



**SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FIRST SESSION**

**NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**THIRD EDITION**

**THURSDAY 02 MARCH 2023**

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Miss Teejista Soojhawon, MP  
Miss Krshtee Sukhbilas, MP  
Miss Rheeya Yaksha Toolsee, MP  
Miss Shaarumathi Sola Veeramunden, MP

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**MAURITIUS**

**Seventh National Assembly**

**FIRST SESSION**

**National Youth Parliament**

**THIRD EDITION**

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**Debate No. 01 of 2023**

**Sitting of Thursday 02 March 2023**

The National Youth Parliament met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 10.30 a.m.

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Mr Speaker in the Chair)*



## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY – PREVENTION & REHABILITATION

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr R. Bhujun)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to juvenile delinquency, he will state the measures Government proposes to take for the –

- (a) prevention thereof, and
- (b) rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents.

**The Prime Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, the scourge of juvenile delinquency has been present in society for a very long time. In fact, the Juvenile Offenders Act of Mauritius dates as far back as April 1935.

I wish to inform this august Assembly of the current provisions made by my Government. The Children's Act 2020 defines a juvenile as a person aged 14 or above but below the age of 18.

In Mauritius, young offenders are not sent to prison. The institution in which they are sent depends on the seriousness of the offence they have committed. There are specialised institutions whose functions are to detain these young delinquents. These are the Correctional Youth Centre, the Rehabilitation Youth Centre and the Probation Home or Hostel.

Section 15(2) of the Reform Institutions Act provides that –

“(...) where the court is satisfied that it is expedient for the reformation of a minor that he should undergo training in a Correctional Youth Centre or a Rehabilitation Youth Centre, it may direct that the offender be sent to that institution as appropriate.”

In this respect, the CYC and RYC cater for youngsters under the age of 18 who are subject to a Committal Order from the Court.

Institutions managed by the Probation and Aftercare Service are the Probation Home for Girls at Closel, Phoenix and the Probation Hostel for Boys at Les Casernes, Curepipe. These are semi-open residential institutions with a family like setting, catering for boys and girls under the age of 18 with antisocial behaviour. Minors are referred to these institutions by the Court either

through a Probation or Committal Order. The Probation Home and Hostel are not as restrictive as the RYC or CYC as the former are semi-open institutions. Youngsters are allowed to leave their premises to attend mainstream schools and other accompanied outings.

The RYC usually detains youngsters having committed mild delinquencies such as theft whilst the CYC confines those offenders who have committed more serious crimes including complicity to major crimes, sexual assault, involuntary manslaughter, and premeditated murder.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the most common causes of detention of juvenile delinquents are conviction for criminal offences most of which are cases of larceny and children beyond parental control, including defiance from parental authority, for instance, absconding from home, consumption of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, defiance of school authority involving truancy from school, precocious sexual activity and aggressive behaviour.

Coming to the specific concern of the Leader of the Opposition, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to bring to the attention of the Members of the Opposition that juvenile delinquency is indeed a matter of serious concern for my Government. There are currently different departments of Government which are already implementing numerous policies and measures to cater for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

In view of the time limit, I shall enumerate the main ones only –

- The *Brigade pour la protection de la famille* of the Mauritius Police Force carries out regular joint crackdown operations in nightclubs, licensed premises, gaming houses, commercial areas and other places of complaints with a view to enabling the detection and subsequent prevention of offences and other antisocial activities involving children. Furthermore, this Unit conducts preventive patrols near primary and secondary schools and public spaces regularly to ensure the safety and security of our children and avert them from indulging in criminal activity. Police Officers and the Brigade have also been designated as School Resource Officers who are responsible to work closely with heads of schools of both public and private educational institutions in order to identify children with minor and serious behavioural issues and take appropriate action.
- The Health and Wellness Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology provide educational psychologists around the

Republic. Secondary schools also have access to educational support desks. Moreover, there exists a student attendance tracking system which is used to identify cases of truancy. Educational social workers then contact the family of the children under the age of 16 found to be regularly shirking school and conduct regular follow-ups with the responsible party. Sanctions are taken against those who fail to send their children to school.

- Since 2018 to 28 February 2023, that is, yesterday, Police have regularly conducted workshops and forums island wide on youth protection and juvenile delinquency. The topics covered include behaviour in civil society, ill effects of drugs and examples of delinquent behaviour and its consequences. I am tabling a list of topics on which the sessions focused.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to further reduce this scourge, my Government is envisaging to implement the following measures –

- the provision of necessary facilities for the care and treatment of children with psychiatric issues;
- the extension of services of psychosocial assessments to children identified with behavioural concerns;
- the training of personnel in the sector of child protection and welfare, specifically pedopsychologists, specialised child carers and social workers;
- the creation of forums for youth ambassadors and role models to effectively communicate the importance of responsibility, respect, manners and decorum to the youth, and
- the integration of edification programmes into the national curriculum, amongst others.

M. le président, avant de répondre à la deuxième partie de la question, imaginons : dans une maison où habite un enfant avec des parents qui s'occupent de lui, il a droit ce qu'on peut qualifier de confort matériel. Il a sa propre chambre, ses repas lui sont servis à table, il vit dans une maison avec un jardin. Ses parents sont à l'écoute, sont présents et sont bienveillants quand il a besoin d'eux. En effet, il mène une vie assez confortable. Il est bien logé. Le matin il a son petit déjeuner et il a accès à un véhicule qui le dépose à l'école. Après l'école, en rentrant, il

prend sa douche, il fait ses devoirs et comme tous les jeunes, il passe un moment avec ses amis. Enfin, avant d'aller se coucher, il profite de son dîner. Maintenant, je me pose une question: comment définissez-vous la vie de cet enfant ?

I would say that it is appropriate for a child. In fact, youngsters in the Probation Home and Hostel are rehabilitated in similar conditions as I have just described. *La prise en charge est axée sur les programmes d'éducation et de réadaptation, d'encadrement familial qui vise le renforcement des capacités éducatives et ceux outre la prise en charge psychologique.* They are also provided free of charge with bags, stationery, uniforms, pocket money and educational outings from time to time. There are also regular visits with family.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to add to these already proficient services, my Government endeavours to come forward with the following measures for the consolidation of our juvenile rehabilitation system –

- training of officers in the rehabilitation cadre to ensure a humane touch in all interactions with these children;
- offer scholarships for the study of pedopsychology and the recruitment of specialised child carers;
- collaborate with international organisations such as the UNICEF to prepare a National Action Plan on juvenile delinquency prevention and rehabilitation;
- consider bringing amendments to relevant legislation and support of the deinstitutionalisation of juvenile delinquents, and
- facilitate and support the implementation of halfway home projects by NGOs such as Safe Haven by Gender Links among others.

It is important to mention the imperative roles of parents in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Nevertheless, the people of the Republic of Mauritius can rely on my Government to keep on working towards the elimination of this scourge from this society as we bring our vision of a better Mauritius even closer.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bhujun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I address the Prime Minister as to what specific programmes or initiatives the Government is planning to implement to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency such as poverty or lack of education? Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**The Prime Minister:** If you want to talk about poverty, the main measures implemented by Government so far are financial assistance to poor families including the provision of school uniforms, social housing, food packages in ZEP schools, special scholarships for pupils from vulnerable families, free education, free transport, free health services, free Internet facilities, tablets to children from vulnerable families and so on. I believe these measures would be counteracting juvenile delinquency. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bhujun:** How does the Government plan to engage with schools or other educational institutions to promote positive behaviour and prevent delinquency among young people? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** I believe that if we continue on the path of sensitization... As I have tabled the list of topics, maybe the Leader of the Opposition can take a look at it afterwards, but I will just mention a few of them. Behaviour at schools, colleges and civil society, sensitisation on the ill effects of drugs, aggression, bullying, the provisions of the Children's Act, Sex Offender Register Act, Children's Court Act and sensitisation in general. I think you get the gist of it. Thank you.

**Mr Bhujun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Prime Minister provide information on the status of existing rehabilitation programmes for juvenile offenders in a country and what step will be taken to improve and expand those programmes? Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** So, there is a scheme of training that is for residents of probation institutions. I will just enumerate on a few activities that are included in the scheme of training, mainly –

- (i) educational activities: mainstream, vocational and prevocational classes;
- (ii) rehabilitative work: training and discipline and time management. Regular sessions with psychologists; as you probably know for most juvenile delinquents,

the root cause is psychological issues which also has its own courses. There is also case conference which involved the parents, probation officers, psychologists.

- (iii) I move on to the development of social skills: there are grooming, budgeting and communications skills;
- (iv) Recreational and wellness activities: birthday celebrations, National Day, Mother's Day, Music Day and all sorts of celebrations to increase the morale of these delinquents and I think that will also reduce the delinquency rate among the youngsters.
- (v) Promoting residents' personal health, spiritual and moral education which is primordial to reintegration into society, and
- (vi) lastly, maintaining family contacts.

We want to continue on this path. So, the way we will improve is mainly by investing in personnel. Pedopsychology is an issue that we need to deal with. So, we are considering investing in the promotion of this as a course of study and to recruit many more pedopsychologists in the years to come. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Members, time is over. MP Aukloo!

#### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – APPLICATIONS IN MAURITIUS**

**(No. B/1) Mr M. Aukloo (Member of Parliament)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to Artificial Intelligence, he will state the applications thereof being made in Mauritius.

**Mr Vally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to thank the MP Aukloo for his question as it is of utmost importance to highlight the work that this Government is doing in the technology sector.

I would like to inform the House that the applications of artificial intelligence are increasingly being adopted across different sectors in Mauritius. One of the key areas where AI is being used in Mauritius is in the financial sector. Many financial institutions in Mauritius are using AI tools to make various processes such as customer service, for detection and risk management.

For instance, the Central Bank of Mauritius is using AI-powered chatbots to provide customer service to its clients. On the other hand, the Mauritius Commercial Bank is using AI to detect and prevent fraud and to develop predictive models for credit scoring.

In the healthcare sector, AI-powered tools are being used to analyse medical data, diagnose diseases and provide personalised treatment recommendations. For instance, the Mauritius Institute of Health is using AI-powered medical imaging tools to assist in the diagnosis of diseases like cancer. Furthermore, AI is also being used to develop predictive models that can help healthcare providers to anticipate health risks and take preventive measures.

AI is also being used in the transportation and logistics sector where AI-powered chatbots are being used to provide real-time information to commuters and optimise the supply chain operations. In particular, the national airline of Mauritius is using AI-powered route optimisation tool to plan efficient flights routes and reduce fuel consumption.

In the Education Sector, AI-powered learning tools are being developed to provide personalised learning experience to students as provided by the University of Mauritius.

These are just a few examples of organisations in Mauritius that are leveraging AI to improve their operations and services. Many other companies and institutions in Mauritius are also exploring the potential of AI and integrating it into their operations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is committed to promoting the adoption of artificial intelligence in the country. Our vision is to create an enabling environment that supports the development and deployment of AI technologies in a responsible and sustainable manner. To achieve this vision, the Government has taken several initiatives –

- (i) The Government has established the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council to coordinate and oversee the implementation of AI initiatives in the country. The Council's task is not only to look at AI but all important technologies; for instance, Internet of Things, cloud computing, machine learning, 5G amongst others that will have any added value to the community and the country in general.
- (ii) The Government is investing in the development of AI skills and capabilities. The Government has launched several programs to promote Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics also known as STEM Education and skills development in AI. For instance, as per the 2022/23 Budget, the Government has established a Digital Industry Academy to train the next generation of AI professionals and promote AI literacy among the public.

- (iii) The Government is creating a supportive regulatory framework for AI. In addition to the Mauritius Artificial Strategy reported by the working group in 2018, the Government is working on developing policies and regulations that promote the ethical and responsible use of AI while also fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the AI sector and ensuring that humans have the ability to override artificial intelligence decisions and maintain control over the technology.
- (iv) The Government is promoting AI research and development. The Government is investing in research initiatives through the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council that focuses on developing AI technologies that are relevant to the needs of the Mauritius society such as the application of AI and Internet of Things. For the improvement of the construction industry, the use of data analytics with AI to generate marketing and gain customer insights amongst others while also promoting collaboration between other industries, Academia and Government.

M. le président, en conclusion, la vision du gouvernement mauricien est de créer une économie alimentée par l'intelligence artificielle qui exploite le potentiel de cette dernière pour améliorer la vie des citoyens mauriciens et stimuler une croissance économique durable. Nous nous engageons à créer un environnement propice qui soutient le développement et le déploiement des technologies de l'intelligence artificielle de manière responsable et durable.

En tant que ministre de la Technologie, je continuerai à soutenir les initiatives qui favorisent l'adoption de l'intelligence artificielle dans différents secteurs et je veillerai à ce que Maurice reste à la pointe de l'innovation technologique. Merci.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Aukloo!

**Mr Aukloo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the view of unemployment in the future with regard to the implementation of AI in Mauritius, how are you going to maintain the labour force with your Ministry? Thank you.



**Mr Vally:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not hide my concern about the impact and consequences of the adoption of AI in Mauritius. I should emphasise that the new era of technology is an important factor to be taken in great consideration. The new generation is witness of this and we should be more considerable to them.

In fact, tertiary institutions such as the Middlesex University and Polytechnics Mauritius are offering courses that involve the learning of AI. Many training programmes are being offered to youngsters and we actually need a labour force dedicated for the adoption of AI in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I reassure you that my Ministry will make sure that job opportunities in AI would be advertised to the current generation. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** We move on to the next PQ! MP Toolsee!

#### **FINANCIAL SECTOR – PROPOSED MEASURES – DEVELOPMENT**

**(No. B/2) Ms R. Toolsee (Member of Parliament)** asked the Minister of Good Governance and Financial Services whether, in regard to the financial sector, he will state the measures proposed for further development thereof.

**Mr Seedheeyan:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. At the very outset, I want to point out that this year, we are celebrating the 30 years of the Mauritius International Financial Sector. Whilst, we have come a long way in building a sector which is today contributing to 13.8% of the GDP of Mauritius and is employing around 15,000 people, the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance has initiated a series of measures for the development of financial sector and our objective is to make it grow by two fold by 2030. Before delving into the measures which we have initiated, it is important to put on record that the most important actions which we have taken to ensure the sustainability of this sector is to ensure that Mauritius comes out of the Financial Action Task Force list in priority. The de-listing of Mauritius from the FATF grey list and subsequently the EU blacklist is the result of a collective and national effort characterised by a strong public and private collaboration to address the strategic deficiencies identified by the FATF which is computed ahead of the FATF set timeline.

More so, today, Mauritius is compliant to 40 of the 40 FATF recommendations which put us amongst the only...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ms Toolsee!

**Ms Toolsee:** On a point of order, it has been so long and the Minister has not even spoken about any measures for further development. I did not ask him about the past measures, but for measures for further development.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister of Good Governance!

**Mr Seedheeyan:** I am coming to it. Yes, I am coming to the measures.

**Mr Speaker:** Please, continue.

**Mr Seedheeyan:** My Ministry has initiated a series of measures to drive development in financial services sector. Firstly, by the implementation of the Blueprint Report. This report, in fact, is a strategy which was devised to establish Mauritius as an international financial centre and has a lot of recommendations.

The very first recommendation, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to create a future proof regulator and tax regime in Mauritius. The Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that we remain compliant with the International Tax Standards in Mauritius.

Today, Mauritius is white listed by the OECD and does not have any harmful features in its regime.

The second recommendation we have been considering is improving the nature and reach of Mauritius' reputation as world class international financial centre. The Mauritius IFC has created a dedicated website [www.mauritiusifc.mu](http://www.mauritiusifc.mu) whereby information with regard to the product and the landscape are regularly updated.

Furthermore, the Mauritius IFC also has its dedicated social media pages to ensure greater outreach. We launched, in April 2022, a toolkit on the Mauritius International Financial Centre geared to be a useful tool for the promotion and development of the financial services. This toolkit is a reference guide designed to support our High Commissioners and Ambassadors in showcase to the international community the unique attractiveness and competitiveness of the jurisdiction of Mauritius. Our mission abroad has a pivotal road to play as a first point of call for investors to channel foreign direct investment to Mauritius. He said while highlighting that it is our duty to ensure that we are providing our embassies with the correct resources and

information for them to succeed on investment and financial services promotion. This toolkit will be updated on a regular basis to reflect recent development in the financial services sector.

It is worth noting that since last year, following the exit of Mauritius IFC from the FATF grey list, the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance in collaboration with the Economic Development Board and the private sector operators has organised a series of road shows and one to one meetings in UK, South Africa, Germany and most recently in India. The purpose of these visits is to ensure that Mauritius IFC maintains its visibility within the international market and also sustains the relationship with our investors.

The third measure or recommendation of the Blueprint Report is to attract, develop and retain world class global talent with a focus on African human capital. One of the key recommendations under the Blueprint was to retain, attract and develop world class global talent. In this context, the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance conducted a survey to identify the human resource and skills gap being faced by operators. The objective was to provide the basis to design relevant courses with a view to fill the skills gap.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Governance, I call upon you to kindly wrap up your speech due to time constraints. Please, continue!

**Mr Seedheeyan:** Sorry?

**Mr Speaker:** Please continue and wrap up your speech!

**Mr Seedheeyan:** The various recommendations of the Blueprint Report was to attract the high calibre corporates, financial institutions to create real value of the IFC. Also, we in the Ministry of Finances and Good Governance, as it is a common fact that finance and technology proceeds same...

**Ms Toolsee:** On a point of order, I think that the Minister is just wasting the time of the House because he has not even mentioned one measure for the further development. I think that he does not even understand the meaning of development and I think that he should recruit an Adviser. I think that an Economics student of Form 4 will also...

**Mr Speaker:** I will entertain this point of order. Hon. Members, you are reminded that under the Standing Order, your speeches should be relevant to the matter being discussed. Hon.

Minister of Good Governance, we have already crossed the time limit. So, I will now entertain supplementary questions from the hon. Member.

**Ms Toolsee:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, Moody's had downgraded Mauritius ratings to be Baa3 last year. I would like to know from the Minister about the measures implemented for further development - I hope that he answers my question this time - so that Mauritius regains its position. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

**Mr Seedheeyan:** Yes, I have already mentioned about the recommendations by the Blueprint Report and I coming to the positioning of Mauritius as a FinTech Hub and you are not allowing time to speak on it. I will tell it briefly. We are coming with an innovative legislative framework. That is, back in 2019, Mauritius introduced a Regulatory Sandbox License under the Economic Development Board to allow start-ups which are in an unregulated space to test their business activities until they can be regulated by the relevant authorities.

Furthermore, Mauritius has been the first country in the world to introduce the Digital Custodian License which was corollary to the security token offering. Most recently, the Mauritius IFC has enacted a dedicated legislation for virtual asset service providers. All these provide the right framework to start up business in Mauritius. And I think I will conclude on this.

For this, my Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance is taking a plethora of measures and the...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Good Governance, allow me to interrupt you. You are answering a supplementary question, not continuing your speech. I would appreciate if you could stick to that. Thank you. Have you given your answer? Hon. Ms Toolsee!

**Ms Toolsee:** Clearly I would let the population judge whether the Minister has actually answered my question. Am I allowed for a second one?

**Mr Speaker:** Please!

**Ms Toolsee:** Okay. Recently, South Africa has been placed under release of the Financial Action Task Force. Can the Minister inform the House about the series of measures to attract potential investors in Mauritius who may now be reluctant to invest in South Africa?

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

**Mr Seedheeyan:** It is a common fact that, Mauritius being a member of the African Free Trade Continental Agreement, companies which are set up in Mauritius benefit from many privileges when selling their products to African countries. Similarly, investment, promotion and prevention agreements will also provide protection to equity orders and investors who are rooting investment through Mauritius structures to get into the African market. There are lot of measures on them.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Mariette!

### **BLUE ECONOMY – DEVELOPMENT MEASURES**

**(No. B/3) Mr L. Mariette (Member of Parliament)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Blue Economy, he will state the measures being proposed to ensure the development thereof with a view to generating employment, foreign income and ensuring food security.

**Mr Gunnoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mauritius, including its outer islands of Rodrigues, St Brandon, Agalega, Tromelin and Chagos Archipelagos, has an Exclusive Economic Zone of around 2.3 m. km<sup>2</sup> along with an extended continental shelf of about 300,000 million km<sup>2</sup> conferred to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. The EEZ includes coral reefs, sea grass beds, rough and sandy areas, submerged oceanic banks and oceanic waters.

The Mauritian blue economy is thus considered to comprise the existing fisheries and aquaculture sectors, seafood processing industry, shipping, port services and tourism activities that are connected with the sea and oceans. It also includes new and immerging areas such as marine biotechnology, sea bed mining, bunkering, renewable energy, ship building and repairs, maritime defence, security and surveillance, research and education, infrastructure development and human resources planning and development for the sector.

Projects pertaining to the blue economies span over different Ministries and departments which are governed by different legislative and institutional frameworks. In order to further the development of the blue economy, a coherent and harmonised approach is required. Thus, a

committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry since August last year with the following specific tasks –

- (i) to examine the concept of the blue economy, with the aim of coming up with a common understanding of the subject and a definition within the present Mauritian context;
- (ii) to examine existing reports on the blue economy sector for Mauritius, including reports of the seven clusters which were set up under the National Ocean Council in 2017;
- (iii) to draw up a list of stakeholders who are involved in the implementation of projects under the blue economy sector and a list of legislations concerned with areas falling under the blue economy;
- (iv) to take stock of all actions already taken or being taken by the different authorities for the development of a blue economy, and
- (v) to provide a basis for an Action Plan, including short, medium and long terms measures for the development of the blue economy sector in Mauritius with the following objectives –
  - (a) to provide an integrated approach to the development, management, regulation, and promotion of projects in the blue economy sector;
  - (b) to ensure policy coordination and monitoring among all Ministries, and public and private sector agencies dealing with activities related to the blue economy, and
  - (c) to work towards increasing the share of the blue economy sector in our GDP.

Government in November 2022 approved for the setting up of a Steering Committee under the Chair of the hon. Prime Minister and a Technical Committee for the implementation of quick win projects to boost the generation of employment, foreign income and ensuring food security.

In the meantime, my Ministry is taking the necessary actions to work out on the necessary governance mechanism for ensuring coordinated approach to the development of the blue economy in Mauritius.

With regard to the financing of the blue economy sector, the World Bank Report in 2017 indicated it would require around Rs25 billion to implement the blue economy agenda for Mauritius. An exercise is already underway in my Ministry to cost the various projects which are being implemented. The same approach will be adopted in the course of consultations with other Ministries. Consultations need to be carried out with other Ministries to size up the required funding for the implementation of the blue economy agenda.

It is to be highlighted that the success of the blue economy agenda depends largely on the availability of appropriate human resources and the skill based needed for its implementation. My Ministry is fully aware of this and has already embarked on consultations with various educational institutions to create durable partnerships in respect of those clusters which fall under our purview.

In this context, consultations are underway with the Open University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Polytechnics Ltd and Curtin University. For the mounting of courses at various levels, my Ministry will soon engage with other institutions in the same respect.

As regards the different clusters in the blue economy sector, my Ministry is building up a database of all institutions engaged in training and capacity building in those specific segments. As an example, the *École Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval* or *Vatel* are both engaged in the capacity building in the field of tourism and hotel management. Once we engage in consultations with other Ministries, we would be in a better position to evaluate and determine their human resource requirements for their particular sector and can then engage in consultations with educational and training institutions for the provision of a required capacity building.

With regard to the promotion of sustainable use of marine resources at national level and the aspect of food security, the following measures are being taken by my Ministry –

- With a view to preventing overexploitation in the lagoon, fishers have been encouraged to conduct off-lagoon fishing around fish aggregating devices installed by my Ministry.

- Moreover, artisanal fishers are provided with grants and loan facilities to purchase more robust boats for off-lagoon fishing and also to increase local fish production.
- The scheme for providing artisanal fishers with a grant to purchase canots that can help them fish off lagoon is ongoing.
- The Semi-Industrial Boat Scheme which provides a grant that will help fishermen cooperatives acquire a semi-industrial boat to fish on the banks is ongoing and is mainly to decrease our dependence on imports.
- The lagoon fish stock enhancement and my Ministry has embarked on a Marine Ranching Programme whereby fish fingerlings are being produced at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre for release at selected sites in the lagoon to increase the stock potential.
- Furthermore, an expression of interest has been launched for local and international companies to invest in fishing and processing facilities in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as an incentive and with a view to attracting investors in aquaculture, the sea concession which amounted to Rs1.2 m. in the past has been reduced to Rs100,000.

My Ministry is also coming up with a view to further develop the aquaculture sector for increased fish production of high valued species.

In addition, my Ministry is undertaking the following measures with a view to promoting aquaculture activities in Mauritius –

- The hatcheries at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry are being renovated and modernised to increase production of fish fingerlings, crabs, shrimps, etc., all year round that will ...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Gunnoo, you have exceeded the time limit by quite a lot. I will be unable to let you continue.

**Mr Gunnoo:** Yes.

**Mr Speaker:** I will now entertain a supplementary question from MP Mariette.

**Mr Mariette:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Minister has mentioned aquaculture. Can the Minister, please, elaborate on how it is sustainable and how it will create employment, foreign income and ensuring food security? Thank you.



**Mr Speaker:** Minister!

**Mr Gunnoo:** Aquaculture offers an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. Through water sequestration, the natural carbon capture by water and aquatic plants, aquaculture can contribute to reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, helping to address climate change. An aquaculture is no longer limited to offshore environments. Fish farming is being taken increasingly closer to home. Onshore facilities enable seafood to be produced close to a large market place and urban areas. In the next decade, we could be having aquacultures in urban regions to further decrease the carbon footprint of the fish that we consume. This will dramatically shorten the distance involved in transporting products to market thus reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while increasing the product shelf life to reduce food loss and waste. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Mariette!

**Mr Mariette:** No further questions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, MP Nuckcheddy!

#### **SMEs - LOCAL PRODUCTION - PROMOTION**

**(No. B/4) Ms H. V. Nuckcheddy (Member of Parliament)** asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to small and medium enterprises, she will state the incentives that will be given thereto with a view to promoting local production of goods.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister of Industrial Development!

**Ms Vencatachellum:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I, firstly, inform the hon. Member that following the proclamation of the SME Act 2017, various schemes, all in line with the recommendations of the 10-year Master Plan for the SME Sector, have been completed or are under implementation.

Accordingly, my Ministry has adopted various incentive schemes geared towards the promotion of local goods which are –

- (i) several financing schemes to help SMEs access the necessary funding. These include the SME Partnership Fund, the SME Development Fund and the Mauritius Investment Corporation;
- (ii) tax incentives including tax break and exemption for SMEs that are engaged in local production. For instance, this include tax credits for SMEs, which invest in machinery, equipment and software used for production processes.

Moreover, procurement policies for SMEs which create a market for local goods which in, help to support their growth and sustainability by increasing demands for their products. This can be particularly important for new SMEs but also encouraging local production. Furthermore, the SME Certification Scheme which provides for technical assistance to SMEs and cooperative for accreditation to international standards and certification will help SMEs target the international market through exportation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on top of this, my Ministry is planning to implement the following incentives towards local production of goods by SMEs –

- 1) Firstly, streamlining the integration process of SMEs by simplifying regulation. Hence, making it easier for SMEs to start and operate their businesses. This includes expediting the process of obtaining licenses and permits and reducing the time and cost required to comply with those regulations.
- 2) Secondly, develop a supportive ecosystem by creating networks association and clusters that bring together SMEs, suppliers, customers and other stakeholders which will increase production of local goods.
- 3) Finally, promoting sustainable practices among SMEs such as energy efficiency, waste reduction and the use of renewable resources. This will help SMEs to reduce their environmental footprint and improve their sustainability which can be a competitive advantage in local and international markets.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the continuous upgrading of knowledge and acquisition of new competencies are crucial to the progress and development of SMEs and conscious of this strategic importance, SME Mauritius has invested heavily in capacity building for SMEs. SME Mauritius has also initiated online training courses in key areas of business management

pertinent to business survival, namely, business remodelling, cost optimization, working capital management, forecasting methods and digital adaptation. These capacity building programmes have benefited some 1500 SMEs. With those actual and prospective strategies, my Ministry is confident that local production will expand in the long run. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. MP Nuckcheddy!

**Ms Nuckcheddy:** Mr Speaker, Sir, courses, loans, and grants have a long history in Mauritius. The capacity and development for SMEs is crucial. Access to supermarkets is hard and unfair openly. They do not want consumers to have the idea to buy local. So, can your Ministry can launch a 100% locally made supermarket regrouping all Mauritians and residents willing to produce goods and services on the strict standards of quality? Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister!

**Ms Vencatachellum:** Thank you. As mentioned, the process of streamlining the integration process of SMEs will help not only in encouraging businesses to start up an SME but also this will help them to get loan easier when they will benefit from the licenses and permits. And regarding the markets, the currently “Made in Moris” brand, for example, the yoghurt’s industry, the handicrafts are currently initiating various markets and regarding the building capacity training, there are various incentives actually in place which offer rather face-to-face training to new SMEs but also online training. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. MP Nuckcheddy!

**Ms Nuckcheddy:** Hon. Minister, what is the concrete evidence that the loan facilities are really going to help expand the local goods production in the long-term?

**Ms Vencatachellum:** So, the main issue for SMEs is mainly the funding. So, having a loan will encourage them to produce more goods because more capital will be available to them. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over!

## MOTION

### CLIMATE CHANGE - COMBAT

**The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Ms P. Rachpal):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, namely -

*“This National Youth Parliament resolves that urgent and efficient actions be taken by the Republic of Mauritius at national and international levels to combat climate change and its devastating impacts”.*

*Question again proposed.*

Mr Speaker Sir, clean air, water and a livable climate are inalienable human rights. Solving this crisis is not a question of politics. I repeat: solving this crisis is not a question of politics. It is our moral obligation if admittedly, a daunting one. As a small island-state, Mauritius is not alone in its vulnerability to climate change as per the 2020 world risk reporting it ranked at 53<sup>rd</sup> with highest disaster risk.

Without further wasting the time of the House, allow me to highlight, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius generates about 1373 tons of wastes on a daily basis. It is huge, isn't, it? In 2021, the total volume of wastes disposed at Mare Chicose Landfill was 501,167 tons, of which less than 3% is recycled. This is an alarming fact! Have you imagined how heavy as a burden these wastes are weighing on planet Earth? We no longer can allow our population to live in such environment, breathing polluted air like methane and carbon monoxide. In line with my Ministry with a goal of adopting a circular economy, the New Solid Waste Management Strategy has set up a sustainable community at Belle Verte, Quatre Bornes with an innovative waste management whereby they sell up-cycled waste materials and collaborate with a local glass recycler to establish a recycling value chain. Through these activities, the local town generates a local market for waste collectors to earn an income from recycling local wastes. Furthermore, the focus is being shifted from the linear economy 'take-make-waste' whereby the same is recovered and recycled to divert wastes away from landfilling, an opportunity to enhance waste efficiency.

In addition, climate change has amplified the frequency of extreme events resulting in unprecedented rainfall density, acute flash flood and sea level rise with associated risks to life like past cyclones. Over the last decade, an accelerated sea level rise of over 5.0 mm per year has been observed causing the degradation of the coastal ecosystems. As a means of mitigating the issue, the development of 50 GIS maps for coastal zones for impactful and cost effective climate

change preparedness and response has been set up. A Coral Conservation Plan was developed in 2015 to protect coral reefs including reef restoration measures as they act as a barrier for our coasts. We need them. A yearly budget of around Rs100 m. is provided by the National Environment Fund (NEF) to address issues of coastal erosion.

A project of replacement of filao trees within the dynamic beach zone 2019 to 2021 on three public beaches, namely Flic-en-Flac, Belle Mare and Le Morne is ongoing to restore the coastal biodiversity and increase resilience of the coastal zones of climate change impacts. ECOFISH project aligned with the UNDP has been established. Recently, at the COP27, *Maurice Ile Durable* concept was put in place and this was a huge achievement for us. Climate change adaptation programme in the coastal zone in Mauritius is a key measure.

With the support of the UNEP and other development partners, Mauritius has made significant stride in the implementation of policies and initiatives on sustainable production and consumption. The State is spending around 2% of its GDP - I repeat 2% of its GDP - around \$265 m. on environmental and climate change related policies.

Moreover, in its updated NDC, Mauritius raised ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% in 2030. As announced in the Budget, the green energy would be new pillar of the economy as 60% of the country's energy needs will be produced from green sources by 2030. Approximately Rs270 m. were provided via a green climate fund grant under the umbrella initiative supported by the UNDP. Accelerating the transformational shift to a low carbon economy in the Republic of Mauritius project is a must.

Hon. Members of the House, it is time to wake up! Wake up for a better future filled with hopes and diligence. A greener future awaits all of us. Just think us becoming future parents and seeing our children enjoying a fresh environment, isn't that rejoicing? Do reflect on that, hon. Members.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the motion to the National Youth Parliament. Thank you for your attention.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Ms S. Sookna) seconded.**

**Mr Speaker:** Next, we move to hon. Ms Sukhbilas!

(11.29 a.m.)

**Ms K. Sukhbilas (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Firstly, I would like to applaud the Government's initiative in building this motion. It is of paramount importance that we take severe climate actions to protect our paradise island. Now, whether these solutions proposed are up to the level is another story.

The immense climate change risk that we face is real, it is tangible. We can feel it in the stronger winds of our cyclones, but also in the heartbreaks of the families who are having their houses flooded, their crops destroyed, their lives in mayhem. When will enough be enough?

It is high time we come up with practical, efficient and pertinent measures. Yet, this is precisely where this motion fails. The Minister of Environment just went on and on about our past achievements, but the Government's motion is mainly made up of recommendations and endorsements. They fail to realise the seriousness of the situation.

The motion is short but it is definitely not sweet. The Government has to understand that we live in a complex and turbulent world, where our citizens are expecting us to come up with concrete and realistic solutions. We are not being paid to just sit here and come up with brief ideas.

Also, surprisingly, the motion leaves out tons of crucial matters like terrestrial biodiversity, climate justice and sustainable financing. Don't the Ministers understand that these are very significant in achieving SDG 13?

The complete exclusion of terrestrial biodiversity itself from this motion is highly concerning. UNESCO itself on its website clearly states that –

“slowing biodiversity loss is essential to mitigate climate change and achieve a transformative sustainable development.”

Unfortunately, it seems that the conservation of the plants and animals of our land is not a priority for our Minister of Environment. Last year itself, we earned Rs65,000 per tourist, but Rs180,000 per live primate exported. The live primate trade is booming, but what will happen to our biodiversity if we continue to export our animals at the same rate? The resulting effect on our

capability to face climate change repercussions is disastrous. Yet, this motion makes zero provision for the protection of such ecosystems.

The concept of inclusivity is also totally foreign to the Ministers as nowhere is it ensured that climate change action is taken after careful consideration of all members of society, be it women, minorities and disadvantaged groups. The Government should have reiterated the need for fair and representative climate action for all. Each and every one of us here, whether rich or poor, male or female or otherwise, deserves a clean, safe and resilient environment.

In this line, we urge the Government to keep an open mind and consider our criticisms and recommendations. This is beyond doubt a critical time for climate action, but we can definitely achieve our goals with more dedication and much better motions.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Mr Rengassamy!

(11.32 a.m.)

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr L. Rengassamy):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mother Nature is angry; angry at us, humans. We are destroying, if not, killing our one and only home, the Earth. Our climate is deteriorating and at this rate in the near future, Mark Twain's famous saying will no longer stand for our beloved island: Mauritius will not be a paradise anymore. I am afraid that the opposite might unfortunately come true.

Can we escape this curse and make our Mauritius a greener utopia? Well, the motion propounded by the Minister of Environment, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, is an excellent resort for the mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

Indeed, cynics from the Opposition will always come up with irrational comments to claim that this thesis is not real. Yet, through the advent of this motion, we can make a stance towards saving the environment.

Members of the House, are you aware that about 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide is emitted by Small Islands Development States on a yearly basis? This is a lot. Industries, firms and companies are abusing on our carbon footprints. Since there is no specific legislation that aims directly at reducing carbon emissions, carbon tax will therefore account for a quota for

these institutions to monitor their carbon output and it will be of great help to reduce these unwanted emissions.

Eco taxes such as carbon tax penalises firms that emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide. Europe itself has 14 countries that adopted this measure to contain carbon dioxide and emissions level permitted by 20%. The United Kingdom will generate about £1 trillion by imposing a carbon tax of just £25 per metric. These are avenues to reducing pollution levels and increase Government revenues. These funds could be used by the Government to come up with more green and sustainable environmental projects to fund alternate ways of productions. The cherry on the top will be: since price will be a bit higher, this will deter customers to purchase such kind of products.

Therefore, I believe that it is critical that we, as Members of Parliament, support this type of environmental tax in order to save our beloved island and rekindle Mark Twain's saying.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a shame that the Members of the Opposition have the audacity to tell in this House of democracy that Government has no initiative to help save us from this environmental dilemma. This motion is all about saving Mauritius from the deteriorating situation. And this Member of Opposition has the audacity to tell in this House that we are not doing anything! Member of the Opposition, please read again this motion and look at all the incentives and mitigation measures that we have come up with to help solve this issue that we have been facing in Mauritius. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Carrim!

(11.35 a.m.)

**Mr J. Z. Carrim (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Climate change is a problem that affects us all, but none more so than the youth. Even with this, the Government has not proposed anything to target the youth; to make us more aware.

The Government's plans, although excellent, are not adapted to the local context. For instance, the hon. Member mentioned that the Government spent 2% of GDP on environmental projects. This is vastly insignificant. We need \$6.5 billion to achieve our renewable plans by 2030. What is being done to achieve this? 2% of GDP is a mere Rs10 billion a year and \$6.5



billion is over Rs240 billion rising with our depreciating rupee. So, what is being done to fund our adaptation?

Seychelles, for example, has introduced a very popular and successful green bond. We have 2,300,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Exclusive Economic Zones. Why are we not using our sea, our carbon dioxide absorption potential to be able to fund our adaptation? We cannot depend on foreign donors, foreign donors who protect their own interests. We have to protect our own interest first.

This Government is merely reactionary. What are you doing to introduce new plans, new projects, new research that can actually make Mauritius a hub for sustainable development? Where are the hydrogen projects? Where are the water desalination projects? Where are we? The youth of Mauritius, the climate educated youth are going abroad. This Government is not introducing anything of substantial significance, it is merely taking existing programs and renaming them to make it seem that they are doing something when in reality not much is being done. For example, the hon. Member talked about our daily waste and that is true, it is a major problem. However, in the CEB Roadmap 2030, the Government plans on using biogas from the Mare Chicose landfill until 2030.

So, this is inherently contradictory. To be able to achieve the renewable energy goals, the Government plans on ensuring more waste, wasting more. This is against the SDGs and not compatible with our image for climate change. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, MP Carrim. I would like to remind the House that whilst electronic devices are allowed inside they should be kept on silent mode for the continuous flow of business. Thank you.

We move on to MP Bhurosah!

(11.38 a.m.)

**The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Ms K. Bhurosah):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Well, climate change is definitely a going concern. Indeed, sea levels are rising, extreme weather patterns are becoming more and more frequent and most importantly human lives are at risk too.

However, as much as climate change is a concerning matter, economic development should be prioritised too. Indeed, economic development instils economic stability. Nevertheless,

higher levels of economic growth tend to go hand in hand with higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions. The solution to that is simple, sustainable development is the way to go.

Sustainable development is actually a concept which encompasses climate mitigation as well as economic growth. For instance, the construction industry can be targeted. This industry alone contributes to 39% of the total greenhouse gas emissions. Switching to more eco-friendly materials such as greener cement is already a big step forward. Now, revamping the infrastructure to make it more eco-friendly is no easy task, it is a multi-step process which definitely requires time.

First, it is crucial to invest in research and development. This will provide a powerful insight on the key term being efficient over here. We can take the example of Japan, a cost efficient nation which spends 3.6% of its GDP on research and development. Hon. Members, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development is trying its utmost best to amass climate finance. In fact, we have successfully dedicated Rs4.18 billion to environment and climate change in the 2021-2022 Budget and we intend to channel Rs4.4 billion according to the 2023-2024 Budget. Most of these funds will be collected either from tax revenue or from sustainable bonds; namely green bonds, blue bonds, climate bonds as well as climate-friendly social bonds.

Concerning the financing decision, as mentioned by the Opposition side, it is still challenging for Mauritius to tackle the climate crisis on its own. First, we are a comparatively small economy with an average annual GDP of USD11.53 billion and secondly, why should we? According to the European Commission report, Mauritius contributes as little as 0.01% of the total greenhouse gas emissions which are being emitted and other countries contribute much more. Shockingly, the figure for China is 32.93%.

Resorting to bilateral and multilateral measures is hence crucial to help us meet our climate goals. For example, Mauritius can diplomatically call for climate finance from its leading bilateral parties, that is, Japan, France and India or from multilateral agreements. The United Nations Convention, the Stockholm Convention as well as the crypto protocols are some of the examples that have been implemented in the recent years. These funds can be in turn channelled into projects that aim to turn Mauritius into a low carbon economy.

I now invite the National Youth Parliament to vote in favour of this Motion for truly it will be revolutionary.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. MP Toolsee.

(11.42 a.m.)

**Ms R. Y. Toolsee (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will firstly start by agreeing with the hon. Minister who just spoke before me about the contribution of Mauritius to climate change, but that does not mean that we should focus more on adaptation measures because even if we engage in a very proper mitigation measure, we will not be able to save our country.

Anyways, this Motion has so many inconsistencies, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I can go on and on about it but let me restrict myself to certain points. The situation is critical, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius risks losing a quarter of its size if we lose our coastal area. For sure, the Government will brag that Rs3.5 billion have recently been allocated for their rehabilitation but the question is why now? We have been warned by the United Nations several times. So, it is either a clear case of ignorance or ‘United Nations, so what?’

*Gouverner c’est prévoir, M. le président*, it is not the first time that we are bearing the consequences of the inaction of the Government. It was observed even in the case of COVID-19 where closure of borders was delayed *même si l’opposition avait tiré la sonnette d’alarme à plusieurs reprises, M. le président*. We have already lost about 10 metres of our beaches. Is the Government not aware that our economy is highly dependent on Tourism? Is the Government not aware of the importance of our beaches? Well, clearly not!

Coming to solutions now, I am aware that many laws are being promulgated to protect our environment, our beaches, our seas but what is the point of voting for a law but not actually enforcing them as they should? I am sure that the House is aware of *to zete to tase* but none of us must have seen an environmental Police officer actually walking around to ensure that no one pollutes our lagoon and beaches. No wonder why our coral reefs are worsening.

Mr Speaker, Sir, any individual looking at this Motion would have the impression that this Government has at heart sustainable development. Of course, they are implementing

concrete measures; do you not see concrete everywhere? All our forests are being converted to highway and smart cities. It is so unique that tourists will get the chance to experience new things such as hiking on concrete. Imagine that beautiful sight of a tourist hiking on our Cyber Tower 1 or the Government House.

I would like to apologise to the Government for realising late why Mauritius aspires to be a unique, indeed very unique to its destination, especially for eco-tourism. Although promoting eco-tourism is actually a good measure but is it really feasible right now? Multiple cases of sharks in our lagoons were subjected to the insensitivity of the Government. Are we projecting a safe image of our lagoons through videos of these sharks for tourists to practice sea activities like kayak? Do we even have sufficient funds to revive national parks? We definitely need to dig deeper into this.

At this point, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not even find the motion even average. I am worried about the population watching us. So, the time for action is now.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Petricher!

(11.45 a.m.)

**Mr Q. L. Petricher (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I understand the Opposition Members' concerns on whether the Government is acting enough about climate change but what the Opposition Members have to understand is that there are way too many solutions to climate change and that we cannot implement all of them at once. We have to go through little steps and progress slowly but surely.

Now, I believe that the House is aware that most scholar establishments around the country inform and teach the students about the effects of climate change and the multiple actions they can take as individuals and small communities, but in most cases it stops here. But, climate action does not stop there; it includes being able to link that to general human behaviour itself and how the first step to acting against climate change is in our mind.

This first step, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to fully acknowledge that we, humans, are the cause and have to be the solution to climate change.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, how do we implement this at the different levels of education? Let us start at the primary level; so, children aged between 5 and 11 years. The best way to implement this climate resilience mindset to these children is through sensitisation by fun activities. These children can learn both the science behind climate change and how to tackle it through little interactive games.

For the secondary and tertiary levels on the other hand, a different approach is needed. A good example of approach to the matter would be to let the youth try and find their own solutions with only little *encadrement*. This thus promotes a sense of independence amongst our youth as they get to work more on their own but also a sense of cooperation, as the solution to climate change will never be individual. This will help assess our youth's creativity as they try and find the most innovative and effective solutions to climate change.

In conclusion Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the most effective ways to integrate the youth in climate action is to make it fun and interactive for them.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister of Commerce!

(11.48 a.m.)

**The Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection (Ms N. M. Tulsi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As the population of Mauritius expands, disposing of household wastes becomes more challenging, with growing pressure on landfill capacity at Mare Chicose and increased risk posed by leakage of hazardous wastes. As such, the Government has come up with tax incentives to encourage households to economise on wastes, increase the portion of wastes that is recycled and separate hazardous or toxic wastes.

As Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, one panacea we bring forward is pay-by-the-bag schemes. If households had to pay for their wastes, this would encourage them to generate less wastes by, for example, increased composting, reduced consumption of packaged products and separation of recyclables. Ideally, households would be given separate bins for recycling, which will be collected at the curbside, free of charge.

Additionally, to lower environmental risks, hazardous items like batteries, tyres and used electronic equipment should be disposed of safely, rather than deposited in landfills with other trash. These hazardous products are potentially good candidates for deposit-refund systems. For example, a portion of the existing tax on tyres and batteries could be rebated to individuals when they return these items to special collection centres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, taxes could also play a useful role in managing off shore fisheries in cases where overfishing on reefs and in lagoons is putting marine ecosystems under extreme pressure. Unfortunately, over 50% of corals in Mauritian lagoon are dead and fish as well as octopus population has decreased dramatically. Market-based policy approaches that effectively charge fishermen for extracting fish have proved fruitful in addressing overfishing. This approach is far better than other approaches like restrictions on gear and harvest seasons which do not address the potential problem of excessive incentives to catch as much as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, I urge my fellow parliamentarians to consider these specific types of taxation as potential solutions for our country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister! Next, MP Padaruth!

(11.51 a.m.)

**Mr P. R. Padaruth (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I would like to present a few points I deem fit that the Government should take into consideration. Firstly, limited focus on behaviour change. Environmental education should inspire and empower students to make changes in their own behaviour and lifestyles to promote sustainability. If such programmes fail to focus on behaviour change, then they may be less effective in promoting long-term environmental awareness inaction. Today's youth, in general, is very adamant on interactive and creative learning. And given the current approaches used at educational levels, important environmental topics such as eco-friendliness, biodiversity and loss of wildlife are being publicised as academic and research intensive topics rather than a simple real topic threatening the continuity of life on earth in the foreseeable future.

The second point I wish to bring forward, Mr Speaker, Sir, is insufficient training of educators. Educators are essential to the success of environmental education programmes. If the Government fails to provide adequate training for educators, they may not have the knowledge or skills necessary to teach environmental concepts effectively. This may lead to students receiving inaccurate or incomplete information or failing to understand the importance of environmental issues. To sustain this argument, it is to be noted that in Mauritius, apart from the limited courses available from few universities in Mauritius, there is barely any institution or initiative providing education programmes with respect to environmental issues to enhance the skills of educators in this field. The fact that there not are many trained educators in the field of environmental awareness, we cannot expect the youth to be properly guided and monitored with regard to environmental programmes and initiatives.

My third and last point that I wish to bring forward to this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, is limited participation and engagement. Environmental education programmes require students' participation and engagement to be effective. If such programmes fail to engage students and inspire them to take action, then, they may be less effective in promoting environmental awareness and behaviour change. There should be an education reform with respect to the methodologies used to achieve effective outcomes from environmental initiatives. Currently, more could be done by the Ministry of Education into issuing guidelines on new ways of pondering this whole process; more efficient, *inter alia*, hands-on activities, group projects and discussions to actively involve students in the learning process. These activities should be designed to be relevant and relatable to students' life experiences, making them more likely to be engaged and invested in the material.

M. le président, j'espère avoir été très clair dans l'avancement de mes points et que cela servirait dans l'implémentation des futurs projets ainsi que de notre combat contre le changement climatique.

Merci.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, MP Padaruth! MP Raghoobur!

(11.54 a.m.)

**Ms T. Raghoobur (Deputy Chairperson of Committees):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

With reference to what the Member of the Opposition said earlier, I would like to start with a quote which goes as follows –

*“Acta-non verba”*

which implies deeds, not words, and that is what we, as a Government, base ourselves on. Our Government is building upon multiple international agreements and conventions to which Mauritius is party with a view to ensure the strengthening of resilience, adaptation and mitigation capacity to climate-related disasters.

Mauritius’ Climate Change Act 2020 and NDC target to reduce GHG emissions by 40% by 2030 are important milestones, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and is aimed at achieving the long-term temperature goal set out in Article 2 of the Convention.

In addition, the Government is investing more than US\$15 million in the construction of drains and coastal rehabilitation programmes for priority eroded sites.

Mauritius is committed to strengthening its resilience to the climate crisis, embarking on a low-emission pathway and completely phasing out coal in electricity generation before 2030.

The updated NDC has taken the firm commitment of providing an unconditional support of 35% share of the total financial needs, amounting to US\$2.3 billion. The remaining 65% share will depend on crucially needed support from international sources which is why our Government is building upon the multiple international agreements and conventions.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Nanette!

(11.56 a.m.)

**Ms G. S. Nanette (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I introduce that the Government is taking into consideration to call for multilateral and bilateral aids regarding the implementation of sustainable projects but, we have to take into consideration that Mauritius did not receive much fund.

In 2020, for its sustainable development, Mauritius received only \$300,000 from the UNDP supporting National Determined Contributions for the Republic of Mauritius and €200,000 from the French government, said the Ministry of Environment and Solid Waste



Management and Climate Change, hon. Kavydass Ramano during an interview in August 2022, in total resuming to 20 million only. Will 20 million only be enough for the National Development Plan that the Government is thinking of implementing in their motion?

I propose that Mauritius increases its involvement in Free Trade Agreements. Furthermore, what is a Free Trade Agreement? As it is known, a Free Trade Agreement or Treaty is an agreement according to international law to form a free trade area between the cooperating states. Mauritius has already contributed in a Free Trade Agreement and if I can note further apart that the circular economy can directly affect the economic sector of Mauritius. How does it affect the economic sector of Mauritius? It challenges business interests in Mauritius. The government has to design new policies with the existing ones to prevent this from happening because if local entrepreneurs are discouraged to produce goods, our economy will be more affected than before. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Seebaruth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, point of order! So, the hon. Member said that Mauritius should be involved in more Free Trade Agreements, but meanwhile, Mauritius is already active in Free Trade Agreements, *notamment nous avons le* preferential trade agreement with Turkey. So, what is the Member referring to?

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you. I will entertain this point of order. Whilst the Government is doing something to address the issue, the MP has said that no action is being taken. So, I will entertain this point of order. We move onto the next orator.

**Ms Sookna:** I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Member cannot mention any names of other persons who are not currently in this Assembly.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, hon. Minister for bringing this to my attention. The House is reminded that under the Standing Orders, no names of people that are not sitting in this Assembly can be mentioned. It applies to the government and the opposition. Thank you, Minister. Next, hon. Minister of National Infrastructure!

(12.00 p.m.)

**The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr R. Daworaz):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since the time is very limited, let me try to go straight and dive into the subject. I must admit that I have listened to the orators that have preceded me

with a lot of interest. I will, as I go along in my intervention, address issues raised by the Members of the Opposition and also by the Government.

As the Ministers and the Members who have spoken before me in this side of the House have rightly said that the context of this motion is of utmost importance. The state of Mauritius is one of the most vulnerable countries exposed to climate change and natural hazards. We are already through more frequent and devastating extreme weather events such as flash floods which have affected our economy and the ecosystem and livelihood of our country.

As we all know, the transport sector is one of the most contributor of the greenhouse gases in Mauritius. It is good to know that despite with an increase of 4.1% in the number of motor vehicles, there were less greenhouse gases emissions and less energy consumption and this is due to the measures that are already being implemented in the last years by our Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the commitment made by our Prime Minister at the COP26 in Glasgow with the international community, this commitment reflects the vision of a resilient, clean and a sustainable development. Therefore, our Government is proposing for the introduction of a new National Development Plan that will enable to provide strategic advices to the government on efficient provision of transport and infrastructure and this will improve and promote the sustainable development which will conserve high quality agricultural land and sensitive environment area.

The Member of the Opposition, Mr Carrim, was relating, a few minutes ago, that there is no such introduction of any plan. I would firstly advise him to go through this motion and then to come to this House and to propose additional measures rather than criticising.

With the emerging and the growing clusters at the region of Côte d'Or and Grand Baie and the Urban Renaissance Zones and around the town centres, the new National Development Plans will allow the government to assess the region and to cater for the extension of the Metro Express project to those specific regions in the future, which will be operated by the energy being generated by the implementation of photovoltaic farms.

I would further say that the Members of the Opposition clearly pointed out that we have not targeted the youth in our educational system. Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to refer the Members of the Opposition to the proposed measures which reads “the creation of awareness from young

age through environmental education.” I believe that once again the Opposition needs to read more accurately the motion and maybe to reread to properly understand the measures and not to make baseless allegations.

I would like to draw the attention of this House that the implementation of the actual Metro Express project from Curepipe to Port Louis would not have been possible without the line of credit and grant provided by the government of India. Moreover, related to the public transport system, our government is also proposing for an increase in subsidies for purchase of electric buses from Rs1 m. to Rs2 m. for 9 metres buses and from Rs1.5 m. to Rs2.5 m. for buses exceeding 9 metres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be also construction of a new road layout with adequate drain provisions across the flood prone area which has been identified by the Land Drainage Masterplan which has been created by the Land Drainage Authority falling under the aegis of my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be more creation of new road layouts including bus and motorcycle lanes to reduce the traffic congestion and to improve the transit capacity. Moreover, there will be construction of climate resilient government buildings that will stand the effect of climate change, for example, earthquake, tsunami, heavy rainfall, and cyclone.

To conclude, our government strategy is to accelerate our country transitions into a model of a sustainable and inclusive development in order to combat climate change. I pray to the both sides of the House to vote in favour of this motion as this motion has measures that have been proposed in order to combat the effect of climate change.

“The future depends on what we do in the present.” – Mahatma Gandhi.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Hon. Askurn!

(12.05 p.m.)

**Mr S. Askurn (Member of Parliament):** Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for recognising me. I wish to first of all thank the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for bringing this Motion of great concern to this august House.

I am afraid that the resolution presented is quite superficial and therefore has a serious lacuna in the legal area and others. The law impacts without exception all stakeholders in a sovereign democratic state. All actions are set out under the law. Therefore, to have a more sustainable future that considers climate change, we made laws and regulations that impact positively in that sense.

An amendment of the Constitution would be required for the addition of a provision for the right to a healthy and ecologically sound environment as a fundamental human right. As a consequence, the citizens would benefit from the right to receive information to take part in decision-making about environmental matters and to obtain access to the justice system in cases of breaches of such rights. Moreover, all State policies, legislations and especially the budget would be drafted in such a way as to abide to the environmental rights.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of the view that Mauritius is impacted by climate change and its effects. We have all recently experienced a plethora of natural calamities such as intense tropical cyclones, flooding and torrential rain and so on. Drainage systems can therefore play an important role in reducing storm water runoff and maximising groundwater recharge. However, drainage only works right if it allows for specific factors such as absorption.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is good for my friends of the Government to further recall, recognise, note and now note with concern and be alarmed about various issues in relation to climate change, but what about the implementation of sustainable measures to mitigate both climate change and its impacts? They have literally advanced eight massive points that lack substance and a clear sense of direction. Sustainable Development Goals to be attained by 2030 are now tactical targets of the Government.

In the adaptation of the words of William Shakespeare, Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that we are not poor players that strut and fret their hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. We are almost reaching the D-Day but what after 2030? What about the strategy of the State? If the Government does not engage in a more constructive policy, might I suggest that they resign at once.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are at war against the evil of climate change; we cannot, must not and should not lose this war.

**Mr Gunnoo:** On a point of order. Section 42(1) how is the resignation of our Government be related to the climate change?

**Mr Speaker:** I am sorry Minister, can you place your mic closer to you when you state your point of order? Can you state it again, please?

**Mr Gunnoo:** Section 42(1) - Relevancy in Debate, how is the resignation of our Government be a solution to climate change as he mentioned?

**Mr Speaker:** Minister, I will not entertain this point of order.

*(Interruptions)*

Please! Please!

While I understand your point, I believe the MP is stating his opinion and expressing his points also. I will not entertain this point of order.

MP, please continue!

**Mr Askurn:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I was stating, we cannot, must not and should not lose this war. Together, we can defeat climate change. Together, we can make the environment better than ever. Together, we have the power to begin the world all over again.

Thank you for your attention.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister of Tourism!

(12.10 p.m.)

**The Minister of Tourism (Ms K. Issac):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Members of Parliament, the tourism sector is one of the key pillars of the Mauritian economy. It is in the 1950s that the deployment of tourism started with approximately 1,550 visitors and this has been accelerating over the years until 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic where there were 1.4 million tourists with an achievement of tourism earnings at Rs61.6 billion. It is therefore a powerful engine of growth for investment, entrepreneurship, works and job creation. The tourism industry directly creates one in every 10 jobs in Mauritius and contributed to 8% of the total GDP in 2019.

Between the Financial Year 2018/2019 and 2021/2022, the spent per tourist has increased by 63% in rupee terms and 30% in USD. We are now expecting 1.2 million tourists for the Financial Year 2022/2023 which represents 86% recovery of our tourist arrival for the Financial Year 2018/2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Mauritius is at the centre stage of luxury industry and the top choice for tourists.

However, the tourism sector is also highly vulnerable to climate change and its contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases cannot be ignored due to which, the need to scale up climate action has been and remains urgent. The vision for Mauritius to become a Leading and Sustainable Island Destination has been achieved through the implementation of the SUS Island Project funded by the European Commission, which was kicked off in 2018.

The SUS Island Project is based on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) which is the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism. The project is in line with the Low Carbon Island Development Strategy and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions 2017-2021 and the project Accelerating Transformational Shift to a Low Carbon Economy – the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of which is for the period 2020-2025. The SUS Island Project promotes sustainable tourism that reduces the footprint, that is, the negative impacts such as carbon emission.

Additionally, Property Development Scheme projects have been adopted to design properties for citizens and non-citizens, to trim energy use and to further lessen the developments' carbon footprint. These design features typically include plantation-style shutters, slate floors, and cooling waterways.

Moreover, pursuant to the provisions of the Environment Protection Act 2002, there are strict environmental standards that developers have to comply with before proceeding with a PDS project. Under Sections 16 and 18 of the Environment Protection Act 2002, a Preliminary Environment Report (PER) in conformity with any required policy or environmental guidance and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Licence which identifies and assesses the effects of climate change on any such developments, are required as detailed under Part IV of the Act. Section 15 of the Act further makes it an offence for any proponent who fails to comply with such requirements.

In line with those measures, we can proudly say that the Mauritian Standard on Sustainable Tourism has achieved the GSTC Recognised standard status in 2019 and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, no stone has been left unturned to promote responsible tourism in a view to achieve the Green Destination Status and make Mauritius a sustainable island to visit and a great place to live for its population. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister of Gender Equality, please!

(12.14 p.m.)

**The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Ms S. Koonjul):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

First of all, I would like to address an issue raised by the Opposition. I heard the term ‘inaction’, inaction in terms of what? The purpose of the motion is *justement* to adjust the pressing issue of climate change. I wonder where the Opposition has seen tourists hiking on concrete. Mauritius is one of the most recommended tourist spots. Addressing the issue of climate change does not mean that all concrete will be taken down. Furthermore, I think that the Opposition confuses climate change action with putting a complete halt to infrastructure. Mauritius promotes a balance between the infrastructure and environment.

On another point, I heard that some concerns were made about presentations being done by people who are not fully educated. I wish to ensure that presentations done in educational institutions are done by professionals who are fully trained in this domain. We do not promote sharing of false information especially to students.

Now, I would like to present to the House the idea of multilateral and bilateral aids regarding the implementation of sustainable projects. Such aids, Mr Speaker, Sir, can be used for the implementation of sustainable projects. An example of such a project has been the Metro Express which, as mentioned by my fellow Member of the Government, would not have been possible without the grant provided to us by India.

Having new sustainable projects funded by bilateral and multilateral aids will not only help combat the devastating effects of climate change, but also ensure that the economy does not have to suffer as much. For example, Mauritius has only one wind farm at Plaines des Roches which is a project that has benefited from the Clean Development Mechanism funding from the

EU and the support of the *Banque des Mascareignes*, and has necessitated investments of some Rs700 m. Another wind farm, in trade of products deemed fit by the Governments concerned, can be implemented, thus promoting remedies for the negative effects of climate change. Mauritius can use these aids to implement more solar farms as well, working even more towards healthy options for the environment.

Another project which can be worked on through the multilateral and bilateral relations of Mauritius is the planting of mangroves along the beaches of our country as beach erosion becomes more and more of a pressing issue. Coral farms can be maintained through aids as well which will help in restoring our lagoons and ensuring the healthy growth of our coral reefs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as we can see, the exploitation of the multilateral and bilateral relations of Mauritius ensures not only a greener environment, but also diminishes the financial burdens these incentives could impose on the Government. I will thus conclude by saying that my intervention is in full support of the Motion set by my Government. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour.

*At 12.18 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 1.34 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Please be seated. We shall continue with normal order of business. Before proceeding, I would like to remind Members that whenever they are delivering their speeches or debates, they should address to the Chair and address to Ministers as Ministers and Members as MPs. Thank you.

MP Hossen!

(1.37 p.m.)

**Mr M. Z. Hossen (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. One aspect on which I wish to draw the attention of the Government, especially the Minister of Infrastructure, is before questioning the accuracy of the information we are able to retrieve on this side of the House, I would strongly advise the Government to first of all, update their database and information published on their websites so that we can actually get the information.



On a second note, the Minister of Finance has previously compared the contribution of Mauritius to climate change to that of China. Mr Speaker, Sir, is that even a real comparison, distinguishing between one of the biggest economies of the world against us? A small island developing State actually does not seem to be the core strength of our dear Finance Minister.

Now, onto my speech, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two serious concerns to highlight with regards to this Motion. At the very outset, there is the problem of inadequate funding. Environmental education programs require money to be effectively implemented.

If the Government fails to allocate sufficient funds for such programmes because they are so preoccupied with supposedly more important projects such as the Metro Express, then it is no wonder that there is no lack of resources. There is actually a lack of resources for schools to incorporate environmental education into their curriculum and for the communities to engage in environmental activities.

From the Minister of Finance Budget Speech of 2022-2023, Mr Speaker, Sir, an amount of Rs18.3 billion has been allocated in regard to free education, be it at primary, secondary or tertiary level. I am tabling this document for reference for later, Mr Speaker, Sir. However, a big question arises as to how much is in fact spent on programmes linked to environmental education?

The second point I wish to raise, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the inconsistency in our curriculum. Environmental education should be consistently incorporated into school curriculum to ensure that all students receive a similar level of exposure and understanding. The Government is failing to maintain consistency in their curriculum in particular guidelines for environmental education. As a result, there is huge variation in the amount of emphasis placed on this topic, leading to uneven outcomes for students.

To understand this point better, Mr Speaker, Sir, consider all of us here, most of us come from mainstream backgrounds at School Certificate and Higher School Certificate levels, that is, from Economics, Science side, Art side or technical side. Nonetheless, a very few minority comes from a background having majored in environmental studies at the aforementioned levels. So, the inconsistency in the curriculum should actually be a real concern to the Minister of Education.

To wrap up my argument, Mr Speaker, Sir, the points I have raised are deemed serious and important on this side of the House. We implore the Government's swift action for this time, at least, and immediate action in this regard.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Attorney General!

(1.39 p.m.)

**The Attorney General (Ms K. Cunniappen):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As very well elaborated by the hon. Member of this side previously, Mauritius is a staunch advocate of participatory diplomacy, and remains committed to expanding its diplomatic relations at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

In order to combat this global phenomenon of climate change, the Government is coming forward with a proposal in its motion to call for multilateral and bilateral aid regarding the implementation of sustainable projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is to be noted that the Republic of Mauritius has launched a \$28 m. project supported by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is a multilateral fund that provides grants to support environmental projects worldwide. The GCF has supported several projects in Mauritius, including one which aims to reduce fossil fuel impacts and accelerate the nation's shift to a low-carbon economy over a period of 20 years. The 8-year project will support national goals to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030, and reduce carbon dioxide output by 4.3 million tons. It is indeed a key step in achieving the country's Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement and supporting continued economic growth.

This Government is proposing that Mauritius should consider blended finance to provide fiscal incentives for issuers of green finance instruments. Blended finance could help de-risk investments in the transition by the private sector and thus leveraging instruments such as green bonds, green loans, sustainability bonds and sustainability-linked bonds and loans.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one Member on the other side of the House has stated that the Government has obtained only Rs20 m. in 2020 concerning multilateral fund to support environmental projects. In support of the motion, I would like to invite the Members of the other

side to, please, get your facts straight and also to get in line with the calendar because after 2020 comes 2021, 2022 and 2023.

In line with my statement, Mr Speaker, Sir, the French Development Agency (AFD) has signed in 2022 a financing agreement worth €2.1 m. with the Mauritian authorities. The funds are intended for the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard another Member from the other side stating that there is a clear lack of absence of legal measures being implemented by our Government and that there is a major legal lacuna in our Mauritian legal system. On this, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may refer the House and also the other party of the other side, to the Cabinet meeting held Friday, 24 February 2023 where a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed to be signed between the Ministry of Environment and the DLA Piper UK based on the legal assistance on matters relating to international climate change negotiations and capacity building. We will not lose the time of the House by going over this document again, but rather advise the Opposition to conduct their legal research in a better manner and to re-engage in their research skills.

I have also listened to one of the Members on the other side stating that there is no *police de l'Environnement* on the beach and that they are not doing their job properly. Concerning this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Member of the Opposition is living in a bubble. In such a context, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to invite that particular Member of the other side to a visit at the beach. But let me just remind the Members of the Opposition that after the Beach Authority (Amendment) Act 2022 comes into force, even the Beach Authority Officers will be able to fine potential offenders, so just do not look out for Police Officers before littering.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Attorney General!

I would like to make an appeal to you, Members, when you are speaking not to get too close to the mics. I know you all have beautiful voice; I do want to hear them myself. But, please, keep a reasonable distance from the mics. Thank you.

Moving on to hon. Ms Gaju!

(1.45 p.m.)

**Ms M. Gaju (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My fellow Members, sitting here and listening to the Member trying very hard to explain herself about the nature of this viable project calls for concern. The motion presented before us talks about multilateral and bilateral aids; aids that are difficult and time consuming to negotiate.

We may find ourselves in the politicisation of aid channels. Multilateral aids are more cost effective and less prone to be captured by vested and individual interest as they have more diverse stakeholders and use untied aid. Would the Member care to provide an answer to this House as to where the aid would come from? Who is willing to provide us with sufficient funds to kick-start this project? We should also take a step back and see that the aid that we are about to receive will need some internal management system.

This raises a series of questions and if the Government cares to provide an explanation as to where the funds will come from; what steps are going to be taken when the aids are received; how will the population be benefitting from this aid, and what will this mean for local businesses. It is said that an aid cannot be made without an agreement. Mainly, it should have a good accountability mechanism of the multilateral and bilateral nature. The aid should be transparent and should have governance and a flow composition. Are those funds actually allocated?

To add, the entire world has just come through a period of pandemic recession and as we are already indebted, it will be a shameless act to ask for more aids for sustainable developments.

The Paris Agreement member countries pledge to invest \$100 billion per year for the Green Climate Fund. However, it has been more than seven years and we still have not received that ambitious target. So, the question to be asked is: we still have another seven years to reach our NDC set...

**Mr Speaker:** MP Gaju, please pause your speech!

**Mr Seebaruth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a point of order in relation to the content of the Member's speech. So, she asked where the funds will be allocated but in fact - there is a Motion if she has read - the funds that we will receive in aid will be allocated to these projects. So, what the Member is referring to in her speech is pointless. That is my point!

**Mr Speaker:** I will entertain your point of order. Thank you for bringing it to my attention. I would also like to call upon both sides of the House to make good use of applause. You can applause of course but make good use of it. Thank you.

MP Gaju, my apologies. Could you please modify your speech accordingly?

**Ms Gaju:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. We still have another seven years to reach our NDC set at 2030. Will we actually receive those funds or will we be disillusioned again?

**Ms Sookna:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my point of order, again the Member from the Opposition side is actually wasting the time of this Parliament by asking pointless questions and not giving recommendations or constructive criticisms. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Members of this House, you are reminded that constructiveness in debates should prevail at all times. MP Gaju, I understand your points; I understand the points of order of the Government as well. I will now ask you to please pause your speech. We will move to the next orator.

Moving on to the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage!

(1.50 p.m.)

**The Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage (Ms O. Thomas):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, if I can deduce what is happening till now, I can see how much competent the Opposition side is being by hiking and then jumping from one point to the other and then diving back to the seas and the sharks and suddenly back to the Earth.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, I would like to reassure the House that this motion brought forward by my Government is actually the phase of putting words into actions. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, we, as a team on the Government side, our task is to enquire and ensure that orders are being directed. I guess the Opposition side is misunderstanding us for maybe catalysts or perhaps magic wands. *Bon, ça arrive!*

Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, coming to the actual point, this Government has been working on a set of solutions which has been proposed and are actually the remedy to the problems, I suppose. Some have been done; some are still in progress but we need to give time, and some will be conducted.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to remind the House that the resolution of this year will help our SID to achieve its climate resilience factor, especially at its uttermost. If the Members of the Opposition side have properly conducted their research, they must have come across the measures that have been taken in the past because I heard one Member on the Opposition side stating that we have not taken any measure until now. So, coming back to it, in the past there have been measures which have been taken where we have been assisting, supporting climate and environmental negotiations because on the other side, some Members said that we are not taking any measures as I said. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, these negotiations are already being tackled per blocks, namely the AOSIS, AGM and the G-77.

Not only that, Mr Speaker, Sir. Despite the vulnerable situation of Mauritius in the past, I emphasise that in 2012, Médine launched the UNICITI Education Hub project which has highly contributed to the good side of the process. And also I heard one Member of the Opposition side stating that in terms of funds, we don't have enough funds to generate these projects which will help to combat climate change.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, I would like to refer to section 47 about repetition. The Government side is repeating that the Opposition side stated that and that. So, what is the point of having an Opposition there if we can't say anything and that they will comment on everything that we are saying? Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Pierre:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I will simply refer to our Constitution, the second chapter -

“It is hereby recognised and declared that in Mauritius there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex (...)”

That we will keep a freedom of speech! So, simply I will just...

**Mr Speaker:** Allow me to interrupt you. Is that a point of order? Can you come straight to the point, please?

**Mr Pierre:** My point of order is that we should keep the freedom of speech in our Assembly. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Please, MP Toolsee!

**Ms Toolsee:** I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. If he is talking about freedom of speech, how can he criticise us talking and making statements?

**Mr Speaker:** I will address the point of order raised by MP Bundhoo. You have stated that the Opposition does not get to talk which is not true. You are currently in a debate about a motion. Members of the Opposition are indeed presenting their debate. I will not entertain your point of order.

Minister, please continue!

**Ms Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I was talking about generating of funds, they are claiming that yes, we do not have enough funds to be able to combat this problem being faced by Mauritius. So, as I said we have many banks from other countries as well as locally such as the AFD, along with the SUNREF which are funding us to be able to fight this problem. So, coming to another issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Opposition side has all responded that the funding or promoting projects will affect the country's economy, which I have already cleared till now.

I would also like to add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this Government is liaising with numerous partner banks as I have said. They have done much more to fight this phenomenon by harnessing the latest technologies and adapt all the infrastructure where food is being produced also at a sustainable basis. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, these projects, despite being tackled back to back, we have always come across a percentage of lack of sensitisation. I suppose that one Member from the Opposition side stated that even if there are educational programmes being implemented in the education sector, there is still a lack of sensitization. But I believe that Mauritius will overcome these issues by reinforcing laws especially by imposing new ways of driving the youngsters back to the wellbeing of the environment. We are hence, Mr Speaker, Sir, looking into the matter to raise awareness by having more workshops or even organising friendly competitions for the children. In my Ministry itself, we are able to do so by promoting artists so that they are able to depict the message to fight climate change.

Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, by taking a close look, we are thus able to deduce that all the Ministers are interconnected to fight this problem. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ensure the population that they are in the right hands and that this Government is actually working as one to

meet the requirements. We mean business and unfortunately here, we don't entertain circus trailers. Having said so, I leave the floor to the Chair. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Seetaram!

(1.56 p.m.)

**Mr B. Seetaram (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was about to tell you that I have been extraordinarily impressed with the quality and calibre of speeches I have seen today in the House but seeing so much of arrogance, I am sceptical about it. And referring to the Minister of Arts, she keeps on speaking of the past. If you have been effective in the past, then why are we still a highly vulnerable country today?

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is indeed challenging to be an Opposition MP, as despite being continuously stereotyped as demagogues and opponents of socio-economic progress, we transcend all these criticisms and bring our constructive ideas for progression of our motherland.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since time is limited, let me go straight and dive into the subject. It is indeed a bitter fact that the world is into the throes of a climatic catastrophe and if we do not come with concrete solutions right now, the future is doomed.

After listening attentively to Minister Rachpal and other orators and after having deeply analysed the motion presented by the Government, we, Opposition MPs do not have any other alternative than to demand for immediate amendments. We repeat: we do not reject the motion but are asking for amendments. I am not going to elaborate on the vagueness of solutions proposed in the motion but rather highlight some major lacunas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the current climate change issues require more effective solutions with a multi-stakeholder approach, this motion has omitted the inclusion of public participation in environmental decision-making by the Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration to which Mauritius is a signatory. The Government has failed to include an inclusive approach of regrouping the civil societies such as trade unions, youth groups, corporates, NGOs on such an important topic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, related to this, there is the Panafrican Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) which empowers yes, but it would be an asset for the country to include a national...

**Mr Speaker:** MP Seetaram, may I please interrupt you?



**Mr Seebaruth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a point of order in relation to what MP Seetaram said that we are excluding the youth from our proposals. So, actually, in our motion, it recommends creating awareness from a young age through an environmental education. So, what is the MP Seetaram referring to by 'exclusion'?

**Mr Speaker:** I reserve my ruling. Leader of Opposition!

**Mr Bhujun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, shall I remind the Members here and according to Standing Orders, any speaker from the Opposition or the Government side should be criticised or not given way to talk when they are expressing themselves. It is an expression from the Opposition and we should be able to express ourselves and not having point of orders and criticisms on what we are expressing. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Carrim, you have a point of order?

Any more points of orders from here?

**Mr Ramdany:** The Leader of the Opposition should be reminded that of course he can express himself but he has to be relevant in his debate.

**Mr Speaker:** Members, I will entertain the point of order raised by this Minister. Whilst the Member of the Opposition has indeed tackled the right points, I wish to emphasise the fact that they can express their opinion and, so, I will entertain this point of order.

Please.

**Mr Seetaram:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Maybe if he had been listening attentively to my point, I was referring to the inclusion of the youth in policy-making and not the awareness that he is talking about; it is completely irrelevant. So, let me continue due to shortage of time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another lacuna; I was talking about the PACJA. The Panafrican Climate Justice Alliance empowers, yes, but it would be an asset for the country to include a national chapter of such a prestigious organisation to promote regional integration. PACJA is a pioneer in resource mobilisation and as an African SIDS, Mauritius would indeed climb the climate justice ladder with their support. I am tabling this document in support of my argument.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another lacuna of this motion is its failure to cater for money-laundering and financial crimes that can accelerate climate change. How? This can lead to illegal activities

such as illegal logging or can divert funds away from sustainable investments and promote nefarious activities harmful to the environment. In support to this argument, I am tabling these documents as well.

Pertaining to my last point, Mr Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that there has been a lack of inter-ministerial consultations while drafting such an important motion. *Oui, je vois la pertinence de certaines ministères comme L'Economie Bleue, le Tourisme et tout, mais* where are the other ministries because I have heard hon. Seedheeyan talking in the morning about good governance and financial crimes. It would be great to hear his measures where he is proposing to combat green crimes and anti-money laundering.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Seetaram.

**Mr Seebaruth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have another point of order in relation to Standing Order, Section 40 (3), Contents of Speeches. The Member is making improper motives to the hon. Minister of Good Governance by saying that he has not taken the right steps.

**Mr Speaker:** Please, Minister! I see no imputing of motives here. I will not entertain this point of order. MP Seetaram has made his point. Please continue with your speech.

**Mr Seetaram:** I am not saying that he did not bring forward ideas; I am saying that I would be glad to hear his ideas. I did not criticise him.

*(Interruptions)*

**A Member:** When he was talking....

**Mr Seetaram:** No, I did not criticise him.

**A Member:** You should address the Chair!

**Mr Seetaram:** You should have listened attentively!

**Mr Speaker:** No cross talking in the House, please! Unless anyone has a point of order, please, MP Seetaram, continue with your speech.

**Mr Seetaram:** Yes. Moreover, I can hear some Members stating that the Government is bringing forward green bonds, blue bonds; these are financial innovative measures, right; but where are they found in the motion? So, this already shows that there needs to be amendments to

the motion. Propose financial innovative solutions. Where are they found in the motion? They are not found! So, this already shows that there are contradictions between yourselves first.

The Attorney General has mentioned about the presence of legal concepts in the motion. Yes, I can see that there are some international laws, UNFCCC, the IPCC and the Climate Change Act 2020, but what are the legal measures proposed in the motion? They are not found in the motion. So, it is important to have amendments in the motion.

On a conclusive note, Mr Speaker, Sir, being young MPs, let us set our ego aside and urge the Government to create a common position of MPs from both sides. Even the inter-parliamentary Union where Mauritius is a member, they recommend a collective effort from members, be it from the Opposition or from the Government.

Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are high expectations from this Youth Parliament. Relevant ministries are awaiting innovative measures and this motion is indeed a good effort from the Government but it is also important to include constructive amendments because if tomorrow, Mauritius is submerged due to climate change affects, we will also drown alongside the Government. So, let us act collectively for the country for once.

Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you. I now invite the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please resume your seats.

Vice-Prime Minister, Ms Wahidna, please!

(2.06 p.m.)

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Authorities and Disaster Risk Management (Ms S. F. Wahidna):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would wish to keep my debate neutral because I have noticed the House is getting very heated up; the Members are angry and I do not think this is correct for a constructive debate. So, let's keep it healthy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, go directly to the point.

**Ms Wahidna:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the CO<sub>2</sub>, carbon dioxide emissions have led to the crippling of marine ecosystems worldwide. I repeat : 'worldwide'. I need to stress that this is

a global issue. I need to stress that this is a global issue. Yes, we are aware that infrastructural projects and the manufacturing sector work adversely against ecology. These developments have had an impact on our whole planet for decades now which has led to the extinction of various animals and the degradation of the marine flora amongst others. But what choice does the country or any country have but to invest in the boosting our economy?

A country needs modernisation and development along with, of course, environmental frameworks. There needs to be a balance and it seems like the Opposition goes to the extremes of any balance. We do not want pessimism. So, it has to be noted that being included in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands as a biodiversity hotspot, our country has a major role to play in protecting our environmental assets. With that being said, the protection of the marine ecosystem stays a burning issue in Mauritius. Since the island is surrounded by sea, we are bent on protecting the rare marine species and the rich aquaculture that the tropical island offers. With 18 Marine Protected Areas and 8 Islets National Parks, Mauritius has undoubtedly proven to be ecological and efficient in the nurturing of the ocean. Four nurseries and two marine parks have been established, especially in the South East, South West and North of the island where rare aqua plants and marine animals are cultivated and bred.

Mauritius has taken various specific measures for biodiversity protection through banning of coral sand extraction, coastal and coral rehabilitation, coral reef and lagoon water monitoring and control of fishing activities amongst others. These implementations have shown optimistic results like an increase in sea life which demonstrates how Mauritius has been relentlessly working towards safeguarding marine life. A series of national and sectorial policies and programs to mitigate and adapt to climate change has been initiated, promoting initiatives such as the use of renewable energy, reforestation programs to increase carbon dioxide capture, recycling and waste minimisation. In terms of international marine policies, the country has signed many conventions, some of which the United Nations Convention on the law of the sea to aim towards the protection of the marine ecosystem.

Finally, to protect our beaches and the coast, any construction projects less than 30 metres from high watermarks are severely sanctioned. We shall reinforce this law by regular onsite checks to ensure that no constructions hinder the high watermarks on our beaches. This existing law under the Environmental Protection Act shall certainly prevent beach erosion. As

the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and National Risk Disaster Management, I assure the House that we have been intervening with environmental officers and experts at all levels in the aim of reducing the risk towards marine ecology.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find it unexplainable how after all our efforts from the Government, from officers, from our on-field team, from our experts, the Opposition keeps on denying and saying that the work of this Government is nothing. They keep denying. Allow me to say that our Government fought to rebalance the environment and that this motion is proof of our dedication in tackling this global issue.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Mr Pierre, Government Chief Whip!

**Mr Pierre:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a late point of order based on Standing Order 47, our dear MP over there kept on saying ‘amendments, amendments, amendments,’ I think that we got it, I think that we jotted it down and thus, I would like to stop the repetition based on that. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That was not a point of order. I will not answer that.

*(Interruptions)*

Please, don’t! This is not a point of order and I have ruled on it. Please, Mr Maudhoo.

(2.11 p.m.)

**Mr N. K. S. Maudhoo (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First I would like to address what the previous Member has said, particularly about marine biodiversity. What she did was that she only rehashed what has been done in the past and no concrete action that can be brought forward has been mentioned. So, instead of continuing to go against whatever they are saying, I wish to propose something that could be done.

So, I want the Government to consider a multidisciplinary approach in tackling this problem. One solution could be the outsourcing of satellite imagery and data from allied countries which will then be processed using AI and this will allow us to track marine life and the progress of the population, their migration patterns which enable us to take the appropriate measures.

Now, going to my debate, I would firstly like to congratulate the Government for the laudable team work that went into the drafting of this motion. I will also express my unconditional support to the vision driving this endeavour.

However, as per my analysis, this motion is deeply flawed for the following reasons –

- (i) the measures proposed are superfluous at best. No concrete implementable measures have been proposed, which is against the spirit of this motion itself because it is said that the goal of this National Youth Parliament is to bring urgent and efficient actions that will be taken by the Government at later stages;
- (ii) there is no sense of urgency being conveyed by the measures proposed by the Government, and lastly;
- (iii) the propositions are at best loosely connected and one dimensional as I mentioned previously for the biodiversity problems.

I will now be substantiating my arguments and proposing alternative and result oriented measures that can be implemented and I wish that they be added by way of amendment to this motion.

So, I will be addressing the management of coastal areas. A new Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan has been proposed which in an ideal world would have been totally appropriate, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are not living in an ideal world. As per the IPCC Special 1.5 Report, the rise in sea levels is going to affect our country much sooner than expected. Statistics from the Mauritius Meteorological Division are clear; time is something that we do not have much of. Indeed, the rate of sea level rise in Mauritius is almost twice the normal global average, that is, 6.8 millimetres on average yearly compared to 3.6 millimetres average around the world.

Moreover, according to the pre-COVID SDG Reports of 2019 and 2020, progress for SDG 13 has been stagnating and I believe that during the COVID, that is, during 2021 and 2022, much measures have not been taken towards these SDGs as per the facts available.

As such, I would sincerely urge the Government to consider specific and targeted actions instead of wasting time and resources on overhauling an already well-oiled administration.

Taking all these into consideration, I humbly urge the Government to consider the following proposals.

First of all, I propose the amendment of the Environmental Protection Act to make the Environmental Impact Assessments Process (EIA process) more stringent and rigorous for residential, commercial and industrial projects on coastal areas.

Furthermore, for added accountability, EIAs need to be published to the public and there also need to be a mechanism to allow for external and independent reviews of EIAs before the start of a project to ensure that the project is in all legality and is in line with the international environmental principles stated in numerous conventions which we are signatory of and which have already been ratified. I, lastly, urge the Government to start considering the re-housing of the 6,000 coastal residents who are at risk of losing their homes by 2050. I would also emphasise that for this particular project, the Government needs to have a particular look at how...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please wait, MP!

**Mr Oozeerally:** On a point of order, please. I would like to remind the Member of the Opposition that he should address the Chair when talking and not at the Government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have taken note on that. Please, continue!

**Mr Maudhoo:** Yes, okay.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I was saying is that the current local context needs to be taken into consideration when addressing this project, that is, there is a problem of land scarcity in Mauritius. And, we need to look into it together as to how we can re-house these 6,000 residents. And, I believe the number is more likely to increase because from 2018 till now we have already lost 11kms of coastal areas. That is all from me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Oozeerally!

(2.18 p.m.)

**The Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (Mr M. J. Oozeerally):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I would like to further elaborate on the international and bilateral aids being given to Mauritius to implement sustainable projects in our country. 84% of Mauritius' energy sources

come from fossil fuels and, hence, we are very vulnerable to external energy ripples, as we have seen with the price of oil barrel since the start of the Russian-Ukrainian War.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am glad to reiterate that Mauritius has indeed been granted US\$ 28 m. through the Green Climate Fund and in partnership with the *Agence Française de Développement*. Here, I would like to ask the Member of Opposition who said that we should not depend on foreign donors. Do you realise, with all the research we have done, that Mauritius contributes to only 0.01% of climate change but we are among the most affected countries? How do you think we will finance all of these projects? Mauritius is a very small island, a dot in the Indian Ocean, allow me to say, and it is our right to ask for donations from the much larger economies. We are certainly on our way to meet our target: using renewable energy to supply 35% of the population by 2025.

This project is nationally implemented by the Government of Mauritius in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Member of the Opposition who was asking where the international funds are coming from. Yes, we have an organisation called the UNDP. There is something called the internet and we have statistics up there.

I am sure that my colleague, the Minister of Gender Equality, will be delighted to hear that more than 1,000 women - and here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to remind the Opposition that yes, we are including women in our fight against climate change - will benefit from the awareness and training campaigns carried out on renewables.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us bring a smile to another of my colleague's face, the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security. Let me reiterate the help given by the Commonwealth in 2020 to Mauritian farmers to promote sustainable agriculture. The Commonwealth Climate Access Hub in collaboration with the Mauritian Government has raised more than 1 million pounds sterling to address the problem of climate change in agriculture. The farmers have learned how to mitigate and most importantly adapt to these changes.

In addition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me state that Mauritius is already well advanced in sustainable investment. CIM Financial Services Ltd, a non-banking financial institution, became the first Mauritian company to issue green bonds. It plans to raise over Rs3 billion over the next 5 years. As you know, my Government is doing everything to promote electric vehicles



and this project will raise sufficient money to encourage the transition to hybrid and electric vehicles through the Green Lease Product.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me announce to the Assembly and the whole population of Mauritius that for our latest project, my Government is working to request urgent international fund to remove sharks from our lagoons, because apparently the Government is now responsible for the presence of sharks in our lagoons?

With the introduction of the 2020 Climate Change Act, Mauritius has clearly shown its relentless commitment to fight climate change and this surely raises our credibility as a reliable country, opening various doors for more green debts in the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude, I would like to point out that one Member of the Opposition, MP Seetaram, calls for collaboration from the Government...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please wait, Minister! When you are making your speech, please, address the Chair!

**Mr Oozeerally:** Okay. MP Seetaram, calls for collaboration from the Government...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, do not cite the name! You are addressing the Chair!

**Mr Oozeerally:** One Member of the Opposition calls for collaboration from the Government but another Member of the same side asked us to resign earlier. There seems to be contradiction amongst them.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr Oozeerally:** And they have clearly failed this House. We would advise them to *accorder leurs violons* first...

**Mr Maudhoo:** On a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, please!

**Mr Maudhoo:** How is this relevant to the debate at hand? How does this concern the motion?

**The Deputy Speaker:** How are you implying the point of order?

**Mr Oozeerally:** This is my humble opinion and I think I have the right to freedom of speech.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have not given you the floor! Please, wait!

**Mr Maudhoo:** Standing Order 47, concerning irrelevance in debates.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, to make my case to you in this matter. Earlier a point was raised that an opinion was made in the context of a speech, and I believe my colleague was making an opinion in this case. So, I do not see the relevance of this point of order. Thank you. This is my opinion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before I proceed, please!

**Mr Hossen:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My comment is more general but is has to be said.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Do you have a point of order?

**Mr Hossen:** Yes, Sir, it is in respect to Section 47 of the Standing Orders, and it concerns the Member of the Government who has just spoken. Every time the Government side is trying to make statements and criticising us in our research process. In my speech earlier, I made it clear that our statistics, our information are based on the Government's websites. If these guys cannot update their data, where is our fault here?

**Ms Sookna:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have not given you the floor yet! So, as per my ruling, the point of order is entertained. Please, proceed!

**Mr Oozeerally:** Just to reply to the last Member of the Opposition who actually raised the point of order, it is the Member from your side who asked where the international funds are coming from; and it is clearly stated on the website...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, we are not here for imputations!

**Mr Oozeerally:** Okay.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is no need for clapping!

**Mr Oozeerally:** And how dare the Opposition say that we are not doing enough. Seeking international help; working relentlessly on the Climate Change Bill; signing the Paris agreement.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please wait, Minister! There is a point of order.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Member just stated that his Government is going to take out the sharks out of the Mauritian lagoon, right. But, after the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, Section 4 states that...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Excuse me; is it a point of order?

**Mr Bundhoo:** Yes, it is irrelevant according to Section 47 of the Standing Order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under irrelevance?

**Mr Bundhoo:** Yes, irrelevance because he is stating that he is going to take out all the sharks in the lagoons of Mauritius where his Government implemented a law, the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, where it is stated that in Section 4, if the territorial sea of the Republic of Mauritius...

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry; I won't entertain your point of order! Please proceed, Minister!

**Mr Oozeerally:** This member of the Opposition is trying to waste our time and break the flow of my speech.

**Ms Toolsee:** I have a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I already ruled on that. Please proceed!

**Mr Oozeerally:** Seeking international help, working relentlessly on the Climate Change Bill, signing the Paris Agreement; they are only criticising for the sake of criticising. They are pulling the government down. I am sorry; they are pulling the whole Mauritian population down simply by coating the unconstructive criticism with the veil of diplomacy. What a disgrace!

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP Jiagoo Jooma!

(2.27 p.m.)

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I rise today to address the House on a matter of great importance; the Metro Express project and its impact on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 13.

As we are all aware, SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. The Metro Express project was one of the measures implemented by our Government to fulfil this goal but how far does it really fulfil SDG 13? Firstly, the Metro Express uses electricity and as we all know in Mauritius, electricity's main source of energy is fossil fuel which creates greenhouse gases. There are more climatic changes such as flash floods which have damaged the infrastructure, as well as properties. Also, doesn't it affect our flora and fauna? Not to mention our environment! Deforestation is being done to create new Metro routes or even the present private properties along the path are destroyed. When the island's wildlife habitat was destroyed, its natural beauty was diminished. Tropical cyclones and floods are becoming...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please wait MP!

**Mr Ramsoorooop:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to refer you to Standing Order 42.1 which speaks of relevance in debates and this Metro Express project has not even been mentioned in the Motion and we question the validity of this particular point at the moment of the speech right now. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will entertain this point of order.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** So, the Metro Express has damaged infrastructure and the environment. And I am coming to my point, so please let me continue with. So, carbon dioxide has increased due to the cutting down of trees and also the Metro Express created traffic jam due to...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, MP, you have a point of order?

**Mr Seebarith:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the member is referring to the Metro Express when she herself was using the Metro Express yesterday and every day to go to her house.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please! Minister, you are imputing the character of the person. I will not entertain this. Please!

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please!

**Mr Seebaruth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please withdraw your words.

**Mr Seebaruth:** Okay, I withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP, please proceed.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** So where was I? Traffic jam has increased due to the bidding of Metro Express.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP, please. You have a point of order?

**Mr Gunnoo:** I have a point of order, Section 42 (1). Once again, we have not mentioned Metro Express in the debate and we are waiting and waiting... When will the point which is relevant to the motion come up? Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP please. Do not...

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** How would I continue when they continue...

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have not given you the floor yet.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** Sorry.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The point of order raised by the Minister is valid. So, please refrain from using Metro Express in your speech.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** So, when they planned the Metro Express, they cut down trees which lead to environmental problems. They were talking about environmental problems and climate change. When doing so, there is no tree to provide oxygen and there is more carbon dioxide in our air. So, to continue...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please wait! You have a point of order?

**Mr Seebaruth:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Actually, the Member keeps repeating about the Metro Express when it is irrelevant to the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is the duty of the Chair. I have already ruled that. Please proceed, MP.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** So, in the Motion that they gave us, they talked about infrastructure and infrastructure for me is when they built up Metro Express, they completely destroyed our properties and I stated it at the beginning of my speech. To continue with that, I found some solutions because apparently the Government cannot find a solution for the Metro Express. My solution is: to reduce the number of Metro being built up on our roads because it can be built on steel. By building them on steel, it allows us to let the environment stay the same under it. It will also resolve the transportation congestion relief and fewer vehicles will be on our roads. I urge the government to...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Wait MP! We have a point of order.

**Mr Daworaz:** On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out to this House that some minutes ago, I have talked about the introduction of a new National Development Plan. There is a difference between the implementation and the planning.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, are you referring to the point of order or clarifying yourself? Is this a point of order?

**Mr Daworaz:** It is a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will not entertain this. Please proceed!

**Mr Daworaz:** Okay.

**Ms Jiagoo Jooma:** So, to conclude, I urge the Government to pay close attention to the issues I raised and achieve SDG 13 to foster a prosperous future for Mauritius rather than just being defensive. And I have a last question which is: was the destruction of our environment more important than the marine life? That's all from me.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP Auhammud!

(2.34 p.m.)

**Ms S. Auhammud (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

This morning, a member of the Opposition has stated that there is no mention of inclusivity of women and different communities to combat climate change in our motion. I do not see why this was needed because the measures mentioned in our motion are meant to involve all citizens of Mauritius as a whole, regardless of gender and their positions in society but are, of course, based on matters of equity and respective abilities. I would like to remind the Opposition that Mauritius is a multiracial society and this Government is working towards making Mauritius a country where gender equality is real. So, there was no need to make one citizen feel inferior to the other.

As we gather here today, the global community is facing an existential threat that demands our urgent attention - climate change. Scientific evidence is clear and is overwhelming. The planet is warming and we have to take actions as soon as possible.

In this light, I would like to make reference to the statement of another MP from the Opposition side who holds that adopting a circular economy would discourage entrepreneurs and affect the economy in general. Is the member aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the transition to a circular economy is a strategic framework which caters for all sectors that are involved towards combating climate change?

The fact that another member of the Opposition said that the solutions that the Government has provided do not seem to be urgent to him shows that the Opposition has not fully comprehended our motion. Do I need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind them that their purpose is to collaborate with us as one of their members even mentioned, or should I advise them to work on their superiority complex?

Do I need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind them that their purpose is to collaborate with us, as one of their Members even mentioned or should I advise them to work on their superiority complex?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, please, state your point of order!

**Ms Toolsee:** According to Standing Order 40(2), it shall be out of order to use unbecoming words or expression. I do not think that accusing us of superiority complex is even necessary at this point. Debate for the population and not to make accusations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, your point of order is entertained. Kindly withdraw the words.

**Ms Auhammud:** Apologies, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I withdraw my statement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to speak about the urgent need for Mauritius to adopt a circular economy and the importance of implementing appropriate framework to support this transition in order to combat climate change. In line with the already existing framework brought forward by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in May 2022 which, if you will allow me to be specific, revolves around six strategic areas, namely –

- (i) promoting responsible consumption and production along with the prevention, minimisation and reduce of waste;
- (ii) maximising resource recovery;
- (iii) tapping the energy recovery potential of solid waste;
- (iv) ensuring the safe disposal of solid waste, and
- (v) using information education and communication to spread awareness.

According to the World Bank, Mauritius generates 1.2 million tonnes of waste each year and only 30% of this waste is currently recycled. This is a clear indication of why we are taking immediate action to transition to a circular economy which is an economic system that prioritises the sustainable use of resources by reducing waste and promoting the reuse of material.

One Member of the Opposition even said that we are at war. I would like to request the Opposition to please be in unity with each other and focus on the most important matter.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ms Auhammud, let me remind you that you are addressing to the Chair! Please, proceed.

**Ms Auhammud:** I will be referring to a statement of a Member of the Opposition who said that adopting a circular economy...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ms Auhammud, please, wait! We have a point of order.



**Ms Nuckcheddy:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a point of order according to Standing Order 47 -Irrelevance. You cannot have a circular economy without lean industry. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** For that point of order...

*(Interruptions)*

Please, order!

The relevancy is for the Chair to rule. I will not entertain this. Kindly proceed!

**Ms Auhammud:** If you would allow me to continue my speech, you will understand the relevancy of having...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ms Auhammud, I have allowed your pleas. Now, please, you have to address to the Chair! Please proceed!

**Ms Auhammud:** A Member of the Opposition, this morning, holds that adopting a circular economy would discourage entrepreneurs and affect the economy in general.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please no cross-talking!

**Ms Auhammud:** The entrepreneurs in question would be discouraged to start his business because of legislations towards an economy that is in view of combating climate change, an actual threat to the country, to rethink his means with which he will be setting up his business. A circular economy can bring tremendous benefits to our country, including the creation of new business...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ms Auhammud, please, wait! We have a point of order!

**Ms Soogund:** I would like to raise a point of order based on Standing Order 47 on irrelevancy or repetition because she has been talking about circular economy again and again now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please! No, I will rule! It is the duty of the Chair to rule! I will entertain this point of order.

If you have no repetition, hon. Ms Auhammud, you can please continue or as I will have to discontinue your speech.

**Ms Auhammud:** My speech is about why we need to adopt a circular economy in Mauritius. So, if you will allow me bring forward my points, you would understand the relevancy...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, proceed with your speech without repetition!

**Ms Auhammud:** Studies have shown that a circular economy can create up to 100,000 new jobs in Mauritius and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30%. To facilitate this transition, we will introduce appropriate measures that support the principles of a circular economy. This includes the –

- (i) promotion of waste reduction;
- (ii) encouragement of reuse and recycling of materials, and
- (iii) the incentivising of businesses to adopt a circular business model.

One example of such is the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework which requires manufacturers and importers to take responsibility for the disposal and recycling of their products. By introducing EPR, we can shift the burden of waste management away from the local authorities and onto the producers thereby incentivising them to design products that are more easily recyclable.

We will also have Deposit Returns Schemes (DRS) which is a system where consumers pay a small deposit on products like bottles and cans which they can then reclaim when they return the item for recycling. According to the Ellen McArthur Foundation, countries that have implemented DRS have seen recycling rate of up to 90% for targeted materials.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ms Auhammud, please be reminded that I will have to tell you to wrap up.

**Ms Auhammud:** Mauritius is heavily reliant on imports and this has led to a significant increase in plastic waste in recent years. By implementing DRS with certain products, Mauritius will effectively reduce the amount of plastic waste in the country and from other reuse or

material. This framework also includes green public procurement where the purchase of goods and services by public authorities has a reduced environmental impact.

As a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including sea level rise and extreme weather events. By adopting GPP policies, the Government will use its purchasing power to promote the use of more sustainable products and services which can help reduce the country's carbon footprint.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the adoption of a circular economy is crucial for the sustainable development of Mauritius. By introducing appropriate framework support this transition, we will create new business opportunities, reduce waste and preserve our natural resources for future generations. I call on all Members of this House to support the introduction of a circular economy in Mauritius and to work towards a sustainable future for our country. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Jealal!

(2.44 p.m.)

**Mr S. Jealal (Opposition Whip):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First of all, I would like to tell the other side of the House to please pay heed to the word of the Opposition to avoid any unnecessary point of orders.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is for the Chair to decide!

**Mr Jealal:** My apologies.

In the morning, Members from the other side mentioned about: 'paying for your waste.' So, is this the measure that the Government is proposing to combat waste problem in Mauritius? If yes, what have they accounted for? Have they taken into consideration about the people in the different hierarchies in the society? There are people living with a basic minimum wage who cannot even bear to make their ends meet and then you are telling them to pay for their waste at the end of the week. Let me remind the House that scavenging is a weekly activity and telling those people to pay for their weekly waste is such an inappropriate measure for the other side of the House.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Members from the other side have proposed a sugar coated motion and Members from the Opposition ponder whether they are telling what they are actually doing instead of proposing what more could be done.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition has taken note of expansionary fiscal policy being proposed by the Government. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius already suffers from a budget deficit of Rs22.9 billion as indicated by PwC 2022/2023 and such measures can further aggravate it. If the Government is proposing such measures, it can be evident that the burden of such actions will mostly fall on the normal taxpayers in terms of increased indirect taxes, hence affecting the normal Mauritian household and further dwindling their standard of living.

So, is the Government willing to sacrifice macro-economic objectives like a balanced budget or a better standard of living for the citizens just to achieve climate change? This is a food for thought to the other side.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition believes that the Government has failed to include solutions on the position of Mauritius as a Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As it has been mentioned in the morning session, we are vulnerable to calamities like extreme cyclones, torrential rainfall, droughts and thus the brunt of climate change can be fatal to our economy. Let me remind the Member of the House that some days ago a short lapse of rainfall in Port Louis and we had to make transport arrangements for them to get access to the bus stop. So, if this situation persists, will it be that in the future Members will not be able to come to Parliament just because Port Louis is flooded? It is high time for the Government to intervene in this and also on a side aspect on this; I would propose the Government to, please, renew the drainage system in Port Louis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to this motion that the Government is hell-bent to agree to, the Opposition proposes to the Government the Capital Approach Framework since basically they are so hell-bent that these measures are so good for the Mauritian economy. The Capital Approach Framework is an analysis of the functioning of an existing governance system identifying capacity needs in which future changes in governance system can be assessed. It is a multi-dimensional perspective, encompassing not only environmental factors but also social, political and human factors that reveal the capacity needs of local Government for implementing

climate change adaptation in Mauritius but also while considering Mauritius as a Small Island Developing State.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition is not here to criticise everything that the Government has to say but to provide constructive leads to them. But, we believe that if the Government is here to go forward with such solutions, then, it has been rightly stated that the Opposition should be like the watchdog of the Government. So, the Opposition is here to provide constructive arguments and we believe that the Government will take our words into consideration to reach a mutual agreement.

On this, I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister Gulam Husen!

(2.50 p.m.)

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning (Mr M. H. Gulam Husen):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Before starting, I would just like to comment on what a Member of the Opposition said, claiming that there is no internal management of funds. I think they have not done their full researching, otherwise they would have realised that this Government brought about the Programme-Based Budgeting (PBB). This budgetary process will serve to embed a form of accountability in development and implementation of targeted policies, national strategies and Action Plans for adaptation and funds.

Coming to that, another Member mentioned about how we were cutting trees. Yes, but we should also look at the legislation Mauritius has provided that for every one tree that has been uprooted, three other trees will be planted. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition makes it look like we have not done anything but this Government realises - we are not lazing around here - that one of the effects of climate change that this country is facing are the cyclones, the detrimental flooding effects and the destruction of our coast lines. Therefore, this Government, to support its disaster risk reduction sector, came up with the early warning system. And I would just like to point out that the early warning system was not only placed for Mauritius but this Government thought of both Agalega and Rodrigues. This early warning system gives three days' notice of approaching cyclones and enables coastal communities to clear and because of

this early warning system the Government was able to relocate 11 households. How many? 11 households from Quatre Soeurs ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order please!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Please proceed!

**Mr Gulam Husen:** ... to Camp Ithier. Let us look at this, not only that, in the same Quatre Soeurs, the Government was also able to create a refuge centre, I would just like to mention that when it was created, it was not only the first one in Mauritius but in the entire Indian Ocean. Its objective is to increase climate resilience of communities and livelihoods in coastal areas. Not only that, it wants to minimise flooding risks in the future. So, this Government does not only think of current issues but also thinks for future generations.

Additionally, the Government has realised that during the cyclonic period people also face many financial issues. Therefore, the Government has a list of the most vulnerable people where they, firstly as I mentioned, provide refuge in emergency shelters but they also provide the payment of cyclone allowances, food allowances. When we come to coastal communities, we know very well that many of the people living around these coastal communities are fishermen...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister please wait, point of order!

**Ms Sukhbilas:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, under Section 47, we are here to discuss new solutions proposed by the Government but many Members are instead focusing their debates on showing off past achievements of the Government. We are not here to repeatedly listen about past solutions but we are here to debate about our future actions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP, please, I will not entertain this point of order. Please proceed, Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

There is no need for clapping please!

**Mr Gulam Husen:** The Government has realised that many of the people living around these coastal areas are fishermen, and in the Budget of 2021 ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, we have a point of order.

**Mr Maudhoo:** I have a point of order under Section 47 of the Standing Orders. What the Member is doing, he is defending the actual Government. We are here in the National Youth Parliament; the gist of the debate should have been the motion that is being proposed by the Government of this National Youth Parliament and not the actual...

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have taken note of your point of order, MP. Please, be relevant to this National Youth Parliament when you speak.

**Mr Gulam Husen:** From this resolution that we made, we talked about the infrastructure that the Government is trying to make. We have spoken about that and in order to look at the infrastructure being destroyed, we should understand that we have to fix the coastline. I am coming to that. We have seen that since 2015, not now, there has been the rehabilitation of more than 8.4 km of coastlines. We are rehabilitating the coastlines so that when cyclones come, it does not affect the infrastructures of people's houses. Not only that, we have also brought the idea of being able to take more of an environmental approach when it comes to protecting the coastline. And as one member of the Opposition has a big problem with building walls and saying that we build too many, the Government has ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order please!

**Mr Gulam Husen:** ... placed the plantation of more than 20,000 mangroves in the area at Grand Sable and in the resolution that we said ourselves...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, we have a point of order.

**Mr Maudhoo:** I would like to raise the same point of order, on the same issue because he is repeating himself.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have already ruled on that, please. Please take note of that, Minister.

**Mr Gulam Husen:** In the resolution that we provided, we stated that environmental solutions would also be taken to help the infrastructure. Therefore, this Government is proposing that more mangrove propagation takes place around the island in order to protect these coastal communities.

Moreover, I would also like to add that this Government, based on its resolution, is also adding to the rehabilitation of degraded coastal zones. And taking from past examples of what has been done, the Government will also for example, want to place, I am just mentioning, in Rivière des Galets where 350 families were protected from the high waves that came during the cyclones. This Government is also proposing that we are able to build more of these coastal walls around the island for families to be able to be protected.

Let us understand here that this Government is coming here to say the problems that it has and also mention its solutions. We are not just sitting here saying problems, problems, problems. We are thinking of our current state and our future. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** MP Soogund!

(2.57 p.m.)

**Ms J. M. E. Soogund (Member of Parliament):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you.

I would like to highlight that some of the points brought forward by the Government, though little, are very pertinent. However, others were too unpractical and not really sustainable when viewed longitudinally.

Starting at the early years of life, the education system does not teach enough about climate change, despite being an agency of socialisation and playing a significant role on an individual's behaviour. Basic climate action like recycling or the use of ecological products is not encouraged enough at schools. They could, for example, encourage the waste triage or the collection of plastic bottles which could later be used extracurricular projects. How can it be that only 6% of our products used in Mauritius are recycled?

Moreover, too often, policies do not really encourage consumers to go green and to use eco-friendly devices or products. This is unfortunately because organisations are too focused on profit-making. For example, the CEB Bill asks consumers to pay for 60% on their consumer rate for the solar photovoltaic panels they installed at their own houses by themselves. Instead, they could propose a win-win partnership. What I am trying to do here is providing solutions to the issues that they are bringing; which is what they have just asked.

On that same note, going green is unfortunately not accessible nor affordable for all. Eco-friendly goods are too expensive or even far-fetched for some people and not everyone can



afford buying them and thus participating in going green. While we try to say that we are an island, we have to go towards climate change together. Being affordable and accessible to all is the problem we have about going together towards climate change. For instance, organic fertilisers are too expensive for small agriculturists. They could be offered a grant or a subsidy to promote organic fertilisers in their industry.

Last but not least, I agree that the recent mass transportation project, Metro Express, is an effective solution but, what about the deforestation it caused? The Minister just mentioned about every one uprooted tree, three will be planted. They are not planted yet! When will they be planted? When climate change is over! When the earth is burning! When will they be planted? The motion speaks about urgency and immediate solutions...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, MP, you have a point of order?

**Mr Gunnoo:** It is a debate, not question time! She is asking questions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair will rule on that. Please!

**Ms Soogund:** We were talking about urgency and when will things be done. I was... never mind.

Last but not least, the recent mass transportation project - like just mentioned...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please!

**Ms Soogund:** I would suggest on this issue that we are having right now, the inclusion of cycling lanes. Far too many times people try to cycle and then, they are having major accidents or they do not even have a particular space, they have to go on the pavements or walking side and it is just too dangerous for them. A cycling lane will resolve these issues as well as issues of distancing, major transportation and deforestation since we are currently in the construction of many big projects...

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have a point of order?

**Mr Oozeerally:** Yes, on a point of order, Standing Order 47, on relevancy. Where does cycling lane...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Set your insight on the relevance. I will not entertain this! Please, proceed!

**Ms Soogund:** I was talking about cycling lanes. I meant that because it is going to help people to go green on a more personal and individual level. People who do not like to use the Metro Express because it is too crowded, they could use the cycling lanes.

*Moreover, pour conclure, la chose la plus importante à retenir de ce débat est le message que le treizième objectif de développement durable porte à tous ceux qui résident notre planète la Terre et non pas seulement l'île Maurice. Il est de notre responsabilité de voir les causes et les conséquences de notre comportement sur le changement climatique. En tant que jeunes, nous devons faire tout ce qui est nécessaire pour assurer la durabilité, une île Maurice saine et propre pour les générations à venir.*

Merci.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Dear Members, the Speaker will resume his seat.

*At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you. Please, resume your seat. We will move to the next orator. MP Pierre!

(3.02 p.m.)

**Mr J. D. Pierre (Chief Government Whip):** Deux heures. 120 minutes. 120 minutes que nous débattons une cause capitale, une cause de la plus haute importance et ma déception ne fait que grandir. Je tiens à féliciter mon gouvernement pour cette motion qui, à mon humble avis, est la parfaite symbiose de nos deux fers de lance de notre république ; l'adaptation et la mitigation.

Cependant, cher président, un très cher membre de l'opposition a déclaré que notre régime n'a rien fait pour l'intégration de la jeunesse. Je pense que notre très cher ami, à mon humble opinion encore une fois, est bloqué dans un monde parallèle ou fait tout simplement preuve d'hypocrisie aiguë.

**Mr Speaker:** MP Pierre, please! MP Bundhoo!

**Mr Bundhoo:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is irrelevant to the motion.

**Mr Pierre:** I spoke for just like two seconds and, then, already...

**Mr Speaker:** Members of this House, I will inform you that from now on, I will not entertain point of orders regarding irrelevancy and repetition. I remind you that this is a debate on a motion; debate is free speech. So, irrelevancy will no more be entertained! Thank you.

Please MP Pierre, continue.

**Mr Pierre:** Premièrement, le gouvernement a semé une peur constructive dans nos jeunes. Que se lève celui qui n'appréhende pas le changement climatique. Non ! Deuxièmement, je pense que le gouvernement a germé de merveilleuses pépites au sein de notre jeunesse. Et, très cher président, permettez-moi de nommer quelques exemples : le *Youth Ambassadors Programme*, le *National Forum for Colleges - Mauritius*, l'Union Indépendante Des Collèges Mauriciens, en outre. La question se pose, pourquoi je mentionne ces trois ci ? Il est bon de savoir que lorsque nous tabulons les statistiques, il est facilement notable que la jeunesse mauricienne est maintenant un pilier contre le changement climatique avec plus de 15,000 étudiants atteints. Dois-je encore mentionner que le gouvernement est uni avec les jeunes ? Je ne pense pas. M. le président, je ne vous cache pas ma déception pour ce manque aberrant de recherche et de bonne volonté.

M. le président, permettez-moi de soumettre une simple réflexion à notre cher *MP*. *Isn't the NYP a Government initiative for the youth? Additionally, I would also want to request the Opposition to be on the same page. One MP says that our Government is a failure...*

**Mr Speaker:** MP Pierre, please! MP Seetaram, do you have a point of order?

**Mr Seetaram:** Yes, I do have a point of order. I do not know why, many Members from the Government, they are keeping on defending the actual Government while we are here to defend on a particular motion. We are not the real Government or the real Opposition Members. We are NYP participants. I think we need to have a clarification on that because I am a bit confused.

**Mr Pierre:** How is it a point of order?

**Mr Speaker:** Please, allow me to rule on that! MP Seetaram, I understand your point. This is the National Youth Parliament but I will also say that there is the Government side and a

clear distinction with the Opposition side. There is a little bit of motivation behind it. So, I will allow both sides to talk about Government and Opposition motives. Thank you.

Please, continue!

**Mr Pierre:** One MP says that our Government is a failure and does nothing. The other says that we are too reactionary and do too much and another one supports and congratulates us. *Si l'opposition... Très cher président, si dans l'opposition, il y a de l'opposition, comment voulez-vous que nous avancions ? Nous sommes en direct et vous n'avez aucune coordination ?*

Ainsi adulé président, permettez-moi de poser un ultimatum dans cette Assemblée. Nous le gouvernement, les ambassadeurs de l'union et de la paix, nous offrons par cette motion, une alliance à l'opposition. Moi, *Chief Whip* du gouvernement tend ainsi la main à l'opposition.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mr Pierre, do you need a minute to coordinate yourself?

**Mr Pierre:** Si dans le temple de la justice ici, nos cœurs crient ; si dans le temple de la justice ici, nos âmes prient, c'est pour que demain mes très chers confrères, nous soyons en vie. Le changement climatique est une question de vie ou de mort. Si nous voulons que les générations à venir incarnent le *Glory to thee*, je pense que nous devons agir. Nous devons gouvernement comme opposition ainsi marcher à l'unisson.

Donc ici, devant toutes ces caméras, devant toute notre nation, j'implore, avec votre permission, le leader de l'opposition de réagir avec trois lettres. Bien sûr il faut avoir une justice dans ce monde. Vous avez le choix entre deux versions de ces trois lettres : OUI – un oui pour réécrire l'histoire et marcher ensemble ; NON – un non pour semer la discorde et la zizanie dans notre pays. Ainsi, M. le président, je tiens à dire que j'ai vraiment envie de voir Maurice survivre. Merci bien.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you very much, Mr Pierre. Leader of the Opposition!

(3.08 p.m.)

**Mr R. E. Bhujun (Leader of the Opposition):** Merci, M. le président. Bon d'abord, M. le président, le *Chief Whip* nous a donné la main et nous acceptons cette main avec tout notre cœur au sein de l'opposition. Mais nous sommes quand même l'opposition ! Et je souhaite aussi dire que l'opposition n'a pas d'opposition dans l'opposition comparativement au gouvernement actuel.

Permettez-moi de vous dire que je suis absolument ravi de constater que nos amis du gouvernement ont choisi de traiter ce sujet avec toute l'importance qu'il mérite en élucidant huit petits points très sombres dans une page blanche. Et bravo ! Bravo ! Je suis sûr que ces quelques mesures vont résoudre tous nos problèmes.

M. le président, au terme de ces débats assez intéressants pour ne pas dire chauffer à blanc, je vais essayer de jouer le rôle de la démocratie, c'est-à-dire avoir une opposition pour le bien-être de la raison de notre présence dans cette auguste Assemblée.

M. le président, j'ai entendu qu'on va faire des *sectors more eco-friendly*, mais on fait quoi de l'économie et du financement ? *Generation of reduce wastes*, mais on fait quoi de l'implémentation d'un tel système ? Et le financement encore une fois ? Le secteur du tourisme qui n'a plus de souffle, vous voulez l'étrangler encore ?

*Mr Speaker, Sir, the funds, they talk about funds. Yes, of course! But the government should use it correctly and is the government waiting for complete depletion before using the funds wisely? The government is talking about statistics on Google and on their website. Let me remind you here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the statistics on the government's website has not been updated since 2021.*

Je vais continuer. Une chose que je suis totalement d'accord avec le gouvernement, c'est à propos des jeunes, *the youth awareness*, comme vous l'avait mentionné dans votre motion. Mais où est l'inclusivité ? Vous avez parlé de l'inclusivité, mais où est cela dans la motion ? Je voudrais avoir cela dans la motion. C'est pour cela que nous proposons des amendements. Nos amendements sont en ligne avec les vôtres. C'est pour cela qu'aujourd'hui j'accepte la main du *Chief Whip*, qui n'est pas là malheureusement.

M. le président, sachant que les actions sur le climat sont axées sur des axes principaux : la mitigation et l'adaptation. Nous sommes un petit pays, notre contribution à l'accélération du changement climatique est très minime. Attention, ne me confondez pas. Je veux dire que l'adaptation devrait être la priorité du pays, du gouvernement et de l'opposition.

Nous sommes en train de perdre une plage, le trésor blanc de l'île Maurice. Nos récifs coralliens, nos communautés côtières et le manque d'eau émanant du changement de la

fréquence des pluies et la montée de la température qui impactent sur l'agriculture et surtout sur notre qualité de vie. Cela fut mentionné aussi par le ministre de l'Environnement.

M. le président, chers membres, mes amis de l'opposition ont proposé plusieurs alternatives viables et pratiques. *We believe in –*

- *sustainable transportation;*
- *protection and restoration of natural eco-system;*
- *developing climate resilience;*
- *supporting adaptation and mitigation measures in vulnerable sectors, and*
- *fostering international cooperation.*

Je suis sûr que nous sommes sur la même ligne du gouvernement parce que cela émane de votre motion.

Pour conclure, M. le président, j'accueille cette motion avec beaucoup de considération. Néanmoins, après avoir écouté ma critique ouverte, certains d'entre vous auraient pu avoir les lèvres brûlantes de me le rappeler, certes nous avons des critiques, mais je l'accueille favorablement et j'exprime mon souhait de participer à la validation et à l'amélioration de cette motion, et de toute l'opposition aussi.

Mais quelque chose que je voulais mentionner au terme des débats et mon analyse aussi, vous avez mentionné plusieurs choses qui ne sont pas dans la motion malheureusement. Si je compte sur la parole que vous avez donnée devant cet auguste Assemblée, je souhaite que cela soit introduit dans la motion. Les choses que vous avez dites- on a fait une liste - on va en discuter plus tard. Le temps presse, mais il n'est pas trop tard. Alors, écoutons les appels des sages, qu'ils soient dirigeants du gouvernement ou même membres de l'opposition, mais surtout les jeunes pour que nous changions dès maintenant notre relation avec la nature. Je vais reprendre les mots d'Antonio Guterres –

« Mettons de chaussures de sport (non pas dans l'hémicycle) et gagnons la course contre le changement climatique. »

Merci, M. le président.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Moving on to the hon. Prime Minister.

(3.13 p.m.)

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by mentioning that this Opposition according to me has had no directions so far. Absolutely none! On one hand, they accuse us of not doing enough and then contradict themselves by criticising about how we do not have the capabilities - financial or otherwise to do anything.

By the way, I would like to recall the attention of the Members of the Opposition that the motion is the question and not the resolution that follows the motion. So, thank you.

Most of the points raised by this Opposition do not have any reasonable basis. In my opinion, this points to sheer demagoguery. Then, they dare to use petty filibuster tactics to reduce the speech time for Government Members. I think I have counted at least five instances where points of order were raised and were not entertained by Members of the Opposition in very short time periods. I will deem that filibuster.

I have to agree with the observations made by my colleague, the Attorney General that the Opposition must first focus on their research skills before they start asking this government to resign.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must mention that our motion is not brief as heavily criticised by the Opposition. It is broad. There is a very big difference. The sheer scope of this motion shows the dedication of my government towards an issue on which we are all concerned and I do appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's hand being extended to us to vote in favour of this motion.

Let me mention broadly the provisions of this motion –

- A National Development Plan to make future developments more eco-friendly.
- The adoption of a circular economy, ecotourism and much more.

I do not wish to be long in my intervention on this motion as I believe my colleague, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change will further elaborate on it.

I believe we are all here very much concerned by the effects of climate change and as previously explained by my colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management, coastal restoration is a highly effective method to fight against climate change.

It is a great disrespect to all civil servants, social workers and others who work so hard on the implementation of policy measures. The excellent points raised by members of my government illustrate our credibility. I do not believe same can be said for the Opposition.

To conclude, given the seriousness of climate action and the will shown by my Government and some Members of the Opposition I must mention, through this motion, I strongly endorse that all Members of this National Youth Parliament vote in its favour.

Through this motion I strongly endorse that all Members of this National Youth Parliament vote in its favour. Let us show some bipartisanship at least on this issue.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Prime Minister. I now call on Minister Rachpal!

(3.17 p.m.)

**The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Ms P. Rachpal):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Members of the House, as we reach around the end of this motion, I wish to highlight the fact that my Government is diligently protecting our marine and terrestrial ecosystems in the face of climate change SDG 13. We seek global partnerships to attain the SDGs and to pursue our unique multicultural and multi-ethnic journey of nation building in a spirit of unity, in university, *lame dan lame* as we always say.

Mauritius is committed to strengthening its resilience to the climate crisis, embarking on a low emission pathway and completely phasing out coal in electricity generation before 2030. I repeat, before 2030! There is a dire need to decouple economic and development dimensions while mainstreaming circularity and sustainability. To affirm that laws such as the Environment and Climate Change Act and the Paris Agreement have always been a guiding help for the Government and it shall always prevail in the near future.

Coming to the point of restoration of wildlife, nurseries and plant restoration which has been put in place at Chamarel, collaboration and guidance from the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and National Parks and Conservation Services will continue to be sought to increase the population of sizes of the native and endemic birds and plants. The coastal rehabilitation works are ongoing at Pointe aux Feuilles to Grand Sable. The *Police de l'Environnement* attends



to environmental complaints with regard to breach of environmental laws and takes appropriate enforcement actions as well as contraventions. The main environmental complaints relate to noise pollution, odour dumping, eyesores, illegal slathering and nuisances caused by bare lands.

Members, you must have noticed that Police Officers do patrols on public beaches to make sure that the public is abiding by the law in order to restore our nature. Under the legal framework regarding the effective measures to combat climate change, we have signed several Acts namely, Environmental Protection Regulations, Paris Agreement, COP27 and it goes on and on.

Members of the Parliament, pay close attention. My Ministry under the support of this whole Government has devised a strategic direction from 2022 to 2025 with a clear indication enabling Mauritius to turn towards a greener eco-friendly island. We support the transition to enhance climate resilience and a low emission country. Let us not forget that the transport sector contributes a lot to our greenhouse emissions. Mauritius is therefore driven to transition towards alternative greener means of transportation. To that effect, the Government of Mauritius has decided to support electric vehicles in 2016 by abolishing excise duty. In addition, duty on hybrid motorcars has been brought down to 30 percentage points – I repeat: 30 percentage points – to all cylinder capacity. The study is underpinned by design thinking through a stakeholder's engagement process.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to clear the doubt of the Opposition Members regarding the financing of our projects. Several international climate funds provide Mauritius with a tangible opportunity to raise additional climate financing. There are several multilateral donor-funded climate funds worldwide committed to finance climate adaptation and mitigation through grants, concessional loans and guaranties. The most active includes the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility, and the Green Climate Fund.

My Government is in full accordance of this motion. Save your planet; make no more greenhouse gases; save trees to fight climate change or the world will take revenge. Take action; climate is changing at a fast pace and so should we. I wish to thank all the Members of the Government for their coherent help to support this motion. Thank you everyone.

And I wish to highlight one thing, my Government, along with the Prime Minister and other Ministers concerned, we are going to work further for the better, better, better, environment, better lifestyle of our population as our population matters the most for us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the motion. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister of Environment.

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the National Youth Parliament do now adjourn to Friday 03 March 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

**The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The National Youth Parliament stands adjourned.

Adjournment matters!

### MATTERS RAISED

(3.23 p.m.)

#### TAMARIN & BLACK RIVER – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Ms S. E. Rama (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I would like to intervene on the persistent issue of the lack of accessibility to public transportation in residential areas such as Tamarin and Black River. Domestic employees and individuals wanting to displace themselves from one place to another have to wait for sometimes over a whole hour for their respective buses to come. The official database of Mauritian bus routes states that the frequency of buses directly from Tamarin to a major metropolitan area such as Port Louis is only three times a day.

Mr Speaker, Sir, locals have been seeking help and complaining by making statements such as *je cite* –

*“bis bien misère ici!”*

without a single response from the Government. I would like to inform the House that the consequence of this issue is one that makes the daily lives of coastal inhabitants a major challenge. Therefore, I kindly ask the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail to not only finally react but to act upon this request of increasing the frequency of buses accordingly in order to facilitate transportation in suburban areas. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Minister, please!

**The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr. A. Ramsoorooop):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My Ministry was apprised of this complaint and a team comprising of officers of my Ministry as well as officers of the National Transport Authority has been constituted to make an assessment on this problem faced by the residents of Tamarin. A contingency arrangement with the CNT for feeder vans during off-peak hours will be implemented in the short run following consultation with technical staff of my Ministry. A full one week survey is being carried out to monitor the situation and a final assessment report will be ready in two weeks' time. Necessary actions will be taken to implement the recommendations therein and the House will be informed accordingly. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Any more adjournment matters?

(3.26 p.m.)

### **SPORTS FACILITIES – BOOKINGS AT MUNICIPALITIES**

**Mr J. Z. Carrim (Member of Parliament):** Sports facilities at the Municipal level are very difficult to access; the bookings are very complicated - at only certain times. And the process is very complicated; it is for a long period of three months which automatically exclude people who have an amateur interest in sports. My suggestion is whether the relevant Ministry could ensure that facilities are made more accessible so that the average person can participate in their sports as they wish. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you. Minister, please!

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Ms S. F. Wahidna):** Thank you very much for addressing the matter. I will look into the matter and will confirm soon.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Any more matters?

(3.27 p.m)

### **REMPART FOOTBALL GROUND – LIGHTNING ISSUE**

**Ms M. J. Padayachy (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The matter I wish to raise is addressed to the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation. Minister, I am making this request on behalf of the inhabitants of Rempart and the vicinity where they cannot use the Rempart Football Ground in the evening because there is an issue with lightning. So, following Government's encouragement for the population to do sports, this currently presents a disadvantage especially to working people. So, can the Minister kindly do the needful to remedy the situation? Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you MP. Minister!

**The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Ms M. T. E. Kattic):** Thank you for raising this issue. Officers of my Government shall contact the Municipal Council of Port Louis to do the necessary taking into account that a budget of Rs55 m. has been allocated for 2022 and 2023 for renovation of football grounds. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. MP Mariette, you had an adjournment matter?

(3.28 p.m)

### **POINTE AUX SABLES – DRAIN PROBLEMS – OVERFLOWING STREETS**

**Mr L. A. L. Mariette (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I wish to address the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development in regards to drain problems happening in the area of Pointe aux Sables, especially in times of heavy rains when streets are overflowing. I humbly request that the matter be looked into and promptly find a solution to this issue. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr R. Daworaz):** Mr Speaker, Sir, normally the cleaning of drains is done via a systematic way and is done by the local authorities under the Ministry of Local Government. However, I will liaise with my colleague Minister to see what is causing this sort of water overflow and we will then see if we can cater for the enlargement of the drains at this specific place. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Any more adjournment matters? Please.

(3.29 p.m.)

### **SEXUAL EDUCATION – SECONDARY & TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr N. K. S. Maudhoo (Member of Parliament):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will be addressing to the Minister of Health. I believe there is a designated team of resource persons working towards sexual education in Secondary and Tertiary Institutions that once a year go to these institutions to sensitise the students. I would urge the Minister to make more regular visits to these institutions. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Health.

**The Minister of Health and Wellness (Mr L. S. Rengassamy):** I am taking note of that and I am going to do the needful after consultation with my Ministry. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Any more matters? Well, in that case Members, the House stands adjourned.

*At 3.23 p.m., the National Youth Parliament was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 03 March 2023 at 10.00 a.m.*