

No. 2 of 2005

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 2 of 2005

Sitting of Friday 4 March, 2005

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Mathurin at 16.00 hrs.

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY 4 March, 2005

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ADJOURNMENT

The Executive Council
(Formed by Mr. Louis Serge Clair)

Mr. Louis Serge Clair	Chief Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (administration), Education (administration), Customs and Excise Duties (administration), Environment, Fisheries, Forestry, Industrial Development, Judicial (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Parks, Marine Services (administration), Meteorology (administration), Registration, State Lands, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, Tourism, Town and Country Planning.
Mr. Jean Daniel Speville	Deputy Chief Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Food Production, Housing. Infrastructure including Highway and roads and Public Buildings and Utilities Plant and Animal Quarantine, Transport, Water Resources.
Mrs. Arlette Perrine-Begue	Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Child Development, Community Development, Family Welfare, Library Services, Women's Affairs.
Mr. Andre Lelio Roussety	Commissioner responsible for Civil Status, Employment, Information Technology & Telecommunications, Museums, archives, historical sites and buildings, Postal services (administration), Vocational Training.
Mr. Soopramanien Sooprayen	Commissioner responsible for Co-operatives, Fire services, Health (administration).
Mr. Nicolson Lisette	Commissioner responsible for Consumer Protection, Handicraft, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Youth and Sports.
Mr. Roberston Mercure	Commissioner responsible for Labour and Industrial Relations, Social Security (administration), Prisons and Reform Institutions (administration).

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson	Lamvohee, Mr. Joseph Chenlye
Clerk	Vithilingem, Mr. Soocramanien
Serjeant -at-Arms	Louis, Mr. Jorgenson

Chief Commissioner:- Mr. Chairperson Sir,

I beg to move the motion standing in my name, which reads as follows:-

"This Assembly resolves that for the purpose of Section 44 (1) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is approved the draft estimates of recurrent revenue and recurrent expenditure and capital revenue and capital expenditure for the financial year 2005/2006."

Mr. Chairperson Sir, copies of the Draft Recurrent and Capital Estimates for financial year 2005/2006 are being tabled for circulation to members for approval by this Assembly.

I beg to move the motion.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, this year's budget is being presented earlier to coincide with the presentation of the National Budget and has been framed to meet the development needs of the island in priority areas. May I refer to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act which specifies the criteria to be considered for the allocation of financial resources to Rodrigues and the island's distinct characteristics as regards its isolation from national growth centres.

I wish to underline, at the very outset, that our proposals form part of the national budget and should be viewed in this framework.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, in view of time constraints, it has unfortunately not been possible for us to proceed with pre-budgetary consultations as in previous years. However, I wish to assure the Assembly that due consideration has been given to all sectors.

En présentant nos propositions pour l'année financière 2005-2006, nous avons prévu un budget de 841.5 millions de roupies pour les dépenses

courantes et un budget de 475 millions de roupies pour les projets de développement.

Après les consultations avec le Vice Premier Ministre et Ministre des Finances et du Développement Économique, une somme de 1 milliard 316.5 millions de roupies a été allouée à l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues pour financer les dépenses courantes de tous les services du gouvernement régional et les projets de développement en cours et ainsi que les nouveaux projets.

Monsieur le Président, j'ai le privilège de présenter aujourd'hui ce quatrième budget de l'Assemblée Régionale qui sera consacré aux secteurs prioritaires suivants :

- Premièrement, un développement intégré et durable avec l'accent mis sur la production, l'emploi et l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie de la population rodriguaise.
- Deuxièmement, renforcer et étendre le réseau routier afin de promouvoir la croissance économique et la construction des routes communautaires dans les villages éloignés.
- Troisièmement, améliorer le stockage d'eau et le réseau de distribution et construire un nouveau barrage pour desservir la partie nord de l'île.
- Quatrièmement, mettre en place un nouveau programme de construction de logement social pour les plus défavorisés de la société rodriguaise.
- Cinquièmement, le développement de l'agriculture afin d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire avec accent sur le professionnalisme, l'irrigation dans les différentes zones agricoles du pays et l'agro-alimentaire.

- Sixièmement, le développement de la pêche hors-lagon, la création de ports de pêche et la préservation de l'écosystème marin.
- Septièmement, l'aménagement du territoire, la bonne gestion des terres et des déchets pour un développement soutenu en tenant compte de l'environnement.
- Huitièmement, un programme de développement social et économique par des investissements et les micro-crédits afin de permettre la création des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises et la création d'emplois.
- Neuvièmement, la formation continue dans tous les domaines, l'orientation professionnelle chez les jeunes et le développement des ressources humaines.
- Dixièmement, hausser le statut économique et social des femmes aussi bien que la protection et le bien-être de la famille et de l'enfant, et
- Onzièmement, un meilleur service de santé et des services de santé communautaire et la prévention contre les maladies non transmissibles et le sida.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, it was a great honour for the representatives of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly comprising myself, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, the Minority Leader and officers of my Commission to participate as part of the national delegation in the recent conference of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) which was held earlier this year in Mauritius with outstanding success.

This conference has confirmed our vision and policies in the protection of natural resources of the island and we shall continue to implement programmes and projects to build up our resilience and increase our preparedness to natural disasters.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, we shall be guided by the programme of action for the sustainable development of Small Islands Developing States as regards environmental degradation, climate change, marine resources, waste management, land use, capacity development, sustainable consumption and production and food security.

As the Assembly may be aware, an early warning system to signal any future tsunami is now a concern for the whole Indian Ocean region and Government of Mauritius is participating, with the assistance of international organizations and countries of the region, in the setting up of such a global warning system.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, two years after the coming into operation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, some operational constraints were noted in its implementation and Government has decided to enlist the services of former Judge Mr. Robert AHNEE to review the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 and to propose changes wherever required, in consultation with all stakeholders, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

In this context, Mr. AHNEE has effected two missions to Rodrigues and has had extensive consultations with respect to proposed amendments to be brought to the Act. The consultant is now finalizing his recommendations for submission to the Government and it is expected that the amendments will be introduced in the National Assembly soon.

Avec la création du « Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order » en juillet 2004, il a été permis de recommencer le recrutement du personnel de l'Assemblée Régionale. Au cours de cette présente année financière, 307 employés ont été recrutés ou promus.

Monsieur le Président, l'Assemblée se souvient comme annoncé dans mon discours du budget de l'année dernière, que les 182 travailleurs employés sous contrat dans le cadre du projet anti-érosion, ont été employés sur une base permanente.

Par ailleurs, dans notre volonté de continuer la Rodriguanisation du Service Civil, 14 "Assistant Finance Officers" ont été recrutés en février

de cette année. Ce qui permettra l'émergence d'un cadre des officiers de finance dans le Service Civil à Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms has embarked in a series of administrative reform initiatives for the improvement of performance, productivity, quality culture and good governance in the civil service.

In this context, two Commissions have developed their Customer Charters, as a written commitment to provide services according to set standards and also to inform customers of their rights and responsibilities. The other Commissions are in the process of formulating their charters.

Moreover, the principles of Gemba Kaizen are being introduced in Commissions with a view to removing non-value adding activities and to fostering continual improvement.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, a training course in Quality Management System was recently run by facilitators from the Management Audit Bureau for officers of three departments where ISO standards will be introduced.

It is also being envisaged to introduce a Computerized Attendance System at some Commissions to promote punctuality and discipline among officers.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, action has also been initiated to set up an Intranet System to connect all Commissions to the computerized modules of the Central Administration. This networking will enable Commissions to have on-line access to existing computerized modules at the Central Administration so as to streamline procedures for more efficient and better quality of service delivery to the population.

In line with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report, four Indian Experts are presently on mission in Rodrigues to carry out a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) of all the staff of the Rodrigues

Regional Assembly. Following this exercise, a training policy will be formulated and a plan laying down the training strategy in the civil service and its execution will be prepared.

REVIEW

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I shall now report progress in the implementation of Budget 2004-2005.

Formulation of a Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues (SIDPR)

The SIDPR was launched in September 2004 and the Project Management and Economic Planning and Monitoring Units have been set up.

The following institutional mechanisms have also been established:-

- ❑ A Project Steering Committee to provide strategic policy guidance and approve the diagnosis, strategy and action plan that will promote development, create employment, reduce poverty, improve the standards of living of the population and ensure environmental sustainability.
- ❑ Four working groups to cover the productive sectors, social issues, infrastructures and cross-sectoral issues and to review the synthesis of issues and identify recommendations.

In a spirit of democratic participation, several workshops have been organized with stakeholders in the following sectors: Handicraft, Private Sector, Health, Education, Agriculture, Fisheries and Village Committees. As regards consultancy services, the tender documents have already been prepared and submitted to the Central Tender Board.

Besides, a Strategic Thinking and Planning Workshop was organized in September 2004 to formulate key strategies to achieve a shared vision for

the development of Rodrigues. The workshop formulated the following vision statement for Rodrigues:-

- To be the successful model of an ecological and sustainable socio-cultural and economic development based on an empowered population.

Tourism

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the tourism sector has continued to develop into an important pillar of our economy. According to provisional figures, there has been a slight decrease in the number of arrivals by air in 2004. This decrease may be attributed to the increase in the price of air tickets that has occurred during last year. With a view to bringing appropriate adjustments called for by this increase in costs of travel, a workshop has been organised with all stakeholders of the tourism sector and a strategy for the development and promotion of Rodrigues as a tourist destination is presently under preparation.

In this context, a Tourism Office will be set up for the promotion and development of tourism. A Tourism Promotion Committee will be set up to support the Tourism Office in its activities. The schemes of service for the posts of Tourism Planner and Tourism Enforcement Officer, which have been created, are being processed.

Le concept de l'écotourisme est à la base d'un développement soutenu pour l'industrie touristique à Rodrigues. La population rodriguaise est appelée à y participer pleinement par son comportement et son esprit de discipline par rapport à l'environnement. Dans les années à venir, plus d'emploi seront créés dans le secteur touristique. La construction de six nouveaux hôtels avec une capacité de 300 chambres va créer environ 600 emplois direct.

(Applause)

Par ailleurs, une attention particulière a été donnée à la régularisation de la situation de ceux qui opèrent des gîtes, chambres et table d'hôtes selon les normes.

Terres de l'Etat

Monsieur le Président, la terre de l'Etat, étant un de nos principales ressources naturelles à Rodrigues, a besoin d'être gérée proprement afin d'atteindre notre but pour un développement durable. Elle est la base de notre développement social et économique.

Un plan détaillé d'aménagement pour toute l'île est en préparation afin de permettre une bonne gestion des terres pour des activités de développement social et économique. Les procédures pour lancer l'appel d'offre pour un inventaire des bâtiments (résidence, commercial, industriel et publique) et pour compléter le cadastre à Rodrigues sont en cours. L'étude du cadastre permettra d'établir une meilleure planification des terres conformément aux demandes des baux résidentiels, commerciaux, industriels et agricoles.

Développement du Port

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the development of the port is a *sine qua non* condition for the sustainable development of our small island. In this respect, a master plan has been devised for the Port Mathurin harbour. This plan which consists of the construction of additional berths will be completed by July 2008 and will cost some Rs 400 million.

Fisheries

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with a view to encouraging the development of off-lagoon fishing, procedures for the registration of genuine fishermen are being streamlined to facilitate their access to existing loan facilities and

to enable this sector to take off. The “Maison des Pêcheurs” will be rehabilitated to provide facilities to fishermen.

Under the IFAD Community Development Programme, facilities are being offered to fishermen to acquire off-lagoon fishing vessels to enable them to have access to fish aggregating devices. A patrol boat will also be acquired to control fishing activities around the fish aggregating Devices.

Approval has been obtained for the award of contracts for the construction of shelters on fish landing stations at Grand Baie and Tamarin to monitor lagoon fishing activities.

Environment and Forestry

Mr. Chairperson Sir, an Environment Impact Assessment Team has been constituted to review reports on Environment Impact Assessment of development projects.

Une étude de faisabilité pour la construction d’une décharge contrôlée dans les environs de Pointe au Sel est en cours. Elle remplacera le dépotoir de Grenade.

La première phase de l’aménagement de la plage de Saint François sera complétée à la fin de cette année financière par la construction de la route reliant St François à Montagne Cabris.

(Applause)

The personnel for the implementation of the Marine Protected Area at Mourouk has been appointed and is expected to assume duty shortly.

Infrastructures Publiques

Monsieur le Président, en ce qui concerne l'infrastructure publique, les routes suivantes seront complétées à la fin de cette année financière :

- (i) Cascade Jean Louis – Anse Quitar – Dans Coco
- (ii) Rivière Coco (de la côte au cimetière)
- (iii) Palissade Ternel – Montagne Malgache
- (iv) Accès au terrain de foot de Grande Montagne

La construction du pont sur la rivière de Port Sud Est a été achevée et celle d'un pont à Grand La Fouche Mangles débutera cette année-ci.

The construction of the building in Port Mathurin to house the Public Library, the Commission for Arts and Culture and the Commission for Health is nearing completion.

Eau

Monsieur le Président, en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'eau, les contrats pour la pose de tuyaux seront alloués bientôt :

- (i) Un réseau primaire reliant le réservoir de Petit Brûlé aux réservoirs de Roche Bon Dieu et Grenade.

(Applause)

- (ii) Un réseau primaire reliant le réservoir de Petit Brûlé aux réservoirs de Coromandel, Mt Piquant et de Mt Cabris Est.

(Applause)

Par ailleurs, l'appel d'offre pour le stockage et la distribution de l'eau à Accacia et les environs a été lancé. Le projet consiste en la réhabilitation des structures existantes, une station de traitement et la construction d'un réservoir d'une capacité de 1000 mètres cubes.

(Applause)

As regards the programme of impounding more water, all projects earmarked for implementation, namely the construction of Anse Raffin Dam and the "retenue collinaire" at Cascade Victoire have been completed.

(Applause)

Agriculture

I will now turn to review the main developments in the agricultural sector. The Commission for Agriculture has been embarking on a series of projects to empower and facilitate the local planters' community. I would like to name a few of them:

- (i) The setting up of One Stop Shops to bring all facilities provided by the Agricultural Services under one roof to help the Farming Community save time. The One Stop Shop at Marechal is operational since September 2004.

(Applause)

A second one will be opened shortly at Mourouk.

- (ii) Irrigation facilities are being provided in the following areas:- Grand Var, Mourouk, Baie Malgache , St. D'Or/Vainqueur, Montagne Plate and Gravières.

The three water harvesting structures at Nassola, Riviere Banane and Papayes have already been completed and are operational.

(Applause)

Some 50 planters are now benefiting from this facility.

Water Users Groups have been formed by planters and training has been organised for them to rationalise the use of water.

- (i) The Crop Research Unit has started a selection process of the local chilli in order to improve its quality. Trials are ongoing at Mourouk Crop Research Centre and the newly erected greenhouse at Grand La Fouche Corail.
- (ii) Action has already been initiated for the revamping and re-opening of the Honey Centre at Citronelle as a processing Centre for honey. The Terms of Reference of a Consultant have been worked out and will include also the reorganization of the honey sector in general.

Under the Anti-Erosion Programme, three green houses have been constructed for the planters who visited Spain in 2003.

Arts and Culture

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regards to Arts and Culture, the three *Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle* (CLACS) have been upgraded and more books and magazines are being provided. Furthermore, free internet access is now available in public libraries.

(Applause)

Tenders for the construction of the Cultural and Leisure Centre at Malabar has reached evaluation stage.

Women's Affairs, Family Welfare and Child Development.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform this Assembly that tender for the construction of an integrated Family Centre at Malabar will be launched soon. Yes, very soon.

Tenders have been floated for the renovation of the Women's Centre at Malabar.

A shelter will be operational at Baie aux Huitres to provide temporary protection to victims of domestic violence and abuse. In the same context, the "Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violence Domestique" has been launched.

Training of Women has been extended to include Agriculture and Fisheries.

Community projects such as track roads, foot paths and community centres to the tune of Rs 12 m have been approved and funds released accordingly.

(Applause)

It is expected that a further amount of some Rs 8 m will be disbursed by the end of the financial year for other projects.

Education

Mr Chairperson, Sir, sustained efforts have been made in the education sector to improve the infrastructural set up of the secondary schools.

The construction of Mont Lubin State Secondary School is being completed. However, classes have already started since April 2004.

The Citron Donis Form VI College is operational, whereas extensions at Marechal College have been completed.

Milk and fruits are distributed to pre-primary and primary school children to alleviate the problem of malnutrition amongst pupils. The distribution of jam, butter and cheese has been extended to pre-primary schools as from 2004.

(Applause)

The *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* (ZEP) project is being implemented since May 2004 at Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus RCA School of Riviere Coco and the pupils are being provided with a balanced lunch on a daily basis.

The project *Appui Regional à la Promotion d'une Education pour la Gestion de l'Environnement* (ARPEGE) has been introduced at the Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School, the Don Bosco RCA School of Petit Gabriel and Grande Montagne College.

With the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2004 with the Mauritius Institute of Education, training of teachers at both primary and secondary levels has been enhanced. Some 72 Teachers/Senior Teachers have been following the Advanced Certificate in Education and the Certificate in Educational Management courses. Other courses for the Secondary School Teachers are being worked out with the Mauritius Institute of Education.

Some 17 Rodriguan students are following courses at the Polytechnic schools in Mauritius, whereas some 16 serving officers are reading for a three year part time course leading to the "Diplome Universitaire Superieur de Technologie (DUST) en Génie Civil" at the Human Resource Centre.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the National Computer Board has submitted a report for devising a strategic plan for the development of Information and Communication Technology in Rodrigues.

Employment

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Employment Information Centre at Malabar is being upgraded to implement the Labour Market Information System, placement of registered job seekers and provision of reliable and up to date information to customers.

A Documentation/Reading Corner has been set up to enable job seekers and the public at large to have access to books on jobs and various occupations.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, a slight decrease can be noted in the number of job seekers registered in December 2004 as compared to December 2002. This trend is due to the sensitization campaign being carried out on the possibilities of self-employment, inculcation of an entrepreneurial culture and motivation of Rodriguan youths for higher studies.

Health Services

Mr. Chairperson Sir, continued efforts have been deployed to materialise the various projects in the Health Sector and the Health Services have been provided with modern equipment for their operations.

An existing building has been converted into psychiatric wards at Queen Elizabeth Hospital to cater for acute cases. Funds originally earmarked for the upgrading of the existing Maternity Ward will now be utilised for the construction of a new one with modern facilities.

In order to improve curative services, we have increased the frequency of visiting specialists to Rodrigues in the field of cardiology, odontology and dermatology.

Health Education is being extended to sensitise the population about safe food and the requirements of the Food Act.

With the recent introduction of direct flights from Reunion Island, strict measures have been taken at the airport to prevent the propagation of communicable diseases and malaria.

Cooperatives

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais faire mention ici des activités de « l'Association Coopérative des Caisses Villageoises Lévé Déboute » qui a été créée dans le but d'encourager une mentalité de producteur afin de sortir de la pauvreté.

« Les Caisses Villageoises » ont 1,855 membres répartis dans 60 villages de Rodrigues. En 2003/2004, l'association a effectué des prêts pour un montant de 5 millions de roupies. Elle encourage les défavorisés à chercher une sécurité dans la production et l'épargne.

Youth

Mr. Chairperson Sir, Youth Centres are now offering Internet facilities to the youth of Rodrigues. The Youth Centres are also promoting literacy activities, inculcating a reading culture and providing reading facilities to the under privileged youth.

Three trainers have recently been recruited to deliver courses in hairdressing and information technology in the Youth Centres.

Other youth activities were organised at regional level to cater for the leisure needs of young people and to direct their efforts towards meaningful and enjoyable social, cultural and educational activities.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, eleven participants of the Rodrigues College undertook their Silver Award Expedition in Mauritius in December 2004 and fifteen Bronze participants of four colleges of Rodrigues were awarded their medals and certificates in November 2004. Moreover, twelve Bronze Award participants of Bocage International School from Mauritius completed their final expedition in Rodrigues.

Rodrigues is also participating in the prestigious programme “Ship for World Youth Programme” organised in Japan from January to March 2005.

Some 100 young people are now following courses in the six “*ateliers de savoir*”. They have now acquired sufficient skills in their chosen trades. Most of them are able to realise finished products and ten beneficiaries have already taken up employment in enterprises.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, 98 youngsters benefited from the backyard poultry rearing project funded by “*Anou Diboute Ensam*”, which provided funds to cover their daily expenses to attend courses at the different “ateliers”. The Rodrigues Youth Council received a grant of five hundred thousand rupees to provide micro credits to the young participants of the “*ateliers de savoirs*”, students from IVTB, participants from les “Ecoles Menagères” and unemployed youth.

Furthermore, cash assistance was provided to the Rodrigues Youth Council for payment to the “responsables d’Ateliers” and the trainers who are providing technical assistance.

Sports

The Second Sports Award Nite was organised in January 2005 and this event will be a yearly feature where athletes will be rewarded for their performance.

Athletes are being provided with numerous facilities to continue improving their performance.

The construction of the Swimming Pool at the cost of Rs 80 million at Marechal and the upgrading of the football ground at the cost of Rs 9 million at Baie aux Huitres will be completed this month.

(Applause)

The tender for the construction of Grande Montagne Gymnasium has already been launched.

Consumer Protection, Trade Commerce and Licensing

The services of the Consumer Protection Division have been decentralised through the opening of sub offices at Malabar and La Ferme to better sensitize the population on their rights.

Social Security

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Network Support Services Unit (*le Projet Reseau*), which has been set up in May 2004 at Mont Lubin is providing assistance to vulnerable groups in receipt of social benefits. An important feature of the Unit is to assist recipients of social aid to identify and realise projects, which can enhance their social and economic independence.

Occupational Health and Safety

A Trainee Occupational Health and Safety Officer has been recruited to look into issues relating to the protection of workers' rights and the promotion of harmonious industrial relations on work sites.

Budget Out-turn

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will now outline the budgetary performance for financial year 2004-2005.

The revised Recurrent Expenditure will reach Rs 816 million as compared to the budgeted figure of Rs 807 million. The additional expenditure resulted from the increase in payment of salary compensation granted by Government in July 2004. The increase also

takes account of the revision rate of old age (BRP) pension from Rs 1700 to Rs 1900 monthly as from July 2004.

The recurrent revenue will amount to Rs 807 million as budgeted. Additional funds will be sought from the Ministry of Finance to meet the increase in expenditure. Capital expenditure will reach Rs 427 million as compared to the previous year expenditure of Rs 424 million.

PROPOSALS

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais présenter maintenant mes propositions budgétaires pour l'année financière 2005-2006 qui se chiffre à 1 milliard 316.5 millions de roupies dont 475 millions sont prévues pour les projets de développement et 841.5 millions pour les dépenses courantes. Ceci représente une augmentation de 85.5 millions de roupies par rapport au budget 2004-2005.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Recurrent Budget provides for Rs 489.9 million for payment of salaries and other staff costs, Rs 115.4 million for other goods and services and a sum of Rs 236.1 million as grants, subsidies, social benefits and contributions to local organisations.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some of the main provisions regarding grants, subsidies, social benefits and contributions to local organisations are:

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| (1) | Grant to National Pension Fund
(old age) (Pension de vieillesse) | Rs 120 m |
| (2) | Assistance to professional
fishermen (Allocation des pêcheurs) | Rs 50 m |
| (3) | Block Grant to RCEA (primary schools) | Rs 29 m |
| (4) | Social Aid (Assistance Publique) | Rs 20 m |
| (5) | Primary School Supplementary | |

	Feeding Project (Nourriture pour (les enfants dans des écoles)	Rs 4 m
(6)	Grant to free pre-primary schools	Rs 1.8 m
(7)	Patients inoperable in Rodrigues	Rs 2 m
(8)	Contributions to NGO's	Rs 2.2 m

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my main proposals for the next financial year are as follows: -

Tourism

To better achieve our tourism development objective, I am increasing the provision for the promotion of tourism to Rs 2 million representing a 100% increase to enable the creation of additional tourist attractions and to strengthen our promotion campaign on the international market.

(Applause)

The construction of new hotels will play a major role in the creation of employment opportunities and will have a multiplier effect in other sectors such as handicraft, agriculture and agro-processing.

Promotion of Rodrigues as an eco-tourism destination at the regional and international level is a key factor for the development of our tourist sector. A workshop has been organised with all stakeholders in the tourism sector with a view to preparing an overall strategy and plan of action for the development of the tourism sector in Rodrigues and the promotion of the island on the world tourism market.

Protection of the Environment

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, protection of the environment, the consolidation of the socio-economic potential of our natural resources and their sustainable use remain one of our top priority.

The International United Nations Conference on the Small Islands Developing States held in Mauritius from 10 to 14 January 2005 has adopted the Mauritius Strategy that stresses on measures to be taken by individual Governments and the international community to address the issues of vulnerabilities. All efforts should aim at building resilience to better achieve the goal of sustainable development. This has become an obligation and a commitment of all participating states including Rodrigues as an integral part of Mauritius.

In our endeavour to achieve our vision of making Rodrigues an ecological island, the following measures and strategies have been identified:

- (i) improvement of waste management and upgrading of the physical environment;
- (ii) developing a detailed planning scheme for Rodrigues;
- (iii) preserving and restoring the marine and terrestrial ecosystems;
- (iv) ensuring a sustainable use and exploitation of these ecosystems and their resources.

As regards the protection of the environment, I am increasing the provision of this budget to Rs 10 million to start the project for the creation of a landfill site at Pointe au Sel and continue the beach development works at Saint Francois.

(Applause)

The Living Environment Section of the Environment Unit will be further strengthened with appropriate equipment to enable better implementation of projects throughout Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, protection of the environment cannot be achieved if our citizens are not properly sensitised. I am, therefore, increasing the provision under the item "Promotion of the Environment" to Rs 800,000 which represents a 100% increase.

(Applause)

I am also maintaining a provision of Rs 2 million for the implementation of the Marine Protected Area at Mourouk, which is a co-funding commitment with the UNDP.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I have made provision of Rs 1 million for a new item in the capital estimate to enable the reforestation of valleys, watersheds, and slopy land to provide an appropriate forest cover. The concept of Community Forestry will be developed to better integrate the community in this re-afforestation programme.

State Lands

Mr. Chairperson Sir, a provision of Rs 3 million is being maintained to continue the Housing and Cadastral Surveys of Rodrigues. In addition the detailed planning scheme initiated with the preparation of an Area Action Plan for La Ferme will be extended to cover the western part of Rodrigues.

Fisheries

Mr. Chairperson Sir, fisheries remain one of the main economic sectors in Rodrigues. A provision of Rs 2 million has been maintained to continue supporting its development.

Infrastructures Publiques

Monsieur le Président, je fais une provision de 90 millions de roupies pour la construction et la réhabilitation des routes suivantes :

- (i) Mont Lubin – St François (1ère phase jusqu’à Grande Montagne)
- (ii) Mont Lubin – Dans Bébé
- (iii) Anse aux Anglais – Terre Rouge
- (iv) Citronnelle – Réservoir Terre Rouge.

Par ailleurs, une provision de 3 millions de roupies est prévue pour la construction d’un pont à Graviers.

(Applause)

D’autre part, une somme de 8.5 millions de roupies est prévue pour développer les facilités d’infrastructure dans les villages éloignés, telles la construction des « track Roads » et autres. Cela apportera une autre vie dans la communauté villageoise.

(Applause)

De tels projets seront un supplément à la contribution du Trust Fund pour les groupes vulnérables et l’IFAD.

Eau

Monsieur, le Président, j’ai prévu une somme de 95 millions de roupies pour financer les projets suivants pour le développement dans le secteur de l’eau.

- (i) 25 millions de roupies pour refaire le réseau de distribution et pour que chaque famille puisse avoir sa prise d'eau.

(Applause)

- (ii) 50 millions de roupies pour la construction d'un nouveau barrage d'environ 100 000 mètres cubes d'eau à Pavé Labonté

(Applause)

; et

- (iii) 20 millions de roupies pour commencer le projet de dessalement de l'eau de mer – *délo salé vine délo doux*.

(Applause)

Agriculture

Monsieur le Président, une des plus grandes préoccupations de ce Gouvernement Régional est l'amélioration du niveau de vie de notre population. Amener la population, les jeunes comme les adultes, à prendre conscience que le développement agricole est la base pour notre sécurité alimentaire et pour une exportation des produits de notre industrie agro-alimentaire. Dans cet esprit, j'augmente la provision sous l'item "Incentive for agriculture, livestock and food production" à 2.5 millions de roupies pour permettre à la Commission de l'Agriculture de continuer la réforme dans le secteur agricole.

(Applause)

De plus, j'augmente la provision sous l'item "Water Distribution for Irrigation" à 3.8 millions de roupies pour les projets d'irrigation dans les différentes zones agricoles dans le pays. Quelques serres ont été construites pour une meilleure qualité de produits tout au long de l'année.

Logement

Monsieur le Président, beaucoup de familles n'ont pas les moyens d'avoir accès à un logement décent. Afin d'apporter un soulagement à leur souffrance, nous avons prévu une somme de 21 millions de roupies pour la construction de quelque 125 maisons pour les plus défavorisés de la société Rodriguaise.

(Applause)

Ces maisons seront construites à côté d'un lopin de terre agricole afin que les bénéficiaires puissent s'adonner à l'agriculture et au petit élevage.

Arts et Culture

Mr. Chairperson Sir, Arts and Culture is an important means to foster our Rodriguan identity. I am providing an amount of Rs 25 million for the completion of the Cultural and Leisure Centre at Malabar.

In addition, I am providing a sum of Rs 1.18 million for the promotion of Arts and Culture. I am also providing an amount of Rs 2 million pour la création d'un "*lieu de memoire*" à L'Union.

Furthermore, I am providing funds for the setting up of a Unit of the National Library to keep copies of documents/newspapers required to be deposited under the Archives legislation.

Women's and Family Welfare

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am providing an amount of Rs 500,000 for the implementation of a Parental Empowerment Programme to increase awareness of parents on their role and responsibilities. In addition, I am also providing an amount of Rs 500,000 for the running costs of training centres for Women and for the payment of fees to instructresses.

Community Development

As part of our poverty alleviation programme, I am creating a new item entitled “Promotion of Community Development and Poverty Alleviation” with a provision of Rs 300,000 to provide immediate relief to needy households.

(Applause)

Education

Mr. Chairperson Sir, after significant investment in the construction and completion of new colleges during the last few years, I am providing a total sum of Rs 32.6 million this year for the Education Sector.

The primary sector is expected to undergo changes in terms of infrastructural set up and the following projects will be implemented:

- Extension of Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School;
- Construction of additional classrooms at Terre Rouge Government School;
- Resurfacing of school yard at Batatran and Port Sud Est Government Schools; and
- Construction of a community school at Araucaria

As regards secondary schools, I am providing an amount of Rs 2 million for the upgrading of Grande Montagne College. A sum of Rs 13 million is being provided for the purchase of equipment and furniture for Secondary schools.

As regards training, a sum of Rs 3.5 million is being provided for both the public and private sector.

Furthermore, the block grant to Roman Catholic Education Authority has been increased to Rs 29 million to enable the authority to recruit pedagogical advisers and to further improve the quality of education.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am also providing an amount of Rs 1.8 million as grant to free pre-primary schools for payment of the monthly contribution of Rs 200 per child over the age of 4.

Monsieur le Président, nos enfants à l'école ont besoin de bien se nourrir pour améliorer leur performance. Dans cet esprit, j'augmente le budget pour le projet de nourriture des enfants dans les écoles pré-primaires et primaires à 4 millions de roupies.

(Applause)

Ils pourront ainsi avoir des fruits, du lait, des achards et des œufs. Un projet d'agrandissement des cuisines est prévu dans certaines écoles. D'autre part, c'est aussi une manière de rendre les parents responsables en participant à l'alimentation de leurs enfants en leur fournissant des produits locaux.

In line with the policy for capacity building in Rodrigues, I am increasing the provision of Rs 1.5 million to Rs 2 million to provide for two additional scholarships for medical studies at the SSR Medical College.

(Applause)

Health

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am providing a sum of Rs 20 million for the construction of a Maternity Ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the

extension of Mont Lubin Area Health Centre and the upgrading of Community Health Centres.

In addition, an amount of Rs 4 million has been earmarked for the purchase of medical equipment for the Maternity and the Paediatric Wards.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson Sir, in view of the threat and health hazards which HIV/AIDS poses to the population, an AIDS Unit will be set up in Rodrigues for the implementation of the HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2004-2007. In that respect, I am providing an amount of Rs 300,000 for its implementation.

Prisons

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am providing an amount of Rs 3 million for the extension of the present building to provide space for the accommodation of juvenile delinquents separate from other detainees and for the construction of a new female block. A workshop will be included in each of these blocks for the training and rehabilitation of detainees.

Probation and After Care Services

Mr. Chairperson Sir, following consultations with relevant authorities, it is now proposed to renovate the existing building at Marechal to be used as a hostel/home for boys and girls. I am providing a sum of Rs 1 million for that purpose.

La Jeunesse

Monsieur le Président, 2005 a été déclarée par l'Organisation des Nations Unies, l'Année Internationale du Micro-Crédit. A Rodrigues, l'accent sera mis sur l'entrepreneuriat chez les jeunes.

Un programme de formation sur l'entrepreneuriat sera organisé afin de faire nos jeunes prendre conscience que celui qui a en main un métier est plus sûr d'avoir un emploi ou de créer son propre emploi.

Quelques sociétés coopératives seront mises sur pied par des jeunes comme suit:-

- Un atelier métallique et auto mécanique à Quatre Vents
- Une pâtisserie à Mont Lubin
- Un atelier de couture à Mont Lubin
- Un élevage de poulet à Saint Gabriel.

Monsieur le Président, la Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports se propose également de diversifier la formation dans les centres de jeunesse afin d'encourager les jeunes à être plus débrouillards. Une somme de 1 million de roupies a été prévue pour la promotion des activités de la jeunesse.

Furthermore, the National Youth Achievement Award Programme in Rodrigues will be strengthened to enlist a greater participation of young people in the programme.

Sports

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am making a provision of Rs 41.5 million to finance the following projects for the improvement of sports infrastructures:-

- (i) the construction of a mini stadium at Roche Bon Dieu; and
- (ii) the construction of a Gymnasium at Grande Montagne.

(Applause)

I am providing a sum of Rs 4.15 million for the promotion of sports activities. In addition a sum of Rs 2 million is being provided for the purchase of sports equipment and for minor repairs to existing sports complexes.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am also making a provision of Rs 600,000 for the organisation of the Inter Islands Cadets Athletics Championship in July 2005.

(Applause)

Trade and Commerce

Dans le but de commercialiser les produits de Rodrigues, le Gouvernement Régional étudie la possibilité de créer une compagnie sous le « *Companies Act* ». Les principaux objectifs de cette compagnie seront :

- Assister dans la mise sur pied des associations de producteurs.
- Mettre sur pied des programmes de production

- Exporter et importer des produits
- Conseiller sur la qualité des produits et l'étiquetage, le label
- Organiser des foires commerciales.

J'ai prévu une somme de Rs 500,000 pour démarrer ce projet.

Social Security

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am creating a new item entitled "Welfare of Vulnerable Groups" with a provision of Rs 450,000 for the distribution of wheelchairs, spectacles and hearing aids to needy social aid recipients.

(Applause)

REVENUE

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I now turn to the Revenue Section of the Recurrent Budget.

The recurrent revenue to be collected in Rodrigues is estimated at about Rs 16.5 million for the next financial year while the Central Government will contribute an amount of Rs 825 million.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais, au nom de la population de Rodrigues et de l'Assemblée Régionale, remercier le gouvernement central pour son engagement et son support continu pour un développement durable de l'île et du bien-être des Rodriguais.

Monsieur le Président, ce budget veut être un **budget social, économique et culturel** tourné vers l'avenir, et se situe dans notre vision de développement visant à améliorer les conditions de vie de la population rodriguaise.

Monsieur le Président, je profite de cette occasion pour lancer un **appel** à la population rodriguaise afin qu'elle participe activement au développement de notre île Rodrigues autonome dans l'harmonie et dans la solidarité et qu'elle montre ce qu'elle dont elle est capable de réaliser.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, my heartfelt gratitude goes to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his staff for the valuable advice and support during consultation with his Ministry.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, may I also thank funding agencies for their continued support in the implementation of development projects.

Monsieur le Président, je dois ici remercier le CEB pour la construction de la station thermique de Pointe Monier et l'installation de deux générateurs d'électricité d'une capacité totale de 3.8 Mégawatt pour satisfaire les besoins croissants en énergie électrique dans le court et à long terme.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, my thanks also go to all those who have participated in the preparation of the Draft Estimates for financial year 2005-2006 and in particular my colleagues Commissioners, the Island Chief Executive, the Departmental Heads and staff of the Commissions and the Chief Finance Officer and his staff for their invaluable contribution in preparing this budget.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am confident that the Draft Estimates will meet the approval of the Assembly. Thereafter, I shall transmit the Draft Estimates to the Minister of Shipping, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands for presentation to Cabinet.

With these words, Mr. Chairperson Sir, I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.

(Applause)

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded the motion.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: I move the adjournment of the debate on the budget speech to Thursday 7 March, 2005 at 10.30 a.m.

Commissioner Arlette Perrine-Begué rose and seconded the motion.

The question was put and agreed to.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly be adjourned to Monday 7th March, 2005 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded the motion.

The question was put and agreed to.

At 17.00 hours the Assembly on its rising stood adjourned to Monday 7 March, 2005 at 10.30 hours.