



**EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2025**

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam,  
GCSK, FRCP

Prime Minister,

Minister of Defence, Home Affairs  
and External Communications,

Minister of Finance,

Minister for Rodrigues and Outer  
Islands

Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK.

Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack  
Mohamed

Minister of Housing and Lands

Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

Minister of Environment, Solid Waste  
Management and Climate Change

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK.

Minister of Agro-Industry, Food  
Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

Hon. Govindranath Gunness

Minister of National Infrastructure

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK

Minister of Health and Wellness

Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval

Minister of Tourism

Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron

Minister of Social Integration, Social  
Security and National Solidarity

Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC

Attorney-General

Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun

Minister of Financial Services and  
Economic Planning

Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohul	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Woochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

**PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS**

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Deputy Speaker	Hon. Vedasingam Vasudevachariar Baloomoody
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Mohamed Ehsan Juman
Acting Clerk of the National Assembly	Gopall, Mr Navin
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
Clerk Assistant	Naika-Cahaneea, Mrs Prishnee
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**MAURITIUS**

**Eighth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 01 of 2025**

**Sitting of Friday 24 January 2025**

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

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

**PAPERS LAID**

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

**A. Prime Minister's Office**

**Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications**

**Ministry of Finance**

**Ministry for Rodrigues and Outer Islands**

- a) The Freeport (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 262 of 2024)
- b) The Civil Aviation (Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2025) (Exemption) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 263 of 2024)

**B. Ministry of Housing and Lands**

The State Lands (Sale of State Lands) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 5 of 2025)

**C. Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change**

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Beach Authority for the year ended 30 June 2022. (In Original)
- (b) The Annual Reports and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Environment and Climate Change Fund for the year ended 30 June, 2022 and 2023.

**D. Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries**

- a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Fishermen Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2023.
- b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund for the year ended 30 June 2023.

**E. Ministry of Health and Wellness**

The Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Morris Legacy Fund for the financial years ended 30 June, 2022 and 2023. (In Original)

**F. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity**

The National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 1 of 2025)

**G. Ministry of Youth and Sports**

The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports for the year ended 30 June 2024.

**H. Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations**

- (a) The Wage Adjustment Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 261 of 2024)
- (b) The Occupational Safety and Health (Registration and Fees) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 6 of 2025)
- (c) The Workers' Rights (Additional Remuneration) (2025) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 7 of 2025)
- (d) The National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 8 of 2025)
- (e) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 9 of 2025)

**I. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 259 of 2024)
- b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 26) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 260 of 2024)

**J. Ministry of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Co-operative College for the year ended 30 June 2023. (In Original)

**K. Ministry of Education and Human Resource**

- (a) The Private Secondary Education (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 3 of 2025)
- (b) The Education (Amendment) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 4 of 2025)

**L. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation**

- (a) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.
- (b) The Information and Communication Technologies (Registration of SIM) (Revocation) Regulations 2025. (Government Notice No. 2 of 2025)



**M. Ministry of Local Government**

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Municipal City of Port Louis for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.  
(In Original)

**N. Ministry of Arts and Culture**

The consolidated Annual Reports of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust for the period 01 January 2011 to 30 June 2020 and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust for the:

- (i) years ended 31 December, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014;
- (ii) 18-months period ended 30 June 2016; and
- (iii) financial years ended 30 June, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.

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

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

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, I now suspend the Sitting for a few minutes to welcome His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Mauritius, who will be presenting the Government Programme 2025-2029.

Hon. Members, you are requested to proceed to Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall, where the proceedings of the Assembly will resume with the presentation of the Government Programme 2025-2029 by His Excellency, the President of the Republic.

At the end of his Address and after the see-off of His Excellency, the President of the Republic, the Assembly will resume here in the Chamber to complete the remaining business.

*At 3.04 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 3.30 p.m. in the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall.*

**Madam Speaker:** Your Excellency, it is my privilege to invite you to present the Government Programme 2025-2029.

**Address by His Excellency The President**  
**at the**  
**Opening of the First Session**  
**Of the Eighth National Assembly of the Republic of Mauritius**  
**On Friday 24 January 2025**

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

I am pleased to welcome you to the presentation of the Government Programme for the Eighth National Assembly. I would like to congratulate all Honourable Members of the Assembly and I extend a particular welcome to those who have been elected to this august Assembly for the first time.

Honourable Members,

1. The people have spoken!

The 10th of November 2024 was a defining and pivotal moment in the history of our country.

It would be opportune, at the very outset, to commend the exemplary manner in which the people decided to take their destiny in their own hands.

They displayed a sense of maturity and unity rarely seen in many parts of the world.

2. Through the landslide victory of the “*Alliance du Changement*” at the 2024 general elections, the people expressed their opinion on the way the affairs of our country have been managed during the past ten years.

Posterity has already recorded the 10 years, from 2015 to 2024, as a dark period of our history.

3. Government has received a clear and overwhelming mandate for a drastic change of course and to chart a new development path.

Government seeks not only to respond to the aspirations of the people and honour its electoral pledges but it will also forge a social pact with the people.

This Programme lays the foundation of a **BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE**. The new model of development being proposed will be underpinned by innovation and creativity.

Honourable Members,

4. I have the honour and privilege to present to the House and to the Nation at large, the Government Programme for its five-year mandate.

### **DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE, INTEGRITY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

5. The very first mission of Government is to reconstruct our democracy, restore good governance and implement constitutional reforms.

Government is committed to put back on track the very founding principles of our parliamentary democracy.

Government will, as a matter of urgency, invite the Standing Orders Committee of the National Assembly to review and update the Standing Orders of the National Assembly.

Honourable Members,

6. Our country reckons more than five decades of experience of its Constitutional Framework, and it is therefore high time to review and update our Constitution. Following the review, Government will implement constitutional and electoral reforms required to further consolidate our democracy.

Our country, long cited as a model of democracy in the world, has in recent years been downgraded in global indices for its poor governance.

Government will reinstate the independence of public institutions to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and credibility.

Government is committed to restoring the trust of the nation in independent and impartial institutions.

Government will foster ethics and integrity as core values in all walks of life.

Government will appoint, within 6 months, a Constitutional Review Commission which will make recommendations on constitutional and electoral reforms as well as on enhanced protection of fundamental rights.

The Commission will, *inter alia*, examine:

- (a) the setting up of an Electoral College which will elect the President of the Republic, with a view to ensuring that the President has a mandate from a broader base;

- (b) provisions to be made in the Constitution for the mandatory holding of local government elections at statutory intervals;
  - (c) amendments to be made to Chapter 2 of the Constitution to better protect fundamental rights, including new generation rights relating to: environment, technology, health, education and other economic, social and cultural rights provided under international treaties, and also to provide for the rights of Nature; and
  - (d) amendment to be made to enshrine in our Constitution, the core values of peace, justice and liberty which we pledge to honour in our National Anthem.
7. The Constitutional Review Commission will also consider legislative amendments to enable Public Interest Litigation and Class Actions that will better safeguard public interest and better protect citizen rights.

The terms of reference of the Commission will include reforms to our electoral system so that it better reflects the will of the people of Mauritius by ensuring equitable parliamentary representation including “*une dose de proportionnelle*” and a higher number of women as Members of Parliament. The reforms will include the right to recall Members of Parliament in prescribed circumstances and in accordance with modalities set out in the Constitution, as well as anti-defection provisions.

To enhance transparency in the political sphere, combat corruption and ensure free and fair elections, Government will introduce legislation on the funding of political parties.

Government will embark on wide consultations to implement inclusive and participatory reforms aimed at modernising the electoral process and bringing celerity in the access to justice over electoral matters.

Government will propose the establishment of a Constitutional Division of the Supreme Court for timely adjudication of matters concerning citizen rights and freedoms, as well as to provide redress in the event of any breach of other constitutional provisions.

To promote national unity and nation building, constitutional amendments will be brought to remove the mandatory declaration of community affiliation, thus allowing

candidates to stand for the National Assembly elections without being required to make any declaration as to their community. By so doing, Government will ensure that all citizens have the right to stand as candidates for elections even if they do not wish to declare their community affiliation.

### **Digital Rights and Citizens' Privacy Protection**

Honourable Members,

8. Government has already demonstrated its will to ensure that the right to privacy of citizens is not infringed. It has revoked the Regulations on the registration of SIM Cards and has caused to be erased the database of photographs collected in the context thereof.

Government will strengthen measures pertaining to the protection and management of personal and sensitive data.

The Constitutional Review Commission will consider proposals to further consolidate the constitutional right to privacy.

Government will introduce legislation to ensure that any covert surveillance is carried out strictly and necessarily only for the purposes of prevention and detection of crime or for national security. The law will prevent the widespread spying of citizens which occurred over the last few years.

Government will strengthen the legal provisions regarding the appointment of members of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the powers and obligations of the IBA in relation to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation to ensure the latter's independence and impartiality.

In order to promote pluralism in the audiovisual sector, arrangements will be made for the introduction of private television channels.

9. Government will set up a Senior Officials' Appointment Committee which will make recommendations to Government on the appointment of heads of major public institutions, other than those made by the service commissions already provided for in the Constitution.

A Freedom of Information Act will be introduced to provide for more transparency in relation to the decisions of public institutions.

To ensure that the principles of meritocracy and non-discrimination in employment are upheld, Government will strengthen the powers of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The powers of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal will also be broadened to cover all disputes relating to recruitment and promotion in the public sector as a whole.

Recruitment and promotion processes in the public sector are largely outdated, and will be completely overhauled to ensure that skills are recognised and that the country has a modern and effective civil service.

Different Chairpersons will be appointed at the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Disciplined Forces Service Commission (DFSC) respectively in order to expedite recruitment and promotion exercises and enhance the level of transparency and meritocracy.

### **Combating Fraud and Corruption**

Honourable Members,

10. In view of the recent serious challenges to the rule of law and the role of enforcement agencies, Government will take immediate measures to ensure that they operate in a totally independent and transparent manner.

Government will repeal the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC) Act and will set up a national crime agency which will be better equipped to deal more effectively with financial and other serious crimes. The agency will not impinge on the prosecutorial powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) but will ensure that an

investigation is carried out independently, objectively and effectively. This will also ensure that those who have transgressed the law are brought to justice. It would be for the Office of the DPP to continue with the prosecution.

To reinforce the effectiveness of prosecution and reduce the timeframe for prosecution, a prosecution service will be set up under the aegis of the Office of the DPP.

In the meantime, the FCC Act will be amended to remove the powers granted to the Director-General to prosecute without the consent of the DPP. Thus, powers relating to prosecution will rest with the Office of the DPP in line with the relevant constitutional provisions.

In addition, the Constitution will be amended to reinforce the independence and role of the DPP.

An Ethics and Integrity Commissioner will be appointed to advise public and private entities on the implementation of policies and practices that will facilitate compliance with the principles of integrity and good governance.

Government will also review the Public Procurement Act to prevent abuses, such as those noted during the COVID-19 pandemic, from ever occurring again.

### **Restoring Integrity in the Gaming Industry**

11. Government will restore public confidence in the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) particularly in regard to its oversight of the horseracing industry. Government will commission a thorough management and financial audit of the Authority.

Relevant amendments will be brought to the Act to ensure that the GRA operates as a trustworthy regulator of the gaming and betting industry, in a transparent and accountable manner.



Honourable Members,

12. Geopolitical and global economic shifts make it imperative for the country to embark on a more dynamic, innovative and proactive diplomatic strategy.

Government will undertake an evaluation of our diplomacy and enhance our Foreign Service with a new legal framework and resources.

Government will give top priority to capacity building to enable our diplomacy to better promote the vital interests of our country.

Government will spare no effort to obtain the support of the international community so that our country exercises effective sovereignty over the whole territory of the Republic of Mauritius as defined in our Constitution as well as over the vast maritime zones of our archipelagic State.

Government will go beyond the use of economic diplomacy to that of developmental diplomacy to advance the interests of Mauritius. It will explore all opportunities arising from bilateral and multilateral cooperation in addressing climate change, sustainable development, the development of the ocean economy, security and other pressing issues.

Government will ensure that our country plays a more important role in Climate Diplomacy and Climate Justice.

13. With a view to strengthening regional dynamics, Government will promote regional cooperation and enhance economic integration, particularly with the coastal states of the Indian Ocean. Government will support the efforts of our partners on the African Continent to achieve the ambitious goal proposed by the agreement on the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Mauritius will pursue the objective of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) aiming at ensuring economic prosperity through regional integration.

Government will also enhance cooperation within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Indian Ocean Commission and the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Government will set up a Centre for International Strategic Studies to promote capacity building and research.

### **Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity**

Honourable Members,

14. Restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Mauritius will be a major priority for Government.

Government will relentlessly pursue its engagement with our partners over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, so that development in and around the archipelago is beneficial to the nation at large and persons of Chagossian origin living in Mauritius.

15. Government will also set up a Regional Centre for Research and Education on Climate Change and Socio-Ecological Transformation, which will act as a platform for islanders in the Indian Ocean and beyond to discuss and act on challenges posed by climate change and ecological threats.

Government will endeavour to make climate diplomacy an important component of our foreign policy. Mauritius will be vocal in its call for greater access to Climate Finance to mitigate the challenges posed by Climate Change.

16. Government will also improve the legal framework to promote innovation and creativity, including by acceding to a number of treaties administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO).

17. Government will adopt a transformative and policy-driven approach to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, centred on the principles of People, Planet and Prosperity.

Mauritius will adhere to the principles of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS on climate resilience, preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable economic growth through investment in the ocean economy and renewable energy.

Honourable Members,

18. With regard to international trade, Government will ensure that existing agreements with our trading partners are used to their full extent and potential. Government will continue lobbying efforts to ensure the extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on a long-term basis.

The destiny of Mauritius is inextricably linked to the future development of our region and of our Continent. Being part of Africa, Mauritius will support the strategy for improving trade and economic development of the Continent.

Government is committed to increasing our share of the wealth derived from our seas, and will press for more equitable arrangements in the allocation of marine resources in the Indian Ocean.

Government will engage with neighbouring countries and other fishing nations with a view to increasing our contribution to the value chain in the fisheries industry.

Government will also work to enhance the Regional Maritime Security Architecture to combat a broad range of illegal activities on the high seas as well as combat human and drug trafficking. Our surveillance capacity will be increased to ensure enhanced maritime security and protection of our Exclusive Economic Zone.

## **A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL**

Honourable Members,

19. Government, notwithstanding the fact that it has inherited a dire economic situation, wants to assure the Nation of its determination to forge ahead with confidence to fix and reconstruct the economy while doing the maximum it can to lift the standard of living of all Mauritians.

Government will pay urgent and special attention to Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon.

### **Toward a Coherent and Comprehensive Long-Term Plan**

20. It is manifestly clear that a well thought-out long-term plan is needed. With the emergence of the new economic landscape and the need to plan accordingly, Government has re-established the Ministry of Economic Planning which will work out a Plan for Socio-Economic Reconstruction with time-bound targets and goals.

In the short and medium term, Government is coming up with a programme for economic reforms and fiscal consolidation that will usher in a new economic order where economic growth will be productivity-based focusing on higher value-added activities.

An impetus will be given to the SME sector to enhance its contribution to the economy in order to boost import substitution.

Government will move away from the mainly consumption-driven economic growth model to one that is investment-driven.

### **Toward an Investment-Driven and Productivity-Based Growth Strategy**

21. Government strategy to boost investment will comprise five planks:
- **First**, the broadening and diversifying of the investment space.
  - **Second**, Resource Repurposing to optimise the use of our productive resources.
  - **Third**, a groundbreaking framework for innovation, research and development.
  - **Fourth**, rebuilding of our institutional strengths.

- **And Fifth**, a strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals.

### **Broadening and Diversifying the Investment Space**

Honourable Members,

22. To broaden and diversify our investment space, Government will use two leverages: our excellent trade and economic relations with countries in the region and around the world, and the vast potential of the ocean economy.

Government will encourage Mauritian businesses to integrate the regional supply chains, focusing on high-growth sectors such as agro-processing, textiles and ICT.

Government will facilitate triangular partnerships to position Mauritius as a hub for manufacturing and re-exportation.

23. Government will leverage its economic cooperation and relations with African and Asian countries in order to expand its exports.

Government will ensure that existing agreements with our trading partners are used to their full extent and potential.

At the same time, Government will consolidate its existing export markets through more targeted marketing and promotion campaigns.

### **Better Exploring and Exploiting the Potential of the Ocean Economy**

24. To further expand our investment space, Government will embark on an ambitious ocean economy project for our country. So far considered a Small Island State, Mauritius is positioning itself as a Large Ocean State. Indeed, we have one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zones in the world, as well as a continental shelf extending over an area that is approximately 1000 times greater than that of our territory.

The ocean economy project aims at adopting a holistic policy approach to all ocean-related activities, both onshore and offshore. The synergy thus created will enable us to optimise the benefits for the country as a Large Ocean State. We will have to conceptually transition from a SIDS framework to a Large Ocean State one.

The Roadmap for the Ocean Economy developed in 2013 represented the first concrete step towards the development of a sustainable ocean economy sector in Mauritius. However, this roadmap was never transformed into concrete actions by the successor Government.

Based on these foundations, this Government is determined to set up and develop an inclusive, sustainable ocean economy sector exploring our untapped ocean assets while ensuring that the benefits are shared with the whole population.

25. Several economic sectors are directly dependent on our maritime space and resources. Government will create new “pôles de croissance” in our ocean economy.

Government will organise a second National Dialogue on the Ocean Economy to update and resume the initiative that was launched in 2013.

The deliberations will contribute to creating an enabling environment for the ocean economy to take off and become a major pillar of our overall economy.

Government will invest in the creation of a vast pool of human resources specialised in various fields related to the ocean economy as part of its strategy of capacity building in the ocean economy sector.

A Department dedicated to multi-disciplinary research on the ocean economy will be set up with the collaboration of experts in the field.

### **Further Diversifying the Economic Space**

Honourable Members,

26. To further diversify our economic space, Government is committed to developing transformative new sectors while consolidating existing and traditional pillars.

The development of the local renewable energy sector will be a key component of Government’s endeavour to usher in transformative new sectors while aiming at making of Mauritius a green economy.

Government will accelerate the development of the renewable energy sector to achieve greater energy security.

## **Promoting a Modern Agro-Industry for Better Food Security**

27. Government will launch an ambitious food security programme. Efficiency in the food production sector will be improved so as to make food more accessible, affordable and safer for the population.

Government will transform and consolidate the agricultural and food production sector in ways that support higher levels of local production and the supply of safer food while promoting the green economy concept.

The rational use and management of prime agricultural land will be a critical factor in enhancing food security. An agricultural land suitability mapping of the whole country, including Rodrigues, will be an immediate priority.

The latest methodology for the traceability of food and food products will also be introduced.

Government will support the modernisation of our agriculture and fisheries to enhance earning capacity of those who depend on these sectors for their livelihood. Local producers will be encouraged to become export-oriented.

A comprehensive technical audit of all institutions in the agri-business sector will be undertaken so that appropriate measures can be implemented to ensure that they operate in a coherent and effective manner. Research and development, innovation and advisory services to support producers will be the main thrust of their activities.

A policy for the recruitment of foreign labour to address the shortage of seasonal workforce will be an urgent task for Government. Smart and eco- farming studies will become part of the school curriculum.

Regional food security will be an important constituent of cross-border initiatives and cooperation. The potential of the sugarcane as an energy crop through the adoption of high fibre varieties will be explored. The production of specialty sugars will also be increased.

## **Transforming Mauritius into a Hi-Tech Intelligent Island**

Honourable Members,

28. Government is committed to making Mauritius an Intelligent Island through effective 360 degrees digital transformation of Government services. This will make our governance more citizen-centred, data-driven, responsible and transparent. This approach aims at digitalising all life events of natural and corporate persons.

As part of the technology foresight exercise, a novel national Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy will be developed to set clear objectives and leverage its transformative power for fuelling economic growth.

The licensing regime in the telecommunications sector will be reviewed to keep pace with the dynamic evolution in the sector and streamline the services for a simpler licensing framework.

The Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 will be amended to address cybersecurity issues more effectively.

Government will set up the “Mobile-ID” which will represent the de facto identity for Mauritians in the virtual world and will be central to all online transactions which Mauritians will conduct with the Government and will later be extended to the private sector. This Mobile-ID will enable centralised services encompassing health, education, social security, local authorities and banking, among others.

### **Consolidating the Tourism Industry**

Honourable Members,

29. Government will further develop the tourism industry with a focus on sustainable tourism and increasing the benefits for all Mauritians.

Eco-tourism will be given greater prominence in Government’s tourism development strategy.

To ensure the long-term viability of the tourism sector and making it more inclusive and participative, the tourism development strategy will comprise a balanced approach through community engagement and community-based initiatives. At the same time, public leisure facilities and recreational spaces will be developed while preserving our natural and cultural heritage.



Government will assist industry stakeholders in developing a year-round high- season strategy that will focus on specialised offerings, including seasonal pricing for air connectivity, indoor attractions, cultural festivals and wellness retreats amongst others.

### **Modernising the Financial Services Industry and Adapting the Global Business Sector**

30. As Government implements its new economic model, the financial services sector will be called upon to play an even more significant role. It should be able to meet the increasing demand for capital and other financial services that would arise from higher investment.

Global business makes up an important segment of the financial services industry which is facing tough challenges. Its development during the past ten years has lagged behind international trends. As part of its efforts to evolve a new economic model, Government will work along with stakeholders of the global business sector to move up the value chain, increase the flow of services, create more jobs and better integrate it internationally.

Government will come up with a new Strategic Plan for Financial Services to consolidate the reputation and image of its jurisdiction whilst improving its product offerings and pioneering the development of new market segments through:

- enhanced organisational and operational efficiencies;
- improved approach to supervision and enforcement of policies aligned with international standards;
- continuous engagement with stakeholders to ensure alignment on future orientation;
- rebuilding the brand image of the jurisdiction; and
- competitor analysis to remain abreast of threats and opportunities.

### **Resource Repurposing**

Honourable Members,

31. Government realises that there is a suboptimal use of our country's resources, including human resources, land, capital and entrepreneurial skills.

The responsiveness of the labour market to the economic exigencies of the country has been severely undermined.

To remedy the situation, Government will introduce strategies to address skills mismatch and labour shortages in our economy.

To this end:

- A Skills Master Plan for the economy will be developed, jointly with stakeholders, to identify the core competencies required to support the emerging technology-driven economy.
- Regular national and sectoral skills studies will be carried out by the Human Resource Development Council.
- The education, skilling and training systems will be reengineered with a focus on better preparing our youth for the world of work.

Government will implement new policies to improve working conditions and enhance protection of workers' rights.

Convinced that gender inequality in the labour force is a pressing moral and social issue as well as an economic challenge, Government is coming up with effective policies to bridge the gender gap.

Government will support the faster growth of employment opportunities for women.

32. Government will adopt measures to address our country's changing demographics and meet the labour market requirements including in strategic sectors such as agriculture.

A Diaspora Policy will be formulated to engage our diaspora in the development of our country.

A Talent, Merit and Excellence Initiative (TMEI) will be launched with a view to promoting talent and merit in the search for excellence.

33. To ensure that the labour market fulfils its role in the New Economic Model, the wage determination system will be reviewed.
34. As part of its strategy of resource repurposing for higher productivity, Government will also review the land use strategy.

For years, land use planning has been under two pieces of legislation namely the Town and Country Planning Act 1954 and the partly proclaimed Planning and Development Act 2004. Government will introduce a consolidated and modern legislation on land use planning.

Government will implement the ‘Digital Twin Mauritius Project’ which will support smarter land use planning.

35. Government will also foster capital repurposing in both the private and public sector.

The operations of the banking sector and the capital markets will be revamped to make it easier and more efficient to mobilise capital resources. In parallel, the public sector, particularly Government, will work to improve the productivity of their investment.

36. Resource repurposing is also about creating a new entrepreneurial culture that is adapted to the vision of the proposed economic order.

Government is fully aware of the crucial role that small and medium enterprises as well as cooperatives play in the socio-economic development of our country.

Government will introduce a revamped legal framework and an innovative package of incentives to strengthen their capacity and competitiveness. It will also assist them in tapping export opportunities.

Government will support cooperative societies to align their activities with the Sustainable Development Goals and with the Circular Economy. The cooperative sector will be reengineered with a focus on clustering of societies and maximising on existing benefits including fair trade certification.

### **Fostering a Groundbreaking Framework for Innovation, Research and Development**

37. Boosting Innovation through Research and Development will be a powerful strategy to support efforts to increase investment in our country. In this context, an appropriate legal framework will be developed to operationalise this initiative.

Government will also set up a National Research Institute under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office to rationalise all research activities and initiatives in Mauritius and to ensure optimal utilisation of research resources. Such a research institute will also have an important regional dimension and enhance the contribution of Mauritius to development in the region.

### **Reconstructing our Economic Institutions**

Honourable Members,

38. To ensure adequate support to the New Economic Model, Government will rebuild the institutional strengths that have been the backbone of economic development and progress before being rendered ineffectual in the past decade.

The reengineering that Government is already implementing at the Bank of Mauritius is an example of the determination to reconstruct our economic institutions so that they can better support the new economic vision.

Government will also carry out a fundamental review of the role and functions of the Economic Development Board to focus on boosting productive investment and export promotion across all sectors of our economy.

Government will restore and strengthen the dialogue with civil society, trade unions and private sector on key development issues.

### **Restoring Sound Macroeconomic Fundamentals**

39. Government recognises that one of the critical success factors behind its endeavour to boost productive investment will be its ability to restore sound macroeconomic fundamentals.

Government is determined to put public sector debt, the budget deficit and government borrowing requirements on downward paths to sustainable levels.

As it secures fiscal consolidation, Government will ensure that its tax reforms also foster greater fairness, certainty, efficiency and convenience in the tax system.

Government will introduce new legislation to establish the Revenue Appeal Tribunal which will take over the functions and powers of the Assessment Review Committee.

40. Government will also reform the expenditure side of its national budget based on the principle of judicious use of every rupee.

Government expenditure will be reengineered in a fiscally sustainable manner while securing fair and adequate pensions for our elderly.

To foster greater transparency and accountability, Government will:

- Accelerate the implementation of the accrual International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);
- Broaden the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and ensure transparency of their deliberations;
- Make it mandatory for PAC to look into Annual Audit Reports with the Accounting Officer in attendance; and
- Ensure that the Report of the Director of Audit will be debated in the National Assembly and is submitted to the relevant institutions for investigation, where appropriate.

Government will reassess all the extra budgetary funds and Special Purpose Vehicles.

Government will re-introduce Performance-Based Budgeting which will systematically link funding with results and outcomes and help to reduce wastage.

41. Government will also introduce the concept of 'Green' budgeting and integrate the need to address issues associated with climate change in its budgeting process.

As it pursues its economic reform and fiscal consolidation programme, Government will introduce a Fiscal Responsibility Act.

### **Consolidating and Better Managing the Sovereign Assets and Liabilities of the State**

42. Government will go beyond securing a system for sound fiscal stewardship. It will also ensure that all sovereign assets and liabilities are managed for better development outcomes. To this end, Government will set up a dedicated unit at the Ministry of Finance to develop and oversee the implementation of a National Asset Liability Management Framework.

The Mauritius Investment Corporation is an example of how easily an irresponsible Government in collusion with an equally irresponsible Central Bank can resort to abusive and even fraudulent use of the country's assets. Government will therefore come up with strict rules and regulations to ringfence the Nation's assets from such abusive practices.

Government will also work with the Bank of Mauritius to develop a national strategy on the use and management of the country's foreign currency reserves.

### **Better Protecting and Enhancing the Buying Power of Consumers**

Honourable Members,

43. Another central feature of the New Economic Order will be about better protecting and enhancing the buying power of consumers. Government is determined to combat the scourge of inflation, the more so that families with modest income bear the brunt of its adverse impacts.

Government is conscious that monetary policy alone will not be enough to combat inflation. Government will therefore come up with appropriate structural policies.

Government will introduce strict rules and regulations to better protect consumers from unscrupulous traders who, to increase their profit margin, reduce the size or weight of a product while the price remains the same.

Government will also come up with legislation to reduce the hiking of prices in times of emergencies and crises to increase profit, and the hoarding of products for sale at higher prices in the future.

Government will explore the potential for the State Trading Corporation to import in bulk and at lower prices certain products in order to increase access for all consumers

while curtailing inflationary pressures. A thorough audit of the operations of the State Trading Corporation will be undertaken.

Government will review the current methodology for measuring inflation. Statistics Mauritius will work out different sets of measures of inflation which reflect better the incidence of inflation on the purchasing power of the different income groups.

Government will also ensure that an asset price index is constructed in order to better form economic decisions and policy making.

### **A NEW SOCIAL ORDER**

Honourable Members,

44. It is the conviction of Government that our country needs a new social pact to reimagine our future together as one people, as one nation.

Government aims at a qualitative leap towards a more inclusive society, where the needs, rights, dignity and a sense of humanism of our people shape the social system of the Republic.

Fundamental reforms will be brought to the outdated social security and social integration operational system of the country.

Government will devote more attention to our elderly, widows, orphans, people with disabilities, and our most vulnerable citizens.

Government is committed to bring major structural reforms in terms of legislative changes relating to service delivery and caring of our otherwise abled citizens.

Government will strengthen the constitutional rights to guard against discrimination against persons living with disabilities and will introduce measures to enhance their training and employability.

It will also streamline the Basic Retirement Pension entitlements for pensioners when traveling abroad and ensure payment of the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund benefits upon retirement.

45. Government will implement a new fully integrated e-Social Security system to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. Beneficiaries of social security schemes will have real-time access to their accounts.

Research on the root causes of absolute and relative poverty, social stress, anxieties and distress proliferation in society will be carried out.

Government will review existing legislation and enhance the services to be provided for the welfare of the elderly. It will set up a Senior Volunteer and

Executive Programme to encourage retirees to offer their services part-time to private and public organisations or to act as volunteers for NGOs and other charitable, educational or social institutions. The establishment of an Ombudsperson for the elderly is also envisaged. The services provided by private Elderly Care Facilities will also be regulated to provide better care to our elders.

This Government will ensure that gradually our country adheres to international standards and conventions regarding the elderly, as well as people with disabilities, and national disasters refugees falling under the aegis of the State.

46. In respect of social integration, Government will review the conceptual framework of the National Empowerment Foundation and the National Social Integration Foundation.

The aim is to ensure beneficiaries are broadly involved in more participatory, horizontal programmes, while also promoting innovative, artistic, socio- ecological and food security projects.

### **The Family Cell: A Driving Force of Social Transformation**

47. Government is convinced that happy, supportive families are the foundation of a healthy, stable, and sustainable society.

The last decade has witnessed the collapse of the rule of law, and persistent social issues: the affliction has negatively impacted on the family cell bringing despair and demoralisation therein.

For too many families, the scourges such as alcoholism, drug addiction, over-indebtedness, and domestic violence are destroying their serenity and harmony.

Government commits itself to reconstructing the family strengths and key attributes that have been the backbone of our social development and upliftment which have been undermined during the past decade.



Government will encourage family interactions, mutual support, while offering more growth opportunities, namely through free internet to bridge the digital divide and fostering the development of every family member.

Government will encourage the setting up of a network of services to provide social support and to stimulate family development and entrepreneurship.

Government is committed to creating a more balanced work-leisure relation for the population. In this context, Government will work towards a 40-hour work week in non-essential sectors, and a policy of equal pay for equal work.

Government will give additional support to parenthood through parental leave of up to one year, and the introduction of Flexitime and Work from Home Schemes for mothers after the maternity leave.

### **Reconstructing an Inclusive Education System**

48. As it redesigns the social order, Government is giving a place of prominence to reconstructing our education system.

Government's aim is to make our education inclusive again.

The current education system drops out too many children from the mainstream education. Too few children make it to tertiary education. These flaws are the source of social injustice. Government is determined to remedy them.

Government will supplement the current approach which is based primarily on intellectual capacity with learning and teaching facilities as well as opportunities to develop talent and non-intellectual skills. The new education system will unleash the creative and innovative potential of our children by providing opportunities for the development of their artistic, social and moral capacities.

To this end, a Blueprint will be prepared following the "*Assises de l'Education et des Ressources Humaines*" which will be held this year with emphasis on "*un modèle éducatif à visage humain*".

Government will ensure that the reforms of our education system cover the widest possible number of issues hampering the development of our students while addressing emerging challenges in a constantly evolving sector.

Government will give due recognition to teachers for their invaluable work and their contribution for social transformation.

Government also undertakes to increase the average per capita expenditure for special needs students.

Honourable Members,

Government's strategy for tertiary education will comprise initiatives in the fields of research, science, innovation and workforce transformation.

Government is determined to position Mauritius as a global education hub in order to attract international students and establish the nation as a centre of academic excellence. A powerful and comprehensive branding and marketing campaign under the banner "Study in Mauritius" will be launched.

Government is committed to creating inclusive and dynamic pathways from Technical and Vocational Education and Training to higher education while advancing technical education to meet industry demands.

### **Reconstructing the Healthcare System to Heal, Protect and Save Lives**

Honourable Members,

49. Government will endeavour to foster a new social order with the reconstruction of the healthcare system to better heal, protect and save lives.

Government will take immediate measures to remedy the lack of investment in critical aspects of healthcare including the poor state of medical facilities, chronic understaffing, lack of capacity building and quality control of pharmaceutical products.

50. In line with its commitment to full transparency and accountability, Government will set up a public inquiry into the practices that plagued the health sector, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The people of Mauritius deserve to know the truth.

Government strategy for the health sector will be in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all and at all ages, including ending AIDS by 2030. The strategy will focus on:

- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles;

- Expansion of dedicated healthcare services for the elderly;
- Modernisation of eye care services and ensuring accessibility to advanced ophthalmic treatments;
- Enhancement of mental health care;
- Substance Abuse Rehabilitation;
- Greater support to patients who require overseas medical treatment; and
- Review of the administrative structure of public health institutions.

51. Government will set up a health regulatory body to oversee health services in both public and private sectors, including quality control, drug testing, and service pricing. To that effect, the Public Health Act which dates back to 1925 will be reviewed in line with international standards and protocols.

The structure and operations of the Medical Council, Pharmacy Board and other institutions under the responsibility of the Ministry will be reviewed to make them more responsive to the needs of a modern, effective and efficient health system.

A Digital Health Transformation Programme will be implemented in the healthcare sector. Digital health cards will be introduced for use by patients in both public hospitals and private clinics. The Programme will include telemedicine as well as the provision of e-medical prescription facilities, and online booking system to reduce waiting time in hospitals. An online training platform will also be provided for healthcare workers.

Government will bring in new legislation to allow for parallel imports of pharmaceutical products, which will result in more competitive medicine prices. Through a system of Pharmacare, prescribed medicines not available in the public health system will be provided.

Full coverage of treatment costs abroad for patients will also be provided, regardless of age, when treatment is not available locally.

To cater for our elderly, geriatric healthcare facilities will be introduced in all five regional hospitals. Moreover, new home-based care services will be introduced to include physiotherapy and medical assistance for patients with mobility challenges.

Government will establish a diabetes centre in all regional hospitals.

A full-fledged and functional Renal Transplant Unit will be set up to provide a sustainable and life-saving alternative to dialysis.

Two hospitals, one specialising in obstetrics and gynaecology, and the other one in paediatrics, will be set up.

Cancer care will be strengthened with the setting up of dedicated operating theatres for cancer surgeries and the integration of palliative care services.

### **A Decent Dwelling for Every Family**

Honourable Members,

52. A roof for each family is not and should not be a pious wish. It is an integral part of the social rights of each family. Government is committed to valuing this right and doing everything possible to achieve it.

A more pragmatic approach will be adopted to meet the various needs for housing. More active support for land supply and sustainable construction is required while at the same time making access to finance more affordable.

Government is aware that affordable housing is a fundamental right and will introduce policy reforms to make the housing sector more economically efficient, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The living environment in all existing social housing estates will be enhanced for improved quality of life.

The main focus of the Housing Policy of Government will be to facilitate access to a decent roof for low and middle-income families.

An institutional framework for the development of social housing will be elaborated following an audit on the projects of the New Social Living Development Ltd since its creation.

Henceforth, the construction of new Housing Estates will be carried out in line with new standards to ensure better integration with the environment.

The law on Sale by Levy will be reviewed in respect of a first residence.

The living environment in all existing “*Résidences*” will be enhanced for improved quality of life. To this end, the mechanisms for renovating these “*Résidences*” across the country will be strengthened.

### **Animal Welfare**

Honourable Members,

53. Mauritius has a huge problem with the growing number of stray dogs. The Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare will be totally reorganised for operational efficiency and a “spay and neuter” campaign for stray dogs will be implemented. Shelters on a regional basis for the welfare and management of stray animals will be opened.

To provide further care to animals in general, the project for the setting up of a modern animal hospital for which funds were already earmarked prior to 2015 will be undertaken.

### **Our Youth as the Bridge to the Future**

Honourable Members,

54. Government believes that the future of a country can only be guaranteed when its youth is empowered and actively participates and contributes to societal progress. It is important to position young people as key partners in the socio-economic, cultural development, and political governance of the country.

Government will launch a Youth Empowerment Programme in conjunction with the broader education sector. Emphasis will be laid on the development of self-awareness, self-reliance, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.

Government will also promote cultural empowerment, encouraging young people to express their voices and explore their artistic paths. Bi-annual Youth Festivals to celebrate and engage youth across the nation will be organised. Youth Entrepreneurship

Schemes will be developed to align with the aspirations of our youth and for meaningful job creation.

### **Sports as a Pillar of the New Social Order**

55. Sports is a unifying factor. We are all proud whenever our athletes represent the country on the international stage.

Government will promote both elite and grassroots sports with inclusion as a central principle. There will be equal access to sports for all, regardless of age, gender, or ability, through inclusive programmes and access to sports facilities.

Government will establish a Mauritius Sports Promotion Division to promote sports across all age groups, with involvement of local authorities. A comprehensive package will also be developed to support our elite athletes.

Government will upgrade sports infrastructure, introduce a new administrative framework and a new Sports Bill.

The objective is to transform the country into a sporting nation focused on maintaining the health and well-being of every individual.

The horseracing industry will be revamped and the legal framework governing horseracing is being reviewed. The Champ de Mars will soon relive its glorious past.

### **Law & Order**

Honourable Members,

56. The fight against drug trafficking and use will be one of the major priorities of Government. Additional resources will be provided to the Police to increase its capacity to deal more efficiently with drug trafficking and related issues.

Government will adopt bold measures to end the suffering of families and society in general, as a result of the significant increases in drug trafficking over the last few years and the breakdown in law and order.

A Select Committee of the National Assembly will be appointed urgently to look into the ways and means to address the scourge of drugs. Civil society including NGOs actively engaged in combating the proliferation and consumption of drugs will be invited to contribute to the work of the Select Committee. Subsequently, Government will develop and implement a comprehensive Action Plan for a more efficient and effective response to deal with this social ill.

Government will set up a National Drug Policy, Monitoring and Coordination Agency that will bring together various public bodies that will combat drug trafficking, provide rehabilitation and support families of victims of drug abuse.

The legal provisions in respect of trafficking, consumption and treatment of drug addicts will be reviewed to cater, inter alia, for differentiated treatment of traffickers and consumers.

57. Government has already initiated actions to restore trust in the Police. For effective enforcement of law and order, public safety, crime prevention, emergency response and victim support, the following measures will be taken as a matter of urgency:

- Restructuring and modernising the role of the Police and the National Security Service;
- Community Policing and Neighbourhood Watch;
- Creation of specialised Units for protection and security of senior citizens;
- Introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill;
- Setting up of new infrastructural facilities and modernisation of police stations and detention centres, a child-friendly Juvenile Detention Centre as well as a Police Training Academy; and
- Introduction of biometric passport with advanced encryption and anti- tampering mechanism.

Government will adopt a zero-tolerance policy and a victim-oriented approach to domestic abuse and human trafficking. In that respect, enforcement measures will be enhanced and a new shelter with modern facilities will be set up for women victims.

To attain the set objectives, Government will provide continuous learning opportunities in areas such as Police Studies and ICT. So as to revitalise the police force, recruitment as well as promotion will be based on meritocracy, hard work and performance. A proper and revised career path will be proposed for all police officers.

Government is also committed to addressing injustices committed under the previous regime.

### **Access to Justice**

Honourable Members,

58. Government will work closely with the judiciary to introduce reforms to ensure that the judicial and legal system operate more efficiently, swiftly and fairly and make justice more accessible. Better resources in terms of personnel, premises or equipment will be provided.

A superior court of appeal, as recommended in Lord Mackay's Report, will be established to hear appeals from the Supreme Court and arbitration tribunals.

Government will introduce a new international investment and commercial court to give confidence to international investors and those doing business in Mauritius that its legal and judicial system will resolve disputes in a timely manner.

The following legislation will be introduced:

- Police and Criminal Justice Bill to review the criminal justice system in Mauritius.
- Criminal Appeal (Amendment) Bill to make provision for simplified procedures for appealing against decisions of the Supreme Court in the exercise of its original jurisdiction in criminal matters.
- Judicial Review (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to make provisions for simplified procedures and to harmonise judicial review proceedings under various enactments.



- Extradition (Amendment) Bill to review the Extradition Act so as to provide for timely determination of extradition proceedings.
- Public Inquiries Bill in order to repeal the Commissions of Inquiry Act and replace it with a modern, transparent and comprehensive legislation which will provide clear parameters for the conduct of such inquiries, including time frames for such inquiries.

## **FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION**

Honourable Members,

59. To face climate risks and vulnerabilities and the adoption of effective mitigation and adaptation measures, the elaboration of sound climate policies and governance practices is of utmost importance.

Too often institutions dealing with climate change operate in an isolated and disjointed manner preventing the elaboration of a coherent holistic strategy to face the daunting challenges of this existential threat.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of institutional, regulatory and legal framework will be a high priority of Government.

60. Government will undertake a landmark constitutional amendment to include the rights of Nature in the constitutional and legal framework.

Government recognises the importance of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) as natural shields to protect our people and biodiversity. An ESA Act will be introduced and serve as a foundation for sustainable development.

Government will make public the Land Drainage Master Plan and the Digital Elevation Model. This will enable development of free software using open- data by NGOs, academics, and other stakeholders to model climate change impacts and assist in the development of mitigation strategies.

Government will launch a Service to Ecology Programme which will contribute to raising ecological awareness and promote nation-wide participation on a voluntary basis.

Government will facilitate development of socio-ecological alternatives, models and experiences that will sustain a just transition towards a socio- ecological future society. To this end, Government will set up a Just Transition Commission with the participation of committed ecologists.

61. The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan will be strengthened through capacity building, equipment procurement, and enhanced coastal sensitivity mapping for improved preparedness.

Monitoring environmental health holistically will be prioritised through defining an Environmental Performance Index, encompassing key elements such as air, water, land, and sea. Additionally, the Lagoon Water Quality Index will enable better assessment and categorisation of beach water quality.

To reinforce coastal resilience, the rehabilitation of eroded coastlines at priority sites will be undertaken. Additional land will be proclaimed as public beaches, and neglected pathways to existing beaches will be restored and upgraded for public use.

Government will support source segregation to empower communities, encourage recycling, and foster a circular economy that creates green jobs while reducing environmental strain.

## **Disaster Management**

Honourable Members,

62. National disasters are now occurring with greater frequency and severity.

And it is likely to be still more so in the future. Responding to them, especially with limited resources can be very challenging and costly.

Government will put in place an all-embracing Disaster Management Centre under the

aegis of the Prime Minister's Office as it used to be prior to 2015. The Centre will be foresighted and not reactive in its approach. It will be concerned with the core phases of disaster management as in other advanced countries. These include prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

To support the disaster response and mitigation efforts across the country, an evacuation plan for Port Louis and other high-risk flood-prone areas would be put in place.

A Land Drainage Masterplan for Rodrigues will be commissioned by the Land Drainage Authority.

### **Investing in a Transformative Green Energy Industry**

63. Government will give a major fillip to the development of a green energy industry. It will be a transformative endeavour with multiple benefits cutting across the economy, society and environment.

The former regime missed the opportunity for a real energy transition, for lack of vision. Today, our country faces a ten-year delay. The percentage of renewable energy sources in our energy mix production has been reduced from 23.4% in 2013 to 17.6% in 2024.

To remedy this situation, Government will implement a comprehensive energy transition programme by increasing the share of renewable energy in the mix, with particular focus on solar and wind.

Additionally, new sources of financing, including issuance of Green Bonds and crowdfunding will be explored.

Government's aim is to accelerate the replacement of fossil fuel with local renewable inputs to produce our electricity. To this end, Government will completely review the country's energy policy.

As Government accelerates the development of the green energy industry it will, at the same time, ensure its democratisation.

Government will also promote demand management policies in the energy sector

through ways and means to use energy more efficiently.

## **Water**

Honourable Members,

64. The climate crisis is a threat multiplier that impacts profoundly on the water cycle. In Mauritius, the situation has been exacerbated by mismanagement of water resources.

Government will review the National Water Policy and the National Integrated Water Resources Management Plan.

There are currently four different institutions associated with the management of water resources in Mauritius with hardly any coordination among them. This calls for a revamping of the governance structure of those institutions.

Special attention will be given to the water situation in Rodrigues through improvement of the distribution network and storage system.

Government will improve the water supply service in all regions in order to improve the quality of life for all, to enable continued development in the agricultural and industrial sectors, through productive investments in water mobilisation, treatment and distribution and the replacement of defective pipes based on proper leak diagnosis.

## **Waste Water**

65. The sea is seriously polluted due to the discharge of insufficiently treated wastewater by wastewater treatment plants. Many other towns without proper sewerage systems experience poor sanitation conditions and health risks, particularly during periods of heavy rain and flooding.

Government will take the necessary measures to reduce pollution of the sea and implement investment plans in infrastructure to improve our quality of life, particularly in areas without sewers.

Government will review the Sewerage Masterplan 2012 as part of an integrated policy which would include Water Resources and Sanitation together with the Strategic Environment & Social Impact Assessment (SESIA). The wastewater network will be extended to more regions including areas prone to overflows as well as in places where the existing disposal system is creating inconvenience and representing health hazards to inhabitants.

### **SHAPING A NEW DEVELOPMENT COURSE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE**

Honourable Members,

66. Arts and Culture play an important role in shaping the identity of a nation.

Government will organise an “*Assises des Arts et de la Culture*”, following which a Strategic Action Plan will be charted out for the sector for the period 2025- 2029.

Government will introduce legislation to recognise cultural workers as defined by the United Nations. Support measures will be devised to create a conducive environment for artists. A cultural desk will be tasked with facilitating the obtention of all authorisations and removing current administrative bottlenecks relating to organisation of artistic events.

The functions of the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA) will be reviewed to better support artists and protect their intellectual property rights.

67. Government will also support the development of the creative industry as a new pillar of the economy with the required legislation, incentive schemes and capacity development for professionals related to the creative industry.

The National Heritage Fund will work with the public and private sectors for the creation of a sustainable local economy around major heritage sites.

Government will encourage development and promotion of cultural tourism to portray our diversity and our “*savoir-vivre*”.

The creative industry will be further boosted through close collaboration with tertiary institutions providing courses in related fields.

A cultural rebate scheme spanning across all areas in the arts sector and a directory of musical heritage in the Indian Ocean will be established. The cultural rebate scheme will promote our island internationally as a cultural destination with a rich heritage and dynamic arts scene.

The law on the status of the artist will be reviewed to take into account the concerns of cultural workers.

Government will set up a Mauritian Cultural Centre that will promote our shared cultural heritage. Public art galleries, theatres and other public venues will be renovated and made accessible to artists.

Government will set up a National Arts Open Commission by the end of 2025. The Commission will initially advise on a comprehensive policy on arts and culture.

### **A MORE PERFORMING PUBLIC SECTOR**

Honourable Members,

68. In an era marked by AI and interconnected global challenges, the civil service must remain effective and impactful. Recognising this, the Government will put quality service at the centre of public sector transformation, ensuring that the needs of citizens remain a top priority.

An adaptive leadership is vital for this transformation and driving national progress, as civil servants must navigate through complexity, uncertainty and change.

Government will encourage innovative practices and empower civil servants to exercise leadership and address systemic issues rather than relying on traditional hierarchical approaches. We need to create a generation of adaptive leaders positioning the civil service as a dynamic force for national development and long-term success.

Government will put quality service at the centre of public sector transformation.

The vision for the Public Service is one that should be dedicated to the upholding of public interest and reaffirmation of democratic fundamentals.

Restoring trust in our public sector institutions at large is, therefore, high on Government's agenda given that we have witnessed severe erosion of values, ethics and good governance principles and practices.

Government is committed to bringing the Public Service to new heights of efficiency and effectiveness, centred around the evolving needs of our citizens and one which is responsive to societal aspirations of the nation while providing necessary support and training to its staff.

## **Public Sector Reform**

Honourable Members,

69. Government will introduce a Public Sector Reforms Bill to provide, inter alia, for reforms initiatives supported by appropriate legal framework with focus on good governance, transparency and accountability, thus paving the way for an Open Government Culture.

The introduction of an Accountability Framework for the public sector will ensure that responsibilities are clearly defined and that there are mechanisms in place to hold individuals and teams accountable.

In the face of the precarious state of the economy, improving performance and productivity in the public sector will be the top priority of this Government. This will be achieved through a revised Performance Management System, monitoring of Public Sector Delivery and Capacity Building.

Government will undertake major reforms to ensure that recruitment and promotion in the public sector are transparent and fair.

The powers of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal (PBAT) will also be reinforced so that the PBAT can have broader jurisdiction with respect to both recruitment and promotion in the public service.

Government will introduce a Public Service Facilitation system to facilitate public service delivery to the population; reducing cost of accessing services; and eliminating unnecessary inconveniences.

### **The Ombudsman**

Honourable Members,

70. Government acknowledges the importance of accountability and transparency in the administration and delivery of public services and is committed to reinforce the independent Constitutional Office of the Ombudsman as an institution where members of the public can confidentially bring their complaints and concerns for address and redress.

Government will broaden the scope of the functions of the Ombudsman with a view to enhancing its contribution to the quality of service in the public sector as a whole.

### **A MODERN AND APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

Honourable Members,

71. A modern and appropriate infrastructure is crucial to redynamising private investment both domestic and foreign.

A modern and efficient transport infrastructure will be particularly vital.

Government will come up with a 20-year Masterplan which will provide a strategic orientation for the land transport sector. The Masterplan will also include walkability



into the country's larger mobility strategy that connects seamlessly with public and private transport, and cycling infrastructure.

A complete rethinking of the bus industry will be undertaken and comprehensive measures will be implemented to make free public transport possible for all.

As Government expands and modernises the land transport, it will also ensure greater road safety by introducing a Graduated Licensing System, undertaking projects to eliminate risk-prone spots, and enhancing enforcement and road safety education.

Government also recognises that a modern and efficient seaport will be of critical importance to boosting the competitiveness of our economy as a destination for foreign investment. There will be therefore a total revamping of the port and other infrastructure to support maritime economic activities.

The masterplan for the development of the airport will be fundamentally adapted to the new economic model including the development of the Airport in Rodrigues.

Government will also ensure that the telecommunication infrastructure and facilities evolve in consonance with the exigencies of the new economic model.

A modern Road Asset Management System will be implemented to classify and manage potential unclassified roads on the island.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

72. The programme I have just presented sets out the will of Government to translate into action, over its five-year mandate, the wish of the electorate for shaping a new destiny for our country.

It sets the agenda for a total reconstruction of our nation, underpinned by the national goals of economic efficiency, social justice, solidarity and unity.

It seeks to unleash the creativity and developmental spirit of the nation. Mauritius is at a turning point in its history.

Let us all join forces to build a Bridge to the Future!

We have to connect the present to a prosperous, sustainable and inclusive future which will be shaped by new technology, new skills and new opportunities.

We have to integrate environmental stewardship into our growth plans to safeguard the future for generations to come.

Government is convinced that a collective commitment to a shared vision, where all come together, will enable the nation to move forward with a clear collaborative goal for the nation's future.

The Mauritian ingenuity works best when we all act together and advance in the same direction.

Let us today, at the dawn of this new era, forge ahead:

As one People

As one Nation.

Honourable Members,

**Let Mauritius be Mauritius again!**

*(Applause)*

*At 5.13 p.m. the Sitting was suspended.*

*On the Assembly resuming at 5.25 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 04 February 2025 at 11.30 a.m.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** The House stands adjourned!

*At 5.26 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 04 February 2025 at 11.30 a.m.*