ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MBC - FOOTBALL MATCHES - ARREARS

(No. B/315) 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 the football matches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if arrears are due for the broadcasting thereof, as at to date and, if so, to whom, indicating in each case –

(a) the quantum thereof, and

(b) since when.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, as at to date, there is only one case where an overseas company has claimed arrears from the Corporation for the broadcasting of football matches.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Director-General has informed that the Corporation is currently negotiating with legal representatives of that company with a view to determining the exact amount of arrears due in order to reach a mutually satisfactory settlement.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the Director-General has informed that the arrears relate to the period 2007 to 2009.

The Director-General has also further indicated that there is a confidentiality clause in the contracts between the MBC and the suppliers of broadcasting materials, including football matches. This clause requires non-disclosure of the terms and conditions of the contract. It would, therefore, not be appropriate to disclose the details thereof.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the MBC actually owes an amount of €260,160 to Trans Image Communication according to the last claim from its Attorney at Law?

The Prime Minister: I won’t go into the detail because they are negotiating apparently to try to find an amicable solution but, at one point, different amounts of money
have been claimed. In fact, three sums of money have been claimed. The sums have changed, so that is why they are negotiating.

**Mr Jhugroo**: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware whether, in April 2011, the Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs in India had to intervene with his Mauritian counterpart so that an early and amicable settlement of overdue payments could be done at that time?

**The Prime Minister**: Probably yes, that is why they were negotiating trying to find whether, in fact, that amount is owed and if it is, what can be done to come to an amicable agreement.

**Mr Jhugroo**: Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister for what reason the Director-General of the MBC failed to discharge his contractual and legal commitment in complete disregard of Indian Government intervention in 2011 to settle this amount due?

**The Prime Minister**: In fact, I think I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, as far as the Director-General is concerned, there was no invoice or any contract available in the records of the Corporation. That is why they didn’t settle it. Now, it is claiming that it is due, so they are trying to work out. I think that is why you will see the amount is changing.

**Mr Jhugroo**: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that the Director-General of the MBC refused to effect the payments due to the fact that he suspects that a *maldonne* may have occurred in these transactions by the former Director-General of the MBC?

**The Prime Minister**: I cannot say, Mr Speaker, Sir, because he says he cannot find any claim or contract at the MBC at this point. That is why they are discussing to try to find an amicable solution.

**Mr Roopun**: I heard the hon. Prime Minister stating that there was no invoice, does it mean that it is the practice at the MBC to purchase whatever they have to purchase without any invoice, without any document, just like that?

**The Prime Minister**: No. I can’t understand the question of the hon. Member. Precisely, there need to have an invoice to be paid. Any Tom, Dick or Harry comes along and says: ‘buy the thing from me’. There is a whole procedure.

**Mr Jugnauth**: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister if an enquiry has been conducted at the MBC with regard to that issue in order to situate responsibilities?

**The Prime Minister**: No. There is no enquiry because they are trying to find an amicable solution from what I understand.
Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there has been any *mise en demeure* which has been served to the Director-General of the MBC in February this year through its Attorney at law?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the legal representation of the company went to see and start discussing with the MBC about the settlement.

MBC - MR D. R. - TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/316) Mr 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 Mr D. R., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

(a) the post occupied, and

(b) his present salaries and terms and conditions of employment.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that Mr D.R. holds a post of Camera Technician at the Corporation.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that Mr D.R. is drawing a salary as recommended in the Pay Research Bureau Report of 2013. His terms and conditions of employment are also in line with the recommendations contained in the report.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether Mr D.R. had been suspended from his duty recently due to the fact that he had not replied to the request of the Prime Minister’s Office to send a cameraman of the MBC to cover the Prime Minister’s visit in a *cité* at Curepipe during the last Municipal election?

The Prime Minister: In fact, there is no request from the Prime Minister’s Office for the MBC to cover any of my meetings. They come if they want, they don’t come if they don’t want.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Next question!
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE - PRESS RELEASES

(No. B/317) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third 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 the Government Information Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if consideration will be given for the press releases to be sent by email instead of fax for a more cost effective and eco-friendly approach.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of Information Services that the Government Information Service has already embarked on a computerisation project which will be gradually extended to cover all its activities.

Accordingly, as an immediate measure, since February of this year, all press releases are uploaded on the new Government Web Portal which can be accessed by the press and the public at large.

I am also informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Director of Information Services that action has already been initiated by its Press and Publication Unit for press releases to be sent by e-mail.

In this respect, the two officers posted to the Press and Publication Unit responsible for transmitting press releases and notices to the press, have been given the necessary training in Information Technology. Also, additional computers and the relevant softwares are being acquired.

The mailing list of all the press organisations has already been compiled.

The system of sending press releases by e-mail will be operational on a trial basis in the second fortnight of June of this year and will become fully operational from 01 July of this year.

During the trial period, press releases will be sent out by fax, as well as by e-mail, and thereafter, only the e-mail system will be resorted to.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the costs incurred for sending those press communiqués by fax?

The Prime Minister: I will have to look into the details of the costs by fax from when because I think that since fax existed, they are sending faxes. So, it would be a long workout list, I am sure.
Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Fakeemeeah: I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying on the website of the Government. In this era of modern communication, can the hon. Prime Minister state to the House whether the Government Information Service has its own website?

The Prime Minister: I said there is a new Government Web Portal that is operational, I think, since February of this year. I agree with the hon. Member that it is late; they should have done it earlier.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether it is possible that those press communiqués be posted on the website of each respective Ministries?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member means different Ministries? I think they would have automatically if they concern the Ministries.

NATURAL CALAMITIES - SMS ALERT SYSTEM

(No. B/318) 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 natural calamities, he will state if a Short Message Service Alert System in cases thereof is now operational and, if so, indicate -

(a) the protocol put in place in relation thereto, and
(b) who is responsible therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the flash flood of 30 March 2013, I had personally requested the Information and Communication Technologies Authority to take the necessary regulatory steps for mobile operators in Mauritius to send out warning messages to the public, at no cost, in order to provide prior warning of the occurrence of natural disasters. I did so without waiting any further for modalities for putting in place such a system, as recommended by Judge Domah, to be worked out. They have been trying to do this but I must say they were not extremely happy with the fact that it should be at their cost, not to the Government or the public.

I am informed by the Executive Director of the ICT Authority that on 01 April 2013, pursuant to section 17(3) of the ICT Act, the Authority issued a Directive to all Public Land
Mobile licensees to require these operators to take immediate steps to send out warning messages to their respective subscribers, at no cost, and using the most appropriate technologies available.

I am further informed by the Executive Director of the ICT Authority that the Short Message Service, that is, the SMS, is one of the technologies which the mobile operators may use for this purpose. Indeed, it is precisely this technology which was used, on a pilot basis, by all mobile operators on 14 April 2013 to inform the subscribers about the evolution of Cyclone Imelda when the Class 2 warning was issued in Mauritius.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am also informed by the Executive Director of the ICT Authority that, in accordance with the protocol put in place for the SMS Alert System, the operators have provided the names of three focal persons within their respective organisations who will be responsible to receive the message to be sent during natural disasters, if there are any, and to send these messages forthwith through their network infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service that, following discussions at the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee, the Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services has been tasked with the responsibility of providing information to mobile operators concerning natural disasters likely to affect Mauritius.

The Executive Director of the ICT Authority has also indicated that, the maximum length of the message to be sent should not exceed 140 characters to ensure that all the different kinds and versions of mobile phones present in Mauritius can effectively receive the same full message.

Following the pilot exercise on 14 April 2013, the ICT Authority had held meetings with the mobile operators to receive feedback and to draw on lessons learnt so that the transmission of warning messages can be further improved for the benefit of the public.

The operators had informed the ICT Authority that they could send out messages to a maximum of 25,000 subscribers at a time. As such, they had to send out the messages in different batches and at different times in order to ensure that they do not create bottlenecks on their networks which could have resulted in a network saturation.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, l’honorable Premier ministre nous parle d’un message envoyé lors du passage du Cyclone Imelda. Est-ce qu’il est au courant qu’un des messages envoyés le 14 avril, pour avertir des gens qu’il y a une alerte cyclonique 2 sur Maurice et Rodrigues, les abonnés ont reçu ce message à 10 heures du soir et même après 10 heures du soir, leur demandant de prendre des précautions nécessaires ? Est-ce qu’il pense que c’est
normal de recevoir un message pareil à cette heure-ci pour prendre des précautions nécessaires?

The Prime Minister:  As I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem of saturation, there is a limit. So, they are sending it by batches, unfortunately. But, this is why we are trying to see if they can invest in new technologies so that they could respond in time.

Mr Seeruttun: L'honorable Premier ministre doit aussi savoir que le 13 février lorsque Port Louis a été inondé, le 30 mars lorsqu’on connaît le drame qu’on a connu à Port Louis et aussi le 03 mai, l’accident du Sorèze, ces trois jours où les gens avaient le plus besoin de communiquer, il y avait, comme on dit, un jam du network d’Orange et c’était impossible de communiquer. Qu’est-ce qu’il compte faire pour assurer que, dans l’avenir, dans des moments pareils, lorsqu’on a le plus besoin de communiquer, il n’y ait pas ce genre de problème, qu’on puisse communiquer, que les SMS puissent partir, et qu’on puisse être informé comme il faut?

The Prime Minister: All the operators, I must say Orange has a higher number of subscribers, so, obviously, it has more problems.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: But they all agree that they will have to upgrade the infrastructure. In fact, I spoke to the Minister of ICT so that we can ensure that Orange has to invest more and upgrade its structure, but it has more subscribers, I must say.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, how can the hon. Prime Minister explain that in such a small country, with a small population, we are having these kinds of problems like bottleneck and congestion? Concerning the mobile, I think there are not more than one million mobiles that we have in this country.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No. Leave your thinking. You put a question that’s all!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member will be surprised, Mauritius is one of the countries - it appears from what we see from the statistics - where individuals have more than
two or three mobiles. So, do not look just at the 1.3 million people! People are carrying more mobiles, it seems, than other countries, normally they have one mobile generally.

(Interruptions)

It is a good thing then!

(Interruptions)

Mr Fakeemeeah: I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister what difference he makes between the natural calamities and a divine sanction because we should identify to give short messages.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Divine sanctions?

(Interruptions)

Mr Fakeemeeah: I mean natural calamities.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am afraid...

Mr Speaker: Well, I do not know whether I can allow this question hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister if, after the publication of the Domah report in 2008...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Jugnauth: ...recommending that an SMS alert system be implemented, first of all, the then Secretary to Cabinet was requested to look into the implementation of that measure and, if yes, whether it is correct to say that even one of the service providers had agreed to bear the cost in implementing this alert system?

The Prime Minister: In fact, as I have explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, after the report, the Secretary to the Cabinet did try to put that in and there were difficulties. Perhaps we should not go into the detail of the difficulties, but one of them was the cost because we had to talk to all the three. One of them was more flexible, but not the other two. So, that is why
they were trying to work out a system until I felt that the law allows us to give them instructions. They have been given the instructions and they have to comply.

**STANLEY & ROSE HILL – GAMING HOUSES, BOOKMAKERS & BETTING OUTLETS**

(No. B/319) 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 the casinos, bookmakers and betting outlets, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, in each case, information as to the number thereof located in Constituency No. 19, indicating –

(a) the number of police operations carried out thereat in respect of any illegal activity, over the past two years, and

(b) if it has been observed that traffic congestions occur in the vicinity thereof and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there are no “casinos” as such in Constituency No. 19 I am informed, but “gaming houses”. In fact, a distinction is to be made between a “casino” and a “gaming house”. A “casino” is either wholly owned or partly owned by the State, while a “gaming house” is owned by a company.

There are currently three gaming houses, three bookmakers and seven betting outlets that are licensed to operate in Constituency No. 19.

Of particular interest are the three gaming houses which are as follows -

- Jumbo Club which was licensed on 01 July 1992, and operating at Royal Road, Rose Hill
- Flamingo Club, licensed on 14 March 2000, and operating at St Ignace Street, Rose Hill, and
- Pallagames Club, licensed on 19 December 2001, and operating at St Ignace Street, Rose Hill

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am making a particular mention of the gaming houses because these are the ones which attract a host of people of varied categories within their premises for long hours, while bookmakers and betting outlets attract members of the public briefly for the purpose of betting.
In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the past two years, 24 Police operations have been carried out at those places involved in gambling activities in Constituency No. 19.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the region around Duncan Taylor Street in Rose Hill is a very busy one in view of its proximity with Rose Hill market and other commercial activities. On racing days, because of the presence of three betting outlets and two bookmakers’ outlets along that street, the traffic in this area is more dense.

Consequently, in order to ensure fluidity of traffic on racing days, two Police officers are deployed to perform fixed point duty at the corner of Duncan Taylor and Maurice Curé Streets and at Elias Street in Rose Hill from 09 00 hours to 17 30 hours. Another Police officer performs patrol duties from Elias Street to Sir Gaëtan Duval Stadium.

**Mr Nagalingum**: Will the hon. Prime Minister recall in his reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/165 on 12 April 2011 and Parliamentary Question No. B/420 on 21 May 2011 respectively, I quote, Mr Speaker, Sir -

“As announced, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Government Programme 2010 -2015, Government will relocate gambling activities either in specifically designated areas or at one designated area away from residential and commercial areas with a view to mitigating the unintended consequences of gambling.”

May I know where matters stand, Mr Speaker, Sir?

**The Prime Minister**: We are still at the level of discussions because many people do not agree with this and this is our view. But, I must tell the hon. Member since then no new permit has been given to anyone. That is why we have stopped giving the permits.

**Mr Nagalingum**: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that applications are submitted on prescribed forms and examined by the Licensing and Inspectorate Unit Police Clearance, and Local Authorities, but at no time is the Traffic Management Unit involved to give clearance especially Avenue Berthaud in Rose Hill is very narrow and is being used by buses of the NTC, UBS and Rose Hill Transport, thus causing traffic jam at anytime and mainly when betting places are open? Can I know why approval has not been obtained from the Traffic Management Unit?
The Prime Minister: That would be a surprise, Mr Speaker, Sir, because one is sent to the Police and one of the issues that they have to look at is, in fact, the creation of traffic jam. They have to provide for parking and all those things. So, I would think this is unlikely. I do not know where the hon. Member got the information, but I cannot see how it can be like this.

Mr Nagalingum: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there has been a petition - with many signatures - against the opening of a Teletote Supertote house at Berthaud that he just mentioned, Avenue Stanley Rose Hill, on 23 May?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that we have this, but if they have a request from the public, Police always look at it in detail. I can tell you, for example, there was the case of Ti Vegas which was opened in August 2005 and there were numerous complaints and representations from the inhabitants of Quatre Bornes, letters were sent – as the hon. Member is mentioning in this case - and eventually, Government decided that Ti Vegas will not operate any longer and cancelled its licence as a gaming house. So, we do look at what people are saying.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Dans le sillage de la moralisation de notre société et notre système, I would like to know if the hon. Prime Minister agrees with me that it is high time to decrease the already high number of these gaming houses and casinos.

The Prime Minister: What does the hon. Member want me to do with the members?

Mr Fakeemeeah: I would like to know if...

(Interjections)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Fakeemeeah: I would like to know if the hon. Prime Minister agrees with me that it is high time to decrease the already high numbers of these gaming houses and casinos.

The Prime Minister: This is why we are looking at the whole policy. We have not given any new licence to anyone and that is why we are looking at the policy, whether we should remove them all to one place. There are difficulties, I must tell the hon. Member, for example with the Champ de Mars, they have a real problem with this. We are in the process of discussing and I hope we will find a solution.
Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister in relation to gaming houses whether Government has carried out any study on the social impact of casinos and gaming houses before delivering 500 licences between 2005 - 2010?

The Prime Minister: This is not something new, Mr Speaker, Sir. For example, in my answer, if you see, for example at Rose Hill in the same street, as if next door, you have two such gaming houses. Do you know why? My guess is one is from the MSM and one from the MMM.

(Interruptions)

Once the MMM has got...

(Interruptions)

We have to give to the MSM....

(Interruptions)

That must be the reason!

(Interruptions)

There is pressure!

(Interruptions)

So, the first culprits are the politicians themselves!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Okay, silence now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Nagalingum: With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I know that the Prime Minister will give due consideration to the petition. If I can lay that petition on the Table of the Assembly.
DECLARATION OF ASSETS ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/320) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the declaration of assets, he will state if consideration will be given for proposed amendments to be brought to the existing legislation in relation thereto to provide for -

(a) additional types of assets that need to be declared, and

(b) same to be made available for inspection by the public.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my replies to previous Parliamentary Questions on this matter, I explained to the House that the Prevention of Corruption Act provides for a Parliamentary Committee for the monitoring of the ICAC and that one of the main functions of the Parliamentary Committee is precisely to make a report to the Assembly where it considers that it is expedient that the attention of the Assembly be directed to the need for further legislative reforms.

The Parliamentary Committee itself is an independent mechanism which has been set up by law to ensure that ICAC is monitored.

I would like to remind the House that the Select Committee Report on Fraud and Corruption highlighted the role of the Parliamentary Committee as a monitoring mechanism for ICAC in the following terms -

“ICAC will need to expect that it will be under constant scrutiny by Parliamentarians.”

It is a long quote.

“The Committee shall examine each report of ICAC and report to the House thereon. The Committee shall also follow up on the Legislation on Corruption and Money Laundering and will make such recommendations as it feels necessary with regard to any amendments required in the Law”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issues regarding the scope and content of asset declarations and public disclosure, which have been raised by the hon. Member in parts (a) and (b) of his question, are precisely the kind of issues that the Parliamentary Committee is meant to address.
Asset declaration systems are indeed an important element in building successful anti-corruption programme and promoting good governance and a culture of integrity. And it is, therefore, appropriate for them to raise the questions there.

Mr Speaker, Sir, however, I must say that the Parliamentary Committee has submitted a Report containing numerous proposals aimed at reinforcing our anti-corruption framework. The Committee has also submitted a draft of a new Declaration of Assets Bill to replace the existing one. The draft legislation addresses the issue as to what additional assets will have to be included in the declaration and also the issue of public disclosure.

The proposals made by the Parliamentary Committee are presently being examined.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I must say that the issue of public disclosure of asset declarations raises some important questions. In a World Bank document, published in 2009, it was mentioned that, I quote -

“granting public access to asset declaration information is an important dimension of asset declaration regimes that can enhance both their effectiveness and their credibility. Many countries are struggling with whether and how to make asset declaration information accessible to the public; the central issue at stake being whether or not public access to this information violates the privacy of public officials, or causes a threat to their security”.

The document has also cautioned that there is no “one size fits all” and that “building and strengthening the administration of an asset declaration system may take considerable time.”

Furthermore, in a document published in 2011, the OECD examined the question as to which information relating to asset declarations should be open to the general public. In this regard, the document highlighted the following -

“while there is a global trend towards greater disclosure, striking the right balance between public disclosure and protection of privacy remains a subject of debate. There are strong reasons for disclosing, at least partially, data of political officials, such as MPs. Politicians should be prepared to provide explanations regarding the disclosed information, if there are any serious concerns raised in the media or by civil society. Concerning the lower-level public officials, the right degree of public disclosure should be determined on the basis of a careful weighing of various
considerations, such as domestic traditions, perceptions of corruption in a given
country, possible safety concerns, and other dangers.”

Let me say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the proposed new asset declaration regime is in the
pipeline. We are looking at it very closely. There are many issues, as I said, that are raised
by this and the Government is looking at this very closely and we will take whatever steps to
ensure what this House will agree to. However, we have taken other initiatives at fostering
anti-corruption practices and good governance in the public sector –

(i) we have already developed a Code of Corporate Governance for public
bodies;

(ii) the declaration of assets of all permanent employees of the Mauritius Revenue
Authority is now a fact;

(iii) setting up the Office of Public Sector Governance under my office is also in
line with these decisions;

(iv) reform of our procurement system with the enactment of a new Public
Procurement Act;

(v) setting up of the Equal Opportunities Commission;

(vi) setting up of the Asset Recovery Unit - very important. This is a great tool
that we have managed to give to the authorities;

(vii) implementation of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework in public
organisations, and

(viii) mandatory declaration of assets by Municipal and District Councillors.

These measures, Mr Speaker, Sir, have produced and are producing concrete results.
Last year, the “United Nations Public Service Award” for the African Region was conferred
on the ICAC for the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework initiative in the category
“Preventing and combating corruption in the public service”, where there were some 28
entries from different countries.

Furthermore, at an international conference on Principles for Anti-Corruption
Agencies, organised last year in Jakarta by the Indonesian Commission for the eradication of
corruption, in collaboration with UNDP and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, it
was mentioned that out of 130 Anti-Corruption Agencies established around the world, only
in six countries have such agencies successfully contributed to control corruption. And
Mauritius is one among the six countries, which also include Singapore, Hong Kong and I think Malaysia, if I am not mistaken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, once again, let me reaffirm, most emphatically and unequivocally, the commitment and determination of Government to continue our relentless fight against fraud and corruption and root out this scourge from our society. In that regard, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir - perhaps I should say this here – we are looking at strengthening our institutions and we find that we need to have expert advice on certain matters that are ongoing here, and that is why we are doing that.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister just mentioned recommendations made by ICAC Parliamentary Committee. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether one of the recommendations was the deletion of section 5 of the Declaration of Assets Act, which required the Commission to cause declaration of assets to be laid before the Assembly, subject to the guidance of the Speaker? That was abolished in 2011.

The Prime Minister: I cannot remember seeing that as an issue, but I will have to look at it. I cannot remember this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interjections)

They are saying no; that this is not the case.

Mr Uteem: Precisely, Mr Speaker, Sir, because this was the source of concern of the Opposition, we wanted declaration of assets to be made public, and in the Local Government Act of 2011, this section was abolished. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, when he comes up with the new legislation, he will make sure that declaration of assets made by the Members of Parliament will be accessible to the public?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two quotations I made from the World Bank Report and also from the OECD. There are issues, as I explained, about privacy cases; whether we can just open this like this. We are looking at it. We have kept our mind open, but we have to look at these issues very carefully; whether we could just leave it like this. If there is no enquiry and it comes out in the open, then we’ll see people targeting these people because they think they are very rich or whatever. This also we have to look at.

Mr Ganoo: The crux of the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the public declaration of assets. May I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that the purpose of a Bill to provide the public
declaration of assets on politicians and Members of Parliament is to reinforce confidence in the democratic system? I will repeat the question that has just been put to the hon. Prime Minister. Knowingly or unknowingly, when the law was passed in November 2011, i.e. the Local Government Act, it did away with the necessity for politicians and MPs to publicly declare their assets. By virtue of the new provisions, we have to declare our assets to the Director of ICAC, who can shelve the declaration of our assets somewhere in his office. But it is not a public declaration of assets, contrary to what the law has been providing since 1985, the first time when the Declaration of Assets Bill was enacted. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to revisit this piece of legislation, which in fact does not make it imperative now for politicians and MPs to publicly declare their assets?

Mr Speaker: That is a lengthy question!

The Prime Minister: Let us be very clear, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two issues here; the politicians have to declare their assets, I think we agree on that. Whether it should be public or it should be with the ICAC or with Mr Speaker, that is the issue. There are issues about making it public, there are issues of privacy. It is not us who say that, it is the World Bank, the OECD and also certain lawyers have also told us these are issues that we really have to look at. But we are not saying that the issue of declaring their assets has to be and the Declaration of Assets Act has been amended times before us. It not as if the previous Declaration of Assets Act has been there for all time and we have just changed it, it has been amended in the past, but that is the issue that we are looking at very carefully. I must tell you, the question speaks of assets – the assets itself is the definition, it is extremely complicated but then everything can be considered as an asset. A table in your house can be an asset, a chair can be an asset, and a carpet can be an asset! We have to make sure that we define it properly and that whether everything should be made to go into the public domain is an issue that we have to look at.

Mr Speaker: Time is up, but I will allow one last question to hon. Jugnauth.

Mr Jugnauth: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Prime Minister consider extending the obligation to declare the assets to high ranking Officers of Government, Public Bodies and Parastatals?

The Prime Minister: It is already being done, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, as I have said, for certain categories already it is there and we are looking at extending it. I think I mentioned that earlier.
Mr Speaker: The mover of the question one last time, and we finish.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The OECD which the hon. Prime Minister just quoted, says –

“There are strong reasons for disclosing at least partially data of political officers such as MP”.

So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether consideration will be given for the declaration of wealth held not only directly, but also through nominees and prêté-noms?

The Prime Minister: Normally, this is one of the ways that people try to hide their assets, we know this. You must know some friends who do that.

Mr Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/324 and B/330 have been withdrawn.

At 12.55 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. Mr Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

(No. B/331) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence, she will state the objectives thereof which have not yet been implemented, indicating the timeframe set for the implementation thereof.

Mr Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, progress has been achieved in all the 5 Strategic Objectives of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence for period 2008-2010. As regards Strategic Objective 2, implementation is outstanding in respect of the Victim and Abuser Empowerment Policy.

As far as Strategic Objective 4 is concerned, only the establishment of a Media Complaints Commission, either by media houses or a national one, is outstanding. The timeframe for its implementation was end of 2008.

In line with this objective, the Gender Links and Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) in collaboration with my Ministry organised several capacity building programmes
for Journalists. I am, however, informed that there was very poor participation in those capacity building programmes and workshops.

Hence, with a view of encouraging participation of media practitioners, my Ministry has laid much emphasis to enhance the capacity of media to provide appropriate reporting on GBV at all levels in the Costed National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (2012-2015).

My Ministry will pursue capacity-building programmes with Editors and Journalists on reporting on GBV and also to improve coverage of GBV in the media in November 2013.

In addition, my Ministry will seek the collaboration of the University of Mauritius to include the component of GBV in the Gender Code of Ethics of the media which has been developed by the University of Mauritius. The Code of Ethics will be launched in approximately 2 weeks time and the University of Mauritius is prepared to collaborate with my Ministry to use the Code of Ethics already developed by them as a baseline.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the time frame for the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence was supposed to be over the next three years, that is, it is supposed to have been implemented by 2010. Can the hon. Minister justify such a delay in the implementation of the whole plan?

**Mrs Martin:** As I have indicated, Mr Speaker, Sir, only a few components remain. As at now, I am informed that 94% of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence as reported in the PBB has been achieved. The remaining 6% accounts for the Victim Empowerment and Rehabilitation Policy as indicated and the evaluation for the Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence which can be done once this Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy has been implemented.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to discourage and prevent the recurrence of acts of domestic violence, the plan proposed a sanction for breach of undertaking to undergo counselling. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the sanction and how often it has been imposed?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have indicated in my answer that it’s precisely what we are talking about when we talk about the Abuser Rehabilitation Policy and the victim empowerment. I formerly replied to a PQ where I informed the House on the progress regarding the formulation of the policy. I would kindly refer the hon. Member to that PQ which is PQ No. B/244.
Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, the plan also proposed a review of the criteria for eligibility of legal aid to the survivors of domestic violence. Can I know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria for eligibility and the quantum of the legal aid?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have that information right now, but I can provide it to the hon. Member. I think it has been clearly spelt out and everyone who benefits from that sort of service is informed about it. But, I can make it available to the hon. Member later on.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, recent events both in India and South Africa, point to the critical importance of the Police being sensitised to issues of domestic violence and to have the appropriate setup to respond to requests from women in distress. May we know from the hon. Minister whether any action is envisaged under the National Action Plan in that regard?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence, the programme as such, has ended in 2010. As at right now, we are working on the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence which is a continuation of the same policy.

However, with regard to the question of the hon. Member, we are indeed working on improving the Police effectiveness in the handling of cases of violence against women. We are continuing to train the Police Officers and empower them with regard to taking care of victims and we have eight Police Family Protection Units which are operational and the Training-of-Trainers programme in regard to development of effective Police responses to violence against women with Police Officers has been ongoing since 2011.

Mr Obeegadoo: May we, therefore, be told how many Police Officers have participated in such training programmes as yet and since the hon. Minister mentioned the Family Protection Service which is notoriously understaffed and, therefore, there are no persons there to attend to women in distress, what is being done to improve the infrastructure and human resources of the Family Protection Service?

Mrs Martin: As regards the infrastructure and especially the human resources concerning the Family Protection Unit, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been, year by year, asking for more personnel and we are still struggling to have more of them and it all depends on the different facilities which are given to us since those officers are, in fact, employed by the PSC. We are waiting to have some more. Every year we are indicating that we need more
officers and this is a concern for us all. As regards the number of Police Officers who have been actually trained, I don’t have the number. I am sorry, but I can make it available to the hon. Member. We have had several sessions with different officers and the process is still ongoing. May I also add that through the national platform to end gender-based violence, we have established further good working relationships with the Police in general so that we may cater for the problem of domestic violence.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, the plan also proposed additional shelters with rehabilitative support services to be strategically distributed across the island. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, the number of shelters that have been setup since 2007, because in the Budget Speech 2011/2012, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development said that six new shelters were going to be opened across the island in 2012.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think what the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development mentioned was the six new shelters with regard to children in distress. It did not concern domestic violence as such.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, the plan also mentioned that training will be provided to victims of domestic violence to increase their employability on the labour market. Victims are supposed to be assisted in job search and financial assistance is supposed to be provided to them. Will the hon. Minister state the number of victims who have benefitted from such financial assistance and the quantum of the financial assistance?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that would require a specific question with regard to the number and the quantum and whatever else the hon. Member is asking. But as regards taking in charge of the victims, I must say that when the victims report at the Family Support Bureau, every effort is done to support that victim in whatever transaction or démarche that that person wants to do. So, we try to assist as much as we can, orient and support the victims with a view especially to economic empowerment.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister if there is enough funding to achieve the implementation of the National Action Plan?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said, National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence ended. Now, we are going on the National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence and every year, money is provided for that purpose. However, as you know, money is not the solution to everything. It also depends on the participation of the different
stakeholders and their willingness in order to be able to achieve the different targets which we have set.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun**: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask from the hon. Minister what measures are being taken by her Ministry to help victims of violence who, in spite of protection orders, are still being battered?

**Mrs Martin**: Every time a case like that is reported to us, Mr Speaker, Sir, we try to see in what way, besides the law, we can support the victim. Psychological support is being given to the victim, sometimes reference to a shelter for battered women also are being counselled to the victim to go to or we try to see, within the family unit, whether there is any kind of support that can be also provided to the victim.

**Mr Obeegadoo**: Mr Speaker, Sir, of critical importance in this battle against gender-based violence, of course, is the issue of the young people. I would like to ask the hon. Minister why it is not the case that in our schools there is not a National Plan with talks to raise awareness of young people as to the risks and significance of gender-based violence?

**Mrs Martin**: I must inform the hon. Member that, in fact, we are working with youngsters. However, we are not working within the school unit as such. What we are doing, for example, with the National Women Council, just in February last, the youths themselves have established a strategic framework whereby there are five strategic areas within which they are willing to work in order to combat all sorts of violence and abuse against women and domestic violence forms part of one of the strategic area where the youths want to work into. However, with regard to the training and the support measures that we want to involve the youths in, this Ministry is intending to set up very soon a specific module to be able to work with regard to teenagers in domestic violence identification.

**Mr Speaker**: Last question, hon. Ribot!

**Mrs Ribot**: Mr Speaker, Sir, the report also proposed to target men in awareness campaigns using former abusers as resource persons. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many men former abusers have been trained to carry out an effective and integrated communication campaign?

**Mrs Martin**: Mr Speaker, Sir, I indicated in a former reply that we are working towards the abuser rehabilitation policy and, in fact, the consultant is going to submit in June-July, this year, the training manual and reference training kits to facilitate the training and support of abusers. In that instance, one the policy has been set up, the work can be initiated.
MINISTER OF HEALTH & QUALITY OF LIFE - UNPARLIAMENTARY WORD – WITHDRAWAL

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, at the sitting of the House on Tuesday 07 May 2013, the hon. First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien (Mr Jhugroo), rose on a point of order to the effect that the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life had uttered the word ‘batchara’ to the address of the hon. Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix (Mr Soodhun).

The hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life denied having uttered the said word, he is expected to assume his responsibility.

I reserved my ruling. A perusal of the transcript does not reveal that the unparliamentary word had been uttered.

I am, therefore, not in a position to rule on the matter.

However, the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life admitted having used the word ‘bechara’ which he himself explained as meaning ‘poor insignificant figure’. I am of the opinion that this is not proper.

I therefore request the hon. Minister to withdraw the offending word and expression.

Mr Bundhoo: I do.

(Interruptions)

MINISTER OF LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS & EMPLOYMENT - UNPARLIAMENTARY WORD - WITHDRAWAL

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, at the sitting of the House of Tuesday 07 May 2013, the hon. First Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West (Mrs Navarre-Marie), rose on a point of order to the effect that the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment stated that the hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle (Mr Seeruttun) was behaving like a ‘she’.

The hon. Minister did not deny having made the statement or used the word ‘she’. The transcript does not reveal that the hon. Minister had made that statement or used the said offensive word. However, shortly after the point of order was taken, the Minister stated the following and I quote –
“Mr Speaker, Sir, may be, if the hon. lady would like to meet me afterwards, we will get into a debate as to what it means. I don’t find anything unparliamentary about it”

May I, first of all remind hon. Members that it is for the Chair to decide as to whether a word or expression is unparliamentary.

I consider that referring to the hon. Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle (Mr Seeruttun) as behaving like a ‘she’ is not in order.

I also consider that it is most inappropriate for the hon. Minister to invite the hon. First Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West (Mrs Navarre-Marie) to get into a debate as to the meaning of the hon. Seeruttun behaving like a ‘she’.

(Interruptions)

Please, don’t interrupt me!

I therefore request the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to withdraw the offending word and statement.

Mr Mohamed: I withdraw.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – HON. MEMBERS - SEXIST REMARKS

Mr Speaker: Now, I have a further statement to make. Hon. Members, several hon. Members have also drawn my attention to the bad habit of other hon. Members brandishing the names of ladies and by making sexist remarks during their interventions.

I seize this opportunity to appeal to the hon. Members from both sides of the House to refrain from making such unwarranted remarks.

Thank you.

Now, we proceed to hon. Dr Sorefan!

PENALTY POINTS SYSTEM – OFFENCES

(No. B/332) 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 Penalty Points System, he will state if proposals for amendment to the existing legislation will be introduced in the National Assembly, especially in relation to the mandatory sentences and, if so, when.
The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been advised that according to the Black’s Law Dictionary, 7th Edition a mandatory sentence is a sentence set by law with no discretion for the Judge to individualise punishment. The Third Schedule to the Road Traffic Act (RTA) does not provide for any mandatory sentences, but a range of points is provided for each offence.

Section 123 AH (2)(a) of the Road Traffic Act provides for the licensing officer to make a written application to a Magistrate for the issue of a summons to show cause why a person should not be disqualified.

Moreover Section 51 of the Road Traffic Act already provides that a person aggrieved by the refusal of a licensing officer to grant or renew a driving licence may cause a summons to be served upon the licensing officer to show cause why his decision should not be reversed, modified or suspended.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may we know from the hon. Vice Prime Minister if and when there is a genuine case in court whether the judiciary can inflict no penalty points at all or will have to stick to the minimum mandatory sentence where two points may cause loss of licence?

Mr Speaker: First of all, the hon. Vice Prime Minister cannot answer for the Judiciary. Secondly, when you use the word ‘if’, it makes the question hypothetical. Your question should be based on facts and pure facts and facts that can be verified. Next question!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a supplementary.

Mr Speaker: Yes, carry on!

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Vice Prime Minister why the DLC given to motorists are not as per the 10th Schedule, for example, no barcode and no other security features incorporated in the DLC?

Mr Bachoo: Well, it has been designed in such a way. I don’t find any problem in not having those barcodes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Enough now! I said, enough! Proceed, hon. Member!
Mr Jhugroo: Will the hon. Vice Prime Minister confirm whether there is a list of vehicles that will not be concerned with the Penalty Points System, if so, can we know what are the criteria used for these vehicles to be on that list?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t have any problem in submitting the whole list, but that concerns the Police cars, the ambulances, the SAMU, etc and the essential services. But I am going to submit a list to the House.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Roopun: Since the coming into force of the Penalty Points System, we have seen long queues and artificial traffic jam all around the island. Could I urge the hon. Vive Prime Minister to consider whether the different categories of speed limits could be rationalised so that it is easier for everybody to know what are the types of speed limits so that we can have two or at least three types of speed limits so that it is easier for everybody to move around?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with the coming into operation of the penalty point system, a Committee has already been set up; a Technical Committee composed of technicians, to have a look at the different speed limits that we have because there have been many articles in the papers, and also representations have been made that there are places where we have to increase, and other places where there is a short notice before coming down. So, all these things are being looked into. I do hope that, within a month, we will be coming with additional measures and new recommendations.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what is the number of permit holders who have not yet taken their DLC, what is the reason why we have heard so many persons who have not yet taken their DLC, and what action is being taken?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, first, I cannot read the mind of those who are not willing to take. Second, many of them have passed away, and third there are many who are abroad, either as students or have settled abroad. Then, we have got - I don’t know exactly how much - a few percentage who have not taken. But, in fact, now they are queuing up at Line Barracks in order to take up the DLC. This is what I have been informed.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the grade of a Police Officer who has the discretion - whenever papers are issued, people going on the motorway - has the authority not to prosecute or not to give points. Is there any specific grade of Police Officer?
Mr Bachoo: No, we don't have any specific grade as such, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are actually cases where people receiving penalties are being debarred from having these points at the level of the Police?

Mr Bachoo: We have not come across any such case. I will have to look into it, and report because that is dealt by the Police.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how he explains the fact that, on the one hand, the number of vehicles is increasing, and on the other hand, the speed limit is decreasing? I think that it is for this reason that we are having several road congestions at different points of this country.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as we have been telling all the time, at least the mindset has to change a little bit. There has been a sense of restraint, but I get the feeling that it has been too much of restraints these days. Deliberately, there are places where drivers are taking extra care, extra precaution. I get the feeling that, within months probably, things will come to normal.

Secondly, we are not decreasing the speed. I have just mentioned earlier, when a question was put by the hon. Member, that we have set up a Committee. We are looking into it, wherever possible. For example, there are places where it is 60 km. If we feel the need to go a bit higher, we don't have any problem. But it all depends on the technicians because I am not myself a traffic expert on that. I am awaiting their recommendations, and we are going to implement it.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether instructions have been given to the Police to be overzealous these days because there is an epidemic of blue uniforms all over the damn places.

Mr Bachoo: I get the feeling that we are extra careful these days, in order to prevent accidents. But I am not aware of any such instructions being given.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May we know from the hon. Minister whether, in case of accidents where there is mutual arrangement, penalty point will apply?
Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the law is meant for everybody. If someone has committed an accident and is responsible, of course, the law is there; it will apply. But I can't tell you more than that. It all depends on the Police and the law.

SPEED CAMERAS - TENDERS

(No. B/333) 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 speed cameras recently installed, he will state when tenders therefor were launched, indicating the -

(a) scope of works therefor, and

(b) names of the bidders therefor, indicating the -

   (i) value of the respective bids, and
   (ii) name of the successful bidder.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, a pre-qualification exercise was carried out through the floating of a pre-qualification document, which was vetted by the Procurement Policy Office (PPO) and approved by the Central Procurement Board (CPB) on 19 August 2011. The closing date was 21 September 2011, and I am going to submit a copy of the pre-qualification document.

After completion of the pre-qualification exercise at the CPB on 19 March 2012, only four pre-qualified bidders were invited to submit their bid, and the deadline was 24 April 2012. I am submitting a copy of that bid document also, so that there can be full transparency in this case.

The scope of the works and services comprise five components, as follows -

(i) Component A consists of the supply, installation and commissioning of 50 fixed photographic speed enforcement cameras along black spot areas where speed related accidents have been registered.

(ii) Component B consists of the supply and commissioning of six mobile photographic speed enforcement cameras mountable on tripod.

(iii) Component C consists of the supply of equipment and setting up of a Back Office IT System and network, with secured and tamper proof software to process speed violation.
(iv) Component D consists of provision of services required for proper operation of the net photographic speed enforcement camera system by trained officers, using appropriate software under close supervision of Police Officers of Police Traffic Branch (PEU) and Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit.

(v) Component E consists of maintenance services and regular calibration of the equipment, and also the services of expert witness to testify calibration in Court.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (c), I wish to inform the House that only two bidders responded out of the four pre-qualified bidders, namely -

1. TMT Services & Supplies (Pty) Ltd (S. Africa) – for the sum of Rs167,535,118 (VAT included for local components only), and
2. Proguard Ltd (Mtius) – for the sum of Rs171,126,111.10 (VAT inclusive).

Public opening of the bids was held on 24 April 2012 at the CPB.

The name of the successful bidder is Proguard Ltd, and the corrected value of contract is Rs149,705,314.00 plus VAT. That comes to Rs172,161,111.10.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether he was the campaign manager of Ward 5 of the recent municipal election, where a base travalliste was erected at Proguard Office?

Mr Speaker: This question is not allowed. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Now that we know that it is a private firm which is supplying these cameras, I have a few questions with regard to that issue. First, whether the officers of this private firm are bound by the Official Secret Act. Second, what action has been taken with regard to their database; whether they comply with the Database Act?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, on this issue, to clarify a few points. Apprehensions have been expressed by certain quarters on some operational aspects of the system. To dissipate these apprehensions, the whole process had been reviewed, and the Police have been made to take over all the critical activities. Besides those tasks which were performed by the contractor, a few tasks are also closely supervised by the Police. The latter is predominantly in charge and responsible for the Speed Camera Scheme, and the contractor only acts as a facilitator by providing technology solutions under Police supervision.
The back office is entirely under the responsibility of the Police, and the contractor does not have access to the database of the National Transport Authority. These new arrangements are already in place since 16 May 2013, following a meeting which involved the Police, the contractor and my Ministry. I would like to reiterate that we have about 11 policemen under the supervision of one Senior Police Officer, one Sergeant, who is looking after all these operations. So, the involvement of the private contractor has been more or less eliminated. He is left with only a few officers.

Mr Baloomody: One Police Officer came on the radio and said that the data is given to the Police; the Police vet the document, and then decide to prosecute or to serve notice on the drivers. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what exactly the Police do when they say that they vet the document? Because apparently, the private firm does not have the data regarding the owners of the vehicles. So, may I know whether there is an element of interference at this stage, at least by the Police?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, that's why I have mentioned since the very beginning - and I want to make everything clear - that there have been apprehensions and that is the reason why a few functions which were occupied by the private operator have already been taken off. If the Members can bear with me, I will just explain the different steps that are being utilised in processing of those offences. There are 11 Police Officers who operate the system. The Officers are assisted by a few members of the staff of Proguard only for administrative work. This system follows a sequential flow from the instant a speed camera flashes a speeding vehicle to the moment the violation is posted to the offender.

The general systematic flow of events is as follows: number one, the speed camera detects a speeding vehicle and flashes it. A photograph of the vehicle is taken and instantly transmitted to the back office through wireless technology. The photograph is securely received on the server of the back office in coded format, that is, it is encrypted. The photograph is then transformed into a comprehensive format, that is, it is decrypted and downloaded by tamper-proof software to another server. The decrypted photograph is distributed to ten workstations and processed by specially designed tamper-proof software called draftsman. The draftsman software is operated by print Police Officers. The draftsman software identifies the registration number plate of the vehicle and matches it with the NTA database which is daily being transferred to a dedicated computer at the Photographic Enforcement Unit. The process to transfer the information from the NTA to Photographic Enforcement Unit is ensured by the Central Information Systems Division of the Police of
Government. Particulars of the vehicle such as the owner are obtained without human intervention. The photograph cannot be deleted from the system and the information received from the process is validated by the Police Officers for prosecution. Once the Police Officers have validated the prosecution, the staff of Proguard Ltd starts procedures to dispatch same to the offender. It should be noted that similar processes and procedures are in place in other countries where Truvelo Manufacturers Pty (Ltd) had provided the speed cameras and this is how it works. So that is the reason why I believe there has not been too much intervention of the private contractor.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister said that the tender price for Proguard Ltd is around Rs149 millions without VAT. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this price includes all the five components mentioned in the specific procurement notice and also the origin of the cameras?

Mr Bachoo: Yes. It includes all the prices and, at the same time, I would hasten to add that, according to section 33 of the general conditions of the contract, the scope of work, that is what we have changed likely and, of course, it will be in relation to the services provided by the contractor, that is, what you are going to pay and we have also put up a diligence committee to look into this.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister why the services of the private company have been sought in this case and public money being spent when, in fact, the Police has the required staff and the expertise to carry out this same exercise.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the beginning, we had a problem of human resources I have to admit and secondly, the Police did not have that expertise in that particular field and that is the reason we had to seek the services…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, allow the Minister to explain.

Mr Bachoo: …to monitor the particular system and that is the reason why we had recourse to the private contractor.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!
Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker Sir. There are already existing speed cameras before the new tender was launched. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is the precise expertise, experience which Proguard Ltd has in speed cameras in Mauritius?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the tender is concerned, neither my Ministry nor any Department of my Ministry is responsible for it. That was an open bidding. They participated into it. I am not here to pass comments on that. I have got a copy of the award which the Central Procurement Board has made and I am going to submit a copy but, unfortunately, I am not in a position on to pass comments on the decision taken by the Central Procurement Board.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. One of the problems that drivers have been facing since the installation of those cameras is the flashing of the cameras at lower speed. In his reply, the Minister, with regard to the project description, mentioned five components and he stated that component (e) is related to maintenance services and regular calibration of the equipment, but I did not hear him saying regular calibration of the equipment from an independent recognised laboratory. It is there in the tender documents. Now, may I ask the Vice-Prime Minister to give the name of that independent recognisable factory laboratory which is going to calibrate the equipment?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll try to find out the answer. I don't have the exact name definitely. Secondly there is one more question which was asked the hon. Member. Of course, that aspect is being looked into by an independent calibration committee. Once I get the name, I am going to submit it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what criteria has been used to install these speed cameras in different places and can we know how many speed cameras have been installed in Plaines Wilhems; how many in Constituency No. 9 and how many in Constituency…

Mr Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. Member. He is putting too many questions at the same time. It should be one question.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, at the end of the documents which I have submitted, you will find all the dark spots which have been detected not by me but rather by
the Traffic Management Authority and the Road Safety Unit as well as the Police. They have put up the list of, I think, thirty and then apart from the thirty, there are places of not only thirty black spots but one black spot can range from half a kilometre to two kilometres or one kilometre. There are places where two speed cameras have been installed. This has been taken care of by the Police Department and the Traffic Management Unit.

**Mr Speaker**: Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan**: I heard the Central Procurement Board issuing the tenders and doing the procedure. Has there been any technical input or otherwise from the Ministry. From the impression which is being gathered – I won’t go into details – there is an impression that the cake has been cooked for Proguard Ltd. so…

**Mr Speaker**: No, no, no.

*(Interruptions)*

Put your question. Manage how you will put a question but making a statement no, no, no.

**Mr Bhagwan**: Can I ask the Minister following information we have received that the project was tailor-made for Proguard Ltd. and whether there was…

**Mr Speaker**: No, the hon. Member is making an allegation. It does not form part of the question.

**Mr Bhagwan**: I am asking the Minister, Sir, in the public interest

**Mr Speaker**: Hon. Bhagwan, put your question please!

**Mr Bhagwan**: In his own interest.

**Mr Speaker**: Put your question please! Put it with a smile hon. Bhagwan.

**Mr Bhagwan**: I am always smiling Sir. Can I ask the Minister what he really has to say to the Mauritian people, the taxpayers that this contract was not tailor-made for Proguard Ltd?

**Mr Bachoo**: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the reason since, at the very beginning, I have already submitted the two documents which are made public. There hasn’t been any type of hidden agenda on the part of the Ministry because the responsibility is for the Central Procurement Board; they have taken their decision. Expression of interest was called and then the tenders were invited. In the beginning, there were about ten; it was shortlisted to four.
Two of them participated. The Central Tender Board did its work. We had nothing to do with it. We have to accept it and that’s why I am submitting a copy of the award.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Balamoody!

**Mr Balamoody:** One of the complaints with these speed cameras is that, very often, they flash when you are not speeding and the reply from the Police is that it is auto servicing itself and this creates great confusion. The Police go even further and say: don’t worry when this comes to Casernes we won’t sue you because we will vet, we will select only those who are speeding. So, there is room for Police to interfere. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us whether there is room for Police to interfere especially when the cameras are auto servicing?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, one guarantee I can give to the House is that, on the part of the Police, there won’t be any selective things but I have to inform the House that – I use the word, I have to use it properly – a slight technical mistake has been detected and it has already been corrected. That is the reason why experts have been called from abroad and they are working on that.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question hon. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. One of the components mentioned is component (d), I quote: software and services for processing the speed limit violation by trained officers integrating the previous back office in the new network. Can the hon. Minister confirm that previous back office, that is, from the Police Department is the property of the Government and under the control of the Mauritius Police Force?

**Mr Bachoo:** I have mentioned that they have taken a hundred persons under the control of the Police. Now, it is the Police who are controlling.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am drawing your attention because I had a question put precisely on that issue. I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister saying that the Police do not have the necessary expertise in regard to this issue. May I know from the hon. Minister how Proguard has better expertise and experience with regard to managing those specific equipment?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, there might have been other experts whom they have called from abroad, but I have only mentioned that there are certain sections which the Police were not looking into. Now we have taken over and we have requested and the Police have
agreed to look into those things. They have got only a skeleton staff to support us in our administrative work that is on the responsibility of Proguard.

Mr Speaker: This question has been sufficiently aired, but I see the interest of Members. I’ll allow only two more questions, then one for the author of the question.

(Interruptions)

Well, I use my discretion. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Now that we have learned from the hon. Minister that during the recent period, there have been some problems with these cameras and experts have come from abroad to look into it. Can I ask him whether he is prepared to give an amnesty for all those who have been caught recently because there are also some problems with these cameras, it is a fact? Let’s start anew, let us say, in a few weeks’ time.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, that may go against your professional interests. Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the experts have come from Truvelo which is a manufacturing company. They have come from that institution from South Africa. Secondly, we have already referred the matter to the State Law Office to seek advice on the request which the hon. Member has made.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to give the opportunity to my friend, hon. Georges Lesjongard, to ask the last question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, you do not decide for the Chair. Time is up! Next question!

BUS SERVICE – ROUTES NOS. 5, 58, 243

(No. B/336) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the buses servicing Route No.5, from Baie du Cap to Quatre Bornes and Route 243, from Chamarel to Rivière Noire, to and from, and Route No. 58, Chamarel via Case Noyale and Rivière Noire, he will state if it has been observed in each case that the timing thereof is erratic, that they run at fast
speed and are very poorly maintained and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that services along Route Nos. 5 and 243 are presently regularly disrupted because of road works at Quatre Bornes and Palma. As regards Route No. 58, no disruption has been noted.

The service is constantly being monitored by the inspectorate to ensure that the travelling public in general benefits from a satisfactory level of service. Checks on buses are also being carried out regularly to urge operators to maintain their buses in good running condition.

So far, no complaints have been received about over speeding.

I am also informed that a meeting with the President of the Black River District Council and other village councillors was held at the National Transport Authority on Thursday 09 May 2013 to examine the transport situation along Route No. 5 and to initiate remedial actions.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, from my information, buses on the following route Nos. 5, 58 and 243 still run on an erratic timetable, fast speed and poorly maintained. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether he will plan tougher legislative measures to put pressure on the bus companies, both private and public, serving these routes?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, my hon. friend, Hervé Aimée also raised up the issue and I have submitted to him a list of the decisions that we have taken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, 20 buses owned by individual operators are licensed to operate along Route No. 5 (Quatre Bornes to Baie du Cap). It is important for me to inform the House that 14 buses start operation at Quatre Bornes and 6 buses start operation at Baie du Cap.

The first bus leaves Quatre Bornes (Jules Koenig Square) at 05.10 hrs and buses operate at intervals of 15 to 20 minutes between 05.10 hrs in the morning till and 06.30 hrs in the afternoon. In all, 48 trips are performed throughout the day amongst which 14 trips are performed via Le Morne Beach. That concerns Route No. 5

The running time from Quatre Bornes to Baie du Cap is 1 hr 50 mins. Stand Regulators are posted at different points at Bambous and Black River to ensure that the
running time is observed failing which a suspension of two hours is inflicted to those buses. However, due to road works at Quatre Bornes and Palma, the operation of buses is regularly disrupted.

The operation of buses along Route No. 5 is regularly being monitored with a view to keeping a satisfactory standard of service.

There are four short services in the direction of Quatre Bornes are performed during weekdays:

- From Cotteau Raffin at 06.15 hrs and 06.35 hrs, and
- From Cascavelle at 11.55 hrs and 17.35 hrs.

As regards Route No. 243, two buses operate along that Route (Quatre Bornes to Chamarel via Case Noyale). The first trip from Quatre Bornes is released at 06.25 hrs in the morning while bus operation starts at 05.00 hrs from Chamarel. Eight trips are performed each way. The running time of buses from Chamarel to Quatre Bornes and vice versa is 1 hr 30 mins. However, in this case also, due to road works at Quatre Bornes and Palma, the running time is disturbed.

There are two buses are licensed to operate along Route No. 58 (Chamarel to Chamarel via Case Noyale, Rivière Noire, Le Morne, Baie du Cap and Choisy) and the journey is covered in 90 minutes.

The first bus starts its operation from Chamarel at 05.50 hrs and the last bus from Chamarel is at 17.15 hrs in the afternoon. A total of eight trips are performed daily.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have given all the details but, at the same time, I will request the inspectors of the MPA to have a look at it and to monitor closely the situation.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that since 2008, Saint Esprit College has been requesting two school buses? However, one additional bus has been added on Route No. 5 for the children going to SSS College La Gaulette, from Quatre Bornes to La Gaulette and vice versa and no decision has been taken yet for the children attending Saint Esprit College, Rivière Noire, and how he intends to solve this persistent problem.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not have dedicated buses. The number of buses which are in demand is very difficult for either NTA to meet those demands. That is the
reason why we are providing the regular buses but, at the same time, I can assure the House that, in fact, we are looking into these problems. Concerning Saint Esprit College, we have received many letters from them. I will try to see if we can increase the number of buses in that region.

**Mr Ganoo:** Has the hon. Minister been informed that on most of these lines, there is a problem of illegal operators who contribute to disrupt the system and has he received representations also that there is a problem of effective and appropriate monitoring from the part of the NTA officers?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have booked many illegal operators. In many cases, we have put the cancellation in the utilisation of their contract vans and buses. We have done that, but we will try to continue monitoring the situation.

**PETITE RIVIERE NOIRE - CHEMIN BARACHOIS – DRAINS**

(No. B/337) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Chemin Barachois, at Petite Rivière Noire, he will state if there is any project for the construction of drains thereat and, if not, why not.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a drain of a length of 90 metres already exists along the Barachois Road at Petite Rivière, but which has no outlet to the sea due to the topography of the region, the land is lower than the sea level.

I am further advised that an alternative solution would have been the construction of an absorption pit. However, from observations made on site, it is noted that seawater oozes out of the land and in which case, the solution is not feasible.

I am informed that a proper study is therefore being envisaged by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to explore other solutions.

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister making his point but, in the meanwhile, can I ask him to make sure that the contractors carry out regular maintenance in the region at least once a week?

**Mr Aimée:** Unless the hon. Member is mentioning the cleaning then, yes.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question hon. Quirin!
NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL - BOARD MEETINGS

(No. B/338) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Youth Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of Board meetings held, since September 2012 to date, indicating the name of the chairperson thereof in each case.

Mr Ritoo: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Youth Council that six Board meetings have been held since September 2012 to date. The Board meeting held on 06 September 2012 was chaired by Mr Jawahar Lall Athal, Chairman of the National Youth Council. The five Board meetings held thereafter, were chaired by the Acting Chairman, Mr Putchay, who is none other than the Director of Youth Affairs of my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que l’honorabe ministre des Sports peut nous dire si le poste de président du NYC est un poste à plein temps ou à temps partiel?

Mr Ritoo: He is a part-time Chairman.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre des Sports peut-il nous dire si malgré son absence du pays - je suppose le président est absent du pays - est-ce qu’il perçoit toujours ses allocations ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, actually he is not receiving any money.

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Minister for how long has Mr A. been absent from Mauritius?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the Chairman was appointed on 17 May 2012 and I was informed on 06 December 2012 that he had gone on a personal mission to UK. He was not in Mauritius and, in fact, he had been Acting Chairman up to November 2012 because it is only after I received a letter that he was on a special mission in UK that he was replaced by the Director of Youth Affairs of my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce qu’on peut savoir, M. le président, si à son retour au pays il compte reprendre son poste ou est-ce que le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports compte le remplacer?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am waiting for the Chairman to be back. In fact, I understand that he is coming to Mauritius during the weekend and I will be meeting him on Monday to decide.
Mr Quirin: M. le président est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu’il y a des informations qui circulent sur l’Internet et entre autres sur Facebook à l’effet que le Chairman du NYC - je dis bien ce sont des informations, ce ne sont pas des allégations, qui circulent - ne possède pas les qualifications dont il prétend détenir ? Est-ce que le ministre peut éclairer la Chambre et ainsi dissiper les malentendus en demandant à Monsieur Athal de bien vouloir lui remettre et ainsi le ministre pourrait déposer des copies certifiées de ses qualifications ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact I have got the CV of the Chairman. I want to inform the hon. Member that the choice of the Chairman of the National Youth Council was not based on academic qualifications, but rather on his outstanding youth leadership capabilities. In fact, he has been two times winner of the Youth Excellence Award of the Ministry. He was winner of the Youth Leadership and Community Work and Entrepreneurship and Initiatives. He has a wide international exposure on several conferences. In fact, he was present on the Young World Summit in UK, in the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, in the International Youth Saliger Award in Russia, International Youth Climate Forum in Indonesia and the Sixth International Peace Festival in India.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Ritoo: So, he was chosen Chairman based on his experience.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, avec votre permission, je demanderais à l’honorable ministre de bien vouloir vérifier, effectivement, si tout ce qui est mentionné dans le CV est vrai parce que les informations que je détiens font mention aussi que pas mal de choses ont été ajoutées.

Mr Ritoo: I have got his CV with me.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Quirin!

JUDO REPUBLIC CUP 2013 – PARTICIPANT - INJURY

(No. B/339) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Judo Republic Cup 2013 held on 6 April at the Dojo de Beau Bassin, he will state if –
(a) all the participants thereof were licensees of the Mauritius Judo Federation, and 

(b) if he is aware that A. P., a participant thereof, was severely injured in the course thereof and, if so, the actions taken by his Ministry in relation thereto, as at to date.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to inform the House that the Judo Republic Cup is an annual regional competition featuring on the calendar of activities of the Mauritius Judo Federation. I am also informed that on 15 March 2013 the Federation gave its approval to the École de Judo de Beau Bassin Rose Hill for the organisation of this year’s edition at the Dojo of Beau Bassin which was held on 06 April 2013.

I am informed that all participants held a license from the Federation except 11 of them whose applications were still being processed.

Normally applications for licenses are made by athletes to the Federation through their respective coaches. The coach who was responsible for the competition had in January 2013 submitted a first batch of 5 applications to the Federation for processing. Those applications were still under consideration by the Federation.

Another batch of 6 applications were received by the coach since February 2013 but not yet submitted to the Federation. This batch included the application of A.P.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that pending the issue of new licences or their renewal, athletes are normally allowed to participate in regional competitions with their parents’ consent. I am informed that A.P had his parents’ consent.

Unfortunately he got injured during the competition. I am informed that he had a dislocated elbow. Immediately after his injury, A.P was taken to the hospital for treatment. Subsequently, his parents transferred him to a private clinic.

I personally contacted the parents of the athlete to enquire about his health and have, exceptionally, approved a request from the Federation to support financially the medical expenses incurred in this case. Secondly, I am impressing on all Federations to have an insurance policy to cover their licensees and other participants during training and competition as provided for in the Sports Act. This will become a screening criterion for disbursement of funds by my Ministry as from 2014.
Mr Speaker, Sir, I am indeed very much concerned about this incident. I have therefore set up a committee to enquire about the exact circumstances of the incident and to situate responsibilities.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, si j’ai bien compris le ministre dans sa réponse, j’aimerais quand même lui demander est-ce qu’il confirme que le judoka A. P. avait une licence de la Fédération au moment de sa participation à cette compétition?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I stated in my answer that the coach was processing the license of the applicant. Normally a coach makes an application to the Federation when he receives a batch of licenses.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce qu’au moment de la compétition le judoka avait ou non sa licence pour participer à cette compétition?

Mr Ritoo: It was submitted to the Federation for processing.

Mr Quirin: Donc, j’aimerais que le ministre nous explique comment un jeune débutant dans cette discipline a pu participer. Il est clair qu’il a participé sans licence, M. le président, avec les conséquences qu’on connaît. Donc, j’aimerais que le ministre nous dise si la Fédération avait donné son feu vert pour l’organisation de cette compétition et si au préalable elle s’était assurée que les règlements et conditions de participation étaient respectés.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Federation that they gave consent for the holding of this competition and also, the coach informed the Ministry that she got the consent of the parents to allow the athlete to participate.

Mrs Ribot: J’aimerais savoir de l’honorable ministre - si je comprends bien il y a eu un comité disciplinaire qui a été institué - si l’entraineur a été suspendu ou non et si oui, comment cela se fait que l’entraineur a été suspendu avant les conclusions de ce comité disciplinaire?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no disciplinary committee; it is only a committee at the level of my Ministry, headed by the Director of Sports to enquire. And more so, the coach is an officer of my Ministry and she has not been suspended.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est ce que le ministre peut nous dire si tous les participants à cette compétition étaient couverts par une police d’assurance?
Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I stated in my answer about the insurance policy. We are, now, at the level of my Ministry, setting up a committee to help the Federation. We have 39 sports Federations but not all of them are able to insure - mainly in that combat sports because at some point in time due to high cost in the insurance policy the Federations are not able to get all their licensees insured. I am proposing to set up a committee at the level of my Ministry to help the Federations in the insurance cover of all their athletes.

MATERNAL DEATH - INQUIRIES

(No. B/340) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Fact Finding Committee set up to look into the maternal death of one Mrs C. D. and of one Mrs B. I., reported in October 2012, he will state where matters stand as to the inquiries carried out thereinto.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a Fact Finding Committee has been setup to carry out an in-depth enquiry into three cases of maternal deaths including those of Mrs C.D. and Mrs B.I. I am informed that the hearing of all witnesses in the three cases has been completed and that the report and findings will be submitted around mid-June 2013.

Mrs Anquetil: Can the hon. Minister state if a copy of the report will be tabled at the National Assembly?

Mr Bundhoo: I am afraid that a full-fledged copy of the report would not be tabled at the National Assembly, but an executive summary of the report may be submitted at the National Assembly. I can assure the hon. Member that the heirs of those deceased, on request, would be given a copy of the relevant part of the report for them to consider.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is now standard procedure to have Fact Finding Committees on every case of suspicious deaths or alleged negligence in hospital and what about the judicial inquiry following a Police investigation?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not normal procedure, but pending such time that we review the Medical Council, especially in cases where at the level of the Ministry, we consider them to be grave and serious enough and to ensure that they are speedy with regard to findings, we would and shall continue to apply a Fact Finding Committee. Hopefully, once we review the Medical Council and the way it conducts its inquiry, I am sure we would depart from this methodology.
Mr Fakeemeeah: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the Medical Practitioner involved in these cases has been interdicted for negligence in the past?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, I do not have the information with me at hand.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister what is the time frame for this Fact Finding Committee?

Mr Bundhoo: As I said earlier, in this specific Fact Finding Committee there were three cases and we expect it to be over within six months.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister, with respect to these three deaths, whether the matter is also being inquired by the Police or has the Fact Finding Committee usurped the constitutional role of the Police in this country?

Mr Bundhoo: I am afraid that we have not usurped the role of the Police and that is not the case. But, once the findings are being tabled in my Ministry, they are going to be given on request to the family, with respect to the confidentiality nature of the findings and recommendations. If the Police require the findings, they are going to be sent to them. I have to inform the House that the recommendations and findings will be used to initiate disciplinary measures as and when required.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, just to follow the question of my learned colleague, hon. Uteem regarding the Fact Finding Committee. May I ask the hon. Minister who is chairing that Fact Finding Committee and whether all the exhibits, the books, the personal files of these three cases have been secured so that in case they need to take further action - be it civil or criminal - their relatives will get possession of these documents?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Magistrate Seebaluck is presiding over the Fact Finding Committee and all the documentary evidence including the findings and the report will be submitted to the Police on request.

Ms Anquetil: M. le président, étant donné qu’il est difficile pour les parents des victimes d’obtenir seuls les informations, est-ce que l’honorable ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre, s’il compte intervenir pour pallier au manque de communication et d’explication entre les médecins et les parents des victimes?

Mr Bundhoo: I humbly request the hon. Member, once the report is being tabled in my Ministry, she can accompany those people - in her Constituency - who are concerned with
this and we will be very glad and pleased to hand over a copy to them. But I have to insist on one thing: this is with regard to the medical reports and all the findings. Confidentiality has to be maintained at all time.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider setting up a Fact-Finding Committee following the death of the baby who was burned in an incubator and died afterwards?

**Mr Bundhoo:** This has already been done, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the Senior Magistrate, Mrs Ratna Seetohul, is already presiding over it.

**Ms Anquetil:** Can the hon. Minister state the composition of the Fact-Finding Committee and how many times they met?

**Mr Bundhoo:** They have met - if I am not mistaken - at least 15 times. The composition is -

- Magistrate R. Seebaluck (Intermediate Court, new Court House Port Louis) - Chairperson;
- Dr. Jean Claude Ng Fat Cheong – retired Consultant;
- Mr Peeroo, PAS - Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and
- Mr Mookram Munboth, Principal Court Officer - acted as Secretary.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the parents of the victims, of the deceased were informed that they had a right to be represented by Counsel, who could have kept a watching brief during the proceedings of this inquiry?

**Mr Bundhoo:** I have every reason to believe that it would have been the duty of the Senior Magistrate to invite the parents of the deceased person to be accompanied, if they wish so, and to depone before the Fact Finding Committee.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister inform us whether it did happen that way? Was there any lawyer keeping a watching brief for the victims or parents of the victims?

**Mr Bundhoo:** I am not so sure whether this happens this way. With regard to the case that was raised earlier by hon. Jhugroo concerning the child who passed away at the Flacq Hospital, I have personally received the father, the mother, the paternal grandfather and grandmother. I have talked to them. I have informed them that I have set up a Fact-Finding
Committee and I have personally invited them. It is not my responsibility as such, but I have done in good spirit because of what has happened to this child. I consider it quite normal and moral also to phone and invite them in my office and talk to them.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister whether in cases of death or where there is alleged medical negligence, the responsible parties upon request to have access to medical documents, are granted the facility to obtain those medical records and documents?

Mr Bundhoo: I can assure the hon. Member that this is exactly the instructions that I have given. They should be able to have access to the medical records of these persons, as I have said to hon. Ms Anquetil earlier, but we have to ensure confidentiality at all times.

TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES - ORANGE - DISRUPTION

(No. B/341) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to Orange, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, information as to if there has been a disruption in the mobile telecommunication services thereof, on Friday 03 May 2013 and, if so, indicate if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to PQ B/341 and PQ B/364 together as they relate to the same issue. One question is from hon. Fakeemeeah and the other from hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the ICT Authority that some disruptions were experienced in the mobile telecommunication services of Cellpus, especially in the region of Port Louis on 30 March and 03 May 2013. Upon my request, Mr Speaker, Sir, the ICT Authority conducted an inquiry into the causes of the breakdown. The ICT Authority has informed that the cause of the outage was a sudden network saturation in Port Louis area where the main switching centre of Cellplus is located, resulting in an abnormal surge of call attempts from subscribers being made within a very short span of time on those days.

The onset of the surge coincided with the time when flash floods occurred on 30 March 2013, and also at the time when the tragic road accident happened at Sorèze, Pailles, on 03 May 2013. The disruptions lasted for around two hours in the first case, and around half an hour in the second case. In both cases, Mr Speaker, Sir, the total number of call attempts made during those periods was much more than the normal call rate expected.
The ICT Authority has not taken any sanction against the licensee in view of clause 24 issued of the licence to Cellplus relating to an ‘Excused Non-Performance Clause’, which provides for the licensee to be excused from performance only to the extent, and for so long as, such performance is substantially hindered or prevented by war, civil disturbances, strikes, natural disaster, fire, explosion, other public emergencies or any other occurrence beyond the reasonable control of the licensee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of PQ No. B/364, I am informed by the ICT Authority that, in a competitive market, it is not convenient at all for authorities to impose a limit on the number of subscribers per operator, to ensure quality of service. However, a quality of service framework can be developed and imposed on operators. In this context, Government has, on 19 April 2013, agreed to the ICT Authority setting up a National Quality of Service Framework for Broadband Internet Services, to better monitor the quality of services offered by Internet Service Providers, and the framework will also be applicable to other telecommunication services, with a view to enabling -

(a) operators to determine their service level and subsequently plan their network investment and capacity requirements, and

(b) consumers to know whether they are receiving value for money.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no provision in the ICT Act presently for the ICT Authority to impose sanction on operators for breach of provisions in their licences. My Ministry is working in close collaboration with the ICT Authority and the Attorney General’s Office to bring amendments to the ICT Act, to empower the ICT Authority to take sanctions against defaulters.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister why is it that the disruption happened only to ‘Orange’ and not to other operators?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been given to understand from the Group Orange itself that there was a saturation of the réseau. In fact, the home location register, which is responsible for that, is now being looked into. They will install a new one. I understand it has already been done, and has been in operation since 20 May 2013, that is, yesterday.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has intervened to compensate the users for their loss of usage on both dates.
Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: It is not possible for me to look into it, but anyway, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned in my answer itself, there are certain instances where the regulator cannot intervene because we have to go according to what our law says. Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are looking into section 24 of the ICT Act. Most probably, in the course of this term itself, we are going to bring the necessary amendments before the House because if we have to sue Mauritius Telecom, it must be on conviction that they can be fined. As we know, only the Courts that have the power to convict, and that is why we are going to amend the law to make provision for that.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I make an appeal to the hon. Minister, so that this kind of situation does not happen again, especially to Cellplus, and whether he can convey this message to his good friend, Mr Sarat Lallah?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Hon. Ameer Meea, I have to draw your attention that you have to put a question. You don’t make appeal during question time.

Mr Roopun: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the saturation which occurred on 13 February and 30 March, I did put a PQ here regarding the reasons, and in a written reply, the hon. Minister stated that, as from 30 April, there would be an upgrading of the system. Now, a few days thereafter, we have this failure again on 03 May. Can the hon. Minister give us an explanation why, after supposedly there has been an upgrading of the system effective as from 30 April, a few days thereafter there was again the same failure?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The hon. Member can understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have said that new technologies will be introduced. But, in fact, when we introduce it, we will not get the result immediately. We have to work it out, and as I have mentioned in my reply, the new technology which we have introduced, that is, the home location register, has already been installed. It takes time to install. It has already been installed, and it has been in operation since 20 May, that is, yesterday.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, answering to a PQ on why ‘Orange’ did not work on 14 February, gave exactly the same answer he is giving today. Doesn’t he think that the ICTA, as regulator, has the power, and should impose conditions on the licensee ‘Orange’, so that everybody is serviced, even in times of crisis?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, my good friend seems to forget that the ICT Act was introduced before this House in the year 2003, and at that time no provision was made in the law insofar as sanction is concerned.
Mr Speaker, Sir, as we all know, *il n'y a pas de dispositions sans texte*. What we have to do, Mr Speaker, Sir, is come with new amendments, and this is being catered for in the new sets of amendments which we are going to introduce in the coming days.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether this situation will be sufficient enough for the hon. Minister to see to it that new players join the market because of the incapacity of ‘Orange’ to deliver the goods to the population.

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** I must say that I am very pleased by the question which is being put by the hon. Member. Mr Speaker, Sir, for new operators to come, you must create …

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Well, I am sorry. Members should not interrupt the hon. Minister! He is answering! How many Ministers of IT do we have in this House? Only one! Please, answer your question. I don’t want any interruption from any quarters.

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Speaker, Sir, when we amended our legislation through the Finance Act last year, new players like Belgacom have come. When we have opened the landing station, Belgacom, a foreign operator, has come to Mauritius. It has already launched its office one or two weeks ago. You will see for yourself that this will transform *le paysage informatique à Maurice.*

**Mr Jhugroo:** Will the hon. Minister agree with me that the network went down because of the inadequate powerful servers used by ‘Orange’?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question has already been answered since day one. In fact, there has been saturation. We all know that the existing technology cannot answer the needs of the great demand that we have today. We have already introduced the home location register which has already been installed and has been operational since yesterday. So, you have to wait for some time to see whether the situation will occur again, or not.

**Mr Jugnauth:** With regard to the National Quality Framework that the hon. Minister has just evoked, may I know if there is a Committee which has been set up to look into that and, if yes, may I know who are the members of that Committee and how the Government is proceeding about it?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** M. le président, on a eu l’aval du gouvernement à travers le Cabinet ministériel. Effectivement, l’ICTA a été autorisé à introduire un nouveau software, c’est-à-dire le *National Quality of Service Framework for Broadband Internet Services.*
Pourquoi on introduit cela, c’est parce qu’on veut donner value for money. Aujourd’hui, vous achetez 2 mégabits, vous ne savez pas si vraiment vous avez des mégabits et là, avec ce new software, Mr Speaker, Sir, everything will be monitored at the level of the regulator. So, there will be no problem about it and you will have value for money.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

AGALEGA – AIRSTRIP - UPGRADEING

(No. B/342) 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 Agalega, he will state the projects earmarked to be implemented thereat, indicating where matters stand as to the proposed upgrading of the airstrip thereat.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the following projects have been earmarked in the PBB 2013 for implementation by the Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC) in Agalega -

(i) construction of a Refugee Centre on South Island;
(ii) construction of a duplex type quarters;
(iii) purchase of equipment;
(iv) purchase of a fire fighting vehicle, and
(v) upgrading of the airstrip.

Mr Speaker, Sir, works for the construction of the Refugee Centre on the South Island which started last year, will be completed in this financial year, whilst procurement procedures have been initiated for the construction of a duplex type quarters for the benefit of the inhabitants of Agalega. As regards the procurement of equipment, two generators have been purchased and shipped to Agalega in February 2013. Furthermore, the procurement exercise for the acquisition of an Airport Crash and Rescue Fire Fighting Vehicle has been completed and the vehicle will be delivered shortly to OIDC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, over and above the projects mentioned, the House may wish to note that the OIDC is also implementing a project for the creation of a Leisure Park at Village 25 in Agalega which is being funded by the Employees Welfare Fund to the tune of Rs1 m. Works have started and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.
Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the project for the upgrading of the airstrip, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply of the Parliamentary Question No. B/19 which I made on 26 March 2013, whereby I informed the House that the present tender exercise is being cancelled, being given that only one bidder has agreed to extend its bid validity. In the meantime, consultations are still underway with relevant stakeholders and alternative proposals are being examined for the implementation of the project.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, going to the issue of airstrip which has been long on the cards, the tender was launched on 04 October 2011 and it has been almost one and half years now that we understand that the tender has been cancelled and the hon. Minister just stated that consultation is on for the construction of this airstrip. Can I know from the hon. Minister if there is a new tender that will be launched or what will happen to this project?

Mr Aimée: Government is studying different avenues of doing this airstrip; not through tender, probably from G to G.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, sorry, I did not quite understand what the hon. Minister said.

Mr Aimée: Government to Government.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister which Government are we talking?

Mr Aimée: Up to now, it has not been disclosed. It is only the Prime Minister who has informed that they are trying to have discussion from G to G. I don’t know which Government. I have not even asked.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this Government has the intention to upgrade the airstrip at Agalega and, if so, can we have a timeframe? We cannot come and say that it is a PBB project or we are going to …

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You put your question!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have explained that there are discussions between Government and Government…
That is the information I have. When the hon. Member asked if I can give a timeframe, it would be difficult. Je ne suis pas dans le secret des Dieux.

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a serious matter and it is a pity that the hon. Minister is not taking this matter seriously. He does not know the problem that the people of Agalega are facing because of the bad state of the airstrip.

Mr Speaker: Just put your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of the very bad state of the jetty which is found in Agalega? This is causing a lot of distress and discomfort to the people of Agalega because of the problem of disembarkation of the ship.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Parliamentary Question the hon. Member has asked for various projects, including the airstrip.

Yes, but actually, there is no project for a jetty for the time being.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that between the negotiations which have taken place between G and G, the options of a new airstrip or the rebuilding of the jetty were not considered as an option because another third possibility cropped up for the other G to touch base at Agalega?

Mr Aimée: No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may go back to the question asked by hon. Ameer Meea, in the recent report drawn up by Mr Jimmy Harmon, emphasis is laid on the urgent necessity of either a wharf or acquisition of the beach vessel, being given the danger posed to people disembarking at Agalega and linked to this is the issue of disembarkment of goods that are shipped to Agalega. If that is not part of the projects, will he take a solemn undertaking before this House to urgently ensure that this project is addressed by Government?
Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are doing our best. As I said, probably in the discussion between G and G, we probably will have the airstrip done and we probably would have the jetty done. During the last seven years, I have been with the Agalean, working with them. I am concerned about that.

(Interruptions)

This is a few days ago, after Jimmy Harmon, that I have seen so many people interested with Agalega.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am sorry to interrupt you. A question has been set; your responsibility is to answer the question.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can only answer questions which I have got the answers already with me …

(Interruptions)

…or from the institution concerned, I can’t answer - like somebody told me, Mr Speaker, Sir - when the airstrip will be done? As I have mentioned, there are discussions between Government and Government for that. I can’t answer to the question.

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that the jetty is in a very critical situation, will the hon. Minister consider having a port development mentioned during the discussions between G and G meeting which will be held soon?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, this would be taken on board. I just mentioned it now.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Silence, please! There is a question from hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister has said that he is not aware of the discussions that are ongoing between this Government and the other Government. Can he inform this House, at least, who are the people on Government side who are aware about the identity of the other G?

Mr Aimée: I don’t know.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!
Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question concerns project implementation. Being given that it would appear that we are going round and round in circles concerning project implementation, will the hon. Minister consider the request made last year in an open letter to the hon. Prime Minister by Father Labour that the whole of the OIDC be reorganised and that the Island Council be dissolved to be constituted anew as an Island Council representative of the people of Agalega?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je pense que j’aurai l’occasion de mentionner cela au Premier ministre et au Cabinet, et certainement on va prendre cela en considération. Mais j’ai quand même fait une proposition qui est peut-être plus facile. Au lieu de faire l’aéroport – tout cela est en discussion - on aurait pu acheter un hydravion. Mais tout cela est à étudier. Ce n’est pas dans l’immédiat.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the subject matter of the question is about where matters stand as to the proposed upgrading of the airstrip and the hon. Minister said to the House that he is not aware. Since he is the hon. Minister responsible for Agalega and he is not aware of anything, should he not resign from his post?

Mr Speaker: Well, the hon. Minister has given the hon. Member an answer. (Interruptions) His answer maybe a “no” answer, but this is an answer. (Interruptions) Unfortunately, I cannot compel the hon. Minister to answer properly. Last question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the recent report concerning Agalega, an important point made was the Educators posted at Agalega, the need to revisit present arrangements, looking on the one hand at the quality and commitment of Educators, on the other hand, of having an educational curriculum that takes on board the specificity of Agalega. May I know whether this is part of the projects being considered, and if so, what is being achieved so far?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je remercie l’honorable membre pour cette question. C’est vrai que nous avons besoin de revoir le système d’éducation à Agalega. En 2008, on avait fait un collège pour les enfants qui venaient, à cette époque, après leur CPE, à Maurice. Il y a encore des problèmes de transport et de communication en général. Je pense qu’on a
tout essayé, mais vu qu’on a ces problèmes de communication, c’est difficile. On est en train
d’étudier aussi le distance learning, mais les réseaux de communication à Agalega ne sont
pas aussi performants qu’à Maurice. Même ici, à Maurice, nous nous plaignons du système
d’Orange.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

**HIV/AIDS - MEASURES**

(No. B/343) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port
Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to
HIV/AIDS, he will state the number of persons infected therewith, giving a breakdown
gender-wise and indicating the measures taken by his Ministry in relation thereto.

**Mr Bundhoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would kindly beg for the indulgence of the House
because the reply is a little bit lengthy. If you decide at a point in time that I should circulate
it, I will be happy to do that.

*(Interruptions)*

I am informed that as at date, a total of 5,577 persons, comprising of 4,412 males and
1,165 females were infected with HIV.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I wish to highlight that there has been a
significant decrease in the overall number of new HIV cases detected since 2011. In fact, the
monthly number of new cases registered in 2010 was 45 and it decreased to 33 in 2011 and
further decreased to 27 in 2012. Furthermore, the number of new cases of HIV among males
has decreased from 433 in 2010 to 298 in 2011 to 215 in 2012.

As regards the number of new cases of HIV among females, in 2010, 135 cases were
registered, 103 in 2011 and 105 in 2012. In fact, more women are now coming forward for
an HIV test following aggressive educational campaigns targeting women at community
level.

With regard to the second part of the question, the decrease in the number of new
cases detected has resulted from a series of measures which my Ministry has initiated. Allow
me here to mention a few of them with the collaboration, of course, of the Secretariat for HIV
which falls under the premises of the Prime Minister’s Office.

(i) The treatment, care and support services to people living with HIV and AIDS
which were available only at Dr. A. F. Bouloux Area Health Centre until
September 2009, have been decentralised to other regions, namely at Volcy Pougnet CHC in the region of Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospital, SSRN Hospital and the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital.

With this measure the number of HIV patients attending our Day Care Centres has increased. In 2009, 2267 HIV patients representing 51% of registered cases were attending the centres while as to date, 4274 patients, that is 76.6% are attending the centres.

Likewise, the number of HIV patients who were adhering to the antiretroviral treatment has increased from 65% in 2009 to about 82% as at to date.

(ii) The Harm Reduction Strategy, comprising the Methadone Substitution Therapy and the Needle Exchange Programmes to address the problem of transmission of HIV through injecting drug use, has been scaled up.

In fact, there was a constant increase in the number of new cases of HIV among People Who Inject Drugs. In 2001, injecting drug use represented 7% of the total number of new HIV cases detected and it is increased to 14% in 2002, 66% in 2003, to reach a peak of 92% in 2005. With the Harm Reduction Strategy which is being implemented since 2006, the number of new cases of HIV among drug use has decreased substantially from 86% in 2006 to 73% in 2010, to 68% in 2011 and to 47% in 2012.

(iv) The HIV and AIDS Act 2006 aiming at amongst other things to address the problems of stigma and discrimination is being enforced. HIV testing has been made more accessible with the provision of voluntary testing in all Area Health Centres, Medi-clinics, Community Health Centres and Peripheral Hospitals. People are encouraged to undertake a test at any health point of their choice without fear in all confidentiality.

In this respect, I wish to point out that in 2005 the total number of HIV tests being carried out was 80,000. In 2012, 109,000 persons were tested for HIV, representing an increase over the years to 36.3%.

(v) The prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) Programme which started in 1999 has been reinforced. A mobile team comprising, inter alia, Medical Officers, Specialised AIDS Nurses and Midwives has been set up.
since 2010 to track HIV pregnant women who are unwilling to come for treatment or to adhere to the PMTCT Programme.

With this measure, Mr Speaker, Sir, the percentage of HIV positive would-be-mothers attending the PMTCT Programme has increased from 68% in 2009 to 94% in 2012.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the other measures taken by my Ministry include -

(i) the formulation and implementation of multi-sectoral National Strategic Frameworks 2007-2012 and 2013-2016;

(ii) reinforcement of awareness, sensitisation and educational programmes in educational institutions as well as at workplace and in the community;

(iii) conduct of targeted education and screening programmes for key affected persons, namely men having sex with men, commercial sex workers, prison inmates and seafarers; and

(iv) capacity building of health care workers and social workers.

Moreover, Mr Speaker Sir, the National AIDS Secretariat has been set up under the Prime Minister’s Office in 2007 with a view to coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the multisectoral HIV and AIDS activities is also being extended to Rodrigues.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Although this long declaration of the hon. Minister, I would like to ask the hon. Minister still can the protocol be reviewed to ensure more confidentiality as I have been informed that the number is significantly more consequent? And I just heard this last Sunday only the chief of the Catholic Church, Monseigneur Piat, has talked about this problem and said that many persons do not come forward to carry out HIV test.

Mr Bundhoo: Despite what the hon. Member has just said, I have just given the figures of how the sensitising campaign has been effective, and the number of people coming out to do the test has increased at least by 40% over the last years. Maybe I agree with the hon. Member that there is always room for improvement, but I would also request the hon. Member to understand that it is not compulsory for the Government of Mauritius to have HIV tested on every citizen of this country. Therefore, as long as it is voluntarily, we are going to make all efforts to sensitise our people, the population, to have the test done.

Mr Speaker: Hon Bodha!
Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister how is the situation in the prisons, because this is one of the areas where the prevalence is very, very high.

Mr Bundhoo: I didn't quite get the question of the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: How is the situation in the prisons where the prevalence is usually very high?

Mr Bundhoo: I will very humbly request the hon. Member to refer to the question that was answered by the hon. Prime Minister. It was a question that was put by hon. Ms Anquetil. I got the reply with me, I can give it to the hon. Member. The hon. Prime Minister has extensively replied to the HIV situation in the prisons as this falls within the ambit of the Prime Minister's Office. He has done so.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may! On this issue of prisons, there is a specific suggestion that has been made in this House by several colleagues such as hon. Dr. S. Boolell about the screening systematic or be it voluntary, but systematic screening, of prisoners when they arrive in the prisons and when they leave prisons so that we can target them as a vulnerable group.

(Interruptions)

I do not think that it is being done!

Will he undertake to urgently look into the practicability of implementing…

Mr Bundhoo: No, the hon. Prime Minister has replied specifically to this question and if I am not mistaken, it was hon. Dr. S. Boolell who has put this question to the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Prime Minister has said that it is now a practice in the prison, as much as possible voluntarily, to test the inmates when they come in, and also to check them when they leave the prison and do everything if they are positive, to ensure about the medications, the facilities, the support. It has been answered by the hon. Prime Minister and action has already been initiated with regard to that. I don't know who has put the question, but a Member has put the question. I have read them. I think it is hon. Dr. S. Boolell himself who did that.

Mr Baloomoody: One of the main complaints of the NGOs working in this sector is that the National AIDS Committee chaired by the hon. Prime Minister has not met for quite a
long time. Can I ask the hon. Minister to inform the House when that Committee met for the last time?

Mr Bundhoo: I have to inform the hon. Member that may be the hon. Prime Minister has not chaired personally the National AIDS Committee, but Mrs Pathak who is the Director, has held several committees and I have myself met them. But what is most fundamental, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that it is only when hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam assumes office as Prime Minister, that he took over the HIV Committee…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Bundhoo: … that it is over the last seven years that hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam as Prime Minister that HIV has decreased substantially; that it is hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam who has negotiated with GEF to ensure financial support from overseas in order to sustain the campaign with regard to HIV and AIDS in Mauritius. There is no other Prime Minister in Mauritius who has committed himself with HIV/AIDS other than hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon Navarre-Marie! Silence!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir,…

Mr Speaker: Silence! There is a supplementary question now.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: The Minister has still not yet answered the question on when was the last meeting held and under whose chairmanship? And second, whether it is still the practice that an MP from the Opposition sits on that committee.

Mr Speaker: One question at a time.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just said, last year I have myself presided over a committee with all the NGOs. Secondly, I have said, Mrs Pathak delegated from the Prime Minister’s Office have presided over several committees and whether it is still the practice for a Member of Parliament of the Opposition to sit in this committee, I don’t know exactly what is the practice, but if this is a case, I am sure it will be done.
Mr S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister to give us the statistics of the age range of contracting the virus and at which age the virus infection is now peaking in both males and females? The age range!

Mr Bundhoo: I don't have the information on me, but I would certainly circulate it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the hon. Minister taken cognizance of the different comments made by genuine NGOs of Government’s commitment and the personal commitment of the Minister to meet them and to work together? Il y a un relâchement au niveau du gouvernement en ce qui s’agit de cette contrepartie gouvernement-NGO.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to repeat myself. It is because there has been permanent contact with NGOs, Prime Minister’s office, NATReSA and all those concerned that, today, we see the result from 98 in 2002 where it peaked to 538 in 2008 and today, in 2012, it is 320 bottom line but count is the result; HIV/AIDS is re-diminishing in Mauritius.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister table a copy of the meeting which he chaired?

Mr Bundhoo: Of course, I can do that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister has just said that the trend is downward, can he confirm that this is the case also for inmates in prisons, that the number of HIV prisoners is going down and, if not, doesn’t he agree that there is a blatant failure at the level of the Prime Minister’s Office to reduce AIDS in prison?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is exactly the contrary because it is through the initiative of the Prime Minister and Prime Minister’s Office that HIV testing, control and support has been introduced in the prisons.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Li Kwong Wing!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the Minister inform the House what specific measures are taken by his Ministry to prevent discrimination against HIV patients in hospitals?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just given a full lengthy reply with regard to the initiatives being given. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no discrimination between male
and female in the Ministry for this matter anywhere in Mauritius with regard to treatment and support for HIV/AIDS.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one issue which is troubling me on this question. We are talking of making of Mauritius an international education hub. The Minister for Tertiary Education very often talks of new campuses to accommodate foreign students. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any arrangement or protocol with regard to foreign students coming to study in Mauritius?

Mr Bundhoo: I don’t know whether it is with regard to students, but, as far as I can remember in the Ministry of Health there is a specific section with regard to health for foreigners coming to work in Mauritius. I would not be surprised if this also would be appraised to would-be students, but I have checked upon that. I am sure there must be some kind of protocol to cover this.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I note with interest that the Minister mentioned schools. May I know what resources are available to the AIDS unit for campaigns in school and what is the frequency of visits to schools for the purposes of sensitisation campaigns?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have it with me, but I don’t have it offhand like this, but I can assure the hon. Member that regular sensitization campaigns are being organized in all schools. There is a distribution of leaflets. There are face-to-face discussions and, if I am not mistaken, on Friday forums are organized in order to sensitize the youth with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Balamoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Yes Sir. May I come back again to that National Committee - I am sure you are aware now that you are the President of the SADC Parliamentary Forum. We have adopted the principle that each country there should be a National AIDS Committee chaired by the Prime Minister or the President and, in that Committee, not only NGOs and Ministries, they should be also a backbencher of the Government and a member from the Opposition. This was put into place when we were in Government MMM/MSM. In fact, I was the one for the backbencher and hon. Minister Boolell was the one for the Opposition.
Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this principle has been done away with because this is an essential condition in the SADC countries.

**Mr Bundhoo**: I have already replied to this, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I can assure the hon. Member that there is a National AIDS Committee and the coordinator is Dr. Pathak. I will liaise with her to make sure that things are done as it should be done.

**Mr Speaker**: Next question hon. Nagalingum!

**GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES - OVERSEAS MISSIONS - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. B/344) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions/scholarships/courses granted by the Government Fire Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fire Services, a list of the officers who have benefitted therefrom, over the past two years, indicating in each case, the –

(a) nature thereof;

(b) country visited;

(c) length of service of the selected officer, and

(d) cost incurred.

**Mr Aimée**: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Fire Services Department that no officer benefitted from overseas scholarship and overseas courses during the past two years. However, some officers proceeded on overseas mission in years 2011 and 2012 to Austria and Germany respectively in connection with pre-delivery inspections of fire fighting equipment.

With regard to parts (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the question, the information is being placed in the Library.

**Mr Nagalingum**: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that one fire officer on probationary basis and who has not been confirmed yet has benefited from overseas courses to the detriment of other long serving officers. He only joined the service on 11 January 2012 and benefited from his first overseas course in September 2012 on urban search and rescue.

**Mr Aimée**: Mr Speaker, Sir, as Minister, I got my information from the Fire Department. Unless the hon. Member can prove what he says; from the information I have here no officers have benefited from overseas scholarship for training courses.
Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Soodhun!

PHOENIX ROUNDABOUT – TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS

(No. B/345) Mr S. Soodhun (Second 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 roundabout at Phoenix, he will state if he has received complaints from the inhabitants thereof in relation to the traffic arrangements thereat and, if so, indicate if actions will be taken in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that complaints from the inhabitants of Phoenix have been received in a letter dated 19 April 2013 regarding traffic movement at Phoenix roundabout.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and the Police have taken appropriate measures to alleviate the traffic congestion caused by the closure of Pont Fer roundabout bypass and have accordingly extended the hours of opening of the bypass both in the morning and the evening. The new opening hours on weekdays are in the morning from 07.00 hrs to 09.30 hrs and from 14.00 hrs to 19.00 hrs in the afternoon. On Saturdays, the new opening hours are 10.00 hrs to 14.00 hrs. Besides, Police is physically present to regulate and ease vehicular traffic in the morning. The bypass is opened to ensure that the traffic flow can be absorbed without any inconvenience.

The long term solution will be applied in the context of the Road Decongestion Programme wherein provision has been made for the construction of a grade separated junction at that location to cater for movement of vehicles on all the three roundabouts, that is, Jumbo, Phoenix and Dowlut roundabouts.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Minister be able to liaise with the Police Department so that the access to Valentina and Petit Camp – as the hon. Minister has mentioned - there is a long queue because of the school children in the morning especially.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I understand the hardship of the people. There were representations made that hardships were caused to those people and then my Ministry decided to construct an additional entrance in front of the Kovil, that is, about 100 metres away from Jumbo roundabout, and, at the same time, we had decided to construct a footbridge adjacent to the narrow bridge so that pedestrians could move safely. The footbridge was constructed, but unfortunately the RDA could not proceed with the construction
of the road because there had been a group of people, inhabitants of the region, who had created problems. They prevented RDA from going ahead with the programme. That is the reason why I intend, once again, to call the inhabitants of the locality and I will try to see if we can go ahead with the construction of that road which can ease the problems of the inhabitants. That is one of the measures which we can take.

**Mr Speaker**: Last question from hon. Boolell!

**Dr. S. Boolell**: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note the absence of the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

An absence of the hon. Minister; and my question is addressed to him!

(Interruptions)

**Mr Speaker**: Silence!

**MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE – INVESTIGATIONS**

(No. B/346) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical negligence, he will state if Government proposes to set up a minimum period for the carrying out of investigations into allegations thereof and to inform the families of the victims of the findings thereof.

**Mr Bundhoo**: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to pledge my apology for the slight delay.

I wish to inform the House that Government has set up a Ministerial Committee to look into the review of the Medical Council Act. One of the tasks of the Committee will be to address the issue of alleged medical negligence, and to advise on ways and means to improve the investigation process, including the fixing of a timeframe and the review of modalities to inform families of victims of alleged medical negligence of the findings.

**Dr. S. Boolell**: Considering, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we were informed by the Minister that a Fact-Finding Committee takes about six months and we have a toothless wonder in the Medical Council, which is yet to produce any form of report, could I humbly ask the hon. Minister whether it would not be practical and more transparent to refer any cases of medical negligence for a Judicial Enquiry where even the relatives might have access to information concerning the alleged mishap?
Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, first of all, to make a small amendment to what the hon. Member said earlier. It has taken six months in the case of which I referred earlier because the Fact-Finding Committee was instituted with regard to three cases of maternal and child death, whereas with regard to the latest case, the timeframe is only one month.

Secondly, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet has decided to set up a Ministerial Committee to review the functions of the Medical Council, which includes the way enquiry is conducted, the way discipline is being applied, and the way sanctions are being taken. I am sure this Committee will also take on board what the hon. Member has just recommended, what he has just advised.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, one last question because time is up!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a month ago, in answer to a question from hon. Bodha, the Minister said that the Ministerial Committee was in existence, that a working paper had been submitted to the Ministerial Committee. Four weeks later, we are being told that a Ministerial Committee has been set up.

Mr Bundhoo: No, what I said is that a Ministerial Committee has already been set up, the working documents have already been given to the Ministerial Committee. The chairmanship of this Ministerial Committee is with hon. Dr. Kasenally, and is composed of hon. Dr. Bunwaree, hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell and hon. Satish Faugoo, former Minister of Health, and also with a lawyer background. They have had several sittings.

(Interruptions)

Of course, the Minister is there! We have had several meetings, and we are looking at different Medical Councils from Singapore to the UK. We will also see what is happening in Mauritius, and then we will come up with a consolidated law with regard to the amendments to the Medical Council.

I must also add one thing. Part of the Medical Council was already amended through the Budget in November last year. With regard to the minimum requirement in order to study medicine, it has been raised to 3 ‘A’ level and 21 minimum points. We have already made amendments in the Medical Council with regard to setting up what is called an examination in order to assess the eligibility of students to practise medicine in Mauritius. We’ve also made amendments with regard to make it compulsory for continuous development
programme, and we’ve also made amendments to establish a Postgraduate Specialist Board in order to review specialists who wish to practise medicine as specialists in Mauritius.

**Mr Speaker**: Last supplementary question to hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie**: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. To a question which I put on 16 November 2010, following a liposuction surgery at the Clinique du Nord leading to death, the then Minister of Health informed the House that an enquiry was being carried out at that time. Could the hon. Minister state whether the enquiry has been completed in the case, stating the number of such cases since 2010, and which enquiry has not yet been completed?

**Mr Speaker**: Let me draw your attention, hon. Member, that you are putting too many questions in one. So, hon. Minister, please answer quickly and fast. Time is up!

**Mr Bundhoo**: As far as I know, the hon. Leader of the Opposition came up with a PNQ. The Committee has sat; there is an independent person from overseas who has looked over with regard to liposuctions. There were two or three cases. With regard to two cases, the findings have already been submitted to the Ministry. There is one case still where the findings have to be submitted. The family of those concerned will be duly informed.

**Mr Speaker**: Time is up! The Table has been advised that PQs B/347, B/348, B/351, B/354, B/363 have been withdrawn. I invite the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

**COMMISSIONER OF BORROWERS – CASES**

(No. B/347) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the protection of the borrowers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Borrowers, information as to, since the adoption of the Protection of the Borrowers Act to date, on a yearly basis, the number of -

(a) cases referred thereto, indicating the outcome thereof in each case, and

(b) properties sold at the Master’s Court.

*(Withdrawn)*

**LAND (DUTIES AND TAXES) ACT – AMENDMENTS**

(No. B/348) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the exemption of registration duty for the first time buyers of bare lands and built up lands, he will state if proposals for amendments will be introduced to the Land (Duties and
Taxes) Act to provide for a specified quantum of exemption, irrespective of the selling price and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

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.

(4.41 p.m.)