Clerk of the National Assembly
Parliament House
Port Louis

To: Select Committee on the Introduction of "Kreol Morisien" into the National Assembly through Clerk of the Assembly

Dear Chairperson and other Members of the MLA,

We, in the Association "Ledikasyon pu Travayer (LPT)" welcome the setting up of this Select Committee on the Introduction of Kreol into the National Assembly, which we see as an important step towards making Kreol a working language, alongside English, as the language until now, with the possibility of addressing the Chair in French. The introduction of Kreol into the National Assembly will, in turn, contribute to the process of applying a more democratic, rational, coherent, decolonized and dignified official language policy for our country hopefully in time for its next anniversary of Independence.

Our Association is pleased to share some documents (as attachments) on the use of Kreol, documents that we think might help in the work of the Committee.

LPT has been doing adult literacy courses for more than 40 years and was awarded the UNESCO International Literacy Prize in 2004 and another UNESCO prize called the Linguapax International Prize for mother tongue promotion in 2013. From our long experience in literacy courses we have seen concretely how using Kreol as medium to teach literacy works perfectly well. After some 30 to 40 hours of literacy sessions participants, mostly workers, succeed in writing and reading with comprehension their own sentences, their letters, notes, poems, or making a list of commodities or hardware to buy, as well as being able to read texts of a scientific, literary or political nature. And one of our literacy students, Claude Chiffone, even wrote a whole novel in Kreol, which we published. Other participants have also learned basic French or English on their own, or with the help of a neighbour, after completing basic literacy courses at LPT. In fact, many international studies have shown that a solid base in the mother tonugue is a necessary and inescapable scaffolding to become "high level mutilingual". The recent PISA results, Select Committee Members will perhaps have noticed, show Mauritius much lower on the test for "reading with comprehension" than the average for OECD countries, with a smaller percentage of students excelling than in OECD countries, as well as a bigger percentage doing poorly.

All this to say that the mother tongue is a very strong effective tool for literacy teaching and language learning. But our mother tongue is also important for allowing for the highest degree of precision of the human mind-at-work.

Human language is, after all, more than a "means of communication". It is our shared way of representing *naturally* in our heads, through grammatical structures we are born with, all the data that comes to us through our different senses. It is human language that allows us to process our own emotions inside us, too, and even to think about our own thoughts and other people's thoughts.

And all this we do *naturally*. Because we are human and have a mother tongue. And MPs, in the National Assembly, need to rely upon this natural endowment, as humans, in order to be part of the nation that elected them. We judge Kreol to be the language MPs consider to be natural because they use it in their electoral campaigns, and in all their communications with the people in their constituencies, and amongst themselves in the streets and markets, at weddings and other gatherings. Candidates and their parties seek election *via speeches in Kreol*, and thus prove that *that* is the language people use and the language understood with most precision. Now that National Assembly sessions are televised, we can see and hear our MPs directly, ourselves. The only problem is that we hear them speaking in a language NOT used when seeking our vote in the democratic system, a language which is neither their own mother tongue, their colleagues in the National Assembly, nor the public in the gallery or listening to them on a Radio or TV broadcast. It is distinctly absurd.

Kreol in public institutions

This Select Committee is starting its work with the advantage of a favorable context for the Kreol language. Today the Kreol language has become the national language in the Republic of Mauritius as the last official census figures clearly show. Kreol Morisien (KM) is used more and more in public institutions. KM is being taught as an optional language in public schools, from Grade One of primary school, all the way right up to HSC level. The University of Mauritius and the Open University run courses on the Creole language.

In 2013 LPT jointly with the Open University organise a course in writing Kreol in the official orthography for the *Institute of Legal and Judicial Studies.* Court transcribers, already on the job, followed the course. All participants loved the course, their results were brilliant, and they received certification from the Open University.

In her 2017-2018 Report the former Ombudsperson for children. Ms. Rita Venkatasamy, wrote favorably on using Kreol as medium of instruction inside a mother tongue based bi/multilingual education. More recently in its 2025 Report the National Human Rights Commission recommended the use of Kreol as medium in early education and for the formal training in reading and writing Kreol Morisien for Court officers.

In addition, since independence the majority of people in Mauritius has remained in favour of using Kreol in the parliament and other public institutions. This tendency stayed constant over the years. A survey by SOFRES in 1977, showed that two-thirds of those interviewed were in favour of Kreol as official language in Parliament. In 2009, again in a SOFRES survey, 67% people said that they are in favour of Kreol as official language alongside English in Parliament. It is interesting to note in that same survey only 20% of those interviewed said they knew that a Kreol dictionary existed, only 7% were aware that there were Kreol courses at the University of Mauritius.

So, there is more and more widespread acceptance for Kreol to be used as an essential medium – whether in Parliament or in other public institutions.

Technical aspect

Even if there are still certain technical questions to tackle with the use of Kreol, as the Prime Minister put it in Parliament, they are no insurmountable obstacles to introducing Kreol into Parliament .

There is the technical issue of "mass data". Of course, all Artificial Intelligence operations like this one, need data, and they need "mass data". This will, of course, essentially be produced every time the National Assembly meets and someone speaks in Kreol, the automatic transcriber does its best, and the employee transcriber corrects its attempt. This is how the computers "learn" – during the process, and become increasingly efficient.

However, there is existing "mass data" already in written Kreol. So, the first thing to know is that the LALIT website (www.lalitmauritius.org) has exactly the kind of "mass data" in written Kreol that can help with one of the processes of computerized transcribing, audio-to-text, by collecting more and more possible words and phrases. This website is used by the Paris VIII University, which we believe has a contract with LALIT for the use of the site for its linguistic studies of Creole languages world-wide, as it is the biggest data base of any Creole language. The LALIT site is also used by the University of Mauritius computer science academics like Dr Sameerchand Pudaruth working on automatic translation and automatic audio-to-written transcribing. We are sure LALIT would be pleased to offer use of the linguistic data on the site.

Material that may be Helpful

Many written materials already exist in Kreol. There are two Kreol Translations of the *Constitution of Mauritius* (two versions, as far as we are aware), one recently published by Arnaud Carpooran's team and the other worked on by the experience barrister and former Attorney General with concommitant Parliamentary experience, Rama Valayden.

Standing Orders in Kreol also exist in two versions – a recent one by Arnaud Carpooran, and one by Ledikasyon pu Travayer in 2018.

Three or four Labour laws have been translated, at various times, into Kreol – over the decades. Long documents like the *Sugar Industry Field Workers' Remuneration Order* and the *Sugar Mill Workers Remuneration Order* were both published in 1980. The *Free Zone Labour Law* was published by Labaz Intersindikal in 1987. The *Construction Workers Labour Law* was published around 1998. The Public Order Act (now defunct) and the Industrial Relations Act (equally defunct), were also translated, giving further linguistic data, and experience that can be shared.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was published in Kreol in 1998 by Amnesty International many, years ago, but unfortunately without the Preamble, which is so important to the Universal Declaration. More recently, a new version by Arnaud Carpooran's team has come

out. The Convention on the Rights of the Child in Kreol was published by the Federation of Preschool Playgroups. These are all useful resources.

We have included a list of non-fiction publication in Kreol from LPT's archive.

So, as we can see how we are not today working in a historic "vacuum". All this background information is necessary to be more prepared to respond to reactionaries, who will try to prevent this change which often they fear for reasons not based on fact.

Your Committee, we suppose, will have to propose amendments to Section 49 of the Constitution that defines the language to be used in Parliament. (As regards another section, Section 33 (d), it, too, needs attention. We intend to submit a proposal before the Constitutional Review Commission to revoke this section 33(d) entirely on the grounds that it has two colonial qualifications to sit as an MP: first, a literacy hurdle, and then a requirement of knowing a language that is *not* the mother tongue of well over 95% of the population! It is arbitrary and against democracy to insist this way on both literacy and proficiency in one particular language. It is probably beyond the scope of your Committee to consider this Amendment?)

The introduction of Kreol into the National Assembly will end the incoherence of the existing situation, which is absurd, and which represents a brutal fracture between the people's language and the language of their elected representatives representing them democratically in Parliament.

The change will also bring a higher level of debate and discussion, and greater precision in the ideas being discussed during Parliamentary debates. Deputies will have the freedom to speak in their mother tongue, which will contribute to them being able to respect the Standing Orders by refraining from reading from prepared texts. It will enhance "democracy" this way, and by, at the same time, allowing those who elected the MPs in the first place, to be able to understand, with precision, what they are saying on their behalf in Parliament. The significance of their vote on an issue will be clearer to their electors. It will be a huge step forward in the process of decolonization of state institutions.

All necessary conditions are almost there for Kreol to make this step forward in our public institutions, beginning the big leap with the change in the institution that gives body to our claim to be a "democracy". This Select Committee now has the task of working towards making the Kreol of the Republic of Mauritius into a working language in the National Assembly. An idea will become a reality as a result of your historic contribution at this key moment.

Alain Ah Vee and Ragini Kistnasamy

Ledikasyon pu Travayer, 17 September 2026.