AIRPORTS OF MAURITIUS LTD - EMPLOYEES - SUSPENSION

(No. B/267) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Airports of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the reasons why five employees thereof have recently been suspended, indicating in each case, the respective -

(a) post held, and

(b) date of appointment.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Airports of Mauritius Limited is a company governed by the Companies Act and its own constitution. As such, in regard to its personnel, it has its own internal procedures to recruit, to promote and institute disciplinary proceedings.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I want some silence in the House. Allow the hon. Prime Minister to answer!

The Prime Minister: The management of the company is vested in its Board of Directors and its day-to-day management is vested in its Chief Executive and senior management, as in the case of most companies. It would, therefore, not be appropriate for me to comment on the day-to-day management and control of employees of the company.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that Airports of Mauritius Ltd. is defined as a public company where Government owns above 99.9% of shares and where public funds have been involved? So, pour la transparence, je demande au Premier ministre de répondre au PQ que je lui ai adressé.

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Prime Minister has already responded.
Mr Jhugroo: Transparency and good governance are always mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister! Therefore, he should answer the PQ addressed to him.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, the hon. Prime Minister has already responded to your question. If anyone has got a different question, yes! Next question!

GOVT OF MAURITIUS – INDIVIDUALS/COMPANIES - PAID DAMAGES

(No. B/268) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to each of the cases in which the State has been advised to pay damages to individuals/companies for wrongful actions by the Police, since April 2009 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

(a) reasons therefor, and

(b) quantum thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me emphasize, right at the outset, that there is nothing new about the State being held liable in damages for wrongful acts in the course of duties by members of the Police. It happens here, it happens in all the countries.

In fact, damages paid by the State to individuals and companies following Police action date back many, many years ago. For example, from January 2003 to June 2005, payment was made by the State in seven such cases.

In regard to the specific details requested by the hon. Member, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 April 2009 to 09 May 2013, there are six cases in respect of which Government has paid damages to individuals as a result of Police action.

It is a bit long, if the hon. Member wants me to circulate it or I can spell it out; otherwise, I can circulate the information in parts (a) and (b).

Let me emphasise also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have done on many occasions in the House, that one of the priorities of Government is the maintenance of public order through effective and humane policing. Accordingly, we have embarked on a significant reform programme for the Police Force with a view to transforming it into a more service-oriented
organisation operating in accordance with the principles of democracy, customer care and the rule of law.

Since February 2010, the Mauritius Police Force has implemented the National Policing Strategic Framework which includes a section on “Achieving Human Rights Compliant Organisation”. The ultimate aim of this Framework is to enable the Police to make a fundamental shift from a “Force” to a “Service”, where service to the community is at the centre of policing thus ushering a new policing concept and a new culture of service.

In this context, various training programmes are dispensed by the Police Training School with emphasis on the necessity to uphold the rights of citizens and other residents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nowadays, with modern technology to assist in the detection of crime, the trend is to move more towards scientific evidence-led enquiries. The DNA Identification Act which was proclaimed in February 2010 has also provided the appropriate legal framework for undertaking DNA tests and to use these results as evidence in a Court of law. DNA profiling now gives the Police a powerful tool to deal more effectively with criminal investigations on the basis of evidence, as opposed to confessions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned earlier, the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, which has already been introduced for first reading in the National Assembly will be a major step forward in Police practices. It aims at providing the Codes of Conduct that will regulate the conduct of Police and other investigators carrying out criminal investigations.

The reform of our Police is a tremendous challenge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and over the past eight years Government has shown over and over again its commitment to the implementation of appropriate measures to facilitate the process. We are witnessing positive results as the number of reported cases of Police brutality shows a decreasing trend.

Mr Ameer Meea: I would ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can circulate information with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question.

Can I ask, therefore, the hon. Prime Minister where Police has been found to be at fault and eventually damages have been paid, had there been any enquiries being done independently and what has been the outcome of those enquiries?
**The Prime Minister**: Normally, there is an internal procedure in the Police. They do their own check-up, whether things could have been done differently and all these, but I don’t know what are the specifics. If the hon. Member asks me specifically I can look into it.
Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that there have been six cases recently where damage has been paid following wrongful acts by the Police. Can I know what action has been taken against these specific Police Officers?

The Prime Minister: Not recently, from the 01 of April 2009 to May 2013. As I said, the Police normally look into it. I’ll give you an example. There is a case which has been caused by an accident by the Government vehicle. They have to pay damages. What enquiry further can be done? There has been an enquiry, the Police were at fault and they have paid damages. These enquiries go to different sections of the Police. I know the Police enquired into it and if they have to refer it, they revert it further to the Human Rights Commission.

Mr Ganoo: There is a major flaw and constraint to litigants suing Government or Police Officers or medical Officers. The Public Officers' Protection Act gives a prescription, a limit of two years only for a citizen to sue Government. My friends at the Bar know about this. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to contact the State Law Office to review that provision in our law which works a lot on injustice because very often, in cases of medical negligence, for example, the citizen, who has suffered at the hands of medical practitioners, comes to know quite late about what has happened or the injury sustained and so on. I think we should review that clause in our law to enable the citizens of this country to sue Government or medical Officers or Police Officers of the State without this handicap of having to do it within the limit of two years.

The Prime Minister: Our concept is to look into this Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although I thought it starts from the day that you are aware that something is wrong, but anyway we can look into this.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can confirm to the House whether Government has received any letter or representation from Mrs late Ramdhonee in relation to the death of her husband, Mr Ramdhonee, who passed away in Police cell?

The Prime Minister: There has been an enquiry. All these allegations that were made have been proven to be false and therefore what else can we do.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!
RAPE (ALLEGED) – MRS M.D.L. - INQUIRY

(No. B/269) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case of alleged rape on one Mrs M.D.L., 70 years old, in Grande Rivière Noire, on 21 April 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto, indicating –

(a) if any arrest has been effected in connection therewith, and

(b) the additional measures taken to protect women against acts of violence and murder.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that one Mr T.M.Q. was arrested on 24 April 2013. A provisional charge of “Rape” was lodged against him before the Black River District Court and he was remanded to Police cell up to 14 May 2013.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, the Police Family Protection Unit and the Police Crime Prevention Unit address both the intervention and prevention aspects of violence and criminal offences against women. On the prevention side, the Police have recourse to intensive sensitization campaigns targeting women and elderly persons. Also, the Police organize on a yearly basis, safety and security weeks throughout the country including Rodrigues. Through this campaign, the public are encouraged to report any suspected case of violence against women to the nearest Police Station.

On 21 October 2012, the Police also launched its Crimestoppers Scheme, which has as main function, to provide free and anonymous telephone access through line 148 to the Police in order to enable members of the public, NGOs, media or any organisation struggling to reduce crime to inform the Police about criminals and criminal activities in their area.

The Police have also, through the National Policing Strategic Framework, implemented Community Policing at the level of all Police Divisions. In each Station, there are dedicated neighbourhood Officers who are in permanent contact with the community. A total of 93,587 local residents have attended 6,208 Community Policing Fora organised by the Police.
Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on its part, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare launched a national platform to end gender-based violence in Mauritius in October 2011. The platform elaborated the policy direction to deal with this type of violence; and set up an Observatory for gender-based violence. The national platform meets twice yearly to monitor the activities carried out by the various stakeholders, namely the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions; the Ministry of Education and Human Resources; the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life; the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and the Police Department.

Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is currently considering amendments to be brought to the Criminal Code in order to make tougher provision for the criminalization of acts of sexual perversion. Amongst the amendments being considered, it is proposed to increase the maximum sentence to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 60 years where aggravating circumstances are found to exist, amongst others, where death has resulted; and the alleged victim is a person with particular vulnerability such as mental deficiency, old age or pregnancy.

The Office of the Attorney General is currently working on a Criminal Code Amendment Bill, in order to bring these amendments, amongst others, to the Criminal Code.

Violence against women, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a societal problem, which has taken huge proportions world-wide. The Government is leaving no stone unturned to address this issue, and the concerted effort of society as a whole is necessary so as to better protect women, more particularly more vulnerable ones.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that in the case of Mrs M.D.L., one of the perpetrators has still not been identified and brought to Court, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us as to whether forensic exams have been performed and, if so, give details of evidence found?

The Prime Minister: I cannot give details of the evidence found, but Forensic evidence is being sought. The person who has been arrested has denied completely, has given alibi and other things, that is why the enquiry is taking a bit longer, but people are seeking the second person.
Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should the hon. Prime Minister agree with me, that being raped by two young men both at the same time, Mrs M.D.L. has experienced a very serious human abuse and this inhuman behaviour is happening every day by our youths, which is not acceptable and should not be tolerated? Will the hon. Prime Minister take actions against the sexual objectification and dehumanisation of women’s bodies in the press and media?

The Prime Minister: I agree with the hon. Member. I have heard that it was a horrible act committed by two young. That is why we are saying we want to strengthen those sanctions, the punishment. In some countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they use chemical castration. I am wondering whether we should not use this here.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a few questions if you will allow me. Since in these recent days or weeks, there have been several cases of old ladies being abused sexually, can the hon. Prime Minister tell the House whether there is a link between all these young aggressors in that they were under the influence of drugs at the time they were committing the offences? Is there such evidence in these cases?

The Prime Minister: There is no evidence as such, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although this is something that we have to look at very carefully, because very often people behave in such a way when they are under the influence of drugs.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can suggest to the Commissioner of Police, that in all Police Stations, there should be a register of elderly persons or old couples living alone, so that all Police Stations should know, within the area which they control and supervise, where these elderly persons are living and this, I am sure, would help in the preservation of security of these old persons?

The Prime Minister: That is a very positive suggestion that I will take up with the Commissioner of Police.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that change in behaviour and attitudes need to start at an early age and to see to it that learning materials used in schools need to challenge the social stereotypes prejudice and social acceptance of male domination and to ensure that boys and girls in every school are being educated on human rights and gender equality?
The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree we have to start with the children. That is why in the project that I have started - NICE - we are also telling them about real values in life and perhaps the hon. Member might be interested to come and have a look. But this is what we are doing.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Prime Minister understand that the physical and psychological damages of Mrs M.D.L. is not only an individual matter, but the sufferings of all women who have been raped or tortured and he will give consideration to have a trained and equipped Gender Unit, including Psychologists and trained women specialists to perform the forensic exams within the Police Force to handle such cases?

The Prime Minister: That is generally the case, but as I said, we also have to look at the strengthening of the law. But that is done with the case, we tend to have Women Police Constables to examine as far as possible, otherwise we wait.

HELICOPTER SQUADRON – FLASH FLOODS – RESCUE EXERCISES

(No. B/270) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the helicopters of the Helicopter Squadron participated in the rescue exercises and, if so, the number of times they so participated, indicating in each case, at what time and, if not, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police Helicopter Squadron set up since 16 September 1974, is entrusted with various policing tasks including, inter-alia, combating drug trafficking, providing maritime surveillance, carrying out Search and Rescue Operations and medical evacuations.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, there are safety requirements before any helicopter can be allowed any sortie, amongst them is the prevailing weather conditions. Thus, helicopters should avoid flying in clouds and heavy rains especially when they are close to the ground because the risk of accident is increased.
I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 30 March 2013, although visibility in the affected regions was impaired by low clouds and heavy rains, two Police helicopters were brought into action.

They undertook five operations and one person was rescued at Canal Dayot and he was conveyed to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital.

The Police Helicopter Squadron has, from January to 09 May 2013, carried out 31 Search and Rescue Operations and successfully rescued seven persons in these operations.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, est-ce que l’honorable Premier ministre peut nous confirmer si, de ces deux hélicoptères qui avaient fait une sortie le 30 mars, un était sorti juste pour faire déplacer le Commissaire de police de Vacoas pour faire une virée sur Port Louis et puis retourner sur Vacoas et après rentrer à l’aéroport?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the two helicopters were used specifically for looking at where they can go and help. There are five helicopters in the fleet, as you probably know, and two were on standby, if needed to be used, they can be used. One is actually being serviced in India. So, there are four available at the moment.

Mr Seeruttun: Peut-on savoir pourquoi seulement deux ont été utilisés ce jour-là, alors qu’il y avait un besoin pour que tous les hélicoptères se mettent au service de ceux en détresse ?

The Prime Minister: I just explained, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are safety requirements. It was felt that it was dangerous, but, in spite of that, they allowed two of the helicopters to fly and to try to see whether they can actually, because there were low clouds and very heavy rains. But the two were on standby. And if the Commissioner of Police needs a helicopter or even the Prime Minister, they can take it, but not in this case, because these two were actually doing that job.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for allowing me to ask a question after having ignored me earlier.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, go straight to your question!

Dr. S. Boolell: I am thanking you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. At least, I have to do that.

(Interruptions)
The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member is wasting the time of the Assembly.

Dr. S. Boolell: Thank You, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a protocol for helicopters to land in areas of major emergencies, including the flash foods and road traffic accidents areas, which would allow them to carry patients to hospitals with landing zones in our hospitals?

The Prime Minister: We can’t have landing zones all over the country, unfortunately, but they use winching as well. They do not actually have to land all the time and this is what they used at Canal Dayot. They did not, actually, land, but they did, actually, winch the person off.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister at what time the two helicopters went out for rescue operations and why is it that they took so long in order to attend to the first rescue operations?

The Prime Minister: It depends when they were told where to go, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They started operating as soon as it was felt that they were needed to see whether they could actually go out. As I explained there were very heavy rains and also, we all know, there were low clouds. So, they have to look at the security of the helicopters as well, but they did go out and they did make…

(Interruptions)

- not one sortie - many sorties. But in the case of Canal Dayot, they actually winched the person away.

Mr Jhugroo: How do you explain, hon. Prime Minister…?

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Jhugroo: Yes. How does the hon. Prime Minister explain that pendant les fêtes de l’Indépendance, on voit de belles acrobaties faites par le personnel de l’hélicoptère, mais quand il y a eu cette tragédie du 30 mars ‘zéro plombaz’, on n’a pas vu les hélicoptères pour venir sauver des vies humaines…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Where is your question?
Mr Jhugroo: When you see what is going …

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, put your question!

Mr Jhugroo: The question is: how do you explain for this? How do you explain ‘bel bel acrobatie’, on 12 March and whenever people are drowning in this country, ‘zéro plombaz’ no presence of the helicopters?

The Deputy Speaker: I think that the hon. Prime Minister has already answered the question. Next question, please!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you allow me. This is an untruth and this is the kind of propaganda the Opposition do. I have just explained from January to 09 May, 31 Search and Rescue Operations were made and 7 persons were rescued. In that case, on that day, one person was winched. On the Independence Day, if the hon. Member was not there, it was raining, there were heavy clouds and heavy rains.

CITE MALHERBES – INCIDENT – 09 DECEMBER 2012

(No. B/271) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the incident that took place on the eve of the 2012 Municipal Elections, at Cité Malherbes in Curepipe, whereby a candidate of the MMM/MSM alliance was allegedly physically assaulted, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 December 2012 at 00 35 hours, one Mr S.A. made a declaration at the Curepipe Police Station to the effect that on 08 December 2012, while he was sitting in his car along Charles Baudelaire Street, Cité Malherbes, Curepipe, one Mrs S.L. made some nasty remarks to him. Thereafter, two other persons accompanying her assaulted him.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 December 2012 at 01 20 hours, Mrs S.L. made a declaration at Eau Coulée Police Station stating that on 08 December 2012, while she was engaged in political activities together with other activists of her party along the same street, that is, Charles Baudelaire Street, Cité Malherbes, Curepipe, she saw Mr S. A.
stopping his vehicle along that street. She approached him and cautioned him about his activities. Mrs S.L. alleged that Mr S.A. grew vexed and assaulted her. Police have completed its inquiry into the case and the file has already been forwarded to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Mr Seeruttun: Cet incident a eu lieu dans la soirée du 08 au 09 décembre en présence d’un Senior Minister et le nom de l’agresseur a été communiqué à la police. Est-ce qu’on peut savoir si cette personne en question a été interrogrée par la police?

The Prime Minister: I just said there are two versions, both of them say they have been assaulted - not just one person, but both persons - and both of them gave declarations; one Mr S. A. gave it at 00 35 hours and Mrs S. L. gave it a bit later, sort of one hour later. So, you cannot say just one, but not the other, that is why the Police did an enquiry and that is why the file has been sent to the DPP.

Mr Seeruttun: Vu qu’il y a deux versions, il y avait aussi beaucoup de témoins ce soir-là, est-ce qu’on a pris les témoignages de ceux qui étaient présents lors de cet incident pour savoir qui dit la vérité ?

The Prime Minister: This is the basic procedure for the Police to try to get all the statements they can get.

DOGS - ATTACKS - CASES

(No. B/272) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to attacks by ferocious dogs on members of the public, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, over the past two years.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 09 May 2011 to 09 May 2013, the number of cases of attacks by dogs on members of the public reported to the Police is as follows -

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of cases reported</th>
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Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 18 January 2011, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has decided not to grant import permit in respect of breeds of dog which are considered as dangerous.

Let me add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security is finalising, with the Attorney General’s Office, the Animal Welfare Bill, which will be probably the first comprehensive piece of legislation which will cater for the welfare and control of animals, including dogs.

The Bill will also regulate dog keeping and dog breeding.

Mr Nagalingum: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a classification of ferocious dogs and whether these dogs have been banned for importation and for breeding?

The Prime Minister: They have been banned for importation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister will undoubtedly agree that there have been some yet additional very alarming cases recently. Is the Prime Minister aware that in July 2009 to a question from hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee he stated that “the Ministry of Agro Industry is having consultation with the Attorney General’s Office concerning revision of existing legislation”? Is he aware that on 22 June 2010 in response to hon. Ameer Meea he stated that “I have already given instructions to the Minister for the elaboration of a Dogs Control Bill”? Is he aware that on 06 December 2011 in answer to hon. Lesjongard, he stated that “the Ministry is presently finalising the Bill”? And, is he aware that on 13 December 2011, in response to hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, he said that the Ministry is finalising the Dangerous Dogs Bill? Will he undertake that this Bill is to be presented, laid before the House in the very near future?

(Interruptions)
It is a serious matter; we need to revise the legislation to afford appropriate protection to citizens of the country.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

The Prime Minister: …bites by dogs did not start in 2005. They started a long time ago. There have always been attacks by dogs. You wonder why the hon. Member, when he was in Government, never thought…

(Interruptions)

…of bringing…

(Interruptions)

Why? He never thought …

(Interruptions)

And now he wants us to do it …

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: For five years they did nothing! So why?

(Interruptions)

So why?

(Interruptions)

Let me explain because it is very easy…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!
The Prime Minister: Let me explain, if they want to listen, they listen!

Let me explain! They think to start…

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you are interrupting the hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I just explained, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't want to bring just legislation; it is a comprehensive one; it is being relooked at. It is comprehensive. We are looking at the list. Some of the dogs - perhaps people will be surprised - I don't think should be on the list. But they have been put on the list. We have to relook. We have to ask authorities from abroad. It takes a long time and we are doing a comprehensive legislation, we will bring it when it is ready and not when the hon. Member decides it should be ready.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS & PARASTATAL BODIES – GOOD GOVERNANCE

(No. B/273) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the para-statal bodies and public-owned companies, he will state when will he come up with the changes he had proposed to bring at the head of the non-performing ones, especially with regard to good governance and accountability.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, in line with our commitment to improve the governance framework in our public institutions, particularly in our para-statal bodies, the Government has re-organised the former Management Audit Bureau into an Office of Public Sector Governance (the OPSG, as we normally call it). It operates under the aegis of my Office and is tasked with the responsibility to ensure that public sector management becomes more outcome oriented and is in line with the best practices of governance, in particular those relating to transparency and accountability.
Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we really want to turn around those entities which are underperforming, we need more than simply a change of people at the top. We need a complete re-engineering and revamping of non-performing or low-performing organisations in order to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and support the economic development of the country and provide quality service to the population. This is precisely the sort of tasks that the OPSG has set about to do.

Mr Bhagwan: Recently, the Prime Minister announced a tsunami and we have seen, Sir, so much incompetence at the Head of certain parastatal bodies. I will only mention two – the Road Development Authority recently and the National Transport Corporation – just to mention a few. The Prime Minister has just stated that it depends on the people at the top. But there are too many people who have been appointed and he himself has stated on many occasions that they are very incompetent and they are doing nothing and they are A, B, C (Assizé Bèze Casse). Can I ask honestly the Prime Minister on behalf of the country itself to make sure that these incompetent people at the Head of certain parastatal bodies or Government-owned companies, where there are people making not only money, but being like super kings, at least for the interest of the taxpayers – ils sont comme des potentats dans plusieurs de ces corps paraétatiques. Can the Prime Minister, at least bring this tsunami - he has been talking about tsunami - act rapidly? There are only two years remaining or less for the Prime Minister…

The Deputy Speaker: What is your question, hon. Bhagwan?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: To replace all these potentats!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I thought, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we were going to see a tsunami on 01 May!

(Interruptions)

5,000 people a tsunami! What tsunami?

(Interruptions)

No tsunami! No tsunami! 5,000 people!
(Interruptions)

5,000 people!

(Interruptions)

They should have got more!

(Interruptions)

The buses were free!

(Interruptions)

All the buses, pane founi faire!

(Interruptions)

Atane to pu gueter!

(Interruptions)

There was no tsunami!

(Interruptions)

And let me…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

The Prime Minister: Let me tell him…

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, allow the hon. Prime Minister to respond to your question!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I know that …

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!
The Prime Minister: I know they were looking for the tsunami, but they did not get.

But let me tell him something else!

Let me tell him something else! I am sure the hysteria of the hon. Member is totally sincere, I can understand it. But, let me say something else, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir…

Perhaps the hon. Member does not know, let me tell him!

The OPSG has already conducted a survey. We need to do it in a holistic approach and not just the person, but also the regulations and all those things.

A survey of 32 parastatal bodies has already been done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This has been completed and now my Office is in the process of looking at the recommendations that have been made. I do not want to go through all these, but let me say that this exercise has started. I also want to inform the hon. Member that reviews have been conducted by ICAC into the parastatal and State-owned enterprises. They have made some 320 recommendations to improve the existing system.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as was announced in the Government Programme 2012-2015, a Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework has been developed and is being implemented in some 18 State-owned enterprises. I could go on and on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but let me say that there has been progress since we have started this. For example, in the sugar sector, six service providing institutions have been merged into one apex body, the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority. As a result of this measure, Cess funding has been reduced from Rs519 m. for the crop of 2010 to Rs287 m. for crop 2011, and we expect it to be again reduced to Rs278 m. for the year 2012. Similarly, a number of permanent employees have been reduced from 908 to 490.
Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to highlight the fact that, prior to 2012, there were 16 parastatals operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro Industry. Now, there are only eight in operation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is up! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/277 has been withdrawn. I suspend the sitting for one and half hours for lunch.

*At 12.54 p.m the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/287 has been withdrawn.

**SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - SQUATTERS**

*(No. B/281) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)* asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the 312 squatters presently living in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, who are eligible for regularisation, he will state where matters stand.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the previous replies I made to Parliamentary Questions B/221 and B/588 of 05 June and 23 October 2012 respectively.

In respect of the regularisation or location of these 312 squatters, there are 132 lots available at Bambous (near the Black River District Council), Camp Levieux and Coteau Raffin. Prior to the allocation of these lots, the sites need to be provided with basic infrastructural amenities such as roads, water and electricity. Funds to the tune of Rs54.3 m. have already been earmarked for the provision of these amenities on these three sites. A request for proposal for consultancy services has been launched in that respect, and it is expected that works on site would start soon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the allocation of the 132 lots is as follows: 76 are being allocated to squatters residing at La Ferme, 39 to squatters at Karo Kalyptis and Case Noyale. The remaining 17 lots are to be allocated to other eligible families presently squatting on other sites of Constituency No. 14.
Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of the remaining cases, most of them are located at Dilo Pourri (45), Coteau Raffin (31), Eau Bonne (24), and African Town (70).

Due to the specific location of the site being occupied by 45 squatters at Dilo Pourri, Le Morne, my Ministry is currently undertaking a topographical survey of the land to assess the advisability of regularising their situation on the same site or whether they have to be relocated. In case the families may be regularised on site, the land will have to be retrieved from the Forestry Service of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, and allocated to the families.

Six of the 31 cases at Coteau Raffin may be regularised on site. However, the 25 cases at PG Comptesse de Lamarque, Coteau Raffin, have to be relocated as the land is marshy and prone to flooding. Thus, the site is unsuitable for construction purposes. The identification of an alternative site for their relocation is underway.

The situation at Eau Bonne has been further complicated by the addition of some 25 new families who have invaded the place since December 2012. My Ministry proposes to relocate the 25 initial squatters from the site, as it is found within the Buffer Zone of La Ferme Reservoir. However, in respect of the new squatters, an exercise is being carried out to identify those who are already owners of land or lessees of State lands in Rodrigues.

As regards the squatters at African Town, Riambel, the situation there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is very serious. I have to inform the House that the invasion of some 70 families over a plot of State land at African Town, Riambel, has been followed recently - I mean during the last few months of 2012 - of another 30 families, bringing the total to some 100 squatters. The land that has been squatted is marshy and unsuitable for residential purposes. The squatters thus have to be relocated. However, I reiterate that, as a responsible Government, only the genuine cases will be considered. A comprehensive survey is thus being undertaken to gain an in-depth insight of the situation, and determine issues such as socioeconomic status of the families, eligibility for the site leases, and land ownership.

Of the remaining 27 cases, three have been regularised in the region of Surinam and Riambel. The others are scattered, and are being processed on a case-to-case basis upon the submission of the relevant documents.
Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that many of these poor families squatting the land at La Ferme, Bambous, African Town, Riambel, Le Morne, Karo Kalyptis, Case Noyale and Coteau Raffin are being denied access to their fundamental basic rights like water and electricity, can the hon. Minister tell us whether these families and children have to be regularised first or relocated before they can enjoy the same basic human rights as other citizens of this country?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think most of them have been given their human rights, but you cannot go and squat anywhere and expect Government to be providing electricity and water on the spot. Most of them are having it. As I have said, we are spending Rs25.4 m. for these basic infrastructures. Government is trying to do as much as we can. We are not denying wilfully, deliberately or maliciously. We are trying to help a situation which is difficult. As I have mentioned, we had 30 people who just squatted over the month of December. As far as African Town, Riambel, is concerned, we cannot provide there. They should never have been there because it is marshy. With the recent rains, they have been having problems. As far as we can, as a caring Government, we are trying. It is basic human rights to have this, but there are certain imperatives that we have to respect.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand the point of the hon. Minister. But, my point here is that there are people who are poor and really cannot obtain or buy a plot of land. What is the caring Government doing to help these people have a plot of land, make application for social housing or any plans? So, what is the Government doing to prevent people from squatting?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are trying. In fact, I have said how we are trying to place them somewhere. To prevent them from squatting may not be easy because some of our Members of Parliament - whom I respect actually - have been encouraging them to squat at African Town, Riambel. They have been given …

(Interruptions)

… nails, pieces of wood, and tin sheets.

(Interruptions)
However, we have to have some order. Those who have been regularised are having their piece of land, water and electricity, and then you have somebody else coming and be a nuisance to them. We have to have some discipline in life. Otherwise, we are doomed.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to come back on this question of utilities, namely the provision of water and electricity. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Government should not take a principled position that before he is granted the formal list, because it takes time to regularise squatters, it takes five years, and sometimes less or more! But, in the meantime, once Government knows that they will never be asked to leave this particular plot of State land even though they have not been granted their formal lease, why can’t the Government issue a document so that they can produce it at the CEB or the CWA for them to be provided with these? This is what used to be done in the past; I don’t know whether the hon. Minister has put an end to the practice, but I appeal to him to see to it that these squatters are provided although they are not formally lease owners.

Dr. Kasenally: Far from it, you yourself as Minister of Public Utilities knows fully well that we sometimes have to cave in - I would say cave in - because it is against the law but, however, we are closing one eye and a lot of them are having it, even at Cité La Cure and also at Bambous. They have not been given the lease but they have been given; but we have to be very careful not to let the floodgates open. We have to have a bit of controlling, but they are being given. It is not a practice which has been stopped.

Mr Ganoo: I come to the area of Karo Kalyptis which the hon. Minister has mentioned. He has said that there are 39 squatters who are going to be regularised and who will have to move somewhere else, I think to La Gaulette. May I ask the hon. Minister to look into the particular case of Karo Kalyptis at Case Noyale? There are more than 39 squatters and they have been staying for as long as the other ones who, thanks God, will be regularised soon; but there are more than 39 squatters and I will ask the hon. Minister if he can ask his Officers to look into the case of all the squatters of Karo Kalyptis. There are some other squatters who are as deserving as those who have been regularised.

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, we have to look at them, as you say with a very compassionate attitude but there is a limit to where we can go but most of them have been identified. The
problem is, there is not much land in that region. Probably, we will have to move them. In fact, some people from Karo Kalyptis or even Coteau Raffin will have to come to Bambous.

**OMBUDSPERSON - 2011-2012 REPORT - CHILD DEVELOPMENT UNIT**

(No. B/282) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether she will state if she has taken cognizance of the observations of the Ombudsperson for Children in her 2011-2012 Report regarding the Child Development Unit and, if so, indicate the remedial measures she proposes to take in relation thereto.

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. B/282 and B/283 at the same time as they relate to the same report and the same Unit of my Ministry.

I have taken cognizance of the observations of the Ombudsperson for Children in her 2011-2012 Report regarding the Child Development Unit (CDU) and the shelters.

The Ombudsperson for Children has made various recommendations for an enhanced service delivery by the CDU, and for the monitoring of shelters for the welfare of children placed thereat by my Ministry. I wish to inform the House that prior to the publication of the report various remedial actions were already underway at the level of my Ministry.

As regards the CDU, services to children are dispensed through six Bureaux across the island. These Bureaux are staffed with a team of professionals provided with logistics, including transport services.

For a proximity service and targeted approach, my Ministry aims at setting up one Child Protection Service in each district. With resources made available this year under my Ministry’s budget and with the support from CSR funding, a first Child Protection Unit has been set up at Vacoas. It is operational since the end of April 2013 and the official launching will be made tomorrow by the hon. Prime Minister.

In conformity with the Ombudsperson for Children’s recommendations, this new and modern service offers a conducive environment with a child-friendly corner. Moreover, the staff thereat is working in a better environment and subject to availability of funds, this model child
service will be replicated at Goodlands where additional space has already been obtained and I shall pursue efforts to find the necessary resources for the same modern service in other districts.

My Ministry also agrees that capacity building is crucial for people dealing with vulnerable children. In this respect, training of frontline officers working with children is an ongoing feature. Furthermore, continuous training of stakeholders on child-related issues are carried out on a regular basis.

In the same vein, I have approached Development Partners in Mauritius to explore the possibility of obtaining services of technical experts in the field of child welfare. My Ministry will pursue the matter with relevant authorities in accordance with existing procedures.

As regards the Ombudsperson’s recommendation on the need to re-visit the role of the CDU, I am to inform the House that my Ministry has already taken action to carry out an audit of the Unit. In the meantime, a reshufflement exercise of the staff of the CDU was effected in 2012. Moreover, some of the activities formerly undertaken by the CDU and related to information, education and communication, have been entrusted to the National Children’s Council.

My Ministry will also commission a National Child Protection Strategy for a holistic planning with respect to child development and child protection.

For a coordinated approach on children’s issues, a High Level Working Together Committee has been set up since 2010. To date, eight Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) have been signed. My Ministry is presently working with the remaining stakeholders. Finalisation of MOUs with the Police Department and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions is under way.

With a view to improving service delivery, my Ministry is also working on the Children’s Bill and a web-based Child Protection Register.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards Ombudsperson’s recommendations on shelters, the majority of issues are already covered by my Ministry. Regular monitoring visits, including surprise visits, are effected at these shelters. Interactions are encouraged between officers and children to enable the latter to voice out their conditions of living and other issues regarding their welfare.
Furthermore, psychologists of the Ministry hold counselling sessions with the children to facilitate their reintegration in mainstream society. One additional psychologists and one psychiatrist will soon be recruited on a sessional basis by my Ministry for counselling at the shelters. My Ministry will reinforce the monitoring and supervision of shelters through the setting-up of an Inspectorate system for a periodic review of placement of children.

To ensure compliance and harmonisation pertaining to the ‘prise en charge’ of children under court order, a list of “Do’s and Don’ts” has been issued to managers of all shelters in November 2012. Additionally, I have initiated in April 2013, a consultative process with managers of shelters with a view to taking stock of their concerns and proposals regarding the welfare and development of children. I have also requested them to share the best practices among themselves for an improved service delivery.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in her Report, the Ombudsperson for Children pointed out that in the case of children placed in Residential Care Institutions no basic data, neither family background nor medical history is submitted along, which renders very difficult the quality of care, health, services and safety to be provided to the child by the RCI. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether she is going to see to it that those very important basic data are submitted to the RCI once the child is admitted there.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that when a child is removed from its original place and placed in a place of safety or a shelter, sometimes it is difficult to obtain the relevant papers at the time when Officers are removing the child, but the necessary is done at the level of the CDU as far as possible and in cases where those papers are not available, there are also different procedures that are done to be able to try and obtain those papers in the shortest delay.

There is also a medical examination to which the child is subjected to. We try at the maximum to see in what way we can cater holistically for that child.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like also to know from the hon. Minister whether she is going to see to it that Officers of the CDU now get a better working environment since the Ombudsperson for Children pointed out dysfunctional workplace, poor working conditions, cramped offices, files stacked everywhere and no personal computer for those CDU Officers.
Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have indicated in my answer, we are very much aware of the difficult conditions in which the CDU Officers are actually working. But, it is also subject to availability of funds. Sometimes it is difficult to be able to provide them with a better environment. We are nevertheless trying to do that. I have indicated that a first Child Protection Service has been set up with a child friendly environment, including appropriate amenities for the staff at the same time. We are aiming at having one in every district and I will pursue effort to make possible that there is a Child Protection Service in every district of the country with a conducive working environment for the Officers of CDU.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the hon. Minister how she intends to address the observation of the Ombudsperson for Children that in some shelters children are not going to school and she recommended that those children should join the mainstream schooling.

Mrs Martin: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are some cases, for example, for children who are put into shelters, the situation of the child going to school or not is considered on a case to case basis. Some children have accumulated a lot of retard, in fact, in their schooling and they are taken care of at the level of the shelters themselves where they are given un cours de rattrapage. However, as far as possible, all the children who are in shelters do go to the schools within the vicinity of those shelters because, we really want all children to be going to school as in conformity with the law.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the services of the CDU units are available over the weekends and especially, afterhours in matters of children who are children of divorced parents and when there are a lot of allegations being made on children who are sent back to their parents?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the services of CDU are on a 24-hour basis. We have some officers who are on rotation with regard to taking care of the different cases around the island and we also have a hotline on which the general public can call in order to report any sort of case.
Mr Ganoo: Can I ask one question to the hon. Minister concerning les foyers? I think this came to light when the problem of Foyer Namasté was raised recently. How does the hon. Minister make sure that people who are employed at the foyer are people who have received proper training in order to look after these children, especially the disabled children? What guarantee does the hon. Minister or the Ministry have that these people are fit and proper persons, not only in terms of training but also in terms of their passé, and that they are appropriate employees who are proper and fit persons to look after these children?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is, I must admit, one of the main problems we have especially with regard to shelters which are ruled by private institutions. The Ministry does not have the right to interfere in the day-to-day running of private institutions. However, we also have un droit de regard on the different activities which are done with the children that we place there. That is how, with regular monitoring and at the same time queries that we may ask to the institutions, we are able to sort of monitor the activities. But, in fact, that is one of the main problems. We do not have any data regarding the recruitment of the staff at the different shelters, especially those who are, in fact, ruled by private institutions or private Boards.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two questions in one, so I have two supplementaries. First, concerning the CDU, I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware that the judgement of the Ombudsperson was a damning one as concerns privacy. If I may quote -

“There is no privacy when offering counselling services especially, to children who may be easily intimidated. The lack of confidentiality impedes on the relationship between the officer and the client. No climate of trust can be established and self-disclosure becomes difficult.”

Given what the Ombudsperson has to say, given that it has taken Government three years to open a modern unit in Vacoas and the one in Goodlands will be subject to availability of funds, God knows when. My point is: will the hon. Minister not agree that there is a case to urgently enlist the collaboration of other Ministries which have Social Security Officers, Labour Officers and Citizens Advice Bureau, to have at least one room made available for parents and relatives of children to come where there is an officer, on a permanent basis during office working hours, to give required attention within a climate of privacy?
Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have indicated that officers of CDU are working in difficult conditions and this is something that we need to acknowledge. However, like we have seen, we are trying to improve the current situation. The operation of the CPS in Vacoas has already started since April and for Goodlands, the place has already been found and we are expecting also that under CSR - because we have quite a few companies who are willing to give us a sort of support to be able to establish other CPS. If this is agreed upon at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, we can proceed in a quicker manner to be able to open a few more CPS at the same time. Because, in the CPS there are places which are dedicated in a child-friendly environment where all sorts of meetings including the statement taking as well the psychologist sessions can also be arranged in a more child-friendly environment.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that she has, in fact, issued guidelines with regard to the management of the shelters. May I know when were the guidelines issued, and if she can table the guidelines with regard to the dos and the don’ts that she has just mentioned?

Mrs Martin: Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I indicated in my answer that the list of do’s and don’ts has been issued to all Managers of shelters in November 2012 and I can table it for the hon. Member to consult.

Mr Baloomoody: In a reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. Minister said that she has no control on the staff of the private shelters. This is an important issue. Is she coming forward with regulations or, if need be, we have to amend the law to ensure that the qualifications, the antecedents and le certificat de moralité of all to regulate so that the Ministry has control as to whom a private home can employ?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have indicated that, indeed, this is a problem for us. We want to find a solution to this. We have already consulted the State Law Office in the prospect of coming up with the Children’s Bill and we are hoping to have means to be able to have a say in the general running of the shelters especially where we place the children with regard to children under Court Orders which are under our purview.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have two last questions. The first one is: I would like to ask the hon. Minister if she could give us the criteria according to which a shelter is
declared a place of safety and the criteria according to which that appellation is removed from a shelter. That is my first question. The second question is: I heard the hon. Minister say that the CDU was operating on a 24/7 basis. However, the Ombudsperson for Children points out the inadequate transport facilities to respond whenever and wherever a child is at risk. I would like to ask her what are the number of vehicles attached to each of the outstations?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the designation of appellation of place of safety is clearly stipulated in the law; what is being called appellation of safety and when the hon. Minister can designate that. As regards the removal of appellation of safety, it is, I think when we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in danger the Ministry must act and that is one of the reasons why we suspended, for example, the appellation of safety with regards to Foyer Namasté.

As regards the third question - because there are three in one - of the hon. Member, it is related to the transport facilities. Indeed, we have one vehicle attached to each Support Bureau of the Ministry and, of course, sometimes there may be impediments to reach the location in appropriate time, but we are doing the utmost which we can with regard to the six vehicles which are attached to our different Family Support Bureaus and CDU Offices.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer to the second question. I am very alarmed by what the hon. Minister said earlier about non-schooling of children. Given that the law is clear that every child between the ages of 5 and 16 must be schooled and being given that it is not the role of Government to either act in breach of the law or to disregard the law, how can she inform the House that children are not going to school because they have accumulated - to quote her - a certain ‘retard’ and that they are being tutored within the centres? I put it to the hon. Minister that this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. These children must go to school and it is also about the socialisation process.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we talk about children under court orders and children which the Ministry takes care of as regards child protection, we try to work within the best interest of the child and sometimes when that child has accumulated so much delay in learning, the socialisation process within a school environment becomes difficult. What we try to do is give that child l’encadrement nécessaire so that we can make him or her able to better enter the school premises and be better equipped to be entering the schools’ premises and get
him ready to do that. Inside the shelters, there are certified teachers who come and teach those children within the shelters until the children are ready and when they are ready, they do enter the school mainstream.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come to the question of children with disabilities, especially poor children with disabilities. As we know, it is mostly the NGOs who cater for the schooling of these children with disabilities and the Ombudsperson has made some remarks concerning the grant-in-aid payable to these institutions. Up to now, modern Mauritius has not achieved full parity with the mainstream schools. When does the hon. Minister expect that, in terms of grant-in-aid paid to these institutions, for schools catering for these poor children with disabilities, full parity will be reached with mainstream schools?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think this question be better addressed to the Ministry of Social Security. Thank you.

OMBUDSPERSON - 2011-2012 REPORT - CHILD DEVELOPMENT UNIT

(No. B/283) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether she will state if she has taken cognizance of the observations of the Ombudsperson for Children in her 2011-2012 Report regarding the shelters and, if so, indicate the remedial measures she proposes to take in relation thereto.

(Vide Reply PQ No. B/282)

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

MUNICIPAL CITY COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – CAPITAL PROJECTS - GRANT

(No. B/284) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will state –

(a) when will the budget deficit of around Rs 64 million and the additional budget for Pailles and the annexed regions be funded by Government, and
(b) if his Ministry has received requests for the provision of additional grants for the implementation of capital projects and the construction of drains and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Municipal City Council of Port Louis is projecting a budget deficit of Rs 63.2 m. in its Programme Based Budget 2013. My Ministry has therefore elaborated a series of measures to address this problem namely -

- After a review conducted within my Ministry, we have identified some savings amount to Rs 3.9m. which will cut down the projected deficit to Rs 59m.

- The self-assessment exercise through the LAVIMS project has so far generated revenue of Rs 5m. from general rates and the total revenue that can potentially be collected by the end of 2013 will be around Rs15 m. The council also envisages to collect revenue in terms of trade fees amounting to Rs 3m. during the fiscal year 2013.

- Following an inter-ministerial meeting I had with my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, an additional grant of Rs35 m. has been provided to the Council to offset part of its deficit for the year 2013.

- An amount of Rs100 m. has been earmarked for the acquisition of compactor lorries for all the 12 local authorities and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis will receive its share of vehicles.

- My Ministry has carried out a budget monitoring expenditure estimates for the first quarter of this year and it is observed that the actual expenditure is in line with revised estimates and there might be room for more savings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in 2012, the Municipal City Council of Port Louis has budgeted a deficit of Rs 7m. However, when it submitted its financial accounts for the same year, there was a surplus of Rs37m. This situation is the same in almost all Councils. It is only the Black River District Council that has registered a deficit in its financial accounts for the year 2012. According to the common practice, a surplus in the final accounts for a year can be used to finance a deficit in a subsequent year. Hence after taking into
account the revenue not budgeted for and the surplus in the final accounts for the year 2012, there will, in fact, be a surplus in the account of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis in year 2013.

As regards the region of Pailles, which now falls under the administrative jurisdiction of the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, my Ministry is in presence of a request for the additional funds of Rs 30m. to meet expenditure on scavenging, street lighting, maintenance of roads, etc. My Ministry is examining the actual expenditure and revenue of the Council for the region of Pailles before taking any decision.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the House may wish to note that an amount of Rs34 m. was allocated to the Municipal City Council of Port Louis under the Local Infrastructure Fund for implementation of minor capital projects in the township. Following the flash floods of 30 March 2013, the Council was advised to re-prioritise its projects so that priority is given to the construction and upgrading of drains. The Council has on 18 April 2013 submitted to my Ministry a revised priority list of projects for the construction and upgrading of drains which has been approved by the LIF Committee.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this question there are three issues; one about the budget deficit of about Rs 64m. and also the additional budget for Pailles and the provision for additional grants for the implementation of capital projects and the construction of drains. So, please allow me at least three supplementary questions. Firstly, the hon. Minister just stated that last year there was a surplus at the Municipality of Port Louis. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don’t know where the hon. Minister gets this figure because according to my information, there was a deficit of Rs41 m. and this was being financed by an additional grant-in-aid by the Ministry of Finance. I would kindly ask the hon. Minister to review his figure for last year and I can submit evidence of what I am saying. Secondly, if I can move on…

Mr Aimée: One by one. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the deficit that I have mentioned for the Municipal City Council of Port Louis was not the reality. As I said, last year, there was Rs37 m. surplus at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. This exercise has not even been done by my Ministry. This has been done by the officers from the Ministry of Finance and we are taking on board all the aspects of financial constraints for all the Municipal Councils, not only Port Louis, but all the local authorities in general.
Mr Ameer Meea: I would, at a later stage, table a document of what I am saying about the budget deficit of Rs 41m. not a surplus. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that the Municipality of Port Louis has requested an amount of Rs30 m. for the annexed regions of Pailles. Please, allow me to table letters from the Municipality of Port Louis which dates back to 09 November 2012, 14 January 2013, 21 February 2013 and 21 March of this year as well, whereby a sum of Rs 27m.; a detailed breakdown of this Rs27 m. has been requested to your Ministry for additional grant…

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Ameer Meea: …to the Municipality of Port Louis to cater for expenses, so that when Pailles would be annexed to Port Louis, it would be around to the tune of Rs27 m. and not the Rs30 m. that the hon. Minister is stating. I will table all the letters that have been sent to the PS of the Ministry of Local Government.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, the hon. Member is saying that for the Municipal City Council of Port Louis there is a deficit of Rs41 m. He said that Pailles needs funds because Rs41 m. - that is what he said -

(Interruptions)

Rs 27 m.! But I mentioned in my reply the following -

“With regard to part (b) of the question, the House may wish to note that an amount of Rs34 m. was allocated to the Municipal City Council of Port Louis under the Local Infrastructure Fund (...)

which will be reallocated due to the priority after the flash flood.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister state that the surplus of last year’s budget may be used to finance the current budget of this year. As you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to surplus in budgeting, it is a fact that all expenditure which every Ministry, parastatal body or Local Government Authority do have is as a result of our system of budgeting. There is not even a single authority which may use every single rupee which has been allocated to it throughout the year. This is a known fact. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he confirms that this surplus can now be used to finance the current
expenditure of the local authorities? Because, as far as we know, this is not something which is authorised as per the Government’s financial manual.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a Minister, I stand guided by the Minister of Finance concerning finance and budget, and this is a fact for all local authorities. In special circumstances, the Minister of Finance gives his guidance that the surplus...

* Interruptions

The hon. Member can say “no”, but he is not the Minister of Finance. I stand guided. As I said, the sum of Rs37,384,000 was the surplus during the budget exercise of 2011/2012. There were instructions from the Minister of Finance, when doing the budgetary exercise, giving the authority to the Municipal Council to use that money instead of having this money - I don't know where - in banks.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The hon. Minister has made mention in his reply of Black River, which situation is *au rouge*. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry is doing something for the district of Black River, which has a lot of problems concerning services?

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, as I said, the Municipal Council of Port Louis has a surplus of Rs37 m. The Municipal Council Beau Bassin-Rose Hill has a surplus of Rs1,000,550. The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has a surplus of Rs29,697,000, and Vacoas-Phoenix Rs6 m. The only place where we have a deficit is Black River, and it is Rs5.478 m. Only there!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Will the hon. Minister table the document which shows, on the one side, the revenue and the expenditure, whereby it comes to the surpluses that he has just mentioned with regard to these local authorities?

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Municipal budget is a public exercise. If you want me, as Minister, to place on the Table of the National Assembly all explanations of the financial exercise, I am prepared to.

**Mr Baloomoody:** The hon. Minister mentioned that there is a request from the Municipality of Port Louis for additional sum for Pailles, now that it is with the Municipality of Port Louis. Can we know when the Ministry will come to a decision to that effect? Because there is an urgent need to consider this request.
Mr Aimée: I do appreciate this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for Pailles particularly. But, as you know, Pailles has got so many economic operators. As it was in Black River before, we have an idea of how much money we can collect from the fees that they owe to the Municipal Council. But still, for this exercise, they have already started self-assessment; they have already started paying their fees at the end of the last financial year, that is, at the beginning of this year. So, we are waiting to have a complete picture of all this, and then we can say whether the Municipal Council of Port Louis needs some more money. We are prepared for that.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have two more supplementary questions. Is hon. Minister aware that the street lighting network of the Ring Road has been handed over to the City Council of Port Louis, and that the estimated cost of the monthly electricity bills is Rs273,000 per year, approximately more than Rs3 m., and that over and above the budget deficit, over and above the annexure of Pailles to Port Louis, this funding of Rs3 m. to finance the lighting of the Ring Road has been requested from his Ministry to be provided to the City Council of Port Louis? Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of this, and when will the City Council of Port Louis receive these funds so that light can be provided to the Ring Road?

Mr Aimée: Thank you, hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the last election, before the coming into operation that Pailles will be part and parcel of Port Louis, the Ring Road was not there. It is only a few months ago that the Ring Road is there. I don't know where the hon. Member got the exact amount that he mentioned, but from the Department of Finance, from the information that I have from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, we have Rs3 m. for one year, and about ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Local Government, kindly address the Chair!

Mr Aimée: ... Rs325,000 every month; rightly so. But we are waiting for all the exercise, so that we can take a decision about how much more money we will need if there is any deficit.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just heard the hon. Minister say in his reply that the only local authority which has a deficit is Black River. Is he confirming that the District Council of Grand Port has a surplus of finance?
Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even though the question is not with regard to Grand Port, I am prepared to answer the question of the hon. Member. For Grand Port-Savanne District Council, which was the then District Council - not now; because now you have Grand Port and Savanne - there was a surplus of Rs7,893,000. That’s why I have mentioned the situation in all local authorities for the privilege of all hon. Members here.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the lighting of the ring road as per the EIA recommendation for the ring road, the lighting should have been voltaic. It is written black and while in the EIA report. May I know from the hon. Minister to find out why this has not been implemented?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the responsibility of putting the light, of tarring roads, of doing drains - every Member of this House knows it clearly - is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

Mr Nagalingum: I heard from the hon. Minister that there have been consultations with the Minister of Finance regarding the grant-in-aid. Can we have a list for all local authorities in detail concerning the new grant-in-aid formula?

Mr Aimée: There is no new grant-in-aid formula. The Budget exercise is based on the previous year. As regards the amount, this is a decision from the Ministry of Finance. I could have told you to ask this question to the Minister of Finance, but still every Budget exercise is based on the last exercise. My colleague and I are looking into one formula which will be shown very clearly without ambiguity to all the local authorities. In fact, the Minister of Finance has given us six officers who are working on the local authorities to look at their financial situation; their priorities and their administration set up.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he remembers that when he presented the Local Government Act 2001 he personally said that the grant-in-aid formula will be reviewed because he thinks that this formula does not work anymore, and that we have to come forward with a new grant-in-aid formula?
Mr Aimée: As I have just mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am working on a new formula with my Colleague, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I can resume on the figures just for the Minister to get a clear picture of what was going on. Today, we have a deficit of Rs63 m. for the yearly deficit; Rs27 m. for Pailles annexure and Rs3 m. for ring road to pay for electricity which, by the way, is due and the City of Port Louis has a written agreement with CEB for the delay because, up to now, the Bill has not yet been settled. All this arrives to a total of Rs93 m. Government has granted Rs35 m., that’s right and, according to the answer made by the hon. Minister, Rs4 m. would be in term of savings and Rs5 m. has been collected for LAVIMS which brings the total to Rs93 m. deficit minus all these figures to Rs49 m. which would remain the actual deficit. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister what he intends to do and what timeframe his Ministry has to finance this budget deficit.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some are not even aware of the economic situation of the world and even of Mauritius, but, as a Minister responsible for Local Government, and in collaboration with my Colleague, the Minister of Finance, we are taking all the local authorities to task particularly in this financial time.

(Interruptions)

I don’t want to mention here that the local authorities actually are not even prepared to see the bad debt. Some of them are waiting ten years since the claim is not mandated. I am sorry we are working in a tight financial exercise so that money is spent judiciously.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/286 has been withdrawn. Next question hon. Dr. Sorefan!

RUISSEAU DU POUCE - BRIDGE

(No. B/285) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bridge presently under construction at the Ruisseau du Pouce, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development
Authority, information as to if the works are being carried out with the approval and to the satisfaction thereof.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to this question. The widening of the bridge over Ruisseau du Pouce on Motorway M1 is a component of the construction of an additional lane along Motorway M1 from Ruisseau Creoles to Place d’Armes which is a project of the Road Development Authority (RDA). The works are being undertaken by General Construction Co. Ltd under the supervision of engineers of the RDA.

I am informed that the works are being carried out to the satisfaction of the RDA. As a matter of fact, the RDA has mobilised a dedicated team to ensure a close monitoring of the works; to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to any stakeholder during the execution of the works.

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the hon. Minister whether RDA gave his written approval for reducing the area outflow of the bridge from 36 square metres to 16 square metres for the contractor to do the work.

Mr Virahsawmy: No, this has not been reduced, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Sorefan: I beg to differ, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was reduced and in a Parliamentary Question, the Minister of Public Infrastructure said so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my second question is: can the hon. Minister inform the House if authority from the Supreme Court was received by RDA to alter the stream as per the Rivers and Canals Act, if yes, to table same; if not, why not.

Mr Virahsawmy: There has been no change of the course of Ruisseau du Pouce so that there is no need to obtain authority from the Supreme Court. I would also like to add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, at the PNQ of 09 April 2013, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure made it clear that the discharge area under the bridge at the site is 36 square metres, so the information of the hon. Member is wrong.

TOLL ROAD PROJECT - LEVY

(No. B/286) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land
Transport and Shipping Whether, in regard to the Toll Road Project, he will state the proposed mode of tolls collection, indicating who will be responsible for the levy thereof.

(Withdrawn)

STATE LAND & PAS GÉOMÉTRIQUES - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/287) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Land whether, in regard to State Land and Pas Géométriques, he will, for period July 2010 to date, give a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating in each case, the –

(a) extent thereof, and

(b) details of the project approved to be implemented thereat.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS - KNOWLEDGE HUB – PROMOTION MISSIONS

(No. B/288) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the promotion of Mauritius as a Knowledge Hub in Africa, he will state the number of missions undertaken in relation thereto, since January 2013 to date, indicating the outcome thereof in each case.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with its core objective, the Board of Investment has been actively promoting Mauritius including the education sector in its various investment promotion missions in Africa. I am informed by the Board of Investment that in 2013, it mounted four promotion missions where the knowledge sector was high on the agenda as follows -

- 29 January - 01 February 2013: Johannesburg, Tanzania and Zambia;
- 04 - 08 March 2013: South Africa - Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg;
- 06 - 10 May 2013: East African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and last
- 12 - 17 March 2013: Tanzania and Uganda.
The main objectives of these missions have been to engage with potential and targeted investors in sectors such as financial services, manufacturing, life sciences, ICT/BPO, healthcare as well as knowledge.

The mission also aimed at –

☐ Following up on existing contacts and leads in Africa;
☐ Developing new leads in the various sectors on the continent;
☐ Positioning Mauritius as an ideal platform for investment;
☐ Promoting the island as a regional knowledge hub of quality, and
☐ To further tap on the huge potential present in Africa with regard to attracting foreign students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only recently that through a stated Government Policy of Internalisation of the Tertiary Education Sector, we are positioning Mauritius as a regional Knowledge Hub.

Tanzania and Uganda mission had at least five positive outcomes, namely it enabled the tertiary education institutions to participate in –

(i) a Mauritius Tanzania Higher Education Forum on 14 March 2013 organised by the BOI, and to meet the hon. Philipo Mulugo, Deputy Minister of Education and Vocational Training of Tanzania and Vice Chancellors, Directors of higher education institutions and Recruiting Agents of Tanzania;

(ii) the EdExpo Tanzania 2013 International Higher Education Recruitment Fair and disseminate information on the higher education opportunities in Mauritius;

(iii) the Kampala International Education Fair (KIEF), the leading student’s recruitment exhibition in Uganda from 15 to 16 March 2013 which attracted high school leavers, colleges and local university students and to meet local agents and heads of schools.

(iv) an interactive session organised by the BOI in Uganda and meet recruiting agents, principals of high schools and heads of tertiary education institutions.
(v) **Recruitment of students**

Higher education institutions are following up with the foreign students and recruiting agents to confirm recruitment of about 50 to 70 students.

**Meeting with Ministers**

I also had meetings with hon. Jessica Arupo, Minister of Education and Sports, Republic of Uganda and hon. Dr. Shukuru Kawambwa, Minister of Education and Vocational Training of Tanzania. Both Ministers have agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for mutual recognition of certificates and expressed the wish to visit Mauritius for further discussions and signing of the MoU. Other issues discussed were the possibility of providing teacher training to Tanzanian teachers.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the amount of expenses incurred for all these missions undertaken?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have the details, but I can certainly provide the information through the Board of Investment?

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many African students are actually studying in this country?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have the details, but I am given to understand that this year the figure is going to be close to 2,000. This is the information that I have.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can we know from the hon. Minister whether there are a number of seats which have been reserved for foreign students and, if so, can we know how many?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is one piece of information that probably the hon. Member is not aware of. It is for the first time that the Government of Mauritius has offered 50 scholarships to African students with a view to position ourselves as a country that has now a new service to offer.

With regard to number of seats, there is a certain amount of work which has been done in collaboration with Tertiary Education Commission and BOI. Today, I can say that, at least, in a few institutions, we have more foreign students than local students.
Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what other measures are taken to promote the stay of all these foreign students in the country?

Dr. Jeetah: If I understand the hon. Member, does it mean where they would live, their residence?

The Deputy Speaker: Accommodation.

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to accommodation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a chicken and egg situation. When we first created this Ministry we had about 500 to 600 students, now we have started attracting students. There was provision to build the whole of residence at the University of Mauritius. At the level of TEC, we are in the process of compiling, through a well-regulated system, houses or flats that could be made available to students, just the same way that it is done in England or in other European countries.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that there has been information that members of the family of the Minister have been on these missions and, being given that I would prefer not to lend any credence to such information, will the hon. Minister reassure the House by giving the guarantee that no member of his family nor any relative of his, has ever, since he has been Minister of Tertiary Education, participated in any of these promotion missions, either with the Minister or without the Minister?

Dr. Jeetah: That’s a good question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member seems to have something personal with my family. My family, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, …

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I…

Dr. Jeetah: I am not giving way.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr Ramnath Jeetah has been in education for about 60 years now and he is 83 years of age…

(Interruptions)

Not because I am sit here or I stand here! It is not because the hon. Member has got some personal grudge against my family, he is going to have ….
Mr Obeegadoo: On a point of explanation, I want to make this very clear. I have said that I do not want to lend credence to such information, but I consider it a matter of integrity and of transparency that no member of a Minister’s family should benefit from a State’s point admission. There is nothing personal. This is a matter of principle.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister table a list of all those people who went on missions and who accompanied the hon. Minister?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can certainly table a list of all institutions with the names of the people who actually attended. I can also further provide who actually benefitted from any Government funds as well.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Minister say whether there has been an increase in the number of students coming from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya when we compare the figures from last year to this year?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member did not listen to what I have said. I did say that, initially there were about 500 students coming from overseas. This year, the figures are getting close to about 2,000. I have an additional piece of information to give, there is even - I won’t say that.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramano!

PAVILLON SWIMMING POOL - OPERATION

(No. B/289) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Pavillon Swimming Pool, he will state

(a) when it is proposed to be operational;

(b) the amount of money already spent

(i) in terms of consultancy fees, and

(ii) for repairs, and

(c) if alternative arrangements have been made for the users thereof.
Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Consultant and the Contractor have both confirmed that the remedial works at Le Pavillon Swimming Pool will be completed by 19 June 2013. Consequently, it is envisaged to have the re-opening around end of June 2013.

I would like here to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that both hon. Ms Deerpalsing and hon. X. L. Duval, Members of the Constituency No. 18 have been continuously enquiring so that this project be materialised as soon as possible so as not to penalise the swimmers.

As regards part (b) of the question, as at date, the consultant has been paid Rs1,035 m. and the contractor has been paid an amount of Rs530,472 as advance payment against bank guarantee. Furthermore, a claim for works completed till now, duly certified by the Consultant, amounting to Rs814,422.87 is presently being processed.

With regard to part (c) of the question, prior to the closure of Le Pavillon Swimming Pool, there were three clubs using the swimming pool. Arrangements have been made for two clubs, namely the Club Nautique de Quatre Bornes (CNQB) and Le Dauphin de Quatre Bornes (LDQB) to make use of the facilities at Serge Alfred Swimming Pool at Beau Bassin and for the other club, namely the Curepipe Starlight Sports Club (CSSC) to use facilities at Mare d’Albert Swimming Pool.

All public sessions which used to be held at Le Pavillon Swimming Pool are presently being held at the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool at Beau Bassin.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, cela fait plaisir d’entendre que très prochainement la piscine du Pavillon sera opérationnelle. Je dois rappeler au ministre que lors d’une question en date du 19 avril 2011, mention a été faite qu’après les Jeux des îles les travaux allaient prendre seulement trois mois.

Dans sa réponse en date du 11 décembre 2012, mention a été faite que le consultant recommande à ce que le réseau actuel soit éliminé complètement, à ce qu’il y ait un nouveau réseau. Est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer que le contractor a fait un nouveau réseau en ce qui concerne l’alimentation d’eau ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand from the consultant that there has been, as per the works, a new piping system. So, I think that it is according to the norms.
Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, did I understand correctly that the hon. Minister has replied that the swimming pool is being replaced by a much larger one and not the same one that was there?

(Interruptions)

The same one! Okay.

(Interruptions)

Can I ask the hon. Minister…

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that all public sessions are now being held at Serge Alfred. Can he inform the House what information campaign has been done or is still being done vis-à-vis the inhabitants of Quatre Bornes to inform them where the alternative place is because a lot of the inhabitants of Quatre Bornes are still complaining that they do not know where to go, there is no notice there?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that we have got the staff of my Ministry working there. I was myself working at the swimming pool. They are still based there and they always inform the swimmers that they can go to Mare d’Albert swimming pool or to Serge Alfred swimming pool. Transport is being given to certain schools as well for those who want to have their practice early morning. So, they are being informed.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Ramano: M. le président, ce n’est pas tous les jours que je suis d’accord avec ma collègue, l’honorable Ms Deerpalsing, mais quand même…

The Deputy Speaker: Just ask your question, please!

Mr Ramano: Mais quand même c’est vrai que la piscine est fermée, donc il n’y a aucune communication avec les membres du public. Ma question, M. le président, concerne toujours le réseau d’eau. M. le président, dans une autre réponse en date du 19 juin 2012 mention avait été fait que le Mechanical Engineering Division du Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports n’est pas d’accord avec la question de la construction d’un nouveau réseau d’eau parce que cela
constituera un danger éventuellement pour les usagers. Est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer cela dans sa réponse en date du 19 juin 2012?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I informed the hon. Members following a Parliamentary Question No. B/170 that several tests, namely, plug-in test, pressure test and valve test have been carried out and these tests reveal that the water loss is most probably due to a leakage in the piping system. Therefore, the Mechanical Division proposed for some new piping system but due to safety reasons and other technical problems this system was given away. Also because the piping system was embedded underground, below the base of the swimming pool structure, it was very difficult to identify the exact location of the leakage. The Ministry then, in close collaboration with the MPI and the CWA, wanted to attend it as quickly as possible. Tenders were floated for the hiring of a consultant to conduct a proper investigation and propose the remedial action.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j’aimerais que le ministre nous dise quel est le nom du contracteur qui effectue des travaux à la piscine et quelle est la somme qui a été dépensée à ce jour?

Mr Ritoo: I think that I have already replied to the amount of money spent but the contractor is Watertech Ltd. and the consultant was Pro-Design Engineering Consultants Ltd.

Mr Quirin: Je voudrais savoir la somme dépensée, je m’excuse si je n’ai pas bien saisi le montant.

Mr Ritoo: We already spent Rs530,472 as advance payment against bank guarantee and a sum of Rs814,422.87 is presently being processed.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider favourably that the Ministry places a board there for the inhabitants when they go to know and also places some communiqués on the radios and in the press because I insist that the inhabitants are not aware?

Mr Ritoo: We can do it, Sir.

Mr Jhugroo: May I know from the hon. Minister whether there was a tendering procedure before awarding this contract to the contractor?

Mr Ritoo: I think I stated in my answer that there was a tendering procedure.
(No. B/290) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the termination of pregnancy in specified circumstances, he will state the number of cases thereof practised, since the coming into force of the Act authorising same.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed as at today, there is only one case of termination of pregnancy and that also, in a public hospital.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, la loi fait mention des hôpitaux publics comme des prescribed institutions. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre si les guidelines et regulations ont été faits par son ministère et s’il est d’accord pour table ces guidelines?

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est ce que le Ministre est en mesure aujourd’hui de faire une évaluation de l’impact de la loi une année après son adoption parce que mention a été fait lors des débats de 2,500 cas de complications liées à l’avortement et s’il peut nous dire si une étude a été faite à cet effet?

Mr Bundhoo: Not at this moment in time, Sir, but I am sure after a given period of time, we shall carry a study to see how effective the law has been.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I go back to the point made? Being given that a law was voted a year ago, moved by Government to address injustices as regards unwanted pregnancies, will the Minister provide to the House some explanation as to how a year later, it would appear that only one person, if I heard correctly, has availed herself of the provisions of the law? I am sure the hon. Minister must be concerned by this.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, genuinely, I am a bit confused about the term the hon. Member has used about unwanted pregnancies. Because the law, when it was voted – the hon. Member had intervened on it - made provisions for four specific circumstances whereby termination is allowed. So far, only one termination has been allowed under the four criteria established in the law. Surely, there might be a case whereby we might have to sensitize more the population with regard to the possibility of this being effected in the private sector.
Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so, may we know what measures were taken in the wake of the law, specifically what are the prescribed institutions, has there been a protocol established to help medical staff deal with the cases of women coming forward in these four scenarios that were listed, how is the medical staff selected to handle those cases and the medical panels constituted?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the provisions that my hon. friend is making reference to have already been earmarked in the law and whatever we have done has been within the parameter established, within the law voted in this House.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I make it clearer, I believe the Minister may not have understood. My first question is: has there been a specific protocol established for guidance of medical practitioners and hospital staff to deal with applications from women falling within these four categories, the four scenarios? Secondly, which are the prescribed institutions that have been proclaimed? Thirdly, what are the criteria utilized to choose which members of the hospital staff will be designated to attend to such cases and form part of the panel?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would kindly refer the hon. Member to go back to the Bill and refer him to section 235(a) of the Criminal Code. Secondly, I would kindly request the hon. Member to go back to the Bill and refer him to the prescribed institution as per paragraph 5(6) of the Criminal Amendment Act No. 11 of 2012 and thirdly, the criteria for the institution to be prescribed and also responsibilities or prescribed institutions.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to be very simple and for us to be able to understand; how many cases of backstreet abortions have been appearing in the Government Hospitals since this Act was implemented?

Mr Bundhoo: The question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was not backdoor, backstreet, aborted or not aborted; it was the case being carried out in public or private hospitals with regard to the termination of pregnancy under the law. The case and the answer is one.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I just rephrase it for the benefit of the hon. Minister. How many cases of abortions which have been conducted in private clinics, in backstreets and appeared in your hospital for complete termination?
Mr Bundhoo: I would kindly request and invite the hon. Member - because I am not aware of the private clinics - if he has any information with regard to illegal abortions in the private clinics, as a responsible doctor and a hon. Member to do whatever he has to do with regard to these illegal abortions in the private clinics. I do not keep an eye at the private clinics and with regard to abortion.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister what mechanism has been put to determine the number of termination of pregnancy in the private?

Mr Bundhoo: I have already answered to the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The application has to go through a Board and so far there is only who one has gone through the Board – it is a public sector. We have one from the public sector and, therefore, there has not been anyone in the private sector.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a serious matter.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you are interrupting the hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a serious matter. If Government took the trouble of proposing this Bill, it was surely not to address one case in one year. If we are to take this law seriously, will the hon. Minister agree and as suggested by hon. Ramano, to commission immediately a full assessment into the implementation of the law, assessing how it has worked and what has been the reality experienced so far, whether from the private sector being referred to hospitals and in hospitals?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not trying to be arrogant at all. This question was put by hon. Ramano and I have already replied to that. But hon. Obeegadoo is putting the same question in a different English, that is all. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, une dernière question de ma part. Tout simplement pour savoir de l’honorable ministre s’il est en présence des objections de conscience qui ont été émises par des professionnels du corps médical?
Mr Bundhoo: This has already been addressed during the debate when the Bill was presented in the House by the hon. Attorney General and all the Members were concerned. I must say one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was a free vote.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est en présence des objections de conscience qui ont été émises par les membres du corps médical à ce jour?

Mr Bundhoo: Not to my knowledge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE - FEUILLE DE ROUTE

(No. B/291) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to *La Feuille de Route* issued by the International Olympic Committee dated 10 April 2013, he will state the stand of his Ministry in relation thereto.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the wake of the deadlock at the level of the Mauritius National Olympic Committee for the holding of its General Assembly and election of the Managing Committee, especially after the Supreme Court judgment questioning the rationale of suspended or fictitious Sports Federations being allowed to participate in the elections, two representatives of the International Olympic Committee who were recently in Mauritius, showed much concern about the state of things and have proposed a *Feuille de Route* with a view to mitigating the situation.

As far as my Ministry is concerned, the *Feuille de Route* relates mainly to the review of the Sports Act to provide for more autonomy to be given to the Mauritius National Olympic Committee and the Sports Federations, within a time frame of six months.

With a view to finding a solution to allow sports to evolve in a sound environment, my Ministry has since long embarked on an exercise to review the Sports Act. This exercise, Mr Speaker Sir, as I have stated earlier in my reply to PQ B/76, would be completed in the next session of the National Assembly. Valid proposals from the International Olympic Committee will no doubt be incorporated in the new legislation which is envisaged to be finalised within the timeframe set.
However, Mr Speaker Sir, while agreeing to the principle of greater autonomy, it is the stand of my Ministry to ensure that all national sports organisations also operate on the principle of good governance, transparency, democracy and within the ambit of the laws of Mauritius.

My Ministry would equally ensure that all Sports Federations and Sports Associations claiming to be national sports governing bodies are in fact exercising a specific, real and ongoing sports activity in line with the Olympic Charter.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que l’honorable ministre peut nous donner l’assurance que le délai de six mois imposé par le Comité International Olympique - justement comme il a dit lui-même par rapport aux amendements à être apportés au Sports Act - sera respecté, vu qu’une menace de suspension pèse sur Maurice?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have already replied to this question that as far as my Ministry is concerned, the Feuille de Route relates mainly to the review of the Sports Act, to provide more autonomy. It will be done within a time frame of six months.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, un mois après que le CEO ait émis sa requête concernant la mise en œuvre d’une Feuille de Route par le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports concernent les amendements au Sports Act; le ministre peut-il nous dire comment justement évoluent les choses par rapport à ces amendements?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have replied to this question that within a time frame of six months, this will be done. Je suis autant concerné que vous même par rapport au le Comité sportif. Ce sera injuste si on est pris en otage concernant la question de Feuille de Route. J’ai la responsabilité de présenter le Sports Act within a time frame of six months.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans la lettre adressée au ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports, l’honorable Devanand Ritoo et aussi au président du CON, M. Hao Thyn Voon, le CEO dans un courrier en date du 10 avril de cette année, référence est faite plutôt à une analyse effectuée sur les points qui posent problème avec le Sports Act. Ces points apparemment ont été transmis au ministre par email en date du 26 novembre 2012. De ce fait, le ministre peut-il nous dire quels sont ces points qui posent problème et de bien vouloir déposer une copie de ce courrier en date du 26 novembre 2012 ?
Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once again I am going to repeat the same thing. Valid proposals from the International Olympic Committee will, no doubt, be incorporated in the new legislation, which is envisaged to be finalised within the time frame. However, the stand of my Ministry is to ensure that all National Sports Organisations also operate on the principle of good governance, transparency, democracy and within the ambit of the laws of Mauritius.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre n’a pas répondu à ma question. Je lui ai demandé quels sont les points qui posent problème avec le *Sports Act*, dont fait référence le Comité International Olympique dans son courrier en date du 10 avril de cette année ?

Mr Ritoo: M. le président, cette réunion a été tenue dans la confidentialité. On a donc pris les propositions émises par le CEO et l’honorable membre aura l’occasion de débattre sur ce point à l’heure de la présentation du *Bill*.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

**INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES - COMITÉ DE SUIVI**

(No. B/292) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Indian Ocean Island Games to be held in 2015, he will state the number of meetings held by *Le Comité de Suivi* of his Ministry in relation thereto, indicating the actions, if any, taken as at to date.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that this is the first time that a ‘*Comité de Suivi*’ has been set up immediately after having taken stock of the performance of our athletes at the last edition of the Indian Ocean Island Games held in Seychelles in 2011, and more than three years ahead of the next edition, that is, 2015 at Ile de la Réunion.

The Committee comprises all stakeholders, namely, Club Maurice, High Level Sports Unit, Mauritius National Olympic Committee, Mauritius Sports Council, Sports medical Unit, Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports and all desk officers of my Ministry.

Since the setting up of the ‘*Comité de Suivi*’ on 16 June 2012, it has held a total of 28 meetings as follows -

(i) Six meetings at the ‘*comité de suivi*’ itself;

(ii) Fifteen meetings with sports federations, and
(iii) Seven meetings with Regional Sports Committees in Rodrigues.

During the meetings held with the Sports Federations individually, their requirements in terms of preparation and budget have been compiled. These requirements have been communicated to my Ministry and to Club Maurice, which is responsible to mobilise sponsors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I need to point that although the Conseil International des Jeux (CIJ), which comprises Olympic Committees of all member states and which is responsible for the organisation of the Indian Island Ocean Games, has not yet finalised the list of sports for the 2015 edition, my Ministry continues to provide all necessary assistance to the athletes likely to participate in the forthcoming Games.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire comment son ministère compte financer justement la préparation de nos sportifs en vue des jeux de 2015?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the preparation of athletes in an ongoing process, and as such we cannot separate preparation of athletes from one competition to another. More intensive training will take place as we approach the competitions.

Mr Quirin: Donc, M. le président, si je comprends bien, il n’y a pas de budget détaillé qui a été préparé à ce jour, discipline par discipline.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the comité de suivi had meetings with all the sports federations - I mean those who are likely to participate in the Indian Ocean Island Games - and a tentative budget of Rs86 m. is targeted to be spent over three years. So, we are going to work in this direction.

Mr Bhagwan: We are all Mauritians, and we are interested in our national football. Can the hon. Minister inform the House - being himself an ex-international player - what has been planned for the Mauritian team, in terms of overseas training, national coach right from now up to 2015, at least, for the Mauritian team to achieve success and target the gold medal?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should say that now that the Mauritius Football Association has come up with a new National Technical Director, who has prepared a plan for the National team as well as the preparation of all the junior teams, we will work together - the new Technical Director, the Technical Committee and the officers of my Ministry - to enhance football performance.
Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre des Sports, dans sa réponse, a parlé du *Club Maurice Company*, et je dois faire ressortir, avec votre permission, que le *Club Maurice Company* est actuellement inexistent. Est-ce qu’on devrait s’attendre à ce que cela se passe comme ce fut le cas en 2011 ? C’est-à-dire, uniquement dans les six derniers mois qu’on a récolté les fonds pour la préparation de nos athlètes en vue des Jeux des Îles. Doit-on s’attendre au même scenario ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don’t know what problem the hon. Member has with the Club Maurice Company. But I should say that the Club Maurice Company, headed by Mr Giandev Motea, collected Rs17 m. to help in the preparation of the athletes for the last Indian Ocean Island Games at Seychelles. Actually, the Club Maurice Company is seeking for sponsors so as to prepare the athletes from now itself for the Indian Ocean Island Games that is going to be held in 2015 in Reunion.

Mr Jhugroo: Est-ce que le ministre peut nous confirmer si, lors du tournoi de la première division de foot, au cours d’un match, les arbitres étaient absents ? Si tel est le cas, pour quelle raison ces arbitres n’étaient pas présents pendant le match de foot?

The Deputy Speaker: Are you talking about the Indian Ocean Island Games?

Mr Ritoo: I would like to answer to his question because the hon. Member does not know that it is not the Ministry that organises football matches. Football matches are being organised by the Mauritius Football Association, and they have a *Commission d’Arbitrage* regarding the organisation of these games. So, if the referees do not turn up, it is the *Commission d’Arbitrage* who is supposed to look into it. Don’t forget that the Ministry gives Rs1 m. to each First Division team and Rs500,000 to each Second Division team to prepare for the Games. But it is the *Commission d’Arbitrage* of the Mauritius Football Association which is to be blamed regarding the referees who did not turn up.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

*(Interruptions)*

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am sorry, hon. Jhugroo…

*(Interruptions)*
Mr Quirin: M. le président, doit-on comprendre que le Club Maurice Company ne récolte que des fonds uniquement pour le Jeux des Îles? J’aimerais que le ministre nous dise, par rapport aux Jeux de la Francophonie qui vont avoir lieu très bientôt, quelle est la somme qui a été récoltée en vue d’aider nos athlètes.

The Deputy Speaker: Is your question in connection with the Indian Ocean Island Games?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, next question, hon. Nagalingum!

PENALTY POINTS SYSTEM - PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

(No. B/293) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the pedestrian crossings, he will state if Government proposes to revisit the locations thereof in view of the forthcoming implementation of the Penalty Points System.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to this question. Pedestrian crossings are located where they can be seen by motorists, and where adequate safe braking distance is available depending on the posted speed limit thereat.

The basic criteria for the setting up of a safe pedestrian crossing are -

(i) adequate visibility;

(ii) safe and sufficient pedestrian standing areas and routes to the crossing point, and

(iii) a desired line for pedestrians to cross the road.

The Penalty Point System is a tool to enforce strict compliance with conditions for pedestrian safety and to promote responsible driving.

Mr Nagalingum: A bidding exercise was conducted in October 2011 regarding the purchase of flashing lamps for pedestrian crossings. Can I know from the hon. Minister where matters stand?
Mr Virahsawmy: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I am not aware of this.

Mr Nagalingum: With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I quote what the hon. Prime Minister, in reply to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition on 21 June 2011, stated –

“(…) amongst other measures envisaged in the overall context of road safety and security, it is proposed -

(i) to place what is called Belisha flashing lamps for more visibility of pedestrian crossing, to forewarn both drivers and pedestrians, and

(ii) to revisit the location of pedestrian crossings.”

Can I know where matters stand, especially when the penalty points system is in force?

Mr Virahsawmy: I will have to find out and inform the House accordingly.

NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES AND PLAINE CHAMPAGNE - SAFETY & SECURITY MEASURES

(No. B/294) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the National Parks and Reserves, including Plaine Champagne, he will state the additional measures he proposes to take to reinforce the safety and security of the members of the public on visit thereat.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Black River Gorges National Park covers an area of 6,574ha (15,580 Arpents) while the Bras D’Eau National Park covers about 500 ha (1,187 Arpents). The 85kms of natural trails at the Black River Gorges National Park have 10 informative boards indicating the sites, natural trails and amenities available in the Park. In addition, there are 33 directional signs and seven signs on ‘do’s and dont’s’, at Pétrin, 3; Bel Ombre, 2, and at the Lower Gorges, 2. Similarly, at Bras D’Eau National Park, one informative board, as well as eight directional signs, are placed to guide visitors.

Following request made by NPCS (National Park and Conservation Service) to enhance security of visitors, a Police post has been set up in February 2007 at Plaine Champagne. The Police Post carries out regular patrols and coordinates search and rescue operations when a person gets
stranded in the Park. Regular patrols are also effected by officials of the NPCS to provide more security.

Over and above hotline 999, which is provided by the Police, another hot line, with number 148, has been set up at the level of the Police to enable the public to seek Police assistance. Visitors are briefed at entrance points on security aspects, according to a protocol which has been established by the NPCS. First Aid facilities are available at all entry points.

In view of the increasing number of visitors - I understand there were about 800,000 visitors per year - additional measures are being taken to reinforce security in the parks. These include -

1. The patrol hours of Park Rangers on the field which are currently from 08.15 hours to 15.15 hours will be extended up to 18.00 hours.
2. Over and above cell phones, the Park Rangers will be equipped with walkie-talkies to enhance communication in the parks.
3. A 4x4 vehicle equipped with radio facilities will be attached to the park for rapid response in case of emergency.
4. More guided tours by well-trained Park Rangers for senior citizens, youth and school children will be provided.
5. Directional signs/informative signs, which I have just said, will be increased in the short-term.
6. The new Visitors’ Centre at Petrin will remain operational on week-ends and during public holidays to provide optimum security support to the public.
7. The Police squad will be requested to effect more patrols at specific sites.
8. Entrance gates have been built at Petrin, Alexandra Falls View Point, Black River Lower Gorges, Mare Longue and Black River Gorges Point to monitor access and exit of the public whilst they are going to visit the park.

Mr Bhagwan: We have just taken note of all the good measures initiated by the Ministry, especially the National Parks concerning several items of security. Following the recent accident at the Chamarel or Plaine Champagne region, can the hon. Minister tell us what are the additional measures being taken by his Ministry with regard to the National Parks where there
are specific danger zones? We are all aware of the unfortunate accidents there and of people who have even disappeared.

Can the hon. Minister, at least, identify these danger zones and whether advertisement could be made on the National television of these high-risk areas so as to advise visitors not to go in these danger zones?

**Mr Faugoo:** I am advised by the MPCS, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that difficult, steep and dangerous sites will be demarcated and warning signs will be posted thereat so as to inform the visitors.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The hon. Minister will agree that these regions are *très bien fréquentées.* These are public places where Mauritian go to on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays. There is a real problem of, I would say, public awareness. Will the hon. Minister, at least, agree to take up the matter with the Director of the MBC/TV to see to it that instead of doing unnecessary programmes, that good programmes be initiated by the National television to, at least, educate people as far as public security is concerned in the National Parks, which are *des endroits très fréquentés?*

**Mr Faugoo:** Over and above the good work that is being done by the MBC/TV, I will ask them to look into this matter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister see to it that with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, there are programmes which are being, I would say, channelled to school children because these areas are also *très fréquentés par les étudiants* during holidays, so that they can be aware of all the measures of security concerning the regions?

Another item concerning environment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been made aware of the state of Grand Bassin area/Plaine Champagne is after a Sunday or a Public Holiday following the passage of Mauritians, who are to be blamed for leaving the environment as it is, with lots of takeaways and so on, which is a bad image for our tourism industry?

**Mr Faugoo:** That is true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We need to carry out a sensitisation campaign which should target, maybe, the senior citizens and also students who visit the park. I believe we should have a coordinated sort of approach with different Ministries and stakeholders,
Education, Social Security, Ministry of Youth and Sports to work out something to sensitise the public at large.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Minister to, at least, canvass the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure instead of going for public awareness campaigns outside Mauritius? He should, at least, make the Mauritian people aware of the concern ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have made your point, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** No, no! I have not yet made my point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

*(Interruptions)*

He is not here. I don’t know if he is in the country. So, instead of doing roadshows in Dubai or elsewhere ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Member, there is no need to digress. Your question is intelligible.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have not yet finished, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is a very important issue; people can lose their lives in the Plaine Champagne region. Instead of going to Dubai, I think the hon. Minister of Tourism and Leisure should pay a visit to our National Parks, Plaine Champagne, etc., and even do some walking for his own good.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over and above the good work which is being carried out by ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, you have put a question, allow the hon. Minister to respond now.

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, please!
Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the result speaks for itself. Apart from the good work which is being carried out, I will also ask that the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure be taken on board.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Jugnauth!

COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT PROJECT - CHINA KINGHO ENERGY GROUP

(No. B/297) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the China Kingho Energy Group Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the coal-fired Power Plant Project it proposes to implement in Mauritius, indicating the -

(a) proposed capacity thereof;
(b) technical and cost details thereof;
(c) land requirements therefor, and
(d) involvement of Government therein.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is as follows -

(a) I am informed by the Central Electricity Board (CEB) that, in July 2012, China Kingho Energy Group Co. Ltd. submitted a proposal for a project consisting of the following components –

(i) A coal pyrolysis system to process coal, and
(ii) A coal power plant of 2 X 55 MW with a totally new design concept which includes a methanization system to produce natural gas, tar and sulphur.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that only a preliminary feasibility study has been carried out by the Promoter with no technical and cost details.

Regarding part (d) of the question, I wish to inform the House that, as at now, there is no Government involvement in the project.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know who are the people who are the promoters of this project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Kingho.
Mr Jugnauth: May I know who are the people who have facilitated the meetings of the promoters with people in Government?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There have been no facilitators; as far as I know, they came with a proposal and we looked at it.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us if any site has been identified?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There have been different sites that have been looked at, but no site has been proposed and identified till now.

Mr Ganoo: I don’t know if I heard the Deputy Prime Minister correctly, has any formal proposal been submitted to the BOI or to his Ministry?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not to my Ministry about any site; if you are talking about site.

Mr Jugnauth: At one time, Government has been saying that Jin Fei could be one of the sites that has been identified. So, I am surprised. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirm whether Jin Fei is, in fact, one of the sites that has been identified?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It has not been mentioned as such. If I understand, the Jin Fei proposal project is something quite different and on a different scale.

Mr Ganoo: How far can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister reconcile what he is just saying to an answer which he gave to the House on 26 March of this year, wherein he said that a Chinese company, Kingho, has submitted a proposal to the BOI to operate a coal-fired power plant and the Jin Fei Park has been identified as one of the locations?

The Deputy Prime Minister: But, it is much more than a coal-fired power plant. The project of Kingho and Jin Fei is much more than that, but they have gone through the BOI and have not come to my Ministry or to CEB yet.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether representatives of this company have met officials of the Central Electricity Board?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not that I am aware of. What I do know is that they did come in July. I have mentioned there was a meeting and they made certain proposals and, as I have said, there have been no detailed study and feasibility study and so on.
Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether one Mr Ah Fat Lam Hing Choy has been involved one way or the other with this case?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Allow the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to answer the question.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jugnauth!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware that the person mentioned has, in any way, anything to do with it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS - AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

(No. B/298) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Wastewater Management Projects, he will state if the Agence Française de Développement has changed its mode of financing thereof and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Grand Baie sewerage project – Phase 2 is the only wastewater project which the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) showed interest to finance in December 2008. Accordingly, AFD appointed the Consultant, HTI from France, to prepare the pre-feasibility study and cost estimate for the project.

Based on the project cost estimate, AFD finalised the loan agreement of € 65,000,000 which was signed in November 2009. The terms and conditions of the loan agreement were EURIBOR flat for a duration of 12 years including 4 years grace period. The project was expected to start in 2010 and the final disbursement to be made by 28 February 2014.

Subsequently, HTI was requested, as a continuation of its services, to prepare the draft bid documents for a Design and Build concept which was completed in May 2010.
However, I have on a number of occasions informed the House of the weaknesses of the implementation of wastewater projects based on the Design and Build concept resulting in increase in quantities and additional cost as is the case under the ongoing Plaines Wilhems sewerage projects.

In this regard, my Ministry requested the Wastewater Management Authority to carry out a full scale topographical survey and detailed designs prior to the invitation of bids for works contract, as is the case for the following projects such as Pailles Guibies, Baie du Tombeau – Phase III and Grand Baie - Phase 1B.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been protracted discussions with AFD on the procurement process in line with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act including finalisation of shortlist of bidders for -

- consultancy services for supervision of works;
- full scale topographical surveys and detailed designs, and
- the works contract, itself.

This imperative preparatory phase, in compliance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, and addressing the concerns expressed by the Director of Audit on the implementation of wastewater projects has implemented on the initial implementation schedule of the project and meeting the strict deadline set by AFD to complete disbursement of funds by 28 February 2014.

In view of the fact that the works would only start in 2015, after completion of the topographical survey and finalisation of detailed designs, the AFD did not agree to postpone the deadline for disbursement of funds and decided to cancel the loan.

I am advised that, at this stage, the AFD has not indicated any change in its mode to finance for the project.

**Mr Lesjongard**: M. le président, voilà un cas encore qui démontre les faiblesses de cette institution qu’est la Wastewater Management Authority. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, since this project was supposed to cater for house connections - as stated in a public communication by AFD – for some 10,000 families in the poor areas of Triolet, Morcellement St
André, Plaines des Papayes and Solitude and since the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is stating that the AFD has cancelled the loan, what will be the way forward?

**The Deputy Prime Minister**: I am glad that the hon. Member has mentioned 10,000 household connections. This is the whole point. We do not know till to date, according to the HTI design, whether there are 10,000, 7,000 or whatever thousand. The way forward is to look for an alternative source of funding and go ahead with the project.

**Mr Lesjongard**: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister - we have put questions in this House regarding the weaknesses of Wastewater Management Authority and we agree that there was a problem of capacity building at the level of Wastewater Management Authority, but that dates back since 2006. Does it mean that it takes 7 years for professionals in that institution to understand what procurement, what implementation of projects are in the country?

**The Deputy Prime Minister**: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don’t think we should point fingers always at our own people. I think we should be careful how we do it.

(Interruptions)

It is the condition.

(Interruptions)

**The Deputy Speaker**: Hon. Lesjongard!

**The Deputy Prime Minister**: I have explained that in this case, the…

(Interruptions)

**The Deputy Speaker**: I am on my feet now! Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Lesjongard, you just asked a question to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. Allow the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to respond to your question, now. Meanwhile, you start talking.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but you have again asked a question to which you are entitled to a reply.

(Interruptions)
I want some silence in the House now!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish the hon. Member had listened. It is the funding agency…

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Lesjongard, please! Kindly lend your ears to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister for his answer!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** It is the funding agency that wanted to proceed with the Design and Build without going into the topographical survey and the detailed designs. This is where the time was lost. So, we should not always point fingers at WMA.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Deputy Prime Minister has said that the way forward now is to look for another funding agency. I think I read somewhere that somebody from the WMA did say the same thing publicly, i.e. the way forward is to look for another funding agency, but is that easy now especially in view of the funds involved in that project which are very substantial! Has the hon. Deputy Prime Minister started to do the needful to look for another funder for this project?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are where we are at this stage. I am surprised as much as anybody else that the AFD did not prolong their engagement and I am sorry about it. But I repeat, the problem has been with the procurement process which the AFD did not recognise for a long time and even today, before we stop negotiating with AFD, the insistence was to have a treatment plant without any detailed design. All along the line, there was disagreement of how to proceed. If I had gone ahead with it, there would have been questions in the House; why we have spent so much over the estimated value. This has been the problem. I think the criticisms that have been addressed before, have been addressed in the way that the WMA has gone ahead with it.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is asking me not to point fingers. Can he confirm whether it is the same gentleman who was blamed in the Fact Finding Committee report at the Wastewater Management Authority who is now at the head of the National Transport Corporation of this country?
The Deputy Prime Minister: It is a process which has been going on since 2009. So, do not blame one individual, blame the process, blame the way that things are being proceeding, blame the way that funding agencies sometimes do not want to respect the local procedures.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that PQs B/300, B/301, B/302, B/303, B/305 and B/314 have been withdrawn.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.33 p.m. the sitting was suspended.