Built at the cost of Rs 120 m, the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Recreation Centre for the Elderly, extending over four acres of land, is located in a tourist zone along the Belle Mare Coastal Road.

A similar facility is operational at Pointe aux Sables since last year. This centre which is equipped with 32 beds is also a modern one. It caters for elderly persons with severe disabilities and who need constant care and attention.

At the inauguration ceremony, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Government’s commitment to work for the welfare of the elderly. He said that he would like to see the elderly people of Mauritius live with dignity and respect and pledged to provide more facilities to them. He also expressed Government’s intention to increase the old age pension on a yearly basis.

The Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens will provide recreational facilities to elderly citizens, including those who suffer from disabilities but with a reasonable degree of independence. Cultural activities, keep-fit exercises, informative talks and lectures and cross-cultural exchanges through
Sir Anerood commended the efforts made by the authorities and stakeholders alike to overcome the impact of adverse economic conditions resulting from the global financial and economic crisis that occurred in 2009. He expressed hope that the efforts of all parties concerned would continue in 2010 so that the country could undergo further development and become more prosperous.

Sir Anerood however underlined that prosperity and progress would only be meaningful if there were an equitable distribution of wealth. He said he was convinced that the Government, the private sector and citizens alike would join hands and help overcome poverty so that social justice could prevail.

The President expressed deep concern over social flaws prevailing in Mauritius, mainly violence against women and children, drugs and their impact on the family and society, crime, fraud and corruption. He proposed that an audit be carried out and a comprehensive national action plan be devised to address the problem with the participation of all stakeholders, that is, the government, public institutions, the private sector, NGOs and the academia.

Sir Anerood warned the population against the threat posed by ‘the poison of communal division’. He called upon all citizens, especially the youth, to ignore communal prejudice and promote peace, tolerance and harmony, which are essential for progress and development.
Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and Bangladeshi labour on the agenda

The Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh, Dr Dipu Moni, led a six-member delegation to Mauritius in December 2009 to sign a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and to discuss the issue of Bangladeshi workers employed by local companies. Other issues on the agenda of the visit were namely industry, tourism, education and shrimp culture. Dr Moni was received by the Prime Minister.

Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between Bangladesh and Mauritius was signed on 21 December 2009 by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment, Dr Rama Sithanen, and Dr Dipu Moni.

The DTAA is expected to provide greater tax certainty for businessmen while making clear the taxing rights of Mauritius and Bangladesh on all forms of income arising from cross-border economic activities between the two countries. It will help to boost cross-border investment by protecting investors from direct or indirect double taxation and broaden investment opportunities for the business community.

Trade between Bangladesh and Mauritius has been taking an upward trend lately. Over the period 2004 to 2008, imports from Bangladesh increased more than ten-fold and exports more than doubled. The main items exported are manufactured goods, and Mauritius imports mostly cotton yarn, woven fabrics and pharmaceuticals. In the near future, the two countries are also looking forward to concluding an investment Promotion and Protection Agreement.

Bangladeshi workers

Dr Dipu Moni met the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Mr Jean-François Chaumière, to discuss problems related to Bangladeshi workers in Mauritius, mainly regarding passports, and action taken by the Government of Mauritius to address the issue. Minister Chaumière and Minister Moni agreed on the need for closer collaboration between the Passport and Immigration Offices of both countries.

As regards recruitment of workers, Minister Chaumière said he was determined to fight unscrupulous recruiting agents who have been recruiting Bangladeshi workers coming to Mauritius. Minister Moni for her part announced that Bangladeshi authorities were setting up a government body to handle the recruitment process, consequently eliminating this problem of recruiting agents.

Minister Moni was also informed that, pending the implementation of these measures, male Bangladeshi workers would be allowed to work in Mauritius until the expiry of their contract. She suggested that no further recruitment be allowed until the proper mechanism for so doing was set up.

In recent years, economic interactions between the two nations have evolved beyond trade. There are presently some 6 000 Bangladeshi workers employed in several sectors of the Mauritian economy, namely agriculture, construction, health, tourism, ICT and manufacturing.
The European Union has granted additional funds of 10.9 million euros to Mauritius under the Vulnerability FLEX (V-FLEX) mechanism of the 10th EDF Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme. The funds have been granted in recognition of the measures adopted by the Government to face the global financial and economic crisis.

The grant agreement was signed on 17 December 2009 in Port Louis by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment, Dr Rama Sithanen, and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union, Ambassador Alessandro Mariani.

Mauritius already benefits from two envelopes under the 10th EDF. Envelope A, which is predictable, amounts to 51 million euros while envelope B which caters for unforeseen needs has an initial allocation of 12.4 million euros and will increase to more than 23 million euros with the V-FLEX. Over the last three years, Mauritius has benefited from general budget support under the 9th and 10th EDF and from Sugar Accompanying Measures to the tune of 124 million euros.

Further additional funds of 104 million euros will be disbursed over the next two years, bringing the total support over a five-year period to 228 million euros, excluding any possible performance bonus that Mauritius may be entitled to. In addition, Mauritius may also be eligible for additional resources via new instruments such as the Global Climate Change Alliance.

It will be recalled that total resources mobilised In Mauritius to date from the support of all development partners including the EU amount to a total of 2.1 billion euros, out of which some 780 million euros have already been disbursed. Of the total resources, grants amount to 204 million euros and concessional loans make up the rest.
Road Infrastructure
Phase 1 of the Quartier Militaire Road project completed

The first phase of the project consisting in the upgrading of the Quartier Militaire Road has been completed and was inaugurated on 10 December 2009 by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in the presence of the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, Mr Anil Bachoo.

The Quartier Militaire Road (B6) is a 9 km local road network stretching from Wooton roundabout to Quartier Militaire and represents an important link between the Upper Plaines Wilhems region and the Moka and Flacq districts. As such, the upgrading of the road network was deemed necessary in order to accommodate the increasing traffic volume, improve access to the eastern part of the country and promote socio-economic activities in the region. The project is being implemented in two phases; phase 1 entailing road improvement works between Wooton and Belle Rive and the second phase comprising upgrading works from Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire.

The completion of the first phase of the widening and rehabilitation of the existing road over 2.4 km from Wooton to Belle Rive took over eight months and cost some Rs 140 million. Prior to its upgrading, the road was narrow and subject to flooding while its pavement was deteriorated. Works which started in January 2009, involved the widening of 2.4 km of existing road from around 5.7 m to a 7.3 m wide carriageway with a hard shoulder 1.5 m wide. The Couacaud Bridge along the existing road together with other culverts were widened and a crawler lane starting after Couacaud Bridge towards Wooton was constructed. A roundabout at Belle Rive was also built.

As for the second phase of the project, regarding the existing road from Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire, works to the tune of some Rs 725 million are expected to start in 2010. They will include the partial realignment of the existing road over a length of about 7.5 km with 7.4 m wide carriageway from Belle Rive junction to Quartier Militaire, the construction of two new bypasses 7.4 m wide through the villages of Valetta and that of Quartier Militaire over a length of 1.6 km and 3 km respectively and the construction of underpass along Quartier Militaire bypass for the crossing of L’Espérance Road (B51) and the realignment of 150 m of L’Espérance Road as well as four roundabouts.

Provision has also been made for street lighting and resurfacing of the existing road and the construction of footpaths and drains.
The World Bank has granted Mauritius a fourth Development Policy Loan (DPL4) to the tune of 50 million US dollars for general budget support for the transition period from July to December 2009, and a project loan of 50 million US dollars for infrastructure projects, which is equivalent to an envelope of Rs 3.3 billion. DPL4 is the last of the series.

The financing agreement was signed on 3 December 2009, in Port Louis by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment, Dr Rama Sithanen, and the Country Director, World Bank, Mrs. Ruth Kagia. The two loans are designed to stimulate trade and competitiveness for Mauritius as well as lay the foundations for increased infrastructure investments in energy, transport and water sectors that underpin growth and improve people’s lives.

At the signing ceremony, Dr Sithanen hailed the support Mauritius has been getting from its development partners for mobilising resources for infrastructure, adding that Mauritius had already secured the additional funding required. He recalled that recently the Board of the African Development Bank approved a loan of 700 million US dollars to be disbursed in the medium term. Similarly, the Agence Française de Développement is finalising a programme loan of 125 million euros to support cross-cutting environmental projects and the European Union has already disbursed 53.5 million euros and will disburse an additional 104 million euros over the next two years for a total grant of 157.5 million euros.

Mrs. Ruth Kagia, for her part, lauded the proactive efforts of the Government of Mauritius in tackling the financial crisis namely Mauritius’ forward-looking social policy which has helped poorer and vulnerable segments of the population to adapt to a transforming economy, whilst cushioning them from the worst impacts of the global slowdown. She reiterated the World Bank’s commitment to strengthen partnership with Mauritius as well as to collaborate with other development partners in supporting the country to achieve sustainable and long-term economic growth necessary for fighting poverty and improving poor peoples’ lives.

It will be recalled that the total budget support for Mauritius over the past four years from all the development partners namely World Bank, European Commission, African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement and the UNDP, amounts to some USD 280 million of which USD 160 million come from the World Bank. The Agence Française de Développement has already disbursed some USD 90 million and the African Development Bank some USD 30 million.
Prior to the launching of the campaign, the ICTA invited stakeholders both from the private and public sectors among whom mobile phone operators, consumer organisations, the Mauritius Police Force and the State Law Office, to come forward with administrative and regulatory proposals to curtail mobile phone theft.

Following that exercise and to kick off the campaign, the ICTA in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and mobile phone operators embarked upon the ‘1 portab kokin= 1 portab selé’ (1 stolen cell phone= 1 disabled cell phone) operation on 10 December. The project aims at urging the general public to make use of the phone International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI). The IMEI is a unique 15-digit electronic serial number identifying a specific handset in use on a mobile network. In case of loss or theft, the user can ask the police to communicate the phone IMEI number to all local mobile network providers in order to block the phone and make it useless. It is expected that the initiative to render any stolen handset valueless will reduce mobile theft in the country.

In addition to the program, the ICTA issued a series of guidelines on December 14 to sensitise customers and future cell phone owners on measures to be taken to safeguard their interest and their handset. The guidelines advocate the purchase of mobile handsets from authorized dealers featuring on the list compiled by the ICTA, the request for receipt or proof of ownership for second-hand mobile phone, registration of SIM Card as required by the law, the use of the cell phone’s security features, some form of personal identification on the phone and battery, and the identification as well as record of one’s phone IMEI.

Other measures taken by the ICTA to curtail mobile phone thefts are the issue of a certificate to authorised cell phone dealers who would have to display the certificate in a conspicuous place in the showroom and the compiling of the list of authorised dealers to be published on the ICTA’s website and in the newspapers on a regular basis. The ICTA has also sought the Customs Department’s cooperation to regulate the import of mobile phones in bulk.
### Law and Order

#### CCTV surveillance for Port Louis and Grand Baie

Port Louis and Grand Baie are to be covered by CCTV surveillance next year. The contract agreement for the construction of the surveillance system and for the provision of a digital radio communication system was signed in Port Louis on 10 December 2009 by the Commissioner of Police, Mr D. I. Rampersad, and the General manager of China International Telecommunication Construction Corporation, Mr Ren Yalin.

The above facilities are being financed with the support of the government of the People’s Republic of China to the tune of around Rs 305m.

272 surveillance cameras would be installed in Port Louis and 69 in the tourist resort of Grand Baie.

The regions of Port Louis to be covered by CCTV would be the stretch from Caudan roundabout to Roche Bois roundabout, Roche Bois, Abercrombie, Cité Briquetterie, Cité la Cure, Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot, Champ de Mars, Bell Village, La Butte, Marie Reine de la Paix and Le Goulet.

Besides preventing and detecting crime and providing public security, the CCTV surveillance system will serve to monitor traffic and to gather evidence from scenes of criminal offence.

As regards the digital radio communication system, it will serve to modernise the communication facilities of the Mauritius Police Force, enabling various agencies to communicate effectively and coordinate police actions and operations.

The implementation of both projects, to start in January 2010, would be completed around May 2010.

---

### Computer Security Day 2009

#### Activities centred on managing risk

Computer Security Day (CSD) is an annual event that is observed worldwide on 30 November since 1988 to raise awareness on computer related security issues. In Mauritius, the Computer Emergency Response Team Mauritius (CERT-MU) in collaboration with the IT Security Unit, Ministry of Information and Technology organised a series of activities on the theme to commemorate the event.

On December 3, a half-day workshop on ISO 27001 Information Security was organised for Chief Information Officers, Business Continuity Managers and IT security Auditors of public and private organisations. Participants were briefed on the importance of adopting good information security practices for proper management of security risks and learnt how to implement ISO 27001 Information Security Standard. ISO 27001 defines the requirements for the establishment, implementation, operation, monitoring, review, maintenance as well as enhancement of information security management systems (ISMS), suited to the needs of individual organisations.

ISO 27001 is the only auditable international standard for the management and protection of valuable information assets through a structured and methodical process. The implementation of such a standard offers a competitive edge to any company since it contributes to the promotion of any business’s image of good corporate governance and legal compliance.

Other activities to commemorate CSD included distribution of Computer Security Day posters to public sector institutions, community centres, universities, post offices and schools, issue of a fact sheet on Effective Password Management and a brochure on ICT Incident Handling Procedure together with Computer Security Awareness sessions.

CSD also provided an opportunity for the CERT-MU to present its services as well as its programme which focus on enhancing information security. Hence, since October 2009 CERT-MU provides assistance to parastatal bodies which want to implement ISO 27001. In addition, it has compiled a list of organisations that provide information security services on ISO 27001 for parastatal bodies willing to obtain further assistance on implementation of ISO 27001 or other security services. Moreover, the CERT-MU can execute free vulnerability scan for organisations which would like their server to be scanned remotely for an assessment of any vulnerability.
**Fighting Domestic Violence**

**National Action Plan on Family to be implemented**

A National Action Plan on the Family is to be implemented by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Family Welfare and Child Development with the objective of achieving improved and sustainable conditions conducive to the development and protection of children, adults and the elderly. The plan is based on principles of democracy, human rights and gender equality and the elimination of violence in the family.

Launched by Minister Indranee Seebun on the occasion of the International Day against Violence against Women on 25 November 2009, the plan carries programmes and activities scheduled over a period of seven years. It encompasses strategies and actions to promote family welfare as spelt out in the National Policy Paper on the Family launched in May 2006 with the objective of acknowledging the inherent strengths of the family and reaffirming them while reinforcing the institution of the family.

The action plan sets to promote and achieve conditions that would lead towards the creation of stronger and violence-free families. The participation of all stakeholders will be enlisted to ensure that the objectives of the plan are successfully met.

The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare will later come forward with a Victim and Abuser Empowerment Policy, in line with the National Action Plan to combat domestic violence introduced in 2007. The main activities advocated in the plan were to provide support to both the victim and the abuser through sensitization campaigns at the workplace in an attempt to decrease domestic violence.

To date, 70 per cent of the action spelt out in the action plan to combat domestic violence has already been achieved.

---

**Plant Pathology**

**Accreditation of AREU laboratory**

The Plant Pathology Laboratory of the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) has been awarded the ISO/IEC 17025 Accreditation by MAURITAS/SANAS. An award ceremony was held on 5 November 2009 at the Farmer Training School at Wooton in the presence of the Minister of Industry, Science and Research, Mr D. Gokhool, and the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security, Mr S. Faugoo.

Launched by Minister Seebun, the accreditation was awarded to the Plant Pathology Laboratory of the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU). The laboratory has been performing tests and research on plant diseases and has been providing support to farmers in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The laboratory has been equipped with modern diagnosis tools like ELISA, PCR so as to ensure a quality oriented service.

The Plant Pathology Division of AREU provides the focus for research on all aspects on the biology, prevention and control of plant diseases in the non-sugarcane sector. It also operates a Plant Health and Advisory Unit, delivering a quality service related to diagnosis and devising of appropriate solutions for crop protection problems encountered by the planting community and the general public at large.

The Plant Pathology Division provides assistance, free of charge, to the planting community. The Diagnosis Service operates for the benefit of the planting community of Mauritius and Rodrigues. The Service is equipped with modern diagnosis tools like ELISA, PCR so as to ensure a quality oriented service. Facilities are also available for conducting seed quality and health tests for planters.

The Plant Pathology Laboratory was set up in 1998. It initiated procedures for accreditation in 2006 and during the same year SANAS and MAURITAS carried out their first assessment. The document reviews and implementation of procedures was done from 2007 to 2008 and the laboratory went through another assessment exercise by SANAS and MAURITAS in 2008 and was certified in 2009.
**Fighting Poverty**

Over 15 500 persons benefit from National Empowerment Foundation programmes

The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) has so far reached over 15 500 persons both in Mauritius and Rodrigues through its different programmes in view of creating more job opportunities, namely through training, reskilling, placement programmes, circular migration, assistance to unemployed women and financial and technical assistance for micro-enterprises.

The NEF, set up in July 2008, as an institutional framework to strengthen the role of the Empowerment Programme, now groups under one roof the different agencies involved in empowerment and in the fight against poverty. As enunciated in the July 2009 budget, the NEF has provided an overall coordinating framework for the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, the Eradication of Absolute Poverty (EAP) Programme, the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP), the Empowerment Programme, the Programme for Rodrigues and the Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.

In 2009, the NEF has been focusing mainly on training and placement for unemployed women and providing social housing facilities under the Integrated Social Development Programme to support vulnerable families especially in the 229 pockets of poverty. As regards the Integrated Social Development Programme, a total sum of Rs 222.5 m has been disbursed from end 2006 to October 2009. At present, 71 families have already benefitted from this scheme at La Valette in Bambous and a second batch of around 127 families will be shortly accommodated. Moreover, another such social housing project is being launched to accommodate some 31 families at Cité Lumière, Sottise in Grand Bay.

As regards the special programme for unemployed women, for which an amount of Rs 10.5 m has been disbursed, some 407 women have benefitted from January 2007 to October 2009, among whom 167 women have been given both financial and technical assistance for micro-enterprise projects. Forty-two enterprises involving 228 women have already started operation and 13 more enterprises will add up to the list by the end of 2009 with the creation of more jobs opportunities for women.

Some 8 272 persons have benefitted from the placement and training for which an amount of Rs 156.5 m has been spent from end 2006 to October 2009. Besides, around 5 445 beneficiaries have been provided assistance under the special entrepreneurship programme for a total amount of Rs 389.2 m from end 2006 to October 2009.

---

**Obituary**

Dr James Burty David, 1946 – 2009

Dr James Burty David, Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, passed away on 13 December 2009 at the age of 63. A state funeral was held for him and a national mourning of two days was observed.

Dr David was first elected to Parliament in 1976. He served as Minister of Education, Science and Technology from 1995 to 1997, and as Minister of Local Government and Environment from 1997 to 2000.

In 2005, Dr David was appointed Minister of Local Government and in 2008 he became Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands.

In a tribute to late Dr David at the National Assembly on 15 December 2009, the Prime Minister spoke of him as someone “who never wavered in his convictions nor in his loyalty”. Hailing his commitment to the advancement of the nation, Dr Ramgoolam pointed out that he was “motivated always by public service and the common weal”.

---

**The Electoral Commission has designated Mr Hervé Aimée as Member of the National Assembly, in replacement of late Dr James Burty David.**

Mr Aimée will take the oath of allegiance on 18 January 2010.