

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Commissioner (Mr Louis Serge CLAIR): M. le Président, le 22 mars à 15.00 heures, Sir Satcam Boolell s'éteignit à l'âge de 85 ans. Il laissa ainsi un vide, non seulement pour sa famille, mais aussi pour tous ceux qui l'ont connu. Dans un élan de reconnaissance à sa contribution à la République de Maurice, le Premier Ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, décida de lui offrir des funérailles nationales et annula toutes les fonctions officielles du Cabinet. Dans ce même élan, j'ai décidé de faire renvoyer la séance de l'Assemblée Régionale du 24 mars pour aujourd'hui. L'obituaire en son honneur a été exprimé dans une session à l'Assemblée Nationale, décrétée spéciale pour l'occasion, que j'ai eu l'honneur d'y assister, aussi bien qu'une délégation de l'Assemblée. Le cheminement politique de Sir Satcam Boolell fut remarquable à plusieurs égards.

Il débuta dans la politique en 1952, à son retour d'Angleterre où il compléta sa formation d'avocat. Il fut auparavant enseignant et officier dans la fonction publique. En 1953, se présentant comme candidat indépendant de l'*Independent Forward Bloc*, il est élu pour la première fois dans la circonscription Moka/Quartier Militaire. Subséquemment, il adhéra au parti Travailleiste en 1955 et fut réélu en 1959, 1963 et 1967. De 1967 à 1968, il occupa le porte-feuille de l'éducation. De 1968 à 1982 il fut ministre de l'agriculture. Il fut élu encore en 1983 et devint ministre du plan et du développement économique jusqu'en 1985. Finalement, en 1986, il fut nommé Vice-premier Ministre, Ministre de la justice et Ministre des affaires étrangères.

Après les élections générales de 1987, j'ai eu le privilège de siéger avec Sir Satcam Boolell au Conseil des Ministres. Il fut un homme très simple, d'une très grande connaissance. Je tiens à souligner que ce grand tribun, a reçu des haute distinctions, non seulement à Maurice, mais aussi à l'étranger. Ainsi, en 1977, il devint Chevalier de la Couronne d'Angleterre, Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur en 1989, titre décerné par la République de France, et Chevalier de la Grande Croix de Saint Georges Le Grand. Il fut ainsi honoré par les institutions académiques. En 1985, l'Université de Maurice lui confère le titre de docteur en droits civils, *Honoris Causa* et en 2000, il reçoit le titre de docteur en droits, *Honoris Causa* de l'université de Londres, le South Bank University.

Le 12 mars de cette année, il obtint la plus haute distinction de la République de Maurice, le *Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean*. Cela vint, à juste titre, couronner sa grande carrière politique. Il faut souligner qu'en 1965, il fut un des 13 membres du Parti Travailleiste qui participèrent à la conférence historique à Londres, le *Lancaster House Constitutional Conference*.

Permettez-moi, M. le Président, de vous faire la requête de donner des instructions au Clerc de l'Assemblée Régionale, d'envoyer les sincères condoléances du gouvernement régional, et de cette assemblée à son épouse Lady Myrna Boolell et à ses enfants l'honorable Arvin Boolell, Ministre de l'agro-industrie et de la pêche, M. Satyajit Boolell et Mme. Mira Khushiram.

Merci.

The Minority Leader (Mr Johnson ROUSSETY) : M. le Président, nous avons eu l'occasion, mardi dernier, d'assister à l'obituaire de Sir Satcam Boolell, ancien Vice-Premier Ministre et homme politique, combattant de l'indépendance aux côtés du père de la nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. Sir Satcam Boolell a eu un parcours exemplaire et cela a été très bien présenté par le Premier Ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam mardi dernier à l'Assemblée Nationale, avec beaucoup d'émotion. Ce que j'ai retenu, M. le Président, en tant que jeune politicien, du parcours de Sir Satcam Boolell dans la presse et tel que présenté par le Premier Ministre et le Speaker et le leader de l'opposition à Maurice, c'est l'exemple d'un combattant, dans la vie – non seulement la vie publique mais aussi la vie personnelle.

Sir Satcam Boolell est un enfant de New Grove, *an underprivileged child* de l'époque coloniale, qui a dû marcher pour aller à l'école, qui a étudié par correspondance pour pouvoir avoir ses diplômes, sa forme IV, sa forme V. Il partit, à ses propres frais, étudier en premier lieu l'économie à la London School of Economics, est revenu à Maurice et est reparti, avec ses économies, étudier encore une fois la loi, à la London School of Economics.

M. le Président, comme vient de le souligner le chef Commissaire, Sir Satcam Boolell a reçu les plus grandes distinctions nationales et internationales dans son engagement pour la justice, la démocratie et le progrès du peuple mauricien.

M. le Président, Sir Satcam Boolell a été celui qui a tenu les rênes du Parti Travailleiste Mauricien avant la reprise par le Dr. Ramgoolam. Il était envers et contre tous pour lutter pour ce parti, qui, aujourd'hui, comme vous le savez, forme *the core of government* à Maurice.

M. le Président, Sir Satcam Boolell, tout comme Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam et les grands tribuns comme Guy Rosemont, Sir Gaetan Duval, mérite une attention et un honneur beaucoup plus prononcé à Rodrigues. Je voudrais faire un appel ici pour que le nom de Sir Satcam Boolell et les autres grands tribuns de la République de Maurice soient donnés aux édifices publics, aux rues de Rodrigues, aux stades, aux écoles, aux collèges de cette île.

M. le Président, je me joins au chef Commissaire pour m'associer à la requête de transmettre les condoléances de cette Assemblée à l'épouse de Sir Satcam Boolell, Lady Boolell, à notre ami parlementaire et ministre, Arvin Boolell et à toute la famille Boolell et ses proches dans ces moments difficiles.

Merci.

Mr Chairperson : Membres distingués, je joins ici le chef Commissaire et le chef de la minorité dans leurs expressions de sympathie envers la famille de Sir Satcam Boolell.

Ces sympathies ici exprimées, seront communiquées à son épouse Lady Myrna Boolell, ses trois enfants, l'honorable Arvin Boolell, M. Satyajit Boolell et Mme. Mira Boolell.

Merci.

MOTION - CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Chief Commissioner (Mr Louis Serge CLAIR) : Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name, which reads as follows :-

"This Assembly resolves that for the purpose of Section 44(1) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is approved the draft estimates of recurrent revenue and recurrent expenditure and capital revenue and capital expenditure for the financial year 2006/2007."

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, copies of the Draft Recurrent and Capital Estimates for financial year 2006/2007 are being tabled for circulation to members for approval by this Assembly.

I beg to move the motion.

Monsieur le Président, j'ai le privilège de présenter aujourd'hui le cinquième budget de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, sous le thème **"Empower the Population"** c'est à dire, il faut travailler à rendre productifs tous les hommes et toutes les femmes qui vivent dans cette île Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Mauritius is facing unprecedented challenges with the triple external shocks, namely the dismantling of the Multifibre Agreement, soaring oil prices and the sharp cuts in the guaranteed sugar prices. In addition, the economy is being constrained by numerous rigidities and economic imbalances that undermine its prospects for sustained growth, investment and job creation. The sustained high budget deficits over the past few years have substantially increased the public debt burden.

That is why for the 2006/2007 Budget and other forthcoming budgets, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has established a rule of no real increase in total government expenditure. In this context, the provisions for filling of vacancies and the creation of new posts have been limited to its minimum.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has issued guidelines to tighten expenditure control and to cut down unproductive spending.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this year's budget is being presented after the coming into office of the new Government in Mauritius following the General Elections held in July 2005.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this budget has been prepared after my colleagues Commissioners and myself had pre-budgetary consultations with all stakeholders in Rodrigues. I wish to thank all persons and associations who submitted valuable suggestions for the betterment of Rodrigues. All suggestions received have been given due consideration in the formulation of this budget.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, like in previous years the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development and officials of his Ministry have been consulted prior to the formulation of the draft estimates for the next financial year.

Monsieur le Président, après seulement trois années d'autonomie, l'île Rodrigues a connu un progrès sans précédent dans son développement économique et social. Nous avons continué avec des budgets successifs à consolider les bases solides pour construire une île Rodrigues meilleure.

Les dépenses et investissements ont été encourus pour assurer l'avenir de la nouvelle génération et améliorer la qualité de la vie de la population dans les domaines tels que l'éducation, la santé, le logement, l'approvisionnement en eau, les facilités sportives et les structures sociales et économiques.

Monsieur le Président, le gouvernement régional veut renforcer davantage sa stratégie de développement économique, culturel et social et donner aussi une attention prioritaire pour stimuler les secteurs productifs de notre économie tels que l'agriculture, l'agro-alimentaire, les petites et moyennes entreprises, le tourisme, la pêche et autres.

Monsieur le Président, nous reconnaissons que l'entrepreneuriat a un rôle crucial à jouer dans la création des entreprises dans le développement économique et social de Rodrigues. De plus, cela permettra l'émergence d'un secteur privé rodriguais dynamique et solide conformément à notre politique de promouvoir une culture de l'entrepreneuriat.

Monsieur le Président, le 12 mars nous avons célébré le 38^{ème} anniversaire de notre indépendance et le 14^{ème} anniversaire de la République ayant pour thème *"Nou pays nou fierté"* qui a été un moment fort pour la république. Monsieur Raouf Bundhun, Vice-Président de la République de Maurice, qui a honoré la célébration de sa présence, nous a inspiré et encouragé par son allocution, qui a confirmé les progrès dans le développement de notre île et à continuer sur cette voie.

Permettez-moi de me référer ici à cette partie de l'allocution du Vice-Président. Je cite:

"le travail abattu pendant ces trois ans a touché presque tous les secteurs importants: l'aviation, le tourisme, l'environnement, la pêche, les infrastructures, la santé, l'éducation, les routes, l'eau, l'agriculture, le logement entre autres. Les habitants de Rodrigues connaissent de ce fait une transformation spectaculaire et une amélioration notable de leur vie quotidienne avec un développement fulgurant dans tous les domaines".

Fin de citation.

De même, ce gouvernement régionale est convaincu que durant son présent mandat, les investissements entrepris ont permis de consolider les acquis de l'île Rodrigues autonome et de créer les conditions propices pour son développement économique avec la participation active de la population.

Monsieur le Président, il y a eu des contraintes au niveau des procédures pour amender les lois existantes à Maurice afin de créer différents fonds pour le bien-être des étudiants, pêcheurs, planteurs, éleveurs et artisans comme annoncés dans les précédents budgets. Suite à la rencontre que j'ai eue avec le Ministre de la Justice, l'honorable Jayarama Valayden, les procédures seront accélérées pour mettre sur pied ces différents fonds.

Monsieur le Président, pour l'année 2006-2007, notre programme d'action sera axé sur les secteurs suivants:

Premièrement, l'augmentation de la capacité de production et de stockage d'eau et l'amélioration du réseau de distribution pour les besoins domestiques et d'irrigation;

Deuxièmement, la continuation du développement de l'infrastructure routière et communautaire;

Troisièmement, l'éducation et la formation continue afin d'intégrer la nouvelle génération dans le développement de l'île;

Quatrièmement, la mise en place d'un système complet du cadastre et l'institution d'un cadre légal pour l'aménagement et de la bonne gestion des terres;

Cinquièmement, la poursuite du programme de logement social;

Sixièmement, la promotion touristique de Rodrigues comme une île écologique et authentique;

Septièmement, le développement soutenu des petites et moyennes entreprises dans tous les secteurs de production tels que l'agriculture, l'agro-alimentaire, la pêche et l'artisanat et la mise en place d'une structure commerciale pour faciliter l'écoulement des produits locaux;

Huitièmement, l'amélioration des services de santé;

Neuvièmement, la construction et l'amélioration des facilités sportives et de loisirs;

Dixièmement, la préservation de l'environnement et une meilleure gestion de l'environnement et une meilleure gestion des déchets;

Onzièmement, la consolidation du statut économique de la femme et la protection des droits de la famille et de l'enfant; et

Douzièmement, l'épanouissement d'une culture identitaire et artistique.

REVIEW

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I shall now report progress in the implementation of the Budget 2005-2006.

Education

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, education has a vital role to play in the development of Rodrigues especially with the advent of autonomy. As such, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has always placed education as a high priority on its agenda and tremendous efforts have been made to improve the infrastructural set up of our institutions at both primary and secondary levels.

During this financial year, the following projects are being implemented:

- (i) extension of Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School by six classrooms among which one room will be utilized for the teaching of computer studies;
- (ii) construction of a new toilet block at Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School for pre-primary section;
- (iii) resurfacing of the schoolyard at Batatran and Port-Sud-Est Government Schools;
- (iv) painting works at Batatran Government School; and
- (v) construction of a retaining wall at Le Chou College.

In addition, tendering procedures have been initiated for the following projects:

- (a) construction of four classrooms at Terre Rouge Government School for the pre-primary section; and

- (b) rehabilitation of the existing toilet block at Basile Allas Port Mathurin , Terre Rouge, Port-Sud-Est and Batatran Government schools.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the approval of the Central Tender Board is being awaited for the award of a contract for the construction of two Community schools at Montagne Charlot and Araucaria/Mont Lubin to relieve pressure on Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School and at Sainte Famille RCA School.

In addition 37 Teachers/Senior Teachers have benefited from an Advanced Certificate in Education and a cohort of 27 Deputy Head Teachers has followed a Certificate in Education Management. The beneficiaries of these courses have acquired additional skills and aptitudes that will enable them to better contribute to the teaching and learning of their pupils.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the context of the School Feeding Project, milk and bread as well as jam, butter, cheese and fruits are distributed to both pre-primary and primary pupils. In addition, pupils of Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus RCA School which is a "*Zone d'Education Prioritaire*" project, are still being provided with a balanced lunch on a daily basis.

It is encouraging to note that the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* project at this school is already giving positive results as reflected in CPE pass rate which has increased significantly from 40% to 56% this year.

The project "*Appui Régional à la Promotion d'une Education pour la Gestion de l'Environnement*" (ARPEGE) has been extended to thirteen institutions and to two secondary schools namely Le Chou and Rodrigues Colleges.

With a view to promoting Information Technology at primary school level, action has been initiated to set up fully equipped computer rooms in the first instance at Batatran and Terre Rouge Government schools and St. Esprit RCA School.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards secondary education, consultations with respect to the management of REDCO Colleges are still ongoing with the Central Government and we will come up with a positive decision shortly.

Monsieur le Président, j'ai le plaisir d'annoncer qu'il y a actuellement sept étudiants qui suivent des cours au SSR Medical College depuis que nous avons introduit des bourses pour les études en médecine en 2004. Suite aux discussions que j'ai eues avec la direction de l'Ecole de Médecine, deux places seront

réservées pour les étudiants Rodriguais chaque année. Une somme de deux millions de roupies (Rs 2.0 m) est prévue à cet effet.

Human Resource Centre

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Human Resource Centre whose mission is to facilitate the promotion of capacity building in Rodrigues has during financial year 2005-2006 undertaken a number of training programmes for public in general.

The following programmes were organized:

- (i) a Diploma Course in Civil Engineering for Technical Officers of the Commission for Public Infrastructure;
- (ii) a Certificate Course in Purchasing and Supply Management for Purchasing and Supply Officers run by the University of Technology of Mauritius;
- (iii) a Maintaining Quality at Work Course for Front Line Officers and Office Caretakers;
- (iv) an Induction Course for newly recruited Clerks, Word Processing Operators and Assistant Finance Officers;
- (v) a Training of Trainers' Course for the pool of local trainers;
- (vi) a Diploma Course in Management run by the University of Mauritius,
- (vii) a Certificate Course in Computer Applications delivered by Le Chou Industrial and Vocational Training Centre; and
- (viii) a training programme for tourist guides and promoters of the tourism business.

In addition, a training plan based on the recommendations of the four Indian Experts who carried out the Training Needs Assessment for all the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been prepared for the public sector for the next two years.

As regards careers' guidance, the Human Resource Centre is working in partnership with the *Réseau pour l'Orientation Scolaire et l'Insertion Professionnelle* and during the period under review, the following activities have been carried out:

- training of the members of the *Réseau* sponsored by the French Embassy;
- preparation of an Action Plan for year 2006;
- devising a *fiche d'orientation* for form III and V students to ensure that these students make the right choice of subjects at SC and HSC levels as regards their interests, their academic performance as well as opportunities for further studies, available scholarships and job prospects;
- a Bridging the Gap Initiative between Prevocational Teachers of year 3 and those of year 4 to ensure a better transition of prevocational students to Le Chou Training Centre;
- an information booklet on scholarships available in Rodrigues has been prepared;
- providing information in connection with training opportunities at the University of Mauritius and the Polytechnic Schools and facilitating enrolment in these institutions; and
- organisation of information and training session on Job Searching Techniques for the unemployed.

Formulation of a Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the tender for consultancy services for the formulation of a Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues was advertised in August 2005 and the approval of the Central Tender Board has been obtained for the award of the contract. It is expected that the consultant will start work by end of April 2006 and the Plan will be submitted within nine months. The integrated plan will provide an overall strategy for the social and economic development of the island with a focus on employment in order to enable Rodrigues to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Computerisation

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to further improving the management of the human resources of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, a contract has been awarded to the State Informatics Ltd to integrate the existing Personnel and Payroll Systems of the Central Administration. Although these two systems share common databases, they are not directly interfaced to enable adjustments and changes brought to a system to impact on the other. The new integrated Human Resource Management System will encompass Personnel, Payroll and Computation of Benefits.

All Commissions will soon be able to access the system, which will be located in the Central Administration through an Intranet system which will be operational during the course of this financial year. To this end, a contract has been awarded to Mauritius Telecom to instal leased lines to interconnect all the Commissions.

Tourism

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following the workshop held with all stakeholders of the tourism sector, a strategy has been defined to ensure a sustainable development of the sector. The main factors constraining the development of the tourism sector in Rodrigues were identified and several recommendations made.

The development of the Eco-Tourism concept was favoured for Rodrigues and emphasis was laid on promotion activities targeting Mauritius, Reunion and Europe, the three main potential tourist markets.

A Tourism Promotion Committee was set up, comprising local tourist associations, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, Air Mauritius and Airport of Rodrigues Limited to look into promotion strategies.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with our promotion strategy, a *Festival de Rodrigues* was organized at the Caudan Waterfront in Mauritius in September 2005 followed by a Rodrigues Week in Reunion Island in November 2005. These promotion campaigns together with the coming into operation of the Catovair airline in September 2005 and the special packages offered by both Air Mauritius and Catovair, have contributed to an increase in the number of tourist arrivals.

The participation of Rodrigues in two tourism international fairs held recently in France has contributed in making Rodrigues a better known eco-

tourism destination. On the same lines, procedures have been initiated for the setting up of a web site and the production of appropriate promotion materials.

Another factor, which led to the increase in tourist arrivals, is the decrease in the price of air tickets resulting from the exemption of Passenger Service Charge of 250 rupees for passengers embarking from Mauritius to Rodrigues. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like here to thank the government of Mauritius for this decision and in particular the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism for this laudable initiative.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in February this year, I led a delegation from Rodrigues to participate in *Les Assises du Tourisme* organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications. A special workshop was devoted to Rodrigues to review the marketing strategy with a view to boosting up the tourism sector.

State Lands

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the management of state lands in Rodrigues is a major issue that is being addressed to achieve sustainable development. In this context, leases are being granted for residential, industrial, agricultural, commercial and social purposes.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, land administration and management of information pertaining to state land leases, applications and revenue collection are being gradually improved through the upgrading of the Computerised Land Lease System and the Revenue Collection System.

The land administration has been reorganised where a Work Flow Management System is being put into place to monitor processing of applications, site surveys and granting of leases for state lands.

A new approach is being adopted in the delivery of leases to ensure that lessees are made aware of their responsibilities, environmental issues and other conditions governing the lease agreement.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in addition, the tender for a Housing and Cadastral Survey throughout Rodrigues has been finalised and is awaiting Central Tender Board's approval for the award of the contract. This survey is a prerequisite for rationalizing the allocation and regularization of residential, industrial and commercial leases.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, land use planning remains an important aspect of management of state land in Rodrigues. In August 2005, a workshop was conducted with the collaboration of two consultants and a draft planning bill as well as proposals for strengthening of the planning framework has been worked out.

Port Development

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the storage and the light cargo off-loading areas of the Port have been resurfaced and the access road from the transit park leading to the quay is being upgraded.

Fisheries

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a fish landing station has already been constructed at Grand Baie and Tamarin respectively. These stations will provide appropriate amenities for both the Fisheries Protection Officers and the Fishers Community in the regions.

The Fishing vessel Diego Rodriguez has been repaired and is being used for the training of off-lagoon fishermen. To date fifty-six fishermen have been trained and have been issued a Conditional Fishermen Registration Card in order to enable them to obtain loan facilities from the Development Bank of Mauritius to start fishing around the Fish Aggregating Devices.

Tender procedures have been initiated for the purpose of community boats under the IFAD programme for off-lagoon fishing. In this context, fishers are being sensitised with a view to encouraging them to group themselves into cooperatives to benefit from this project.

Environment

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the protection of the environment is the pre-requisite for a good and healthy quality of life for the population and the development of the tourism sector. As such, emphasis has been laid on the embellishment of the physical environment, including roadsides and public places. Works have already started for the setting up of a green space at Malabar.

Two private companies have been authorised to collect scrap metals lying around Rodrigues and two hundred tons have been shipped to Mauritius for recycling.

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Study for the construction of the landfill site at Pointe au Sel is being finalised and a draft tender document has already been prepared.

The first phase of the upgrading project at St. Francois beach has been completed with the construction of an access road and the second phase is due to be completed by July this year.

Natural Disaster

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the first phase in the construction of drains in the region of Oyster Bay, is ongoing and will be completed in April 2006 at the cost of 4.0 million rupees.

A study for a drainage system along Victoria and Lucchesi streets in Port Mathurin is being carried out by the consultant.

Agriculture

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a one-stop shop has been launched at Port Sud Est where there is an important community of farmers. Construction of another one-stop shop at Trèfles has been completed and will be inaugurated in the coming days.

Irrigation structures at Grand Var, Rivière Banane, Gravières and Mourouck have been completed. Other irrigation works are ongoing at St D'or and Baie Malgache.

Water troughs at Grenade and Baie Malgache have been rehabilitated and are now operational.

A parcel of land has been put at the disposal of ex-IVTB students at St. Gabriel. They have obtained facilities such as land preparation, provision of seeds and pesticides, the installation of an irrigation network, and they have received technical guidance from officers of the Agricultural Services.

A group of beekeepers who went on a study tour to Reunion Island in December 2005 was also given practical training by a consultant in February/March 2006.

Land mechanisation services offered to planters have been improved with the acquisition of five power tillers for use on terraced land. A number of orchard equipment and sprayers have also been acquired and will be given on loan to different groups of farmers.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the process of implementing the agrarian reform, an Agricultural Land Office and an Irrigation Unit have been set up. The Agricultural Land Office will accelerate the processing of applications for agricultural state land leases. Special attention is being given to projects of the Network Support Services which aim at enabling the beneficiaries to become more self reliant.

Moreover, some 1500 planters have been registered and issued with planters' cards.

Public Infrastructure

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Consultancy Services provided to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the Global Project Management Consultancy Services have proved to be very helpful for the design and implementation of capital projects. During this financial year twenty-eight projects were initiated of which fifteen have reached tender stage and twelve are in progress.

Roads

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a total amount of one hundred and twenty-five million rupees will be invested in the construction of the following roads which will be completed during this financial year:-

- the first phase of the Mont Lubin – Pte Coton – St. Francois road from Mont Lubin to Grande Montagne;
- the Mont Lubin to Dans Bébé road; and
- the Mont Lubin to Citronelle road.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the construction of a network of track roads and footpaths is also being implemented to provide access in deprived regions. So far, some eight villages have been involved with voluntary labour for their construction and some twenty more track roads/footpaths would be completed during this financial year.

The tender for a river crossing at Graviers to provide access to villagers in the vicinity of Graviers and Anse Fémie was also launched in February 2006.

Water Resources

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards water supply, the contract for the laying of new pipelines from Petit Brule Reservoir to Montagne Piquant Reservoir with connections into Roche Bon Dieu Reservoir and Grenade Reservoir has been awarded for the sum of 10.2 million rupees. Works started in May 2005 and will be completed within this financial year.

The contract for the construction of a second pipeline from Coromandel Reservoir to Montagne Cabris Reservoir was awarded for the sum of 4.1 million rupees. Works started in August 2005 and will also be completed within this financial year.

The contract for the water supply project at Fond Accacia comprising the upgrading of the intake structure, construction of a 1000 m³ service reservoir and a treatment plant of capacity up to 20 m³ per hour including ancillary pipe works was awarded for the sum of 121.1 million rupees.

The tender for the construction of three service reservoirs at Anse Baleine, l'Union and Anse Quitar in reinforced concrete including the necessary feeder pipeline was launched in November 2005 and the approval of the Central Tender Board has been obtained for the award of the contract for the sum of twenty three million seven hundred thousand rupees (Rs 23.7 m).

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the tender for the construction of the Pave La Bonté Dam of a capacity of 68,000 m³ capacity was launched in August 2005 and the approval of the Central Tender Board is being awaited for the award of the contract.

Furthermore, the draft tender documents for the desalination project was submitted by the consultant and amendments are being proposed regarding recent technological developments in this sector. The consultant has also submitted a draft tender document for oceanic surveys and site investigations.

Transport

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a Rodrigues Transport Committee has been set up and the inspectorate of the National Transport Authority has been strengthened with the recruitment of two Road Transport Inspectors. Public transport is being closely monitored and more checks and inspections on all types of vehicles are being carried out.

A new bus route from Port Mathurin to Montagne Malgache will be operational soon. In this connection the Road Transport Committee has already invited applications for the grant of road service licenses.

The free travel scheme for school children, senior citizens and handicapped is being implemented.

Housing

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards housing, the tender document for the construction of housing units for the low income groups has been submitted to the Central Tender Board for the launching of tenders. A Housing Scheme for the Elderly for the rehabilitation and renovation of their houses is also being implemented. Besides, the exercise for the allocation of 83 low cost housing units at a highly subsidised price will be completed shortly.

Under the NHDC Housing Scheme for the casting of roof slabs financed by Government, 101 beneficiaries were granted a sum of 3.2 million rupees during this financial year.

Arts and Culture

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the study on Culture and Development of Cultural Industries has been completed and the recommendations are being examined for implementation.

The Construction of a Cultural Centre at Malabar which will be completed before the end of financial year 2005-2006 is due to become operational in the next financial year.

A “*Lieu de Mémoire*” has been created at l’Union where a “*Monument aux Esclaves*” was inaugurated on 1 February 2006. Moreover, the historic site is being upgraded for conversion into a “*parcours culturel*”.

Women and Family

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a shelter at Oyster Bay for victims of domestic violence has become operational since December 2005.

Family support and counselling services and the services of a Psychologist and a Legal Adviser are also being provided to the public on a regular basis.

Training sessions have been organised for members of the “*Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violence Domestique*” as well as for benevolent social workers engaged in attending to family matters and a sensitisation campaign on domestic violence has been launched by the Association.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a twelve-month sensitisation campaign has been launched throughout the island with barristers-at-law in order to explain the legal provisions relating to the rights of the family and the remedies available in case of non-observance of these rights. More involvement of men has been secured for the solution of problems affecting the family.

In order to reward the efforts of women entrepreneurs, promote local talents and encourage women at large to launch small scale enterprises, a first Annual Women Entrepreneur Award was successfully organised.

Some 500 women have been grouped into five regional associations of entrepreneurs which, in turn, have set up a Federation known as the “*Forum des Femmes Entrepreneurs de Rodrigues*” to promote women entrepreneurship and enable their participation in the economic development of the island.

A Small Enterprise Development Scheme has been launched to assist women’s associations with grants of a maximum of 15,000 rupees per project. Under this scheme, some three hundred thousand rupees will be paid to women’s associations.

The Women Centre at Malabar has been reconstructed to provide more facilities to women. A Women Training Centre has also been opened at La Ferme.

The services of a Consultant from the University of Mauritius have been enlisted to carry out a social survey to identify the causes of teenage pregnancy and to look into its implications so as to find out remedies for this problem.

A Rodrigues Children Council Bill has been passed in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and is awaiting enactment by the National Assembly.

Public Libraries

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the services of the Public Library are being improved with:-

- (a) the construction of a new building at Port Mathurin to accommodate more readers;
- (b) the establishment of a children's corner;
- (c) a hall for displaying new books and organising discussions with students and readers in general on matters of public interest;
- (d) an aggressive campaign to increase the readership rate and the number of subscribers; and
- (e) the involvement of "*Comités de Soutien*" for activities and animations on books at the various "*Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle*".

Free access to internet in all public libraries of the island and the extension of opening hours have proved advantageous to students and the public at large.

The World Book Day was celebrated by the organisation of literary competitions.

Poverty Alleviation and Community Development

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, special attention has been given to vulnerable groups and individuals by the setting up of various programmes to address the issue of poverty.

Assistance is being given to needy persons who have no place to live and who were:-

- (a) living in unacceptable housing conditions;
- (b) out of employment;
- (c) meeting difficulties to afford education for their children; and
- (d) in financial difficulties to feed their family.

Some one hundred thousand rupees have been paid to dependents of persons who died in dramatic circumstances under the “Women and Children in Distress Scheme”.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Rural Development Programme financed by IFAD, through income generating activities, is coming to an end in June 2006. At the completion date, some 40 million rupees will have been spent on community projects in the following fields:-

- (a) infrastructural works (track roads, community centres, pre-primary schools);
- (b) environmental projects;
- (c) purchase of agricultural and other equipment and tools;
- (d) training of beneficiaries of the project ; and
- (e) acquisition of community boats for fishermen co-operatives.

Employment

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the purpose of the Employment Information Centre is to enable registered unemployed to obtain a job by making available reliable and up to date information to job seekers as well as implementing the Labour Market Information System.

The Employment Information Centre is equipped with a documentation centre with books and magazines on various careers’ prospects.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Employment Counselling has been introduced recently so as to impart job seekers with important information on jobs, job

profiles, and training facilities so as to provide them with necessary tools which will subsequently help them to become more employable and self-employed.

Vocational Training and Information Technology

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Le Chou Multi-Purpose Training Centre provides today some twelve trade courses grouped under the following main clusters:-

- Technical trades;
- Information and Communication Technology; and
- The Hospitality sector.

To date, 300 students have attended full time courses, whereas 975 have attended part time courses and 117 registered unemployed have followed other vocational training courses ranging from mechanics, masonry and concrete, vegetable production, welding, apiculture, etc.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some 60 students who have completed their third year's Prevocational Education in the five colleges of Rodrigues were admitted at Le Chou Training Centre for a fourth year Bridging Course. On successful completion of same, they may eventually have access to the National Trade Certificate Foundation Level 3 courses.

During this financial year, sponsorship was provided to 20 trainees under the National Apprenticeship Scheme in the field of hospitality trade, such as Frontline Office, Restaurant/Bar and Housekeeping.

A Certificate in Computer Applications Course for SC and HSC holders is also being run to promote an IT culture.

Health Services

Monsieur le Président, nous croyons que *La Richesse d'un pays repose sur la bonne santé de son peuple*. This is why this Regional Government is fully committed to improve the health and quality of life of the population through continual investment in the health infrastructures and services.

Capital investments include the purchasing of state-of-the-art medical equipment such as anaesthetic machine for the operating theatre and a new CTG (Cardiography) machine for the Maternity Ward, a refrigerated centrifuge for the laboratory and additional incubators for the maternity and paediatric ward.

The visiting specialist frequency has been increased in the field of cardiology, orthodontology and dermatology. There are improvements in other fields such as physiotherapy, haemodialysis, electro-cardiography, laboratory, dental care services and radiology.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with our objective to provide better health services to the population, major infrastructural works have been undertaken as follows:-

- the extension to the Mont Lubin Area Health Centre is well underway to provide for added health service facilities;
- the covering of alleys linking the Female Ward, Maternity Ward and the Operation Theatre will be completed by mid April 2006; and
- the conversion of the old X-Ray Theatre into a second Operation Theatre.

Moreover, the contract for the construction of a modern Maternity Ward has been awarded for the sum of 41 million rupees and works will start soon.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, procedures have been initiated to recruit a first batch of Health Care Assistants to provide assistance with respect to personal hygiene and welfare of patients.

Training of the health personnel with a view to promoting a better service remains a priority. Four Officers have successfully completed their training for a Diploma in Mental Health and three in Community nursing. Three Nursing Officers have also completed their training at the Nursing School in Mauritius for appointment as Nursing Supervisors and eight newly recruited student nurses have enrolled on a three-year training course in Mauritius.

Public Health

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a Quality Management System in the Public Health Office has been introduced.

An Extensive Health Education Campaign has been launched to sensitise both consumers and food vendors on sale and consumption of safe food and the requirements of the food Act.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is worth mentioning that the sanitary conditions prevailing in the slaughterhouse at the Port Mathurin market have been improved considerably. A stunner has been installed in the slaughter house to facilitate the slaughtering of animals.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the authorities in Rodrigues are well aware of the health hazard caused by Chikungunya in the region and timely action has been taken to prevent its propagation in Rodrigues. A cleaning campaign has been undertaken all around Rodrigues with the collaboration of the population and the private sector. The population is now conscious that their active participation is vital in combating the proliferation of mosquitoes in their surroundings.

Furthermore, strict measures have been taken at Plaine Corail Airport to prevent the propagation of communicable diseases such as malaria and Chikungunya. The World Health Organisation has donated a vehicle to enhance public health surveillance. Passengers coming from or having visited a malarious country are screened and placed under health surveillance.

Co-operatives

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, necessary support has been provided to co-operators for the import of agricultural inputs, day old chicks, animal feed, veterinary products and the marketing of their products.

A steering committee has been set up to support the co-operative sector to enable it to face the economic challenges lying ahead. Credit Unions have been called upon to play a more important role in the issue of small loans for small scale business. Nassola Cooperative Society has already negotiated a loan from IFAD for on-lending through the Development Bank of Mauritius to recipients for the purchase of inputs to be transformed into finished products for sale.

Fire Services

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Fire Services have been equipped with a mobile fire fighting pump and other equipment for the protection of the community at large against fire hazards, cyclone and flooding.

Youth

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, our young people are being placed at the centre of the development process. The Regional Government is very much concerned and committed towards the empowerment of the youth through comprehensive youth development programmes.

Training, talks, seminars and conferences were organised for some three hundred and fifty youth leaders.

Given that the youth need plenty of leisure facilities in addition to being provided with necessary skills to contribute actively to the development of Rodrigues, several activities were organised to cater for these needs. For the second time, the International Youth Day was celebrated with splendour during which the logo of the Commission for Youth and sports was unveiled.

Sports

Monsieur le Président, il est impérieux de signaler les principales réalisations dans le domaine du sport. En septembre 2005, le Championnat Inter Ile Cadet a été organisé avec la collaboration d'autres partenaires. Les athlètes de la Réunion et de Maurice ont pu faire valoir leurs talents sportifs. Ceux de Rodrigues, participant sous la bannière de la République de Maurice, n'ont pas manqué de faire bonne prestation sur le terrain.

Une série d'activités durant l'année 2005 a été organisée pour marquer l'Année Internationale du Sport et de l'Education Physique.

Monsieur le Président, j'ai le plaisir de souligner que le project Sport Etudes a été introduit avec succès dans trois collèges de Rodrigues, notamment Maréchal, Le Chou et Rodrigues College. Cela permettra à nos jeunes athlètes de se perfectionner dans diverses disciplines telles que l'athlétisme, le judo et le football.

Cette année, la troisième édition de la Soirée des Oscars a été organisée à la Résidence avec la collaboration du *Rodrigues Sports Award Committee* et l'appui des sponsors pour récompenser les athlètes de haut niveau. Une bourse de Rs 700 mensuellement a été offerte à quatre sportifs, garçons et filles, pour les motiver davantage à améliorer leurs performances dans leurs disciplines respectives.

Par rapport aux infrastructures, nous avons investi dans la construction de la Piscine Olympique de Maréchal, le Mini Stade de Baie aux Huîtres et l'aménagement des terrains de jeux à Vanguard, Citron Donis, Gravières, Grand Baie et Dans Coco. Un complexe sportif pour la pratique des disciplines telles que le handball, le volleyball, le basketball et le tennis a été construit à Nassola.

Consumer Protection, Trade, Commerce and Licensing

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Consumer Protection Services have been improved to provide better and more efficient services to consumers. In that context, the Price Control Unit has been computerized to enable quick retrieval of information. Furthermore, two sub offices have been opened at Malabar and La Ferme with a view to giving more accessible services to the public in these regions.

In order to sensitise women on their rights and responsibilities and to help them develop good purchasing habits, a half day seminar was organised for some 100 representatives of women's associations.

To improve the marketing of Rodriguan products, action has already been initiated for the setting up of a Trade and Marketing Company. The Company will soon be incorporated and all shares of the Company will be owned by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this Assembly will be pleased to note that the private sector has already initiated action for the setting up of a Rodrigues Chamber of commerce and Industry.

Social Security

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during this financial year, some 1800 persons have benefited from social aid, 1050 persons have been paid Basic Widows Pension, Basic Invalid Pension and Basic Orphan Pension whereas 3500 Senior Citizens have received Basic Retirement Pension. As at February 2006, total expenses on these social benefits amounted to some 142 million rupees.

The Network Support Services Project has been implemented in collaboration with Lux Development. The Project "Réseau d'Accompagnement pour les personnes en difficultés" has been a timely initiative as it addresses the physiological and psychological needs of the elderly. The aim of the network is

to provide support services to the Senior Citizens. However, in Rodrigues, this Project has been extended to the population at large, mainly with a view to promoting greater self reliance.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a caring Regional Government, medical domiciliary visits have been extended to all bed-ridden patients in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, twelve Health and Nutrition Clubs have been set up to foster a healthy life style among the senior citizens in Rodrigues. The Health and Nutrition Clubs aim at sensitizing senior citizens on good dietary habits with a view to contributing towards minimizing the effects of diabetes and hypertension. The services of six Nurses and one Nutritionist have been enlisted to advise senior citizens at the Health and Nutrition Clubs. Some 2500 senior citizens are presently benefiting from the services of these clubs.

Labour and Industrial Relations

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with a view to closely monitoring the conditions prevailing at the work sites, a Labour and Industrial Relations Squad, comprising the Labour and industrial Relations Officer, the Trainee Occupational Safety and Health Inspector and a Social Security Officer has been set up in January this year.

The Occupational Safety and Health Unit ensures that all norms and conditions in respect of health, security and welfare of the employees are complied with. The Trainee Occupational Safety and Health Inspector have just undergone a six months' on-the-job training at the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations. A full-fledged Senior Occupational Safety and Health Inspector from Mauritius visits the island of Rodrigues regularly with a view to carrying out training and to monitor the implementation of the appropriate health and safety regulations.

Budget Out-turn

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will now indicate the budgetary performance for financial year 2005-2006.

The revised Recurrent Expenditure will reach eight hundred and ninety five million rupees (Rs 895,000,000) as compared to the budgeted figure of eight hundred and forty one million five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 841,500,000). The additional expenditure resulted mainly from the increase in payment of

salary compensation granted by the Government in July 2005. The increase also takes into account the revised rate of old age pension from Rs 1900 to Rs 2200 monthly as from July 2005 and, furthermore, resulted from the re-introduction of the old age pension to all those who have reached the age of 60 years irrespective of their monthly income.

The recurrent revenue will amount to eight hundred and ninety five million rupees (Rs 895,000,000) of which revenue collected and credited to the Rodrigues Consolidated Fund will reach sixteen million five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 16,500,000) and the contribution from the Central Government will amount to eight hundred and seventy eight million five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 878,500,000).

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the Capital Budget, I wish to inform this Assembly that the revised estimates of expenditure for capital projects will reach four hundred and seventy-five million rupees (Rs 475,000,000). The capital revenue will thus reach the sum of four hundred and seventy-five million rupees (Rs 475,000,000) being contribution from the Central Government.

PROPOSALS

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will now indicate my proposals for financial year 2006-2007. Total budgeted provision for financial year 2006-2007 will reach one billion one hundred and sixty two million five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 1,162,500,000) of which eight hundred and sixty two million five hundred thousand rupees (Rs 862,500,000) will be for recurrent expenses and three hundred million rupees (Rs 300,000,000) will be for capital projects.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the recurrent budget provides for four hundred and ninety seven million, seven hundred thousand rupees (Rs 497,700,000) for payment of salaries and other staff costs, one hundred and thirteen million and eight hundred thousand rupees (Rs 113,800,000) for other goods and services and two hundred and fifty one million rupees (Rs 251,000,000) as grants, subsidies, social benefits and contribution to local organisations.

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

	<u>Rs million</u>
(1) Grant to National Pension Fund (old age)	140.0

(2)	Assistance to professional fishermen	45.0
(3)	Block Grant to RCEA	29.0
(4)	Social Aid	20.0
(5)	Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project	4.0
(6)	Grant to free pre-primary schools	1.8
(7)	Patients inoperable in Rodrigues	2.0
(8)	Contributions to local organisations	1.7

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

Education

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am proposing to allocate one hundred and twelve million four hundred thousand rupees (Rs 112.4 m) for the education sector to meet recurrent and capital expenses.

The following projects which have already been initiated will be finalised during financial year 2006-2007:-

- construction of two community schools at Araucaria/Mont Lubin and Mt. Charlot; and
- construction of four additional classrooms at Terre Rouge Government School to meet the demand on an increasing pupil population.

In addition, a new toilet block will be constructed at Mangues Government School.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am making a provision of 4.0 million rupees for the implementation of the school feeding project the Pre-Primary and Primary Schools.

With a view to empowering the teaching staff, arrangement is being made with the Mauritius Institute of Education to run a Teacher's Diploma Primary (in Service) as from January 2007 for teachers who will complete the Advanced Certificate in Education in May 2006.

Human Resource Development

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am providing the sum of 3.5 million rupees for training that will be mounted for employees of both the private and public sector.

During financial year 2006-2007, the Human Resource Centre will strengthen its partnership with training institutions in Mauritius with a view to facilitating the training and learning process of the local people. It is planned to implement the following projects:

- a study on the causes of CPE failure in Rodrigues with expertise from the Centre of Social and Applied Research of the University of Mauritius.
- an open day in collaboration with l'Institut Supérieur de Technologie with the objective to run a Diplôme Universitaire Scientifique et Technique en Informatique Appliquée; and
- training courses for public officers as scheduled in the training plan for the public sector.

The *Réseau pour l'Orientation Scolaire et l'Insertion Professionnelle* will also strengthen its partnership with the French Embassy and will continue its mission to provide career's guidance to youths.

Monsieur le Président, durant la prochaine année financière, l'accent sera mis sur la promotion de l'entrepreneuriat parmi nos jeunes. Dans ce contexte, toute une série de formation sera organisée sur les trois volets suivants:

- (1) des causeries pour les étudiants du cycle secondaire afin de provoquer chez eux l'éveil à l'entrepreneuriat;
- (2) la formation des étudiants qui suivent des cours dans des institutions tertiaires et les établissements polytechniques à Maurice; et
- (3) l'orientation pratique sur la démarche à entreprendre afin d'aider ceux

qui veulent lancer une entreprise.

De plus, une bourse d'étude sera allouée à un étudiant pour poursuivre des cours dispensés par l'Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Entrepreneuriat menant à une maîtrise en entrepreneuriat.

Vocational Training and Information Technology

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council with a view to organising the Mass Computer Proficiency Programme for the Public.

Intensive courses for unskilled persons with a view to involving them in new trades will be organised. In addition, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, children who have already left pre-vocational school will be monitored and oriented to different trades.

Tourism

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in order to boost up the tourism sector, the Regional Government is increasing the provision for the promotion of tourism twofold. The provision included in the 2006-2007 budget will amount to 4.0 million rupees to further enhance the promotion of Rodrigues as an authentic destination.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this year, Rodrigues will have the opportunity to host the organisation of a *Chasse aux Trésors* around mid-November next. This event, which is well known internationally, will have a wide press coverage abroad. It will be organised with the collaboration of partners from France, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, Air Mauritius, Diving Clubs and Tourism Operators. The activity will also be widely broadcast in Europe and will definitely promote Rodrigues as an eco-tourism destination.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, provision has been made in this budget for the publication of posters and other promotional materials on Rodrigues. Other "sentiers de randonnées" will also be created. Existing tourist sites such as Ile aux Cocos and Caverne Patate will be upgraded.

Furthermore, most of the approved hotel projects have finalised procedures for their EIA licences and their promoters have shown interest to start construction shortly.

Environment

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the management of solid wastes remains one of the priorities in the field of environmental protection. This is vital in enhancing the quality of life of the population while at the same time maintaining the cleanliness of the country to support the development of the tourism sector.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this year, emphasis will be laid on the implementation of a continuous environmental education programme with a view to inculcating the appropriate mindset and attitude amongst the public at large with respect to the protection of the environment. Students in primary and secondary schools as well as village communities will be targeted.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an alternative solid waste disposal site has become a pressing issue as the existing dumping site at Grenade is nearing saturation. The construction of a landfill site at Pointe au Sel is expected to start during this financial year. The cost of the project will amount to 46.0 million rupees and the construction will span over two financial years. An amount of 8.0 million rupees is being provided in this Budget to start the project.

Natural Disaster

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, our island is vulnerable to the effects of global environmental changes. We are experiencing extreme weather conditions which have serious consequences on the security of people and the economy. During the torrential rains of last week, we witnessed a number of environmental damages, including landslides, damaged roads and flooding. In addition, our experience with cyclones and tsunami has instigated us to strengthen existing mechanism for well coordinated actions and a better preparedness programme.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the rehabilitation and construction of drains in flood prone areas is a major issue which is being dealt with under the Natural Disaster Emergency Programme. This programme will be carried out in phases. I am providing an amount of 5.0 million rupees to continue the programme.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais faire un appel à toute la population pour leur collaboration pour le respect des règlements concernant toute construction et la protection de l'environnement.

Fisheries

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will now announce the measures included in this budget to boost up the fisheries sector:-

- first, the completion of the Fish Landing Station at Pointe L'Aigle and additional Fisheries Posts will be constructed in strategic places with a view to strengthening control against illegal fishing;
- second, additional Fish Aggregating Devices will be installed nearer to the reef around the island to facilitate off-lagoon fishing; and
- third, a committee will be set up to work out appropriate measures to encourage some professional lagoon fishers to adopt other alternative income generating activities so as to address the problem of over-exploitation of the lagoon.

A provision of three million rupees (Rs 3.0 m) to cater for the above expenses has been made in this budget.

The project for the construction of a marina at Port Sud Est to provide an appropriate mooring area for fishing boats is under EIA stage.

Port Development

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an amount of 1.0 million rupees is being provided to cater for minor development works in the harbour. Consultations are being carried out with authorities in Mauritius to explore possibilities of funding to implement the Master Plan prepared by Mauritius Port Authority for the development of the port at Port Mathurin.

Marine Protected Area

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a provision of 1.0 million rupees is being included in the budget to enable the continued implementation of the Marine Protected Area Project at Mourouk and Port Sud Est which is co-funded by UNDP.

Forestry

An amount of 1.0 million rupees has been provided in the budget to pursue the reafforestation programme in Rodrigues.

Terres de l'Etat

Monsieur le Président, une provision de dix millions de roupies (Rs 10.0 m) a été faite dans ce budget pour démarrer le projet "Housing and Cadastral Survey" pour l'établissement d'un cadastre complet de l'île. L'objectif de ce projet est d'établir les bases d'une bonne gestion et de planification de l'utilisation des terres de l'état à Rodrigues. L'appel d'offres a déjà été lancé et nous attendons l'approbation du Central Tender Board pour allouer le contrat. Le projet sera échelonné sur deux années et comprendra deux volets distincts:

- premièrement, un inventaire complet de tous les bâtiments et leur utilisation; et
- deuxièmement, l'arpentage de 10,000 lots de terrain qui sera réalisé en deux phases.

Ce projet sera un des plus importants jamais entrepris pour accélérer l'allocation des baux résidentiels, industriels et commerciaux.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a Rodrigues Environmental Planning and Land Development Bill is being finalised and will be introduced in this Assembly shortly. The provisions of the Bill will apply to both state and private lands and will make comprehensive provision with respect to land use planning for sustainable development.

The concept of clustering will be promoted mainly for residential and industrial purposes to enable cost effective services to be provided to the development zones.

Public Infrastructure

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to upgrading the road network and providing easy access to the transport sector, a sum of 50 million rupees has been allocated for the construction of roads already started and to start the

construction of the road from Le Chou to Port Mathurin via Soupir and Montagne Charlot.

Monsieur le Président, une somme de 10.5 million de roupies est aussi prévue pour la réalisation des petits projets communautaires au niveau des villages tels que les *track roads* et les petits sentiers. Ces projets à petite échelle auront un impact direct sur la qualité de vie.

Water

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am making provision of sixty million rupees (Rs 60m) for the water sector.

Provision is being made to start the construction of a dam at Pavé la Bonté. The dam will have a storage capacity of about 68,000 m³ and a minimum safe yield of 1100 m³ per day to supplement the production of potable water. Although the dam will be servicing mainly the northern part of the island, provision will also be made to pump the water into the “conduite en crête” so as to enable the supply of water to the southern and western part of the island.

The water supply system at Mourouk will be upgraded and some eight small dams will be desilted. Water distribution networks and pressure filters will also be upgraded.

Logement

Monsieur le Président, afin de continuer notre programme de construction de logements sociaux pour aider les couches les plus vulnérables de notre société, nous avons prévu une somme de 15 millions de roupies dans ce budget. Ces logements seront dotés de deux chambres avec cuisine, toilettes et salle de bain et possibilité d’extension.

Agriculture

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am providing a sum of 5 million rupees for agricultural diversification and irrigation and 2.5 million rupees as incentives for agricultural livestock and food production. These incentives will boost up the production in these sectors including honey production. Assistance will also be provided to planters for the construction of water tanks.

In addition, the following projects will be implemented:-

- (i) the setting up of a Food Analysis Laboratory at Citronelle to introduce quality control of processed produce;
- (ii) the establishment of model lemon orchards and model bean and chili plots equipped with drip irrigation to serve as demonstration of modern agricultural practices;
- (iii) the creation of model poultry, goat/sheep, cattle farms to encourage livestock production;
- (iv) the setting up of a well equipped Veterinary Laboratory and the decentralisation of Veterinary Services to La Ferme;
- (v) the reopening of the Honey Centre at Citronelle;
- (vi) the construction of water troughs for livestock; and
- (vii) the promotion of fodder plantation and melliferous crops.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget also caters for the purchase of drip irrigation materials to be put at the disposal of Planters' Associations to enable them to improve their production.

Moreover, the Rodrigues Cattlewalk Regulations 2006 will be implemented for the benefits of both the farming community and the island's environment.

Women's and Family Welfare

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the construction of an Integrated Family Centre at Malabar has started and will be completed during financial year 2006-2007. The centre will provide, under one roof, all services pertaining to women, children and family and will consist of two distinct units namely:

- a Family and Child Development Unit which will provide a child development section, a children's corner, psychotherapy and counselling services, and a domestic violence section; and

- a Women Development Unit with multipurpose halls for meetings and conferences, a home economics room and a library to provide training facilities to Women's Associations and Women Entrepreneurs.

The services of a Psychologist will also be made available to provide support to the public at large.

In addition to the six training centres at Battue Madame, Montagne Goyave, Roche Bon Dieu, Malabar, Petit Gabriel and La Ferme, a seventh centre will be opened at Camp du Roi to provide training for the inhabitants of the northern region of the island.

A second edition of Women Entrepreneur Award will be organised to encourage and reward entrepreneurship among women with a view to empowering them and developing their economic activities.

The Parental Empowerment Programme which has started in 2005-2006 will continue during the next financial year.

Community Development and Poverty Alleviation

Monsieur le Président, le programme de coopération décentralisée sous le 9^{ème} FED (Fond Européen de Développement) en faveur des acteurs non-étatiques dans le but de combattre la pauvreté sera mis en oeuvre cette année. Ce programme comprend entre autre les axes d'intervention suivantes:-

- l'aide aux groupes vulnérables;
- la promotion des principes de bonne gouvernance; et
- support aux activités spécifiques dans le domaine de l'agriculture, l'irrigation, la pêche, la petite et moyenne entreprise, l'accompagnement scolaire et le logement social.

La coopération décentralisée est une nouvelle approche pour soutenir les acteurs non gouvernementaux dans la création de leurs propres emplois.

Rodrigues bénéficiera d'une allocation de 60 millions de roupies qui sera utilisée pour renforcer la capacité des autorités locales en matière de développement rurale.

Un bureau et du personnel seront mis à la disposition de l'unité de coordination du programme qui sera basée à Citronelle.

La possibilité de créer un Comité de Pilotage du Projet à Rodrigues est à l'étude pour l'orientation de ce projet. Ce comité va réunir tous les partenaires impliqués dans la lutte contre la pauvreté.

Monsieur le Président, je lance un appel à la société civile, les ONGs et les acteurs non-gouvernementaux de prendre avantage de ce fond pour le financement de leurs projets respectifs.

Public Libraries

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a new public library will be opened at La Ferme and will provide the usual facilities as well as free internet access.

To promote a reading culture, the following activities will be organised:-

- (a) open days in all libraries to sensitise the public about facilities offered;
- (b) talks on the importance of books; and
- (c) competitions and debates on various subjects of public interest and especially those relating to books and information and communication.

Moreover, adequate support will be provided to libraries from Mauritius for the sale of books at concessionary prices.

Arts and Culture

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Cultural Centre at Malabar, which will be completed in June 2006, will offer opportunities for artistic and cultural activities as from 2006-2007. The building will accommodate:-

- (a) a theatre of 250 seats;
- (b) a 'mediathèque' with all modern facilities and equipment;
- (c) creativity studios for all artistic fields; and

- (d) a multi-purpose hall for conferences, debates and symposiums.

Health

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the budget 2006-2007 provides for an amount of 20 million rupees to enable the completion of the new Maternity Ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the extension of the Area Health Centre at Mont Lubin.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a sum of three hundred thousand rupees (RS 300,000) has been earmarked to implement the HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for Rodrigues to sensitise the population on the threats and hazards of HIV/AIDS. The Rodrigues AIDS coordinating Committee will steer the AIDS programme.

For a number of years, the “Agents de Santé Communautaire” have been instrumental in improving community Health in Rodrigues.

To give due recognition to their contribution, a Bill for the creation of a Trust Fund for the Development of Community Health will soon be introduced in this Assembly to provide a legal framework within which they will work.

Co-operatives

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with the new Co-operative Act 2005, the Co-operative Federations and Societies will have to reorganise themselves and consolidate their management structure to offer better services and contribute to the economic and social development process.

Youth and Sports

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an *Entrepreneuriat Jeunesse* training programme will be launched to develop an entrepreneurial culture among the youths. Two additional cooperative societies in metal work/auto mechanic will be set up. The Malabar Centre d’Accueil will be uplifted to provide better accommodation to athletes/youths from Mauritius and Rodrigues. Four “Caisses de la Jeunesse” will be set up to provide micro-credit facilities to beneficiaries of the Ateliers de Savoir.

Monsieur le Président, une somme de 5.1 million de roupies sera allouée dans le budget courant pour la promotion de la jeunesse et le sport et en particulier pour l'organisation des compétitions sportives, des cours de leadership, des échanges inter îles de l'Océan Indien et l'initiation à la natation.

Monsieur le Président, chaque année nous mettons l'emphasis sur l'amélioration des infrastructures sportives mises à la disposition de nos sportifs. Je prévois une donation de vingt-trois millions de roupies (Rs 23.0 m) pour commencer la construction d'un stade regional à Roche Bon Dieu. Un espace pour le sport et les loisirs sera crée à Baie Lascars et le terrain de football sera aussi re-aménagé. Nous continuerons également à aménager les terrains de jeux et les complexes sportifs dans d'autres regions de l'île.

Provision a aussi été faite pour l'organisation du Trophée Internationale de Volley-ball pour les jeunes de 12 à 15 ans de Maurice, Réunion, Madagascar et Seychelles.

Trade and Commerce

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a provision of one million rupees (Rs 1.0 m) is being made as contribution to the Trade and Marketing Company which will be incorporated soon. Consultations with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development are already underway concerning the procedures. Its main objectives are to promote the marketing of Rodriguan products and to provide a structure for Rodriguan producers for the sale of their products on the local and international markets.

Social Security

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a responsible Government that cares for the welfare of the vulnerable segment of the population, I am making a provision of one hundred and forty million rupees (Rs 140,000,000) for the benefit of all recipients of Basic Widow's Pension, Basic Invalidity Pension, Basic Orphan Pension and Basic Retirement Pension.

An amount of 1.0 million rupees is included in this budget to start the project for an Elderly and Disabled Recreational Centre.

Prisons and Reform Institutions/Probation Office

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Pointe La Gueule Prison is expected to undergo some infrastructural upgrading so as to create a more conducive environment for the rehabilitation of detainees. In addition, a Probation Hostel for girls and boys will be set up at Maréchal to address the problem arising from the present arrangement whereby juvenile delinquents are being transferred to Rehabilitation Youth Centres in Mauritius.

Revenue

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the recurrent revenue to be collected in Rodrigues is estimated at about 16.5 million rupees for the next financial year and will be credited to the Rodrigues Consolidated Fund while the Central Government will contribute an amount of 846 million rupees.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais souligner encore une fois les contraintes que nous avons eues pour la préparation de ce budget eu égard à la conjoncture difficile de l'économie nationale. Je voudrais remercier le Vice-premier Ministre et Ministre des Finances et du Développement Economique et ses Officiers pour leur collaboration dans cet exercice budgétaire. Nous pensons que Rodrigues a besoin d'accélérer son développement économique et sociale année après année pour le bien-être de la population Rodriguaise qui doit faire preuve d'esprit de créativité et d'innovation. Je voudrais encore une fois souligner qu'il faut travailler à rendre productifs tous les hommes et toutes les femmes qui vivent dans cette île Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my thanks also go to my colleagues Commissioners for their continuous support and understanding in the preparation of this budget.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to place on record my appreciation to the Island Chief Executive, the Departmental Heads, the Chief Finance Officer, and staff of the Commissions for their valuable contribution.

May I also thank funding agencies for their co-operation in various development programmes underway.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am confident that the Draft Estimates will meet the approval of this Assembly. Thereafter, I shall transmit the Draft Estimates to the

Honourable Prime Minister and Minister for Rodrigues for presentation to Cabinet.

M. le Président, il nous faut travailler et vivre avec les moyens qu'on a et faire les choses autrement.

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

Thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. Chairperson: In the light of Standing Order 55(a) Paragraph 2, the debate will be adjourned to the next sitting of the Assembly. Thank you.

Yes, adjournment?

The Chief Commissioner : Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Regional Assembly be adjourned to Monday 3rd April, 2006 at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Chairperson : Yes, secondment ?

(The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.)

Mr. Chairperson : Question : that this Assembly be adjourned to Monday 3rd April, 2006 at 10.30 a.m. Those in favour say aye, those against say no. The ayes have it.

The House stands adjourned.

On its rising at 17.45 hours, the Assembly stood adjourned to Monday 3rd April, 2006 at 10.30 a.m.