



EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION

NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FOURTH EDITION

THURSDAY 21 AUGUST 2025

CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY NYP MEMBERS

ELECTION OF THE NYP SPEAKER

ELECTION OF THE NYP DEPUTY SPEAKER

QUESTIONS

STATEMENTS BY NYP MINISTERS

MOTIONS

ADJOURNMENT

MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker (Mohammad Uzair Ahseek)

The Prime Minister Mr. Kyle Ridley Dyail, MP

(Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Home Affairs and External Communications,
Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity)

The Deputy Prime Minister Miss Yakshini Mattarooa, MP

(Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance)

The Minister Miss Aliah Hassaanah Mahamoodally, MP

(Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning)

The Minister Miss Shiksha Ramlugon, MP

(Minister of Tourism)

The Minister Miss Durga Pariag, MP

(Minister of Education and Human Resource)

The Minister Miss Alisa Ahdia Mydheen Khan, MP

(Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research)

The Minister Miss Nessyana Raghoonundan, MP

(Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management)

The Minister Mr. Rohan Seeparasad, MP

(Minister of Land Transport)

The Minister Mr. Nakul Kumar Varma Dusoye, MP

(Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade)

The Minister Mr. Lakshya Kumar Seebah, MP

(Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)

The Minister Mr. Altaaf Muhammad Luqmaan Seegoulam, MP

(Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity)

The Minister Mr. Lolljowaheer Chatresingh Sharma, MP

(Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives)

The Minister Miss Dambaresha Devi Banjhu, MP

(Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change)

The Minister Miss Jerusha Devi Seeburn, MP

(Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning)

The Minister Mr. Yash Divyesh Rao Lalsing, MP

(Attorney General)

The Minister Miss Delphine Dominique, MP

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

The Minister Mr. Shawn Andreas Li Hing Duen, MP

(Minister of Youth and Sports)

The Minister Mr. Hansika Sheoraj, MP

(Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development)

The Minister Miss Fanny Zameer, MP

(Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation)

The Minister Mr. Yohans Veeriah, MP

(Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations)

The Minister Miss Sanchi Hanshita, MP

(Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection)

The Minister Mr. Soopun Hossen Mosaheb, MP

(Minister of Health and Wellness)

The Minister Mr. Yuhans Khulpateea, MP

(Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare)

The Minister Miss Ahamudally Umme Sharfaa Humairah, MP

(Minister of Arts and Culture)

The Minister Mr. Ouday Chuttoo, MP

(Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms)

The Junior Minister Mr. Muhammad Rayhaan Kaudeer, MP

(Junior Minister of Finance)

The Junior Minister Miss Riya Vihaana Cyparsade, MP

(Junior Minister of Tourism)

The Junior Minister Miss Lushika Mungurah, MP

(Junior Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management)

The Junior Minister Miss Chudaamani Gaya, MP

(Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade)

The Junior Minister Miss Khushi Dayal, MP

(Junior Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity)

The Junior Minister Miss Saabiyah Keramuth, MP

(Junior Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change)

The Junior Minister Miss Tanushri Gobin, MP

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

The Junior Minister Mr. Toi Nigel, MP

(Junior Minister of Youth and Sports)

The Junior Minister Miss Zahrah Sheik Hoossain, MP

(Junior Minister of Health and Wellness)

The Junior Minister Mr. Mahavir Gossagne Nunkoo, MP

(Junior Minister of Arts and Culture)

The Minister Miss Ishika Munbodh-Mohun, MP

(Leader of the Opposition)

Miss Larose Gwénaél Tatiana, MP

(Deputy of Rodrigues)

The MP Mr Nawfar Muhammad Sawar, MP

(Deputy Speaker)

The Minister Miss Shanaelle Marie Noemi Rock, MP

(Chief Government Whip)

The MP Mr Gyan Digumber

(Opposition Whip)

The Minister Miss Diya Kulpoo

(Deputy Chairperson of Committees)

The Minister Mr. Ksheetij Sharma Budosy

(Deputy Chief Government Whip)

Miss Nabeeha Zariya Kainat Nundoosing

Miss Bhaviyatha Soondur

Miss Shahira Dulmeer

Mr. Dushyant Munjhureea

Mr. Louis Mygel Andrew Young Chin Fa Young Pak Kian, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Koshal Kowal, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Aashir Mehran Hosany, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Hans Ansah, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Dhanrajsing Sheoraj, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Sheikh Ishfaaq Cader, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Jeelasha Sansourooah, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Krish Raj Luchmun, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Yogesh Luchmun, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Krishna Sai Mudalli, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Kritin Deenoo, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Niraali Roopchand, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Muhammad Ouweis Beharry, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Poovarahsi Subbarayan, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Lohitaksh Prayag, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Rewatee Soorjun, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Rahul Balgobin, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Bibi Zaynab Roheemun, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Sanjana Seeburn, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Samiyah Teeluck, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Miss Tanvi Badycharun, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Yash Chushan Sharma Bandhu, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Yoan Raggoo, MP

(Member of Opposition)

Mr. Caitanya Chandra Koylas, MP

(Member of Opposition)

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker	Mr Mohammad Uzair Ahseek
Deputy Speaker	Mr Nawfar Muhammad Sawar
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Miss Diya Kulpoo
Clerk of the National Youth Parliament	Miss Ozeer Hannaa
Deputy Clerk	Mr Gunesh Nikhil
Clerk Assistant	Miss Lee Man Yan Laeticia Bridget
Hansard Editor	Mrs Chitra Jankee
Assistant Hansard Editor	Ms Doushika Hurdoss
Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer	Ms Prittydevi Jeewoonarain
Serjeant-at-Arms	Miss Annoua Marie Eloane Cassandre

MAURITIUS

Eighth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

National Youth Parliament

FOURTH EDITION

Debate No. 01 of 2025

Sitting of Thursday 21 August 2025

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

The National Anthem was played

(The Mace is brought into the House by the Serjeant-at-Arms and is laid under the Table).

The Clerk: Thank you. Members, please resume your seats!

DECLARATION OF THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The Clerk: To declare the opening of the Fourth Edition of the National Youth Parliament, whereas it has been recognised that the youth of the Republic of Mauritius are encouraged to be interested in the political, economic and social affairs of the country, whereas, Madam Speaker of the Mauritius National Assembly has allowed that the Chamber of the Mauritius National Assembly to be the seat of the Fourth Edition of the National Youth Parliament.

Now, therefore, I do hereby declare that the Fourth Edition of the National Youth Parliament shall take place in the Chamber of the Mauritius National Assembly at Port Louis on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 of August 2025.

DECLARATION BY NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT MEMBERS

The Clerk: We shall now proceed with the declaration by Members of the National Youth Parliament. I invite Members of National Youth Parliament to stand up and make the declaration.

At this stage, all Members of National Youth Parliament stood up and made the declaration.

The Clerk: Thank you. Members, please resume your seats.

SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT – ELECTION

The Clerk: I will now invite two Members to move and second the election of a Member present in this Assembly all the whilst to be nominated to the Office of the Speaker and to take the Chair of the National Youth Parliament.

The Prime Minister: Clerk, I move that Mr Ahseek Mohammad Uzair be elected Speaker of the National Youth Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition (Miss Munbodh-Mohun) rose and seconded.

The Clerk: Is there any counterproposal?

Members, as there appears to be no counterproposals, I declare Mr Ahseek Mohammad Uzair, present in the House, elected Speaker of the National Youth Parliament. I invite him to come to the upper step to make a declaration prescribed therefore before this Assembly in the first instance and then to take the Chair.

(The House having called Mr Ahseek Mohammad Uzair, to the Chair, he proceeds to the upper step of the Chair.)

Mr Speaker *(Standing on the upper step):*

I, Mr Ahseek Mohammad Uzair, having been elected as Speaker of the National Youth Parliament do declare that I will conscientiously, impartially and to the best of my knowledge, judgement and ability, discharge the duties and responsibilities that I am now about to assume.

(Mr Speaker then takes the Chair)

(The Mace which was, up to that time, under the Table, is placed upon the Table by the Serjeant-at-Arms)

Mr Speaker: Members, it is my honour and solemn duty to serve as Speaker of the National Youth Parliament. I stand before you, committed to fairness, integrity and the highest ideals of parliamentary democracy. Guided by the principles of rights, respect and responsibility, I will protect the dignity of this House and ensure that every voice is heard in order, free from fear or favour. Let our debates be robust, our conduct honourable and our decisions worthy of the trust placed in us.

I thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER – ELECTION

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that MP Nawfar Muhammad Sawar be elected Deputy Speaker of this National Youth Parliament.

The Leader of the Opposition (Miss I. Munboddh-Mohun) rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: Is there any counterproposal?

There being no counterproposal, I declare MP Nawfar Muhammad Sawar elected Deputy Speaker of the National Youth Parliament. I offer him my sincere congratulations. I understand that the Deputy Speaker will have a few words to the House.

Mr Sawar: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I wish first to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for having been elected to his high office and I wish also to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to all Members for having elected me as Deputy Speaker and I assure all Members of the National Youth Parliament that I will do my level best to conduct the affairs of this National Youth Parliament and uphold the dignity of the House.

I thank you.

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition!

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

WORLD BANK – 2023 MAURITIUS ECONOMIC REPORT – STRUCTURAL ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES – MEASURES

The Leader of the Opposition (Miss I. Munbodh-Mohun) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance whether, in regard to the structural economic vulnerabilities identified in the 2023 Mauritius Economic Report of the World Bank, she will state the measures Government proposes to take to attract Foreign Direct Investment in emerging sectors, including through tax incentives, subsidies and Public-Private Partnerships.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for this question of national importance which allows me to update the House on the government's ongoing initiatives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, two years ago, in 2023, the World Bank released its report which pointed to several vulnerabilities namely, our exposure to external shocks, the small size of our domestic market and the urgent need to diversify our growth model. Two years have passed since then, and I, today, stand here to clearly state those vulnerabilities have not been ignored.

On the contrary, they were met with concrete targeted and forward-looking reforms and we will continue to implement even more measures to counteract these vulnerabilities. Mauritius is

one of the members of the Southern Africa Development Community with the lowest level of statutory barriers to investment but maintains a more restrictive environment for foreign investment on average than OECD members. This contrast highlights the challenges we face but rather than dwelling on them, our government is more focus on rebuilding the economy. The first area on which we will focus is investment and innovation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to attract foreign direct investment in emerging sectors, we introduced the Premium Investment Certificate and the Innovative Mauritius Scheme. These initiatives provide investors with fast-track permits, dedicated facilitation and fiscal incentives because in today's world, time and predictability matter more than ever. A National Research and Innovation Institute under the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research has been set up, that will henceforth support both public and private sectors while streamlining existing public research institution for greater effectiveness. An amount of Rs200 million will be allocated to ministries, to finance research that result in policy innovation.

Furthermore, all parastatal organisations and state-owned enterprises will be required to come up with a research and development and innovation plan. A high-level steering committee, at the level of the Prime Minister's Office will also be set up to monitor progress on the innovative Mauritius mission. Incentives through a new innovative Mauritius Scheme to promote research and development and innovation will also be provided. An AI innovation startup programme will be set up under the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to promote startups using AI because to drive innovation, national AI initiatives are of paramount importance. A dedicated AI Unit will also be established at the MITCI to drive the AI transition.

Furthermore, as part of the public sector AI programme, Rs25 million will be allocated to equip ministries with AI tools for better policy making and service delivery. Additionally, startups and MSMEs can claim tax deductions on AI investments up to a Rs150,000. These are the types of reforms that makes Mauritius a hub for research, technology and innovation.

Financial Services are one of the emerging sectors that must also be explored. The government will promote fintech as a key driver of foreign direct investment by positioning Mauritius as a trusted and innovation friendly jurisdiction, with government fully committed to supporting the ecosystem alongside the FSC and the Bank of Mauritius. The FSC, Fintech and

Innovation Hub and its regulatory sandbox authorisation framework already provide global investors with a secure, yet flexible environment to test and scale digital financial solutions under proper supervision.

While the Bank of Mauritius innovates initiative reinforces our national ambition to nurture cutting-edge financial technologies and digital banking solutions.

This Government will strengthen and internationalise these platforms by enhancing regulatory clarity and ensuring investor protection and facilitating the cross-border digital transactions. Moreover, the FSC, in partnership with Government, will intensify international promotion through cooperation with foreign regulators, global Fintech accelerators and dedicated investor roadshows, showcasing Mauritius' stable policy environment, competitive tax regime and strategic role as a gateway to African and Asian markets. So far, Mauritius has concluded 46 tax treaties, namely the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, and is party to a series of treaties under negotiation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while corporate tax rates in Europe, Asia and across SADC often climb well above the mid-twenties, Mauritius, with its competitive 15% rate and as low as 3% in key sectors, clearly positions itself as one of the most attractive and investor-friendly jurisdictions worldwide. Through these combined efforts, we are determined to attract sustainable, high quality FDI into Fintech, fostering innovation, inclusion and long-term economic transformation.

The Government will implement carefully targeted tax holidays as a proven instrument to attract foreign direct investment, drawing on the successful experience of such incentives in boosting SMEs through angel investors in Mauritius. In the past, tax holidays provided a breathing space and financial relief that enabled small businesses and start-ups to grow, innovate and create quality employment while also encouraging angel investors to commit capital to high potential ventures.

Building on this track record, the extension of tax holidays to foreign investors in priority and emerging sectors will serve as a catalyst for scaling up investment, fostering technology transfer and integrating Mauritius more deeply into global value chains. By ensuring that these tax holidays are time-bound, transparent and linked to concrete outcomes such as job creation,

R&D activity and export diversification, Government aims to balance investor attraction with sustainable economic transformation.

The Government reaffirms its steadfast commitment to attract high quality FDI by leveraging a robust Public-Private Partnership Framework, grounded in transparent laws and institutional strength. Under the stewardship of the Procurement Policy Office, the official PPP unit, Mauritius has enacted a comprehensive regulatory foundation, including the Public-Private Partnership Act 2004 and the Built Operate Transfer Projects Act 2016 to provide robust, legal certainty and clarity for investors.

Together, these measures underpin landmark PPP successes in major development areas from renewable energy and smart infrastructure to transport and social infrastructure. Thus, demonstrating to prospective foreign investors that Mauritius offers a reliable, governed and innovative investment platform where public resources and private sector expertise coalesce to drive sustainable growth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to match the skills required, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), in collaboration with the Economic Development Board (EDB), has established the Skills Development Support Scheme for foreign direct investment to support foreign investors in training of their employees. The availability of necessary skills is one the of the determining factors in the foreign investment decision making process. This is why the Skills Development Support Scheme aims at creating a more agile and targeted skills development response to foreign investment.

It is in this very spirit that the Government, today, is bringing forward the motion to establish a national framework for the implementation of the public-private partnerships schemes in vocational, technical and skills-based training across all levels of education. A clear demonstration that our policies are not only about attracting foreign capital, but also about empowering our youth with the competencies required to drive sustainable and inclusive development.

While attracting FDI, our Government has placed Mauritians at the heart of its policies, in contrast to those who placed their emphasis almost entirely on foreign investors. The

Development Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Investment Corporation have been mobilised to provide concessional loans and equity support for start-ups. We are promoting joint ventures between foreign investors and local SMEs, and we have made skills transfer a key condition in investment approval. This way investment not only brings capital, but it brings knowledge, opportunity and empowerment in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the real test of reform is found in the numbers and macro-economic stability.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Prime Minister, it is getting too long! Please wrap up!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the IMF 2025 Article IV Consultation Report, inflation which stood at 7% in 2023 fell to around 2.5% in March 2025, contrary to runaway inflation predicted by some! Two years ago, vulnerabilities were identified. Two years later, we have addressed them through targeted incentives, digital reforms, financial diversification and macro-economic stability. Mauritius will be stronger, more attractive to investors.

This Government is not content with short-term fixes. We are building long-term resilience. While some may speak of vulnerabilities, we speak of solutions.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Prime Minister, you have to conclude, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: And for that, Mauritius stands on a firmer ground today.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition!

Ms Munboddh-Mohun: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In light of the current inflation rate of 5%, will the loan facilitation proposed by the Deputy Prime Minister not cause our country's inflation rate to skyrocket? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Prime Minister!

The Deputy Prime Minister: The inflation rate was around 2.5% in March 2025 according to the IMF Report. And it is not runaway inflation. So, we can afford to give these loan incentives and schemes to support our local businesses and SMEs for their joint venture by attracting foreign direct investment at the same time. So, I do not feel that the inflation rate will skyrocket because we have stable inflation.

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, one last supplementary!

Ms Munbodh-Mohun: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. With reference to the tax incentives proposed by the Deputy Prime Minister, can the Deputy Prime Minister, please state the measures that will be proposed to prevent the Government tax incentives from overlapping with the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Prime Minister, please be a bit brief in your reply!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mauritius is already a signatory of the Double Taxation Agreement.

And, what does the Leader of the Opposition mean by over-lapsing?

I only find advantages to attract foreign direct investment through these treaties.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Members, time is over! We shall now proceed to Parliamentary questions address to the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity.

Deputy Chairperson of Committees, MP Ms Kulpoo.

PREVAILING LAW & ORDER SITUATION – EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES INTEGRATION – SECURITY CHALLENGES

(No. B/1) Ms D. Kulpoo (Member of the Parliament) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the prevailing law and order situation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the strategic priorities under consideration to further reinforce

same, indicating how emerging technologies and best practices can be integrated to meet evolving security challenges.

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I begin by thanking the Member for raising this important question. It gives us the opportunity to reaffirm that law and order is and will remain the foremost priority of this government. Without safety, there can be no justice, no prosperity and no trust in institutions. Security threats evolve constantly and our response must evolve faster. Our strategy, therefore, rests on three pillars – modernisation, professionalisation and accountability.

First, modernising the fight against cybercrime. The Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 was only a beginning. We now move further with a National Security Operation Centre to provide 24/7 protection of critical digital infrastructure. Electronic evidence will be strengthened through clear rules in forthcoming reforms to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. At the international level, Mauritius will engage with SADC, the African Union and the Commonwealth to ensure data sharing reflects modern realities.

Second, professionalising our manpower. Our officers on the ground remain the backbone of law and order and that is precisely why they must be supported by new expertise. We are introducing continuous professional developments every two to three years with incentive for officers who upscale. Recruitment of ICT specialists will strengthen cyber and forensic capacity, and training exchanges with INTERPOL, FBI and Scotland Yard will broaden knowledge. And to open now horizons for our youths, we will provide scholarships in ICT and security that come with a pathway to serve in the Mauritius Police Force.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please wrap up.

The Prime Minister: This ensures that graduates gain worldclass training while their skills directly benefit the country on their return.

Mr Speaker, Sir, law and order is not a slogan; it is a solemn responsibility. My government will continue to modernise, professionalise and deliver security worthy of the people's trust.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Chief Whip, MP Ms Rock.

MARITIME & AIR CONNECTIVITY – PROJECTS & INITIATIVES – ECONOMIC & STRATEGIC BENEFITS

(No. B/2) Ms N. Rock (Member of Parliament) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to maritime and air connectivity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the projects and initiatives being envisaged for the strengthening thereof for the economic and strategic benefits of Mauritius, regionally and internationally.

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I thank the Member for this timely question.

Connectivity by sea and by air is indeed the backbone of Mauritius competitiveness. Without strong arteries of trade, we cannot speak of growth nor of resilience and this government has placed connectivity at the very heart of its long-term vision.

On the maritime front, the House will recall that a full techno-economic feasibility study was completed in 2019. That study confirmed what traders and shippers know all too well – that Port-Louis needs an island terminal and a 1.7 km protective breakwater. This is not expansion for expansion's sake. In 2018 alone, cyclones and heavy swells forced our port to close for 24 days. With an island terminal and breakwater, we will cut weather related down time and expand capacity from today's one million TEUs to other 1.5 million, handling mega ships reliably.

Government is committed to driving this as a state-owned climate resilient development, integrating shore power, solar powered cranes and eco-friendly recommendations. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, capacity without efficiency is not competitiveness.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please wrap up!

The Prime Minister: The concession of a Cargo Handling Corporation comes up for renewal in 2026. Government will use that window to lock personal-based reform.

Thirdly, digitalisation. Mauritius has already a head start through MACCS, the next frontier is to transform Port-Louis a smart digital trade corridor.

On air connectivity, the government recognises that large gate airport projects take time but smaller operation can deliver impact today. That is why SSRN Airport will soon deploy and AI-driven operation platform.

Mr Speaker, Sir,

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please conclude!

The Prime Minister: ... this is how Mauritius secures its place as premier logistic and connectivity hub of the Indian Ocean. Through infrastructure that is resilient, reforms that drive efficiency ...

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please conclude!

The Prime Minister: ... and technology that makes us smart and faster.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Ms Teeluck.

DRUG TRAFFICKING & CONSUMPTION – MEASURES ENVISAGED – NATIONAL DRUG REHABILITATION & REINTEGRATION AUTHORITY

(No. B/3) Ms Teeluck (Member of Parliament) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to narcotics trafficking, synthetic drug consumption and the resulting public health and socio-economic risks, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to whether consideration will be given for the taking of appropriate legal and other measures to effectively and efficiently deal therewith in a wholesome manner, including the establishment of a National Drug Rehabilitation and Reintegration Authority.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Member from the Opposition for raising this question because it allows us to reinstate the clarity that the fight against narcotics trafficking and synthetic drugs is not just another policy item. It is a moral duty of my government to protect our youth, our families and the very fabric of our society. My government has not stood still, the Dangerous Drugs Act as amended in 2022, brought in the Drug Users Administrative Panel to divert minor users into treatment rather than prison.

It gave law enforcement the power to conduct controlled deliveries and decoy operations. It streamlines the role of the Forensic Science Laboratory to ensure evidence stand in court. It even created the legal basis for hospital to supervise medicinal cannabis.

We continue to update our schedules as seen with the audition of oxeladin last year and since April 2024, the DUAP has been operational but the reality is that synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances evolve faster than our laws and traffickers are quick to exploit every loophole. That is why our next step, Mr Speaker, Sir, will be to move beyond chasing substances one by one but instead, to adopt a class-based scheduling. By outlawing entire chemical families, we will prevent traffickers from flooding our streets with so-called legal hives. A rapid early warning system will connect the Forensic Science Laboratory, the National Agency for Drug Control, the Ministry of Health and the Prime Minister's Office so that new threats can be flagged and restricted within days.

And when dealers prey on our children near schools or hide behind social media, the law will empower our courts to impose tougher penalties, sending a clear message that such conduct is beyond the pale. At the same time, programmes like the DUAP will retain their health first orientation but with credible compliance measures, attendance checks, testing and the ability to return persistent offenders to court.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the second part of the question, the answer is no. There is no need for a new authority because the National Agency for Drug Control already exists. This House itself created it in April last year. The NADC is the apex body integrating treatment, rehabilitation, harm reduction, reintegration, prevention and supply reduction functions. It regulates centres, coordinate NGOs, manages vocational trainings, runs for National Drug Observatory and publishes real time statistics. In short, it is precisely what the Member is asking for except it is already in law.

So, perhaps before calling for new authorities, the Opposition might first familiarise themselves with the legislation of the land. On this side of the House, we prefer to strengthen our institutions that we have built, not chase illusion of duplication.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this government's approach is clear, firm against traffickers, compassionate with victims and absolutely unwavering in its duty to save the nation from the scourge of drugs. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: No supplementary? Next question!

**LAW AND ORDER – MODERNISATION OF INVESTIGATIVE POWERS,
FORENSIC CAPACITY & INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING**

(No. B/4) Mr K. Mudalli (Member of Parliament) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to law and order, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the measures being envisaged for the –

- (a) modernisation of the investigative powers;
- (b) enhancement of the Forensic Science Laboratory, and
- (c) embedding of intelligence-led policing whilst ensuring the alignment thereof with the obligations of Mauritius under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I welcome this question because it gives us the chance to show that this Government understands something very simple yet very powerful, that is, the rule of law is not just about control; it is about confidence. Confidence that justice is fair, that rights are protected and that those who serve on the frontline of our security have the tools they need to act swiftly and lawfully.

For too long, we have worked with patchwork rules scattered here and there. That is why we will bring forward a modern Police and Criminal Evidence Act. A single, clear law that sets out what the policemen can do and how they must do it.

It will mean that stop and search, arrests, interviews and even the handling of digital evidence are governed not by improvisation, but by principle. In doing so, Mauritius will not only strengthen its investigation. It will also show the world that justice here is anchored firmly in our international commitments, in the ICCPR and the UN Guidelines on the Prevention of Crimes.

But law, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not only written in statute. It is written in trust. That is why we will extend body-worn and in-car cameras under strict safeguards so that citizens know their rights and are respected, and officers know their integrity is protected.

On forensics, this Government has already launched the relocation of the Forensics Science Laboratory to La Vigie. Yet, we all know that new walls mean little unless they house new capacity. This is why we will equip the laboratory with the best technology, expand specialists' staff and ensure ISO standards are not only maintained, but extended so that cases move faster and justice is not delayed. Yes, the future of policing is intelligence-led.

The National Security Operation Centre, which I mentioned earlier, will now form part of a wider fusion hub connecting forensic hits, crime report, safe city data and regional partners into one secure system with privacy built into its design. At our borders, radars and satellites will help us track vessels that try to slip through the dark and drones will try to support search and rescue when every second matters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our colleague opposite may raise the question, but the truth is my Government is already delivering the answer. When they rehearse doubts, we bring forward solutions. When they point to obstacles, we turn them into opportunities. That is the difference! A Government that does not simply promise security, but builds it reasonably, transparently and always in the service of the people.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Mudalli!

Mr Mudalli: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the Prime Minister a supplementary question. In what ways would the help of more advanced nations in forensic technology be solicited should the need for such aid arise?

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Member, please, repeat the question? I did not understand.

Mr Speaker: Please, do!

Mr Mudalli: In what ways will the help of more advanced nations in forensic technology be solicited should the need for such aid arise?

Mr Speaker: Yes, Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I will keep it brief. The forensic lab is currently facing a severe backlog. And backlog is not a building problem; it is a system's problem. That is why the answer lies in the LIMS upgrade, rapid DNA instrument and specialists' recruitment. That is how we move from months of waiting to predictable timelines.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Deputy for Rodrigues, MP Ms Larose!

RODRIGUES & OUTER ISLANDS – STRATEGIC PROJECTS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, ECONOMIC RESILIENCE & SOCIAL WELL-BEING

(No. B/5) Ms T. Larose (Member of Parliament) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the long-term vision for the Island of Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, he will state the strategic projects under consideration to strengthen infrastructure, economic resilience and social wellbeing thereat.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I thank the Member for this question because it gives us the opportunity to reaffirm a simple truth: Rodrigues and the Outer Islands are not an afterthought. They are an integral part of our Republic and their future is our shared future. Because Rodrigues enjoys its own Regional Assembly with autonomy enshrined in law, our vision is one of collaboration: Government and RRA working side by side to turn plans into progress.

Our long-term vision rests on three pillars –

- (i) Infrastructure;
- (ii) Economic resilience, and
- (iii) Social well-being.

First on infrastructure, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Rodrigues airport modernisation is not just a runaway project. It is a gateway to opportunity, to safer medical evacuation, to reliable connectivity for families and businesses alike.

The new desalination plant, the reservoirs, the transfer pipelines, these works guarantee water security for the households, protect our lagoons and support a dignified quality of life, and with renewable energy, solar storage and even a wave-energy pilot.

Rodrigues will stand at the forefront of clean energy innovation in the Indian Ocean. These projects are being advanced in close coordination with the RRA, ensuring that local priorities guide national investment.

Second, on economic resilience. The Government's vision is clear. Rodrigues must grow in its own way on its own strength. That means tourism that is high-quality and low-impact, built on authenticity and respect for the island's culture and natural beauty.

With green destination certification underway, with microgrants and procurement preferences for local entrepreneurs and with innovation support from agencies already present on the island, we are ensuring that prosperity is created by Rodriguans hands and kept in Rodriguans homes. Here again, collaboration with the RRA ensures that the Rodriguan people are not just beneficiaries, but active partners in shaping growth.

Third, Mr Speaker, Sir, on social well-being. Development will always serve people. That is why we are strengthening the partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to align resources to improve referrals, to rotate specialists and to ensure hospital upgrades keep pace with demand. It means that progressing infrastructure and jobs will always be matching progress in care and dignity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our vision also extends to the Outer Islands. In Agaléga, the new airstrip and jetty are now deliverable – better access to health care, education and supplies.

In Saint Brandon, we are safeguarding one of the world's great biodiversity treasures while allowing regulated ecotourism that creates opportunities without compromise. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the vision. Islands that are connected, resilient, prosperous and cared for.

A Republic where Rodrigues and the Outer Islands with their own institutions and their own voices stand not at the margin, but at the centre of our progress.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Young Pak Kian!

FLOODS – DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PLAN & STRATEGIES

(No. B/6) **Mr A. Young Pak Kian (Member of Parliament)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to floods, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, information as to where matters stand regarding the creation of a comprehensive plan to guide the implementation of disaster risk reduction and management strategies in terms of specific long-term infrastructure upgrades and their completion timelines to

—

- (a) prevent the recurrence thereof;
- (b) carry out audits thereof, and
- (c) hold agencies to account for lapses identified during same.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Member opposite for raising this question because it gives us the chance to say plainly: floods are not just acts of nature. They are tests of governance. They expose whether our systems are strong or fragile, whether our institutions are prepared or paralysed. This Government has not stood idle.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy of 2020, its Strategic Framework and its Action Plan of 2020-2030 already exist. 189 actions are listed and costed. Drainage upgrade in Port Louis and with the towns, slope stabilisation projects mapped with GCIA expertise. The move from cyclone-only-alert to a multi-hazard early warning system and ecosystem-based measures like mangrove restoration and river buffers.

The Opposition would like the country to believe that there is no plan. The reality is that the plan exists. What matters now is making it public, transparent and accountable. That is why my government is pushing further a national drainage masterplan with project-by-project timeline will be published.

Every new school, road, housing estate will face a climate resilient audit before approval. We will not just pour concrete.

We will also use nature, permeable pavements, wetland, mangroves because a modern State protects its people, green defenses as well as grey walls.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please conclude! We are past time.

The Prime Minister: The question is rather long, Mr Speaker, Sir, I need to be able to fully answer it.

Mr Speaker: We are past time, Prime Minister. Thank you.

The Prime Minister: I will try to wrap up. On audit, the current framework requires reporting but internal reporting is not enough that is why we will bring in a public flood resilience scoreboard visible to the Parliament and to the people. After every major flood, an independent audit by engineers, academics and civil society will fit directly into the cycle of the plan.

Mr Speaker Sir, accountability will no longer be an empty phrase. The Council will be empowered to summon agencies after disasters.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, I will have to stop you. Well, time is over!

The Prime Minister: May I finish?

Mr Speaker: We are past time, Prime Minister, please resume your seat.

The Prime Minister: Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Members, given the time is over, we are now going to proceed to question addressed to Ministers.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION – PREVENTION MEASURES – INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PLAN

(No. B/7) Ms N. Nundoosing (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Land Transport whether, in regard to traffic congestion, he will state if a sustainable mobility framework is being envisaged for the prevention thereof, indicating the measures being envisaged to implement an integrated transport plan, expand public transport options and encourage a shift from private to public and active modes of transport.

Mr Seeparasad: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Traffic congestion in Mauritius is concentrated during peak hours from 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. causing major productivity losses, stress and emissions. Unlike megacities, our challenge is limited and, therefore, manageable.

The Ministry of Land Transport sees sustainable mobility as essential for economic growth, social well-being and environmental resilience. In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour until the country reaches a 24/7 economy, essential measure is the promotion of flextime in both public and private sectors allowing employees to stagger arrival and departure within agreed limits, therefore spreading the demand curve across a broader time window. This will entail advantages like reduce peak load and improve work life balance.

Furthermore, a strikingly cost-effective measure is the development of a dedicated lane for cycles and motorcycles. Once cycle lanes are visible and commuters personally experience reaching their destination faster and at lower cost, momentum will build. If ever there are heavy traffics, these cycle lanes can also serve a dual purpose as they can be converted into emergency corridors.

Furthermore, my Ministry aims to make public transport not just an alternative but the preferred mode by expanding Metro coverage, upgrading bus fleet with clean air condition and Wi-Fi enabled buses and ensuring a 24/7 service.

We also encourage an integrated transport plan through seamless interchanges between bus and metro stations, coordinated timetables across modes and unified ticketing and payment systems. To further encourage people, a mobility card system will also be introduced rewarding frequent public transport users with points. Points can reduce future fares and for car owners, points can even be converted into rebates on vehicle insurance or road tax.

Mr Speaker, Sir, traffic congestion is evitable. This transition will not happen overnight but with consistent investment, partnership across sectors and the collective commitment of our people, congestion can be tamed and mobility reimaged for the prosperity, health and dignity of all Mauritians. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, MP Nundoosing!

Ms Nundoosing: Can the Minister elaborate on how the proposed cycle and motorcycle lanes will be integrated into existing world infrastructure and how their dual use as emergency corridors will be managed in practice?

Mr Speaker: Minister!

Mr Seeparasad: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My Ministry and I plan to convert parking slots along roads in urban areas into these dedicated cycle lanes and in case of roads without these parking slots in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Lands, we shall discuss and allow enlargement of roads where possible to integrate these dedicated roads.

Now to ensure safety for cyclists, the lanes will be fitted with smart lighting systems that change color when the lane is activated for emergency use. Cyclists will then move to the side of the lane which will be ensured by traffic police officers on motorcycles while escorting ambulances swiftly and securely. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Ms Soondur!

JUDICIARY – DIGITALIZATION INITIATIVES – JUSTICE DELIVERY EFFICIENCY

(No. B/8) Ms B. Soondur (Member of the Parliament) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the judiciary, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand regarding the initiatives undertaken for the digitalization of the court processes and case management, indicating the expected service delivery outcomes thereof in terms of efficiency and reduction of delays.

Mr Lalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. *La lenteur de la justice est l'injustice la plus cruelle.* Those words capture exactly why reform of our courts is not a luxury but a duty. I, therefore, welcome this opportunity to outline initiatives being pursued in this light.

Over the span of the last two years, according to the Supreme Court statistical highlights of 2024, we have seen an 83% of cases being disposed of within the first 12 months and backlog, almost half. *Nous espérons continuer sur cette lancée avec les mesures qui seront mises en avant aujourd'hui.*

Having laid the foundations, we are now considering expanding the e- judiciary system under the 2025-2026 Budget. It is being extended to all court divisions and registries around the

island, bringing digital filing and work flows into the very heart of our courts. Meaning faster justice and more reliable audit trails.

Moreover, digital recordings and videoconferencing systems will be rolled out nationwide so that at least one courtroom in every jurisdiction including the Court of Rodrigues can sit even when witnesses or remandees cannot travel. *Quand l'accusé ne peut se produire en cour, c'est la cour qui ira vers l'accusé.* Therefore, ending transport delays, reducing security risks and keeping cases moving.

Furthermore, we are also upgrading the record of justice itself. With top of the shelf, transcription software on top of DCR backed by IT upgrades ensuring more accurate transcripts and fewer avoidable adjournments. To crown these efforts, online payments via *Mokas* and other platforms are being reinforced so that fines and fees are settled digitally ensuring a better use of our human capital.

Mr Speaker Sir, these claims are not shallow. These investments are all anchored into measurable targets. According to the performance-based budget estimates for the next four years, with these measures in mind, the Supreme Court backlog will fall from 18% to 11% by the year 2028 while subordinate courts are expected to achieve a 100% disposal within one year.

Moreover, the digital transformation Blueprint 2025-2029 then charts our next horizon. A fully paperless judiciary, equipped with top of the shelf AI-powered transcription, automated scheduling and remote hearing as a norm.

Mr Speaker: Attorney General, please wrap up!

Mr Lalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, make the mistake, we are dismantling the old system of delay and bringing in its place a justice system that is swift, transparent and citizen centric.

La justice mauricienne entre dans une nouvelle ère, pas à pas nous avançons tous ensemble vers la justice de demain. *Thank you.*

Mr Speaker: Yes, MP Soondur!

Ms Soondur: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Attorney General specify alongside the digitalisation of court processes, what specific measures are being implemented to ensure that all judiciary officers, lawyers and court staff receive adequate

training so that the reform genuinely translate into faster and more efficient justice delivery?
Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Attorney General!

Mr Lalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Digitalisation without training would be meaningless. This is why the judiciary has put capacity building of judges, lawyers and staff at the very core of its reforms.

Over the years, the IJLS has spent time training around 60 members of staff every year. From modules ranging from e-judiciary, case management, court recording and videoconferencing, no officer shall be left behind.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are working closely with the Ministry of Information Communication and Technology to ensure that our staff can better handle the new technology.

I reassure the House that training is ongoing, funded and result driven.

Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: MP Ms Dabycharun!

LOCAL AUTHORITIES – GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

(No. B/9) Ms T. Dabycharun (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the local authorities, she will state the measures being taken to strengthen compliance with good governance principles across same while safeguarding the administrative autonomy thereof.

Mr Speaker: Minister of Local Government!

Ms Raghoonundan: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for granting me the floor. I also wish to thank the respected Member for raising this pertinent question, which goes to the very heart of our democracy, ensuring that our local authorities remain transparent, accountable and inclusive while still preserving the autonomy that allows them to serve their communities effectively.

Mr Speaker, Sir, good governance cannot be reduced to mere slogans. It must be lived through clear principles, that is, –

- transparency in decision making;
- accountability in resource management;
- efficiency in service delivery, and
- inclusiveness so that no citizen is left behind.

My Ministry has been working tirelessly to uphold these principles without comprising the independence of our councils. In line with Resolution No. 2 adopted by this Youth Parliament, which calls for a national framework for vocational, technical and skills-based education, we have placed education and capacity building at the very centre of good governance.

Under SDG 4, we are equipping councillors and officers with training in financial management, procurement procedures, ethics and digital literacy. This is not simply a training. It is empowerment. When our local leaders are better equipped, our institutions are stronger and our citizens are better served. We are also encouraging public-private partnerships at the municipal level where councils collaborate with schools, NGOs, and private companies to establish skill hubs, afterschool programmes, learning centres. This ensures that good governance and knowledge hubs are about building informed and capable communities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must stress that this Government believes in oversight, not micromanagement. We have put in place regular audits, performance indicators and reporting frameworks. But these are designed to provide accountability, not to interfere in the daily functioning of councils. Local authorities retain the freedom to adapt these frameworks to the unique community needs, thereby safeguarding their autonomy.

Furthermore, under SDG 5 on Gender Equality, we are working to ensure that women, youth and persons with disabilities are given equal voice in local decision-making. Inclusive councils are effective councils because they reflect the realities of the people they serve.

I also wish to point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that while the Opposition may focus on SDG 14: ‘Life below Water’, we, on this side of the House, fully recognise its importance.

Mr Speaker: Minister, please wrap up your reply!

Ms Raghoonundan: Local councils are leading waste management, local production and pollution reduction efforts in our coastal regions. But let me be clear, without educated aware citizens, SDG 4...

Mr Speaker: Please, pause your speech. Yes, do you have a point of order?

Mr Luchmun: The Member's answer is too long and she is not relevant to the question being asked.

Mr Speaker: It is my discretion to allow the Member. Please, Minister, continue with your speech!

Ms Raghoonundan: And Inclusive Participation, SDG 5 and the Protection of our Environment, SDG 14, cannot succeed.

Education and quality of the foundation of the sustainability. Looking forward, my Ministry will expand digital platforms for citizens feedback, strengthen partnerships with civil society and roll out the new initiatives such as smart city projects and youth engagement in councils.

These are not just promises. They are commitments tied directly to our national vision and it is the resolution before the House.

Mr Speaker: Minister, please conclude!

Ms Raghoonundan: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me reassure the respected Member and this entire House, the Ministry of Local Government will continue to uphold the highest standards of good governance while safeguarding the autonomy of the local authorities. In doing so, we are not only building strong institutions today, but we are also concretely advancing Resolution No. 2 of this Youth Parliament under Sustainable Development Goals to which our nation is committed.

Mr Speaker: Minister, please conclude!

Ms Raghoonundan: As we reflect on our responsibilities and the power we are holding, shaping our communities, *la question se pose : allons-nous rester des spectateurs ou allons-nous prendre les rênes et combattre pour notre communauté ?*

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Raggoo!

**MAURITIUS-AFRICAN RELATION – STRENGTHENING DIPLOMATIC
FOOTPRINT & YOUTH EXCHANGE INITIATIVES**

(No. B/10) Mr Y. Raggoo (Member of the Parliament) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Whether, in regard to the African Continent, he will state the steps being taken by Mauritius to strengthen its diplomatic presence therein and deepen bilateral ties with individual countries thereof, including ensuring meaningful Youth Exchange Programmes.

Mr Speaker: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade! Ministers are required to keep their replies brief.

Mr Dusoye: Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has always seen Africa not as a distant continent, but as our home, our family and our future. Our foreign policy is, therefore, guided by one clear conviction, that Mauritius must stand at the very heart of Africa's growth story, not its margins.

To strengthen our diplomatic presence, the Government has expanded its mission to the continent and ensured that every major African capital sees Mauritius as a reliable partner. But we are not stopping there. We are actively deepening bilateral ties through trade agreements, educational partnerships and cultural exchanges that bring our people close together.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not here to give a long speech. We are also placing our youth at the centre of this vision. If Africa is to rise, it is the youth that must carry it forward. This is why Mauritius is championing more youth exchanges, more scholarships and more opportunities for young Mauritians. This is to connect with international counterparts so that they may learn together, build together and lead together.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius may be small in territory, but we are vast in ambition. Our strength lies not in numbers, but in credibility, stability and in the trust that we bring to every African table.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at the end of the day, diplomacy is not about size, it is about vision. Mauritius has never waited to be invited to history. We have always chosen to write it. As we move forward, we do so with conviction, with clarity and with courage. While some choose to stand back and question, my Government is here to keep our vision of Mauritius leading in the front.

Mr Speaker, Sir, questioning is easy, but building is hard. This Government is not here to talk Mauritius down. Our heart beats for this country.

Mr Speaker: Please, pause your speech. Yes, Mr Balgobin!

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, in the question we talk about meaningful youth exchange programmes. Till now, I have not heard anything about that. Could the Minister please answer this part? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Minister, I will have to remind you of same. Please, answer the question that was given to you.

Mr Dusoye: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said that we are putting our youth at the centre of this vision. If Africa is to rise, it is the youth that must carry it forward. I have clearly mentioned that this is how Mauritius is championing more youth exchanges and more scholarships, more opportunities for the young Mauritians to connect with their international counterparts.

Mr Speaker: Please, pause your speech. Yes, do you have a point of order?

Mr Luchmun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Member is repeating arguments already addressed. He has still not answered the question.

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister answer, please!

(Interruptions)

There is no need for applause!

Minister, please resume your speech! Minister, we are getting past time. Please, resume your speech!

Mr Dusoye: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, if they want the answer, I will give it to them. A vital question, Mr Speaker, Sir, the selection criteria for all government sponsored international programmes are publicly available, transparent and based on merit, leadership, potential and a clear plan for how experience will benefit Mauritius. We promote these opportunities through all secondary schools, universities to ensure a truly representative pool of our best and brightest, not just the well consigned.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Raggoo!

Mr Raggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister speaks of strengthening our diplomatic presence in Africa. Can he please clarify how many new embassies or consulates Mauritius has concretely opened or plans to open in Africa? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Minister!

Mr Dusoye: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Member for his touching concern for this public pursue. Our diplomatic expansion is not an expense. For our government, it is an investment. For every country spent on a mission, in a market like Nigeria or Kenya, we secure millions in trade, investment and political goodwill. However, for the figures, I do not have the exact materials with me. I will make sure that my Ministry and Cabinet will leave it to the other side. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Thank you.

MP Budosy!

CULTURAL & CREATIVE SECTORS – INITIATIVES – PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION – CREATIVE ECONOMY

(No. B/11) Mr K. S. Budosy (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the cultural and creative sectors, she will state the initiatives being envisaged to –

- (a) encourage private sector participation therein;
- (b) expand the creative economy by 2026, and

- (c) convert cultural assets into sustainable livelihood for artists nationwide.

Ms Ahamudally: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is often said a nation without a culture is a nation without a soul. This question touches the very heart of what our Ministry stands for – to build a vibrant, cultural and creative sector that uplift our national identity, empowers our economy. It is the living language of people, the mirror in which a nation sees its truth and the canvas upon which our future is painted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, culture thrive when it is co-owned by the State, the people and the private sector. The artist maybe the heart beat but the private sector is the blood flow. To encourage private sector participation, we are introducing several key initiatives –

1. Free access to markets and fairs – we will remove rental and participation fees for artists and creative entrepreneurs, especially emerging talents;
2. Tax and custom relief – we are working on reducing or eliminating duties on instruments, materials and production equipment used in cultural work;
3. Public-private event partnerships;
4. Monthly nights and food markets will be sponsored across major towns, fusing gastronomy, crafts and live performances;
5. Cultural co-investment funds – enabling businesses to invest in the arts while gaining visibility and brand value.

To grow the creative economy by 2026, our targets are ambitious but achievable –

1. Open the door to responsible foreign investment in creating fields like film, fashion and design while protecting our cultural identity as well.
2. Pilot creative arts and culture curriculum at secondary level, to identify talents early and reshape perceptions of creative careers.
3. Revamp and to use public spaces into art parks, creative hubs and performance venues, and most importantly,
4. generate new jobs, focus on youth, woman and talent from all region.

To convert cultural asset into sustainable livelihoods, we will create a national association of cultural practitioners to organise, train and empower all voices in the creative eco-system.

Introduce state support for cultural professionals, including grants, fellowship and social protection, schemes for full...

Mr Speaker: Minister, please wrap up!

Ms Ahamudally: Yes, sure. For full time artists. We will also give national recognition to all form of arts from street murals to digital illustration through award festival and competition. As Senghor said –

“ La culture est au début et à la fin du développement. ”

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is not just a tropical post card, we are mosaic of cultures, rhythms, histories and hope. Let no artist live hungry while their music feel our festivals. Let no poet remain voiceless while their verses echo through our valleys and let us make culture a career, not just a calling alone. Together, we will build a creative Mauritius inclusive, empowered, inspired by its people.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Dulmeer!

E-HEALTH – DIGITAL HEALTH CARDS, TELEMEDICINE, E-PRESCRIPTIONS & ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEMS – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/12) Ms S. Dulmeer (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to e-Health, he will state the measures being envisaged to introduce and expand digital health cards, telemedicine, e-prescriptions and online booking systems, indicating how –

- (a) high standards of data security and patient confidentiality will be ensured, and
- (b) Mauritius proposes to position itself as a regional model therein.

Mr Soopun: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Before you start Minister, Members, we are running short of time, and I request that you be as brief as possible in your reply.

Mr Soopun: Yes, indeed!

The digital health transformation strategy is not just a slogan; it is a structured plan. We are introducing digital health card, rolled out in phases, beginning with regional hospitals before expanding nationwide, ensuring every citizen's medical history is secured and easily accessible. At the same time, telemedicine will be bolstered through digital consultation platforms, connecting specialists in our main hospitals with patients at regional centres, thus reducing delays and unnecessary transfers. E-prescriptions will be directly linked to pharmacies, cutting errors and sparing patients the burden of repetitive framework and to complete the system, a centralised online booking platform will allow appointment across all hospital in one system finally putting an end in those endless queues.

I will be brief, Mr Speaker, Sir. Technology alone will not heal a nation, we can launch card, apps or portals but if the system is not trusted, how do we make the Mauritian believe in us. So, I leave this question with the House. Do we want digital health to be just another project?

Mr Speaker: Minister, you cannot put a question to the House, you are addressing the Chair!

Mr Soopun: Yes, but the reflection...

Mr Speaker: Please rephrase your sentence!

Mr Soopun: Okay! Or do we want the system to be the backbone Mauritius can surely trust with their lives? Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, doing it fast is not enough, we must do it in the right way. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, MP!

Ms Subbarayan: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Digitalisation seems great, sure, but it comes with a cost, it uses enormous amount of water and energy to maintain those machines. What measures the government is willing to undertake for the long-term benefit of our environment? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Minister!

Mr Soopun: Thank you. Mr Speaker, Sir, while the upfront cost is real, a CBA, that is a Cost Benefit Analysis, is clearly in favour of this resolution. This is not a burden, it is an investment that pays for itself. Efficiency, equity and healthier citizen. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Roheemun!

SPORTS DISCIPLINES – YOUTH PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIES

(No. B/14) Ms B. Z. Roheemun (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the practice of sports disciplines, he will state –

- (a) if an assessment of youth participation therein has been carried out and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) outcome thereof, and
 - (ii) strategies put in place, if any, to boost same, including through the facilitation of emerging sports disciplines and implementation of digital platforms, and
- (b) how public sports infrastructure is being utilized.

Mr Duen: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As Minister of Youth and Sports, I strongly believe that sport is not just about medals or competition, it's about building stronger, healthier and united communities. Across Mauritius, we see increasing interest among the youth, however, participation still depends on few factors, namely – accessibility, affordability, adaptability and support from friends, family and school.

Furthermore, growing academic pressures as well as digital distraction can limit our youths' time for physical activities; that is why our approach must go beyond infrastructure, it must address motivation, mindset and opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in term of infrastructure, we made great progress. The Côte d'Or National Sports Complex is a regional hub for youth developments and recreational activity throughout the whole Indian Ocean. In our urban areas...

Mr Speaker: Yes, please close your speech.

Do you have a point of order?

Mr Luchmun: Yes, on a point of order! The question was if a survey or any other research has been carried out for youth participation, the Minister has yet to answer this and time is...

Mr Speaker: It is not about a survey; it is about the factors. He has talked about the factors. Please resume your speech!

Mr Duen: Okay! In urban areas, project like the Plaine Verte Sports Arena offer multisport facilities to the public in densely populated areas. In our youth hubs, in places like Belle Mare and Pointe Jérôme...

Mr Speaker: Minister, I will have to tell you to wrap up.

Mr Duen: We are also going digital, using digital platform like Instagram to advocate for the young athletes to motivate the youth and we are ensuring equity with programmes, targeting the youth, girls, youth with disabilities and those from poor backgrounds. In short, my government has a simple goal; it is to bring sports to where the youth is, physically, digitally, in their everyday lives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, transformation begins with sports. I assure the House, as Minister of Youth and Sports, that a nation's true strength is not measured in its economy, but rather in the character of its youth. Giving our youth a chance to play is giving Mauritius a chance to win. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Yes, MP Ms Roheemun!

Ms Roheemun: If the digital platforms are being explored, can the Minister explain why is Mauritius still without a national youth sports league when several African countries have already established them?

Mr Duen: I want to rebut that fact. Mauritius already has an e-sports team. During the CJSOI 2022 Games, our team competed against Reunion, Seychelles and Comoros, and won the second place in the whole Indian Ocean. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: A PQ has been omitted on my behalf. May I now call MP Ms Soorjun!

TRADE DEFICIT – EXPORT DIVERSIFICATION & IMPORT DEPENDENCE

(No. B/13) Ms R. Soorjun (Member of Parliament) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the trade deficit, as reported in May 2024, she will state the measures being envisaged to diversify the export sector with a view to –

- (a) improving the trade deficit, and
- (b) reducing over-reliance on imports.

Mr Speaker: Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection!

Ms Sanchi: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to the trade imbalance reported in May 2024, Government has taken note of the structural challenges underpinning our external sector. As Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, I firmly believe that the way forward lies in diversifying our export-base and reducing our overdependence on imports while ensuring our policies protect both producers and our consumers.

The decline in Mauritius exports by 6.3% to Rs8.8 billion in May 2024 is attributed to a combination of factors, including a slowdown in key export markets like South Africa and Europe and the impact of global trade instability on tariffs. Additionally, specific sectors like textile and apparel experience a significant drop in sales. On the other hand, the 9.1% increase in Mauritius import bill, reaching Rs26 billion in May 2024 was initially driven by a surge in imports of food and live animals as well as machinery and equipment. Nevertheless, Mauritius economy remains resilient. Real GDP grew by 4.7% in 2024 from 5% in 2023, driven by services, construction and tourism.

Our strategy for export diversification goes beyond our traditional pillars of textile and sugar. Our focus is on nurturing and promoting high value, non-traditional sectors that can compete on the global stage. We are taking full advantage of the preferential areas provided by existing and new trade agreements, including our Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement with India and our Free Trade Agreement with China.

We are also strengthening our position within regional blocks like the...

Mr Speaker: Minister, please wrap up!

Ms Sanchi: ...Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), and maximising the opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area, positioning Mauritius as a gateway for trade between Asia and Africa. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Members, our time is over! Other questions will be answered in writing.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr Speaker: Minister of Environment!

(11.48 a.m.)

NYP 2023 RESOLUTION – COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE & IMPACTS – GOVERNMENT’S STAND

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Ms D. Banjhu): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement regarding the stand of the Government on the Resolution adopted by the National Youth Parliament during its Third Edition in 2023.

The motion debated then was clear and urgent and laid emphasis on the actions that the Republic of Mauritius should take both at national and international levels to combat climate change and its devastating impacts.

Members of the then National Youth Parliament highlighted the extreme vulnerability of our Small Island Developing State to natural calamities such as cyclones, flash floods, droughts, rising seas, declining agricultural yields and marine ecosystem degradation.

They also called for actions such as eco-friendly infrastructure, a circular economy, integrated coastal management, sustainable tourism, and marine biodiversity protection, along with environmental education and green incentives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the House that the Government has listened carefully to the pledge of the youth, and the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate

Change has acted decisively. Although our greenhouse gas emissions represent only 0.01% of global totals, Mauritius remains committed to building resilience for the future.

In that regard, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has enacted the appropriate legal frameworks and implemented policies that reflect its commitment to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Climate Change Act enacted in 2020, the National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework and our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement guide our path to a net zero Mauritius by 2050. Work is already underway on NDC 3.0 (2025-2035) with international support to ensure it is robust and realistic.

Secondly, climate finance is essential. The NDC 2021 estimated requirements up to USD 6.5 billion, and the NDC 3.0 demand even greater investments. To support this, Government has strengthened transparency and accountability through tagging climate expenditures across Ministries and parastatal bodies and preparing an investment plan to access both domestic and international funding.

Thirdly, regarding adaptation measures, Mauritius is preparing a comprehensive National Adaptation Plan that includes key sectors like water, tourism, agriculture, fishing, health, infrastructure, and disaster management. A National Health Adaptation Plan is being prepared, including a coastal risk assessment map up to the time Horizon 2100 have been produced, to guide our integrated coastal management and protect vulnerable communities.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, on mitigation, Mauritius is accelerating its low-carbon transition. Renewable energy programmes, including the promotion of the use of solar water heaters, photovoltaic systems and biomass initiatives are being implemented.

Nature-based and ecosystem-based solutions are promoted to protect infrastructure, coastal zones and agriculture, which support the recommendations made by the very National Youth Parliament of the previous edition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, looking ahead, the Government Programme 2025-2029 ensures not a just and inclusive transition to a sustainable economy, but also, it ensures that no citizen is left behind.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, I wish to inform Members of the National Youth Parliament that Government has heard the voices of our youth and is responding with concrete measures. Climate change is not tomorrow's problem – it is today's reality.

The message is clear: we must act urgently, efficiently, wisely, and, of course, together. I thank you.

Mr Speaker: The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities!

(11.53 a.m.)

NYP 2023 RESOLUTION – GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY

The Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr L. Seebah): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement on the outcome of the Resolution adopted during the Third Edition of the National Youth Parliament with focus on Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to access to renewable energy, the Central Electricity Board has democratised access to the grid, enabling every segment, from households to industries, the power to generate and export clean electricity.

Cognizant of the value of our island's limited land, Government is turning to innovation by developing a 17 MW floating solar farm at Tamarind Falls, exploring 100 MW of offshore wind project in collaboration with international partners.

To ensure reliable power when the sun sets or when the wind slows, battery energy storage, the backbone of a resilient renewable network, is being expanded.

At the level of sustainable governance, at the Conference of Parties 26 (COP26) in 2021, Mauritius pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 % by 2030, achieve 60 % renewable energy in the electricity mix and the phase out of coal by 2030.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of inclusivity, government remains steadfast that the green transition must benefit everyone with specific accompanying schemes to vulnerable families,

middle and high-income households and the farmers community specifically through the Agrivoltaics Scheme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, investments are also being made in technology, in people through energy efficiency campaigns in schools, training programmes for women in solar PV installation and platforms for the sharing of ideas at both regional and global levels. At the same time, the workforce for green transition is being developed.

Finally, Mr Speaker Sir, partnerships are also being forged with the private sector, with global agencies and local communities. From hybrid solar battery plants to biomass projects and smart cities energy schemes, the government is shaping a future where clean energy becomes a pillar of our national prosperity. The updated renewable energy roadmap will serve as the compass guiding this journey over the upcoming decade.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is more than an energy plan; it is a promise to our youth, our planet and our shared tomorrow. Together, a cleaner, stronger and more sustainable Mauritius is being changed for generations to come. I thank you.

Mr Speaker: Opposition Whip, MP Digumber.

MOTIONS

MAURITIUS OCEAN ECONOMIC SECTORS – EXPLORATION & DEVELOPMENT – ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL & SCIENTIFIC POTENTIALS

(11.56 a.m.)

Mr G. Digumber (Member of Parliament): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, namely –

“This National Youth Parliament resolves that the ocean economic sectors of Mauritius should be sustainably explored and developed to unlock the economic, environmental and scientific potentials thereof, while ensuring the protection of marine biodiversity, pollution reduction and the empowerment of communities.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, and Members, Mauritius is called a Small Island Developing State but let us not be deceived. Our island may be small but our ocean is vast – 2.3 million square kilometres. That is our identity, our wealth, our strength and yet, where others with the same size

ocean generate hundreds of billions of USD, Mauritius remains stuck at a mere 1.5 billion USD. That is not the failure of the sea, that is the failure of leadership. It is not nature that has failed us; it is those who are entrusted to protect it, who treat potential as a footnote and bold opportunity as an inconvenience.

This motion is about changing that story. It is about saying that we, the youth of this country, will not be trapped in hesitation and half measures. We are here to build; we are here to act and we are here to ensure that the riches of our ocean are no longer locked behind bureaucracy or delayed by cautious convenience.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to highlight just two points that show why this motion is urgent.

First, the call for a National Blue Economy Development Plan. The plan taps into Mauritius' vast ocean potential, from aqua culture and marine biotechnology to renewable energy, seaweed farming and eco-tourism. Already, small-scale seaweeds farms are creating jobs for coastal communities while marine biotechnology holds promise for high value pharmaceuticals.

Renewable ocean energy such as wave and tidal power could reduce our dependence on imports. This strategy will generate green jobs for youths and women, attract investment and grow the economy all while protecting our fragile marine ecosystem. It is a real urgent chance to harness our ocean responsibly and empower the next generation of leaders. Yet, what do we see too often?

Delays, token gestures, projects celebrated in press releases while the ocean continues to be unsustainably exploited. Mauritius does not lack potential; it lacks decisive action. Leadership is measured by courage, not by the number of meetings held or announcements made.

Second, the creation of a permanent marine ecosystem monitoring system. We cannot wait for disasters like Wakashio to remind us of our vulnerability. With satellites, drones and community-led reports, we can track illegal fishing, coral bleaching and oil spills in real time. And when the reply inevitably arrives –

“But Mauritius is small, we don’t have the resources.”

I remind the House that the cost of action maybe heavy but the cost of inaction is unbearable. Resources are never scarce when there is political will, only when there is political inconvenience.

Mr Speaker, Sir, protecting some reefs while using others is not protection. It is managed declined. Celebrating token projects while ecosystems collapse is acting to boasting a bucket of water while the house burns down. And when critics dismiss this motion as too ambitious; I say ambition is not our weakness, it is our only chance. If boldness is unrealistic then complacency is suicidal.

Let us be clear, the youth of Mauritius do not want to inherit excuses, we want to inherit an ocean alive, abundant and protected. We do not seek permission to dream; we demand permission to act. And if the government cannot rise the scale of our ocean, perhaps it should consider stepping aside for those who can.

Mr Speaker, Sir, and Members the time for half measures is over. We are not here to applaud delay; we are here to demand action. Every day we postpone is a day the ocean is jeopardised, a day where our youths lose opportunity and a day our heritage suffers.

This motion is not just a proposal; it is a challenge to this House, to those in leadership and to every citizen who believes in a Mauritius that is bold enough to match the scale of its ocean.

I urge this House to accept this motion. Let it be the moment we stop settling for convenience and start building for the future we deserve. Let it be the moment when ambition is no longer treated as a threat but embraced as the only path to survival and prosperity. We owe it to our ocean, we owe it to our youth, we owe it to ourselves. I urge this House to act decisively.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the motion to the National Youth Parliament.

Thank you.

Mr Beharry rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: MP Beharry.

(12.01 p.m.)

Mr O. Beharry (Member of Parliament): Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The government will tell you everything is fine, that progress was made, is being made and will be made. But if everything was truly fine, Mr Speaker, Sir, would we be standing here in this temple of democracy debating the same problem?

M. le président, si on doit vraiment critiquer le gouvernement, cette séance ne se terminera jamais. Il y aura tant des choses à dire sur les compétences de membres du gouvernement.

I shall not waste the time of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we talk about blue economy, we often hear big numbers, fancy presentations and high-end booklets. But here is the reality, Mr Speaker, Sir. Some of the most effective solutions are already being carried out quietly with limited resources by women in our coastal communities, to be specific, in Rodrigues. Should we not pay a heed, Mr Speaker, Sir? Should we not bat an eye?

Well, *prenons Seychelles, par exemple, M. le président*, thanks to its bold blue economy initiatives, women now hold 36% of blue sector jobs and 31% of managerial positions. This is Seychelles and we are Mauritius. We are BOS, the Big Ocean State.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that transformation did not happen by accident. It did not happen by an overnight miracle. *Ce n'est pas une chose qu'ils ont fait du jour au lendemain, M. le président*. It happened through intentional policy, ongoing training and institutional support.

Voilà, M. le président, voilà la vraie différence entre des slogans et les résultats. And that is exactly the blueprint we intend to adapt for Mauritius under Operative Clause 6 of our Resolution.

Our blue skills programme will provide women with internationally recognised certification in marine science, coral restoration and ecotourism, paving the way into leadership and conservation.

Let's look at New Guinea for instance where indigenous women trained as divers and reef monitors, became United Nation recognised champions of the earth. This demonstrates the power of training and certification in empowering women. That is what the blue skills programme is all about, Mr Speaker, Sir. this is not a theory; this is a proven model. If women in

New Guinea can rise from coastal communities to become global champions recognised by the United Nations, then women in Mauritius can and shall actually do the same.

To deny them this chance is to deny Mauritius its future, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let us not forget that the blue economy cannot succeed without being inclusive. By inclusivity, I mean giving women and marginalised groups what fancy strategies and endless committees cannot, and, that is, access to credit, real training...

Mr Speaker: MP Beeharry, please wrap up!

Mr Beeharry: I shall do that very quickly, Mr Speaker, Sir. Thank you.

I urge that we put the local community at the decision-making table.

To end, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would just like to mention that our actual Prime Minister has mentioned in the United Nation Ocean Conference in Nice that the conservation and economy should go hand in hand.

We must not just talk, Mr Speaker, Sir. We should act because our women need the tool, need the training and they need the recognition. They deserve this, Mr Speaker, Sir. If not now, then when? If it is not for this Motion, Mr Speaker, Sir, then what?

Just to end, Mr Speaker, Sir, let the Government enjoy and applause today. Tomorrow, when the people will ask questions, it is this Opposition they will turn to for answers!

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Minister Veeriah!

(12.05 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations (Mr Y. Veeriah): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for allowing me the floor. I stand today not to be an obstacle for change, but rather to serve as a catalyst for a meaningful change. A change that will steer our country towards a more sustainable and resilient future in line with our commitment to SDG14: Life below Water.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to rebut a bit on what my friend just said before.

Mr Beeharry: Friend?

Mr Speaker: MP!

Mr Veeriah: He is not my friend or what?

Mr Beeharry: Not friend!

Mr Veeriah: Okay. The Member from the Opposition just said. In his debate, he just mentioned ‘women.’ I did not hear he mentioned about men anywhere in his debate. So, perhaps, he did not mention anything regarding men.

Mr Speaker: Yes, you have a point of order?

Mr Budosy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a point of order. Can the Member not speak when he is not given the floor? Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Beeharry, please refrain from making unnecessary interruptions!

Minister, please continue!

Mr Veeriah: Mr Speaker, Sir, let us turn our attention to operative clause 8 as proposed by the Opposition in this Motion. While the resolution may appear to be grounded in a noble intention, it ultimately represents a misguided and impractical approach to achieving SDG 14.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that the Opposition is unaware or worse chooses to overlook the fact that Mauritius has already implemented legislative and policy framework. To enrich the Opposition’s knowledge, I would like to name some of the policies and legislative framework which have been enacted in Mauritius –

- The Environment Protection Act;
- The Maritime Zone Act, and
- The Policy for Blue Economy.

The list goes on. I would let the Opposition do a bit of research so that they do not make a repetition of the resolution next time.

Despite of all these laws, marine justice frameworks, Mauritius still fails as a nation to prevent overfishing which leads to a degradation of our marine species. To prevent dangerous aqua-tourism and worse to prevent one of the most catastrophic environmental calamities that happened to our country, the MV Wakashio.

Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Opposition telling us to reimplement laws that we already have in Mauritius, but which fail to prevent those activities? Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not commit the mistake like the Philippines did. The Philippines enacted laws upon laws and the result is fruitless. We need to empower those laws, not just putting laws, but not empowering them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a reasonable and responsible Government, we are not just here to criticise, but also to provide solutions to achieve SDG 14. I firmly believe that everyone in Mauritius should have a fair chance not just to punish the offenders, but to help them and also to achieve SDG 14. Every people in this country should have been given a fair chance to support the ocean – a chance to help in achieving SDG 14.

It is high time that we start enforcing those laws. But before, we shall educate the population first. We cannot just bring in laws and not educate the people and we just punish them. Explain the laws to them. That is why it is vital to protect the sea. Many others do not have enough knowledge on these laws.

Mr Speaker: Minister Veeriah, please wrap up!

Mr Veeriah: So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to finish on a very important sentence which goes as: Members, we should not be remembered as the generation who wrote the laws only or the generation who scrolled TikTok while our ocean is dying. We should be remembered as the generation who saved our ocean and the generation who saved our little country and the generation who successfully achieved SDG 14.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Balgobin!

(12.10 p.m.)

Mr R. Balgobin (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, I will address the criticism by the Government. The Government is entitled to their opinion. It is their right. But, unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, they suffer from the notable disadvantage of being completely wrong.

Critiquer, c'est bien. Mais partager des idées constructives, c'est mieux ! J'ai entendu dire "*The law has failed us.*" Who has failed them? Who? Was it the Government? Who? We do not know!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to address one of the burning questions with regard to this motion: how will we finance it? Mr Speaker, Sir, first and foremost, I wish to reassure the House, we will not hide behind some statements, we will not make some false promises and afterwards we will say that, 'look. we cannot do that. We cannot do this.' We have concrete measures. Us in the Opposition, we like to work and we found some very interesting ways to finance our ocean.

Mr Speaker: Please, pause your speech. Do you a point of order?

Mr Kaudeer: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a point of order. It is irrelevant to the debate.

Mr Speaker: MP, please proceed! I will not entertain this point of order. Please proceed!

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will outline a very clear and straightforward roadmap on how we will finance this motion. Our primary focus will focus on domestic financing.

Tourism is one of our most lucrative sectors here in Mauritius. We welcome around 1.2 million visitors annually. Maybe if the Minister of Tourism works harder, we will get more.

Mr Speaker: Please, pause your speech. Do you have another point of order?

Mr Kaudeer: Yes. We are talking about SDG 14! It is not about tourism.

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Member is not listening.

Mr Speaker: Please let the MP make his speech. You will hear what he is saying.

Please continue!

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said, we are financing this motion and I have mentioned it, tourism is one of our most lucrative sectors. Let me come to it, you will hear what we are trying to do. Recently, the Government had imposed a tourism levy of around Rs150 which is equivalent to three euros. This measure alone is expected to generate around Rs180 million each year. This revenue collected from this levy can be directly allocated to support coral reef restoration and marine monitoring activities.

Next, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has the opportunity to issue blue bonds. With the strength of our well-established financial services sector, we can attract international investors who are eager to support sustainability and marine protection. Blue bonds are not an untested concept.

Small Island Developing States such as Seychelles have already paved the way successfully issuing around 15 million dollars' worth of blue bonds in 2018.

Mr Speaker: MP Balgobin, please wrap up!

Mr Balgobin: Okay. If Seychelles was able to do it, there is no reason why Mauritius cannot. The global blue bond market is valued around 15 billion USD and Mauritius is well positioned to tap into this growing space.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, another concrete measure that we can build upon is public private partnership. We propose the establishment of a blue economy, innovation and development fund to which hotel groups in Mauritius can contribute approximately 0.5% of annual turnover. Given...

Mr Speaker: Please do not make unnecessary comments. MP, please!

Mr Balgobin: Please, hear my speech, afterwards you will raise point of order that you are not being able to understand how we raise money.

Mr Speaker: Please, proceed. MP, please conclude.

Mr Balgobin: Yes! Mr Speaker, Sir, like I was saying, the hotel industry in Mauritius generate of around billions of rupees each year. This mechanism put under close to around Rs30 million annually, and again, these resources could be used to fund our projects.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will conclude shortly. We are dreaming of change but when change is here, we are afraid to embrace it. This motion is our contribution. This motion will be our legacy. And we will require the help of this government in order to build that legacy. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Members, I will now invite the Deputy Speaker, Sir, to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated. Minister Seeburn!

(12.16 p.m.)

The Minister of Financial Services and Economic Planning (Ms J. Seeburn): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to be clear, we are not negatively

criticising the member. I am giving constructive criticism and simply letting them know that the policies we are proposing are in fact already in place.

I am not here to fool the population. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unlike the opposition, with their empty promises, I am not here for politics. I am here in fact to serve and fight for our people. I rise today to question the necessity of Operative Clause 1. It appears the Opposition's impressive idea is really just a recycle policy drafted in haste with a new title slapped on.

Mauritius has already recognised the ocean as a new frontier of prosperity. We no longer identify ourselves as a Small Island Developing State but rather as a Blue Ocean State. But I am firmly rejecting the reckless idea of duplicating existing efforts. Why should we spend taxpayers' money to invest on things that just look good on paper but do not have the solid financial backing, scientific support or institutional feasibility.

The Operative Clause 1 calls for a so called National Blue Economy Development Plan but allow me to break the news to the opposition.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister, let me hear that point of order.

Mr Balgobin: On a point of order, what the Member is speaking? It is not relevant. I have just explained how we will finance...

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. I have got your point, thank you. Minister, please continue. I have got your point.

No cross-talking please! Minister, please continue.

Ms J. Seebun: But allow me to break the news to the opposition who believe that they are wiser than us but have been clearly daydreaming. Mauritius has already adopted a blue economy policy in 2023. It covers governance, ICT-driven innovation, renewable ocean energy and sustainable aquaculture. We are not starting from scratch. We have already been making progress for quite some time now. Considering the smart port transformation, the opposition now urges us to turn Port-Louis into a smart and green maritime hub.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not just a new idea, it is already funded and is in progress...

The Deputy Speaker: Minister!

Ms Dabycharun: I have a point of order. I think the MP should address you as Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for making that note. No need to applaud for that. There is no need. It is okay. It is fine. Minister please, continue.

Ms J. Seebun: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is not just a new idea. It is already funded and is in progress at the moment. It seems that the opposition has just woken up to existing ideas. Perhaps next they will tell us that ships float on ocean too. This demonstrates incompetency on the side.

The Mauritius Port Authority is working with the United Nations in Mauritius and is investing Rs5.4 billion in upgrading infrastructure, electrifying our port and integrating renewable energy. And yet, as we have not been deceived enough by all these fanciful ideas till now, the opposition comes forward with genetically engineered super corals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since when did Mauritius become a high-tech superpower overnight? Did they believe that by merely passing a resolution billion-dollar laboratories and world-class scientists will magically appear on our shores? Why gamble millions on untested experiments when proving methods such as lagoon nurseries and reef protection already effective.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister, wrap up your speech, please! Wrap up!

Ms J. Seebun: Yes. I shall do that. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the government is not against ambition. Nonetheless, ambition without clear direction is wasteful and unrealistic.

The government approach is smarter, cost-effective and ready for the future. Our government believes in building on firm foundations not castle in the stand like the opposition which will eventually crumble down by the waves of good governance.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: MP Cader!

You have a point? After the speech? Okay!

Ms Dominique: I am raising a point of order. The MP has mentioned that Port Louis is a smart hub but it has not yet become a smart hub, it has announced to be in ...

The Deputy Speaker: Okay thank you. Maybe the government is planning to do it soon for you. Thank you. MP Cader!

(12.21 p.m.)

Mr S. I. Cader (Member of Parliament): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the Member here said that we did not mention anything about men but it is already a male dominated sector. Why would should we talk about that?

Second thing...

The Deputy Speaker: MP! Minister!

Ms Dominique: On a point of order Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is irrelevant. This is clearly discriminatory towards women.

The Deputy Speaker: MP, please refrain from doing such statements. Go direct to your speech.

Mr Cader: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how is it discriminatory towards woman?

The Deputy Speaker: No, you cannot say a male dominated...

Mr Cader: Alright! Alright!

The Deputy Speaker: We have Ministry of Gender who is promoting the gender equality.

Mr Cader: That is the truth. That is a fact.

The Deputy Speaker: No. Do not question me. Let me hear the point of order first when you can...

Mr Cader: No worries.

Mr Kaudeer: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he is challenging your point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I have just said that. Do not crosscheck the authority. Thank you. MP please!

Mr Cader: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other member also said we are making empty promise. I do not know what empty promise she is referring to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is a small island with limited land, limited resources and limited options. If we do not diversify our economy, what is going to be the future of Mauritius? What is going to the future of our youth? What is going to be our future?

The truth is, we will have no future. Sustainably exploring of our marine is a key to solve youth unemployment. Let us face the truth. Around 11,400 young Mauritians aged 14 to 24 are unemployed. This means, one in five youth does not have a future in Mauritius.

This resolution directly addresses that issue. Mauritius is a member of the ILO and the ILO has been very clear that the best way to fight youth unemployment is through formal apprenticeship systems such as paid training and this is exactly what this resolution is going to deliver.

Look at Seychelles, the Blue Economic Champions Programme gives paid internships to their youth and the result speak for itself. Youth unemployment in Seychelles: 11%, Mauritius: 20%. To anyone who still doubts whether apprenticeship system is going to work, I say look at Seychelles, look at Trinidad. Both invested in their youth and both were able to reduce unemployment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are we going to keep preventing the youth of achieving their potential or are we finally going to give them the future they deserve? Of course, paid internship programme is not enough. To address this problem, with this resolution, we shall create entrepreneurship programmes just like Rwanda did through the YouthConnekt initiative. Instead of searching for a job, the youth themselves created it. We shall invest in marine training centres just like Kenya. It is a shame that a subject like marine science is taught in so few colleges around the world. All these models have worked in these countries and the Minister who just spoke before me wanted scientific support.

The Deputy Speaker: Wrap up, please!

Mr Cader: This is the scientific support!

The Deputy Speaker: Wrap up! Wrap up!

Mr Cader: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will wrap up. With these measures, not only are we going to reduce unemployment...

The Deputy Speaker: Let me hear this point of order.

Mr Seeparasad: The MP has been pinpointing for the third time.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for your point of order. Please do not pinpoint.

Mr Cader: I apologise for that.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Cader: I apologise.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Wrap up your speech, please.

Mr Cader: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these measures, not only are we going to reduce unemployment amount the youth, but we are also going to reduce inflationary pressures – a problem that the country has been facing throughout the years. This is what our blue skills programme is going to deliver.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Opposition, I challenge the Government to prove that this resolution will not create employment and that this resolution will not boost the economy. The truth is they will not be able to do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Conclude, please. Conclude!

Mr Cader: I conclude with this. Not going forward with this resolution is going to be to the detriment of the economy, to the detriment of the tourism sector, to the detriment of women, and most importantly, to the detriment of the youth. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: MP Sheoraj!

(12.26 p.m.)

Mr D. Sheoraj (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for kindly granting me the floor. When we talk about sustainably exploring our marine and coastal sector, we cannot ignore the people who live by the sea, depend on the sea and protect it with their bare hands – our coastal communities, our fishers and our youth. Yet, they are often missing from the very policies that govern their lives and livelihoods.

Today, I rise to speak on why justice, equity and community engagement are not optional, they are essential. Let us start with platforms that actually work. In Mauritius, community science is already proving pathway. The NGO Reef Conservation runs a mobile marine education unit called *Bis Lamer*, which has reached over 15,000 children, youth and adults in just 2.5 years. It does not just teach, it trains youth and fishers to collect scientific data using tools like the Mangrove Matters app, bridging local knowledge and policy.

Beyond that, co-management must be part of our marine future. Imagine a model where fishers sit at the same table as planners, deciding on rules, zones and enforcements. That is already happening in parts of Africa and the Pacific. If others can trust their communities with marine protection, so can we.

In Rodrigues, co-management goes a step further. The South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA) Regulations 2011 defines co-management as shared authority between Rodrigues Regional Assembly and resource users. SEMPA's Management Board was expressly created with representation from Government, communities and the private sector – an institutional model that helps fishers to set rules, zoning and enforcement priorities. Closer to home, our Marine Protected Area (MPA) planning processes like in Blue Bay Marine Park have included local NGOs, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre and the University of Mauritius. But this needs to go further. Communities must not be consulted; they must co-lead.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for real time concerns, Mauritius has a working system, the Citizen Support Unit. Whether it is oil spills, illegal discharges or beach access, this platform allows anyone to flag environmental problems and request action. It is time we formally integrate this feedback loop into marine government frameworks. And what about the youth? We already have the National Youth Council set under the National Youth Council Act 1998. Let us empower it to be more than symbolic, give it a voice in blue economy decisions. Youth are not just future leaders; they are the current stakeholders. *Et rappelons-nous, l'inclusion ce n'est pas un lux. C'est une nécessité pour construire un avenir marin résilient et prospère.*

To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our coastal economy can grow, yes, but only if it grows with the people. Let us create marine policies not just based on science and economics,

but on justice, equity and meaningful engagement. Let us make this sector not just sustainable, but also inclusive.

With these remarks, I once again thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for granting me the floor and I thank the House for its kind attention. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The Junior Minister Gobin!

(12.30 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Ms T. Gobin): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, distinguished Members of this House, while it was indeed a pleasure to hear what my friends from the Opposition had to say, I must admit it sounded impressive and visionary. The only problem? Everything they have presented is already being done by this Government! If anything, they have just delivered the best publicity campaign for this Government. *Une motion digne d’être encadrée, mais qui a sa place plus dans un musée que dans ce débat !*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government has already rolled out strategies to protect our oceans –

- The Blue Economy Roadmap;
- Cooperation under the UN Ocean Decade, and
- Investment in institutions such as the Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the Albion Fisheries Research Centre.

Point seven of their motion, allow me to quote, –

“Calls upon the Government of Mauritius to sustainably explore and manage its marine and coastal sectors in accordance with the International Court of Justice.”

Well, let me inform the House that Mauritius has been relying on the ICJ since independence in 1965, from the unlawful detachment of the Chagos Archipelago to the historic 2019 Advisory Opinion! To raise doubts on this commitment is not only misplaced, it questions Mauritius’ very integrity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while it is important to highlight what we have already achieved, let me also stress out what the Government is determined to do moving forward. The Government has the moral imperative to establish a marine protected area around our outer islands, enshrine the right of nature in our Constitution. The list does not end here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Government is also in the process of setting up a faculty of ocean studies at our universities.

M. le président, au moment où l'opposition se penche sur les océans et non sur les principes essentiels d'une responsabilité collective à leur égard, je ne peux m'empêcher de penser à cette phrase d'accroche prêtée à Aristote et que nous connaissons tous –

« Il y a trois sortes d'hommes : les morts, les vivants, et ceux qui vont en mer. »

Ce gouvernement ne se contente pas de beaux discours, ni de motions rédigées sur papier. Nos politiques pour nos océans sont concrètes : des aires marines protégées, des laboratoires de coraux, des projets de restauration et le soutien direct à nos communautés côtières.

Nous ne sommes pas là pour copier des modèles, M. le président, mais nous construisons notre avenir. On nous a dit que Maurice a été découvert...

The Deputy Speaker: Junior Minister!

Mr Beharry: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The MP is irrelevant with regard to the last clause of our resolution. She is completely irrelevant. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Junior Minister, please continue. Please continue your speech!

Ms Gobin: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It seems the MP was not listening to my speech. I have already addressed part of it before. I have limited amount of time; I have to go directly to my conclusion, unfortunately.

On nous a dit que Maurice a été découvert et puis le paradis. N'oublions pas notre drapeau qui représente notre mauricianisme –

- Rouge pour la lutte ;

- Bleu pour nos océans ;
- Jaune pour le soleil, et
- Vert pour nos champs.

Et à chaque fois que notre drapeau flotte, une vérité s'impose. Le bleu qui nous entoure n'est pas seulement notre fierté, mais il est aussi, à chacun d'entre nous, notre devoir de le préserver. Ainsi, M. le président, nous n'attendons pas les critiques, nous n'attendons pas que les autres nous disent que faire. Nous savons déjà que notre devoir est de travailler vers cette responsabilité, et nous le ferons comme un gouvernement solide et uni.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: MP Luchmun Krish!

(12.34 p.m.)

Mr K. R. Luchmun (Member of Parliament): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for the floor.

The Member of the Government side just mentioned that they invested Rs5.1 billion in infrastructure and said that we have ideas, we are wasting tax payers' money. I believe that we call it a national budget but not personal budget for a fact. So, they should actually be more precise and not waste our time by saying that we are wasting their time doing research.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for the floor and greetings to the Members of the House. Today, in this sacred place, let us speak with courage, let us dare to be bold, *comme dit Madame la présidente, osons être audacieux*. Mauritius stands at a crossroad, we can either remain trap in the safe comfort of yesterday's economy or we can rise boldly towards a new frontier, the frontier of marine biotechnology as mentioned in point number one in our resolution.

Marine biotechnology is not just about laboratories and patents, it is about protecting our farmers with drought resistance crops, it is about new medicines that saves lives and cut our import bills. It is about exporting high value products to Africa, to Europe, to the world and in doing so, protecting the very soul of our economy which is our Mauritius Rupee. Imagine an

economy where the rupee does not depreciate at every global shock because our exports are strong, diversified and knowledge driven. This is not abstract economics, Members of the House, that is bread on the table, dignity in the home and hope in the eyes of the Mauritians. We must unlock the full force of our scientific and entrepreneurial spirit. Let us create an ecosystem through the establishment of the National Blue Economy Development Plan where our brightest researchers are ambitious youth and our bold investors come together, not in isolation but in synergy.

M. le président, c'est dans l'union que nous trouverons la force. Yet, we cannot ignore a painful truth which is the brain drain that we are facing here in Mauritius. Every time a bright Mauritian leaves, or economic bleeds, every time a young scientist, engineer, entrepreneur seeks opportunity abroad, Mauritius loses a person, not only a person but potential.

Marine biotechnology is a weapon against this, by investing in research by funding innovation and making this country a magnet for talent, we keep our sons and daughters here. *Je dirais, restons maître de notre destin.*

Members of the House, this is where courage comes in. We must not be timid. We must not let our fear of change change us to mediocrity. As Victor Hugo once said –

« Rien n'est plus puissant qu'une idée dont l'heure est venue. »

Alors, soyons claire, M. le président, notre génération ne se contentera pas de rêver, elle construira, elle transformera et elle dominera.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will end here by saying that the Members of the House, who dare to be bold, will definitely vote for this motion.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Junior Minister Ms Keramuth!

(12.37 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Ms S. Keramuth): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The resolution sounds promising at first, it talks about progress and protecting our ocean but when we look closer, many of these ideas are already being done and some go beyond what Mauritius can realistically manage right now. We don't need to start over; we need to build on what's already working. The previous orator mentioned the National Blue Economy Development Plan. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is already in progress, we don't need to reinvent the wheel. Mauritius already has a comprehensive Blue Economy Policy 2023 that outlines inclusive governance frameworks, ICC driven innovation, renewable ocean energy and marine spatial planning. So, the Opposition's proposal risk duplicating existing efforts without adding new value.

Now, let's talk about what super corals really mean for Mauritius. Genetically engineered corals are still experimental worldwide. No country has successfully deployed them at a scale. Even if we wanted to, Mauritius lacks the lab infrastructure, marine geneticists and bio-security protocols to safely conduct such research. We would be outsourcing our risk to foreign labs and hoping for the best. And, what happens if it goes wrong? Coral ecosystems are delicate, introducing engineered species could trigger invasive outbreaks, disease or ecological collapse. Let's not forget...

The Deputy Speaker: Junior Minister, let me hear that point of order!

Mr Kowal: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The MP is being repetitive.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, thank you. Junior Minister, please be specific in your speech!

Ms Keramuth: Let's not forget the cost. This isn't a one-time investment, it's a long-term financial sinkhole. Meanwhile, our existing reef restoration programmes are already working. Additionally, would people feel safer swimming near genetically modified reefs? Public acceptance matters. One of the previous orators talked on tourist. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, imagine telling a tourist – 'welcome to Mauritius, home of genetically modified reefs', it does not evoke the charm of natural paradise, does it?

The Deputy Speaker: Junior Minister, let me listen to this point of order!

Mr Balgobin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. This is not relevant. I spoke about tourism in terms of finance not what she is mentioning about.

The Deputy Speaker: Junior Minister, please be relevant in your statement!

Ms Keramuth: I don't think the orator heard me well. I talked on super corals which is mentioned on the resolution.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, continue with your speech!

Ms Keramuth: Even if super corals survived warmer waters, they won't thrive if pollution, over-fishing and poor-quality water persist. The root causes of bleaching must be tackled first, that means stronger enforcement, better waste management and mangrove protection, not biotech band aids. My ideas are: build local marine science training, expand existing reef restoration and strengthen reef protection laws, water quality and enforcement.

Let me close by saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are not people pleasers, we are nation builders. *Leurs discours font du bruit, notre action fait du progrès.* The Opposition wants super corals, I say we need super logic.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: MP Mudalli!

(12.41 p.m.)

Mr K. S. Mudalli (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for allowing me the floor.

First of all, I would like to rebut one of the comments that was passed before. Someone mentioned that ships float, that's what they said, the Opposition would say that but do you know one ship that didn't float? That's right. MV Wakashio, what happened to it?

The Deputy Speaker: You don't need to question the Members. You address to the Chair, whatever you have say.

Mr Mudalli: It was a rhetorical question.

The Deputy Speaker: Don't make the question rhetoric if you want to make... Don't make it like a question that you want them to answer. Make it rhetoric in your tone.

Mr Mudalli: Very sorry. What happened to it? It was one of the biggest government failures in implementation while all of the people were struggling to help out bring buoys in the water, what was the Government doing? How is it helping in reducing this calamity?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stand before you today, not simply to debate another motion but to sound a call to action. A call that speaks directly to our future as an island nation, as a youth-driven society and as a country that dreams of being more than a dot in the ocean.

The Deputy Speaker: MP, let me hear this point of order!

Mr Kaudeer: I have a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He is imputing motives.

Mr Mudalli: I didn't specify which Member, I just said...

The Deputy Speaker: No, it is not for you to answer that; let me give my ruling on what he is saying. You please continue your speech!

(Interruptions)

No cross talking!

No need, I did not give you the floor! Please calm down!

Continue your speech without imputing motives.

Mr Mudalli: The motion before us, technology and innovation in the blue economy is not a luxury, it is a necessity. It is about whether Mauritius will remain a passive spectator to global change or whether we will ride the waves of innovation and chart a bold new course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us look at the facts. We commend an exclusive economic zone of 2.3 million km², one of the largest of the Indian Ocean, and yet we generate only \$1.5 billion from it each year. Compare that to India which earns \$259 billion from a similar sized zone. The question is not whether Mauritius has potential, the question is why...

The Deputy Speaker: MP!

Ms Dominique: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is irrelevant. You cannot compare Mauritius to India. Our population is not the same.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, thank you. Please, be relevant in what you are saying. I don't want you to compare with India because sometimes we...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mudalli: I do not see how it is irrelevant. I did not compare the population.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no need to answer! Please, be relevant!

Mr Mudalli: I was not trying to compare to the population.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking, please! Continue!

Mr Mudalli: I was not trying to compare to the population. I was trying to compare to the EEZ size, if you did not hear me.

So, the question is: why are we leaving that potential intact? Well, technology gives us the answer. Imagine deploying satellites and drones across our EEZ. Instead of wanting to react to disasters like the Wakashio oil spill, we could prevent them. Instead of watching illegal trawlers steal fish from our waters, we could detect them in real-time and act decisively. Every day we delay is another day spent in fear of catastrophe and lost trust from our coastal communities.

But this is not just about protection, it is also about resilience. Our coral reefs, which shield our coasts and sustain our fishes, are dying under rising sea temperatures. What if Mauritius led way, testing heat-resistant 'super corals'? What if instead of watching our lagoons fade into memory, we revive them with science and innovation?

Then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is the matter of waste. Mauritius produces an estimated 75,000 tonnes of plastic wastes annually, much of which end up choking our oceans. What if every fish docked in Port Louis was required to recycle its waste as a dedicated hub? Pollution would fall, yes, but more importantly, we would create green jobs for our youth. With over 11,000 young people unemployed, this is not just an environmental solution. This is an economic lifeline.

Members of Parliament, this is about more than numbers and policies. It is about identity. For too long, Mauritius has described itself as an Ocean State in speeches and strategies. But let us be honest, are we truly an Ocean State if we are not leading in ocean innovation, if we are not protecting our reefs...

The Deputy Speaker: Wrap up, please!

Mr Mudalli: ...our fishes, our coastline, if we are not giving our youth a stake in this future? This motion gives us the chance to change that, to align with SDG 14: Life below Water, to stand shoulder to shoulder with our regional neighbours and say: Mauritius is ready to lead. We are ready to innovate. We are ready to prove that a small island can set a big example.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history does not reward hesitation. It rewards courage.

The Deputy Speaker: Conclude, please!

Mr Mudalli: Today, Mauritius has a choice: do we continue as we are with wasted potential and rising risks or do we embrace technology and innovation and transform our ocean into the beating heart of our economy, our environment and our identity?

I would like to conclude by saying that I believe the choice is clear. I urge this House, let us back this motion with unity, with urgency...

The Deputy Speaker: In one line, you conclude!

Mr Mudalli: ...and with pride. Let us prove to our youth, the future leaders of the nation, that we are not afraid of bold action, that we will give them an ocean future...

The Deputy Speaker: A shorter sentence, please!

Mr Mudalli: ...worth fighting for. Thank you. And maybe the Government could take some notes!

The Deputy Speaker: MP Ms Larose!

(12.47 p.m.)

Ms T. G. Larose (Member of Parliament): M. le président et chers membres, je prends la parole, aujourd'hui, non seulement en tant que membre de cette Assemblée, mais aussi en tant que fille de Rodrigues, profondément attachée à mon île, à son peuple et à son avenir.

Rodrigues, île autonome, partage avec Maurice et nos voisins de l'océan Indien la même vulnérabilité face aux effets du changement climatique, à l'érosion côtière et à la dégradation de nos écosystèmes marins. C'est pourquoi je salue la proposition de finaliser et de mettre en œuvre le projet de gestion intégrée des zones côtières. Ce projet n'est pas seulement une nécessité environnementale, il est une garantie pour l'avenir de nos enfants, pour la protection de notre patrimoine naturel et pour la consolidation d'un développement durable.

M. le président, je souhaite apporter mon appui au choix de démarrer ce projet par un projet pilote à Rivière Noire, à Maurice. Ce district, riche de sa biodiversité, mais soumis à de fortes pressions, constitue un terrain d'expérimentation idéal pour démontrer la pertinence de cette approche intégrée. Mais je ne saurais rester silencieuse sans plaider pour l'inclusion de Rodrigues dès le départ dans ce grand sentier national avec son immense lagon, l'un des plus vastes de l'océan Indien, sa biodiversité fragile et une population qui dépend directement de la mer pour vivre.

Rodrigues est sans doute l'une des îles les plus vulnérables. Toute dégradation de nos ressources marines touche directement nos familles, nos pêcheurs, nos jeunes, notre sécurité alimentaire et notre économie locale. Rodrigues a déjà démontré par des initiatives courageuses et communautaires, comme la fermeture saisonnière de la pêche au poulpe, que nous savons innover et prendre des décisions difficiles pour protéger nos ressources. Notre île peut devenir un véritable laboratoire de bonne pratique, un modèle de gestion participative et durable.

L'esprit de responsabilité, M. le président, s'enracine dans notre histoire. Je me permets, ici, de rappeler les paroles du père de l'autonomie rodriguaise : 'Ne comptez pas sur la nourriture qui nous vient d'ailleurs, mais comptez sur la nourriture qui sort de notre terre.' Ses mots raisonnent encore aujourd'hui. Il nous appelle à protéger nos ressources locales, marines et terrestres pour garantir notre autonomie et notre dignité.

Enfin, je salue l'ambition d'élargir ce projet à l'échelle régionale en coopération avec nos voisins, les Seychelles et La Réunion. Ensembles, nous pourrions partager nos expériences, unir nos forces et construire une véritable alliance des îles de l'océan Indien autour de la préservation de nos zones côtières et marines.

M. le président, aimer son pays, aimer son île, c'est aussi avoir le courage de défendre sa fragilité et de préparer son avenir. En tant que patriote rodriguaise, je plaide avec conviction pour que Rodrigues soit pleinement inclus dans ce projet, car protéger nos côtes, c'est protéger notre identité, notre culture et notre dignité. Je vous remercie.

The Deputy Speaker: MP Bandhu!

(12.51 p.m.)

Mr Y. Bandhu (Member of Parliament): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, various members of the Government keep mentioning that our plans have already been implemented by them. We cannot stay at a standstill. There is always room for improvement, and that is what the Opposition is aiming for: a better Mauritius, and it includes Rodrigues as well. Yet, allow me to clear the way so that the House may better understand our perspective.

Despite the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act of 2007, the Fishermen Investment Trust Act of 2006, the Fishermen Welfare Fund Act of 2000 and the new Fisheries Act of 2023, let us be clear, these laws, while commendable, remain insufficient in achieving genuine marine justice. They deal with welfare and investment, yes. They provide consultative committees, yes. But they do not give fishers and youth a legal right to participate. They do not guarantee transparency in marine concession, and they do not provide a specialised forum to resolve conflicts that erupt in our lagoon. A specialised forum could be the Lagoon Conflict Resolution Forum to remedy the fishing gear conflicts, anchoring issues and other disturbances.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need a comprehensive marine justice framework. These include –

- recognise the customer rights of our fishers and coastal communities;

- require full transparency: every licence, every aquaculture concession, every marine tourism lease published on the Ocean Observatory Portal;
- dedicate part of concession fees and penalties to a climate adaptation fund for vulnerable coastal communities, and importantly
- a body to resolve dispute fairly and quickly.

Now, I know the Government MPs will say: ‘But Mauritius already has an Ombudsman’. That is true. Section 96 of our Constitution creates an Ombudsman to investigate maladministration in public bodies. The Ombudsman is generally overwhelmed. Marine conflicts are technical, urgent and often require mediation, not years of procedure. That is why we propose

—

- either a Marine Ombudsperson or, at the very least, a Marine Division within the Office of the Ombudsman;
- staff who are experts in fisheries law, marine science and coastal rights.

This is about specialisation and accessibility.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the community and youth participation, in addition to the National Youth Council set up under the NYC Act 1998, we need local marine councils in our lagoons: in Grand Bay, Mahebourg, Blue Bay, and Flic en Flac. These councils must have reserved seats for fishers, for women, for our youth and they have a statutory voice before any licence or concession is granted. We need to replicate the Rodrigues SEMPA co-management model on the mainland so that fishers share real authority, not symbolic imitation just like MP Sheoraj had mentioned.

We also need a Youth Marine Ambassadors Programme with digital reporting lines so that young Mauritians can report pollution, illegal fishing or coral damage and see actions taken.

So, let us be clear – this motion is not about left or right, not about government or opposition. It is about whether Mauritius chooses action over inaction, resilience over vulnerability, unity over division.

We, the youth of this Parliament, are not here to trade accusations; we are here to plant idea, to build solutions and to speak as one people under one flag. Our ocean is our identity, our

economy, our future. To protect it and to use it wisely is the greatest duty we owe to the future generations to come.

I, therefore, stand in full support of this motion, not as a politician but as a Mauritian because there is only one side worth standing on – the side of Mauritius.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister Dominique!

(12.55 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries (Ms D. Dominique): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, firstly, the Opposition mentioned that our government did not do anything in regards to the MV Wakashio.

Let me tell them that the government achieved a National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, declared a state of environmental emergency and requested national assistance.

I will proceed with my debate. I want to begin by recognising the good intentions behind this resolution. The Opposition is demanding the creation of a permanent marine ecosystem monitoring framework in alignment with the UN Ocean Decade for sustainable development. A project that appears ambitious and forward looking but Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of course, we will say that the Opposition is duplicating efforts. They are only copy pasting the efforts of already existing frameworks.

Let me inform them that Mauritius is already participating in regional marine programmes such as the agreement on Port State Measures which provide platforms for regional corporation and aligns closely with the goals of their proposed system.

While my Ministry acknowledges the genuine commitment behind this resolution to safeguard our marine ecosystem, we also believe that it would risk duplicating efforts of an already existing system. This would add to cost, cause confusion in enforcement mechanisms, weaken legal cases against IUU fishing vessels and slow down the response to environmental security threats such as another potential MW Wakashio.

Pour ajouter à cela, M. le président, l'opposition réclame une fois de plus, un plan intégré de gestion des zones côtières en commençant par le district de Rivière Noire comme projet pilote. Mais soyons réalistes ! Maurice ne peut pas se permettre de s'enliser dans des exercices de planification interminable. Ce qu'il nous faut, ce n'est pas d'avantage des plans sur papier mais une véritable action et une mise en œuvre régional, concrète et efficace.

Maurice à elle seule, ne peut pas lutter contre le blanchiment des coraux, les marées noires ou la pêche illégale. Ce ne sont pas uniquement des problèmes mauriciens, ce sont des crises régionales qui exigent des solutions régionales.

This is why Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to close the gap in regional ocean governance, my Ministry puts forward two bold and practical solutions. The creation of a joint legal resolution framework and a joint marine special planning initiative which will not only harmonise legal systems, penalties and enforcement mechanisms across the Western Indian Ocean but it will also allow us to manage our marine resources in a coordinated way, promote sustainable practices and strengthen our collective resilience against oil spills, illegal fishing and the devastating impact of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are the Star and the Key of the Indian Ocean. Our commitment is genuine, grounded in faith and focused on sustainability. Together, through regional unity and a firm enforcement, we will keep our oceans resilient, a true lifeline for generations to come.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Members, it was so nice to see both sides of the House applauding for the Member from Rodrigues during her debate. It was nice to see that. That was a very good gesture of yours, both side of the House were applauding her.

And I know you are hungry now; I am, too. So, I am suspending the Sitting for one hour.

At 12.58 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.05 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Members, please be seated!

Before proceeding with our debates, I would like to make a statement. I would like to remind Members that you are to make reasonable use of points of orders as you will appreciate time in the House is of essence.

MP Young Pak Kian!

(2.06 p.m.)

Mr A. Young Pak Kian (Member of Parliament): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for this opportunity. Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise today not to pass blame, but to sound an alarm – an alarm for our oceans, our economy and our very future. The report on my desk paints a devastating picture. Our coral reefs, the very bedrock of our marine ecosystem, are dying. 50% were bleached in 1998 and again in 2002, 2005 and 2009 and as recent as March this year.

We are presiding over an underwater funnel and our response has been a whisper against a hurricane. Yet, I want to add to what MP Mudalli said earlier. The plastic wastes actually choke our lagoon and kill our marine life. Yet, where are the ambitious policies to tackle this scourge? The ghost of Wakashio still haunts our south east – 1,000 tons of oil, hundreds of millions in losses, decades of environmental damage and a deep, festering wound in our social fabric.

The solidarity grants were a plaster on a gaping wound. We were told lessons would be learnt, but still lingers a tragedy whose lesson must not be forgotten. We are even warned by science that there is a 10% percent chance a tsunami could ravage our coast within 50 years.

We have the opportunity to champion solutions. I have heard that the Government is doing coral restoration projects and also eliminate plastic wastes, but what I will add and suggest would be to develop rapid response systems for environmental disasters such the National Adaptation Plan.

Yet, we have to live with natural disasters. I will quote in French –

« On ne peut pas scorer, mais on peut encaisser. »

While the Government cannot be held responsible for past inaction, it now bears the responsibility to act. *Où est le plan de secours ?* Does this Government have a plan or is it a gamble we are willing to take with our people's lives? Mr Speaker, Sir, the question this side of the House is forced to ask is this: why does this Government seem content to manage the decline of our greatest natural assets rather than launching a full-scale war to save same?

We need actions, not just action plans. We need a revolution in environmental policy, not just recycled promises. Our marine biodiversity is not a lie item on a budget. It is the very soul of Mauritius. The time for urgent transformative action is not tomorrow; it was yesterday.

To wrap up, I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for this opportunity and I leave the floor.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, Mr Kaudeer!

(2.09 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Finance (Mr M. R. Kaudeer): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. At first glance, the motion sounds responsible, even visionary, but vision without realism is political theatre. Looking across the aisle, we can see a few self-proclaimed Shakespeare, Mozart and even Molière among us!

Mr Speaker: MP, please!

Ms Seeburn: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a point of order to address.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Ms Seeburn: When he is addressing, he should address to the Chair, and not point fingers to the Opposition.

Mr Kaudeer: I was not pointing any fingers, but okay.

Mr Speaker: The Junior Minister will refrain from making unnecessary comments.

(Interruptions)

Order in the House! Order!

Mr Kaudeer: This motion in all its noble language rests on a contradiction.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister Kaudeer, I have not finished giving my ruling! The Junior Minister will refrain from making any unnecessary gestures towards any Member of the House. Please address the Chair!

Mr Kaudeer: I apologise, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: MP Beeharry, please refrain from making such comments!

Mr Kaudeer: This motion for all its noble language rests on a contradiction we cannot afford to ignore. You cannot drive large scale economic extraction and claim ecological restoration at the same time. Not at the scale they are proposing! The previous orator before me spoke about, I do not know, he was very incomprehensible.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let the Member speak.

Mr Kaudeer: The motion tries to have it both ways. Protect the sea yet extract more from it. Restore coral reef yet expand marine industries. Promote community justice yet handover to private sector exploration. But let us be brutally honest, most marine degradation today in Mauritius comes directly from economic activities, tourism infrastructure that the Member says.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, I have told you before, please do not make unnecessary gestures towards any Member of the House. Please, address to the Chair.

Mr Kaudeer: Okay, my apologies.

Mr Kaudeer: Tourism infrastructure has damaged lagoons. Overfishing continues despite regulations. Now, this motion asks us to scale up the very model that caused the damage while promising it will suddenly be sustainable! That is not strategy, that is greenwashing!

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius faces a set of immediate, tangible development challenges, reducing youth employment like managing public debt. I can go on and on and on.

Let me remind the Opposition that our public debt is at Rs642 billion and a 9.8% budget deficit. Our ship is already navigating through stormy waters. Despite these constraints, we are financing the blue economy. We have said it not once, not twice, but several times that we are preparing the *Assises de l'océan* to set out a proper blue print.

As regard to operating clause 4, Rs200 million has been provided to various ministries to finance research. While they are busy shouting or sleeping, Rs164 million is going straight into restoring habitats, fighting beach erosion and tackling marine pollution.

So, before throwing big statements around, maybe they should actually do their homework. Let me remind the House, Mauritius has already been recognised by UNEP for its marine protection work.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, please pause for a moment. Yes, do you have a point of order?

Ms Subbarayan: He is imputing motives. He cannot do that.

Mr Speaker: The point of order will be dismissed! Please, continue!

Mr Kaudeer: Like my colleague said, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. *La Fisheries Act 2023 constitue à elle seule un témoignage clair et tangible de notre engagement.*

Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, when it comes to blue economy, this Government is steering the ship. The Opposition is still drawing maps.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, I would like you to conclude, please. Conclude, please!

Mr Kaudeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Lastly, to conclude, I heard MP Young Pak Kian say something about coral restoration but let me ask him one thing. Why should we waste ...?

Mr Speaker: Member, you are addressing the Chair. You cannot put a question to the Chair. Please rephrase.

Mr Kaudeer: It was rhetorical, Mr Speaker, Sir. Why waste taxpayers' money?

A Member of Parliament: On a point of order, he cannot use rhetorical questions!

Mr Speaker: Please continue. You are time bound. Please continue!

Mr Kaudeer: *To anvi vinn pran mo plas?*

Mr Speaker: Member I will not be allowing this. Please resume your seat. The next speaker will speak.

(2.15 p.m.)

The Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Mr C. S. Lolljowaheer): Mr Speaker, Sir, let us all maintain decorum. When the MV Wakasio split upon our reef in July 2020, Mauritius faced what many called an apocalypse at sea. Over a1000 tonnes of heavy oil spilled into our lagoons threatening to erase centuries of coral growth and the livelihoods of thousands of our fishermen.

The world expected paralysis from this small island nation but instead Mauritius rose from the fishing villages of Mahebourg to the women's cooperative of Rodrigues, from the youth who lined our coast to the SMEs that halted production to supply materials, our nation acted as one. Together we built 50 km of oil booms out of sugarcane leaves, plastic bottles and even human hair. This was not in the textbooks. This was not in the foreign funded plans. This was Mauritian courage. Mauritian ingenuity! Mauritian resilience! *Bizin ena klas pou fer sa*. And out of that unity, new enterprises were born. In Mahebourg small family workshops that once stitched school uniforms retooled overnight to sew protective gear and eco-friendly booms. Within months, those very SMEs transformed again creating sustainable products from recycled oil-spoilt materials, selling them locally and abroad. What was once pollution became innovation, jobs and dignity. This is the DNA of Mauritian cooperatives – the power to turn crisis into opportunity. And what followed was not despair but rebirth.

The government launched a National Oil Spill Contingency Plan invested in satellite and drone monitoring, supported reef restoration projects like the Mauritius Coral Bank and extended grants for eco-enterprises and coastal cooperatives. Oh Mauritius! Out of tragedy came renewal not because we waited for resolutions but because Mauritian themselves acted with vision and strength.

Now this resolution has called for oyster restoration projects and genetically engineered super corals. Super corals! But why should Mauritius gamble with untested foreign imported experiments when we already have community-led coral nurseries in Blue Bay?

Sea weed farming cooperatives in Rodrigues and ecotourism ventures that empower local women. Our people are not waiting to be saved by foreign models. They are already writing their own. Let us also be clear about the cost. The MV Wakashio cleanup exceeded USD 34 million.

Mr Speaker: Minister, please wrap up!

Mr Lolljowaheer: Much of it reallocated for national development to fund vast numerating systems, oyster farms and super corals labs would cost hundreds of millions more.

Yet the same goals already been advanced through Mauritians ingenuity and international partnerships without drowning our youth in debt. When history is written, let it not say – ‘Mauritians depended on others to tell us how to protect our seas’. Let it say – ‘in our darkest

hour, Mauritius stood tall'. We did not bend. We innovated. We cooperated. We led. Mauritius does not need to be told how to be courageous. It is the pinnacle of courage itself. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: MP Ansah!

(2.19 p.m.)

Mr H. Ansah (Member of Parliament): Mr Speaker, Sir, if it is not us, who, and if it is not now, when? This motion, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not about challenging one another but rather work for the future. Some members of the government side are saying that we do not have the money to invest while others are saying that we should not take examples of the country but Mauritius' seas are more than just waves – they are life itself. Our coral reef are home to countless marine species, they protect our coastlines, sustain livelihoods, and enrich our culture. Yet, these treasures are under threat. Rising ocean temperatures, pollution, human activity, coral bleaching is turning vibrant reefs into pale, lifeless skeletons. Over the last 30 years, more than half of the world's reefs have suffered this fate and Mauritius is no exception.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is hope. Science is giving us a lifeline. Using CRISPR-Cas9 technology, researchers on the Great Barrier Reef have identified genes that allowed corals to survive heat stress. We should learn from them. It will not cost us much as if we work in collaboration with international universities. Their experts will share their knowledge to our local students. We will not have to spend that much because they already spend a lot in research. We just have to open our gates to them, our waters to them.

By allowing those universities and partnering with them will make Mauritius become an educational hub in Africa, revenue grows and our economy moves toward knowledge-driven innovation, foreign students come, conferences are hosted, our country shines on the global stage.

Mr Speaker: MP, please, wrap up!

Mr Ansah: Yet science alone is not enough. Nature herself provides solutions, take humble oyster, the natural purifier of water. We should rather invest in how to clean our oceans, our lagoons than to make noises in this Chambre.

Our nation was built by citizens who work tirelessly day and night, and to make our Republic shine, SSR brought a welfare State and SAJ ensured its endurance and it is saving lives. There is a clear lesson: differences must be set aside; the nation comes first.

This motion, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not about what has been done but, rather, what can be done. Let us allow generations to come to see the beauty of our motherland as we have. As the song says, “*Lame dan lame, anou batir nasyon Morisien.*”

Mr Speaker: MP! Please conclude.

Mr Ansah: Someone once said in this Chambre – we must think about the future of all Mauritian children. We must stop thinking about community. We must think in terms of Mauritians. Let us make sure that we write a history that shall always be remembered. For a life spent in service is not a sacrifice but an honour. Let us leave a legacy where Mauritius thrives on land and in its waters.

Mr Speaker: Your final sentence!

Mr Ansah: Okay. May the counsel of the good Lord rest upon our shoulders. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, Ms Mungurah!

(2.23 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Ms L. Mungurah): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The proposals of Opposition are indeed very impressive but when applied to theory, they are far from practical. Earlier a member of the Opposition stated: if Seychelles can, why not Mauritius? In this view, other countries are as well building submarines, so why not Mauritius?

Clearly, Mauritius cannot afford to be guided by imported models that look impressive in international reports, but fail in our lagoons and villages. What we need are homegrown solutions that are feasible and grounded. Solutions that truly serve our people and enhance our biodiversity. The proposal to reintroduce oysters, drawing inspiration from the Solent Project in the UK simply does not fit our context. The Solent restoration works in cold temperature with

very specific ecological situations. Mauritius by contrast has tropical shallows with exposed lagoons. It is often affected by land-based pollution and rising sea temperatures. Assuming that solutions that worked in other places will work in Mauritius is not science, it is just blind imitation.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, the project itself was resource intensive and costly. Tens of thousands of oysters were used with high mortality and constant monitoring. For Mauritius, with our limited budget, this would mean pouring millions into what could become dead oyster cemeteries and dead reefs. With no provision for disease control systems, we risk importing parasites which have devastated oyster populations in Europe.

Mr Speaker, Sir, does the Opposition want to solve our problems or create new ones? Instead of investing on oysters, let us focus on what already works here –

- coral nurseries that are successfully restoring reef habitats;
- restoring mangrove parks that shield our coast lines and stores carbon;
- community-led marine protected areas that support livelihood.

Mr Speaker: Junior Minister, please wrap up.

Ms Mungurah: These solutions are proven and affordable. They empower communities, protect biodiversity and deliver resilience against climate change. We do not need oyster fantasies that collapse at the first wave. We need local solutions that enhance our reefs, restore our coasts and protect our people. So, let us be bold enough to say no to oyster illusions and yes to corals, mangroves and our people. That is how Mauritius will lead the way on SDG 14 with our own solutions, our own strength and our own people. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister!

(2.26 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, after listening patiently to nearly 20 interventions today, I must confess, if words alone could restore our lagoons, Mauritius would already be the

cleanest, greenest ocean on the planet. But unfortunately, speeches do not repair coral reefs and resolutions written in flowery ink do not create jobs for our young people.

The Opposition wants us to believe that by simply passing this motion, we shall unlock billions, solve unemployment and heal the seas. It sounds wonderful until you ask one simple question: where is the plan; where is the money, and where is the realism? My colleagues on this side of the House have already demonstrated how much of this motion is nothing but duplication. Policies are already in place, projects already funded, strategies already being executed from the smart port transformation to coral nurseries, from the *Assises de l'océan* to Fisheries Act 2023. This Government is steering, not drifting. We are not waiting for someone to draw castles in the sand. We are building it on firm foundations.

Yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to be constructive on operative clause 3, the famous oyster project. While I admire the Opposition's sudden fascination about shell fish, I must propose an amendment. Instead of rushing head first into large scale oyster cultivation, as if oysters alone will save the nation, let us begin with a pilot project. More importantly, let us broaden the scope from oysters to marine life restoration as a whole – coral, seagrass, mangrove, ecosystems that matter to our biodiversity and our livelihoods. In other words, less oyster obsession, more scientific precision. Because the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that this Government does not gamble with the future.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, please wrap up.

The Prime Minister: We do not run after fashionable experiments or international buzz words. We act with caution, with competence, with responsibility. So, to my friends across the aisle, keep your poetry, we will keep our policy. Keep your castles in the sand. We will keep the light after with designation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our duty is not to win applause in this Chamber, but to win the trust of the people and to safeguard their tomorrow. On that duty, my Government stands firm. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition!

(2.29 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Ms I. Munbodh-Mohun): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the floor. The Government seems to have a problem with the fact that we wrote a resolution. I would like to remind the House that having a resolution is compulsory to us being here.

We, as the youth of this country, have a vision. It is no wonder that our island is known as a paradise island. A big part of what makes the paradise lies in its beautiful marine ecosystem. This paradise island offers resources and it holds largely unexplored economic and environmental potential.

I wish to draw the House's attention to the fact that while Mauritius possesses an exclusive economic zone similar in size of that India, our revenue from this zone remains but a small fraction of India's. This is not a direct comparison of output. We recognise that India is a vast country blessed with a much longer coast line and much more labour than Mauritius. That is true, but India set a prime example of a transformative potential of marine resources when strategically managed. It reminds us that we are a large ocean nation, not just a small island.

The waters around us are a marketplace, a laboratory and a power station. We need to turn ocean wealth into livelihoods. If we organise our talents, push innovation and stay at the cutting edge of technology, we can turn blue horizons into blue jobs. We are tired of Mauritius sitting on the back benches. We need to play on the fields. To do so, we need planning. We need a marine justice framework.

The marine justice framework is not a law. It is a roadmap that unites our laws, policies, experts and communities. Its purpose is to protect our marine ecosystem today and secure them for future generations. For example, under this framework, the traditional fishing areas will not be blocked by hotels or marinas. Any project impacting communities must come with restoration plans and fair compensation. Women will have reserved seats in councils, ensuring their voices are heard and represented. Even its funding is designed to be sustainable. It will come from pollution fines, carbon credits and green incentives. This is how Mauritius moves from the back benches to the frontline.

Mr Speaker, Sir, planning is meaningless without action. We may be isolated physically, but today, we are more connected than ever. Borders are opened, knowledge flows freely and

opportunities are on the growth. So, let us make the most of it. Let us embrace technology, creativity and international expertise. Maybe the Government is not aware of this, but in Hawaii, the University of Hawaii leads the Rapid Resilient Reefs for Coastal Defense Project, creating hybrid coral reefs from both natural and artificial structures to protect coastlines and support marine life.

We must bring in experts from leading international universities to guide our coral restoration and climate resilient initiatives so that Mauritius can not only safeguard its oceans, but lead the way into marine innovation. This is how we will show the world what a small island...

Mr Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, please conclude.

Ms Munbodh-Mohun: ...with big ideas can achieve.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, *ensemble avec vision, innovation et collaboration, nous élèverons Maurice et nous élèverons son peuple avec lui. Merci.*

Mr Speaker: The Opposition Whip, MP Digumber, your concluding comment.

(2.33 p.m.)

Mr G. Digumber (Opposition Whip): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, Members, we acknowledge the amendments proposed by the Prime Minister. As we reach the end of this debate, let us pause to recognise the measures outlined in this motion. From the call for a national blue economic development plan, the permanent marine ecosystem monitoring system, the reintroduction of native oysters, the research on resilient super corals and the education and skills programmes for youth and women, each initiative speaks to a vision of Mauritius that is ambitious, sustainable and inclusive.

While we are appreciative of the fact that there are laws and acts existing, the catastrophes and erosion of the capacity of our blue economy point towards the fact that the laws and acts are quite simply inadequate.

We are not making empty promises; we demand action on the so-called measures already in place. Unlike our so-called leaders, *nous ne faisons pas des promesses aussi brillantes*

d'apparence qu'obscures de sens. Speeches do indeed not rebuild the lagoons. We do not raise doubts on commitment. We point out inefficiencies; it is rather ironic that the government points out issues with funding and inability to take risks for the betterment of the country. Despite our funding plans, as I said, resources are only scarce when there is political inconvenience.

These measures are not mere ideas; they are a road map for our nation to take its rightful place as a leader in the blue economy. They promise green jobs, innovation and a future where our oceans are protected and our youth empowered. Indeed, this motion shows us what is possible when vision meets action, though, regrettably, not all vision has yet been matched with the urgency of demands. We acknowledge the intent even as we urge faster, bolder action. Collaboration will be key across communities, government and private sectors. Let us remember – an ocean is not flourished with half-hearted stewardship and a nation does not thrive on cautious convenience. Every delay costs livelihood, every hesitation risks our heritage and every unclaimed opportunity diminishes our future.

Members, this motion is a challenge and an invitation. It calls on us to rise above complacency, to turn ideas into impact, to transform ambition into achievement. For the youth, for the coastal communities and for the generations yet to come. We must ensure that our legacy is not one of hesitation but of bold, uncompromising action. We, the youth of the country, were born to inherit the stars, yet all we asked, is a healthy, thriving and sustainable ocean. We are not asking for miracles, we are demanding the courage to match the size of our ocean and if dreaming big is our crime, then let it be known. It is the dreamers who build this nation and it is us dreamers who will save it. The tide is rising; the winds of change are calling. The question is not whether we can rise, it is whether we dare to rise together. Will Mauritius answer the call? Will we, the youth, the custodians of tomorrow, embrace this responsibility with courage, creativity and conviction?

Let us take this moment to pledge collaboration across communities, across sectors and across generations. The ocean waits for no one. Our nation waits for no one. I urge you all to vote, not in favour of this motion, but in favour of a brighter future for our country. I now leave you, *la tête dans les étoiles, les pieds sur terre et le cœur à l'océan.*

I commend the motion in the National Youth Parliament. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Members, time is over for motion one, I shall now put the question before the House.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Chairperson of Committees, MP Kulpoo!

(2.38 p.m.)

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS SCHEMES – VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL & SKILLS-BASED TRAINING – NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Ms D. Kulpoo (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, namely –

“This National Youth Parliament resolves that a national framework be established for the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships Schemes in vocational, technical and skills-based training across all levels of education.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, every generation is entrusted the mission. Ours is clear, it is to prepare the young people of Mauritius, not only to survive in tomorrow’s world but to thrive in it. Yet, today, we face a troubling paradox. We have classrooms filled with bright minds but they graduate without the skills that industries demand. We have talent in abundance but not the structured pathways to transform that talent into innovation.

Today, Mauritius stands at a crossroad: on one side lies a future where our youth remains trapped in cycles of unemployment with dreams that out pay their opportunities, on the other lies a horizon filled with innovation and prosperity but only if, and I repeat, if we equip our young men and women with the skills of tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world is changing faster than ever before. According to the World Economic Forum, more than one billion people globally will need to rescaled to meet the demands of an economy transformed by technology, Artificial Intelligence and climate imperatives by 2030, I repeat 2030. Mauritius, as a Small Island Developing State, and a major financial hub in Africa cannot afford to lag behind and yet, despite our proud history of investment and education, the realities are grim. Statistics Mauritius report that while our youth

unemployment stands at around 22%, only 11% of our upper secondary students are currently enrolled in vocational and technical programmes. This mismatch is not one of talents but of opportunity. We are producing bright graduates but too often, they step out into a labour market that demands skills, they were never equipped to learn.

A recent survey found that 74% of young Mauritians have considered emigrating, most of them citing the lack of adequate training and experience. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not just a statistic, it is the story of thousands of young men and women who are willing to work, eager to learn, yet left stranded between education and the job markets. But why does this happen? Because while academic pathways are structured, vocational and technical training remains underfunded.

In 2022, less than 1.3% of the education budget was allocated to vocational training. Enrolment at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development fell by 10% in just one year. As a nation, we are not investing enough in skills that can truly empower our youth.

Now, let us look outward. Jamaica created the HEART Trust, funded by a levy on business which today trains and places tens of thousands of youths everyday. Barbados launched the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity, a joint public and private initiative which now trains over 3,000 people annually in practical job-oriented skills and here we are, Mauritius, an island that dreams of becoming a smart nation, a green nation, a blue economy leader. Yet, how can we achieve this if our youth are not trained in renewable energy, ocean science, robotics and Artificial Intelligence. These are not subjects of the future, Mr Speaker, Sir, they are the demands of today.

If education is the ladder of opportunity, then today, too many of our young people are finding that the rungs of this ladder is broken. The result: frustration, unemployment and wasted potential. This motion, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not an accessory through education policy, it is the very foundation of it. If we fail to train our youth for the job of today and of tomorrow, we are not just risking unemployment, we are risking an entire generation but if we dare to act now, Mauritius will not only keep its brightest minds, it will let them shine for the world.

And, with these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the motion to the National Youth Parliament. Thank you.

Mr K. S. Budosy rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: We shall now move to MP Luchmun Yogesh!

(2.42 p.m.)

Mr Y. Luchmun (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me start by saying that education is a human right and every Mauritian is deserving of that right. Quality education should never be about narrowly focusing on creating the next generation of workers, it should be about what our students need. What they need is inclusive, substantial and equitable education. They need education that empowers each one of them, not just those who fit industry demands. This brings me to my argument. This motion and resolution glorify STEM as if it's the only path to employment. But what about those students whose strength lies in arts, humanities, law and social sciences, and even the creative industries such as music? A national education policy should celebrate diversity of talents, not just STEM.

Mr Speaker, Sir, they boast about innovation driven outcomes in their resolution but has the government anticipated that STEM is a resource intensive venture. Nowhere have they mentioned investments in equipment or labs. Is it a lack of effort or just over-reliance on the private sector?

May I also note that many schools, especially in the rural or underprivileged areas, do not have the proper science labs today. In the Black River District, 10% of residents lack access to basic sanitation and schools are often located far from students' home.

The DPM earlier mentioned that the PPP vocational trainings are available at all levels. However, presence does not equal effectiveness. Such PPP projects may exist at all levels but skill, accessibility and quality are still lacking. Lest we remember, schools at primary and secondary levels still lack the basic resources such as water and proper electrical connections. The unaddressed problem of internet connections also arises together with the lack of equipment.

And we should not and never forget about the learners with learning differences such as dyslexia, ADHD and autism. These rigid demands can be overwhelming and exclusionary. This is unfair to them. Focusing on STEM is unfair to them as instead of supporting their diverse strengths, this leaves them without adequate support. A national framework should celebrate all

abilities, not just technical excellence. Many impaired learners excel in art, music or detailed-oriented work. Furthermore, Mauritius is party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which call for inclusive education at all levels.

Sur ce, je conclus en affirmant qu'un système éducatif qui n'inclut pas chaque enfant n'est pas un système solide mais, un système défaillant.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Minister Sheik Hoossain!

(2.46 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Health and Wellness (Ms Z. Sheik Hoossain): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

While people living in stone houses are trying to throw bricks at others, let us imagine a young student, bright, full of potential, silently struggling with anxiety. Imagine a nurse, exhausted, unable to meet demand because there are simply not enough trained nurse professionals. The World Health Organization warns that by 2030, the world could face a shortage of 18 million health workers. In Mauritius, mental health challenges are rising, especially among the youth. These are not distinct numbers, they are real lives.

This Government has already acted. Through the National Framework, our health and education systems are strengthened to ensure care and learning reach every citizen. The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) is producing more nurses, carers and allied health professionals. Mental health campaigns in schools and communities are reducing stigma and counselling services are now more accessible. These are not promises, they are realities changing lives today.

Yet, we must go further because this Government always makes room for improvement. Schools will give students hands-on training and apprenticeships so they leave with real skills. The MITD will train more nurses, technicians and care workers. Universities will work with hospitals and clinics so that graduates are ready from day one. Members of this House, let us

think on. If we do not take these steps now, who will fill these gaps? These measures will make sure our workforce is ready and every Mauritian can access quality care and support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us be clear. Supporting this motion is not about politics. It is about survival and, if the Opposition chooses to oppose it, I sincerely hope they are ready to explain to the future Mauritians why no one was there to treat them, why care was not available when they needed it the most.

This motion is about action, courage and responsibility. It is about the health, education and dignity of every Mauritian. I urge all Members of this Parliament to vote for it because every life, every young person and every community depends on it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Members, there has been a confusion on my behalf. I have missed Minister Pariag. She will now take the floor.

Minister Pariag!

(2.49 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resource (Ms D. Pariag): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I rise, today, with deep support for the motion. While Mauritius has achieved remarkable progress in its access to education, we face a growing disconnect between academic achievement and market relevance. Mr Speaker, Sir, according to Statistics Mauritius 2024, youth unemployment stands close to 20% and yet employers continue to report skill shortages. This paradox demonstrates that there are graduates but not necessarily graduates with the competencies the industry demands. Education cannot operate in isolation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

If we are to equip our youth for the realities of the 21st century economy, we must build structured bridges between the classroom and the world of work. This is where the motion becomes indispensable. By partnering with the private sector, academia and research institutions, we ensure that what we teach is forward-looking, preparing our youth for jobs that exist today

and those that will emerge tomorrow. The expansion is necessary. Such collaborations offer three critical benefits –

- (i) It injects industry relevance into curricular.
- (ii) It enables resource sharing.
- (iii) It enhances our global competitiveness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while we emphasise STEM education, which are the cornerstones at primary and secondary levels, I do stress upon the importance within this system – the importance of philosophy in shaping critical thinking among our young minds. From the primary level itself, philosophy should encourage students, in the spirit of Socratic dialogue of course, to ask questions, to reflect, to reason with clarity, ensuring that our youth grow not only as employable professionals but also, as responsible citizens. I wish to highlight, Mr Speaker, Sir, the words of Mahatma Gandhi –

“The future depends on what you do in the present.”

The anticipated outcomes are measurable and ambitious. On a realistic basis, Mr Speaker, Sir, with this motion, at least 70% of graduates should leave our system with a certified employability skill, be it digital or vocational.

Mr Speaker: Minister, please wrap up!

Ms Pariag: Okay. Wrapping up, I would like to say that, ultimately, Mauritius should be recognised not merely as a service economy but as a knowledge-based and innovation-driven nation.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Indian Prime Minister, Shri Modi came to Mauritius, he reminded us that the greatest strength of any nation does not merely lie in its land but in the potential of its people. This motion ensures that our youth are not left behind but are at the forefront of the global economy.

As we act, let us remember, governments may come and go, but this nation must endure. The democracy of this nation must remain eternal. The nation should survive. The nation should unite. Mauritius has to strive to live long as one people, as one nation.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Raggoo!

(2.53 p.m.)

Mr Y. Raggoo (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at first hearing, this Resolution seems very impressive. Impressive indeed, full of fashionable words like ‘PPP’ and almost an obsessive emphasis on STEM but when the buzzword fades what remains is a proposal that is narrow and disconnected from the real challenges of our education system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 1 calls for a National Framework for PPPs to integrate STEM focused training at all levels. But we must ask –

- Who will decide our curriculum? The Government or profit-driven private actors?
- Whose priorities will dominate? The public interest or profit motives?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Resolution itself, in the 7th preambular clause, admits that this will be a collaborative effort to design and certify training, handing over a sovereign responsibility to corporate partners whose primary interest is profit, not nation building.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if these actors control education, how can we trust them to serve the public good?

Mr Speaker, Sir, building on clause 1, we must ask –

“What happens after we train our youth?”

By focusing heavily on STEM through PPPs, this Resolution risks turning Mauritius into a training ground for other countries as our graduates will leave for abroad. The proposed skills

and curriculum alignment may forecast skill but forecasting alone cannot create jobs, they cannot enforce hiring nor can they guarantee that our youth will remain here.

Clause 1 PPP and STEM focus, dominated by private interest may train our youth for global market rather than for our own economy. Mr Speaker, Sir, without clear, enforceable retention measures, this resolution hands our talents to others while Mauritius shoulders the cost, turning national investment into foreign profit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 9 proposes a centralised digital youth talent hub under the PPP framework. While this may sound very modern and forward thinking, in reality, it risks deepening inequality. Today, approximately one in five Mauritian, around 260,000 people remain offline, meaning that a large segment of our youth would be unable to access this digital hub.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this supposedly national solution thus becomes exclusive to those with reliable internet and digital literacy, leaving the most vulnerable behind. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, directly contradicts the spirit of SDG4 which calls for equitable and inclusive education.

Mr Speaker: MP Raggoo, please wrap up.

Mr Raggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, by prioritising a tech-heavy platform without addressing digital gaps, the most vulnerable youth risk being left behind.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Minister Seegoulam.

(2.57 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity (Mr L. Seegoulam): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been listening to the Members of the Opposition since the very outset of this Sitting. It seems to me while this side of this House is busy delivering solutions, the Opposition is busy playing dirty politics. They criticise every proposal, yet offer no constructive alternative. They are more interested in obstruction than in progress, more concerned with headlines than with hard work.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to my speech. I rise today with conviction, to support this Resolution for a national framework on Public Private Partnership in vocational and technical and skills-based training across all level of education.

Poverty will not be defeated by words but by giving our young people their skills and confidence to build their own future. This framework, Mr Speaker, Sir, empowers the youth with the tools and mindset needed to shape their own destiny. By encouraging industry participation through apprenticeship, internships and project-based learning in STEM, we open real doors.

Apprenticeship and internship provide work experiences and networks, as well as giving our youth hope. Project-based learning turns theory into motivation and problem-solving. And through innovation and skills hub created with industry partners, we go further, offering advance training, prototyping and entrepreneurial development. These hubs will not just produce workers but entrepreneurs and job creators.

Mr Speaker, Sir, behind every statistic, lies a real story – a mother hoping her son finds a stable job, a father praying his daughter won't leave school just to sit idle, a family yearning for dignity. This resolution, Mr Speaker, Sir, answers those hopes. It tells our people that their children will not be left behind, that their talents will not go to waste and that their future is worth investing in.

Mr Speaker, Sir, esteemed Members of the National Youth Parliament, let us support this Resolution with one voice – the Mauritian voice. Poverty will not be defeated by chance but by design, by skills and by solidarity. Mr Speaker, Sir, as our national anthem goes on – as one people as one nation, in peace, justice and liberty.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Dabycharun.

(3.00 p.m.)

Ms T. Dabycharun (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

This Resolution presents itself as ambitious with its emphasis on STEM and Public Private Partnership but let's be honest; ambition without realism is dangerous. Our education system is already cracking. Reform cannot just be about framework and big words. They must bring realistic solutions to the issue of unemployment, *pas que du blah blah et zéro résultat*.

Let me begin with the recruitment of school counsellors. Finally, something that makes sense. I fully support this measure but Mr Speaker, Sir, let's not fool ourselves. Counsellors alone won't solve this problem until and unless society stops being biased regarding counselling. Far too many people still believe that only those suffering from psychological issues need counsellors.

C'est pourquoi ce programme doit s'accompagner non-seulement des campagnes de sensibilisation et formation spécialisée, mais aussi de l'intégration des conseillers dans la vie scolaire et des vrais partenariats avec les familles. Sans cela, les conseillers risquent de devenir des simples plants décoratifs sur un bureau.

But Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Nine-Year Schooling also deserves merit in this Resolution. It was supposed to strengthen the foundation. Instead, it has created serious gap. And to make matters worse, students who fail the PSAC are promoted without addressing the learning gaps. The SC results speak for themselves – pass rate 79% in 2022 down to 73 % in 2024. To fix this, we need a combination of structured remedial measures and smaller size classrooms for student to get the individual attention they deserve. We need to review the teacher-student ratio now.

And what about the curriculum being changed overnight? Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, only change is constant. Teachers crumble, parents panic, students suffer and we are all clueless.

Our students are not laboratory rats nor *des cobayes* on whom experiment can be tested. Instead of these unplanned changes, why not seize the opportunity to enrich the syllabus with vocational pathway to introduce students to different options, they have to be employed. Not every child will walk the traditional school-university route. Regular public school could partner with professionals from private vocational institute to expose students to practice skills and real career options.

Lastly, the famous 3-credits solution. On paper, it looks inclusive but in practice, it lowers standard. It sends the wrong message that – “Don't worry, excellence is optional.”

What lessons are we teaching our youth? That mediocrity is acceptable?

Quelle belle philosophie de l'excellence nationale ! Viser bas pour être sûr de réussir, comme mes chers collègues de l'autre côté qui sont la preuve vivante.

Mr Speaker: Can you please wrap up?

Ms Dabycharun: If we really want to help struggling students, we must strengthen academic support and expand vocational pathway, not dilute standards.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let's be clear. The Opposition does not oppose reform, we oppose bad reform but we also believe that solution cannot come alone from one side. For the sake of our youth, we, in the Opposition, are ready *de tendre la main au gouvernement* because the future of Mauritius is bigger than politics.

On ne bâtit pas l'avenir des jeunes avec des reformes improvisées mais avec de la vision, de la cohérence et du courage.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Deputy Chief Whip, MP Budosy!

(3.04 p.m.)

Mr K. Budosy (Deputy Chief Government Whip): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, today, I rise in firm support of this motion which calls for the adoption of outcome driven education, strategies that prioritise practical competencies, critical thinking, digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills to empower our youth for the future.

Despite our economic achievements, as mentioned earlier by my colleagues, we are facing a troubling reality. Youth unemployment remains high and this is indicative of a persistent skills mismatch between what our education system delivers and what industries demand. This mismatch is especially evident in high value sectors such as ICT, Artificial Intelligence, pharmaceutical, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing where employers struggle to find qualified and competent candidates. Meanwhile, our bright and capable youth, eager for opportunities, keep waiting while same never arrives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, public-private partnerships are the bridge between education and industry. We are fortunate to have a dynamic and well-established private sector in Mauritius enriched by the presence of leading multinational companies. These global giants are renowned for their expertise in ICT and other cutting-edge industries. They have expressed a strong willingness to collaborate with our Government in shaping this national framework.

Their involvement offers an extraordinary opportunity for our youth to engage with world class professionals – enquire about advanced skills and gain exposure to global best practices, resources that are rarely accessible elsewhere. This partnership will empower our young people to unlock their full potential and connect with opportunities they truly desire. We have already decided to expand and diversify vocational and technical education. This Government promises to make it accessible, inclusive and prestigious. Because technical skills are not second class, they are primordial and are the backbone of innovation and economic resilience.

This motion is not just about reforming education. It is about restoring dignity to the skilled workers and building the pathway for Mauritius to be the leader in STEM and other technical matters. This Government does not want our country to just follow and remain behind in worldwide developments such as AI. But now, we want to lead globally in such fields. This will only happen if we invest today in curating the potential of our youth.

Our Government will develop this national framework in a way that both the private and public sector contribute in the best ways possible to make this happen. What we see in our youth today, we shall reap as a flourishing nation tomorrow. Let us be the leaders building an education system that not only teaches, but transforms. This should be done with the private sector, I quote « *lame dan lame.* »

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Prayag!

(3.07 p.m.)

Mr L. Prayag (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, the beautiful words of the Government are meant to do only one thing: distract the population from the lack of conviction and competency seen from this side. As a matter of fact, this resolution fails to tackle the most urgent issues pertaining to education today.

Mr Speaker: Member, yes?

Mr Seeparasad: On a point of order. The Member's conduct is provocative.

Mr Speaker: Please, continue. Your point of order is dismissed.

Mr Prayag: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Rather the vague promises of an unclear Mauritius all seem to do more harm than good. Take for example, Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 6. This part relating to the setting up internationally recognised standards in education seems to come from good intentions. Nonetheless, their consequences could be rather unfortunate.

Firstly, conforming to these standards will undoubtedly add more workload to already overworked school staffs. This will thus undermine the rights of education officers in favour of school changes in statistic reports. Secondly, teachers might have to stray away from doing actual work helping students just to do paperwork so as to ensure that the standards are maintained. The lingering question would be, Mr Speaker, Sir: how will this benefit the students in any way, shape or form?

Moreover, the setting up of career counselling, as mentioned in clause 6, also has core issues. As a matter of fact, many problems might arise with this activity –

- (i) Firstly, counselling might affect the decision-making process of certain students. Indeed, an over dependency on career counselling would incur the loss of decision-making skills and confidence in the youth due to them solely relying on a third party and deciding such important choices;
- (ii) Secondly, the bias of some career counsellors will assuredly result in them imparting wrong advice, possibly restricting the path of many young people;
- (iii) Thirdly, advice from career counsellors might come from futile trends in employment. This will without a doubt affect the prospect of so many of our young talent, preventing them from reaching their full potential.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have previously mentioned, this resolution is ineffective at best. In fact, it is a distraction from the other issues affecting the Mauritian student populace. Indeed, the Government could have addressed the exodus of 252 teachers between 2023 and 2024. It could have addressed the over dependence of students on tuitions. It could have addressed the homogenisation of subject choices. Rather, it chooses to increase these problems.

All these could have been addressed, but no. No, the Government is not ready to bring forth real and meaningful change. No, the Government is not insightful enough to look beyond

current often minor trends. And no, the Government is not here to try to change the lives of anyone in any unprecedented manner.

Mr Speaker: Member, please pause your speech. Yes, Junior Minister.

Mr Kaudeer: I have a point of order. The Member is imputing motives.

Mr Speaker: Member, please refrain from making such provocative comments.

Mr Prayag: Okay, I apologise, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me be clear that we are not against reforms, but we should denounce the lack of reforms proposed here. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this motion is a mere product of irrelevancy, neither here to bring a seismic change nor here to even try. In the words that were previously uttered in this House, ‘We should not be called the generation that scrolled TikTok.’

Mr Speaker: Member, please wrap up!

Mr Prayag: But unfortunately, this motion shows that it might just as well have been written while scrolling TikTok.

Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: MP Nunkoo!

(3.12 p.m.)

The Junior Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Nunkoo) Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, in Mauritius, our creativity industries music, dance, crafts, fashion, film and visual arts are vibrant expressions of who we are. They are also powerful engines of innovation, youth engagement and economic growth. Thousands of young Mauritians pour their passion and talents into these fields every day.

Yet, too often, their skills remain informal and unrecognised by our education and employment system. This must change. Today, I speak in strong support of establishing a national framework for public-private partnerships that will strengthen vocational, technical and skills-based training across all levels of education.

Central to this framework is the collaborative development of nationally recognised certification standards – a cornerstone of Sustainable Development Goal 4 which calls for

inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Such certification will allow young creatives to earn qualifications that employers trust, institutions accept and our nation respects both locally and globally.

It conforms informal talent and experience into formal opportunity, turning passion into profession. The creative sector in Mauritius already accounts for approximately 3.4% of our GDP and a significant portion of our workforce. We must empower this growth. But these standards cannot be developed in isolation.

Mr Speaker: MP, please pause your speech. Yes!

Mr Kowal: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to raise a point of order under Standing Order 39; the Member is reading his speech. I think he has to be reminded that it is not an essay reading.

Mr Speaker: Member, please sit down! Members, as a Speaker I shall display a level of compassion towards other Members of this House and it is to my discretion. Please, continue.

Mr Nunkoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

But these standards cannot be developed in isolation, it demands –

- collaboration where the government assured to provide the policy framework;
- industrial leaders will be identified with real market skills in demand;
- training institutions with practical and relevant programmes, and
- most importantly practitioners themselves, the artists, craftsman's, creators must help design the content ensuring it reflects our unique culture and lived realities.

Imagine a dancer in Triolet, a filmmaker in Mahebourg and a fashion designer in Rodrigues trained through structured programmes, assessed fairly and holding certificates that open doors to jobs, funding and further education. This is particularly critical when our national youth employment rate stands at around 16.6%, a challenge that creativity can help us solve.

Let us also seize current opportunities, our progressive film legislation is attracting global players like Netflix, eager to invest in our stories and talent. The Film Rebate Scheme which offers up to 40% cash rebate has already attracted a significant foreign investment. Partnering

with such companies to establish arts schools and high school programmes in cinematic storytelling will bring global expertise to local creativity. At the same time by certifying traditional art forms, our sega, crafts and oral histories will not only preserve our cultural heritage but also create new pathways for pride and income.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is about more than employment, it is about dignity. It is about affirming that creativity is vital to nation building. It is also about telling every young artist in Mauritius: your talent matters, your story matters, your future is here.

Let us come together to ensure our creative skills are not only celebrated but recognised, rewarded and respected.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Deenoo!

Mr Deenoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debates.

Mr Budosy rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the National Youth Parliament do now adjourn to Friday 22 August 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The National Youth Parliament stands adjourned.

Adjournment matters!

MATTERS RAISED

(3.18 p.m.)

RODRIGUES – MEDICAL EVACUATIONS – AIR MAURITIUS FLIGHTS

Ms T. Larose (Member of Parliament) : M. le président, je m'adresse au Premier ministre. Je souhaite attirer l'attention sur l'urgence des évacuations médicales depuis Rodrigues rendu difficile par le nombre limité de vols commerciaux avec Air Mauritius. Chaque retard met en danger la vie de nos citoyens et provoque une inquiétude chez leur famille. J'exhorte le Premier ministre à se pencher rapidement sur cette question et à garantir un accès immédiat aux soins pour tous les malades de l'île.

Mr Speaker: Prime Minister, your reply.

The Prime Minister: Please rest assured, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the matter will be looked into.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Yes, Mr Ansah!

(3.19 p.m.)

REMOTE AREAS – BUS SERVICES – HARDSHIP

Mr H. Ansah (Member of Parliament): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of Minister of Land Transport to the difficulties faced by citizens living in remote areas regarding bus services. Buses often fail to arrive on time and in some instances, do not arrive at all. This situation is causing considerable hardship to inhabitants who depend on public transport.

May I respectfully request the Minister to look into this matter with urgency.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Minister Land and Transport!

The Minister of Land and Transport (Mr R. Seeparasad): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will definitely look into this urgent matter and come back as soon as possible. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Any further adjournment matter? Yes, MP Sawar!

(3.20 p.m.)

ROAD ACCIDENTS – WORSENING SITUATION – SOLUTIONS

Mr N. Sawar (Member of Parliament): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My concern is addressed to the Minister of Land and Transport on a matter of public importance with regard to the noticeable and worrying increase in the number of road accidents resulting in loss of life, serious injuries and material damage. In view of the worsening of road safety situation, it would

be in the public interest for the Minister to kindly look into this matter urgently and provide immediate and effective solutions. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Minister!

The Minister of Land and Transport (Mr R. Seeparasad): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Indeed, I will look into this urgent matter and come back with concrete solution very soon. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes MP!

(3.20 p.m.)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES – SURVIVORS – FINANCIAL NEEDS

Ms P. Subbarayan (Member of Parliament): Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr Speaker, Sir. My question is addressed to Minister ...

Mr Speaker: It is not a question Member; it is a statement.

Ms Subbarayan: Yes, I apologize. To the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. I have noticed an exponential rise in domestic violence cases where the survivors were financially dependent on the abuser. These comprises mainly of housewives. After reporting the case, these survivors often have to leave their homes and have absolutely no monetary ground offered to them to cater for their financial needs and those of their children. I wonder what measures the government will take to ensure the financial security of these women. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Minister!

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mr Y. Khulpateea): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Ministry has already started working on the matter. I will get back when I get more information.

Mr Speaker: Any further matters?

The National youth Parliament stands adjourned!

At 3.22 p.m., the National Youth Parliament was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 22 August 2025 at 9.30 a.m.