

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2015 – 2019

Achieving Meaningful Change

ADDRESS

By

The President of the Republic of Mauritius

**Tuesday
27 January 2015**

INTRODUCTION

Madame Speaker,

Honourable Members,

1. I am pleased to welcome you to the First Sitting of 2015 of the First Session of the Sixth National Assembly of Mauritius being held today the 27th of January.
2. It is my honour and privilege to welcome Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, CGSK, KCMG, QC, as the new Prime Minister and Leader of the House, Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo as Attorney General and Mrs Santibai Hanoomanjee as Speaker of this Assembly.
3. I bid a special welcome to all the newly elected members whom I wish a fruitful journey at the service of the nation.
4. On the 10th of December 2014, the population overwhelmingly and very clearly expressed its faith and trust in Sir Anerood Jugnauth, his coalition partners and his team to bring meaningful change to the daily life of our people and to lead them towards happiness, prosperity and a better future.

5. Respecting the will of the nation, Government will govern for the People with the People. And this pledge will consistently drive the endeavours and actions of all ministers throughout this mandate.
6. Government's objective is to transform Mauritius into a truly forward looking, environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant and innovative country with modern infrastructure, global connectivity, high skills and technology.
7. Government will improve quality of life, accelerate social integration, strengthen democracy and ensure the independent functioning of institutions. The ultimate aim is to shape a second socio-economic miracle in the interest of one and all.
8. Government is committed to conducting business on the principles of discipline, transparency, accountability and exemplary governance.
9. This implies:
 - Responsible and judicious use of public funds and a crusade to weed out wastage;
 - An open and transparent bidding and procurement process to combat fraud and corruption;

- A transparent and merit-based recruitment and appointment policy to ensure meritocracy;
 - An in-depth reform of our public sector institutions to inject productivity, efficiency and quality service;
 - A zero tolerance policy against crime and violence;
 - Freeing our society from the shackles of widespread corruption, favoritism, nepotism, mafias and political interference; and
 - Guaranteeing access to information and broadening of the democratic space.
10. Government is committed to warding off unemployment, introducing a minimum wage policy and implementing a better social housing policy.
11. Government will lay the foundations of a stronger economy and a fairer society. The aim is to promote a healthy business climate that will encourage enterprise and investment and, at the same time, ensure happiness and prosperity to our people and a greater sense of belonging to the nation.
12. Government adheres to the principle that in the development process and financial advancement, national wealth must be equitably distributed. The philosophy of '*développement à visage humain et*

chances égales pour tous' shall eminently prevail in all our endeavours.

13. Government is convinced that sustainable economic growth cannot be achieved without the integration and participation of the entire population.
14. Consequently, a key consideration of Government during its mandate will be to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, promote social justice, economic empowerment and national unity, and protect the elderly and vulnerable ones.

Honourable Members,

SOCIAL INCLUSION

15. Meaningful change starts with a strong focus on the most vulnerable citizens. Only a few days after being sworn into power, Government granted a sizeable increase in pension payments to the elderly, as well as to the widows, orphans, physically handicapped and all other recipients of social aid.
16. Thus, the monthly old age pension, basic widow's pension and basic invalid pension have all been

- increased to Rs 5,000. At the same time, a uniform salary compensation of Rs 600 has been granted to all workers and employees.
17. A minimum wage bill will be introduced for the workers at the lower end of the ladder.
 18. To further alleviate people's financial burden, government will eliminate VAT on a number of food products.
 19. Government will set up a special financial assistance scheme to help students from modest families to pursue tertiary education and thus contribute to their own economic and social advancement.
 20. A medium to long term Marshall Plan will be elaborated to combat poverty and social exclusion. The National Empowerment Foundation will be restructured to render it more proactive and improve service delivery to the poor.
 21. New legislation will be brought forward to provide more protection and security to the elderly, women, children and physically handicapped. Penalties for offenders will be substantially increased.

22. Government will set up additional recreation and activity facility centres for the elderly and the disabled.
23. Government will further strengthen the existing legislations in respect of charitable institutions which will be required to install CCTV cameras on their premises, ensure the presence of a full-time medical practitioner and recruit qualified and trained carers, as well as a psychologist.
24. Government will provide special support care to elderly persons with disabilities and those living alone as part of its strategy to provide a ‘service de proximité’ to them.
25. Government proposes to amend sections 3 and 16 of the Constitution to prohibit discrimination and introduce a Disability Bill to provide further protection to persons with disabilities.
26. Government will review the national pensions fund to strengthen enforcement and sustainability and ensure adequate income replacement.

HOUSING

27. Government will increase housing supply and home ownership for the economically and socially disadvantaged. The construction of some 10,000 social housing units during this present mandate has been planned.
28. To protect financially distressed people, legislation will be enacted to prohibit, for a period of two years, the sale by levy of the only house of a worker who has been made redundant on economic grounds. In the same vein, the overall procedure of sale by levy will be reviewed to prevent collusion between financial institutions, legal advisors and their agents.
29. A new strategic land use planning framework will be developed to achieve major social and development objectives.

JOB CREATION

30. Over the next five years, a significant number of jobs will be created in the public sector. In parallel, the private sector will be empowered through various fiscal measures to actively participate in government's unemployment alleviation mission.

31. Some 15,000 jobs will thus be created annually. A new dynamism will be instilled in the existing economic sectors and, later on, from new development poles, such as regional bunkering hub, the ocean economy, duty free shopping and the ICT enabled services sectors.
32. Labour legislation will be amended to better protect employees.
33. A new school of nursing will be opened in the south of the country and a project to train and prepare medical staff for employment abroad will be initiated. Bilateral agreements and partnerships will be sought with other countries to that end.
34. A considerable number of well-remunerated seasonal jobs will be created in the cruise, shipping and hospitality sectors. The recruitment and training exercise will be carried out in an open and transparent way under the aegis of the government.
35. To increase the chances of young jobseekers and fresh graduates secure permanent employment at their training stations, the duration of the state subsidised Youth Employment Programme will be extended to two years.

- Prospective employers will thus have additional time to assess their trainees.
36. The Youth Employment Programme will be reviewed in order to extend the duration of the contract of employment to a period of two years.
 37. New fiscal incentives will be granted to the private sector to encourage them recruit unemployed people on a full time basis.
 38. In order to increase the employability of people convicted of minor crimes and misdemeanors, such records will cease to appear on their 'certificates of character' after a period of one year.
 39. To encourage companies hire local work force, work permit regulations will be reviewed. Recruitment of foreigners will be limited to scarcity areas and to acquire new skills.
 40. A new national employment agency will be created to find suitable job placements for the unemployed.
 41. The Back to Work Programme will be implemented to facilitate women wishing to take up or resume employment.

42. Amendments will be brought to the Employment Rights Act with a view to extending maternity leave from 12 to 14 weeks to better support working mothers fulfill their family obligations.

YOUTH & SPORTS

43. Government will endeavour to increase the level and standard of sports activities in the country. Professional football will be actively promoted. In collaboration with an English premier league soccer club, a high-level football academy will be set up in Mauritius to offer talented youngsters the opportunity to pursue a career locally and abroad.

44. To provide greater access to quality and user friendly services to the young and empowering them to better participate in the socio-economic development of the country, Government will review the operations of youth centres.

45. New modern residential sports training centres will be built in Bel Ombre and Anse La Raie.

46. A National Youth Volunteer Scheme will be introduced to promote volunteering culture among the youth.
47. Government will set up fitness facilities in sports complexes and youth centres to encourage regular physical exercises.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

48. Government will strengthen legislation on women, children, community care and protection.
49. A new Children's Bill will be introduced to bring together the different pieces of legislation dealing with children under one single legislative umbrella.
50. A new bill will be introduced to replace the National Women's Council Act of 1985 to provide for a more dynamic, productive and structured council. Laws relating to protection and prevention of domestic violence will be reinforced. Particular attention will be given to street children.
51. The SILWF Act will be reviewed to meet the changing needs and aspirations of the population.

Honourable members,

ENVIRONMENT

52. Sustainable and eco-friendly development ranks high on Government's agenda and is expected to pave the way for a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius.
53. The Beach Authority Act will be reviewed and Beach Management Plans will be developed and implemented to ensure a more rational development and sustainable use of beaches. Reinforcing safety and security on public beaches will be a key priority.
54. Government will take necessary steps to ensure that beachfronts, public beaches and access to the sea remain the domain of the public. Commercial developments in these places will be carefully weighed against the population's need for recreational activities.
55. Government will ensure that lease hold rights of Pas Géométriques and other state lands are not transferred, sold or otherwise monetised in whatever form without prior authorisation of the Cabinet.

56. Efforts will be made to reclaim back all leases that have not respected the development clause for which they were allocated, or which are being held for speculative or pecuniary motives.
57. The Environment Protection Act will be reviewed to more effectively respond to the changing needs of the day and tackle emerging challenges including mitigation concepts.
58. The National Environment Commission (NEC) will be revived to create better synergy among the various stakeholders to address important environmental concerns and issues.
59. For more efficient prevention and control of environmental pollution, the Police de l'Environnement will be strengthened and reinforced and the various enforcing agencies empowered.
60. Addressing climate change is a major challenge, particularly for Small Island Developing States. In this context, Government will come up with a Climate Change Bill and a new Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan will be devised and implemented.

61. To enhance the safety and security of our citizens against natural disasters, Government will review and update the national multi-hazard early warning system and embark on innovative disaster management education, training and public awareness initiatives.
62. Government will adopt a responsible and environmentally sustainable policy regarding energy production, waste management and physical infrastructural development. Awareness, control, monitoring and sanctions will be at the heart of future initiatives.
63. Fiscal incentives will be provided to encourage renewable energy production.

EDUCATION

64. Government will aim to deliver a high standard of academic education and skills for our youngsters. Education reforms will focus on curriculum review and performance improvement at all levels. Remedial education at an early stage of the primary and secondary education cycles will remain a priority in order to deal with learning deficits, early drop-outs and failures.

65. Government will introduce a nine-year basic continuous schooling and the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) will be replaced by an end-of-primary cycle assessment.
66. To alleviate financial burden, improve education attainment and child health, Government will ensure that all pupils attending primary schools receive a free hot meal.
67. Full subsidies on SC and HSC examinations will be extended indiscriminately to all pupils irrespective of their social background.
68. Government will introduce environmental awareness and value-based education in the primary education curriculum.
69. A School of Arts will be set up to promote holistic learner development in areas of music, dance, painting and drama.
70. In order to build on the existing partnership with the private providers of secondary education and make it more effective, Government will review the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) Act.

71. Government will reinforce Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and provide for a new legal framework to govern the sub-sector, including the review of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD).
72. The MITD will be called upon to position itself as a Regional Training of Trainers Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Southern and Eastern African, COMESA and SADC countries.
73. Government will introduce a Skills for Growth scheme that will offer opportunities to young graduates to acquire work experience and to put into practice their knowledge, thereby assisting SMEs in terms of manpower, knowledge-sharing, creativity and innovation.
74. With a view to providing students with relevant career guidance and counselling services, an Integrated Career Counselling System including career orientation, information and management services will be established.

75. Government will introduce a ‘Chambre des Métiers’ Bill to give due recognition to the various professions, including the registration of people in the different trades, setting standards for training facilities and qualifications in each trade.
76. A Higher Education Bill will be introduced as a new legal framework for the development of quality education and research in line with the objective of strengthening Mauritius as a knowledge hub. In the same vein, the Tertiary Education Act will be reviewed and the TEC strengthened as the regulator.
77. With a view to providing higher learning opportunities for those in need of fostering greater equity in the system, Government will encourage access to Tertiary Education for students from low income families and students with disabilities.

ARTS AND CULTURE

78. The promotion of arts and culture will constitute an important ingredient in nurturing national unity and promoting our tourism industry. Measures will be put in place to promote cultural tourism, religious pilgrimage and film production. In this context, the role and functions of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) will be reviewed.
79. Cultural entrepreneurs in the different fields of arts and culture will be given incentives through a start-up scheme for new entrepreneurs and a special scheme for existing cultural entrepreneurs with a view to giving a new impetus to the sector and boosting artistic creativity.
80. The Status of the Artist project will be implemented to ensure recognition of the professional, social and economic status of artists.
81. Government will review the regulatory framework for the Rights Management Society for better representations of rights holders.

82. A Mauritian History and Culture Museum retracing history from the creation of Mauritius up to the Modern time will be set up. The Museum will also depict the different stages of how our country has been populated, the different cultures as well as our economic evolution.
83. A “Stade Musical” comprising state of the art technology in terms of podium, sound and light facilities will be constructed to enable local artists as well as international stars to give performances in a highly professional environment.
84. Government will set up a National Centre for Performing Arts as well as multicultural National Troupe to promote cultural diversity and artistic capacity building. The Port Louis and Plaza theatres will be rehabilitated.
85. Better support and facilities will be made available to Mauritians undertaking pilgrimage to holy lands.
86. A holistic strategy based on our shared moral and cultural value will be devised in partnership with the media, the civil society and educational institutions to tackle the phenomenon of increasing societal ills.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

87. Over the next five years, public infrastructure and land transport will be a key component in transforming Mauritius into a modern, eco-friendly, vibrant and attractive place to live in, visit and do business.
88. A new, state of the art transport system will provide rapid access and connectivity throughout the country for the population and tourists, fuel economic activities and promote social integration within the country.
89. The existing system of speed cameras, traffic monitoring and sanctions will be replaced by a fairer and more socially equitable system.
90. The light railway project initiated by the previous government will be shelved for the time being on economic grounds.
91. With a view to alleviating traffic congestion along the main arteries of the country, a new road decongestion programme will be put in place. A number of main roads, highways, flyovers and secondary roads will be constructed.

- 92.The operations of the National Transport Corporation will be re-organised and the national bus fleet modernised to provide better service to travelers.
- 93.Government will address the long-standing problem of “marchand ambulants” and provide alternative attractive locations to enable them continue their trade.
- 94.Duty free facilities for taxi owners will be increased from 70% to 100%.
- 95.Government will ensure that the construction industry operates according to set standard and international norms. The quality of building materials, such as cement, steel bars and wires, aggregates, concrete and blocks used in construction will be closely monitored and relevant legislations will be harmonised.
- 96.A Professional Engineering Council Act and a Building Control Act will be brought to Parliament. The structure, staffing and operations of the Construction Industry Development Board will be reviewed.
- 97.Government will ensure that the Landslide Management Unit (LMU) becomes fully operational for the surveillance and investigation of the known suspected areas.

98. The National Development Unit (NDU), now under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, will be provided with resources and means so that the expectations of our citizens in terms of infrastructure and amenities are fully met.

99. The role of the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) as the interface between government and the public will be reviewed and improved.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

100. Government will bring major reforms to the public utilities sector, especially in relation to domestic water supply, electricity production and distribution as well as waste management.

101. Government is committed to addressing, on a priority basis, the long standing problem of water supply in the country. Water resources will be mobilised and infrastructure including pipes renewed or replaced to reduce water loss and ensure year round water supply.

102. The Bagatelle Dam will be completed within a year and a new dam will be constructed at Rivière des Anguilles to improve water supply in the South region.

103. The capacity of La Nicolière reservoir will be increased to satisfy growing demand in the North.

104. New technologically advanced water treatment plants will be constructed at La Nicolière, Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles.

105. Government will consider new projects for construction of dams along rivers and further development of ground water to mobilise additional water resources.

106. Government will undertake a review of the wastewater master plan to ensure the most competitive wastewater disposal technology for environmental protection. It will address the sanitation problems in the former CHA housing estates and the regions which are vulnerable to environmental hazards related to wastewater disposal.

107. Energy is an important sector, considered as the engine for economic development. The supply of electricity on a continuous basis is essential for the economy and the population at large. The Power Sector Expansion Plan will be updated to provide realistic projections for the next decade.

108. Government will review the institutional framework for the power sector and operationalise the Utility Regulatory Authority to ensure sound competitiveness in the energy sector and protect the interests of consumers.

109. Government will launch a Renewable Energy Programme so as to encourage the production of energy from renewable sources.

110. Government will ensure the timely implementation of power sector projects to meet the demand for electricity. The redevelopment of St Louis Power station will be implemented in the short term. For the medium term, Government will encourage development of generation mix of green energy and clean fossil fuel technology, taking into account the best interests of the country. Government will encourage efficient use of energy at all levels in particular in Government owned institutions.

PUBLIC HEALTH

111. Government is committed to providing universal, accessible and quality health services, free of any user cost, with emphasis on customer satisfaction. Special counters will be set in hospitals to deal with the complaints of patients and a special code of ethics will be introduced for health professionals.

112. To ensure that primary health care becomes the lynchpin of our national health system, a new Master Plan on Primary Health Care will be formulated and implemented. The existing system will be re-engineered to reduce pressure on the regional hospitals.
113. For patients needing home care, a system of domiciliary visits by specialised nurses will be established. Dedicated counters will be set up at the level of primary health care centres and hospitals to cater for the needs of the elderly and disable persons.
114. In view of increasing demand for eye operations, ophthalmology services will be decentralised.
115. A second Cardiac Surgery Centre will be set up to cater for the increasing demand for cardiac surgery.
116. A Vascular Surgery Unit will also be set up for the treatment of complex vascular diseases and prevention of amputations.
117. Government will invest in a new Cancer Centre and significant investment will be made in state of the art medical equipment and logistics.
118. A Rehabilitation Centre is envisaged to cater for patients with disabilities following accidents and surgeries.

119. A Special Committee will be set up to ensure timely purchase of quality medicines and wastage elimination in all public health institutions.
120. Awareness and sensitisation campaigns will be enhanced to reach the population at large through an improved communication strategy.
121. Glucose meters will be provided to diabetics receiving medical home care.
122. A new HIV/AIDS Action Plan 2015-2020 will be formulated. The Methadone Substitution Therapy services will be decentralised for the benefit of the patients and the community at large.
123. Government is determined to ensuring that our country takes advantage of the opportunities of the global medical tourism industry.
124. A National E-Health project aiming at improving the quality of service delivery across all public health institutions will be implemented.
125. The Medical Council, Dental Council and Pharmacy Acts will be reviewed in order to be more responsive to the needs and challenges of the health sector.

126. New Legislations will be introduced, namely the Pharmacy Council Bill and the Health Professionals Bill, to recognise and regulate allied health professionals.

127. A Private Health Institution legislation will be introduced to regulate the private health sector.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS

SECURITY AND LAW & ORDER

128. Government is fully committed to guaranteeing security and law & order to the citizens of the country and foreigners as well.

129. A zero tolerance policy will be adopted against child abuse, rapes, kidnapping, mafias, drug trafficking and abuse to the vulnerable.

130. The Police Force will be provided with a more conducive working environment in addition to modern equipment and state-of-the-art technology. This includes the acquisition of 18 Light Armoured Personnel Carriers to be used for internal security operations, three new helicopters, and one new Dornier aircraft.

131. A Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking will be set up and Government shall pursue a relentless fight against traffickers, while ensuring that our seaport and airport are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and technology to counter any attempt to introduce drugs in Mauritius.

132. Government will come up with a modern legal framework modelled on the UK Police and Criminal Evidence Act to address the abusiveness and arbitrariness of the present system of “provisional charges”.

133. Government firmly believes that in order to achieve results, the Police Force must attract and retain the best competencies. To promote transparency and meritocracy, an independent body will be set up to conduct examinations within the Police. Degree holders will be encouraged to join the Force and new incentives will be introduced to reward performance.

134. A central database of criminals will be set up and made accessible online to approved institutions, such as the Passport and Immigration Office and police stations. A separate electronic register of pedophiles and other perpetrators of child sexual abuse will be introduced.

135. Police Stations will be equipped with CCTV and audio recording systems. Investigations will be conducted in a more professional manner with focus on scientific-led evidence rather than confession.

136. Government intends to introduce electronic monitoring bracelets as an alternative to imprisonment for certain types of suspects who have been released on bail with a view to better managing the prison population.

137. Government will establish an independent Police Complaints Commission presided by a former Judge of the Supreme Court to ensure that fundamental human rights of citizens are respected.

138. Police officers will be allowed to syndicate to safeguard their interests.

139. Government will bring reform to the Prison Department to ensure that it is properly manned and equipped, and its officers adequately trained to guarantee a targeted and effective rehabilitation of offenders and their successful re-integration into the community.

140. A new legal framework will be introduced for adult detainees aiming at eliminating structural barriers and reviewing sentencing practices by providing more options for alternatives to imprisonment.
141. A new legal framework will be developed for the detention and management of juveniles in custody.
142. Government will finalise the construction of an open prison for female detainees considered as minimum risk inmates.
143. A Correctional Youth Centre for girls will be set up under the Prisons Department.
144. Government will set up a National Coalition against Domestic Violence Committee under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office. The Committee will liaise with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions to ensure that victims of domestic violence are given immediate shelter in a Government institution and provided with a job and a house within a reasonable time frame to lead a normal life anew.

145. Government will formulate a new immigration policy and reinforce the Immigration Act to cater for increasing cross-border movement of persons and its associated risks.
146. In line with international best practices, Government will modernise the immigration border control system with a view to enhancing the security and safety of passengers.
147. The Counter Terrorism Unit is being reorganised and given new mandates, which will enable it to establish good networking and disseminate timely information to avert threats.
148. Government will introduce necessary legislations to domesticate the provisions of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-Country Adoption.
149. Government will introduce strong regulations to address the issue of fake marriages involving locals and foreigners.
150. Government will streamline existing procedures to promote Mauritius as a prime destination for tourist weddings.

151. Government will closely monitor the sale of property, whether state lands or private lands, to non-citizens, especially in the context of IRS/RES schemes and other business transactions.

152. Air access policy will be reviewed to transform Mauritius into a regional aviation and tourism hub.

153. Government will adopt an accommodating immigration policy with respect to high net worth individuals and investors willing to live in Mauritius.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

CIVIL SERVICE

154. Government is committed to building a responsible and responsive Civil Service. In this context, a series of cutting-edge measures will be implemented to bring about a transformational change in the Civil Service with focus on Human Capital Development, Streamlining of Processes and Optimisation of Information and Communication Technologies.

155. Government will introduce a Public Service Bill to clarify and secure the boundaries within the Executive, thus reinforcing transparency, accountability and integrity.

156. The Civil Service College will cater for the training needs of the Public Sector at large including state-owned enterprises and serve as a regional centre of excellence in Public Sector Management and Governance.

157. A Public Service Call Centre will be created to act as a one stop shop and information centre to help track applications made by citizens and provide quick information on Government services.

JUDICIARY

158. Reforms will be brought to the judiciary to expedite determination of court cases and improve services to the public. A new independent court of appeal will be set up.

159. In line with the MacKay Report of 1997, Government will introduce legislation to set up a separate Court of Appeal Section and a separate High Court Section of the Supreme Court.

160. In the above context, renovations to the Supreme Court Historical Building will be undertaken to accommodate the proposed Court of Appeal.
161. A dedicated state of the art Court Building for the Supreme Court and all its Divisions will be built.
162. The required support services for a full-fledged Family Division will be improved.
163. All District Court premises will be reviewed and upgraded to ensure better services to all stakeholders since the bulk of court cases are dealt with at this level.
164. Government will review and update the *Code de Procédure Civile* which dates back to 1808.
165. Special witness schemes will be reinforced for our Courts to provide certain facilities to special categories of witnesses.
166. Digital and Audio recording systems will be upgraded to ensure accurate record keeping and speedier delivery of justice.

167. Legal aid fees to attorneys and barristers will be reviewed to ensure adequate legal representation during pre-trial and trial stages to all pauper litigants.
168. Government will update the Criminal Code to provide for new criminal offences, including those related to “Ponzi Schemes”, financial crime as well as offences related to use of technology.
169. The Law Reform Commission will be empowered and further amendments will be brought to the Criminal Code and other laws to ensure that they meet the needs of contemporary Mauritius.
170. Government will review our evidential laws and rules with a view to codifying them in line with recent developments in the Commonwealth.
171. Government will make better provision for the rights and interests of victims and, in particular, provide in the law for representations by or on behalf of a victim to be taken into account at sentencing stage.
172. Government will amend the Criminal Code to provide for a better legal framework for dealing with sexual offences and will enhance the procedural context in which such cases are dealt with.

173. Government will introduce a Juvenile Justice Bill to provide for a more modern juvenile justice system.

174. Government will amend the Curatelle Act with a view to making further and better provision for the administration of vacant estates.

Honourable members,

THE ECONOMY

175. Sustainable economic development, wealth creation and equitable distribution of the national cake are fundamental elements in achieving meaningful change.

176. Inspired by the first economic miracle that took our country out of the doldrums in the eighties, Government will steer the economy to a much higher plane of development. New policies will be implemented to boost GDP growth and create jobs.

177. Government will develop new pillars for economic growth, such as the launching of a regional bunkering hub, the development of the ocean economy, the implementation of the duty free shopping paradise initiative and the ICT Enabled Services sectors.

178. Government will also consolidate traditional sectors – sugar cane industry, tourism and manufacturing - and existing service sectors, namely the financial services industry and promote the expansion of business in Africa.
179. Innovation will be a key driver of growth. In that context, a techno park will be set up to create the right environment for carrying out new research, clinical and innovation activities.
180. Government will also take strong actions to revitalise private investment in existing pillars of the economy with an emphasis on greater business facilitation and improvement of the investment climate.
181. Government will revisit and unlock several investment projects that have been stuck in the pipeline for too long. These projects will be executed on a joint venture basis with the participation of local private sector and international investors. This new approach will instill a new confidence factor in the whole business community.
182. The most critical success factor to the shaping of the second miracle will be the emergence of the new breed of young entrepreneurs and rise of the SME sector as the main engine of growth.
183. To democratise the economy, Government will ensure that SMEs become the backbone of the economy in the years to come.

184. A new SME bank will be set up and some Rs 10 billion earmarked by Government to support the development of this sector over the next five years.
185. To achieve a higher growth rate will also require macroeconomic stability. To this end, there will be better coordination of monetary and fiscal policies.
186. Urgent emphasis will be placed on resolving the problem of excess liquidity in our banking system.
187. Inflation will be kept under control and new policies will be implemented to raise national savings.
188. As regards public finance and fiscal policy, Government will not tolerate wasteful, unnecessary and excessive expenditure. The Finance and Audit Act will be reviewed to strengthen public financial management, accountability, transparency and fiscal discipline.
189. Government will implement an equitable tax policy based on the philosophy of ‘fiscalité légère’.
190. Tax administration will be made more efficient and fairer, where all persons liable to tax pay their fair share. New legislations will be introduced to reinforce and modernise tax administration and customs management.

191. A Property Valuation bill will be introduced to simplify the current valuation system and promote transparency and good governance.
192. Government will ensure that the public sector debt as a ratio of GDP is on a declining trend in order to achieve the statutory requirement of 50 per cent by 2018.
193. Government will revisit the Public Procurement Act so that projects are implemented faster, more efficiently, with greater transparency and better value for money.
194. Government will be merciless in combating the growing illicit gambling activities in order to minimise harm to society. To this end, the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act as well as the institutional framework will be strengthened.
195. A new charter for budget responsibility will be brought forward to ensure that future governments spend taxpayers' money responsibly.

TOURISM

196. The tourism sector will be called upon to play a pivotal role towards achieving the targeted second economic miracle. The development of our tourism industry will be articulated around four main axes, namely Attractiveness, Accessibility, Visibility and Sustainability of the destination.

197. A Tourism Strategic Plan covering period 2016 to 2020 will be formulated. An “*Assise du Tourisme*” with the participation of all stakeholders will also be organised to chart a roadmap for the sector and to enlist their commitment to Government’s vision of offering a unique tourism experience in a safe and secure destination.

198. In a bid to enhance the appeal of our destination to wider market segments, Government will broaden the tourism product portfolio to include eco-tourism, medical tourism, shopping tourism, wellness tourism, cultural and heritage tourism and grey tourism.

199. Government will re-establish the reputation of Mauritius as an up market destination for the quality of its tourism product based on a brand promise of excellent service delivery. Demand and supply will be balanced in

a bid to uphold the quality of our product offer at all times.

200. Government will, in collaboration with the tourism operators, implement an official rating system for hotel classification with a view to consolidating the tourism industry with well-defined criteria for operational standards.

201. Regional tourism will occupy a predominant position in our market diversification strategy. An Africa Strategy, targeting African countries registering sustained growth, will be implemented to capture a greater share of the African outbound tourists.

202. The tourism support institutions will be revamped and reorganised to be more responsive to the needs of tourism operators. The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority will be restructured and provided with a new legal and institutional framework adapted to a dynamic institution with a commercial outlook. The Tourism Authority will be transformed into a business facilitator leveraging on new technologies to provide a more efficient service to the stakeholders and reduce the costs of doing business for tourism operators.

203. Air Mauritius being the national airline is the backbone of the tourist development of the country. Government will encourage Air Mauritius to take necessary steps to become more competitive and to sustain the tourism industry. To this end it will have to be restructured to face global competition in the industry.

Honourable Members,

Agriculture

204. Government will accelerate the reforms already started in the cane industry to make it sustainable and financially viable. Diversification into ethanol production, sucro-chemicals and other activities will be encouraged.

205. Measures will be put forward to ensure that small planters increase their revenues from cane production, bagasse, and other crops. Financial assistance, technical guidance and logistical support will be provided to this end.

206. Special efforts will be made to encourage large scale production of vegetables and other food products on a pooled or clustered basis with a view to reducing the country's overall food imports. Young entrepreneurs will be encouraged to engage in agricultural activities.

207. Government will take measures to:-

- boost production of strategic crops;
- encourage agro industry development through regional cross-border initiatives;
- explore regional markets for export opportunities;
- accompany small planters and agro-entrepreneurs to modernise their production methods, upgrade their skills and professionalise their activities;
- promote natural farming and organic production; and
- prioritise projects in the ornamental sector for export.

208. Government will address the key constraints of livestock production by setting up special livestock zones in different parts of the island for cattle, goat and pig production.

209. Government will review the terms and conditions of lease of land to metayers to ensure the sustainability of their activities.

210. Government reckons the importance of the Cooperative Sector and undertakes to further strengthen the Cooperative Movement by providing the appropriate legal, fiscal and policy support. Existing cooperatives will be consolidated and facilities for the emergence of cooperatives in new sectors, such as Green Energy, will be put in place.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

MANUFACTURING

211. To give a fresh impetus to the manufacturing sector, Government will elaborate an Export Development Plan with emphasis on an Africa Export Strategy that will provide strong support to the Domestic Oriented Enterprises to tap opportunities in the African markets.

212. In parallel, air connectivity between Mauritius and Africa will be improved and lobbying efforts made to secure the renewal of the AGOA treaty will be intensified.

213. The current fiscal incentives will be reviewed for enhanced competitiveness of the manufacturing sector and improve its penetration into the regional and international markets.

214. A new investment promotion model driven by institutional alignment will be formulated based on best investment promotion practices and value-chain analysis to attract investment in high-value added manufacturing activities.

215. Government will promote the development of a fashion industry and organise regular and seasonal fashion shows both in Mauritius and abroad that would make known internationally the ‘Made in Mauritius’ label for greater acceptance of our products in new and emerging markets

OCEAN ECONOMY

216. Government is committed to making Ocean economy an important industry to sustain economic diversification, job creation and wealth generation.

217. A new ministry has been created and the Mauritius Institute of Oceanography as well as all ocean related activities have been pooled together under that Ministry.

218. A legal framework and a unified regulatory body will be put in place to license, supervise, monitor and regulate the activities of ocean related economic operators.
219. Technical co-operation and financial assistance will be sought from international organisations and donor countries to ensure that the new industry starts off on a sound foundation.
220. A new Fisheries and Marine Resources Bill incorporating international norms and practices for modernising the fisheries sector will be introduced.
221. Government will put the fishermen community at the centre of development and will ensure their capacity building and training for improved livelihood.
222. A Marine Pollution Bill will be introduced in line with the International Maritime Organisation Convention.
223. Government will actively promote research expedition in our quest for fossil fuel and other minerals that can be sustainably exploited.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

FINANCIAL SERVICES

224. Financial services constitute a key sector of our economy and have a huge potential for growth and job creation. Substance building within the Mauritian jurisdiction will be accelerated.
225. Government will position the Stock Exchange of Mauritius as an attractive capital-raising platform for international and African focused financial products.
226. Efforts will be made to promote the development of wealth management, asset management and position Mauritius as a centre for private placements, trading of bonds and other financial instruments.
227. Multinationals will be encouraged to set up their regional headquarters in Mauritius with more back office activities.
228. Investors will be encouraged to make use of the Mauritian jurisdiction for their investments into and out of Africa.
229. Government will strive to extend the network of Double Taxation Agreements and Investment Partnership and Protection Agreements.

TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATION AND INNOVATION

230. In achieving meaningful change, technology, communication and innovation will constitute key drivers. In this respect, a National TCI Strategic Plan 2015-2020 will be formulated to pave the way for an Intelligent and Smart Mauritius.

231. Government will expedite the deployment of high speed connectivity through Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) and 4G island-wide. The objective is to attain a Broadband Penetration of 60% by December 2015. The delivery of quality service online to citizens and businesses on a round the clock basis will be addressed.

232. Government is committed to setting up the appropriate ecosystem and a comprehensive, secure ICT infrastructure to protect Mauritius from internal and external cyber threats and attacks. The National Cybersecurity Strategy will thus allow Mauritius to manage and expedite both deliberate and unintentional disturbances in the cyber space.

233. A techno park will be constructed in Rose Belle to spearhead the development of the ICT sector. New cyber-cities will be set up in the North, East and West as well.

234. Government is committed to providing the right incentives to position Mauritius as the ‘virtual office’ of Africa.

235. New policies and strategies will be introduced to transform the ICT/BPO landscape into high value service sourcing by moving from the traditional BPO/call centre services to high-end value added services such as Knowledge Outsourcing, Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) and Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO). In this context, a 4-Tier Data Centre and a Disaster Recovery Centre will be constructed for the purpose of Business continuity.

236. To enhance value and improve technical efficiency within the Mauritian ICT sector and to develop local capacity as well as bringing localised ICT tools to help develop local knowledge communities, a National Open Source Policy and Strategy will be developed.

237. The price of Telecommunication services will be made more affordable for increased accessibility to the general public and business while at the same time improving the Quality of Service.

238. One of the glaring gaps identified so far in the ICT sector is the shortage and the right mix-match of skills. Government is committed to introduce viable strategies using a PPP approach to address this shortcoming.

239. Free broadband internet connectivity through Wi-Fi network will be made available in public places and in educational institutions.

240. Digital Migration from the analogue system shall happen on 17 June 2015 in line with the ITU convention. All TV channels will then be on a digital mode.

241. High-tech transmission equipment will be purchased by Multicarrier Mauritius Ltd to improve quality of service and eliminate black spot areas. MCML will enter into agreement with international satellite operators to become a content port to service the region.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

AIRPORT AND SEAPORT

242. The airport and seaport sectors will play important roles to service the different poles of economic development of Mauritius. Special emphasis will be laid on connecting Mauritius with different parts of the world through the transformation of SSR International Airport into an efficient regional aviation hub and transforming the Port Louis Harbour into an international maritime hub.

243. The airport will be enhanced and provided with necessary facilities to allow its development into a transit hub.

244. An airport city will be developed which will house a wide range of aviation and commercial activities.

245. A new Port Master Plan Study will be undertaken with a view to tapping the huge potential that the ocean economy offers. Focus will be placed on the emergence of dynamic port related activities such as cruise operation, transshipment and bunkering activities as well as the exploration of the potential for development of the port of Vieux Grand Port.

Honourable members,

246. Government will relentlessly fight fraud, corruption and financial crime. To that effect, a Financial Crime Commission will be set up to act as an apex body to oversee the ICAC, the Financial Intelligence Unit and the enforcement department of the Financial Services Commission.

247. To safeguard people's financial security and employment, measures will be brought forward to limit household indebtedness. To prevent the possibility of a systemic financial crisis, private sector gearings will be closely monitored and regulated if necessary.

248. Government will eradicate fraud, corruption, malpractices and irregularities in all aspects of public life and restore our national values. To this end, a new Declaration of Assets Act for MPs and high ranking public officers and a Financing of Political Parties Act will be enacted. A new Code of Conduct will be introduced for all MPs and public officers.

249. The entire process of tendering, procurement and contract allocation will be reviewed to increase competition, transparency and accountability. The Prevention of Corruption Act will be amended to enable more effective tracking and curbing of money laundering and accumulation of wealth through back door mechanisms.

250. A significant reduction in misuse and wastage of public funds will be the order of the day in all public institutions. The continued existence of loss making institutions will be thoroughly assessed against the contribution they make to the public.

251. The public sector will be re-organised and reformed to make it more productive, transparent, accountable and customer friendly. A Public Sector Efficiency Bureau has already been set up as a department of the newly crafted ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reform.

252. Government will give serious consideration to the findings and recommendations of the National Auditors. Ministers, their accounting officers, and directors of parastatals will be held accountable for abuse or misuse of public funds.

DEMOCRACY

Honourable Members,

253. Mauritius is a democratic country of immense cultural and ethnic diversity. A consultative and participative decision making structure is thus crucial in meeting the varied ideas and aspirations of our diverse people.

254. The Constitution of Mauritius guarantees fundamental rights and freedom of a citizen of the country, such as: freedom of expression and speech, political opinion, assembly and association. Government is determined to protect these rights and widen the contours of our democracy.

255. Government will adopt a genuinely decentralised and participative approach in decision making and adopt a consultative approach in matters directly relating to the Constitution of the country and in all cases where the interest of the public at large is at stake.

256. An ‘anti defection’ legislation will be introduced to make it more difficult for MPs to cross the floor.

257. Nationwide referendums will be held on matters of utmost importance and relating to public interest as well as on critical amendments pertaining to our sovereignty or Constitution.

258. A Freedom of Information Act will be brought forward to promote transparency and accountability in public administration and more particularly in contract allocations.

259. Journalists and media reporters in the exercise of their functions will no longer be arrested or jailed unless there is strong prima facie evidence of a conspiracy against them.

260. The data bank containing fingerprints and biometric photographs of the new National Identity Cards will be destroyed to protect sensitive personal data of our citizens.

261. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation will be re-organised and made more efficient, service oriented and less dependent on government funding. Private television broadcast will be permitted.

262. Live public debates and telecasts on topical issues and matters relating to public interest will be encouraged.

263. The Electoral Supervisory Commission will be given wider powers to control and sanction fraud, corruption and conflict of interests during election time, and also to monitor political funding and abuse of position or power.
264. Our electoral system will be reformed to introduce a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly and guarantee better women representation.
265. Government will amend the Local Government Act to consolidate democracy at local level and promote better participation of local councilors in the management of community affairs.
266. Local authorities will be encouraged to implement, as far as possible, self-supporting development projects and sustainable delivery of services.
267. The ‘Government Transformation Plan’ will be extended to the local authorities to allow for online issue of permits and collection of dues via e-payment.

THE NATION

Honourable Members,

DIPLOMACY

268. In the increasingly inter-dependent world, it is essential for Mauritius to play an active role regionally and internationally in order to secure desired outcomes at national level and opportunities abroad. In this perspective, Government will pursue economic, trade, employment and other objectives to ensure that the voice of Mauritius is duly heard.

269. Government will conduct an economy-driven and people-focused diplomacy which aims at delivering greater prosperity, security and opportunities for our citizens.

270. Government's efforts will aim at consolidating and strengthening existing diplomatic linkages with our bilateral partners and, at the same time, forging new relationships across the world. Government will give high priority to the establishment of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

271. A key feature of our diplomatic pursuits will be to conclude growth-inducing bilateral agreements, including comprehensive partnership agreements and preferential trade agreements to respond to our development needs and aspirations as they evolve.

272. Government will endeavour to enhance market access in our traditional markets, at bilateral and regional levels, for our goods and services. In the process, we will step up our engagements for the extension of the third country fabric derogation under AGOA post 2015.

273. We will actively pursue deepened economic engagement with Africa, the new global frontier of growth, in a manner that Mauritius becomes recognised as an important economic gateway to Africa.

274. Government will work closely with like-minded countries to ensure that the concerns of Small Island Developing States are fully addressed in the global fora.

275. Government will step up efforts in bringing about more convergence in the policies among the Regional Economic Communities to which Mauritius belongs.

276. Government will, in collaboration with international co-operating partners and like-minded countries continue to promote and preserve peace and security in Africa and the Indian Ocean region.

277. Government action will focus on the conclusion of the comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Europe and the Tripartite COMESA/SADC/EAC/ FTA Negotiations.

278. Government will also develop strategic economic partnership with emerging economies, with particular focus on the BRICS and accelerate the implementation of an expanded Africa Strategy.

279. Government will ensure that the rights, territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as security interests of Mauritius are fully respected and safeguarded.

280. Government is much concerned at the lack of progress made to date to resolve the long-standing dispute over the Chagos Archipelago. Every effort will be made to speed up diplomatic talks with the UK and US Governments and actively seek the support of the international community in this respect.

RODRIGUES AND OTHER OUTER ISLANDS

281. Government is fully committed to supporting the development of Rodrigues and other outer islands as an integral part of the Republic of Mauritius.

282. Air and sea connectivity with Mauritius will be improved as will public infrastructure, electricity and water supplies. Greater technical assistance will be provided in the fields of education, health care, agriculture and poverty alleviation.

283. The support provided for the social and economic development of Rodrigues will be consolidated with the promotion of an enhanced business climate and boosting up development in the field of agriculture, more specifically organic farming, apiculture as well as fisheries and artisanal products.

284. Government will support the setting up of a “Maison de Rodrigues” in Mauritius with a view to better assisting and supporting our Rodriguan brothers and sisters to work and live here.

285. The water problem in Rodrigues will be addressed with the construction of new reservoirs and planned exploitation of available resources.

286. Government will bridge the digital communication gap between Mauritius and Rodrigues with the laying of the submarine optic fibre cable to link Mauritius and Rodrigues thus enabling the emergence of a new ICT economic pillar in Rodrigues.

287. Government will ensure that the needs and requirements of our fellow citizens based at Agalega and other outer islands are catered for.

288. Government will equip Agalega with appropriate amenities including an air strip and a new jetty to improve accessibility and connectivity. In view of its specificity, the use of renewable energy will be promoted there.

289. Government will also come up with new legislation to preserve the fragile ecosystem of St Brandon.

CONCLUSION

Honourable members,

290. With the advent of a new Government in place, time for the much awaited change in the daily life of our citizens has arrived. The next five years will therefore be a defining era in the economic and social revival of our country.

291. This legislative programme is an important stage of a journey that has just begun. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Government will create a new economic model based on a number of challenges, namely:

- putting in place a people's government;
- fueling growth in the major sectors of the economy;
- creating new pillars of development;
- creating new jobs for our people;
- injecting good governance, transparency and accountability in government business;
- tackling security, law and order;
- protecting our fragile environment and ecosystem;
- fighting poverty and social exclusion;
- making opportunities more equal for all our fellow countrymen; and
- improving the general well-being of the population.

292. So our creed today is innovative socialism, and all members of Government believe passionately in this vision. In short, the ambition is to create an economy where Mauritius would be a regional reference in entrepreneurship, aviation and tourism, shipping and logistics, technology and innovation, just to name a few.

293. But it will also be founded on the determination that wealth and opportunity must be more fairly distributed across the entire spectrum of the society. Government wants to see an economy where not just our standard of living, but also everyone's quality of life rises steadily and sustainably in harmony with the environment.

294. This socio-economic vision reflects Government's belief in the Mauritian genius and entrepreneurship spirit, our sense of social justice and reward sharing. It is a vision of a modern and vibrant Mauritius.

295. The results of the elections of 10th December heralded a new era for meaningful change. But Sir Anerood Jugnauth, his coalition partners and his team alone cannot materialise this vision. Though they have the energy, the ideas and the ambition to get our country back on track, they need the support and participation of our entire population.

296. Time has come to achieve meaningful change. We must turn the page as this is the long awaited opportunity for us all to join forces together, recreate history through a second socio-economic miracle and contribute to the making of a better future for the nation. And that includes every one of our rainbow nation.

297. If we join together, if we act decisively and move forward with optimism and determination we can address the economic, social and political problems that have plagued our nation for nearly a decade.

298. Together, we can materialise the change the country strongly desires and move towards growth and prosperity.

299. We appeal to the population to participate in our economic reconstruction and nation-building endeavours and help materialise our vision and dreams.

300. We can do that, we can reshape our own destiny and the destiny of the generations to come.

Honourable Members,

I thank you for your attention and pray that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon your counsels.

