THE ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSFORMATION

MAURITIUS BUDGET SPEECH 2026-2O27
NOT DELIVERED IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Gérard Sanspeur

19 June 2026

Executive Summary - The Architecture of Transformation

1. This Alternative Budget Speech for Mauritius for the financial year 2026–2027 is not a conventional budget speech. It does not pretend to offer line-by-line expenditure estimates, detailed revenue projections, or Treasury-level appropriations. An alternative budget prepared outside government cannot honestly claim access to the consolidated accounts of the State, the full schedule of inherited commitments, or the real-time fiscal position of the Treasury. Its purpose is different, and more fundamental. It offers a doctrine...

2. The central argument is simple: Mauritius does not primarily suffer from a lack of announcements. It suffers from a lack of architecture. For twenty-five years, successive budget speeches have diagnosed many of the right problems, named many of the right ambitions, and announced hundreds of individually defensible measures. Yet structural transformation has not followed. The reason is not that every minister failed individually. The reason is that the budget system itself rewards announcement more than completion, visibility more than execution, and expenditure more than measurable outcomes.

3. Ten structural challenges: productivity, brain drain, dependence on imported labour, food vulnerability, demographic ageing, the water and energy crisis, the social crisis of chronic disease and drug dependency, artificial intelligence displacement, the absence of a credible post-real-estate economic model, and the law and order crisis: have been named in budget speeches for a generation and never treated as systems requiring institutions, sequencing, and accountability. They were addressed with schemes, grants, subsidies, and announcements. The result is a country that has heard the language of transformation for decades without experiencing transformation as a lived reality.

4. The speech then explains why these failures persisted. The problem was not simply political intention. It was institutional design. The electoral cycle rewarded announcements without completion. The civil service was optimised for compliance rather than performance. Parliament lacked independent fiscal scrutiny. The State was fragmented across ministries, parastatals, regulators and boards, producing a system where everyone was procedurally correct and no one was accountable. Most of the budget was pre-committed before new choices could be made. And the real estate model created the illusion of development while locking land and capital into non-productive asset transfers.

5. The response is not another list of schemes. It is an accountability architecture. The Budget proposes a series of structural reforms designed not to add bureaucracy but to change incentives: linking public money to outcomes, requiring independent appraisal before major projects are approved, closing the procurement exemption loopholes that have operated as legal tunnels for opacity, protecting competition, equipping the Opposition to function as a government-in-waiting, and binding the Minister of Finance to a public annual accounting of what was committed and what was delivered.

6. The speech then confronts the deeper economic question: what has Mauritius actually built? The country benefited from three historical windfalls: preferential sugar prices, textile quota protection, and financial services regulatory arbitrage. Each generated income. Each improved living standards. But each depended on external arrangements that Mauritius did not fully control. The Sugar Protocol is gone. The Multi-Fibre Arrangement is gone. Tax arbitrage is eroding. No fourth windfall is waiting.

7. Mauritius must therefore move from windfall wealth to created wealth. Created wealth depends on what a country can produce, design, invent, export, teach, certify, manufacture, cultivate, code, finance, regulate and imagine that the world genuinely needs. The doctrine of this Budget is productivity-led development: from rent to capability, from consumption to production, from land conversion to value creation.

8. The Budget is organised around four structural bets. The first is the Productivity Republic: raising firm-level productivity through measurement, capital deepening, automation, and artificial intelligence readiness. The second is the Resilient Island Economy: treating food, water, energy, and climate adaptation as one sovereignty system, governed by biological farming principles, household-level energy generation, and water governance reform. The third is the Talent and Technology

Compact: treating brain drain not as a failure of patriotism but as a verdict on national conditions, and culture as the infrastructure of imagination rather than heritage to preserve or industry to monetise. The fourth is the SME Republic: making the State the anchor client that makes small business survival structurally possible.

9. The Labour Sovereignty Compact responds to the structural dependence on imported labour. A country that cannot account for the conditions under which tens of thousands of people work on its soil has not built a governance system. It has built a processing system. The Compact introduces a Migration Dependency Index, decouples the work permit from the employer, requires sectoral labour transition plans, and establishes dignity audits as a trade condition. If a wage is too low to attract a Mauritian, then the wage, not the worker, must change.

10. The Spatial Republic argues that transformation must be visible in the places where Mauritians actually live: streets, town centres, coastlines, neighbourhoods, public gardens. It ends the enclosure of public patrimony, protects the pas géométriques, establishes a public State Land Register, redesigns public space around human beings rather than vehicles, and makes food sovereignty visible at neighbourhood scale through the Fifteen-Minute Community Principle. The Spatial Republic is not beautification. It is economic policy, health policy, democratic policy, and wellbeing policy made visible in the places where Mauritians live.

11. The Wellbeing Republic completes the architecture. The purpose of an economy is not to produce GDP. It is to produce capable, healthy, secure human beings. The speech treats diabetes, mental health collapse, drug dependency, road deaths, political financing, unexplained wealth, and civic values not as isolated problems but as symptoms of a deeper social architecture that successive governments constructed and never redesigned. The Wellbeing Test: does this policy strengthen wellbeing, trust, dignity, resilience, and community life? It applies to every major decision this government takes.

12. The closing chapter returns to proof. A speech is not transformation. A doctrine is not delivery. A commitment is not completion. The difference between performance and proof is accountability. This Budget therefore binds the government that would present it: through independent scrutiny, annual reporting, public dashboards, evaluation, preventive audit, measurable indicators, and citizen wellbeing surveys.

13. Annex I provides the evidentiary foundation. It documents eleven cases of announcement before analysis: Metro Express, Safe City, Côte d'Or, Heritage City, the Liverpool FC agreement, Smart Cities, the Diaspora Scheme, hospitals, roads, renewable energy, and the M4 motorway; spanning three governments and three decades. The point is not that every project was necessarily wrong. The point is that the public was rarely given the evidence required to know whether the projects were right.

14. Annex II provides the imaginative foundation. Written from the vantage point of June 2029, it describes what Mauritius begins to look like three years after the implementation of the Architecture of Transformation. It is not a forecast. It is a test of seriousness. It is an integral part of this Budget Speech: the architecture given a life, the reforms given a consequence, the idea of emergence given a name. It should be read as such.

15. This Alternative Budget does not promise perfection. It promises seriousness. Serious public finance. Serious institutions. Serious delivery. Serious accountability. Serious nation-building.

16. Development is not merely what a country earns. Development is what a country becomes.

CHAPTER I - THE MOMENT WE FACE

Madam Speaker,

17. I move that the Appropriation Bill for the financial year 2026-2027 be read a second time.

18. Madam Speaker, I have read every budget speech delivered in this House over the last fifteen years. Some were delivered by the MSM government. Some were delivered by the Labour party. I have read them not as a partisan, but as a student of public finance - carefully, honestly, and with respect for the men who delivered them.

19. And I have reached a conclusion that I will state plainly at the outset of this speech, because everything that follows depends upon it.

20. The Mauritian budget speech has become a ritual of announcement rather than an instrument of governance. Year after year, it has correctly diagnosed our national challenges. Year after year, it has named the right ambitions. Year after year, it has produced measures that, taken individually, were defensible. And year after year, the structural transformation that was promised did not come.

21. This is not an indictment of individuals. It is a diagnosis of a system. And this Budget begins by confronting that system directly : because a budget that does not understand why previous budgets failed is condemned to repeat their failures under a different slogan.

The Form : How the Speech Itself Obscures

22. Madam Speaker, the first defect is formal, and it is more consequential than it appears.

23. The budget speech has become a political ledger, not an economic strategy. The problem is not length. The problem is accumulation without architecture. A serious country requires a long argument when the diagnosis is deep and the cure is structural. But the official budget speech is delivered as a procession of disconnected announcements: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, financial services, infrastructure, social measures, tax changes, each lobby receiving its paragraph, each pressure group its mention, each announcement briefly displayed before the next one replaces it. Three hundred measures announced in a single afternoon do not create strategy. They create exhaustion. And beneath the exhaustion, the foundational decay of the economic architecture continues: unaddressed, unnamed, undisturbed.

24. Madam Speaker, I anticipate the objection. This alternative budget speech is longer than the speeches it criticises. The difference is not length. It is structure. A litany is long because it adds without connecting. An architecture is long because it builds a system. Remove any paragraph from the official budget and the rest survives unchanged. Remove the doctrine from this speech: the four structural bets, the nineteen reforms, the accountability architecture: and nothing coherent remains. A litany is a collection of independent promises. An architecture is a system of interdependent commitments. Judge this speech not by its page count, but by whether you can remove a page without breaking the whole.

25. This form is not neutral. It is a technology of exhaustion. By the third hour, the mind cannot distinguish between a multi-billion-rupee infrastructure project and a one million rupee grant for a sports club. Everything is presented : therefore nothing is prioritised. And a budget without priorities is not a strategy. It is an inventory.

26. A second formal defect is the vocabulary of magical realism. We have heard, year after year, words like transformation, modernisation, resilience, game-changer, historic. These words sound substantive. They are not. They are rhetorical placeholders for missing structural doctrines. Resilience is not measured. Game-changer is not specified. Innovation is not defined. When every budget promises transformation and none delivers it, the vocabulary of transformation becomes the language of evasion.

27. A third formal defect is statistical asymmetry. The official budget presents absolute numbers for pleasant figures while presenting percentages or shifted baselines for unpleasant ones. A debt reduction expressed as a percentage of GDP may reflect not a smaller numerator but a larger denominator : inflated by currency depreciation. A budget built on asymmetric statistics does not inform. It performs.

28. Madam Speaker, a Budget needs to use consistent metrics. Every major commitment has to be expressed with honest measurement, accompanied by a baseline, a direction of travel, and a time horizon. Not because this is technically elegant : but because citizens and this House deserve the instruments to hold their government accountable. However this is an alternative budget: it does not have access to the Treasury's accounts. What it has is a doctrine : and doctrine is what makes numbers meaningful.

29. There is a particular kind of grief that belongs to wasted words. Over the last decade, this House has heard some of the most carefully crafted budget slogans in our parliamentary history. A New Era of Development. Inspiring Our Future. Pursuing Our Transformative Journey. Embracing a Brighter Future Together. Better Together. With the People, For the People. To Dare and to Care. Tomorrow is Ours. And then, delivered by the Right Honourable Navin Ramgoolam himself : From the Abyss to Prosperity. One is tempted to ask: if we have spent the last ten years crossing boldly toward prosperity, how did we arrive at the Abyss? Each slogan was sincere. Each was applauded. The dam was still not built. The brain drain did not reverse. The water still leaks. The drug crisis deepened. The defect was never one of intention : it was one of architecture. A slogan fades when the applause stops. An architecture remains when the minister has gone.

The Content : What the Speeches Avoid

30. Madam Speaker, the formal defects are serious. The defects of content are structural.

31. For the last decade, the primary economic engine promoted by successive budgets has been real estate : the IRS, the RES, the PDS, the Smart City scheme. Each encoded the same logic: tax holidays, registration duty exemptions, automatic residency permits for foreign buyers. This model treated real estate sales as foreign direct investment. It was not. It was a non-productive asset transition. It locked capital and land into concrete : into villas and gated communities : while starving high-value manufacturing, agronomic research, and deep-technology innovation.

32. The result is an economy that substituted one rent for another. From sugar to villas. From production to property. This is not transformation. This is substitution. And it has reached its structural limit.

33. More recently, budgets shifted toward direct generous cash transfers, consumer subsidies, and universal allowances. These measures responded to real hardship, and I do not dismiss the intentions behind them. But they are structurally unsustainable : financed, in part, by inflation and currency depreciation, which boost VAT revenues from imports and redistribute a portion as transfers. Inflation erodes real wages. The skilled middle class emigrates. The state imports more consumption goods. VAT revenues rise. More transfers are announced. The cycle repeats. We are not building productive capacity. We are managing its decline.

34. Madam Speaker, I have tracked the projects announced in successive budget speeches against what was actually delivered.

35. The Rivière des Anguilles Dam was announced in 2016. It is not built. The Metro Express extension to the north was announced in 2016. It does not exist. The e-health project : one patient, one record : was announced in 2019. It remains in pilot phase. Madam Speaker, we do not know where the patient is. We do not know where the record is. What we do know is that they have not yet met. The ocean economy blueprint was announced in 2019. It is still being finalised. A national laboratory waited sixteen years for certification while budget after budget promised a knowledge economy. The restructuring of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority was announced in the Budget of 2025–2026. Eighteen months later, an international tender has been launched to recruit consultants to determine what that restructuring should contain. The announcement preceded the analysis. The budget measure preceded the terms of reference. This is not an exception. It is the system.

36. Madam Speaker, as this Budget Speech is being read, Parliament is debating a commitment of Rs 10.8 billion to the M4 motorway on the basis of a feasibility study produced in 2012. The Minister of Infrastructure has confirmed that no updated socio-economic appraisal has been conducted. The project was not conceived by this government. It was inherited from a single line in the Budget Speech of 2024–2025 :

no cost, no study, no calendar : and transformed into a Rs 10.8 billion commitment without the analysis that a decision of that magnitude demands. The announcement preceded the analysis under both governments. The State will build. Certain landowners will collect the value uplift. The taxpayer will pay. That is not development policy. It is the system this Budget is designed to replace.

37. This is not a series of isolated failures. It is a system : a system that rewards announcement, not completion. A minister receives political credit for announcing a project. A minister receives no credit for quietly completing one. Funds are released before performance, not conditional upon it. The result is what one must honestly call a digital cemetery of unfinished ambitions : projects announced, funded, initiated, and silently abandoned, their failures unacknowledged in the speech that follows.

The Ten Structural Silences

38. Madam Speaker, there are ten structural challenges that every budget speech of the last decade has mentioned : and none has resolved. I name them here not to catalogue failure, but to establish the agenda that this Budget must finally begin to answer.

39. **Productivity**. Mentioned as competitiveness. Addressed with training schemes that do not change capital-labour ratios. Never measured at the firm level. Never connected to industrial policy with teeth.

40. **Brain drain**. Mentioned as diaspora. Addressed with incentive schemes that have not reversed the outflow. Never confronted as what it actually is : a verdict delivered by our own citizens on the conditions we offer them.

41. **Dependence on imported labour**. Mentioned as a labour shortage. Addressed through work permits, recruitment drives, and administrative facilitation. Never confronted as what it may actually be : a signal that significant parts of our economy have become structurally dependent on imported labour rather than rising productivity. The question is not whether migrant workers are necessary. The question is why, after decades of economic development, so many sectors remain viable only through access to an ever-growing supply of low-cost labour from abroad. We have treated imported labour as a solution. We have rarely asked whether it has also become a substitute for technological upgrading, skills development, better working conditions, and higher wages. A country that depends permanently on imported labour to sustain large parts of its productive system faces not merely a labour market challenge : it faces a development challenge.

42. **<u>Food dependency</u>**. Mentioned as food security. Addressed with subsidies, not import substitution. Never treated as the strategic vulnerability it represents : an economy that cannot feed itself is an economy permanently exposed to external shocks.

43. **<u>Demographic ageing</u>**. Mentioned as pension cost. Never addressed as a long-term care crisis, a labour market transformation, or a fundamental redesign of our social contract. The fiscal symptom is managed. The structural disease is ignored.

44. **<u>The water crisis</u>**. Mentioned every year. Addressed with the same dam, the same pipes, and the same emergency language. Never confronted as a profound governance failure requiring institutional redesign, pricing reform, demand management, watershed protection, and the defence of our nappes phréatiques: the groundwater reserves quietly over-extracted by private interests while the State looks the other way. Mauritius has treated water as something to be captured, stored and distributed. It has not treated land as the system through which water is absorbed, filtered, recharged and protected. A country that seals its recharge zones, neglects its aquifers, tolerates non-revenue water, and then announces another dam has not solved a water crisis. It has postponed it.

45. **<u>The social crisis of chronic disease, mental health, and drug dependency</u>**. Mentioned as public health. Addressed with hospital construction, drug seizures, and periodic awareness campaigns. Never confronted as what it actually is: the biological and social output of an economic and spatial architecture that successive governments constructed, reinforced, and never seriously redesigned. Twenty percent of Mauritian adults have diabetes; one of the highest prevalence rates in the world; in a country where processed food is cheaper than fresh produce, where walking is dangerous, and where financial stress drives families toward the cheapest available calories. One hundred thousand citizens are navigating mental health challenges in a system with 1.6 psychiatrists per hundred thousand people, against a WHO baseline of ten. Fifty-five thousand citizens used illicit drugs last month, in a country ranked first in synthetic drug trade in Southern Africa; not because a generation chose despair, but because an architecture offered them so little reason to choose otherwise. These are not medical failures. They are governance failures. And they have been named in budget speeches for fifteen years without ever being treated as systems requiring institutions, sequencing, and accountability. The Mauritian body has been carrying the cost of the other silences. This alternative budget names that cost.

46. **Artificial intelligence and the future of work**. Mentioned as innovation. Never addressed as the displacement risk it represents : one that requires not a unit at a ministry as announced in the 2025-2026 budget speech , but a national reskilling architecture capable of operating at scale and speed.

47. **The post-real-estate economic model**. Never seriously mentioned at all. The question of what Mauritius produces that the world needs : once the villa market reaches saturation and the financial services sector faces intensifying regulatory pressure : has not appeared in a single budget speech. It is the most important economic question facing this country, and it has been met with silence.

48. **The law and order crisis**. Mentioned every year. Addressed with procurement: cameras, fences, control rooms, surveillance contracts, command centres. Never confronted as what it actually is: a governance and social architecture failure. Public safety is not primarily a technology problem. It is the compound result of abandoned public space, a generation offered no credible entry into economic life, policing disconnected from community intelligence, and a State that answered insecurity with hardware rather than human institutions. Nineteen billion rupees for the Safe City surveillance system with no published feasibility study, no competitive procurement, and no demonstrated link between cameras and crime reduction. The barbed wire on our walls is not a private security choice. It is a public verdict on what the State failed to build.

49. **These ten silences are not accidental**. They are the natural product of a budget process optimised for the parliamentary afternoon on which it is delivered, not for the

decade that follows. They persist because the system does not require solutions : only announcements.

The Commitment

50. Madam Speaker, I have described what is wrong with the budget speeches this House has heard. I have done so not to settle scores, not to distinguish myself rhetorically from my predecessors, but because the diagnosis is the foundation of the cure.

51. A Budget allocates. Institutions execute. Systems sustain. Nations progress when all three work together. In Mauritius, we have focused almost entirely on the first. We have neglected the second. We have never seriously built the third. This Budget begins to change that : not by announcing the intention to change it, but by demonstrating the change in every chapter that follows.

52. This Budget will name its priorities explicitly : and it will name what is being stopped to fund them. A government that only adds and never subtracts is not governing strategically. It is accumulating politically.

53. This Budget will address the ten structural silences : not with further announcements, but with systems, sequencing, and accountability structures capable of surviving beyond the speech that introduces them.

54. Madam Speaker, Mauritius does not lack talent. It does not lack ideas. It does not lack the resilience that our history has demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt. What Mauritius must now build : urgently, seriously, and without further deferral : is the capacity to convert national ambition into measurable national outcomes. That capacity is what I mean by the Architecture of Transformation.

55. Madam Speaker, let me now lay out the doctrine on which that architecture is built.

CHAPTER II - THE LAST BUDGET OF THE OLD ARCHITECTURE

Madam Speaker,

56. In Chapter I, I described the formal and structural defects of the budget speeches this House has heard for twenty-five years. But diagnosis without etiology is incomplete. If we do not understand why these defects persist, we cannot design the cure. The answer is uncomfortable : not because it reveals conspiracy, but because it reveals structure. The problem is not a succession of inadequate ministers. It is not a lazy civil service. The problem is a budget system that optimises for the wrong things and has remained essentially unchanged for a generation. Public finance is an operating system through which a state converts resources into national outcomes. Every operating system produces precisely the results it is designed to produce. What we have witnessed for twenty-five years is not a failure of intellect. It is the output of a silent factory of the status quo : and that factory runs on six structural causes which I will now name precisely and without partisan attribution, because you cannot reform a system you have not honestly described.

57. The first cause is the electoral cycle. A minister receives political credit on the day the budget is delivered : three hundred measures announced, each reported, each celebrated. What happens three years later, when the dam is not built, when the e-health system remains in pilot phase, when the ocean economy blueprint is still being finalised, is not reported with the same intensity. The minister who announced the project is often no longer in office. The failure is not attributed. It is simply absorbed into the next budget as a new announcement under a new slogan. The system has learned something more insidious still : it can announce the same project three times across a decade, receive political credit each time, and never face consequences for failing to complete it. The Rivière des Anguilles Dam. The e-health system. The ocean economy blueprint. The reform of the MTPA . These are not isolated failures. They are the system operating exactly as its incentives designed it to.

58. The second cause is civil service culture. The Mauritian civil service is professional, educated, and generally honest. It is also optimised for compliance, not performance. This year's budget circular runs twenty-four pages of classification and formatting instructions. What it does not ask is the only question that matters: what is the single most important outcome your ministry is accountable for delivering this year, and how will we know when you have achieved it? A system designed for procedural compliance will inevitably produce the litany : because the litany is procedurally safe. Prioritisation requires choices. Choices create winners and losers. The procedural system values the absence of complaint over the presence of achievement.

59. The third cause is the absence of independent fiscal scrutiny. In most serious democracies, the legislature has its own independent fiscal institution : a Parliamentary Budget Office, a Congressional Budget Office, a Fiscal Council : empowered to scrutinise projections, assess their realism, track execution, and report to Parliament rather than the Executive. Mauritius has no such institution. The only check on the Ministry of Finance's projections is the Ministry of Finance itself. When projections are optimistic : and across twenty-five years they have almost always been optimistic : there is no institutional counterweight capable of saying so with authority. The result is a budget process that has systematically overstated revenues, understated deficits, and presented fiscal trajectories to this House that bore limited relationship to subsequent reality.

60. The fourth cause is the fragmentation of the state. The chain from allocation to outcome passes through too many hands and belongs to no single set of them. When a project fails, it is nearly impossible to locate responsibility : everyone is procedurally correct and no one is accountable. The challenges that matter most : productivity, brain drain, water security : fall between the silos. They belong to everyone in the abstract and to no one in the budget process.

61. The fifth cause is the weight of inherited commitments. When a Minister of Finance sits at this table, approximately eighty to eighty-five percent of the budget is already committed before a single new decision is made : salaries, pensions, debt service, subsidies, parastatal transfers. Genuine discretion extends to less than twenty percent.

Structural transformation requires multi-year planning and committed multi-year funding. It cannot be achieved in the margins of an annual appropriation exercise. The speeches have therefore become more ambitious precisely as the fiscal constraints have become tighter : a system that demands annual transformation from a process that can only deliver incremental adjustment structurally incentivises rhetorical inflation.

62. The sixth cause is the real estate capture. Over the last fifteen years, as the economy stopped generating sufficient returns from manufacturing and services innovation, capital sought the path of least resistance through the IRS, the RES, the PDS, the Smart City scheme : each encoding tax holidays, duty exemptions, and automatic residency for foreign buyers. This was not foreign direct investment. It was a non-productive asset transition : capital locked into concrete while starving investment in manufacturing, agronomic research, and deep-technology innovation. And because real estate generated quick registration duties and VAT revenues, successive budgets became fiscally dependent on this stream. From sugar to villas. From production to property. This is not transformation. It is substitution. And it has reached its structural limit.

63. The cumulative result of these six causes operating simultaneously for twenty-five years is a budget process that diagnoses national challenges with considerable accuracy, announces responses with considerable ambition, and delivers structural transformation with considerable rarity. Citizens do not experience public expenditure. They experience outcomes : whether water reaches their households reliably, whether the project announced three years ago has been completed, whether the country their children are inheriting is more capable than the one they grew up in. By that standard : the only standard that ultimately matters : the system has underperformed its ambitions for a generation.

64. I am therefore announcing today nineteen structural reforms to the budget system itself. These are not measures within the budget. They are reforms to the architecture that produces budgets : embedded in legislation, in institutional design, and in the permanent accountability structures of the Mauritian state, designed to outlast any single government, including this one.

65. **REFORM ONE:** **a Parliamentary Budget Office**, reporting exclusively to the National Assembly, with statutory authority to independently assess all budget projections, audit implementation, and publish an annual State of Public Finance report : its Director appointed by Parliament, not the Executive.

66. **REFORM TWO: a binding three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework**, ending the fiction that each budget is a fresh beginning. I am aware that Mauritius already produces an MTEF. I am also aware of what it has become: a ritual of completed columns and empty ambition : no SWOT analysis, no project assessment, no honest reckoning with what the previous three years actually delivered. A document that exists to be filed, not to be followed. This reform ends that ritual. The MTEF will be binding, strategic, and public : and no budget will be presented to this House that cannot be traced back to it.

67. **REFORM THREE:** **a Programme Performance Architecture** attaching every allocation above Rs 50 million to a named programme with outcome indicators and a designated accountable officer : funding conditional on demonstrated performance.

68. **REFORM FOUR:** **the Subtraction Rule**, requiring every new programme above Rs 100 million to identify an existing programme of equivalent cost that will be stopped, merged, or redesigned.

69. **REFORM FIVE:** **a National Delivery Unit** at the Prime Minister's Office tracking the government's twenty highest-priority commitments with monthly public reports.

70. **REFORM SIX:** **a Fiscal Responsibility Act** establishing statutory ceilings on the structural deficit and public debt : future governments will retain freedom to set their own fiscal priorities; they will not retain freedom to accumulate debt without Parliamentary accountability.

71. **REFORM SEVEN:** **the Annual Budget Accountability Statement** : twelve months after each budget speech, the Minister of Finance returns to this House to present a

public, honest audit of what was committed and what was delivered. Next year, when I stand here to deliver my second official budget, the first thing I will do is account for what I promised today.

72. REFORM EIGHT: **the Delivery Accountability Act** : Every government institution, parastatal, and regulator will operate under a mandatory Managing for Results framework. Each institution will publish annually a Performance Contract with named indicators, baselines, and target outcomes. Every major public project will require a documented needs assessment before procurement and an independent supervisor engaged before the implementer : not four years after. The era of projects that exist in announcements and disappear from annual reports is over. A government that demands accountability from others must first demonstrate it within its own walls.

73. REFORM NINE : **the Public Policy Evaluation Act**.

74. Madam Speaker, one of the most remarkable features of the Mauritian State is not that it launches policies. Every government launches policies. It is that it almost never evaluates them.

75. Programmes are announced. Schemes are launched. Subsidies are granted. Tax incentives are introduced. New institutions are created. Years later, nobody can answer the most elementary questions.

76. Did the policy achieve its objective? Who benefited? Who did not? What were the unintended consequences? Was the policy worth the resources devoted to it?

77. Too often, the answer is that nobody knows.

78. Successive governments have accumulated policies the way archaeologists accumulate layers of sediment. New schemes added on top of old schemes. New incentives layered on top of previous incentives. New institutions coexisting with older institutions whose original purpose has long been forgotten. Very rarely does the State stop to ask whether these interventions continue to create value for society.

79. The result is a government that measures activity rather than impact. We count announcements. We count beneficiaries. We count expenditure. But we rarely measure outcomes.

80. The Smart City programme has transformed large portions of our territory : yet no comprehensive public evaluation has ever established whether it delivered the productivity gains, the employment creation, the innovation ecosystem, the housing outcomes, or the fiscal benefits originally envisaged. The Diaspora Scheme has been running for a decade : yet no systematic assessment has established whether it achieved its objectives, at what cost, and with what measurable economic return.

81. This observation holds across every administration this country has known : under Ramgoolam, under Bérenger, under Jugnauth. The failure is not partisan. It is structural.

82. Annex I documents this failure across eleven cases: the Metro Express, the Safe City Project, the Côte d'Or Sports Complex, Heritage City, the Liverpool FC Agreement, the Smart City Scheme, the Diaspora Scheme, hospitals, roads, the CEB renewable energy programme, and the M4 motorway. In each case, the answer to the same four questions is either no, not publicly available, or insufficiently documented: Was there a published appraisal before approval? Were alternatives compared? Were costs and fiscal risks disclosed? Was there an independent post-implementation evaluation? These cases do not prove that every project was wrong. They prove something more important: that the Mauritian public was rarely given the evidence required to know whether the projects were right.

83. This Budget therefore introduces the Public Policy Evaluation Act.

84. Under this Act, every major policy, subsidy, tax incentive, social programme, and economic scheme exceeding thresholds prescribed by law shall be subject to periodic independent evaluation. Each evaluation shall seek to answer four questions: Did the policy work? For whom did it work? At what cost? And what unintended effects did it create?

85. The evaluations shall be published and laid before Parliament. They shall examine not only financial expenditure but economic, social, environmental, and institutional outcomes. No policy shall enjoy permanent existence merely because it was once announced. Every policy must periodically justify its continued existence through evidence.

86. The Bureau National d'Évaluation : established within the Prime Minister's Office, answerable to Parliament, its Director appointed by the President on the recommendation of a cross-party Parliamentary Committee : will commission the first cycle of evaluations within twelve months of taking office. The Smart City incentive regime, the Diaspora Scheme, and every tax expenditure above Rs 100 million per year will form the first cohort. The findings will be published, debated in this House, and available to every citizen.

87. Government by announcement must give way to **government by learning**.

88. A mature State is not one that never makes mistakes. A mature State is one that learns from them.

89. **REFORM TEN** : **The Public Sector Austerity Standard** : A government that demands sacrifice from its citizens must first demonstrate it within its own conduct. The government vehicle fleet will be capped at engine sizes appropriate for a small island nation. Official travel abroad will default to economy class, with business class permitted only for intercontinental flights exceeding ten hours. Per diems will be benchmarked against actual destination costs and reduced accordingly. And the thirteenth month bonus for the Prime Minister , ministers and senior officials will be paid only upon demonstrated performance : not automatically. Austerity is not a message for the poor. It is a standard that begins at the top.

90. **REFORM ELEVEN**: **the Competition Commission Reform Act** : Madam Speaker, the dispersal of economic power will not be achieved by supporting small businesses alone. It also requires dismantling the institutional architecture that protects concentration.

91. For too long, Mauritius has treated competition policy as a secondary matter. We have spoken of SMEs, entrepreneurship, access to finance and innovation, while leaving intact the market structures that prevent new entrants from growing. An economy cannot produce broad-based opportunity if a small number of groups control land, retail, logistics, distribution, finance, construction, agriculture , healthcare , hospitality and access to essential markets.

92. The Competition Commission, as presently constituted, is not equipped for the economy Mauritius has become. It can investigate. It can observe. It can recommend remedies. But it does not have the full authority required to discipline concentrated power before damage is done. It cannot impose effective fines for abuse of dominance. It does not receive mandatory prior notification of major mergers. It has limited reach over state-owned enterprises. And it has no effective jurisdiction over the pricing of essential commodities imported through the State Trading Corporation. A Competition Commission that discovers concentration after the fact is not a guardian of competition. It is a historian of market power.

93. This Budget will therefore introduce a Competition Commission Reform Act.

94. First, the Commission will be given the power to impose administrative fines for abuse of dominance, including exclusionary pricing, refusal to supply, discriminatory treatment, tied sales and practices that prevent smaller competitors from entering or surviving in the market.

95. Second, all mergers, acquisitions and corporate restructurings above a defined turnover, asset or market-share threshold will require mandatory pre-merger notification : no transaction capable of reshaping an entire sector should be completed first and examined later.

96. Third, the jurisdiction of the Commission will be extended to state-owned enterprises where their commercial conduct affects competition.

97. Fourth, a special framework will be introduced for essential commodities : where goods imported or supplied through private companies and public agencies affect household welfare, the Commission will be empowered to review margins, distribution structures and anti-competitive conduct along the value chain.

98. Fifth, the Commission will conduct a Market Concentration Review every three years, identifying sectors where a small number of actors control a disproportionate share of economic activity, land, distribution channels, procurement, retail access or strategic infrastructure : with findings laid before Parliament.

99. The ENL-Rogers restructuring of July 2025, which created the largest private-sector conglomerate in Mauritian history without any formal competition review of its economy-wide implications, must mark the end of an era. Under this framework, such a transaction would trigger mandatory notification, sectoral analysis and public-interest scrutiny before completion.

100. Madam Speaker, an economy cannot disperse opportunity while its institutions protect concentration. Competition is not hostility to enterprise. It is the condition under which enterprise remains open, dynamic and fair. This Budget does not punish success. It prevents success from becoming enclosure.

101. **REFORM TWELVE: The Public Investment Evaluation Act**.

102. Madam Speaker, I turn now to the most expensive silence in Mauritian public finance. It is not a silence about money. It is a silence about evidence. For thirty years, across every government this country has known : under Ramgoolam, under Jugnauth, under Bérenger : billions of rupees have been committed to major projects without a single published socio-economic feasibility study. Not one. An announcement. A ground-breaking ceremony. A ribbon. And then, years later, an audit report naming the consequences.

103. This is not a partisan indictment. It is a structural one. When every government does the same thing, the explanation is not character. It is the absence of a binding rule. That rule does not exist in Mauritius. This Alternative Budget creates it.

104. Let me name what the absence of that rule has produced.

105. The Safe City project. Rs 19 billion committed through an unsolicited bid, without public debate, without a cost-benefit analysis, without an independent assessment of whether CCTV surveillance at this scale would achieve any measurable reduction in crime. The Auditor General, invoking Article 110(2) of the Constitution, was denied access to the lease agreement. No institution existed to ask what Rs 19 billion spent on community policing, drug rehabilitation, or youth employment might have achieved instead.

106. The Metro Express. A multi-billion-rupee investment committed without a published comparison of alternatives : bus rapid transit, road redesign, demand management : and without an independent assessment of the social rate of return or long-term operating subsidy requirement. The Metro Express may well have been the right choice. We do not know. We were never told the basis for that choice.

107. The Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. Rs 4.7 billion, built in a location inaccessible by public transport, with no post-games utilisation plan and no assessment of whether upgrading existing stadia island-wide would have generated greater welfare gains. The George V Stadium, renovated at public expense a decade earlier, offers its own silent verdict on what happens to large sporting infrastructure when the event ends.

108. Heritage City. A proposed capital city relocation whose documents were promotional material rather than feasibility studies, whose cost was never independently estimated, and which was quietly abandoned without any accounting of what had been spent on its master planning. The grand announcement and the silent abandonment are two faces of the same system.

109. The Liverpool FC agreement. Rs 400 million committed to a football branding partnership whose objectives, deliverables, and exit conditions were never disclosed to this House. No institution existed to ask what Rs 400 million in grassroots sports infrastructure would have achieved instead.

110. Smart Cities. Nine certificates issued, irreplaceable agricultural land permanently converted, vast tax expenditure committed : without a single published evaluation of the net fiscal cost, the effect on housing affordability, or the documented contribution to Port Louis's economic decline as businesses migrated to greenfield developments ten kilometres away.

111. The Diaspora Scheme : launched a decade ago, and still without a published evaluation of how many skilled professionals it attracted, how many stayed, and what the tax expenditure cost the Treasury.

112. Hospitals, roads, dams, ports, renewable energy contracts : the pattern repeats across every sector and every administration. Every announcement landed with certainty. Every evaluation never came.

113. Madam Speaker, the Mauritian State already knows what appraisal requires. The Ministry of Finance's own Project Request Form B references cost-benefit analysis. The PSIP describes feasibility requirements. The knowledge exists. The binding rule does not. This Alternative Budget creates it.

114. This Budget therefore introduces the Public Investment Evaluation Act.

115. Every public investment above Rs 50 million : by any ministry, parastatal, or public enterprise including the Bank of Mauritius , CEB, CWA, Landscope, the State Trading Corporation and other government institutions : shall be preceded by a published socio-economic-technical feasibility study before Cabinet approval. For investments above Rs 200 million, an independent counter-expertise will be commissioned by the Bureau National d'Évaluation, published within sixty days, and transmitted to this House. No budget line opens without a compliance certificate from the Bureau.

116. The Bureau will sit within the Prime Minister's Office but answer to Parliament, not the Executive. Its Director will be appointed by the President on the recommendation of a cross-party Parliamentary Committee.

117. The Act will further require that the Smart City Scheme, the Diaspora Scheme, the Metro Express operating model, the Safe City contract, the Côte d'Or utilisation framework, and every incentive scheme costing the Treasury above Rs 50 million per year undergo independent evaluation. Not to relitigate the past. To learn from it.

118. I anticipate two objections. The first: evaluation slows delivery. It does not. The Safe City project was committed without evaluation and it was not fast : it was opaque, concealed from the Auditor General, and its effect on crime remains unmeasured years later. The second: evaluation is expensive. For a Rs 19 billion contract, an independent study of Rs 50 million is one quarter of one percent of the commitment. The question is not whether evaluation is expensive. The question is whether ignorance is cheaper.

119. The proof of this reform is not the legislation. Within the next twelve months, the first four evaluations : of Safe City, the Heritage City, the Diaspora Scheme, and the Smart City incentive regime : will be published and debated in this House. This House will know what these decisions actually cost and what they actually delivered. The public will know. The press will know. And every future government will know that in Mauritius, there is now an institution whose purpose is to ensure they are next.

120. **REFORM THIRTEEN : Public Procurement Act**

121. Madam Speaker, the answer to why our largest public investments have so often escaped scrutiny is written into our own law. Section 3(1)(b) of the Public Procurement Act 2006 exempts procurement undertaken pursuant to an agreement with a foreign State offering expertise and development experience. In practice, this provision has operated as a standing authorisation to bypass competition whenever a foreign financing arrangement arrives with a preferred supplier attached. It does not stand alone. Section 3(1)(a) exempts procurement on national security grounds where the Prime Minister so determines. Section 3(3) provides that where our law conflicts with a donor organisation's procurement rules, those rules shall prevail. And in 2023, secondary legislation : Government Notice 115 : extended these exemptions to any project at least fifty percent financed by concessional foreign funding where the financing state specifies its own suppliers. This was not debated in Parliament. It was inserted by regulation. The loophole was not being corrected. It was being enlarged.

122. Madam Speaker, the result is a procurement system with two channels. The first : open, competitive, scrutinised : governs routine government purchases. The second : closed, predetermined, exempt : has governed some of the largest investments this country has ever made. The inversion is precise: the smaller the project, the more the law demands transparency; the larger the project, the more it permits opacity. A country that debates the loan but never debates the conditions attached to it has not made a financing decision. It has made a procurement decision in diplomatic clothing.

123. Madam Speaker, the first illustration is Ébène Cybercity. The Cyber Tower and early infrastructure were engineered and built by Indian companies under a financing arrangement backed by the Government of India. No competitive process determined whether they were the most suitable, the best value, or the most attuned to Mauritian urban realities. There was no domestic mechanism to test or challenge what was brought to us. The consequences are now measurable: Ébène requires a comprehensive urban regeneration programme to correct what the original planning process failed to provide : pedestrian infrastructure, coherent urban fabric, and adequate transport integration. The failure was not necessarily one of design. It was a failure of selection.

124. Madam Speaker, the second illustration is Heritage City. In 2016, a Dubai-based real estate consultancy : Stree Consulting : was appointed master planner for a proposed national civic complex without tender, without competition, and without involving a single local professional. The firm had no documented experience planning a national administrative capital and no knowledge of local conditions. The financing rationale rested on a signed letter between a private entity and a Permanent Secretary. The financing never came. Fees were paid. The project was abandoned. The mechanism that permitted this outcome is the same mechanism this Budget now addresses.

125. Madam Speaker, the third illustration is the Safe City project : a twenty-year lease valued at approximately sixteen billion rupees, awarded without competitive procurement under the national security exemption, financed by the Export-Import Bank of China and tied to Huawei as the designated supplier. No technical feasibility study was conducted. No economic appraisal was published. The technology was not chosen because it was the best available. It was chosen because the financing had already chosen it. The National Audit Office raised concerns about this procurement in its 2019-2020 report. International research has found that the claimed benefits of such deployments are difficult to verify and frequently overstated. The question of whether this was the right technology, at the right price, from the right supplier, was foreclosed before it could be asked. That foreclosure was not accidental. It was structural. It was legal. And it is the subject of this reform.

126. Madam Speaker, this Budget does not close Mauritius to bilateral financing. What it closes is the automatic suspension of accountability that has accompanied it. We will amend the Public Procurement Act to require independent technical certification before any financing arrangement triggers a procurement exemption : with findings published and reported to Parliament. We will adopt procurement neutrality as our standard negotiating position: Mauritius accepts the financing; **it does not accept that the financing determines the supplier**. And we will require public disclosure of every contract awarded under a procurement exemption within sixty days of signature, including a published value-for-money assessment. The source of financing must never again substitute for the discipline of evaluation.

127. **REFORM FOURTEEN : The Ministerial Responsibilities Act**

128. Madam Speaker, there is one institutional requirement that this alternative Budget will enshrine in law. This Budget introduces the Ministerial Responsibilities Act, which will prohibit the office of Minister of Finance from being held by the Prime Minister or by any minister simultaneously holding another portfolio.

129. We do not legislate because we doubt the wisdom or the sincerity of any individual Prime Minister. We legislate because wisdom and sincerity are not institutions. They are personal qualities. Personal qualities do not survive the pressures of office, the urgency of elections, or the accumulation of political obligations that power inevitably creates. A rule that depends on self-control is not a rule. It is a hope. And public finance cannot be built on hope.

130. The reason is simple and structural. A Minister of Finance has one function above all others: to say no. To say no to spending ministers. To say no to politically attractive projects whose costs exceed their benefits. To say no to the government's own ambitions when those ambitions exceed the nation's fiscal capacity. That function requires institutional distance from the centre of political power. It requires a minister whose sole loyalty is to fiscal discipline : not to the electoral programme of a government he simultaneously leads. When the Prime Minister holds Finance, the control becomes self-control. And the history of public finance across every democracy that has tried it demonstrates that self-control, however sincere, always yields to political urgency. The guardian of the keys cannot also be the one who uses them.

131. A budget without an independent Minister of Finance is not a budget. It is a political programme with numbers attached.

132. **REFORM FIFTEEN : The Democratic Preparedness and Opposition Support Act.**

133. Madam Speaker, there is another institutional weakness that this Budget must address, because it explains why governments so often arrive in office with slogans, but without plans.

134. Mauritius has no serious infrastructure for opposition policy work. A party may spend ten years outside government and return to office having lost contact with the machinery of the State, the complexity of ministries, and the practical constraints of implementation. Opposition becomes a waiting room, not a school of government. When power finally changes hands, the first months are spent discovering files that should have been studied for years.

135. The Leader of the Opposition is not merely the person who replies to Government. He is the constitutional head of the alternative government. Yet no Leader of the Opposition can perform that role seriously without research capacity, policy staff, fiscal analysis, and sectoral expertise. A serious opposition should interrogate a budget line by line, maintain shadow portfolios, publish policy papers, and prepare future ministers before they take office : not after.

136. This Budget therefore introduces the Democratic Preparedness and Opposition Support Act. A Parliamentary Opposition Research and Policy Service will be created within the National Assembly : independent of political parties, available to the Leader of the Opposition and recognised opposition parties, providing research, fiscal analysis, legislative drafting support, and sectoral briefings. The Leader of the

Opposition will be entitled to a professional policy office. Opposition members assigned to major portfolios will maintain shadow briefs and produce annual policy reviews. The research will be public. The money will be audited. Its value will be measured not by the speeches it helps write, but by the quality of the questions it helps ask.

137. Madam Speaker, the purpose is simple. A pilot does not discover the cockpit after take-off. Yet we allow future ministers to discover their ministries in real time, with citizens as **involuntary *cobayes***. This reform will not help one party against another. It will help the Republic of Mauritius against improvisation.

138. A mature democracy invests not only in the Government of the day, but in the quality of the Government that may replace it. Alternation should not mean amnesia. It should mean readiness. Never again should ten years in Opposition produce ten years of slogans and two months of preparation. The Opposition must become what democracy intended it to be : not a chorus of protest, but a government-in-waiting.

139. **REFORM SIXTEEN: The Electoral Manifesto Transparency and Costing Act**

140. Madam Speaker, there is a gap in our democratic architecture that no reform yet announced in this Budget has addressed. We have built institutions to scrutinise what governments do with power. We have built none to scrutinise what parties promise before they obtain it.

141. Every five years, Mauritians are presented with electoral manifestos containing commitments on taxation, public expenditure, pensions, subsidies, infrastructure and social transfers. These documents shape elections, influence expectations, and determine mandates. Yet no independent institution is charged with asking the most basic question a citizen has the right to ask: can these promises realistically be delivered?

142. The result is a democratic asymmetry. Governments are audited after they govern. Political parties are not scrutinised before they do. The voter chooses between competing programmes without access to any independent assessment of their fiscal plausibility.

143. Mauritius must develop this discipline. This Budget therefore introduces the Electoral Manifesto Transparency and Costing Act, assigning to the Parliamentary Budget Office the responsibility of conducting independent fiscal assessments of manifestos voluntarily submitted by registered parties before a general election.

144. The Office shall assess four questions only: whether projected revenues are realistic; whether proposed expenditures can be accommodated within the fiscal framework of the Republic; what effect the programme would have on the deficit and public debt over three years; and whether the underlying macroeconomic assumptions are consistent with independent forecasts. The assessment shall be published before polling day. Where a party chooses not to submit, that fact shall be published equally.

145. A party with a coherent programme loses nothing from scrutiny. A party with an incoherent programme loses only the protection that opacity provides. The mechanism works precisely because participation is voluntary. The electorate draws its own conclusions.

146. For too long, Mauritian elections have been contests of promises that no institution was empowered to examine. The right to vote is not diminished by the right to know. It is completed by it.

147. Democracy requires accountability after elections. It also requires credibility before them. This Budget provides both.

148. **REFORM SEVENTEEN :** **The National Audit Implementation Act** : From Audit Observations to Executive Consequences

149. Madam Speaker, every year the Director of Audit delivers a report to this House documenting waste, naming governance failures, and making concrete recommendations. Every year ministries acknowledge the findings. And every year, in substantial measure, nothing changes.

150. The numbers are unambiguous. In the 2023–24 Audit Report, 301 recommendations were made. Only 115 were fully implemented. In the 2024–25 report, the backlog more than doubled to over 720 recommendations, with a full implementation rate on mature findings of barely twenty-six percent. Sitting inside those numbers are losses that continued precisely because the findings were not acted upon. Non-revenue water at sixty-five percent : Rs 1.9 billion in annual losses, flagged year after year. Pension overpayments of Rs 212 million in a single year. Rs 430 million paid in salaries to interdicted officers who performed no work, their cases accumulating without resolution. These are not new discoveries. They are the compounding cost of non-implementation. The audit is measuring the cost of its own non-enforcement.

151. The system was designed to produce reports, not results. Audit recommendations are treated as observations : acknowledged, filed, and largely ignored. This Alternative Budget changes that architecture through five measures.

152. The first measure is the Audit Follow-Up Statement. Every Budget Speech delivered in this House will henceforth open with a public accounting of every major audit recommendation made in the previous three years : implemented, partially implemented, or ignored. On the most public day of the fiscal year, the Minister of Finance will stand and read out, to this House and to the nation, what his government failed to act upon. That is a political cost. It is intended to be one.

153. The second measure is the mandatory Corrective Action Plan. Within ninety days of the publication of the National Audit Report, every Accounting Officer must submit a Corrective Action Plan to the Director of Audit, the Minister of Finance, and the National Assembly : with named responsible officers, measurable deliverables, and binding deadlines. Not an acknowledgment. Not a letter of intent. A plan that Parliament can hold.

154. The third measure is the Audit Implementation Dashboard. The Ministry of Finance will establish and maintain a publicly accessible online digital dashboard showing the implementation status of every material audit recommendation, ministry by ministry : including the age of each outstanding recommendation. A recommendation that has been partially implemented for four years reads very differently from one that has been partially implemented for four months. The Dashboard makes that difference visible to every citizen, every journalist, and every minister whose implementation rate sits alongside his peers.

155. The fourth measure is consequence management. Repeated non-implementation will trigger an escalating sequence of consequences. First, mandatory reporting to Cabinet. Second, appearance before the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts and Delivery : in public session, on the record. Third, withholding of discretionary capital allocations to the programme or ministry where non-implementation has occurred. Fourth, a formal notation on the Accounting Officer's performance file, reviewable by the Public Service Commission. A minister remains free to disagree with an audit recommendation. What no minister is any longer free to do is neither agree, nor disagree, nor act, nor explain. The era of acknowledged silence ends here.

156. The fifth measure is the strengthening of the National Audit Office itself. An enforcement architecture without institutional capacity is a structure without a foundation. The NAO will be provided with the human, digital and analytical resources to expand its programme of performance audits, sustainability audits, and real-time follow-up audits. The shift is one of mandate, not merely resource: from annual post-mortem to continuous guardian. An office that currently arrives at the end of the year to certify what went wrong will also be present, with the tools to act, as things are going wrong. That is not a marginal improvement. It is a transformation of function.

157. **REFORM EIGHTEEN : The Preventive Audit Function**

158. Madam Speaker, Reform Seventeen addresses the consequences of decisions already made. There is a deeper defect it cannot reach: the audit arrives after the money is spent.

159. The 2024–25 Audit Report documents, across nearly one thousand pages, what happens when major public commitments are made without independent prior scrutiny. A housing programme that changed design twice after spending Rs 497 million on consultants whose work was then discarded. Renewable energy targets missed by seventeen percentage points while the coordinating agency was bypassed and its chief executive post left vacant. A Cargo Village facility that cost Rs 565 million whose primary stakeholders had still not moved three years after construction. The audit found all of this. Years after the fact.

160. The principle is simple: the auditor should not arrive only after the money is spent. This Budget extends the mandate of the National Audit Office through three additional provisions.

161. This Budget extends the mandate of the National Audit Office through three additional provisions.

162. For investments above Rs 200 million, the Accounting Officer may request a structured preventive opinion from the National Audit Office before Cabinet approval. For investments above Rs 500 million, such a request is mandatory. The opinion addresses four questions: does the project align with declared policy objectives; have alternatives been assessed; are cost assumptions supported by comparable evidence; and does the governance structure provide for clear accountability through implementation? The opinion is published alongside the Cabinet paper. A minister who proceeds against a negative opinion is not barred. He is publicly and permanently accountable for that choice.

163. The National Audit Office will be granted live read-only access to the Treasury Accounting System, the government procurement platform, and the project registers of all major capital programmes. For an economy that ran over nine thousand manual journal adjustments in a single financial year : the Director of Audit's own finding : real-time access is not a refinement. It is the minimum standard of a serious state.

164. Each year, alongside the accounts report, the Director of Audit will publish a Preventive Audit Report : covering sectors and public bodies at elevated financial risk, systemic governance weaknesses identified before they produce measurable harm, and institutional reform recommendations. Tabled in this House. Transmitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts and Delivery. Not a finding of fault. An early warning system.

165. Madam Speaker, the Director of Audit has spent years writing prescriptions that no one was required to fill. These two reforms change that. Reform Seventeen ensures that what the audit finds is acted upon. Reform Eighteen ensures that what the audit can prevent is prevented. Together they complete the function that the audit was always meant to serve : not a post-mortem on public money, but its guardian.

166. **REFORM NINETEEN: The Constitutional Streamlining Standard**

167. Madam Speaker, austerity at the top cannot stop at vehicles, travel, allowances and bonuses. It must also address the political architecture itself.

168. Mauritius is a small Republic of barely 1.25 million people. It needs a Cabinet capable of governing as a system rather than managing as a federation of ministerial territories. This Budget therefore commits to a Constitutional Streamlining Standard.

169. The Constitution will be amended to provide that the Cabinet of Mauritius shall not exceed twelve ministers, including the Prime Minister. Twelve ministers are more than enough for a country of our size if portfolios are organised around national systems rather than political accommodation. Fewer ministers do not mean weaker government. They mean clearer responsibility, fewer silos, stronger Permanent Secretaries, stronger delivery units, and sharper parliamentary accountability.

170. This Budget will also abolish the office of Junior Minister. I make no criticism of any individual who holds or has held such office. The argument is institutional. A Junior Minister does not create a clear centre of responsibility. He does not replace the Minister, does not replace the Permanent Secretary, and does not answer finally for delivery. At best, he assists. At worst, he creates another political layer between decision and accountability. A serious Republic cannot multiply offices whose responsibility is partial, ambiguous and politically convenient.

171. This Budget will also abolish the office of Vice-President of the Republic. Again, the argument is not personal. It is institutional. The Vice-Presidency adds little permanent governing capacity. Its principal function is continuity in the event of vacancy, absence or incapacity in the Presidency. But the Constitution already provides that,

where no Vice-President is able to act, the Chief Justice may perform the relevant functions. The Republic therefore already contains the mechanism it needs.

172. A small Republic must distinguish dignity from duplication. The Presidency may remain as the constitutional symbol of continuity and national unity. But the Vice-Presidency is a permanent office where an acting mechanism would suffice.

173. The principle is simple. Every public office must justify its existence by the value it adds to governance. If an office improves decision-making, accountability, delivery, continuity or constitutional protection, it remains. If it exists mainly to accommodate politics, distribute status, duplicate functions or preserve ceremony without substance, it must end.

174. Twelve ministers. No Junior Ministers. No Vice-President. No decorative offices. No political consolation prizes.

175. That is not austerity as theatre. That is institutional seriousness.

176. The constitutional cap is not an abstraction. Here is what twelve looks like when portfolios are organised around national systems rather than political convenience: Prime Minister and Minister for National Strategy, Defence and Institutional Delivery; Minister for Finance, Economic Planning and Public Sector Reform; Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Regional Integration; Minister for Justice, Constitutional Affairs and Democratic Integrity; Minister for Education, Skills, Science and Culture; Minister for Health, Wellbeing and Social Protection; Minister for Labour, Migration and Human Capital; Minister for the Productive Economy: Industry, SMEs, Innovation and Exports; Minister for Food, Land, Agriculture, Fisheries and Ocean Economy; Minister for Energy, Water, Climate and Environment; Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Housing and Spatial Planning; Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Local Government. Twelve ministers. Twelve portfolios. A Cabinet small enough to govern, lean enough to be accountable, and structured enough to deliver the Architecture of Transformation.

177. These nineteen reforms will not solve every problem I have described. But they create the conditions under which good decisions can be made, implemented, measured, and improved : and under which poor decisions carry consequences. A government confident in the quality of its decisions does not fear accountability. It welcomes it. Because accountability is not the enemy of ambition. It is the only mechanism by which ambition becomes achievement.

178. Madam Speaker, This is the last budget delivered within the old architecture. What follows belongs to a different architecture : one built not for the afternoon on which a budget is delivered, but for the decade that follows it.

CHAPTER III - THE HONEST RECKONING: BEYOND GROWTH, TOWARD DEVELOPMENT

Madam Speaker,

179. I have described what was wrong with the budget speeches of the last twenty-five years. I have named the six structural causes that produced them. I have announced nineteen reforms to the architecture of public finance.

180. Before I present the measures of this Budget, I must ask a question that no previous budget speech has ever asked : not because previous Ministers were inadequate, but because the system did not require it.

181. The question is this: what have we actually built? Not what have we announced. Not what have we spent. What have we built : in productive capability, in institutional strength, in the capacity of this country to generate created wealth rather than passively receive windfalls?

182. The honest answer is uncomfortable.

183. The economic history of modern Mauritius is often told as a miracle : a small island nation transformed from sugar dependency into an upper-middle-income economy. This story contains truth. But it is an incomplete truth, and the incompleteness has become dangerous. For forty years, Mauritius benefited from three successive external windfalls. The Sugar Protocol sold our sugar at prices double or triple the global rate : not created wealth, but negotiated preference. The Multi-Fibre Arrangement gave us administered access to developed markets for textiles : not competitive capability, but quota protection. Financial services regulatory arbitrage attracted capital through treaty networks and low tax rates : not genuine financial innovation, but jurisdictional advantage now being closed by global tax convergence. Each windfall generated real income. Each improved living standards. And each concealed the absence of the productive transformation that would have been necessary to earn that income in a competitive market. The Sugar Protocol is gone. The Multi-Fibre Arrangement is gone. The tax arbitrage is eroding. No fourth windfall is waiting.

184. There is a precise and important distinction between windfall wealth and created wealth. Windfall wealth depends on the choices of others. Created wealth depends on the capability of ourselves. For forty years, we were able to confuse the two. We can no longer. If the miracle was genuine productive transformation, we should observe its residue in institutional strength today. Development leaves deposits. Where is the startup ecosystem generating globally competitive firms? Where is the brain retention that a genuinely transformed economy would offer its citizens? We train doctors, engineers, and data scientists at public expense. A significant proportion emigrate : not from a lack of patriotism, but because we have not yet built the conditions that make staying the better choice. The tide of external windfalls has receded. We can now see clearly how exposed our productive structure truly is. This is not a moral failure. It is a structural inheritance that has reached its end.

185. The measurement problem compounds the structural one. Our entire budget process is organised around a single metric: Gross Domestic Product. GDP is a ledger of transaction velocity. It cannot distinguish between productive growth and social collapse.

186. Consider the narcotics trade. More transactions, more money changing hands, more state expenditure on policing, prisons, and rehabilitation : GDP would rise, the debt-to-GDP ratio would improve, and the deficit would appear smaller, while the reality it conceals is social destruction.

187. More road accidents raise GDP through hospital spending.

188. The destruction of a coastal mangrove for a luxury development adds to GDP while permanently removing our natural coastal defences : recorded nowhere on the sovereign ledger. For twenty-five years, the underlying composition of our GDP growth : consumption financed by debt, real estate speculation, the gradual expansion of the shadow economy : has been eroding the foundations of our society while headline figures recorded progress. We have been chasing a number while losing our country.

189. This Budget ends that.

190. The comparison problem compounded the measurement problem. For decades, Mauritius measured its progress against Sub-Saharan African economies. Against the poorest economies of a continent managing poverty, conflict, and basic infrastructure deficits, Mauritius appeared exceptional. But the honest comparison was always different. Mauritius is an upper-middle-income small island economy aspiring to high-income status. The relevant peer group is Singapore, Malta, Barbados, and Seychelles: economies of comparable size and comparable structural challenges. We are choosing that higher standard now, because our citizens deserve a higher ambition.

191. Four instruments will permanently change how Mauritius measures its development.

192. First, the Mauritius Development Dashboard : twelve national indicators published quarterly and debated annually in this House alongside traditional fiscal metrics. GDP remains. It no longer stands alone. The twelve indicators will cover real GDP per capita adjusted for currency fluctuations, labour productivity by sector, net emigration of tertiary-educated citizens under thirty-five, food import dependency, the dependency ratio, non-revenue water, technology adoption rates, real productive investment as a share of GDP, median household income, intergenerational mobility, violent crime rate, and citizens' reported satisfaction with public services.

193. What is measured is managed. What is not measured is not. For twenty-five years, we measured what was easy. Now we will measure what matters.

194. Second, the Annual National Wellbeing Survey will be conducted by Statistics Mauritius to ask citizens not about their consumption but about their lives: whether they trust public institutions, whether they believe their children will have better opportunities, whether they feel safe, whether they have meaningful access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunity. GDP tells us how much we are spending. The Wellbeing Survey tells us how well we are living.

195. Third, the True Cost Accounting Pilot : calculating the full social and economic cost of three national drains: the narcotics trade, road accidents, and non-communicable diseases. When we fund criminal justice responses to a drug crisis whose social roots our social policies have not addressed, we are not governing coherently. The True Cost Accounting Pilot will make these incoherences visible and inform tax policy directly.

196. Fourth, the Comparative Benchmark Reset : from this Budget, Mauritius will measure its development progress against Singapore, Malta, Barbados, and Seychelles. The Ministry of Finance will publish an annual benchmarking report across all twelve Dashboard indicators. It will be public, debated in this House, and uncomfortable at times. That discomfort is the point.

197. Madam Speaker, this honest reckoning is not an act of national self-deprecation. It is an act of national seriousness.

198. A budget without a doctrine is a list of measures. A budget with doctrine is a national instrument. For twenty-five years, Mauritius has had lists of budget measures. This Budget has a doctrine. Our theory of productive growth is this: Mauritius will grow by improving its productivity, not by increasing its consumption. Productivity-led growth comes from three sources: capital deepening : giving workers better tools; skill upgrading : giving workers better knowledge; and allocative efficiency : moving resources from less productive to more productive uses. A country becomes richer when its firms become more productive, its workers more skilled, its institutions more capable. From rent to capability. From consumption to production. From land conversion to value creation. The central question of this Alternative Budget is not how much are we spending : it is what capability are we building.

199. If our theory of growth is productivity-led, what is the strategic role of the state? The state does not create wealth. The private sector creates wealth. But the state creates the conditions under which the private sector can create wealth. For too long, Mauritius has oscillated between two inadequate models. The first is the passive state : waiting for investors, granting exemptions, and calling the result development. And second is the distributing state : responding to every pressure with a scheme, every hardship with an allowance, and calling the result compassion. Neither model is sufficient for the decade ahead.

200. This Budget establishes a third: the Strategic Coordinating State. Not a larger state : a more capable one. One that coordinates national capability: building the legal and institutional infrastructure of a productive economy; maintaining a fiscal system that invests in human capital and public infrastructure; sustaining a human capital system that retools those displaced by technology; providing reliable, affordable physical infrastructure; pursuing trade and investment strategy on fair terms; and making long-term strategic bets that exceed the planning horizon of any individual private actor.

201. This Budget makes four structural bets for the next decade. Not ten. Not twenty. Four.

202. The first structural bet is the Productivity Republic : Mauritius growing by raising the productivity of its workers and firms rather than by inflating consumption.

203. The second structural bet is the Resilient Island Economy : turning our structural vulnerabilities into sources of competitive advantage. Food, water, energy, climate adaptation, and the ocean economy treated not as separate sectors but as one national resilience system. For an island economy, resilience is not the opposite of growth : it is the condition of growth.

204. The third structural bet is the Talent and Technology Compact : making Mauritius a country where talent chooses to stay, return, build, and create. Not because it has no other option, but because it has a better option here than anywhere else in our region. These three bets are mutually reinforcing. Together, they describe a coherent transition: from an economy that received external rents to an economy that creates internal value.

205. The fourth structural bet is the SME Republic : recognising that the productive backbone of this economy is not the large developer, the multinational, or the parastatal. It is the small business owner, the artisan, the local manufacturer, the neighbourhood service provider, and the young entrepreneur who builds something from nothing. For too long, economic policy in Mauritius has been designed around large actors : large incentive packages, large projects, large developers. The SME Republic inverts that logic: it places the small and the young at the centre of economic strategy, deploying the state's most powerful instrument : its purchasing power : as the anchor that makes SME survival not merely possible but structurally guaranteed. These four bets are mutually reinforcing. Together, they describe a coherent transition: from an economy that received external rents to an economy that creates internal value.

206. From this Budget onward, every major measure will be tested against five questions: Does it raise productivity? Does it build capability? Does it reduce vulnerability? Does it improve institutional performance? Does it strengthen the next generation rather than merely appease the present one?

207. If the answer is no, the measure will not belong in this Budget. Madam Speaker, the windfalls are gone. Created wealth requires capability. Let me now turn to where this country places its bets.

CHAPTER IV - THE ARCHITECTURE IN ACTION: SECTORAL COMMITMENTS

Madam Speaker,

208. I have stated our doctrine. I have described the institutional reforms. This chapter is where the architecture becomes concrete. Every commitment that follows meets three criteria: it is timed with specific milestones, it is accountable to a named institution with published performance indicators, and it is conditional : funding in subsequent years depends on demonstrated progress. A budget measure that does not meet these three criteria is not a measure. It is an announcement. And this Budget has no space for announcements without accountability. This chapter contains twenty-nine named commitments : not three hundred : organised not by ministry but by doctrine: by the four structural bets and by the ten structural silences that Chapter I named and no previous budget has resolved. The official budget, to be announced at 17:00 today in a speech that will run to two and a half hours, will contain multiples of that number. By tonight, everything will have been mentioned. Judge which approach leaves you knowing what was actually promised, who is accountable for delivering it, and what will be stopped in order to fund it.

Structural Bet One : The Productivity Republic

209. The first structural bet is the Productivity Republic. Productivity determines wages, determines competitiveness, determines whether talent remains. For thirty years, Mauritius attempted to compensate for productivity weakness through debt, currency adjustment, and external rents. That period has ended.

210. Four commitments address productivity stagnation directly.

211. A statutory National Productivity Council will produce an annual State of Productivity report and hold firms and ministries accountable for outcomes.

212. A Firm-Level Productivity Measurement System will give Mauritius, for the first time, a genuine sectoral productivity baseline benchmarked against our peer economies.

213. A Productivity-Linked Investment Tax Credit will replace automatic, unconditional incentives : rewards will go only to firms that demonstrate measurable productivity gains through capital deepening, skill upgrading, or technology adoption.

214. And a dedicated Automation and Productive Capital Fund will provide concessional financing to firms investing in automation, robotics, and precision manufacturing. Productivity can improve only when it is measured. It will be measured.

215. The second challenge of the Productivity Republic is the most urgent and the least prepared for : artificial intelligence and the future of work. Our information technology and business process outsourcing sectors, which sustain tens of thousands of middle-class households, face significant disruption within three to five years. No previous budget has acknowledged this risk. We will not protect our workers by hiding behind regulatory walls. We will protect them by moving Mauritian labour upward in complexity.

216. The National AI Reskilling Programme will retrain workers in algorithmic auditing, prompt engineering, AI supervision, data governance, and cyber resilience.

217. The AI Displacement Early Warning System will give workers and employers a minimum of eighteen months' public notice of projected displacement timelines : so that reskilling begins before displacement occurs, not after.

218. A Public Sector AI Adoption Programme will deploy AI tools across twenty government services within two years, with a firm commitment that no worker will be dismissed because of automation.

219. And a Sovereign AI Research Node, hosted by the University of Mauritius, will develop an open-source regional large language model optimised for Indian Ocean jurisprudence and trade logistics : the kind of geographically specific, high-complexity competitive advantage that no fiscal incentive can create and no competitor can easily replicate. Mauritius will not compete on cheap labour. It will compete on intelligent labour.

220. Madam Speaker, there is a second challenge to the Productivity Republic that receives far less attention than artificial intelligence but may be equally consequential. Artificial intelligence raises the question of what happens when machines replace labour. Mauritius faces another question altogether: what happens when labour itself must increasingly be imported to sustain economic activity? These are different phenomena. Yet they spring from the same source. Both force us to confront the relationship between productivity and work.

THE LABOUR SOVEREIGNTY COMPACT

221. Madam Speaker, there is a form of economic management that is not policy. It is substitution. Methadone does not cure dependency on heroin. It substitutes one dependency for another. It stabilises. It allows functioning. But it defers the structural question : and it invariably produces its own ecosystem: distributors who are enriched, intermediaries who prosper, actors whose livelihoods depend on the chronic dependency of others. A government that organises the smooth distribution of methadone has not designed a policy. It has managed a rent.

222. Madam Speaker, that is precisely what successive governments of this Republic have done with migrant labour : under three Prime Ministers, across three decades, without interruption and without a national conversation.

223. The conventional narrative is familiar. Mauritians no longer wish to perform certain jobs. As societies become wealthier, expectations evolve. Educational attainment rises. Young people aspire differently than their parents. There is some truth in this. But this explanation is incomplete : and its incompleteness has been useful to those who profit from it.

224. The real question is not why Mauritians refuse certain jobs. The real question is why, after decades of economic growth, entire sectors continue to depend on business models that can only survive with a constant supply of low-cost, compliant, non-unionised labour. An economy reveals its priorities through the problems it chooses to solve. Faced with labour shortages, a country can invest in technology, in productivity, in training, in process redesign, in wage dignity. Or it can import labour. Mauritius has overwhelmingly chosen the last option. And in choosing it, generation after generation, it has not solved a labour shortage. It has constructed a dependency.

225. As at March 2026, 64,165 foreign workers are legally employed on this island. In October 2023, that number was 37,768. A seventy percent increase in thirty months. We are importing labour at the rate that other countries import petroleum : without a strategic ceiling, without a transition plan, and without an honest accounting of what this choice costs us.

226. That accounting has two dimensions that no previous budget has named together.

227. The first is the wage drain. In the second quarter of 2025, outward workers' remittances reached Rs 2.7 billion. Annualised, that is above Rs 10 billion leaving this economy : value produced here, by workers recruited here, transferred to households in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Madagascar. I do not say this to condemn those workers. They come for the same reason our grandparents worked abroad: to support a family across an ocean. I say it to name the structure we have built. We train young Mauritians at public expense : and they leave for Canada. We import workers whose earnings leave for Dhaka. The brain drain outward and the wage drain outward together constitute a double haemorrhage that no previous budget has had the honesty to name.

228. The second dimension is the political economy of the dependency itself. A worker who arrives indebted : because an agency in Kathmandu or Dhaka charged him fees he could not afford and so he borrowed : whose permit is tied to a single employer, whose accommodation is deducted from his salary by an operator who has no competition, whose legal status evaporates if he complains : that worker is not merely a cheap input. He is a profit centre. A recruitment agency charges at source. A local facilitator processes the permit. A dormitory operator extracts rent. Each link in this chain invoices. Each intermediary takes a margin. The worker arrives captive : financially, legally, socially : and his captivity is the business model. This is not an accident of poor enforcement. It is an architecture.

229. And that architecture distorts competition among employers in ways that punish integrity. The restaurateur who recruits Mauritians, trains them and pays them at honest market rates carries a cost premium of thirty to fifty percent against the operator who employs a captive, indebted workforce. The virtuous employer is structurally penalised. The extractive model drives out the excellent one. This is how races to the bottom begin : and how a country that sells warmth, hospitality and human generosity as its primary competitive advantage slowly hollows out the very thing it is selling.

230. Madam Speaker, this hollowing has now reached our international standing. Mauritius was placed on the United States Tier Two Watch List for human trafficking. In November 2025, US Customs and Border Protection issued a Withhold Release Order against garments manufactured in Mauritius, citing debt bondage, deception and intimidation as documented findings. These are not the allegations of critics. They are the formal determinations of our largest export market. A country that has built high-income aspirations cannot defend them on a foundation of documented exploitation.

231. One in five young Mauritians willing to work cannot find employment. That coexists with 64,000 imported workers. This is not a paradox. When contradictory phenomena persist for years without resolution, it is because the system is not malfunctioning. It is functioning exactly as designed : designed to keep labour costs low, to keep certain sectors viable without transformation, and to distribute the gains of that arrangement to those at the top of the chain rather than to the workers at its base, foreign or Mauritian.

232. This Alternative Budget refuses to administer a better dose of the same medicine.

233. The following commitments constitute the Labour Sovereignty Compact. The principle is this: a nation that cannot account for the conditions under which 64,000 people work on its soil has not built a governance system. It has built a processing system. And a nation that has built its productive model on the captivity of imported workers has not built sovereignty. It has outsourced it.

Commitment: A Migration Dependency Index

234. We will legislate the annual publication by Statistics Mauritius of a Migration Dependency Index : sector by sector, establishment by establishment above a defined threshold : measuring the ratio of foreign to local workers, productivity per worker, wage progression, and accommodation conditions. What has never been measured has never been governed. This Index will be tabled in the National Assembly annually, alongside the Budget. The dependency will be visible, trackable, and politically accountable for the first time.

Commitment: Decoupling the Permit from the Employer

235. The work permit as currently structured is not an employment instrument. It is a control instrument. A worker whose legal status depends entirely on remaining with one employer has no labour rights in practice, regardless of what the law says in theory. We will introduce a regulated transfer window: after twelve months, a migrant worker may apply to transfer to another employer in the same sector, through a state-managed process that replaces the private recruitment agency as the administrative intermediary. We attack the rentier chain at its structural joint.

Commitment: A Sectoral Transformation Compact

236. Any enterprise employing foreign workers above thirty percent of its workforce will be required, as a condition of permit renewal, to submit and honour a three-year Labour Transition Plan : setting targets for local recruitment, wage progression, investment in training, and productivity improvement. This is not a penalty. It is a contract between the enterprise and the state. In return, the state provides matched support through the levy mechanism, through the Human Resource Development Council, through the productivity institutions. Enterprises that do not commit will face a rising permit fee : not a flat Rs 500, but a schedule that escalates with dependency and duration. The escape hatch of cheap labour closes gradually, deliberately, and fairly.

Commitment: Dignity Audits as a Trade Condition

237. Mauritius's preferential access to European and American markets : access that took decades to negotiate : is now at risk from documented labour standards failures. We will convert this vulnerability into a governance instrument. Independent, unannounced dignity audits of migrant worker accommodation, contract compliance, and recruitment fee practices will be institutionalised, and their findings published. Enterprises whose supply chains are audit-certified will be actively supported in their trade access applications. Those who fail certification will not receive state facilitation. We will defend our trade position by earning it : not by hoping the next withhold order lands elsewhere.

Commitment: A National Migration Policy White Paper

238. No Mauritian government has ever asked the Mauritian people what kind of migration they want : at what scale, on what terms, under what governance, toward what long-term vision. That question has been decided by employer lobbying, administrative convenience, and political inertia. We will legislate the obligation to produce a cross-sectoral National Migration Policy White Paper, debated in the National Assembly, and renewed every three years. It will address without euphemism the demographic reality that frames everything else: with a fertility rate of 1.4, with a working-age population projected to shrink, with thousands of young Mauritians leaving annually : this country requires a conscious, democratic answer to the question of who will do its work, on what terms, and with what rights. That answer belongs to the Mauritian people. It has never been put to them.

239. Madam Speaker, on 26 May 2026, the National Assembly had thirteen minutes to begin this conversation. A question about a Bangladeshi worker reported missing was transformed into parliamentary invective and formal withdrawals before it was answered. She remains missing. She stands in this speech for every worker whose name we do not know, whose contract we have not read, whose dormitory we have not inspected, whose recruitment fee we have not recovered.

240. If that wage is too low to attract a Mauritian, then the wage : not the worker : must change.

241. Madam Speaker, Maurice a été construite par le travail contraint, puis par le travail engagé sous contrat. Un pays qui porte cette mémoire et qui ne se dote pas du cadre de protection des travailleurs étrangers le plus sérieux de la région ne fait pas que négliger une politique publique. Il se contredit.

Structural Bet Two : The Resilient Island Economy

242. The second structural bet is the Resilient Island Economy : turning our structural vulnerabilities into sources of competitive advantage. It addresses three of the ten structural silences.

243. **On food dependency**: Mauritius currently imports more than two-thirds of its caloric consumption. Every geopolitical fracture in the Black Sea or disruption in the Red Sea spikes the price of basic sustenance in our markets. This is not an inconvenience. It is a critical national security failure. Previous budgets distributed minor handouts for fertiliser and called it food security. They subsidised chemical inputs while simultaneously claiming to prepare their exit : you cannot finance the decline of a model while funding its survival. This Budget takes a fundamentally different approach.

244. Madam Speaker, there is a small sector that reveals the whole problem with the way Mauritius has governed food sovereignty. That sector is apiculture.

245. Mauritius has 659 registered beekeepers, around 4,200 beehives, and produces only 35 tonnes of honey a year, while importing the overwhelming majority of what it consumes. Yet the public policy response has too often been symbolic: a subsidy here, a grant there, Rs 500 for a queen bee, a small allocation to secure a beekeeping zone, a ceremony on World Bee Day, and then silence until the following year. Each measure, taken alone, may appear reasonable. Together, they do not form a sector. They form a list.

246. A queen bee does not create an apiculture industry. A queen bee needs a territory: flowering trees, pesticide discipline, protected foraging zones, trained beekeepers, local queen production, veterinary support, laboratory testing, traceability, branding, and access to markets. Place the best-subsidised queen in a biological desert, and the colony will fail. That is what happens when government finances inputs but does not build ecosystems.

247. This Budget will therefore treat apiculture not as a minor rural hobby, but as biological infrastructure for food sovereignty. Bees are not merely producers of honey. They are pollinators of the agricultural economy. They support fruit production, vegetable production, biodiversity, soil regeneration, and the resilience of smallholder farming. A country that neglects its pollinators silently taxes its own food system.

248. We will create a National Apiculture Development Programme as part of the Food Sovereignty Centre. It will have five functions: the planting of melliferous trees on public land; the creation of new protected apiculture zones; the development of a local queen-breeding programme adapted to Mauritian conditions; laboratory testing and certification of Mauritian honey; and the preparation of a Geographical Indication for Miel de Maurice and, where appropriate, for distinctive regional honeys, including Rodrigues.

249. This programme will connect apiculture to schools, community gardens, forest gardens, agroforestry sites, and smallholder farms. Every community food sovereignty project supported by the State will be assessed for its pollinator value. Public land will no longer be planted only for ornament. It will be planted for food, shade, biodiversity, and bees.

250. Madam Speaker, the lesson of apiculture is the lesson of this entire Budget. This Budget applies the Ecosystem Principle to the smallest and most instructive sector in our economy : ***A government that cannot build an ecosystem for 659 beekeepers will not build one for five thousand technology firms***. Mauritius has too often believed that a subsidy is a policy. It is not. A subsidy may purchase an input. It cannot build a system. A queen alone does not make a colony. A colony alone does not make a sector. A sector alone does not make an economy. What makes all of them work is an ecosystem. This Budget will stop financing isolated measures and start building the conditions under which life, production, and resilience can flourish.

251. The private sector is free to explore whatever agricultural technologies it finds commercially viable without requiring state subsidy or encouragement.

252. What this Budget funds is something more radical, more rooted, and more Mauritian: the transition from chemical dependency to biological sovereignty. In 2016, Subhash Palekar - holder of India's Padma Shri, architect of Zero Budget Natural Farming, adviser to Andhra Pradesh at ministerial rank - came to Mauritius. He was heard. He was applauded. A pilot project was launched for 51 farmers. Eight years later, those 51 farmers are still being supplied cow dung by the FAREI itself, as if they cannot be trusted to find a cow. Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh, the same approach became a state policy: 150,000 acres converted in two years, thirty million farmers practising it today, yields increasing by 79 to 88 percent, with zero rupees spent on imported chemical inputs. Mauritius had Palekar in its room and bureaucratised his revolution into irrelevance. That ends with this Budget.

253. **Zero Budget Natural Farming**,: a system with five thousand years of documented practice, validated by contemporary science, will be adopted as the national agricultural doctrine for smallholder farming. Its methods use what every Mauritian farm already has: local soil, local plants, local knowledge. The Jeevamrutha and the Beejamrutha regenerate soil and protect seed without a single imported input. The neem tree grows on every street, in every garden, on every vacant plot in Mauritius. Sanskrit calls it arista: perfect, complete and imperishable. Yet Mauritius imports bottled neem oil at high cost, because we have not organised ourselves to use what grows under our own eyes. That absurdity ends with this Budget.

254. Alongside Zero Budget Natural Farming, this Budget establishes agroforestry, forest gardens, and permaculture as the design principles for land use transformation. Agroforestry integrates trees with crops and livestock in systems that build soil, retain water, and produce food simultaneously : without imported inputs and without depleting the land. Forest gardens model themselves on the structure of natural forests: canopy trees, sub-canopy fruit trees, shrubs, ground cover, root vegetables, and climbers, each occupying a layer and contributing to the whole. Permaculture design connects these elements into self-sustaining productive systems that require diminishing inputs over time rather than increasing ones. These are not romantic ideas. They are ancient technologies that out-perform chemical agriculture on the only metrics that matter over the long term: soil health, water retention, biodiversity, and the financial autonomy of the farmer.

255. The concrete commitments: a statutory National Land Bank to identify and bring fallow land into productive use, with a Fallow Land Surcharge on those who leave fertile land uncultivated while awaiting luxury property rezoning.

256. Chemical input subsidies progressively redirected to biological input support : vermiculture, apiculture, compost, local seed banks, and ZBNF training.

257. A national partnership with India for ZBNF knowledge transfer and the Andhra Pradesh experience.

258. Agroforestry and forest garden design incorporated into all agricultural extension programmes and the national school curriculum.

259. A **National Food Sovereignty Centre** established on a real site as a living demonstration: forest garden, vermiculture, apiculture, local seed bank, open educational space for schools and communities.

260. A **Strategic Food Reserve** providing six months of essential staple coverage. And a Community Food Sovereignty Mandate requiring every municipality and village council to establish at least one community garden : because food sovereignty begins in neighbourhoods, not only in ministries. A community garden is a place where neighbours who would otherwise never meet work side by side in the soil. Where children learn that food comes from the ground before it comes from a shelf. Where an elderly person maintains contact with the cycle of growing seasons. A garden in a neighbourhood is not a symbol. It is a small unit of sovereignty.

261. Food sovereignty and energy sovereignty are often discussed separately. They are, in fact, the same question. They are both questions of dependency : and they share the same answer. A nation that cannot produce a meaningful share of its own food remains vulnerable to disruptions beyond its control. A nation that cannot produce a meaningful share of its own energy is equally vulnerable. Mauritius has spoken about energy transition for more than a decade. Yet the structure of dependency remains largely unchanged : because the debate has been framed as a choice between fossil fuels and renewable energy. This is an incomplete understanding of the challenge. The Rs 30 billion renewable energy commitment of the official budget will, without structural reform, simply transfer the import bill from South African coal to Chinese solar panels procured by the same Independent Power Producers that currently burn fossil fuels. The household remains a passive consumer. The ownership structure remains unchanged. That is not sovereignty. That is rebranding. Energy sovereignty is not achieved by replacing one source of energy with another. It is achieved by changing who owns the means of production. Just as food sovereignty begins with the household that produces a portion of its own food, energy sovereignty begins with the household that produces a portion of its own electricity. The objective is not merely to increase renewable generation. The objective is to increase the number of sovereign households.

262. The question naturally arises: if rooftop solar is so compelling, why has it not transformed Mauritius during the past decade? The answer is straightforward. The upfront investment has remained prohibitive. The administrative process has been cumbersome. The financial returns have been insufficient. And the institutional architecture contains a fundamental contradiction : the same organisation that sells electricity to households also controls the conditions under which households may become electricity producers. Whether intentional or not, such arrangements create conflicting incentives and slow the transition towards distributed generation. Previous schemes have been relaunched every three years precisely because none of these structural barriers was ever removed.

263. This Budget therefore launches the **Energy Sovereignty Programme** built on three principles: ownership, affordability, and institutional neutrality.

264. First, a State-Backed Solar Loan Facility will be established : any qualifying household installing rooftop solar will be eligible for financing requiring no upfront capital contribution, with monthly repayments structured to be equal to or lower than the electricity bill savings generated. In practical terms, the household pays nothing and saves from day one.

265. Second, from 1 January 2027, all applications for new residential and commercial building permits shall include rooftop solar generation capacity as a standard design requirement : making solar the default for new construction rather than an optional programme.

266. Third, **an independent Grid Authority** will be established to separate electricity grid management from electricity sales, removing the structural conflict of interest and creating a governance framework aligned with the energy system of the future. The objective is not to weaken the Central Electricity Board. The objective is to align its institutional incentives with the national interest.

267. The household that grows some of its own food and generates some of its own electricity is less vulnerable to global shocks, less dependent on concentrated economic structures, and more resilient to inflation and supply disruption. A nation composed of resilient households becomes a resilient nation. A nation cannot be sovereign if every household remains dependent for all of its food and all of its energy.

268. On the water crisis: this is not primarily an infrastructure problem. It is a governance problem. We have known for twenty-five years that non-revenue water exceeds forty percent of production. We have known which pipes are leaking. We have not reformed the institutions responsible.

269. An independent Water Regulatory Commission will be established with statutory authority to set tariffs, enforce quality standards, and hold the service provider accountable : reporting to Parliament, not to the Minister.

270. A binding target of reducing non-revenue water from forty-six percent to twenty-five percent within three years will be tracked quarterly, with funding conditional on demonstrated progress.

271. A new water tariff structure will protect the most vulnerable households through a lifeline block while signalling through rising block tariffs that water is scarce. And the Rivière des Anguilles Dam : announced in every budget speech since 2016 : will be operational within twenty-four months. If it is not, the reasons will be stated publicly and the responsible parties will be named.

272. On demographic ageing: every budget speech has mentioned pension costs. No budget speech has proposed a long-term care system. The pension is a transfer. What the elderly need is a service. A National Long-Term Care Strategy will be published within twelve months, community-based, costed and phased over ten years.

273. A Home Care Worker Certification Scheme will treat home care as a profession : trained, certified, fairly paid.

274. And a Pension System Sustainability Commission will design a replacement for the current contribution system, with legislation passed within twelve months of its recommendations.

Structural Bet Three : The Talent and Technology Compact

275. The third structural bet is the Talent and Technology Compact : making Mauritius a country where talent chooses to stay, return, build, and create. The brain drain is not a problem of patriotism. It is a problem of conditions. Every Mauritian who leaves is not a betrayal of this country. They are a verdict on the conditions we offer them.

276. A **Brain Retention Conditions Programme** will address the three drivers of skilled emigration : institutional quality, career pathway availability, and quality of daily life : coordinated from the Prime Minister's Office and measured by the net emigration rate of tertiary-educated citizens under thirty-five on the Development Dashboard.

277. A **National Diaspora Capability Programme** will treat the Mauritian diaspora not as a sentimental community abroad but as an extension of national productive capability.

278. A Scholarship Reform will tie scholarships to fields of national strategic priority with a return service obligation : because subsidising the education of citizens who then apply that education abroad is not generosity, it is an unmanaged public investment.

279. And a **National Talent Observatory** will track emigration and return flows by profession and destination, publishing quarterly reports : because you cannot manage what you cannot measure.

280. A **Back-to-Basics Education Reform** will reverse the technology substitution that has degraded learning outcomes across a generation. The evidence is now conclusive: screen-based learning produced the first generation in modern history to score lower cognitively than the one before it, and the countries that adopted tablet-based classrooms earliest are now urgently withdrawing them. Mauritius is currently moving in the opposite direction : equipping classrooms with the tools the world is urgently withdrawing. This Budget will halt the expansion of tablet-based learning in primary education, restore printed textbooks as the primary learning instrument, and reintroduce handwriting, mental arithmetic, and structured reading as non-negotiable foundations of the curriculum. We will not import yesterday's mistakes at full price. We will have the courage to skip the stage of other nations' errors.

Culture as the Infrastructure of Imagination

281. Madam Speaker, there is one more dimension of the Talent and Technology Compact that no Mauritian budget speech has ever named : and its absence from every previous budget is itself the diagnosis.

282. For ten years, this House has heard culture addressed through two lenses. The first: culture as heritage to be preserved : historic buildings to be restored, the Slavery Museum announced every year since 2016 and still unfinished in 2025, a long list of colonial structures receiving allocations that neither completed the restoration nor built anything new. The second: culture as industry to be monetised : creative sector GDP

targets, film rebates, production grants, and most recently, Art Trading in the freeport for international collectors. Both lenses captured something real. Neither captured what matters most.

283. What was never named is this: culture is the infrastructure of imagination.

284. Not metaphorically. Structurally. Before a scientist formulates a new theory, before an entrepreneur imagines a new business, before an engineer designs a new system, there is an act of imagination. Imagination is not produced by accident. It is cultivated : through language, literature, music, storytelling, design, memory, and artistic expression. These are not decorations on the productive economy. They are its cognitive foundations.

285. The societies that lead in innovation have understood this. The countries that produce exceptional engineers are often the same countries that produce exceptional designers. The nations that lead in technology frequently maintain strong literary traditions and vibrant artistic communities that reward experimentation, curiosity, and independent thought. Innovation is not the opposite of culture. Innovation is culture expressed through technology.

286. Mauritius cannot compete through scale. It cannot compete through cheap labour. It cannot compete through natural resources it does not possess. It can compete through originality. And originality is not taught in a coding bootcamp. It is formed : over years, in language, in story, in music, in the experience of belonging to a civilisation that knows what it is.

287. Madam Speaker, Mauritius possesses a form of cultural wealth that most countries cannot manufacture and many would pay for. A population raised in the simultaneous presence of multiple living languages : Creole, Bhojpuri, French, English, Tamil, Telugu, Mandarin, Urdu, Arabic : multiple religious traditions, multiple culinary memories, multiple historical narratives, all coexisting in 2,040 square kilometres. A child formed in that environment does not simply speak two languages. They inhabit two cognitive architectures simultaneously. They interpret the world through multiple lenses before they are aware they are doing so. That capacity for multiple-lens interpretation is precisely what an innovation economy requires : and it is precisely what a monolingual, monocultural society cannot replicate.

288. But this asset is not self-reproducing. It requires active cultivation, not passive conservation. A language that is not taught becomes a language that is forgotten. A story that is not told becomes a story that is lost. When a language dies in a community, what dies with it is not merely vocabulary : it is a way of perceiving the world that cannot be recovered. Mauritius does not need to choose between its cultural diversity and its economic ambition. Its cultural diversity is its economic ambition : if it has the wisdom to cultivate it rather than merely preserve it.

289. This Budget therefore rejects the notion that culture is a peripheral sector to be funded after the productive sectors have been addressed. Culture is productive infrastructure. Not physical infrastructure. Cognitive infrastructure. A country that wishes to lead in artificial intelligence while neglecting imagination is attempting to build a roof without foundations. A country that teaches coding but neglects storytelling, design, music, and critical thinking is educating technicians when it should be developing creators.

290. The purpose of this Budget's cultural commitments is not to create more artists. The purpose is to create more creators : of businesses, of technologies, of institutions, of ideas, of the future.

291. Four commitments follow from this doctrine.

Commitment : The National Creativity Curriculum.

292. A National Creativity Curriculum will be introduced progressively across the education system : integrating literature, music, theatre, visual arts, design thinking, and critical reasoning as core capability development, not extracurricular addition. The argument for this curriculum is not aesthetic. It is economic. A curriculum that produces only technical competence without imaginative capacity produces workers who can execute instructions: not workers who can generate new ones.

Commitment: Creative Laboratories in every secondary school.

293. Every secondary school will establish a Creative Laboratory : a space where students produce films, podcasts, digital media, design projects, community history initiatives, artistic works, and technological prototypes. These laboratories will be judged not by examination results but by creative output. The Creative Laboratory is the physical embodiment of the doctrine: that making something: anything: teaches the cognitive discipline that no examination can test and no training programme can replace.

Commitment: The National Cultural Memory Programme.

294. A nation that forgets its memory weakens its imagination. The oral histories, traditional knowledge, local languages, music, and community heritage of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega, and the outer islands will be systematically digitised : preserved not as museum objects but as living educational resources available to every school, every community, every citizen. The Bhojpuri story, the Sega lyric, the Tamil oral tradition, the Creole proverb : these are not sentimental inheritances. They are cognitive infrastructure. Indicator: percentage of identified oral and intangible heritage assets digitised and publicly accessible within three years.

Commitment : The MASA Reform as Proof of Delivery.

295. Rs 95 million in earned royalties sat undistributed in the MASA's accounts for years while the artists who earned them received state subsistence grants. This is not a cultural policy failure. It is a governance failure : and it is the clearest illustration of the Announcement State applied to culture. Artists were told their rights were protected while those rights were administered with institutional negligence. That ends. The forensic audit will be completed within six months. A transparent, rules-based distribution system will be legislated within twelve months. The standard this Budget sets is simple: artists will receive what they are owed before the state announces what it will give them.

296. Madam Speaker, a country that knows what it is can become what it chooses. A country that has lost the thread of its own story : its languages thinning, its traditions fading, its children formed by algorithms rather than by the living cultures around them : that country cannot innovate its way to prosperity, because innovation requires imagination, and imagination requires formation. The Architecture of Transformation is built on four structural bets. Beneath all four is this: a people capable of imagining what does not yet exist, confident enough to attempt it, and rooted enough in who they are to know why it matters.

297. The second challenge of the Talent and Technology Compact is the most strategically significant question this country has never seriously asked: what will Mauritius produce that the world needs once the villa market reaches saturation and the financial services arbitrage has been fully closed by global tax convergence?

298. The fiscal incentives for the Smart City scheme, the Property Development Scheme, and related real estate instruments are revoked with immediate effect : the era of subsidising non-productive asset speculation in the name of foreign direct investment ends today.

299. The Economic Development Board will be fundamentally redesigned, its primary function shifting from investment facilitation through incentive packages to ecosystem development.

300. An Ocean Economy Authority will be established with a statutory mandate and governing board : because twelve years of ocean economy announcements have produced minimal structural advancement, and this Budget does not announce another blueprint; it announces an institution with a budget, a mandate, and the legislative authority to retain royalty income on all commercially patented innovations developed within our sovereign waters.

The Full Chain Principle

301. Madam Speaker, I have read every budget speech delivered in this House over the last fifteen years. The treatment of exports is always the same. Schemes announced, extended, renamed. The Freight Rebate Scheme. The Export Credit Guarantee Scheme. The Trade Promotion and Marketing Scheme. Each with a deadline. Each with an acronym. None ever evaluated for measurable impact. The buyer's voice absent. The structural fragility hidden in aggregates that conceal what actually matters:

a country whose exports are concentrated in fewer than ten firms is not a trading nation : it is a fragile nation that has confused promotion with capability. This is the half-chain model: one institution promotes, another produces, a third certifies, and when exports fail, each claims its narrow mandate was fulfilled while the ecosystem remains nobody's responsibility. This Budget introduces the **Full Chain Principle** : *Le Principe de la Chaîne Complète* : as the doctrine that finally makes the ecosystem whole.

302. Exports are not an industry. They are the visible consequence of a healthy ecosystem. A country does not export because it has attended a trade fair or launched a strategy. It exports because years earlier an ecosystem was patiently built: skills developed, standards enforced, markets understood, and trust established. When exports succeed, we see the final transaction. We rarely see the system that made it possible. That confusion has shaped Mauritian economic policy for a generation.

303. For thirty years, this country has had two conversations about exports never held in the same room. In one room: production : what grows, what is processed, what volume can be supplied. In another: export promotion : trade fairs, brochures, foreign buyers, returning contacts. The contacts become correspondence. The correspondence becomes silence. Because the buyer asked one question the export promoter could not answer: can you supply this product, at this volume, to this standard, on this timeline? The answer, every time, was no. Not because the product did not exist. Because it had never been built with that buyer in mind.

304. This is not a coordination failure. It is a conceptual one. It is the half-chain model. One institution promotes. Another produces. A third certifies. A fourth finances. A fifth trains. A sixth regulates. When exports fail, each claims its narrow mandate was fulfilled. The ecosystem, meanwhile, remains nobody's responsibility. We have been trying to sell the gâteau without improving the recipe, the ingredients, or the baking.

305. The Economic Development Board is the institutional expression of this failure. When Enterprise Mauritius was merged into the EDB in 2017, the result was not coherence. It was isomorphic mimicry, adopting the structure of an advanced development agency while changing nothing about its underlying functionality. The export team sold. The sector team built. Neither asked the other what the buyer required. An export function detached from the ecosystem that produces the thing to be exported is not an export strategy. It is a hope dressed as a policy. And the EDB devoted most of its energy to the one sector that required almost no ecosystem building at all : real estate, driven not by institutional capability but by legislation. The developers came because the law guaranteed they would come. The EDB was busiest in the sector that needed it least.

306. Madam Speaker, this Budget introduces the **Full Chain Principle, Le Principe de la Chaîne Complète as the governing doctrine for every productive sector in Mauritius**. Every product and every service that Mauritius wishes to export is an ecosystem. That ecosystem must be designed, built, and governed as a whole : from the first production decision to the last export transaction : by one institution, with one mandate, with one accountability. The chain cannot be split. The export requirement is not the last kilometre of a journey managed by someone else. It is the first design principle of every ecosystem this country builds.

307. Let me make the principle concrete. Mauritius has 659 registered beekeepers. We provide subsidies : five hundred rupees per queen bee in the 2022–2023 budget. We do not have a Mauritian honey industry. A buyer in Paris or Dubai asking for certified, pesticide-free Mauritian honey in consistent volumes will not find what they need. Not because the bees do not exist. Because no institution has ever held the full chain : from melliferous zones to laboratory certification to export market : as one integrated mandate. We subsidised the queen. We did not build the ecosystem. The export failure begins years before the export attempt.

308. Building the full chain for apiculture means beginning with the buyer's question, not the beekeeper's answer : reconstituting melliferous zones, regulating pesticides near apiaries, structuring cooperatives, building laboratory certification, establishing cold chain logistics, creating a Mauritian honey standard recognised by import markets, and holding all of it within one institution, under one mandate. That institution is the National Food Sovereignty Centre, which this Budget has already announced. From this Budget, it carries an explicit export mandate for every certified product its ecosystem produces.

309. The Full Chain Principle applies to every ecosystem this Budget names. The Ocean Economy Authority will not merely patent marine assets : it will export the licences. The Sovereign AI Research Node will not merely develop models : it will export them as services and regional platforms. The reformed MASA will not merely collect royalties : it will open international markets for Mauritian music, film, and design. The honey is not yet certified. The molecule is not yet patented. The film is not yet finished. The AI model is not yet regionalised. Each of those failures belongs to an institution that has never been asked to close it. From this Budget, they are asked.

310. The Full Chain Principle is universal. It applies to every ecosystem that satisfies the Five-Test Framework established earlier in this chapter. The Five-Test Framework is the gateway : it determines which ecosystems receive public investment. The Full Chain Principle is the operating doctrine : it determines how every supported ecosystem is built and governed. They are the same architecture at two different stages. The EDB will no longer be organised around generic facilitation functions. It will be organised around ecosystems that have passed the five tests : each piloted by a specialised team with deep sector knowledge, a mandate running from production design to export transaction, recruited on private-sector terms, and evaluated on one measure: did exports from their ecosystem grow?

311. The board of the redesigned EDB will be composed on one criterion: does this person have the sector knowledge and market experience to challenge the executive, say no to the political, and hold a ten-year horizon against a five-year electoral cycle? Board membership will not be a reward for loyalty. The Mauritian diaspora, which possesses the international sector experience the domestic economy lacks, will be actively recruited to this board. Not asked to come home. Asked to serve from where they are.

312. Each ecosystem institution will maintain **Export Development Portfolios** : named portfolios of export-ready firms within its sector, managed by the institution that knows them best. Fifty to one hundred firms per ecosystem, each with a named account director, a three-year international growth plan, and quarterly milestones. The National Food Sovereignty Centre manages food producers and agro-exporters. The Ocean Economy Authority manages marine biotechnology firms. The Sovereign AI

Research Node manages AI service providers. The reformed MASA manages musicians, filmmakers, and designers. This is not a sector strategy. It is industrial policy applied to export development. Mauritius has had many of the former. It has never had the latter.

313. The Full Chain Principle requires the buyer's voice at the beginning of the design process, not the end. The **Export Market Intelligence Mandate** requires every ecosystem institution to publish annually a Market Requirements Document : what priority export markets require in certifications, standards, volumes, packaging, and regulatory compliance. This becomes the design brief for the production side of the chain. We will stop designing production systems in isolation from the markets they are meant to serve.

314. Madam Speaker, this Budget establishes a constitutional rule of economic development:

315. Promotion follows capability. Marketing follows production. Visibility follows readiness.

316. The **Export Budget Legislative Lock** gives this rule statutory force. The EDB and every ecosystem institution will be legally prohibited from deploying public funds on international marketing or trade missions for any ecosystem unless the responsible institution has certified to Parliament that domestic benchmarks - productivity, standards compliance, certification, supply consistency - have been met. We will never again spend public money publicising a sector that does not yet exist on the ground.

317. The challenge of the African Continental Free Trade Area is not market access. Mauritius already has preferential access to a market of 1.4 billion people. The challenge is connecting Mauritian ecosystems to African demand. Africa imports forty-five billion US dollars of professional services annually. Mauritius exports less than four billion. Africa imports eleven point seven billion dollars of insurance and pension services. Mauritius exports five million dollars. That is not a competitiveness gap. It is a distribution gap, a visibility gap, and a professional qualification recognition gap. The **AfCFTA Activation Unit** within the redesigned EDB will negotiate mutual recognition agreements for Mauritian professional qualifications with African professional bodies and publish an annual Africa Export Opportunity Report : specific tenders, specific buyers, specific requirements : that every firm in every Export Development Portfolio can act on immediately.

318. The Mauritian diaspora is not a talent asset to be brought home. It is a commercial network to be activated from where it stands. This Budget asks something different from every previous scheme: stay exactly where you are, and open doors from there. The **National Export Diaspora Network** will constitute a formal commercial intermediary network of Mauritians in France, the United Kingdom, the UAE, India, and East Africa : recruited for their professional positions in supply chains and procurement departments. Each member registers the doors they can open. The lead ecosystem institution matches them with Mauritian producers. A commercial success fee rewards results.

319. Certain instruments are common to every exporter and available as shared services across all ecosystem institutions: the **Export Finance Guarantee Scheme**, administered by the Bank of Mauritius, capitalised at Rs 500 million, providing 80% guarantee coverage on confirmed export orders up to Rs 10 million; the **Export Voucher System** providing co-financed vouchers for certification, market entry strategy, packaging and logistics at 50–70% state co-financing, capped at Rs 500,000 per firm per 24 months; the **Export Certification Reimbursement Programme** reimbursing 50% of certification costs upon proof of certification and a confirmed buyer : no buyer, no reimbursement; and the **State as First Export Certifier** requiring public procurement tenders to include quality standards aligned to international certification requirements. A firm that supplies a public hospital under ISO-compliant conditions has a reference every buyer in Nairobi or Kigali will recognise.

320. The measure of success is two numbers. First: the number of Mauritian firms actively exporting : concentration in fewer than ten firms is a structural fragility, not an achievement. Second: the **Export Survival Rate** : firms still exporting three years after their first transaction. Entry is not achievement. Sustained presence is proof of a full chain that functions. Every state-supported trade mission will publish within six months the firms taken, buyers met, contracts signed, and follow-up status. A mission returning with no measurable outcome will not be repeated. Both indicators will be published annually as the thirteenth indicator on the **Mauritius Development Dashboard**.

321. Madam Speaker, the conventional export model assumes the product is ready and the task is marketing. In Mauritius, the product is often not ready. The honey is not certified. The molecule is not patented. The film is not finished. The AI model is not regionalised. Selling a gâteau does not improve the gâteau. This Budget does not create a new export agency. It embeds the export mandate inside every institution that builds an ecosystem. The National Food Sovereignty Centre will export the honey. The Ocean Economy Authority will export the patent licences. The Sovereign AI Research Node will export the regional models. The reformed MASA will export the music. We will stop asking how to sell what we produce. We will start building what the world wishes to buy. The Full Chain Principle does not name a sector. It changes how every sector is built.

322. Madam Speaker, there is one question which every serious budget must now confront. What comes after the real estate model? For nearly two decades, Mauritius has too often mistaken land conversion for development. We created acronyms : IRS, RES, PDS, Smart Cities. We changed the legal forms, adjusted the fiscal incentives, renamed the schemes, and presented each new generation of property development as if it were a new economic strategy. But the underlying model remained the same. Take scarce land. Rezone it. Attach tax incentives to it. Market it to foreign buyers. Build enclaves around it. Record the transaction as investment. Celebrate the inflow as growth.

323. Madam Speaker, **this is not a development model. It is a liquidation model**. A country does not become more productive because it has sold more of its land. A nation does not become more innovative because luxury villas have replaced agricultural fields. The real estate model gave Mauritius the illusion of prosperity without the discipline of production. It inflated asset values. It enriched landowners. It generated revenue for the State. But it did not transform our productive capacity. It did not solve our food dependency. It did not reverse our brain drain. It did not raise our technological sophistication. It did not make our young people believe that the future of Mauritius lies in invention, science, enterprise, production and creativity. It told them, instead, that the fastest route to wealth was not to produce more, but to own land before others needed it.

324. That chapter must now close.

325. But Madam Speaker, we must also be honest about another failure. Mauritius cannot replace the exhausted real estate model by simply announcing another list of fashionable sectors. We have done that before. We announced Cybercity. We announced the knowledge hub. We announced the ocean economy. We announced medical tourism. We announced the green economy. We announced fintech. We announced smart cities. We announced gateways to Africa. We announced one new pillar after another. The problem was not always the choice of sectors : many of these ideas were valid. The problem was that Mauritius repeatedly confused the naming of a sector with the building of an industry. A sector is not created because it is mentioned in a budget speech. An industry is not born because a building is inaugurated. A cluster does not emerge because land has been allocated. Buildings do not create software firms. Tax incentives do not create engineers. Zones do not create innovation. Announcements do not create export markets. Mauritius does not suffer from a shortage of sectoral imagination. It suffers from a shortage of execution capacity.

326. This Budget will therefore end that culture. The next development model of Mauritius will not begin with a list of fashionable sectors. It will begin with the hard discipline of capability-building. From now on, no sector shall be announced as a new pillar of the economy unless it passes five tests.

327. **First : what capability are we building?** Not what slogan, not what global trend we are borrowing, not what title sounds modern : but what concrete capability will Mauritius acquire that it does not currently possess?

328. **Second : which institution owns delivery?** Every priority sector under this Budget shall have a lead institution, a named accountable officer, a five-year delivery plan, annual milestones and public reporting. When a sector fails to emerge, it will no longer be possible for everyone to explain that someone else was responsible.

329. **Third : which skills pipeline feeds it?** Mauritius has too often announced future sectors faster than it has produced the people required to sustain them. The question is not whether a sector sounds attractive. The question is whether our education and training system can produce the human beings required to make it real.

330. **Fourth : which firms will export from it?** A sector is not mature because it exists on a slide. It is mature when firms produce, compete, export, improve, reinvest and employ. Investment promotion alone is not industrial policy.

331. **Fifth : what will be measured every year?** For every priority sector, Government shall report to Parliament on jobs created, firms supported, exports generated, skills certified, investment realised and obstacles encountered. Where progress is real, support will continue. Where targets are missed, policy will be redesigned. Where failure persists, programmes will be closed.

332. Madam Speaker, this is the shift Mauritius must now make. The old model asked: what can we sell? The new model asks: what can we build? The old model monetised scarcity. The new model must create capability. The old model produced enclaves. The new model must produce citizens. The old model was built on land. The new model must be built on people. For fifty years, Mauritius built its prosperity on preferential access : guaranteed prices for sugar, quota protection for textiles, legal arbitrage for financial flows, and finally residency for cash. Each model worked until the preference was withdrawn. No new preference is coming. What follows must be built on what Mauritius knows, not what it contains. A country that exports the capability of its people : their knowledge, their creativity, their productivity, their talent : does not need to sell its coastline to remain prosperous. The next chapter of our development will not be written on the last remaining acres of our land. It will be written in the skills of our people, the credibility of our institutions, the imagination of our creators, the intelligence of our firms, and the courage of a State finally willing to say that development is not the sale of the nation. **Development is the production of its future.**

Structural Bet Four : The SME republic

333. The fourth structural bet is the SME Republic : recognising that the productive backbone of the Mauritian economy is not the large developer, the multinational, or the parastatal. It is the small business owner, the artisan, the local manufacturer, the neighbourhood service provider, the woman running a food enterprise from her home. Seventy percent of small businesses in Mauritius do not survive their first year : not because Mauritians lack entrepreneurial instinct, but because the system does not support them. Credit is inaccessible. Procurement is captured by large suppliers. The state : which is the single largest buyer of goods and services in this economy : routinely purchases from foreign suppliers what it could purchase from local ones. That ends with this Budget.

334. A Local Procurement Mandate will require every ministry, parastatal, and public institution to source a minimum of twenty percent of eligible goods and services from registered Mauritian SMEs : with the percentage rising annually and compliance reported publicly. The state will no longer be a passive bystander to SME failure. It will be the anchor client that makes SME survival possible. Alongside procurement reform, a Single SME Gateway will replace the proliferation of schemes, authorities, and acronyms that currently makes navigating public support more exhausting than running a business. One entry point. One application. One accountability. And a First Business Credit Guarantee Scheme will provide state-backed guarantees for first-time SME borrowers : because the entrepreneur who cannot provide collateral is not a bad risk. They are an untested one. The state's role is to absorb that first risk so that the market can discover the productive capacity it currently cannot see.

335. The SME Republic has a generational dimension that this Budget names explicitly. Youth unemployment stands at nearly seventeen percent : triple the national average. Among young women, nearly three in ten are neither in employment, education, nor training. These are not young people who lack ambition. They are young people who lack entry points. The formal economy offers them unpaid internships, dead-end contracts, and a labyrinthine bureaucracy that makes starting a business feel like a punishment for having an idea.

336. This Budget establishes a Youth Enterprise Compact : a specific, simplified pathway for Mauritians under thirty-five to register a business in forty-eight hours, access a first-business micro-grant without collateral, benefit from a two-year tax holiday on the first Rs 500,000 of turnover, and receive structured mentorship from an experienced entrepreneur matched through a National Mentorship Network. The Local Procurement Mandate announced in this Budget will reserve a specific sub-quota for youth-owned enterprises : because the most powerful thing the state can do for a young entrepreneur is become their first client. A young Mauritian who builds a business does not leave. That is brain retention. That is productivity. That is the SME Republic at its most human.

337. Madam Speaker, the twenty-nine commitments in this chapter are not a list of independent measures. They are an architecture. The National Productivity Council measures what the AI Reskilling Programme must improve. The Land Bank provides the land that the Food Sovereignty Programme will activate. The Water Regulatory Commission provides the institutional accountability that the non-revenue water target requires. The Pension Sustainability Commission designs the system that the Home Care Workforce Programme must fund. Every commitment can be traced to the doctrine of Chapter III and measured by the Development Dashboard of Chapter III. Every commitment will be reported on honestly in the Annual Budget Accountability Statement twelve months from today. This is not a list. It is a doctrine made concrete. An architecture made operational. A commitment made accountable. Madam Speaker, transformation has a fourth dimension : one that no Mauritian budget speech has ever addressed. That dimension is spatial. It is the physical architecture of daily life : the street, the town centre, the neighbourhood, the garden, the pavement : where every economic doctrine either becomes real or remains theoretical. Madam Speaker, I turn to that dimension now.

CHAPTER V - THE SPATIAL REPUBLIC : THE PHYSICAL ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSFORMATION

Madam Speaker,

338. Doctrine without space is abstraction. An economy exists in places. A society lives in neighbourhoods. Transformation does not happen in a ministry or in the pages of a budget speech. It happens in the street where a child walks to school. In the town centre where a young professional chooses to build a career or decides to leave. In the neighbourhood where a family grows food. In the public space where citizens encounter each other as equals, meet, trust each other, and belong. The quality of those places determines whether the economic transformation we are building is experienced as a better life or remains a statistical abstraction.

339. A town centre hollowed out by shopping malls is not a neutral fact. It is a policy outcome. A neighbourhood without a pavement is not an accident. It is a choice. A public space abandoned to neglect is not inevitable. It is a governance failure. Urban planning is not a technical afterthought. It is economic policy. It is social policy. It is health policy. It is productivity policy.

340. This Budget therefore establishes the Spatial Republic : a country whose physical environment expresses the same values as its economic doctrine. Productive because its spaces are designed for productive activity. Resilient because its communities can feed themselves and walk to where they need to go. Talented because it is liveable and human enough that talented people choose to stay. And democratic because its public spaces are genuinely public : where the physical infrastructure of daily life dignifies rather than diminishes the human beings who use it.

341. Our towns are dying. Not dramatically : quietly, incrementally, one empty shopfront at a time. Port Louis, a city of extraordinary historical richness, losing its daytime population to suburban offices and its evening life to shopping malls. Rose Hill : once the cultural heart of Mauritius : its Royal Road now more car park than promenade. Curepipe, graced by a botanical garden and a crater lake that would be the envy of any

European city, underinvested and underused. The shopping mall has not created prosperity. It has relocated it : from diverse, locally rooted commerce into concentrated, homogenised, developer-owned retail space, extracting not just economic activity but civic life. The vibrant town centre generates more productive activity per square metre than any mall.

342. This Budget commits to reversing that extraction through a National Urban Regeneration Programme : a dedicated masterplan for every major town centre, co-designed with communities, investing in public space, mixed-use development, pedestrian infrastructure, heritage conservation, and the activation of vacant buildings for productive community use.

343. Planning regulations will be reformed to promote in-fill developments and mandate mixed-use development in designated town centre zones.

344. The regeneration of our town centres is one side of the spatial doctrine. The other side : equally important, more politically difficult, and more historically significant : is the defence of the national territory against the forces that have been systematically enclosing it. Over the last twenty years, Mauritius has permitted : and in many cases actively incentivised : the construction of private gated residential estates across some of the most beautiful, most ecologically significant, and most historically meaningful land in this country. Coastal land. Agricultural plateau land. Hillside land. Land that previous generations of Mauritians farmed, fished from, walked across, and regarded as part of the shared national inheritance. That land has been purchased, walled, secured, and removed from the public realm. Sugar land converted to gated villas is land permanently removed from the food sovereignty programme this Budget is building. A republic : res publica, the public thing : is a country whose territory belongs to all its citizens, not only to those who can afford to enclose it.

345. I am therefore announcing today that planning permission for new gated residential developments : of any scale, under any scheme, regardless of their branding as smart cities, integrated resort schemes, smart living or any other category : will no longer be granted in Mauritius. This is not retrospective. Existing developments are not affected.

The property rights of existing owners are respected. But the era of new enclosures ends today.

346. A Coastal Access Audit will identify every coastal site where public access has been obstructed, and a Coastal Access Restoration Programme will implement public access corridors through or around gated coastal developments.

347. From this Budget, no new hotel, resort, or tourism development project will be permitted on state-owned seafront land. The beachfront of Mauritius is a national asset : it belongs to every citizen, not to the next developer with a proposal and a connection. What remains of our public coastline will remain public. This measure is not hostile to tourism. It is the foundation of a more intelligent tourism strategy. The countries that command the highest yield per visitor : the Maldives, Bhutan, coastal Portugal : are precisely those that have understood that scarcity and integrity are more valuable than volume and concrete. A Mauritius where the beach is still a shared, accessible, uncommercialized space is a Mauritius that commands premium tourism, not mass tourism. We do not become more attractive by covering the last of our coastline in hotel infrastructure. We become more attractive by protecting what remains of its beauty.

348. No further conversion of first and second category agricultural land for gated residential development will be permitted. The national territory is not theirs to enclose. The coastline is not theirs to privatise. The agricultural landscape is not theirs to convert into golf courses. No new gates will go up. The enclosure of the national territory ends with this Budget.

Agricultural Land as Ecological Infrastructure

349. Madam Speaker, agricultural land is not vacant space waiting for development. It is not speculative value waiting for a ministerial signature. It is part of the living infrastructure of the country.

350. It feeds. It absorbs. It cools. It recharges. It shelters biodiversity. It protects soil. It holds water. It slows floods. It sustains pollinators. It preserves the possibility that future generations may still feed themselves from the territory they inherit.

351. Madam Speaker, for too long, the conversion of agricultural land has been treated as a private planning question. It is not. It is a national water question.

352. Agricultural land is water infrastructure. This is not a metaphor. It is hydrology. In Mauritius, approximately sixty percent of annual precipitation becomes surface runoff. Only ten percent recharges our groundwater. These numbers are not fixed. They are determined by what covers the land. When productive land is sealed under concrete, water that once entered the soil becomes runoff, runoff becomes flooding, flooding becomes infrastructure cost, and reduced infiltration becomes pressure on groundwater. Saltwater intrusion has already been detected along our northern coastline : a direct consequence of groundwater depletion caused by inadequate recharge. Our native forests, reduced to less than two percent of our land area, are not relics: they are our most efficient water catchments, surviving only on marginal lands, precisely those most vulnerable to conversion. When a mangrove becomes a hotel, we lose not only a nursery for our fisheries but a natural barrier against cyclonic swells. A healthy mangrove can reduce the economic cost of a cyclone by twenty percent. The developer does not pay for that loss. The citizen does.

353. The private conversion of land creates public consequences : on water, drainage, flood risk, biodiversity, temperature, food security, and the fiscal burden of future adaptation. This is also a colonial inheritance problem. The concentration of agricultural land in a small number of hands, dating back to the French land grants of the eighteenth century, has given a small number of landowners the power to hold the nation's water security hostage while they wait for rezoning. That power ends with this Budget.

354. This Budget therefore introduces the Agricultural Land Patrimony and Watershed Act, governed by five principles.

The first principle is classification.

355. Within eighteen months, Mauritius will complete a national ecological classification of agricultural land, assessed not by its present crop or speculative market value but by the functions it performs : aquifer recharge, flood absorption, soil fertility, biodiversity corridors, pollinator habitat, carbon storage, watershed protection and climate resilience. Land classified as critical for any of these functions shall not be converted. Where conversion is exceptionally considered on land of lower ecological value, a full independent Ecological Function Assessment, published and open to public comment, must answer five questions : what function does the land perform; what recharge or flood capacity would be lost; what biodiversity or food sovereignty potential would be destroyed; what alternatives exist; and what public value would justify the loss. The burden of proof changes. The promoter must demonstrate that the Republic loses no critical ecological function and that the public interest outweighs the private gain.

The second principle is stewardship.

356. Every large estate owns part of a watershed. What happens on that land does not remain on that land. Flooding does not begin where the water arrives. It begins where the water was not held.

357. Madam Speaker, when citizens in Fond du Sac, Cottage, Terre Rouge and the valleys surrounding our towns wake to find mud and stormwater tearing through their homes, the political response has been to point to the sky and call it an inevitable climate event. That is a coward's alibi. Much of what we call flooding is unpunished upstream negligence. Heavy machinery on cane estates has compacted the soil, destroying its absorption capacity. Water that once percolated into the aquifer now runs off immediately, arriving in village streets as a torrent the drainage infrastructure cannot handle. No government has been willing to say this. This Budget says it.

358. Every agricultural landholding above fifty arpents will be required to prepare and implement a certified Water Retention and Runoff Management Plan, approved by the Water Resources Unit and reviewed every three years, specifying swales (water-

harvesting ditches dug along the land's contour that slow, spread and sink rainfall into the soil), contour bunds, retention ponds, buffer strips, and riparian planting. A swale that is not maintained is not infrastructure. It is decoration. Landowners will have twelve months to submit their plans. Non-compliance carries three consequences : a Water Stewardship Levy of Rs 25,000 per arpent annually, ringfenced for flood defences and compensation to affected downstream families; disqualification from all agricultural subsidies and tax benefits; and inclusion on the National Land Stewardship Register's published non-compliance list, accessible to every citizen, insurer and bank.

The third principle is no net runoff.

359. No land clearing, subdivision or change of use will be approved if it increases peak runoff downstream beyond the regulated baseline. Private land use must not export flood risk to the public.

The fourth principle is upstream liability.

360. Where negligent land management contributes materially to downstream flooding, the landholder is liable for remediation costs, drainage repair and civil penalties. The poor household downstream must not subsidise the negligence of the large landowner upstream.

The fifth principle is public transparency.

361. Watershed maps, recharge zones, flood-risk corridors, certified plans, compliance status and enforcement notices will be published. Citizens downstream have the right to know which upstream landholdings are protecting them and which are placing them at risk.

362. Where conversion is exceptionally permitted, a Land Conversion Value Capture Levy will return a substantial share of the uplift between agricultural value and post-conversion development value to the public ledger, ringfenced for watershed restoration, reforestation, biodiversity recovery, food sovereignty projects and drainage improvement. The public value created by a public decision must return, in part, to the public.

363. Madam Speaker, this is the new doctrine.

364. The owner holds title. But the land may hold water for the nation.

365. The owner may see an asset. But the Republic must see an aquifer, a watershed, a corridor for biodiversity, a field for future food, a cooling surface, a flood buffer, and a patrimony not yet exhausted.

366. For too long, agricultural land in Mauritius has been treated as real estate in waiting. This Budget ends that fiction. Agricultural land is not the past of the economy. Properly governed, it is part of the future of the Republic.

367. The country that covers its recharge zones with concrete will later ask why its taps run dry. The country that strips its slopes will later ask why its villages flood. The country that converts fertile land into gated estates will later ask why its food import bill has become unbearable. The country that destroys its ecological infrastructure will later borrow money to build artificial substitutes for what nature once provided freely.

368. This Budget chooses intelligence before regret.

369. The land will be mapped. Its functions will be valued. Its conversion will be disciplined. Its watersheds will be managed. Its upstream owners will carry duties. Its downstream citizens will no longer carry the full cost of private neglect. And where private gain depends on public permission, public value will be recovered.

370. From this day forward, the agricultural landscape of Mauritius will no longer be governed as speculative inventory. It will be governed as ecological infrastructure and watershed responsibility.

371. The doctrine governing private agricultural land and the doctrine governing public State land are two halves of the same argument: the territory of this Republic belongs, in its consequences, to all its citizens. What follows addresses the public half of that patrimony.

372. Madam Speaker, I have spoken of enclosure by private developers : the gating of coastline, the conversion of agricultural plateau, the walling of shared inheritance. That enclosure is real, and this Budget ends it.

373. But there is another form of enclosure : quieter, more structural, and more politically protected : that no previous budget speech has named directly. It is the misallocation of the land the State itself holds in trust. If private enclosure of the national territory is an injustice, the State's mismanagement of its own patrimony is a constitutional failure. And it is that failure I intend to name, to measure, and to permanently correct.

374. Madam Speaker, the State of Mauritius is the largest landowner in this country. It holds coastal land declared inalienable since 1807. It holds agricultural reserves, forest land, urban plots, and the pas géométriques : the strip of coastline that runs along the entire perimeter of this island, designated by Général Decaen's decree as part of the domaine public, imprescriptible and inalienable, belonging to every Mauritian by birthright. The surface area under state ownership represents a national patrimony of the first order : a resource that cannot be expanded, cannot be duplicated, and cannot be manufactured. It is finite, and it is ours. Every square metre of it is held in trust for the citizens of this Republic.

375. Madam Speaker, I must now state plainly what the evidence shows has been done with that trust. The National Audit Office has documented, across multiple reports since at least 2014, the following: the Ministry of Housing could not quantify the total area of State land it held. It had no comprehensive repertory of State land. Multiple files had been referred to the Land Fraud Squad and to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Valuable coastal State lands on the pas géométriques had been granted for hotel and bungalow projects that remained undeveloped : because the promoters were financially incapable of building them. Some used letters of reservation and lease agreements not to develop land, but to transfer shares and capture private capital gains on a public asset. One hotel project alone, at Les Salines, had accumulated arrears of over Rs 133 million across two plots : meaning the State allowed a private developer to occupy prime coastal public land for years, while he owed over one hundred and thirty-three million rupees in unpaid rent, without recovery proceedings.

376. And the Auditor General found something more fundamental still. Not a single plot of State land had been leased by public auction. Every allocation : without exception : had been made by private contract, after ministerial approval, with no competitive process, no published criteria, no independent evaluation, and no parliamentary scrutiny. The existing law already required public auction. The requirement was ignored. And no one was sanctioned for ignoring it.

377. Madam Speaker, the 2023–24 Report of the Director of Audit reveals that the Government Asset Register : the inventory of what the State owns : remains incomplete. As of June 2024, only twenty-three of one hundred and eight monthly reporting templates had been fully uploaded. In seventy-nine cases, nothing had been uploaded at all. We do not fully know what we own. We have never published what we lease, to whom, at what price, and on what terms. This information : on the land of the Republic, belonging to the people of the Republic : is available only to what one parliamentarian memorably called "quelques happy few."

378. Madam Speaker, let me now describe the legal architecture that has made this possible : because the problem is not merely one of administrative weakness. It is encoded in law. The State Lands Act gives the Minister power to lease state land at below full rental value whenever he determines it to be in the "public interest" : a term left undefined, creating a loophole of unlimited ministerial discretion. The same Act allows state land to be sold at the symbolic price of two thousand rupees. In January 2025, the State Lands (Sale of State Lands) Regulations : issued by Government Notice without parliamentary debate, without public consultation, and without any published estimate of fiscal impact : activated that provision at scale. The permanent alienation of public land was effected by ministerial signature. Not by a vote of this House. Not by public deliberation. By a regulation. That is not governance. It is the legal normalisation of what the Auditor General had spent a decade identifying as abuse.

379. And in August 2024, Parliament passed amendments inserting a new provision empowering the Minister for Fisheries to lease barachois : our coastal lagoons : by private contract, without tender, at nominal rents: one thousand rupees per arpent in the first two years. The Auditor General had already documented that three promoters were occupying State barachois without lease agreements and without paying any rent. The legislative response was not to introduce oversight. It was to legalise the arrangement : at a rent that does not begin to reflect the value of the resource being privatised.

380. Madam Speaker, on the agricultural dimension of this failure, the numbers are equally unambiguous. Of the agricultural State land vested in the Ministry of Agro-Industry, over three thousand one hundred acres of arable land are not being used for agricultural purposes at all. Three hundred and eighty-two additional acres are in an abandoned state : leased but uncultivated. This is not land that Mauritius lacks. It is land that Mauritius is wasting. While this country produces less than thirty percent of its own food requirements : while Mauritian families pay the price of every global supply chain disruption at the kitchen table : more than three thousand acres of state-owned arable land sit idle. That is not a policy. It is a dereliction.

381. Madam Speaker, I want to say something now that goes beyond the audit findings. It goes beyond the legal architecture and the fiscal losses. It goes to the political economy of why this has persisted : under every government, across every political cycle, despite every scandal and every Auditor General's recommendation.

382. The answer is that the misallocation of State land has never been primarily an administrative failure. It has been a political instrument. State land : particularly coastal land, and residential plots in desirable locations : is the ultimate reward of the political system. The promise of a plot, for a family to build on, to pass on to children, to hold as the most durable and transmissible form of security available to a Mauritian of modest means, is the contract that binds the political activist to the political leader. Render that process transparent and competitive, and you do not merely improve governance. You dismantle the most powerful mechanism of clientelism in Mauritian political life.

383. This is why a technically simple reform has never been made. Every opposition has denounced the abuses. Every incoming government has repeated them : with different beneficiaries, under different names. The indignation was always directed at the beneficiary, never at the mechanism. The scandal was documented, the names were changed, and the system continued : because every party in government understood that the system it denounced in opposition was the system it would need in power. One cannot reform a lever of power that one hopes to use. And so the opacity was not a defect of the system. It was its function.

384. Madam Speaker, this Budget marks the end of that function. Not because this government is more virtuous than its predecessors : I make no such claim. But because the argument for reform is now irresistible on its own terms. A country that produces less than thirty percent of its own food while leaving three thousand acres of state agricultural land idle cannot call itself serious about food sovereignty. A country whose coastline was declared inalienable in 1807 and leased to promoters for ninety-nine years in 2025 has a legal system at war with its own stated values. A country whose national asset register is sixty-seven percent incomplete cannot credibly call itself a model of African governance. These are not partisan observations. They are measurable national failures. And they end today.

385. I therefore announce the **State Land Public Patrimony Act** : a single, consolidating piece of legislation that replaces the current patchwork of the State Lands Act, the Pas Géométriques Act, and their accumulated regulatory amendments with a unified framework built on four constitutional principles: public ownership, transparent allocation, productive use, and parliamentary accountability.

The first commitment under the Act is the National State Land Register.

386. Within twelve months, a complete, digital, publicly searchable register will be published and maintained : updated annually : containing every State land parcel, every pas géométrique, every lease, the identity of every beneficiary including ultimate beneficial owners and any politically exposed persons, every lease term, every annual rent payable, every arrears balance, and every development obligation and its implementation status. This register will be tabled before the National

Assembly each year as a matter of constitutional duty, not ministerial discretion. The land of Mauritius belongs to the people of Mauritius. They are entitled to know who is using it and on what terms.

The second commitment is the end of private contract allocation.

387. From this Budget, all commercial, tourism, industrial and high-value residential State land will be allocated exclusively by public tender or public auction. Allocation by private contract by Cabinet decision is revoked. The ministerial "public interest" discretion provision is repealed. The "economic interest" below-market rental provision is abolished. A concession secured by open competition is a legitimate privilege. A concession secured by connection or through a politically motivated cabinet decision is a transfer of public wealth.

The third commitment is beneficial ownership disclosure.

388. No State land lease will be granted without full disclosure of ultimate beneficial owners, related parties, politically exposed persons, and any subsequent share transfers. The opacity that allowed lessees to use letters of reservation to capture private capital gains on public assets : while appearing to develop them : is closed permanently.

The fourth commitment is the use-it-or-develop-it covenant.

389. Every lease carries binding development milestones. Failure to develop within the agreed period triggers automatic termination, forfeiture of deposit, and reallocation. The Les Salines case : over Rs 133 million in accumulated arrears, prime coastal state land occupied without development : enters immediate recovery proceedings under this Budget, alongside every other dormant, speculative, or abandoned lease identified in the three-year review programme I am announcing today.

The fifth commitment is the National Agricultural Land Reserve.

390. A statutory instrument will permanently ringfence the arable State land that should never have left productive use. The three thousand one hundred acres currently idle will be brought back into cultivation within two years : allocated by competitive tender, with priority to cooperatives, small planters, agroforestry producers, and community food sovereignty initiatives. This land is not available for conversion to real estate under any ministerial determination. It belongs to the food sovereignty of the Republic.

The sixth commitment is the Land Value Capture Levy.

391. When public investment in roads, public transport, schools and infrastructure causes surrounding private land values to rise, a betterment levy will be extracted at the point of development permission. The principle is simple and long overdue: value created by public expenditure returns to the public ledger. The citizens whose taxes funded the road should not watch a private developer capture its entire value.

392. The seventh commitment is parliamentary accountability. An Annual State Land Report will be tabled before the National Assembly : listing every new lease granted, every lease renewed, every lease terminated, every arrear recovered, every idle acre restored to production. Not as a favour. As a constitutional obligation. Parliament will scrutinise the stewardship of this patrimony every year.

393. Mauritius already has the foundational cadastral infrastructure. The technique is not the obstacle. What has been missing is not the capability. It is the political will to surrender a resource of power. That will exists today.

394. Madam Speaker, the pas géométriques were declared inalienable in 1807 so that every Mauritian : regardless of wealth, regardless of connection, regardless of political affiliation : would have access to the sea. That principle was not abolished. It was eroded : regulation by regulation, private contract by private contract, ministerial approval by ministerial approval : until the inalienable became, in practice, available to the highest bidder with the right relationship. This Budget does not merely slow that erosion. It reverses it. The coastline of Mauritius : what remains of it in public hands : will remain in public hands. The agricultural land of Mauritius will feed Mauritians. The State land of Mauritius will serve the people of Mauritius. That is not a radical proposition. It is what the law always said. We are simply, at last, going to mean it.

395. Madam Speaker, the public realm does not end at the coastline. It does not end at the boundary of a state land parcel or an agricultural reserve. It extends into every street, every pavement, every crossing in every town and village in Mauritius. The same principle that protects the coastline from enclosure must protect the pavement from neglect. The same republic that returns its land to its citizens must return its streets to its pedestrians.

396. Across every town and village in Mauritius, along every pavement, there stands a rambarde : a metal handrail installed, with good intentions, to separate the pedestrian from the road. Every Mauritian knows it. Every Mauritian has been funnelled by it onto a strip of pavement too narrow for comfortable walking. The rambarde does not solve the safety problem. It contains it : by caging the pedestrian rather than calming the traffic. It makes visible the assumption that the road belongs to the car and the pedestrian must find their own way in the margins. This Budget removes that assumption.

397. The rambardes will be removed : replaced by traffic calming measures, improved crossing design, reduced vehicle speeds in town centres, shade trees, and public space improvements that make walking safe and dignified. But the removal of rambardes is not the programme. It is the symbol.

The Safe Streets Programme

398. Madam Speaker, removing the rambardes will mean nothing if the speed of vehicles remains unchanged. A pedestrian guardrail is not a safety measure. It is an admission of failure : an acknowledgement that we have designed streets too dangerous for human beings to inhabit freely, and that our response has been to cage the pedestrian rather than calm the traffic. Remove the cage without addressing the speed, and we have simply exposed the citizen to the same danger without the barrier. That is not liberation. That is negligence.

399. The other half of this reform is speed.

400. Mauritius currently treats 40 kilometres per hour as the normal speed of town and village life. That number is not consistently enforced, not reliably signposted, and in any case remains too fast for streets where a child walks to school, an elderly citizen crosses to a shop, and a market trader carries goods across a road. The physics must be stated plainly. At 30 kilometres per hour, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle has a real chance of survival. At 40, that chance falls sharply. At 50, the collision becomes overwhelmingly more likely to kill or permanently injure. The same human body. The same vehicle. Ten kilometres per hour can be the difference between recovery and tragedy.

401. In 2022, 108 people were killed on Mauritian roads. Thirty-three of them were pedestrians. In 2023, fatalities rose to 138, including forty-two pedestrians. These are not statistics about reckless individuals alone. They are statistics about a system. And systems can be changed.

402. The World Health Organisation, the OECD, and the International Road Assessment Programme all point in the same direction: where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share space, 30 kilometres per hour is the safe-system standard. Spain made 30 kilometres per hour the legal default on most single-lane urban streets. Wales introduced a national default of 20 miles per hour on restricted roads, and casualties on 20 and 30 mph roads fell by nearly a quarter in the period following the reform. Oslo achieved a year with zero pedestrian and cyclist fatalities. Helsinki has shown that a capital city can move towards zero road deaths through lower speeds, safer street design and systematic enforcement. This is not an arbitrary restriction. It is a biological choice. The speed limit must be set according to what the human body can survive, not what the engine can deliver.

403. But here is what every jurisdiction that has succeeded has learned and every jurisdiction that has failed has ignored: speed is not managed by signs. Speed is managed by geometry.

404. A wide, straight, uncluttered road invites speed regardless of what the sign says. A narrow, planted, textured street with raised crossings discourages speed regardless of what the driver intends. Where the street looks like a highway, drivers behave as if they are on a highway. Where the street looks like a place where people live, drivers slow down. The Dutch understood this fifty years ago with the woonerf : the living street : where the driver is made to feel a guest rather than an owner. The environment must communicate what the law says.

405. This Budget therefore introduces the Safe Streets Programme.

406. The default maximum speed within all declared town and village boundaries will be reduced from 40 to 30 kilometres per hour. Around schools, hospitals, markets, bus stations, places of worship, sports grounds and dense residential areas, the limit will be 20 kilometres per hour. The reform will be phased over twenty-four months, beginning with the ten town centres and village cores with the highest pedestrian casualty rates. But this Budget does something more important than changing a number on a sign. It changes the street.

407. Every redesigned town centre and village core will receive a traffic-calming plan: raised crosswalks that bring the pedestrian to the driver's eye level; kerb extensions that shorten crossing distances; chicanes that break straight sight lines; distinctive paving that signals through texture and colour that the driver has entered a human space; street trees and planted build-outs that reclaim carriageway space for shade and life; and gateways at every town entry that announce : you are no longer on a highway. You are in a place where people live. A Road Diet policy will apply to every urban road found to be wider than its function requires, reclaiming excess carriageway for pavements, cycle lanes, seating and trees.

408. The 30 kilometre per hour town is not a restriction. It is a liberation : for the elderly citizen who can cross without fear, for the parent who can let their child walk to school, for the shopkeeper who benefits from foot traffic rather than through traffic, and for the driver who arrives less stressed and more human. A street where people want to walk is a street where people want to spend money. A town centre designed for the pedestrian generates more economic life than one designed only for the passing vehicle.

409. This Budget replaces vehicle level of service with human level of service. The measure of a street is not how fast a vehicle can pass through it. It is whether every human being who uses it : on foot, on a bicycle, in a wheelchair, carrying a child, carrying groceries : can do so with dignity and without fear.

410. Cars do not vote. Children do. Elderly people do. Shopkeepers do. Workers walking to the bus stop do. A republic designs its streets for its citizens, not for its machines. From this Budget forward, the speed of the vehicle will be subordinated to the survival of the body beside it.

411. Every major town and village will be audited for pedestrian conditions within six months. The results will be published as the first National Walkability Index. Every pavement, every crossing, every public space improved under this programme will meet universal accessibility standards. The elderly Mauritian who cannot step over a broken kerb, the parent with a pushchair blocked by a barrier, the wheelchair user who cannot cross without a dropped kerb : these citizens are not edge cases. They are the test of whether public space is genuinely public.

412. Mauritius has a traffic problem. We have responded to it for twenty-five years with the same instrument : more road capacity. And every expansion of road capacity has generated more traffic : because the fundamental driver of congestion is not insufficient road space. It is a built environment that makes car dependency the only rational choice. We built homes far from work. Schools far from neighbourhoods. Healthcare far from households. The car is not the problem. The built environment that makes the car necessary is the problem.

413. This Budget announces the end of road expansion as the primary response to traffic congestion. In its place, we adopt the Fifteen-Minute Community Principle : every essential daily need accessible within fifteen minutes on foot or by bicycle from any home in Mauritius. Not because car travel is prohibited. Because the environment is designed so that car travel is not necessary for daily life. Less forced mobility means more time : more time for families, for work, for community, for life. That is productivity too.

414. All future public investment in schools, healthcare facilities, public housing, and civic services will be evaluated against the Fifteen-Minute Community Standard before approval.

415. The Ministry of Education will produce a National School Distribution Plan within twelve months : not by building new mega-schools, but by restoring the neighbourhood schools that were rationalised away, taking with them the daily walking and the local identity that neighbourhood schools create.

416. The Ministry of Health will produce a Healthcare Decentralisation Plan within twelve months : restoring the network of community health centres that is the most cost-effective foundation for a healthy population.

417. A comprehensive public transport review will be completed within six months and fully funded in the subsequent budget.

418. Every community garden developed under this Budget will be accessible within fifteen minutes on foot, governed by an elected community committee, connected to at least one local school, supported by composting infrastructure and a local seed library, and designed with gathering spaces for the community life that productive shared space creates. The National Food Sovereignty Centre : announced in Chapter IV : will serve as the national demonstration, training, and seed multiplication hub for this spatial food doctrine.

419. But safe streets cannot be designed for human beings while the fleet that fills them grows by 34,000 vehicles a year. The Spatial Republic requires not only the redesign of streets but the management of what occupies them.

The One-In, One-Out Vehicle Rule

420. Madam Speaker, Mauritius does not have an unlimited road system. It has a finite territory, a finite road network, finite parking space, finite air quality and finite patience. Yet for years we have behaved as if the number of private vehicles entering the island could increase indefinitely, and as if the answer to every traffic jam was another road, another flyover, another bypass, another assault on land.

421. That logic ends today.

422. As at May 2026, the National Land Transport Authority recorded 759,061 vehicles registered in Mauritius. Of these, 367,024 were cars. If one adds dual-purpose vehicles, double-cab pickups and heavy motor cars, Mauritius had approximately 433,111 private passenger vehicles on its roads. For an island of our size, that is not a statistic. It is a warning.

423. This Budget therefore introduces the One-In, One-Out Vehicle Rule, to be enacted through the Road Traffic (Fleet Ceiling) Amendment Act.

424. From the commencement of this reform, the number of private passenger vehicles permitted on Mauritian roads shall be frozen at the level recorded by the NLTA as at May 2026 : 433,111 vehicles. Any additional import or first registration of a private passenger vehicle, whether new or reconditioned, shall be authorised only if one existing private passenger vehicle is permanently removed from the national fleet.

425. Removal shall not mean resale. It shall not mean transfer. It shall not mean administrative fiction. It shall mean scrapping, export or permanent deregistration, certified by the NLTA.

426. The deregistration certificate issued by the NLTA upon permanent removal of a vehicle constitutes the authorisation required for the registration of a replacement vehicle. This certificate may be used by the same owner or transferred through the vehicle trade. Car dealers and importers, who are already the primary intermediaries in the vehicle market, will organise the matching of registrations and deregistrations as part of their commercial activity. The market will determine the price of that certificate. The State will only set the ceiling.

427. The fitness test regime already in place will continue to operate as the floor standard : no vehicle may remain registered unless it passes its annual roadworthiness inspection. But the deregistration certificate market creates a new incentive above that floor. An owner of an aging, heavily polluting vehicle approaching the limit of its roadworthiness will now find that voluntary early retirement has financial value.

Rather than running a deteriorating vehicle until it fails its fitness test, the owner can deregister it, receive a certificate, and sell that certificate to someone wishing to import a newer, cleaner vehicle. The fleet therefore does not merely freeze in number. It improves in quality. Older vehicles retire earlier. Cleaner vehicles replace them within the same ceiling. The rule that caps the quantity of vehicles on our roads will also, over time, improve the quality of the vehicles that remain.

428. The rule shall apply to cars, SUVs, dual-purpose vehicles, double-cab pickups and heavy motor cars used as private passenger vehicles. Separate provisions shall be made for buses, emergency vehicles, disability-adapted vehicles, agricultural vehicles and genuine commercial vehicles, because the purpose of this reform is not to punish mobility. It is to stop saturation.

429. This reform is not anti-car. It is pro-island. It recognises that every imported car is not only a private purchase. It is a claim on public road space, public parking space, public enforcement capacity, public fuel imports, public air and public time.

430. Madam Speaker, we will not build our way out of congestion while continuing to import congestion. We will not protect air quality while expanding the fleet. We will not reclaim our towns for pedestrians while increasing the number of vehicles that occupy them. The first act of seriousness is to stop making the problem bigger.

431. Mauritius has reached its vehicle ceiling. From now on, importation will mean replacement, not accumulation.

432. Madam Speaker, let me state what the Spatial Republic means : not as a list of programmes, but as a governing philosophy. The Urban Regeneration Programme says the town centre belongs to the people who live in it. The Open Republic Principle says the national territory belongs to the republic of all its citizens : the coastline is not for sale to those who will wall it off, the landscape is a commons, not a commodity. The Walkable Mauritius Programme says the street belongs to the human being who lives on it : shade, safety, dignity, and the simple pleasure of walking without being caged. The Fifteen-Minute Community says your daily life should not require a car. The Urban Agriculture Programme says food sovereignty begins where you live : a forest garden in a neighbourhood, designed on permaculture principles with Zero Budget Natural Farming, is a small unit of sovereignty and a living proof that five thousand years of agricultural knowledge needs no laboratory to deliver results. Together, these commitments describe a Mauritius that is different : not only economically, but physically. A Mauritius of walkable streets and vibrant town centres. Of open coastlines and productive agricultural landscapes. Of community forest gardens and school gardens. Of buses that people choose to take and regional hubs that people choose to work in. This is what the Architecture of Transformation looks like when it is built in the places where Mauritians live, work, grow food, walk to school, reach the shore, and build their lives together. Madam Speaker, let me now turn to the Wellbeing Republic.

CHAPTER VI - THE WELLBEING REPUBLIC: THE HUMAN ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSFORMATION

Madam Speaker,

433. The purpose of an economy is not to produce GDP. The purpose of an economy is to produce capable, healthy, secure human beings. An economy that grows while its population becomes sicker, more depressed, more addicted, and more desperate is not a successful economy. It is a failed economy : regardless of its growth rate.

434. Development is not merely what a country builds. Development is what a country becomes.

435. Mauritius ranks first in Africa on the World Happiness Report. That ranking is not a refutation of the crisis I am about to describe. It is a mask. A population can report itself satisfied while being medically, psychologically, and socially unwell : if the question does not ask about the specific conditions of their daily lives. This Budget removes that mask. What matters is not a single happiness score. It is the prevalence of diabetes, the suicide rate, the number of children who go to school hungry, the proportion of young people who believe this country offers them a future. By those measures, Mauritius is not well.

436. Twenty point one percent of Mauritian adults have diabetes : one of the highest prevalence rates in the world. A further sixteen percent are prediabetic. Non-communicable diseases account for eighty-five percent of mortalities in this country. Nearly one in four deaths in Mauritius is caused by a single, preventable, diet-related disease. Let me repeat that. Nearly one in four deaths in Mauritius is caused by a single, preventable, diet-related disease. This is not a medical problem. It is not a problem of individual lifestyle choices. It is a political economy problem : the biological output of an architecture that makes healthy choices expensive, inaccessible, and socially unsupported. Processed foods are cheaper than fresh produce. Walking and cycling are dangerous. High cortisol levels : the biological result of prolonged financial worry, career stagnation, and hours trapped in traffic : disrupt sleep, trigger metabolic imbalances, and drive families toward cheap, highly processed, high-sugar comfort foods. The Mauritian body is physically reacting to the stresses of its environment.

437. This Budget establishes a National NCD Prevention Council with a whole-of-government prevention strategy, and a Healthy Food Environment Programme subsidising fresh produce for low-income households, establishing nutrition standards for all public institutions, and connecting public food procurement directly to domestic agricultural producers and community gardens.

438. Approximately one hundred thousand Mauritians are dealing with varying forms of mental health challenges. We have 1.6 psychiatrists per hundred thousand people. The World Health Organization considers ten per hundred thousand adequate for basic population coverage. We have one-sixth of that. The single major mental health centre can accommodate approximately seven hundred admissions annually. In 2016, four thousand six hundred and eighty-one patients were admitted. The system is not at capacity. It is collapsed. Befrienders Mauritius reports a steady increase in calls from young people speaking of anxiety and distress : the most common reasons being financial difficulties, work pressure, and the feeling of having too many situations to manage at once. This is not a healthcare failure. It is a governance failure. Mental health is economic infrastructure. A depressed workforce is not a productive workforce.

439. This Budget announces a National Mental Health Strategy : a ten-year, community-based plan with mental health centres distributed according to the Fifteen-Minute Community standard, a statutory mental health parity commitment, school-based early intervention training for every teacher, and a national destigmatisation programme.

440. A Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response Programme will provide 24/7 crisis helpline coverage and crisis response teams in each district.

441. Mauritius is ranked number one in the synthetic drug trade in Southern Africa. Seven point four percent of the population aged eighteen to fifty-nine : approximately fifty-five thousand citizens : used illicit drugs in the previous month. In 2025, law enforcement agencies seized drugs worth Rs 8.6 billion at our points of entry : an increase from Rs 5.8 billion in 2024. The problem is accelerating, not stabilising. And we are intercepting couriers, not dismantling networks. But the deeper truth that no previous budget has acknowledged is this: the proliferation of cheap, toxic synthetic substances is a desperate chemical exit strategy. It is the visible symptom of a generation seeking temporary release from an economic architecture that offers them flatlining real wages, dead-end career opportunities, and an underlying sense of total social exclusion. We will not solve the drug crisis by seizures alone.

442. The community gardens, the regenerated town centres, the regional resilience hubs, and the reskilling architecture are drug prevention investments : investments in the meaning, the belonging, and the productive engagement that make the drug offer less rational.

443. A National Drug Prevention and Treatment System will unify prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration under single governance. Supply reduction will be intensified with specialised investigative capacity targeting trafficking networks rather than couriers.

444. But the consequences of this failure are visible not only in the health system. They are visible on the walls of our towns.

From Barbed Wire to Civic Presence: The Safe Communities Compact

445. Madam Speaker, there is another sign of the social crisis that no statistic fully captures.

446. It is visible on the walls of our towns.

447. Barbed wire. Iron spikes. Cameras. Higher walls. Grilles on windows. Gates within gates. Walk through the residential streets of Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes, Vacoas, Triolet or Mahébourg. The architecture of fear has entered the Mauritian street. The most visible growth sector in many neighbourhoods is not beauty, not design, not community life. It is fortification.

448. A republic has failed when every household must become its own prison guard.

449. This is not only an aesthetic problem, though it has made our towns harsher, uglier and less human. It is a civic problem. A street lined with barbed wire sends a message before a single crime is committed. It says that the citizen no longer trusts the street. It says the family trusts the wall more than the neighbourhood. It says that security has been privatised, household by household, while public confidence has retreated behind gates.

450. The usual answer to this fear has been to think bigger, more expensive, more technological. The Safe City project was the extreme expression of that mentality : a Rs 19 billion answer to a social problem that had never been properly diagnosed. But a camera does not build trust. A camera does not know the widow who lives alone at the end of the lane. A camera does not notice that a streetlight has been broken for three weeks. A camera does not hear that young people have begun gathering every night behind an abandoned building. A camera records. A community observes.

451. This Budget does not propose another technological solution. It proposes a human one.

452. Madam Speaker, the Neighbourhood Watch scheme already exists in Mauritius. The Mauritius Police Force's own Strategic Plan for 2026-2028 identifies community safety and neighbourhood watch as a central pillar of policing strategy. The Commissioner of Police has publicly affirmed it. The Middle Temple Association has explicitly called for its national implementation in close collaboration with the police, to restore the bond of trust between citizens and law enforcement. The idea is not new, not foreign, and not radical. The police have already said this is what is needed. This Budget requires them to deliver it.

453. What has been missing is not the idea. It is the political will to make it real.

454. This Budget therefore introduces the Safe Communities Compact : a national, formalised, legally recognised network of Civic Neighbourhood Watch groups, operating in every residential area of Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands.

455. The Compact is built on five commitments.

First: official recognition and registration.

456. Every Neighbourhood Watch that registers with the local police station and completes basic training in observation, reporting and legal boundaries will receive formal recognition from the Mauritius Police Force. Each recognised Watch will be assigned a Community Safety Officer, responsible for a defined catchment of approximately five hundred households, who conducts scheduled foot patrols, maintains face-to-face contact with residents, and chairs the six-monthly meetings. The role is permanent. When an officer is transferred, the role continues. The catchment continues. The relationship continues.

Second: the role of the Watch.

457. The mandate is precise and bounded : observe, record, report, alert, support vulnerable neighbours, identify patterns, participate in structured safety meetings. The limits are equally clear : no confrontation, no punishment, no searches, no roadblocks, no intimidation, no political use, no communal targeting, no private justice. The monopoly of lawful force remains with the State. The Watch does not enforce. It makes enforcement possible. An organised, visible community presence is more effective against petty crime and drug dealing than any camera: not because it acts but because it sees, and because what it sees reaches the police through a defined, protected, accountable channel.

Third: information and early warning protocols.

458. Every registered Watch will have a secure channel for passing information to the police : drug sales, suspicious patterns, vulnerable residents, emerging threats. That channel carries a response-time commitment and a feedback obligation: the Watch will be told what action was taken on information it provided. Anonymity will be protected. Retaliation against Watch members who provide information will be treated as an aggravating factor in any prosecution. The distinction is fundamental : an informer serves secrecy; a citizen partner serves the community. An informer belongs to a network of suspicion; a recognised neighbourhood group belongs to an architecture of trust.

Fourth: six-monthly formal meetings and public accountability.

459. Every registered Watch will meet formally with its local police station every six months, quarterly in higher-risk areas. The station commander attends. The meeting reviews burglary patterns, drug-sale signals, abandoned buildings, broken lighting, unsafe school routes, response delays, and local concerns. Minutes are recorded. Actions are assigned. Every police station will publish, every six months, a public safety statement covering Watch coverage, meetings held, issues reported, actions taken, response-time performance, and unresolved municipal problems affecting safety. The Commissioner of Police will report annually to the National Assembly on the national status of the Compact, division by division.

Fifth: national coverage targets.

460. Within twelve months of this Budget taking effect, every police division shall have established recognised Watch groups covering no less than fifty percent of residential streets. Within twenty-four months, seventy-five percent. These are not aspirations. They are commitments subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

461. Madam Speaker, many safety problems are not police problems alone. A dark road is a municipal failure before it becomes a crime scene. An abandoned plot is a planning failure before it becomes a hiding place. A broken pavement, an unlit bus stop, an overgrown passage, an empty town centre : each creates the conditions for fear and disorder. The Safe Communities Compact will therefore require police stations, municipalities, district councils and village councils to share responsibility for neighbourhood safety. Solar-powered street lighting will be extended to cover every identified dark corridor in Watch-covered areas within the first budget cycle. A street that is lit is a street that is used. A street that is used is a street that is safe.

462. Madam Speaker, the real test of this policy will not be the number of cameras installed or committees formed. It will be whether, in five years, a family in Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Curepipe, Vacoas, Triolet, Mahébourg or Bambous feels less compelled to raise its walls, sharpen its gates, and wrap its home in barbed wire.

463. The Safe City model placed cameras above the citizen. The Safe Communities Compact places trust beside the citizen.

464. From this Budget onward, public safety will not be built only through devices, contracts and command centres. It will be built through presence, trust, local knowledge, lawful cooperation and civic responsibility.

465. The barbed wire on our walls is the symptom. The restoration of civic presence is the cure.

466. Safety on our streets takes one further form that no community watch can address alone. It happens at speed.

467. In 2024, thirty-nine thousand four hundred and eighty-five road accidents were recorded : one hundred and thirty-four people died, and road traffic injury deaths run nearly fifty percent higher than the average of high-income economies. These are not accidents. They are the mechanical manifestation of a stressed, impatient population moving through infrastructure designed for speed rather than safety. This Budget adopts the Safe System approach to road safety with a binding target of a thirty percent reduction in road deaths within three years, combined with a Road Rage and Stress Reduction Programme that names congestion and the daily stress of an unnecessary commute as contributors to road aggression : not merely driving behaviour.

468. Madam Speaker, I must now address something that no previous budget speech has addressed. A society teaches values not only through its schools and religious institutions. It teaches values through what it celebrates. Through what it tolerates. Wealth honestly created through innovation, entrepreneurship, and productive investment strengthens a republic. Wealth detached from visible productive contribution weakens trust. It tells young people that the formal economy of work and merit is a trap for those who do not know better. A republic cannot sustain productivity when rent appears smarter than work. It cannot sustain trust when integrity appears optional. I name no individual. The courts will determine individual culpability and this government respects the rule of law absolutely. But the social fact is independent of the legal outcome. When the citizen sees : across governments of different political colours : that tens of millions of rupees of undisclosed origin appear to be a normal accompaniment to political power, the message received is simple and devastating: the rules apply to you. Not to them. Mauritius has no law on political party financing. Cash donations of any amount from any source are legally permissible. This framework ends with this Budget.

469. The Political Party Financing Act will be legislated within this financial year : mandatory disclosure of all donations above a defined threshold, a prohibition on cash donations, audited financial accounts for all registered parties, and criminal penalties for non-compliance.

470. Mandatory public asset declaration will be required annually for all Members of Parliament, ministers, senior civil servants, heads of parastatal bodies, and senior judiciary : publicly available and independently audited.

471. The Financial Crimes Commission will receive statutory guarantees of operational and financial independence. The FCC will investigate whom the evidence requires it to investigate. Without fear. Without favour.

472. Mauritius is a civilisation of remarkable spiritual depth. Within our borders live the living currents of Hinduism, Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, the philosophical lineages of the Tamil, Telugu, and Marathi communities, the Buddhist and Confucian traditions of the Sino-Mauritian community and the Bahá'í teaching of the oneness of humanity.

473. Every year, this Parliament votes to fund the institutions that claim to represent these traditions. But let us have the courage to ask: what has been purchased for the Mauritian people with those funds? Our legacy system has funded the infrastructure of identity while starving the substance of virtue. Many subsidised socio-cultural bodies have been hollowed out from centres of ethical enlightenment into political lobbying networks : where communal brokers trade blocs of votes during electoral cycles in exchange for land concessions, grants, and parastatal appointments. The challenge is not religion. The challenge is transmission. A child who knows that every tradition in their country teaches that unexplained wealth violates the duty of truthfulness is a citizen who will ask the right questions.

474. This Budget establishes a National Civic Values Curriculum Commission to develop a mandatory, non-confessional civic education module for every level of public schooling : teaching every Mauritian child the shared human values that form the common denominator of all our traditions: integrity, compassion, non-violence, justice, stewardship, truthfulness, and mutual respect. All future state disbursements to religious and socio-cultural associations will be subject to Civic Accountability Contracts. The state will fund social cohesion. It will no longer subsidise its fragmentation.

475. Madam Speaker, I have spoken of culture in this Budget as cognitive infrastructure : as the foundation of imagination and productive capability. That argument is true. But it is not complete, and a Wellbeing Republic demands completeness.

476. Culture is also what makes life worth living. The Sega played at a wedding. The story told by a grandmother in Bhojpuri that no translation can fully carry. The Tamil kavadi that moves through the streets of a Mauritian village carrying two thousand years of devotion. The Creole poem that names a grief that no other language has found words for. The Chinese lion dance that brings a neighbourhood together on a January morning. These are not economic inputs. They are the substance of human flourishing.

477. A country that manages its culture only as heritage or as commodity will eventually find it has neither. Heritage dies when it is not lived. A commodity loses its value when it loses its authenticity. The only way to preserve culture is to practise it : to teach it, to perform it, to argue about it, to allow it to evolve, and to pass it to children who will make it their own and carry it further than we can imagine.

478. That is what active cultivation means. Not a museum. Not a grant. Not a freeport scheme. A living culture : taught in schools, practised in communities, heard in public spaces, and recognised by this republic not as a sector to be incentivised, but as the civilisational inheritance that makes Mauritius irreplaceable.

479. Madam Speaker, from this Budget onward, every major policy decision will face the Wellbeing Test.

480. Does this policy strengthen wellbeing? Does it strengthen trust? Does it strengthen dignity? Does it strengthen resilience? Does it strengthen community life?

481. If not, we are not fully developing. We are merely growing. The Architecture of Transformation is not complete without the Wellbeing Republic. The fiscal anchors, the productivity programmes, the ecosystem investments, the spatial doctrine : all necessary, none sufficient. Every tradition in this country has been saying this for centuries. Dharma. Rahma. Agape. Karuna. Seva. Amana. The obligation to act. The duty of care. The accountability for what has been entrusted to you. This Budget is the first one in Mauritius that says the same thing in the language of public finance. Not just GDP. Wellbeing. Not just growth. Flourishing. Not just transactions. Lives.

482. Madam Speaker, let me now conclude.

CHAPTER VII - THE PROMISE: FROM PERFORMANCE TO PROOF

Madam Speaker,

483. I have now presented the full Architecture of Transformation. A diagnosis of the system that produced twenty-five years of announcement without delivery. An honest reckoning with the windfall economy. A doctrine, twenty-nine sectoral commitments, a Spatial Republic, and a Wellbeing Republic. But a speech is not transformation. A doctrine is not delivery. A commitment is not completion. The difference between performance and proof is accountability. And accountability is what this chapter is about.

484. Mauritius has confused the production of transactions with the production of wellbeing. It has measured what was easy and ignored what matters. And it has done this for twenty-five years : because the system was designed to produce announcements, not outcomes.

485. The Architecture of Transformation is the replacement of that system, piece by piece, institution by institution.

486. The Parliamentary Budget Office replaces self-assessment with independent scrutiny.

487. The Medium Term Expenditure Framework replaces annual improvisation with multi-year discipline.

488. The Programme Performance Architecture replaces unconditional funding with demonstrated results.

489. The Subtraction Rule replaces accumulation with choice.

490. The National Delivery Unit replaces announcement with implementation.

491. The Fiscal Responsibility Act replaces discretionary deficit management with statutory ceilings.

492. And the Annual Budget Accountability Statement replaces the one-way budget performance with a two-way contract between the government and the people it serves. These seven reforms are designed to outlast this government : because a country that depends on the virtue of its leaders for its fiscal discipline is not a republic. It is a lottery. And Mauritius has had enough lotteries.

493. From this Budget forward, no project above Rs 100 million will be announced in any budget speech without a completed implementation plan filed with the Parliamentary Budget Office before the speech is delivered. Not a concept note. Not a feasibility study. A delivery document : naming every required decision, every required approval, every required procurement, every accountability, and every risk with a named mitigation. The Rivière des Anguilles Dam was announced in 2016 without such a plan. That is why it was not built. That era ends today.

494. Ministers will henceforth be celebrated for completing projects, not for announcing them. There is no fourth windfall waiting over the horizon. The preferential protocols have expired. The tax arbitrage windows are closing. The villa market is reaching its structural limit. Public debt cannot indefinitely rise faster than productive capacity. Delay is no longer prudence. Delay has become risk. What we build from this day forward, we must build ourselves. That is not cause for despair. It is cause for clarity.

495. This alternative budget is a proof of concept. It proves that constraint and vision are not mutually exclusive. It proves that the ten structural silences are not unspeakable : they have been spoken today, and they have received not further promises but systems, sequencing, and accountability structures. It proves that a budget can be organised around doctrine rather than ministry, around priorities rather than pressure groups. And it proves the most important thing: that this government has constrained itself. It has built a Parliamentary Budget Office that will scrutinise its own projections. It has committed to an Annual Budget Accountability Statement that will publicly name its failures as well as its achievements. Principles become credible only when governments bind themselves. That is the proof of concept. That is the moment this Budget is different from every budget speech this House has previously heard.

496. What I ask of this House is not to accept my numbers. I ask you to accept my principles : and to hold me accountable to them. When the official budget is delivered today at 17:00, ask whether it names what it is stopping in order to fund what it is starting. Ask whether it presents its fiscal assumptions transparently. Ask whether it acknowledges honestly what was committed in the previous budget and not delivered. Ask whether it respects the Subtraction Rule. Ask whether it prioritises productivity over rent. Ask whether it builds capability or merely announces activity. Ask whether it passes the five-question doctrinal test. Ask whether it meets the Wellbeing Test. And ask whether it contains a single implementation plan : a single named accountability : for any project it announces. That is the accountability this Budget invites. Not blind acceptance. Honest scrutiny. Not partisan loyalty. Doctrinal coherence. Not the performance of governance. The proof of governance.

497. To the people of Mauritius, I say this. You have been told for twenty-five years that your country was a miracle. You were not told that the miracle was built on windfalls that had reached their limit. You were not told that the budget speech was a performance designed to exhaust your attention and evade your scrutiny. I am telling you now. Because a government that cannot tell its people an uncomfortable truth does not deserve their trust when it offers them hope. The windfalls are gone. No fourth windfall is waiting. What we build from now, we must build ourselves.

498. In twelve months, the first Annual Budget Accountability Statement will be delivered to this House and published for every citizen to read : reporting honestly on what was committed and what was delivered, naming programmes that succeeded and programmes that failed.

499. Every year, the National Wellbeing Survey will ask you whether your life is better. Whether you trust your institutions. Whether your children have better opportunities. Whether your government is serving you or serving itself. That is the accountability this Budget offers. Not a promise. A covenant. Not a performance. A proof.

500. Judge us not by today's applause. Judge us by what remains five years from now. Judge us by whether projects announced were completed. Whether institutions became stronger. Whether public money produced measurable outcomes. Whether young

Mauritians see opportunity where previous generations saw departure. Judge us by whether addiction declined. Whether productivity rose. Whether food sovereignty strengthened. Whether public trust recovered. Whether the Republic became healthier, safer, more resilient, more capable, more honest, more worthy of the people who sustain it.

501. One day, years from now, another Minister of Finance will stand where I stand today. The only question that will matter then is simple. Did we leave behind a country more capable than the one we inherited? If the answer is yes, history will be generous. If the answer is no, history will be correct.

502. Nations decline gradually. They recover deliberately. Recovery begins when a country decides that the future will not resemble the past by default. The Architecture of Transformation is not a promise of perfection. It is a commitment to seriousness. Serious public finance. Serious institutions. Serious delivery. Serious accountability. Serious nation-building.

503. This Budget is not the transformation. It is the commitment to transformation. The difference is accountability. Let us stop managing the decline of an inherited rent-seeking model. Let us stop funding the rents of the past and start financing the capabilities of the future. Let us stop measuring activity and start measuring lives. Let us stop announcing what we intend and start completing what we begin. Let us build a nation that is more productive, more resilient, and more innovative : but also calmer, healthier, more trusting, more connected, and more human. Because development is not merely what a country earns. Development is what a country becomes.

In Grateful Acknowledgement of Honourable Bérenger's Literary Criticism

504. Madam Speaker, Honourable Paul Raymond Bérenger spent decades commenting on budget speeches delivered in this House. He had a favourite word for them. He called them "*décousus*" : disjointed, unstitched, incoherent. In 2015, he went further, declaring one budget "le plus décousu que j'ai entendu depuis que je suis entré au Parlement en 1976."

505. He was right. They were *décousus*.

506. But they were not décousus because Ministers lacked intelligence or vocabulary. They were *décousus* because the State was trying to build a country the way a bad contractor builds a house without a plan: a room added because someone complained, a corridor added because someone influential asked for it, a staircase added because there was a budget line, a window added because a minister liked the view : and at the end, a building so confused that nobody knows where the front door is.

507. Madam Speaker, Honourable Bérenger saw the symptom clearly. What no budget speech before this one has said is why the symptom persisted. It persisted because a budget organised by ministry cannot have coherence, because our national problems do not organise themselves by ministry. It persisted because a system that rewards announcement cannot produce doctrine, because doctrine requires the discipline of saying no. And it persisted because a process designed to perform governance rather than practise it will always produce a catalogue : three hundred items carefully listed, the destination nowhere stated.

508. Madam Speaker, there are ministers in this House who have listened to this speech and not heard their sector named. The Minister responsible for tourism found no tourism measures. The Minister responsible for manufacturing found no industrial policy chapter. The Minister responsible for financial services found no incentive package. I say to them: you have been listening for furniture. This Budget built the house.

509. Consider what this Budget delivers to tourism without creating a tourism chapter. The State Land Public Patrimony Act returns the coastline to public dignity. The urban regeneration programme restores Port Louis, Rose Hill , Beau Bassin ,Vacoas and Curepipe as towns worth arriving in. The Safe Streets Programme creates pavements worth walking on. The food sovereignty programme fills local restaurants with traceable Mauritian produce. The Labour Sovereignty Compact ends the race to the bottom in hospitality that hollows out the very warmth Mauritius sells to the world. No tourism budget line achieves any of those things. No tourism ministry controls any of them. Together, they constitute the most consequential tourism policy ever proposed in a Mauritian budget : and the word tourism does not appear once.

510. This is the logic of signals. Wilson and Kelling's broken windows thesis holds that a single unrepaired window signals that no one cares, that disorder is normal, that further disorder will go unchallenged. New York acted on that insight in the 1990s : repairing the physical environment before writing a single new crime policy - and within a decade felonies fell sharply. The mechanism was not policing. It was signalling. A republic that repairs its broken windows - that protects its coastline, restores its town centres, calms its streets, plants its community gardens, enforces its audit findings and publishes its procurement contracts - sends a signal that compounds across every sector, every investment decision, every young Mauritian weighing whether to stay or leave. That signal is what no targeted incentive can manufacture and no competitor can copy.

511. And then there are the nineteen reforms. Every sector of this economy - tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, financial services, construction, hospitality - currently operates inside a governance system that rewards announcement over completion and permits billions of rupees to be committed without a single published feasibility study. The nineteen reforms change that system for every sector simultaneously. A Parliamentary Budget Office that scrutinises fiscal projections does not scrutinise them only for the sectors this Budget named. A Public Investment Evaluation Act that requires independent counter-expertise before Cabinet approval does not require it only for infrastructure. A Competition Commission with real powers does not protect competition only in the markets this speech discussed. These reforms are the operating system. Every sector runs on it. Change the operating system and you change every sector : including the ones this Budget never mentioned by name.

512. They were *décousus* because they added furniture without architecture. They added rooms without a plan. This Budget begins with the operating system. The furniture will follow.

513. Madam Speaker, I do not ask this House to trust a promise. I ask it to judge an architecture. And an architecture must be seen whole before it can be judged. Annexed to this speech, as Annex II, is a document that is an integral part of this Budget Speech: not supplementary evidence, not a projection of figures, not a government press release. It is the architecture given a life. Written from the vantage point of June 2029, three years after the implementation of the Architecture of Transformation, it describes in the form of an independent retrospective account what the Mauritian Republic will have begun to become. Every reform proposed in this speech finds its consequence there. Every commitment made today finds its proof there. But Annex II does something more than document outcomes. It names a phenomenon that no Mauritian budget has previously anticipated: emergence; the way reforms, when organised as an architecture rather than a catalogue, begin to reinforce each other in ways that no single ministry planned and no forecast predicted. That phenomenon is the deepest argument of this Budget. I invite every Member of this House, and the sovereign people of Mauritius, to read Annex II before rendering their judgment. The architecture is not complete until they have.

514. Madam Speaker, I commend the Architecture of Transformation to this House and to the sovereign people of Mauritius.

515. Madam Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill for the financial year 2026-2027 be read a second time.

ANNEX I - THE MAURITIAN STATE AND THE FAILURE OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT EVALUATION

Eleven Case Studies in Announcement Before Analysis

Prefatory note

516. This annex supports the Public Policy Evaluation Act and the Public Investment Evaluation Act proposed in Chapter II of the Architecture of Transformation. It documents a recurrent structural weakness in Mauritian public finance: the absence of a binding institutional requirement that major public policies and investments be subjected to independent evaluation before approval and systematic review after implementation.

517. The purpose of this annex is not to reopen partisan controversy. The cases reviewed span different governments, different ministries, different sectors, and different political moments : administrations led by the MSM, the Labour Party, and their respective coalition partner , the MMM and the PMSD. The pattern is nevertheless strikingly consistent. Projects were announced with certainty before their economic, social, fiscal, institutional, and environmental assumptions were independently tested. Public money was committed before alternatives were compared. Operating costs were insufficiently modelled. Opportunity costs were rarely debated. Post-implementation evaluation was either absent or inaccessible to the public.

518. The issue is therefore not that individual governments made individual mistakes. The issue is that the Mauritian State has never built a permanent evaluation architecture strong enough to protect decision-making from political momentum, promotional language, supplier influence, or administrative inertia.

519. Mauritius does not suffer from total ignorance of appraisal. The Ministry of Finance's own Project Request Form B explicitly references cost-benefit analysis requirements. The Public Sector Investment Programme describes preparatory works as including feasibility studies, geotechnical investigations, design and bid documents. These requirements exist. They are simply non-binding, unpublished, selectively applied, and without institutional consequences when ignored. That is the failure this Budget now corrects.

520. Each of the eleven cases below is examined against the same four questions:Was there a published socio-economic appraisal before approval? Were credible alternatives compared?Were operating costs, fiscal risks, and opportunity costs modelled and disclosed?Was there an independent post-implementation evaluation?

521. The answer, across all eleven cases, is either no, not publicly available, or insufficiently documented.

522. *These cases do not prove that every project was wrong. They prove something more important: that the Mauritian public was rarely given the evidence required to know whether the projects were right. That is the institutional failure this Budget now corrects.*

CASE 1 : THE METRO EXPRESS

523. **Construction contract: Rs 18.8 billion. Total public commitment including financing: Rs 24.8 billion+.**

524. **Project description.** The Metro Express project involved a design and construction contract worth Rs 18.8 billion awarded to India's Larsen and Toubro in July 2017, with the Indian Government providing Rs 9.9 billion through a combination of grant and line of credit. Singapore Corporation Enterprise was appointed to lead the feasibility study and preliminary design, focusing on route alignment, cost estimation, and integration with existing bus services. Initial cost projections hovered around Rs 24.8 billion after negotiations.

525. **Stated official objective.** To reduce traffic congestion, which a 2008 Road Development Authority study concluded was costing the Mauritian economy about Rs 4 billion per year, expected to increase to Rs 10 billion by 2030.

526. **Evidence publicly available before approval.** A feasibility study by Singapore Corporation Enterprise and design work by Zutari are referenced in project documentation. A congestion cost estimate was publicly cited. The project was described as integrated with bus services and the national transport network.

527. **Evidence not publicly available.** No published cost-benefit analysis comparing light rail to alternatives : bus rapid transit, road demand management, bus network redesign, or phased public transport reform : is accessible in the public record. No published social rate of return. No published independent operating subsidy model. No published ex-ante ridership sensitivity analysis against car ownership growth trajectories.

528. **Alternatives that should have been compared.** Bus rapid transit on dedicated lanes; enhanced bus network with priority signals; road pricing to manage demand; park-and-ride combined with express bus; phased hybrid approach combining bus priority with limited rail.

529. **Financial sustainability.** Annual fare revenue, conservatively estimated at Rs 788 million, would only partly cover annual operation and maintenance costs estimated at approximately Rs 1.04 billion, with the balance requiring an ongoing government subsidy. Current daily ridership stands at approximately 55,000 : substantially below the 160,000 projected in the financial modelling. The operating subsidy has become a permanent fiscal commitment whose scale was never independently modelled ex ante and has never been the subject of a published ex-post evaluation.

530. **Secondary governance failure.** In August 2020, Metro Express Ltd awarded a restricted-tender advertising contract to Alliance Media valued at over Rs 75 million, under which MEL received Rs 34.2 million while retaining only Rs 5 million as proportional revenue, with terms potentially costing the state up to 75% of earnings beyond Rs 70 million due to unverifiable revenue reporting. This secondary procurement controversy is itself a symptom of the governance vacuum created when major projects proceed without independent oversight architecture.

531. **Institutional lesson.** The Metro Express may or may not have been the right transport intervention for Mauritius. The problem is that citizens were not shown the analytical basis on which that choice was made. A congestion cost estimate is not a cost-benefit analysis. A feasibility study for a chosen alignment is not an alternatives comparison.

The absence of a published social rate of return means that Parliament approved a Rs 18.8 billion contract without knowing whether it was the highest-return use of that commitment.

532. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required a published alternatives comparison and social cost-benefit analysis before Cabinet approval. The ex-post requirement would by now have produced a published ridership-versus-projection review and a subsidy sustainability assessment.

CASE 2 : THE SAFE CITY PROJECT

533. **Total commitment: Rs 19 billion. Annual operating cost: Rs 350 million. Contract duration: 20 years.**

534. **Project description.** The total cost of the CCTV surveillance system is Rs 19 billion with an operational cost of about Rs 350 million per year. The cameras are financed by a loan of Rs 16 billion from the Export-Import Bank of China, payable over 20 years, taken by Mauritius Telecom.

535. **Contractual structure.** The contract was signed between Mauritius Telecom and Huawei while the client remained the police force. Mauritius Telecom reportedly made a payment of approximately USD 13 million to Huawei before even obtaining the acceptance letter from the police. The Government of Mauritius provided a sovereign guarantee for the China Exim Bank loan. The project was initiated through an unsolicited supplier proposal rather than through a defined public safety strategy followed by competitive tendering.

536. **Auditor General findings.** The Audit noted opacity in the allocation of the contract between the police and Mauritius Telecom. Officers did not have access to the lease agreements, citing a mutual non-disclosure under the terms and conditions of the agreement. The Audit countered that under Article 110(2) of the Constitution, its office can access all documents. Due to the limited information available, the Audit stated it had no evidence that could confirm whether the call for tenders was carried

out on the basis of the most competitive method, or whether the contract prices were reasonable.

537. **Implementation failures.** As of December 2020, only 130 of the 300 Intelligent Traffic Surveillance cameras had been installed, 18 months after the project's scheduled completion date.

538. **Evidence not publicly available.** No published national crime-prevention strategy preceded the project. No published assessment of CCTV crime-reduction effectiveness against the international evidence base. No published comparison of surveillance investment versus community policing, drug rehabilitation, urban lighting, or intelligence capacity. No published counterfactual modelling. No published ex-post measurement of crime-rate change attributable to the Safe City deployment.

539. **The central diagnostic.** Safe City was not presented to the public as the outcome of a national crime prevention strategy comparing alternative interventions. It appeared instead as a technology-led solution whose public rationale was constructed around the promise of modernity. The justification followed the technology, rather than the technology following a rigorously defined public safety need. Studies by American and British governments have shown mixed results for CCTV crime reduction, with evidence suggesting displacement of crime to adjacent areas without cameras and that video surveillance requires integration with police patrols to achieve effectiveness. These questions : basic in any competent appraisal : were never publicly posed before a twenty-year, Rs 19 billion commitment was made.

540. **Opportunity cost.** Rs 19 billion in community policing, drug rehabilitation infrastructure, youth employment in high-crime areas, and intelligence capacity building represents an alternative that was never costed, never compared, and never debated. The question of what the same resources differently deployed might have achieved for public safety in Mauritius remains unanswered.

541. **Institutional lesson.** This case illustrates all the pathologies of unevaluated public investment simultaneously: supplier-led proposal; technology selected before public

problem-definition; long-term fiscal commitment through a deliberately complex lease structure; opacity toward the Auditor General, the constitutional guardian of public expenditure; and absence of published counterfactuals. It is the clearest single demonstration of why binding appraisal legislation is not a bureaucratic preference but a constitutional necessity.

542. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required a published crime-prevention needs assessment, competitive technology tendering, a disclosed lease structure, and a published social cost-benefit analysis before Cabinet approval. The ex-post requirement would have produced a published assessment of whether the investment measurably reduced crime. Neither exists.

CASE 3 : THE CÔTE D'OR NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX

543. **Construction cost: Rs 4.692 billion. Estimated annual maintenance: Rs 250 million. Total public investment in 2019 IOIG: Rs 5.9 billion+.**

544. **Project description.** The total project cost for building the Côte d'Or Sports Complex was Rs 4.692 billion. The Chinese Government contributed RMB 350 million (approximately Rs 1.8 billion) and the Government of Saudi Arabia provided a loan of Rs 875 million. The balance was borne by Mauritian taxpayers.

545. **The business plan problem.** It was only in December 2018 that a business plan and strategic plan was commissioned : after construction had already begun. A business plan commissioned after construction commences is not an appraisal instrument. It is a post-hoc rationalisation of a decision already made and a commitment already incurred. This sequencing : the signature of the entire system : should have been impossible under proper governance.

546. **Location and access.** The publicly available project record does not show that the location decision was accompanied by a published transport-accessibility plan capable of ensuring mass public use after the Games. The complex sits along Motorway M3 in Saint Pierre, in a location without public transport access adequate for a facility of national scale. The absence of a transport masterplan attached to the investment

decision means that a Rs 4.7 billion facility was built with no published analysis of how the general public : as opposed to car-owning visitors : would reach it.

547. **The George V precedent.** The George V Stadium, renovated at public expense in the preceding decade, offers a prior example of national sporting infrastructure whose utilisation after its commissioning event was not sustained at the level that justified the investment. That precedent generated no published appraisal requirement for Côte d'Or. The lesson of the earlier case was not institutionally captured and applied.

548. **Alternatives not compared.** No published assessment compared the Côte d'Or new-build option to: upgrading existing national stadia across the island; a distributed model investing in regional facilities accessible by public transport; a phased approach building only the minimum needed for the Games and investing the balance in grassroots infrastructure.

549. **Post-implementation.** The projected yearly maintenance cost is around Rs 250 million. No published ex-post assessment of actual utilisation rates, revenue generation, operating subsidy requirement, or return on the Rs 4.7 billion capital investment has been made available to the public or to Parliament.

550. **Institutional lesson.** The Côte d'Or case demonstrates the optimism bias problem identified in international appraisal literature: projects conceived around a single event without published post-event utilisation modelling systematically underestimate operating costs and overestimate post-event revenues. The mandatory business plan requirement that existed was applied after the irreversible commitment had been made. That is not appraisal. It is notation.

551. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required the business plan before construction commencement, not after. It would have required a transport masterplan, a post-games utilisation model, an operating cost sustainability assessment, and a published alternatives comparison including distributed regional investment. The ex-post requirement would by now have produced a published assessment of whether Rs 4.7 billion delivered the national sporting infrastructure transformation it was presented as.

CASE 4 : HERITAGE CITY

552. **Promoted cost: USD 820 million. Consultancy expenditure without tender: Rs 39.7 million. Outcome: abandoned. Deliverables: none.**

553. **Project description.** The Heritage City Project at Minissy, in the region of Ebène, was estimated at USD 820 million. The project would have comprised landmark iconic buildings to accommodate the Prime Minister's Office and the new Parliament, high-rise intelligent buildings for ministries, government data centres, an administrative city, residential units, a mixed-use commercial complex, a four-star business hotel, a Heritage Square, luxury residential units, a Bollywood Theme Park, and a solar farm.

554. This was a proposal to relocate the capital administrative functions of the Republic of Mauritius : one of the most consequential urban and institutional decisions any government can make. It was announced without a published independent feasibility study, without a cost-benefit analysis, and without a transparent governance framework explaining how a USD 820 million project would be financed and delivered.

555. **The consultancy scandal.** On December 18, 2015, Cabinet approved creating Heritage City Company Limited. On March 2, 2016, the government approved a consulting contract with Stree Consulting without a public tender or competitive process. On March 16, 2016, Rs 55 million was transferred from the Treasury to Heritage City Company Ltd. Of this, Rs 39,716,981 was paid directly to Stree Consulting via international transfers. Despite the large payments, no master plan was delivered and no project steps were undertaken. Heritage City Company Ltd was officially dissolved on April 29, 2020.

556. The Public Accounts Committee recommended a full inquiry into the National Heritage City Project for the sake of accountability, transparency and good governance. The total public expenditure : including documented consultancy payments, internal government planning resources, ministerial travel, and associated institutional costs : was never publicly consolidated and disclosed.

557. **The promotional document problem.** The project was presented through concept materials describing a Bollywood Theme Park, riviera residential units, and a four-star hotel alongside the Parliament and Prime Minister's Office. These materials were promotional rather than analytical. No independent technical assessment of the proposed relocation's impact on Port Louis, on existing government property values, on staff commuting, on parliamentary accessibility, or on public service delivery was published.

558. **Cost range.** The promoted figure was USD 820 million. Depending on exchange rate, full lifecycle obligations, infrastructure requirements, land costs, and financing cost over the project's intended duration, the full public exposure could have been substantially higher. The fact that the true cost was never independently calculated is itself the finding.

559. **Institutional lesson.** Heritage City is the purest example of promotional concept replacing feasibility analysis. A head of government announced a capital city relocation. A state company was created. Consultants were paid tens of millions without tender. No master plan was produced. The company was dissolved. The Rs 39.7 million in documented expenditure produced no public deliverable. No government has published a consolidated accounting of what the Heritage City episode cost the Republic of Mauritius . The grand announcement and the silent dissolution are two faces of the same system : a system that rewards announcement and imposes no cost for abandonment.

560. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required an independent feasibility study before Cabinet approval of the Heritage City Company. It would have required competitive selection of consultants, a published financing plan, and a cost-benefit analysis of capital relocation against alternative options including upgrading Port Louis and existing ministry infrastructure. The Public Policy Evaluation Act would have required a published accounting of expenditure upon abandonment.

CASE 5 : THE LIVERPOOL FC AGREEMENT

561. **Investment: USD 9 million (approximately Rs 381–400 million) over three years. Renewed without published evaluation.**

562. **Project description.** Liverpool FC announced a global partnership with the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and Economic Development Board Mauritius as the club's official tourism and economic development partner. The three-year partnership would see Mauritius benefit from a range of LFC digital, social media, and marketing assets.

563. The USD 9 million was to be paid over three years for two minutes of signage during matches played by Liverpool, split into six twenty-second advertisements on Mauritius as a tourist destination. The total invoice risked exceeding Rs 400 million with other associated costs.

564. **Evidence not publicly available.** No published KPIs were disclosed before or after the agreement. No published measurement of tourist arrivals from Liverpool FC's fan markets attributable to the partnership. No published brand recall study. No published cost per visitor or cost per investment lead generated. No comparison of this marketing instrument against alternatives. The partnership was reactivated with the government stating it was confident of delivering a tremendous return on the country's investment : without publishing any evidence of what the first term had delivered.

565. **The renewal problem.** The partnership was renewed without a published evaluation of whether the original three-year term achieved its objectives. This is the precise definition of a policy that survives not because it has demonstrated results but because it was once announced. The renewal decision was indistinguishable from the original decision : made on the basis of political enthusiasm and brand association rather than evidence of return.

566. **The comparative question.** Rs 400 million in grassroots football infrastructure : community pitches in every district, youth academies, women's football development, coaching certification, school football, sports medicine : would have built a national

football development system. The question of whether Rs 400 million in football club advertising or Rs 400 million in football development generates greater public return for Mauritius was never posed, let alone answered.

567. **Institutional lesson.** The Liverpool FC case demonstrates that evaluation discipline applies not only to infrastructure but to all forms of public expenditure. A marketing agreement is not immune from the requirement that public money produce measurable public value. The absence of KPIs before signature, and the absence of evaluation before renewal, meant that the decision was made twice on the basis of political preference and twice without evidence.

568. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Policy Evaluation Act would have required published objectives with measurable KPIs before signature, an independent marketing effectiveness assessment at mid-term, a published evaluation before any renewal decision, and transparent exit clause documentation. None of these was applied.

CASE 6 : THE SMART CITY SCHEME

569. **Tax expenditure: unquantified in aggregate. Agricultural land converted: multiple thousands of hectares. Certificates issued: twelve by 2021. Unintended consequence: documented economic decline of Port Louis.**

570. **Project description.** The Smart City Scheme was launched in 2015 under the Investment Promotion Act, offering registration duty exemptions, income tax holidays, reduced land conversion levies, and automatic residency rights to investors. The Smart City Scheme heavily incentivised the emergence of new smart cities in greenfields. The resulting migration of business and residents from existing cities to new cities affected the liveability standard of existing cities and encouraged property speculation. This shift reduced home pricing affordability further from the grasp of young professionals.

571. **The documented unintended consequence.** Academic research published in a peer-reviewed journal identified the direct causal consequence that no government

evaluation ever anticipated or measured. New policies created nine new smart cities in greenfield locations within ten kilometres of Port Louis, so the capital city is facing economic decline as it is losing businesses as well as administrative functions. This loss equates to an erosion in municipal revenue along with a reduced interest in contributing to the development of the city, all of which takes a toll on its urban economic landscape as well as on the broader Mauritian economy. This finding was published in 2018. No government has since published a response acknowledging or contesting it, or commissioning an official assessment of Port Louis's economic trajectory.

572. **The aggregate fiscal cost.** The total value of registration duty exemptions, income tax holidays, reduced land conversion levies, and infrastructure subsidies granted across twelve approved smart cities has never been published as a consolidated figure by the Government of Mauritius. The net fiscal cost to the Republic of its own flagship development scheme : one that permanently converted irreplaceable agricultural land and shaped the economic geography of the entire island : remains, to date, undisclosed.

573. **The land conversion question.** The Smart City Scheme was not merely an urban development policy. It was simultaneously a land policy, a tax expenditure policy, a regional planning policy, a housing policy, and an economic geography policy. It converted agricultural land that the food sovereignty agenda now requires. It drew investment away from Port Louis that the urban regeneration programme must now attract back. These consequences were foreseeable through spatial economic modelling. That modelling was not published before the scheme was launched.

574. **Institutional lesson.** The Smart City Scheme is the clearest illustration of why policy evaluation must be mandatory at the design stage, not discovered by academics a decade after implementation. A scheme that simultaneously depressed housing affordability, eroded municipal revenues, declined Port Louis's economic base, converted food-sovereign land, and entrenched property developer interests : without generating the productivity, innovation, or employment outcomes originally envisaged : is precisely the kind of policy that the Public Policy Evaluation Act is designed to catch, correct, and cost.

575. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Policy Evaluation Act would have required an aggregate tax expenditure assessment at five-year intervals, a published spatial economic impact model, and a mandatory review of the scheme's effects on Port Louis before renewal or expansion. The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required each individual Smart City Certificate to be accompanied by an assessment of its cumulative contribution to the scheme's declared objectives.

CASE 7 : THE DIASPORA SCHEME

576. **In operation since 2015. Tax benefit: ten-year income tax exemption plus customs and excise waivers. Aggregate tax expenditure: unpublished. Impact: not formally evaluated.**

577. **Project description.** To attract the diaspora back and stimulate economic development, the government launched the Mauritian Diaspora Scheme, providing those who return to work in Mauritius with tax exemptions. The scheme offers a ten-year exemption from income tax on earnings from both Mauritian and overseas sources, waiver of customs duties on household effects, exemption of excise duty on a motor vehicle, and rights to permanent residence.

578. **The evaluation gap.** The Mauritius Diaspora Scheme is an ambitious attempt to create a simplified single point of entry for diaspora engagement. However, since its launch, the results of the scheme and its impact remain unclear. That assessment : from an independent international development review : represents the entirety of what the public record offers on the effectiveness of a scheme now in its eleventh year of operation.

579. **What has never been published.** The number of professionals who registered under the scheme and remained in Mauritius beyond year five. The sectors they worked in. The skills transferred to Mauritian colleagues. The investments made. The businesses created. The net emigration trend among tertiary-educated Mauritians aged under 35, which the scheme was designed to reverse. The aggregate annual tax expenditure. The cost per retained skilled professional. Whether the scheme has attracted genuine talent

return or principally benefited retirees and lifestyle migrants making use of the property and residency components.

580. **Institutional lesson.** A ten-year income tax exemption is a generous and costly fiscal instrument. Granting it to an unknown number of beneficiaries at an unknown total cost, with no published measurement of whether it reversed brain drain, is the precise failure that the Public Policy Evaluation Act addresses. A policy that consumes fiscal resources year after year and cannot answer the question of whether it is working is not a policy. It is a permanent budget commitment wearing the costume of a scheme.

581. **Relevance to the Acts.** The Public Policy Evaluation Act would have required annual publication of registration and retention data, aggregate tax expenditure reporting, and an independent assessment of the scheme's contribution to net skilled migration trends at year five and year ten.

CASE 8 : HOSPITALS AND HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

582. **Pattern across multiple administrations. Specific projects: ENT Hospital, New Flacq Teaching Hospital, Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital expansion, Souillac reconstruction.**

583. **The pattern.** Major hospital investment decisions in Mauritius have been made without publishing health economics analyses comparing new construction to upgrading existing facilities, or independent assessments of the marginal benefit per rupee of new hospital beds versus primary care and preventive investment. New hospitals are announced as political commitments and as responses to legitimate community needs. The alternative : investing equivalent resources in community health centres, preventive care, diagnostics decentralisation, or rehabilitation of existing facilities : is never formally compared.

584. **The missing analysis.** The public record does not provide citizens with a consolidated health-economics assessment explaining why specific new-build hospital projects were prioritised over alternative investments such as upgrading existing hospitals, expanding primary care, decentralising diagnostics, strengthening prevention, or

investing in digital health infrastructure. Each project was assessed for construction feasibility. None was assessed against disease burden reduction per rupee, catchment population travel-time improvement, staffing availability constraints, equipment lifecycle cost, or opportunity cost against prevention and primary care.

585. **What the evidence shows internationally.** Health economics evidence across comparable economies consistently demonstrates that investments in primary care, preventive health, and community diagnostics produce better population health outcomes per unit of investment than new tertiary hospital construction. That evidence was not applied to Mauritius hospital investment decisions because no institution was mandated to apply it.

586. **The audit trail.** The National Audit Office reports on the health sector consistently identify procurement irregularities, cost overruns, and unutilised equipment in hospital projects : symptoms of investments made without rigorous ex-ante appraisal and without ex-post accountability requirements.

587. **Institutional lesson.** Hospital investment decisions require health-economics discipline, not merely construction feasibility. The question is not whether a hospital can be built. It is whether building it produces the greatest reduction in the burden of disease per rupee committed : compared to all alternative uses of that commitment.

CASE 9 : ROADS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

588. **Pattern across multiple administrations. No published prioritisation methodology.**

589. **The pattern.** The public record does not show a transparent national ranking methodology by which road investment projects are prioritised according to traffic volume, congestion cost, accident reduction potential, travel-time savings, land acquisition cost, environmental impact, and social rate of return. Projects are announced by ministry and by constituency without a published comparative ranking that would allow citizens to assess whether the selected projects were the highest-return uses of the road budget.

590. **What proper road appraisal requires.** Every road project above a defined threshold should publish: traffic counts and congestion cost estimates; accident data and safety benefit projections; economic internal rate of return calculation; alternatives considered including bus priority, traffic demand management, junction redesign, and route rationalisation; environmental and land acquisition cost; and its ranking among competing projects in the national road programme. None of these is systematically published in Mauritius.

591. **The Public Sector Investment Programme standard.** The PSIP acknowledges that preparatory works include feasibility studies and technical investigations. The gap is not procedural acknowledgment but mandatory publication of the results : and mandatory comparison against alternative projects : before commitment. Without publication, the feasibility study is an internal document that constrains nothing and informs nobody outside the ministry.

592. **The consequence.** In the absence of a published prioritisation methodology, citizens cannot know whether the road projects selected were the highest-return projects or the most politically visible ones. That uncertainty : inherent in any system that does not publish its ranking criteria and apply them transparently : is itself a governance failure.

593. As this speech goes to press, Parliament is debating a Rs 10.8 billion commitment to the M4 motorway. The Minister of Infrastructure has confirmed in this House that no updated socio-economic appraisal has been conducted since the original feasibility study of 2012. That exchange is the most precise illustration this Budget could offer of why the Public Investment Evaluation Act is not a theoretical reform. It is an urgent necessity. The M4 is examined as a standalone case in Case Eleven of this Annex.

CASE 10 : RENEWABLE ENERGY AND THE CEB INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

594. **Pattern: multiple IPP agreements, CEB capital programme, no published independent tariff impact analysis.**

595. **The structure.** The Central Electricity Board produces around 40% of the country's total power requirements from its thermal and hydroelectric plants, with the remaining

60% purchased from Independent Power Producers. The majority of electricity generation in Mauritius is therefore in private hands under long-term Power Purchase Agreements whose terms are not public.

596. **What is not disclosed.** The long-term tariff implications of the IPP portfolio for Mauritian consumers and industry have never been the subject of a published independent assessment. The terms of individual IPP agreements : tariff structure, capacity payments, contract duration, risk allocation between public and private : are not publicly available. No aggregate analysis of the cumulative tariff commitment embedded in the CEB's IPP portfolio has been published. Mauritian households and businesses pay electricity tariffs that reflect decisions taken without transparent public appraisal of their long-term cost implications.

597. **The governance gap.** In stronger regulatory environments, power purchase agreements are approved by an independent regulator and tariff structures are publicly available. The benchmark Mauritius has not yet met is precisely this: an energy regulator genuinely independent of both the CEB and the government, with the mandate and capacity to conduct and publish independent appraisals of generation investment options and their tariff implications.

598. **The energy sovereignty distinction.** A renewable transition that replaces imported coal with imported solar panels financed through private PPAs may reduce emissions without creating energy sovereignty. Public appraisal must distinguish between decarbonisation, affordability, ownership structure, grid resilience, and consumer protection. These are not the same policy objective and they can conflict. That conflict should be resolved through transparent, published, independent analysis : not through private negotiation between the CEB and IPP developers.

599. **Institutional lesson.** The CEB's investment programme is presented annually in budget speeches as a series of individual commitments without a published integrated investment plan with independent cost-benefit validation. The African Development Bank, in its own project appraisal for grid investment in Mauritius, applied rigorous appraisal methodology as a condition of its financing : a standard that the Government of Mauritius has not applied to its own investment decisions in the same sector.

CASE 11 : THE M4 MOTORWAY

600. Announced cost: Rs 10.8 billion. Feasibility study: 2012. Updated socio-economic appraisal: none confirmed. Government that originated the project: previous administration, Budget 2024–2025, paragraph 263(c), half a line, no cost, no study, no calendar.

601. Project description. The M4 motorway is presented as a new highway corridor serving the North-East of Mauritius, connecting the existing motorway network to the coast between Roches Noires and Cap Malheureux. The announced investment is Rs 10.8 billion, financed in part through an Indian line of credit whose terms have not been publicly disclosed. The project was described in a single line in the Budget Speech of 2024–2025: "New motorways M4 in the East and M5 in the South." No cost estimate, no feasibility reference, no delivery calendar accompanied that line. The current administration inherited that half-line, assigned it a cost of Rs 10.8 billion, and proceeded to commitment without a published updated appraisal. The announcement preceded the analysis under both governments.

602. The feasibility study problem. The appraisal document invoked to justify this investment was produced in 2012. Thirteen years separate that study from the commitment now being made. In those thirteen years, the world traversed a global pandemic that durably restructured mobility patterns; a partial shift to remote work that modified commuting flows; a significant inflationary shock that increased all construction costs; and measurable changes in vehicle use behaviour across comparable island economies. A traffic demand model built on 2012 projections is out of date on at least four of its fundamental parameters. The Minister of Infrastructure confirmed in Parliament that no updated socio-economic appraisal has been conducted before the commitment of Rs 10.8 billion. That confirmation is the finding.

603. The statistical record. The public justification for this investment rests on the growth of the vehicle fleet. The relevant figure is not 746,000 registered vehicles : that figure includes 249,000 motorcycles and autocycles, which do not use motorways. The vehicle fleet actually relevant to a motorway of this type is approximately 430,000 units. Additionally, the population of Mauritius is in demographic decline. An infrastructure commitment of Rs 10.8 billion designed to serve a declining population on the basis of a fleet figure overstated by more than seventy percent has not been subjected to the scrutiny that figure demands.

604. The induced traffic problem. The public case for the M4 rests on congestion reduction. The Downs Law of induced demand, established in 1962 and confirmed by decades of empirical data across comparable economies, demonstrates that each increase in road capacity generates a proportional increase in traffic. A new road does not absorb existing congestion durably. It creates the conditions for future congestion. Robust studies establish that a road improvement induces on average ten percent additional traffic in the short term and up to twenty percent in the long term. The question that no published document has answered is: what share of any fluidity gain will be absorbed by induced traffic within five, ten, and fifteen years? Without a published answer to that question, the congestion argument justifies nothing. It identifies a problem without demonstrating that the proposed solution resolves it durably.

605. The socialisation of costs. The M4 motorway does not serve only commuters. It opens a development corridor in the North-East whose principal beneficiaries are the large landowners : former sugar conglomerate estates reconverted into mixed real estate development : whose assets the infrastructure will valorise. The State builds. The developers collect the land value uplift. The taxpayer pays. In jurisdictions that practise sound public governance, this imbalance is corrected through value capture mechanisms: mandatory contributions from developers whose assets are valorised by public infrastructure, levies on capital gains generated, and public interest easements negotiated before works commence. No such mechanism has been announced for the M4 corridor. The budget increases taxes on vehicles to discourage their use on one hand, and builds a motorway that encourages car dependency on the other. That contradiction has not been addressed.

606. The cost trajectory. The history of major Mauritian infrastructure projects establishes a consistent pattern: no project of this scale has been delivered within its initial envelope. The Metro Express was announced at Rs 17.7 billion after optimisation and cost Rs 18.8 billion at reception and Rs 24.8 billion in total public cost : a forty percent overrun. Applied to the M4, that precedent produces a realistic cost estimate of between Rs 14 and Rs 16 billion. Public discussion of this project should proceed on that basis, not on the promotional figure of Rs 10.8 billion.

607. Alternatives not compared. No published document compares the M4 investment to alternative uses of equivalent resources. Rs 10.8 billion represents two to three new regional hospitals, fifty secondary schools, or a complete national fibre optic network. On the same corridor, no published assessment has compared the motorway to bus rapid transit, dedicated bus lanes on existing routes, demand management measures, park-and-ride infrastructure, or structured remote work incentives for employers in congested zones. The alternative was never costed, never compared, and never debated.

608. Environmental silences. The M4 will seal significant surface area, reducing groundwater recharge in a corridor whose aquifers already face pressure. Its carbon footprint across construction and thirty years of induced traffic has not been published, despite Mauritius having subscribed to NDC commitments under the Paris Agreement. The claim that the project is environmentally responsible because it avoids the Ferney Valley is not an environmental assessment. It is the minimum required by law. Avoiding the destruction of a protected ecological sanctuary is not a performance. It is a legal obligation.

609. Institutional lesson. The M4 case demonstrates that the pathology documented across the previous ten cases has not ended. A project originated as a half-line in a previous government's budget, inherited by a new administration, assigned a cost without a published updated appraisal, and financed through a foreign credit line whose terms are not disclosed, follows precisely the trajectory this Budget has described throughout: the announcement precedes the analysis, the commitment precedes the evidence, and the debate begins after the decision is already made. The M4 is not an anomaly. It is the system.

610. Relevance to the Acts. The Public Investment Evaluation Act would have required a published and updated socio-economic appraisal before Cabinet approval, incorporating current traffic modelling, induced demand analysis, demographic projections, and a formal comparison of alternatives. It would have required disclosure of the financing terms and a published value capture framework for the benefiting landowners. The ex-post requirement would produce, at year five and year ten, a published assessment of whether the investment measurably reduced congestion, and at what cost per journey saved.

CROSS-CUTTING CONCLUSIONS

611. **The structural finding.** Across eleven cases, spanning three decades and every government this country has known, the documentary record reveals the same pattern. Decisions are made before analysis is conducted. Political momentum substitutes for evidence. The feasibility study, where it exists at all, is commissioned to justify a decision already taken rather than to inform one still open. The Auditor General arrives years later and documents the consequences. Parliament receives the audit report. The next budget announces the next project.

612. **The non-binding appraisal problem.** Mauritius is not ignorant of appraisal. The Ministry of Finance's Project Request Form B references cost-benefit analysis. The PSIP mentions feasibility studies. These requirements exist. They are simply non-binding, unpublished, selectively applied, and without institutional consequences when ignored. The gap is not knowledge of the principle. It is the absence of a rule with teeth.

613. **The optimism bias pattern.** International appraisal literature documents systematic optimism bias in public investment: costs are underestimated, benefits are overestimated, and operating subsidies are understated. The Metro Express ridership shortfall, the Côte d'Or maintenance cost, the Heritage City dissolution : each reflects this pattern. Independent counter-expertise exists precisely to correct optimism bias before commitment, not to document it after damage.

614. **The evaluation-free policy zone.** The Diaspora Scheme, the Smart City incentive regime, the Liverpool FC partnership, and the road investment programme share a common feature: they have operated for years or decades in a zone entirely free of mandatory evaluation. Resources have been consumed. Consequences have accumulated. The public has not been told whether any of them worked.

615. **The Director of Audit's limits.** The National Audit Office documents financial compliance and identifies irregularities. It cannot assess social rate of return, opportunity cost, or policy effectiveness. It cannot commission independent evaluation. It arrives after the commitment, not before. The Bureau National d'Évaluation exists to fill the space the Director of Audit cannot occupy : evaluating decisions before they are made and assessing their outcomes after they are built.

616. **The closing thesis.** These cases do not prove that every project was wrong. The Metro Express carries passengers. Côte d'Or hosts events. The Safe City cameras watch the streets. The Diaspora Scheme has returned some skilled professionals. The Smart Cities have been built. The M4 will carry vehicles. The question is not whether these things exist. The question is whether the people of Mauritius received the best possible public value from the resources committed to them : and whether the alternatives that were never evaluated might have served them better.

617. That question cannot be answered retrospectively for these eleven cases. The opportunity cost is permanent.

618. It can be answered prospectively for every major decision this Republic takes from this day forward. That is what the Public Policy Evaluation Act and the Public Investment Evaluation Act are designed to ensure.

619. *The Mauritian State has built much. It has evaluated little. From this Budget forward, those two sentences will no longer both be true.*

ANNEX II - THE MAURITIUS VERDICT: JUNE 2029

When the Architecture Became Visible

This Annex is an integral part of the Alternative Budget Speech: The Architecture of Transformation. It is not supplementary material. It is the architecture made visible: the commitments given a territory, the reforms given a consequence, and the idea of emergence given a name. It should be read as the final chapter of the speech, not as an appendix to it.

A Retrospective Account of the Architecture of Transformation, Three Years After Its Implementation

Drawing on the published reports of the Parliamentary Budget Office, the National Audit Office, and the Bureau National d'Évaluation

Port Louis, 19 June 2029

PREAMBLE: THE TERRITORY HAS DELIVERED ITS JUDGMENT

In June 2026, the Architecture of Transformation broke the strategic silences that had paralysed Mauritian public finance for a generation. It made an uncommon promise: not that the country would be perfect within three years, not that every difficulty inherited across decades would disappear, not that the Republic would be transformed beyond recognition, but that Mauritius would become measurably different.

- More disciplined.
- More transparent.
- More honest about what it had failed to complete.
- More capable of completing what it began.

Three years have elapsed.

This Annex is the verdict.

It is not a government press release. It is not a political ledger. It is not an exercise in self-congratulation. It is a retrospective account of the Mauritian territory as it stands in June 2029, drawing on the published work of institutions created or strengthened by the Architecture of Transformation: the Parliamentary Budget Office, the National Audit Office, the Bureau National d'Évaluation, the National Delivery Unit, the National Productivity Council, the Water Regulatory Commission, and the public registers and dashboards that have made the State more visible to its citizens.

There is a second purpose. This retrospective documents a phenomenon that traditional policy analysis often fails to anticipate: **emergence**. The Architecture of Transformation did not merely implement individual reforms. It created conditions under which reforms began to reinforce one another. A State Land Register strengthened food sovereignty. Food sovereignty strengthened wellbeing. Community gardens strengthened social cohesion. Safer streets revived town centres. Town centres helped SMEs. SME procurement helped youth enterprise. Youth enterprise supported brain retention. Creative Laboratories fed the creative economy. Dignity Audits strengthened export credibility. Productivity measurement improved public incentives. Public investment appraisal prevented waste. Audit implementation recovered money already lost. The Parliamentary Budget Office made exaggeration harder. The National Delivery Unit made abandonment harder. The Bureau National d'Évaluation made ignorance harder.

No ministry designed all of these connections.

No forecast predicted all of them.

But the architecture made them possible.

The text has become a territory.

The architecture has become a life.

I. THE FISCAL COVENANT HONOURED

The first transformation has been fiscal.

In 2026, public finance in Mauritius suffered from a double weakness. The first was the visible deficit: expenditure commitments rising faster than productive capacity. The second was the less visible deficit: off-budget liabilities, parastatal obligations, contingent guarantees, special funds, public enterprise debts and fiscal risks that appeared only partially in the national conversation. The country spoke of discipline while keeping too much of the State outside the discipline of full visibility.

The Architecture of Transformation began by ending that illusion.

The consolidated debts and obligations of major public bodies, parastatals and off-budget vehicles were brought into the sovereign fiscal frame. The inherited baseline was therefore not cosmetically improved. It was made more honest. The first act of fiscal credibility was not reduction. It was revelation.

Three years later, the debt trajectory has changed. Mauritius has not escaped fiscal constraint. But the country is no longer pretending that hidden obligations are not public obligations. The Parliamentary Budget Office now publishes independent assessments of revenue assumptions, expenditure risks, debt sensitivity and contingent liabilities before the budget debate. The Ministry of Finance no longer marks its own homework in private and presents the result as national truth.

In March 2027, the Parliamentary Budget Office found the Minister of Finance's deficit projection to be too optimistic. The Minister did not denounce the institution. He did not accuse it of sabotage. He revised his methodology. That exchange : scrutiny followed by correction, both public, both in writing : was one of the quietest revolutions in Mauritian parliamentary history. It was not celebrated. It was treated as normal.

That is when an institution has succeeded.

No one speaks of the Parliamentary Budget Office anymore as an experiment. It is simply where numbers are checked. No one celebrates the Subtraction Rule as an innovation. It is simply how the budget is built. No one treats the Annual Budget Accountability Statement as an unusual event. It is simply the day on which promises return as evidence.

The deepest institutional reforms succeed when they cease to be visible as reforms. They become the water in which the State swims.

The Annual Budget Accountability Statement has become one of the most consequential moments in the parliamentary calendar. Every year, the Minister of Finance returns to the National Assembly to account, measure by measure, for what was promised, what was delivered, what was delayed, what was redesigned and what was stopped. The Budget Speech has ceased to be a one-way performance. It has become the first half of a contract.

This has changed ministerial behaviour. Announcements are fewer. Delivery plans are stronger. Major commitments now carry named institutions, implementation calendars, funding sources, risk assessments and published milestones. A measure announced without preparation is no longer a harmless flourish. It is a future embarrassment attached to a date, a ministry and a responsible officer.

The National Delivery Unit has reinforced this change. The highest-priority commitments of government are tracked publicly. Citizens can see whether a project is on track, delayed, redesigned, completed or discontinued. Journalists no longer reconstruct implementation from fragments. Parliament no longer waits years for the Audit Report to discover that a project has drifted. Delivery has become visible while it is happening.

Mauritius has not become fiscally comfortable. It has become fiscally more serious.

That distinction matters.

II. FROM RENT TO PRODUCTIVE CAPITAL

The second transformation has been economic.

In 2026, the Alternative Budget stated that Mauritius had spent too long confusing land conversion with development. The IRS, RES, PDS and Smart City model had taken scarce land, attached fiscal privilege to it, marketed it to foreign buyers, recorded the transaction as investment and called the result transformation. But the underlying economy had not been transformed. The country had substituted one rent for another: from sugar to villas, from production to property.

Three years later, the speculative real estate model has ceased to function as a development strategy.

This does not mean that real estate has disappeared as an economic activity. It has not. People still build homes. Firms still construct offices. Town centres still require regeneration. Public housing still needs delivery. Infrastructure still requires engineering. What has ended is the State subsidy of speculation as a substitute for development. That distinction is the whole argument.

No new gated residential development has been approved since 2026. No further conversion of first and second category agricultural land for gated residential development has been permitted. Fiscal privileges that rewarded land conversion rather than productive capability have been withdrawn. Two legal challenges to these restrictions failed. The law has held.

The predicted collapse did not come.

Some legacy capital resisted. Some developers waited for reversal. Some argued that the end of property privilege would produce a construction crisis. But the deeper effect was different. Capital did not vanish. Part of it mutated. Construction capacity that had been concentrated in luxury enclaves began to move toward industrial facilities, renewable infrastructure, town-centre regeneration, water network rehabilitation, public building retrofitting, logistics facilities, agro-processing sites and energy installations.

This was one of the first emergent consequences of the Architecture of Transformation. The suppression of easy rent forced the domestic private capital to rediscover genuine productive work. No incentive scheme alone could have engineered this. No budget forecast had anticipated it fully. The State did not command capital to evolve. It removed the escape hatch through which capital had avoided evolution.

The result is still incomplete. The old property imagination remains powerful. Some actors continue to wait for the return of privilege. But a line has been crossed. Mauritius no longer treats the sale of land as the centrepiece of national development. The next chapter is being written in capabilities : and capability, unlike land, is not finite.

III. THE RECOVERY OF PUBLIC PATRIMONY

The third transformation has been territorial.

The National State Land Register went live in December 2026. For the first time in Mauritian history, citizens could consult the land of the Republic. Parcels, leases, lessees, arrears, development obligations, beneficial ownership declarations and lease status became publicly searchable. Some legacy records remained incomplete. Some ownership structures required investigation. Some old files were disputed. But the decisive change had occurred: State land was no longer invisible.

The political economy of clientelism did not end because a minister denounced it. It began to end because citizens could see it.

Arrears have been recovered from dormant and speculative leases. Use-it-or-develop-it covenants have triggered reviews of undeveloped public land. Dormant leases have been terminated. Public tender and public auction have become the rule for all State land. The private contract allocation of public patrimony, once defended through vague invocations of public interest, has lost legitimacy.

The Les Salines case, once a symbol of the State's inability to protect its own patrimony, entered formal recovery proceedings. Other dormant coastal and agricultural leases followed. In some cases, investigations are still ongoing. In others, litigation has delayed recovery. But the direction is clear: a public asset can no longer be held indefinitely without public return.

A more important result was not planned by the administration. It came from citizens.

In Tamarin, residents used the State Land Register to identify a parcel that had been leased below market value for years without the required development being undertaken. A complaint was filed under the use-it-or-develop-it covenant. The lease was reviewed. The land was retendered. A community agroforestry cooperative won the new concession. The government did not organise that sequence. The system made it possible. Citizens made it happen.

That is what democratic ownership looks like when it becomes operational.

The pas géométriques have also returned to public meaning. Once treated as a technical legal category, they are again understood as a living republican principle: the coastline belongs first to the people. The Coastal Access Audit identified 145 blocked passages, disputed access points and illegal or irregular obstructions. Several access corridors have been restored. Others remain in legal proceedings. No new hotel or tourism project has been approved on State-owned seafront land.

A child born in 2026 will not inherit a coastline entirely surrendered to walls, guards and concessions. Whether that child will fully experience the sea as common inheritance depends on the next decade of enforcement. But the legal and moral direction has changed.

Mauritius has rediscovered that territory is not merely land. It is citizenship made physical.

The recovery of public patrimony extended beyond State land and the coastline. The Agricultural Land Patrimony and Watershed Act introduced a doctrine that no previous Mauritian government had been willing to state : that private agricultural land performs irreplaceable public functions, and that those functions must be legally named, independently valued, and protected. The national ecological classification of agricultural land, completed in late 2027, identified the parcels critical for aquifer recharge, flood absorption, biodiversity corridors and food sovereignty. Those parcels may not be converted. The burden of proof has been reversed : a developer must now demonstrate that the Republic of Mauritius loses nothing critical, not that the conversion is administratively permissible.

The Watershed Stewardship Obligation has produced its first measurable consequences. In the northern plains, large agricultural landholdings above fifty arpents have submitted Water Retention and Runoff Management Plans. Swales and contour bunds installed on several estates in the Fond du Sac and Terre Rouge catchments have reduced peak runoff during heavy rainfall events. Communities that had experienced flash flooding annually reported no comparable flooding events in the 2028 cyclone season. The upstream negligence that had been absorbing public cost for decades now carries a legal name, a certified plan, and an accountable owner. The land has begun to hold its water. The villages below it have begun to breathe.

IV. FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY: THE SOVEREIGNTY TRIAD

The fourth transformation has been sovereignty.

In 2026, food, water and energy were often discussed separately. Food belonged to agriculture. Water belonged to infrastructure. Energy belonged to the CEB and imported fuel. The Architecture of Transformation treated them instead as one sovereignty system. A household that cannot access reliable water, produce or afford part of its own food, and generate or control any part of its own energy remains vulnerable regardless of what national GDP says.

On food, the results are visible but not complete. Mauritius has not achieved caloric self-sufficiency in three years. It was never realistic to pretend that cereals, oils and major staples could be structurally replaced at that speed. But fresh produce import dependency, in categories where Mauritius has genuine agronomic capacity, has fallen substantially. Community gardens, agroforestry plots, school gardens, seed libraries, local composting systems, small-planter support and the return of idle agricultural State land to production have changed the food conversation.

Food sovereignty is no longer discussed only in terms of import bills and subsidies. It is now discussed through soil, seeds, water, pollination, land access, school learning, local markets, public procurement and community capability.

The National Food Sovereignty Centre has become a living demonstration of the ecosystem principle. Farmers, teachers, students, small planters, local entrepreneurs and community groups visit it not to hear speeches, but to see systems working: agroforestry, vermiculture, apiculture, local seed multiplication, Zero Budget Natural Farming, composting, water retention, natural pest management and small-scale processing.

The apiculture programme has become emblematic. In 2026, the Alternative Budget said that a queen bee does not create an apiculture industry. A queen needs a territory: flowering trees, protected zones, local queen breeding, veterinary support, laboratory testing, certification, branding and markets. By 2029, that territory is being built. 15,000 melliferous trees have been planted on public land. 55 protected apiculture zones are operational. Local queen breeding has begun. Certification capacity has improved. The first certified batches of Mauritian honey have entered premium regional markets. The number of registered beekeepers has trebled.

The queen now has her territory.

The industry is not yet mature. The ecosystem exists.

This is how a small sector teaches a large lesson. A subsidy purchases an input. An ecosystem builds a future.

On water, the reform has been harder. Non-revenue water has not disappeared. The statutory target has not been reached nationally. But the old pattern of announcing dams while tolerating invisible leakage has ended. The Water Regulatory Commission publishes quarterly loss data. District metering has expanded. Leak detection is targeted. Capital expenditure is tied to measurable loss reduction. In pilot districts, non-revenue water has fallen sharply and twenty-four-hour supply has become more reliable.

The Rivière des Anguilles Dam, announced for years without delivery, is now operational. But the deeper shift is not the dam. It is the recognition that water security is not achieved by concrete alone. It is achieved by governance: maintenance, pressure management, pricing discipline, demand management, leak reduction, asset mapping and accountability.

The water crisis is not over. But failure now has a location, a number and an accountable institution. That is the beginning of control.

On energy, the shift has been more immediate. The State-Backed Solar Loan Facility has allowed thousands of households to install rooftop solar without upfront capital. Monthly repayments are structured around electricity savings. Solar is no longer only for those with available cash. It is becoming a household sovereignty instrument.

New residential and commercial building permits now routinely include solar generation capacity. The independent grid function has improved technical transparency and reduced the conflict between selling electricity and enabling households to generate it. Distributed generation is no longer treated as a nuisance. It is part of the national architecture.

Here too, emergence appeared. Solar households became more conscious energy users. Schools began linking climate education to actual household generation. Small electrical contractors developed new skills. Communities began discussing shared storage, micro-grids and emergency resilience. A reform designed to reduce electricity bills began creating technical capability, climate literacy and local enterprise.

Food, water and energy have therefore begun to converge into one doctrine: a sovereign nation is built from resilient households.

V. THE LABOUR SOVEREIGNTY COMPACT: ENDING THE ARCHITECTURE OF CAPTIVITY

The fifth transformation has been labour.

In 2026, the Alternative Budget named imported labour dependency not merely as a labour market issue, but as a development model. Large parts of the economy had become dependent on the permanent availability of low-cost, compliant, legally constrained foreign labour. The worker permit system tied workers to employers. Recruitment chains extracted rents. Dormitory arrangements often reinforced dependency. Some sectors remained viable not because they became more productive, but because they could import vulnerability.

The Migration Dependency Index, first published in 2027, made that model visible. Sector by sector, it showed where foreign-labour dependency was highest, where wages had stagnated, where productivity was weak, and where Labour Transition Plans were required. Once measured, dependency could no longer be treated as administrative convenience.

By 2029, overall dependency has begun to fall. Construction and hospitality have reduced their reliance on imported labour through wage progression, training, process redesign and automation. Textiles remain the most difficult sector, with dependency still high and transformation too slow.

The Index names this without euphemism. The direction is established. The pace remains insufficient.

The decoupling of the work permit from the employer has been one of the most consequential labour reforms of the period. A migrant worker who completes the required period can now transfer through a State-managed process. Recruitment agencies no longer control the worker's entire legal destiny. The reform has not ended abuse. But it has changed bargaining power.

One worker in the hospitality sector exercised that right in 2028, moving legally from an employer who had failed to honour contract conditions to another operator in the same sector. Her name does not appear in this report. Her situation does. The point is not the anecdote. The point is the architecture: a right that exists only on paper is not a right. A right that can be exercised changes the system.

Dignity Audits have also changed the trade conversation. Firms that demonstrate clean labour practices, fair contracts, decent accommodation and transparent recruitment now use certification as a competitive advantage. The labour reform, designed first as a moral and governance correction, has become a trade asset. Mauritius now defends market access not by diplomatic pleading alone, but by documented compliance.

The worker is no longer the vulnerability.

The worker is the proof.

VI. STREETS, TOWNS AND THE RETURN OF THE PEDESTRIAN

The sixth transformation has been spatial.

The rambardes are not gone from every street in Mauritius. But they have disappeared from major pilot town centres and village cores. In their place are raised crossings, kerb extensions, chicanes, shade trees, narrowed carriageways and geometry that communicates to the driver: you have entered a place where human beings live.

The 30 kilometre per hour town-centre standard, controversial at first, has become accepted wherever it has been properly designed rather than merely signposted. The lesson was simple. Speed is not controlled by signs. Speed is controlled by geometry.

Road deaths have fallen. Pedestrian deaths have fallen more sharply in redesigned areas. These are not statistics about individual virtue. They are statistics about a system. When the street is redesigned, the body survives.

The first National Walkability Index gave citizens a language for what they had always experienced but could not measure. Broken pavements, missing shade, unsafe crossings, inaccessible kerbs and dangerous school routes are now mapped, scored and budgeted. The condition of the pedestrian is no longer invisible.

An elderly woman in Quatre Bornes who had stopped walking alone to the pharmacy began doing so again after a raised crossing and traffic-calming measures were installed near her usual route. The importance of that event cannot be captured by GDP. A street had changed. Her freedom changed with it.

Urban regeneration has begun to reverse the psychology of decline. Port Louis has new pedestrian corridors and activated heritage zones. Rose Hill has recovered parts of its cultural life through public space programming and restored walkability. Curepipe has begun to reconnect its garden, climate, heritage and town centre. Beau Bassin, Vacoas and Mahébourg have begun their own local regeneration sequences.

These towns are not yet what they must become. A generation of extraction cannot be reversed in three years. But decline is no longer the governing direction.

Here, emergence has been especially visible. Safer streets increased walking. Walking increased shopfront activity. Shopfront activity helped small businesses. Small businesses made streets livelier. Livelier streets improved perceptions of safety. Improved safety brought families back into town centres. What began as traffic calming became local economic development. What began as pavement reform became civic recovery.

The Republic has begun to understand that public space is not decoration. It is economic infrastructure, health infrastructure, democratic infrastructure and emotional infrastructure.

One transformation in the Spatial Republic had consequences that extended well beyond the spatial.

The Fleet That Improved Itself

In 2026, the One-In, One-Out Vehicle Rule was presented as a ceiling. Its architects expected it to stop growth. What they did not fully anticipate was that it would also change the composition of the fleet in ways that no emissions regulation, no duty schedule, and no awareness campaign had previously achieved.

The mechanism was the deregistration certificate.

When the right to register a new vehicle acquired a market price, the economics of keeping an old vehicle on the road changed permanently. Before the rule, an owner of an aging, heavily polluting vehicle faced a simple calculation : pay for repairs to pass the annual fitness test, or scrap the vehicle and receive nothing. The deregistration certificate introduced a third option. An owner whose vehicle was approaching the end of its roadworthy life could deregister it voluntarily, receive a certificate, and sell that certificate to a dealer or importer who needed it to bring a newer vehicle onto the island. The financial return on voluntary early retirement was, in many cases, higher than the residual value of the aging vehicle itself.

The result was not planned. It emerged from the structure.

Within eighteen months of the rule taking effect, the average age of the Mauritian private vehicle fleet had begun to fall measurably. Vehicles that would previously have remained on the road until they failed their annual fitness test were being retired voluntarily, years earlier, because their deregistration right had become a tradeable asset. The proportion of vehicles failing their annual roadworthiness inspection declined : not because standards had been lowered, but because the oldest and most deteriorated vehicles were leaving the fleet before they reached the point of failure.

The Air Quality Monitoring Network recorded the first improvement. Particulate matter concentrations at monitoring stations in Port Louis, Curepipe and Quatre Bornes began to fall within two years of the rule taking effect : earlier than the Ministry of Health had projected under any of its modelling scenarios. The improvement was not attributable to a single policy. But the correlation with the accelerated retirement of pre-2015 vehicles from the fleet was documented in the first Annual Fleet Quality Report published by the NLTA in 2028.

The second emergence was infrastructural and entirely unpredicted.

Road surface deterioration is not linear. Heavier, older vehicles impose disproportionate wear on road surfaces relative to lighter, more modern ones. As the composition of the Mauritian fleet shifted : within the same ceiling : toward lighter and more fuel-efficient vehicles, the rate of surface deterioration began to slow on several key corridors. The Roads Authority reported a measurable reduction in pothole formation frequency on the Curepipe-Port Louis corridor within two years. The saving in road maintenance expenditure : unbudgeted, unplanned : was sufficient to fund the resurfacing of three secondary roads in the first year alone. A rule designed to cap the quantity of vehicles had, as a secondary consequence, reduced the damage those vehicles caused to the public infrastructure they shared.

The third emergence was financial, and it surprised even those who had designed the instrument.

The deregistration certificate market generated a volume of transactions that Statistics Mauritius began tracking in 2028 as a new category of asset transfer. Certificate prices settled at levels that reflected genuine road space scarcity : higher than most had projected, because demand for vehicle registration remained strong while supply of certificates was constrained by the ceiling. The vehicle trade organised the matching of registrations and deregistrations efficiently and at commercial scale. The proceeds flowed partly into the Sovereign Green Mobility Fund through the transaction levy, financing electric bus procurement and cycling infrastructure at a pace that the original Budget allocation had not anticipated. By 2029, the Fund had received sufficient revenue to advance the electrification of three major bus routes by two years ahead of schedule.

A fourth emergence was social and the most quietly consequential of all.

The rule changed the conversation about vehicle ownership. For the first time, Mauritians encountered the concept that road space is finite and that occupying it has a cost beyond the purchase price of the vehicle. The deregistration certificate made that cost visible and tradeable. A household that chose not to own a car : or to retire an old one without replacing it : received a financial return for that choice. A household that wanted to own a vehicle contributed, through the certificate market, to the retirement of an older one. The transaction made the social arithmetic of road space legible in a way that no public awareness campaign had ever achieved.

By 2029, the fleet had not shrunk. The ceiling held at 433,111 private passenger vehicles. But the fleet that occupied that ceiling was measurably cleaner, measurably younger, and measurably lighter than the fleet of 2026. The road that stopped growing began, quietly, to improve.

VII. FROM BARBED WIRE TO CIVIC PRESENCE: DRUGS, CRIME AND YOUTH POSSIBILITY

In 2026, the drug crisis in Mauritius was discussed mainly in the language of seizures, arrests, treatment centres and despair.

By 2029, that language had not disappeared. It could not. The crisis had been too deep, too profitable, too embedded in networks of dependency and exclusion to be solved by rhetoric or by one budget cycle. But the curve had begun to bend.

The change did not come from one measure.

It came from the architecture.

The National Drug Prevention and Treatment System created the first unified framework linking prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration. The Financial Crimes Commission began following the money rather than merely counting the couriers. Youth enterprise programmes gave young people entry points into the formal economy. Creative Laboratories gave students spaces to make, perform, record, design and belong. Community gardens gave neighbourhoods places of work, encounter and responsibility. The Safe Streets Programme made streets more walkable. Town regeneration brought life back into places that had been surrendering to abandonment.

The drug offer did not disappear. But in many places, it became less alone.

That was the first emergence.

A young person who spends an afternoon in a Creative Laboratory is not automatically protected from drugs. A young entrepreneur who receives a first public contract is not automatically secure. A teenager who helps in a community garden is not automatically saved. But when these experiences accumulate, when a young person has somewhere to go, something to build, someone who expects them, and a visible path into dignity, the chemical exit becomes less rational.

The Architecture did not preach morality to the excluded.

It created alternatives to exclusion.

The second emergence took place in the neighbourhood.

In 2026, fear had become part of the urban landscape. It was visible on walls: barbed wire, iron spikes, cameras, grilles, higher gates, gates within gates. The architecture of fear had entered the

Mauritian street. Families fortified themselves because they no longer trusted the street to protect them. Security had become private, household by household.

The Safe Communities Compact changed the direction of public safety.

It did not begin with another mega-project. It did not begin with a new command centre. It did not begin with a promise that more cameras would restore confidence. Mauritius had already learned the lesson of the Safe City model: a camera may record fear, but it does not cure it.

The Compact began instead with a simpler proposition.

The police remain the lawful authority. The neighbourhood becomes the early-warning system.

By 2029, recognised Civic Neighbourhood Watch groups were operating across most residential areas. Their function was deliberately limited and deliberately lawful: observe, record, report, alert, support vulnerable neighbours, identify patterns, and meet the police through structured channels. They did not arrest. They did not confront. They did not search. They did not punish. Their legitimacy came precisely from the fact that they were not vigilantes. They were citizens organised within the law.

This distinction mattered.

Because the State did not outsource policing to the citizen. It restored the citizen to the safety architecture of the State.

Each recognised group had a named Community Safety Officer. Each police station maintained a register of its groups, meeting schedules, unresolved issues and follow-up actions. Six-monthly meetings became routine; in higher-risk areas, quarterly meetings became the norm. What had once been informal complaint, private anxiety or neighbourhood gossip became structured intelligence: broken lighting, repeated suspicious movement, abandoned houses, vulnerable elderly residents, unsafe routes to school, drug-sale signals, patterns of theft, nuisance points, and places where public order was beginning to thin.

The early warning function proved more powerful than anticipated. In 2028, a Watch in Quatre Bornes reported a pattern of unfamiliar vehicles near an abandoned house. The information, passed through the secure channel, led to a significant seizure of synthetic drugs. The Watch received no reward: the Compact had deliberately rejected the informant model and its corrupting incentives. What the Watch members received was a public acknowledgment from the station commander and the knowledge that they had made their street safer. That was enough. And it became, in neighbourhood after neighbourhood, the model of what civic partnership with the police could look like.

The result was not dramatic at first.

It was cumulative.

Police officers began to know streets before incidents occurred. Residents began to know officers before emergencies occurred. Shopkeepers reported earlier. Elderly persons living alone were identified sooner. Schools knew which officer to contact. Municipal councils received safety-trigger notices when lighting failed, plots were overgrown or abandoned buildings became disorder points. A dark road ceased to be dismissed as a minor maintenance issue. It became part of the public-safety system.

This was the third emergence.

Law and order ceased to be only a police matter.

A broken streetlight became a safety matter. An abandoned plot became a safety matter. An unlit bus stop became a safety matter. An empty lane beside a school became a safety matter. A municipality that ignored these signals was no longer merely inefficient. It was contributing to the conditions of fear.

The Safe Communities Compact therefore changed the accountability of institutions that had never thought of themselves as part of law and order. Municipalities, district councils and village councils became co-producers of safety. The police remained responsible for crime. But the environment that made crime easier, and fear more reasonable, now belonged to the whole local state.

The fourth emergence was trust.

Not trust as slogan. Trust as repeated contact.

A patrol that once moved through a street without speaking became a visit. A station that once appeared only after a complaint became a familiar institution. A resident who once hesitated to report a pattern now had a known channel. A police officer who once saw a neighbourhood only through incidents began to see it through people.

That changed the psychology of safety.

In the National Wellbeing Survey conducted by Statistics Mauritius, the proportion of citizens who reported feeling safe walking in their neighbourhood after dark rose from thirty-four percent in 2026 to sivty-one percent in 2029. The proportion who reported that they would contact the police if they witnessed a crime rose from forty-two percent to sixty-three percent. These are not triumph numbers. They are proof of direction. Decades of institutional withdrawal and eroded trust cannot be reversed in three years. But the direction has changed. And in a republic whose citizens had nearly stopped believing that reporting a crime would produce a response, the direction is everything.

The presence of a Civic Neighbourhood Watch did not mean that every street became safe. It meant that abandonment was less credible. Someone was watching lawfully. Someone was reporting. Someone would ask at the next meeting what had been done. Someone would compare the promise with the follow-up. Public safety moved from episodic reaction to continuous relationship.

The fifth emergence was spatial.

The Safe Streets Programme had already slowed vehicles and restored the pedestrian. Urban regeneration had already returned people to town centres. Community gardens had already created shared local spaces. The Safe Communities Compact connected these physical changes to social confidence.

An inhabited street became harder to capture.

A lit street became easier to use.

A known officer became easier to approach.

A neighbour became more than the person behind the wall.

This is how the barbed wire began to lose its logic. It did not disappear everywhere. Fear accumulated over years; it recedes slowly. But in Watch-covered areas, the next renovation did not always add another layer of fortification. Some walls were softened by planting. Some gates were lowered. Some residents who would once have retreated indoors began sitting outside again. Shopfronts stayed open later. School routes became more populated. Evening walks returned in places where evening had become a time of retreat.

The civic meaning was immense.

A republic does not become safe when every home becomes a fortress. It becomes safe when the street itself begins to recover trust.

The sixth emergence was the most unexpected.

The Compact improved the quality of democratic citizenship.

People who first met to discuss lighting, burglaries, abandoned plots and drug-sale signals began to discuss pavements, school routes, gardens, bus stops and town cleanliness. Safety became the entry point into local democracy. The Neighbourhood Watch did not remain a crime instrument. It became a civic habit: meeting, reporting, following up, asking the State to act, and learning the difference between complaint and responsibility.

That is emergence.

A law-and-order measure became a school of citizenship.

A police liaison became a bridge to municipal accountability.

A neighbourhood meeting became a forum for public space.

A fear of crime became a practice of community.

The Architecture of Transformation had not promised that no crime would occur. Serious government does not promise impossibilities. What it promised was that fear would no longer be left to organise itself privately, one wall at a time. It promised that the State would no longer answer social insecurity only with expensive devices, remote control rooms and procurement contracts. It promised that public safety would be rebuilt where public safety is actually experienced: in the lane, outside the school, near the bus stop, around the shop, beside the neighbour, at the police station whose officers know the territory they serve.

By 2029, the Safe City model had become what it always should have been: one tool among many, subordinate to human intelligence, local trust and accountable policing.

The Safe Communities Compact became something larger.

It became the civic infrastructure of everyday safety.

The barbed wire on the wall had been the symptom.

Civic presence became the cure.

The M4 That Was Never Built: A Lesson in Institutional Courage

The M4 motorway was not built.

That sentence, written three years after the announcement of a Rs 10.8 billion commitment, still surprises those who did not witness the sequence of events between June and December 2026. It is worth recording that sequence precisely, because it illustrates something this Budget argued in the abstract and the Republic subsequently demonstrated in practice: that evidence, when it enters public discourse at the right moment, can alter the trajectory of even a committed project.

The turning point did not come from a political party. It came from a question. What problem, precisely, was the M4 motorway intended to solve?

When the project was first announced, its cancellation appeared politically impossible. It had already been incorporated into official infrastructure planning. Funding discussions with India had advanced. Construction was expected to commence before the end of the year. Government communication presented the motorway as a strategic necessity for mobility, tourism and economic development in the East. Yet within six months, the project had become the subject of one of the most significant public policy debates of the decade.

As citizens, journalists, academics, environmental organisations and professional bodies began examining the proposal, an uncomfortable reality emerged. While the project had been justified through references to future growth and increasing vehicle ownership, no updated socio-economic evaluation had been published. The feasibility study repeatedly cited in support of the motorway dated from 2012 and had never been subjected to independent public scrutiny. The vocabulary that made this examination possible had entered public discourse on 19 June 2026, the day this Alternative Budget Speech was delivered. By that afternoon, citizens had been given not a slogan but a vocabulary. Induced demand. Value capture. The Downs Law. The 430,000 vehicles. The half-line in Pravind Jugnauth's government budget. Precise tools, in the hands of citizens who had been told for twenty years that infrastructure was too complex for them to question, are dangerous to the architecture of opacity.

Within three weeks of the budget speech, something unusual happened in the National Assembly. Three government backbenchers, in separate interventions, asked the Minister of Infrastructure the same four questions this Budget had posed: Was the 2012 feasibility study still valid? Had induced demand been modelled? What were the financing terms of the Indian credit line? And what value capture mechanism would protect the taxpayer from subsidising private land valorisation in the North-East corridor? The Minister answered none of them satisfactorily. The transcript of those exchanges was shared forty thousand times.

The pension context amplified everything. The Budget 2025-2026 had raised the Basic Retirement Pension eligibility age from 60 to 65, generating the most sustained public anger the government had faced since its election. Petitions had reached the Supreme Court. Citizens aged 60 to 64, who had planned their lives around a universal pension that was now five years away, were being offered an income-tested Income Support scheme that felt, to many of them, like a means-tested humiliation in place of a universal right. Into this atmosphere, the government announced Rs 10.8 billion for a motorway. The arithmetic wrote itself on every social media wall in the country. Rs 10.8 billion would have funded the Basic Retirement Pension at its original eligibility age for almost two years. Citizens, now equipped with the analytical language of the alternative budget, understood that choice with a clarity no previous political moment had offered them.

The debate rapidly expanded. Environmental groups questioned the impact of further automobile dependence in a country already struggling with land pressure and climate vulnerability. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Nature Mauritius and a coalition of independent scientists published a joint statement identifying three silences in the project's environmental record: the aquifer recharge zones the motorway would seal along the North-East corridor; the carbon footprint of construction and thirty years of induced traffic against Mauritius's NDC commitments; and the ecological corridor fragmentation between the Ferney Valley and the coastal wetlands that the project's environmental note had not modelled. Urban planners argued that the motorway would encourage dispersed development rather than strengthen existing towns and villages.

Citizens then invoked, for the first time in a live political campaign, the Freedom of Information framework that the Alliance du Changement had promised during the November 2024 elections. They requested the full financing terms of the Indian credit line, the traffic modelling data underlying the project, and the list of landowners in the North-East corridor whose assets would be valorised by the infrastructure. The government, which had promised transparency as a founding commitment, found itself unable to refuse without contradicting its own manifesto. What the documents revealed when released in September 2026 was damaging not because the government had acted illegally but because they confirmed what the alternative budget had said:

no updated socio-economic appraisal existed. The financing terms included a tied procurement clause binding the project to Indian suppliers. And the land registry data, cross-referenced by an independent urban economist, showed that four large landholding entities stood to benefit from a combined land value uplift estimated at between Rs 8 and Rs 12 billion. The State was about to spend Rs 10.8 billion to generate Rs 10 billion in private gain for four entities that had contributed nothing to the cost.

The association with the previous administration proved politically damaging. Public discussion repeatedly returned to the fact that the motorway had first appeared in the final budget of the previous government, alongside several other projects that had become associated with cost overruns, weak evaluation and uncertain public benefit. The argument that the M4 represented a new development vision became progressively harder to sustain.

The most influential intervention came during parliamentary hearings on infrastructure expenditure in November 2026. A member of the governing majority advanced an argument that would subsequently become widely quoted. Mauritius, he observed, possessed something many destinations spent billions attempting to create: a scenic coastal route connecting the North and the East through fishing villages, canefield estuaries, small temples, rum distilleries and sea views that formed part of the country's tourism identity. The purpose of tourism infrastructure was not merely to move people as quickly as possible from one point to another. It was to enhance the experience of place. An express motorway offered speed. The coastal road offered Mauritius.

The argument resonated because it reframed the issue entirely. At the same time, traffic data released during the Freedom of Information process demonstrated that congestion levels on the corridor were significantly lower than public perception had suggested. Delays existed at specific bottlenecks and intersections. But the evidence did not support the claim of a systemic mobility crisis requiring Rs 10.8 billion. There was no congestion. There had never been congestion on that road. The problem the motorway was designed to solve did not exist where it was being built. It existed on the M1 and the M2, where no motorway was being planned.

The Government withdrew the M4 commitment on 18 December 2026. The announcement was brief. No minister claimed credit. The Rs 10.8 billion was reallocated: Rs 3 billion to the restoration of the Basic Retirement Pension at age 60, effective January 2027; Rs 2.5 billion to bus rapid transit infrastructure on the congested M1 corridor; Rs 2 billion to a national fibre optic completion programme; Rs 1.8 billion to the first phase of the Coastal Heritage Trail, a nonmotorised pathway connecting the fishing villages, wetlands and cultural sites of the North-East coast into a public amenity that no private developer could enclose; and the balance to the National Water Infrastructure Fund, to repair what decades of neglect had damaged beneath the feet of the very communities the motorway had claimed to serve.

For perhaps the first time in modern Mauritian history, a major infrastructure project was not abandoned because financing collapsed, because a government changed, or because implementation failed. It was abandoned because public scrutiny worked. The M4 became the moment when evidence acquired greater political weight than announcement.

The Architecture of Transformation did not cancel the M4. The citizens who had read the analysis, understood the vocabulary, and exercised the rights the architecture had given them cancelled it. The document became a tool. The tool became a conversation. The conversation became a verdict.

That is what institutional courage looks like when it begins not at the top but at the desk of a citizen who has finally been given the information they were always owed.

VIII. PRODUCTIVITY, TALENT AND THE BRAIN THAT BEGAN TO RETURN

The eighth transformation has been productive capability.

The National Productivity Council has published three State of Productivity reports. Mauritius now possesses firm-level and sector-level productivity baselines for priority sectors. Incentives are no longer granted merely because a firm is large, established, visible or politically connected. Firms seeking public support must show productivity gains through capital deepening, skills upgrading, technology adoption, process redesign or export performance.

This has changed the language of economic policy. Productivity is no longer a slogan placed in a budget speech. It is a measured condition attached to public support.

The Automation and Productive Capital Fund has financed firm-level modernisation in manufacturing, logistics, agro-processing and services. Repetitive low-value manual work has begun to decline in firms that invested early. Workers displaced by automation have not been abandoned. The AI Reskilling Programme has trained workers in AI supervision, algorithmic audit, data governance, cyber resilience, digital workflow management and human-in-the-loop quality control.

The AI Displacement Early Warning System gave the business process outsourcing sector advance notice of disruption. Layoffs occurred. They were managed. The difference between disruption and abandonment is preparation.

The Sovereign AI Research Node at the University of Mauritius has launched its first applied tools for Indian Ocean trade logistics, maritime documentation and regional compliance workflows. These tools do not compete with Silicon Valley. They serve what Mauritius can credibly understand: the legal, linguistic, commercial and logistical specificities of its region. That is created wealth : not borrowed fashion.

The brain drain has also begun to change. It has not reversed completely. But the net outflow of tertiary-educated young Mauritians has slowed, and documented returns have increased in fields linked to technology, finance, logistics, biotechnology, design, energy and regulation. The most interesting effect was not merely that some skilled Mauritians returned. It was what their presence catalysed.

Returned professionals began forming networks with local entrepreneurs, universities, banks, diaspora contacts and private investors. Small pools of venture funding emerged. Deep-tech and applied-services start-ups began to appear around logistics, compliance, agro-technology, renewable services and cultural production. The State did not design every link. It created a country in which the links could form.

A country retains talent not by asking its people to be patriotic, but by becoming worthy of their ambition.

IX. THE SME REPUBLIC AND THE STATE AS FIRST CLIENT

The ninth transformation has been enterprise.

The Local Procurement Mandate has made the State an anchor client for small businesses. Ministries, parastatals and public institutions now report the share of eligible procurement sourced from Mauritian SMEs. Youth-owned enterprises benefit from reserved sub-quotas. Small food producers, maintenance firms, design studios, local manufacturers, digital service providers, cultural enterprises and neighbourhood businesses have entered supply chains that were previously closed to them.

The Single SME Gateway has reduced the confusion of schemes, forms and overlapping agencies. Entrepreneurs no longer need to become experts in bureaucracy before they can become business owners. The Youth Enterprise Compact has helped young Mauritians register quickly, access first-business support, receive mentorship and compete for public contracts.

Not every enterprise survives. No serious enterprise policy can promise that. But many more young Mauritians now receive a first serious chance.

This has produced one of the clearest forms of brain retention. A young Mauritian who can build something at home is less likely to leave only because the country offered no entry point. The SME Republic has therefore done more than support businesses. It has changed the emotional relationship between youth and the future.

The redesigned Economic Development Board has also begun to operate differently. It no longer functions primarily as a generic promoter of Mauritius. It works through ecosystems. The Full Chain Principle has changed export policy. Mauritius no longer spends public money marketing sectors that are not ready to supply. Export Development Portfolios identify firms with real export potential and support them through standards, certification, packaging, finance, buyer requirements, logistics and follow-up.

Trade missions now publish outcomes: firms taken, buyers met, contracts signed, follow-up status. A mission that produces nothing is no longer repeated as ritual.

Promotion follows capability.

Marketing follows production.

Visibility follows readiness.

The first results are modest but real. More firms are exporting. More firms remain exporters after their first transaction. Export concentration has begun to decline in selected niches. Small producers connected to food, design, cultural goods, specialised services and digital capability have entered markets they previously could not reach because no institution had held the full chain from production readiness to buyer confidence.

X. CULTURE, IMAGINATION AND THE WELLBEING REPUBLIC

The tenth transformation has been human.

In 2026, the Alternative Budget made an argument no Mauritian budget had made with such force: culture is the infrastructure of imagination. Not decoration. Not only heritage. Not only an industry. The cognitive foundation of creativity, innovation, memory, confidence and national identity.

By 2029, this argument has begun to reshape education.

Creative Laboratories are operational in most state secondary schools. Students produce films, podcasts, community archives, design projects, theatre fragments, digital prototypes, music and local history work. The laboratories are uneven, as real reforms always are. Some are vibrant. Some require stronger teachers, better equipment and more disciplined support. But where they work, they have changed the meaning of schooling.

Children are not only absorbing information for examinations.

They are making things.

A child who makes something experiences, perhaps for the first time, that imagination produces value. That experience is not reversible. It is the cognitive foundation of everything the Productivity Republic requires and the Wellbeing Republic depends on.

The National Cultural Memory Programme has begun recording oral histories, songs, proverbs, rituals, languages, culinary practices, community narratives and local ecological knowledge across Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands. The archive is already being used in schools and local creative projects. Culture is no longer only something to preserve after development. It is one of the sources from which development draws imagination.

The MASA reform has become a symbol of cultural seriousness. The forensic audit identified undistributed royalties. Distribution rules were clarified. A rules-based system was legislated. Royalty payments became more transparent and timely. Artists who had been receiving state subsistence grants while their own earnings sat in institutional accounts began to receive what they were owed.

The distinction between charity and justice matters. It changes the relationship between the creator and the Republic from supplication to entitlement.

The National Wellbeing Survey has also changed the conversation. It asks citizens not only what they consume, but how they live: whether they feel safe, whether they trust institutions, whether their children have opportunities, whether public services treat them with dignity, whether they experience loneliness, stress, belonging and hope. Its results are now debated alongside economic indicators.

GDP no longer stands alone.

The National NCD Prevention Council has connected health policy to food, urban design, public procurement and education. Stronger nutrition standards apply in public institutions. Fresh produce support is increasingly linked to domestic growers and community gardens. Prevention remains politically harder than hospital construction. But the shift has begun. Mauritius is finally treating diabetes, obesity and chronic disease not merely as medical outcomes, but as biological results of an economic and spatial environment.

Mental health services have expanded through community-based points of access. School-based early intervention has begun. The crisis response system has greater reach. Mauritius still has too few specialists. But mental health is no longer treated as a silent private burden. It is recognised as economic infrastructure and civic responsibility.

Here again, emergence appeared. Community gardens strengthened social connection. Safer streets reduced daily stress. Creative Laboratories gave young people expressive tools. Youth enterprise gave them economic entry. Cultural memory strengthened belonging. Food reform improved health. These were separate measures in the speech. In life, they became one wellbeing architecture.

XI. INTEGRITY, COMPETITION AND DEMOCRATIC PREPAREDNESS

The eleventh transformation has been institutional trust.

The Political Party Financing Act has ended the era of total opacity in political money. Cash donations above the legal threshold are prohibited. Party accounts are audited. Large donations are disclosed. Public asset declarations for elected officials and senior public officers have begun. The system is not immune to evasion. No system ever is. But citizens now possess tools to ask how politics is financed and how public power relates to private wealth.

The Financial Crimes Commission, strengthened by statutory guarantees of operational and financial independence, has begun to operate with greater credibility. The deeper achievement is not that corruption has disappeared. It has not. The achievement is that impunity is less comfortable. The shadow between unexplained wealth and public power is no longer so easily normalised.

The Competition Commission Reform Act has also changed the economic conversation. Pre-merger notification has altered corporate behaviour. Transactions that once would have proceeded quietly now require examination. The Market Concentration Review has made visible the degree to which land, logistics, distribution, retail, finance, construction and access to strategic markets remain concentrated. Abuse-of-dominance investigations have begun. Dominant firms can no longer assume that size itself will operate as immunity.

This has not dismantled concentrated economic power. Such power is deeply embedded and politically resilient. But it has ended the fiction that Mauritius can build an SME Republic while ignoring the market structures that prevent SMEs from growing. Competition is now part of development policy. SMEs now have a stronger institutional ally when dominant actors abuse market position.

The Democratic Preparedness and Opposition Support Act has produced a quieter but important change. The Parliamentary Opposition Research and Policy Service now provides research, fiscal analysis, legislative drafting support and sectoral briefings. Opposition is no longer condemned to improvisation, slogans and press conferences. Shadow portfolios have begun to function as preparation for government. This reform benefits not one party, but the Republic. Better scrutiny produces better government. Alternation begins to mean readiness rather than amnesia.

XII. WHAT THE ARCHITECTURE BUILT THAT NO ARCHITECTURE COULD PREDICT

This is the section that could not have been written in 2026.

An architecture cannot predict all the forms of life that will inhabit it. It can only create the conditions under which positive connections become possible. It aligns incentives. It makes information public. It gives institutions mandates. It links expenditure to outcomes. It removes escape hatches. It makes irresponsibility visible. And then, if it is genuinely an architecture and not merely a catalogue, one reform begins to reinforce another in ways that no single ministry could have planned.

The State Land Register strengthened food sovereignty by identifying idle agricultural land.

Food sovereignty strengthened wellbeing through community gardens and healthier public procurement.

Community gardens strengthened social cohesion.

Social cohesion supported mental health.

Safer streets made access to gardens, schools and town centres possible without a car.

Town-centre regeneration helped SMEs survive.

SME procurement gave young enterprises their first client.

Youth enterprise changed the emotional relationship between young Mauritians and their future.

Creative Laboratories fed the creative economy.

Cultural memory enriched education, tourism and local identity.

Rooftop solar created energy literacy and local technical skills.

Dignity Audits converted labour reform into trade credibility.

Productivity measurement improved the quality of public incentives.

Public investment appraisal prevented waste before it occurred.

Audit implementation recovered public money already lost.

Competition reform opened space for smaller firms.

The Parliamentary Budget Office made all of it harder to disguise, exaggerate or quietly abandon.

This is emergence.

It is what happens when a budget stops being a catalogue of measures and becomes an architecture.

The deepest change is this: consequence has entered the Mauritian State.

Before 2026, too many things carried no consequence. A project could be announced and not delivered. A procurement exemption could conceal a major contract. A feasibility study could be absent. An audit recommendation could be ignored. A public lease could remain invisible. A subsidy could continue without evaluation. A trade mission could return without contracts. A minister could promise without returning to account.

By 2029, consequence has entered the system.

A project requires appraisal.

A policy faces evaluation.

An audit requires action.

A budget returns for accountability.

A State land lease faces public scrutiny.

An export scheme requires documented outcomes.

A wellbeing claim meets survey evidence.

A productivity incentive requires productivity proof.

A public investment carries a named accountable institution.

This does not make Mauritius perfect. It makes the State answerable.

And that is the beginning of seriousness.

XIII. THE LEAN REPUBLIC: WHAT THE CABINET STRUCTURE UNLOCKED

In 2026, the Architecture of Transformation announced that the Cabinet of Mauritius would be limited to twelve ministers, that Junior Ministers would be abolished, and that the office of Vice-President would be eliminated. The conventional response was predictable: commentators calculated the salary savings, noted the reduction in official vehicles, and filed the reform under fiscal austerity.

They were wrong.

The Lean Republic was never about saving money. It was about creating a government structure capable of delivering the Architecture of Transformation. The savings were the least important part. What changed was the geometry of the State. And when the geometry changes, the system behaves differently : generating institutional capacities that were structurally impossible under the old layout.

By 2029, the emergent properties of that structure have become visible. None of them were predicted. All of them were consequential.

First: collective responsibility became real.

A Cabinet of thirty ministers is not a Cabinet. It is a crowd. Responsibility diffuses. When a policy fails, ministers point to other ministers. When a portfolio underperforms, the Prime Minister has too many appointments to monitor and too many loyalties to manage. A Cabinet of twelve is small enough that every member knows every portfolio. When a minister fails, there is nowhere to hide. In 2028, for the first time in Mauritian history, a Prime Minister dismissed a minister for non-delivery : not for scandal, not for political disloyalty, but because the minister's performance indicators had missed their targets for two consecutive quarters. The dismissal was not contested. The architecture had made the failure visible, and the smallness of the Cabinet had made the accountability inescapable.

Second: the portfolios were the Architecture of Transformation made executable.

The list of twelve portfolios published in 2026 was not an administrative convenience. It was a constitutional document. It announced that the government would be organised around doctrine, not around pressure groups. The connections were deliberate. The Minister for Food, Land, Agriculture, Fisheries and Ocean Economy held the State Land Public Patrimony Act in one hand and the food sovereignty programme in the other : for the first time, the institution responsible for land could not allocate it for luxury developments without simultaneously answering for the food production that land was being removed from. The Minister for Labour, Migration and Human Capital held the Labour Sovereignty Compact : the connection between what Mauritius imported in labour and what it failed to develop domestically became one minister's accountability rather than a gap between three ministries. The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Housing and Spatial Planning held the Spatial Republic and the Fifteen-Minute Community Principle : spatial planning and infrastructure were no longer separate construction pipelines but one physical doctrine with one accountable owner. By 2029, this structure had become self-reinforcing. New ministers enter a Cabinet whose shape already embodies the national strategy. They do not reshape the Cabinet. The Cabinet reshapes them.

Third: the abolition of Junior Ministers ended the legal no-man's land.

For decades, Junior Ministers operated in a constitutional void. They had no portfolio, no budget, no vote in Cabinet, and no accountability. They existed to manage political expectations, not to deliver public value. Their abolition forced a choice: either a function is important enough to have a full minister with a published performance contract, or it is not important enough to have a minister at all. The result was not fewer people working on important problems. The result was that every important problem now has a named, accountable, constitutionally visible minister. The shadow government of Junior Ministers, accountable to no one, simply disappeared. Regional development returned to the transparent statutory ledger of elected Municipal and District Councils. The professional civil service was freed from arbitrary political dictation. The Permanent Secretary recovered institutional importance : strong enough to manage, senior enough to be trusted, and finally carrying the authority that the post had always implied but rarely exercised.

Fourth: the absence of a Vice-President clarified succession without redundancy.

The Vice-President had no independent constitutional function. The President remains head of state; the Chief Justice remains the designated successor in case of incapacity. The abolition of the Vice-Presidency removed a layer of ceremonial expense without creating a single gap in the constitutional order. No citizen noticed the absence. The Republic continued to function. That was the proof: the post had never been necessary. But the deeper consequence was a principle. Public office could no longer be defended merely because it existed. **The reform of one symbolic office became a standard applied across the machinery of the State** : boards were reviewed, advisory bodies rationalised, committees that had not met or had duplicated functions were dissolved. Intellectual honesty at the summit of constitutional power became the engine of institutional discipline at every tier below it.

Fifth : and most unexpectedly : the Lean Republic changed the quality of parliamentary debate.

With twelve ministers and no junior ministers, the National Assembly now faces a smaller, more visible executive. Opposition scrutiny is no longer dispersed across thirty ministers and ten junior ministers, each able to claim that someone else holds the relevant files. Shadow portfolios now align directly with the twelve ministers. The Democratic Preparedness and Opposition Support Act, announced in 2026, has equipped the Opposition with research capacity that matches the streamlined executive. The result is a higher quality of debate : sharper questions, more precise answers, and less room for evasion.

The Lean Republic did not save Mauritius a significant amount of money. The salaries of ten junior ministers and one Vice-President, in the context of a national budget, are not negligible, but neither are they transformative. What was transformative was the concentration of accountability : the forced prioritisation, the elimination of the constitutional no-man's land, the creation of a Cabinet small enough to govern as a body **rather than as a coalition of fiefdoms**.

These were emergent properties. No forecast predicted them in 2026. But by 2029, they are among the most consequential achievements of the Architecture of Transformation : not because they saved money, but because they made government possible.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE MADE BELIEVABLE

Mauritius is not yet what it can become.

Pension reform remains unfinished. Brain drain has slowed but not disappeared. Water infrastructure remains fragile in parts. The drug crisis has bent but not ended. Economic concentration remains powerful. Some ministries still resist transparency. Some old habits survive because old habits do not disappear merely because a law is passed. These are not omissions. They are the honest residue of three years of serious work in a country whose institutional weaknesses accumulated across a generation.

But the direction of the Republic has changed.

The old State produced announcements and forgot them. The new State records, tracks, evaluates and reports.

The old State allocated land invisibly. The new State publishes the register.

The old State audited after loss. The new State begins to prevent loss.

The old State measured GDP and called it development. The new State measures wellbeing, productivity, trust, walkability, food dependency and delivery.

The old State treated citizens as spectators of budget speeches. The new State gives them dashboards, registers, surveys, evaluations and accountability statements.

The old State believed that development could be performed. The new State is learning that development must be proved.

Three years later, the signs are tangible. Safer streets in pilot towns. Solar panels on ordinary homes. Community gardens beside schools. Public dashboards citizens can consult. State land records online. Audit recommendations tracked. Young entrepreneurs supplying the State. Artists receiving royalties. Migrant labour dependency measured. Major projects appraised before approval. Budget promises reported back to Parliament. Town centres beginning to breathe. Citizens beginning to act with the tools the Republic has given them.

The transformation is not complete.

But it is visible.

And visibility matters. **A country changes when citizens can see that change is possible**. When a pavement is repaired, a lease disclosed, a dashboard published, a project completed, a young enterprise paid, a public garden harvested, a school laboratory filled with student work, a coastal access restored, a ministry held to account, the State sends a signal that compounds across every sector and every household: disorder is not destiny. Decline is not inevitable. Public money can produce public value. Public institutions can learn. The Republic can still act.

That may be the most important result of all.

In 2026, the Alternative Budget said that development is not merely what a country earns. Development is what a country becomes.

In June 2029, Mauritius has not yet become all that it can be.

But it has stopped becoming what it was becoming.

It has begun to become something else: a more disciplined State, a more visible Republic, a more productive economy, a more humane public realm, a more demanding democracy, and a country whose citizens have begun once again to believe that **public action can improve common life**.

The Architecture of Transformation has not completed the future.

It has made the future believable.

The Republic has acquired memory.

The State has acquired discipline.

Citizens have acquired proof.

And proof, in public life, is the beginning of trust.

Drawing on the published reports of the Parliamentary Budget Office, the National Audit Office, and the Bureau National d'Évaluation.

19 June 2029, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius