

CONJONCTURE

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"*Tout l'art de la politique est de se servir des conjonctures.*" Louis XIV

Reform and Propaganda

By Samad Ramoly

"There is no magic bullet. A country's economic institutions are a richly textured fabric. There would be big disappointment if a government abolished a quick employment regulation or two before breakfast and expected great things to happen. There are hundreds of things that have to change."

Edmund Phelps,
2006 Nobel Prize in Economics

In spite of the social, economic and political instability it entails, globalisation continues to gather momentum. When assessing how different countries cope with globalisation in order to anticipate and mitigate the resulting imbalances, the quality of leadership proves critical.

As expected, Singapore tops the *Globalisation Index 2006* measured by the consulting firm A.T. Kearney. Ireland and Denmark are among the five best performers. A closer look at how the three countries operate is revealing: it debunks many fallacies disseminated by members of Tina F.C., i.e. the "There-is-no-alternative" Fan Club.

One dogma suggests that if countries want to successfully integrate global capitalism, their governments must keep their "hands" off the economy and privatise their business activities. Ironically, the state-led approach has been the Singapore model. Today Temasek Holdings, the investment arm of the Singapore government, powers many global flagship companies. Another dogma suggests that when a country embraces economic liberalism, the Welfare State becomes redundant. Both Ireland and Denmark emphatically demonstrate the opposite.

According to the *Quality-of-life Index 2005* established by *The Economist*, Ireland is the country that best reconciles economic and social imperatives to meet the aspirations of its citizens. Material well-being alone does not adequately reflect quality of life. Ireland would never have enjoyed such a quality of life had it not contained the impediments associated with modernisation, namely the breakdown of traditional institutions and the erosion of family values. After all, is not Ireland the land that swings blissfully between melancholy and *joie de vivre*?

Viewed through black and white lenses with no shades of grey, as in the case of members of Tina F.C., all our woes can be resolved in a sleight of hand; for an instant relief of our existential crisis, repeat religiously "*république laïque*"; to recharge our flawed "democracy", simply "cut" a piece of "proportional representation" and "paste" it to the mechanism of "first pass the post"; to salvage our failed educational system, deride obsessively the streaming test at the end of primary schooling; to balance our abysmal national accounts, target everybody but the networks of patronage and fleece them.

Followership under the influence of the IMF

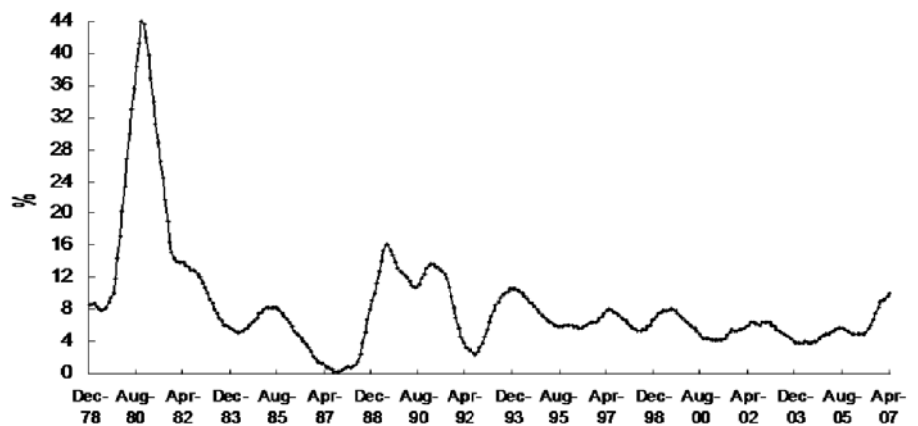
We are in the creative age. Only those nations groomed to "think global and act local" will thrive. In a globalised setting your edge is basically how much more creative you are than your competitors because that is where you differentiate yourself. To the members of Tina F.C. faking to "think outside the box", Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Computers, hailed as the most innovative company by *Business Week*, offers a candid rebuttal: don't be trapped by dogma, which is living with the results of other people's thinking.

The transformation of Mauritius is tributary to the inclusion of the following elements of change management: a project in which all stakeholders believe passionately in, the creation of an environment that stimulates a shift in mindsets and attitudes, the building of a strong and committed top team to drive the process and a leadership by example. Post-independent Mauritius has hardly experienced anything that even brushes with that. Or maybe, our successive governments, barring a few mavericks within, should jointly patent the ultimate brand of leadership; one exclusive of integrity, foresight, vision and empathy.

The bogeymen setting the cart before the horse

In conformity with the bigotry of the IMF and the World Bank, members of Tina F.C. believe that a violent disruption in the form of a "shock therapy" is a quick fix that will reap rewards in a couple of years. "Reform" as spun by the government in reality refers to a few half-baked measures expected to revive our ailing competitiveness. This bland and reductive thinking, that confuses means and end and vice versa, is alienating citizens and polarising the Mauritian community further.

12-month running inflation rate



(Data: Central Statistics Office)

It would indeed be more appropriate to talk about followership than leadership. That Singapore has never been under International Monetary Fund (IMF) programmes from 1980 to 2002, and till today for that matter, speaks volumes. Mauritius, on the other hand, has spent about 23% of its time over the same period under the influence of the IMF. These figures, arguably much higher today as far as Mauritius is concerned, are extracted from the findings of William Easterly in his latest book "*The white man's burden: why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*".

William Easterly, a professor of economics at New York University, is one of the editors of the Economic Freedom Index report compiled by The Fraser Institute. His book shall make a far more enlightening reading for our policymakers rather than say, "*Globalization and its discontents*" by Joseph Stiglitz, "*The end of poverty*" by Jeffery Sachs or even "*The world is flat*" by Thomas Friedman. If top-down transformation by outsiders is self-defeating, a combination of domestic top-down policies with bottom-up reciprocity has the potential to unleash the crucial synergy.

As long as the government does not question the status of insiders of our system, who live by entrenched privileges, policies are doomed to fail because they are opposed by insiders, who fear that they may be the next on the list, and outsiders, who consider them as discriminatory and continue to dream of becoming themselves insiders. A doctrinaire approach to policymaking may foster short-term economic expansion but when it simultaneously disintegrates social cooperation, it inhibits value creation through productivity gains and retards competitiveness growth.

"Democratisation" and "Empowerment", at their worst, are akin to window-dressing.

The government rightly claims that our labour market must be revamped to become more flexible. But where are the evidence and the benchmark? When "hiring and firing" of employers can happen from one day to the next, companies surely get a decided competitive edge over rivals. Is it the one and only factor in the "flexibility" paradigm?

Denmark's "flexicurity" blends a flexible labour market, generous social security and an active labour-market policy with rights and obligations for the unemployed. Workers pay high taxes, but trade job security for a guarantee, should they be laid off, of time-limited but generous unemployment benefits that they can live on and a promise that they will get new jobs fast. About a fifth of Danish workers lose their job in any given year but most find a new job quickly. The mechanism rests on perpetual dialogue and mutual trust.

The implementation of the National Pay Council (NPC) is a glaring example of how despicable a government can get. The concept *per se* is sound. But the NPC should not arbitrate the dispute regarding compensation for declining purchasing power that is not, as the government would have us to believe, totally inflicted by global capitalism. Despite the annual inflation-adjusted compensation granted to them, the majority of Mauritians has been subsidising uncompetitive players through a wage cut as persistent and self-inflicted rupee depreciation feeds into a vicious circle that offsets the compensation.

The African Peer Review Mechanism in context

Designated as the focal point of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in Mauritius, the National Economic and Social Council (NESOC) has appointed Ernst & Young and its associate agency, PluriConseil, as Consultants responsible for conducting the APRM process. They will call on the public, officials, managers and other active agents in every walk of life, with a view to obtaining information and data regarding key aspects of our national life as well as their views and comments on our democracy and its vital institutions.

Launched in 2003, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a pan-African initiative to improve good governance and promote development. It is an instrument by which African nations ensure mutual oversight on political, economic and corporate governance. Its goal is to promote adoption of policies, standards and practices favouring political stability, economic growth and sustainable development.

Undergoing a peer review is voluntary and a country must abide by certain rules of procedure once it has decided to participate. These rules include establishing mechanisms to self assess the country's performance on governance and creating a plan of action to deal with any issues and shortcomings that are identified.

The origin of the APRM dates back to 2001, when the African Union (AU) adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which sets out the new vision for Africa. One of the main objectives of the NEPAD was to enforce, among other things, the rule of law; the equality of all citizens before the law; individual and collective freedoms; the right to participate in free, credible and democratic political processes; and adherence to the separation of powers, including protection for the independence of the judiciary body and the effectiveness of parliaments.

In July 2002, a base document encapsulating the APRM process and modus operandi was approved by the NEPAD Heads of States and Governments. The document followed the declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate governance adhered to by all Member States of the AU.

In order to maintain a proper and consistent understanding of the APRM, the NEPAD Heads of States and Government Implementation Committee adopted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the APRM in 2003. Mauritius acceded to the APRM through the signature of the MOU, on 9 July 2003 during the Meeting of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee in 2003 at the AU Summit in Maputo.

The APRM Process

The APRM base document identifies five stages in the process:

Stage One: Self-Assessment - The self assessment exercise entails the following:

1) Launch a communication campaign in the country and publicise the what, why and how of the APRM;

2) Gather information on the governance situation of the country which will include collation of relevant statistics, official government documents, treaties and reports;

3) Prepare a country questionnaire based on the model APRM questionnaire. The country questionnaire will be the underlying tool that will be used to request feedback from all stakeholders. The questionnaire covers all four aspects of governance namely Democracy and political governance, Economic governance and management, Corporate governance and, Socio-economic development;

4) Obtain and gauge feedback from the stakeholders, through workshops, focus group meetings, interviews and analysis of views on the governance aspect of the country;

5) Prepare a Self Assessment Report reflecting main issues on governance of the country based on feedback received from stakeholders, the workshops, the focus group discussions and one on interviews; and

6) Discuss the self assessment report with the partner institutions namely government officials in order to prepare a Programme of Action designed to improve on the governance aspect of the country.

Stage Two: Independent review of the country by the APRM team - This stage builds up on the analysis undertaken in stage one. The APRM team will be composed of high calibre professionals and technicians. This team will consult and interact extensively with government officials, representatives of the political parties, the business community and representatives of the civil society (including the media, academia, trade union and non governmental organisations).

The purpose of the country visit is threefold:

1) The visit allows interaction of the APRM team with the key stakeholders of the country;

2) The APRM team will discuss the agreed Programme of Action with the major stakeholders and will ensure commitment and endorsement at the appropriate level; and

3) The APRM team will play a supervisory role in the APRM process. The APRM team will assess adherence by the country to agreed processes set out in the MOU.

Stage Three: Elaboration of Country Review Report by the APR team - The Country Review Report will be based on the findings of the Self Assessment exercise undertaken in stage 1 and interactions with the stakeholders during their country visits undertaken in stage 2.

The APRM Team Country Review Report will normally contain recommendations on how the Programme of Action of the country can be improved to accelerate the achievement of best practices and address any weaknesses identified more effectively.

The team's draft country report is first discussed with the government of the country who is given the opportunity to provide feedback on detailed findings prior to finalisation.

Stage Four - The APRM Team's final Country Review Report is sent to the APRM Secretariat and the APRM Panel. The Panel then submits the report to the APRM Forum of participating Heads of States as well as to the government of the country under review for consideration and formulation of actions deemed necessary in accordance with the Forum's mandate.

Stage Five - This is the final stage of the APRM process. Six months after consideration of the report by the Heads of States and the Governments of the participating member countries, the report is formally and publicly tabled in key regional and sub-regional structures. These include the Regional Economic Community to which the country belongs, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Peace and Security Council, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union.

The Self-Assessment Exercise

Undertaking the Self Assessment Exercise will be the most important activity of the APRM Process. The self-assessment will be based on the model questionnaire provided by the APRM Secretariat. The questionnaire is divided into four sections:

- Democracy and political governance;
- Economic governance and management;
- Corporate governance; and
- Socio-economic development.

The questions are designed to assess the States' compliance with a wide range of African and international human rights treaties and standards. The questionnaire should not be considered as the only list of exhaustive questions pertaining to governance on which response is sought. Any person within any target audience is free to raise any question which he/she considers to be relevant to a subject being discussed.

The Self-Assessment Exercise will involve the collection of a massive volume of data and information both in the forms of verifiable facts and opinion statements based on the questionnaire. Given the wide-ranging scope of the exercise, the Consultants (Ernst & Young and PluriConseil) will interface with stakeholders to collect all possible information relevant to the formulation of the Self-Assessment Report.

The Self-Assessment Exercise for Mauritius is scheduled to terminate by October/November 2007. Therefore, over the weeks to come, representatives from Ernst & Young and PluriConseil will be involved in a massive task of data gathering through workshops, direct interviews, and focus group discussions. The information sought may be both of descriptive or quantifiable nature and will relate to governance issues.

This wide consultative exercise will involve not less than 9 national thematic workshops and not less than 16 focus group meetings. It is also provided that a series of one to one interviews reaching the Head of State, the Head of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition and other main actors of the political, economic and social spheres of the society will be undertaken. The information will be collated, analysed and summarised in thematic ideas and issues and will form the basis of the Self-Assessment Report for Mauritius.

The Self Assessment Exercise will also include the Rodrigues community, which will be fully engaged in the process.

Benefits of Participating in the APRM

Civil society participation - The APRM process encourages all the citizens of the country to:

- 1) Express their opinion on governance issues within a framework;
- 2) Fully participate in the identification of appropriate developmental programmes and their effective monitoring.

The APRM will be a unique exercise whereby the government together with other participating stakeholders, after considering the main issues emerging from the Self-Assessment Report, will define a Programme of Action that addresses the issues discussed. The process provides for a leveraging tool that allows participation and interaction by the civil society and the public at large, to discuss in a transparent manner, the political, economic and social development and corporate governance aspect of the country. It allows the ordinary citizen and the civil society to be increasingly mainstreamed into governance issues.

The Peer review effect - The APRM also involves cross country comparison and exchange of experiences. The exchange mechanism will provide for required stimulus towards improved performance especially with regards to implementation of policy decisions. Constructive peer synergy will ensure that member countries are continually abiding to the rules of good governance.

Transparency brings in higher level of confidence in the country - The APRM is also a good channel for the government to publicise to the outside world on the level of governance of the country measured according to set principles. The APRM will thus be a platform to communicate to international institutional partners the strengths and weaknesses of political, socio-economic and corporate governance, and the necessary actions that are undertaken to mitigate the identified weaknesses and consolidate the strengths.

Participation in the APRM demonstrates the country has reached a mature stage and promotes transparency. It gives confidence to major international cooperating partners and institutions as well as the economic community at large and will ultimately assist its country to strengthen the capacity to implement principles of good governance the country has adhered to.

A refreshing note on Corporate Governance

By Eric Ng Ping Cheun

“Corporate Governance is concerned with holding the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. The governance framework is there to encourage the efficient use of resources and equally to require accountability for the stewardship of those resources. The aim is to align as nearly as possible the interests of individuals, corporations and society.”

Sir Adrian Cadbury

In this era of globalisation, achieving good governance has become the avowed objective of all countries across the world. Globalisation entails the free flow of labour, capital, products and services. The removal of barriers, accompanied by advances in information technologies, has led to intensified competition.

To cope with this rapidly changing international environment, corporations must continuously provide not only better products and services, but also ethical business conduct. Governments, for their part, are compelled to foster political and economic governance in order to gain credence among the international community.

Conformance needs not clash with performance

Modern corporations have become dominant institutions today. But corporate scandals and failures have lowered public trust in corporations and accentuated the importance of good governance practices. Companies and institutions have seen their reputations tarnished by inadequate oversight, lack of transparency and irresponsible business conduct, while national economies have suffered from political laxity and fraud.

Corporate governance is an effective mechanism for improving economic performance, leading to job creation, wealth and consumer welfare. It requires willingness on the part of corporations to work in the best interests of stakeholders. The latter are generally shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, financiers, government and the local community in which the corporation conducts its business.

The two watchwords of good governance are “accountability” and “transparency”. Responsibility is also a characteristic of good governance, but it should be distinguished from accountability. Individuals, at the board and management levels, are accountable, by statute to the company, to the shareholders for their decisions and actions. The company, on the other hand, is responsible towards its stakeholders.

Corporate responsibility involves the search for an effective relationship between businesses and societies to help foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and predictability that facilitates the conduct of business and enhances economic and social welfare. Corporate responsibility goes far beyond ways of doing business to encompass corporations’ relationships with society as a whole. It is in this spirit that the term “social responsibility” has been coined so that companies respond in a non-discriminatory and non-exploitative manner to social, environmental and human rights issues.

Transparency means timely disclosure of relevant and accurate information and cost-efficient access to it. Information about the financial and operating results of the company and the non-financial aspects pertinent to the business should be such that an outsider can make meaningful analysis of the state of the company.

Two other factors contribute to effective corporate

governance, namely independence and fairness. To ensure independence, companies should set up mechanisms that minimise and avoid potential conflicts of interests, from board composition to appointments to committees. As a matter of fairness, there should be equal treatment of shareholders and respect of stakeholders’ rights.

The relationship between ownership structure, performance and the demands of society requires that companies exercise a high degree of diligence in their governance. How companies conform to principles of good governance and put them into practice is as important as their acceptance. Conformance needs not clash with performance.

The general consensus

From a company perspective, the general consensus is that corporate governance:

- brings discipline and commitment to senior management,
- maximises long-term shareholder value,
- protects minority shareholder rights,
- helps meet legal and contractual obligations,
- minimises concerns of financiers,
- cater to societal expectations,
- contributes to the prevention of malpractice, fraud and corruption,
- restores public trust into corporations.

From a public policy perspective, effective corporate governance directly supports corporate restructuring and socio-economic development programmes. It also acts as a catalyst for attracting foreign direct investment. Last but not least, it promotes the efficient use of resources and is thus fundamental to economic growth.

Les nouveaux gouvernants ont de la chance

Par Jean-Yves Naudet

En France, l'élection présidentielle vient de s'achever, mais l'Assemblée nationale ne sera élue qu'à la mi-juin après les législatives. Les nouveaux gouvernants se trouveront dans un environnement économique international très favorable, de sorte qu'il ne tient qu'à eux d'en faire bénéficier les Français ou de gaspiller cette nouvelle chance.

S'ils sont capables d'amorcer les réformes fondamentales qui permettent à notre économie de monter dans le train de la croissance, tant mieux. S'ils tergiversent et remettent à plus tard tout ce qui doit être fait, tant pis. Ils n'auront pas l'excuse d'une mauvaise conjoncture, puisqu'elle est mondialement excellente.

4,9% de croissance dans le monde

Nous disposons de deux rapports récents pour nous faire une idée de la situation économique internationale à laquelle seront confrontés les nouveaux gouvernants : un premier rapport du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) sur la croissance mondiale, et un second de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC) sur le commerce international.

Du côté du FMI, c'est un rapport optimiste qui vient d'être publié. Globalement, la croissance de l'économie mondiale devrait être en 2007 de 4,9% et ce chiffre devrait être identique en 2008 : autrement dit, la croissance mondiale continuera à être forte et dynamique. C'est la cinquième année que le monde connaît une très forte croissance et il faut remonter aux années 50 et 60 pour retrouver un cycle d'expansion aussi long.

Autre élément très positif : une nouvelle fois, ce sont les pays du « tiers-monde » qui emportent la palme de la croissance. Cela fait des années que cela dure, ce qui signifie que, contrairement à tous les discours officiels, les écarts entre pays riches et pays pauvres se resserrent et qu'un vrai processus de développement est entamé dans de nombreux pays. En Chine, la croissance devrait être encore de 10% en 2007 et de 9,5% en 2008. En Inde, le PIB augmenterait de 8,4% cette année et de 7,8% l'an prochain.

L'Afrique, continent réputé sinistré, va connaître 6,2%

de croissance en 2007 et 5,8% en 2008. Le produit intérieur brut augmenterait de 5,5% pour l'une et l'autre année au Proche-Orient. Même l'Amérique latine devrait connaître une croissance, avec 4,4% et 4,2% au Brésil. Il en sera de même dans les pays de l'Est, avec par exemple 6,4% et 5,9% de croissance en Russie.

Des échanges internationaux en hausse de 8%

Il est vrai que la situation sera moins brillante dans les pays développés. Mais enfin, on devrait avoir 2,3% de croissance au Japon en 2007, signe que ce pays en a fini avec la déflation. Aux Etats-Unis, on observe un ralentissement passager, dû en particulier à l'éclatement de la bulle immobilière, avec 2,2% de croissance en 2007, mais l'économie devrait redémarrer dès l'an prochain (2,8%).

En Europe, le Royaume-Uni devrait être à 2,9% et 2,7%, et la zone euro à 2,3%. Et la France ? Elle devrait être lanterne rouge, à politique inchangée, avec l'Allemagne, avec 2% et 2,4% de croissance en 2007 et 2008. Cela fait de la France l'un des pays les plus mal placés.

On ne peut s'empêcher de rapprocher ce dynamisme de l'économie mondiale de celui du commerce international. Selon les informations fournies cette fois par l'OMC, le commerce mondial a augmenté de 8% l'an dernier, ce qui a servi de moteur à la croissance. Une nouvelle fois, la preuve est faite que le commerce est un facteur de développement des pays pauvres et constitue la meilleure forme d'aide à la croissance.

Comment ne pas voir que la Chine, désormais troisième exportateur mondial avec 8% des exportations du monde, et qui est en passe de doubler les Etats-Unis, second exportateur (8,6% des exportations mondiales), connaît une croissance de 27% cette année de ses ventes à l'étranger : rien de tel pour soutenir sa croissance. L'Allemagne n'a pas connu de vraie récession, en dépit des erreurs de politique économique (hausse du taux de TVA) car l'économie a été tirée par les exportations (l'Allemagne a des excédents records et elle reste le premier exportateur mondial avec 9,2% du commerce mondial).

Au Japon aussi (quatrième exportateur mondial) les exportations ont empêché la récession de se poursuivre. Ailleurs, dans les pays en développement, le commerce est en expansion rapide et a lui aussi tiré vers le haut la croissance (36% des exportations mondiales viennent du tiers-monde).

Sans réformes, pas de croissance

La France montre qu'elle a des atouts : nous sommes le cinquième exportateur mondial, mais nous sommes talonnés par les Pays-Bas, l'Angleterre et l'Italie et surtout nos exportations progressent beaucoup moins vite que nos importations : les Français consomment plus qu'ils ne produisent, car nous manquons de compétitivité.

Plus généralement, nous ne profitons pas de cet environnement international favorable, car nous avons refusé jusqu'à présent de procéder aux réformes nécessaires. Aurons-nous un changement ? Le ton dominant de la campagne actuelle n'avait guère été encourageant : le candidat Sarkozy avait promis une « protection » contre la mondialisation, contre l'Europe, contre les délocalisations, contre la concurrence. On lui pardonnerait pour une fois de ne pas tenir ses promesses sur ce point !

Le chemin des réformes est pourtant tout tracé, il suffit d'imiter la plupart de nos partenaires. Ces réformes sont celles du marché du travail, celles de la fiscalité, celles de la protection sociale, celles de l'éducation et celles de l'Etat. Elles tournent toutes autour de la baisse des impôts et des dépenses, de la privatisation, de la dérégulation, du désengagement de l'Etat, de la flexibilité, de la mobilité, de la concurrence, de l'offre et de l'entreprise. Ce sont les réformes libérales qui ont permis à tous les pays du monde, riches et pauvres, de se tourner vers la croissance depuis des années. Nous voilà maintenant bons derniers, pour avoir refusé jusque là les réformes. Nous sommes vraiment au pied du mur. Le choix est clair : ou une politique libérale, ou la poursuite inéluctable du déclin français.

Jean-Yves Naudet est professeur d'économie à l'Université d'Aix-Marseille III.

Reform and Propaganda

By Samad Ramoly (cont., from Pg 1)

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket of goods and services identified to compute CPI inflation does not have the same relevance for people with different pay levels. As their expenditure patterns vary, so does the weightage of the items in the basket. That is why the Singapore Department of Statistics regularly publishes CPI inflation for different income groups instead of relying on a general average figure. What's more, because of the high income divide, an inflation rate of 10% largely under-estimates the impact of price hikes on low-income earners.

In an open economy like ours, the exchange rate is the main determinant in the variation of consumer prices. To make things worse, the current government provoked a massive currency slide coupled with a sudden removal of subsidies on flour with all its knock-on effects. Under these circumstances, it would be criminal to link the compensation of an ever-declining purchasing power to productivity. Reasonably, to be coherent with its policies, the government should have settled for a non-negotiable full compensation for incomes below Rs 16, 500. As for the NPC, it could show its

mettle by arbitrating a collective bargaining for end-of-the-year bonuses.

The need for a makeover starting at the top

A lean and efficient government is the incarnation of a clean and smart government. That is a far cry from what the IMF and the World Bank actually promote. When "leaders" indulge in the blame game, like flying the "economic patriotism" flag or grumbling about the "laid-back workforce", they unwittingly reveal their incompetence. One of the roles of a government is to provide more certainties for households and businesses alike. Gross Domestic Product growth, no matter how dazzling, is futile when it is unable to dent joblessness and inequalities, to overcome structural mismatches and distortions and to boost purchasing power and morale.

Mauritius will be poised for globalisation after an extreme makeover starting at the top. Our civil society and media are still too weak a fourth estate to offer a counterbalance. Neocons of all hues will continue to sell the illusion that they are the genuine

progressives and those who do not bow to their proselytism are self-hating citizens, but the Internet and its tools such as the Blogosphere, Wikipedia and YouTube are creating a new reality, where information flows less asymmetrically.

Samad Ramoly is an entrepreneur and a policy observer.