

No. 08 of 2024



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 07 JUNE 2024

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
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
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation

Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
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Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Dr. the Hon. Mrs Marie Christiane Dorine Chukowry	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Anjiv Ramdhany	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms
Hon. Ms Naveena Ramyad	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker	Hon. Sooroojdev Phokeer, GCSK, GOSK
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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 08 of 2024

Sitting of Friday 07 June 2024

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity

- (a) The Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Appropriation (2024–2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024). (In Original)
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022. (With CD)
- (c) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Chagossian Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2020. (With CD)
- (d) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Environment Cleaning Authority for the year ended 30 June 2023. (With CD)

B. Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning

Ministry of Tourism

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2023. (In Original)

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

The Education (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 92 of 2024)

D. Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail

The Road Traffic (Crop Season) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 90 of 2024)

E. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

- (a) Estimates 2024-2025 & Indicative Estimates 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.
- (b) Virement Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2024): Nos. 16, 22 to 27, 29 to 48, 50 to 61 and 64. (In Original)
- (c) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2024): Nos. 9 to 18. (In Original)

- (d) Virement Certificate - Quarter 3 (January – March 2024): Vote/Sub-Head (Certificates Nos.): 1-1(1-3,5), 1-2(4), 1-4(1), 1-5(1-4), 1-7(3-7), 1-8(3-4), 1-9(4), 1-10(1-2), 1-11(2-3), 1-12(3), 1-13(1-3), 2-1(1-3,5,7), 2-106(1-2), 2-107(1), 2-108(2-3), 2-109(1-4), 2-2(1), 2-3(2-4), 2-5(7-12), 2-6(1,3), 2-9(2,5), 2-10(3-4), 3-1(2-7), 3-2(1-2), 3-3(3-5), 4-1(2-5), 5-1(8-16), 5-2(4-6), 5-3(2-6), 5-4(3-5), 6-1(2,6-9), 6-2(3-4), 6-3(2), 7-1(5-10), 7-2(7), 7-3(1-6), 7-4(1-2), 7-6(1-2), 8-1(9,11-12,14,16-17), 9-2(6-14), 10-101(1-2), 10-102(2-3), 10-104(1-2), 11-1(2-3), 11-2(1-2), 12-1(4), 13-1(1), 13-2(1), 13-4(3-4), 15-1(2-5), 15-2(1-6), 16-1(3-11), 16-103(2-3), 17-1(2-7), 17-2(4-6), 18-1(10-15,18), 19-1(2-3), 19-2(4), 20-1(2,4-7), 20-2(3), 21-1(5), 22-1(1-2) and 23-1(5-8).
- (e) The Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Resilience Fund for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (f) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme Board for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- (g) The Public Procurement (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 95 of 2024)
- (h) The Public Procurement (Suspension and Debarment) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 96 of 2024)
- (i) The Public Procurement (Disqualification) (Revocation) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 97 of 2024)

F. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

The Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 94 of 2024)

G. Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Financial Reporting Council for the year ended 30 June 2023. **(With CD)**

H. Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security

(a) The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Vallée d’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation for the year/period ended: **(With CD)**

- (i) 01 January 2015 to 31 December 2015; and
- (ii) 01 January 2016 to 30 June 2017.

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board for the year ended 30 June 2023. **(With CD)**

I. Attorney General

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

The Industrial Property (Procedure of Tribunal) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 93 of 2024)

J. Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Youth Council for the year ended 30 June 2023. (In Original)

K. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Human Resource Development Council for the year ended 30 June 2023. (With CD)

L. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

The Annual Report and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust for the years ended 30 June, 2021 and 2022. (With CD)

M. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

(a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 89 of 2024)

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Competition Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023. (With CD)

(c) The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) (Amendment) 2024. (Government Notice No. 91 of 2024)

N. Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Public Officers' Welfare Council for the year ended 30 June 2023.

O. Ministry of Industrial Development, SME's and Cooperatives

(a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council for the year ended 30 June 2023. (With CD)

(b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the St Antoine Planters Co-operative Trust for the year ended 30 June 2023. (With CD)

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.

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Appropriation (2024-2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2024-2025) BILL

(No. IV of 2024)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Appropriation (2024-2025) Bill (No. IV of 2024) be read a second time.

“L’économie est au service du bien commun”

Jean Tirole

Budget 2024-2025

TOMORROW IS OURS

INTRODUCTION

Mr Speaker, Sir,

1. I move that the Appropriation 2024-2025 Bill No. IV of 2024 be read a second time.
2. I come before this august Assembly for the fifth and last budget of this mandate.
3. Since taking office, this Government has placed Mauritians at the heart of its actions.
4. Investing in the population, whilst reducing inequalities to boost growth and development.
5. This is our strategy.
6. Thanks to this philosophy, we are here today, stronger and more united than ever.
7. Yet, over the last few years, our economy has been faced with its worst shocks since independence.
8. Surviving the unthinkable, we have managed to preserve and even uplift the livelihood of our population.

9. The average monthly household income has increased by 51.1 percent between 2017 and 2023 to reach Rs 55,600.
10. The proportion of households earning less than Rs 25,000 per month decreased from 43 percent in 2017 to 19.6 percent in 2023.
11. Alongside social progress, the economy has exceeded its potential.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

12. We registered a strong GDP growth rate of 7 percent in 2023, following an exceptional growth of 8.9 percent in 2022.
13. Our GDP reached Rs 651.7 billion in 2023, much higher than the Rs 628.4 billion estimated initially.
14. Total investment grew by 30.9 percent, compared to 7.8 percent in 2022.
15. This is the result of an expansion of 20.3 percent in private investment and 73.5 percent in public investment.
16. FDI inflows for 2023 amounted to Rs 37 billion, exceeding the previous record of Rs 33.5 billion registered the year before.
17. Exports of goods and services increased by Rs 30.8 billion in 2023 to reach Rs 347 billion.

18. The unemployment rate as at end of 2023 stood at 6.1 percent, compared to 6.8 percent at end of 2022, the lowest rate in over 25 years.
19. Headline inflation decreased from 10.8 percent in 2022 to 7 percent in 2023.
20. Public sector debt stood at 78 percent of GDP at end of 2023, lower by 7.2 percentage points.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

21. Enabling social progress has stimulated economic growth.
22. It has been possible thanks to the measures taken by this Government, under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.
23. Because our youth is our future, we have made education completely free from pre-primary to university, and launched an Independence Scheme through a one-off grant of Rs 20,000 at the age of majority.
24. Convinced that all work deserves pay, we have increased the Minimum Guaranteed Income from Rs 12,075 to Rs 15,000 monthly in June 2023 and further to Rs 18,500 in January 2024.
25. To ensure that each and every Mauritian has equal opportunities to work, we have introduced and extended the *Prime à l'Emploi* Scheme, which benefits 6,000 individuals, including 5,500 women.

26. To ensure the dignity of our elderly, the basic retirement pension has been increased from Rs 10,000 in June 2022 to Rs 11,000 in June 2023 and Rs 13,500 in April 2024.
27. With the introduction of the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (CSG), we have supported the purchasing power of Mauritians through:-
 - (a) A monthly allowance to employees and self-employed individuals of Rs 2,000 for those who earn less than Rs 25,000; and Rs 1,000 for those earning between Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000;
 - (b) A CSG Child Allowance of Rs 2,000 monthly for children aged up to 3 years; and
 - (c) A CSG Disability Allowance of Rs 2,500 monthly.
28. Making support for the most vulnerable our priority, we have disbursed Rs 4.4 billion in the form of subsidies to maintain retail prices of rice, flour, and LPG this year.
29. To enable greater social and fiscal justice, in particular for the benefit of the middle class, we have replaced the flat tax regime by a progressive and fairer tax system with a maximum tax rate of 20 percent which allows all Mauritians to pay lower taxes.
30. Today, an individual earning up to Rs 30,000 monthly no longer pays income tax.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

31. The vulnerable, middle class, youth, women, retirees, and disabled, no one has been left behind.
32. This is the principle which has guided us during this mandate, and will continue to do so, with the trust of the population.
33. This budget is a continuation of our philosophy.
34. Growth for social progress.
35. Growth for all and with all.
36. Growth that is robust, inclusive and sustainable.
37. In one word, resilient.
38. Because, the only way for our country to prosper is to write our destiny together, and with ambition.
39. Because, the future of this country belongs to each and everyone.
40. Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, tomorrow is ours.
41. This is why we will focus on 3 key pillars: -
 - (a) Fostering Economic Dynamism;
 - (b) Working towards a sustainable and inclusive Mauritius; and
 - (c) Building our Future.

FOSTERING ECONOMIC DYNAMISM

Mr Speaker, Sir,

42. A dynamic economy creates more opportunities, better jobs, advanced skills, enhanced production, greater investment, better redistribution, lower inflation, lower debt to GDP ratio and less inequalities.
43. This is a better economy for better lives.
44. To foster economic dynamism, we must enhance the ease of doing business environment to sustain higher levels of investment.
45. We must make the labour market more vibrant to enhance our productivity and competitiveness.
46. We must strengthen sectoral development for a well-diversified economic structure.
47. This strategy will bring us to a Rs 1 trillion economy by 2030.

Improving the Ease of Doing Business

Mr Speaker, Sir,

48. This budget will ensure that we continue to upgrade our business environment to fully realise our extraordinary potential.

49. We have reached an investment rate of 23.5 percent in 2023 and record Foreign Direct Investment inflows of Rs 37 billion, 5.7 percent of our GDP.
50. This is the result of the consistent efforts of this Government.
51. In 2024, the objective is to reach an investment rate of 25 percent and FDI inflows of Rs 40 billion.
52. To achieve this goal, a series of measures will be implemented.
53. First, portability of bank accounts will become a reality this year.
54. Second, the information centre of the Companies and Business Registration Department will be operational on a 24/7 basis.
55. Third, the number of licenses on the National E-licensing system will be increased from 26 to 35, starting with applications for clinical trials and fishing licenses.
56. The EDB will work with various authorities to double the number of licenses delivered electronically within the next 3 years.
57. Fourth, a Tax Arrears Settlement Scheme and a Contribution Arrears Settlement Scheme will be implemented up to June 2025, with a full waiver of penalties.
58. Fifth, the FSC will streamline its licenses and permits to ensure they are granted within 10 working days, subject to all requirements being met.

59. Sixth, the MACCS e-bunkering service will be operational on a 24/7 basis.
60. Seventh, to ease the resolution of commercial disputes, the framework for alternative dispute resolution will be modernised.
61. Eighth, Government Gazettes and legislations will be made available electronically by December 2024.
62. Finally, a new Consulate in Réunion Island and an embassy in Japan will be opened to facilitate economic and trade relations

Labour Force

Mr Speaker, Sir,

63. Our jobs policy over this mandate has been fruitful.
64. Unemployment rate fell from 10.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020 to 6.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023.
65. The lowest figure since 1996.
66. We will pursue on this strategy.
67. One where no individual is left behind.
68. Thanks to the measures taken last year, women participation in the labour force has increased from 43 to 48 percent.
69. We will continue with the *Prime à l'Emploi* Scheme for unemployed women irrespective of age.

70. Persons with disabilities will be further supported to integrate the workplace through an increase in the period of placement from 6 months to one year.
71. Moreover, to increase the participation of women and disabled in the labour force, the *Prime à l'Emploi* will be made available to those willing to work on a part-time basis.
72. We will contribute a sum of Rs 7,500 monthly to their salaries for 20 hours of work.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

73. For our economy to sustain higher levels of growth, we will continue to open up to foreign talents.
74. We need to make the process seamless for businesses.
75. The threshold for Occupation Permits for professionals will be reduced from Rs 30,000 to Rs 22,500.
76. Professionals with a minimum of 10 years' experience will receive a temporary Occupation Permit of 3 months allowing them to work pending approval.
77. To speed up recruitment of foreign workers:
 - (a) The Agricultural Workers (Job Contractors') Regulations will be amended to provide more flexibility for recruitment in the agricultural sector;
 - (b) Quotas on foreign labour will be removed in the manufacturing, jewellery, freeport and ICT/BPO sectors;

(c) The maximum timeframe to deliver or renew a Work Permit will be set at 3 weeks; and

(d) The maximum renewal period for the manufacturing sector is being prolonged to 10 years.

78. Finally, non-citizens holding a Retired Residence Permit will be allowed to work without an additional Work or Occupation Permit.

Sectoral Development

Mr Speaker, Sir,

79. Our economy is now stronger.

80. Together, we have achieved higher growth, more jobs and a more resilient economy.

81. We will further boost our strategic sectors to build the tomorrow we deserve.

SMEs and Entrepreneurship

82. Throughout our mandate, Government has been at the side of SMEs, entrepreneurs and innovators.

83. We will continue to promote entrepreneurship for a diversified, resilient and competitive economy by: -

(a) Paying the full salary compensation of up to Rs 2,000 for SMEs up to December 2024;

(b) Providing a 10 percent rebate on DBM rental for SMEs in productive sectors for two years;

- (c) Writing off loans which will become outstanding for more than 20 years as at June 2025 and loans of deceased micro entrepreneurs at DBM;
 - (d) Increasing the maximum yearly refund to Rs 500,000 under the Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme; and
 - (e) Waiving 50 percent of rental arrears of over 5 years at DBM if settled by June 2025.
84. Financial support will also be provided for a period of 3 years for barcoding by SMEs, cooperatives and small farmers.
85. To empower cooperatives to grow strongly: -
- (a) A scheme will be introduced to provide 50 percent of the digitalisation cost up to a maximum of Rs 100,000;
 - (b) Cooperatives will benefit from DBM and IFCM schemes; and
 - (c) Cooperatives will receive interest on accounts held in public banks.

Agro Industry

Mr Speaker, Sir,

86. Agro-industry is fundamental for our future.
87. We cannot remain blind to the impact of climate change on food security and the availability of food crops.

88. We will thus provide a series of measures to support the resurgence of the agro-industry.

Crop Sector

89. To further boost the local production of food crops and reduce our dependency on imports, we are providing a: -

- (a) Grant of 50 percent, up to a maximum of Rs 500,000 for the construction of up to two sheltered farms, including replacement of plastic nets;
- (b) 50 percent subsidy for purchase of fertilisers;
- (c) 75 percent subsidy on seeds for potatoes, onions, carrots, beans, garlic and tomatoes;
- (d) Grant of Rs 250,000 for the purchase of equipment by small planters; and
- (e) Grant of Rs 300,000 for cooperatives for acquisition of equipment to boost local production.

90. Moreover, Government will provide: -

- (a) A grant of Rs 1 million and concessionary leasing facilities by IFCM for planters purchasing fully equipped container farming facilities;
- (b) Rs 10 million for upgrading of track roads, drains, and sheltered farms at the Britannia Organic Zone; and
- (c) Rs 50 million for setting up of a cold storage facility at the National Wholesale Market to increase the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables.

91. To uphold the re-emergence of the tea sector, Government will provide Rs 6 million to continue the Road Mending Scheme for tea cooperatives.
92. Tea growers occupying a minimum of 1 arpent of land will henceforth benefit from duty free facilities on purchase of a double cab.
93. Finally, we will increase the winter allowance for tea growers by 80 percent from Rs 2.50 per kg to Rs 4.50 per kg.
94. For planters affected by adverse weather conditions, we are:-
 - (a) Maintaining a cash compensation of Rs 6,000 per arpent for the first crop cycle annually; and
 - (b) Introducing a cash compensation of Rs 3,000 per arpent for a second crop cycle annually;

Mr Speaker, Sir,

95. We have rekindled the cane industry.
96. Thanks to the Cane Replantation Scheme and Cane Revolving Fund Scheme, some 9,900 arpents of land have been replanted over the last 3 years.
97. In order to continue the renewal of sugar cane plantation: -
 - (a) We are increasing the grant under the Cane Replantation Scheme from Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 per arpent to restore abandoned cane lands; and

- (b) The Cane Revolving Fund Scheme at the DBM will be renewed for a period of one year.
98. The subsidy of 50 percent on green certification of sugar production will be maintained.
99. For planters producing up to 60 tons of sugar, Government will:-
- (a) Continue to pay the premium to the Sugar Insurance Fund Board;
 - (b) Provide a 50 percent subsidy on purchase of fertilisers;
 - (c) Continue to provide a financial assistance of Rs 150,000 for purchase of drip irrigation systems; and
 - (d) Waive CESS in respect of crop 2024.
100. Furthermore, we are increasing the minimum guaranteed revenue of sugar to Rs 30,000 per ton for crop 2024, a 20 percent increase over two years.

Livestock Sector

Mr Speaker, Sir,

101. The livestock industry is essential in our food security strategy.
102. We will support our farmers and breeders to produce more locally. To this end, I am making provision for grants of:-
- (a) Up to Rs 225,000 for the import of cows, goats, pigs and sheep;

- (b) Rs 200,000 for construction and upgrading of sheds and purchase of goats, sheep, pigs, and cows; and
 - (c) Rs 10,000 to calf breeders.
103. The subsidies will be increased by 50 percent for: -
- (a) Cost of veterinary services from Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500; and
 - (b) Purchase of heifers from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,500.
104. We are further increasing the grant under the Pasture Development Scheme to Rs 25,000 per arpent.
105. Government will acquire a mobile veterinary clinic to deliver quicker service to farmers for their livestock.
106. The subsidy on animal feed is being increased by 33 percent from Rs 15 to Rs 20 per kilogram.
107. For our farmers and breeders, we are: -
- (a) Providing a grant of up to Rs 300,000 for purchase of fencing and security equipment; and
 - (b) Increasing the threshold from Rs 250,000 to Rs 300,000 for purchase of land mechanisation equipment.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

108. To tap into the potential of the apiculture sector and reduce our imports, Government will increase: -
- (a) The one-off grant under the Bee Keeping Scheme from Rs 150,000 to Rs 200,000 for fencing purposes; and

- (b) The 50 percent subsidy on acquisition of solar powered CCTV cameras from a maximum of Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000.
- 109. Moreover, we will give a subsidy of Rs 500 per Bee Queen to beekeepers up to a maximum of 10 queens.
- 110. Finally, the DBM will extend its Amnesty Scheme to write-off long outstanding loans of more than 20 years up to June 2025 and loans of deceased breeders, farmers and planters.

Blue Economy

- 111. As an island nation, fishing is part of our rich heritage.
- 112. This Government has always stood by the side of our fishers.
- 113. We have been the first to consider the sustenance, financial independence and retirement of fishers.
- 114. This year, we will further support this industry through: -
 - (a) A grant of Rs 300,000 to fishers for the purchase of canotte;
 - (b) A grant of Rs 6 million to cooperatives for the purchase of semi-industrial fishing boats;
 - (c) A grant of Rs 1 million to individual fishers for the purchase of semi-industrial fishing boats;

- (d) Increasing the grant for purchase of:
 - i. hooks and fishing materials from Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,500; and
 - ii. materials to construct fish trap from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,500.
- (e) Setting up modern fish markets in the region of Mahébourg, Grand Baie, Baie du Cap and Trou d'eau Douce;
- (f) Constructing fisheries post at Saint Brandon for monitoring of bank fishers; and
- (g) Providing a one-off grant of Rs 50,000 to registered fishers for renewal of outboard motors.

115. For the safety of fishers, we will: -

- (a) Allocate Rs 10 million for the placement of marker buoys; and
- (b) Install a second layer of Fish Aggregating Devices across the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

116. Two years ago, we introduced a lump sum to artisanal fishermen aged 65 years and above returning their licenses.

117. We are increasing it from Rs 100,000 to Rs 125,000.

118. For net fishers returning their fishing licenses, we are increasing the compensation from Rs 100,000 to Rs 125,000 for individuals and from Rs 200,000 to Rs 250,000 for cooperatives.
119. In the case of sudden death of the fisher, an amount of Rs 200,000 will be paid to his heirs.
120. We are also increasing from Rs 200,000 to Rs 300,000 the death grant provided to families of fishers lost at sea.
121. Moreover, the DBM Ltd will extend its Amnesty Scheme for the write-off of long outstanding loans of more than 20 years as at June 2025 and loans of deceased fishermen.
122. We are further providing duty free facilities to registered artisanal fishers for the acquisition of a 4 by 4 vehicle.
123. Finally, we are increasing the daily Bad Weather Allowance for fishers from Rs 650 to Rs 800.

Manufacturing

Mr Speaker, Sir,

124. The manufacturing sector has been one of the most resilient sectors of our economy, despite the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, increase in freight prices, and labour shortages.
125. The sector has recorded for the second consecutive year, a double-digit growth.

126. Last year, it grew by 12.9 percent, after a growth of 10.4 percent in 2022.
127. Exports of goods have exceeded Rs 100 billion in both 2022 and 2023.
128. Our aim is to reach Rs 150 billion of exports of goods annually.
129. We will provide a comprehensive set of measures to support our industrial base and boost our export industry.
130. To boost the production and consumption of goods produced locally,
Government will:-
- (a) Introduce an “*Industrie du Futur*” programme for 100 SMEs over a period of 3 years to enable them to digitalise their operations; and
 - (b) Facilitate the development of a distribution network of 10 retail outlets and mini-stores across the island for *Made in Moris* products.
131. Furthermore, the investment tax credit of 15 percent over 3 years will henceforth include AI and patents.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

132. It is equally essential for us to engage in a sustainable transformation of the export industry.

133. We have to diversify our exports, improve our export competitiveness, and explore new market segments and destinations.
134. A critical aspect of our textile industry is its competitiveness.
135. Government will provide a support on the wage bill of the textile industry by compensating the increase in minimum wage and the salary compensation of 2024.
136. We will introduce Export Manufacturing Regulations under the Economic Development Board Act, which will, inter-alia:-
- (a) Define an export manufacturing enterprise as having a minimum of 30 percent of export turnover;
 - (b) Set-up an export promotion fund with a seed capital of Rs 50 million; and
 - (c) Provide for a public-private sector Export Development Council to devise export strategies including identification of products and markets.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

137. The Africa Warehousing Scheme has successfully enabled an increase in exports ten-fold to reach Rs 475 million in less than 3 years.
138. We are thus prolonging the scheme up to 2027 and expanding it to Kenya.

139. To continue facilitating exports, the Freight Rebate, the Trade Promotion and Marketing, and the Export Credit Guarantee Schemes are being renewed for an additional year.
140. Moreover, first time exporters with a turnover of less than Rs 20 million will benefit from an increased refund of 40 percent for a period of one year under the Freight Rebate Scheme.
141. The Trade Promotion and Marketing Scheme will now include New Zealand.
142. To accelerate the decarbonisation of the industrial sector, the Carbon Neutral Loan Scheme will henceforth include the cost of batteries.
143. Finally, we will extend the DBM Wage Support Scheme over a period of 7 years up to 2031.

Construction

144. Our country is engaged in substantial public investment, with the construction of social housing, drains, roads and other infrastructure projects.
145. In addition, over Rs 300 billion of private sector investment is under facilitation at the EDB.
146. To further reinforce the capacity of the construction industry, Government will:-
 - (a) Harmonise the fees for Building and Land Use Permits (BLUP) across all local authorities;

- (b) Extend the validity period of a BLUP for construction to start from 2 years to 3 years;
- (c) Provide for harmonised timeframes for the determination of Environment Impact Assessments; and
- (d) Streamline the process to determine land conversion permits.

ICT/BPO

Mr Speaker, Sir,

- 147. The ICT/BPO sector is a dynamic and resilient industry which catalyse innovation and growth in the economy.
- 148. The sector has grown consistently at an average annual rate of over 4 percent.
- 149. Last year, it has registered a growth of 4.5 percent.
- 150. To accelerate the development of this economic pillar, Government will introduce: -
 - (a) A refund of 25 percent under the 'Small Business Digital Champion Scheme' on investment of a minimum of Rs 500,000 in new technologies and equipment;
 - (b) A virtual platform to showcase Mauritian IT services; and
 - (c) An enhanced margin of preference of 50 percent for local service companies.

151. Moreover, a 5-year blueprint for the Digital Industry will be devised.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

152. The development and spread of Artificial Intelligence across the world offer vast opportunities for Mauritius.

153. It will enable us to improve our global competitiveness and productivity.

154. We will launch a national 'A.I-for-ALL' campaign to encourage the use of AI tools in schools, universities, businesses and for the public at large.

155. Moreover, training courses involving AI will be eligible to an increased refund of 90 percent.

156. Finally, to accelerate the transition towards renewable energy, the CEB will launch an ICT Sector Carbon Neutral Scheme with excess electricity exported at Rs 4.20 per kWh.

Life Sciences and Biotechnology

Mr Speaker, Sir,

157. The life science and biotechnology sector is a nascent industry that has the potential to become a key feature of our economic landscape.

158. We need to provide necessary support to promote Mauritius as a hub for international players to set-up their R&D activities.

159. To strengthen innovation and growth in the sector, a Mauritius Biopharmaceutical Regulatory Authority will be set up.

160. In order to attract international fertility centres to set up in Mauritius, an Assisted Reproductive Technology Act will be introduced to regulate and supervise reproductive technology clinics and assisted technology banks.

Financial Services

Mr Speaker, Sir,

161. The financial services sector is the first contributor to our GDP with a growth of 4.4 percent in 2023.

162. To maintain the momentum and further expand the sector: -

- (a) Payment Intermediary Services (PIS) Licence Holders will now benefit from the Partial Exemption Regime;
- (b) The Fund and Asset Manager Certificate will be reviewed to include at least 2 qualified officers;
- (c) The Funds Regime will be reviewed to enhance the attractiveness of the jurisdiction;
- (d) The blueprint for the financial services sector will be reviewed in light of new opportunities, challenges and threats;
- (e) A blueprint for the development of Mauritius as a Fintech Hub in the region will be devised with the assistance of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; and
- (f) The centralised e-KYC will be extended to the global business sector.

163. Furthermore, to consolidate the position of the Mauritius International Financial Centre, we will: -
- (a) Introduce a 10-year expert Occupation Permit to attract foreign talents in wealth management, family office, virtual assets and virtual tokens; and
 - (b) Explore the signature of a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) with India and African countries;
164. We will further engage into discussions with the Indian authorities for the development of our financial sector.
165. Moreover, a new framework for the secondary trading of government bonds will be established on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.
166. To encourage the adoption of digital payments in Mauritius, the Bank of Mauritius will remove the fees associated with the use of the MAUCAS platform.

Tourism

Mr Speaker, Sir,

167. According to the United Nations, the tourism industry in Mauritius has recovered at 94 percent of pre-pandemic levels compared to the global average of 88 percent.
168. This shows that the measures taken by Government since the pandemic have borne its fruits.
169. Indeed, tourism earnings in 2023 were 36 percent higher than in 2019, reaching Rs 86 billion.

170. The country is attracting higher spenders and longer stay tourists.
171. Our objective for 2024 is to reach 1.4 million tourist arrivals and Rs 100 billion of tourism receipts.
172. To support the promotion and marketing of the Mauritius destination: -
- (a) The Promotion and Destination Marketing budget of MTPA is being increased by 20 percent to reach Rs 600 million;
 - (b) The grant provided to SMEs for projects undertaken by small hotels associations is being increased to Rs 800,000; and
 - (c) The amount under the Participation in International Fairs SME Refund Scheme is being increased to Rs 275,000.
173. To facilitate the utilisation of pleasure crafts by tourists and the public, jetties will be constructed at Trou d'Eau Douce and Black River.
174. With a view to enhancing travelers' experience, Government will fast track the implementation of the e-Gate and the e-Passport.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

175. We will continue to foster sustainable tourism development to make Mauritius a Green-Certified Destination by 2030.
176. Last year, Bel Ombre Village achieved a significant milestone by earning a place in the esteemed Green Destination Top 100 Stories list.

177. This year, the Tourism Authority will engage in the accredited certification process of Bel Ombre on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council to be completed by December 2025.
178. Furthermore, the newly refurbished Cotton Bay Hotel in Rodrigues will open next month.

Arts and Culture

Mr Speaker, Sir,

179. Arts and culture are central to our national fabric.
180. Its impact goes beyond the economy, with the society at large benefitting.
181. We need to transform the sector into a vibrant and thriving creative arts industry.
182. Our unique local talents and artists can become the pride of Mauritius both locally and abroad.

Support to Artists

183. Last year, Government introduced a historic legislation to recognise the status of artists in our economy.
184. Our first priority is to strengthen support to our registered professional artists.
185. Rs 25 million is being provided to the Professional in the Arts Council for the financing of schemes and programmes to support professionals in the art.

186. To give due recognition to our renowned local artists, we will: -
- (a) Launch an Artist of the Year Award of Rs 250,000 to showcase and market the artistic works of professionals in visual arts, literature, music, audio-visual and digital media, dance and performing arts; and
 - (b) Introduce an Artist Welfare Fund to provide support to the professionals in the arts and their families.
187. Furthermore, to facilitate an enabling environment for our artists, companies supporting a registered professional in the arts will benefit from a double deduction on the costs incurred.
188. Second, to encourage more youth to acquire professional training in the field of music and dance: -
- (a) The Artist Incubator Scheme will include mentoring of talents in traditional Mauritian Sega and Bhojpuri; and
 - (b) Government will continue to meet the cost of international examination fees for diploma courses at the Conservatoire National de Musique François-Mitterrand.
189. Third, private investment in the development of the creative industry, including concert venues and theatres will be eligible for a Premium Investor Certificate with incentives on taxation, utilities, labour, infrastructure amongst others.

Preservation of Heritage

Mr Speaker, Sir,

190. Our culture and our heritage are vastly enriching.
191. We need to preserve and promote them.
192. As part of the promotion of our ancestral heritage, we will:-
 - (a) Celebrate ‘La nuit du Séga’ at Le Morne in October 2024, an event last celebrated 60 years ago;
 - (b) Organise a conference on ‘Routes of Enslaved People’ in February 2025 to mark the 190th anniversary of the abolition of slavery; and
 - (c) Launch the International Indentured Labour Route Project in May 2025.
193. As part of the preservation of our cultural heritage, we are going to: -
 - (a) Develop a cultural heritage district in the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Area to celebrate Mauritius' rich history, promote cultural exchange, and enhance visitor experiences;
 - (b) Undertake preliminary works for the setting up of an Interpretation Centre, including a Maroonage Museum and craft market at Le Morne; and

(c) Provide for the restoration of the Canal Dayot Aqueduct, Tower of Old Powder Mill at Pamplemousses, Windmill Tower at Belle Rive, and Batterie de L'Harmonie at Les Salines.

194. Socio-cultural organisations play a key role in promoting our cultural, linguistic and religious values. Government will thus: -

(a) Increase the grant for the organisation of cultural activities to Rs 10 million; and

(b) Allocate funds for the construction of cultural centres, over four years.

WORKING TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE MAURITIUS

Mr Speaker, Sir,

195. The second strategy is to pursue our agenda of an inclusive and sustainable Mauritius.

196. We will incentivise local and efficient energy and water supply.

197. We will prioritise the climate agenda by promoting a circular economy, greening of our island and conservation of our terrestrial and coastal landmarks.

198. We will ensure an inclusive tomorrow for our children by investing in their wellbeing, their education and their safety.

Energy

Mr Speaker, Sir,

199. Last year, we set out a goal to make of Mauritius a Carbon Neutral Economy.
200. One based on clean, green, secure homegrown energy supply.
201. We are acting fast to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel.
202. Thanks to CEB's renewable energy schemes, we have to date approved over 9,200 PV systems for installation in houses, and businesses, with a production capacity of over 250 Megawatt of electric supply.
203. A Government Support Agreement will be established to unlock over Rs 15 billion of private sector investment in renewable energy projects in the upcoming 2 years.
204. To move our energy supply towards renewable home-grown sources, we aim to:
 -
 - (a) Launch an Agri-voltaic Scheme to enable planters, farmers and breeders to generate electricity at a premium tariff of Rs 5 per kWh;
 - (b) Introduce a community based solar PV Scheme for households within vulnerable localities who will benefit freely from 50 kilowatt-hours of electricity monthly;

- (c) Install 3,500 solar PV kits on rooftops of households, NGOs as well as religious and charitable institutions;
 - (d) Revamp the Net Billing Scheme to allow households to install batteries and sell any excess electricity generated to the CEB;
 - (e) Increase the Home PV Scheme from 5 kWh to 15 kWh;
 - (f) Set up an additional 20-Megawatt Battery Energy Storage System at L’Avenir; and
 - (g) Set up solar PV panels on rooftops of public buildings for a total capacity of 5 Megawatt.
205. Moreover, DBM Ltd will increase the maximum loan amount for the purchase of solar kits and batteries by households to Rs 350,000.
206. In our efforts to phase out coal in electricity generation, the CEB will shift its production on biofuel in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
207. To reduce energy consumption and improve on energy efficiency;
- (a) Minimum energy performance standards will be implemented for electric pumps; and
 - (b) DBM will implement an Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme for the implementation of energy-saving measures.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

208. Two years ago, we removed the excise duty on all electric and hybrid vehicles.

209. The impact has been immediate.

210. The share of sales of electric and hybrid vehicles has gone up from 24 percent to 46 percent.

211. To further support the move towards the greening of our automobile fleet: -

(a) The Negative Excise Duty of Rs 200,000 for purchase of electric vehicles will be renewed up to June 2025; and

(b) The CEB will install prepaid public charging stations.

Pursuing on our Climate Agenda

Mr Speaker, Sir,

212. Rising sea levels, flash floods, unprecedented rainfall, and extreme weather conditions are today a visible outcome of climate change.

213. We cannot remain insensitive whilst we see our pristine beaches being washed out, our coral reefs being destroyed and our lagoons and forests being deprived of its lifeline.

214. Our actions today have to be bold.

215. This initiative cannot be done alone.
216. It requires the collaboration of each and every one; Government, business community and civil society.
217. To meet our adaptation and mitigation agenda, we will have to mobilise some Rs 300 billion.
218. This is why we are introducing a Corporate Climate Responsibility (CCR) levy, equivalent to 2 percent of the company's profits.
219. Companies with a turnover of less than Rs 50 million will be exempted from this levy.
220. It will be used to support national initiatives to protect, manage, invest and restore the country's natural ecosystem and combat the effects of climate change.
221. A Climate and Sustainability Fund will thus be set-up to implement this agenda.
222. The fund will further be open to donations from international organisations and individuals and will be managed by a joint public-private committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

223. Rs 3.2 billion is being earmarked under the Climate and Sustainability Fund (CSF) for projects to address climate change.
224. More than 37 km of our coastline have been affected by beach erosion.

225. During the next five years, we are restoring more than 26 km of shoreline and rehabilitate some 30 degraded sites across the island:-
- (a) In the North: Trou aux Biches, Pointe des Lascars, Grand-Baie, Mon Choisy, Bain Boeuf, and Bras D'Eau;
 - (b) In the South: Bel Ombre, Riambel, Rivière des Galets, Saint Felix, Blue Bay, Pointe d'Esny, Pointe des Régates, Bois des Amourettes, and Rivière des Créoles;
 - (c) In the East: Poste de Flacq, Belle Mare, Grand River South East, and Palmar; and
 - (d) In the West: Albion, La Preneuse, La Mivoie Rivière Noire, Le Morne Trou Chenille, La Prairie, Flic en Flac, Wolmar, Le Morne Village, and Petit Verger.
226. We will invest in ecosystem-based adaptation remedial works on some 5 kilometres of shoreline at Bain Boeuf, Mon Choisy, Le Morne, Grand Sable, La Prairie, Grand River South East and Baie du Cap.
227. To do so, we are enabling sand extraction for beach nourishment.
228. We will introduce the concept of sustainable villages by promoting eco-friendly infrastructure, environmental conservation and community resilience in coastal and touristic regions.

229. To rebuild our marine eco-system, we are launching a lagoon reseedling programme.
230. Furthermore, we will implement a national coral reef restoration and replantation programme including: -
- (a) Establishment of 250 coral farms in Belle-Mare, Pointe-aux-Feuilles, Port-Louis Harbor, Trou-aux-Biches and Flic-en-Flac;
 - (b) Use of sustainable coral farming techniques to grow and transplant some 25,000 corals to degraded reef areas annually over 3 years; and
 - (c) Installation of underwater cameras at coral farm sites to provide live video feeds.
231. Oysters can act as natural water purifiers by filtering and removing pollutants.
232. We are going to invite proposals from individuals and companies to set-up oyster farms across the island.
233. Moreover, companies will be issued a licence for the cleaning of beaches through collection of algae and seaweeds for valorisation into products such as fertilisers.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

234. We are engaging in a Reforestation and Tree Plantation Programme across the island.

235. Our aim is to increase the tree coverage by 100 hectares annually over the next decade. To do so, we will:-

- (a) Make it mandatory for morcellements of more than 5 arpents, including Smart Cities, to allocate at least 4 percent of the total area for development of a mini forest, featuring endemic trees;
- (b) Invest and restore eco-sensitive zones having incomparable values due to its landscape, wildlife, biodiversity and natural values;
- (c) Plant trees on river banks, mountains and in sites identified by village and municipal councils;
- (d) Rehabilitate and preserve endemic plants at the SSR Botanical Garden; and
- (e) Distribute trees for plantation to students in primary schools.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

236. Cleaning, greening and embellishment of our country is a critical and collective effort.

237. The National Environment Cleaning Agency (NECA) was set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office to develop our national cleaning strategy.

238. To achieve this strategy, funds are being provided for the cleaning of:-

- (a) All primary and secondary roads, Motorways and lateral roads in towns and villages;
- (b) 500 major public sites including Grand Bassin, Eau Bouillie, Rochester Falls, Viewpoints Chamarel, Eau Bleu Falls, Marie Reine de la Paix, Trou Chenilles Trail, Dutch First Landing, Bassin des Esclaves, and Pas Géométriques de Labonté;
- (c) 100 highly visited beaches; and
- (d) 500 kms of drains and watercourses, especially in high flood prone areas.

239. NECA will recruit 2,000 employees to this end.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

240. We shall continue to promote a circular economy by encouraging recycling and re-use of products by: -

- (a) Removing the levy on PET bottles for fully biodegradable plastic bottles;
- (b) Implementing extended producer responsibility for electronic and electrical wastes;

- (c) Initiating source segregation of waste through distribution of bins at household level; and
- (d) Enabling the import of used tyres solely for the purpose of re-treading for exports.

- 241. Waste has both an economic and ecological value.
- 242. Two Regional Integrated Waste Processing Facilities will be developed on a PPP basis to convert waste into compost and new materials.
- 243. Furthermore, recycling will be classified as a manufacturing activity to enable companies to benefit from incentives.

Flood Management

Mr Speaker, Sir,

- 244. Extreme weather conditions such as flash floods are being observed in unimaginable places and no country is spared.
- 245. Mauritius is no exception.
- 246. This is why we need to invest in flood management programmes.
- 247. This year, we have earmarked Rs 1 billion to pursue the implementation of 132 drain projects of a total value of Rs 3.5 billion.

Landslide works

Mr Speaker, Sir,

248. Landslide works are crucial to enhance resilience of communities against natural disasters.
249. It enables safer living environments for present and future generations.
250. We are providing Rs 178 million for completion of landslide protection works including:
- (a) Stabilisation works at Rivière des Créoles, Rivière des Anguilles Bridge and Chamarel; and
 - (b) Slope stabilisation works along Plaisance-Ferney Road at Rivière des Créoles.
251. We will further invest in flood and landslide mitigation works at Le Hochet, Crève Cœur, Signal Mountain, Ruisseau du Pouce, Chitrakoot and Quatre Sœurs.

Water

Mr Speaker, Sir,

252. Climate change has not only affected the country in terms of flash floods, but we also witness prolonged periods of droughts causing stress on water supply.

253. It is imperative to further increase our water storage capacity and improve our distribution network.
254. Rs 2.5 billion is earmarked for existing and new water storage infrastructure: -
- (a) Rs 1.2 billion this year for the replacement of pipes across the Island including L'Escalier, Mahébourg, Ferney, and Bambous Virieux;
 - (b) Rs 930 million for the construction works of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project as from December 2024;
 - (c) Rs 345 million for the construction of new and upgrading of existing water treatment plants in regions including Mont Blanc, Piton du Milieu and Pont Lardier; and
 - (d) Commissioning of the service reservoirs at Alma and Nouvelle France by August 2024 with a total capacity of 5,500 cubic metres to serve around 4,000 households.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

255. Access to water supply is a basic need.
256. It should be seamless, efficient and swift.
257. Henceforth, a person applying for a water connection will be connected within a period of 30 days, subject to all requirements being met.

258. When the network of the CWA needs to be extended, the full cost of this expansion was borne by the household.
259. As from the 1st of July 2024, 50 percent of the cost will be incurred by the CWA.
260. In Government's efforts to improve sanitation across the island, some Rs 1.1 billion will be invested for the implementation of sewerage infrastructure projects.

Infrastructure Development

Mr Speaker, Sir,

261. This Government has during its mandate, invested massively in the construction, upgrading, and extension of our road network, easing the flow of traffic in many regions, such as: -
- (a) The Quay D flyover, which is operational since May 2023;
 - (b) The new link road connecting La Vigie and La Brasserie;
 - (c) The new flyover at Saint Pierre;
 - (d) The Verdun and Bois Cheri bypasses;
 - (e) The new bridge at Baie du Tombeau; and
 - (f) The SAJ Bridge, linking Coromandel and Sorèze, and which is operational since March 2024.

262. This year, we will invest Rs 3 billion for completion of existing projects including: -
- (a) Upgrading of roads at Bel Air, Holyrood Vacoas, Wooton, Tyack, and at Constance near the new Flacq Teaching Hospital;
 - (b) Construction of road bypasses at Flic-en-Flac and Hermitage;
 - (c) Construction of flyovers at Wooton, Terre Rouge, Ebène and La Vigie;
 - (d) Construction of a new roundabout at Goodlands;
 - (e) Upgrading of the Roussel Bridge at Grand River North West (GRNW);
 - (f) Construction of a new footbridge on M1 at Trianon; and
 - (g) Construction of the new link road connecting La Brasserie to Beaux Songes, to Pierrefonds roundabout and to Cascavelle.
263. Government will engage in new road projects including:
- (a) Construction of new flyovers at Labourdonnais on Motorway M2 and Camp Fouquereaux;
 - (b) Construction of a new link road connecting Britannia to Rivière des Anguilles; and
 - (c) New motorways M4 in the East and M5 in the South.

264. Rs 600 million is being earmarked for the rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading of roads across the island.

Community Development

Mr Speaker, Sir,

265. We will revamp, upgrade and further equip our social welfare and community centres.

266. 46 Social Welfare Centres will be upgraded into evacuee centres to be used as refuge during natural calamities.

267. The Social Welfare Centres at Montagne Ory, Lallmatie, Bel Air Riviere Sèche, Petite Julie and Saint Pierre will be reconstructed.

268. We are providing more facilities to our citizens to improve their quality of life across the Island.

269. These projects include the upgrading of: -

(a) 4 Basketball pitches at Chamarel, Vuillemin, Riambel and Trèfles;

(b) 2 Markets at Plaine Magnien and Mahebourg;

(c) 2 Health tracks at Dubreuil, and Bois Chéri;

(d) 5 Green spaces at Balfour Garden, Coromandel, Mont Roches, Rose-Hill and Britannia;

- (e) 2 five-a-side football pitches at Résidence Saint Luc and Résidence La Brasserie;
- (f) 6 Municipal centres at Vacoas, Route Militaire, Roches Brunes, Chebel, Beau Bassin and Mare Gravier;
- (g) 6 Multipurpose complexes at Cascavelle, Grande Rivière Noire, Triolet, Midlands, La Flora and Rivière des Anguilles; and
- (h) 8 Sport complexes, 47 children's playgrounds, 34 football grounds, 30 outdoor gyms, 20 mini-soccer pitches, 15 indoor gyms, 8 volleyball pitches, 32 village halls and 24 cremation grounds and cemeteries.

270. In addition, 8 new health tracks, 16 new children's playground and 9 new pétanque courts will be constructed across the island.

Access to Public Transport

Mr Speaker, Sir,

271. Public transport is part of our greening strategy to reduce carbon emissions.

272. Hence, continuous support will be provided to our transport system.

273. The Metro Express Project now connects Curepipe to Port Louis, and has been extended to Ebene and Reduit.

274. The next phase of extensions will include La Vigie, Saint Pierre, Côte D'or and Immigration Terminal.
275. We will further develop a masterplan to connect the Metro Express to the North, South, East and West.
276. To maintain the price of bus fare, Government is going to:-
- (a) Pay the compensation for the additional remuneration 2024 for the bus industry; and
 - (b) Extend the Bus Modernisation Scheme for the purchase of buses up to June 2025.
277. For taxis, we are increasing the once-in a lifetime VAT exemption on purchase of a car by 20 percent to Rs 120,000.
278. Moreover, taxi owners will be able to form a company for the transfer of their license to their heirs and the process for temporary drivers will be streamlined.
279. Furthermore, DBM will provide a loan for taxis of 2.5 percent over a period of 7 years.

Education

Mr Speaker, Sir,

280. Education is the cornerstone of our progress and prosperity.
281. We will continue to invest in our education system, school infrastructure and our students through the provision of Rs 21 billion.

282. In January, this Government implemented a major reform to make pre-primary education free.
283. This is in complement to the free tertiary education implemented in 2019.
284. Our children today enjoy free education, from pre-primary to tertiary.
285. We are enabling some 36,000 children to have free access to education through the Free Pre-Primary Education Scheme.
286. In order to incentivize owners of pre-primary buildings to integrate the Free Pre-Primary Education Scheme, we will further provide for compensation equivalent to rental payment for use of building.
287. We will continue to support special education needs students to benefit from equitable opportunities.
288. As announced last year, we have reviewed the Grant in Aid formula for assistance to SEN schools.
289. We are therefore increasing the provision by 10 percent to Rs 330 million.
290. Government will continue to strengthen our education system to ensure that no one is left behind.

291. First, we will provide Rs 250 million for the construction, upgrading and maintenance of school infrastructure at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels.
292. Second, we are revamping the Scholarship schemes to make them fairer and to ensure that all students receiving a scholarship benefit from the necessary support.
- (a) The living allowance for beneficiaries of all scholarship schemes is being increased by 50 percent, irrespective of whether they are studying locally or abroad;
 - (b) HSC Professional Scholarship holders will henceforth benefit from a full scholarship and a living allowance instead of Rs 400,000 actually;
 - (c) The 50 laureates under the Additional Scholarship Scheme and the Additional Scholarship Based on Merit and Social Criteria will benefit from an increase in the: -
 - i. Annual all-inclusive financial grant from Rs 400,000 to Rs 600,000 if they study abroad;
 - ii. Annual Allowance from Rs 105,600 to Rs 150,000 if they study locally; and
 - iii. Entitlement on tuition fees and other related charges from Rs 150,000 to Rs 225,000.
 - (d) Beneficiaries of the Scholarship to Children from Vulnerable Families studying locally will benefit from an increase in the annual living allowance to Rs 100,000.

293. Third, for private secondary schools, a Minimum Guaranteed per capita variable grant of Rs 1,000 will be provided to cater for basic schooling expenses; an amount of Rs 239 million is being earmarked to this end.
294. The Bank of Mauritius and Maurice Stratégie will jointly launch a PhD Scholarship programme for 10 students annually.

Healthcare

Mr Speaker, Sir,

295. Government will continue to enhance the services it provides for the health of all its citizens.
296. We are therefore providing a budget of Rs 17.2 billion this year.
297. Of this amount, Rs 1.7 billion is earmarked for the implementation of health infrastructure around the island: -.
- (a) Rs 800 million for the operationalisation of the New Flacq Teaching Hospital by October 2024;
 - (b) Rs 311 million for completion of the New Renal Transplant Unit at the JNH Hospital by December 2024;
 - (c) Rs 310 million for completion of the New Eye Hospital by November 2024;
 - (d) Rs 127 million for completion of Area Health Centres at Cap Malheureux, Curepipe, Bramsthan and Bambous by February 2025;

- (e) Rs 81 million for upgrading works at regional hospitals;
- (f) Rs 55 million for mediclinics which comprise completion works at Grand Bois by October 2024 and works starting at Chemin Grenier by end of this year;
- (g) Rs 38 million for upgrading of 10 mediclinics, 17 area health centres, 113 community health centres and 18 health offices across the island; and
- (h) Rs 11 million for construction of community health centres at Roche Bois and Ecroignard.

298. In order to provide specialized care to children, we will set up a pediatric intensive care unit at the New ENT Hospital.

299. Artificial intelligence-enhanced electro-cardiography for detection of cardiovascular diseases has been introduced in 6 mediclinics last year, and will be extended to all regional hospitals for effective detection.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

300. Last year, we announced the implementation of the e-health system; one patient, one record.

301. We are pleased to announce that the system is in pilot phase at the JNH Hospital.

302. As from November 2024, the e-health system will be rolled out in all public health institutions around the island.

303. Henceforth, the public will be able to benefit from a digital health record including online appointment and medical history.

Youth and Sports

Mr Speaker, Sir,

304. Sports is not only a source of leisure and recreation.

305. It contributes to the wellness of our society.

306. It is capable of evoking national solidarity and lifting the spirit of a nation.

307. Let me congratulate the athletes who have made our country proud.

308. We will continue to support the development of our athletes by providing: -

(a) Rs 20 million for the preparation and participation of some 250 athletes at the Seychelles CJSOI Games in July 2025;

(b) Rs 40 million for the hosting of the Africa and Asia Pacific Choir Games in Mauritius in September 2025; and

(c) An increase from Rs 50 million to Rs 60 million in the grant allocated to 51 sports federation.

309. Moreover, we are increasing the grant to the 26 football clubs to Rs 17.5 million.

310. An amount of Rs 10 million is being provided for the Retired Athletes Allowance Scheme.
311. We will provide a special grant of Rs 30,000 to our high-level athletes for the purchase of sports equipment.
312. We are increasing the cash prize for winning medals in individual sports at the Olympic and Paralympic Games from: -
- (a) Rs 2,160,000 to Rs 2,500,000 for a gold medal;
 - (b) Rs 1,440,000 to Rs 1,750,000 for a silver medal; and
 - (c) Rs 720,000 to Rs 1,000,000 for a bronze medal.
313. To motivate the youth to engage in sports activities, new MUGA facilities will be constructed in Rose-Belle, Bambous, Rodrigues and Agalega.
314. A National Yoga Campaign will be launched with weekly classes for the public at Port Louis, Mon Choisy, Mahebourg, Gris Gris, Sodnac, Ebene, Moka, Tamarin, Vacoas and Belle Mare.
315. We will also invest in the upgrading of Germain Comarmond Stadium at Bambous, Auguste Voltaire Stadium at Flacq and the Centre Technique Nationale Francois Blaquart at Reduit.
316. The Mauritius Sports Council will upgrade its swimming pools at Mare D'Albert, Pavillion Quatre Bornes, Rivière du Rempart, Serge Alfred, Souvenir Calebasse and Côte D'Or to make them accessible for persons with disabilities.

317. Moreover, a half day will be reserved weekly for disabled individuals to benefit from the facilities with dedicated staff.

Law and Order

Mr Speaker, Sir,

318. National security and safety of our citizens have always been high on the agenda of this Government.

319. We are committed to upholding of law and order in the Republic of Mauritius.

320. To this end, the total provision allocated to the police force is being increased by over 15 percent from Rs 10.8 billion to Rs 12.6 billion.

321. We have, since 2019, recruited over 2,000 police officers and some 4,850 have been promoted.

322. For this financial year, we are engaged in the recruitment of some 1,000 police officers.

323. We will also invest in improving the infrastructure and equipment of the police force, including:-

(a) Construction of the Disciplined Forces Academy;

(b) Acquisition of an Offshore Patrol Vessel to ensure maritime security;

- (c) An Automated Biometric Identification System, which will be linked to a criminal attribute database;
- (d) Acquisition of new Coastal Surveillance Radar System for coastal surveillance and monitoring of vessel movement;
- (e) Renewal of vehicles of the police force; and
- (f) Construction and upgrading of police stations at Cent Gaulettes, L'Escalier, Phoenix and Triolet.

Crusade Against Drug Trafficking

Mr Speaker, Sir,

324. In 2015, it is this Government that set up a Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking.
325. Since then, huge seizures of dangerous drugs amounting to Rs 15.5 billion have been made and 25,615 persons arrested.
326. To strengthen the vigilance by Customs at our borders, both at Airport and seaport, we are investing in the purchase of:-
- (a) A whole-body scanner and two baggage scanners at the Cruise Terminal;
 - (b) Two additional baggage scanners at the SSR Arrival Hall;
 - (c) Two scanners, for loose cargo at the Parcel Post Office in Rodrigues; and
 - (d) 5 additional drug test equipment for rapid testing of illicit substances at port and airport.

327. Furthermore, to enhance the enforcement capacity of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU), a sum of Rs 350 million is being provided.
328. To assist in the rehabilitation of drug users, the Drug Users Administrative Panel, which has enabled 46 individuals to benefit from treatments will pursue its mandate.

Judiciary

Mr Speaker, Sir,

329. I now come to the Judiciary.
330. Over the years, this Government has been making continued efforts to improve access to justice and offer better services to all Court users and employees.
331. This year, we are making provision to: -
- (a) Upgrade court premises including the Mahébourg and Rose-Hill District Courts;
 - (b) Equip the New Court House with new air-conditioning system and enhance its connectivity; and
 - (c) Appoint a President for the Children's Court, a Senior District Magistrate and additional Judicial Research Assistants and Court Officers.

332. With a view to reducing the number of outstanding cases and improve delivery of judgements, digitalisation of justice and court administration will be accelerated.

Rodrigues and Outer Islands

Mr Speaker, Sir,

333. This Government will continue to engage in the development of our outer islands for the benefit of their inhabitants.

334. We will invest in the largest capital project ever implemented in Rodrigues.

335. The new runway at Plaine Corail will enhance the connectivity of the island to Mauritius and the rest of the world.

336. This runway, which is 2.1 km long, at a cost of Rs 7.9 billion would allow planes such as Boeing 737 and Airbus A321 Neo to land in Rodrigues.

337. We are providing an amount of Rs 1.4 billion to kick-start the construction of this project.

338. This will chart out a new growth path for Rodrigues, with the number of visitors expected to more than double.

339. Rs 900 million will be provided over the next four years to prepare the island in terms of water and electricity supply, food security and tourism development.

340. To maintain competitive and affordable air connectivity, we are maintaining the subsidy on the Special Rodrigues Holiday Package and the Subsidy on Airfare from Rodrigues until September 2025.
341. Funds are being earmarked to conduct a feasibility study for the future development of the port in Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

342. Government is also committed to address the shortage of water in the island.
343. Rs 540 million is being invested for the construction of a desalination plant at Pointe Coton with daily production capacity of 3,500 cubic meters and at Caverne Bouteille with daily capacity of 700 cubic meters.
344. Works have already started and are expected to be completed by July 2025.
345. As part of our vision of Rodrigues Ile Verte, Government will implement a roadmap to decarbonize the electricity grid of Rodrigues.
346. To pursue on our agenda to promote entrepreneurship, A Rodriguan Week will be organised which will include, inter-alia:-
- (a) A Made in Rodrigues Trade Fair to enable local producers to showcase their goods and services to consumers and other businesses;

(b) A Trade and Investment Policy Forum by the Economic Development Board to identify opportunities for business on the island; and

(c) A workshop to identify the strategic economic orientation of Rodrigues.

347. We are maintaining the 20 percent rebate on the cost of freight between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

348. Government is also allocating funds to subsidise the costs related to product testing, analysis and certification for Rodriguan SMEs.

Agalega

349. With regards to Agalega, as the House is aware, the airstrip and jetty were inaugurated in February last.

350. This infrastructure will increase connectivity of Agalega and contribute in improving development of the island.

351. In order to make full use of the opportunities, I am providing Rs 15 million for the implementation of the masterplan for the development of Agalega.

352. We are also providing Rs 49.1 million for the acquisition of equipment and vehicles as well as the development of small infrastructure projects that are of immediate need for Agalega.

Chagos

Mr Speaker, Sir,

353. Government will pursue in our struggle for the completion of the decolonisation of Mauritius.
354. We remain strongly committed to implementing a resettlement programme in the Chagos Archipelago.
355. In this regard, visits will be undertaken to the Chagos Archipelago to lay the groundwork for a proper resettlement, and Rs 50 million is being earmarked.
356. Earlier this year, Mauritius hosted with the support of the Zoological Society of London a workshop on the creation of a Marine Protected Area around the Chagos Archipelago.
357. Building on the outcome of this workshop which attracted participation from scientists and practitioners from across the world, Government will take further steps to make this project a reality.

Economic Outlook

Mr Speaker, Sir,

358. I now come to the budget outturn and economic outlook.
359. Total expenditure will amount to Rs 237.3 billion and total revenue is estimated at Rs 210.5 billion.

360. The overall budget deficit as at end of June 2025 is expected to further decrease to 3.4 percent, from 3.9 percent in June 2024 and 4.8 percent in June 2023.
361. Government debt will decline from 69.8 percent of GDP in June 2023 to 65.4 percent of GDP in June of this year and further to 63 percent of GDP by end June 2025.
362. Public sector debt is expected to decline from 80.2 percent of GDP in June 2023 to 74.5 percent of GDP by June 2024 and further to 71.1 percent of GDP by June 2025.
363. Interest to revenue ratio will fall below 10 percent, to 9,84 percent.
364. The GDP growth will be of 6.5 percent this year, and our measures will enable us to sustain an average growth rate of over 5 percent in the medium term.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

365. This year, we have achieved our objective to bring down public sector debt to less than the statutory level of 80 percent of GDP.
366. By June 2025, we will be largely below that statutory level and closer to our medium-term goal of 60 percent of GDP.

CONSTRUIRE NOTRE AVENIR

Monsieur le Président,

367. J'en viens maintenant aux mesures qui s'adressent à chaque Mauricienne et à chaque Mauricien.
368. Des mesures pour mieux soigner les enfants qui sont atteints de cancer.
369. Des mesures pour accompagner les familles qui attendent l'arrivée d'un enfant.
370. Des mesures pour assurer une vie digne aux membres les plus vulnérables de notre société.
371. Des mesures pour permettre à tous les Mauriciens de se loger décemment.
372. Des mesures pour créer les conditions d'une jeunesse épanouie et confiante en l'avenir.
373. Des mesures pour reconnaître l'apport des personnes âgées à notre nation.
374. Des mesures pour pleinement intégrer les personnes à handicap.
375. Des mesures pour améliorer la qualité de vie des classes moyennes.

376. Des mesures pour rétablir l'équité en offrant les mêmes opportunités à tous les citoyens.
377. Car, Monsieur le Président, nous reconnaissons la valeur de chaque Mauricien, individuellement et collectivement.

Soins Pédiatriques contre le Cancer

Monsieur le Président,

378. La vie d'un enfant, lorsqu'elle est faite d'insouciance et d'éclats de rire, est un trésor que chaque parent chérit.
379. Quand elle devient menacée par le drame du cancer, c'est tout l'équilibre de l'enfant et de son entourage qui se bouleverse.
380. Pour y faire face, il est de notre devoir, à nous Gouvernement, de mettre tout en œuvre pour mieux soigner les enfants malades.
381. Du diagnostic au traitement et à la guérison, nous nous engageons aux côtés des familles d'enfants qui luttent courageusement contre le cancer.
382. L'année dernière, nous avons annoncé une nouvelle politique pour que tous les enfants âgés de moins de 18 ans atteints d'un cancer soient entièrement pris en charge par le Gouvernement à partir du diagnostic et cela jusqu'à ce que tous les traitements soient donnés.

383. Cette mesure a permis à 49 enfants d'être soignés dans certains des meilleurs centres de cancérologie du monde.
384. Elle a aussi permis à 71 enfants déjà diagnostiqués avec un cancer de bénéficier d'un accès gratuit aux meilleurs programmes de traitement de suivi.
385. Nous devons faire toujours mieux pour eux.
386. Nous faisons donc passer l'âge limite d'éligibilité au programme de lutte contre le cancer de 18 à 25 ans.
387. Ainsi, tous les patients jusqu'à l'âge de 25 ans souffrant de cancer recevront un traitement dans les meilleurs centres de cancérologie étrangers et locaux, entièrement financé par le Gouvernement.

Monsieur le Président,

388. Pour les autres maladies graves, nous avons aboli le montant maximum d'un million de roupies dans le cadre du Overseas Treatment Scheme pour les patients pédiatriques jusqu'à l'âge de 18 ans.
389. De ce fait, le Gouvernement couvre actuellement la totalité du coût de leur traitement à l'étranger.
390. A partir de ce jour, ce soutien financier deviendra accessible aux jeunes patients âgés jusqu'à 25 ans.

391. En ce qui concerne les patients âgés de 25 ans et plus, pour l'ensemble des maladies, nous augmentons : -
- (a) Le seuil d'éligibilité de revenu mensuel par ménage, qui passe de 150 000 roupies à 200 000 roupies ; et
 - (b) Le plafond de l'allocation de 1 million de roupies à 1,3 million de roupies.

Soins de Grossesse

Monsieur le Président,

392. Il y a dans une vie, des événements qui transforment le quotidien.
393. Celui de la venue au monde d'un enfant en est la quintessence.
394. Afin d'accompagner les familles qui s'agrandissent, de soutenir les futures mères dans leur grossesse et d'assurer la bonne santé des nouveau-nés, ce Gouvernement apporte son soutien à tous les futurs parents.
395. Ainsi, pour encourager les femmes enceintes à suivre systématiquement les examens médicaux requis pendant la grossesse, elles recevront une subvention de 3 000 roupies une fois les 6 examens médicaux obligatoires effectués.
396. De plus, alors que le coût des soins médicaux, des nutriments et des suppléments pour la mère avant l'accouchement et dans les premiers mois suivant la naissance est élevé, nous apportons une aide financière aux mères.

397. Au travers de ce Budget, nous introduisons ainsi une Maternity Allowance de 2 000 roupies par mois pour la mère versée pendant 9 mois, à partir de la 28ème semaine de grossesse.

Équilibre entre Vie Professionnelle et Vie Privée

Monsieur le Président,

398. Les premiers temps de la parentalité constituent une période fondamentale dans la construction du lien familial et dans le développement de l'enfant en bas-âge.
399. A cet effet, les jeunes parents, mères et pères, méritent d'être mieux soutenus dans la gestion de leurs responsabilités professionnelles et familiales.
400. Ce Gouvernement est fier d'allonger la durée des congés payés comme suit : -
- (a) de 14 à 16 semaines pour les congés de maternité ; et
 - (b) de 1 à 4 semaines pour les congés de paternité.
401. Pour les mères qui ont donné naissance à des jumeaux ou à des triplés ou plus, ou bien à un nouveau-né prématuré, un congé de maternité supplémentaire de 2 semaines sera accordé.
402. En outre, les entreprises qui investissent dans des crèches d'entreprise bénéficieront d'un crédit d'impôt de 25 pour cent sur le coût.

Inclusion Sociale

Monsieur le Président,

403. Une société solidaire qui intègre les plus vulnérables est une société tournée vers le progrès, l'avenir et la croissance.
404. Fort de cette philosophie humaniste, ce Gouvernement n'a eu de cesse de faire de la réduction des inégalités une lutte de tous les jours.
405. Partout où les inégalités persistent, nous devons les combattre avec force, conviction et redistribution.
406. En 2016, sous ce Gouvernement, le Plan Marshall contre la pauvreté a été lancé et le Social Register of Mauritius a été créé.
407. Ce sont aujourd'hui plus de 7000 familles et ainsi 28 700 Mauriciens vulnérables que nous accompagnons pour sortir de l'exclusion sociale et économique.
408. À partir du 1er juillet 2024, nous augmentons le montant minimum de l'allocation mensuelle de subsistance pour le porter à 1 500 roupies par mois.
409. En outre, nous fournissons 11 millions de roupies pour accroître l'accès des bénéficiaires du SRM aux opportunités d'emploi par le biais de l'amélioration des compétences et des stages.
410. Enfin, nous prendrons en charge la fourniture de lunettes pour tous les bénéficiaires du SRM.

Lutte contre les Violences Domestiques

Monsieur le Président,

411. Parce que la violence sous toutes formes n'a pas sa place dans nos foyers, nous devons continuer de la dénoncer et de l'éradiquer.
412. Alors que ce Gouvernement est engagé dans la lutte contre les violences domestiques, il en va de notre responsabilité de porter assistance aux personnes qui en sont victimes.
413. A cette fin, nous allons lancer un Survivor Support Scheme avec une aide financière unique de 5 000 roupies pour soutenir les victimes de violences domestiques.

Les ONG

Monsieur le Président,

414. La société civile, les ONG et les associations caritatives ont joué un rôle essentiel en assistant les communautés et les plus vulnérables de notre société, en particulier pendant la pandémie de la Covid-19.
415. Nous continuerons à leur apporter tout notre soutien et notre reconnaissance.
416. A cet égard, nous accordons une triple déduction pour les entreprises qui font des dons aux ONG impliquées dans la lutte

contre la toxicomanie, les violences basées sur le genre, la réduction de la pauvreté et la protection animale.

417. Nous augmenterons aussi la déduction de l'impôt sur le revenu de 50 000 à 100 000 roupies pour les particuliers qui font des dons aux autres ONG et aux institutions caritatives, et nous permettrons également aux entreprises de le faire.
418. Dans ce même esprit, les ONG et les hôpitaux privés bénéficieront de facilités hors taxes pour l'achat d'ambulances.
419. En sus, la subvention accordée aux organismes religieux est augmentée de 60 pour cent et passe de 125 millions de roupies à 200 millions de roupies.
420. Pour rappel, la subvention était de 73 millions de roupies en 2014, ce qui représente une augmentation de plus de 170 pour cent.
421. Nous fournirons également des facilités hors taxes pour l'achat tous les 7 ans de voitures à tous les prêtres enregistrés, pour toutes les religions.
422. Afin de mieux supporter les organismes religieux, le Gouvernement va : -
 - (a) Étendre le Water Tank Scheme à tous les organismes religieux ; et
 - (b) Augmenter le Solar PV Scheme pour les organismes religieux jusqu'à un maximum de 10 panneaux.

423. Enfin, à partir du 1er janvier 2025, le Gouvernement facilitera à travers des subventions les pèlerinages religieux à l'étranger pour toutes les communautés.
424. Le ministère des Arts et de la Culture concevra un ensemble de mesures, avec les différents organismes religieux, pour soutenir les Mauriciens pendant leur pèlerinage.

Bien-être Animal

Monsieur le Président,

425. Le bien-être animal reflète nos valeurs de compassion, d'empathie et de bienveillance.
426. Traiter les animaux avec respect est le signe de notre humanité.
427. Pour ce faire, nous procéderons à : -
- (a) L'achat de deux cliniques vétérinaires mobiles par la Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare afin de renforcer son programme de stérilisation des chiens ; et
 - (b) La construction d'un refuge pour chiens à Plaine Magnien.
428. Afin de réduire le nombre de chiens errants, nous offrirons une incitation de 200 roupies aux particuliers pour la stérilisation et le marquage de ces animaux auprès de la MSAW ou d'ONG agréées.
429. Enfin, à partir du 1^{er} janvier 2025, les chiots et chiens vendus devront être enregistrés auprès de la MSAW avant leur vente.

Un logement D cent pour Tous

Monsieur le Pr sident,

430. A l'heure o  le mal logement est souvent synonyme d'exclusion sociale et  conomique, ce Gouvernement a fait de l'acc s   un habitat d cent l'une de ses priorit s.
431. Permettre   tous les Mauriciens, en particulier les plus vuln rables, d'avoir un toit sur la t te est un objectif que nous poursuivons avec t nacit .
432. En 2020, ce Gouvernement a lanc  le plus grand programme de logement social du pays.
433. Sur les 8 000 logements annonc s, 1 850 logements seront achev s d'ici septembre 2024   Pointe aux Piments, R union Maurel, Valetta, Camp Ithier, Olivia, Mare d'Albert, Grand Bel Air, Souillac, Bambous, Hermitage, Henrietta, Malherbes, La Source et Camp Levieux.
434. 1 800 autres unit s devraient  tre termin es d'ici d cembre 2024, et les autres seront livr es d'ici juin 2025.
435. Ainsi, nous tiendrons notre promesse de construire 8 000 unit s de logement d'ici juin 2025.
436. Les b n ficiaires des unit s de logement auront acc s   des pr ts immobiliers   des conditions favorables pour l'acquisition de leur propri t .

437. En outre, la NHDC s'engage à : -

(a) Achever la construction de 223 unités à La Valette à la fin juin 2024 ; et

(b) Construire 546 nouveaux logements sociaux à Camp Ithier, Quatre Cocos, Solitude, Henrietta, Melrose, Sébastopol, Souillac et Wooton.

438. De plus, afin de soutenir les particuliers dans leur projet de construction de maison, les critères d'éligibilité des revenus mensuels pour le Casting of Roof Slab Grant Scheme et le Purchases of Building Materials Scheme sont augmentés de 30 000 roupies à 40 000 roupies.

Monsieur le Président,

439. Un logement est tant une nécessité de base qu'un projet de vie.

440. Tout au long de ce mandat, le Gouvernement a facilité l'accès à la propriété pour ses citoyens.

441. Nous offrons, dans le cadre du Home Ownership Scheme, un remboursement de 5 % sur le coût d'achat d'un bien immobilier, jusqu'à un maximum de 500 000 roupies.

442. Pour ceux qui ont contracté un prêt pour construire ou acheter une maison, nous accordons un remboursement de 5 pour cent, dans le cadre du Home Loan Scheme, sur le montant du prêt, jusqu'à un maximum de 500 000 roupies.

Protection de l'Enfance

Monsieur le Président,

- 443. Chaque Mauricien né a le droit, de la petite enfance à l'âge adulte, de bénéficier des meilleures conditions pour grandir, apprendre et s'épanouir.
- 444. Ce Gouvernement, attaché à la protection de l'enfance, n'a eu de cesse de soutenir les familles dans leur vie de tous les jours.
- 445. L'année dernière, nous avons introduit une CSG Child Allowance de 2 000 roupies par mois de la naissance à l'âge de 3 ans.
- 446. Grâce à cette aide, le Gouvernement facilite le quotidien de plus de 36 000 familles avec enfants en bas âge.
- 447. Cette année nous allons plus loin en l'augmentant de 25 pour cent pour l'amener à 2 500 roupies par mois.

Monsieur le Président,

- 448. En rendant le pré-primaire gratuit en janvier de cette année, nous avons garanti que tous les enfants aient un accès libre à l'école dès le plus jeune âge.
- 449. Nous voulons maintenant nous assurer que tous puissent démarrer leur scolarité dans les meilleures conditions.

450. Nous introduisons donc, à partir du 1er juillet 2024, la School Allowance de 2 000 roupies par mois pour tous les enfants âgés de 3 à 10 ans.
451. Et cela afin de permettre à plus de 80 000 familles de bénéficier d'un soutien supplémentaire pour assurer les besoins de base de leurs enfants.
452. Telle est notre philosophie.
453. Telle est la philosophie que ce Gouvernement, sous la direction du Premier ministre l'Honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, a consacrée.

Monsieur le Président,

454. L'accès à l'éducation est un droit humain fondamental.
455. La fourniture gratuite de serviettes hygiéniques permet aux filles d'exercer pleinement ce droit.
456. Ce Gouvernement introduira à partir du 1^{er} janvier 2025 la distribution gratuite de serviettes hygiéniques à toutes les filles du Grade 6 au Grade 13.
457. Dans le même esprit, nous voulons que tous les étudiants poursuivent leurs études, quels que soient leurs moyens financiers.

458. Ainsi, tous les parents dont les enfants sont scolarisés dans les écoles privées payantes pourront bénéficier d'une déduction fiscale allant jusqu'à 60 000 roupies par an et par enfant.
459. Ce Gouvernement a déjà rétabli la subvention pour les frais d'examen du SC et du HSC.
460. Pour cultiver encore davantage l'esprit de croissance et de résilience, nous veillerons à ce que tous les élèves aient une deuxième chance de réussir.
461. À cette fin, à partir de cette année, nous fournirons une subvention complète sur les frais d'examen du SC et du HSC pour ceux qui n'ont pas obtenu leurs 5 crédits ou qui n'ont pas réussi leurs examens la première fois.

M. le Président,

462. Le Gouvernement reconnaît les défis financiers auxquels sont confrontés les retraités, les veuves et les personnes handicapées qui élèvent des enfants à charge.
463. Nous augmentons donc la Monthly Child Allowance qui leur est versée de 2 000 à 2 500 roupies, quel que soit le nombre d'enfants.
464. Cette mesure, ainsi que les allocations de 2 500 roupies pour tous les enfants âgés de moins de 3 ans et de 2 000 roupies pour les enfants âgés de moins de 10 ans, visent à améliorer la qualité de vie des familles.

465. Enfin, le Gouvernement accroît l'aide aux familles ayant eu des jumeaux, des triplés ou plus de la façon suivante : -

(a) Le plafond de revenu du ménage pour bénéficiaire de la Multiple Birth Allowance passe de 390 000 roupies à 500 000 roupies ; et

(b) L'allocation mensuelle passe de 3 272 roupies à 5 000 roupies.

Pour la Jeunesse

M. le Président,

466. Nos jeunes sont notre avenir.

467. Ils sont ceux en qui nous plaçons nos espoirs, nos rêves et nos ambitions pour la nation.

468. Ce Gouvernement veut que chaque jeune soit épanoui, intégré et connecté avec le monde.

469. L'année dernière, nous avons introduit l'Independence Scheme pour fournir une subvention unique de 20 000 roupies à chaque citoyen à l'âge de 18 ans.

470. Nous faisons un pas de plus en direction de la jeunesse.

471. Nous fournirons un forfait mensuel de données gratuit pour tous les citoyens âgés de 18 à 25 ans, afin de permettre à quelque 80 000 jeunes de bénéficier d'un accès gratuit à l'internet mobile.

472. En outre, la DBM accordera également un prêt à taux zéro sur l'équipement informatique pour les personnes âgées de 18 à 25 ans.

Pour les Personnes Âgées

M. le Président,

473. Les personnes âgées sont le substrat de notre société.

474. Elles ont, au cours des 5 dernières décennies, œuvré au succès de Maurice.

475. Elles ont écrit notre récit national depuis l'Indépendance et ont élargi le champ des possibles pour les jeunes générations.

476. Elles ont travaillé à notre développement, créé nos foyers et nos entreprises.

477. Elles méritent, en signe de reconnaissance et de solidarité, que nous leur apportions tout notre soutien, notre gratitude et notre respect.

478. Je rappelle que c'est ce Gouvernement qui a revalorisé graduellement les pensions de retraite de base de nos aînés depuis 2014.

479. En 2014, la pension pour les aînés, les veuves, et les handicapés n'était que de 3 623 roupies, soit moins de 60 pour cent du seuil de pauvreté.

480. Pour nous, ce montant était indigne de leur contribution à notre société ainsi que pour leurs besoins vitaux.
481. Face à ce constat, nous avons fait la promesse de porter les pensions de base à 13 500 roupies par mois.
482. Et nous avons respecté notre parole.
483. Durant cette période, nous avons en effet multiplié par plus de trois le montant des pensions de base, qui sont passées de 3 623 roupies par mois à 13 500 roupies.
484. Malgré la pire crise de notre histoire, ce Gouvernement n'a pas abdiqué devant la tâche ni fait table rase de l'engagement qu'il avait pris auprès des citoyens.
485. Nous avons en sus porté les prestations d'un retraité à l'âge de 65 ans à 14 500 roupies et celles d'un retraité de 75 ans à 16 000 roupies.
486. Enfin, nous avons aussi aligné toutes les pensions de base sur le Basic Retirement Pension.
487. À l'époque, les orphelins de moins de 15 ans qui ne suivaient pas d'études à temps plein ne recevaient qu'une pension de 1 810 roupies par mois.
488. Les personnes âgées de 3 à 20 ans qui suivaient un enseignement à temps plein percevaient une maigre pension mensuelle de 3 330 roupies.

489. Nous avons corrigé ces injustices.

490. Ces deux chiffres ont été alignés à 13 500 roupies par mois.

Monsieur le Président,

491. Permettez-moi d'assurer à la Chambre et à la population que les personnes âgées, les personnes à handicap, les orphelins et les veuves continuent de bénéficier de tout notre soutien.

492. Ce Gouvernement est fier d'annoncer une double augmentation du niveau de pension au cours des 6 prochains mois.

493. Premièrement, nous augmentons, dès le 1er juillet 2024, le montant mensuel du Basic Retirement Pension à 14 000 roupies.

494. La Basic Widow's Pension, la Basic Invalid's Pension et la Basic Orphan's Pension seront également augmentées pour atteindre 14 000 roupies.

495. Il s'agit d'une augmentation de plus de 10 000 roupies en moins de 10 ans.

496. Ainsi, entre le 1^{er} juillet 2024 et jusqu'au 31 décembre 2024, les retraités âgés de 65 ans percevront 15 000 roupies et 16 500 roupies à l'âge de 75 ans.

497. Les personnes âgées de 90 à 99 ans recevront elles 24 210 roupies et les centenaires 29 210 roupies.

498. Deuxièmement, à partir du 1er janvier 2025, nous augmenterons encore la Basic Retirement Pension et toutes les pensions de base pour les porter à 15 000 roupies par mois.
499. Dès lors, les retraités âgés de 65 ans percevront 16 000 roupies et 17 500 roupies à l'âge de 75 ans.
500. Les personnes âgées de 90 à 99 ans recevront elles 25 210 roupies et les centenaires 30 210 roupies.

Monsieur le Président,

501. Dans un esprit de solidarité et de compassion, nous augmentons l'allocation mensuelle de loyer pour les bénéficiaires de pensions de base vivant seuls de 2 286 roupies à 3 500 roupies.
502. L'Inmate's allowance des institutions caritatives passe de 830 roupies à 1 500 roupies.
503. De plus, afin d'aider les ménages à recruter des soignants pour les personnes âgées :-
 - (a) Un particulier pourra déduire 30 000 roupies pour l'emploi d'une personne chargée de s'occuper de ses parents ou de ses grands-parents ; et
 - (b) Un individu ayant atteint l'âge de 60 ans pourra bénéficier d'un permis pour recruter un soignant étranger, quel que soit son lieu d'origine.

504. Pour les retraités, nous augmentons l'exonération de l'impôt sur le revenu sur la somme forfaitaire reçue de 2,5 millions roupies à 3 millions roupies.
505. Enfin, nous augmentons la Guardian's Allowance pour les personnes qui assument la responsabilité d'orphelins dont elles ont la garde, qui passe de 1 100 roupies à 2 000 roupies par mois.

Pour les Personnes à Handicap

Monsieur le Président,

506. Une société inclusive est celle qui intègre pleinement et sans discrimination le handicap dans les activités socio-économiques.
507. Pour y parvenir, la reconnaissance du handicap est un combat de tous les jours que de trop nombreuses familles mauriciennes mènent encore avec difficulté.
508. Nous ne pouvons pas nous résoudre à ce qu'une situation de handicap amène injustices et vulnérabilité.
509. Nous devons être à la hauteur de cet enjeu d'égalité et de solidarité, qui reflète les valeurs de notre société.
510. Car chaque Mauricien a le droit aux mêmes opportunités.

511. Pour aider les personnes handicapées à réaliser leur plein potentiel, nous avons augmenté la Basic Invalid's Pension de 3 267 roupies par mois en 2014 à 13 500 roupies jusqu'à lors.
512. Nous avons aussi fait de sorte que toute personne souffrant d'une amputation bénéficie de la totalité de la pension d'invalidité de base.
513. Nous avons également prévu une CSG Disability Allowance de 2 500 roupies pour les personnes dont le taux d'invalidité est compris entre 40 pour cent et 60 pour cent.

Monsieur le Président,

514. Comme annoncé précédemment, nous augmenterons la Basic Invalid's Pension à 14 000 roupies en juillet 2024 et à 15 000 roupies en janvier 2025.
515. Nous rembourserons également les frais de taxi à tous les étudiants qui fréquentent des unités intégrées et des centres de ressources et de développement pour les besoins éducatifs spéciaux.
516. La Monthly Incontinence Allowance de 1 800 roupies sera portée à 2 500 roupies et étendue aux patients souffrant de graves traumatismes de la moelle épinière.
517. Pour les parents de tous les enfants âgés de moins de 18 ans et souffrant d'un handicap, nous accordons une concession hors taxes sur un véhicule à moteur.

518. Enfin, pour quelque 5 000 enfants handicapés de moins de 18 ans, nous introduirons une allocation mensuelle additionnelle de 3 000 roupies.

Protection des Consommateurs

Monsieur le Président

519. Les perturbations de la chaîne d'approvisionnement mondiale, la pandémie de la Covid-19, la guerre entre l'Ukraine et la Russie et les tensions actuelles au Moyen-Orient ont effectivement eu un impact sur les prix au niveau mondial.
520. Nous avons été confrontés à une inflation cumulée de 15,5 % au cours des deux dernières années.
521. Conscient de ce défi de taille pour de nombreux ménages, le Gouvernement a mis en œuvre des mesures historiques pour préserver le pouvoir d'achat des Mauriciens, en particulier des plus vulnérables et des classes moyennes.
522. Nous avons veillé à ce que le coût des produits de première nécessité soit maîtrisé.
523. Dans le prolongement de cette philosophie, nous maintiendrons le prix du pain maison à 2,60 roupies au lieu du tarif de 4,80 roupies qui aurait prévalu sans subside du Gouvernement.

524. Pour y parvenir, nous continuerons à fournir : -
- (a) 540 roupies de subvention sur un paquet de 25 kg de farine aux boulangers pour maintenir son prix à 109 roupies ; et
 - (b) Un remboursement de 5 roupies par litre de diesel aux boulangeries à partir d'octobre 2023.
525. Nous accordons également une augmentation de la subvention sur le pain maison de 167 pour cent à 24 sous.
526. Le prix du riz est maintenu à 10,80 roupies par kilo contre 35 roupies par kilo sans subside.
527. Enfin, nous diminuons le prix de la bonbonne de gaz ménager de 12 kg de 240 roupies à 190 roupies, au lieu des 560 roupies sans subside.
528. Au total, 4,9 milliards de roupies sont donc accordées sous forme de subsides pour le prix du gaz ménager, de la farine, du pain et du riz.

Soutien aux Revenus

Monsieur le Président,

529. Depuis 2022, ce Gouvernement a introduit une mesure historique, la CSG Income Allowance, qui bénéficie à plus de 500 000 employés.

530. Nous avons en effet introduit en 2022 la CSG Income Allowance de 1 000 roupies pour tous ceux qui gagnaient jusqu'à 50 000 roupies par mois.
531. L'année dernière, nous avons porté ce chiffre à 2 000 roupies pour quelque 200 000 personnes gagnant jusqu'à 25 000 roupies par mois.
532. Cette année, nous maintenons la CSG Income Allowance pour tous les employés et les travailleurs indépendants.
533. Et nous allons encore plus loin.
534. Nous augmentons le montant de la CSG Income Allowance pour quelque 500 000 personnes :-
- (a) À 3 000 roupies pour quelque 110 000 employés et travailleurs indépendants percevant mensuellement moins de 20 000 roupies ;
 - (b) À 2 500 roupies pour 55 000 individus percevant mensuellement moins de 25 000 roupies ;
 - (c) À 2 000 roupies pour 50 000 individus percevant mensuellement moins de 30 000 roupies ; et
 - (d) À 1 500 roupies pour 105 000 individus percevant mensuellement moins de 50 000 roupies.

Monsieur le Président,

535. Fort de sa stratégie d'éradication de la pauvreté, ce Gouvernement a introduit l'année dernière, en plus du salaire

minimum, le Revenu Minimum Garanti de 15 000 roupies par mois.

536. En janvier 2024, nous avons augmenté ce chiffre à 18 500 roupies.
537. Aujourd'hui, nous augmentons le Revenu Minimum Garanti à 20 000 roupies.
538. Aucun individu travaillant à temps plein n'aura un revenu inférieur à 20 000 roupies à partir du 1er juillet 2024.
539. Il s'agit d'une augmentation de 7 925 roupies, soit de plus de 65 pour cent par rapport aux 12 075 roupies accordées en 2022.
540. Pour tous ceux qui ont un revenu, y compris la CSG Income Allowance, inférieur à 20 000 roupies, le Gouvernement complétera par un maximum de 500 roupies par mois.
541. Par cette mesure historique, nous veillons à ce que plus de 110 000 hommes et femmes disposent aujourd'hui d'un revenu d'au moins 20 000 roupies à la fin de chaque mois.

Monsieur le Président,

542. Nous faciliterons la création de revenus par l'investissement pour les Mauriciens en lançant le Mauritius Savings Bond avec une rémunération annuelle garantie d'un minimum de 3,5 pour cent.

L'Allocation d'Égalité des Chances

Monsieur le Président,

543. Si les hommes naissent égaux en droits, ils ne sont pas égaux en faits.
544. Pour corriger ces injustices qui privent une partie de nos concitoyens d'accéder aux mêmes opportunités, le Gouvernement de l'Honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth a lutté sans relâche pour réduire les inégalités là où elles se trouvaient.
545. Faisant du principe de redistribution son mantra, il découle de cette philosophie la promesse d'une nation plus juste, plus inclusive et plus prospère.
546. Une société qui tend la main aux plus vulnérables pour offrir à cette génération et aux prochaines un accélérateur d'ascenseur social.
547. Ce Gouvernement a été le premier à introduire le salaire minimum pour chaque citoyen.
548. Il a été le premier à introduire un Revenu Minimum Garanti pour tous les employés.
549. Aujourd'hui, nous annonçons une mesure historique pour toutes les familles mauriciennes.
550. Nous introduisons l'Allocation d'Égalité des Chances pour les ménages qui gagnent moins de 20 000 roupies par mois.

551. L'allocation sera de 2 000 roupies par ménage et par mois.

Monsieur le Président,

552. Ce Budget maintient le cap de nos ambitions.

553. Nous faisons de cette vision notre futur collectif.

554. Un avenir où l'économie croît de manière robuste et durable.

555. Un avenir où les fruits de la croissance sont redistribués de manière plus juste aux Mauriciens.

556. Un avenir où la contribution de chaque citoyen à la nation est reconnue à sa juste valeur.

557. Un avenir où les besoins de bases pour se loger, se nourrir, se soigner et s'éduquer, sont garantis.

Monsieur le Président,

558. Chaque Mauricien est une note de musique sur la partition de notre destinée.

559. Ensemble, osons faire du bien commun notre finalité.

560. Ensemble, osons faire du progrès social notre atout.

561. *Car Demain est à nous.*

Monsieur le Président,

562. Je ne peux conclure sans remercier l'Honorable Premier ministre, qui m'a accordé sa confiance et m'a apporté son soutien indéfectible depuis mon tout premier discours du budget, il y a cinq ans.
563. Marque des grands hommes, sa vision a donné du sens à notre action.
564. Je tiens également à remercier mes collègues ministres et leurs officiers pour leur précieuse contribution à la préparation de ce Budget.
565. Permettez-moi également d'exprimer ma sincère gratitude à mon équipe, en particulier au Secrétaire Financier, aux Secrétares Financiers adjoints ainsi qu'aux officiers de mon ministère et aux institutions sous la tutelle du ministère pour leur ferme engagement.
566. Enfin, je voudrais exprimer ma reconnaissance à l'ensemble des parties prenantes qui ont partagé leurs points de vue et à tous ceux qui ont contribué à la préparation de ce budget.
567. Nous avons dûment tenu compte de leurs suggestions.

CONCLUSION

568. Monsieur le Président, ce Budget est un contrat de confiance avec la population.

569. Il s'agit d'investir dans un avenir meilleur pour chaque Mauricien.
570. Il s'agit, grâce aux mesures dévoilées, d'investir dans notre futur.
571. 320 000 salariés et indépendants recevront une CSG Income Allowance mensuelle plus élevée.
572. 310 000 personnes âgées, handicapées et veuves bénéficieront d'une pension plus élevée.
573. 110 000 personnes bénéficieront d'un Revenu Minimum Garanti de 20 000 roupies par mois.
574. 100 000 jeunes âgés de 18 à 25 ans bénéficieront d'un forfait mensuel de données gratuit sur mobile.
575. 80 000 familles avec enfants âgés de 3 à 10 ans bénéficieront d'une School Allowance de 2 000 roupies par mois.
576. 50 000 ménages disposeront d'un minimum de 20 000 roupies par mois grâce à l'Allocation d'Égalité des Chances de 2 000 roupies par mois.
577. 36 000 familles avec enfants de moins de 3 ans recevront une Child Allowance plus élevée à 2 500 roupies par mois.
578. 20 000 bénéficiaires du SRM percevront d'un revenu minimum mensuel de 1 500 roupies.

579. 12 000 mères recevront une Maternity Allowance mensuelle de 2 000 roupies.
580. 5 000 enfants handicapés recevront une allocation mensuelle supplémentaire de 3 000 roupies.

M. le Président,

581. Au travers de ce Budget, nous créons plus d'opportunités pour ceux qui en sont privés.
582. Parce que, comme l'a écrit Jean Tirole, « *l'économie est au service du bien commun* ».
583. Parce que, Monsieur le Président, nous sommes pleinement engagés auprès de la population.
584. Merci.
585. Je recommande maintenant le projet de loi à l'Assemblée.

(Applause)

The Prime Minister seconded.

The debate stood adjourned to the next Sitting of the Assembly, in accordance with S.O. 73(2).

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday 10 June 2024 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 5.23 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 10 June 2024 at 11.30 a.m.