The Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, attended the 25th Africa-France Summit held on 31 May and 01 June 2010 in Nice, France, on an invitation of the President of the Republic of France, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy.

In his address at the Summit Dr. Ramgoolam pointed out that piracy, which costs around 250 million US dollars per year, represents a rising threat for coastal countries and island States. Piracy impacts negatively on international trade, on the economy of the States of the Indian Ocean and specifically on their tourism and fisheries industries, he added.
Dr. Ramgoolam sought French assistance to help African countries in the fight against piracy by equipping Africa with the necessary logistics and infrastructures to face acts of piracy, by offering training in the fight against piracy and in the field of peace of security and by increasing financial aid to African countries affected by piracy, mostly the small insular States.

The Prime Minister listed the various measures taken by Mauritius to counter piracy and pointed out the problems linked to judiciary procedures when suspects of piracy acts are under arrest. He recalled that Mauritius and France, through the Indian Ocean Commission, are working in the same direction as far as piracy is concerned and that both countries are party to the resolution adopted by the Commission on 3 April 2009. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime has already conducted a study on the possibility for Mauritius to host a court of law for the trial of pirates, he announced.

In the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister had meetings with Baroness Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Mr. William Hague, British Foreign Secretary. The discussions with the latter centred on the Chagos issue.

**Economic Empowerment**

**Second Decentralised Cooperation Programme to be implemented in 2011**

A second Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP), to be implemented as from 2011, is being finalised by the Government of Mauritius and the European Union (EU). The first five-year DCP programme, which started in 2005 with a funding of approximately Rs 570 million, came to an end in March 2010.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, Mr Xavier Luc Duval, made the announcement at the opening of a two-day grant projects exhibition and the launch of a booklet depicting a selection of DCP grant projects, on 17 June 2010, at the Port Louis Waterfront, in the presence of the Head of the Delegation of the European Union in Mauritius, Mr Alessandro Mariani.

About 40 projects showcasing the achievements of the beneficiaries of grants from the EU/Government of Mauritius DCP during the period 2006 to 2010 were being exhibited. An initiative of the Programme Coordination Unit of the DCP, the exhibition was held in the context of the European Week 2010 in Mauritius for which the theme was fighting poverty and social exclusion.

Minister Duval hailed the different community-based projects implemented by the DCP both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, ranging from poverty alleviation and improved business services to natural resource management. He added that local poverty alleviation initiatives of Mauritius could serve as example to the world.

For his part, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union in Mauritius, Mr Alessandro Mariani, pointed out that the DCP has offered a platform where everyone has an active role to play for the benefit of the socially disadvantaged groups. In his view, the DCP has been a success owing to the collaboration between the civil society, the Government and the EU for the implementation of projects for the needy segments of the society.

It will be recalled that the first DCP was implemented from 2005 to March 2010, with a total budget of about Rs 697 million. At March 2009, some 260 projects had been approved for financing under six different calls for proposals and the Small Grants Window of the programme. The amount of money committed stood at nearly Rs 287 million. Around 340 community-based projects both in Mauritius and Rodrigues have been implemented so far.
Government Programme 2010-2015
Strategies to create a just and equitable society

The pursuit of the democratisation of the economy and the transformation of Mauritius into a society of equal opportunities based on Unity, Equity and Modernity will be at the core of Government action for 2010-2015, as spelt out in the Government Programme presented by the President of the Republic, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, on 08 June 2010 at Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall in Port Louis.

Considering that the people have endorsed its philosophy and measures in the past five years by giving a new mandate to the ruling team, the Government will continue to hinge its action on economic efficiency and social justice. To achieve the above objectives, the Government will take measures geared towards strengthening national unity, entrenching democracy, promoting higher norms of governance, especially in terms of transparency and accountability in public affairs, and bringing the people to fully associate themselves with national development.

Government wants to transform the economy into a globally competitive one; hence measures will be taken to face new challenges as regards both macroeconomy and public finances.

The tax system will be reviewed and the National Residential Property Tax and tax on interest abolished.

Efforts will be redoubled to fight poverty so that every section benefits from the democratisation of the economy and adequate protection will be provided to vulnerable groups.

Measures will be taken to promote gender equality through the setting up of a research centre on gender. A boost will be given to women entrepreneurship.

Education and culture will also be among the main thrusts of government action. Tertiary education will be democratised through the setting up of an open university for distance learning and at secondary level, the formula for the payment of SC and HSC examination fees will be reviewed. To promote culture, an Artist Welfare Fund and a ‘Conseil National de la Culture’ will be created.

The reinforcement of law and order is also high on the agenda. Five thousand police constables will be recruited to reinforce law and order. A new Bail Act will be introduced.
Economy

To keep the economy competitive, resilient and robust:

- Reforms to improve ease-of-doing business with focus on building the economic pillars of the future and preserving the existing ones
- Transforming Mauritius into a Duty Free Island to enhance tourism and make Mauritius a more dynamic trading hub
- Consolidating public finances to bring down the budget deficit and public debt further
- Fiscal reforms to relieve taxpayers and encourage investment and savings, among which the abolition of the National Residential Property Tax and the tax on interest
- Setting up of an Integrated Tax Administration System to facilitate tax audits and fight tax evasion and fraud
- Setting up of an Ombudsperson Office for the whole financial services sector, both banking and non-banking
- Modernisation of regulations and licensing agreements to further improve the Doing Business Climate

To consolidate the industrial sector:

- Modernisation and innovation for the production of high-value, branded and more diversified products for wider market
- Adoption of eco-friendly processes and products
- Creation of an ‘Observatoire de l’Industrie’ for gathering economic intelligence and sharing with economic operators and policy makers
- A new strategy to re-dynamise exports
- Exploration of new export avenues
- Setting up of Industrial Advisory Council for greater synergy between public and private sectors
Government Programme 2010-2015 - Highlights

Democratisation of the Economy

To accelerate the democratisation of the economy, empower people and bring social justice:

- Revamp of Employees Real Estate Investment Trust to ensure workers’ participation in land and property development
- Democratisation of the electricity generation sector to provide the necessary incentives to small producers and households to generate electricity
- Access to “fully serviced sites” to the poor so that they can construct houses on their own on plots of land of 60 toises. At the end of five years, around 1000 such lots will have been allocated to eligible beneficiaries who will also benefit from prototype plans and loan facilities
- Diversification of the tourism and eco-tourism product to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders in the different spheres in the tourism sector
- Setting up of a Tourism and Hotel Investment Trust to provide new opportunities for investment, employment and new ventures
- Transformation of the sugar industry into a sugar cane industry with the full participation of the small planters
- Setting up of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment to address poverty, fight exclusion, promote inclusive and sustainable growth, secure social progress and enhance the quality of life of the vulnerable groups
- Enhanced support of the National Empowerment Programme to specific vulnerable groups and assistance under

To pursue the modernisation of agro-industrial and fisheries sector and promote food security:

- Introduction of a Food Security Stimulus Package of Rs 2 billion to assist planters, breeders and fishermen to maximise local production
- Setting up of an Institute of Agri-food Biotechnology to enable producers to have access to genetically superior varieties and high quality seeds or planting materials
- Institution of a national auction for fresh vegetables and fruits to enable consumers to have access to high quality produce that meets the standards of food safety
- Setting up an Agricultural Production and Marketing Information System to provide information on a real time basis to planters so as to enable them to better plan their planting and production
- Setting up of a National Agricultural Land Bank to ensure that agricultural lands are used optimally
- Setting up of a National Meat and Milk Board to give a boost to the livestock sector and the new pig breeding scheme
- Developing the seafood hub as an economic pillar
- Elaboration of a Fisheries Master Plan
- Setting up of a fund of one billion rupees to encourage industrial fishing
- Development of a Local Fishing Fleet
the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme to families identified in 229 pockets of poverty

- Greater coordination in poverty reduction strategies and programmes in the areas of social housing, training and education, capacity building and employment, infrastructural development and provision of public utilities, health and recreation, and empowering citizens and promoting responsible citizenship

- Creation of more jobs by boosting economic growth while maintaining a low inflation environment to protect the purchasing power of the citizens, especially the unemployed and low income groups

Education

To consolidate equity in the education system:

- Encouraging of ‘Mauritian Kreol’ and ‘Bhojpuri’ as optional subjects in schools
- Review of current formula for payment of SC & HSC examinations fees
- Restructuring of Special Needs Education Sector to ensure that no child with special needs is deprived of education
- Provision of laptops and internet access to needy students
- Setting up of ‘Campus Universitaires’ in different parts of Mauritius
- Setting of an open university to promote lifelong learning through distance education

Infrastructure

To achieve development objectives through a modern infrastructure:

- Implementation of a Bus Modernisation Programme to offer fast, convenient and attractive transport services and alleviate road congestion
- Adoption of an alternative mode of transport on the Curepipe – Port Louis corridor
- Métro léger project to be reconsidered
- Implementation of Road Decongestion Programme by upgrading road network
- Implementation of an effective Land Drainage Programme islandwide
- Setting up of a new Cargo and Freeport Zone with modern logistic facilities at SSR International Airport
- Development of a Leisure and Cruise Hub
- Expansion and modernisation of airport facilities
- Construction of new runway exclusively for landing of aircrafts
- Upgrading of meteorological facilities with new weather radar
- Construction of dams at Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles
- Construction of a water treatment plant at Pailles
- Construction of a new block comprising six operation theatres and additional wards at Victoria Hospital
**Health**

*To achieve Millennium Development Goals regarding health standards:*

- Acquisition of latest medical equipment including mammography machines, anaesthetic machines, MRI and CT scanners
- Setting up of neurosurgery and spinal surgery units, one Intensive Care Unit, six operation theatres and a new ward in new block at Victoria Hospital
- Extension of cardiology and neonatal intensive care to all regional hospitals
- Implementation of aggressive health promotion campaigns and sensitisation on NCDs
- Setting up of an Institute of Health for Women, a National Geriatric Hospital and a National Paediatric Hospital
- Implementation of a master plan to upgrade and reinforce primary health care services and decrease workload in public hospitals
- Further decentralisation of HIV testing and counselling

**Arts and Culture**

*To promote arts and culture as catalysts for peace, stability and national unity:*

- Setting up of a national symphonic orchestra
- Creation of an Artist Welfare Fund to help artists in their quest to live by their talents
- Setting up of an *Ecole de Cinéma*
- Creation of a *Conseil National de la Culture* to promote intercultural dialogue

**ICT**

*To implement the government vision of making an I-Mauritius (Intelligent Mauritius):*

- Reviewing the National ICT Strategic Plan 2007-2011 under the Competitiveness and Public Sector Efficiency Programme to address the impact of the global recession
- Making ‘Access to the Internet’ a basic citizen’s right
- Setting up a national on-line library to promote and democratise access to information and knowledge
- Construction of other technology parks to support development of the ICT sector and create employment
- Further diversification of ICT services to include software developments, high-end BPO activities and Disaster Recovery Centres
Rodrigues

To strengthen the autonomous status of Rodrigues and ensure its full integration within the Republic of Mauritius:

- Consultations to be held with Rodrigues Regional Assembly for introduction of local government in the island
- Construction of a new runway at Sir Gaëtan Duval Airport
- Connection of Rodrigues to Mauritius via fibre optic cable
- Building of 1000 low-cost housing units over the next five years
- Construction of dams for water storage
- Construction of a secondary school
- Development of the port area
- Elaboration of a sustainable fisheries development plan
- Replacing the synthetic athletic track at Camp du Roi Stadium

Other measures on the agenda

- Construction of a high security prison at Melrose for 750 detainees
- Review of local government legislation and eventual setting up of new Municipal Councils
- Introduction of a new Bail Act
- Introduction of an Interception of Communications Act to fight against organised crime and drug trafficking
- Introduction of legislation for media law reform
- Review of the powers and functions of Independent Broadcasting Authority to provide for ethical conduct of broadcasters and safeguard fundamental rights of citizens
- Setting up of a national digital cadastre
- Adoption of appropriate policies to promote active and healthy ageing
- Construction of two additional recreation centres for the elderly
- Upgrading and expanding existing sports facilities and construction of new sports complexes across Mauritius
- Training youth in entrepreneurship
- Setting up of a Disaster Management Centre for better management of natural disasters
Tromelin to be co-managed by Mauritius and France

Tromelin Island and its surrounding waters will be co-managed by Mauritius and France.

The Framework Agreement on the co-management of the island and three implementing agreements were signed on 7 June 2010 in Port Louis. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, and the Secrétaire d’Etat chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie, Mr. Alain Joyandet, were the respective signatories for the Mauritian and the French sides.

Both the Framework Agreement and the implementing agreements do not prejudice the respective positions of Mauritius and France on the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin.

The Co-management Framework Agreement

This Agreement provides for the establishment of a regime of economic, scientific and environmental co-management relating to Tromelin Island, as well as its territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone.

The three implementing agreements relate to fisheries, archaeological research and the protection of the environment.

- The implementing agreement on fisheries provides for the implementation of a common fisheries policy aimed at ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries resources in the surrounding maritime areas of Tromelin. This common policy addresses the following issues: evaluation of stocks, development of fisheries-related management measures, and modalities to deliver fishing licences.

- The implementing agreement on archaeological research provides for measures to be taken by Mauritius and France following the two archaeological campaigns on Tromelin Island in 2006 and 2008. One of those measures is to constitute a Mauritian-French scientific team in view of a third archaeological campaign to be conducted in 2010 once necessary financial resources have been obtained.

- The implementing agreement on the protection of the environment establishes a framework for the responsible management of the environment of Tromelin Island and its surrounding maritime areas by taking into account its ecosystem.
Children’s Rights
16 Days 16 Rights Campaign 2010

The 16 Days 16 Rights Campaign 2010, starting on 1st and ending on 16 June, was officially launched by the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, on 9 June, at the Grannum Social Welfare Centre in Vacoas.

The campaign, organised since 2004, aims at creating awareness at national level on the rights and the responsibilities of children.

What are the 16 Rights?

Every year, 16 Articles out of 54, stipulated in the Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child are chosen by the Ministry for the campaign. These Articles advocate the “full and harmonious development of the child’s personality, so that he/she should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.”

Among the 16 Rights retained this year:

- protection against all forms of discrimination
- every child has the inherent right to life
- the right from birth to a name and to acquire a nationality
- the right to live with his/her family and maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents if the child lives separated from one or both parents
- no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation
- both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child
- the right to protection against all forms of ill-treatment while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child
- a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community
- the right of the child to education
- the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- Sensitising the Public on the Rights of the Child

At the launching ceremony, Minister Bappoo observed that the 16 Days 16 Rights Campaign aims at educating parents and the public and make them understand what the rights of children are. While it is true that nowadays there are many conflicts between parents and children, it is through communication that these problems can be solved, she pointed out.

It is necessary to bring about a change within each individual and therefore within parents and children so that the country is one where there is peace, joy of living, and respect, and where unity and stability prevail within the family, she said.

Other activities in the margins of the Campaign included a forum and an interactive session “A l’écoute des jeunes”, organised on 16 June 2010 at the Grand Baie Conference Centre. Around 600 children were present on that occasion. Participants were given the opportunity to openly express their views on themes such as Social Participation of Children, Education and Development, Protection, and Leisure and Play.
**Health**

**New Cardiac Unit Inaugurated at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital**

A new Cardiac Unit was inaugurated on 10 June 2010 at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at Rose Belle by the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee. This fully equipped Unit will be operational on a 24-hour basis.

The Unit is manned by a team of six cardiologists and generalists as well as nurses. It comprises a catheter laboratory where patients can be fitted with pacemakers. Other facilities include echography and stress testing. The Cardiac Unit has four sections, namely two sections for women, one for men and one for Intensive Care.

In her address, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life recalled that around 180,000 inhabitants in the catchment area of the hospital would benefit from this new facility and would no longer have to travel to Victoria Hospital to receive treatment for cardiac problems. She further announced that Souillac Hospital too will have its own cardiac department. This initiative is in line with Government’s vision to consolidate and democratise the health sector and ensure that health services remain accessible to every citizen, she said.

Mrs Hanoomanjee pointed out that the health expenditure, amounting Rs 7.4 billion, testifies government’s commitment to provide quality service in the health sector. In a bid to further improve service delivery, several measures are being implemented by the Ministry. They include training of hospital staff in customer care, redistribution of medical staff to those hospitals which are receiving more patients, provision of echography facilities in all Area Health Centres and introduction of a new system of giving appointment to patients at staggered hours so that waiting time at hospitals is reduced.

**Civil Service**

**Officers of General Services cadre complete training**

A batch of 64 officers, namely Higher Executive Officers, Executive Officers and Confidential Secretaries, have been awarded certificates following completion of a training course mounted by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms in collaboration with the University of Technology Mauritius (UTM).

The Award ceremony was held on 9 June 2010 at the UTM at La Tour Koenig, Pointe Aux Sables.

The overall objectives of the course were to acquaint the officers with the new concepts and latest trends in public sector management as well as help them develop effective inter-personal communication skills and understand the importance of the administrative reforms process in the civil service.

So far, around 800 public officers, including officers from Rodrigues, have followed award courses at the UTM.
Finance and Taxation

MoU for Effective Exchange of Information between MRA and FSC

A Memorandum of Understanding setting out the framework for effective exchange of information between the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) and the Financial Services Commission was signed on June 3 at the Financial Services Commission (FSC) in Ebène.

The MoU, which is in line with other MoUs amongst regulators and with other agencies, will further reinforce the existing practice of cooperation with the MRA by providing a proper framework for such exchange of information between the two authorities. It contains the usual safeguards relating to confidentiality and other purposes for which the information is used and also contains the conventional clause requiring prior consent before information from one authority is disclosed to a third party. It will also serve in cases where information sought regards entities which are not taxpayers.

The Chief Executive of the FSC, Mr Milan Meetarbhan, and the Director General of the MRA, Mr Sudhamo Lal, proceeded with the signature of the MOU.

It will be recalled that the Financial Services Commission, Mauritius has already signed MoUs for the exchange of information with 19 Regulators, both foreign and local.