réservoir behind Cité La Ferme. You know that, Mr Speaker, Sir, you are a resident of Bambous. You know what I am talking about. And these 233 squatters include Rodriguans, Camp Rodriguais. And when you go to these houses, Mr Speaker, Sir, as we heard yesterday, *mo anvie plore*. Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, tears come in your eyes when you see in what situation these 200 squatters are living behind Cité La Ferme and the *rodriguais* of Camp Rodriguais. It is for these people that these houses have been built at this time.

They have already even received a paper because the houses have already been allocated. The Authorities have made a very thorough analysis, examination, survey. The houses have been marked to know which of them are squatters or illegal; some have been regularized.

I, myself, as the Minister of Housing, I remember having regularised many of them but they could not build a decent house. Their houses are still made of corrugated iron sheet (CIS), Mr Speaker, Sir, flooded with heavy rainfall and so on. These are the ghettos where these poor people are going to stay in a few months and I would like Mr Duval to go and tell these people including our friends from Rodrigues, *“ghetto sa, na pa ale rester. Rest dan to lakaz couler.”* If he is in fact a responsible Leader of the Opposition, he should go and tell those people that hon. Obeegadoo is building ghetto for them and that they should not go there; but rather stay in their CIS houses, Mr Speaker, Sir. He is speaking of ghettos, *4 perce later*, 233 families are going to live in a new house in a few months, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On behalf of my two colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the DPM, Mr Speaker, Sir. *233 maisons dans quelques mois - allons souhaiter que jusqu'à la Noël, ces 233 familles y compris les rodriguais qui sont venus à Maurice, des familles rodriguaises vont finalement avoir la possibilité de commencer à occuper ces maisons-là*, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, that's a big lie that I wanted to denounce at the beginning of my speech.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I told you I wanted to say a few words on the other segment in this Estimate, in this Supplementary Appropriation Bill regarding Climate Change. Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately I know I do not have much time but I will just say a few things and I would like to approach this subject with your permission to inform the House on the Climate Action Finance Diplomacy Tracks that my Ministry, in consultation with other Ministries and Government Agencies, have been actively pursuing in the recent months. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that before the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank published a report whereby transitioning to a green economy and initiating measures against the climate change could unlock potentials for new economic opportunities and jobs in any country.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, the benefits of investing to address climate change dramatically outweigh any upfront cost as these would not only reduce emissions but promote adaptation to the negative impacts of climate change and hence, build resilience. SIDS, Mr Speaker, Sir, of which we are one, are already facing disproportionate losses and damages. Sea level rise poses existential threat to coastal regions. There is risk of permanent and irreversible loss of terrestrial marine and coastal bio-diversity.

Today, in our country, we have physical evidence that indicates that coastal erosion around our island is increasing significantly, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have been experiencing droughts, flashfloods, and cyclones with high intensities. I think the Minister of Finance said in his speech, the sea level is rising at a rate of 5.6 mm per year, directly impacting our beaches which in turn, affect the Tourism Industry, Mr Speaker, Sir, and if I am not mistaken, the Indian Ocean is the ocean where the sea rise is more acute today. Thus, the livelihoods of our fisheries community and the Tourism Sector, one of the pillars of our economy, are at risk of escalation with climate change. Also, like other SIDS, we faced other technical capacity challenges throughout the project cycle from conception to implementation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Paris Agreement, as we remember, advocates for the support of developing countries, including SIDS like Mauritius to design and develop action plans under their nationally determined contribution and in Mauritius, we also have the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. This is a Commonwealth Project which is hosted by our country and this project has helped many countries of the Commonwealth to unlock the available Climate Finance. Through this initiative, small and vulnerable states are assisted to bid for and gain increased access to climate finance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these climate adaptation and mitigation projects have been financed by the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Small Grass Program which are dedicated multilateral funds and Mauritius, including other SIDS, have been calling the International Community to press multilateral development banks and development financing institutions to take urgent measures towards decarbonisation and more importantly, to unlock investment for adaptation and building resilience.

Mr Speaker, Sir, new pledges totaling USD 230 m. were made to the adaptation theme at COP27. Mauritius will have to tap on these financing structures to help many more vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change through concrete adaptation solutions. On the regional front also, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are a number of climate action initiatives which our Government is taking. The Indian Ocean Commission Member State, for example, adopted a strategy on adaptation to climate change in 2013 and a regional action plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change in 2018. The necessity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to build regional

resilience through strengthened meteorological, hydrological and climate services in the IOC member countries has been identified.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the adverse effects of climate change and natural hazards have placed additional burdens on national budgets and undermine sustainable development. Modeling demonstrates that climate related risks affecting the region are expected to worsen with climate change, producing greater human, economic, social and environmental losses. In this context, a project named resilience building and disaster risk management is being implemented by the Indian Ocean Commission, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, regional collaboration remains high on our agenda in order to better prepare ourselves with climate change and disaster mitigation.

Under our forthcoming Chairmanship, as you know, Mauritius will take over the Chairmanship of the IOC in a few weeks, we will continue to give due consideration to this big issue. With regard to the SADC also, Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change is a key priority for the SADC Regional Indicative Development Plan. Various protocols and programmes are being elaborated to mitigate the impacts of climate change such as the SADC Climate Change Framework and the SADC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, 70% of the SADC population depends on agriculture for the livelihoods. Climate change, therefore, is greatly increasing the risks of food security and the SADC has come up with a regional vulnerability assessment and analysis programme to strengthen and prioritise the main streaming of climate change into vulnerability assessment and analysis with a view to developing informed policies, strategies and programmes. There are many other SADC Programmes, Mr Speaker, Sir, which I do not have time to mention. The COMESA, Mr Speaker, Sir, has also developed a strategy and climate change for the period 2020 to 2023, supporting its member state in their efforts to adapt and mitigate climate change responses at National level through technical assistance, capacity building and financial support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, finally at the level of the IORA, the Council of Ministers meeting held in November last year, in Dhaka, agreed that climate change be embedded as an integral agenda, item of the IORA. The establishment of a working group on climate change is under progress.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius as a SIDS, is exploring different avenues of financing opportunities. As you know at the COP27 last year, in Sharm El Sheikh Egypt, the announcement of the breakthrough agreement to provide a loss and damage fund to assist

vulnerable developing countries which have been hit hard by climate disasters was made. This new package aims at strengthening action by countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change as well as boosting the support of finance, technology and capacity building. The new funding arrangements and the loss and damaged funds are expected to be operationalized at COP28 this year, Mr Speaker, Sir.

More importantly, what I wish to announce to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index. This index is being worked out by the United Nations, that is, to promote the development of a Multi-Vulnerability Index (MVI), which aims to be a vital tool to help SIDS, like Mauritius to gain access to concessional financing that we need to survive the climate catastrophe to improve our long term national planning, service debts and sign up to insurance and compensation schemes that may be a last resort when the waters rise, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The MVI is another avenue of financing prospects for Mauritius to look forward that will help reduce the climate finance gap. We are looking forward to ensure that the indicators and the criteria used will incorporate the inherent vulnerabilities of developing countries such as Mauritius as an upper middle income country and in SIDS.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2021 we benefitted also from the joint SDG Fund whereby a joint project is being implemented with the Republic of Seychelles in view of contributing to establish, Mr Speaker, Sir, an enabling environment to promote sustainable green and blue economy in Mauritius and Seychelles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the point of me going through all these regional and international initiatives is to highlight the fact that our Ministry of Environment, the Minister, of course, are doing the right thing in taking the measures to reverse the course as soon as possible and to assure our study progress, especially on the SDG goals, Mr Speaker, Sir.

To address this great finance divide that curtails the ability of the developing countries to invest in recovery climate actions and sustainable development, the SDG stimulus package, which I have just referred to, Mr Speaker, Sir, will undoubtedly tackle the high cost of debt and the rising risk of debt distress, including by converting short term high interest borrowing into long term debt at lower interest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 17 February of this year, the United Nations' Secretary General reiterated his call for the G20 countries to agree on USD500 billion annual stimulus for sustainable development at the agenda. He called for radical transformation of global financial system to tackle pressing global changes while achieving sustainable development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I conclude by saying in the past months, I have been attending the G20 Meeting, the AU Summit, the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting and recently the SADC Council of Ministers. During all these multi-lateral platforms, Mr Speaker, Sir, the battle cry of developing countries and of SIDS has been the provision of climate funds to enable them to initiate the necessary measures to tackle what we call now this existence of threat, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mauritius, our country, the Ministry of Environment, I know, because all what we are doing today, Mr Speaker, Sir, is known to all the different member states of the different organisation to which we belong and they are full of praise for us. But, of course, climate finance is important.

Today more than ever, Mr Speaker, Sir, this issue is high on the agenda everywhere. I wish to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that on 31 March 2023, a United Nations General Assembly Resolution entitled, I quote –

“Request for an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Obligation of States in respect of Climate Change”

That was spearheaded by Vanuatu, a Small Island Developing State and a member of the Alliance of Small States, and adopted by consensus. Mauritius was one of the 120 countries which had co-sponsored this draft resolution. This resolution calls upon the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest court of this planet, to clarify states obligations to tackle the climate crisis and specify any consequences countries should face for inaction. The resolution will also hold polluting countries legally accountable for failing to tackle the climate emergency.

Following the adoption of this resolution, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, hon. Kalsakau, stated that, I quote –

“The world had witnessed a wind for climate justice of epic proportions.”

While adding, Mr Speaker, Sir, I quote again –

“That this historic resolution is the beginning of a new era in multi-lateral climate corporation, one that is more fully focussed on upholding the rule of international law and an era that places human rights and intergeneration equity at the fore front of climate decision making”

The success is not only at the level of the United Nations, but it trickles down to the SIDS. It trickles down to countries like Mauritius which are facing the brunt of devastation through no fault of ours. Indeed, the words of the leader of the Pacific Islands, students fighting climate change, could apply to the situation prevailing in Mauritius and in small islands of the world, irrespective of their locations in the vast expanses of the five oceans which as we know are linked and form one global ocean.

The young student from Vanuatu stated, I quote –

“Through no fault of our own, we are living with devastating tropical cyclones, flooding, biodiversity loss and sea level rise. We have contributed the least to the global emissions that are drowning our land. As young people, the world’s failure to stop planet killing emissions is not a theoretical problem, it is our present and it is our future that is being sold out.”

This resolution which was co-sponsored by more than 120 countries will help, undoubtedly, Mr Speaker, Sir, to establish a legal litmus for the global climate justice movement seeking to hold countries to account for climate failures in the courts. It also represents the first attempt to establish climate action obligations under international law, which it is hoped will strengthen climate related litigation by helping vulnerable states and advocates whole countries accountable for their action and inaction. In a sense, the ICJ advisory will help establish whether there is legal obligation for countries to do what they have committed to in non-binding treaties such as the 2015 Paris Climate Accord and whether failure do so can be challenged to litigation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

To conclude, I wish to emphasise that the issues of climate change and global warming are essential priorities for our country, Mr Speaker, Sir. I avail of this opportunity to once again thank the hon. Minister of Finance and the hon. Minister of Environment with regard to the actions and the funds that are being provided to confront this challenge and with regard to environment and climate change. I am done. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy!

(5.14 p.m.)

Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Speaker, Sir, it gives me tremendous pleasure to bring my contribution in respect of the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill in this august Assembly.

This Supplementary Appropriation Bill makes provision for an additional amount not exceeding Rs5,417,000,000. Now, from this total sum, which we are going to vote later, Rs417 m. is intended for the construction of a waterfront at Deux Frères.

Mr Speaker, Sir, villages like Deux Frères, Quatre Soeurs, Pointe aux Feuilles, etc., which are located on our South Eastern coast have for too long been bereft of any development. These villages I have mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, are found in the Constituency No.11 and No.11 is not far from Constituency No.09 from where I am an elected Member and also an inhabitant. So, I know the region very well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, 1987, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, six elections in a row, and in all these six years, Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell has always been elected until came the year 2014 when he had to run away from Rose Belle to Belle Rose! From 1987 to 2014, for 27 years, hon. Dr. Boolell did nothing for those people. From 1987 to 2014, for 27 years hon. Dr. Boolell did nothing for those people. On Wednesday 14 March 2023, I was by the side of the hon. Prime Minister, hon. Seeruttun, hon. Ms Ramyad, hon. Ramano and other colleagues when the waterfront project of Deux Frères was explained by the Consultants.

This waterfront project, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to also protect the inhabitants of Deux Frères from erosion, which will be about 900m long, located in the northern part of the village. The project consists of rock revetments which will serve as protection measure against surges of cyclonic waves, together with a recreational area for the community.

Recent events throughout the world and also in Mauritius bear testimony to the impact of climate change. The world is now more prone to extreme weather conditions, climate shocks and disasters. We believe in the urgency of action on climate change. It is about creating the mechanism for fundamental change and mitigating climate change disruptions and protecting the future generation.

The objectives of the project are not only to adapt and to increase resilience to climate change impacts but also to improve the beaches and access to the sea and eventually, the idea is to improve the socio-economic status of the village.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir, on that day of 14 March, the inhabitants met the hon. Prime Minister and expressed their joy over the project. Some of them had tears of joy in their eyes. These people could see how caring the Government is as compared to others who were there for 27 years and yet had a *bilan* of *zero plonbaz*.

The amount of Rs417 m., Mr Speaker, Sir, is required to catch up that *zero plonbaz* and to show that we are a country that values its population as its main asset. Our country needs such infrastructures that fit the aspiration of an innovative economy and society.

Moreover, the project has been planned with the consultation of the concerned public bodies and local Council representatives and their requests have been integrated in the project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, such project raises concern about the impact on the environment during its implementation. It is good to note that the following measures have been recommended to curtail negative impacts on the marine environments –

- (i) boulders to be used for the project will have to be washed off site prior to placing;
- (ii) installation of double layer geotextile screens around the working areas;
- (iii) refuelling of plants and equipment to be carried out on the mainland at designated areas, and
- (iv) daily inspection of plants and equipment that will allow detection of any hydrocarbon leakage.

More importantly, it is worth noting that all works will be carried out along the shoreline, hence no fishing activities in the lagoon will be disrupted. Moreover, the project will be beneficial to the fishermen and the local communities of the Deux Frères region as provision has been made for the proper infrastructure and facilities.

Now, the remaining Rs5 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been earmarked for the construction of residential units. 400 of these residential units will be in my Constituency, 200 at Quatres Cocos and another 200 at Isidore Rose. Isidore Rose most probably lots of Mauritians have not

heard this name. This shows, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is bringing modernity and development to every known and unknown part of the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, myself and my two colleagues, hon. Maudhoo and hon. Balgobin, apart from meeting our constituents at our place on a daily basis, are also present every Wednesday at the Citizens Advice Bureau where our constituents again get the opportunity to meet us. From our records, we have found that 50% of those people queue from very early morning in the quest of a house.

In the Budget Speech of 2020, the Government announced the construction of 12,000 residential units. We have now reached at a very advanced stage of the project despite all the unforeseen issues we had to face.

This Government believes that in order to have an inclusive society providing a decent dwelling to our people is of paramount importance. Our Government operates in a context of internationally agreed principles and acknowledges that housing is a basic right for all citizens. This purpose of the residential units, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to help household access and afford houses.

Our Government believes that housing is not just about having a safe place to live, it is a prerequisite to access employment, education, health and social services and sits at the very heart of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Earlier, when I listened to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, “Small is Beautiful” seemed to be his motto. It seems that he is still stuck to those *bwat zalimet*. Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when you listen to him you may believe that there is only one route of procurement. He does not seem to be aware that there exist the Design and Build route and the Design and Build do also provide for value for money. And the NSLD, against which he made several negative remarks, has rightly opted for this route, that is, Design and Build.

Concerning the guarantee that he spoke of, Mr Speaker, Sir, when it is a Design and Build project, the projects are covered under the *Garantie Décennale*, that is, the contractor will be bound by the *Code Civil*. He was worried about guarantee. I would have appreciated if he could have raised this question when it came to the project of Terre Rouge-Verdun.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is also against precasting. At a time when all the professionals of the construction industry of favouring precast as it provides a better quality, shorter construction period and is cheaper. Precast is the future, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is an innovative method which should be encouraged.

In his reply to PQ B/28 last Tuesday, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister explained all the processes and measures that have been taken to reach where we are. He explained the issues we had with the geotechnical surveys carrying firms. You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are a caring Government and we mean business. So, we had to carry all the tests before embarking on this project instead of going blindly like the Labour Government did on Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road. It was such a disaster that our friend, hon. Bodha, took four years to repair that blunder.

In his reply to PQ B/28 as I mentioned earlier, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister explained how the price went up by more than 30% and thus more funds are required for the implementation of this unprecedented effort.

Let me show you with examples the evolution of prices of building materials, Mr Speaker, Sir. The price of reinforcement in July 2020 was at Rs27,000 per ton. Today, it is at Rs41,000 per ton and reinforcement represents about 11% of the total cost of a house. Ready-mixed concrete Grade 30 supply only was at Rs3,550 per cubic metre and today, it is at Rs4,460 per cubic metre. Concrete represents 12% of the total cost. Block which represents 5% of the total cost of construction, Mr Speaker, Sir, the 200 mm thick – the block *8 pouces* – was at Rs23.30 each and today, it is at Rs25.85. I won't take the prices of the basalt products. I believe the hon. Leader of the Opposition can contact his friends of MMM because the accounting agent was the former GM of the UBP, they can get it from there.

Now the labour which totals to 30% of the total cost of construction has not only increased but has also become scarce. Our local people, especially the youngsters, are not willing to work on construction sites. We have to have recourse to foreign labour. We have a tendency to believe that the foreign labour is cheap labour but that is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. The foreign labour costs about 20 to 22% more than the local labour.

The Economic Times of 15 December 2022 reported that the cost of key construction materials have jumped by 32%. The Construction Industry Report predicts that the prices of construction materials are going to increase by another 7% this year. I hope Mr Speaker, Sir, that

these will bring the transparency and rationality that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was looking for before approving this amount.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Supplementary Appropriation Bill is therefore required to allow the Government to move on its way towards the new heights where Mauritians want it to be.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.26 p.m.)

Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): *Mr Speaker, Sir,* le 4 juin 2020, le ministre des Finances présentant son budget, avait annoncé la construction de 12 000 logements sociaux lors de la présentation du budget. On est en 2023 ; on nous demande, M. le président, de voter un budget supplémentaire de R 5 milliards. On ne parle pas de R 5 millions mais de R 5 milliards pour investir dans le *NSLD* et ce qui est étonnant pour les gens qui nous écoutent ce soir, pour ceux qui, pour le budget 2020-2021, ont rêvé en entendant les 12 000 logements qui vont être construits, aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement parle de 8 000 logements, moins 4 000 maisons dans le chiffre initial.

Ce n'est pas que l'Opposition est contre la construction des maisons. Non ! Si les orateurs, M. le président, de l'Opposition se sont appesantis sur le fait que ce projet, le *NSLD* pour la construction de 8 000 logements, est fait dans une opacité totale. En tant que membres de Parlement, quand les membres du public nous demandent des éclaircissements sur ce projet, nous sommes incapables de donner des renseignements car ce projet a changé de nature depuis sa création, pour aujourd'hui après trois ans, 12 000 à 8 000, R 12 milliards à R 30 milliards - le chiffre que j'ai entendu mentionner ce matin le leader de l'Opposition. Et aujourd'hui, on nous demande de voter pour un projet dans une opacité totale.

Pour commencer, l'appel d'offres, nous sommes obligés au sein de l'Opposition de poser que des questions dans ce débat parce que nous sommes obligés de rechercher des informations du *Deputy Prime Minister*. D'abord, nous sommes étonnés, surpris de voir qu'il n'y a pas eu appel d'offres pour le lancement de ce projet. Pour le design, pour la préparation des papiers - pas de transparence ! Pas d'appel d'offres ! Décisions unilatérales en ce qui concerne le choix des consultants, le choix des contracteurs, le choix des designs ! Et nous sommes aujourd'hui au sein de l'Opposition dans un *blackout* car les R 5 milliards qu'on nous demande de voter...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Pou fer enn walk out?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: Ça fait rire ! Désolant ! Car nous apprenons à travers les journaux et le public qui nous écoute se demande si c'est vrai qu'autour de R 300 millions à R 500 millions vont être réservées pour les consultants pour l'appel d'offres qui a été annulé. Comme disait l'honorable Osman Mahomed, R 300 millions plus de gaspillage. Est-ce vrai ? Est-ce que avant de prendre forme, ce projet, ce pays perd déjà R 300 millions à des consultants alors que l'appel d'offres a été annulé ? Il faudra que quelque part, quelqu'un, le *Deputy Prime Minister*, le ministre des Finances, quelqu'un de responsable au sein du gouvernement, vienne expliquer à la population si c'est vrai, expliquer le pourquoi de l'annulation de l'appel d'offres, le pourquoi de 12 000 maisons à 8 000 maisons, le pourquoi de R 12 milliards à R 30 milliards.

Nous apprenons à travers la presse que des terrains ont été achetés ici et là à des prix que nous ne savons pas. Est-ce qu'il y a eu appel d'offres en ce qui concerne l'achat des terrains ? De qui le gouvernement a-t-il acheté le terrain ? À quel prix ? Et aujourd'hui, nous apprenons que le *Deputy Prime Minister* viendra confirmer ou infirmer plus tard dans cette Chambre si les terrains achetés jusqu'ici, certaines parties de ces terrains achetés sont inutilisables, marécageux. Avec l'argent des contribuables ! Est-ce que pour payer ces gens-là, nous allons puiser dans les R 5 milliards qu'on nous demande de voter aujourd'hui ? Nous sommes en droit de savoir si parmi les terrains achetés, se trouve le terrain du fameux dentiste, proche du gouvernement, donc la déclaration que nous avons vue et entendue dans la presse. Il se lave les mains. Disant qu'avant que le gouvernement achète mon terrain, mon terrain était *okay*. Quand le gouvernement a acheté mon terrain, mon terrain est devenu marécageux.

Est-ce que les R 5 milliards qu'on nous demande de voter aujourd'hui va servir en partie à payer pour ces genres, pour ces décisions prises par ce gouvernement ? Et, il y a des gens qui applaudissent pour cela ! On se pose la question. Le leader de l'Opposition a parfaitement raison. J'ai entendu l'honorable ministre Jeewa-Daureeawoo un peu plus tôt, dans sa déclaration faire comme s'il y avait une compétition entre l'ancien gouvernement, le passé et le présent, qui a construit plus de maisons que d'autres. Le débat aujourd'hui, M. le président, ce n'est pas qui a construit plus de maisons ou d'autres. Non ! Nous ne sommes pas contre la construction de

maisons. Nous sommes contre le gaspillage et nous posons des questions sur les R 5 milliards que vous demandez à la population de payer.

La *NHDC*, le *social housing* du temps, tous les contracteurs étaient recrutés dans un appel d'offres, dans la transparence, les petits contracteurs. Bien souvent, nous parlons de *lowest bidder* mais dans ce cas précis, pourquoi avoir créé la *NSLD* et éliminé complètement la *NHDC* ? Pourquoi ? Pour simplement éviter le *Public Procurement Act* ? Pourquoi ? Si vous n'avez rien à cacher, que la transparence se joue ! Qu'on explique le pourquoi de tous ces milliards. 30 milliards, peut-être que cela va dépasser le projet du métro, plus de 30 milliards. Nous nous embarquons dans un projet où il y a une opacité totale et nous avons eu des leçons du passé. Malheureusement, certains n'apprennent rien des leçons du passé.

Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé pendant le Covid, avec l'opacité de l'achat des médicaments ? Personne n'attire l'attention du ministre des Finances dans ce gouvernement ? Personne n'attire l'attention du *Deputy Prime Minister* dans ce gouvernement ? Vous êtes occupés à faire quoi ? À veiller les cerfs ? Personne n'attire l'attention de ce gouvernement que le directeur de l'audit a précisé dans une opacité où les comprimés de Molnupiravir sont sortis un jour à R 7.90 pour R 79.30 le lendemain ? Il faudra tirer une leçon du passé.

Mr Speaker: This is Ministry of Health, now it concerns Housing!

Mr Assirvaden: Les leçons restent des leçons !

Mr Speaker: No, no, do not...

Mr Assirvaden: L'opacité est la même opacité du passé. La relation entre les deux, c'est l'opacité.

Mr Speaker: Continue! Continue!

Mr Assirvaden: C'est ce que je vais faire, M. le président. Pas la peine de m'arrêter.

Donc, cette opacité est encore là. Où est la bonne gouvernance ? Le *Deputy Prime Minister*, très souvent, il se donne – ce qui est bien pour lui – un air moderne, d'homme éclairé, d'ouverture, qui répond aux questions, qui prend des notes, qui ne parle même pas, il gazouille. Quand il parle, il gazouille ! Ce que j'apprécie. Il gazouille ! Mais on n'a pas besoin de quelqu'un qui gazouille ici, on a besoin de quelqu'un...

Mr Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr Assirvaden: On a besoin...

Mr Speaker: Please, remove that word 'gazouiller'!

Mr Assirvaden: Gazouiller?

Mr Speaker: Yes, it is unparliamentary!

Mr Assirvaden: Gazouiller, c'est chanter!

Mr Speaker: No, no, it is unparliamentary!

Mr Assirvaden: Un oiseau gazouille !

Mr Speaker: No, please, do not discuss! I declare it unparliamentary in this context!

Mr Assirvaden: Il ne gazouille pas ?

Mr Speaker: In this context! You withdraw it and you apologise!

An hon. Member: *Ki* apologise?

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: Qu'est-ce que je dois faire là ?

Mr Speaker: You withdraw the word and you apologise!

Mr Assirvaden: Je le retire. Je m'excuse, il ne gazouille pas.

Mr Speaker: Continue!

Mr Assirvaden: Il ne gazouille pas !

Mr X. L. Duval: Toi aussi, ne gazouille pas !

Mr Assirvaden: On a besoin des chiffres...

An hon. Member: Nous gazouillerons!

Mr Assirvaden: On se pose des questions. Après le non appel d'offres, qui sont ceux au sein du ministère, au sein de ce gouvernement, au sein du ministère des Finances, qui ont décidé de la liste des contracteurs ? J'ai vu qu'il y a une liste de 14 contracteurs désignés par le gouvernement. Et nous voudrions savoir puisqu'il n'y a pas eu d'appel d'offres où les

contracteurs du pays auraient pu - ceux qui sont intéressés - tenter leur chance et donner un prix, et que le *lower* dans l'intérêt public soit choisi. Mais ici, non ! Nous avons des contracteurs recrutés pour ce projet, d'après ceux qui ont travaillé les chiffres, nous arrivons à un prix de R 40 000 par mètre carré pour ces maisons. R 40 000 par mètre carré !

Puisque le *Deputy Prime Minister* est de retour, je voudrais savoir pour le même projet, un contracteur qui se trouve sur cette liste, le RBRB Construction, a eu un contrat de la *Mauritius Housing Company* quelques semaines de cela pour les Résidences Mon Rêve, coté à R 30 000 le mètre carré avec piscine. Ici dans le projet du *Deputy Prime Minister* de ce gouvernement MSM et consorts, c'est à R 40,000 le mètre carré ; R 10,000 roupies de différence par mètre carré. R 4,000 par pied carré ! *Ena kontrakter pe fer lor 1,200 roupie pie kare.*

Je voudrais avoir des éclaircissements du *Deputy Prime Minister* de ce que nous avançons parce que dans la liste que je vois, je me pose des questions, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister*. Par exemple, parmi les contracteurs choisis par votre ministère et par votre gouvernement dans une opacité totale, je vois Hyvec dont la FIU a gelé les avoirs du propriétaire. Qu'est-ce qui va se passer ? Est-ce que le gouvernement va payer les *down payments* de 10 %, 15 %, 25 % - dieu seul le sait - à ces compagnies ? Je vois aussi des proches du pouvoir, les nominés politiques du gouvernement parmi les compagnies, N. Gopee, par exemple, 800 logements. Peut-être que vous allez pouvoir nous éclairer, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister* comment on est arrivé à cette liste de contracteurs, et sur quelle base : 900, 800, 200 ?

Et j'ai appris ce matin, quand le leader de l'Opposition a fait son discours, que le *performance bond* n'est pas obligatoire. Est-ce vrai ?

Mr X. L. Duval: Est-ce vrai ?

Mr Assirvaden: Ce n'est pas au Leader de l'opposition de répondre ; c'est à vous, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister*. Vous avez la responsabilité de ce projet de 30 milliards. L'histoire retiendra...

(Interruptions)

Je peux continuer ? L'histoire retiendra...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Both of you!

Mr Assirvaden: Donc, c'est inquiétant. C'est inquiétant de par la liste des contracteurs, pas d'appel d'offres, l'opacité, les prix qui sont recommandés car nous avons vécu dans le passé la même chose, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister*. Je crois en votre intégrité, mais pas ceux autour de vous.

Donc, c'est pour dire, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister*, que le Covid a bon dos car le Covid, pour certains des orateurs du gouvernement, a fait retarder le projet. Pourtant, le Covid a fait retarder certains projets du gouvernement dont ce projet, mais le Covid n'a pas retardé ou handicapé tout le monde. Pendant le Covid, il y a bien eu le cerf *party*. Pendant le Covid, il y a eu le *Black Label party*.

Mr Speaker: No, stick to your debate!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais c'est une vérité !

Mr Speaker: No, you cannot force me to believe you! I am regulating the business of the House! You concentrate on your speech!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais il faut parler du Covid !

Mr Speaker: You concentrate on your speech! I know where you are going!

Mr Assirvaden: On n'a pas le droit de parler du Covid ?

Mr Speaker: I know where you are going! I have already given my ruling!

Mr Assirvaden: Moi, je ne vais pas dans les chassés !

Mr Speaker: Either you accept or not, okay? Continue, but in the right direction! Do not drift!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, si je comprends bien, je n'ai pas le droit de parler du Covid ?

Mr Speaker: You can talk about COVID.

Mr Assirvaden: Mais pas *saser* ?

Mr Speaker: But whatever thing that you are...

(Interruptions)

No! Okay?

Mr Assirvaden: Donc, le Covid a bon dos, M. le président. Les raisons...

(Interruptions)

M. le président, demandez à M. Nuckcheddy de se tenir. Les gens du Building and Civil Engineering Co. Ltd. (BCE) pleurent encore. Ils pleurent encore !

Mr Speaker: Come on!

Mr Assirvaden: Les gens du BCE pleurent encore !

Mr Speaker: Stop this character assassination! You should stop this character assassination!

(Interruptions)

People in this country have to right to live! Stop this character assassination! Now, you continue with your speech!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Ganoo kin fer?*

Mr Assirvaden: Les gens pleurent, M. le président. Là, c'est bon?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Assirvaden: Là, c'est *order!*

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Assirvaden: Oui, là c'est *order!* Là, c'est *order!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You also stop with character assassination!

Mr Assirvaden: Les gens pleurent et...

(Interruptions)

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Kontroler bis pe plore!*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy, could you withdraw from the Chamber?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Carry him out!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Serjeant-at-Arms, take care of him!

An hon. Member: Carry him out!

An hon. Member: *To pa pe konpran? Sarye sa aler!*

An hon. Member: He is becoming dangerous! Dangerous!

Mr Speaker: Hurry up, please! Serjeant-at-Arms, do your work!

An hon. Member: Carry him out! Carry him!

Mr Speaker: Carry him!

Mr Assirvaden: Je voudrais donc pour terminer, M. le *Deputy Prime Minister*, après les questions du leader de l'Opposition, ce n'est pas nécessaire de répéter les mêmes choses mais c'est un fait que nous sommes dans une opacité totale. Je ne dis pas que les membres de l'Opposition ; je dis que c'est sûr que certains membres du Gouvernement sont aussi malheureusement dans une opacité totale. Il y a un manque de transparence. Ce n'est pas la peine de faire ces gestes de tourner à l'arrière, ça ne marchera pas avec moi. Donc, je connais l'éthique des clowns ; ce n'est pas nécessaire, M. le Deputy Prime Minister. Ce n'est pas nécessaire ! Donc, nous avons besoin des réponses.

(Interruptions)

Nous avons besoin ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Withdraw! Withdraw that word!

Mr Speaker: Please! Please! Withdraw that word! Okay? Thank you.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Li pa gagne drwa dir klounn.*

Mr Speaker: What is happening? Both sides of the House! Please! Let him finish!

Mr Assirvaden: Donc nous avons besoin des réponses claires et directes dans la transparence parce que le passé de ce gouvernement dont vous faites partie, le passé de ce gouvernement MSM en ce qui concerne le *procurement*, l'achat, l'opacité, la *STC*, nous fait avoir des doutes et la population aussi, est la raison pourquoi nous avons des doutes en ce qui concerne l'utilisation de cet argent.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Seeruttun!

(5.48 p.m.)

The Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance (Mr M. Seeruttun): Merci, M. le président. J'ai écouté avec attention tous les orateurs qui ont parlé avant moi et j'espère que j'aurai la même attention des membres de cette Chambre aujourd'hui.

M. le président, nous sommes appelés aujourd'hui à travers le *Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill* à voter une somme additionnelle de R 5,417,000,000 pour l'exercice 2022-2023. Comme expliqué par mon collègue, le ministre des Finances, cette somme servira à réaliser des projets importants et cruciaux pour le pays. Important parce qu'on va réaliser le plus gros projet de logement que ce pays ait connu et qui touchera des milliers de Mauriciens et de Rodriguais surtout ceux au plus bas de l'échelle et autre projet concernant le front de mer de Deux Frères qui est aligné avec la politique de ce gouvernement qui est de protéger notre zone côtière et en même temps de continuer le développement de nos villages.

Dans son intervention, l'honorable leader de l'Opposition a traité ce projet de construction de ce front de mer de Deux Frères comme étant un petit projet pour lequel le ministre a consacré trop de temps dans son discours, parce que pour lui c'est un projet qui est peut-être banal. Je crois qu'il n'a pas vu la portée de ce projet.

Aujourd'hui, quand on constate les effets du changement climatique et surtout les effets que cela a sur les petites îles comme Maurice causant beaucoup de dégâts et le travail que ce gouvernement est en train de faire pour protéger nos zones côtières, allouer une somme pareille et donner autant d'attention à une région qui est touchée par la montée des eaux, je trouve que quelque part le leader de l'Opposition a été un peu mal inspiré de dire que ce projet n'aurait pas dû...

Mr X. L. Duval: Je n'ai pas dit ça.

Mr Speaker: Please! This is not the way to talk! Please! Listen to me! Listen to me first!
Listen to me first!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have the right to make a point of order but you should ask me the permission.

Mr X. L. Duval: I asked you.

Mr Speaker: You see, but don't answer attacking the orator! Don't do that! Now, you ask your permission for a point of order.

Mr X. L. Duval: I have no problem with the speech of the hon. Minister but when he is quoting me, he should tell the truth. I said it is relative.

Mr Speaker: No! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, don't make a debate! I am not misguiding you. If you have a point of order, it should come from here...

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes.

Mr Speaker: ... any section in this. If you don't have, you don't have! You are just rebutting what he is saying! And this is debate in a parliamentary democracy! I know! I know where the shoe pinches!

Mr X. L. Duval: He is misleading the House; I have never said this!

Mr Speaker: Please, I have finished! I have finished with you. The Minister will continue!

Mr Seeruttun: Merci, M. le président.

Mr X. L. Duval: Make your speech!

Mr Seeruttun: Oui. Tout le monde était là pour vous écouter et vous avez bien fait part que...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Listen! Let me give me ruling! Any Member can criticise any Member on an argument or the Government and names have been mentioned in this House for long time since. It's not inventing the wheel today saying, don't quote me; don't tell. No! Feel free!

Mr Seeruttun: Merci, merci encore une fois, M. le président. Donc c'est pour dire que pour la protection de notre environnement, venir avec des projets pour atténuer les effets du changement climatiques, c'est une des priorités de ce gouvernement. Et donc je crois qu'allouer autant d'argent à un projet comme ce projet de front de mer de Deux Frères a son importance et bien sûre j'espère que la population comprendra qu'on est là pour faire des choses pour sauvegarder la nouvelle génération des Mauriciens.

Il avait aussi parlé en parlant du projet du logement comme-ci tout est noir. Il me semble que l'Opposition sombre dans l'obscurité à tel point qu'aujourd'hui il voit tout en noir. Ce n'est pas possible, comme a dit l'intervenant juste avant moi, tout est dans l'opacité. Alors que lui-même, tout en disant cela, il venait avec une liste des choses, il posait des questions en termes de la liste des contracteurs, il parlait des conditions attachées avec l'appel d'offres. Donc, en même temps il parle de l'opacité et en même temps il est en train de venir avec des informations auxquelles il semble avoir quelque part accès.

Donc, je pense que quand même par rapport à ce projet, un projet jamais réalisé par aucun gouvernement avant nous, est un projet qui prend son temps. Je suis sûr que dans cette Chambre tout le monde à un moment donné était appelé à construire une maison, sa propre résidence et on sait que construire une maison, cela prend du temps, préparer un plan, chercher les permis, trouver un contracteur, chercher un prêt, trouver les matériaux et démarrer la construction. Donc, comme-ci le moment qu'on a annoncé ce projet, rien n'a été fait ; il faut attendre qu'on commence avoir les gens sur le site et que c'est là que le projet commence mais non, M. le président. Le projet a démarré au moment qu'il a été annoncé et donc les choses avancent et aujourd'hui on est au stade où vraiment les choses vont se faire sur place et la construction va se faire sur des sites mentionnés.

Aussi, parler de Covid on est tous passé par là. A faire croire qu'aujourd'hui ça n'a eu aucun effet sur les prix des matériaux, on connaît aussi la crise en Ukraine, l'impact que ça a sur les trucs qu'on importe et bien sûr l'estimation faite au départ de ce projet a connu une hausse. Il faut être vraiment ignorant pour ne pas comprendre que tout ce qu'on importe aujourd'hui coûte plus cher que cela a coûté quelques années de cela.

Donc, tout à l'heure, lors de son intervention le *Deputy Prime Minister* aura l'occasion bien sûr de donner plus de détails en ce qui concerne ce projet de logement. M. le président, j'ai

aussi entendu parler des membres de l'opposition ici et là dans les médias lorsque l'ordre du jour est sorti pour cette session d'aujourd'hui qu'on est en train de venir avec cette *ESE* pour éviter qu'on ait des *PQs* aujourd'hui. C'est tout à fait normal lorsqu'on présente le *ESE*, il n'y a pas de questions. Dans le passé, lorsqu'on venait avec un *Supplementary Appropriation Bill* après l'année financière, on nous critiquait qu'on venait avec ce *Bill* bien après la fin de l'année financière et que c'est un fait accompli et qu'il faut juste voter. Aujourd'hui on arrive avant la fin de l'année financière, là aussi ils trouvent que ce n'est pas correct mais ils sont là que pour critiquer et bien souvent ils sont dans leurs contradictions eux-mêmes.

M. le président, moi je voudrais focaliser aujourd'hui plus sur ce projet de front de mer de Deux Frères parce que ça concerne ma circonscription avant tout mais ça concerne aussi un projet qui va coûter R 417 millions. Un projet que pas seulement on vient à la fois pour protéger la zone côtière de cette région, qui est sérieusement menacée comme je disais avec le changement climatique mais aussi corriger une injustice. Une injustice envers les habitants du village de Deux Frères et les environs.

Injustice pourquoi, M. le président ? Parce que cela fait presque 20 ans que ce projet était initié par le gouvernement MMM/MSM entre 2000/2005 mais le pays a eu le malheur d'avoir un gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD après les élections de 2005 et le projet a été mis tout simplement au frigo. Je ne sais pas si c'est par manque de vision ou par pur mesquinerie politique ou c'est un trop petit village pour eux, trop lointain pas assez d'électeurs peut-être ou parce que c'était un projet de notre actuel Premier ministre parce que c'était lui l'initiateur de ce projet à l'époque.

Voilà pourquoi je dis une injustice a été causée parce que justement le gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD n'a pas voulu poursuivre avec ce projet. Pourquoi, M. le président, il fallait à tout prix mettre sur pied ce projet ? Il faut se rappeler qu'autrefois beaucoup des habitants du village de Deux Frères et les environs y gagnaient leur vie en allant extraire le sable marin dans l'océan et il y avait même ce qu'on appelle un *Landing Sand Platform* dans le village. Mais sachant que les dégâts causés par l'extraction du sable marin à notre biodiversité, le gouvernement en 2001, je dois dire avait pris la bonne décision de bannir cette activité. Mais étant responsable, le gouvernement n'a pas voulu laisser tomber ces habitants parce qu'ils allaient être sans emploi et donc le projet de créer le Deux Frères Waterfront prie naissance car le

projet allait ouvrir les nouvelles opportunités économiques pour les habitants, protéger la zone côtière tout en changeant le paysage du village. C'est ça que je dis que nous avons une vision et eux n'avaient pas vu cela venir, on savait qu'il y avait un problème des montés des eaux et qu'il fallait déjà venir avec des projets pour protéger nos plages contre l'érosion.

Donc, comme je l'avais dit plutôt le changement de gouvernement en 2005 a privé tout cette région de L'île d'un projet de cette envergure et pour moi, M. le président, cela démontre le manque de vision et de l'inconsidération de ce gouvernement dirigé alors par le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Et je dois dire que cette décision est restée en travers de la gorge des habitants et c'est la raison pour laquelle ils ne veulent plus faire confiance à un gouvernement dirigé par le Parti Travailleiste et ils disent, plus jamais le Parti Travailleiste et on les comprend.

M. le président, imaginez le temps perdu et les opportunités ratées pour ces habitants et aussi le montant que ce projet aurait coûté si ce projet a été réalisé quelque 20 ans de cela. Laissez-moi vous rappeler, M. le président, à la place de protéger cette zone comme on le fait aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement d'alors, pour protéger notre côte contre l'érosion, le gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD jetait des macadams le long de la côte et à chaque fois qu'il y avait un raz-de-marée, tous les macadams partaient dans l'océan et ils revenaient après encore avec les macadams.

An hon Member : *Apel sa coastal protection.*

Mr Seeruttun : Et ils ont mis des tonnes et des tonnes de macadams sur la plage qui a coûté des centaines de millions de roupies et en même temps l'érosion de nos plages continuait de plus belle. Voilà *rezilta lor rezilta* ! Donc, aujourd'hui, on est appelé à corriger cette incompétence et cette injustice, M. le président, et encore une fois c'est l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. Mais cette fois-ci, comme Premier ministre, il vient donner aux habitants de Deux Frères leur dû.

M. le président, un peu plus tôt, lors de son intervention, l'honorable Uteem disait que ce projet avait été annoncé dans le budget de 2017. Mais je dis plutôt que c'est un projet qui date de 2003. Et malheureusement, avec le changement du gouvernement, il n'y a eu aucun projet. Je peux vous dire que depuis 2016, le gouvernement et le ministère de l'Environnement avaient commencé à revoir l'ensemble ce projet en ayant des réunions et des consultations où tous les acteurs concernés étaient appelés à donner leur point de vue. Les habitants du village étaient

constamment consultés et leurs requêtes prises en compte tout en assurant que la protection de la zone côtière et la biodiversité de la région restent les priorités du gouvernement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Excuse me, one second. You choose who is going to speak or if you want to break, you can break and come back.

Mr Osman Mahomed: If I go out, I will lose my turn. Can I request that hon. Hurdoyal speaks just after the Minister and then I speak?

Mr Speaker: No, that would be the question for the Whip to sort out. The Whip should have taken note of all these arrangements. You cannot stop in the middle of a speech. What is this?

Ms Ramyad: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just got the request from hon. Osman Mahomed. With your permission, we agreed that hon. Hurdoyal speaks in the turn of hon. Osman Mahomed and hon. Osman Mahomed speaks in the turn of hon. Hurdoyal, with your permission.

Mr Speaker: If it is agreed, then it is okay.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, je disais que les discussions ont commencé depuis 2016, et donc la raison pour laquelle, on avait déjà commencé à annoncer qu'on allait venir avec ce projet en 2017. Il y a eu entre le projet initial et le projet actuel beaucoup de choses qui ont changé et il fallait revoir complètement le concept de ce projet. Raison pour laquelle il y a eu beaucoup de consultations avec les experts et aussi avec les habitants de la région parce qu'on ne voulait pas faire quelque chose qui n'allait pas répondre aux objectifs de ce projet. Je dois dire qu'il y a eu beaucoup de belles idées qui sont sorties de ces rencontres, de ces réunions et consultations, et bien sûr, cela a pris le temps qu'il fallait. Mais je dois dire qu'on était constamment en train d'informer les habitants de la région comment avancer avec le projet.

Aujourd'hui, comme je le dis, le gouvernement met beaucoup de ressources financières pour adresser le problème du changement climatique, et donc, c'est primordial qu'on vienne avec ce projet qui va enfin être réalisé. D'ailleurs, vous n'avez qu'à voir ce qui se passe dans cette région. Ceux qui ont parlé avant moi ont beaucoup mis l'accent sur les projets déjà réalisés ; de Bois des Amourettes jusqu'à Pointe Aux Feuilles. Aujourd'hui, ce projet de

waterfront à Deux Frères va être étalé sur 900 mètres et va changer complètement le paysage de toute la région sud-est de l'île Maurice.

Mais ce qui est aussi bon de comprendre, M. le président, tout en adressant ce problème de *coastal protection*, on n'est pas resté là. On a voulu aussi donner aux habitants un espace de loisir qui permettra aux habitants de profiter de cet espace, d'avoir une meilleure qualité de vie, et en même temps, d'embellir toute cette région qu'on vient d'aménager.

Donc, c'est pour dire on fait les choses bien. Je peux dire aujourd'hui, on était quelque temps de cela, en présence du Premier ministre dans la région et les gens ont témoigné leur satisfaction. Les gens ont exprimé leur contentement par rapport à ce qu'on a déjà réalisé. Je peux dire qu'on ne va pas arrêter en si bon chemin. Déjà, je me tourne vers mon collègue, le ministre de l'Environnement, je sais qu'il y a des consultants qui travaillent sur le projet de Rivière des Créoles et de Vieux Grand Port. J'espère que dans quelque temps, on aura l'occasion d'en parler sur ces deux gros projets dans ces deux villages qui méritent la considération qu'on leur donne.

Donc, c'est pour démontrer qu'aujourd'hui, c'est une transformation qui se passe dans toute cette région de la côte du sud-est dont l'honorable Nuckcheddy en a parlé un peu plus tôt. Pendant plus de 25 ans, il y avait ce qu'on appelle le roi du Sud dans cette circonscription. Mais qu'a-t-il fait, M. le président ? Rien ! Rien pendant les 25 ans de députation. Et c'est avec raison, M. le président, que les habitants de la circonscription ont dit qu'ils n'ont plus besoin de roi, mais des travailleurs. Donc, merci à vous, M. le Premier ministre pour votre vision et votre soutien. Merci, M. le ministre de l'Environnement pour avoir mené à bien ce projet. Merci, M. le ministre des Finances pour avoir alloué les fonds nécessaires. Je peux dire que les habitants de la région seront toujours reconnaissants envers ce gouvernement qui travaille avec le peuple et pour le peuple.

M. le président, la planète est plus que jamais menacée avec les effets du changement climatique. Les petits États insulaires, comme Maurice, sont les plus vulnérables. Et pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, comme l'a mentionné le ministre, l'honorable Alan Ganoo, les Nations Unies ont adopté une résolution proposée par le Vanuatu afin que la Cour internationale de Justice puisse donner un avis consultatif afin de tenir responsable les grandes économies qui polluent la planète et les oblige à prendre des mesures correctives. Une très bonne initiative dont

Maurice a donné tout son support, vu qu'on subit les mêmes effets du changement climatique comme cette île du Pacifique.

On ne peut plus attendre, M. le président. Il faut agir et agir vite. Et c'est ce que ce gouvernement est en train de faire pour sauver nos plages, sauver ceux qui gagnent leur vie aux activités liées à la mer et sauver l'humanité.

Donc, avec ces quelques mots, M. le président, je vous remercie de votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Hurdoyal!

(6.16 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (Mr T. Hurdoyal): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to shed some light on the Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill presented by hon. Dr. Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. I will try to be very short and brief during my intervention.

Let me remind the House that the presentation of a Supplementary Appropriation Bill and ensuing debate is a common and recurring exercise that has been brought in this august Assembly by different Governments to meet for expenses not provided in the Appropriation Bill.

I will choose not to dwell in those unfounded arguments by the Members of the Opposition. We fortunately have *une population éclairée* which can clearly understand that it is the Members of this side of the House who have the interest of our citizens at heart.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Supplementary Appropriation Bill Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure 2022-2023 makes provision for two key projects which translate this vision to place our citizens at the centre of the socio-economic development of our country.

Never before had a Government invested to such an extent in the welfare and well-being of its population, particularly, by paying a special attention to those at the lower rung of the economic ladder despite the dire challenges arising in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the on-going war between Russia and Ukraine.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start with the first item under the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure which is the provision of Rs417 m. for the construction of a waterfront in the coastal village of Deux Frères under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund.

The construction of the waterfront has become an urgent project for several reasons as mentioned previously by my colleague. Firstly, as you are aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, our country being Small Island Developing State, is directly impacted by climate change, particularly in the coastal regions. The objective of the project is therefore, to rehabilitate the region from the nefarious effects erosion which will result in irreversible consequences if left unattended.

Secondly, it remains high on the agenda of Government to make our country a preferred tourist destination and thus, consolidating the tourism sector as the main pillar of the economy. The waterfront will therefore provide better road access to tourists along the eastern coast. These roads lead to some of the most reputable hotels in the country such as Anahita, Four Seasons, Shangri-La Le Touessrok, all of which are found in my constituency, that is, Constituency No 10.

Moreover, a wharf which is already situated at Grand River South East, the longest river in Mauritius also famous for its waterfall, greatly facilitates and increases the movement of tourists and visitors from Deux Frères to Ile aux Cerfs which is one of the main tourist attractions in the East.

I am also pleased to add that Government has recently completed the work for the upgrading of B28 road from Deux Frères to Beaux Champs, further improving road connectivity between my constituency and the southern part of the island.

Being a fishing village, the waterfront will blend harmoniously with the existing marine ecosystem and thus will benefit our fishermen of this region. For too long, Mr Speaker, Sir, as mentioned by my colleague previously, this part of our country has not fully benefited from modern amenities for its inhabitants and time has now come to rectify the situation.

Therefore, the construction of a waterfront will promote economic activities in the area such as establishment of restaurants, cafés and other tourist attractions which are likely to raise the status of the village and improve the quality of life for the locals. As a result, the project will

attract more visitors to the area which will stimulate economic growth and create more job opportunities for residents of Constituencies No. 10 and 11.

The waterfront will be a hub for leisure and recreation for many people during day and night. The locals and tourists alike will be able to engage in activities such as fishing, boating and other water sports. This area will also be a great spot for relaxation, picnicking and enjoying the scenic beauty of the sea. The waterfront which also caters for parking facilities may also facilitate transportation and connectivity between the various villages through the establishment of a ferry boat service which will also promote social and economic integration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the second item under the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill is the provision of Rs5 billion for the construction of residential units as well as other associated costs under the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me cite a quote from Abbé Pierre, an emblematic figure and French Catholic priest who founded the Emmaus Movement with the goal of helping the poor, homeless people and refugees. I quote –

« Gouverner, c'est d'abord loger son peuple. »

May I also remind this august Assembly that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 11 which is ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’ makes it an obligation for Member States to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services by 2030.

Never before had any Government invested so massively to provide decent, modern and eco-friendly social housing units to those who are at the lower rung of the socio-economic ladder.

Our population deserves no less than such consideration from a caring Government.

As a matter of fact, provision to the tune of Rs5 billion is made in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill for the construction of no less than 8,000 units for families earning up to Rs30,000 per month. I would qualify such venture as ground-breaking and game-changing ever implemented by any government. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, Sir, the 8,000 housing units which

shall be constructed within such a short period of time and in one single phase will be unprecedented.

Such a feat requires not only a massive funding but also a well thought plan along with complex activities such as acquisition of land, selection of reliable contractors and project and quality management during the construction phase.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition, Government has pledged to provide a sizable subsidy as an expression of solidarity to those deserving applicants who have gone the extra mile to save every cent of their earnings for years and patiently awaiting to become the legitimate owner of a well-deserved and decent housing unit for their family.

May I seize this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning and Minister of Tourism for the hard work and unflinching commitment towards ensuring the construction of all the 8,000 housing units by 2024.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am extremely pleased to note that no less than 400 housing units will be constructed in my constituency, No. 10, and which concerns the regions of Bramsthan, Bel Air Rivière Sèche and Olivia. These will be built within existing amenities such as schools, grocery stores, sports and health facilities to name a few. I must admit that many of my constituents whom I meet regularly have raised the dire issue of unavailability of affordable housing units. I am confident that in the very near future, this unfortunate situation will be things of the past. History will retain that it is under the leadership of our Prime Minister that there has been a major breakthrough for this long standing problem.

I am also informed that these housing units will be built in line with latest trends and best practices in architectural design, landscaping, ergonomic features as well as adopting sustainable and eco-friendly practices such as the use of photovoltaic electricity supply, rainwater harvesting and many more.

M. le président, la philosophie de ce Gouvernement est de mettre le citoyen au centre du développement où il peut s'épanouir dans un environnement sain et harmonieux.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my pride and happiness reside in my humble contribution to the betterment of the citizens coming from the four corners of the country, particularly those residing

the Eastern Region. The presentation of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2022-2023 is a vivid testimony of this Government's philosophy to place the citizen at the centre of our socio-economic development and to build an all-inclusive nation.

We are standing at a time where our capacity to shape the destiny of our country is unmatched. As Mahatma Gandhi said –

“In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”

Thank you for your attention!

(6.32 p.m.)

Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are being requested to vote for the sum of Rs5 billion for the provision required for the construction of residential units as well as other associated costs under COVID-19 Projects Development Fund for a housing project that could go up to Rs30 billion. From what I understood from the Minister of Finance's opening remarks this morning, this sum is firstly meant to increase the subsidy component for beneficiaries by Rs2.4 billion; to purchase private plots of land with an increment of Rs600 m., and the difference, I believe, of Rs2 m. is to meet the increased offsite infrastructure costs to the sites.

The social housing domain is a total mess today with two organisations *sur la place*. One is the New Social Living Development which has been created and incorporated in 2019 at the Ministry of Finance by the hon. Dr. Padayachy's predecessor, the actual Prime Minister, who was Minister of Finance and the Financial Secretary, but operationalised by the actual hon. Deputy Prime Minister when he became Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning. Well, the other organisation is, of course, the NHDC. The coexistence of these two organisations is the root cause of the problem because this new NSLD, with political nominees at the head, without required competences in the domain, has done a lot of harm and the very first one is because of their amateurism, they have lost precious time. And we are talking about three years, 2020 to 2023. We all know that time is money, especially in the construction industry.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, construction costs have escalated by approximately 30% and this is why we are being asked to vote for additional funds today, especially with regard to the increased subsidy to beneficiaries and the increased offsite infrastructural costs. On Tuesday

28 April 2021, I had addressed the House lengthily at adjournment time to tell the hon. Minister of Housing about my concerns and I even made a few simple suggestions based on my past experience as former Officer-in-Charge of the Housing Unit at the Ministry of Housing and that of my passage as Managing Director of the NHDC. And the main one is to get the NHDC to implement the housing projects instead of the new entity, the NSLD. The reason for which I had advocated for this is that NHDC already has a set up and also a learning curve of 30 years, more than 30 years in fact.

It is therefore more seasoned and you cannot possibly have a start up like the NSLD to undertake such a massive project. It is logical. I had even suggested to increase the number of staffs of the NHDC if need be, but do not set up a new organisation. Now, what did hon. Obeegadoo reply to this suggestion of mine? He simply said that this country needs a new entity in the same spirit that the NHDC had replaced the CHA, some 30 years ago, during the ministerial days of his friend and mentor, the late Mr Jayen Cuttaree. That was Mr Obeegadoo's response. With hindsight, I today wonder whether the real intentions were not to close the NHDC for good like the case was for the ex-CHA.

I hope that today the hon. Minister of Housing realises that I was right because over the years, the NHDC has emerged *bon gré mal gré*, and on the other hand, the NSLD has not, for the simple reason that the incompetent political nominees at its head have lamentably failed to deliver. What are the consequences of this? For three years, the NSLD has not started anything concrete, but has only succeeded in throwing more than half a billion rupees down the drain without starting the construction of a single housing unit. I have said it outside the House and in the press that the consultants, the NSLD had recruited after several failed tender exercises at a total cost of more than Rs1 billion, had their contracts terminated at the hefty cost to tax payers of Rs300 m. because they have produced ridiculous units of social housing at Rs6 m. per unit purportedly.

If you add the Rs200 m. of running cost of the NSLD since it became operational, you get a sub cost of half a billion as at date, even before *la première coup de pioche*. One should not forget that the NSLD has a yearly recurrent budget of Rs78 m. Now, that these consultants are laughing their way to the bank, the Government has resorted to the construction of all previous NHDC model, meaning the duplexes, the terrace housing models, the so-called ex-Exim bank

housing types, to be built by selected contractors on a design and build basis, and mind you, without any tendering process. Therefore a real *festival de contrat* like I had predicted in this very House on 20 April 2021. These were the words I used, it can be verified, it is in Hansard. But where is the revolutionary concept from a progressive Government that hon. Obeegadoo had promised here on the same day in reply to me? I questioned. It took the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Housing three years to come up with a very expensive, worse version of a designed and build of an old Exim type model at Rs2.7 m. per unit.

If they had listened to us, the NHDC could have floated the tenders and these housing units, if they had been done in 2020, these housing units would have been ready today and would have cost less than Rs2 m. Both the Government and the beneficiaries would have benefitted. This is big time failure. I remember very clearly what hon. Obeegadoo replied to me on 20 April 2021, he said and I quote –

“Traditional approaches used by all Governments given the complexity of the task, at times, failed to produce the desired results, even when financing was provided in the Budget.”

I wonder what hon. Obeegadoo has to say today. I said it just now, a worst version of the Exim type housing project because the bids that the NSLD will be receiving this week for these houses to be delivered on a design and build basis will cost Rs2.7 m. for a very basic unit. The rest to the houses will come as options, just like when you are buying a car, all kind of options are available, but with incremental prices and costs.

Furthermore, the contractors have 15 months to deliver the housing units including design works and obtaining all permits, very short contract period indeed! In some places, there are 400 housing units, we heard it this morning. It must be born in mind that some sites are very complex as well in terms of topography and in terms of accessibility. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked this morning if performance bonds are included in the contracts. This is a very pertinent question and it did not appear that the hon. Minister of Housing was 100% sure about it. In fact, just now, he was playing the eye game, showing to you that you should be answering whether there is performance bond or not?

Very funny indeed! I did not know he had such a good sense of humour. Let me mention a few things that he could additionally look into, the more so, that these designs and build

contracts where the contractor is the pay master who will design and supervise the whole construction process. We all know that contractors are not in charitable businesses and they exist to maximise profits. So, my plea to the hon. Minister of Housing tonight is to check on major provisions like defect liability period, retention money, as provided for in FIDIC's conditions of contract, which is the *Fédération Internationale des Ingénieurs Conseils* and to make sure that no provision is submitted to exclude the inclusion of decennial guarantee as provided under the Code Civil, especially if contractors are given the liberty of coming up with different technologies. If not, we will be in mayhem.

Like the case is for Gros Cailloux NHDC Complex, which I had visited after last January's inundation, and for which, as a matter of fact, hon. Rajesh Bhagwan was supposed to raise at Adjournment Time tonight for the sake of his constituents who are having a hard time living in this complex. I have listened to the hon. Minister of Finance carefully this morning and I have noticed that talking about the different salary ranges, he has again mentioned that he is limiting beneficiaries up to the ceiling of Rs30,000. But then, if this is as confirmed, the Minister of Finance has come to this august Assembly to ask for more money meaning Rs5 billion to build 4,000 houses less, that is, 8,000 housing units instead of 12,000 and catering for a smaller section of the beneficiaries, that is, those earning only up to Rs30,000 rather than Rs60,000, as he initially envisaged. This is a real tragedy because the middle income families are today faced with two major challenges –

1. the increasing interest rates, and
2. the perpetually increasing construction cost.

Also, a mixed type development with beneficiaries of low income, all the way to the middle income, would have avoided the creation of ghettos which the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned in his discourse this morning.

The NSLD is a Special Purpose Vehicle, and as such, according to the Minister of Housing, in his reply to me on 20 of April 2021, it can mobilise funding instead of relying solely on borrowing and Government funding. This SPV allows Government to implement projects more rapidly, thus sharing the risk rather than Government bearing the risk *in toto*.

How much funding... I see the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has just ...

Mr Speaker: No, forget about that. Continue!

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, I have a lot of questions for him. I hope he is taking note.

Mr Speaker: Continue with your speech!

Mr Osman Mahomed: This is what I am doing.

Mr Speaker: Continue with the speech!

Mr Osman Mahomed: How much funding has been raised by the NSLD which has at its head a former banker? I question. I do believe that this is the reason why he was appointed there. I once again hope to have a reply from the hon. Minister of Housing.

Now, let me come to the acquisition of land for which an additional of Rs600 m. is being requested as part of the Rs5 billion. I have to start by saying that the hon. Obeegadoo is the luckiest Minister of Housing of all time but unfortunately, he missed a terrific opportunity. I shall come to that in a while but first let me reply to hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo who has mentioned some housing figures this morning. Well, I hope that in mentioning these figures from 2015 onwards, she has factored in the fact that the Labour Party-led Government has, before the general elections of 2014, initiated the processes for housing projects at several sites, namely –

- (a) Petit Bel Air;
- (b) Belle Rose;
- (c) Khoyratty;
- (d) Notre Dame;
- (e) Bassin;
- (f) Nehru Nagar in Flacq;
- (g) Chebel A;
- (h) Camp de Masque;
- (i) Henrietta;
- (j) Goodlands;
- (k) St Julien D'Hotman;

- (l) Madam Azor;
- (m) Souillac, and
- (n) Mont Gout.

And these sites had actually reached different stages in the implementation process and they were either at a stage where the contracts for construction were already awarded, some were at evaluation or bid stages. For some, their contracts for soil investigation were already awarded and some had reached the initial steps of financial clearances having already been sold. These are some of the houses initiated by the Labour led Government that the MSM Ministers *finn koup riban* from 2015 onwards.

Now, why did I say that hon. Obeegadoo is a very lucky Minister? At the beginning of his mandate as Minister of Housing, the State Land Bank already had some 300 acres - if my estimates are right - of State Land and you know where this land came from? Well, from the 2,000 acres of land that Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, whom hon. Obeegadoo had called *enn gran rasanbler*, negotiated with the Corporate Sector through the NSPA. I know this well because I was based at the Ministry of Housing at the material time in 2007. Dr. Ramgoolam had strike the deal but the choice and finalisation of the plots was an on-going process throughout 2015, 2016, and 2017 until completion sometimes before even the 2019 general elections.

So, the Minister of Housing had the most important ingredient at his disposal, that is, plentiful supply of State Land but instead of *commencer petit avec les terrains disponibles et voir grand*, he has preferred to stick to the rhetoric of a - what he called - revolutionary concept of a massive construction of 12,000 housing units for families up to Rs60,000 salary and what is the result of this overzealous attitude today? Huge delays, higher prices, less future beneficiaries with reduced income ceiling.

Hon. Obeegadoo would you be humble enough to admit that yourself, the Minister of Finance and the whole team have failed to deliver on your promises? And please, do not use COVID-19 as an excuse. One question at this stage: if you are going only for 8,000 housing units rather than 12,000 housing units, why would you, the Government, need to buy private land like the one that was brought from the *transfuge* of the MSM in Highlands - I think hon. Assirvaden spoke lengthily about it just now - for which the land is unusable because it is marshy? Is the

land bank of 300 acres not sufficient for your housing project of 8,000 housing units? As a matter of fact, I had put a question on this for today but unfortunately, there are no PQs today because of the Bill.

Now, let me mention another area where social housing is costing taxpayers a lot of money and this is due to mismanagement of contracts by the people that the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned this morning: Mr A. R., Mr S., Mr D. H. Y., etc. The case of Super Construction Ltd for the construction of housing units at Chebel, a subject of a Parliamentary Question of mine is a case in point. Big mess! Following arbitration, Rs45 m. had to be paid last year.

Let me take a more recent arbitration case that of housing unit at Mare D'Albert by the same contractor, Super Construction Ltd, for which the award took place last Friday only, a few days ago. The contractor, Super Construction, won on all fronts and a much bigger award this time Rs75 m. More good money down the drain as if there is no tomorrow. How come so much of mismanagement? Where to get all this money from? These are the two questions to the Minister of Housing and has he deemed it appropriate to find out the why and the how of this terrible situation?

I would like to end on a food for thought note for the Government.

- The Mauritian population is decreasing.
- Many people are immigrating more rapidly in the last couple of years.
- There are currently 57,500 primary housing units which are unoccupied, not secondary housing units but primary, if you count secondary you need to add another 7,000 units.
- People do not want to rent their houses because of the current landlord and tenant laws.

So, with this backdrop, the Government needs to do some serious thinking about how to resolve the housing problem, especially given that many Mauritians prefer to buy their own plot of land and construct a housing unit but are having problem to do so.

Government could make land available because there is plentiful of land and facilities available for the construction and to give additional facilities, for example, enhanced roof slab grant. With NSLD's inability to commence any single housing project and in the light of all the mismanagement which culminated in the loss of precious time and in addition to the level of

wastage of public money and with such level of mismanagement, as detailed by myself and my colleagues of the Opposition before me, I also express doubt about the intention, about this request for Rs5 billion and request that the whole proposal be revisited. Thank you.

(6.54 p.m.)

Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, what I note today is that the word of truth came on the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition, hon. Uteem, hon. Patrick Assirvaden, and hon. Osman Mohamed who spoke before me. Why the word of truth, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because since this morning, others has been glorifying the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and as well as the Deputy Prime Minister for coming to the House today and asking for fund.

I have to remind the House again, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are here today to debate on a request for fund that is supposed to be used for the construction of 8,000 social housing units. Many questions, Mr Speaker, Sir, since this morning from the Leader of the Opposition, many uncertainties from my friends on the Opposition side, many remarks of opacity, lack of transparency have been put forward by my colleagues from this side of the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, maybe I was expecting to see the name of the Deputy Prime Minister on the top of this list today. I was maybe expecting him to be the first one to intervene on Government's side today because we wanted to hear from him all the explanations, all the remarks that were put forward by the Leader of the Opposition today. Unfortunately, despite the list being amended, Mr Speaker, Sir, he is the last orator from the Government side. So, I leave it to the public, I leave it to all my colleagues here to see how much consideration we, on the Opposition side, are getting from this Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, they came to the House today asking for Rs5 billion – *5 milliards*, let me say it in French or Creole because everyone should understand. It is hell lots of money, Mr Speaker, Sir. Trying to justify what? The incompetence of the other! Trying to do what? Hide the truth! They came to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, asking for the money, for the funds and they are not even able to tell us the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir. Why do you need this fund?

If I go back, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the Estimates in 2021/2022, there was already a sum of Rs4 billion that was allocated and only Rs100 m. was used. Another sum of Rs4.5 billion was

allocated in 2022/2023, Mr Speaker, Sir, and there is currently Rs6 billion that is being carried forward till next year. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an Rs8.5 billion of fund that was available, that is available under the NSLD, the SPV that this Government has created. So, what is the real truth about coming to the House today and asking for more funds on a Tuesday, preventing the MPs from putting questions, preventing the Leader of the Opposition to have a PNQ and using the Supplementary Appropriation Bill as a *paravent* to prevent us to do the work today?

Mr Speaker: No, but you are touching a very delicate subject. Any Government in the world has a duty to present this kind of Bill and you have a duty to criticise if you are not agreeable but you cannot prevent. There is nothing in this world, nothing in the Standing Order that gives you the right to prevent Government from doing its work!

Mr Armance: Don't shout at me. I understand English.

Mr Speaker: Go ahead!

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to comment on your ruling but...

Mr Speaker: You cannot! And you should not! It is a ruling!

Mr Armance: I will not. I'm just telling you, I won't. Yes, that's what I am telling you.

Mr Speaker: Continue!

Mr Armance: It could have been any other day except Tuesday, that's what I wanted to tell you.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Rs8.5 billion was available. How was this money spent? Has he been spending this money? How much fund is still available at the NSLD? What is the projection for expenditure? We are talking of a hell lot of funds, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is a lot of money. It is public fund; it is neither my money nor your money; it is the money belonging to the population. And you know what makes me feel very puzzled today? It is about wastage of public funds. Since this morning, Mr Speaker, Sir, on this side of the House, we are saying: please, stop wasting public funds! Please, what are you going to do with this money? Please, tell us the truth! The truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is what we are claiming. We are only requesting them to come forward and tell us the truth.

There have been two tenders, Mr Speaker, Sir. Do you know how many consultants have been hired for the tenders, professionals that cost a lot of money? Do you know how many Public Officers have been working on the tenders, on the specifications? It is brought to our attention, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a sum of more than Rs500 m. has been spent into the two exercises of tendering, that is, tender one and tender two. Mr Speaker, Sir, they have scrapped tender one; it was a complete failure. *Et ils n'ont pas retenu la leçon du passé. Ils sont venus avec tender two and they have scrapped tender two, Mr Speaker, Sir. Ils ont dépensé plus de R 500 million dans des exercices de tendering qui n'ont abouti à rien. Je rappelle à la Chambre encore une fois que ce n'est pas mon argent, ce n'est pas votre argent mais c'est l'argent qui vient des fonds publics. C'est bien de le faire rappeler en son temps.*

Et pour couronner le tout, M. le président, le directeur de l'audit n'aura pas accès à ces informations. Pourquoi ? Parce que ce gouvernement a décidé de passer le projet sous une compagnie qui n'est pas sujette à l'audit. La compagnie NSLD, le directeur de l'audit n'a pas de droit de regard. Alors qu'on parle de R 20 million de projet et cela ne m'étonnerai pas qu'on passe à 30 ou 40 avec ce gouvernement ; cela ne m'étonnerai pas. On parle de chiffres faramineux et il n'y a pas de contrôle. Est-ce que ces gens-là vont pouvoir contrôler l'argent public ? Allons-nous faire confiance à ces gens-là, M. le président, alors que dans le passé – Patrick l'a soutenu plus tôt – pendant la Covid-19, vous avez vu le gaspillage qu'il y a eu pour l'achat des médicaments et l'achat des ventilateurs ? Pourtant ce n'était que ça. Mais là, maintenant on double le dernier nœud, les cerfs etc. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails, je ne veux pas faire de polémique. Mais, moi je suis inquiet parce que ce n'est pas votre argent, ce n'est pas mon argent mais c'est l'argent public qu'on est en train de mettre dans la main de ces gens-là. Vous savez en créole, il y a une expression qui dit : *'met lisien vey sosis'*. *That's what is going to happen. That is what going to happen, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

Do you know why Government has chosen to create this SPV, they injected the fund – I say it again – without safeguards, without the possibility for the Director of Audit to justify their expenses or their non-expenses? Government has chosen to do that, Mr Speaker, Sir, because they want to keep everything secret.

The Government decided to embark into a project of Rs20 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir, just in view to align their electoral promises without proper consultation and without proper

planning. Again, the Government has chosen to operate in a complete opacity and lack of transparency. The Government has again chosen to fulfill its electoral promises without a proper risk assessment; without knowing the dangers that can be caused by this type of construction made in a rush. In a rush, Mr Speaker, Sir! We are now nine months left for this year and 12 months next year. They are in a rush to come and build these houses. 12,000 houses were announced, now the workings I have in my hands talks about 8,000 houses. We will not know until the end how many of these houses will be built Mr Speaker, Sir but, they come here and make us believe that they are working for the population and the nation. They make us believe that they are going to take good care of our funds. They make us believe that there will be accountability. They make us believe in *bolom nwel*. That is the Government in front of us today. I mean part of the Government because majority of them are not here.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning, the Minister of Social Security – I am so sad she is not here – she mentioned *bwat zalimet*. Many MPs sitting on that side of the House were shouting: ‘*bwat zalimet!*’ as if they are very proud of that. But, you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the so-called *bwat zalimet* are social housing units that were given free of charge to the needy ones. Free of charge to the needy ones! There have been thousands – not hundred or whatever she was saying this morning, 500, *bat lestoma* – of these social units that have been constructed under the aegis of the PTR and the PMSD government of that time. There was the possibility to expand construction on upper floors or build more rooms.

The essence then, *M. le président*, the empowerment was mainly taken into consideration while giving the opportunity to the needy ones to have this so called *bwat zalimet*. Let me remind the Minister – she is not here – that under her, the Ministry of Social Integration has completely disappeared! It has been merged into her Ministry, which is a complete disaster. And now, she comes here and tries to give us lessons about construction of houses? But, you see, she does not tell the truth! She was saying: ‘yes, you were building CIS, they were small,’ but she forgot to tell us that in 2013, there were also 450 concrete housing units. She forgot or she omitted to tell us that in 2014, there were 1,677 concrete housing units. She should give the correct information! As a responsible Minister, she should give the correct information to the House because we are not going to accept that a Minister of the Republic of Mauritius comes here and misleads the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have tried to come up in my mind as to how did the Minister of Housing and Land come with the figure of Rs2.7 m. per unit? Somewhere, I fail to understand the logic behind. Previously, in the same House, the Minister was unable to confirm whether this housing unit would cost Rs6 m. or Not, despite that he spent Rs500 m. for consultancy fees per firm. He was unable to tell us the truth and what he said in the House is: 'I do not know.'

Somewhere, somehow, Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole concept has changed! The basic principle of construction – unfortunately, Nuckcheddy is not here – the whole concept has changed! Now, we are talking about...

Mr Speaker: You should be referring to an elected Member as hon. Nuckcheddy!

Mr Armance: But he is not here! Hon. Nuckcheddy, I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The whole concept has changed, Mr Speaker, Sir, no more tender, no more competition. They use the grade A list, which is a large contractor from CIDB, and invited the contractor for a design and build proposal. Why did I mention hon. Nuckcheddy? Because he said this, but he forgot to tell us something as well. When doing so, this Government is taking off from their shoulder the responsibility to complete and do a proper project. Let me tell you why, because it will be the contractor who is going to be responsible for each and every nail that is going to be in this housing unit. They are going to '*lav lame*' at the end of the day. I have seen this in Rodrigues where contractors leave the site and go away. I have seen it in Mauritius where contractors leave the site and go away.

That is why when the Leader of the Opposition was questioning about the performance bonds, it is very important that we have the correct safeguards, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is very important that today we reassure the House and we reassure the population that we are going to spend the money wisely, that we are not going to waste this money, Mr Speaker, Sir.

You know what, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is very funny. The exercise to give the proposal from the 14 selected contractors, do you know what was the date that it was supposed to be submitted? It was yesterday. I would like the Minister, when he is going to intervene after me, to tell concretely how many, out of the 14 contractors, did submit a proposal saying that they can build the houses at a budget of Rs2.7 m? Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only 14 names. If he can come here, when he is going to intervene, and tell me 'contractor 1 said yes, contractor 2...' We want

to know the truth because as per our information, this is not going to happen! This is not going to happen, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned something very important this morning about how the project is going to be managed. Who is going to ensure quality on site? Who is going to ensure that there is no cost overrun? You know, this Government is a champion of cost overrun. Champion! I can take some examples if you want. Let us just take Côte d'Or, *Côte Mort*, the only example! Champion of cost overrun, this is the Government of MSM! Who is going to control the time allocated for the completion of the project?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the NSLD is a newly created small company; a small team of Project Managers, young guys, and there is a lady whom I cannot remember her name. Compare this to the full setup of the experienced Consultants who were working on the project on tender one and two. Compare it to the NHDC which hon. Mahomed just mentioned the full set up, the experienced people who have already done this type of project. You want us to believe that in one and a half year, you are going to build 8,000 concrete houses with on-site infrastructure and off-site infrastructure? Come on, there is something wrong, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Hon. Ganoo came here in the House and talked lengthily about La Valette. I was not there, I was at the office, but I listened to him because I wanted to know whether he is passionate about what he was saying or was he just coming here to say whatever he has to say. Yes, he gave us some details about the new project of 223 social housing units that are going to be under construction. I read about the projects on the newspaper. A very nice project! But it is not just about construction, Mr Speaker, Sir. Today, it is not only about construction. What I am going to tell you is very important. It is about life skill, it is about living in a clean environment, it is about living in a safe environment, and not about repeating what was done in the past. Stop coming the House and stop saying it is the government of PTR, government of PMSD. You are in Government for the last two elections!

When will you, at least, understand that you should not copy from errors? Do your own things! Let me tell you what a newspaper reported on La Valette. I am not proud that I am going to quote it, but I will have to quote it so that he understands –

« (...) le village intégré est devenu un « bidonville ». Prostitution, trafic de drogue, vol, violence, mères célibataires, il y a de tout à La Valette. Le pire quartier de Bambous (...). »

Est-ce que l'honorable Ganoo a oublié de nous dire, suite à la description du Défi, que c'est à côté que se trouve son projet de 223 maisons? Comment va-t-on pouvoir faire les deux vivre ensemble, M. le président ? Alors qu'un côté, on décrit La Valette comme étant le pire du pire, de l'autre côté, M. Ganoo dit qu'il est en train de construire des châteaux avec toutes les infrastructures !

M. le président, je demande à ces gens : avant de parler, réfléchissez ! Les personnes qui vivent à La Valette sont si vulnérables, ce sont des opprimés ; ce sont des gens qui sont dans le besoin. On ne peut pas venir ici et dire qu'ils sont venus signer des papiers et que personne ne savait ; ils étaient des squatters, etc. Comme-ci venir mettre des timbres sur ces gens-là. Ces personnes ont besoin d'aide. Ces personnes ont besoin d'encadrement. Ces personnes ont besoin de soutien.

Ma question à l'honorable ministre Jeewa-Daureeawoo qui n'est pas là : est-ce que vous avez pu faire quelque chose pour justement remonter le niveau de vie de ces gens qui vivent à La Valette ? Non, M. le président, parce qu'après ce rapport accablant, la situation est toujours pareille. Ce n'est pas les maisons neuves de M. Ganoo et de ce gouvernement qui vont changer la situation à La Valette. Il faudrait que ce ministre et ses collègues aient la volonté de le faire. Je ne vais pas m'attarder dessus. Je vous donne un simple exemple, M. le président. Il y a 52 *streetlights* à La Valette. Savez-vous combien fonctionnent sur les 52? Deux! Deux!

Mr Speaker: No, but now you are going too far, stretching away from the main debate.

Mr Armance: I am going to conclude.

Mr Speaker: The main debate is about construction of 12,000 or 8,000 houses.

Mr Armance: He talked lengthily about La Valette!

Mr Speaker: You go straight to the subject!

Mr Armance: You didn't even stop him! Now you are stopping me.

Mr Speaker: No, you don't teach me lessons! I am giving my ruling! I listened to the hon. Minister. The hon. Leader of the Opposition started the whole thing of La Valette, she rebutted and I know to what extent she went and I know to what extent you are going. You are making an abuse of the time of Parliament.

Mr Armance: I am not. I am making a request.

Mr Speaker: Please, don't discuss!

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to conclude. I don't want you to get nervous with me. I know you had a very hard day today. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like the Minister...

Mr Speaker: Yes, and the other thing...

Mr Armance: I am very polite now.

Mr Speaker: Please, listen to me.

Mr Armance: Yes.

Mr Speaker: Don't comment! Don't make any comment about the Speaker! This is contrary to rules and regulations. Okay? Learn! You are a seasoned politician. You are a seasoned parliamentarian. Don't commit simple mistakes like these.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me end with a positive note. I would like the Minister during his intervention to give us full details of the construction per region. Full details! Tell us exactly what project you are doing in Pointe aux Sables, Coromandel and Malherbes. Give us details region-wise! If he cannot come with all the details today, then, please come with a statement in the House and let us know. Give us the specifications of the amenities so that standards can be respected despite the region where they are constructed. We need a copy of the contract because, again, the champion of confidential clause is this Government. We need a copy of that. We need to know all the contractual clauses that are listed and all the safeguards. We want to know what his projection for the final cost of a unit is, including the infrastructure, the onsite work, the offsite work, and the cost of land per region. We want to have full transparency on the financing of the project as well. As a last request, tell us exactly who the people who are going to buy these houses are or what is going to be the real sales condition and what is going to be the interest that is going to be imposed on this future owner.

M. le président, R 20 milliards-30 milliards, cela fait tourner la tête à certains. Donc, on n'aimerait pas que ces milliards atterrissent dans des chassées avec les cerfs. Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Next orator!

(7.20 p.m.)

Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the chance once again to talk on two main issues that the Bill is addressing, which are, climate change and housing.

Additional funds need to be made available if there is the urgency to do so to address both issues because good governance in terms of housing policy and building resilience towards the negative effects of climate change is central to people's life, health, dignity and safety. Policy makers have the responsibility to make sure that decent homes are affordable, safe and accessible.

Appropriation of additional funds with regard to housing policies and housing schemes to low income vulnerable people is extremely important. This is where the Consolidated Fund, account of Government, becomes so important. It is therefore, very important to keep the Consolidated Fund of Government healthy to maintain the determinants of health and well-being in our society. Building resilience to natural catastrophes such as rise in sea level, severe droughts, flooding, cyclones, among so many, also affect the determinant of health.

For Government to be able to drive actions to address the related concerns, which I have already mentioned, health and well-being imply that extra funds are needed to design and readjust policies to shape an inclusive and sustainable approach towards reforms to ensure adequate housing to its citizens through strategic policies.

Providing additional funds for affordable housing is important. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is money well distributed. Providing decent and affordable housing infrastructure is not only an important social determinant to the health and well-being of a nation. Housing development by sound and sustainable policies also has a very important contribution to the economy.

The construction sector has always been a crucial part of our economy, where it brings employment, generating incomes and is important for sustainable development. Providing

additional funds to allow housing to become more accessible by increasing subsidies are part of social expenditure. Increasing subsidies on housing units for 8,000 families will definitely influence the housing supply market. Therefore, this will have positive effects on the overall prices of housing.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, housing will not become affordable and accessible to the 8,000 families concerned only but also to other people outside this social housing scheme, because this incentive that the Government is providing will improve housing availability, making more people getting access to affordable housing market which in turn will reduce inequality and poverty in our society.

We need to encourage Government to come forward with good strategies and policies as we still have a long way to go to reduce inequality, enhance inclusiveness and continually promote and maintain socio-cultural fabrics of our society.

Accessibility to decent housing is becoming increasingly important for physical safety. With the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, we had all witnessed the importance of decent housing to effectively combat this pandemic where we were all called to confine. Infection rates during the peak of the pandemic COVID-19 were higher among vulnerable people with poor housing conditions.

With COVID-19 pandemic, policy makers have noticed how difficult it was to hide homeless people from the virus. We did have casualties among people with inadequate housing in the peak of the pandemic despite the measures taken by the Government into finding temporary housing and prevention of evictions. It is therefore very important that the Bill goes through the Parliamentary process to give the policy makers the fund needed to implement measures of providing access to affordable and decent housing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the unwanted effects due to climate change are present in our Republic as the whole island is surrounded by sea water. As we are small, our challenges about climate change and rise in sea water are enormous compared to bigger landlocked places. We are starting to have the initial impact of rise in sea level. Our coastal eco-system will be destabilized. Considerable ecological changes will occur. Increased transmissions of diseases are possible with rise in sea level. These cataclysmic changes are recipe for disaster and sound policies need

to be developed urgently as preventive measures, well before disaster strikes as by the following trend, disasters due to climate change, are almost predictable nowadays.

The preventive measures are to devise strategies for sea level rise by constructing new infrastructures. We need to develop adaptation measures to address anticipated risk. In so doing, all the mitigation and adaptation efforts will affect our national budget. That is why we are undergoing this exercise tonight. With the unpredictability of climate change, it is sometimes difficult to predict the right amount of money to be spent to adapt to the effects of climate change into how to develop policies to mitigate climate change even though we have a National Risk Assessment Framework.

Climate change, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a new factor which affects the National Budget but once again, if proper policies are developed to mitigate the effects of climate change, we will be able to decrease mandatory spending on disasters. That is why this Supplementary Appropriation exercise is important. The extent of coastal degradation due to rise in sea level in the Republic is significant and this is where I come to add my voice to this debate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is good that this Bill is addressing the problem of housing and climate change together as they are inter-related. A rise in sea level will cause human displacement, especially in a small developing State like ours where many people prefer to live on coastal area. So, this issue will be looked at by providing additional funds on housing programmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is my contribution to this debate and I thank you for your attention.

(7.30 p.m.)

Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): L'honorable collègue membres, on est en train de débattre pour l'allocation de R 5.4 milliards sollicitées par l'honorable ministre des Finances. Beaucoup de questions ont été soulevées par les membres de l'opposition. Ce n'est pas nécessaire que si l'opposition soulève des questions, les appréhensions, qu'il faut absolument que les membres du gouvernement réfutent. Écoutez, analysez et ensuite, au nom de la population, au nom des contribuables, au nom de vos mandants, vous décidez. Je vous donne un exemple, cela a été pris par mes collègues avant. Un comprimé acheté par le ministère à R 7.90...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, if you are going to compare...

Mr Juman : On est en train...

Mr Speaker: I am speaking! I am on my feet!

I am regulating the business of the House. If you are going to compare anything with medicines or whatever you are saying, this is not allowed! You go directly to the subject, the construction of houses and the money that is being requested! Go directly!

Mr Juman: As we are here yet again, Mr Speaker, Sir, to debate on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, I feel disheartened for our people. While people are suffering deeply due to the cost of living crisis, we have seen in the last audit report published only last week, how public funds are being wasted...

Mr Speaker: Again hon. Member, again! We are not debating the Report of the Director of Audit as such. We are debating the Bill for the construction of 8,000 houses! So, go directly to the Bill!

Mr Juman: Yes, public funds are being wasted by millions and millions of rupees, *pour ne pas dire des milliards*. Now the hon. Minister of Finance is requesting for an additional fund of Rs5.4 billion, out of which Rs5 billion is earmarked for the construction of social housing. I will focus only on aspect of these centrally managed initiatives today namely, the construction of 12,000 housing units.

Ce matin l'honorable ministre de la Sécurité sociale nous a dit que le gouvernement a construit environ 4 000 maisons depuis 2014 mais elle ne nous a pas dit combien de ces maisons ont été construites avant et en 2014, inaugurées en 2015. Combien de contrats pour construction de ces maisons ont été déjà alloués avant des élections de 2014 ? Est-ce que vous savez que dans le Manifeste Electoral 2014 du gouvernement, vous aviez promis 2 000 maisons par année ? Aujourd'hui, après neuf ans, combien de maisons a-t-on construites ? Vous savez qu'est-ce que le ministre du Logement, le *DPM* nous a dit en novembre, après neuf ans au pouvoir ? « *2,200 houses have been constructed since the last elections.* » 2 200 maisons, alors que vous avez promis à la population 2 000 maisons par an ! Ça ce n'est pas moi, c'est l'honorable *DPM* qui nous a dit ça.

En 2020, le ministre des Finances, l'honorable Dr. Padayachy, nous demande R 12 milliards pour la construction de 12 000 maisons pour les prochains trois ans qui va terminer

dans deux mois. 12 000 maisons ! Savez-vous pourquoi ? Il nous dit que c'est pour relancer l'économie. Pourquoi faut-il relancer l'économie ? À cause du Covid. Il sollicite la Chambre, il demande R 12 milliards pour relancer l'économie pour la construction de 12 000 maisons à cause du Covid. Aujourd'hui, Madame la ministre et il y a une semaine, l'adjoint au Premier ministre nous dit –

« Le retard c'est dû au Covid. »

Pour relancer l'économie, on demande de l'argent pour construire des maisons ? Tout à l'heure, le ministre de la Bonne gouvernance nous a dit : Il faut chercher des terrains, des contracteurs. Mais avant de venir demander R 12 milliards pour construire 12 000 maisons dans trois ans, on n'a pas réfléchi à cela ?

Aujourd'hui, après trois ans, vous savez combien de maisons on a construit de ces 12 000 ? Zéro! Zéro ! Comment relancer l'économie, l'honorable ministre Dr. Padayachy ?

Mr Speaker: No, this is another subject. Go directly to the 8,000 houses!

Mr Juman: We are talking about housing project.

Mr Speaker: Go directly to 8,000 houses, not taking into account those houses that have not been built.

Mr Juman: Yes, no worries, I will complete.

Mr Speaker: Now, they are building and they are requesting the money. If you are for or against, criticise. But 8,000 houses.

Mr Juman: *Enn kari serf mem mo krwar la!*

M. le ministre, si on vient maintenant au projet de 12,000 maisons, on ne parle plus de 12 000 maisons aujourd'hui ; on parle de 8 000. On ne parle plus de R 12 milliards, on parle de R 30 milliards pour 8,000 maisons. Si on parle pour 12 000, on doit compter R 40 milliards. Voilà ce qui se passe ! Et maintenant, M. le président, pourquoi on ne passe pas par la *NHDC* ? Pourquoi a-t-on créé une nouvelle compagnie, *NSLD* ? Pour la simple et bonne raison : c'est pour contourner le *Public Procurement Act*.

Je m'adresse plutôt aux membres du gouvernement. Il faut réfléchir, il faut écouter. M. le président, vous savez les conditions de ce contrat ? Il n'y a pas eu d'appel d'offres. Mes

collègues ont commenté dessus. Il n'y a pas eu d'appels d'offres. D'abord, vous savez qu'on a fait une demande pour un consultant ? Avant même de commencer le projet, cela a coûté R 780 millions à la population. De ces R 780 millions, on a déjà payé 40 %, R 280 millions déjà payées au consultant. Après, le projet a été *scrapped, closed*. R 280 millions à l'eau !

R 75 millions à *NSLD* toutes les années, trois ans. Cela fait R 500 millions. Combien de maisons a-t-on construit à ce jour ? Zéro ! R 500 millions, vous savez, beaucoup d'argent, beaucoup de maisons. Mais qui est responsable ? Vous avez R 1.7 millions pour construire une maison, mais pourquoi vous demandez un villa de R 11 millions ? Les consultants ne sont pas fautifs, c'est le ministère, c'est le ministre, le *DPM*. Il faut venir expliquer à la Chambre –

- (a) Qu'est-ce que vous avez demandé au consultant ?;
- (b) Quel genre de maisons et de villas ? 11 millions de roupies, logements sociaux ?
- (c) Une unité à R 11 millions ?

Là, *scrapped*, R 500 millions à l'eau ! Voilà, j'ai R 2.7 millions. Dieu sait où ils ont eu R 2.7 millions pour décider, mais qu'est-ce qui se passe maintenant ? Laissez-moi vous dire : R 2.7 millions par unité, pas d'appels d'offres, on prend des contracteurs ici et là, voilà ce qu'ils disent dans les conditions. On est en train de voter R 5 milliards pour cela, M. le président –

- (a) Selon le *Public Procurement Act*, n'importe quelle autre compagnie qui commande ou demande à construire, *normal practice is 10% of contract value as advance payment*, mais dans le cas de *NSLD*, *25% of contract value paid in one instalment*.

La semaine prochaine pour tous ce qu'il y a là, R 2.7 millions par unité par 8 000, on va payer 25 % de cela. On est en train de parler de plusieurs milliards de roupies sans condition. Je continue –

- (b) *performance security bond, normal practice is 10% of contract value from local registered banks*.

NSLD vous demande 5 % pas de la banque, mais d'une compagnie d'assurance. Je continue –

- (c) *normal practice delay damage, s'il y a delay, s'il y a de retard, normal practice pour 100 à 150 maisons, R 270,000 à R 405,000 par jour, as per CPB guidelines*.

Dans le cas de *NSLD* pour ces maisons, on est en train de parler de R 30 milliards, R 25,000 par jour. Je continue –

- (d) retention money, normal practice is 10% interim payment. *Ici, c'est 5 %.* Second half, money may be released upon issue of retention bond. *On peut tout payer, pas de retention money.*
- (e) *NSLD – normal practice is 10%. Payment effected within 56 days after been checked, etc. In this case, 28 days when the contractor applies, you have to pay within 28 days. Contractors are value added tax exempted. On-site dormitories allowed exceptionally for them.*

Je peux continuer, il y en a de trop. Hier, c'était le *deadline*, 3 April. Il y a un contracteur qui vous appelle, il vous dit que 'non, je ne suis pas prêt, je vais déposer cela vendredi.' Que pouvons-nous faire ? Il n'y a pas de conditions, il n'y a rien.

Maintenant, on est en train de parler de quoi ? *Social housing* pour des personnes qui sont vulnérables, qui sont au bas de l'échelle. Si une famille touche R 11,000 aujourd'hui, avec ce projet, la famille doit déboursier R 7,800 par mois pendant 20 ans par unité. Vous réalisez qu'une famille qui touche R 11,000 doit payer R 7,900 par mois pendant 20 ans ?

Flooring - il n'y a pas de *tiles*, rien. Gris ! Rien ! R 7,900 - électricité, *CEB*, *CWA*, etc. Qu'est-ce qu'ils mangent ? C'est ça qu'on est en train de proposer pour les gens qui sont au bas de l'échelle ? Voilà ! Mais de l'autre côté, M. le président, pour une chassée de 490 arpents...

Mr Speaker: Again.

Mr Juman: Non, non, non.

Mr Speaker: Again.

Mr Juman: Ça concerne cela, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: I will stop you if you're going outside the subject!

Mr Juman: It is not outside. I am comparing.

R 400 arpent pour les riches! Ici, R 790 pour quelqu'un qui touche R 11,000 par mois. Qu'est-ce qu'ils mangent?

Mr Speaker: There is no relevance!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Member!

Mr Juman: *R 400 plis cerf! Plis Black Label!*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, I am on my feet!

There is no relevance between what you are saying and what is here on table in this House. You know fully well that you are outside the subject! Come back to your subject!

Mr Juman: M. le président, tout ce que je demande...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order !

Mr Juman : On est en train de parler de l'argent des contribuables. On est en train de parler de beaucoup d'argent. Je demande à ce qu'on utilise cet argent à bon escient, qu'on investisse là où il le faut et qu'on n'embête pas la population parce que là ce qu'on est en train de faire c'est qu'on est en train de dilapider les fonds. Quelqu'un par 25% ...

Mr Speaker: No. Please, withdraw that word "*dilapider*".

Mr Juman: Volatiliser.

Mr Speaker: You said "*dilapider*"!

Mr Juman: Volatiliser, c'est bon?

Mr Speaker: You said "*dilapider*"! I am asking you to withdraw the word "*dilapider*"! Once and forever!

Mr Juman: *Dilapider.*

Mr Speaker: Withdraw it! Say it: I withdraw the word "*dilapider*"!

Mr Juman: I withdraw the word "*dilapider*".

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Dans le rapport de l'Audit, il y a ça.

Mr Speaker: Parliament is one thing; *rapport de l'Audit* is another thing.

(Interruptions)

Later we will discuss it. We can talk about that later. Continue hon. Member! You were doing very well. Continue !

Mr Juman: M. le président, je demande au *DPM* de venir répondre à toutes ces questions et appréhensions. C'est grave ! Qui a commandé des maisons qui d'après les consultants nous coûtent R 11 millions ? Comment des personnes vulnérables ...

Mr Speaker: No, you already said that! Hon. Member, I am on my feet!

Mr Juman: I know.

Mr Speaker: Don't repeat yourself; it is according to Standing Orders!

Mr Juman: Huh!

Mr Speaker: Don't repeat yourself!

(Interruptions)

Mr Juman: Yes.

Mr Speaker: So, you finished?

Mr Juman: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am nearly finished. I ask again the hon. DPM to please reconsider. The social housing is very important but the way that things are being done now is not good.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much. Very good speech!

Now I will call hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah!

(7.50 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me the floor to contribute to this extremely important Supplementary Appropriation Bill this evening.

I shall be leaving the pleasure to my two honourable colleagues, the Deputy Prime Minister and the mover of the Bill to later reply to the fairly repetitive questions put forth by numerous Members of the Opposition. But with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reply to a few of the points put forward by a few Members of the Opposition. Starting with hon. Osman Mahomed who is not here but started off on a very good note displaying a decent command of the gist of this Supplementary Appropriation Bill and even stating that the primary objective of this Bill is precisely because we have been through an unprecedented, unpredicted pandemic and because of this there has been an increase in all associated costs, across the board, related to these projects and that is entirely correct. Unfortunately, having said that, he decides to shoot off a tangent by questioning now the competence of individuals heading, funnily enough, the very same institution he was at the helm of and having stated that himself in Parliament earlier on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Armance cautioned or asked the hon. Members of the Government *de réfléchir avant de parler*. I think he should apply that to himself as well because if my memory and his memory will serve correctly, when we talk about *dilapider ou volatiliser*, they should recall – they are Members of the Opposition there – or go back and try and find out how much money was squandered *kan Maurice ti enn plezir lor so lil plat. Sa osi nou kapav koze*. But this is not the platform for it. This isn't the platform for it!

And having listened to hon. Mahomed earlier on, it appears to me that he was just spurting out *des prétextes pourquoi ils n'ont pas pu construire ces 10,000 maisons qu'ils avaient prévues alors qu'il ont construit je crois 548 maisons*. So, I would really ask them to *réfléchir avant de parler comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable Armance tout à l'heure*.

L'honorable Assirvaden ended his speech by stating and I quote –

« *Le passé de ce gouvernement nous laisse des doutes* ».

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to gently turn this around. In fact, *le passé du gouvernement Travailleiste nous confirme son incompétence* and if I could summarise the social housing policies and achievements of the PTr led government, Mr Speaker, Sir, I probably could fit those achievements at the back of a matchbox.

Therefore, anybody who has listened and paid attention to the speech of my colleague hon. Dr. Padayachy, mover of the Bill, and paid particular attention to the specifics of this Supplementary Appropriation, one would have easily understood the various categories of spending for which the hon. Minister of Finance is requesting the House. Mr Speaker, Sir, all the justifications and this Bill, unquestionably, are decisive for inclusive development, inclusive growth, and a green Mauritius. It is not just another budgetary financial accounting exercise only. It is about the consistency of this Government to go out of their way to cater for the needs of our vulnerable citizens, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am recalling the word used by none other than the Leader of the Opposition, this morning, when he stated that we are constructing ‘ghettos’. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government, is constructing social housing for the needy, the vulnerable and to coin these social housing units as ‘ghettos’ is just downright demeaning. He is not here at the moment but I hope wherever he is, he is paying attention to what I am saying. The hon. Member of the Opposition was saying that small is beautiful, small is beautiful. He repeated that a few times. Yes, small might be beautiful, Mr Speaker, Sir, but to draw his attention – yes, small might be beautiful – but size also matters. We cannot be providing social housing...

(Interruptions)

Zot pas pou compran sa zot. Pa fer nanye. It does when we are providing adequate facilities for the needy, for the vulnerable. *Nou pa met enn tol lao!* We do not give them a matchbox where there is hardly room to swing a cat, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is where I commend the dignified social housing policy of the Prime Minister, of the Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, earlier on my colleague has explained how these houses are going to be beneficial to so many families, there is no doubt about that. So many Members of the other side of the House have spoken about lockdown, going to the extent of – it is the Leader of the Opposition I think who said that – that lockdown only lasted one month. I mean, for clarity’s sake, it is either the hon. Member of the Opposition, Leader of the Opposition is not inhabiting the same planet as us because we are still bearing, suffering the setbacks of COVID-19. We are still going through the effects of the war between Ukraine and Russia.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, my point being, everybody has understood and those who are pretending not to have understood, I hope after my intervention they will understand that the

Prime Minister is fully aware of his priorities and that has been amply demonstrated when the priorities had to be reshuffled when COVID-19 hit our country, when public health became a priority and now that we are headed on a recovery path, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is time to go back and do good on our promise, deliver the promise that we have made to this population which is the way forward onto the journey of green socio-economic development as a sustainable strategy for our people. Hence, Mr Speaker, Sir, the timely introduction of this Appropriation Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, both climate change and social housing are high-priority issues and they remain that on the Government's agenda. Mauritius and the entire world to that effect have been experiencing extreme weather conditions. I am not going to wax lyrical about all these points because my colleagues on this side of the House have already highlighted that the reality of our geographical position and how being in such an active tropical cyclone basin, cyclone zone, makes us so vulnerable to the damaging effects of global climate shift.

Mr Speaker, Sir, no doubt like stressed out earlier on by my colleagues from the Government side, the waterfront project at Deux-Frères will be serving to mitigate the impact of such climate change as well as at the same time, opening doors of opportunities for development, tourism, business, leisure activities and so on and so forth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coming back to the objectives of constructing 12,000 social houses, it is a priority that ranks highest on the developmental agenda of this Government and after having listened to the intervention of many Members of the other side of the House, it begs the question as to why the Members of the Opposition are so vehemently criticising and not very constructively I may say. Sometimes even going to contradicting themselves saying that we operate in opacity, *pas de transparence* when in fact, they themselves are in possession of an enormous amount of information as earlier on made very clear by my colleague, hon. Mahen Seeruttun.

So, it begs the question of why this vehemence and the answer came to me when was listening to – I do not remember, definitely not hon. Juman – but I think it was while listening to hon. Armance. The answer came to me and it reminds me of these kinds of weightless criticisms that they always put forth when Government goes on delivering, stands up and lives up to its commitment. One of the examples that come to mind is when we said that we were going to increase the old age pension. What was not said in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir? In fact, the latest

example of what was said in this House by the Members of the Opposition is not even a few hours old, *les fleurs qui ont été lancées tout à l'heure dans la Chambre*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to be extremely lengthy. When it comes to standing by its people, when it comes to living up to its vow, its promise to provide for those who are in need, for those who are the most vulnerable, for those at the bottom rungs of the ladder, undeniably there is no question that the Prime Minister, this Government puts the people first on top of all our priorities and I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the very bone of contention. This is what the Opposition always finds so hard to digest.

As pointed out again, previously by my colleagues, when the Opposition had the time, the opportunity; they had the duty in fact to deliver these social housing units, nothing was done and now that something is being done about it, the work is being carried out, instead of acknowledging it, *dans tout le respect de la Chambre, de la démocratie*, instead of acknowledging the work that is being carried out, where we are leaving absolutely nobody behind which remains our philosophy, instead they come to the House with the same argument, with the same kind of political theatricals that we witnessed earlier on, with the same masterminding of walk-outs all very planned and so on and so forth.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, *c'est désolant*; it is really sad that when we are discussing, we are debating this extremely valid and important Appropriation Bill, it is important and I should make that very clear, every cent that is requested, approved and spent, is guided by one principle only - the principle of this Government is to improve the life of our population. Unfortunately, some will always obstruct the road to development for whatever reason, be it for political gain, whether it is for survival, for whatever reason some will always *met batons dans larou comme on l'appel*. Some will always feel like crying. *Heureusement, il n'y a pas de taxe là-dessus*.

So, they can freely cry if they feel like, but Mr Speaker, Sir, I would invite the Members of the other side of the House, in particular, the Leader of the Opposition. I would invite him... Allow the direct beneficiaries of this human centric project; allow those people to come forward and testify whether we should or not work in their interests, for their well-being. Allow the people who are going to be the direct recipients of this gargantuan, second to none project, allow them to come and testify.

Mr Speaker, Sir, vulnerable people do not have the Press under their payroll. These vulnerable people are not on social media and I again invite, I reiterate my invitation to the Members of the Opposition again, in particular to the Leader of the Opposition who was throwing left, right, centre. I would invite him to go and speak to these people for whom this Government has been, is and will continue to work for. I put on record my whole hearted support for this Supplementary Appropriation Bill and I thank you very much for your attention.

Long live the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

(8.05 p.m.)

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to intervene on this piece of legislation.

I have heard the hon. Minister who spoke just before me and what I gathered from her speech was that she used the word ‘democracy’ and in my humble view, does not really necessarily understand the intricacies of the word.

The very fact that the Opposition is here to give its view(s) is something that she should not be angry about *ou offusquer* because she has gone on and on about the Opposition, casting aspersions on our views, on our opinion, as though we have a dark motive and that is why we are exercising our right to criticise. That is why I am convinced that she is totally oblivious of what exactly ‘democracy’ means.

It is the duty of the Opposition to act responsibly and this is precisely what the Opposition has done today. The Opposition has gone through the projects behind this huge amount of money that is being asked for. And what is the project about? On one hand, the issue is about the residential units for Rs5 billion and then, on the other, the Waterfront in Deux Frères. It is the duty of the Opposition not only to just stick to the figures because very often, the figures blind and try to hide the obvious. It is necessary therefore to go into the details what exactly is this project for Rs5 billion about and what exactly is the project in Deux Frères about. If it is to create employment; if it is there to sort out economic downturn; if it is there to create *la richesse* in areas of the country where economic development has not reached, it is therefore something that is very important. If we have to build houses in order to give families that do not

have houses, *les demandeurs de logements sociaux*, it is important and indeed needs to be commended.

However, you cannot get away scot-free by simply saying: 'I am here, I am going to give accommodation to the poor. I am going to give accommodation to those who don't have a home, *les demandeurs de logements*', but at the same time, you keep it secret as to how and in what way you are going to be spending that money that does not belong to you. It does not belong to any single Minister or Members of Government, but it belongs to the taxpayers of this country. You cannot hide behind the idea of doing something that is supposedly charitable, good, and social in the objective but at the same time, you keep the shroud of secrecy, no accountability, none whatsoever, and then, you call this democracy. I have never seen a book where this is democracy, where you keep secrets.

Can you imagine Mr Speaker, Sir, we come to this House and we cannot even find out who and how contractors were chosen, what are the issues that would have been exposed had it gone to the normal procurement under the Public Procurement Act? We can't find that out in this House. And I am convinced - they can say whatever they wish - *la seule raison pour laquelle* a special-purpose vehicle was created, the only one reason, is to stop Members of Parliament from putting questions. The opposition that the previous orator was so nice to find that it is not democratically correct for us to put those questions. The only reason why this SPV was created was to *nous voiler la face, pour nous empêcher de poser des questions; pour nous empêcher de savoir la vérité; pour nous empêcher de savoir qui exactement obtient le contrat; si* the value that is ascribed to this project is it reasonable or is it overinflated; are commissions being paid or not. This is the reason why we cannot find out because we will not go through the Public Procurement Act; because we need to hide everything. How dare we, Members of the Opposition, question the right of Government to hide things? How dare we, as Members of the Opposition, ask for accountability? We should not do that. We are wrong. They are right to stay in the darkness. They are right to make everything secret. They are right to manoeuvre in the dark. They are right because they are in numbers. This is their version of democracy. Their version of democracy means : *allons bangole mais ne posez pas de questions*.

Mr Speaker: No, hon. Member, I will stop you there.

Mr Mohamed: Should I withdraw it?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: I withdraw it. Let us waste the money. Let us waste! Let us not be responsible in our management of taxpayers' money. In English, maybe it sounds parliamentarily more acceptable, but it means the same thing. Throwing money out of the window because they would do it in secret in their little meetings, but that is democracy, their version.

But what is democracy? Democracy is for us to be able to have access to information. I have in my hand here a document that is produced by the NSLD, New Social Living Development. Hon. Juman referred to this document when he was intervening earlier on, 'Construction of 12,000 units, Phase 1: 8,000 units'. And in that document, I read at page 30, and this is a document produced by that company that was, I am convinced, created to hide the truth, not to let taxpayers know where the money is going and whose pockets it is lying in. That is why it was created. *Si ena anguille sous roche*, at least, the procurement agency would have stopped it. If there is unfairness, corruption, we would have found out. But then, you cannot keep on hiding everything every time, it surfaces. And what does it say here, at page 30, payment to contractor, sub clause 14.7, normal practice, as hon. Juman said. Normal practice is in normal trade, payment is effected within 56 days after application made by contractor. Here, payment will be effected within 28 days after application made by contractor.

Mr Speaker: Hon Member!

Mr Mohamed: Yes?

Mr Speaker: You would be repeating what he has already said.

Mr Mohamed: I am explaining it again. He only said it, now I am explaining.

Mr Speaker: Go through it rapidly because he has already stated that.

Mr Mohamed: No, he stated it but he did not explain.

Mr Speaker: Explain it!

Mr Mohamed: I am explaining now.

What this shows is favouritism that is being given by Government, the NSLD, to contractors, and these favourable terms...

Mr Speaker: No, no, hon. Member. “Favouritism given by Government to contractors”, withdraw that sentence completely, please.

Mr Mohamed: I do not know why I should withdraw but just to please you, I withdraw.

Mr Speaker: No, don't comment!

Mr Mohamed: I please you.

Mr Speaker: I am here just to regulate the business of the House.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, regulate.

Mr Speaker: I am a victim myself.

Mr Mohamed: Of what?

Mr Speaker: Of regulating.

Mr Mohamed: You are a victim?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, I would have loved to be a victim like you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am just regulating the business of the House. This sentence cannot be accepted in the House. Please, withdraw it unconditionally.

Mr Mohamed: Sit down; I withdraw. Sit down!

Mr Speaker: And, please...

Mr Mohamed: Yes, yes, yes. So, I withdraw it unconditionally.

Mr Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr Mohamed: Yes?

Mr Speaker: Don't talk like this to me: 'Sit down!' No!

We are good friends. Maybe the population does not know the depth of our friendship. They make ...

Mr Mohamed: With such friendship who needs enemies? Anyway!

Mr Speaker: Don't talk like this.

Mr Mohamed: Don't worry. Please, don't worry. Sit down!

Mr Assirvaden: Je souffre de l'oreille gauche, un peu moins...

Mr Mohamed: So, now that everyone is sitting down...

Mr Assirvaden: Je souffre de l'oreille gauche. Je vous dis franchement, M. le président, un peu plus doux, s'il vous plait.

Mr Mohamed: Those terms...

Mr Speaker: Non, mais là...

Mr Mohamed: Those terms...

Mr Speaker: Mais là vous allez trop loin ! Vous n'avez pas le droit comme un membre de me demander ceci ou cela.

Mr Assirvaden: Vous hurlez trop, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Non ! Non, retirez ce mot !

Mr Assirvaden: Mais vous...

Mr Speaker: Retirez ce mot ! Sans condition, toute suite, retirez ce mot ou sinon vous partez !

Mr Assirvaden: Je préfère partir !

Mr Speaker: Partez !

Mr Assirvaden: Je souffre de l'oreille gauche !

Mr Mohamed: *Mon ami reste, s'il te plaît.* Please, don't leave me!

Mr Assirvaden: Je préfère partir.

Mr Mohamed: Don't leave me alone!

Mr Assirvaden: Non, pour protéger mon oreille!

Mr Mohamed: *Mais mon oreille va avoir mal maintenant!*

So, why is it that the NSLD is offering better terms to the contractors here? Because the 28 days instead of 56, means that more money is put in the pockets of the contractor faster than in the normal situation. I let the population decide and be the judge and here if the retention money was once 10%, it is being reduced to 5%. What does that mean? Once again, it means that there would be less money in order to correct defects during the defect and liability period. So, at some point in time, because of this genius way of managing things, you could end up with a situation where there are defects and liabilities during the period that cannot be corrected because there would be no funds for it anymore. And something else which struck me in this matter is the price adjustment sub clause 13.8, it says here –

“Price adjustment allowed for up to a maximum of 2% of the contract amount payable as from day 366...”

And I just wanted to do a mathematical calculation. What is 2%? 2% of Rs30 billion as the hon. Leader of the Opposition says is Rs600 m. So, you could have an adjustment of Rs600 m. already provided for in the contract but do we know that from our workings in Parliament? Have we been provided this information *par les maîtres de ce gouvernement*? Have they been so transparent as to tell the people of this country that there is the possibility that we may give those contractors Rs600 m. more of your money but we will not tell you, we will keep it secret, we will create an SPV? All this does not shock anyone? And on top of it, as hon. Juman has stated about the issue about VAT but most importantly, asking us to give them Rs5 billion more but at the same time ask a question: how many jobs will this create locally? That’s the question! How many jobs will it create locally? If at the same time, at page 31 of this document, *so jalousement gardé* in their coffers, secretly not make it public and what does it say here? Fast-tracking of Foreign Labour Permit! How many foreign workers will be getting jobs here? What about Mauritians? How many Mauritians are being trained in order to do those jobs for those houses, to work on those *chantiers*? How many?

Mr Speaker: Help me to understand. This document is a secret document. Not official!

Mr Mohamed: Well, they have tried to. They have not given it through the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, but we obtained it.

Mr Speaker: But this is not in circulation, an official document?

Mr Mohamed: It is in circulation in close quarters by people who are chosen, the bidders, the 14 bidders.

Mr Speaker: The bidders got it.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, only them. In other words, all conditions and decisions are already taken in the back of the people who are to pay for the project. The people of Mauritius have no say in it. It's behind their back that VAT is being exempted from the project, it's behind their back that foreigners are given priority to come and work on those *chantiers*, it's behind their back that Mauritian Citizens are not being trained, failure to train them in order to take up those jobs. Our youths, where unemployment rate has exploded, we don't give them the opportunity to be trained, to go and work on those sites and worst of all this Government talks about being so caring about workers on-site dormitories.

The regulations, my good friend the Minister of labour knows, do not allow on-site dormitories. Why does the ILO say that on-site dormitories are not allowed? Because we cannot make a worker live where he works and works where he lives. This is called *un minimum de respect*, human rights, that he lives somewhere else, not on the site of construction. Here, we are going to treat those workers as cattle, we are going to make them sleep where they work and work where they sleep. This is what this Government, caring Government that the previous orator said "democracy". She knows what democracy is and we don't. This is her version of democracy; make the worker sleep where he works and works where he sleeps. Waiving of fees for work permits! What more do we want to give those contractors? Work permits, you will not pay for it anymore whereas *les petites et moyennes entreprises qui ont vraiment besoin des travailleurs, par exemple, les boulangeries, eux ils doivent payer. Par exemple, ceux qui sont dans l'agriculture et qui n'ont pas de main d'œuvre à travailler dans les champs, eux ils doivent payer le work permit fees mais par contre ceux qui vont se faire des milliards, ils n'ont rien à payer comme TVA, ils n'ont rien à payer comme work permit fees.* But why don't you just give them lock, stock, and barrel *sab kuch dedo*, give everything to them in the name of democracy, version MSM and then we talk about this project.

The Prime Minister started out by going to Coromandel visiting one of those sites chosen for the project and he went there to say that his Government will equitably share the development of social housing all around the 20 Constituencies. I am the first elected Member

for Constituency No. 3. I asked the question: how many of those houses will we put in Constituency No. 3? How many? How many will be put in Roche Bois? Zero! How many will be put in Plaine Verte? Zero! *Combien de logements vont être construit à Plaine Verte ? Pas un seul!* I can show you land. It's only if you don't want to see that you don't see. I know where it is and the last time that anything was built in that Constituency was when I was in Government and we were in power.

In Roche Bois, in Constituency No. 3, in Plaine Verte, we built houses. But why is it that this Government systematically provides for nothing for Constituency No. 3? I can even dare, go as far as Constituency No. 2. How many are going to be built in those Constituencies? Then we are going to have the lame excuse, there is no land. Why don't you adapt to the situation if you have to create buildings going up high rise? Why don't you adapt? Why is it in big capitals they know how to adapt and have social housing three floors, four floors, five floors? Why is it in Mauritius we have the lame excuse of no space?

(Interruptions)

I am coming to you, Sir, wait, I am coming to you. I am coming to you, don't interrupt me! Don't interrupt me! Mr Speaker, Sir! Don't interrupt me!

Mr Speaker: Please!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Ramano, don't interrupt me! I am coming to you in a minute!

Tell me why is it that Port Louis is forgotten? Is it because the MSM has been systematically kicked during elections by Constituencies in Port Louis? Because they have not obtained the votes, they decide not to develop Port Louis. Let us reject Port Louis ! *Allons oublier Port Louis, pas de maison à Port Louis !*

Mr Speaker: But now, you made your point. I agree with you. You have a point where there are no indications that houses are being built to your satisfaction. You made your point. But when you go and say that the MSM has been kicked in Constituency No. 3 and all that, the Government side will have their reply. But let's be fair....

(Interruptions)

Stop it there! Move on!

Mr Mohamed: I could have used the worst word than kicked. So, I am being fair! To be honest the Government has shown that they are consistent. Ever since this Government is in power and I talked about 2014, it has done nothing for the housing situation in the district of Port Louis. Nothing!

They have had many Ministers, they even have a Deputy Prime Minister now, they have done nothing and planned to do nothing *pour le district de Port Louis, que ce soit clair, que ce soit bien compris. Le gouvernement décide de prendre volontairement la décision de bouger l'électorat de la Circonscription No. 3, de la Circonscription No. 2, des Port Louisiens et de les envoyer dans d'autres Circonscriptions.* This is called gerrymandering and I believe that this is done on purpose.

Mr Speaker: No, I don't think.

Mr Mohamed: That is my opinion.

Mr Speaker: No.

Mr Mohamed: Am I not allowed to have an opinion?

Mr Speaker: You are making a good speech.

Mr Mohamed: I know I am.

Mr Speaker: But don't exaggerate, there is no gerrymandering and all this.

Mr Mohamed: There is no?

Mr Speaker: Try to be honest.

Mr Mohamed: I am being honest.

Mr Speaker: You are honest.

Mr Mohamed: I can also say the same thing – try to be honest, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, I am honest.

Mr Mohamed: So am I.

Mr Speaker: I am honest; I am backed by the Standing Orders.

Mr Mohamed: So am I.

Mr Speaker: Yes. I am telling you, don't do demagoguery.

Mr Mohamed: This is not demagoguery, it is not demagoguery.

Mr Speaker: Don't do demagoguery about all the things you are saying.

Mr Mohamed: I am convinced about what I am saying.

Mr Speaker: Come directly to the subject. It's a question of constructing 8,000 houses throughout the Island. If you are against you can criticize but Government has the right to bring the Bill and Government has the right to put forward its policy.

Mr Mohamed: Am I not allowed to give my *point de vue*?

Mr Speaker: But within the Standing Orders.

Mr Mohamed: I am doing it within Standing Orders. I am being here long enough to know that. Now, let me say something else. *Pourquoi on ne voit pas des maisons construites là-bas, à Roche Bois quand il y a de la place ? Pourquoi il n'y a pas de maisons construites à Camp Yoloff quand il y a de la place ? Ils ne veulent pas voir.*

Why is it that even in Constituency No.2, nothing! Why is it? So, let me say one thing, the Government wants us to stand by their side, to give them Rs5 billion more. How can I, in the name of decency, put my name next to this approval when they have completely and knowingly insulted my Constituency by not providing a single social house to a single member in that Constituency? How can I do that? What explanation will I give to them? And hon. Ramano is talking about the whole - and before I go to hon. Ramano, this is how competent this whole company is, this New Social Living Development. Already they are talking about 8,000 houses instead of 12,000. Go to the website, it is still talking about 12,000. It is still saying it's the vision of Government. It is still saying that it's their mandate. They still have not updated their site. If a website you can't even update you are going to tell us to trust you with Rs30 billion?

A website you can't even manage, you want us to give you Rs5 billion more. I won't even give you 5 cents and what about the consultants who were paid Rs300 m.? I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to say.

(Interruptions)

You know once you have gone above Rs100 million, so what? It is not their money, what about them when they were given that money? Why were they given that money? Why was it cancelled? Why was it scrapped? Why do we have to start anew? But the big question *que la population veut savoir c'est qu'il n'y a pas de responsable ? Car l'argent de la population est jeté par la fenêtre, il n'y a pas de responsable ?* There is no accountability? Who cares? It is not their money, so you mean to say no Minister is responsible? Is this how this Government manages the affairs of the State?

No one is responsible for throwing out more than Rs300 m. and it is wasted and we will receive nothing in return for that money.

Mr Speaker: Move on!

Mr Mohamed: I do have to because it stinks.

Mr Speaker: Please.

Mr Mohamed: I must move on, it stinks.

Mr Speaker: Feel free, move on.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, I know. And now hon. Ramano is standing by this project in Deux Frères. I am totally for that project, I think it is a great project. Thank God I can make a difference between hon. Ramano and hon. Obeegadoo. Him, I understand how it is something which he should stand by and I will commend him for that.

However, I ask him not to repeat the same mistake as his other colleagues because until today we do not know who has obtained the contract. We do not know how much the contract is costing, we do not know exactly what the plan is about but the only people who will know about it are the Members of Government who are Members of Parliament who have already been going around their Constituency presenting, introducing the whole project to the Constituents but the taxpayers for this project through the National Assembly, we don't know what it is.

So, in other words, the taxpayers are paying Members of Government to do their politics but it is not a question of seeking our permission, our views, our opinion in order to give them our approval. You ask for approval but you do not tell us the details? You ask for approval but you do not share the details? We do not know who, when, will, we don't know anything. We don't know and one thing which I hope that will not be another SPV created and we will not be

on another situation where you are not going to comply with Public Procurement Act, etcetera. Please do not follow your senior friends, don't do that because this is suicidal because right now, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is very clear when the hon. Leader of the Opposition said at the beginning of his intervention, what did he say? He said that he did not know even who this Chairman of the NSLD was. He did not know who it was.

We don't even know his CV, we don't even know who is that person, he is not accountable to anyone here. They are the ones who are chosen by those who are in charge, *ils sont choisis* and then I did some research. I wanted to know very rapidly who he was, who is that person? Mr Ehsan Abdool Raman.

Mr Speaker: No, don't mention name, please.

Mr Mohamed: No.

Mr Speaker: This morning the Leader of the Opposition committed a big mistake.

Mr Mohamed: Alright, but it is already gone now.

Mr Speaker: These people are human beings. You may be against the Government, against Government policy, these people are human beings. Please, you know the rest.

Mr Mohamed: He is now an officer who is paid with public funds.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but don't mention names, this is in the Standing Orders.

Mr Mohamed: Okay. The one I name just now I shall give him initials now, Mr E. A. R., I hope he is all ears now. I hear in an interview that he gave on 01 February 2019, in Defimedia, he gave an interview and what did he say then? He talked about his shock about *la situation politique à l'Ile Maurice* and he talked about, he said –

« *Mon constat est triste et impitoyable* ».

He said –

« *Je vais même plus loin, nos acteurs politiques sont aujourd'hui ...* »

En 2019, le même Premier ministre –

« *... aujourd'hui otage de la logique casteisme et communaliste* »

He must be a good man. In fact, he must be a good man because ever since those days he saw clearly through this Government and the good thing about this Government, at least we know that they are constant in their ways. They don't change. Try to have a silver lining on anything Deputy Prime Minister, try to do whatever you wish but today the fact remains is I cannot stand by such a despicable piece of legislation.

In this Temple of Democracy, we are put before a *fait accompli*. On top of it, we are not shared with documents, be it by hon. Ramano *qui va post*, after having presented the Bill, after giving me an opportunity to debate then he says I will explain when I talk. But you should have explained before I talk, not afterwards. This is the role of this Member of Parliament to get the information before we debate and not to debate simply for the sake of opening my mouth and making noise. This is to understand what democracy is. You may smile as much as you want but this is not democracy. This is an insult to democracy and what is even more insulting is when the Minister of Finance talks about Section 105 of the Constitution, that he is duty bound to bring this Bill to Parliament in order to appropriate that sum of money.

Very true, but what the Minister of Finance did when he opened the door, when he mentioned the Constitution, he introduced the debate by referring to that Constitution. Where is it said in the Constitution that we should obligatorily bring this Bill on a Tuesday? Where does it say that? I read the Constitution, I do not see it mentioned there.

So, not only do they hide and make all their moves secret and it is quite normal, therefore, for the population to believe...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, I think you are going a bit too far. You are casting aspersions and imputing motives.

Mr Mohamed: What motives, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker: Do not put questions to the Chair!

Mr Mohamed: Okay, but the Chair should be very clear.

Mr Speaker: Yes, I am clearer than that! No, do not discuss! Listen and do not say any word!

You know, when you say Government is doing this, is doing that, you are just imputing motives – 'hiding or whatever.' The Government is a democratically and constitutionally elected

Government. In the practice of all governments, Labour government, MMM Government, MSM Government, all Governments have come with this exercise.

(Interruptions)

Come on, please. So, this is a common practice. What we are debating is whether Government's request for funding 8,000 houses throughout the country should be done or not. You may be against, you may criticise, but do not impute motives!

You continue now!

Mr Mohamed: As I was saying, the Government has done everything not to make things transparent and this is a very constructive criticism, because had the Government wanted to make things transparent, they would not have created a Special Purpose Vehicle.

Mr Speaker: Also, this has been said by you three times.

Mr Mohamed: Oh, I was about to say it a fourth time.

Mr Speaker: This has been said by other Members so many times! So, do not continue to repeat yourself. The time is not my time! The time is the time of the House, the time of Parliament! Do not waste time!

Move on! You are a good barrister, move on! You should have many arguments! Why come back to few arguments and turn around those arguments again and again and again?

Mr Mohamed: For people to understand, you have to repeat.

Mr Speaker: Please, continue!

Mr Mohamed: You see, Mr Speaker, Sir, very often in order for people to understand – and here, I am speaking on behalf of the people who have elected me – I am an elected Member of Parliament, and those who have elected me, those who have elected us, they rely on us to be able to make sure that whatever we are saying is not simply for the sake of saying it and that we have Government in front of us who will at least pay heed to what we are saying. Those concerns of ours are not concerns that belong to us personally. Those are concerns of the people of this country. And let us not forget that when you put the Opposition together, we are more representative, percentagewise, of the Government sitting there in minority. So, when the

Opposition, in its great majority, says what we are saying, it is, in fact, the people of this country saying it; the great majority of it.

So, in those circumstances, sometimes, I do apologise, Mr Speaker, Sir, we do need to repeat. I do agree. You are right, Mr Speaker, Sir, Standing Orders say that you should not repeat arguments already stated, but when you have people who have difficulties in comprehending and do not want to comprehend, you have to sometimes say it again with the only hope that they would make the effort to understand.

Mr Speaker: No! This is an insult!

Mr Mohamed: Is it?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, every Member here is democratically elected having the same rights. They do not have difficulties; you do not have difficulties to understand! Nobody has difficulties to understand!

Mr Mohamed: If they understood, they would withdraw the Bill!

Mr Speaker: No, hon. Member! This is not logic what you are saying!

Mr Mohamed: It is logic!

Mr Speaker: It is not a question of your logic. It is the Parliament's logic and the Standing Orders. What you are saying 'elected Members do not understand,' no, do not say that!

Dr. Padayachy: *Nou ban zako!*

Mr Speaker: Please, continue!

Mr Mohamed: So, you see, I am listening to the hon. Minister of Finance insulting himself. I do not know why he does that.

I know you are confused and you are trying to auto flagellate yourself.

Mr Speaker: You better not talk among yourselves!

Mr Mohamed: I have never seen you as that. Do not do that.

Dr. Padayachy: I am not confused!

Mr Speaker: Better not talk among yourselves, please!

Hon. Member, try to finish your speech. I think you have made almost all the points you had.

Mr Mohamed: Yes. What I would like now, therefore, to conclude is that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, the issue that he has to deal with today is quite straightforward. I am aware that even in Government there are people who do not agree with this project, I am aware. And those who look at the back are the ones who know exactly whom I am talking about. They look at the back to pretend it is not them! I know for a fact that Ministers, who pretend that they are for, are against! They do not like it that there is no transparency, and I know.

So, let us basically be very careful, and therefore, each and every question that has been put has to be answered. Then, if this Government is serious in what it says, then it simply has to ensure that you amend the Public Procurement Act and you add this new entity therein under Schedule One Part IV of the Act in order for there to be transparency and accountability. This is a simple request to be on the side and to prove to the population that you have nothing to hide. But if you fail to heed to this request, you would have confirmed that you are guilty as charged. That will be all.

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much! Hon. Ramano!

(8.43 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): M. le président, le discours de l'honorable Mohamed a la particularité de répéter le discours de l'honorable Juman, et de contredire d'une façon flagrante le discours du leader de l'opposition. Comme le dit si bien un ancien leader de l'Entente de l'Espoir –

'zot bizin koumans met lord dan zot ban dezord.'

Mr Speaker, Sir, my intervention will be based mainly on the Deux Frères Waterfront Project and I will be speaking also on the sustainable aspect of the housing project.

At the very outset, I would heartfully thank the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, for his pivotal leadership, unflinching commitment and his strong belief in the fact that environmental protection and economic development cannot be dissociated.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Dr. the hon. Renganaden Padayachy, for provision of financial

support to the tune of Rs417 m. for the Deux Frères Waterfront Project, as well as support for other environmental projects despite the difficult economic context which has been negatively impacted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The implementation of this project, once more, demonstrates the commitment of this Government towards sustainable development, and the urgency to address adverse impacts of climate change.

Mr Speaker, Sir, today, humanity is facing a triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. These intertwined challenges are threatening the health of the planet, well-being and survival of millions of people around the world, thereby jeopardising countries capabilities to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. Mauritius is no exception, the more so, it is vulnerable as a result of its inherent environmental vulnerabilities associated with Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is at the frontline of the prevailing global climate crisis. Mauritius is recognised as one of the most vulnerable and exposed countries. According to the World Risk Report 2022, Mauritius was classified as the 107th country at risk to natural disasters. Geographically located in an active tropical cyclone basin, we are highly exposed to disaster and climate risks.

The region is already experiencing more intense cyclones, such as Cyclone Freddy, an exceptionally long-lived, powerful, and deadly storm, which affected the several countries recently, and the recent flash floods episodes which occurred around end January and early February this year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the coastal zone of Mauritius is a key resource that supports various economic activities, such as recreation, tourism, fisheries, trade and industry. Besides providing socio-economic opportunities, the coastal zone also protects the island from ocean waves during storm surges and also adverse climatic conditions. The beaches are of great importance partly as an integrated part of the marine, coral and lagoon environment and partly as an important landscape resource for the tourism industry.

Accentuated beach erosion and shoreline degradation are major environmental problems faced by the coastal zone of Mauritius, over the recent years, as a result of the increasing impacts

of climate change such as sea level rise, acidifying ocean, rising sea surface temperature causing coral bleaching and mortality, and increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Mauritius is experiencing an accentuated sea level rise of 5.6 mm per year, which is almost twice the global average of 3.3 mm per year, and is severely worsening beach erosion.

Moreover, lagoon corals and the reef barrier are suffering from recurrent coral bleaching events due to increasing sea surface temperature, leading to a decrease in their protective function against the forces of high waves and also their sand regeneration capacity. The loss in the bio function of corals is further accentuating beach erosion.

One of the most visible consequences of beach erosion is the loss of prime beachfront for the tourism industry and leisure for the population, as well as damage to infrastructure, resulting in the decline of the scenic view and attraction of the coastal destination. Beach erosion, as has been mentioned by my colleagues, has shrunk the width of the beaches up to 20 metres over the last few decades. Degraded beaches with exposed roots and escarpments and damaged coastal infrastructure represent serious hazards to beach users and visitors, especially to children and elderly.

According to the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Framework and Action Plan, a projected increase in mean annual temperature extremes coupled with beach erosion can lead to a reduction in tourist arrivals accounting for a revenue loss of up USD 50 million by 2050. This is a very conservative estimate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as beach erosion is driven by complex natural processes and exacerbated by human impacts, finding the best solution requires detailed site assessment and expert studies, based on the following main criteria –

- site location;
- wave climate – height of nearshore waves and waves during extreme weather;
- current pattern;
- bathymetry;
- topography;
- land use pattern;

- socio-economic status –fishing, tourism;
- ecological status – status of reefs, ecologically sensitive areas;
- infrastructure and amenities at risk such as coastal road and residential buildings;
- site vulnerability to sea level rise;
- risk to flooding, and
- drainage aspects.

Design of rehabilitation measures also takes into consideration the principles of reef to ridge approach and ecosystem-based management which focus on integrating nature-based solutions to the erosion problem such as mangrove plantation, seagrass restoration and reef restoration to increase the resilience of the reef barrier, which is greatly affected by coral bleaching and losing its sediment generation capacity to replenish the sandy beaches.

Mr Speaker, Sir, conscious of the erosion problem in Mauritius, no efforts are being spared and no stones are being left unturned by this Government to address this growing problem. Coastal protection and rehabilitation works have been a high priority on my Ministry's agenda, and we have a continuous beach rehabilitation programme, to address coastal erosion in an integrated manner to increase the resilience of the coastal zone to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise and to safeguard natural assets for the benefit of citizens and the tourism industry. The programme is funded under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund.

Site specific coastal protection and rehabilitation works are being implemented using mixed approaches, depending on site specificities and sensitivities, and taking into consideration ecosystem-based management and nature-based solutions such as mangrove plantation, seagrass restoration, and reef restoration to increase the resilience of the reef barrier.

Over the last eight years, some 35 priority eroded sites over 13 km have been rehabilitated to the tune of Rs1 billion and for the year 2022/23, Rs182 m. have been earmarked under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund for coastal rehabilitation. Presently, coastal protection works are ongoing over 2 km along the south east coast from Bambous Virieux to Anse Jonchée, Bois des Amourettes, and are expected to be completed by July 2023. Still on the east coast, works have been completed at Pointe aux Feuilles to Grand Sable,

Providence, Petit Sable to Bambous Virieux and for the coming five years, some 20 km of eroded shoreline will be rehabilitated and 21 priority sites, including Deux Frères, and all the works are estimated at some Rs3.5 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the south east coast of Mauritius, also known as the wild coast, is among the most pristine coastal areas of the island. It offers magnificent views of the coastal belt in between the mountains and the sea.

The livelihood of the inhabitants is highly dependent on fishing and tourism. However, with the advent of climate change and sea level rise, the coast is being impacted by beach erosion, leading to shoreline degradation and putting amenities at risk.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these sites for which works have been completed or for which detailed assessment is underway, were identified under the 3-year technical assistance from the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the project 'Capacity Development on Coastal Protection and Rehabilitation in the Republic of Mauritius'. Under this project, an island-wide coastal survey was effected with the experts in 2014.

Site observations have shown that the south east coast, including the Deux Frères area, is low-lying at several locations and is vulnerable to the impacts of high waves, leading to beach erosion, wave overtopping and inundation of the coastal road and adjoining coastal residences.

After sand extraction from the lagoon was banned in 2001, the ex-sand landing platforms at Deux Frères became dilapidated, and the adjacent areas have suffered a socio-economic and environmental decline. Observations made on site have shown that the shoreline at Deux Frères is being impacted by erosion. It is recalled that the Deux Frères site faces the large lagoon at the Grand River South East estuary. It extends approximately 900m north from Deux Frères Village up to the inter-bank ferry boat landing within the inner estuary and incorporates the ex-sand landing station.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Deux Frères waterfront Project is in line with the policies and strategies of Government, which is geared, among others, towards enhancing resilience and adapting to climate change impacts.

The project aims at addressing coastal erosion in an integrated manner and to increase the resilience of the coastal zone, in that area, to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise and to safeguard natural assets for the benefit of citizens and the tourism industry.

In addition to the coastal protection measures and facilities being provided, the whole Deux Frères Village and neighbouring regions will benefit from the renewed socio-economic activities and will be generated by the tourist activities given the location of the Deux Frères Village which lies on the South West bank of the estuary of the *Grand Rivière Sud-Est* (GRSE). The Deux Frères Waterfront will become the main nodal point for many activities for tourists and the local public, including visits to the GRSE waterfalls and the offshore Ile aux Cerfs.

The nearest point of the fringing reef lies about 3.6 km from the shoreline of Deux Frères Waterfront and the reef shelters the shoreline within the lagoon from the predominant South Eastern swell waves generated in the open ocean. Thus, in both non-cyclonic and cyclonic conditions, short period sea waves generated within the lagoon by wind, are generally larger than the long period swell waves reaching the Deux Frères Waterfront. Due to the funnel shape of the coastline into the GRSE estuary, which amplifies the storm surge, Still Water Levels (SWL) during storm surges are higher at Deux Frères Waterfront than at some other sites along the South East coast.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the region of Grand Port has some 111,000 inhabitants and impresses with its tranquillity. There are some 321 registered fishers in this region. Some 33 artisanal fishing boats are moored at Deux Frères. The village of Deux Frères is today a nodal point for many activities for tourists and the local public, including visits to the GRSE waterfalls and the Ile aux Cerfs islets.

The nearby tourism resorts are Anahita Golf and Spa Resort and Laguna Beach Hotel and Spa, located at some 565 metres and 825 metres, respectively. There are about 23 catamarans and 70 speedboats transit through Deux Frères on a daily basis. The catamarans and speedboats are estimated to carry some 1,200 passengers daily. Mr Speaker, Sir, at the moment, there is no dedicated place where passengers can board on catamaran. The transfers of passengers to catamarans are being done by speedboats in the lagoon which is very risky. It is recalled that there was a trans-boarding accident in the past which caused three deaths and four injured.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 26 October 2016, pursuant to a tender exercise, my Ministry contracted the consultancy services of GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd to undertake assessment and propose site-specific measures for coastal protection, both on land and at sea, to circumvent beach erosion and severe degradation of the coast, as a result of adverse impacts of climate change, at 13 eroded sites, including at Deux Frères.

Further to discussion with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, my Ministry broadened the scope of works for the Deux Frères Waterfront Project to include amenities such as kiosks, benches, parking area, children's playground, tuck shops as well as the upgrading of access road and drainage network, amongst others, within the existing consultancy service awarded to GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd.

Given that the proposals entailed works both at land and sea, the Consultant was required to formulate a Master Plan which would include the detailed project components, its broad environmental impacts and budget estimates, prior to embarking on the preliminary design and Environment Impact Assessment, amongst others. Financial clearance to conduct the Master Plan was obtained in 2018.

A Master Plan for the construction therefore was submitted in March 2019. In November 2020, pursuant to the tender exercise, my Ministry awarded a 30-month consultancy service of GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd for Surveys, Geotechnical Investigations, Design, Environmental Impact Assessment, Preparation of Tender Document, Management of Construction Contract and Supervision of Works, from funds made available under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund. The contract amount of the consultancy services is Rs23.4 m. (including VAT).

The Consultant submitted the Preliminary Design Report (PDR) on 16 November 2021. The Preliminary Design Report (PDR) outlined the engineering design criteria and methodologies that were adopted for conducting the various field surveys, hydrodynamic modelling and the preliminary design of the various components on the basis of users' functional requirements and the interpretation of the surveys, geotechnical and other investigations. The tide levels at Deux Frères over the last half a lunar cycle was measured by the Consultant and analysed to obtain an estimate of the lowest low water level at the site.

Under the project, the Consultant contracted Diospyros Ltd to undertake a comprehensive terrestrial and marine (lagoon) ecological assessment of the site to allow the successful planning

of coastal protection measures in relation to the biodiversity and ecosystem. The assessment comprised terrestrial and marine surveys of the coastal and lagoon ecosystems to identify the composition, diversity, health, functions, integrity, endemism of the biodiversity present.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Consultant also sub-contracted PRDW, Consulting Port and Coastal Engineers of Cape Town, South Africa to undertake the numerical modelling activities within the project scope, including the following –

- (i) A review of the potential climate change impacts on the Mauritian coastline;
- (ii) Recommendations and the numerical modelling results, and
- (iii) To determine the operational and extreme waves and water levels at Deux Frères using coupled spectral wave and hydrodynamic models.

An assessment of climate change and the numerical modelling, conducted to determine the operational and extreme waves and water levels at Deux Frères, has been described in a report submitted by the PRDW, included in Preliminary Design Report.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is to be noted that the Preliminary Design Report was circulated to relevant authorities for views and comments and a technical committee was held with the latter, prior to approving the report on 25 January 2022.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Detailed Design Report (DDR) was submitted In July 2022 and same was approved in August 2022. The waterfront, being proposed in the Detailed Design Report (DDR) are detailed in 4 stretches, namely, Deux Frères Village, Deux Frères Village to Waterfront, Waterfront area, and Recreational area. The DDR contains the following –

- i. Protection measures and associated works to be implemented at the Deux Frères Waterfront;
- ii. Detailed engineering drawings;
- iii. Detailed cost estimates, and
- iv. Implementation schedule.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to enumerate some of the salient features of the project itself –

- (1) The coastal protection measures over a length of some 900 metres consisting of rock revetment together with backfilling works up to a distance of 30 to 60 metres seawards;
- (2) 6-metre wide New Access Road, to access the Waterfront from the B-28 Coastal Road, in order to avoid the heavy construction vehicles from using the existing narrow and congested Clarisse Street within the Deux Frères village;
- (3) Parking facilities for 30 cars and 8 buses;
- (4) 5-metre wide esplanade for pedestrian and leisure activities;
- (5) Perched beaches for leisure purposes;
- (6) 2-metre wide walkway and pedestrian access from existing roads to the proposed walkway;
- (7) 3-metre wide cycle track with dual carriageway with access to existing Clarisse Street;
- (8) Cycle stand facilities;
- (9) 2 pedestrian staircases to the sea.
- (10) Water points;
- (11) Toilet facilities;
- (12) 20-metre long and 5-metre wide shallow boat ramp to allow removal of boats;
- (13) low level platform of approximate 1,000 m² of boat careening and boat storage;
- (14) 30 ecological mooring pins for fishermen boats;
- (15) fish quay;
- (16) 165 metre of quay for tourist boats within a sheltered basin protected by a mini breakwater;
- (17) provision of access including wheelchair access between the upper and lower platforms;

- (18) hardscaping comprising benches and lighting;
- (19) green areas with grass and selected trees;
- (20) extension of the children's playground by an area of about 200 m²;
- (21) storm water drainage and culvert extensions;
- (22) an area of approximately 1050 m² reserved for the future development of the post of the National Coast Guard;
- (23) a reserved frontage of approximately 40 metre in the lee of the breakwater for National Coast Guard to design and build their berthing facility;
- (24) an upper platform providing approximately 1,150 m² dedicated to commercial outlets/tuck shops;
- (25) reinstatement of existing boat ramp at the ferry boat landing station, and
- (26) an area of 600 m² earmarked for future development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the coastal protection measures proposed have been designed to have a design life upwards of 50 years, during which time critical overtopping discharges and volumes would not exceed acceptable levels defined in technical guidelines as appropriate to operating functions.

Based on previous experience, the Consultant has indicated that rock suppliers in Mauritius, for the rock revetment works, can supply standard gradings defined in European Standard EN 13383. However, these standard gradings have been derived to suit rock obtained from a crushing plant, which is not the case in Mauritius, where the larger rock sizes are normally collected from the sugar cane fields. For the purpose of the design, the Consultant has considered both the standard rock gradings indicated in the Rock Manual and non-standard gradings as appropriate.

Storm water emanating from the road and immediate hinterland currently drains to the sea through numerous culverts across the Coast Road or Clarisse Street at the site. These culverts

will be extended across the proposed works to the new shoreline as reinforced concrete box culverts.

The EIA report was another deliverable submitted by the Consultant in September 2022. Following, joint site visit with the relevant authorities, the EIA report was approved with list of conditions on 25 October 2022.

The proposed works have been designed with minimal damage to existing vegetation. However, a certain number of plants will be impacted by the works and will have to be felled and translocated. At least, thrice the number of trees to be felled would be replanted to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security.

Some 181 mangrove seedlings were also identified on the project site. These mangrove seedlings would be relocated at Bambous Virieux, some 200 metres from *La Case du Pêcheur*, as per the recommendation of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, if you will bear with me, if I can suspend the Sitting for half hour, and then, we will meet again.

At 9.10 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.40 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: All polite Members, be seated.

Hon. Members: Thank you.

Mr Ramano: Mr Speaker, Sir, a series of consultation meetings with relevant authorities, inhabitants, *'forces vives'* and fishermen of Deux Frères Village and neighbouring regions were held in the presence of elected members of the Parliament of Constituency No. 11. These meetings were held between September 2018 and October 2022.

It is worth mentioning, Mr Speaker, Sir, a plot of land of approximate area of 1050 m² has been reserved on the waterfront for the National Coast Guard post. Mr Speaker, Sir, facilities for fishers and pleasure craft owners have also been considered and we should say that everything has been done for the access of all these facilities. There would also be an additional area of 200 m² for the existing playground area for the construction of volleyball platform and other games.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a question from hon. Mohamed concerning the construction works itself. In December 2022, GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd has submitted draft final tender documents taking on board all the requirements of the different stakeholders. I should mention here that the works are expected to start in July and August 2023 for a duration of 18 months. So, the tendering documents will be launched shortly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards provision required for the construction of residential units as well as other associated costs, I wish to reiterate that the vision of the Government is not only to create affordable residential units but in concurrence, to build sustainable communities thriving in an eco-friendly environment. This is exactly the mandate of the New Social Living Development Ltd which has been entrusted to construct 12,000 social housing units all over the island with sustainability aspects being integrated at the design and construction stage itself.

Integrating environmental sustainability within these 12,000 residential units, will ensure that the housing units take into consideration all aspects of sustainable urban planning and design including energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable mobility, green infrastructure, circular economy, sustainable waste management, landscaping and organic farming, including –

- a) Maximisation of natural ventilation instead of mechanical ventilation;
- b) Maximisation of natural lighting in common areas such as lobby and common areas for energy reduction;
- c) Use of solar/led lighting, wherever possible for yards and common spaces;
- d) Maximisation of green spaces for gardening and leisure;
- e) Optimisation of saving on-site existing trees and promotion of relocation on site to fit the master site planning;
- f) Minimisation and rationalisation of building materials;
- g) green practices such as rainwater harvesting, energy reduction, composting, waste recycling and community gardening, and
- h) Provision of segregation areas for waste disposal.

The integration of the sustainability concept in the construction of the 12,000 NSLD housing units is most opportune in line with the Government's commitment to promote the

concept of green and circular economy through efficient use of resources. Furthermore, the provision of solar energy for the 12,000 NSLD housing units is also in line with the Government's commitment to the pathway for a just, people-driven transition to a resilient and carbon-neutral Mauritius by 2070, as enshrined in the Approved Environment Master Plan (2020-2030) for the Republic of Mauritius as well as the updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of 2021 which has set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, achieve 60% of green energy in our energy mix, and reach 10% energy efficiency by 2030.

With these words Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

(9.45 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism (Mr S. Obeegadoo): M. le président, mes chers collègues du gouvernement, mesdames et messieurs les parlementaires, je voudrais de prime abord présenter mes excuses aux députés de la Chambre des deux côtés pour avoir quelques fois raté une partie de leurs interventions mais je me suis assuré à travers mes collaborateurs de me familiariser, de prendre connaissance des différents arguments soulevés.

Je voudrais saluer la teneur de certains discours de l'autre côté de la Chambre tels que ceux du leader de l'Opposition et de l'honorable Uteem, malheureusement absent à cette heure-ci, qui mis à part quelques dérapages, ont soulevé des questions très pertinentes et des interrogations tout à fait légitimes et compréhensibles mais, je m'empresse aussi de déplorer l'absence, une fois n'est pas coutume j'aurais voulu dire, mais là, vraiment on nous habitue à cela. Heureusement, que le leader de l'Opposition est revenu parce que tout le long de la journée, j'ai entendu dire : on s'attend à ce que le Premier ministre adjoint réponde ; que le ministre du Logement nous donne des renseignements. Après les six orateurs de l'Opposition, il nous restait tout à l'heure que M. le député Osman Mahomed, bien que je ne suis pas du tout d'accord avec le contenu de son discours. Je salue en lui le plus constant des aspirants ministres du Logement parce qu'au moins, il est resté présent mais permettez-moi aussi de saluer les vaillants *backbenchers* de la majorité et mes collègues pour être toujours là, à la fin d'une longue, très longue journée.

M. le président, je ne vais pas m'attarder à rappeler le contexte. Le fait d'introduire à la Chambre un budget supplémentaire, c'est un procédé adopté par tous les gouvernements et cela a

été fait comme le disait mon collègue, le ministre des Finances, selon les dispositions constitutionnelles et légales et forcément d'après les *Standing Orders*. Les mardis si tel est le cas, il n'y a pas d'interpellation mais, l'Opposition aura tout loisir d'interpeller le gouvernement durant tous les mardis parce que nous sommes là pour siéger jusqu'au budget tout au moins.

Je voudrais aussi rappeler que ce projet très ambitieux sans précédent de construction de 12,000 logements sociaux – oui l'objectif est toujours 12,000 bien que nous décidons de procéder en phase – et bien, il trouve sa source dans le dysfonctionnement du marché du logement. Un phénomène qui explique la liste d'attente à la *NHDC* parce que tous les gouvernements ont construit des maisons mais pas suffisamment pour endiguer cette demande croissante. Ce n'est pas un phénomène réservé à l'île Maurice, c'est un phénomène commun de nombreux pays à revenu moyen d'où notre requête auprès de la Banque mondiale de nous assister dans une étude du marché du logement à Maurice pour mieux comprendre ce phénomène.

Le pourquoi de ce budget additionnel, je pense qu'il a été expliqué par mon collègue, le ministre des Finances. Tout à l'heure, plutôt, tantôt lorsque le leader de l'Opposition suivi en cela par un des intervenants, faisait peu de cas de la Covid-19, je pense que ce projet de loi trouve sa source, son explication dans la poussée inflationniste qui a découlé de la Covid-19 et de la guerre qui a suivi la Covid-19 qui a fait exploser les coûts de construction et qui a créé de réelles difficultés au gouvernement pour financer ce projet de logements sociaux. Je pense que toute perspective, objective de l'évolution des choses ces dernières années en conviendra.

Alors, le Leader de l'Opposition nous disait – « *democracy is transparency.* » Je suis totalement du même avis et c'est pour cela que pour toutes les interpellations concernant ce projet de construction de logements sociaux, nous avons toujours été disponibles, volontaires pour répondre aux interpellations. Je ne parle pas uniquement de moi en tant que ministre du Logement. Le Premier ministre, mon collègue des Finances et tous ceux concernés, ma collègue, la ministre de la Sécurité sociale, qu'il s'agisse d'interventions à l'ajournement telles que celle du député Osman Mahomed, qu'il s'agisse de la *PNQ* dont je fus honoré par le leader de l'Opposition en novembre dernier, nous avons toujours été disponibles pour offrir tous les renseignements qui nous étaient disponibles à ce moment-là.

Mais, beaucoup de réponses aux interrogations soulevées aujourd'hui se trouvent déjà dans les débats antérieurs. Par exemple lorsqu'on nous demande : pourquoi la *NSLD* ? Vous pouvez ne pas être d'accord mais ces renseignements ont été fournis. Vous pouvez ne pas les accepter mais lors de l'intervention à l'ajournement du député Osman Mahomed, j'avais expliqué la vision d'avoir un *Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)* et à quoi cela servait. J'avais expliqué pourquoi il fallait la *NSLD* en sus de la *NHDC* pour un projet très précis et limité dans le temps. Et après, la *NSLD* disparaît et la *NHDC* reste. J'avais expliqué justement la possibilité avec une plus grande flexibilité d'être efficace et de compléter ce projet tellement ambitieux, tellement difficile.

Et donc, je m'en tiens à ces renseignements déjà fournis. Je voudrais rappeler aussi que la *NSLD* a des auditeurs externes. On me dit, je me suis renseigné, c'est *Moore Mauritius*. Moi je ne connais pas *Moore Mauritius*. Si le Leader de l'Opposition ne pense pas qu'ils feront un travail correct, et bien donnez-nous les renseignements et nous verrons bien mais je voulais juste rappeler qu'il y a un auditeur externe pour tout ce qui est des dépenses encourues par la *NSLD*.

Mr X. L. Duval: Very small problem!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Je ne vous ai pas interrompu remarquez, M. le leader de l'Opposition.

J'ai été très peiné par les critiques formulées ici par le leader de l'Opposition mais surtout par le député Shakeel Mohamed qui ne nous a pas fait la courtoisie d'être resté pour nous écouter. Il est venu juste avant d'intervenir et il est parti tout de suite après. J'ai trouvé cela tout à fait inapproprié de se référer à certains responsables de la *NSLD*, sous couvert de l'immunité parlementaire, de s'attaquer à des personnes sans défense qui ne sont pas là, qui n'ont pas la possibilité de se défendre et qui ne sont pas des personnalités politiques, qui ne vont pas aller se défendre dans un *meeting* lors d'une conférence de presse. Ce sont des gens qui, dans la plus grande discrétion, font leur travail au mieux de leurs moyens. Donc, à moins que l'on ait des accusations sérieuses à l'encontre de ces personnes, que l'on aille à la police ou à l'*ICAC*. De grâce, ne jetons pas la boue sur des personnes qui n'ont rien à voir avec la politique partisane et qui font le travail qu'on leur demande dans l'intérêt public jusqu'à preuve du contraire.

Le Covid-19 nous a, oui, affecté énormément et pas seulement à Maurice. J'en veux pour preuve le programme de construction de *social housing* en Nouvelle-Zélande ; le programme de

Madame Arden qui a dû être totalement abandonné en résultat du Covid-19 et de tout ce qui est advenu après ; la crise actuelle du logement social à Hong Kong, par exemple. Donc, c'est un phénomène mondial et que l'Opposition le veuille ou pas, les effets de la Covid-19 sont toujours avec nous et seront toujours là pour quelques temps encore. Et la guerre en Ukraine n'arrange pas les choses.

Venir parler et faire référence à des *Cerfs Party*, à des *Black Label Party*, honnêtement, M. le président, je trouve cela tout à fait inapproprié. Il y a eu si je le comprends bien, des allégations d'une personne qui font l'objet d'une enquête par l'ICAC. On attend les résultats de cette enquête mais venir ici faire de la propagande malveillante, insidieusement essayer de planter des idées dans la tête des gens, je trouve cela tout à fait déplorable.

J'aurais souhaité que nous puissions maintenir un certain niveau dans nos débats et il est dommage que cela ne soit pas toujours le cas en entendant parler les représentants de l'Opposition.

Y a-t-il eu gaspillage de fonds ? À chacun son opinion. J'ai expliqué longuement en répondant au leader de l'Opposition en novembre dernier, et la semaine dernière, c'est un *backbencher* de la majorité, mon collègue, le député Kenny Dhunoo, qui m'a interpellé pour me demander de faire le point par rapport au projet de construction de la *NSLD*, et je l'ai fait avec force au détail.

Donc, y a-t-il eu gaspillage ? Je réponds que non, que nous avons fait du mieux de nos possibilités en suivant ce qui est l'approche traditionnelle, l'approche standard dans le domaine de la construction avec la nomination de consultants, de *Project Monitoring Consultants (PMCCs)* comme cela se fait dans le public et dans le privé, comme cela se fait à la *NHDC*. Mais il y a deux exercices de *tendering exercises* qui ont failli et qui n'ont pas marché parce que les coûts étaient excessifs. Et je l'ai expliqué à plusieurs reprises. Oui, la *NSLD* avait demandé d'abord à ses consultants, ensuite par ses techniciens à l'interne, de faire une estimation du coût de la construction par unité.

Le premier exercice, l'estimation était de 4,2 millions, le résultat était bien plus que cela. La deuxième fois pareille, estimation de 3,5, le coût finalement était beaucoup plus. Si vous me posez une question directe sur ce sujet, je n'ai aucun problème à vous donner tous les renseignements voulus. Il se fait tard, j'aurais préféré ne pas m'étendre mais j'ai tous les détails,

j'aurais pu venir vous donner ces renseignements. Mais revenez avec des interpellations, on vous les donnera.

Mr X. L. Duval: Table it! Table it!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Maintenant en ce qui concerne les terrains achetés, M. le leader de l'Opposition, en toute légitimité, a demandé les terrains achetés : où, de qui, comment, quel valeur. Tous ces renseignements sont disponibles. *Put a Parliamentary Question and I will provide you.* Nous avons besoin de 38 terrains pour les 8,000 maisons. Nous avons 29 qui sont déjà acquis et transférés à la *NSLD*. De ces 29 terrains, il y a dix terrains privés et je serais heureux de vous fournir les renseignements. Je pourrai vous donner le nom du vendeur, de qui nous l'avons acheté, la taille des terrains, les prix en fonction de ce que nous a dit le *Valuation Department*. Il n'y a aucun problème de vous fournir tous ces renseignements.

Avons-nous fait l'acquisition d'un terrain d'un proche de la majorité qui ensuite a été considéré comme non-constructible ? Pas depuis que je suis ministre, non ! Si cela s'est passé avant, je verrai, posez-moi une question, j'irai aux renseignements. Mais depuis que je suis ministre du Logement, d'abord, on procède à l'étude géotechnique. Voilà pourquoi cela prend un temps fou. On fait une étude géotechnique et ce n'est qu'après un résultat positif que l'on procède à l'acquisition.

J'ai été, M. le président, bouleversé tout à l'heure en écoutant l'ancien ministre, le député Shakeel Mohamed, qui comme toujours, est excessif. Il va beaucoup plus loin dans la démagogie que qui que ce soit d'autre dans cette instance. Il est venu nous dire que l'on a insulté sa circonscription en n'y construisant pas de maisons et il nous a dit qu'il y a de terrains disponibles facilement dans la circonscription que nous appelons la circonscription numéro trois. Et bien, cela est faux, M. le président. Vingt ans de cela, quand j'étais ministre de l'Éducation, nous avons essayé par tous les moyens de construire un établissement scolaire dans cette circonscription ; on n'a jamais trouvé de terrain. Le mieux qu'on a pu faire c'est à Colline Monneron, de construire deux établissements parce qu'il était impossible.

Aujourd'hui, ce problème se pose dans cinq circonscriptions, pas seulement au numéro trois. Il se pose au numéro un, il se pose au numéro deux, il se pose au numéro trois, il se pose au numéro 18 à Quatre Bornes, il se pose au numéro 19 à Rose Hill. Oui, nous n'avons pas de terrains pour construire 400 maisons et je prends en témoin les députés de la circonscription

numéro deux, tous de l'Opposition, que j'ai rencontré à deux reprises, que j'ai consulté, à qui j'ai demandé conseil. Je prends comme témoin le député Reza Uteem, qui n'est malheureusement pas là, est venu me faire des suggestions qu'on a explorées ensemble, mais qui se sont avérées vaines en terme d'acquisition de terrain parce qu'il ne s'agit pas seulement de voir un terrain. Il faut que ce terrain soit disponible et constructible, et ce n'est malheureusement souvent pas le cas.

Donc, dans le cas de ces cinq circonscriptions, nous allons construire le même le nombre d'unités, 400 par circonscription, mais certaines ne seront pas localisées dans la même circonscription. C'est le cas de la circonscription numéro trois, la circonscription numéro deux. Le député Osman Mahomed, le sait. Par exemple, Raoul Rivet, on en a discuté ici. J'étais sceptique parce qu'on n'avait pas pu construire un collège il y a 20 ans. On a essayé, terrain non constructible ou un coût prohibitif parce que le terrain est en pente. Donc, il y a cinq circonscriptions ou cela n'est possible, mais venir dire qu'on insulte une circonscription avec les sous-entendus, je pense que c'est grave pour l'unité de notre pays. Il faut une certaine mesure, un certain équilibre dans ses propos quand on s'adresse publiquement ici ou ailleurs à la nation mauricienne.

M. le président, j'ai parlé rapidement des terrains. Encore une fois, je le répète, nous voulons être transparents, nous sommes disponibles pour fournir tous les renseignements voulus. Quant à la procédure, je l'ai expliqué longuement lors de ma réponse au député Kenny Dhunoo. Alors, comprenons, deux *tendering exercises* qui ne réussissent pas parce que les constructions sont cotées beaucoup plus cher qu'on peut les payer. En plus, ce n'est pas seulement une question de l'État de payer cette somme, mais il faut qu'à la fin, les gens, les démunis, les plus pauvres puissent acheter ces maisons. Donc, si nous construisons une maison qui nous coûte six millions, un tiers sera deux millions pour le bénéficiaire. Donc, évidemment, à la fin du jour, comme je le disais, *the litmus test is affordability*.

Quoi que nous fassions, c'est pour servir les plus pauvres, les plus vulnérables, les démunis. Il faut que ces maisons leur soient accessibles. C'est pour cela que la méthode traditionnelle, les consultants qui prennent une année pour préparer le design. Et puis, le *tendering process* a échoué dans deux cas. En répondant - je ne sais plus si c'était au leader de l'Opposition ou au député Dhunoo - que j'ai expliqué pourquoi, comment cela n'a pas marché

et j'ai dit que pour ne pas répéter – voilà, je me cite vous le permettez, c'est la réponse de la semaine dernière au député Dhunno –

“(...) so as not to repeat the previous ineffective tender exercises, the NSLD, in February 2023 adopted a new procurement strategy based on the design and built concept (...)”

Et, je vais plus loin, j'explique –

“(...) it was decided that the project would be entrusted to locally incorporated, large contractors building and civil works as registered with the Construction Industry Development Board (...)”

Comment être plus transparent ? Vous allez sur le site du CIDB, vous tapez *large contractors, building and civil works* et vous avez 19 companies. On appelle les 19. On leur dit - j'ai expliqué cela la semaine dernière - *there is a predetermined price* de R 2,7 millions. On ne va pas négocier le prix, on va faire un *selective bidding* avec 19 companies, un *competitive negotiation*.

Pas un *competitive tendering* mais un *competitive negotiation* tel que prévu dans la Directive No. 61 (*Issued Pursuant to Section 7(b) of the Public Procurement Act of 2006*) qui définit et qui explique ce que c'est que '*competitive negotiations*'.

Donc, on approche ces 19 compagnies, on leur dit : 'Voilà, l'État est disposé à financer à hauteur 2,7 millions la construction de maisons sociaux, êtes-vous partants ?' Alors, évidemment, qu'ils viennent négocier. Ils viennent nous dire *advanced payment* 'x' au lieu de 'y'. Ils demandent tel et tel avantage. Et, donc, c'est une négociation compétitive. Et finalement, des 19 compagnies, 16 disent qu'ils sont disposés à aller de l'avant. Et de ces 16, 14 acceptent les conditions posées par l'État. Donc, résultat : les contrats sont alloués à ces 14 compagnies. Oui, avec des avantages négociés qui sont communs à toutes les 14 compagnies de construction. Donc, il n'y a pas de favoritisme envers une compagnie aux dépens de l'autre.

Les sites sont discutés avec les compagnies. Il n'y a pas d'attributions arbitraires. On discute des sites avec les compagnies parce qu'on veut qu'ils puissent construire dans les paramètres de 2,7 millions et construire vite. Vite pourquoi ? Parce qu'il y a une longue liste d'attente à la NHDC. On s'accorde avec ces compagnies et on leur demande : combien pouvez-vous construire ? Certains nous disent 200, d'autres nous disent un millier au plus. Et donc là, on

va attribuer aux différentes compagnies les sites qu'elles préfèrent, dans la mesure du possible, et un nombre de maisons à construire selon leurs capacités. Et en ce moment même, les discussions sont en cours entre la NSLD et ces contracteurs avec les différentes autorités concernées parce qu'on veut après que, pour le *Building and Land Use Permit*, les choses aillent vite. Donc, si on peut déjà leur dire ce que l'État exige pour toutes constructions en ce genre. Nous espérons très vite pouvoir aller vers un *letter of award* et débiter les constructions.

On nous a posé des questions comme : 'Ah, vous offrez un contrat à une compagnie qui est perçue comme étant proche du gouvernement.' Allez voir la liste, vous verrez qu'il y a des compagnies qui sont perçues comme étant proches de l'opposition. On n'a pas fait de tris. 19 appelées selon la liste du *CIDB*, 16 intéressées et 14 qualifiées. Après, ce qui nous importe c'est que les maisons soient construites au plus vite quelle que soit la couleur politique des constructeurs, blanc, bleu, rouge, jaune, vert ou quoi que ce soit, aussi longtemps que ce soient des maisons correctes, décentes et *affordable* et que ces maisons soient prêtes le plus vite possible. Donc, après s'il y a des questions encore une fois, je suis à votre entière disposition.

Après on m'a parlé de nouvelles technologies. Écoutez, nous avons dit aux contracteurs que nous avons l'esprit ouvert et venez nous faire des propositions. Il y a cinq technologies différentes qui nous sont proposées et elles sont à l'étude. Vous nous dites : 'Comment allez-vous construire des maisons pareilles sur les sites différents ?' Non, le *design and build* laisse la liberté à celui qui se propose d'entreprendre les constructions de venir proposer construction hauteur, construction rez-de-chaussée seulement, et on va étudier au cas par cas la solution la plus appropriée.

Performance bond – oui, il y a un *performance bond*. J'ai bien vérifié. Je suis allé confirmer ce que je suis en train de vous dire. Il y a un *performance bond* certainement. Je crois que ça s'appelle un *performance security bond* dans le langage technique. Oui, M. le leader de l'Opposition, cela est prévu.

Les garanties, ce sont celles prévues dans le Code Civil Mauricien qui ont cours pour toute construction, les vices apparents, la garantie décennale ; nous connaissons tous ces garanties. Qui va faire le suivi ? Je suis d'accord, M. le leader de l'Opposition, c'est un des défis auxquels nous faisons face. J'ai toujours répondu en toute humilité. Il n'est pas facile de construire 8 000 ou 12 000 maisons. Aucun gouvernement ne l'a fait. Je rappellerais que la plus

grande réalisation aura été celle du gouvernement MSM-MMM entre 1991 et 1995 où on a construit un peu plus de 4 000 maisons. Jamais 8 000 ou encore moins 12 000. Donc, évidemment, que c'est difficile ! Évidemment, que c'est un défi extraordinaire mais on va faire de notre mieux et en toute transparence.

Alors vous nous dites : créer des ghettos. Je vais être très honnête, M. le président. Au tout début, j'avais dit à la *NSLD*, essayons de ne pas construire plus de 300 maisons sur un même site, et on a tout fait pour cela. Ce n'est pas possible surtout par manque de terrain. Donc, aujourd'hui il y a quelques sites - et là encore s'il y a une interpellation en bonne et due forme, je vous fournirai tous les renseignements - où nous allons aller au-delà de 300 maisons, mais croyez-moi il y a un ratio, nombre d'unités à construire et la taille du terrain. J'ai déjà répondu ici en donnant l'exemple de Coromandel. Coromandel sera sans doute le plus grand site. Vous aviez tout à l'heure cité un chiffre de 500-550, il y aura peut-être même plus que cela. Mais nous avons un terrain de 41 arpents, qui dit mieux ? C'est exceptionnel ! Donc, à Coromandel, nous aurons des maisons construites pour les gens de Beau Bassin-Petite Rivière. Nous allons sans doute devoir accueillir les habitants de Rose Hill, du numéro 19 et peut-être du numéro 1. On va faire de la place là où on a les terrains disponibles. On n'a pas d'autre choix. Mais, je partage moi aussi le souci d'assurer le bien vivre, si je peux m'exprimer ainsi, de tous ces habitants qui vont y habiter. Et c'est bien pour cela qu'on veille à la dimension écologique avec le *rainwater harvesting*, les *solar panels*, le tri des déchets, etc. et l'aspect sport, hygiène de vie, *jogging tracks*, terrain de pétanque, *children's playground*, et un centre communautaire qui n'existait pas dans le passé dans les complexes NHDC.

Et vous aviez posé la question des infrastructures. Oui, le ministère des Finances a aussi prévu le financement des infrastructures externes : drains, *CWA*, *CEB*, aménagement des routes, etc. Tout cela est prévu. Interpellation parlementaire, je serais heureux de vous en donner les détails.

Les subsides, écoutez, j'ai tous les détails pour les derniers projets : Dagotière, Mare Tabac, je crois. D'abord, pour les subsides, il faut savoir que les choses ont évolué. Si vous m'accordez une minute, je ne voulais pas aller en longueur. J'ai déjà expliqué que pour les subsides, les bénéficiaires du *NEF* avec un revenu mensuel du ménage de moins de R 10 000, c'est 80 % à la charge de l'État, et pour tous les autres, de R 10 000 à R 30 000, ce sera 67 %. En

fait, avant ce n'était pas 67%, c'était 50 % pour les revenus de R 10 000 à R 15 000 et 20 % pour les revenus de R 15 000 à R 20 000. C'est le 1 juillet 2020 que mon ami et collègue, le ministre des Finances a introduit une nouvelle disposition prévoyant des subsides de l'ordre de 67 % pour tous les ménages gagnant un revenu mensuel entre R 10 000 et R 30 000.

Pour ce qui est du paiement, depuis 1991, cela a toujours été 10 % de dépôt. Depuis 2021, nous avons introduit un principe de flexibilité. On peut descendre jusqu'au zéro dépôt dans les cas extrêmes, *hardship cases*. La période de repaiement, qui était de 25 ans jusqu'en 2010 et qui est passé à 30 ans par la suite, a été étendue à partir de 2021 à 35 ans. Donc, aujourd'hui, les plus défavorisés peuvent déposer un dépôt de bien moins de 10 % et repayer selon, évidemment, l'âge du bénéficiaire, c'est pour cela qu'on encourage les plus âgés à adjoindre le nom d'un enfant pour l'acquisition de ce logement ; ils peuvent avoir 35 ans.

Alors, quand M. Uteem, honnêtement j'aurais voulu ne pas répondre mais par respect pour les députés des deux côtés de la Chambre qui sont présents, il nous posent la question, est-ce que le repaiement pour les bénéficiaires va être de lors de 900 000, oui un tiers de 2,7, c'est 900 000 mais ça a évolué dans le cas de Mare Tabac ou Dagotière, je crois que ça a tourné autour de R 600 000, c'est passé à 700 000 dans le cas de Wooton qui va être livré bientôt et cela passera à R 900 000 si nécessaire dépendant des capacités au moment de l'acquisition. Certains font des dépôts plus conséquents sinon on fait preuve de flexibilité et ils ont jusqu'à 35 ans pour le repaiement et comme le sait très bien le leader de l'Opposition qui est comptable, il y a un mécanisme. On calcule un certain pourcentage du revenu qui va au repaiement du logement. Il le sait sans doute mieux que moi.

En ce qui concerne les intérêts sur les emprunts, je ne sais plus qui avait soulevé la question. Évidemment dans le passé, c'était la *NHDC* je pense qui avançait le montant avec un taux d'intérêt. Cette question ou on va, non je ne peux pas vous le dire, honnêtement je ne peux pas vous le dire à ce stade. Évidemment, on va voir l'évolution du projet. Je vais en discuter avec le ministère des Finances et on vous donnera la réponse en temps et lieu. Aujourd'hui je ne peux pas vous dire quel sera le taux d'intérêt. Cela a toujours été mon approche, ce que je sais je le dis, ce que je ne sais pas, si vous posez la question, je vais au renseignement en espérant pouvoir vous répondre à la prochaine occasion.

Bon, je vais juste conclure M. le président. En écoutant l'Opposition, que nous dit l'Opposition? N'optez pas pour la *NSLD*, revenez à la formule de *tendering* traditionnelle, faite partir tous les gens qui sont à la tête de la *NHDC* ou de la *NSLD*, faites comme si le Covid n'avait jamais existé, insistez sur des prix plus bas, n'ayez pas recours à de nouvelles technologies, insistez sur toutes les conditions contractuelles, traditionnels qui existent, ne faites pas plus de 300 maisons sur un site. A la fin, ça équivaut à quoi ? Ne rien faire et aboutir comme entre 2011 et 2014 – 548 maisons livrées !

Alors, les députés de l'Opposition disent mais attention, il ne faut pas regarder les maisons livrées ; il faut regarder les maisons mises en chantier mais quel que soit le critère objectif, si vous dites maisons mises en chantier, il faudra faire le même exercice pour tous les mandats. Mais, à la fin du jour, c'est pareil. La période où on a construit ou mise en chantier le moins de maisons, c'est la période 2011 à 2014 et puis juste après, juste derrière, la période 2006 à 2010. Ça ce sont les faits et cela témoignent de la difficulté ; d'une part à mobiliser les fonds, les investissements pour la construction de maisons qui coûtent cher et je rends hommage à mon ami et collègue, le ministre des Finances qui a le cœur au bon endroit en termes de solidarité avec les démunis et deuxièmement, il faut avoir la volonté politique et nous l'avons.

J'aurais pu, M. le président, prendre le temps de la Chambre pour vous donner tous les lieux où la *NHDC* a livré des maisons depuis novembre 2019. J'aurais pu vous faire la liste, M. le député, de tous les projets en cours de la *NHDC*, pas seulement de construction de maisons mais aussi de réhabilitation de complexe *NHDC* existant. Vous connaissez mieux que moi le mandat de la *NHDC*. J'aurais pu et j'aurais voulu vous donner les détails des 400 maisons par circonscription, circonscription par circonscription, les différents sites, le nombre de maisons sur chaque site mais posez moi les questions lors de la séance de questions parlementaires les mardis suivants et je le ferai avec grand plaisir.

Donc, je vais terminer par dire que vous savez quand on entreprend des grands projets comme cela, il y a toujours des critiques ; parfois des critiques justifiées, souvent des critiques malveillantes. Quand j'étais tout petit, mes parents qui étaient à l'époque des fervents travaillistes, comme l'étaient les progressistes avant l'indépendance, me racontaient comment le gouvernement travailliste d'alors avait essayé de construire la première autoroute et combien de critiques ce gouvernement avait subies. Et quand il y a 20 ans, avec le MMM parce que c'est là,

qu'on a construit plus des maisons et d'écoles quand les militants étaient au gouvernement avec le MMM. Quand on a fait la grande réforme de l'éducation et qu'il fallait doubler le nombre de collèges d'État, que n'a-t-on pas entendu? On nous disait *lekol pa rempli ventre*. Imaginez-vous cela, *lekol na pa rempli ventre*, mais ces écoles ont été construits et tout le monde en a bénéficié. Et tout l'engagement social de ce gouvernement qui a protégé sa population au moment de la Covid, qui a protégé les familles, les ménages ; à grands coups, on nous accusait d'emprunter massivement, de creuser la dette nationale. Ce gouvernement qui a relancé l'économie avec grand succès. Ce gouvernement qui a introduit le salaire minimum. Non, mais on critique ce gouvernement, on nous dit vous dilapidez...

(Interruptions)

La lutte politique ne se limite pas à des allégations de corruption à tort et à travers. Moi je parle de la réalité matérielle des plus pauvres. Le salaire minimum, les augmentations de pension, l'abolition de la taxe urbaine, la tout juste deux semaines, l'introduction du préscolaire gratuit, cela bénéficie à toutes les communautés, à tous les groupes d'âges, à toutes les régions du pays y compris, celle du député Mohamed et cela bénéficie encore plus que tout, aux plus pauvres, aux démunis, ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle. Voilà l'illustration, M. le président, de l'engagement de ce gouvernement de faire de sorte que la justice sociale soit la colonne vertébrale des politiques publiques. L'Opposition parle quand elle est présente à l'Assemblée, le gouvernement agit et le peuple jugera.

J'en ai terminé. Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister Dr. Padayachy!

(10.23 p.m.)

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy):

M. le président, de prime abord, j'ai à cœur de remercier l'ensemble des intervenants pour leur contribution au débat de ce jour, plus particulièrement, permettez-moi de saluer les différentes prises de parole de mes collègues ministres et parlementaires de la majorité. Ils ont, avec force et conviction, exposé, détaillé, porté la stratégie et les décisions attenantes prises par ce gouvernement sous la houlette de notre Premier ministre. C'est en leur emboîtant le pas que je

clôturerai les échanges autour du vote de ce projet de loi. Je m'attacherai donc à revenir sur le fondement des deux projets publics pour lesquels des crédits supplémentaires sont requis.

M. le président, comme je l'ai mentionné lors de l'ouverture des débats, le montant total des dépenses encourues sur les postes discuté pour l'année fiscale 2022-2023, sera supérieur de R 5,4 milliards en comparaison au montant initialement voté par la Chambre. Le vote de ce montant est nécessaire pour mettre en œuvre deux projets d'une importance majeure pour Maurice et notre population. Il s'agit d'une part de la bonne conduite de la mise en chantier de logements sociaux sûrs et abordables pour les mauriciens et d'autre part, de la construction d'un *Waterfront* à Deux Frères. Chacun de ces postes de dépense additionnelle est justifié et nécessaire. S'opposer à l'allocation de ces crédits revient à aller à l'encontre des intérêts de notre nation et de notre population.

M. le président, pour ce qui est du premier projet, celui des logements sociaux annoncé dans le discours du Budget 2020-2021, je tiens à réitérer l'engagement ferme pris par ce gouvernement envers la population mauricienne.

Il s'inscrit au cœur de notre philosophie : centrer sur l'homme, centrer sur l'humain. Il en est pour ainsi dire son épiceutre.

Rien, ni la crise de la Covid-19, ni les conséquences de la guerre en Ukraine, nous ont fait dévier de notre chemin. Ce n'est donc pas aujourd'hui, alors que le pays a affiché une croissance du PIB de 8.7% en 2022, que notre dette poursuit sa trajectoire descendante, que nous changerons notre fusil d'épaule. Nous avons un cap, nous le maintenons. Depuis 2017, le gouvernement dirigé par l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, a ainsi mis en place des politiques ambitieuses pour renforcer encore d'avantage les tissus sociaux économiques du pays et promouvoir la mobilité sociale.

Notre vision est simple. Nous croyons que chaque citoyen doit pouvoir bénéficier d'un accès égal aux opportunités indépendamment de son origine socio-économique. Alors qu'une récente étude de l'OCDE a fait état d'une moyenne de cinq générations, soit 150 ans, pour observer le passage d'un individu à faible revenu vers le revenu médian, il est clair que l'État aura central à jouer. Nous ne pouvons pas rester cois. Action et protection, telle est notre motivation. C'est la condition sine qua non d'un ascenseur social en marche.

À cet égard, le gouvernement s'inscrit pleinement dans la philosophie Rousseauiste considérant la propriété comme un droit positif issu d'un pacte social scellé par la confiance partagée entre une population et son gouvernement. Créature du lien sociétal, l'accès à la propriété pour le plus grand nombre est également l'une des clés de la réduction des inégalités entre nos concitoyens. Je rejoins ici les propos de ma collègue ministre en charge de la sécurité sociale. Il est évident que devenir propriétaire d'un logement décent constitue une étape majeure pour un individu ou un ménage tant de point de vue de sa sécurité économique que de son inclusion sociale.

Il est un gage de stabilité, un rempart contre l'imprévu. Nous avons toute confiance que ce projet d'envergure financé sous le *COVID-19 Project Development Fund* et implémenté par le *New Social Living Development Limited* sera conduit à bon port.

M. le président, notre politique en faveur de la construction de logements sociaux modernes est accessible, déjà détaillée dans le programme 2020-2024 du gouvernement et réitérée dans le Budget 2020-2021, va permettre aux ménages à revenu faible et intermédiaire d'accéder à de dignes conditions d'habitat. C'est également par ce biais que nous pourrions assurer une plus juste répartition des différentes catégories sociales sur le territoire mauricien afin d'éviter à tout prix que ne se constituent semant des poches de pauvreté et d'exclusion. Il ne s'agit donc pas de construire à tout-va, mais d'engager l'implémentation d'une politique urbaine holistique et bienveillante. C'est à cet égard que tant le nombre de logements sociaux que leurs qualités et leurs environnements sont primordiaux pour accompagner un nivèlement vers le haut du cadre de vie des Mauriciens.

Certains de ceux siégeant de l'autre côté de cette auguste Assemblée se demandent encore pourquoi ce gouvernement est si focalisé sur la lutte contre les inégalités ? La réponse est très claire. Une société plus juste est déjà un objectif en soi et engendre en plus une économie plus robuste. D'ailleurs, l'OCDE en a fait son mantra. Je me permets ici de citer l'étude de l'OCDE, « *Trends in incoming equality and its impact on economic growth* », qui établit un lien direct entre la réduction des inégalités et la hausse de la croissance économique.

M. le président, alors comment peut-on sincèrement remettre en question le bien-fondé de ce projet et de son financement ? J'ai entendu les membres de l'opposition questionnaient la nécessité de voter ce montant de Rs5 milliards additionnels. Sont-ils seulement au courant que

ces fonds sont requis dès maintenant pour faire aller de l'avant ce projet et qu'aucun prestataire ne mettra des coups de pioche sans avoir l'assurance de son dû ? Cette tentative de manipulation de l'opinion publique est du grand n'importe quoi.

M. le président, revenons à notre sujet du jour et soyons précis. La circulaire émise en 2019 est mentionnée par certains membres de l'opposition ne s'applique pas aux fonds spéciaux en vertu de la section 9(3) (a) de la *Finance and Audit Act*. Cela est écrit noir sur blanc. Plus encore, le directeur de l'Audit avait en sus fait le constat que de trop nombreux fonds publics n'étaient pas rémunérés. Maintenant que cela est le cas, on crie au loup. Face à tant d'amateurisme, je me pose des questions.

M. le président, bien que le second montant à approprié soit moindre, le sujet requière toute notre attention. À cet égard, permettez-moi de rappeler dans quel contexte le projet placé sur le *National Environment and Climate Change Fund* est relatif à la construction d'un front de mer à Deux Frères s'établit. Maurice, petit État insulaire en développement, est très largement exposé aux risques climatiques de plusieurs natures. Il s'agit notamment de l'enjeu de lutte contre l'érosion de nos côtes contre la montée des eaux et contre la détérioration de nos plages et de nos lagons. Ils sont la fierté de notre pays et attire des touristes venus des quatre coins du globe.

Depuis plusieurs années déjà, nous travaillons sur un programme ambitieux de restauration des plages qui visent à préserver nos littoraux et à protéger nos communautés côtières. Nous investissons également dans des infrastructures de protection côtière pour minimiser les risques de dégradation de nos plages dans un effort d'adaptation et de mitigation. Je tiens à rappeler ici qu'au cours de la dernière décennie, nous avons constaté à Maurice une élévation du niveau de la mer de 5,6 mm par an, supérieure donc en moyenne mondiale.

Ce constat appelle à une action prompte et décisive. Le sujet est à la fois environnemental, sociale et économique. Nous sommes, en effet, convaincus que la promotion de notre résilience économique passe par la préservation de notre environnement et de la protection des Mauriciens dont la mer est le gain pain. Ils font figure de priorité pour assurer le développement durable et inclusif de notre pays. Nous faisons tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour garantir que les politiques publiques engagées soient efficaces, équitables et responsables tout en préservant nos ressources naturelles pour les générations futures. C'est justement ce que

nous faisons actuellement en demandant à cette auguste Assemblée le vote des crédits supplémentaires. En tant que décideurs publics, il en va de notre responsabilité envers les Mauriciens d'aujourd'hui et de demain.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry avait d'ailleurs écrit –

« Pour ce qui est de l'avenir, il ne s'agit pas que de le prévoir, mais de le rendre possible. »

Je ne peux que me ranger à ses côtés en appelant le vote de ce montant additionnel.

M. le président, pour conclure et clôturer le débat, il est évident que ces deux projets ont pour point commun d'améliorer les conditions de vie des Mauriciens. Ce gouvernement emmenait par notre Premier ministre, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, à l'intérêt de la population chevillée au corps. Nous voulons que chaque Mauricien ait un toit sur sa tête, nous voulons que notre pays continue de resplendir par la beauté de ses côtes. Nous voulons, avec la confiance que nous a accordée la population, réussir à faire de Maurice un modèle de développement robuste inclusif et durable.

Aujourd'hui, encore, cette prise de position est dictée par les principes de justice sociale et de développement économique. Sur ces considérations, je vous remercie de votre attention et recommande à présent le projet de loi à l'Assemblée. Merci.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ESTIMATES OF SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE (2022-2023) OF 2023

&

THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2022 – 2023) Bill

The Chairperson: All polite Members, sit down.

(10.36 p.m.)

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

The Chairperson: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: Item 26323208 – Rs5 billion. I am addressing the Deputy Prime Minister. This money is required, as the Minister of Finance has said, to replenish sums already spent. So, this is my question: before we vote Rs5 billion, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister to table a list of all the amount he has spent to date of the Rs12 billion already given to him and which you are now replenishing by another Rs5 billion. Table the list of all your expenses of the NSLD to date which you are now replenishing.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes. I shall seek from the NSLD the required information, compile same and table it as is allowed by normal procedures and regulations.

Mr X. L. Duval: It is obviously allowed. In particular, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the amount spent on all professional fees to date including PMCCs etc. and the list of all the land that you have bought to date. Is that okay?

The Deputy Prime Minister: All information available will be tabled in the House.

Mr X. L. Duval: There are other details which we want to know which we have asked but you have not given us. You mentioned that there is a performance bond; this money is going to be spent, given to people and they give a bond so that if they go bankrupt in the meantime, the bank pays us back. You understand this, right? So, what is the amount of the performance bond? You have just said that there is a performance bond but what is the amount? Can you tell us? Is it 10 percent, 5 percent, 0 percent, half a percent? What is the amount, please? If you want to circulate it later, it is okay.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, precisely, Mr Chairperson, I am quite willing if the Leader of the Opposition, for instance as regards land, wants me now to list 1 to 10 all the land and all the details, I can do it but this is going to take a long time. So, I think it would be preferable that it be tabled for circulation as soon as it is possible.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Deputy Prime Minister does not seem to understand that we are talking about Rs5 billion, not Rs5. I have all the time in the world.

The Chairperson: But, hon. Leader of the Opposition, bear with me. The Deputy Prime Minister said that he is prepared to table.

Mr X. L. Duval: But he is also prepared to give it now. I have time!

The Chairperson: Are you prepared to give it now?

Mr X. L. Duval: All the lists of professionals expenses; what happened? Where is the rest?

The Chairperson: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, be clear!

The Deputy Prime Minister: As regard to performance bond, what I have now – and this is subject to confirmation – I have information from the NSLD that the performance bond is in the region of 5% against bank guarantee or insurance company guarantee. But as I said, I need to verify the status of such information before making a solemn statement to the House. This is the information that I have available now. Does the hon. Leader of the Opposition want me to run through the 20 constituencies, each site, the size of the site, the identity of the contractor, the number of housing units? I mean, surely this is going to be a tedious and time consuming exercise.

Mr X. L. Duval: I have all the time in the world!

The Deputy Prime Minister: And I am quite willing to, as I said, table.

Mr X. L. Duval: But I did not ask that question.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I thought that was the question asked. The question asked concerns land.

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, land purchased. You can table right now or just give me a copy. I'll be happy to...

The Deputy Prime Minister: I don't have it in a document, in a form that can be tabled but I can try and tell you. According to information, I have at hand right now there are 10 plots of land ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Wait!

Mr X. L. Duval: I will help you.

The Chairperson: No, let the Minister...

(Interruptions)

Please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Let me answer! The Leader of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Leader of the Opposition! Please! Please, Leader of the Opposition, I am the Speaker! I am the President! Please wait! Let the Deputy Prime Minister continue!

The Deputy Prime Minister: So, right now there are 10 private plots of land that have been acquired against payment for the social housing project. Now, the details are as follows –

- (i) For Constituency No. 1, there is a plot of land at Pointe aux Sables, the owner of which is one Mr Chiu, of an extent of 15.5 arpents – I am rounding up the figures – at a cost of some Rs60 m.

(Interruptions)

- (ii) Constituency No. 4 at Notre Dame, land belonging to Terragri Ltd. of an extent of approximately 2.8 arpents, costing Rs10.5 m. approximately.
- (iii) The third and the fourth plot. Two plots of land at Hermitage belonging to Landscape Mauritius. One of about 4.5 arpents costing Rs25.78 m. The second one still from Landscape Mauritius of 12.5 arpents costing around Rs47 m.
- (iv) Next plot at Palma La Source belonging to one Mr Lingaya of around 2 arpents costing in the region of Rs18 m. or Rs19 m.
- (v) Palma La Source, land belonging to one Mr Mauderbacus of around 2.4 arpents costing around Rs23.1 m.
- (vi) At Arsenal belonging to Terragri Ltd. of 14 arpents costing around Rs95 m.
- (vii) At Côte D'or, 14.4 arpents belonging to Landscape Mauritius costing around Rs89 m.
- (viii) At Rose Belle, Balisson, belonging to EREIT (Employee's Real Estate Investment Trust, I think, the former Sugar Industry Workers) of 15 arpents costing Rs98 m.

- (ix) At Reunion Maurel belonging to Société Rouillard Frères of 8 arpents at the cost of Rs34.7 m.

Mr X. L. Duval: Now, we are getting somewhere. So, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, out of these lands – I am grateful for the information given – how many have you found to be unsuitable for construction?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will repeat what I said in the course of my intervention. Since the NSLD has got on the way and has been entrusted with this project, no land has been acquired unless and until the geotechnical survey confirms that it is buildable. That is why, it is so time consuming because you have to run after, I think, four firms only across the whole country that undertake geotechnical surveys. They are under great demand.

In the case of Palma, let me repeat, we had to work with the Private Sector, get equipment from the US to undertake such surveys. But we will not spend public funds unless we are sure land is buildable.

Mr X. L. Duval: Do you have something to say as far as expenses for professional fees are concerned? Are you going to give it to me now?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I do not have the information now and that information was not readily available when I asked from the NSLD for the simple reason that they are trying to thrash out the figures from the contractual sums and what payments have already been effected. Now, once I have that and it relates to very different professional services as you may understand, as soon as such information becomes available, I shall certainly be willing to share it.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am asking you details from the cashbook but apparently it is not available. Maybe I should take my exams again. Anyway, I will ask you now about advance payment. Now, we understand that this money is required to pay advance payment to contractors, the 14 contractors. What is the percentage of the contract value of the advance payment being paid please? It must be standard I presume.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Again, Mr Chairperson, this was the subject of the competitive negotiation. The NSLD, in its discussions with contractors, was presented with different requests. Again, I would need to confirm this. So I am speaking conditionally. Such

information must be confirmed. What I understand is that the advanced payment is likely to be in the region of 25% against bank guarantee or a guarantee from an insurance company being paid in Mauritius rupees. This is the information I have at hand now and I would wish to confirm this. So, the information I am imparting is indicative.

The Chairperson: So, may I put the question now?

Mr X. L. Duval: Are you in a rush?

The Chairperson: No, have you finished?

Mr X. L. Duval: No!

The Chairperson: Continue!

Mr X. L. Duval: But you asked me if I was finished. Now, off-site infrastructure, this is also part of the cost. What is the estimated off-site infrastructure that will be borne directly by the NSLD rather than by the contractors? On-site, Mr Chairperson, is borne by the contractors, off-site is borne by the Government.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, my understanding is that off-site infrastructure will not be the direct responsibility of the NSLD.

Mr X. L. Duval: Who is going to pay for the off-site infrastructure?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, the relevant services of the State who will undertake the work you mean?

Mr X. L. Duval: So, they will do it for free?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Certainly not. This is part of the...

Mr X. L. Duval: So, what is the amount that they are going to charge?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson...

Mr X. L. Duval: Who would they charge?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson...

Mr X. L. Duval: They would charge the consumers?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the question was what part of off-site works will be undertaken by the NSLD. I understand this to refer, for instance, to electricity provision and infrastructure that may go with it, CWA connections and the infrastructure that go with it, access roads for instance. As I said, this will not be the responsibility of the NSLD just as off-site works are not generally the responsibility of the NHDC. These matters are neither for the contractor nor the NHDC which is responsible for building the housing complex. We then have relevant branches or relevant services and departments of the State that will undertake such work and subject to information that can be provided by the Ministry of Finance, this will go into the relevant budget.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Minister of Finance is here, so he can intervene as he wishes. I am asking again if - let us take electricity - *il y a des colonnes etc.* you know that when you want electricity, Government asks to pay for the *colonne*, whatever it is called in English, right? So, who is going to pay for this now? The consumers of CEB will be paying for your projects, supply of electricity and if so how much? If the Ministry of Finance will pay, from what fund will it pay and how much of it will it pay? This is the question. It is a valid question. He will not be able to give houses without water, electricity and roads surely.

The Deputy Prime Minister: With respect to my colleague, may I just remind the Leader of the Opposition that throughout the years, when the NHDC has built houses, no Government has ever asked the individual beneficiaries to pay for installation of electricity poles or for construction of the roads for that matter. We are providing social housing and we will do the needful.

Mr X. L. Duval: So, the Minister of Finance will tell us.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, si on me permet, je peux donner une information dessus. Donc, sur les 8,000 logements, le coût sera de R 14,4 milliards de subsidie.

Mr X. L. Duval: 14 milliards !

Dr. Padayachy: R 14,4 milliards, oui pour les 8,000 logements. Donc, nous avons actuellement R 12 milliards dans les fonds pour ce projet et on est en train de prendre R 5 milliards, donc cela nous fait un total de R 17 milliards. Sur les R 17 milliards, on a déjà alloué R 2 milliards pour l'achat de terrains et aussi d'autres services y compris les *off-site works* et pour

les R 5 milliards qu'on est en train de demander aujourd'hui, il y a R 4,4 milliards qui vont s'ajouter aux R 10 milliards restant, qui fait R 14,4 milliards le montant des subsides pour les 8,000 logements et R 600 millions qui sont des provisions pour les *off-site works*.

Mr X. L. Duval: Will it be paid by NSLD?

Dr. Padayachy: Non, c'est ce qu'on fait là. Oui.

Mr X. L. Duval: It will be paid by NSLD then. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I have got most of the information. I will wait for the rest in the coming days.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please, be polite!

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs5,417,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (2022-2023) of 2023 was considered and agreed to.

The Supplementary Appropriation (2022-2023) Bill (No. II of 2023) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 10.56 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 11.30 a.m.