Madame Speaker,

Let me at the very outset congratulate the Minister of Finance and Economic Development for this very audacious budget that will usher a new era for sustainable development for the country. The array of measures, fiscal incentives and proposals reflects the philosophy of l’Alliance Lepep. Indeed, the Minister of Finance has left no stone unturned to bring about the badly needed turnaround on both the economic and social fronts.

In fact, this is not just another budget, but an economic plan to further boost up the economy while at the same time reinforcing our
welfare state of the country without forgetting the vulnerable groups of our society. And of course, the measures announced go along with the vision of the Second Economic Miracle we pledged for.

*Madam Speaker,*

Amy Leigh Mercree said, I quote: “*Commitment mixed with drive and sprinkled with imagination creates sustained results. Stay focused and you will make your mark!*,” (Unquote). And this is what this Government is doing.

*Madame la Présidente,*

En 2014, ce gouvernement a pris un engagement vis-à-vis de la population.

Et cet engagement, nous l’honorons chaque jour à travers chacune de nos actions.

L’équipe gouvernementale, *Madame la Présidente,* est menée de main de maître par des leaders politiques, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Xavier-Luc Duval, Ivan Collendavelloo et Pravind Jugnauth, qui regardent dans la même direction et qui font preuve de respect mutuel.

L’innovation est au cœur de toutes nos actions. Tout cela apporte déjà et continuera à apporter des développements tangibles et durables pour le bien de toute la Nation, n’en déplaise à ceux qui souhaitent à tout prix voir échouer le gouvernement. Ce gouvernement laissera
une empreinte indélébile et les futures générations, et même ceux qui refusent de l’admettre aujourd’hui, se rendront à l’évidence que le gouvernement de l’Alliance Lepep a propulsé l’île Maurice encore plus loin sur la voie du progrès et de la prospérité.

L’échec, Madame la Présidente, ne fait pas partie de notre vocabulaire et toutes les couches de la population en sont témoins. Nous sommes bien partis pour relever les défis économiques, sociaux, environnementaux, et j’en passe. Certes, la voie vers la réussite ne sera pas de tout repos, surtout avec ceux qui tenteront de nous mettre des bâtons dans les roues, mais avec de la vision, la conviction et la volonté nous y parviendrons.

Madam Speaker,

Hon. Pravind Jugnauth rightly said it. With this budget, we are breaking with the past and traditional policies and approaches. It is also encouraging that it has not taken much time for many people, even from the Opposition side, to recognize that it is a ‘budget intéressant’.

Madam Speaker,

The Minister of Finance has given an attentive ear to each and every proposal made during the pre-budgetary consultations. This budget not only provides concrete measures for the “relance
“économique” but also lays a solid foundation for the eradication of absolute poverty through the Marshall Plan. Several environmental issues that are closely linked with poverty will also be addressed.

The fight against absolute poverty and other audacious measures announced in the Budget give me great hope for our country, and in particular for my Constituency, Port-Louis West/Grand River North West. For decades, this Constituency lagged behind in terms of development. Things have changed since this government is in power. Public infrastructures, roads, amongst others, have been upgraded in various regions, new and modern social houses have been built and granted to vulnerable people and my colleague, Hon. Patrice Armance and I make it a must to personally ensure that our constituents live in a healthy and safe environment. I am glad that with the new measures announced, Constituency No.1 will follow the trend of development and progress.

(Education)

Madam Speaker,

I would like to point out that the together with audacious measures to improve quality of life, the most important legacy which a Government can offer to its citizens is education. Education through
various means. And I must point out that both Ministries for which I am responsible go along with this philosophy.

**Environmental literacy**

For example, Environment Education is a key ingredient in the building of a sustainable and responsible nation. The Ministry of Environment is actively engaged in environmental awareness and sensitisation programmes, including distribution of resource materials and commemoration of international environmental events such as Earth Day, World Environment Day and Clean Up The World.

To support our initiatives towards promoting sustainable lifestyles, we will double our efforts to inculcate a sense of environmental stewardship and literacy at all levels of our society.

In the same vein, Training and Capacity Building are inextricably linked with reforms in the Civil Service. Government has taken the commitment to bring transformational change in the Civil Service in order to render it more responsible and provide an expedient service to boost the economy. In this respect the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is sparing no effort to step up training and capacity building in the Civil Service.

It is noteworthy that the Civil Service College was a long awaited project since **20 years back**. On my assumption as Minister of Civil
Service and Administrative Reforms, I have personally ensured that the project be revived.

I am pleased to state that we have successfully set up the Civil Service College, Mauritius and rendered it operational since 16 November 2015 to cater for a human capital development across all sectors and grades of officers in the civil service, parastatal bodies, local authorities and State Owned Enterprises. The College is running 33 courses with focus on Customer Care, Leadership and Change Management, among others. Since November 2015 to date, 2,167 officers have been trained. It is also envisaged, henceforth, to train Parliamentarians and ultimately to develop the college as a Regional Centre of Excellence.

I note with appreciation that my colleague the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has acceded to my request to increase the provision for training and capacity building in my Ministry’s Budget from Rs 5 million to Rs 20 million. This will enable the college to dispense more courses following Training Needs of Ministries/Departments and ensure that the public officers have the relevant skills, values and above all to inculcate the right mind set. To fulfill this requirement, the college will ensure that systematic
Training Needs Assessments (TNA) are carried out so as to map the training gaps and skills/competencies mismatch.

_Madam Speaker,_

(E-Learning System)

The setting up of the E-Learning System ELS constitutes a technological breakthrough that will have a significant impact on both personal and organisational development in the public sector. The ELS which will make use of web-based technologies will complement the traditional face to face training. It is presently managed by Civil Service College and it is foreseen that a larger number of Public Officers in all grades (90,000) including those from parastatal bodies and local authorities would benefit from their new learning too and ultimately foster a new learning culture in the Civil Service.

_Madam Speaker,_

I note with immense pleasure the attention given by the Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to re-engineer and transform the public sector institutions through, inter-alia, a modernization, capacity building process and the merger of different
institutions. And I would like to assure the House that my Ministry will provide all support.

My Ministry has a key role to play in accelerating reforms in the Civil Service. I am, indeed, very much grateful that my Ministry has been given the necessary means and resources to be able to, both, consolidate ongoing initiatives and embark on new ones.

_Madam Speaker_,

_The House will concur with me that ICT is now integral to an organization._ I am pleased to note that this Budget has not only highlighted the importance of modernizing the Civil Service, but also provided the means to accelerate the process. This will undoubtedly help towards streamlining business processes, reduce delays and improve customer’s satisfaction. In this regard, my Ministry, will fully participate in furthering the Digital Economy by providing the necessary support to Ministries/Departments to facilitate the delivery of e-services for the benefits of their customers.

_The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms will also collaborate with the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation with a view to ensuring that all public officers be given a “govmu.org” e-mail account_ on the basis
of a reasonable time frame. I have no doubt, all these measures will create an e-culture and cause a paradigm shift in the Civil Service.

(Major Reform Initiatives)

(Shakeel Mohamed)

Madam Speaker,

My good friend, Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, was talking about ‘trial and error’. I beg to differ and without going into much details, I would like to highlight some points concerning the public service...

Allow me, Madam Speaker, to point out some major reforms initiatives which are underway.

Performance Management System

PMS is instrumental for the successful implementation of the government’s plan to modernize the public sector, improve the delivery of quality services, and trigger the change in the mindset and determination of public officers so as to assist in delivering the economic agenda of Government to achieve the second Economic Miracle and Vision 2030.

In line with Government’s agenda to reinforce the concept of accountability in the Civil Service, we have also successfully
introduced another bold initiative, namely the Executive Performance Management Review, which is a reporting system on organizational performance for Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries/Departments based on their specific Key Performance Indicators. In the light of this major breakthrough, the Performance Management System is now covering all public officers from top to bottom.

PMS is expected to become major instrument for transforming the public service into an active driving force for spearheading national reforms and instilling a performance culture where public officers actually deliver and are rewarded for their performance according to the concept of “Earn As You Work”.

**Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)**

The HRMIS which is a priority project of my Ministry and a valuable tool to assist in strategic human resource planning and management has reached a crucial stage in its implementation. In fact, the HR and Payroll Modules have reached the User Acceptance Test Phase, and the system is expected to be fully utilized in about 40 Ministries/Departments by June 2017. The implementation of HRMIS will in itself constitutes a major transformation in processing the
monthly Payroll of public officers through the elimination of several time consuming manual activities.

**Madam Speaker,**

The coming into operation of the HRMIS, will no doubt render simpler the management of human resources in the complex environment of the Civil Service. In effect, this strategic tool will in the near future bring tangible benefits by reducing considerably the processing time of all “HR” related activities. **Productivity at work will considerably increase and Ministries/Departments will be able to focus more on Strategic HR, through a judicious use of their human resources.**

In addition, the Electronic Attendance System which is gradually replacing the manual Attendance Register is being upgraded to provide for, inter alia, a seamless interface with the HRMIS and to render the control of attendance at work more effective.

**Other Reform Initiatives**

**Madame Speaker,**

Government’s strategy for public service reform is that services must be increasingly responsive to the needs and aspirations of their
customers. This undoubtedly requires a better understanding of what makes customers satisfied and how this can be measured.

In this perspective, my Ministry will ensure that the quality culture instilled across the Civil Service is reinforced through the continued implementations of the following:

(a) Counter Services and Customer Care;
(b) ISO Certification; and
(c) Public Service Excellence Award to give due recognition for excellence.

It is indeed a matter of pride that for the first time in the history of the Civil Service of Mauritius, a Customer Satisfaction Survey has been successfully carried out by my Ministry, in collaboration with Statistics Mauritius, to measure how far people are satisfied with the level of services delivered. The survey, which initially covered all the Civil Status Offices across the island will be extended to other sectors as well and the results published for public knowledge in due course.

Mystery Shopping is being carried out in 10 selected organizations to ensure delivery of quality services to customers. My Ministry is investing in capacity building to train a dedicated team of officers to enable Mystery Shopping to be
carried out as an ongoing process, at any time of the year and in any organization.

On the other hand, the number of ISO Certification projects covering Divisions/Sections of Ministries/Departments is on the increase. My Ministry is now providing training to some 150 Facilitators across the Civil Service to enable the already ISO certified organizations to move to the ISO 9001:2015 Standard.

(Training and Capacity Building)

Madam Speaker,

Civil Service Reforms

Another unprecedented initiative worth highlighting relates to the formulation of a Civil Service Reforms Strategy, incorporating a Human Resource Strategy as well as a Capacity Building Strategy. My Ministry has, in fact, received technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat since April 2016 with a view to enabling Government to undertake strategic Civil Service Reform, using a holistic approach. In this endeavor, the Consultant has carried out wide consultations with various stakeholders including public officers of different grades, both administrative and technical and operating at different levels; representatives of the Private Sector, the Civil Society and those of Trade Unions of the Civil Service.
The Reform Strategy will cover the three main pillars of **People**, **Process** and **Technology**, and will be complemented by an Action Plan. The Reform Strategy along with the accompanying implementation matrix are expected to be ready by end March 2017.

I am confident that this Reform Strategy will chart the way forward for the next ten years in line with Vision 2030.

_Madam Speaker,_

We are **conscious of the problem of unemployment** prevailing in the country for the past years and we are committed to reduce unemployment in particular among our youths. **In the Budget 2015-2016, funds were provided for the filling of 7446 promotional and entry vacant posts in the Civil Service, and I am proud to announce that around 5,000 of these vacancies have been filled as at June 2016. For the budget 2016/2017, I am grateful to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development for providing funds for the recruitment of 7200 new entrants in the Civil Service.**

_New Initiatives_

_Madam Speaker,_
Since my taking office in the Ministry, I have given much attention to our more valuable asset. While harnessing public officers to provide an efficient and effective service delivery to our citizens, we must also promote their welfare and ensure that they have a work life balance. At the same time, with this concern at heart we have introduced the following new schemes:

(a) **Flexible Working Arrangement**

(b) **Government Medical Insurance Scheme (GMIS)**

A “**Flexible Working Arrangement**” scheme is meant to be implemented across the Civil Service for officers working on a five-day week basis with a view to improving overall efficiency in the Civil Service through longer hours of office operation and reduced lateness; and extended service to our customers.

Moreover, it provides more flexibility to officers to attend and leave office at times which are more convenient to them, thus enabling them to attend to their own family commitments, enhancing the work life balance of public officers and ultimately reducing stress.

The Scheme has been introduced on a pilot basis in my Ministry as from 1 October 2015 and extended to seven (7) other
Ministries/Departments as from January 2016. It will gradually be replicated across the civil service.

**The Government Medical Insurance Scheme**

The Medical Insurance Scheme is being spearheaded by my Ministry as from this year. It would consist of a Basic Plan whereby its premium would be on a cost sharing basis, that is, the 50% Government contribution to be matched by 50% employee contribution.

The scheme will be optional, and enable public officers to have access to a wider array of medical facilities.

Consultations have been held with all stakeholders including trade unions and the scheme would be implemented as from January 2017.

**Madam Speaker,**

The successful implementation of the Scheme will result in a healthy workforce in the Civil Service, reduce pressure in our public hospitals and contribute in the development of a Medical Hub.
Madam Speaker,

In this new era of development, the Human Capital, would play a significant role and consequently, safety and health would remain a key element.

Safety, Health and Welfare issues are important factors of life in any business, be it public or private. While compliance with legislation is a major factor, the development of an effective safety and health culture would be beneficial by encouraging safer working practices through the Occupational Safety and Health Management System.

My Ministry will continuously support the creation of the necessary conditions to render the work environment conducive to inspire and improve the morale of public officers.

Madam Speaker,

I am pleased to inform that since my assumption as Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, I have always ensured that Public Officers work in a healthy environment. A Gymnasium is operational in my Ministry for the benefits of my officers.

In addition to the provision of sports and gym facilities, I have a dream to put in place a **Public Service Food Court (Restaurant)** in order to promote healthy eating habits and healthy/bio food as well
as to reinforce social networking relationships and a desired work-life balance. I am convinced that healthy officers can better perform and this will positively impact on the whole service.

Madam Speaker,

Let me now come to another Ministry for which I am responsible, namely the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management.

Madam Speaker,

Sustainable development is at the core of this budget and it is also the engine of growth, innovation and productivity to pave the way for a greener Mauritius. This budget has, in fact, put in place the required enablers to accelerate our shift to a more sustainable society.

This budget has brought a new outlook on environmental sustainability through a plethora of measures to promote sustainable practices in sectors such as agriculture, energy, water, blue economy, tourism, land use planning, transport, amongst others.

- The creation of an agri-business park on a demonstration basis will showcase the potential for symbiosis between planters and breeders in terms of waste management and resource use.
Furthermore, the provision made for an exclusive and modern bio-farming zone as well as levy on pesticides and agro-chemicals will accelerate our efforts towards sustainable agriculture, safer food and conservation of ecosystem services.

Investment in sophisticated laboratory equipment for the testing of fruits and vegetables will support our efforts towards eco-labelling.

With regard to energy efficiency, I am particularly pleased to note the economic instruments proposed to promote sustainable consumption.

For the renewable energy sector, there are exciting provisions to accommodate the production of electricity from local renewable sources. What is moreover interesting to note is the potential for the creation of green jobs in this particular sector.

Madam Speaker,

While talking about environment, we should not forget that our ocean and our lagoon are also of prime importance. Our actions towards the preservation of our biodiversity should be in line with
the measures ratified during the COP 21. In so doing, we can win on every fronts.

I firmly believe that appropriate measures are necessary regarding navigation, nautical activities and even artisanal fishing in our lagoons. It is of utmost importance to do what is right instead of having recourse to traditional measures and actions which may have destructive effects. We should not also succumb to lobbies which may often have negative consequences for government and the population.

Let us not forget that the climate change is already happening. And I would like to congratulate Hon. Pravind Jugnauth for the measures announced in the Budget and which are in line with the protection of the environment.

*Madam Speaker,*

I will now highlight the main achievements of my Ministry that support the vision of the Government.

I. **Enhancing Resilience, Green Economy and Sustainable Development**

Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change remain our priority. The Ministry of Environment is already engaged in various
activities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, including:

1. Development of a **Mauritius Intended Nationally Determined Contributions** (INDC) submitted in the context of COP21. The House will note that Mauritius was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change.

2. Development of a **Guideline for Climate Change Adaptation Strategy on Coastal Setback** with the collaboration of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

3. Development and implementation of a **Climate Change Charter** in collaboration with Local Authorities.

Furthermore, I am delighted to inform the House that my Ministry has recently secured a grant of 1.6 Million US Dollars under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the implementation of our **Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions** for a Low Carbon Island Development Strategy in the wind power sector.

**Madam Speaker,**

Our coastal zone, which is of vital importance to the socio-economic development of Mauritius, is subject to degradation as a result of land and sea-based activities and climate change.
A continuous coastal rehabilitation programme is being undertaken at priority eroded sites based on the recommendations made under different Expert studies. Works have been undertaken at critical eroded sites, namely Grand Baie, Pointe Aux Sables, Poudre d’Or, Cap Malheureux, Quatre Soeurs, Grande Rivière Sud-Est, Bain Boeuf, Baie du Cap, La Prairie, La Preneuse, Le Morne, Grand Sable, Grand Port and Roche Noires.

To further support our national efforts, a grant of 9 Million US Dollars from the Adaptation Fund has enabled my Ministry together with relevant stakeholders to improve coastal ecosystem services and implement an early warning system for storm surges for the coastal zone. With regard to preparedness to disasters, a dedicated Refuge Centre is being constructed at Quatre-Soeurs. Within this initiative, major coastal protection works will be undertaken at Mon Choisy and Rivière des Galets.

Madam Speaker,

My Ministry is already focusing on the greening of the economy and promotion of sustainable production. We have already embarked on an ambitious capacity building programme under the SWITCH Africa Green Project in partnership with the EU, UNEP, UNDP and UNOPS. Green practices and responsible behaviours in the Agriculture, Manufacturing and Tourism sectors are being
encouraged. In addition, a policy review exercise carried out very recently has enabled us identify significant potential to further green these sectors and create a plethora of green jobs. By embracing cleaner production techniques, industrial symbiosis and waste minimization, SMEs can aim at increasing productivity and maximizing profit.

**Resource management**

As Mauritius is growing industrially and economically, new emerging waste streams, such as electrical and electronic waste, construction and demolition waste and, industrial waste, including hazardous waste, have become matters of serious concern. At the current rate of municipal waste generation, the Mare Chicose Landfill is expected to reach saturation by the end of 2018.

Against this backdrop, my Ministry has taken the following main initiatives:

(a) **Construction of an Interim Hazardous Waste Storage Facility** at La Chaumière where some 100 tonnes of hazardous wastes will be stored temporarily by June 2017 awaiting eventual shipping to licensed treatment facilities abroad.
An e-waste management system is expected to become operational by April 2017. This will be a Public-Private Partnership initiative.

Financial support from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) has already been secured for the development of a new Strategy and Action Plan for Solid Waste Management and Resource Recovery System for Mauritius.

Madam Speaker,

Another milestone towards sustainable consumption is the banning of plastic bags as from 1st January 2016. We have witnessed a change in the mind-sets of both consumers and producers. Local manufacturers have also diversified their activities by producing biodegradable plastic bags and more eco-friendly bags.

The provisions made in this budget to encourage waste minimization and promote resource efficiency are indeed highly commendable. We will in fact sustain the schemes on Solar Water Heater, Rainwater Harvesting and Composting.

Madam Speaker,

In line with the 2016/2017 budget towards streamlining the licensing mechanism, my Ministry is setting up an EIA e-licensing
platform. This platform will enable a more efficient permitting procedure and considerably decrease paper use.

**Environmental health and monitoring**

Proper enforcement of environmental legislation and monitoring of environmental parameters are critical to ensure a healthy environment for our fellow citizens. To better cope with emerging challenges and improve environmental and public health, my Ministry will:

- review the Environment Protection Act for better protection of the environment;
- strengthen ambient air quality monitoring through a network of fixed stations; and
- review a number of standards including drinking water and effluent discharge.

*Madam Speaker,*

We will continue with the embellishment and upgrading of our physical environment as it is a key element towards improving the quality of life of our citizens and market Mauritius as a green tourist destination. We will also upgrade our public beaches through provision of amenities and by ensuring safety and security of public beach users.
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

We all know that climate change is causing frequent and extreme weather events with dramatic consequences. We have no choice than to be better prepared to save lives and property. In this context, a comprehensive National Disaster Scheme 2015 has been prepared to enable stakeholders to better understand and assume their respective roles before, during and after disasters.

Furthermore, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act which has already been promulgated, provides for the prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters, mitigation of the adverse impacts of disasters, disaster preparedness, effective response to disasters and management of post-disaster activities including recovery and rehabilitation.

Some forty simulation exercises have so far been conducted to enhance the preparedness of agencies and local communities against natural disasters such as flooding, tsunami and landslides, among others. Moreover, a National Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Emergency Alert System is being implemented to provide alert in a timely and reliable manner.
Madam Speaker,

I would like to inform the House that Mauritius will have the privilege to host the 6th Session of the Africa Regional Platform and the 5th High Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction under the overarching theme ‘Implementing Sendai Framework in Africa’ in collaboration with the UNISDR Regional Office for Africa and the African Union from 22nd to 25th November 2016. We are expecting some 600 delegates, including 50 Ministers from the African continent. Mauritius will benefit both in terms of capacity building and visibility at regional and international levels.

Madam Speaker,

Allow me to conclude by stating that the ten key strategies enunciated by the Honourable Minister of Finance chart a clear path for the future of our country. Through this budget, Government has clearly expressed its firm intention to play its role fully as a facilitator to achieve sustainable development. It is now up to all stakeholders to assume their responsibilities. We need to ensure that our efforts are integrated and our actions are harmonized. It is only then that we will ensure a legacy for our future generation.

I thank you for your attention.