

GIS Newsletter

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66th United Nations General Assembly **Key security elements at the fore of PM's address**

Present day security concerns, the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, piracy in the Indian Ocean region and the Palestinian application for admission to the United Nations as a fully fledged Member State were among the key issues upon which the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, articulated his intervention on 24 September 2011 at the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held in New York.

The Prime Minister was leading a delegation comprising Dr Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr Suresh Seeballuck, Secretary to Cabinet, Mr Kailash Ruhee, Chief of Staff, Mrs K. Bhanji, Permanent Secretary at the

PMO, and Mr Milan Meetharban, Permanent Representative at the Mauritius Mission to the United Nations in New York. The theme of the general debate at the UNGA this year was 'The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means'.

Present day security - Four elements

Dwelling on the security issue, the Prime Minister proposed that the international community and the United Nations address what he termed as the four constitutive elements of present day security, which would be economic security, environmental security, human security and legal security.

The Prime Minister underscored the particular economic vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States and reiterated the need that SIDS be granted



The UN - Reform imperative, PM says

preferential treatment as part of a global strategy to ensure economic security.

Dr Ramgoolam regretted the stalled international trade talks and made an appeal to the international community so that it ensures that the sectoral frameworks adopted have universal membership. He was of opinion that the UN, as an apex body, should have a holistic view of global economic, financial, trade and development issues, with the UN Economic and Social Council playing a more prominent role in implementing these reforms.

The issue of food security must also be addressed, along with racism, he further noted, adding that development and security will require the increased participation of youth in the formulation of strategies and policies.

On environmental security, the threat that disruptions from climate change pose to global security were elaborated upon by Dr Ramgoolam, who also pinpointed the commitment of Mauritius to the Green Economy concept with the Maurice Ile Durable project.

As regards human security, the Prime Minister said that people of the world continue to be concerned about their own security. He elaborated on four of these concerns namely disarmament, terrorism, narco-trafficking and HIV/AIDS.

For Dr Ramgoolam, security requires appropriate legal framework for the redress of grievances or the settlement of disputes, together

with an adequate machinery that would be available to all States. He cited the dispute involving Mauritius and the United Kingdom over the Chagos Archipelago where the United Kingdom has failed to engage in any meaningful discussions, and called on the United Nations to review the whole issue of dispute resolution and to set standards of conduct for all States.

Greater legal security, noted the Prime Minister, also requires better global governance and in this respect the United Nations must lead by example. He also reiterated the stand of Mauritius in favour of a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, especially in the membership of both the permanent and non-permanent categories. 'Africa should no longer be deprived of its right to permanent representation in the Council', Dr Ramgoolam said.

Palestine and Sudan

The Prime minister expressed support to the application submitted by the President of the State of Palestine for full membership of the United Nations. 'The United Nations and the international community have a duty to restore to the Palestinian people their dignity and right to statehood and security', he observed.

He also hailed the emergence of South Sudan as an independent and sovereign State and its admission to the United Nations.

Critical issues in Indian Ocean region

The Prime Minister recalled critical issues unfolding in the Indian Ocean

region namely, piracy, famine in Somalia, and the unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago by the United Kingdom.

He highlighted the fact that Mauritius has offered to assist with the prosecution and detention of pirates. In this regard, Mauritius and the European Union have signed an agreement in July this year to enhance the island State's capacity to contribute to the international effort under way.

The Clinton Global Initiative and the Socialist International Presidium

In New York, the Prime Minister also attended the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative. He was invited for the seventh time to the distinguished gathering of a very select group of current Heads of State and Government, business leaders, eminent academicians and key NGO representatives. The main objectives of the Conference were to identify immediate and pragmatic solutions to address the world's most pressing problems. The special sessions that the Prime Minister attended were "*Sports as a Tool for Social Good*" and "*Multifaith Dialogue*".

The Prime Minister also attended the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Socialist International Presidium and Heads of State and Governments. The agenda of the meeting included discussions on the current impact and consequences of the global financial crisis, the contribution of social democracy to combating racism and intolerance and to ensure the success of the COP17 Summit in South Africa.

Tackling traffic congestion Schoenfeld bypass operational

The Schoenfeld bypass (ex-Railway road) in Rivière du Rempart was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, on 7 September 2011 in the presence of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, Mr Anil Bachoo.

The Schoenfeld bypass is the latest of a series of regional road projects completed to alleviate traffic congestion across the country. It will be recalled that since the beginning of the year, several projects have been completed and are now fully operational namely the Triolet Bypass, the Goodlands Bypass, the Mare D'albert - Gros Bois Link Road, the access road to Réduit Triangle, among others.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has already embarked on the implementation of several other road projects. One of the

projects underway is the conversion of the roundabout at Caudan into a grade separated junction. The Caudan junction is one of the major bottlenecks on the route to Port Louis. The roundabout is already saturated at peak hours and well beyond, with Police Control necessary almost during the whole day. The grade separation will allow through North-South traffic to move freely and traffic movement into and from Caudan area will be enhanced. Works would be completed early next year.

As for the Phoenix Beau Songes Link Road, the project is almost completed. It comprises the construction of

a new link road from "Jumbo" roundabout at Pont Fer, Phoenix to Pierrefonds roundabout at Palma over approximately 6 kilometres.

The rehabilitation of the Pamplemousses – Grand Baie Road (A13) from Pamplemousses to Mapou is in progress. The scope of works includes, among others, localised repairs, reshaping and resurfacing of approximately 3.8 km of a dual carriageway over a width of 7.6 m and of a hard shoulder over a width of 2 m and the rehabilitation of the roundabouts of Pamplemousses and Mapou as well as the traffic islands.



The Schoenfeld bypass - Part of a regional road upgrade plan



As for the construction of the bidirectional additional lanes from St Jean to Pont Fer on Motorway M1, works are ongoing. The project comprises a third lane along the stretch of road which is the most heavily trafficked in Mauritius and includes the widening of the motorway on both sides over approximately 4 km from Pont Fer roundabout to St Jean. The project implies the provision of third lane to

Motorway M1 northbound from Pont Fer roundabout to St Jean roundabout and southbound from St. Jean roundabout to Pont Fer roundabout and towards Dowlut roundabout.

Works for the construction of the Port Louis Ring Road, Phase 1: Sorèze to Guibies are progressing smoothly. The project aims at tackling congestion which is plaguing Motorways M1 and M2 between Curepipe and Terre

Rouge and the entrances to Port Louis. Phase 1 consists of over 5 km from Sorèze on Motorway M1 to the entrance of the tunnel at Quoin Bluff.

Among other major road projects that will provide improved modern road infrastructure to the public and contribute to tackling congestion are Terre Rouge – Verdun – Ebène Link Road, the Dream Bridge and the Ring Road Phase 2.

Salon de L'Entreprise 2011: Increasing Visibility of SMEs

The 6th edition of the *Salon de L'Entreprise* was organised from 1 to 4 September 2011 by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre in Pailles. About 50 000 visitors attended the fair.

The principal objective was to impart more vitality and growth impetus to the manufacturing sector to enable it to contribute to its full potential to the economy as well as increase the visibility of locally-made products and services, enhance marketing avenues for SMEs and boost local production, improve sales by local enterprises as well as ensure their growth. The Salon de L'Entreprise also allowed local enterprises to build relationships with various stakeholders and to network with leaders from the industry, financial institutions, local service providers, and government.

The fair featured about 110 stands and 100 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) participated. Products and services offered by a wide range of enterprises across the country were exhibited such as textile and garments, shoes and leather products, light engineering, furniture, interior decoration, food & agro-industry, ICT, printing and paper products and handicraft.

Besides the trade fair, the Salon comprised other key components, namely an information desk for entrepreneurs, and conferences and business matching. Free business advice and counselling, technical information and other related services to both potential and existing entrepreneurs were also provided.

Consolidating Trade Ties Mauritius and Turkey sign Free Trade Agreement

A Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which provides a platform to consolidate trade ties as well as create more synergy between the business communities of both Mauritius and Turkey through joint venture projects, was signed on 09 September 2011 in Istanbul. The signatories were the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, for the Mauritian side and the Minister of Economy, Mr Zafer Caglayan, for the Turkish government.

The FTA will provide an enhanced market with duty free access to most industrial products. All Mauritian industrial products will enter Turkey duty free with the exception of some 70 lines related to textiles which will be phased on four years. As regards agricultural products, Mauritius will have preferential access for some 50 products constituting mainly of tropical fruits (pineapples, palm hearts, guavas, mangoes), vegetables, flowers and biscuits, amongst others. Small enterprises will thus be able to tap a new market as regards local fruits and flowers.

Mauritius, on the other hand, will offer duty free access to more than 80% of its tariff lines to Turkish products.

The Agreement includes flexible rules of origin. For several products, including textiles, Mauritian exporters would be able to source



FTA will provide enhanced mutual access for products

their raw materials from third countries, manufacture the product in Mauritius and export to Turkey at preferential rates. Mauritius will also be able to use materials from countries having an FTA with Turkey such as the European Union and benefit from preferential treatment. The FTA will spare Mauritian textiles and clothing products from being sanctioned by a safeguard duty which Turkey has recently imposed on all textiles products imported from the rest of the world.

The Agreement also provides a platform for encouraging investment from Turkish businessmen, who can use Mauritius as a gateway to the African continent. It is expected that Turkey will use Mauritius to penetrate the African market especially Eastern and Southern Africa given that

Mauritius is the first country of the southern region to sign an FTA with Turkey.

It is recalled that negotiations for the FTA started in June 2009 and were completed in January 2011 after five rounds of discussions.

A milestone in bilateral relations

The FTA represents a milestone in the relations between Mauritius and Turkey and is also a crucial step in implementing what is expected to be a major new chapter in bilateral relations, stated the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, in his address at the signature ceremony. 'Through the FTA we want to create a legally secure, predictable and reliable environment that is

conducive to attracting investments and which in turn will help create jobs, spark new industries and drive broad-based inclusive growth', he said.

For Dr Boolell, this is critically important against the backdrop of the global crisis. 'We want this FTA to help increase trade, promote diversification, attract investment and encourage technology transfer. We must also mainstream the SMEs in this new trade initiative by offering a wide range of choices in terms of inputs, low cost machineries, spare parts and affordable technologies,' he said.

For his part, the Turkish Minister recalled that Turkey is closely linked to the maritime history of the Indian Ocean since the 16th century and has collaborated with Mauritius in making the island a trade hub in the region.

Turkey to offer development support to Mauritius

During discussions held between the two Ministers, it has been agreed that Turkey will offer development support to Mauritius. As such, an office of the Turkish International Development Agency would be opened in Mauritius. Turkey is also planning to open an embassy in Mauritius next year, followed by the appointment of a commercial attaché. Turkey will also host two Mauritian trade diplomats every year for a one-month training programme. According to the Turkish Minister, officials are working to conclude

expeditiously an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement between Mauritius and Turkey and to start DTA negotiations in due course. An Air Transport Agreement is also the agenda. Mr Caglayan would lead a business delegation to Mauritius shortly.

In addition, an association of Turkey exporters, the Foreign Economic Relations Board, has agreed to set a Joint Business Council with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Mauritius, for its part, has agreed to support Turkey's candidature for next World Expo in 2020.

Imports and exports – Some figures

In 2010, Mauritian exports to Turkey accounted for less than 1% of our exports basket constituting mainly of

woven cotton apparels and totalling Rs 66 million. Imports from that country came up to Rs 537 million comprising mainly manufactured products such as electric cables, oven cookers, refrigerators, iron bars, organic soaps, floor and ceiling fittings and sweet biscuits.

It is expected that trade will be boosted to USD 100 million in two years with the FTA. This Agreement will cover a market of more than 500 million persons taking into consideration Turkey, Mauritius and the involvement of the latter in several regional blocs. As it is, Mauritius belongs to the SADC and COMESA configurations with a combined size of 527 million inhabitants. Turkey, on its own, is a big market nearing 90 million people but having extended outreach to the Balkans, East Europe and Central Asia.



FTA - The 3rd round of negotiations in February 2010 in Mauritius

Electoral Reform

A team of eminent constitutional experts to make proposals

The Prime Minister has entrusted the responsibility of looking into, and making proposals for, the reform of the Mauritian electoral system to a team of eminent international constitutional experts headed by French constitutional expert of international repute Professor Guy Carcassonne, of Université de Nanterre.

The proposals for a reform, expected before the end of the year 2011, will have to meet four important goals namely: effectiveness, equity, diversity and gender balance.

- *Effectiveness* - an election should allow the emergence of a majority and it is for the electorate to choose the people by whom they wish to be governed;
- *Equity* - the proposals should address and correct the inordinate imbalances created by the First-Past-the-Post system which has frequently produced results which were grossly disproportionate to the share of votes obtained by the different parties;
- *Diversity* - the electoral system should ensure a fair representation of all the different components of the Mauritian population in Parliament; and,

- *Gender balance* - the under representation of women in Parliament must be addressed. The proposals should aim to eventually move towards parity between men and women.

Government expects that the team of experts take into consideration the complexity and the rich culture of the Mauritian society as well as the country's consideration for and adherence to democratic values. It will depend afterwards upon Mauritians to debate on the issue and decide accordingly. It is also anticipated that this debate will bring together each and every citizen as the reform of the electoral system goes along the lines of the modernisation process of the country and its value for democracy.

The collaborators of Professor Carcassonne will be Professor Vernon Bogdanor, Professor of Government at Oxford University, and Dr Pere Vilanova Trias, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of Barcelona.



- Mauritius ranks second in the world and first in Africa in air quality index released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). According to the WHO air quality guidelines, the recommended maximum level for PM 10 (particulate matter with diameter of 10 micro-metres or less) which can affect our lungs, cause heart diseases and acute respiratory infections should be less than 20 micrograms per cubic metre. Mauritius is one of the few countries in the world where the PM 10 level is 12 micrograms per cubic metre.

- The Cabinet has approved that certain items, such as fish, milk, potatoes, onions, shallots, garlic, lemons and limes, be removed from the list of goods requiring import permits.

- The Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act has been proclaimed, taking effect on 26 September 2011. The Act, as amended, gives to the Chief Justice the power to make rules for the purposes of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, including rules for the hearing of applications for occupation and tenancy orders.

- Mauritius is to sign a Technical Assistance Framework Agreement with the World Bank so as to facilitate the provision of quality and just-in-time specialised technical assistance to identify and design reforms to unlock the development potential of the country and to draw upon World Bank expertise in areas where there is a lack of required skills.

HEALTH

Health Screening Programme for Public Officers

A Health Screening Programme for Public officers extending till 2012 was launched on 26 September 2011 at the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall, Port Louis, by the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, and the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Mr Sutyadeo Moutia.

The programme, held in the context of the World Heart Day, comprises non-communicable diseases screening for public officers namely, detecting diabetes and high blood pressure, vision tests, checking for overweight and obesity, consultation by medical officer, health education and issue of health cards and referral and follow-up of positive cases. Breast and cervical cancer screening for married women aged 30 and above is also being carried out.

The theme chosen for the World Heart Day this year by the World Heart Federation is 'One World, One Home, One Heart'. Individuals are being called upon to reduce their own and their family's risk of heart disease and stroke by initiating steps such as choosing healthy food options, increasing physical activity and saying no to tobacco.

Cardiovascular diseases are the world's largest killers, claiming 17.3 million lives a year. Risk factors for heart disease and stroke include raised blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels, smoking, inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables, obesity and physical inactivity.

According to the Non-Communicable Diseases Survey 2009, there was an estimated 172 400 people between the ages of 25 and 74 years with diabetes in Mauritius; 65.6% of adult Mauritians were overweight or obese. The prevalence of hypertension was 37.9% while that of elevated total cholesterol 34.7%. As reported by the survey 3.7% women and 40.3% men are smokers and only 16.5% of Mauritian adults aged 25-74 years undertake sufficient physical activity to meet the national guidelines of 30 minutes of leisure time activity (moderate to vigorous) per day to maintain good health. Approximately 1 in 2 people (56.2%) reported no participation in moderate or vigorous leisure time physical activity at all.

Alzheimer Disease: Towards the Development of a National Strategy Plan

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, to develop a national dementia strategy to ensure that senior citizens affected with alzheimer/dementia disease receive proper care and treatment.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, made this announcement at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes on 22 September 2011 at the opening of a public conference organised by the Alzheimer Association of Mauritius in the context of World Alzheimer Day. For Mr Bundhoo, the early detection of the disease followed by the timely provision of treatment can not only improve the quality of life of those affected but also help generate huge savings.

For the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, alzheimer and other dementias being the most significant social, health and economic crisis of the 21st century, a lot to be done at the preventive level. The Minister reiterated that her Ministry will work in collaboration with the Alzheimer Association as far as prevention is concerned.

The theme chosen this year for World Alzheimer Day is 'Faces of Dementia'. The objective is to draw attention and pay tribute to those who are fighting against the disease and those who work tirelessly to promote increased support and care for people with dementia and their carers. To mark this event, the Alzheimer Association had invited Dr Pierre Cateau, French gerontologist and Alzheimer specialist, to meet patients and organise training for carers and doctors. He also gave a talk at the University of Mauritius.

According to Alzheimer Disease International, around 6 000 people in Mauritius suffer from the disease and this figure is expected to double by 2025. Global figures show that 36 million people worldwide are living with dementia and that this figure will jump to 66 million by 2030 and 115 million by 2050. The World Alzheimer Report 2011 says that as many as 75% of the 36 million people living with dementia have not been formally diagnosed and are receiving neither treatment, information, nor care and support. In high-income countries, only 20-50% of dementia cases are recognised and documented in primary care while in low-income countries, the percentage is likely to be even higher.

International Literacy Day 2011: Focus on Women Empowerment

Activities marking International Literacy Day 2011 were held under the theme - *Legal Literacy as a tool for Women's Empowerment* - on 8 September 2011 at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, Bell Village. The focus was on legal literacy so as to help adult literacy trainees benefitting from the Adult Literacy Programme, run by the National Women's Council (NWC), know their rights and lead better lives.

In that context, interactive DVDs on legal literacy were presented to adult literacy instructors involved in the implementation of the programme.

Literacy vital tool for social progress

In her address on that occasion, the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mrs Mireille Martin, underlined that literacy is a vital tool for social progress. For her, literacy is a means to develop a person's potential so that he can integrate in the development process of his country, enhance the lives of his family and inculcate values to family members. It is a privileged way to fill up all existing gaps between men and women so that an equitable social justice is attained, added the Minister.

Women educated on their rights

Empowering women through education on their rights is considered

as one of the most effective tools for their development by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. It is recalled that the Gender Unit of the Ministry launched in May 2011 a Lifelong Learning for Women's Empowerment Programme in collaboration with the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council and the Commonwealth of Learning.

In line with the strategy of collaboration between the Gender Unit and the NWC, the programme will be decentralised to reach women at grassroots level, hence the initiative of the NWC to lay emphasis on legal literacy to mark International Literacy Day 2011. The main objective is to empower women on various legislations and to improve their livelihood through lifelong learning.

Adult Literacy Programme

The National Women's Council has been implementing the Adult Literacy Programme since 1986 with the overall objective of imparting writing and numeracy skills to women. The programme is dispensed in 38 centres both in rural and urban areas all around the island, including Women's Centres, Community Centres and Social Welfare Centres. A total of 8 000 women in the age group 16 to 80 years who have had no schooling or who do not how to read or write have already benefitted, while around 836 women are presently enlisted. There are 420 women on the waiting list.

The illiteracy rate for women in Mauritius stands at 18.5% compared to 11.3% for men.



Literacy Training: Promoting women entrepreneurship

Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre New exhibits to ease understanding of science

The Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre (RGSC) launched its newest exhibits during open days with free access in August and September 2011. The series of 13 new exhibits were procured from the National Council of Science Museums of India in a bid to provide to the public new and improved hands-on experience of science.



Exploring science in an interactive manner

The new exhibits explain concepts of mathematics and physics in a fun and interactive manner. They are in line with the institution's objectives of creating and enhancing public interest and understanding of science and technology.

Five exhibition galleries

The RGSC houses five permanent exhibition galleries namely 'Origin of Mauritius', 'Land and Environment of Mauritius', 'Resources of Mauritius', 'Fun Science' and 'Frontiers of New Technology'. They all contain interactive hands-on exhibits that enable visitors to learn and experience science in a fun manner. Outside the building of the RGSC is the science park where visitors are introduced to scientific concepts through games. Six of the new exhibits have been displayed in the gallery 'Fun Science' and six in the science park outside the building of the RGSC. The huge attraction known as the Energy Ball is found in the central lobby just at the entrance of the centre.

The exhibition centrepiece, the Energy Ball, is sure to fascinate visitors giving them the chance to witness the transformation of energy in various ways. The Energy Ball is a maze of circuitous paths of 9 ft x 9 ft and 18 ft in height along which "energetic" balls roll, and perform like an acrobat in a circus. The balls are energised by lifting them up and giving them enough potential energy to turn wheels, hit gongs and bells, create music and sometimes fall from a height but only bounce back for another round of performance.

All exhibitions are open to the public seven days a week including weekends and public holidays from 10.00 to 16.00 hrs. The entry fee for adults is Rs40. Special fares apply for students, senior citizens and group visits. Since its opening in December 2004, the RGSC has received more than 250 000 visitors.

Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress

Grant of Rs 2.25 m to three NGOs

Three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have received grants totalling around Rs 2 250 000 from Government as first instalment for projects under the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress. The ceremony of handing over of cheques, organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, was held on 5 September 2011 in Port Louis.

The three NGOs namely, *Jeune Chambre Economique de Curepipe*, the Society for the Welfare of the Deaf, and *Action Familiale*, were given cheques of Rs 1 million, Rs 498,300 and Rs 750,000, respectively. They will receive the second and final instalment in six months, after an evaluation of the status of their projects.

The *Jeune Chambre Economique de Curepipe* project aims at sensitising the population on gender-based violence, changing attitudes and behaviour about gender roles and relationships at all levels. The project targets young boys, youths and adults around the island.

Seventy-five children with hearing disabilities will benefit from the project of the Society for the Welfare of the Deaf. The aim is to enhance the capacity of the hearing impaired children and equip them so that they benefit from more opportunities towards a sustainable economic livelihood and thus fight against their potential marginalisation.

The *Action Familiale* project focuses on the prevention of domestic violence, parental empowerment, and facilitating social integration of women living in poverty. It will benefit some 2 221 families around the island.

About the Programme

The objective of the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress, set up in 2009, is to support women and children in distress with a view to enhancing their livelihoods and integrating them in the mainstream of development. Financial support is provided, under the Programme, to NGOs, community-based

organisations and non-State agencies working for the welfare of these women and children.

Funds allocated so far are as follows: July/December 2009 - Rs 30 million; 2010 - Rs 70 million. For 2011, a total of Rs 40 million has been earmarked.

In line with the provisions of the 2011 Budget, the Women and Children's Solidarity Programme (WCSP), which used to operate under the Prime Minister's Office, has been merged into the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress, operating under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. It is to be noted that the sum of Rs 40 million allocated for 2011 includes funds to the tune of Rs 8.0 million already earmarked for projects approved under the WCSP.

Kreol Morisien: Updated dictionary launched

The second edition of the Kreol Morisien dictionary was launched on 12 September 2011 by the Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, at the Octave Wiehé Auditorium, Réduit. The dictionary, written by Dr. Arnaud Carpooran, is believed to be the first of its type in the world. It has 17 000 words in Kreol Morisien and includes Kreol words spoken specifically in Rodrigues and in the Chagos. It also contains 1 500 new words compared to the first edition which was published in September 2009.

It is recalled that *Kreol Morisien* will be introduced as an optional language in Standard I in the 272 primary schools as from January next year in line with the Government Programme 2010-2015 which pledges to encourage the use of mother tongues to facilitate teaching and learning, and work towards the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* and Bhojpuri as optional subjects in schools.

In this context, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has initiated a number of measures since August 2010 with a view to ensuring that *Kreol Morisien* is introduced in primary schools at Standard I as from January 2012. The Akademi Kreol Morisien, a technical committee, was set up in October 2010 to look into all aspects related to the introduction of the language in schools along with, inter alia, a harmonised version of its written form.

For the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* in schools to become a reality, its standardised writing system that covers the recommended orthography,

punctuation and scientific notations (quantity and measurement) and grammar has been finalised by the Akademi Kreol Morisien. This body is collaborating with the MIE to develop the relevant curriculum and prepare workbooks for Standard I pupils as well as a Teachers' guide.

Consequently, some 100 trainee primary educators who have expressed their interest in teaching *Kreol Morisien* as from January 2012 are following a six-month training programme in the pedagogy related to the teaching of this subject at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE).

Some 3 320 children have opted to study *Kreol Morisien* when they join primary school next year. It is believed that the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* in classrooms will help pupils to better acquire concepts and knowledge.

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