Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Hon Minister who made the Statement for the excellent way he has eulogised our fallen heroes.

Mr Speaker, there is a saying that a nation that does not honour its heroes is not worth dying for. But it is also equally important that when these heroes are alive, we should see to their welfare.

Mr Speaker, it is an open secret that some of these coaches we are eulogising today, during their lifetime, had difficulties. They are not here to bring out all those difficulties that they encountered. Today, they are no longer there, and beyond feasting our heroes during Republic Days once in a year, what next?

Sometimes, when these heroes are on retirement, they find it difficult to have funds to buy the basic necessities like the normal body painkillers. Yet the amount of money that would be spent on the day of the funeral is so huge. We have come to a time where we need to honour those we need to honour when they are alive. Mr Speaker, I believe that the Hon Minister who made the Statement, the Hon Minister for Youth and Sports was right on point by meticulously identifying all those things that these our fallen heroes have done for this country. What did we do for them when they were alive? I believe that during their funerals, we would say a whole lot of things. Going forward, I would want this House and the Ministry of Youth and Sports to institute some kind of insurance for them beyond their private personal insurance. We should have a system of setting some budgetary allocation for them as a welfare package, so that when they are on retirement, we would see to their needs.

Mr Speaker, while we sympathise with the bereaved family, we should also remind ourselves as a House, that for how long can we always come here to lament over our Hon Colleagues and those who have done something for this country and thereafter, it has been business as usual?

It is not uncommon to see some of us sometimes, even promise the widow, children and all those our departed colleagues may have left behind. We promise them when we attend their funerals. We say all sorts of things that we would do to the families who have been left behind, only for us to renege on our promises.

Mr Speaker, this is bad.

If the dead were to be alive and we stand in the midst of a gathering or sometimes, before the pulpit and promise the children and we fail to honour —
Mr Speaker, while I comment on this Statement, may I use the occasion to appeal to the public and all those who promise during periods of emotional stress but failed to honour them, especially to the widows and the children, to redeem their promises. I beseech them and all of us here never to make promises we know we would not fulfil. We do so just to raise the hope of such bereaved families.

Mr Speaker, having said that, it is equally important for the Government to look at all those things that the people did while they were alive and ensure that during the Republic Day celebrations, as part of the packages to be announced for the aged, the Government sees to it and give some small packages to the children of those departed colleagues.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I thank the Hon Minister who made the Statement.

I believe and hope that once he has taken the mantle of the leadership of the Ministry, some of these things we have discussed here —as he sits here — he would take them on board. This is to ensure that, at least, something is done to those of our colleagues who are alive today rather than to wait and eulogise them.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.