

Motion – Chief Commissioner’s Budget Speech 2005-2006

(Resumption of debate)

ANNOUNCEMENT – CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Chairperson: On Friday we listened to the speech of the Chief Commissioner. Now for the proper continuity of the debate, I will ask a number from the Minority, if ever they do have a speech, I don’t have their list of precedence as the practice always conforms but I will ask the Minority whether they’ve got a speech to make. Any member.

The Minority Leader: Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I believe that each and every member here will have a speech.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you for this information.

The Minority Leader: No matter what is the agenda and the intervention list for today, we are prepared to intervene. Just like, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this team from this side of the House has always been prepared for every meeting of this Assembly and is prepared, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at any time to assume higher responsibilities at the level of this Assembly should the need arise. I trust my team and I trust that they will show their capacity, full capacity during the debates on this motion of the budget. Coming to the main motion, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is true that because of political development in Mauritius that we have to examine the budget well before the normal dates. It is a bit a disadvantage because we are nearly three, four months to the end of the financial year and we don’t know what is the performance here of the current financial year, it is not really over, the projects, the funds which have been appropriated are still ongoing.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget which has been presented, once again, is very deceiving, very disappointing and does not reflect, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, policies and measures necessary to meet the short term problems, the short term challenges facing this island. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget which has been presented is null and dull in prospects. We wish to express our disquiet, our strong disquiet of this side of the House and a very big majority of the population about this state of affairs. There is, I believe, a discrepancy between what has been presented with regard to the problems, the economic social problems facing this island. I gather the impression, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that what the Commissioner of finance has presented to this House, apart being a mere summary of expenditure, “une exercice comptable”, apart from that, this budget is completely disconnected from the reality of Rodrigues presently. Nothing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, has been prepared, has been proposed in this budget to contain the rising strictures of the people against the Regional Government headed by the presenter of this motion, Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner has adopted a very confident and relaxed approach in his presentation whereas his relaxation and confidence in what he has presented contrast with the deteriorating situation in this island. The stands of public opinion today, presently, about their policies, the policies of the Regional Government in the country, have never been worse. There is the lamentable state of the economy of Rodrigues which, once again, I’ll stress the fact that I am in the opposition, we are in the opposition, we have the task to depict

and to present because. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a budget, any responsible politician, elected politician, who is in a majority and who is responsible of finance and who has the task of presenting a budget, whether it is for a Regional Assembly, for a National Government or for any institution, public institution, should, as a matter of responsibility, present first what is the state of affairs when he is presenting his budget. What is the economy, how is the economy, what is the health, what is the state of the economy? I have heard nothing about that, and Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the word 'economy', a budget, the word 'economy', I have searched for it, the word 'economy' appears only once, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. How can we today prepare a budget with the word 'economy' appearing only once? I have searched, made a search for words such as 'innovation'; I haven't found the word 'innovation' in the budget. It is a sign that the budget has been prepared in, dans la précipitation, ça a été bâclé. Et devant les attentes de la population, les critiques qu'ils reçoivent, nous voyons que ils ne savent plus quoi faire. Si on suit le cours des budgets qui ont été présentés, if we follow the course of all these budgets, what do we see ? The first budget which has been presented in this House was very impressive in words, the words used by the then Commissioner, Chief Commissioner responsible for finance were very impressive, very pretty on paper. And then, when the new Chief Commissioner came, the same approach, but may be with much more responsibility, was shown. The second budget lesser in words, in terms of words, and this one has forgotten all adjectives, all the words which they use to, pour faire maquiller les mots qu'ils nous présentent ici.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais émettre une critique sévère de la gestion économique de Rodrigues par le Gouvernement Régional en place. D'année en année nous perdons notre temps dans des discours à chaque fois remodelés telle une vieille robe qu'on modifie chaque année en enlevant ou en ajoutant des accessoires pour la présenter comme nouvelle, comme neuve, comme belle. What has been presented on the economic front, Monsieur le Président, apart from being a mere account of expenditure? No policy dimension, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. There is not a single policy dimension in this budget apart from, they always say it, "creation des petites et moyennes entreprises", But how, what policies, what is being put forward, what are the instruments, where are the funds, what is the time frame, what immediate policies are being put forward to encourage what they say, for example; small and medium enterprises? There are no budgetary measures, fiscal or budgetary measures aimed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at enhancing the operation of the economy. The economy of Rodrigues today is completely import-oriented, with a higher number of recurring shortages, which is a sign of economic inefficiency; examples are gas and cement. What has this Government proposed to remove these difficulties facing producers, households, economic operators in the island? Do you know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for example when the ship which comes here, which comes to Port Mathurin, when they come they are full of goods, all sorts of goods that Rodriguans consume. But when they leave, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have done a small enquiry, do you know what are the exports; empty containers, empty bottles, empty containers of gas, and the exports, the real exports, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, not even a container, I have seen it with my own eyes, not even one (1) full container of goods. I went to the car park where the containers are, from which the containers are shipped, and what do we see, what did I see, I saw only one (1) container, I asked where are the exports of Rodrigues, how many containers are there? They say no, there are only empty bottles, empty recipients of gas etc and one (1) container with about ten (10) sacks of lemons and other primary goods which are packed, and which do not even fill half of this container. These are the exports of Rodrigues today, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and these people speak that they are developing the economy of the island, they are giving all the

facilities necessary for the development of the economy. How do you want to create jobs, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? How do you want to create, to promote economic growth, when the exports of your country, I say country and island like Rodrigues, is half container, not even half container of goods? Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this budget expresses no awareness of the high balance of payments deficit which permanently prevails in Rodrigues. I know it is very difficult for small islands' developing states, they are very vulnerable, they are highly dependent on imported goods like energy, fuel for generation of energy, like food, but we are not doomed in this island. We should not think that this should be the situation. Il faut refuser la fatalité et il faut travailler pour produire, pour exporter, développer une économie qui soit orientée vers l'exportation pour faire en sorte que de l'argent rentre dans le pays parce que quand il y a que des importations, c'est l'argent qui quitte le pays. Et dans le pays, ça a été souligné depuis bien longtemps dans l'histoire, par les mercantilistes par exemple. Quand l'argent quitte un pays, c'est l'argent qui quitte ce pays. Quand vous ne faites qu'importer, vous importez, l'argent quitte votre pays et cet argent va à Maurice, elle va ailleurs. Qu'est-ce qu'il reste dans votre pays? L'argent c'est le sang, it is the blood of the economy ; if there is no money, there is no circulation of money, there are no transactions, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. When this money leaves, we are not making people in our country, there are no, il n'y a pas d'effet d'entraînement, de faits multiplicateurs dans notre économie. Rien n'est fait pour proposer, j'entends rien dans ce budget en terme de politique, d'import substitution, import substitutions policies. On continue à importer tout, même du poisson et tout. On the other hand, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, no boost, no encouragement is being given to local production to encourage exports, industries or sectors of production where there are exports, where there is value added. And I told you when the boat comes, it is full, when it leaves it is half. And Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this matter of fact is one of the reasons why the freight coming to Rodrigues is among the highest in the world; because the company which operates this shipping route has nothing to bring back to Mauritius. They don't get any revenue apart from the revenue from passengers. If we had some exports, the Shipping Company would get revenue from transporting these exports and may be the cost of shipment to and from Rodrigues would be lower. No account, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, not a mention is made, not even a word about the severe difficulties faced by pig, poultry and the others, animals' farmers in Rodrigues. No mention is made of any measure to curtail the increases in the prices of livestock feed and other costs of production, in animal production. No announcement about Government measures, e.g. in movement of veterinary services. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what is the situation today in the animal production industry, farming industry? The farmers are faced with continuously rising costs, the cost today of livestock feed is higher, much higher than the cost of rice. Because it is imported, it is not produced here, it is costly. The farmers don't have access to facilities; when the animals are ill, for example, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. For example, la dernière fois j'ai rencontré quelqu'un qui est venu me voir, qui m'a arrêté dans la rue me dire : « est-ce que c'est normal quand une poule est malade, c'était pas une poule, c'était des pintades, un jeune homme, il est allé voir les gens du 'Veterinary Service' à Citronnelle. On lui a dit : « amenez l'animal chez nous, emmenez l'animal à Citronnelle pour qu'on le voit », Monsieur le Président, voilà les difficultés. C'est pas fini, il y avait quelqu'un d'autre qui avait des porcs ; Rodrigues est réputé pour la production de porc à l'époque, on lui a dit, Monsieur le Président, « emmenez les excréments du cochon à Citronnelle ». Donc lui transportait tout ça à Citronnelle pour que les officiers là-bas regardent et voient qu'est-ce qu'il y a. Est-ce que c'est une politique ça ? Est-ce que c'est comme ça qu'on va encourager la production ? Les producteurs, les fermiers etc de Rodrigues sont les grands laissés-pour-compte du budget que nous

examinons. Il y a quelque temps de cela, avait été annoncé en fanfare, à la radio, d'ailleurs la radio annonce beaucoup de choses, il faudrait faire attention, voir la réalité des propos ; on avait annoncé en grande pompe la mise en place, la construction d'un abattoir moderne, ultra moderne. C'était bien accueilli, Monsieur le Président, on avait expliqué, on avait expliqué que cet abattoir allait résoudre les problèmes auxquels les exportateurs, les fermiers, ceux qui élèvent les animaux faisaient face, ils avaient personne, ils ont personne pour acheter leurs produits pour être exportés à Maurice. Donc on a proposé, ils ont proposé de construire un abattoir pour que les produits soient transformés et que la production puisse continuer, parce qu'aujourd'hui il n'y a pas de marché. J'ai bien regardé j'ai bien cherché dans le budget, dans le « budget speech », il y a aucune mention qui a été faite de cet abattoir ultra moderne, sophistiqué qu'on avait dit « will be constructed », as usual, « very soon ». Plus grave, Monsieur le Président, dans le budget capital, on aurait du voir les sommes, on aurait du voir l'argent pour rénover l'abattoir de Pointe La Gueule par exemple ou pour la construction de l'abattoir. Où est la notation budgétaire, Monsieur le Président ? Est-ce que des items comme ça ne sont pas plus importants ? Pourquoi, Monsieur le Président, les 21 millions de roupies, nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec cela, 21 millions de roupies for the construction of a new Regional Assembly House. Est-ce que nous ne sommes pas bien ici ? L'assemblée vient de démarrer ; pourquoi ce Gouvernement Régional veut à tout prix mettre en fanfare construire des centres, « Cultural and Leisure Centre » qui aurait du être à Lataniers, la Commissaire avait dit Lataniers is the birthplace of « séga tambour », of Rodriguan culture. Maintenant on apprend que cela va être transféré à Malabar. Est-ce que le birthplace a été transféré, Monsieur le Président ? What kind of policies, projects which are ill-conceived ? Des projets mal conçus, des Commissaires qui parlent sans savoir, sans réfléchir, sans comprendre ce qui va se passer après.

Monsieur le Président, je continue dans cet, dans la production animale. Il y a des bouchers qui aident, qui travaillent; mais je voudrais venir sur les conditions d'abattage. Je ne sais pas si les membres ici ont été au marché de Port Mathurin le samedi, le samedi matin. Monsieur le Président, moi j'appellerais ça un assassinat. Un assassinat de cochons ou d'autres animaux tous les samedis. Quand vous allez faire vote marché, vous allez acheter vos légumes, qu'est-ce que vous entendez ? Un concert, Monsieur le Président, un concert de cochons agonisants. Des cochons qu'on abat et vous vous avez ça dans les oreilles pendant que vous faites votre marché. Et il y a la fumée, la fumée avec qui vient vous incommoder, qui vient embaumer le marché. Où sommes-nous, Monsieur le Président, quel âge sommes nous, nous sommes toujours au moyen âge à Rodrigues ? Pourquoi, Monsieur le Président, pourquoi ne pas avoir donné de priorité dans ce budget à cet abattoir ? On aurait demandé, comme cela se faisait auparavant, quand j'étais gosse je le voyais, on aurait demandé à tous ces gens qui abattent des animaux d'aller les abattre gratuitement à l'abattoir. On met les facilités pour eux avec l'eau, les conditions sanitaires adéquates, les équipements modernes. Est-ce qu'il faut continuer à Rodrigues de prendre un gros couteau pour piquer un cochon ? Un cochon qui agonise pendant dix minutes, Monsieur le Président, alors qu'il y a des équipements modernes. En dix secondes on peut abattre le cochon et le cochon est mort et le travail est plus facile et humaine. On aurait, Monsieur le Président, envoyé tous ces animaux qu'on abat dans cet abattoir, on les aurait abattu là-bas à l'abattoir et ensuite, avec les camions réfrigérés que le Gouvernement Régional doit acheter, peut acheter, au lieu d'acheter des Pajeros, transporter cela au point de vente, au marché gratuitement, pour commencer. Après, plus tard on aurait pu leur demander dix roupies (Rs 10) par tête de cochon qu'on abat. Mais pour commencer ça doit

être gratuit pour les inciter à le faire. Vous interdisez aux gens d'abattre leurs cochons dans leur cour, mais il n'y a aucune alternative.

La situation dans le chômage, qui entraîne la précarité et l'exclusion du tissu social. Monsieur le Président, j'ai l'impression que pour l'équipe qui est en face de moi, le problème du chômage se trouve dans l'élevage de poules seulement ; comme-ci toutes les gens qui n'ont pas de travail allaient prendre de l'argent au 'micro crédit' pour élever des poules. Il nous faut innover, Monsieur le Président, suivre le rythme mondial, aller vers des secteurs innovants ; dans les secteurs de nouvelles technologies, par exemple, former les jeunes massivement et préparer notre société pour cela. Qu'est-ce qui est prévu dans le budget, nothing. Les chiffres du chômage, Monsieur le Président, on a dit qu'il y a un « slight decrease », mais les chiffres du chômage, le nombre de chômeurs enregistrés, n'a jamais été le taux de chômage, et cela ne peut être confondu avec le nombre de chômeurs enregistrés car ce n'en est pas là la définition. Et encore, Monsieur le Président, ils veulent faire du développement économique, ils veulent avancer et ils n'ont toujours pas mis en place un système de statistiques nécessaire, de statistiques économiques nécessaire pour une évaluation adéquate de leur progrès, du progrès qu'ils se proposent de faire. On ne connaît toujours pas le taux de chômage, le taux de croissance de l'économie du pays. Je me demande quel genre de développement on va pouvoir faire si on n'a pas ce genre d'indication ; it is trial and error. Cette situation d'absence de dynamisme est accentuée au niveau économique, par un interventionnisme des autorités qui dépasse les limites de l'acceptable. L'état, I mean the state in the constitutional term, in the general term, represented by this Regional Government in Rodrigues, l'état, the state is intervening in almost every sphere and, with all sorts of threats, are discouraging all initiatives of the people, many initiatives of the people. Because, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the state is not here to intervene, to tell the people what you have to do, what you have to produce. We are in a mixed economy; this should be left in private hands, but this is not the case. With all sorts of threats, all sorts of declarations that they make on radio, on T.V, in meetings where they meet these people, they say "sa pa capav fer, sa pa capav fer, pa pou toler sa", and the people feel discouraged.

Last year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I spoke about the 'Four Wheels of Growth', by Paul Samuelson, a nobel prize in Economics, who was attacked by the Deputy Chief Commissioner in his speech. They attacked the ideas of 'Four Wheels of Growth', by Nobel Prize in Economics. This year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the context necessitates, I will, with your permission, present briefly, very briefly, what an Austrian Economist, Freidrich Von Hayek in his book 'The Road to Serfdom', 1971, 'The Road to Serfdom', 'La Route vers le Servage'. Hayek had a severe critique of the interventionist state in all its guises. His criticisms about excessive state intervention was founded on two (2) grounds; the grounds of efficiency, the grounds of morality. On efficiency, from the microeconomic perspective, and Hayek was an economist, only the persons concerned can fully know all the circumstances of their situation. The state, l'état, cannot only understand any individual situation and should therefore, as a matter of efficiency, leave it to the individuals concerned to make their own decisions about what they want or how they choose to achieve what they want so long as it is achieved in a legal way. People in Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, feel that their liberty is at stake. Hayek said "there should be no interference on how individuals make their own decisions about what they want and how they choose to achieve what they want". People in Rodrigues feel that they can't achieve what they want or they can't achieve it like they want to achieve it. It is breaking all the dreams of people especially the youth. You are not here; a Government is not here to say that women who are unmarried but who have children and who live with their

parents are not allowed to acquire state lands for example. What is this, Mr. Chairperson? This woman, she is a citizen, she has rights in this country. Can you base yourself on her social, her family condition to say that she has no right, to deprive her of her right? Is this the rule of Law? From the morality side, Mr. Chairperson, Hayek says "to the extent that the state leaves the individual less room to make individual decisions, it reduces their freedom", Mr. Chairperson, Sir. What does this imply? It implies, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that basically for economic agents, households, people have some money in their pocket to spend. The state should not distort their plans, because if you distort their plans, you are distorting their economic decisions, and when you distort economic decisions, you would render the economy inefficient.

En gros, Monsieur le Président, la situation économique de Rodrigues est une urgence. Mais l'ignorance des faits de la part du Commissaire des Finances, nous amène à rester dans cet état de chose. Monsieur le Président, nous sommes d'avis que l'autonomie politique ne peut pas se situer logiquement, dans une perspective de long terme, « on a long term basis » sans une économie et une indépendance économique. L'autonomie politique, l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, une institution autonome du gouvernement de la République de Maurice, ne peut pas se situer dans le long terme dans une perspective de dépendance économique. On doit travailler, mettre en place des mécanismes, les mesures pour aller vers l'autonomie et l'indépendance économique; c'est-à-dire, au lieu de deux, two, only two, instead of the 2% revenue that we cover for our expenditure, we need to grow more, each year we progress to 10, to 20, to 25 and we gain at least enough to cover all our cost of expenditure by ourselves, and then we have assistance from Central Government. But this is not their policy. I believe these people are here merely to accept the funds from Mauritius and to spend the money without knowing whether that money will always come, Mr. Chairperson. When Mauritius has problems, do you think, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the very long term, we can ask Mauritius for money every year, without us here, as people of this island trying to generate income to produce in our economy and to make the finances, the public finance seem more independent? C'est cela notre vision, Monsieur le Président, mon parti, notre parti, le Mouvement Rodriguais a fait de ce slogan « indépendance économique », le thème central de son action, de sa vision pour l'avenir à long terme, de notre île. Nous voulons que Rodrigues devienne une île où l'on produit, où l'on exporte, où l'on travaille, où l'on crée de la richesse et où on vit, où on est content de vivre. Et c'est vers cette indépendance économique que nous invitons le peuple à faire le parcours avec nous.

Monsieur le Président, it is with much, c'est avec beaucoup d'impatience que nous attendons les élections qui arrivent. Monsieur le Président, dans le cadre of the Human International Meeting to review the implementation of the programme of action for the sustainable development of SIDS which was held in Mauritius from 10th to 4th January, 2005, I was invited as an observer to participate by the Prime Minister's Office to whom, je profite de l'occasion, I express my sincere thanks for the invitation and for the support and welcome during my stay in Mauritius. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the meeting ended with the Mauritius Declaration being issued. One of the main items on which attention was focused has been the necessity for SIDS to set down the proper equilibrium between development and environment. We have examples here in Rodrigues where this balance is not being set, where valuable land with ecological and environmental importance is being sacrificed for the benefit of tourism development.

Another issue, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, which has been of particular interest to me and which, I believe, we should pay attention to is the issue of graduation of countries by the UN developing countries, developed countries and least developed countries and its implications

in terms of access to foreign aid. Rodrigues, as part of Mauritius, is represented in the international forums as one island, as one country together with Mauritius. The stress there in the conference was laid on the need for SIDS to be able to have positive discrimination in terms of graduation because if a country is graduated from least developed to developing, this means that much aid, foreign aid, will not reach that country because donors will not send aid to countries which are graduated at the higher level on the scale of the development of countries. I believe, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that this Assembly should set down, I don't know how we can do it, may be together we can work on it, devise the strategy to tell donors, to tell the world that Rodrigues is different from Mauritius and that there is need for positive discrimination. So Rodrigues is included in Mauritius, there is need to enable Rodrigues to have access... We badly need these aids and one way that we do not fall under the same item of Mauritius could be, to have special representation at these conferences. There was one island, one island which forms part of the United States of America but which was represented there; it was the British Virgin Islands. So, despite the fact that they are in the USA, with the USA, they were represented. So, this could be a strategy for foreign relations. And in this budget, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, nothing is being proposed for foreign relations. There have been missions, costly missions to Reunion Island, to France, to Seychelles, to Madagascar, to Morocco; what are the fruits of these missions? Nothing in this budget. What do we hear about the regional cooperation with Reunion? What has happened since a delegation has been there? Have we had positive outcomes out of these? Nothing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I can't see.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to offer a copy, table a copy of the Mauritius draft strategy for the further implementation of the programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing states; it could be reproduced and offered to members. If we come back to the budget speech and we analyze the different objectives which have been assigned, which have been set for the different priority sectors. Monsieur le Président, premièrement, ils ont proposé, « développement durable avec accent sur la production, l'emploi et l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie dans la population rodriguaise ». Dans la production, je viens de vous dire' je viens de vous expliquer que concrètement, on ne voit pas grand-chose pour inciter les producteurs, pour les aider face aux coûts qui montent, face à la compétition pour le développement des produits potentiels et pour la promotion de l'investissement. Au niveau de l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie rodriguaise, amélioration de la qualité de la vie de la population rodriguaise ; qu'est-ce qui a été proposé ? Qu'est-ce qu'on voit aujourd'hui dans l'île Rodrigues ? Dans beaucoup d'endroits quand vous passez vous voyez des gens qui s'asseyent au coin de la rue – bien souvent, avec une bouteille à la main. Est-ce que c'est comme ça que, qu'est-ce qui est proposé contre cela ? Pourquoi ces gens-là font ça, parce qu'ils sont irresponsable ? Non, parce que bien souvent ils n'ont pas accès aux loisirs. Qui peut aller au cinéma ici, à Rodrigues, combien de gens peuvent aller au cinéma ? Un ticket de cinéma est à cents roupies (Rs 100). Ne serait-il pas intéressant, Monsieur le Président, par exemple, d'introduire une pratique, d'aider les gens à venir au cinéma et les encourager, de mettre des transports ? Monsieur le Président, j'entends des voix, c'est pas à moi de dire ce qu'il faut faire, je peux pas tout dire ici. Le transport s'arrête à six heures dans ce pays. Que voulez-vous, que je vous donne des leçons ? Amélioration de la qualité de la population Rodriguaise, on veut toujours que les Rodriguais dorment à six heures ? Le bus s'arrête de rouler à six heures ; pourquoi ne pas « extend it to seven hours », dix-neuf heures ? Si quelqu'un a un travail à faire jusqu'à six heures et demi à Port Mathurin il ne peut pas. Ce sont des choses comme ça qu'un budget doit attaquer. Déjà les choses qui touchent les gens au quotidien, dans leurs vies quotidiennes. Deuxièmement ils

ont dit « étendre le réseau routier, construction des routes communautaires ». Il faut voir, Monsieur le Président, dans quelles conditions certaines routes communautaires sont construits. Dans certains endroits, je ne comprends pas. Quand il y a à construire des routes, vous voyez des routes en ciment, des « track road », full, very large, entrer chez des gens, tandis que chez d'autres, la route s'arrête et puis continue plus loin, les « track roads ». Est-ce qu'on va mettre le budget, pour après, Monsieur le Président, confier l'argent à des agents politiques qui ont la tâche de construire ces routes ou bien de mettre en place les politiques, d'acheter les matériaux, il y a aucun contrôle pour cela. Il ne faut pas aussi que l'état abdique devant ses responsabilités. Il y a aussi, deuxièmement ils ont dit le logement social. Que voyons-nous aujourd'hui ? Nous voyons des logements, successions de politique de logements, de types de maisons. On a eu une maison Trust Fund avec deux pièces, que beaucoup de gens ont peiné pour construire. On a eu les maisons NHDC, trop petit, on a modifié en cours de route et maintenant qu'est-ce qu'on va avoir ? Nous avons l'impression, Monsieur le Président, que de gaspillage en gaspillage on est en train de faire des projets de logement inadaptés et qui ne répondent pas vraiment aux besoins de la famille Rodriguaise de demain. J'ai l'impression que ces gens qui sont en face de nous croient toujours que les Rodriguais doivent vivre à l'époque coloniale. Au niveau du développement de l'agriculture et la diversification agricole, quelle suite, Monsieur le Président, a été donnée – je vois rien – aux différents projets FED ? On sait que les projets FED, le dernier en date c'était le projet 'Anti Erosion', a été fermé. Quelles suites ont été données à ces différents projets ? Parce qu'un projet, dans beaucoup de cas, quand le donneur arrête de financer, le gouvernement qui reçoit, les autorités qui ont reçu doivent continuer à mettre en place, doivent continuer le travail, mais je vois rien dedans. Au niveau de la pêche hors lagon, il y a la même formule, il n'y a pas d'approche intégrée visant la création d'une véritable industrie. On se fie toujours aux loans de la DBM, dire aux pêcheurs « allez prendre des loans de la DBM ». Il faut un minimum de Rs 300 000 pour acheter un bateau de 22 pieds avec deux moteurs et tous les équipements qui vont avec et bien souvent c'est inadapté.

Monsieur le Président, qu'est-ce qui a été dit sur les FADs (Fish Aggregating Devices) pour les améliorer, pour les rendre plus accessibles. J'ai eu l'occasion, Monsieur le Président, d'aller en mer avec un pêcheur, d'aller pêcher à la seine. Savez-vous combien de temps on a pris pour, en mer calme, bien sûr, en mer calme, malgré les repères que le pêcheur a, pour retrouver un de ces radeaux, de ces Fish Aggregating Devices ; plus de trois heures de temps, plus de trois heures perdues par le pêcheur à rouler, à dépenser l'essence parce qu'ils ne savent pas où sont ces, ils ne savent pas et ne retrouvent pas ces FADs, ces Fish Aggregating Devices. Parce que la mer est grande et malgré les repères qu'ils peuvent mettre sur Rodrigues qui leur apparaît de loin, ils n'arrivent pas à retrouver ces FADs et beaucoup de ces FADs sont très loin. Celui qui est en face de Baladirou, de Port Mathurin est à environ 25 kilomètres de la côte. Ils ont été endommagés par le Tsunami, par le cyclone, ne sont pas bien maintenus et il y a pas de nouveaux. Ces FADs ont été installés depuis quelques années but there are no new FADs de radeaux, pas de maintenance, il n'y a pas une vraie information autour de ces FADs. Un pêcheur me disait there are the FADs, mais combien de pêcheurs, il y a les radeaux, mais combien de pêcheurs savent qu'est-ce que c'est, comment pêcher autour, comment y accéder, quelle est l'avantage d'aller là-bas ? Il y a pas de formation, il y a pas de dissémination de l'information. Et croyez-moi ça coûte cher d'aller sur ces FADs, d'opérer un petit bateau de pêche de 22 pieds avec deux moteurs minimum, Monsieur le Président. Pour aller à une partie de pêche dans ces petits bateaux de 22 pieds avec deux moteurs, le minimum c'est Rs 1000 pour le coût d'une journée, avec

deux, trois ou quatre pêcheurs, s'il y a pas de vent. Est-ce que c'est sûr qu'ils vont avoir Rs 1000, plus de Rs 1000 de poissons, payer tous les travailleurs qu'ils emmènent avec eux et payer tous les frais, payer les frais de la banque ; c'est très très difficile. A moins d'avoir de gros bateaux qui peuvent aller pêcher pour une journée, pour plus d'une journée, deux, trois jours et ramener le poisson ensuite. J'ai vu aussi, sixièmement, développement de la pêche hors lagon et quelque chose d'aberrant, la création de port de pêche, création de port de pêche, ports, pluriel, c'est à dire plus d'un, more than one. Je ne sais pas combien de ports de pêche le Chef Commissaire veut créer durant cet exercice financier mais j'aimerais tout de même lui rappeler que l'étude de son budget capital démontre qu'il n'y a aucune dotation. Le budget capital, sous l'item « Fisheries Development », il y a Rs 2 millions. Alors, à la page 2 de son discours le Chef Commissaire dit, et j'ai bien lu, il a dit : « J'ai le privilège de présenter aujourd'hui ce quatrième budget de l'Assemblée Régionale qui sera consacré aux secteurs prioritaires suivants. » C'est à dire le budget durant l'exercice financier qui vient, for the following financial year. Et il a dit « la création de ports de pêche. » Et ils disent qu'on les accuse de magiciens, qu'ils ne peuvent pas fabriquer l'eau avec la main etc. Mais où est la dotation, Monsieur le Président, où est le sérieux dedans ? Pourquoi venir annoncer ça, parce qu'il y avait discours à la radio, parce qu'on passait à la radio alors on dit création de ports de pêche ? Et puis, il y a rien qui suit, il y a rien dans le budget capital, il y a même pas un consultancy fee, de l'argent qui est prévu pour essayer de travailler sur le port de pêche. Où ce port de pêche qui va être créé ? Rodrigues, ce n'est pas l'Amérique. S'il y avait un sérieux, on aurait dit port de pêche à Pointe Monier, port de pêche à Port Sud Est. Where is the seriousness of these declarations that we have here every year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

Et, Monsieur le Président, au niveau de l'écosystème marin et de la protection de l'environnement, et dans la mer et sur la terre nous voyons que de jour en jour la situation écologique de Rodrigues se détériore. Et je voudrais ici, critiquer la Police de l'environnement sévèrement. Quand quelqu'un jette un papier ou crache par terre, il est condamné, on l'arrête, ou bien quelqu'un qui a mal réglé son pot d'échappement ; « ène bayant » qui vend des poissons, qui essaye de gagner sa vie, on l'arrête parce qu'il y a trop de fumée. Quelqu'un va pêcher en mer dans le bateau d'un pêcheur, accompagner un pêcheur, il n'est pas pêcheur, il doit payer une amende, alors que les grosses pollutions sont laissées pour compte, comme-ci on agit arbitrairement, mais ils ne font pas leur travail comme il faut. Et au niveau de la reforestation, le Chef Commissaire a dit qu'il veut, quelque part, un de nos membres va venir là-dessus, « provide forest cover in valleys, on steep slopes etc » pour tout Rodrigues ; et quand on regarde combien il veut mettre, il a dit lui-même, 1 million rupees, Rs 1 m to provide forest cover in all these zones, Monsieur le Président. Les réalisations, les réalisations par apport à l'année dernière, qu'est-ce qu'on voit ? On nous avait, dit par exemple, l'achat d'un bus de trente (30) places pour la Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports. Je ne sais pas s'ils ont acheté un bus miniature, mais on a pas vu de bus pour la Commission, comme mentionné dans le budget, pour la Commission Jeunesse et Sports et on voit toujours des athlètes, des sportifs être véhiculés comme des soldats, à l'intérieur des pick-ups, à l'arrière des pick-ups etc et certains qui s'approchent au risque de se blesser. Voilà comment on traite les athlètes, ceux qui emmènent des médailles, ceux qui font honneur à Rodrigues.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais faire un appel au Chef Commissaire parce que c'est sérieux cette affaire de maintenance of passes, seareef passes. Parce qu'il y va de la vie des gens qui pêchent, des pêcheurs. Trois cent mille roupies (Rs 300 000) l'année dernière a été mis pour le maintenance de ces seareef passes etc à Grenade, par exemple, à Saint François. Il y a pas de feu, s'il y a une urgence, le pêcheur est parti pêcher, il doit

rentrer la nuit, il ne sait pas comment faire ; pareil à Grenade. Mais pourtant auparavant il y avait, les structures sont là. Le marine protected area qu'on devait faire à Mourouck, toujours pas mis en place dans l'exercice financier précédent. Dragage du lagon avec Rs 2 million, nettoyage du lagon, de petites passes, par exemple, qui vont de Port Mathurin à Baie du Nord, depuis trois ans ça roule dans le budget et cela n'a pas été réalisé soit disant parce que l'équipement qui doit faire cela n'est pas disponible ; alors qu'on sait que cela, ce travail peut être fait par des gens, par des travailleurs qui sont des travailleurs manuels. Ça aurait aidé à donner du travail aux gens.

Il y a aussi les routes qui n'ont pas été faites. La route de Rivière Cocos, qui est dans le budget de Rodrigues depuis la création de cette Assemblée, la route de Rivière Cocos, la route Coopérative - Malabar - Saint Gabriel, prévue l'année dernière, pas réalisée, la route de Grand la Fouche Mangues à Cité Grand la Fouche Mangues, qui n'a pas été réalisée. Au niveau de l'eau, on avait dit l'année dernière, new reservoir at l'Union, nothing, nouveau système de distribution d'eau à Accacia, dans le budget, jusqu'à maintenant je n'ai rien vu, Regional, Cultural and Leisure Centre de Madame la Commissaire à Lataniers, on m'a dit qu'on a posé la première pierre et maintenant on me dit que le budget, le projet va avoir des pieds, va marcher jusqu'à Malabar. Je me demande qui a conçu le projet, pourquoi avoir mis un projet, dépenser les fonds préliminaires, engager le Cadastre, un consultant, gaspiller l'argent public et venir annoncer en grande comble that the Regional, Cultural and Leisure Centre will be found at the birthplace of 'Séga Tambour' of Rodriguan culture at Lataniers and then, would come and tell us this year that it would not be there. Quelle honte, Monsieur le Président, quelle affront aux gens de Lataniers ? Ça démontre l'irresponsabilité, l'incapacité à bien formuler, à bien présenter, à bien travailler un projet. Maintenant ça va travailler à Malabar, à Malabar où ça ? Je présume c'est sur l'autre versant qui va vers Le Chou et ils vont détruire l'environnement encore, ils vont couper les arbres, défigurer le paysage, comme ils se proposaient de faire avec un projet touristique, pas loin d'ici, à Pointe Venus. Je ne sais pas qu'est-ce qui c'est passé, après une manifestation qu'ils ont rejetée sur nous, sur le Mouvement Rodriguais, ils ont dit que c'est nous qui avons fait manifester les autres hommes. Ils allouent des terres dans un site historique pour qu'on coupe des tamariniers vieux de plus de cent ans, pour qu'on défigure Rodrigues, Monsieur le Président, voilà leur projet, défigurer Rodrigues, construire n'importe quoi partout, n'importe où. A Malabar encore on avait dit « Integrated Centre for Women », 5 millions, on n'a pas vu. Des projets bidons pour plaire à certains. Au niveau de la santé on avait dit « extension of Mont Lubin Area Health Centre », on avait dit qu'on va mettre l'étage sur le Mont Lubin Area Health Centre ; à moins que je ne vois pas bien, quand je passe à Mont Lubin je vois toujours Mont Lubin , only one ground floor, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Irresponsibility, incapacity to implement projects. Extension of maternity, renovation of maternity at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, they said that they would go ahead with it. And this year they say they will construct a new maternity. So, I ask myself, last year they were not able to renovate, to enlarge the maternity, this year they put a higher objective that they will build a new one. So, I do hope that the Commissioner for Health is aware of the greater challenge facing him. They said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the last year's budget, for the Fire Services, acquisition of a 6000-litre lorry. We haven't seen any 6000-litre lorry for the Fire Services. And Mr. [Chairperson, Sir](#), many of the budget proposals which were proposed last year are still not yet implemented. And when this is not done, it is the money which could have been used for projects which could improve the quality of life, which could improve the economy of the island and hence, the economic capacity of the island and this is loss, because they don't think well about what they come to announce here and they are unable to implement these projects. Mr.

Chairperson, Sir, in Rodrigues today there is very big frustration among the economic operators. We feel, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that an economic mafia, oligarchy, an economy oligarchy is being established with the blessing of this Regional Government. They want to concentrate economic power arising out of government contacts, there is only this here. If Government does not allow a contract, does not build something, the people don't work, there is no dynamism, money does not circulate. I will give you examples of what I mean by this mafia going on in this island.

Lastly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the sand extraction industry, there was a gathering there, une manifestation contre les pratiques illégales dans ce secteur. Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé; il y a quelqu'un, M. Mario Lamvohee, qui opère un permis illégalement sur le nom d'un autre personne. Cette personne ne travaille pas sur le permis d'extraction de sable

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, please wait, please wait. Take your seat, please. This is a serious allegation against a person not inside this Assembly. When, of course something illegal is being operated, of course this is a criminal matter and I will ask the member whether he made any declaration to the Police, referred the matter to anything?

The Minority Leader: I did, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

The Minority Leader: The declaration was made in the morning of the manifestation, the gathering there, on a Monday. I was circulating in La Ferme and I will not of course, I'm not under any responsibility to tell you what I said, to tell this House what I said in my declaration. But a declaration was made against one person and I repeat that the name I mentioned, I will mention it. And that in this House we are protected against, we have immunity justement pour pouvoir dénoncer les pratiques illégales, et nous le faisons. Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé? Il y a des gens qui opèrent des bateaux pour aller extraire le sable, qui ont des permis. Ce monsieur n'a pas de permis, donc il opère sur le permis de quelqu'un d'autre. Fair enough, au nom de sa femme. La loi, 'Removal of Sand Act' dit que «No person shall carry on the business of dealer in sand unless he is holder of a license granted by an authority», et la loi dit aussi que on ne peut pas vendre le sable hors du site ou le sable est débarqué et il y a des heures strictes pour enlever le sable, pour vendre le sable. Donc, qu'est-ce que cette personne-là a fait, cette personne-là a pris tout le sable qu'elle extraite.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, please wait. You are embarking in a history of some matters that happens in Rodrigues. Can you show me what will be the reference to the motion before you proceed?

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

The Minority Leader: I was speaking about

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, you just show me and then

The Minority Leader: I don't see why I need to show you because this is budget speech.

Mr. Chairperson: Otherwise I will rule that you ...

The Minority Leader: You want me to explain to you?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, you have to show me, I fail to see the relevancy of this matter to the motion. This is what I'm asking you. Yes, you have to show me the relevancy; otherwise you will be out of subject and out of order.

The Minority Leader: There is no out of subject in the budget, the budget is general, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: No.

The Minority Leader: We can speak of what we want. Why are you restricting me? I was in the National Assembly, I asked questions, can these people talk about anything, they say yes, it's the budget, it's general, you can speak even if this has not been mentioned. Why are you people restricting us from speaking here? J'en ai marre de ça moi.

(Interruptions)

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, take your seat, please. Is this, yes, I heard you what you said and I will move that you withdraw these word immediately. You were addressing to the Chairperson an insulting word, I heard it and I wish you to withdraw it immediately. Yes. I am asking you for a last time the Minority Leader, you have insulted the Chair and if you don't withdraw I will take sanctions against you.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I don't want that the proceedings to end here, I don't know which word and it was not my intention to offend you.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, if you don't remember your words, you said «line découyoné », this is what you said.

The Minority Leader: Did I say it to you?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

The Minority Leader: Excusez-moi.

Mr. Chairperson: No, no.

The Minority Leader: Excusez-moi.

Mr. Chairperson: No, you don't, take your seat, please.

The Minority Leader: Vous êtes en train d'agir comme un enfant.

Mr. Chairperson: Take your seat, please.

The Minority Leader: You are acting, vous-même vous déviez cette Assemblée, vous cachez des procédures. Je dénonce une irrégularité, vous ne voulez pas, pourquoi ?

Mr. Chairperson: Take your seat, please.

The Minority Leader: Allow me to speak, because you are not acting well as a speaker.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes

The Minority Leader: And you are not acting well.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

The Minority Leader: Let me speak, it is the budget, I must speak, I will speak

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

The Minority Leader: And if you don't want I will walk out you.

Mr. Chairperson: I consider this as a term of disregard to the Chair, I will ask you to withdraw from this House now. Yes, I ask you a second time to withdraw from this House, yes. The Sergeant-at-Arms to execute my order. Yes, I will inform members that if any member prevents this officer from the House from executing my order, I will take sanctions against them.
I suspend the Assembly.

*At 11.45 hrs the Assembly was suspended.
The Assembly resumed at 12.05 hrs.*

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, being given that there are no persons from the Minority side, and, in any case, I didn't know beforehand who would intervene in this debate. I've got a list from the Majority for the order of the speeches, I will now ask the First Member for Baie aux Huîtres to make his speech, thank you.

Mr. Francois: Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Francois: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first I should like to congratulate the Chief Commissioner for his 2005/2006 budget speech and same goes to all those who have been closely involved in the preparation of this very good piece of work. Once again, this fourth budget presented by the Regional Government through the Chief Commissioner, proves that

there is a great desire to bring change for better conditions of living of the inhabitants of Rodrigues in all aspects of everyday life. And before considering the different shortcomings of the budget, I should like to express my appreciation to the fact that the upgrading of a football ground at the cost of Rs 9 million at Baie aux Huîtres will be completed this month. And Rs 50 million have been earmarked in this 2005/2006 budget proposals for the construction of a new dam of 100 000 m³ at Pavé la Bonté and also that the rehabilitation of Accacia Dam, including filtration and chlorination equipment and a storage reservoir of capacity 1000 m³ is at tender stage. And I'm sure, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that those living Accacia village and nearby will appreciate. The eleven (11) point programme proposed by this Regional Government; based on sustainable development, road network, water storage and distribution, housing programme for socio-vulnerable group, agricultural development, tourism development, off-lagoon fishing, career guidance for youth, women empowerment and community development, Health services, small and medium enterprises, is a clear vision of our priorities where significant financial resources have been provided in this yearly budget and are very strong signs from the majority side to create much more better conditions for a successful model of an ecological and sustainable socio-cultural and economic development which will be based on an empowered population.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this Regional Government is determined to continue to strengthen and modernize the physical structure of the island in order to support sustainable development. In this context, harmonizing policies, strategies and mobilizing resources by a strategic plan process has already been launched since September, 2004 and I mention the SIDPR as well the management and economic planning and monitoring units which have been set up. A strategic policy guidance through the Project Steering Committee that will promote development, create employment, reduce poverty, improve the standard of living of the population and ensure environmental sustainability have also been established. The spirit of democratic participation, through the participation of different workshops with stakeholders of different sectors has been organized. The strategic thinking and planning workshop which was organized in September, 2004 to formulate important strategies for the development of Rodrigues where a vision statement was found, agreed and shared, formulated as follows; to be the successful model of an ecological and sustainable patterns of development in all aspects based on an empowered population.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this Regional Government is very conscious of the problem of unemployment which is causing a lot of misery to our population. An example of this situation happened recently in Rodrigues where hundreds of young people, looking for employment were trapped by people with malicious intentions. This, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, makes the Regional Government much more aware of the problem of unemployment in Rodrigues, though there has been a decrease in the demand for employment registered at the employment office. Nevertheless, the private sector is expected to generate productive employment for our active labour force. However, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the tourist sector has continued to develop into an important pillar of the Rodriguan economy. Thus, a carefully planned and managed framework has been set up and is under process, including a tourism office, a tourism promotion committee, the creation of the post of Tourism Planner and Tourism Officer. The concept of Ecotourism with the participation of the population will generate direct and indirect employment. The construction of about six (6) new medium-sized hotels is expected to generate job opportunities for hundreds of persons in different fields such as agriculture, agro-processing, fishing, transport, handicraft, as well as other producing sectors.

Concerning the public sector for employment, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Council of the RRA will continue to recruit officers as and when required. The creation of the Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order in July, 2004, allows the Regional Government to employ some 182 contractual workers of the Anti Erosion programme on a permanent basis. In February of this year, some 14 Assistant Finance Officers were recruited in view of setting up a finance cadre of officers of Civil Service in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards infrastructure namely road network and water conservation and distribution, this Regional Government is determined to continue to invest massively to improve our road structure. During this financial year, some Rs 104 million has been invested in the construction and upgrading of roads and bridges, projects and infrastructural works in remote villages as well as in residential morcellement namely concrete track roads and footpaths. Provision has been made in this financial year, for the construction of Mont Lubin - Saint François road, phase one, Mont Lubin to Dan Bébé, Anse aux Anglais to Terre Rouge and Citronnelle to Terre Rouge.

Concerning water supply, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since the advent of autonomy, the top priority of this Regional Government has always been water conservation and distribution. I'm pleased to report the actions already taken to achieve our objectives namely the different primary networks of pipe laying in different parts of Rodrigues, the upgrading of water distribution network in more than 30 villages, rehabilitation of some service reservoirs, construction of first dam of capacity 65 000 m³ at Anse Raffin, nearly completed, and improvement water supply in the South Western part of Rodrigues. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in this 2005/2006 budget proposals, provision of Rs 95 million has been made for the following projects in the water sector:

- construction of a new dam of capacity 100 000 m³ at Pavée la Bonté;
- Rehabilitation of Accacia Dam and the construction of a new reservoir of capacity 1000 m³;
- new primary networks in distant part of Rodrigues, namely the Petit Brûlé to Roche Bon Dieu and Grenade, Petit Brûlé to Coromandel and Montagne Piquant to Montage Cabris Est network;
- the improvement of all water network in Rodrigues so as to enable each household to have a water prise and where the sum of Rs 25 million will be invested is a clear sign for this Regional Government to solve the problem of water distribution once for all.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me now come to the social measures and policies of this budget as regard Health, Education and Social Security. In order to improve health facilities, modern medical equipment have been purchased. More visiting specialists in different areas are serving Rodrigues. Continued efforts have been deployed to introduce different projects in the Health sector. Provision is made for the construction of a new maternity ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, whereas the Area Health Centre of Mont Lubin will know extension works as well as ongoing process of upgrading all Community Health Centres. The renovation of a building at Maréchal to be used as a probation hostel for boys and girls is under way. Education.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is with great satisfaction that we notice that all Redco colleges have gone through either renovation or extension works which have almost been completed.

In respect of Primary schools, a programme of preventive maintenance of educational infrastructure has already been established and money budgeted. This includes the extension of Basile Allas Government school of Port Mathurin, construction of additional classrooms at Terre Rouge Government school, the resurfacing of Batatran, Port Sud Est school compound and the construction of a Community Primary school at Araucaria. The School Feeding Project for both Primary and Pre-primary has been reviewed and the budget doubled. The parents are expected to participate in the provision and preparation of some food for their own children, such as local foods, vegetables and milk.

As regards Social Security, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the social considerations in this budget are also one of our priorities mentioned in the 11-point programme. As we feel it is a continuing obligation of this Regional Government to protect the weak and the most needy as the social fabric of our society as there is no doubt that poverty remains a major problem threatening the social fabric of our society. So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the setting up of the Network Support Services Unit has been proved to be very helpful to those in receipt of social benefits and to assist them to realize economic activities to improve their family income. The creation of the welfare of vulnerable group is most welcomed. The distribution of wheel chairs, spectacles and hearing aids to the needy people of our society is an example of solidarity.

Allow me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, now to say a few words about Youth & Sports. Since the advent of autonomy, no efforts have been spared to improve the level of sports in Rodrigues. Now I will seize this opportunity to recall to this House some details of the broad outlines of our achievements as regard Youth & Sports. A Sports Awards event is being organized on a yearly basis, the renovation of sports complexes at La Ferme and Mangues, Camp du Roi Stadium, Malabar Gymnasium, the construction of stands and blocks at Oyster Bay football ground, which is near completion, the setting up of new "écoles de sports", the Olympic swimming pool of Maréchal, the upgrading of other football grounds are among others. Furthermore, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard new sports infrastructure, money has been provided in this new financial year proposals for the construction of a new gymnasium at Grande Montagne, whereas Roche Bon Dieu football ground will undergo very important infrastructural changes. The organization of the Inter Island Cadet Athletic Championship in July, 2005 in Rodrigues will be the next, surely not the last, most important sport event after the Indian Ocean Island Games Judo Competition.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais terminer en disant ceci. Tout ce qui a été accompli depuis octobre 2002 est le fruit d'un travail d'équipe. Nous avons encore un long chemin à parcourir. Dieu n'a pas créé l'homme pour s'asseoir et attendre. C'est par le travail assidu qu'on accomplit des merveilles. Nous sommes en train de bâtir une île Rodrigues meilleur comme le dit si bien dans notre «hymne aux bâtisseurs»; «péna mirak, péna mazik»; un homme vit et meurt debout, symbole du travail, ce que nous devons inculquer à la jeune génération.

Merci, Monsieur le Président, pour votre indulgence.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson: Can we have another intervenant before we break for lunch? Yes Commissioner for Health, yes, proceed.

Mr. Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget 2005/2006 describes a strong determination of the Rodrigues Regional Government and the vision of the Chief Commissioner to achieve sustainable development in the autonomous island. The projects earmarked for the next financial year let me show that they've established a fruitful line of communication between the Regional Government and the population. Health is wealth. La richesse d'un pays repose sur la bonne santé de son peuple. It is a fact that the health of the population in respect to various allocation of funds have been made to improve the health and quality of life of the Rodriguan population. Further, I'll state that this budget has translated into reality the vision of the Chief Commissioner as far as the welfare of the population is concerned. This budget, among others, makes provision in terms of capital projects for the construction of roads, distribution of potable water, extension of school infrastructures, construction and renovation of hospital infrastructures. The social components need to be underlined as it comprises a package of some 229 million ranging from the grants to National Pension Fund, social aids, funds for patients inoperable in Rodrigues and Primary school supplementary feeding projects among others.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to apprise this Assembly of the realisation of the Health sector during the financial year 2004/2005. My Commission has made tremendous efforts to implement the various projects alluded to in the last budget speech and a special emphasis has to be laid on the following realisations regarding the provision of equipment, infrastructure and power. Instead of the heart medical equipment such as the anesthetic machine with an incorporated ventilator and two (2) pulse oxymeters have been provided for the Operating Theatre and the Pediatric Ward. The Maternity Ward will be provided with a new CTG machine soon. Tenders for supply of a refrigerated centrifuge for the laboratory have been awarded while same has been floated with a provision of incubators for the Maternity Ward and a portable X-Ray machine for the Operating Theatre.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as hospital infrastructures are concerned, this Assembly will note that the construction of a Psychiatric Ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital comprising two (2) rooms to cater for only acute cases has already been completed. Further, with a view to providing modern facilities and other amenities to future mothers, it is envisaged to construct a new Maternity Ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Funds already nearly earmarked for the upgrading of the existing Maternity Ward is now being utilized for the construction of a new one. In this respect ...

Mr. Chairperson: Proceed please.

Mr. Sooprayen: In this respect, thank you, structural designs have been finalized. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, you no doubt agree that infrastructures development and provision of equipment can be of no use to patients if appropriate qualified personnel with dedication to human service are not available. In fact, human resources are the most important of factors responsible for the proper running of the health services. To further improve the dispensing such services, the Regional Government is laying great emphasis on the training of its health personnel. In this connection, four (4) Health Officers have just completed their Diploma in Medical Health. Three (3) community nurses are at present following the 9-month training in Community Nursing while three (3) other Nursing Officers have just left for a 3-month training course at the Nursing school in Mauritius in order to qualify themselves for appointment as Nursing Supervisors. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are pleased to note that a young qualified Rodriguan has been appointed as Nutritionist to help improve the health of the people.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in our endeavour to improve the curative services, the frequency of visiting specialists to Rodrigues in the fields of cardiology, orthodontics and dermatology has been increased. Subsequently, the practice of sending patients to Mauritius has been on the decline. It is worthwhile stating that improvements have also been made in the provision of other services in the fields of physiotherapy, haemodialysis, electro-cardiography, laboratory and radiology. Some of the new posts such as Medical Record Assistant have been advertised and will be filled shortly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a caring Regional Government, a quality management system in the Health Office has been introduced since September, 2004. It has proved to be a success. As to date, there is no waiting list for any visits. All complaints have been attended to within 48 hours. My Commission is trying hard to provide a quality and excellent customer oriented service. Food premises are being regularly visited and expired products and commodities are being removed from the shelves. Extensive health education campaigns have been launched to sensitize both consumers and food vendors on the preparation of safe food and the requirements of the Food Act. This sensitization campaign is usually being carried out at the Health Office and Trade premises. An average of 150 persons are sensitized monthly. Further, due care has been taken to have all our Rodriguan products properly labelled.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is worth mentioning that the sanitary conditions prevailing in the slaughter house at the Port Mathurin market have been considerably improved. Furthermore, a stunner is available and it will be installed in the slaughter house to momentarily stun the pigs in order to render it insensitive and ready for slaughter without pain. Simultaneously, strict measures have been taken at Plaine Corail Airport to prevent the propagation of communicable diseases and malaria. Passenger coming from or having visited a "malarious" country are streamed and placed under health surveillance.

Cooperating services- Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the cooperating services can inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship among the Rodriguan population. In this context, my Commission has set up a steering committee with a view to dynamising cooperative societies to enable them to face the economic challenges lying ahead. Therefore, over and above the routine activities of audit and supervision of cooperative societies including the Federation of Cooperative Services, they have succeeded in the unflinching task to impart education to cooperators and school leavers in entrepreneurship development in order to encourage them to establish their own enterprises. Additional support has been provided to cooperators for the import of agricultural inputs; day-old chickens, animal feeds, veterinary products and for marketing their product such as onions. Livestock breeders and small farmers grouped into cooperators have been left unattended. Prisons and reform institutions, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, major work has been carried out during the year under review to make the prison environment more humane for its occupants. However, it has now been decided that the actual prison complex be extended to provide a separate wing for female prisoners and another one for juvenile delinquents. Further, a building at Maréchal will be renovated for the setting up of a probation home for girls and hostel for boys separately.

Probation and after-care services- Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the probation and after-care services have supervised, 15 adults, 16 juveniles and equipment in this respect. Quotations have already been floated for the supply of portable and trailer fire fighting pump. The officers are also given opportunity to follow workshops and attend seminars in Mauritius to upgrade their knowledge in the service.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget 2005/2006 has made a provision of Rs 31,100,000 under capital projects compared to Rs 14,800,000 for financial year 2004/2005; this shows an

increase of 16, 300,000. It therefore proves the good faith of the Regional Government to improve the health infrastructural set-up as well as the quality of life of the Rodriguan population. Forecast has been made for the following, I've just said, construction of new Maternity Ward at QEH, extension of Mont Lubin Area Health Centre, upgrading of Community Health Centres, purchase of medical equipment for the Maternity and Pediatric Wards, extension of present building and renovation of an existing building at Maréchal to be used as hostel and home for boys and girls.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Regional Government is well aware of the hazards of HIV/AIDS and a sum of three hundred thousand rupees (Rs 300,000) has been earmarked to implement the HIV/AIDS strategic plan 2004/2007. It will assist my Commission in sensitizing the population on the threats and hazards of HIV/AIDS that is causing havoc to the world population.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must state that the aims and objectives of the Rodrigues Regional Government, the OPR and the vision of the Chief Commissioner to contribute towards a better health system and quality of life of the Rodriguan population, have been clearly set and we are gearing towards its achievement.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson: Respected members, I have the following announcement to make. Being given that both sides of the House are now present. All members would realize that I represent the executive authority of this House, the dignity of this House and the maintenance of order rests of on my shoulders. Of course, if any member is dissatisfied with my conduct, they can seek solace under Standing Order 36 which says that the conduct of the Chairperson shall not be raised, except on a substantive motion moved for that purpose. Of course, if they are dissatisfied with any of my rulings, they can also move for the matter to be rescinded. There is a difference between the debate that we have now and the debate that exists in Mauritius with regard to the budget discussions. In Mauritius, the budget is introduced in Parliament through a bill and the matter for discussion upon the first reading of the bill stands on a rather different grounds that we have here. Here, the motion, the speech of the Chief Commissioner is in fact in furtherhence of a motion that this Assembly do approve the budget for the recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure for the recurrent revenue and capital revenue.

No member is allowed to shout or to give directive to the Chairperson and any decision of the Chairperson is final. I quote Standing Order 37: "The Chairperson shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in the Assembly and his decision upon any point of order shall be final." Of course, I do repeat myself, if they are dissatisfied with my ruling, they can seek solace under the different provisions that we do have under our Standing Orders. I understand that many members have not intervened in this debate. May I wish to draw their attention to Standing Order 38 which is entitled 'Relevancy in Debate', I quote: "Debate upon any matter shall be relevant to such matter and no member will be allowed to move away from the motion" and in case I feel that this is so, I'll preserve my right to ask the member to guide me as to whether what he is saying or what will say is relevant in fact to the motion.

Thank you very much for your attention.

I now suspend the Assembly for lunch.

*The Assembly was suspended at 12.35 hours.
The House resumed at 13.35 hours.*

Resumption of debate on the Chief Commissioner's motion (Deputy Chairperson in the chair).

The Deputy Chairperson: Yes, Miss Castel, you are going to intervene now?

Miss Castel: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, on Friday 4th March, 2005, I witnessed the Chief Commissioner, Louis Serge Clair, delivering his speech for the budget for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year 2005/2006. I was deeply impressed by his speech which shows the firm commitment of this Government to assume fully its responsibilities for the betterment of the life of the Rodriguan population. This Regional Government has a great determination to bring about new priorities and hopes that can meet the aspirations of our people, which I am convinced, will be successful because all the objectives that we can and want to achieve are clearly defined.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this Government believes firmly in good governance to enhance sustainable development, leading to long term progress towards increased prosperity. This budget is essentially characterized by a wide scope for social and economic development, physical capital, human capital that are the utmost importance to set the necessary conditions for strengthening our economy within the era of our autonomy.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I fully support all the great measures announced by the Chief Commissioner to provide the framework for the economic take-off by setting up a tourism office and a tourism promotion committee for the promotion of the tourism sector. This measure was taken by looking at evidence; by talking to experts, but, above all, by listening to our mature electorate through "démocratie participative". This measure will definitely help to boost up the tourism sector's investment which will eventually contribute to the creation of more jobs. The construction of new hotels will inevitably play a very important role and will convince people dealing with economic activity in other sectors such as handicraft, agriculture and agro-processing to produce more.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this budget offers a framework which intends to improve the standard of living of our people. This Government is seriously committed to poverty elimination and we will not put that target at risk by making wide promises to people.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, permettez-moi de faire mention ici que le Gouvernement Régional a la ferme intention d'apporter des améliorations au sort des familles qui n'ont pas un logement décent en construisant 125 maisons pour réhabiliter les plus défavorisés de la société rodriguaise et en plus, leur octroyer un lopin de terre agricole où ils pourraient cultiver et élever des animaux même si ce n'est pas sur une grande échelle. This is a sound example of our political will to help the most needy. I think that's good governance because governance means helping people impartially.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this budget focuses on economic infrastructure and services, including public works like roads, e.g. from Mont Lubin to Saint François (phase one), Mont Lubin to Grande Montagne, second from Saint François to Montagne Cabris, third from Mont Lubin to Dan Bébé, construction d'un gymnase à Grande Montagne, construction d'un stade à Roche Bon Dieu, construction d'une décharge contrôlée à Pointe au Sel, la pose de tuyaux de nos eaux primaires reliant le réservoir Petit Brûlé au réservoir de Roche Bon Dieu et de Grenade et deuxième, reliant le réservoir de Petit Brûlé au réservoir de

Coromandel, Montagne Piquant et Montagne Cabris, l'aménagement de la plage à Saint François and all these infrastructures will further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision as well as delivering many benefits in economic growth, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, je tiens ardemment à réitérer ma reconnaissance et mes remerciements au Chef Commissaire, Louis Serge Clair, d'avoir pris en considération la construction de la décharge contrôlée à Pointe au Sel, qui remplacera le dépotoir de Grenade qui cause un problème immense à l'environnement. En apprenant la nouvelle, Monsieur le Deputy Chairperson, la nouvelle concernant cette décision, les habitants des villages alentours ont été émerveillés par ce projet.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, from this budget proposals, the measures introduced by the Government do incorporate a gender perspective and its perception will be based on a participatory approach which will allow this Government to highly value the important role of women in our society. Consequently, I should be thankful to the Chief Commissioner for having provided funds for the construction of the Regional Cultural and Leisure Centre and an integrated Family Centre at Malabar and a training centre for women. Mr. Boutros Boutros Gali rightly said; "Il ne peut y avoir de véritable développement sociale sans l'amélioration de la condition de la femme.» Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is fully supported by the measures taken by the Commissioner for women for the empowerment of women who have a crucial role to play in the strengthening and maintenance of social fabric. The setting up of a shelter and the emergence of the "Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violence Domestique" are sound decisions to provide basic services and facilities to victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the continuation of the delivery of various courses that are delivered in the different centres in Rodrigues will further enhance the Rodriguan women to acquire knowledge and skills to promote family welfare and favour their integration in the social and economic development. A parental empowerment programme will be implemented so as to increase the awareness of parents on their role and responsibilities.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Commissioner for women for her dedication to uplift the quality of life of women, family welfare and child development. I can assure the Commissioner for Women's Affairs of my full support and sincere collaboration towards achieving these goals.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we all know that good education is the backbone that conditions, the success of a society be it politically, economically, socially and culturally. This budget proposal condenses the measures to provide good education. The proposed development of infrastructure, training facilities, Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project and grant to three pre-primary schools in the Education sector is a very positive move towards good education in Rodrigues. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to note that this Government does take to heart the importance of good education and training which are very essential to meet to present and future challenges of our society.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, an absolute priority of this Government is to promote a healthy population. The provisions from this 2005/2006 budget, shows the determination of this Government to provide better facilities in the health sector. The construction of a new Maternity Ward at QEH and the extension of Mont Lubin Health Centre and the upgrading of Community Health Centres is a classical example of this Government's devotion in that area.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I'm extremely grateful to the Chief Commissioner to have given an exceptional consideration to the sports sector being given that our sportsmen and sportswomen have shown to what extent they can perform at regional, national and

international levels. I wish to thank the Chief Commissioner for provisions made for the construction of a stadium at Roche Bon Dieu and a gymnasium at Grande Montagne. En écoutant le discours du Chef Commissaire en direct à la radio vendredi dernier, Monsieur le Vice Président, les gens de la région de Grande Montagne et sans oublier tous ceux qui ont un penchant pour le foot, ont eu le cœur débordé de joie et ont accueilli la nouvelle en faisant éclater des pétards. In this context, the Inter Islands Cadets Athletic Championship will be organized in Rodrigues in July, 2005.

Monsieur le Vice Président, les jeunes n'ont pas été oubliés car un programme de formation est prévu pour eux. Après cette formation, les jeunes auront déjà un métier en main, ce qui va créer déjà un esprit de débrouillardise chez les jeunes ; soit il crée son propre emploi ou il cherche un emploi dans une entreprise quelconque.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, all these matters I just mentioned are extremely important. They are measures of what good government can do. With the enthusiasm of our team, we are confident that we will be able to meet the greatest challenges awaiting the Rodriguan people in the years to come. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir I wish to express all my gratitude to the Chief Commissioner for his genuine interest for the Women's Affairs, Education sector, Health sector, Youth & Sports, Environment sector, Agricultural sector, Housing and other sectors not mentioned here by proposing sums that are much bigger as compared to that allocated in the previous budget. As a responsible Government, we are reiterating our engagement and commitment towards the people of Rodrigues.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with these words, I will end up by saying long live to this Government, long live to the autonomous status of Rodrigues.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

(Applause)

The Deputy Chairperson: Any member wishes to intervene now? Madame Bégué?

Mr. Mercure: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, let me, at the very outset, express my deep appreciation and congratulate the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for finance for his budget speech that has successfully identified the priorities of Rodrigues and the measures required in consolidating and strengthening our socio-economic development programme. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am particularly appreciative of the social dimension of this budget which demonstrates the preoccupation and commitment of this Executive Council to ensure a people-centred development process that does not leave behind people but empower them to participate and get along in our development programme. Tackling poverty and social exclusion remains an urgent priority for Rodrigues. This budget provides the necessary framework for action in various sectors including education, training, health, infrastructures, low cost housing scheme and others; facilitate access of the poor and vulnerable segment of the population to these services. I am convinced that the measures identified to boost up the productive sectors such as tourism, agriculture and fisheries will be an impetus to our job creation strategy. These altogether, will support our ongoing poverty-alleviation and social exclusion programme and offer an integrated approach towards achieving these objectives.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I'm particularly sensitive to the special attention that has been given in this budget to vulnerable groups, particularly the disabled and the elderly. This shows our determination to provide adequate social protection in face of the difficult economic context the world is facing. Although measures to consolidate our economy have been adequately set forth, we should at the same time, reckon that there is still need to provide direct financial assistance to those who are in need. The provision of Rs 20 million in the recurrent estimate for the payment of social aid is indicative of our commitment to protect the poor. This provision will be used as financial assistance to be paid to the poorest section of our society and those who are unable to earn a living. Other categories of people who require financial assistance are our senior citizens, the invalid and those unemployed persons with family responsibilities whose income are not sufficient to meet the needs of their household. Necessary provision to the tune of Rs 121.4 million has been made for this. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, our senior citizens are those people to have strived and worked very hard under difficult conditions for the construction and advancement of our society. All of us here in this Assembly are the products of the struggle during the course of our history. They deserve better attention and care from us – the younger generation. Our objective is to ensure that our elderly people are not placed at the risk of poverty and can enjoy a decent standard of living so that they share the economic well-being and can participate actively in public, social and cultural life. In this context, six (6) health and nutrition clubs are being set up throughout Rodrigues. The 6 different teams are ready to start working. These clubs will be based in community centres and will be animated by community nursing officers, community health agents and the representatives of the Rodrigues Council of Social Services and the Senior Citizens Associations. These clubs will provide, will enable regular checks for hypertension and diabetes. Regular education programme will be organized to explain to our elderly the appropriate nutritional culture. We want them to age in dignity and in good health. I am pleased to note that for celebration of the International Day for Elderly and Disabled, a sum of Rs 320,000 is being earmarked. This will help us to do activities, to organize activities to enable the proper commemoration of these days.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, protection of the disabled person also has a high place in our social protection agenda; grants in aid to the tune of Rs 390,000 to the Rodrigues Association of Disabled, Association for Mentally Handicapped Children and Elderly Federation.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the respected members of this Assembly that so far we have been facing serious difficulties in meeting demands of disabled persons for assistance in kind such as wheelchairs, spectacles and auditive apparatuses. This year a new item naming "Welfare of Vulnerable Groups" to the tune of Rs 450,000 for buying same. Furthermore, since last year an item known as Allowance to Medical Profession to the tune of Rs 216,000 is being maintained to allow us to provide two (2) main services namely Medical Appeal Tribunal. Since this service has been set up, about 30% of the rejected cases from local medical board has been able to get award pension. Secondly, Medical Domiciliary Visit to bed-ridden under ninety (90). Now, up to date 122 bed-ridden is benefiting from this service. All this indicates that the Executive Council wants every citizen to be on board for a better living.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, they had set up a network support services unit on a pilot basis since mid October, 2004. The objective is to bring existing competence and service facilities to these persons instead of vice versa. The network support services also, where appropriate, encourages individuals to identify projects and coordinate for their realization with a view to helping these persons achieving social and economic autonomy. I am pleased

to note that since the experimental phase of a newly-set up project; “Réseau d’accompagnement pour les personnes en difficulté” by mid October, 2004 up to date, the following projects have been conceived and submitted to the coordinator of Trust Fund for consideration. There is farming, 9 projects, basket work, 2, poissonnerie, 1 and shoe maker shop, 1. This make a total of 13 projects. This is helping us to reduce “l’assistanat”.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are aiming at reducing the overall risk of poverty and social exclusion during the years to come. We are convinced that the investments we are making in our social policies alongside sound economic and employment policies as contained in this budget will lead to lower levels of poverty and social exclusion.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards social protection, there are series of measures which are there. Since last year, the post of Principal Social Security Officer has been introduced in our establishment; I have already had discussion with the minister Lauthan and they are sending us a PSSO to set up the award unit in Rodrigues. This unit will help beneficiaries to avoid three-months’ time sparing before awarded in Rodrigues. In addition, in the spirit of rodriguanisation of the Social Security Services, two (2) Social Security Officers are now being trained in Mauritius so that they can be promoted eventually as Higher Social Security Officer. This budget, thus, budget after budget we are increasing capacity building and all these significantly accelerate access to existing schemes and benefits pension to those who are in need.

Labour industrial relations: This section was once a one-man show division with only one Labour Inspector. Now it is not the case; we have already recruited a Trainee Occupational Health and Safety Officer to look into issues relating to the protection of workers’ rights and promotion of health and safety of an harmonious industrial relation on work sites. The scheme of service of a Training Inspector of Association is under preparation and he will be recruited shortly. All this will enable the Commission to strengthen and have a proper structuring of the labour office into a full fledge labour and industrial relation division that will better ensure a proper and a decent work environment that promotes the social dialogue and productivity.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would qualify this budget as being highly innovative and original. It has successfully addressed the real challenge which we’ll have to meet; it provides the appropriate momentum to ensure that those who are most at risk do not suffer from the economic growths that will follow. It offers a consistent link between social inclusion strategies and the economic and employment policies and ensure that they are mutually reinforcing. The Chief Commissioner, in his speech has likely highlighted the vital importance of our human resource; this budget provides the necessary mechanisms for the protection and empowerment of our people. We all need to look in the same direction as this is an investment for tomorrow’s peace, security and development.

Thank you for your attention.

(Applause)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Who is next to intervene, Commissioner ROUSSETY? Do you wish to intervene now?

Mr. L. Roussety: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

The budget 2005/2006 clearly shows the four (4) commitments of the Regional Government and the vision of the Chief Commissioner to cater for the needs of the Rodriguan population at large. This budget lays emphasis amongst others, on socio-economic development of Rodrigues when heavy investments are expected to be made in terms of infrastructural development, with construction of roads, low cost houses, promotion of education and training, grant to RCEA, the announcement to name but a few.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, education is another important sector for the future development of the autonomous Rodrigues. Tremendous efforts have been made to improve the infrastructural set up of the Secondary schools. The premises of the Primary schools have being upgraded and building embellished with fresh..... Toilet blocks are undergoing renovation and in the surveys on to assess the financial implication to have Primary school toilet repaired and renovated. All Primary schools are to date equipped with at least one computer and one printer to further back up the ICT lessons. Provisions for the prevocational classes are made in four (4) colleges throughout Rodrigues; these are Le Chou, Maréchal, Mont Lubin and Grande Montagne colleges; Rodrigues College as well caters for the same.

The “Zone d’Éducation Prioritaire” project is already on and it provides pupils with a balanced lunch on a daily basis. The ARPESE, that is the “appui régional à la promotion d’une education pour la gestion de l’environnement” has involved full participation of the Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School, Don Bosco R.C.A School as well as the Grande Montagne, College.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a sum of Rs 177 million has already been used for the implementation of the two (2) ongoing projects: construction of Mont Lubin Secondary School and the extension of Le Chou Secondary School.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has made arrangement to improve infrastructural setup of the primary sector and the following projects are in the pipeline: the extension of Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School to meet the demands of an increasing pupil population and the construction of additional classrooms at Terre Rouge Government School, again to solve the same problems of over population, the resurfacing of school yard at Batastran and Port Sud Est Government Schools, construction of kitchens and stores in primary schools to allow for space for the preparation of food in the School Feeding Project and building of a community school at Araucaria to relieve pressure on both Basile Allas Port Mathurin and Terre Rouge Government schools. And these, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, are the way that the Chief Commissioner in his very commendable budget addresses the children of this autonomous Rodrigues. The secondary school at Grande Montagne is also being upgraded. An additional floor will be set up to meet the increasing demand of students as well as to provide them with a more conducive and learning environment. Works are expected to start during this financial year and completed by next financial year. And when we talk of regionalization, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it is right and fitting that the Chief Commissioner has foreseen this in this budget because we need to bring Grande Montagne College on a par with the other secondary schools in Rodrigues. As a caring Regional Government and with a view to enhancing a better academic performance of primary school children, a cup of milk and fruits are distributed to all the pre-primary and primary schools alike. Pre-primary school children, as well, are benefiting from the supply of jam, butter and cheese as from the year 2004. A provisional sum of Rs 4 million is being made for the continuous implementation of the School Feeding Project, thus, relieving the burdens of many families. And I cannot, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, find a better way of commending the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for finance for making provision and

for addressing poverty directly at the base of our society in our schools. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Employment Information Centre aims at effecting placement of registered job seekers and providing reliable and up-to-date information to customers and also by implementing the labour-market information system. The EIC has been upgraded and a documentation reading corner set up to enable job seekers and the public at large to have access to books on jobs and various occupations. The EIC has been partly computerized. Data on job seekers are easily processed daily onto computer networks to facilitate manipulation of database to provide updated computer base information on services offered to provide a management information system, labour-market information system. The EIC has referred some 1005 persons to various organizations following notification of vacancies and some 15 have been placed. Some 180 youths were referred to training organization for workshops, seminars and training services.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the unemployment trend is on a decrease as the number of registered job seekers has gone down from 2,830 in December, 2002 to 2,774 in December, 2004.

As for training, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Human Resource Centre is a landmark in the process of capacity building of the Rodriguan workforce. Some 800 participants have undergone training in various fields of knowledge and trade during this financial year. To date, the Human Resource Centre gears more towards demand-driven rather than supply-driven training course. In this respect, the Human Resource Centre has planned further courses for the benefits of the Rodriguan citizens: book keeping, project writing for future entrepreneurs, internet searching techniques, job searching techniques in favour of the Rodriguan youth, briefing sessions on educational opportunities at Technical School Management Trust Fund, University of South Africa, Mauritius College of the Air and La Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie amongst others.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Human Resource Centre strives to pave its way to become full-fledged facilitative training delivery institution. It walks in collaboration with various local, national and regional institutions to provide academic, professional and technical training to the Rodriguan public and private employees as well as young people and students for future integration in the labour market. A sum of Rs 3.5 million is earmarked for training and related activities. This Regional Government is fully committed to providing training albeit at a relatively high cost in order to see that our young people receive the required training and get prepared to integrate the labour market. My Commission is in the process of finalizing the signature of an "Accord Cadre" with Cariforef of Reunion Island so as to tap expertise in various areas related to human resource development. It is a pity that members of the minority party are not here to hear that this thing is ongoing. The computerization of the Documentation and Research unit is also envisaged. With a view to facilitating the learning and training process as well as management and future resources of the same unit. Subsequently, the documentation and research unit has made provision for new reference books in connection with the organization where the different award and non-award courses. And I will avail myself of the opportunity of saying that our documentation centre at the Human Resource Centre is very well frequented and provides lots of information with people attending it throughout the working day. The Human Resource Centre, in collaboration with UNESCO GREDA organized a seminar in December 2004, with a view to identifying and assessing the training needs for the implementation of Open Distance Learning (ooh) in Rodrigues.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Le Chou Training Centre is another backbone in the training of the Rodriguan youths. It offers a large variety of courses ranging from National

Trade Certificate Courses to Certificate in Computer Application run in collaboration with the Human Resource Centre. It carries out all the technical courses which are beneficial to school leavers and public at large. It has to date trained some 300 participants. The training mechanism has been boosted with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2004 with the Mauritius Institute of Education for the enhancement of pedagogical skills of the teachers of both Primary and Secondary sectors. Some 72 teachers, senior teachers have been following the Advanced Certificate in Education and Certificate in Education Management. Other courses for the Secondary school teachers are in the pipeline, i.e. the Post Graduate Certificate in Education and the Diploma in Secondary Education. Some 17 Rodriguan students are following courses at the Polytechnic school in Mauritius, whereas some 16 officers of the Commission for Public Infrastructure have embarked on a three-year part-time course leading to the 'Diplôme Universitaire Supérieure de Technologie en Génie Civil' run by the Institut Supérieure de Technologie under the supervision of the Université de Limoge. And this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, shows, to some extent, the engagement of this Regional Government in organizing training sessions for the upliftment and betterment of the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, particularly in our schools and in the public service.

The training of would-be doctors has been one of the main preoccupations of my Commission and to date, the Rodriguan youths are offered scholarship by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to follow courses leading to the award of MBBS, i.e. Bachelor in Medicine and Bachelor in Surgery. These courses are dispensed at the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam Medical College. Some four (4) Rodriguan youths have so far been sponsored and the Regional Government has increased the budget from 1.5 million to 2 million for the next financial year. This translates the vision of this government in capacity building into reality. And I can assure this Assembly that in the years to come, there will be Rodriguan-born working in our hospitals.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, preliminary works in terms of consultations have been carried out and draft reports submitted by the National Computer Board for the revising of a strategic plan for Information, Communication Technology development. With a view to inculcating an ICT culture among the youth, negotiations were carried out with Mississippi Consortium for International Development via University of Mauritius and as a result of which ten (10) computers are now available for training purposes. This computer room with the 10 computers aims at providing opportunities of access to all interested parties and of all ages and to use an integrated information and communication in the everyday life.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, in an attempt to keep abreast of the latest developments in the world of communication, my Commission favourably considers the possibility of developing a dedicating website for the promotion, sensitization and awareness of the various activities of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, to conclude I will say that there is no doubt that the budget 2005/2006 will contribute to those achieving various objectives in the fields of Education, Training, Employment and Information and Communication Technology and it will be beneficial to the population at large. And once again, I will reiterate my congratulations and gratitude to the Chief Commissioner for addressing the world of education, the young people of this country and the poor children in the way he has done in his budget.

I thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Would you wish to intervene now, Mrs. Commissioner for Arts & Culture?

Mrs. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir this year again I'm thankful to the Chief Commissioner for having given a fair share of the Rodrigues budget to my Commission. Indeed, not less than 3.4% of the one billion, three hundred and sixteen point five million rupees (Rs 1, 316, 500,000) have been allocated to the services falling under my purview. In fact, there has been an increase of 49.8% in this 2005/2006 budget as compared to the ongoing one as regards my Commission. This increase in provision is an additional testimony, if need be, of my colleagues' appreciation of the huge efforts that are being made for the advancement of women issues, child development, family welfare, community development as well as the alleviation of poverty and access to information to all. At the very outset, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would like to congratulate the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Finance for having had the dexterity to roll out the figures on all the areas of the Rodriguan life while at the same time, harping upon the most urgent and important sectors of development at this present juncture. My feelings on the budget presented in this House last week stem from my own portfolio's perspectives, are that all the measures enunciated have a direct or indirect bearing thereon.

Monsieur le Président, dans toutes nos considérations, il ne faut pas perdre de vue, que toutes les commissions de l'exécutif rodriguais sont transversales; c'est-à-dire que les mesures prises par les unes transcendent sur les autres. Ceci étant, je suis fière que les différentes mesures contenues dans le budget 2005/2006, touchent a famille, la femme et les enfants de près ou de loin.

In this regard, I would like to underline the fact that at the very first lines of his budget speech, the Chief Commissioner pointed out that one of his eleven (11) top priorities for the forthcoming financial year, relates to the uplifting of the economic status of women and family welfare.

Coming to the Rodriguan family, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one of the tangible effects of a 25-year old vision and struggle of the autonomy come true, has been the revolution of the public administration setup in our island. Three hundred and seven (307) families, all of a sudden, two (2) years after the event, found their quality of life improved; because 307 persons, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, either found a new job or had been promoted to a higher rank in the public service during this current financial year. And hundreds of us have yet to be created for strengthening the Rodrigues Public Service towards attaining the goals of the autonomy. In my Commission itself we are expecting some 13 new recruits; be it for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare or Arts & Culture and Public Library; partly done this financial year or the next. But this OPR government does not just focus on the public sector automatically inevitable advancement because of the event of the autonomy for job creation. As you are aware, the OPR government that has always advocated private investment and private enterprise. And for that reason, all the measures contained in the budget are geared towards economic and social welfare and will bring about their sum of jobs and by extension, family welfare. One such sector of job creation is tourism where our Commissioner for finance and equally responsible at the same time for tourism, forecasts the creation of some six hundred (600) direct employment. In the same breath, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Deputy Chairperson, may I point out that the undivided effort of the OPR Government;

only to create job opportunities to those who cannot create same, but also and above all, to accompany the Rodriguan population in its quest for self-employment and development. As regards women, for example, who, as you know, represent 50%, if not more, of the population. My Commission has gone a long way towards helping women to become their own managers and more dynamic in professional entrepreneurs. Five (5) training centres for detection and promotion of economic capacities have been set up in five (5) different areas of Rodrigues and the sixth one will be opened for some two hundred (200) recruits each year in Southern region of the island next week. And during the financial year 2005/2006, two (2) more women training centres will become operational in the Northern and Eastern regions. These two will be constructed from both Government-owned funds and proceeds from the IFAD loan. A sum of Rs 1.5 million is being provided in the capital budget for that purpose. Furthermore, a federation of women entrepreneurs consisting of five (5) regional branches and regrouping a total of 275 members will be launched tomorrow. As you can see, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is leaving no stone unturned to ensure the economic empowerment of women.

To conclude this chapter of the economic strategy in Rodrigues, I would like to inform the House that my Commission is launching tomorrow morning a micro project scheme aimed at giving access to finance to an additional one hundred and nine (109) women's associations who are involved in various minor activities to encourage their involvement in more important projects. Therefore, as you can see, most of original Government combined measures toward direct or indirect job creation or incitement to job creation will definitely have a positive bearing on the Gross Domestic Product and a consequential multiplier effect on income. Slowly but surely we are providing the solutions to poverty alleviation.

And to close the chapter on this issue, I heard over the radio on Saturday, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that this budget, and this morning again it has been repeated, that this budget does not mention any measures whatsoever, regarding the economy and that even the word 'economy' has been mentioned only once in the Chief Commissioner's speech. So said the Minority Leader; shame of those who do not listen and who finally talked out of ignorance or malice, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I went through the budget speech year 2005/2006, from cover to cover and I came across the word 'economy' more than fourteen (14) times and the word 'development', forty-five (45) times. I repeat, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because this has been highlighted and wholly repeated here; I went through the budget speech 2005/2006 from cover to cover and came across the word of 'economy' more than fourteen (14) times and the word 'development', forty-five (45) times. These are facts, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because these documents that laid down the Chief Commissioner are public, even the press have had it. And they are written down black on white. Attempts to mislead the population on this issue will fail for we members from this side of the House can talk, and with proofs in hand. Gone are the days, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when anything could be set to put off people and long are the days since the Rodriguan eyes and ears have been opened. Today the Rodriguan people well know how to separate the wheat from the chaff; comment séparer le bon grain de l'ivraie. I just highlighted by job creation or job creation incitement concerning tourism and women, not to mention measures contained in the agricultural sector as well as for the youth, I would like to draw the attention of the House on the SIDPR Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues launched in September 2004 as well as the strategic thinking and planning document produced some time after. These tools, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, are being designed to set the right strategy to guide the economy in the right direction. If these are not economic measures, what are they, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir?

To be understood in this House, Monsieur le Vice-Président, should we utter up farfetched economic jargons? One must not forget that we are here to serve the people and that we are in a representative democracy; we represent the people and the standard that they are and we must talk a language understandable by the layman. Je suis convaincue, Monsieur le Président, que toute la population a bien compris la portée des mesures énoncées dans le discours budget et qu'ils ont bien entendu les nombreuses fois que le mot 'économie' a été prononcé. Ainsi donc, ce budget pour moi, regorge de mesures économiques et n'importe qui, sachant lire on entend, l'aurait compris. Mais comme dit bien le dicton, «il n'y a de pire sourd que celui qui ne veut entendre».

In furtherance of my feeling, that all the Commissions of the Regional Government are working in an integrated and networking way, I would like to praise some three (3) other projects initiated by my colleagues which will indirectly touch the Rodriguan family as a whole. First, I would like to mention the very courageous provision of twenty one million rupees (Rs 21,000,000) for the construction of housing units. Given that in the course of my duties, I've regularly come across the poorest of the poor, I can imagine the scope of such a measure. In providing such an envelope to cater for one of the basic and essential need of a family, this government has proven how much caring it can be and how well distributed the financial resources are. I have the same grateful and satisfactory sentiment that rich me as regards the two (2) other provisions, I would like to welcome namely the School Feeding Project which is a highly economic and social cultural decision. I congratulate whole heartedly both the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Education for their will to continue increasing its scope. This decision is freehold, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, by encouraging production and transformation of local food, proposing a better nutrition to our youth and encouraging them to appreciate Rodriguan food, "mangez rodriguais" and finally the project will also help mostly mothers but also fathers who instead of going to feed the children everyday at school, can spend the time in more productive purposes. As you can see, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, export may not be as much as we would wish to, to bring as much capital in our country but I listened last time to somebody coming from Mauritius and that person said that the situation was alike at the beginning of the Independence of Mauritius during the first years. But one thing we are sure, is that they are encouraging the circulation, keeping the circulation of capital produced by the Rodriguan in the island. In encouraging a local production for a local market, first this is an initial step, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, towards higher production of value added products and therefore, exportation. I would like to say one brief word on our remarkable improvement in the road network at both main and secondary roads headed by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office. The development has been so visible that it speaks for itself and its impact on the welfare of the Rodriguan families and its economy is invaluable.

Maintenant, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais commenter quelques unes des principales réalisations de ma Commission durant l'année financière courante. Like I said earlier, six (6) centres have been opened for detection and orientation and induction towards economic potential. More than five hundred (500) women are now being trained at La Ferme, at Roche Bon Dieu, at Montagne Goyave, at Mont Plaisir and Citron Donis and they are being trained in not less than ten (10) different fields. These women are evolving at the very grass root of the economy. On the other hand, my Commission has been instrumental in the creation of the federation for more professional women entrepreneurs; those who are already earning a living by their activities. They would be more closely supported; an annual award of the best woman entrepreneur will be instituted to trigger their effort towards productivity and quality. A survey on their needs and constraints has been carried out and the results of this survey will be taken care of so that we could favour a better condition of business for

women. In the same line, the Rodrigues Regional Women's Committee Market Centre at Malabar which also constitutes the one hundred and nine (109) women's associations will undergo complete renovation in the following weeks to render it more business-oriented and [customer-friendly](#). During the past months, my Commission has financed the participation of more than ten (10) groups of women in exchanges with foreign countries. Such exchanges with Mauritius, Scotland, India and Africa have brought them an overture and helped to widen their scope of activity and add a more professional touch thereto. In addition, other twenty (20) cases of women and children in distress have been attended to positively under the appropriate scheme set up by my Commission in 2003. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has largely contributed in the construction of a number of Community Centres financed jointly with international funding agencies during the past months, among which, some six (6) centres for women at Battue Madame, Camp du Roi, English Bay, Rémir and others, procedures are under way for the construction of a commercial complex for three (3) groups of women of Champs, Deux Goyaves and Mont Limon. During its negotiations at national level, my Commission has been able to secure a seat for Rodriguan women's representation on national statutory councils among which the National Women's Entrepreneur Council, all being financed by the Regional Government.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at this stage, I would like to mention projects which are ongoing; the full renovation of the Women Centre at Malabar, of which the contract will be awarded in the days to come, the tendering procedure having just been completed by the Central Tender Board. I'm also thankful to the Commissioner for Finance for having created a specific item for training of women in this budget amounting to five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 500,000).

Coming to Family Welfare, much has been done to consolidate the Rodriguan family ties and stability during the past months. The Rodriguan chapter of the National Family Policy Paper has been elaborated. A mass sensitization programme covering the whole island has been organized with special emphasis on the role and responsibilities of men in the family and the consequences of economic violence. An Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violences Domestiques has been created with the assistance of my Commission and launched in November 2004 to mark the International Day against Domestic Violence. A shelter for victims of domestic violence and abuses will become operational at Baie aux Huitres in a few weeks. A provision of a half million rupees has been made in this budget for starting the implementation of the first phase of the forum to the empowerment programme. The aim in this original programme is to provide additional support to parents for bringing their children in the modern society.

May I finally add, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that my Commission, with the collaboration of the Ministry for Women has been able to devise ways and means to provide psychological, legal and family support services free of charge to soothe the sufferings of the Rodriguan family. All these services will be dispensed in a more professional way and under the same roof of an integrated Family Centre, the foundation stone of which will be laid tomorrow morning at Malabar. The two other levels of that building will include a Women Development Unit comprising offices, conference meeting rooms and some specialist training rooms at the second level for women who have attained a very considerable professionalism in entrepreneurship and the last one space will be for dialogue consultations among the different family stakeholders including women federations, associations and men and children's associations. Construction works will start during the last quarter of the current financial year.

Children - My Commission has taken care of its responsibilities regarding children, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. Among the different actions, let me underline the following; the

setting up of a Steering Committee for the protection of the Rodriguan Child to better coordinate and monitor government services which are child-related, Rodrigues representation on the National Children Council, the drafting of the bill for the setting up of the Rodrigues Children's Council, Rodrigues data inclusion in the Observatoire de l'Enfant de l'Océan Indien which has been launched last year, the design of the family game for 8,000 families in collaboration with the *Comité des Droits de l'Enfant*, the setting up of an NGO named DIJER, which is an abbreviation for *Développement Intégrale du Jeune Enfant Rodriguais*, the organization of various cultural activities and competition for children, cultural exchange between Indian and Rodriguan children in the context of bilateral agreement and last but not least, training of managers of nurseries and their staff in Mauritius, fully financed by my Commission for a better standard of service to our small children who are being left "dans les crèches de Rodrigues" so that parents can be allowed to work with "la tête reposée".

Mr. Chairperson, Sir this year again, children will have an equitable share in the financial resources allocated to my Commission. Children will in fact be the main beneficiary of the different integrated actions in favour of our Rodriguan family. Let's now look at the community development portfolio and budget allocation.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, during this current year 2004/2005 tremendous effort has been made to promote community development. Around thirty million rupees (Rs 30,000,000) have been disbursed for the implementation of several projects including construction and improvement of community centres, pre-primary schools and of some twenty kilometers (20 km) of track roads and footpaths as well as provision of equipment, tools and training at various level of the community. Some seventy (70) villages have benefited from one (1) or more projects out of the IFAD or the A Nou Diboute Ensam programme. This year, the Regional Government has made provision for twenty-one million rupees (Rs 21,000,000) for the execution of projects under the Rural Diversification Programme under the Chief Commissioner's Office with an additional Rs 8.5 million provided under the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office for projects of the same type. The Regional Government will have gone a long way towards the improvement of the quality of life of the population. Cela, Monsieur le Président, est conforme à la vision proclamée du Gouvernement Régional qui vise à apporter un développement de proximité visant le désenclavement total de toutes les régions de Rodrigues donnant ainsi les moyens à un plus grand nombre de participer pleinement au développement. I now turn to library services.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, much has been done to encourage readership and access to information to all, free Internet Access to all; the four (4) libraries in Rodrigues access to newspapers and magazines weekly or daily in remote regions through these libraries. Supporting committees for supporting and encouraging readership in rural regions, there has been complete renovation of all the regional centres and a new public library complex is now under completion under the aegis of the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office at Port Mathurin where a children's corner will be opened to facilitate reading. A new section of the National Library will be opened in the new library complex. And I think that this new section of the National Library is very very important because this will help us to, what we call, reach our goal of document development, because when a country is developing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, documents as regards its development must be filed, must be preserved and must be kept for the future generation and this measure that has been included in this budget has cared for this aspect of the development. And, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I'm also proud to announce that Rodrigues won the best export appreciation from l'Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie of the twenty-two (22) CLACs in the world. And as from now I have read the report, all the Mauritian CLACS have been advised to align their CLACs to the Rodriguan

models. Our readership rate is very high in Rodrigues and it is very interesting and encouraging for all the efforts that the government is giving. And I would like to say that in its report, l'Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie has also said that with the development and with the quality goodwill that is being shown as regard to readership and librarianship in Rodrigues, they will be able to help us finance a new CLAC during the current year and the Regional Government has taken the decision to open a new CLAC at La Ferme under the new administrative building that is under completion. My Commission continues to endeavour, to lay down the foundation of Rodriguan identity through the creation of different critical elements which will serve comme des modèles d'identifications populaires créant ainsi "le symbole d'un peuple en marche" as regards Arts & Culture. After the Coat of Arms the Rodriguan devise "*Travail, Solidarité, Fierté*", my Commission has now entitled a patriotic song 'Sé Pou Sa' in praise of Rodriguan courage throughout all generations gone or to come. Another reference landmark which this Government will give as heritage is the vision statement formulated in September, 2004 in collaboration with all stakeholders, with the professional support of the firm De Chazal Dumée which reads as follows: "*To be the successful model of an ecological and sustainable socio-cultural and economic development based on an empowered population.*" My Commission is also launching an anthology of Rodriguan poems to incite local writings and at the same time giving the Rodriguan pen local reconnaissance and national and international visibility. My Commission is proud to have negotiated for the specificities of the Rodriguan Creole language being taken into account and the drafting in the process of the harmonization de la langue créole, graphique créole. Wide consultation has been organised with the trois Vice Chanceliers of the University of Mauritius and is expected back for final consultations in a few weeks before the finalization of the project. Another important realisation of my Commission has been the organisation of an island-wide reflection on patriotic and civic role of the individual in the community. The aim was to encourage Rodriguans to adopt the Rodriguan devise, "Travail, Solidarité, Fierté" so that they be guided by those values in their day-to-day actions. We strongly believe, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that the "devise" can become a unifying element of the Rodriguan people. This year, the same exercise, with much more intensity will be replicated in all schools and colleges.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I'm happy to announce that the study on agricultural preservation and development jointly financed by the Regional Government and the French Embassy has just been completed, carried out jointly by a French expert assisted by a Rodriguan historian. This was the very first point of our cultural mandate. This important document will serve as a basis for future, not just cultural, but future development strategies. My Commission has optimised the Rs 1.18 million provision for the actual budget of the promotion for Arts & Culture to stimulate all the different fields of cultural sector. Among the measures taken, let's note the following: cultural exchanges of our artists at international level, namely in Reunion, in Europe, in Madagascar, in Mauritius, in Africa and in India. Rodrigues Festival is now a member of the International Organizers of the Festival Association IOFA. A gist of the Rodriguan festival has been presented for IOFA in the World Music Expo in ... Germany. This strategy will contribute tremendously to promote Rodrigues as "une destination touristique". My Commission has also supported financial and technical support in various artistic fields including painting, choreography, photography and film development. The Artists' Assistance Scheme has benefited to some forty (40) persons, 40 artists, 40 projects. Et quand on pense qu'avant l'arrivée de l'Autonomie, aucune production n'avait été retenue dans le cadre du même plan à Maurice, c'est dire la portée de l'Autonomie, Monsieur le Président. J'aimerais aussi mentionner tout l'effort consenti par le Gouvernement Régional

pour sensibiliser et consulter les Rodriguais sur l'importance d'une architecture appropriée à notre topographie ainsi que la création d'un musée. Des recommandations expertes ont été faites sur ces deux plans au Gouvernement Régional durant le Festival Créole 2004.

Monsieur le Président, l'exercice de recrutement de six (6) animateurs culturels est au niveau de la Public Service Commission. You will recall that the proposed aim of this project is to inculcate creativity, artistic and cultural development in our young ones.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I'm thankful to the Chief Commissioner for the provision of twenty-five million rupees (Rs 25,000,000) for the construction of the first Rodriguan Cultural Centre. Given the complex technicalities of such a project and the fact that offers received that tender exercise have been very high; this project went through the very lengthy tendering procedures three (3) times and is just being finalised by the Central Tender Board on the 23rd of February. We are confident that this project will help transform our island.

Another landmark in the Rodriguan heritage is the creation of the Lieu de Mémoire at l'Union. Our ancestors, slaves and masters have lived, worked and died there. This file is being jointly managed by the Commission for Education and Historical Sites and that of the Commission for Arts & Culture. The design of the landscaping programme is now being finalized and the first phase of the project will start in a few days comprising of the construction of a Monument aux Esclaves, road access and renovation of Maragon's Tomb.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it was with disbelief that I heard the successive objections of the minority group in this House, objection and questioning objection too and questioning the importance of the study on cultural preservation and development. Objection for the acquisition of a chapiteau, an important infrastructure, pending concrete infrastructures to encourage development in artistic and cultural fields as well as circulation of knowledge and exhibitions. Objections à la seule manifestation culturelle d'envergure of the island, le Festival Créole, « gaspillage d'argent », disent-ils. And now what do I hear from the Minority Leader this morning, he asked why the regional government does not give free transport facilities to go to cinema. This is stunning, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is, I am taken aback! By saying so, the Minority Leader a confirmé le doute que nous avons sur sa capacité autoproclamée de vouloir diriger ce pays et démontrer une instabilité dans la vision, si vision il y en a, une instabilité dans la vision des choses. Ils sont pour et en même temps contre le développement qu'on propose.

Monsieur le Président, nous, dans le gouvernement, sommes en faveur du cinéma. Nous ne sommes pas contre, mais nous aimerions que le septième art soit viable par lui-même. Formation à l'image, nous l'avons fait; trois (3) cours de formation ont été financés, MFDC et la Commission Art & Culture, cinéclub, on incite les gens à travers les comités de soutien, parce qu'on parle aussi de cinéma dans le comité de soutien, des centres de lecture de d'animations culturelles ; inciter les propriétaires de cinéma à décentraliser, aller là où il y a la masse, la concentration lui-même. Mais nous aimerions, Monsieur le Président, que ça commence par la formation du théâtre, que les gens produisent localement l'image et qu'ils le consomment. Ça c'est plus important et c'est ça qui apporte un développement viable, Monsieur le Président. Pour beaucoup de personne, le besoin matériel passe avant les valeurs, et nous l'avons compris dans tous les dialogues qui sont sortis ici. Mais comme le dit si bien le document suprême, si on peut dire, pour l'humanité, la Bible, « l'homme ne vit pas que de pain ». C'est seulement quand on sait qui l'on est que l'on saura choisir dans quelle direction on va, et sans un développement culturel approprié, Monsieur le Président, on va construire un homme physique, mais pas un être intégral. Et ça, Monsieur le Président, nous sommes totalement contre, parce qu'une fois quand on a acquis tous les besoins intériels, on ne saura plus quoi en faire et c'est pas sûr qu'on saura maîtriser les personnes

qui n'auront pas de valeurs. Et c'est pour ça, Monsieur le Président, que je crois, le SIDS, qui a été la grande conférence pour laquelle la minorité a remercié le gouvernement pour son invitation et à laquelle la minorité a été représentée. J'espère qu'ils vont changer leur fusil d'épaule et que cette conférence leur aura permis, en tout cas, j'espère qu'ils ont écouté tous les débats, passionnants on me dit, sur la culture et sur l'importance de la culture puisque c'était un des points prioritaires du développement des petits états insulaires et qu'ils comprendront que leur conception d'une économie automate est érodée, est dépassée et que, de nos jours, on parle de l'économie à plusieurs dimensions, dont la dimension culturelle. Et je voudrais ici partager un commentaire d'une personnalité, Bourkina Faso que j'ai écouté sur TV 5 il y a trois jours ; cette personne disait, éminente personnalité, *«la culture est aussi importante que la santé et que les résultats, les productions culturelles devraient être vendues comme le café et comme le cacao »*, sauf que pour, selon ce Bourkinnabbée, *« pour le café, pour le cacao, ce sont des gens externes, c'est le marché qui décide du prix, alors que pour la culture, c'est nous, et c'est ceux où la culture est produite qui décident du prix »*. C'est dire la primauté de la culture, dans le développement, Monsieur le Président et j'aimerais partager cela.

To end, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will like to say two (2) things. **(1)** There has been much criticism in the Minority Leader's budget speech this morning. He listed a number of projects which, according to him, were enunciated but not completed, among which some regarding my Commission. That in fact, was his main reproach to this government, but this is hypocrisy and pure counteracting political rhetoric, Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir. For the Ides of March has not yet come. The financial year may be approaching its end but the financial year is not gone. We have almost four (4) full months to go, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and much is in the pipeline as regards the different co-ordination meetings that we have had with all our top cadre and all the Commissioners under the direction of the Chief Commissioner to see whether all possible projects could be implemented to respect the provisions made in the budget. So, therefore, much is in the pipeline to start. However, we know that there is a big hindrance that's the question of the lengthy, the new and lengthy Central Tender Board procedure.

Monsieur le Président, avant de conclure, I would like to assure the House that this Government has the courage of its words. We are confident that the measures point out by the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Finance will be implemented in a responsible manner and I welcome all the measures and I also would like to say that these measures have been warmly welcomed by the majority of the population during the past days.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Sports.

Mr. Lisette: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am honoured to be delivering my fourth budget speech to this august Assembly at this historic moment of our society's development. We are on the verge of completing the third year of our new political status and this juncture presents us with an appropriate opportunity, normally at budget time, to take stock of what we have achieved during the last months and where we are heading for. We must also consider

what lies ahead and determine the direction in which we are moving. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the people of Rodrigues have much to be proud of as we proceed in the third year of autonomy. In these first three (3) years of the new political status of our country, the Regional Government and our people have faced enormous challenges and problems. However, what we have done as a nation has been remarkable. The third budget presented by the Chief Commissioner consolidates the ongoing reforms and massive investment in key sectors while taking new courageous initiatives to ensure a better future for our citizens. If I am to summarize the budget speech of the Chief Commissioner in one sentence, I would simply say it is a new season of hope in the third year of our autonomy to our fellow citizens. The budget speech and its content can be regarded as optimistic, progressive and realistic. I can dare and venture to say all this about the budget because it aims, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, to improve the lives of every Rodriguan with increased consideration being given to children, youth, sportsmen, fishermen, handicapped, women and the old aged. In fact, the Chief Commissioner has outlined a budget to address especially the needs of the most vulnerable of our people by specifically focusing on the delivery of access to housing, education, training and health.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, many months have elapsed since we became an autonomous island and this majority side of the House is governing well. We can say with pride, that for what we have done so far, we stand, guided by the collective spirit and every hard work to record visible achievement that the Executive Council has been credited with.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me quote from the Chief Commissioner's speech who told this Assembly, I quote; "Ce budget est un budget social, économique et culturel, tourné vers l'avenir et se situe dans notre vision de développement visant à améliorer les conditions de la vie de la population». Certainly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget documents are the ultimate proof of that quotation with a strong expectation of the population who has, with open heart, welcomed these budget proposals. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner, being responsible for Finance, deserves the population's praise, gratitude, support and admiration rather than the groundless, shallow, off the cuff and entirely predictable negative comments from the minority side. I am quite surprised that members of the minority side qualify this budget as an election budget as the Chief Commissioner is leading us with humility, hard work, devotion and he is listening to the people of Rodrigues. One of the most important features of this budget is the momentous effort to improve the quality of life of our people and living conditions in remote areas and the increased interest in social development.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how can one say that elderly people and poor people are being accentuated? Our entire document shows and the foundation that we lay today for the future of our children can only be realized and sustained in an atmosphere of harmony.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we make our commitment to the people of Rodrigues and we are keeping our word through our priorities in this budget proposal. It is clear that quality education, a cleaner environment, a strong tourist sector, better health, proper lodging for the modest people remains our priority. We do bear in mind that we live in an open system. international currency and capital markets, increased security risks and cost conflicts in the Middle East, war in Iraq and the South Asia Tsunami disaster. The acceleration, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, of the globalization and liberalization of trade, increasing competition for foreign capital, is a great challenge to every nation in this highly competitive world. The deeply troubled sugar industry is a classical example. Globalization means that we have to be competitive, mainly in terms of quality and standards of our goods and services. This is why, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the Rodrigues label will play its major role.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, at domestic level, our economy continued to be dominated by government services; agriculture, the tourist sector and the construction activity. The improvements of road network is one of our main objectives as highlighted in the budget speech of the Chief Commissioner. Ninety thousand, ninety million rupees (Rs 90,000,000) have been allocated in this budget. The principle of our social policy as widely expressed by the Chief Commissioner, are based on access to basic necessities of life, i.e. housing, education, health, welfare services, poverty alleviation and social exclusion, promoting social justice and promoting empowerment of our people and the quality of life. Let me now turn, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to one aspect which falls under my purview, mainly, the sports sector.

I am extremely grateful, I should say, and thankful to the Executive Council and the Chief Commissioner for having kept the sport budget exceptionally and substantially high at the expense, I should say sometimes, of other basic necessities. An allocation, a budget allocation of forty-one point five million rupees (Rs 41, 500,000) as compared Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to last year, it is remarkable, it is very remarkable with regard to other sectors when the Chief Commissioner has allocated a budget of Rs 41.5 million. This means, Mr. Chairperson Sir that our priority is to remain relevant. It expresses, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the total commitment and it gives a clear indication that the Regional Government, the Executive Council has really the will through the promotion and the development of sports and recreation amongst all our people. That commitment, Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, draws strength from our knowledge that sport and recreation are indispensable ingredients in our drive to build a nation. They are an essential part of our effort to raise the quality of life for all of our citizens. Sports and recreation are continuing to be vehicles among the youth, in particularly, to promote positive experiences. We aim, Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, to counter anti-social behaviour and to promote a sense of belonging among the youth through sports. We aim to assist, through sports, a community of spirit in pursuit of greater social position and further moral regeneration.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, respected members; I will take this opportunity in this budget statement, to give details of the broad outline of the achievement of the Executive Council through the Commission for Youth & Sports in the sports sector. Last year in my budget speech I highlighted the measures being taken, I quote from my budget speech itself; "Toutes ces raisons par rapport aux mesures qui est en train d'être prises expliquent que ma Commission se soit focalisée dans un premier temps, à déterminer des orientations d'un cadre structurel institutionnel lui permettant de s'inscrire dans un projet clair, cadre et cohérent. L'adoption d'une telle mesure est fondamentale pour doter notre politique sportive d'un cadre et d'une cohérence qui permettent d'attirer aussi bien l'investissement de jeunes et même que celui des bailleurs de fonds.»

In last year's budget Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I aimed in fulfilling mainly seven (7) objectives. These were:

Premièrement, continuer la tenue des assises du sport, l'aménagement d'infrastructures sportives, construction d'un gymnase à Grande Montagne, la des activités des comités régionaux et l'amélioration de la représentativité dans les équipes nationales et puis, l'échange avec les autres îles de l'Océan Indien et finalement, j'avais comme objectif l'année dernière, de mettre en place une sélection de volley-ball et un centre de formation pour les jeunes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, out of the seven (7) objectives that I highlighted in my budget in my budget last year, I am proud to say that I have already got up six of these objectives; namely, continuous support to the Regional Committee; this is being done through courses that are being provided to the different representatives of the Regional Committees.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, since the beginning of this year, year 2005, Mr. Chairperson Sir, my Commission has continuously and is continuing to give continuous training to representatives of Regional Committees as well as coaches. From January to March, Mr. Chairperson, we did perform training in the form of an administrative course for all presidents and secretaries and this also includes the treasurers of the different Regional Committees. This was done, with a view, Mr. Chairperson Sir, to consolidating the different Regional Committees because I still believe that for the progress of sports in Rodrigues, will still highly depend, we still highly need the support of the different Regional Committees. Actually, there is a close partnership between the different Regional Committees and my Commission for the progress of sports in Rodrigues.

As regards l'aménagement d'infrastructures sportives, much has been done. As mentioned by my colleague, Mr. Philippe FRANCOIS in his budget speech, we are on the point of completing the construction of a mini stadium at Oyster Bay. Likewise, the construction of the swimming pool at Maréchal is about to be completed within a short period of time. On the same line, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because when we talk of development, sometimes, in the mind of people, development is, development for them it is what they see. In an attempt to bring sports all around the island, my Commission has focused on the upgrading and renovation of football grounds around the island. Actually, we have focused on the upgrading and the renovation of five (5) football grounds around the island and I should say that the target is going to be met by the end of this financial year. This, Mr. Chairperson Sir, is to state that in such a short space of time, we have spent a lot of time orienting to the new environment and I've started to make strategic adjustments to the course in which Sports and Youth is taking in our country. The past three (3) years have been particularly heavy to say the list. We have however taken up the challenge with the enthusiasm that a dynamic area such as sport deserves, to mould it into a well-oiled machine that will take sports to new heights in our country and I should say that our efforts are being rewarded with respect to what we have focused in the last few years. When we have a look back, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, every one of us should remind himself of the good organisation of the Indian Ocean Games in Rodrigues. We should, out of this; we should say that the whole population, the whole region in the Indian Ocean had their eyes on us. This is why, I should say that due to the successful organization of these games, we have been entrusted, Mr. Chairperson Sir, with the holding of the Inter Island Cadet Championship for the year 2005. This is a clear indication, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that the region in the Indian Ocean is well aware of our capability to organise competitions at an international level. With regard to all these development in sports, I should say that my tenure as Commissioner, could have come at a very good opportune and exciting time given among others, the holding of the Jeux des Iles, to start with, the Inter Island Cadet Championship and we are also focusing on the organization of the Coupe de l'Océan Indien de Handball in Rodrigues in the year 2006. Actually the gymnasium that we are proposing to construct at Grande Montagne, mainly aims at hosting such an important international event. The Coupe de l'Océan Indien de Handball will bring together all member countries of the region namely Madagascar, Reunion Island, Mauritius (Rodrigues will participate in such a tournament as an island) and Comores and Mayotte. So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a positive response from our fellow friends among the islands and I should thank them for the trust that they are giving to Rodrigues for hosting such an important and international event.

In particular, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the holding of the Inter Island Cadet Championship in July 2005, this year, I am really happy about the positive feedback that I am receiving as response for the hosting of same. This has been confirmed by the enthusiasm

that I have experienced among the organizing teams and those persons who are part of the organizing committee. There has been such an enthusiasm for the hosting of such an event that I should say that we are aiming at really providing the Rodriguan population, the Rodriguan sports community, with a competition of a good standard. Of course, such opportunities to hold competitions, at international level region-wise, inter island, we should not, at any cost, be allowed to slip through our hands. As regards the Youth sector, Mr. Chairperson Sir, it has clearly been stated in the Chief Commissioner's speech the different measures that have been taken for financial year 2004/2005. It is a fact, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that the work in Youth is critical for our future. The economy depends on them. Of course, this future will only be possible with hard work, with efforts for the improvement of skills and of course, with the willingness, Mr. Chairperson Sir, for progress. I firmly believe that hand-in-hand with the private sector, we professionals, can lead the youth in achieving its goal. One of the major sectors that influence the youth is the question of unemployment. I should say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to these unemployed youth, not to despair. They have to use, Mr. Chairperson, Sir all the possibilities that are opened to them whether big or small. They have to create their own opportunities and they have to take also advantage of the programmes that the Regional Government is putting at their disposal. And here I am going to refer to one (1) project that is under the aegis of the Commission for Youth & Sports; namely the Ateliers de Savoirs. We started with the Ateliers de Savoirs, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in June, 2003 where one hundred (100) youth joined for skills training with regard to different activities, namely agro industry, fueling, metal works, electrification and maçonnerie. I am pleased to note that after almost one and a half year that these persons have been at these Ateliers de Savoirs, many of them are now able to complete finished products. This is very important, and in a way to help these persons to move forward, my Commission is moving, is focusing on setting up four (4) co-operatives this year. Actually, the funds have been provided by the United Nations, by the UNDP which has already been credited to the account of the Rodrigues Youth Council. Once these co-operatives of youth are settled, these youths will be provided with the funds for starting their activity. Not later than this weekend, I did meet the students of the IVTB, those who are engaged in agriculture, to encourage them to join in the setting up of co-operatives. I am sure that in with the effort, that with the support of the Commission, through the Rodrigues Youth Council and the officers of my Commission, that this project is going to be really satisfactory. Major projects that have been provided to the youth and will be continued to be given are Internet facilities in Youth Centres; we are now providing magazines, newspapers facilities in all the Youth Centres in a way to inculcate a reading spirit in the minds of these youths, we have also set Groupe d'Animation in the Youth Centres for the leisure of our youth; mainly here the Groupe d'Animation has been set mainly at Grande Montagne and Petit Gabriel. And for this year, Mr. Chairperson Sir, an organising committee will be set up for the organization of the International Day for Youth which is to be commemorated on 12th August. Also, I should point out, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that my Commission will be providing much for the development of sports, especially as the United Nations has declared the year 2005 as the year for Sports and Physical Education. With all the measures that my Commission aims at doing for this financial year, there is no doubt that the athletes will benefit very well from all these budgets.

As regards Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Mr. Chairperson, and Handicrafts, for the year ending December, 2004, my Commission did receive about one hundred and thirteen (113) licenses, out of which, I should say, more than sixty percent (60%) have been considered favorably. Of course, some are still under consideration and I have no doubt that within the coming weeks, all these are going to be dealt with at the level of my Commission.

Also, with a view to increasing the quality of our products, the Commission for Education and my Commission has worked in a partnership where we have provided training for artisans in the agro-processing sector and I should say that these artisans, they are going to be helped to increase the knowledge about the preservation, about the question of sanitation and also about the question of quality. I do hope that for the financial year 2005/2006, much is going to be done, again for the improvement of our products, our local products; because it is sure, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that if you are aiming at exporting our local products, there is no way out that the quality of our local products has to be increased. This is why the finalisation of the Rodrigues Label for registration, as a trade mark is under way, and I believe that in the coming months, with all the support of the different Commissions, Agriculture, the Chief Commissioner's Office – this is going to be used by the different artisans – of course with the required standards that are going to be set for our local products.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, before I end, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed so selflessly in compiling this budget; the Departmental Heads, the Island Chief Executive, my colleagues of the Executive Council, our members who also give us their help in formulating our policy and I have no doubt, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that the budget that has been spelt out for the next financial year will meet the consideration and the appreciation of the people. I would like also, Mr. Chairperson Sir, to congratulate all the co-ordinating committees that are giving a help for the progress of sports and I believe that their support will make a difference in the performance of our youths. Also, I would like to give a word of appreciation to the sponsors, with whom, I should say, sometimes without whom most events would never take place. And I should say that my Commission will, of course, continue to appreciate their help in the funding of our activities. And of Course, I wish good luck to all our athletes.

I end up here, Mr. Chairperson Sir, by confirming my allegiance to, and my confidence in the direction taken by this Regional Government as well as the leadership of the Chief Commissioner.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson Sir.

(Applause)

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, I move that all the business on today's order paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph 3 of Standing Order 9.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: That all the business on today's order paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph 3 of Standing Order 9. Those in favour say Ayes, those who are against say No.

I suspend the House for ten (10) minutes.

At 15.27 hrs, the Assembly was suspended for 10 minutes.

The House resumed at 15.50 hrs.

Resumption of debate on the Chief Commissioner's motion.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Infrastructure.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chief Commissioner, je voudrais au nom de la majorité, féliciter le Chef Commissaire pour ce budget 2005/2006. Après notre consultation avec le Vice Premier Ministre et le Ministre des Finances à Maurice, les propositions budgétaires s'élèvent à un milliard trois cent seize point cinq million de roupies (Rs1, 316, 500,000), ce qui représente une augmentation de quatre-vingt cinq point cinq million de roupies (Rs 85, 500,000) et la confiance aussi du Gouvernement Central dans le Gouvernement Régional à gérer les affaires de l'île Rodrigues autonome.

Monsieur le Vice Président, ce budget 2005/2006 a été accueilli favorablement par la population, je le dis avec conviction après avoir rencontré plusieurs personnes après la présentation du budget. Ce budget est un budget de continuité qui inspire beaucoup de confiance. Le pays est sur la bonne voie avec ce budget, même les étrangers qui visitent Rodrigues y sont témoins, et je m'associe avec les précédents orateurs de la majorité pour féliciter le Chef Commissaire et Commissaire des Finances pour les consensus autour du budget, parmi, les onze différents secteurs prioritaires annoncés dans le budget. J'ai entendu dire, de l'autre côté de la Chambre, que le budget est un exercice de comptabilité. Mais moi, j'ai ma propre définition qui est très simple, à mon avis, sans le Gouvernement Régional, il n'y a pas de budget. Et qu'est-ce que c'est le Gouvernement Régional? Le Gouvernement Régional est ce groupe de personne ici présents du côté de la majorité en qui la population a eu confiance et a confié l'administration du pays, l'île Rodrigues autonome et qui doit gérer les biens et les propriétés du public, donc ma définition du mot 'budget'. Ce budget, pour moi, est un budget bien calculé, très réfléchi, budget intelligent, très équilibré et très apprécié parmi la population.

M. le Deputy Chairperson Sir, last year I summed up the budget in four (4) words; our people, our priority, but this year the budget can be considered as creating opportunities for the people. Plusieurs bases, Monsieur le Vice-président, ont été déjà consolidées, Monsieur le Vice-président, depuis l'avènement de l'autonomie. On a vu émerger la création des petites et moyennes entreprises, les développements dans le secteur de l'eau, la protection de l'environnement, les développements dans le secteur routier, les développements communautaires, le tourisme, empowerment of our people, especially the youth, development of agriculture and agro-processing to provide employment opportunities.

Monsieur le Vice-président, le spending capacity of this Regional Government du côté du budget capital a été environ 99% du budget alloué l'année dernière. The appointment of a consultant under the Global Management Consultancy Services is greatly facilitating in the preparation and execution of some thirty-two (32) projects on which I will come with a statement later on the state reached. But among these thirty-two (32) projects, twenty-two (22) of the projects have been completed or ongoing and some have reached tender stage. Our priority, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, for year 2005/2006 is the construction of Pavé la Bonté Dam which will cater for the potable requirement for the Northern region at a capacity of about 100,000 m³. This project, together with the new water system which will be constructed shortly at Accacia, will consolidate the water requirement of the Zone Industrielle which will be situated on the reclaimed land at Baie aux Huitres. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is an example of our planning for a "développement durable" for entrepreneurship and employment generation. Secondly, the vision of this Government is to invest in a well-developed road infrastructure to support the cultural, social and economic activities of the Rodriguan; et pour cela, quatre-vingt dix millions de roupies (Rs 90, 000,000) ont été prévues. De plus, nous avons aussi créé un spécial item/vote at the tune of eight point five million

rupees (Rs 8, 500,000) to cater for village track roads and other community infrastructural works.

Concernant l'agriculture et le logement, des sommes de quatre point huit millions (4,800,000) et vingt-et-un millions (21,000,000) ont été prévues dans ce budget respectivement. Le concept du logement sera différent parce qu'on veut que les maisonnettes soient plus accommodables et que chaque famille puisse avoir un lopin de terre pour pratiquer l'agriculture.

Moreover, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, two point five million (2, 500,000), representing an increase of about seven hundred thousand rupees (Rs 700,000), has been earmarked for incentive for agricultural livestock and food production. This will support our "Réforme Agraire"; we are helping planters to have irrigation facilities, mechanisation facilities, helping planters to support our Feeding Project and helping Rodriguan to produce more to support our forthcoming tourism development.

Monsieur le Vice-président, le dessalement de l'eau de mer est aussi une priorité. Nous avons prévu vingt millions de roupies (Rs 20, 000,000) pour aller de l'avant avec le projet. En ce moment, les consultants travaillent sur les différentes données des sondages océanographiques qui leur permettront de terminer les types de faisabilité, les E.I.A; les Environmental Impact Assessment et la préparation du document d'appel d'offre. Pendant notre séjour à Maurice, le dessalement de l'eau de mer a été pressenti comme une meilleure roue de secours pour pallier aux manques d'eau dans les îles parce qu'on ne peut pas quantifier la durée d'une sécheresse. Au Cap Vert, par exemple, ils ont sept (7) stations de dessalement de mer pour une population de quatre-cent trente milles (430,000) habitants et le prix de l'eau est de cents roupies (Rs 100) le mètre cube.

Monsieur le Vice-président, with this budget, we take the country forward into a future of continued prosperity and stability, greater equity and enhanced opportunity for all. La vision du Gouvernement Régional est de faire de Rodrigues une île écologique avec des actions bien réfléchies and for that, we shall invest significantly in the country's human resources as a principal factor in social and economic transformation so that no one is left behind.

Monsieur le Vice-président, the Minority Leader, in his budget speech, has been contradictory. The Minority Leader, un soit-disant économiste, ne sait pas lire le mot 'économique' qui est écrit plus d'une dizaine de fois dans le discours de budget. He begins his speech by saying that we don't know the performance of the current financial year and at the same time, he want all projects stated in the budget 2004/2005 to have been completed. Secondly, the minority side dit qu'on prône l'assistanat, mais ils disent au lieu que le gouvernement vous donne un travail, il vous dit d'aller à la banque pour lancer une petite entreprise. Next, il a aussi dit qu'il n'a pas eu de suite au projet Anti-Erosion; nous le Gouvernement Régional, a embauché les cent quatre-vingt cinq (185) travailleurs qui sont sur contrat, pour continuer à servir le pays dans leurs domaines respectifs. Et puis, à la suite du projet Anti-Erosion, il y a la co-opération décentralisée qui est prévue pour Rodrigues; une somme de soixante-dix millions de roupies (Rs 70, 000.000) a été prévue pour continuer, dans le secteur agricole, la conservation de l'eau et la conservation du sol. The Minority Leader said that Rodrigues' valuable land is being sacrificed for tourism development, but at the same time they incite people in public meeting, in saying; "go and construct your house where you want". We are sacrificing valuable land, and they tell people to go and construct their house where they want. This is not sacrifice of valuable land! These three (3) examples, Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, demonstrate that it is the OPR party qui a mené le combat pour

l'Autonomie and that its vision is rooted in upholding and advancing the human dignity and empowerment in the process of autonomy, dans le respect des autres et la discipline.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the people have spoken and this Regional Government has listened, and we will continue to listen. The Chief Commissioner's budget speech has demonstrated the foremost priority that this Regional Government attaches to putting people first in the process of the country development and give them opportunities. However, with this development philosophy in mind, we should not forget that Rodrigues has only 104 km² and it is of primordial importance that development follows certain strategies because our land, our main resources should first be used for economic development.

Mr. the Deputy Chairperson, let me now, thank all the people who have contributed to the formulation of this budget; the Chief Commissioner, my colleagues Commissioners, the Island Chief Executive, the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly; we apologise for not having any public consultation with private organization and individuals, mais je dois dire que vu la situation politique de l'île Maurice en ce moment, cela est indépendant de notre volonté, car notre Gouvernement Régional OPR est pour la démocratie participative. Nous sommes pour la démocratie participative.

Encore une fois Monsieur le Deputy Chairperson, je félicite le Chef Commissaire et le Commissaire des Finances et son équipe pour ce budget préparé avec professionnalisme et un esprit d'équipe et dans le dialogue, et les bons signaux qui sont à la population en partenariat avec le Gouvernement Régional de jouer le jeu. Et nous irons jusqu'au bout et c'est ça, la réussite de l'autonomie, Monsieur le Vice-président.

Merci, Monsieur le Vice-président.

(Applause)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I invite now the Chief Commissioner to sum up the debate.

The Chief Commissioner: Monsieur le Vice-président, je dois d'abord féliciter et remercier mes collègues pour leurs interventions d'un certain niveau, d'un niveau qui relève une vision de notre parti et de ce gouvernement régional. Je voudrais aussi remercier encore une fois, les officiers des différentes commissions qui ont travaillé jour et nuit pour préparer le budget, surtout les conseillers autour de moi, les officiers de finances, le Island Chief Executive et autres. Pourquoi je le fais, parce qu'en écoutant le Leader de la minority, de la minorité tout à l'heure, ce matin, il a une façon de parler qui reflète certain mépris de toutes ces personnes autour de nous, qui réfléchissent sur l'avenir du pays, sur une économie, sur le visage social de ce pays, sur son avenir. Il n'est pas bon de mépriser les personnes qui ont de l'expérience. Pendant des années, pendant vingt ans j'ai été à l'Assemblée Nationale; j'ai jamais vu l'opposition officielle dire des choses à l'encontre de tous ceux qui ont préparé un budget. Par contre, on a eu aussi, dans l'opposition officielle, certaines félicitations dans quelques années. En écoutant le Leader de la minorité, je me suis dit à qui avons-nous affaire? J'ai l'impression que ce que nous avons entendu ici, c'est

un discours décousu. On va chercher les petites imperfections; ceci n'a pas été réalisé, où est-ce que ce minibus est ? Ben, c'est que justement nous avons encore quelques mois à arriver jusqu'à la fin de ce budget. Un discours décousu avec toujours la même histoire sur l'économie. Mais moi je vais lui répondre encore aujourd'hui comme je lui ai répondu l'année dernière; qui crée l'économie dans cette petite île Rodrigues dans 104 km². C'est pas Samuelson, c'est pas les grands théoriciens, mais celui qui crée l'économie, c'est l'homme et la femme Rodriguaise. C'est pourquoi nous avons dit, et Madame l'a dit tout à l'heure, quand nous avons eu une séance de travail avec Monsieur Jaunbaccus, je vois que le Project manager mentionne cela dans son dernier rapport sur SIDPI. A vision statement was agreed and reads as follows: "To be the successful model of an ecological and a sustainable socio-cultural and economic development based on an empowered population". Ça a été le centre, c'est ce que nous avons dit ici, c'est ce que nous avons dit l'année dernière, c'est ce que nous avons dit toujours, ça a été le centre des échanges à la conférence des petits états insulaires. L'écologie, développement soutenu, développement social économique, développement culturel; nous allons venir tout à l'heure dessus, basé sur une population éduquée, formée, avec toutes les capacités de prendre en charge son développement. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a de mieux comme vision? Comment Maurice aujourd'hui est arrivé à avoir une réputation au niveau international? C'est justement par le travail de sa population, par l'intelligence de sa population, par ceux qui n'ont pas hésité, même qu'ils sortent de l'université, de se lancer dans des petites et moyennes entreprises. La population mauricienne a compris, et ce que Madame avait dit au début de l'indépendance; on méprisait les produits mauriciens. Tout ce qui venait de l'extérieur, c'était bien, et au fil des années, les Mauriciens ont compris ce que les autres fabriquent à l'extérieur, ils peuvent le faire eux aussi. C'est pourquoi dès 1976, quand nous avons commencé la politique dans le pays, nous avons dit ce que le Minority Leader a dit ce matin, ça c'est pas du nouveau ça, nous l'avons dit en 76 ; « conte lor manzé ki sorti dan ou pei, pa conte lor manzé ki sorti déhor, se ki sorti déhor li pou coûte ou cher, mé se ki sorti dans ou pei, se ki zot fer », et nous l'avons dit encore, faisons dans notre pays ce que nos amis Mauriciens font chez eux, ce que nos amis Réunionnais font chez eux, ou les Africains font chez eux. Nous pouvons le faire ici, et c'est ça, crée une économie du futur, la nouvelle économie avec un peuple conscientisé, formé. Monsieur le Vice-président, je ne veux pas revenir sur ce que le Minority Leader a dit; "ongoing projects 2004/2005, disappointing budget, no short term challenges, null and void, disconnected with reality of the population of the country". Déconnecté de la réalité du pays alors que pendant des années nous avons mené le combat pour l'autonomie de Rodrigues, pour la spécificité et les réalités du pays. Ils n'ont pas mené ce combat, ils ne savent pas d'où vient ce combat, c'est pourquoi ils le disent, mais c'est eux qui sont déconnectés de la réalité avec leur Samuelson sous le bras. Pourquoi parler encore de Samuelson aujourd'hui, qui c'est ce monsieur-là? C'est un Américain, qui parle pour les Américains, et les petites îles, est-ce que Samuelson parle pour les petites îles? Est-ce qu'il a connu ça lui Samuelson, dans son étude? Quand il cause et c'est maintenant quand on a remarqué au SIDS, c'est maintenant qu'on a remarqué, qu'on a vu, il y a des universités dans ces petites îles, il y a un consortium qui a été formé entre cinq (5) ou six (6) universités de ces petites îles, et ça c'est très important. Mais dedans il n'y aura pas Samuelson, il y aura des économistes de ces petits pays-là, qui connaissent les réalités; nous les connaissons ces réalités depuis des années, la spécificité de ce pays. Donc, Monsieur le Président, ce budget qui a été longuement travaillé et discuté, les onze (11) points soulevés, c'est les onze (11) points qui ont été soulevés au cours de la conférence des petits états insulaires. Ces onze (11) points viennent consolidé notre vision du développement de Rodrigues. Ces onze points viennent

confirmer ce que peut-être nous savions pas ce qui existait dans les autres petites îles, viennent consolider une fois pour toute, que nous devons continuer dans cette direction avec une ferme volonté et en disant la vérité à la population. Et c'est ça que j'ai découvert là-bas, je ne sais pas lui s'il l'a découvert, c'est ça. Et comme Madame m'a dit, au cours de cette conférence des petits états insulaires, il y a un aspect auquel je m'y attendais pas – l'aspect culturel du développement. J'étais invité pour une conférence à Bamako au Mali, 17 au 18, Culture et Développement, je devais y aller mais j'ai du décliner à cause justement que nous allions présenter le budget. Culture et Développement; aujourd'hui, il n'y a aucun développement qui soit fait sans qu'il y ait une référence à la culture de ce pays, à la culture d'un peuple. Vous pouvez faire n'importe quel développement, mais si ce développement vient tuer la culture, vous perdez votre âme, et même aujourd'hui on dit dans l'éducation, l'éducation doit pouvoir faire mention de l'identité culturelle, et c'est pourquoi notre système d'éducation aujourd'hui est dépassé complètement, pas la culture, la culture c'est toute la vie d'un peuple, d'une société, son savoir faire, son intelligence, l'action, la manière d'agir, la manière de voir son pays, c'est ça la culture. La culture c'est l'homme, son intelligence et tout ce qu'il est. Eux il croient que la culture c'est dans 'Séga Tambour', ceci, cela, ce n'est que ça ! Et c'est pourquoi qu'on a dit on va faire une étude sur le développement culturel, le développement culturel et les industries culturelles. J'ai dit que ça sert, et quand on a vu à SIDS, Sydney BENTLEY de la Jamaïque qui a parlé de Bob MARLEY, comment de la Jamaïque, la Jamaïque est partie avec le Reggae pour envahir le monde, Jusqu'à même aller faire, à Nottingville en Angleterre, des festivals du Reggae et c'est ça qui fait entrer, justement, de l'argent. La colonisation c'était des choses qu'on sortait de l'extérieur, qu'on venait nous imposer et aujourd'hui c'est l'inverse à travers le développement culturel, les industries culturelles, ce sont ces pays qu'on a colonisé pendant des années avec leurs cultures, leur musique, ce sont ces pays-là qui envahissent le monde aujourd'hui, et puis qui a dénoncé ce qu'on appelle le CNNisation of culture. Donc Monsieur le Vice-président, aujourd'hui cette vision que développe le Gouvernement Régional OPR, cette vision tient compte de la culture d'un peuple. Et c'est pourquoi très souvent, quand on m'a demandé, vous là, votre parti d'ici, est-ce que vous êtes de droite ou de gauche? Ça c'est de petites histoires Européennes. J'ai dit non, nous ne sommes ni de droite ou de gauche, ça c'est chez vous là-bas. Nous ici, notre partie c'est inspiré de la culture de ce pays, les réalités de ce pays et c'est pourquoi nous mettons l'accent sur the empowerment of the people. C'est pourquoi nous mettons l'accent sur la capacité des Rodriguais, eux pendant des années ils ont dit les Rodriguais sont ceci cela, traité les Rodriguais comme des assistés, on ne peut pas leur donner ceci, donner de cela, donner de ceci, encore un petit de ceci, encore un petit de cela. On ne vit pas, on ne développe pas une population, un peuple avec ces genres de choses. Je voudrais Monsieur le Président, m'attarder sur, c'est ce que j'appelle le micro-crédit, la petite et moyenne entreprise. L'Europe, l'Union Européenne aujourd'hui, développe à 100% la petite et moyenne entreprise. La petite et moyenne entreprise est arrivée à créer de l'emploi là où les grosses entreprises sont en train de fermer. La petite et moyenne entreprise crée de l'emploi, et c'est ça que nous voulons. Et même avec un micro-crédit de cinquante milles roupies (Rs 50,000) quelqu'un peut arriver à développer une portion de terre et peut avoir une petite entreprise agro-alimentaire.

Monsieur le Président, ils nous disent qu'est-ce qu'on fait. Mais c'est ça qu'on est en train de faire, c'est ça qu'on est en train de faire. Quand une dame vous dit, une maman vous dit; «c'est grâce à mon travail dans mon jardin que je suis arrivée à envoyer mes deux enfants aux collèges». Il y a un autre qui dit: «Mo pa pou vote Serge CLAIR parski Serge CLAIR dir

nou bizin travay dan Rodrigues». Et c'est ce que nos collègues viennent dire tout à l'heure, ils répètent partout, ils disent partout; «au lieu ki gouvernement régional donne ou ène travay, ils vous disent d'aller à la banque de développement prendre un emprunt pour faire un projet». Alors, je ne comprends pas, je ne comprends pas. Et avant de terminer toutes ces histoires autour to meet about the bush, pour arriver à la fin pour dire; il faut produire, transformer et exporter. Pour dire toutes ces choses pour à la fin dire tout ça. C'est ce que nous avons dit pendant des années et des années. On a parlé de l'indépendance économique, justement l'indépendance, on parle pas d'indépendance politique mais on parle d'indépendance économique, c'est pourquoi on le dit. Pour arriver à une indépendance politique il faut prendre des mesures courageuses. Alors, to beat about the bush, tourner autour, des petites remarques par ci, par là, Samuelson sous le bras, telle histoire, petit petit pata tata, pour à la fin pour venir dire c'est ce qu'il fallait dire. Produire, transformer et exporter; qui va produire, qui va produire? Et c'est pourquoi là Monsieur le Président, peut-être mon collègue, peut-être qu'il a abordé ces questions concernant l'orientation professionnelle de nos jeunes. Le système d'éducation dans ce pays-là est un mal pour l'avenir de ce pays, est un mal; quand vous voyez des jeunes qui sont au collège, notre système d'éducation purement académique et qui retire ces jeunes de la réalité, disconnect, disconnect de la réalité. Il ne dit pas ça lui l'enseignant, ce n'est pas ce qu'il dit, disconnect de la réalité, c'est pour lui; c'est ce qu'il enseigne aux enfants « disconnect de la réalité ». C'est vrai Monsieur le Président, Vice-président. Mais ce qui m'encourage aujourd'hui, quand je vois certains jeunes qui ont fait la senior, qui viennent me dire; «je vais lancer ma petite entreprise, j'ai deux ou trois arpents de terre, je vais y travailler». Ils ont été libérés, nos jeunes au collège aujourd'hui ne sont pas libérés, il faut les libérer, il faut les libérer des préjugés par apport aux métiers. Une jeune fille dans un journal l'Express parle de l'Autonomie, «Rodrigues s'enfonce de plus en plus dans la pauvreté». Dans un collège où il y a un Evêque catholique et un Evêque Anglican qui ont écrit un livre sur l'autonomie pour dire; l'Autonomie veut dire il faut être responsable, faut savoir être responsable dans ce pays-là». C'est là le gros problème. Le gros problème c'est l'orientation professionnelle, notre système d'éducation qui au lieu de libérer nos jeunes, les disconnect de la réalité, lui compris lui le Minority Leader. On vient nous dire, à nous. On lutte pendant plusieurs années pour que le Redco vienne sous la responsabilité de l'Assemblée Régionale, qu'on ne dirige pas à Rodrigues ces cinq (5) collèges de Maurice ; qu'on nous donne toute la responsabilité, et j'espère que cela va se faire.

Monsieur le Président, Vice-président, le micro crédit, la petite et la moyenne entreprise, mon collègue, le Commissaire de la Jeunesse, est en train de faire un beau travail. Mais quand il parle lui, il parle toujours des histoires un peu mensongères. Il n'y a pas juste poule, ben oui. Si nous pouvions exporter notre poulet demain sur Maurice, avec un label Rodriguais, pourquoi toujours nous, on doit prendre le poulet de Maurice pour venir ici? Est-ce que nous ne pouvons pas demain exporter notre poulet avec un label Rodriguais, «poulet Rodrigues, weh!». Mais alors, only one way ? Two ways ; c'est pourquoi nous allons mettre sur pied une compagnie, nous avons mis provision pour ça. Cette compagnie, après plusieurs discussions, même à Maurice avec certains spécialistes, qu'on doit mettre une compagnie au lieu de faire une loi. Cette compagnie va être créée sous le Company's Act pour assister dans la mise sur pied des associations de producteurs, amener les gens à produire des fruits avec l'agriculture, transformation, de poissons en barquettes, toutes sortes d'affaires. Pourquoi ne pas faire cela nous, pourquoi toujours cette idée toujours on reçoit mais on ne donne pas. Mettre sur pied des programmes de production, exporter et importer des produits. Monsieur

le Vice-président, quand vous voyez ces pommes qu'on nous vend ici, de petites pommes comme ça, moi qui ai vécu en France pendant des années, ces pommes-là on les donne aux cochons. Mais ici des petites pommes comme ça, qui n'a pas de goût, vert, six roupies. Alors cette compagnie, s'il faut importer, importera des produits de qualité. Il ne faut pas que ceux qui importent des produits ici maltraitent la population, et pour une petite pomme de, je sais pas, gros c'est gros comme ça ; ène grenadine, oui grosser ène grenadine, pour six roupies (Rs 6), trois (3) livres du riz. Donc cette compagnie exportera. C'est pourquoi il y aura un boost au niveau de l'agriculture ; la réforme agraire doit se faire. Madame a deux cent cinquante (250) dames qui veulent se lancer dans la petite entreprise. Nous aurons à peu près une centaine de petites entreprises. Mais je dois dire nos plus grandes faiblesses, c'est le manque de personnel pour faire aboutir tout ça, le manque d'arpenteur, le manque de planners, c'est ça notre gros obstacle. Nous aurions aimé aller beaucoup plus vite, et si nous pouvions le faire, ce serait extraordinaire. Deux cent cinquante dames, en plus justement, la nourriture pour les enfants, dans ce mois-ci, on donne des bananes hein, ... banane. Faut encourager les gens à planter ; des achards, des œufs, élever des poules, pas bizin dizef pou nou donne nou zenfants ? Ils disent les choses pour dire simplement, mais ils ne voient pas ce qu'il y a derrière tout cela. Derrière tout ça il y a toute une philosophie, toute une vision qu'à travers un projet, ça va emmener d'autres projets, le tourisme, les hôtels qui vont venir, la charcuterie, les poissons, la pêche en haute mer, petites et moyennes entreprises, transformation. Mais c'est quoi ça ? Demain une dame qui va fournir des achards sera obligée d'acheter des papayes, de trouver trois (3) ou quatre (4) personnes pour râper les papayes. L'autre jour un jeune homme vient me dire, « Monsieur Clair ou conné mone vane pour Rs 3000 papayes dan ène semaine ». Trois mille roupies de papayes pendant une semaine; il gagne plus que s'il travaille comme General Worker dans le gouvernement. Et je connais un jeune qui fait vingt cinq mille roupies (Rs 25,000) par mois. Donc il faut créer cette mentalité d'entrepreneur, cette culture d'entrepreneuriat. Et ensuite cette compagnie va conseiller sur la qualité des produits et des labels. Tous les produits qui vont être vendus sur le marché doivent avoir un label, ce label Rodriguais qui est déjà là, financé par le, l'Union Européenne, il faut l'officialiser, et ensuite il y a le contrôle de la qualité pour empêcher que les gens ne continuent avec des histoires «piment z'orange, piment quoi; piment giraumon». Et ça, c'est ça la discipline, c'est ça le sérieux. Alors qu'on voit en face de nous des personnes qui disent aux gens «faire ou la case kot ou envi, pa bizin permi pou ou vane ou fruit», c'est tolérer l'indiscipline. Pour pouvoir avoir de la popularité, mais quand j'ai parlé à un Premier Ministre de ces petites îles de l'Atlantique, je lui raconte un petit peu des problèmes d'ici, lui aussi il me dit la même chose; l'environnement, la discipline des gens, l'éducation de la population.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais terminer, je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, la culture, associée au développement et à l'économie. Aujourd'hui on parle de culture et économie, culture et développement, Samuelson, ça ! Nou pli loin, nou pli loin ki Samuelson, Samuelson, 71 Samuelson, ça ine dépassé ça Samuelson ! Il y a une nouvelle économie aujourd'hui, il y a des jeunes qui entendent économie, pas besoin d'un Samuelson, et nous savons, nous le savons. Et donc, Monsieur le Président, c'est un élément nouveau dans le développement d'un pays, la culture. J'ai parlé tout à l'heure là, l'identité culturelle dans les études de nos enfants. Nous n'avons pas un livre d'histoire Rodrigues pou nou zenfans connaître l'histoire, même à Maurice ils n'en n'ont pas. Des étrangers font cette remarque; la culture. Et tout développement doit se faire par rapport à la culture de ce pays, au mode de vie des gens, de ce qui existe au niveau de la terre, au niveau de la mer, la manière de vivre, la manière de

parler, la manière d'agir, on ne peut pas imposer une manière de faire, faut que les gens, eux-mêmes, arrivent à découvrir. On a entendu tout à l'heure-là que nous empêchons les gens d'exercer leur liberté. Qu'est-ce que c'est que des histoires-là? Empêchant les gens d'exercer leur liberté, comment? En faisant allusion au bail. Et les gens demandent des terres, des jeunes gens, des jeunes filles, des mères de famille, des couples; mais on regarde tout le monde. Mais il y a des cas qu'il fallait voir, et ensuite, nous sommes sur cent quatre kilomètres carrée (104 km²), il y a l'aspect environnemental qu'on doit tenir en compte. Quand on a vu les films qui nous ont été montrés à la conférence des petits états insulaires, quand on a vu des bâtiments «dans vide», l'érosion, on a construit n'importe comment, n'importe comment et aujourd'hui nous mettons des paramètres, des conditions. Et si vous allez à Tobago, on ne casse pas la terre tout de même. Tobago c'est une, c'est montagneux comme à Rodrigues, ils construisent sur des pilotis: en dessous on peut faire des choses mais la terre n'est pas touchée du tout, du tout. On ne voit pas une terre cassée là, avec des grosses machines comme à Rodrigues. Ça aussi c'est très important, préserver l'environnement. Donc, cette économie que nous voulons mettre en place, c'est à la population de créer cette économie, c'est à la femme rodriguaise et l'homme rodriguais de créer cette économie; par sa manière de faire, par son intelligence, par ses petits projets qu'il essaie de travailler. Il faut de plus en plus la formation à des métiers, le IVTB le fait, il nous faudra poursuivre un peu plus. La formation est à la base de ce développement culturel et économique de ce pays. Logement, Monsieur le Vice-président. En 1981, il y avait des maisons Céline 2; je fais l'historique là, pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas. Ces maisons étaient construites par l'ancien Ministre, l'ex-Ministre, Nicole FRANÇOIS; tôle là-haut, sans salle de bain, sans cuisine, sans toilette et dimoune ti pé dormi après quand tôle pourri; les gens dormaient à la belle étoile. Qu'avons-nous fait? Nous avons mis de l'argent pour mettre une dalle sur ces maisons et ajouté une cuisine, une salle de bain et un endroit si les gens peuvent, installer une toilette dans la maison. Ensuite est venu le projet de logement; trois cents (300) logements sous forme de auto construction. Maisons, deux (2) chambres, trois (3) chambres, cuisine, salle de bain, toilette. Ensuite vient le Trust Fund avec deux (2) petites chambres; sans toilette, sans cuisine, sans salle de bain. Et que font les gens, ceux qui ont un peu d'argent ils ajoutent un petit bout en béton, ceux qui n'ont pas d'argent, ils ajoutent un petit bout de tôle un peu par ci par là, déformant un peu, si vous voulez, le visage de ce type de maison. Mais la maison que nous nous allons proposer, type de maison créole, avec salle de bain, toilette et cuisine, à l'intérieur, pas à l'extérieur, pour que les gens ne viennent pas construire un truc autour de ça pour défigurer ce petit logement. Voilà le logement qu'on va proposer, qui va coûter peut-être autour de cent cinquante mille roupies (Rs 150,000) l'unité, avec possibilité qu'un maçon puisse aider ces personnes incluses dedans, plus le bassin, il faut que le bassin soit d'un bon volume, pas simplement pour une semaine, mais bon pour deux, trois semaines d'eau, il faut voir tout ça. Donc, voilà ce que nous proposons; deux (2) chambres, trois (3) chambres, cuisine, salle de bain et toilette, avec le bassin, toit penché, bien solide. Ils n'aiment pas qu'on propose ces genres de maisons? A quoi ça sert, Monsieur le Vice-président, que vous donniez à un pauvre, quelqu'un qui n'a pas les moyens, une maison? Et puis après? C'est là où nous disons à la personne, il y a un morceau de terrain, essayez de tirer votre nourriture de ce morceau de terrain, faites un petit élevage. Il suffit pas simplement de notre philosophie de donner une maison mais il faut aussi encourager cette personne à gagner sa vie et de ne pas vivre sur l'assistanat, sur l'assistance publique. Et le projet réseau annoncé par mon collègue, c'est un projet justement, et on conscientise les gens qui viennent pour l'assistance publique, pour essayer de les mettre en confiance, pour essayer de leur dire pourquoi vous n'essayez pas

de faire quelque chose, et ça c'est très important. On a vu comme ça, des accompagnateurs scolaires, les accompagnateurs scolaires visitant des dames, causant avec ces personnes, ils ont fait découvrir qu'il y a des personnes qui sont de bons artisans, qui fabriquent des chapeaux extraordinaires et qui ont fait ces personnes-là suivre un cours de formation et aujourd'hui ces personnes-là sont économiquement indépendants.

Monsieur le Président, c'est facile de gagner les élections en disant «mo pou donne ou sa, mo pou donne ou sa, mo pou donne ou sa». C'est pas dans notre politique. C'est ne pas respecter la personne lui-même, ne pas respecter sa dignité, il faut lui dire qu'il a une dignité, c'est dans son travail qu'il a une dignité. «Mo pa pou vote Serge CLAIR parski dire tou dimoune travay». Et moi je travaille chez moi; j'ai planté un grain de giraumon et j'ai gagné quinze (15) giraumons que j'ai partagé avec mes voisins; j'ai de la banane, je partage avec mes voisins. Autrefois, les gens venaient devant moi me demander l'assistance; je leur donnais des semences, je leur expliquais, je prenais mon temps; quand j'étais député, j'avais beaucoup de temps à donner aux gens, hein ! Et aujourd'hui ces personnes-là sont indépendants, ils sont fiers de l'information, de la formation qu'on leur donne. C'est pourquoi ce pays-là doivent être justement, empowered, capacity building pour que vraiment nous puissions aller de l'avant. Monsieur le Président, je voudrais terminer, j'ai parlé longuement, je voudrais terminer en disant au Minority Leader, absent ici, qu'il a parlé de la situation catastrophique à Rodrigues. Vous savez notre réelle vision et la vision de l'autre côté, notre philosophie et leur philosophie c'est différent. Ils parlent toujours de fatalisme, quand nous parlons de 104 km², ils disent c'est fataliste. C'est un langage désespérant. Nous notre langage c'est un langage d'encouragement, d'espoir ; nous ne parlons pas de fatalisme. Nous disons ; au contraire, dans une petite île de 104 km², il nous faudra relever le défi, ce défi que trente-six mille (36,000) habitants peuvent vivre heureux dans une petite île, sans vouloir toujours attendre de l'assistance de l'extérieur, à part le budget, la part du budget national que nous gérons. Mais il y a cette part de la population dans son économie qui est une part, on ne sait pas, mais c'est une grande part. Tout ces produits qui vont à Maurice à travers l'artisanat agro-alimentaire, qui partent pas par les containers, mais qui partent par l'avion. Et ça, c'est là où justement, il nous faudra aller quantifier tout ça. On voit tout ça à travers le nombre de pots qui est acheté tous les ans ; vingt milles (20,000), trente milles (30,000), quarante milles (40,000), cinquante milles (50,000) pots qui partent comme ça et c'est ce que les gens aussi du pays achètent, que moi aussi j'achète, que je mets dans mon riz, dans ma nourriture. Il y a un circuit économique dans ce pays, il y a un circuit économique entre Maurice et Rodrigues déjà qui existe, mais cette compagnie va venir, si vous voulez, officialiser, rationaliser le commerce entre Maurice et Rodrigues et à l'intérieur du pays. On peut nous dire toutes sortes de choses, on peut nous accuser de ceci, de cela, ils passent leur temps à grogner et à relever des défauts, mais on peut pas tout faire Monsieur le Vice-président, dans une année, dans une année on ne peut pas tout faire. Au fil des années il y a des choses qui arrivent. Mais nous mettons la base, les bases au niveau de l'eau, au niveau de la culture, ils contestent cette, évidemment, ce centre culturel. Mais laissez-moi vous dire Monsieur le Président, parler de cinéma à la campagne, mais ce centre culturel il va avoir du cinéma dedans, puis nous pour aller chercher dimoune dans nous quatre quatre pour aller cinéma cadeau ? Nous n'avons pas une bonne salle pour les conférences. L'île Rodrigues doit se placer aussi, Monsieur vice Président, au niveau international, un centre culturel qui place Rodrigues sur le plan international. Une conférence internationale peut se dérouler à Rodrigues; demain les conférences des secteurs publics à Maurice peuvent venir ici. Quelqu'un nous a dit bon, il y a un projet d'un centre de conférence à

Rodrigues. C'est vrai, les gens vont partout pour aller faire des conférences. Mais ce centre culturel, ce sera le cœur, le cœur de cette identité culturelle du peuple Rodriguais, ce sera là où les jeunes vont venir; que ce soit des étudiants, que ce soit ceux en dehors, pour venir découvrir vraiment qui ils sont, créer, apprendre ce qu'est la culture, ce que nous sommes. Faut pas essayer de nous « dévider » de ce que nous sommes; nous sommes ce que nous sommes, nous pouvons pas être autrement, nous pouvons pas copier ni les Seychellois, ni les Réunionnais, ni les Mauriciens, ni les Africains; nous sommes ce que nous sommes. Et ce centre culturel sera le cœur même de cette identité culturelle, sera la base de tout ce qui va permettre à l'éducation, à la culture, au développement économique et social, de se pénétrer de cette culture Rodriguaise. Faut pas croire que c'est une culture diminuée, non, on a de la valeur, eux ils savent pas ce que c'est que la valeur, ils parlent jamais de la valeur, parlent de petites choses par ci, par là. En tout cas, Monsieur le Président, je m'excuse pour ce long moment, mais il j'ai été obligé à travers ce budget, de définir cette vision de ce Gouvernement Régional d'aujourd'hui. Le combat que nous avons mené pendant des années a été imprégné de cette vision culturelle du développement social et économique. Et je suis content qu'aujourd'hui, qu'en Afrique, là il y quelques semaines, quelque jours à Bamako, en février, ils ont cents personnes venues d'ailleurs, ils ont débattu sur le thème «Culture et Développement». Alors, les papiers que j'ai lus, que je lis jusqu'à maintenant, même les Africains s'interrogent sur tout ce qui peut faire à perdre la culture, la mondialisation, la globalisation, toutes sortes d'histoires et je vois comment les Africains ont pu défendre ce concept de culture et développement. Il n'y a pas de développement sans la culture, et c'est ça que j'ai voulu montrer aujourd'hui et que ce peuple doit sortir d'une mentalité d'assistés pour entrer dans une mentalité de producteurs. C'est en 1977, une des résolutions que nous avons votées, en 1977, en avril 77 parmi les dix (10) points et dans ces 10 points justement, on parle de l'identité culturelle de Rodrigues qu'il nous faudra sortir de l'assistanat pour avoir une mentalité de créateurs et de producteurs. Nous faisons confiance à la population et en même temps nous abordons l'autonomie de Rodrigues pour nous permettre justement, de développer ce concept, cette réalité d'identité culturelle Rodriguaise.

Merci, Monsieur le Vice-président.

(Applause)

DRAFT ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

(The House resolves itself into a committee of the whole House with the Deputy Chairperson in the chair)

The Clerk: Estimated current revenues. Page 2, Contribution to Rodrigues Regional Assembly and following up to page 6.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question:

That the sum of Rs 841, 500,000 stand part of the vote. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Estimated Expenditure, page 7, Vote 1, Vote 02, Vote 03, Vote 04, Vote 05, Vote 06, Vote 07 and Vote 08.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Vote 01 (Rodrigues Regional Assembly). Question: that the sum of Rs 8, 520,000 stand part of the vote. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Chief Commissioner's Office - Vote 02-101 – Personal Emoluments – 106,567,000, Other Charges recurrent – Rs 91, 509,000; that is a total of 198, 076,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that 198, 076,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office – Vote 03-101- Personal Emoluments - Rs 153, 018,000, Other Charges recurrent Rs 43, 270,000; total of Rs 196, 288,000 on page 31.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 196, 288,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Vote 04-101 – Commission for Arts & Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare & Child Development, Community Development and Library Services - Personal Emoluments - 6, 335,000, Other Charges recurrent - 12, 193,000, total page 42 - 18, 528,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 18, 528,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Vote 05-101– Commission for Education, Employment, Information Technology and Telecommunication, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites & Buildings and Vocational Training – Personal Emoluments- 44, 556,000, Other charges recurrent- 47, 664, 000, total- Rs 92, 220,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 92, 220,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Vote 06-101- Commission for Health, Co-operatives, Prisons & Reform Institutions and Fire Services- Personal Emoluments- Rs 108, 546,000, Other charges recurrent- 42, 557,000 and total is Rs 151, 103,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 151, 103,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Vote 07(Commission for Youth & Sports, Consumer Protection, Trade, Commerce & Licensing and Handicraft)- Personal Emoluments- 12, 337,000, Other charges recurrent- Rs 11, 965,000 and total is Rs 24, 302,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 24, 302,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those who are in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Vote 08-101-(Commission for Social Security & Labour & Industrial Relations) - Personal Emoluments - 6, 491,000, Other charges recurrent- Rs 145, 972,000, making a total of Rs 152, 463,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 152, 463,000 stand part in the draft estimates. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: The grand total for 2005/2006- Estimated expenditure- Rs 841, 500,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 841, 500,000 stands part in the draft estimates, 2005-2006. Those in favour say ayes, those who are against say no. The ayes have it.

The Clerk: Estimated revenue and estimated expenditure have passed the committee stage. We move on to the draft capital budget 2005/2006 and the first is page 1, capital revenue. So we start with page1 No.51- Grants- contribution from Central Government, European Development Fund, NAO, EPO, international fund for agricultural development, World diversification project, miscellaneous. The estimates for July 2005 to June 2006 is Rs 475, 000, 010. The total of the grants, loans, the returns on investment and the miscellaneous is Rs 475, 000,010.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the amount of Rs 475,000,010 stands part of the estimated capital revenue for financial year 2005-2006. Those in favour say “aye”, those against say “no”. The “ayes” have it.

The Clerk: We move now to Capital Expenditure. Page 2: Estimated Capital expenditure, Vote 31 (services under the control of the Chief Commissioner) the estimates are Rs 105, 200,010.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 105, 200,010 stand part of the draft capital estimates for services under the context of the Chief Commissioner. Those in favour say “ayes”, those who are against say “no”. The “ayes” have it.

The Clerk: Services under the control of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, estimates- Rs 230, 600,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 230, 600,000 stand part of the draft estimates. Those In favour say “ayes”, those who are against say “no”. The “ayes” have it.

The Clerk: Vote 03-103- Services under the control of the Commissioner for Arts & Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare & Child Development, Community Development and Library Services, estimates- Rs 31, 500,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 31, 500,000 stand part of the estimates. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

The Clerk: Vote 104 - Services under the control of the Commissioner for Education & Employment, Information Technology & Telecommunication, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites & Buildings and Vocational Training, estimates- Rs 32, 600,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 32, 600,000 stand part of the estimates. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

The Clerk: Services under the control of the Commissioner for Health, Co-operatives, Prisons, Reform Institutions and Fire Services, estimates- Rs 31, 100,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 31, 100,000 stand part of the estimates. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

The Clerk: 106- Services under the control of the Commissioner for Youth & Sports, Consumer Protection, Trade, Commerce and Licensing- Rs 42, 500,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of Rs 42, 500,000 stand part of the estimates. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

The Clerk: 107- Services under the control of the Commissioner for Social Security, Labour and Industrial Relations- 1, 500,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the sum of 1, 500,000 stand part of the estimates. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

The Clerk: So, the estimates for recurrent and capital expenditure and revenue have been seen in committee. In a few minutes report stage will follow.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, I beg leave to move that you report progress and ask leave to sit again.

(The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that I do report to the House that the draft estimates for recurrent revenue and recurrent expenditure, capital revenue and capital expenditure 2005/2006 have passed the Draft Estimates Committee. Those in favour say Ayes, those who are against say No.

I wish to report that the Draft Estimates Committee has made progress and I have been asked to apply for leave to sit again. Those in favour say "ayes", those who are against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

REPORT STAGE

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I wish to inform the House that the draft estimates have passed the Draft Estimates Committee. Question: the Assembly resolves that for the purpose of section 44 (1) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is approved the draft estimates for recurrent revenue and recurrent expenditure, capital revenue and capital expenditure for the financial year 2005/2006. Those in favour say “ayes”, those who are against say “no”. The “ayes” have it.

The Clerk: All items on the Order Paper have been exhausted.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I move that the House be adjourned to Tuesday 29th March, 2005 at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Question: that the House do adjourn to Tuesday 29th March, 2005 at 10.30 a.m. Those in favour say “ayes”, those who are against say “no”. The “ayes” have it.

The House stands adjourned at 5.10 p.m.

On its rising at 5.10 p.m., the Assembly was adjourned to Tuesday 29th March, 2005 at 10.30 a.m.