



GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2020-2024

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, HIGH INCOME AND GREEN MAURITIUS, FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER

Address by The President
of the Republic of Mauritius



Friday 24 January 2020

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE,
HIGH INCOME AND GREEN MAURITIUS
FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER

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Introduction

Mr Speaker, Sir,

Honourable Members,

1. I am pleased to welcome you to the Third Sitting of the First Session of the Seventh National Assembly of Mauritius being held today 24th of January 2020.

2. I extend a special welcome to all newly elected members.

3. On 7th November 2019, the population gave a clear mandate to the Prime Minister and his team to take our Republic to new heights and to continue improving the quality of life of our citizens by building on the achievements accomplished so far.

4. At the dawn of this 2020 decade, we have the leadership, the courage and the determination to rise to the challenges of our times and to face the future with confidence.

5. Government has a clear vision for the future.

6. It is about:

- a country that values its population as its main asset, through empowerment, enhanced social inclusiveness, and equality of opportunity;
- a country that meets the aspirations of its population, including its youth for higher standards of living, enhanced opportunities and sustainable development;
- an economy in the league of high-income countries, driven by technology and innovation and bringing higher levels of growth, equality and shared prosperity;

- a society where gender equality is promoted to ensure a fair and adequate representation of all genders as well as the human and social development of women in Mauritius; and

- a country that nurtures its deeply entrenched democratic values and human rights.

7. Government is therefore coming up with the present programme which is centred on achieving an Inclusive, High Income and Green Mauritius.

8. To meet the expectations of the population, Government will come forward with deep and wide-reaching actions across various sectors of our economy and society.

9. Government will introduce measures to improve management of public sector bodies, public finances, industrial relations, social security systems, housing and land use, education and training, health care, citizen facilitation, water and energy sectors, local government and environmental sustainability.

10. Government will implement its strategy through both human capital and physical infrastructural developments, based on the principles of discipline and rigour, rule of law and integrity. It will create a sustainable development model which is respectful of the environment and promotes quality of life, safety and welfare of its citizens to create a truly dynamic and pleasant country to live in.

11. On the international front, we shall assert our role as a key actor in the region and the world, connecting Africa and Asia, and reaffirming our sovereignty over our entire territory.

Chapter 1

Inclusiveness at the Heart of the Nation



— Inclusiveness at the Heart of the Nation

Honourable Members,

12. Government's priority is to harness the collective efforts of the population to achieve an inclusive Mauritius.

13. It is only through fairer access to prosperity and wealth distribution, and enhanced standard of living for every citizen that our country will be able to move forward and achieve its goals.

14. Our elderly are our source of inspiration and their contribution to the development of our country is invaluable. They deserve all our support in order to enjoy a good quality of life.

15. The old age pension, the basic widow's pension and the basic invalid pension have all been increased to Rs.9,000 since December 2019. Additionally, Government will honour its pledge to the population to bring the basic retirement pension to Rs 13,500 by 2024.

16. Government will spare no effort to continuously provide better facilities to our elderly, such as day care and recreational centres.

17. Government will strengthen the regulatory framework pertaining to charitable institutions and residential care homes.

18. Combating poverty and improving the standard of living of the population shall remain one of the priorities of Government.

19. This Government will therefore step up the implementation of the Marshall Plan Against Poverty.

20. The minimum salary has been revised upwards to Rs 10,200 per month since January 2020 and a salary compensation of Rs 300 granted to employees earning less than Rs 50,000 monthly.

21. Government will facilitate access for everyone to a decent and affordable housing in a sustainable living environment.

22. To this end, Government will accelerate housing programmes for both low and middle income families, with special focus on the needy and vulnerable.

23. Government will also uplift and modernise the existing social housing units, including ex-CHA housing estates and NHDC apartment blocks.

Education and Skills for the World of Tomorrow



— Education and Skills for the World of Tomorrow

Honourable Members,

24. Education is at the core of Government's inclusiveness agenda. It will therefore take measures to ensure a fair access to high quality education for all.

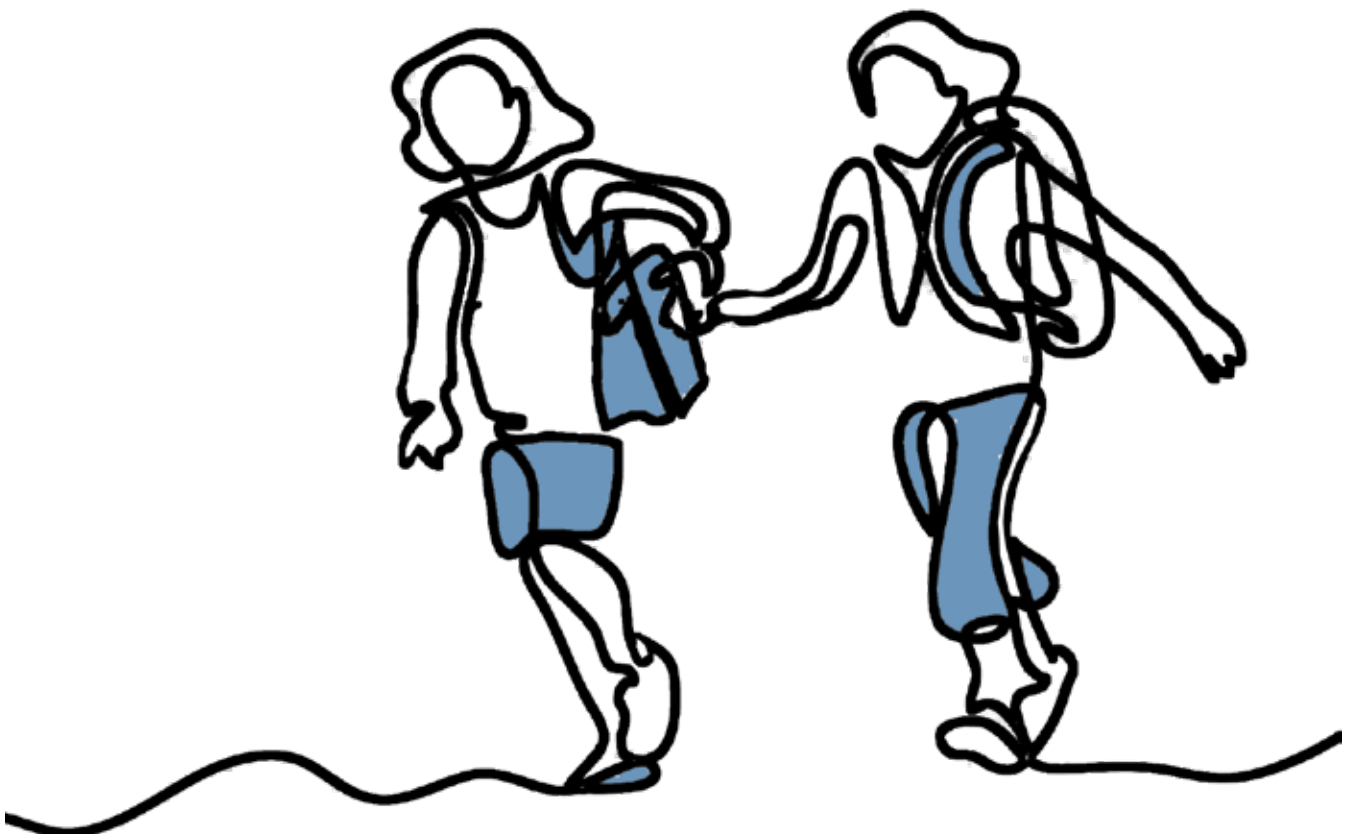
25. Government will come up with concrete actions to further improve performance at all levels.

26. Starting from academic year 2020, textbooks and e-books are being provided free of charge to Grades 7, 8 and 9 students attending state and grant-aided private secondary schools.

27. Access to educational facilities to students with disabilities will be improved.

28. Government will continue to invest in facilities to promote dual and vocational training in order to provide learning and work-study opportunities to our youth in non-academic fields.

29. As our country enters the next phase of its development, Government will create an environment conducive to learning through modern digital technology and latest best practices.



30. An Educators' Council Bill will be introduced to promote the continuous professional development and status of our teachers and educators.

31. The National Curriculum Framework for the pre-primary sector is being reviewed in order to better meet the new trends in education.

32. Government will further upgrade primary school infrastructure to accommodate additional art classes, playgrounds and a green and endemic corner to inculcate in our children the culture of conservation and protection of the environment. Moreover, secondary schools and tertiary education infrastructure will be further upgraded.

33. In line with the education reform policy, an Institute of Technical Education will be set up to create opportunities and pathways for students to pursue studies in technical education.

34. To better prepare and empower our young people, a National Skills Development Strategy 2020-2024 will be developed.

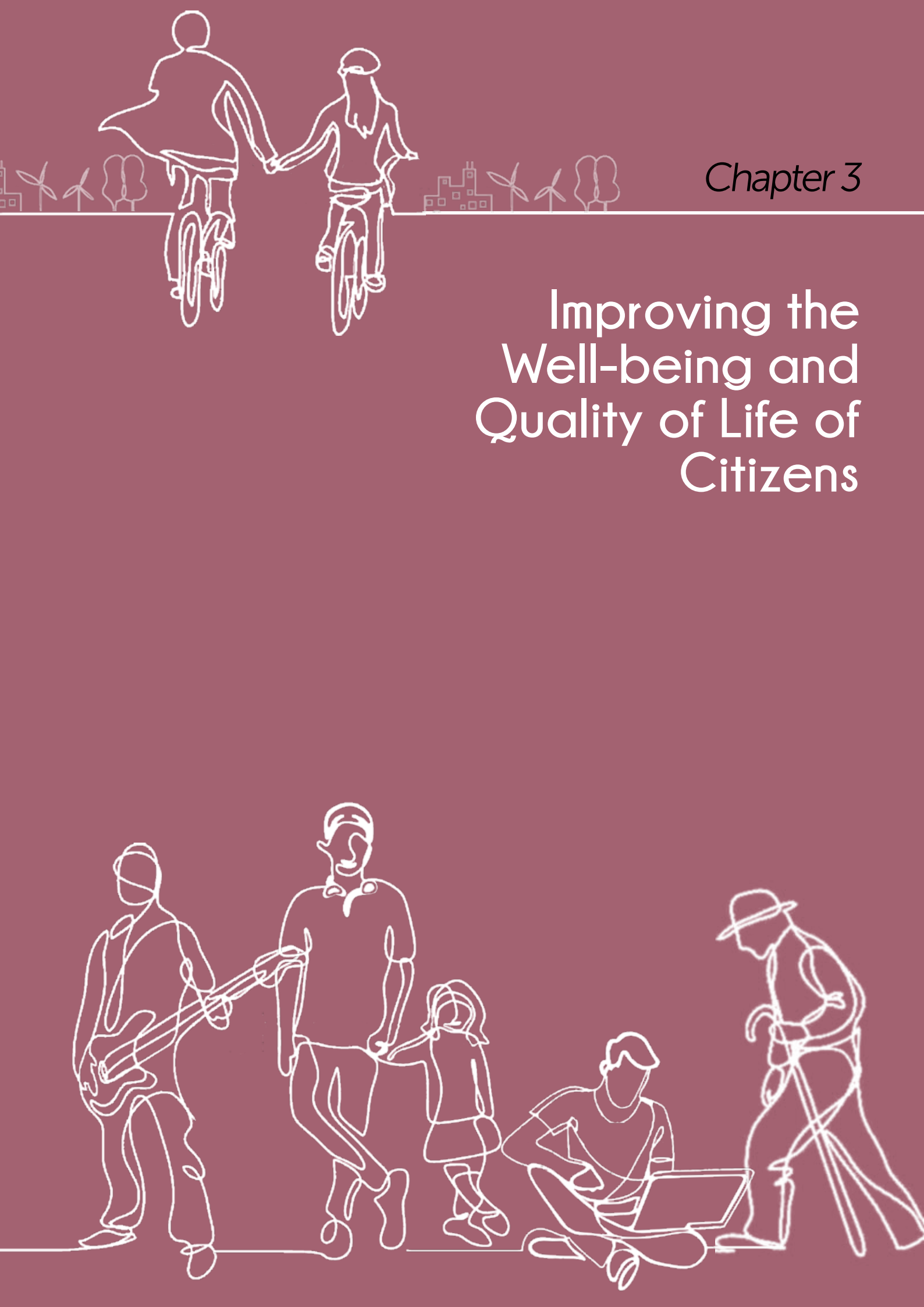
35. This Strategy will map out the skills development needs for the next five years and address the new trends influencing skills development policies, such as industry 4.0, Artificial Intelligence and ageing population. It will also outline incentives for our youth to engage in green tourism activities and modern agriculture.

36. The 'Afterschool' program, for young people aged 8 to 14 years, will be expanded to include new activities aimed at the practice of arts, stimulating creativity and the enhancement of learning about our national cultural heritage.



Chapter 3

Improving the Well-being and Quality of Life of Citizens



— Improving the Well-being and Quality of Life of Citizens

Honourable Members,

37. Improving our health care services and creating a healthy lifestyle based on social, cultural and sports activities will be a priority for Government.

38. Inspired by the innovative and state-of-the-art new ENT hospital model, Government will upgrade and modernize all public healthcare facilities while investing in specialised ones, namely:

- a centre for the treatment of cancer;
- specialised care homes for persons suffering from mental illnesses;
- a new eye hospital;
- a University Hospital; and
- mediclinics.

39. A new Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences will be set up at the University of Mauritius.

40. Our country is faced with relatively high levels of diabetes and non-communicable diseases. Accordingly, our national policy will be stepped up and more resources made available to this end.

41. A dedicated unit will be set up to look into health issues associated with climatic change and prepare guidelines and protocols.

42. To better safeguard public health and protect the population against infectious diseases, a national action plan for health security will be implemented and aligned with international norms and regulations. The use of traditional medicines alongside conventional health services will be promoted.



43. Government will revise and update the Overseas Treatment Scheme and will increase the financial assistance to patients proceeding abroad for treatment from Rs 800,000 to Rs 1 million. In addition, the cost of air tickets for a person accompanying the patient will be borne by Government.

44. Government will further develop the e-health programme to increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of our health services.

PROMOTING GREATER ENGAGEMENT OF THE POPULATION IN SPORTS

Honourable Members,

45. The whole of Mauritius has been inspired by the outstanding performance of our athletes in the *Jeux des Iles* last year.

46. Sports, physical, leisure and cultural activities are also vital to quality of life.

47. Therefore, Government will provide more and better facilities to further promote excellence in all sports.

48. Government will also aim at increasing the practice of physical activities rate to 35 percent within the next five years.



49. A National Cycling Policy Framework will be developed to encourage cycling for leisure and recreation as well as for transport and tourism. Dedicated cycle lanes will be included as a component of road infrastructure development plans.

50. A Sports Facilities Management Unit will be set up to optimize the operation and use of sports infrastructure and ensure that more citizens benefit from these facilities.

51. Government aims to position Mauritius as a reference for the hosting of international sports and cultural events.





Chapter 4

Building the Economy of the Future



— Building the Economy of the Future

Honourable Members,

52. A sine-qua-non condition for taking our country to greater heights of development is a modern, vibrant and innovative economy that delivers sustainable and inclusive growth.

53. Due to progress made in the past five years, our country is now on track to cross the high-income threshold in the coming years and take its first steps as a First World Nation.

54. It is therefore on an exciting path to its next stage of economic development which will be knowledge and technology driven.

55. A window of extraordinary opportunities lies ahead, especially for our youth and entrepreneurs.

56. To fully tap the opportunities as they unfold, Government economic growth strategy is to:

- lay strong foundation for the future economy;
- develop the entrepreneurs and workforce of the future;
- adapt its industrial and trade policies;
- secure strong macroeconomic fundamentals; and
- drive an elaborate Economic Planning Agenda.

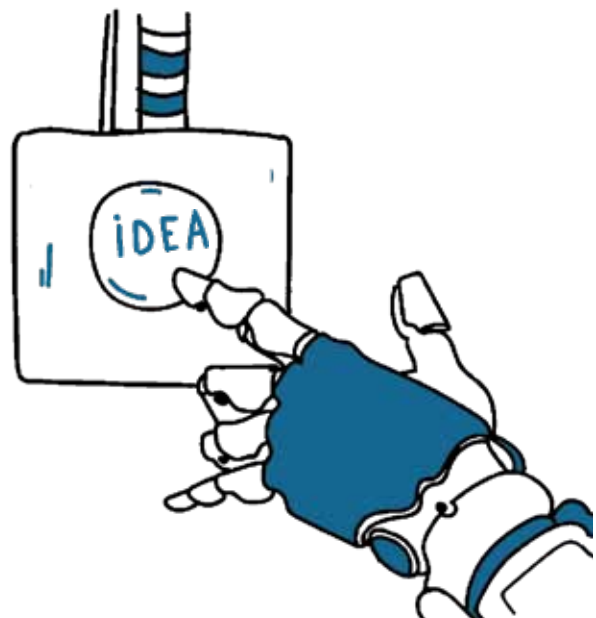
THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ECONOMY

57. Government will therefore implement strong policies to build up on the significant strides we have made in recent years in moving towards Industry 4.0.

58. Government will further invest in and promote cutting edge technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, robotics, blockchain and Internet of Things, as our country embraces the dictates of the fourth industrial revolution.

59. It will develop infrastructure such as technology parks, innovation labs and country wide 5G connectivity.

60. Government will also introduce relevant legislation to consolidate cyber security, encourage online and cashless transactions, promote an open data culture and further democratise access to high-speed internet. It will invest further to digitalise public services and create an e-Mauritius.



THE ENTREPRENEURS AND WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

61. Government will continue to promote digital entrepreneurship, innovation and Research and Development.
62. Today's youth will be the game changers in the economy of the future. To this end, Government will put a special focus on supporting youth-led start-ups.
63. Universities will be given the necessary support to become more engaged in R&D and to be the nesting ground for the development of entrepreneurship from the roots and to offer programmes that meet the needs of industries.
64. More technology accelerators and incubators will be created targeting the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector.
65. Government will also transform the co-operative sector towards engaging in emerging sectors.
66. Government will ensure that the country has an adequate workforce with the new skills required to drive the future economy. More incentives will be given to foreign talents, including the diaspora and women to join the workforce.
67. A one-month parental leave will be introduced, in addition to the 14 weeks maternity leave granted to a mother, and schemes will be set up to encourage the employment of young people in both the public and private sectors.

ADAPTING THE INDUSTRIAL AND TRADE POLICIES

68. In order to speed up employment creation, Government will adapt its industrial and trade policies to the new realities and exigencies of the world economy and the higher aspirations of our population, particularly our youth.
69. Government will build further on the impressive performance of the past few years which has enabled Mauritius to be positioned 13th globally in the Ease of Doing Business of the World Bank in 2019. It will continue to streamline licences and business processes aiming at putting Mauritius among the ten best countries for doing business. Special efforts will be made to ensure timely enforcement of contracts and settlement of commercial disputes.
70. Government will consolidate the effective and enduring partnership with Business and Industry with special emphasis on dialogue with all stakeholders, including trade unions.
71. A centralized repository will be established to enable businesses and relevant public sector agencies to have access to data, licences, permits, and reporting obligations.



CONSOLIDATING OUR KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS

72. Another core objective of the new industrial and trade policies will be to strengthen the resilience of key sectors of the economy.
73. A new reform package will be implemented for the cane industry, while encouraging the shift to modern organic and niche production in agriculture. A plan for optimising the use of agricultural land will be developed.
74. With regard to tourism, Government will work with all stakeholders to re-engineer the whole industry, target new markets, enhance efforts to further diversify the product and client base and consolidate traditional markets.
75. The tourism branding will be reviewed.
76. As regards the financial services industry, Government will build on the progress achieved in developing the fintech eco-system in Mauritius and further accelerate the country's growth and consolidate the image of Mauritius as a thriving international financial centre of repute.
77. The Bank of Mauritius is currently working on the creation of a central bank digital currency and is further developing a modern technology-driven payment system.
78. In order to usher in a paradigm shift in the development of the manufacturing sector, Government is devising a strategic plan. It will focus on the promotion of innovation-led and technology-intensive production on building export competitiveness and on import-substituting activities.
79. As part of its new trade policies, Government will use economic diplomacy more intensively. It will leverage agreements already negotiated with trading partners, namely, the USA, Europe, UK, key African nations, China and India.

FOSTERING EMERGING SECTORS

80. As part of its new industrial and trade policies, Government will also focus on developing new economic pillars.

81. Accordingly, Government will come up with a Unified Regulatory Framework, an Offshore Petroleum Bill, a Seabed Mineral Bill and set up a Marine Biotechnology hub, among others, to accelerate the development of our blue economy.

82. In addition, Government will enhance its support towards the development of a sustainable aquaculture and fishing industry through training for semi-industrial and industrial fisheries and skills enhancement of artisanal fishers.

83. Government will give a new boost to the Creative Industry. Appropriate infrastructure and new schemes for artistic activities will be provided. A strong policy will be developed to promote cultural tourism and expand opportunities for local artists.

84. The development of the circular economy will also be given greater prominence by promoting the reduction, reusing and recycling culture and sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

STRENGTHENING MACROECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS

85. A key ingredient to the success of any economic model is strong macro-economic fundamentals, including resilient GDP growth with low inflation and low unemployment.

86. These objectives will be achieved whilst ensuring that public debt remains at a reasonable level and targeted at productive investment.

87. Fiscal policy will continue to support lower and middle-income households and in this respect, Government will honour its pledge to abolish the Municipal Tax on property for persons owning only one house.

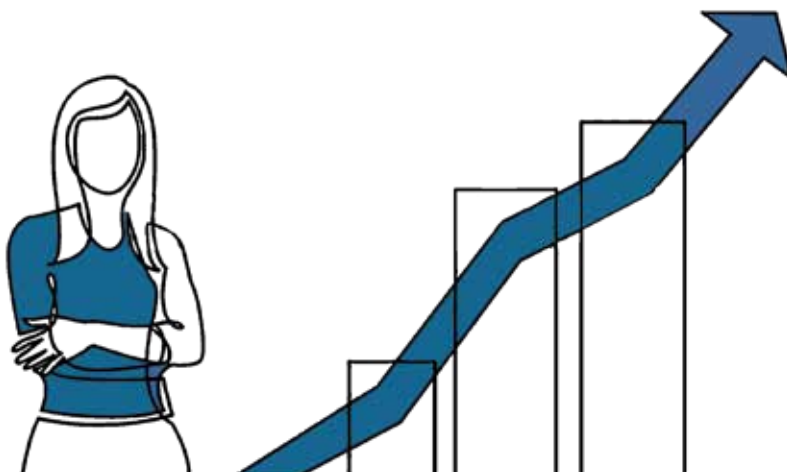
DRIVING THE ECONOMIC PLANNING AGENDA

88. In order to achieve these transformations in our economy, and at a time where the world economy is itself on an uncertain path, it is essential for Mauritius to engage in medium-term economic planning.

89. To this end, an Economic Research and Planning Bureau will be set up at the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development. The Bureau will help to translate the Government Programme into an overarching and coherent action plan, within which private and public sector operators and institutions will operate.

90. The Bureau will work in collaboration with the Economic Development Board (EDB).

91. An Economy Advisory Council will be set up at the EDB to advise on matters relating to the development of the economic landscape.



Public Infrastructure for an Innovative Mauritius



Public Infrastructure for an Innovative Mauritius

Honourable Members,

92. Our country also needs an infrastructure that fits the aspirations of an innovative economy and society.

93. The Metro Express and the five urban terminals are a concrete example of this.

94. Government will continue modernising our public transport system.

95. With the coming of electric buses, bus terminals in rural areas will be revamped along the same model as the urban terminals. And to support taxi licence holders, Government will provide them a one-off grant equivalent to Rs 100,000, when acquiring or renewing their vehicle.

96. Government will invest to further modernise the road network across the country including, a new motorway M4 to link the airport to the north along the eastern coastline.

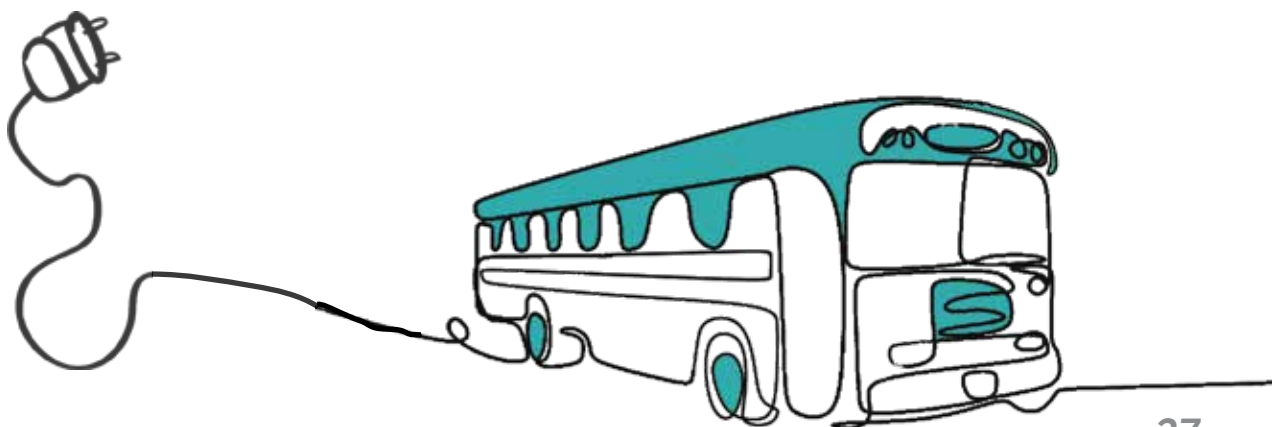
97. More flyovers and by-passes will be constructed with a view to eliminating roundabouts on the motorways and improve traffic flows.

98. The airport will be transformed into a major 'Regional Logistics and Aviation Hub'. To support this ambition, the airport terminal will be expanded to cater for an annual passenger traffic from 4 to 8 million and an airport city and a cargo village will be developed.

99. The Port Louis Harbour will be transformed into a major transport logistics and maritime hub connecting Europe, Africa and Asia.

100. Government will act upon the recommendations of the port masterplan. Additional shipyard capacity, bunkering and LNG facilities, and fish unloading and processing facilities will be set up.

101. Government will invest in the construction of a Breakwater and an Island Terminal to improve transshipment capacity and reduce downtime. New gantries and a Smart Port System will be acquired to significantly increase efficiency and port productivity.



102. Government will also invest in the infrastructure needed to minimise the impact of floods, in particular flash floods on people, property, agriculture and the environment. It will ensure that there is adequate and effectively managed drainage infrastructure. To this end, with the setting up of the Land Drainage Authority, Government will implement the recommendations of the Masterplan with the use of modern technology to map out the flood prone areas.

103. Round the clock access to basic utilities such as water and electricity is at the very centre of Government's endeavour to unlock a sustainable future for the population. Priority will be given to rehabilitation and upgrading of water infrastructure.

104. The water strategy will focus on:

- replacing the defective water distribution pipes at a faster pace,
- increasing storage capacity through new infrastructure,
- and better protecting our water resources.

105. Government will explore possibilities of public private partnerships, after discussions with relevant stakeholders, to apply state-of-the-art technologies, modern management and operational systems in the water sector.

106. The Central Water Authority will, at all times, retain ownership of its core assets.

107. Government will increase water storage capacity with the construction and expansion of dams and reservoirs.

108. It will develop a medium and long-term action plan to address the impact of climate change on water resources.

109. Government will introduce a legislative framework for better protection of our water resources and create a water observatory to serve as a public information portal on the quantity and quality of water resources.

110. Government will continue to guarantee reliable and secure electricity supply by developing adequate electricity generation capacity in a timely manner and by strengthening the electricity grid.

111. Government will develop a biomass policy and encourage the production of energy with bagasse through incentives to small planters. It will promote research on new renewable energy technologies.

112. Government will accelerate the installation of solar panels by households, public buildings, small and medium enterprises, NGOs and cooperatives as well as smallholders and breeders.



113. In its bid to reduce dependence on fossil energy, encourage the recycling of solid waste and promote sustainable renewable energy, Government will consider implementing a waste to energy project.

114. Government will support the Utility Regulatory Authority for the implementation of a regulatory framework for electricity and will review the governance structure and operations of the Central Electricity Board to enable it to respond to the requirements of the Utility Regulatory Authority.

115. Government will encourage the efficient use of energy. It will implement a national program to promote the use of LED technologies and develop a framework to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

116. Government will continue implementing the sewerage projects in a phased manner with priority given to regions particularly prone to overflows. It will extend the sewerage network in Grand Baie and Pailles and upgrade the wastewater treatment plants.

117. Government will implement all the provisions of the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Act and thereby ensure compliance with international conventions.

118. To achieve the development goals that are set in this programme, it will also be crucial to have a strong strategy to optimise the use of land.

119. A National Land Development Strategy, based on a sustainable development approach to land use, will be developed by 2021. This will allow for an overall ecological urbanisation policy, as well as revised and updated Outline Planning Schemes and Planning Guidelines for all regions.

120. A comprehensive and accurate digital data base pertaining to land occupation and use in Mauritius, including an updated State Land Register will be created.

121. A new legal framework for land use and planning will be introduced.

122. A Land Research & Monitoring Unit will be set up to address all issues pertaining to alleged land dispossession.

123. A 'Land Division' will be set up at the level of the Supreme Court.



A Peaceful, Safe and Secure Mauritius



— A Peaceful, Safe and Secure Mauritius

Honourable Members,

124. Building on the implementation of the Safe City Project, Government will provide high technology solutions to ensure that the Republic as a whole, including our waters, remain safe and secure.

125. Government is conscious of the impact drug trafficking can have on society. The efforts made by Government during its last mandate to combat this scourge are unprecedented in our history and is testimony to our determination to eliminate it completely.

126. Government will expedite the implementation of the Drug Control Masterplan focusing on demand and supply reduction and rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts. Government will increase the manpower and operational capacity of ADSU, the National Coast Guard and the Mauritius Revenue Authority and continue modernising and upgrading the drug screening facilities at the seaport and the airport.

127. Government will also devote resources to modern security logistics, equipment, infrastructural facilities on land and sea to maintain peace and order on its territory.

128. The Forensic Science Laboratory will be modernised, equipped with latest technology and housed in a new building.

129. To address all the issues relating to border control, Government will review the Immigration Act, the Mauritius Citizenship Act and other relevant legislation.

130. A safer Mauritius also means better road safety and security.

131. Government will introduce new educational, sensitization and awareness campaigns.

132. Irresponsible and reckless drivers will be more closely tracked with the help of new and modern technologies and sanctioned with tougher penalties.

133. A new system of motor vehicle insurance based on the concept of discounted premiums for good drivers and increased premiums for bad drivers will be introduced in Mauritius, rendering drivers more accountable for their actions.

134. The existing road signaling systems in our major cities will be reviewed to increase traffic fluidity.

135. Government will consolidate the family unit and family values as a fundamental pillar of our society.

136. Government will be relentless in its fight against all kinds of violence, including domestic violence.

137. A high level committee chaired by the Prime Minister will formulate a new strategy to eliminate gender-based violence. The legal framework will be strengthened and a new national sensitization campaign implemented.

138. Victims of domestic violence and their dependent children will be provided with access to a wider range of help and support, including shelters, professional counselling and legal assistance.

139. Our children are the future of our country and the protection of their rights is a priority. To this end, a new Children's Bill will be introduced very shortly.

140. Furthermore, Government will set up an Early Childhood Screening and Referral Unit with a view to ensuring timely intervention in cases of potential health problems, developmental delays and cases of child abuse.

141. Government will set up a National Social Observatory to scientifically study and analyse all issues relating to disruptive social behaviour to understand its root causes with a view to preparing a national action plan.





Chapter 7

A Sustainable and Green Society



— A Sustainable and Green Society

Honourable Members,

142. Government is committed to adopting a responsible and environmentally sustainable development policy.

143. It is clear that the impact of global warming and climate change is being increasingly felt across the world. Mauritius as an island nation with a small land mass is most vulnerable to the phenomenon of climate change. Government will play a leadership role not only on the domestic front but also regionally and internationally to champion a paradigm shift in our development policy.

144. To ensure sustainability and responsible investment, Mauritius aims at championing this new development policy based on four pillars:

- (i) Investing in clean energy;
- (ii) Shifting to a cleaner and greener Mauritius;
- (iii) Mitigating risks from climate change; and
- (iv) Protecting our marine resources.

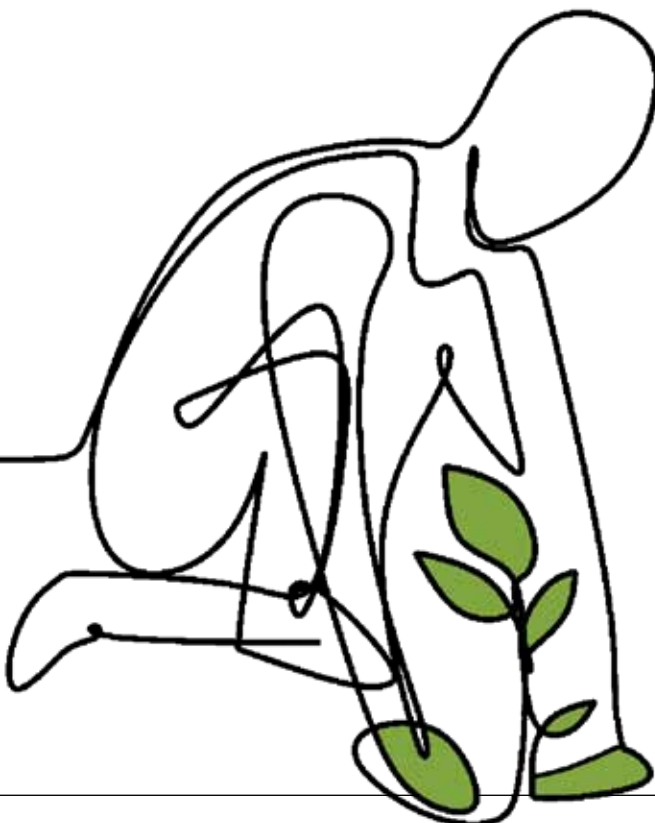
INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY

145. Government will promote more extensively the use of clean and renewable energy.

146. Government will continue to encourage carbon-free energy generation by accelerating the development of renewable energy to reach 35% in 2025 and 40% in 2030.

147. Fiscal incentives and budgetary measures will be introduced to ensure achievement of these targets.

148. Government will further promote the setting up of photovoltaic system for households, SMEs, cooperatives, NGOs, small planters and breeders.



149. Companies which are high consumers of electricity will be encouraged to set up their own solar farms to become self-sufficient in electricity. Any excess electricity produced will be purchased by the CEB at a guaranteed rate comprising a profit margin to the producing company.

150. Government will encourage the use of Liquefied Natural Gas for the production of electricity, for internal transport, for domestic use as well as for eventual bunkering purposes.

A CLEANER AND GREENER MAURITIUS

151. Government will pursue its efforts to make Mauritius a cleaner and greener country.

152. A new national cleaning and waste management programme will be introduced. It will include a modern and efficient mechanism for waste management through planned collection, sorting and disposal of waste.

153. Rodrigues has shown the way in the field of plastic ban and restriction on single use plastic containers. Such programme will be extended to the whole of the Republic.

154. Government will endeavour to make of Mauritius a plastic free country within the nearest possible delays.

155. A centralised medical and clinical waste incineration project will also be implemented to ensure better management of toxic and hazardous products.

MITIGATING RISKS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

156. Recent events throughout the world and also in Mauritius bear testimony to the impact of climate change. The world is now more prone to extreme weather conditions, climate shocks and disasters.

157. Government believes in the urgency of action on climate change. It is about creating the mechanisms for fundamental change and mitigating climate change disruptions and protecting the future generations.

158. A High level Inter-Ministerial Council will be set up to identify and mitigate risks arising from global warming and climate change. A new Climate Change Bill will be introduced.

159. Government has heard the voice of the youth on their concerns about the protection of the environment. A National Youth Environmental Council will be set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office to give them the opportunity to contribute in the decision making process.

160. Three new endemic forests will be created and existing ones restored. These forests will be accessible for hiking and nature walk.

161. Government will introduce new eco-friendly measures such as building norms and improve public infrastructure for better protection against natural disasters such as cyclones and floods. Alongside, steps will be taken to improve waste management, through modernisation of its treatment plants.



PROTECTING OUR MARINE RESOURCES

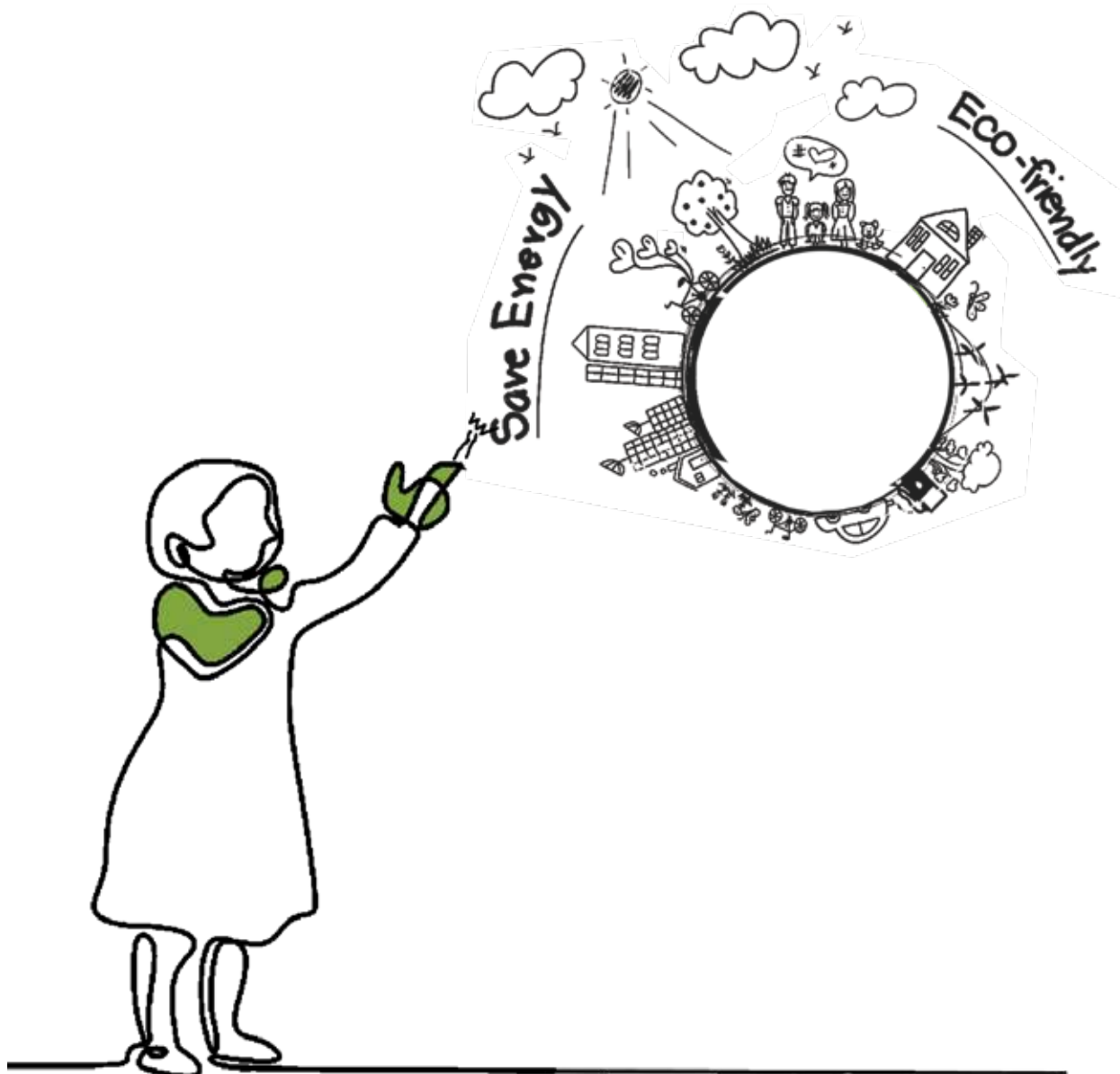
162. Government will implement measures to protect our oceans, its marine resources and our beaches.

163. Government will pursue the restoration of our beaches through a national integrated management plan.

164. The underwater fauna and flora of our lagoons will be reinstated through the planting of coral and cultivation of algae.

165. Government will delimit and declare additional marine conservation areas, where only sustainable activities such as marine permaculture will be allowed.

166. Government will introduce a River and Lake Authority Bill for better management and protection of our rivers and lakes.





Chapter 8

Strengthening Democracy and Governance



Strengthening Democracy and Governance

Honourable Members,

167. Government is committed to enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms within our institutions.

168. A Code of Conduct for Members of the National Assembly will be introduced into the National Assembly.

169. The philosophy of equity and '*chances égales pour tous*', will continue to be upheld to ensure merit-based recruitment and selection.

170. Government will pursue the implementation of the cohesive Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy which encompasses the Whole-of-Government approach.

171. A modern building will be constructed at Le Réduit Triangle to house the Civil Service College which will also serve as a Regional Centre of Excellence in the domain of public administration.

172. An Occupational, Safety and Health Management System will be implemented across the public service and Government will devise a Government Medical Insurance Scheme for all public officers.

173. Government will recommend a review of the regulations governing the Public Service Commission, the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and the Local Government Service Commission with a view to enhancing effectiveness in their recruitment processes and disciplinary proceedings.

174. It will also strengthen governance of parastatal institutions by ensuring, among others, adequate and appropriate gender representation on their Board of Directors.



175. Government will intensify its fight against fraud and corruption with zero tolerance of corrupt practices. Government will enact necessary legislation to make further and better provisions in line with its transparency, accountability and corrupt-free agenda. The new legislative regime on the declaration of assets is one such example of transparency legislation, also known as “sunshine laws”.

176. Over the years Mauritius has established itself as a significant player in the global financial system and therefore has an obligation to protect the system from abuse. In this endeavour and as a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), Mauritius has endorsed the internationally recognized standards of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) against money laundering and terrorist financing.

177. In order to strengthen our legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, additional measures will be taken to further consolidate the regulatory frameworks of our financial and banking services.

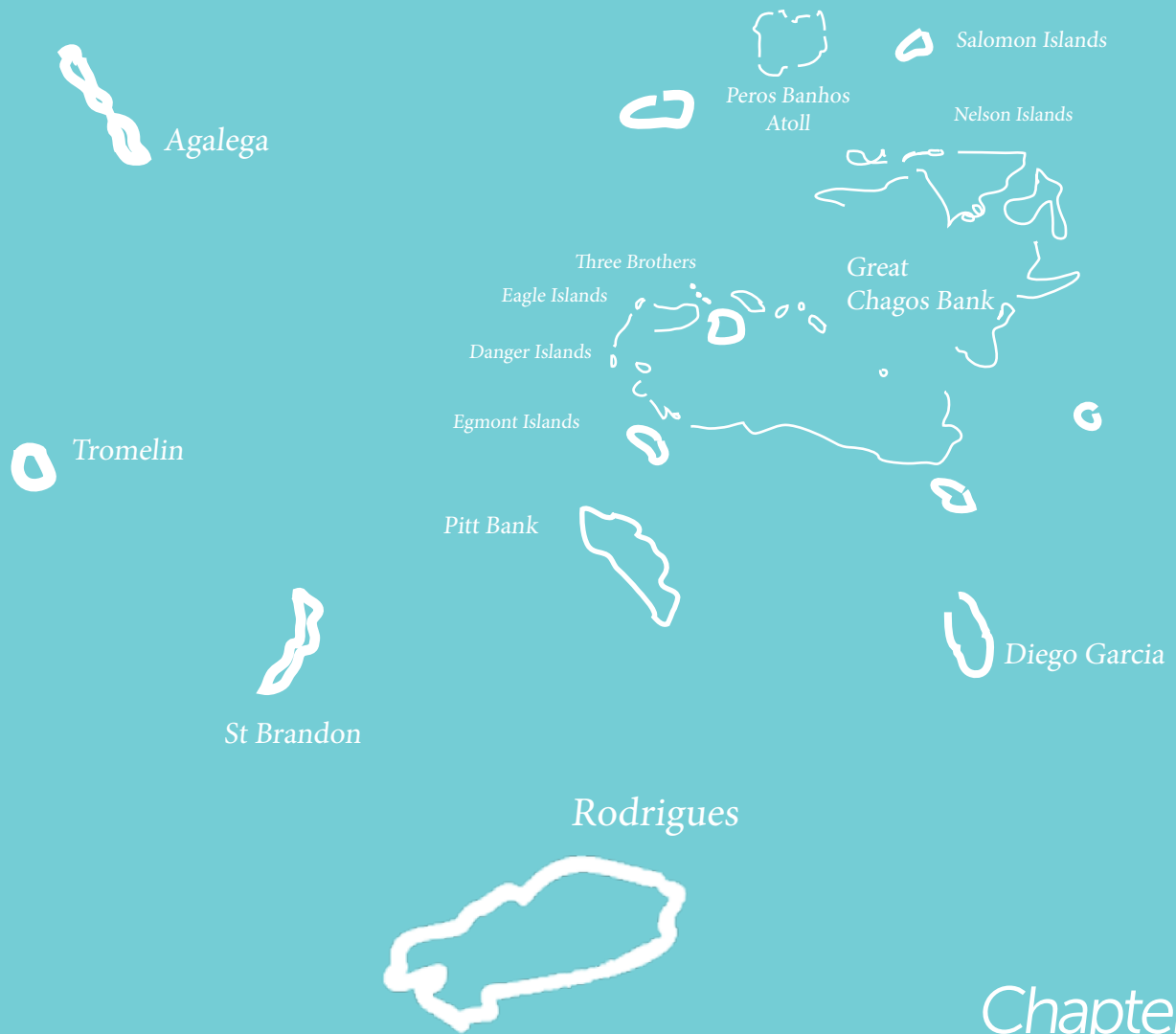
178. Government will also ensure that all relevant institutions are fully manned and equipped to fight this battle and enhance the reputation of Mauritius as an internationally preferred jurisdiction for conducting clean and quality business activities.

179. An appropriate coordination mechanism will be introduced to ensure inter-agency cooperation to combat serious economic and financial crimes.

180. A new Bill on the Financing of Political Parties will be introduced into the National Assembly.

181. Government will pursue its initiative to bring an electoral reform that will ensure political and social stability in the country and higher women participation.





Chapter 9

Transformational Development of Rodrigues and the Outer Islands



— Transformational Development of Rodrigues and the Outer Islands

Honourable Members,

182. The sustainable development of Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, with due regard to their fragile ecosystems, will remain at the heart of Government's agenda 2020-2024.

183. Government will enhance its support to the economic development of Rodrigues.

184. A new runway at Plaine Corail Airport in Rodrigues will be built, enabling the development of new economic activities.

185. Government will further support the development of cultural and eco-tourism in the island.

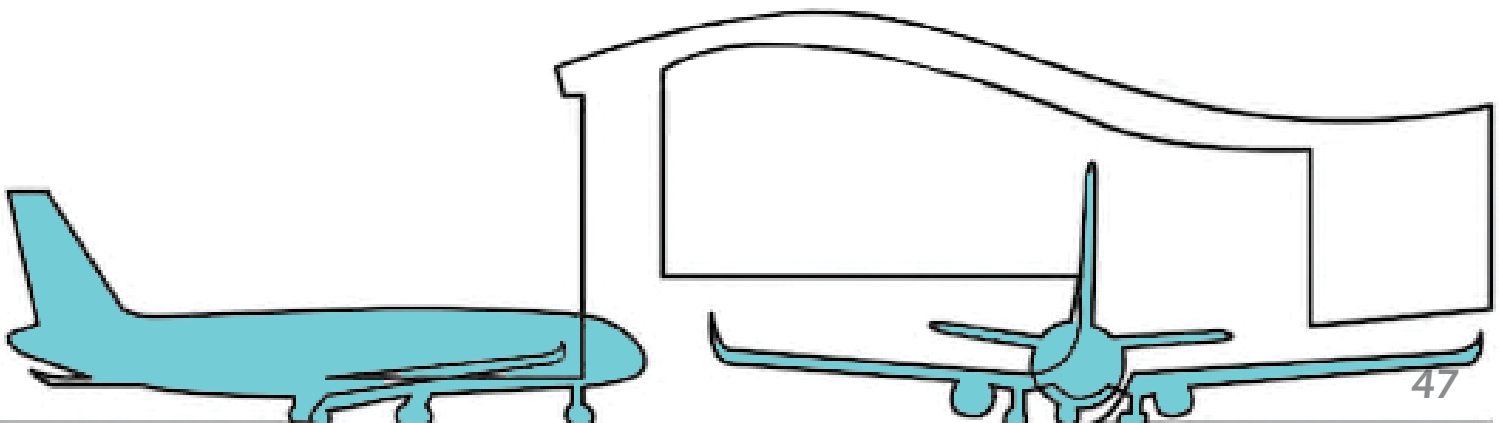
186. In order to increase water supply in Rodrigues, Government will support the application of new technologies for desalination and storage.

187. The concept of family doctor will be introduced in Rodrigues and new Medicare Centres will be constructed.

188. In line with Government's blue economy strategy, the fisheries sector in Rodrigues will be consolidated by introducing new sustainable measures such as seaweed cultivation and the cultivation of ocean products for high-end markets.

189. In the same vein, fishing and other marine activities will be promoted in St Brandon.

190. With the establishment of seaport and airport infrastructure in Agalega, Government will further develop the island and optimize its economic potential.



Chapter 10

Diplomacy and Foreign policy



— Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

Honourable Members,

191. Government's foreign policy will be aligned with the national development priorities and underpinned by the principles of a pragmatic approach that upholds sovereignty, rule of law, democracy, human rights, environmental sustainability and economic growth.

192. Government's actions will be directed towards expanding our regional and multilateral cooperation, trade agreements and market access, and increasing our network of bilateral visa exemption agreements.

193. To ensure a safe, secure and sustainable exploitation of our vast maritime special economic zone, maritime security within the Indian Ocean will be a key consideration in negotiations, discussions and agreements between Mauritius and its major trading partners such as India, Africa, UK, Europe, US, Japan and Australia.

194. The roles, operations and strategy of our embassies and missions abroad will be re-organized to ensure greater transparency, accountability, efficient use of public funds and the achievement of economic benefits.

195. Government will promote Mauritius as an international centre for political dialogue and mediation for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

196. Government will uphold our values as regards to human rights and pursue its cooperation with regional and international bodies, in particular the Universal Periodic Reviews carried out by the United Nations.

197. Before concluding, I would like to re-affirm this Government's commitment to ensuring that our territorial integrity and sovereignty is safeguarded at all times.

198. With respect to Tromelin, Government will pursue efforts for an early resolution of the sovereignty dispute between Mauritius and France in a spirit of dialogue and friendship.

199. As regards Chagos Archipelago, following the historic and resounding victories registered by the Republic of Mauritius at the United Nations and the International Court of Justice concerning Mauritian sovereignty last year, Government will relentlessly pursue its efforts so that the decolonisation process of Mauritius is completed for our country to exercise its full sovereignty over the totality of its territory.

200. Government also remains strongly committed to implementing a programme for the resettlement in the Chagos Archipelago.



Conclusion

Honourable Members,

201. I will now conclude.

202. Building the future of Mauritius is not an Agenda for Government only.

203. It requires the unique blend of Mauritian hard-work, entrepreneurship, adaptability, resilience and the unflinching willingness to succeed. It is the Mauritian DNA.

204. Our history has taught us that working together, as one nation, has enabled us to build the resilience and progress of our Republic.

205. Our country has been blessed by an extraordinary cultural and ethnic diversity which is unique.

206. Our religions, traditions, cultures and our faith in our future are an immense asset.

207. Together, we can make Mauritius an innovation-driven, high-income economy based on inclusiveness and shared prosperity.

208. Together we can create a cleaner and greener Mauritius.

209. Together we can materialize our future development goals through digitalization, state-of-the-art infrastructures and vibrant industries.

210. Together, we can build a safer Mauritius for all, based on higher standards of living enshrined in a culture of togetherness and harmony.

211. Let us therefore, come together as a nation. *C'est ensemble que nous réussirons.*

Honourable Members,

212. I thank you for your attention.

