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RODRIGUES

SECOND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 9 of 2011

Sitting of Wednesday 14th December 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House,
Port Mathurin, at 15.00 p.m.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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Debate No. 9 of 14.12.2011

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2011

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr. Gaetan Jabeemissar, G.O.S.K.)

Mr. Gaetan Jabeemissar, G.O.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Finance, Economic Affairs, Central Administration, Civil Aviation (administration), Civil Status, Customs and Excise (administration), Education (administration), Fisheries, Industrial Development, Judicial (administration), Legal Services, Marine Parks, Marine Services (administration), Meteorology (administration), Postal Services (administration), Registration, Statistics in respects of Rodrigues, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Vocational Training, Information Technology and Telecommunications, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Tourism, Handicraft, Consumer Protection.
Mrs. Marie Thérèse Clair-Brault	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Child Development Unit, Family Welfare, Library Services, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and buildings, Tourism, Women's Affairs
Mr. Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Commissioner responsible for Environment, Housing, Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Transport
Mr. Jean Christian Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Community Development, Employment, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Labour and Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports
Mr. Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Food Production, Forestry, Plant and animal quarantine, State Lands, Town and Country Planning
Mrs. M. D. Lordana Chan-Meunier	Commissioner responsible for Co-operatives, Fire Services, Health (administration), Prisons and Reforms Institutions (administration), Social Security (administration)
Mr. Jean Daniel Speville	Commissioner responsible for Consumer Protection, Handicraft, Water Resources

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson	-	Lamvohee, Mr. Joseph Chenlye, C.S.K.
Clerk	-	Parsooramen, Miss Marie Cristelle Joanna
Serjeant-at-Arms	-	Louis, Mr. Jorgenson

Debate 14.12.2011

STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with great pleasure and honour that I am addressing the House this afternoon which is the last sitting for this August Assembly for 2011. Allow me to recall the House that in 2006 this majority except for Commissioner Daniel Spéville and the two respected Members newly elected during the last by-elections, was elected on the basis of the Mouvement Rodriguais (MR) programme and the pledge we made to the population of Rodrigues was to improve their lives and well being.

After the elections of December 2006 the Mouvement Rodriguais obtained the largest number of seats in this Regional Assembly and the President of the Republic was present here for the swearing in ceremony in December 2006. It was a great day in the life of the Rodriguans and represented a major change after twenty-five years of continuous rule of the island by the OPR party.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this Regional Assembly will now complete its five years term. Last December, two of our party members elected under the banner of the MR decided to go to the other side of the House. Since January 2011, I am in charge of the new Executive Council. Up to now and prior to this I occupied the position of Deputy Chief Commissioner over a period of four consecutive years.

It gives me a great pleasure to make a statement today and I am honoured to present our achievements to the House. I will elaborate on our main achievements.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been able to complete our programme over the last five years. I am proud to have favourably responded to the aspirations of our electorate and the population of Rodrigues in general. I would like to present our achievements in comparison to our promises in the electoral manifesto and the Government programme presented in this House in December 2006.

Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues (SIDPR)

We have a long term vision for the development of Rodrigues for a better quality of life for all our fellow citizens who reside here. That is why the SIDPR was high in the agenda of the MR Government. The formulation of a sustainable

integrated plan for Rodrigues has been an arduous task. We had promised to concentrate on the formulation of strategies and action plan which will help us assess the validity of the actions we propose to take and bring timely corrections if warranted. The SIDPR has been elaborated and approved by the Regional Assembly.

The SIDPR involved a long consultative process and all the Commissions participated in its elaboration and it is being implemented now. In fact, the consultant who drafted the report worked in close collaboration with the Executive Council and we oversee its elaboration. All the proposals of the Government programme were included in it. I am pleased to say that the major institutions proposed in the SIDPR such as the EPMU and the Thematic Working groups are operating smoothly. The Thematic Working groups were elected by the relevant stakeholders and their proposals are being implemented by the Commissions. The major proposals of the SIDPR are being implemented therefore by all the Commissions.

The major policies, projects and programme are being implemented. Each Commission prepares its Annual Work Plan based on the proposals enunciated in the Budget speech and they are adhering to it. The progress during the last six financial years, one of which was for merely six months because of the introduction of the PBB are quite significant and have been presented in the annual reports submitted by the RRA.

We had promised an economic development strategy which lay emphasis on the development of three initial main engines of growth namely, tourism, fishing and agriculture. I am glad that we have been able to put in place all investment friendly measures.

Many establishments have been provided with lease and many projects have been implemented. It is easier to get an operating licence nowadays and the waiting time has been reduced considerably.

Institutional changes

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are concerned with the necessity to offer a better service to our population. We wanted decisions to be taken quickly to develop certain sectors of the economy such as tourism, agriculture, water management. That is why we set up companies. Many of these companies are now operating satisfactorily. Rodclean Ltd. is now a major company delivering waste collection

and transportation services throughout the island. It is now fully equipped with modern lorry. It is now taking responsibilities for the embellishment along the roadsides all around the island. The cleaning of Port Mathurin market now rests with the workers of Rodclean Ltd.

Discovery Rodrigues is now taking care of the tourism products and they are also responsible for the promotion campaigns of Rodrigues. The Rodrigues Water Company Ltd. is also responsible for the water distribution management in the southern part of the island.

The Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Co. Ltd. provide inputs to farmers and also buy onions and other agricultural surplus produce for exports to Mauritius.

The Rodrigues General Fishing Co. Ltd. has been set up to provide different services to the fishermen. The company now operates the “Maison Des Pecheurs” which was abandoned by the previous OPR Government. There are now cold room facilities and an ice making machine. The company also purchases and sells fish to the public. It also operates the six fishing boats which were acquired by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

New Services

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Companies Division has set up a sub-unit in Rodrigues and it is providing all the services right in Port Mathurin. A company can be registered now in Port Mathurin itself. Companies can now submit their annual reports and pay all the relevant licences.

Many organisations have set up their offices in Rodrigues. They include among others the:-

- (a) National Empowerment Foundation;
- (b) HRDC; and
- (c) Mauritius Research Council (MRC); and
- (d) DCP

Only recently the DPP has opened its sub-office in Port Mathurin.

Road infrastructure

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, the road infrastructural programme was also high in our agenda. We had promised to upgrade and extend the existing roads, construct new ones to facilitate inland communication, and adjust to the increasing vehicular traffic. Anyone returning to the island after only five years will undoubtedly observe the tremendous progress and change made in this sector.

During that period more than 25 kilometres of roads have been constructed and upgraded for a total cost of more than half a billion rupees. In addition, more than Rs 15M have been spent on the continuous patching of existing roads. Let me mention a few of them:-

- Baie du Nord to Pointe la Gueule;
- Baladirou Phase I;
- Reposoir/Cascade Jean Louis;
- Citron Donis road Phase I;
- Grand la Fouche Corail to Riviere Cocos
- Grand Baie to Baladirou road already gravelled;
- Nassola road;
- Creve Coeur/Roseaux/Contour Oblasse roads;
- St Gabriel Cooperative to Port Sud Est;
- La Ferme/Baie Topaze/Camp Pintade;
- Port Sud Est/Mourouk;
- Grand Montagne to Coromandel;
- Mont Plaisir road;
- Petit Gabriel/Le Chou;
- Terre Rouge College.

We also constructed a new bus shelter at La Ferme in line with our vision to provide adequate infrastructural facilities to our people. Moreover, this project has also improved the safety aspects of pedestrians in that region. 20 bus shelters have also been constructed all around the island.

Moreover, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with a view to open up regions of Rodrigues far from the main roads we have been able to construct more than 22 kilometres of track roads which have been equally shared among the six electoral regions of Rodrigues. The track road project has benefitted many families and is still ongoing.

Water sector

In our Government programme we had promised to reorganise the water sector. We are quite well aware that the reorganisation of the sector was important to improve the service delivery level. The Rodrigues Water Company Ltd. is now fully operational. It is already responsible for water distribution in the southern part of the island.

We have significantly improved the water distribution network. The frequency of water distribution has improved in several villages and efforts are still ongoing. Water tanks have been provided to needy households for the storage and harvesting of rainwater. We have been able to set up the first desalination plant in Songes ever established in the history of Rodrigues. In addition three brackish desalination plants have also been established at Creve Coeur, Hauteur Accacia and Baie Topaze. Though we have had difficulties in the initial stage, we have learnt from that experience and will not repeat the same mistake again in the future.

We have invested in the construction of new reservoirs and upgrading of existing ones. The storage capacity of the Cascade Pigeon dam has been increased and although during dry periods these reservoirs have not been providing adequate supply of water we have been able to manage that the surplus of water after heavy rainfall is being added to the existing network.

In spite of the many measures which I have just mentioned in the water sector problem still exist and it is very critical. With the appointment of one Commissioner namely, Mr. Daniel Spéville to be responsible for this sector many new projects have been undertaken this year and in spite of the difficult climatic conditions which have been prevailing up to now there are signs of improvement and very soon with the reopening of Songes desalination plant and new brackish water project at Caverne Bouteille coupled with the construction of new reservoirs the situation will improve considerably.

Education sector

I would like to present our progress in the education sector which falls under my responsibility. The education sector has witnessed consequent infrastructural transformation in all the learning institutions. We have been able to construct a pre-primary school in Terre Rouge and provide support to upgrade the pre-primary schools everywhere around the island. In the primary education sector, the

Araucaria and the Mt Charlot community schools have been completed. The Araucaria primary school is fully operational and the Mt. Charlot community school is ready for the opening scheduled for January 2012. We have also, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, upgrade other primary schools infrastructure namely a new block at Grand la Fouche Corail and Mangues Government School.

In the secondary education sector, additional classrooms have been added to Mont Lubin and Grand Montagne Colleges. The Citron Donis College is now an annex of Marechal College and this college will be of no more use with the opening of the new the Terre Rouge College in January 2012.

Besides the major infrastructure development, all primary and secondary schools have been equipped with proper furniture and ICT equipments. The pre-primary schools have also been provided with audio visual equipments and computers which have been made available under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. A Book Loan Scheme is now operational.

The manpower development programme has been implemented to keep pace with the infrastructure development. A continuous training has been implemented in order to upgrade the capacity of the staff of the education sector. A PGCE course is ongoing for 80 Educators. For the first time in the history of education we have published a booklet on the History and Geography of Rodrigues for Forms I and II students.

These developments in the sector have produced the desired results. The CPE pass rate has increased from 55.1% in 2006 to 62.68% in the 2010 examinations. It has increased by a double digit figure of 13.8% increase over these five years. I wish to repeat, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the CPE pass rate has increased by 13.8%. This is a remarkable achievement and I wish to thank all the teachers, the headmasters and parents for their contribution. The other performance indicators such as the SC and HSC pass rate have also increased over the past five years. The SC pass rate increased from 70.4% in 2006 to 72.8% in 2010 while the HSC pass rate rose from 74.3% to 76.1%.

Many students are now studying in Mauritius and abroad through our scholarship programme. We have also provided a financial support to our students facing difficulties to meet the cost of their rent and the cost of living in Mauritius and elsewhere. Many tertiary institutions are carrying out their activities in Rodrigues and this is benefitting our post secondary students. I am pleased to

announce, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that shortly a new tertiary institution will be set up in Rodrigues.

Health sector

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in 2006 we inherited a building at Creve Coeur and an additional storey at Mont Lubin. There were no equipment and manpower to make optimum use of these buildings. Besides there were no plan on how to use it. I am glad that the Maternity Ward is now operational and the building at Mont Lubin is now being used.

We have provided a plethora of equipment to the Medical and Health Services. Never had such equipment been procured by the Medical and Health Services. The number of specialists visiting QEH has increased.

The nursing staffs have also increased.

Agriculture and Port Mathurin market

Mr Chairperson, Sir, our government programme enunciated our proposals to boost up agricultural production. In this respect we have made tremendous progress ever made in the history of agriculture in Rodrigues. The evidence is the production figures and the area under agricultural cultivation has considerably increased. Let me mention a few of these achievements, Mr. Chairperson, Sir:-

- The setting of agricultural villages specialising in chillies, beans and limes;
- The setting up of a food processing unit, the Limon D'Or at Marechal;
- The upgrading of the breeding centres;
- The setting up of new pastures to support the livestock industry;
- The continuing support to the farmers for mechanisation, pasture development and the provision of adequate inputs and extension services;
- The establishment of small irrigation networks;
- The milk pasteurisation project;
- The setting up of the Small Planters Welfare Fund;
- We have already laid the foundation stone for the modern slaughterhouse (abattoir).

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We are also working in close collaboration with partners in both Mauritius and abroad. We have entered into a collaboration agreement with the ‘Chambre des Metiers de la Reunion’.

We have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the MSIRI, AREU and the Ministry of Agro-industry

We have worked in close collaboration with the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP) for the implementation of projects for the setting up of unit farms and the support to pig breeders. With the support of the Small Planters Mechanical Pool, we have obtained a machine for the derocking of farms.

The Port Mathurin market is now a jewel in the Indian Ocean. The facility is now fully operational and the facilities are being used by the farmers and the sellers of fruits and vegetables. The butchery is also operational and fresh meat is made available.

Tourism

The development of the tourism sector has always stood high on my regional government's agenda. In fact, much effort has been done since 2006 so that the tourism sector becomes a pillar of our economy. To date, despite the numerous challenges faced by this sector like limited air access, expensive air tickets, high competition with other destinations, the number of tourists' arrival has increased from 42,833 in 2006 to 46,903 in 2010, meaning an increase of about 10%. Furthermore, during the period January to November of this year, the number of tourists visiting our island is 38,345 as compared to 35,544 to the same period last year, which implies an increase of more than 7%.

In fact, this increase in tourism arrival is derived mainly from Mauritius, which is driven, by the “special holiday package” and the intensive promotional campaigns undertaken by the Commission for Tourism along with the Tourism Office and Discovery Rodrigues Ltd., as well as other stakeholders such as “Association du Tourisme Réunie” (ATR). After discussions with the Honourable Prime Minister and the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, I have obtained firm commitment from the government that this special holiday package has proven its merit and will be extended beyond December this year, that is, 2012.

Land and Cadastral Services

Mr Chairperson, Sir, State Land is now accessible to our fellow citizens. Delay in issue of lease is now a story of the past. The Cadastral Services has done a very good job. We have been able to issue many residential leases and industrial leases. Moreover, the cost of lease has been brought down so that it is accessible to everyone.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, let me mention some of our achievements in this sector:-

No. of leases signed and finalized	- 4,042
No. of sites surveyed (Residential/Commercial/Industrial/Agricultural)	- 5,848
No. of cases treated in connection with renewal of leases/transfer/extension	- 377
No. of pledging of rights issued	- 1,020
No. of site surveyed for community centres	- 83
No. of letters of intent issued	- 4,074
No. of site surveyed for government projects	- 60
No. boundary stones fixed	- 12,000

IFAD MARS Programme

Under the Joint Government/IFAD Marine and Agricultural Resource Support Programme (MARS), we have been able to help the vulnerable groups start some income generating activities. Activities range from micro-finance projects, purchase of equipment and furniture, and provision of agricultural and farm equipment using the latest scientific methods. These activities constitute an important training and mentoring component. Many households belonging to the vulnerable groups are showing an interest to upgrade their living standards by starting some micro projects in sectors such as poultry rearing, pig rearing, bee keeping, agriculture and handicrafts. The main beneficiaries are women.

The long awaited fishing vessels reached the port last Tuesday evening. They were all manned by skippers from the island. It is the messenger of the

future development that will occur in the outer lagoon fishing sector in Rodrigues. The cost of these fishing vessels are estimated at around Rs 52M. Government will provide 75% of the project cost as grant and the 25% will be paid by the fishermen over a period 3 years at an interest rate of 5%. The goodwill for the successful implementation of this project should go to the Executive Council and the Ministry for Rodrigues.

Sea weed Farming

It was long ago that the under the IFAD Rural Diversification Programme that a feasibility study was conducted for the setting up a sea weed farm. However amidst reservations expressed by some experts on the negative effects of such project, the project was postponed. Now that we have acquired more information on the project following the research conducted by the MRC, a pilot farm has been set up at Petite Butte.

The project is now operational. The sea weeds are growing smoothly.

Fishermen

We had promised to introduce a Reconversion Scheme for those fishers who were to leave their sea ongoing occupations and develop another land based activity. A lump sum was be paid to those fishers who wish to tender back their fisherman cards and use the lump sum as a start up capital.

In order to promote outer lagoon fishing only this year we have been able to give more than 300 cards to outer lagoon fishermen. An Assize de la Pêche was held in Rodrigues in April 2011 and the proposals of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly have already been included in the Master Plan for the fishing sector for both Mauritius and Rodrigues.

We have provided training to our fishermen so that they can go and fish outside the lagoon. And by January next, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some 250 more fishermen will get their training so that all of them will be getting their fishing cards. .

Those willing to start dean income generating activity are benefitting from a special scheme under the Empowerment Programme.

South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA)

The SEMPA project is now a reality. It was financed by the UNDP, GEF and the RRA under the project 'Partnerships for Marine Protected Areas in Mauritius and Rodrigues'. The SEMPA is the largest marine reserve of the Republic of Mauritius with a surface area of more than 43 km², which represents about 15% of the lagoon. This year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been able to pass the Regulations for the South East Marine Areas Regulations 2011. This provides SEMPA with a required legal framework for the effective management of its marine resources.

This Regulation makes provision for the zones, the Management Board and the Fund, created under the SEMPA to become statutory.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) of the SEMPA was strengthened with additional staff recruited under contract by the UNDP to provide necessary support in the field of education and sensitization, livelihood development, and scientific works. The new propositions/proposals include the setting up of an education and communication unit with an officer in charge of that, the Livelihood Coordinator and Scientific Officer. These took office at SEMPA in January this year for a contractual period of one year.

The Livelihood Expert, Mrs. Nathalie Maisonneuve, recruited under contract by UNDP was handed the responsibility for the development of an Action Plan and a Livelihood Assessment report with a view to help in the identification of potential sustainable livelihood activities for the SEMPA fisher community. This process will enlist a wide range of development programmes in support and clarify the role of the SEMPA Unit as a facilitator to this effort. The two previously stated reports have been handed over to the UNDP and RRA and same will be reviewed by relevant stakeholders at a workshop before this year. The workshop will provide the platform for the stakeholders to validate the content of the plans will guide towards a sustained living of the fisher community.

A Livelihood Coordinator was recruited to work closely with the fisher community for the coordination of activities towards the development of alternative livelihoods for fishers. The 'Association des Pêcheur du Parc Marin du Sud Est' is receiving much assistance from this programme, for example, they have received the support of the GEF for the construction of a glass bottom boat as an alternative ecotourism activity to fishing. To date the boat is fully operational and is helping to generate funding for the members of this association. The

Alternative Livelihood programme enables the fishermen to kick-start their business and ensure equitable sharing of the benefits. The Livelihood Coordinator is providing various meetings, training and other support to the fishers of SEMPA.

To date, the SEMPA office is fully operational and to ensure the proper management of SEMPA after the project life, appropriate management structure need to be put in place. Therefore, a Management Plan has been developed by a Management Planner and a first draft is currently under circulation for consultation by relevant stakeholders in view of finalization. A sustainability strategy has been developed by the Chief Technical Adviser, who has identified short, medium and long term needs and actions plan for SEMPA. The aim is to ensure sustainability of the Marine Protected Area with time and to prepare for the exit of the project by the UNDP and the takeover by the RRA.

Housing

We have promised to construct 1000 low cost housing units for the vulnerable groups. We have worked in close collaboration with the NHDC Ltd. for the housing development. I am pleased to say that many persons have benefitted from the Slab Scheme.

Our elderly housing scheme has also helped the elderly. Under an ambitious housing, the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of the Vulnerable Groups is providing their support for the implementation of our housing programme to support the vulnerable groups of our society.

Summary of achievements

In a nutshell, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me summarise during this last five years all the major progress that we have undertaken:-

- (a) Construction of new roads and upgrading of existing ones;
- (b) Dredging of channels at Port Mathurin up to Pointe Monier;
- (c) Setting up of RRA Companies;
- (d) Strategic planning & consultancies – Sir Gaetan Duval Development strategic report, Airport feasibility study, Strategic options for the agricultural sector, water study by AFD, Study on CPE failure, Cadastral Plan, Aquaculture study;
- (e) Provision of Medical Equipment at QEH. Improvement at the different health sectors and more regular visits of Medical Specialists;

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- (f) Sports infrastructure - Football playgrounds and volley ball pitches;
- (g) Public gardens throughout the island;
- (h) Embellishment of public premises along the road sides;
- (i) Extension of training to fishermen, artisans and potential entrepreneurs;
- (j) Water development - rehabilitation of dams and reservoirs, improving water distribution network, increased water supply generated from boreholes, increased of water quality
- (k) Agricultural development - improved service delivery to farmers through extension service and additional machinery and equipment;
- (l) Allocation of state land lease for development projects and residential purpose;
- (m) Housing programme for the vulnerable groups.

As you see, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have left the traces our achievements throughout the island in all the sectors. We will shortly lay the foundation stone for a modern ICT with the coming of the optical fibre cable that will link Mauritius to Rodrigues for the first time in history, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We have also laid the base for the new and longer runway at Sir Gaetan Duval airport.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we believe in democracy, good governance and the supremacy of the population. That is why we are prepared to go before our electorate and present to them what we have achieved over these five years. It is of course much more than what others have done over 25 or more years. We have shown that we have the competencies and vision to put Rodrigues in a higher growth path as I announced in my last Budget Speech in September. We know that we face new challenges and we are ready to face our electorate to face these challenges again. We will be back again, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, soon.

VOTE OF THANKS AND END OF YEAR MESSAGE

The Chief Commissioner: I take this opportunity, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to thank the Prime Minister, all the Ministries of Mauritius, parastatal bodies, the major private sector organisations and the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) for their support in the development of the island of Rodrigues for the well being of our population.

I wish to extend a special thank to our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, for his continuing support and contribution to the

development of Rodrigues. All the Ministers have also listened attentively to our request and I thank them all. I also thank all the donor agencies, the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues and Leader of the MR party who have been very supportive in all our initiatives. We also thank the Honourable Christian Leopold, Private Parliamentary Secretary (PPS) who is also the Chairman of the MR party.

I wish to extend my special appreciation to the efforts made by all my colleagues, Commissioners and the Members of the majority side, the Acting Island Chief Executive, all the Departmental Heads of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, all staff of all the Commissions and also my advisors. I also wish to thank the House for the good conduct of all the works that have been done in this August Assembly, all the Clerks that have succeeded, Mr. Vythilingum, I will not mention them all and now we have Miss Cristelle in front of us. I also wish to thank you, Chairperson, for having chaired this Assembly since its beginning up to now and the Deputy Chairpersons. We have been able to have the first woman Deputy Chairperson of this Assembly. To end with, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to thank all Members that have contributed in one way or another in the good deliberation of the works of this Assembly since the beginning of this year. I wish them all Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and we will meet on the battle field.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

[Applause]

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Members, you have noticed that this is not a sitting conventional to what we are used to. This is as the Commissioner said; it is the last sitting for this year and probably the last sitting for this Regional Assembly. Normally the practice says that we have the word of the Leader of the House and then I have to read the proclamation for dissolution. We do not have that document. I have been in communication with the President's Office and it is not issued actually. In the light of Section 3(5), I may say that on the 15th of December this could be nearly a sub message. The Chief Commissioner has intimidated to me that through his reading and interpretation of Section 3(5) of the Regional Assembly, he will not be moving for the adjournment of the House. I concur with him. I agree with his interpretation and normally this will be the end of the House. However, being given that the Chief Commissioner has extended a word of wish to this end of year to certain persons, I will allow on this point the Minority Leader and the other Member of the group to have the floor of this Assembly for that purpose.

Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I am speaking to you today Respected Members, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with much emotion in my heart because this is the last sitting of the Second Regional Assembly and over and above party politics we must all be proud of the achievements, parliamentary and non-parliamentary, that is, governmental that have been made during this mandate. Of course, I have been Chief Commissioner, elected by the people on 11th of December 2006, that is, five years back and from 16th of December 2006 to 7th of January 2011, I have delivered my duties as Chief Commissioner with utmost devotion and professionalism.

I have been listening to the Chief Commissioner speaking of the SIDPR and all the RRA companies that we have set up. Companies division, roads, desalination, education, agriculture, tourism office, lands, Cadastral Office, even there is no mention of the 'Plan D'Amenagement du Territoire' - which was finalised when I left office, of the fishing projects, etc. Nobody will be able to do everything in a mandate. What we have to bear in mind is that in this House we are just '*de passage*' and that even though some of us may not come back, it does not mean that you cannot contribute to the development of Rodrigues. This is why I regret the events of January this year regarding my arrest, which I considered at the time, and still consider as unfair and, of course, I am confident about the outcome in Court.

I have to say that my family and myself have had very harsh and difficult moments in January and all over the year 2011 because of political victimization.

I wish to thank my friend for supporting me, Mr. Alan Ladd Emilien and to thank and congratulate my two friends, Alex Flore and Johnny Raffaut who have not hesitated to join us, a new party and to take up the challenge.

I wish to thank all the Rodriguan people who trusted me in 2006 under the MR party, the electors of Region No. 5, Port Mathurin, which I have represented from 2006 until today for the trust and confidence that they have placed in me. I wish to say that it is desirable that during the forthcoming campaign the utmost and primordial interests of Rodrigues are put forward in the political debate and in the political campaign.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I, thank yourself for Chairing this House during this mandate. May I present to yourself and Mrs. Lamvohee our best wishes for

Christmas and New Year, the Clerk, to all Members of this House and may I invite you to consider sending the best wishes of this House to the President of the Republic and Lady Jugnauth, to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Ramgoolam and all Ministers in Mauritius. May God bless the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and may the new Regional Assembly come in and continue to work for the betterment and the future of the people of Rodrigues.

Thank you.

Mr. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this second session ends today after more than 66 sittings that we have had; I am speaking under your correction. Let me in this specific independent bench of the House to say farewell to all the Members of the Assembly, to your good self, to the Clerk and all the other persons with whom we have had the opportunity and the pleasure to collaborate in this Assembly. It has been a pleasure to work together and I wish we would get another opportunity to work together again.

As you, know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been elected twice in this Assembly and I consider that I have done, impacted both in government level when I was in office and as well as in the opposition. I have been elected in 2006, First Member of the Region No. 3 and followed by my colleague who is on the other side of the House today. Things in this House, that is, the way we are seated today, have proved how things have been in the organization where we were. I have had the gut, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to take some decisions in the name of justice, not to me directly, but to others and I am happy today, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that I have stood against some form of injustice. As a woman, I am very proud of this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whilst many other persons have shut their mouth.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that during this particular session I have tried to the best of my might's to impact on the transactions, parliamentary both local, initiatives as well as national initiatives and I am proud of that too, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Like the Minority Leader has just said, in a mandate or two mandates, you just cannot complete everything that you wished but I think that in this House we all are aware that we have sworn in as Members or as Commissioners to do things under a specific period and time have come to say farewell. So the year also is ending, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and it is time for greetings. Let me convey my heartfelt greetings, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to yourself and spouse, to the Clerk, to the Assembly's staffs and Office Assembly House as well as to all my colleagues here sitting on both sides of the House and may 2012 brings us all prosperity and health.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Members, before coming to the greetings I would like to pay a special gratitude to all the Members present here, to those Members who left us, to the new Members who came and join us in this Assembly for their valuable contributions in debates, for their interest they have shown for their country, their understanding of how the rule have been preserve here and how the staffs of this Secretariat with their limited resources have to make tremendous effort to have a good Assembly that we have today. I thank them for their understanding and cooperation and undoubtedly, without them there cannot be any Assembly and this have helped us a lot in delivering what is expected from us.

Lastly, I seized this occasion to join the Chief Commissioner, the Minority Leader and Mrs. Bégué, an independent Member, to convey our best wishes and a Happy New Year to His Excellency, Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Lady Jugnauth, to the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Lady Ramgoolam, to the Vice-President and her spouse. I thank also the Chief Commissioner, the Minority Leader and Mrs. Arlette Perrine-Bégué for their kind words extended to me and to all the staffs and wish them in return a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May I side to the Chief Commissioner and his wife, to the Minority Leader and Mrs. Meunier, to Mrs. Arlette Perrine-Bégué and Mr. and to all the Members present in this House and to their spouses.

Thank you for your kind regards and attention.

At 16.00 hours the Assembly stands adjourned.