STATE LANDS – FOREIGN PROPERTY DEVELOPERS

(No. B/115) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the foreign property developers who have benefitted from leased State lands, he will state if Government has taken any decision to authorize them to sell apartments found thereon or any other such property on a freehold basis.

Reply (The Minister of Housing and Lands): It is Government policy to grant industrial leases over State land with a view to promoting industrial development. State land is generally leased for the following purposes -

(a) Hotel development and tourism related projects;
(b) Construction of bungalow complex;
(c) Construction of offices/commercial complex, and
(d) Construction of various industrial buildings.

No State land has been leased to any foreign property developer for the construction of apartments for sale on a freehold basis.

In the context of encouraging foreign investment and boosting modern infrastructural development cum economic activities, two foreign-owned companies have projects on State land for developing a mix of mutually supporting business and professional services, research, business and corporate offices, hotel, retail and other services, with a component of residential apartments for subservient use. The construction of such apartments has only been allowed as part of a larger mixed-use development.

Article 1778-5 of Section Quatrième of the Code Civil Mauricien provides as follows -

“Le bail à construction confère un droit réel immobilier. Ce droit peut être hypothiqué ou grevé de sûretés fixes ou flottantes, de même que les constructions édifiées sur le terrain loué.”

Further, Article 1778-7 of the Code Civil Mauricien provides that “Le preneur peut céder tout ou partie de ses droits ou les apporter en société.”

These provisions give a lessee the right to dispose of any building/constructions that he has put up on the leased property. Furthermore the lease agreement provides for the transfer or
assignment in the lease subject to authorisation of the lessor. The lessee, of course, remains liable for the payment of rent for the leased land under the lease agreement and has to comply with the other terms and conditions of the lease agreement.

Moreover, I wish to inform the House that the Invest-Hotel Scheme allows hotel developers to finance the development of a project on State Land by allowing them to sell villas, suites, rooms or other components that form part of the hotel to individual buyers.

**BALANCE OF PAYMENTS**

(No. B/133) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the current account and overall balance of payments, he will state -

(a) the amount and percentage rate of the Gross Domestic Product of the deficits for the year ended December 2011 and for the period January to April 2012;
(b) an estimate of the amounts and percentage rates thereof for 2012, and
(c) if the trend is worsening and if so, the impact thereof on the exchange rate of the rupee.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, the overall balance of payments for the year 2011 stood at a surplus of Rs5.2 billion and represented 1.6 per cent of GDP at market prices. The current account deficit for the year 2011 stood at Rs40.7 billion and represented 12.6 per cent of GDP at market prices. The figures for the first quarter of this year will be released by Bank of Mauritius next month.

With regards to part (b) of the question, for the year 2012, the overall balance of payments surplus is forecast at Rs2.5 billion, which would represent 0.7 per cent of GDP at market prices. The current account deficit for the year 2012 is estimated at Rs45.5 billion equivalent to 13.2 per cent of GDP at market prices. This larger deficit is based on the assumption that input bill of petroleum products will rise by around Rs7bn. Tourism earnings may also be more than forecast originally.

The current account deficit also reflects both the impact of investment related imports such as machinery. The House will note that the only way to counter the negative external price
shocks if they become permanent is to continue to diversify our economy and to boost productivity. Our efforts in this area are bearing fruit but must continue.

For the investment related imports, the associated increase in the current account deficit is in line with the experience of most developing countries with sustained economic growth and healthy FDI.

As regards part (c) of the question, in theory a balance of payments surplus, leading to an increase in the country’s net international reserve position, should lead to an appreciation of the country’s currency. However, both the direction and the magnitude of change in the exchange value of the rupee will also depend on a number of other factors, including the liquidity situation on the domestic market for both rupees and forex. The exchange rate of the rupee is also determined by the relative strength of other currencies on the international market. Since 2007, Mauritius has had an overall balance of payments surplus and has been accumulating foreign currency reserves. This means that overall there has been adequate supply of forex on the market, notwithstanding, short term shortages or surpluses which are smoothed out by the Bank of Mauritius. As the overall balance of payments is forecast to be in surplus in 2012, the impact of an increase in the current account deficit on the exchange rate may be minimal, if any.

**CEB - CHAIRPERSON & GENERAL MANAGER - SALARY & BENEFITS**

(No. B/134) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Chairperson and the General Manager of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, in each case, information as to -

(a) their qualifications, and

(b) the salary and benefits drawn.

*(Withdrawn)*

**NTC – BUILDING - EBÈNE**

(No. B/135) 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 National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the -

(a) financial situation thereof, since 2007 to date, and

(b) if it is selling its building found in Ebène and if so, indicate the -
(i) construction cost thereof, and
(ii) selling price thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the National Transport Corporation (NTC) had deficits of Rs97.48 m. for Financial Year 2007/2008, Rs103.74 m. for 2008/09 and Rs58.59 m. for 2009/10. Following application of a series of correcting measures coupled with re-engineering of process, in 2011, NTC experienced an operating surplus of Rs75.19 m. in 2011. Even for the first quarter of 2012 there is a clear indication of an operational surplus situation.

As regards part (b) of the question, the NTC decided in April 2012, to sell its building located at Ebene Cybercity.

On 28 April 2012, the NTC invited bids through the local press for the sale of the building. The closing date for the bid submission is 31 May 2012.

As such it will not be ethical to reveal the construction costs at this stage as it can cause prejudice to the NTC.

As far as the selling price is concerned, it will be known only after the bidding exercise has been completed.

BENZODIAZEPINES, TRIHEXYPHENTOHYDROXAL & CODEINE BASED PRODUCTS - IMPORTATION

(No. B/136) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to benzodiazepines, trihexyphentohal and codeine based products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pharmacy Board, information as to the amount of money spent on the importation thereof over the past seven years, indicating if the Board exercises adequate control on the purchase thereof by the private and the public sectors.

Reply: I am informed that benzodiazepines belong to a group of drugs mainly used in the treatment of insomnia and anxiety. They are classified as dangerous drugs under the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000 and are listed under Schedule III of the Act. As regards Trihexyphenidyl (wrongly spelt in the question), it is commonly known as Artane and is used in the treatment of Parkinsonism. As for codeine based products they are used to treat coughs and diarrhea. They are classified as Poison under the Pharmacy Act 1983.
The total amount spent for the last seven years on the importation of these three products in the public sector is Rs12,281,853. However, no information is available on the amount spent in the private sector.

The Pharmacy Board exercises strict control on the importation of these products as follows -

(a) For the public sector, the quantity purchased annually is based on consumption for the previous years and future forecast.

(b) As far as the private sector is concerned, special permits are required for the import of benzodiazepines and codeine based products. The quantity to be imported is approved on the basis of consumption trends which are closely monitored by the Pharmacy Board. Any request which is considered excessive is queried by the Board and justifications sought prior to giving authorisation for import. Furthermore, benzodiazepines, Trihexyphenidyl and codeine based products are sold on prescriptions.

(c) In accordance with Section 23 of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000, a register has to be kept for benzodiazepines to record every supply and sale.

(d) All private pharmacies are regularly inspected by Government Pharmacists, who scrutinise all entries pertaining to purchase and sale of all drugs listed under Schedule III of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000. Any irregularity is promptly reported to the Pharmacy Board. Around 175 inspections are carried out annually. Since 2010 seven pharmacists have been sanctioned and the licenses of six pharmacies have been revoked.

Furthermore, in accordance with international Conventions ratified by Mauritius, the Pharmacy Board has to submit quarterly and annual returns on the consumption of psychotropic substances to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). So far, there has been no adverse comment on the returns made.

GRAND’ BAIE PUBLIC BEACH - REHABILITATION - CONTRACT

(No. B/137) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’ Baie & Poudre D’or) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the rehabilitation of the Grand Baie public beach, in front of the Grand Baie Social Welfare Centre, he will state -

(a) when the contract therefor was awarded, indicating the -
(i) name of the contractor;
(ii) initial cost, and
(iii) final cost thereof;

(b) when works started and were completed, and

(c) if he has received representations regarding shortcomings thereat and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that have been taken.

Reply (The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development): In regard to the rehabilitation of the Grand Baie Public Beach, I have to inform the House that -

(a) (i) the contract was awarded on 18 January 2011 to Future Builders Company Limited;
(ii) the initial contract amount was Rs19,215,850.25 (inclusive of VAT), and
(iii) the projected final cost would amount to Rs16,615,230.64 (inclusive of VAT).

(b) Works started on 08 March 2011 and were completed on 6 February 2012.

(c) As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to point out that during implementation of the coastal protection works, representations were received relating to sediment entrainment into the lagoon from the National Coast Guard, dust nuisance from sand stacked on site from the neighbourhood and removal of rocks from the lagoon from fishermen. Following intervention of my Ministry, remedial actions were taken by the Contractor for the placement of geotextile screens and washing of rocks before placement in the lagoon to prevent sediment entrainment into the lagoon. The Contractor also took measures for the covering of the sand stacked on site to avoid dust nuisance.

As far as removal of rocks is concerned, after investigation, it was found that no rocks had in fact been removed from the lagoon where works were being carried out.

Representations have also been received from ‘Association des Commerçants de Grand Baie’ with regard to the height of the rock revetment which was hampering the view of the lagoon. I wish to inform the House that the construction of the rock revetment was recommended in the ‘Baird Report’ of 2003, in the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework Study 2010 and by Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd., consultancy firm hired by my Ministry in 2010 for coastal protection works. Rock revetment is considered to be the preferred choice and
the most cost effective means to address the problem of beach erosion over a longer period of
time at Grand Baie, compared to other options such as gabions and beach nourishment.

Based on recommendations from Consultants, the rock revetment has been constructed at
an appropriate height with a view to protect the coastline and the land side, including the coastal
road, from serious effects of erosion due to overtopping of the rock revetment by waves during
adverse conditions.

Furthermore, my Ministry is presently in the process of finalising the design for
embellishment works on the site.

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY PREMISES - OLD-AGED PERSON -
PASSED AWAY

(No. B/139) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)
asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in
regard to the old-aged person who passed away whilst being on the premises of the Ministry of
Social Security in Port Louis on Wednesday 2 May 2012, she will state if an inquiry has been
carried out into the circumstances and causes thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed that no old-aged person passed away on the premises of my
Ministry, on Wednesday 2 May 2012.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITUS/UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – FOREIGN
STUDENTS

(No. B/140) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the
Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the
foreign students, he will state the number thereof presently studying in institutions run by or
under the aegis of the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology, Mauritius,
indicating

(a) by how much this figure has increased since the setting up of the Ministry for Tertiary
    Education, Science, Research and Technology, and

(b) what are the programmes currently available in Mauritius which are in high demand
    by these students.

(Withdrawn)
VICTORIA HOSPITAL – OUTPATIENTS/CASUALTY BLOCK
(No. B/141) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the new outpatients/casualty block in the Queen Victoria Hospital, he will state the area of unoccupied space thereat, indicating the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS – STUDENTS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
(No. B/142) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the financial assistance granted by Government to students to enable them pursue higher studies in tertiary institutions, he will state the number of students who have availed themselves thereof, since 2009 to date, on a yearly basis.

(Withdrawn)

BEL AIR – MEDICAL COLLEGE – SETTING UP
(No. B/143) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a Medical College in Bel Air, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CHAGOS COMMUNITY – PETITION – GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
(No. B/144) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the petition made by the Chagos Community to the Government of the United States of America relating to their rights of return in the Chagos Archipelago and the issue of sovereignty thereon, he will state the outcome thereof.

Reply: As the hon. Member is aware, the longstanding struggle of Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, and the right of Mauritian citizens, including those from the Chagossian community, to return to and resettle in the Archipelago are indissociable.
This is the stand taken by the Government in all relevant international and bilateral fora as well as in discussions with the British authorities.

According to available sources, on 05 March 2012, an international petition was launched via Internet on the “We the People” section of the US White House website in order to ask the Obama Administration to “provide relief to the Chagossians in the form of resettlement to the outer Chagos islands, employment and compensation.” The petition is, as we understand it, a joint initiative of the “Groupe des Refugiés Chagossiens” and SPEAK— an NGO engaged in the defence of human rights.

The website of the White House provides a copy of the said petition which is addressed to the US Obama Administration under the heading “The US Government Must Redress Wrongs Against the Chagossians”. According to the website, the petition had garnered, by its deadline of 4 April 2012, some 28,959 signatures i.e. more than the 25,000 normally required by the White House in order for a petition to receive a formal response. According to our information, thus far, it would seem that no formal response thereto has been made by the White House. We also understand that such a response would be posted as and when the White House decides to do so.

I have to emphasise that the said petition is not an initiative of the Government of Mauritius and is, therefore, not an issue on which Government can act upon both in terms of its content and intents.

This having been said, we wish to reaffirm that the Government of Mauritius and as a matter of fact the whole nation are deeply sympathetic to the cause of the Chagossian community, in particular the legal battles, which some associations of the Chagossian Community, particularly the “Groupe des Refugiés Chagossiens” have been engaged in during the last two decades in the UK and at the level of the European Court of Human Rights.

I wish to commend the two leaders of the “Groupe des Réfugiés Chagossiens” and the Chagossian Social Committee, Mr. Olivier Bancoult and Mr. Fernand Mandarin respectively and like-minded persons for their arduous pursuit of the Chagossian interest. We fully support their various initiatives in our belief that they also advance the cause of the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

While we remain very attentive to developments regarding these legal proceedings, in particular, the sovereignty implications thereof, we as a Government have consistently and relentlessly pursued sustained diplomatic efforts for an early exercise by Mauritius of its
sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. In the process, the Government is exploring all possible options that are available to advance our case.

The House is already aware that the Government of Mauritius has initiated legal proceedings under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) against the United Kingdom to contest the legality of the unilateral and arbitrary creation by the UK Government of the so-called “marine protected area” around the Chagos Archipelago. It is our firmly-held view that the establishment of this area is in violation of the provisions of the UNCLOS and international law.

In parallel to this lawsuit, we have intensified our diplomatic efforts in various international and intergovernmental fora with a view to further sensitizing the international community on the unlawful denial to Mauritius of its right to exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. As a result, we succeeded in including a special paragraph on the Chagos Archipelago issue in the G77 +China Ministerial Declaration held in Doha, Qatar on 22 April 2012 in the context of the UNCTAD XIII Conference. This is the first time that the G77+China official document makes explicit reference to the Chagos Archipelago issue with regard to UNCTAD which essentially deals with economic and trade matters.

Similarly, we succeeded in incorporating specific paragraphs on the Chagos Archipelago issue in the Final Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held from 9 to 10 May 2012 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in preparation for the NAM Summit to take place in Iran later this year. It is to be noted, in this regard, that the XVI Ministerial Conference and Commemorative Meeting of the NAM, held in Bali, Indonesia, in May 2011 also devoted three paragraphs on the Chagos Archipelago issue in its final outcome document.

I am proud to recall that Mr. Olivier Bancoult, leader of the Groupe des Réfugiés Chagossiens, attended the 16th session of the Summit of the African Union held in January 2011 in Addis Ababa and formed part of the Mauritius delegation. His presence highlighted the importance the Government attaches to the plight and cause of the Chagossian community. The said Summit adopted a resolution on the Chagos Archipelago following up to the resolution on the same issue adopted by the previous AU Summit held in Kampala, Uganda in 2010.

As I have indicated before, we shall leave no stone unturned in our endeavour to enable Mauritius to exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

**NHDC & NEF – LOW COST HOUSES**
(No. B/145) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the low cost houses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., and the National Empowerment Fund respectively, information as to the number thereof built, since 2005 to date, indicating the -

(a) location thereof;
(b) cost thereof, and
(c) procedure followed for the selection of the contractors therefor.

(Withdrawn)

ABSOLUTE POVERTY - NUMBER

(No. B/146) Mr M. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to absolute poverty, he will state the number of persons falling into this category, since 2005 to-date.

Reply: I am informed by CSO “an absolute poverty line of $1.25 per day per person has been developed by the World Bank for least developed countries and an absolute poverty line of $2 a day per person for developing countries, to assess and monitor global poverty.”

According to CSO, the proportion of absolute poor has remained below 1.5% of the total population from 2001/02 till to date.

I wish to inform the House that notwithstanding the absolute poverty line as established by World Bank this Government has gone an extra mile and had established that a household earning less than Rs 4,000 as being absolute poor. This ceiling was increased to Rs 5,000 in 2010 and has further been increased to Rs 6,200 excluding social aid with effect from February 2012.

According to a survey carried out in 2007 by the then Trust Fund for social integration for vulnerable groups, it was found that there were 7,157 households in absolute poverty.

Another survey carried out by the NEF, it was noted that as at December 2011, the number of households has decreased to 7016.

Following the increase in the poverty line in February 2012 to Rs 6200, a new survey is underway.
BAGATELLE DAM PROJECT – ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

(No. B/147) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam Project, he will state if he is in presence of any adverse Environment Impact Assessment report in relation thereto and if so, will he table copy thereof.

Reply: My Ministry is not in presence of any adverse Environmental Impact Assessment report regarding the Bagatelle Dam Project.

SRI LANKA - TAMILS - GOVERNMENT STAND

(No. B/148) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Tamils of Sri Lanka, he will state the position of Government on the sufferings thereof.

Reply: As the House is fully aware, Sri Lanka has been marked by a long and bitter civil war arising out of ethnic tensions between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamil minority in the northeast. After more than 25 years of violence, the conflict ended- at least militarily- in May 2009, when government forces seized the last area controlled by the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

I wish to emphasise that this Government has unwaveringly supported the legitimate cause of the Sri Lankan Tamil community, including its demand for non–discriminatory treatment.

Furthermore, throughout this conflict, the Government of Mauritius, in bilateral consultations with the Government of Sri Lanka and in relevant international fora, has consistently called on the Government of Sri Lanka to take immediate steps to address the core grievances of the Tamil population and engage in a genuine national reconciliation process.

It is to be noted that there have been international concerns about the fate of civilians who had been caught up in the conflict zone during the final stages of the civil war, the confinement of some 250,000 Tamil refugees to camps for months after the war and allegations that the government had ordered the execution of captured or surrendering rebels. In the absence of
measures by the Sri Lankan Government to credibly address those concerns, the UN Secretary General appointed in 2010 a panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka.

The panel's report, released on 12 April 2011, revealed a very different version of the final stages of the war than that maintained by the Government of Sri Lanka. The panel found credible allegations which, if proven, indicated that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed by the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE. The panel also found that as many as 40,000 civilians may have been killed in the final months of the civil war, most as a result of indiscriminate shelling by the Sri Lankan military. The panel called on the UN Secretary General to conduct an independent international investigation into the alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by both sides.

The Sri Lankan Government rejected the report, describing it as biased and conducted its own inquiry through the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) which began its work in August 2010. However, many international human rights groups stated that the said Commission did not meet international standards.

The Government of Mauritius has been closely following the situation in Sri Lanka and demonstrated its serious concerns on the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamil community in all relevant fora, in particular in the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In May 2009, Mauritius was one of the 17 countries which attempted to get the 11th Session of the Human Rights Council to investigate war crimes in Sri Lanka. These countries submitted a draft resolution that deplored abuses by both the Sri Lankan Government forces and the Tamil Tigers and urged the government to co-operate fully with humanitarian organisations and to provide protection to civilians and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The move was, however, thwarted after Sri Lanka received support from other Council Members.

More recently, at the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council in March 2012, Mauritius worked closely with the co-sponsors of a resolution which was adopted. The resolution urges the Sri Lankan Government to implement the recommendations from its own Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission and ensure justice, equity, accountability and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans. It also requests Sri Lanka to present, as expeditiously as possible, a comprehensive action plan detailing the steps that the Government has taken and will take on this matter.
Mauritius was commended for its principled stand on the issue by the international community, including international human rights organization such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Mauritius remains concerned that the Government of Sri Lanka has not fully addressed the grave accusations of serious violations concerning international humanitarian and human rights law, particularly against the Tamil community, that occurred toward the end of the conflict as raised by the UN Secretary General’s panel of experts on accountability in Sri Lanka. We will, therefore, continue to call for an independent and credible investigation into these allegations.

At the same time, Mauritius will continue to engage with Sri Lanka bilaterally and in all relevant fora and will urge that all Sri Lankan people, in particular the Sri Lankan Tamil community, be treated with dignity and respect as equals while allowing them to enjoy all fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Sri Lanka and international human rights law such that Sri Lanka wins the battle of peace.

CHOISY, BAIE DU CAP, ST MARTIN, BEL OMBRE & CHEMIN GRENIER - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/149) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, in the regions of Choisy, Baie du Cap, St Martin, Bel Ombre and Chemin Grenier, he will state if he has been informed that the inhabitants thereof are insufficiently supplied with water for domestic and personal use, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the piped water delivery is as sufficient as possible.

Reply: I am informed by the CWA, that except for Chemin Grenier where water supply is round the clock, the other regions are subject to water cuts following the closing down since January this year of one of the sources of supply namely the borehole at Valruche due to ingress of muddy water. The hours of supply are currently between -

- 4.00 a.m. - 9.00 a.m. and
- 4.00 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.

I am also informed that the water supply to houses located at the upper elevations is at a lower tap pressure.
To improve the situation, CWA is implementing a project to increase supply from La Foret river from 1500 m³ a day to 4000 m³ a day. Moreover, the problem at Valruche borehole is being investigated with a view to resuming supply therefrom.

HANDICAPPED PERSONS - ASSISTANCE

(No. B/150) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the mentally or physically severely handicapped persons, with multiple congenital or traumatic deformities, she will state the number of known cases thereof, indicating if she will consider removing the ceiling of Rs 250,000 provided as assistance annually.

Reply: At the very outset, I would like to inform the House that the income ceiling of Rs250,000 applies only to children with very severe disabilities having multiple congenital or traumatic deformities.

The number of known cases of children having such severe disabilities is 300.

I wish to point out that severely disabled children with multiple congenital or traumatic deformities are the only recipients of Social Aid who benefit from this special income ceiling which was raised in July 2006 from Rs150,000 to Rs250,000.

Regarding the removal of the income ceiling of Rs250,000, this implies a policy decision having major financial implications which need to be studied at the level of Government.

YOUTH CENTRES - USE - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/151) Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Youth Centres, he will state the eligibility criteria for the use thereof for the carrying out of activities by members of the public.

Reply: I have to inform the House that in line with the objectives of my Ministry, our Youth Centres are used for the organisation of a wide range of activities for the development of the youth population in general. These activities include training in various fields, talks, ‘animations sportives’, youth concerts and other leisure activities.

Apart from the activities organised by my Ministry, requests for use of Youth Centres are also received from other governmental and non-governmental organisations for the conduct of activities such as seminars and workshops for the benefit of the wider population. These requests are examined on a case to case basis and are entertained subject to the nature of the activities and availability of the centre.
PANCHAVATI, RIVIÈRE DU REMPART - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL

(No. B/152) Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to Panchavati, found in the district of Rivière du Rempart, he will -

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the social assistance brought to the needy people living thereat, if any, indicating the amount of money disbursed, since August 2011 to date, and

(b) state where matters stand regarding the setting up of a pre-primary school thereat.

Reply: I am informed by NEF that 38 families who are registered as vulnerable reside at Panchavati. With regard to social assistance brought to those families, I am informed that around Rs427,000 have been disbursed since 20 August 2011 as follows -

(i) five families have benefitted from Corrugated Iron Sheets (CIS) houses amounting to Rs343,122;
(ii) Rs51,196.92 to meet expenses in connection with meals, transport, school fees and accompagnement scolaire under the Pre primary school project of NEF, and
(iii) Rs32,434 was spent on school materials distributed to 4 pre-primary, 12 primary and 7 secondary school students.

With regard to part (b), I am informed by the Ministry of Environment that the setting up of a pre-primary school at Panchavati is included in the ECO Village Project in phases over a period of three years.

I also wish to inform the House that with a view to upgrading the living conditions of those families, NEF is undertaking infrastructural works to the tune of Rs19.5 m. involving drains. As at 10 May, 61% of the works have been completed.

RODRIGUES - POINTE MONNIER POWER STATION PROJECT - BIDDERS

(No. B/153) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Pointe Monnier Power Station project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to -
(a) the names of the bidders therefor, indicating the names of the successful bidder;
(b) the contractual value thereof;
(c) the expected completion date thereof, and
(d) if all the environmental issues in relation thereto are being closely monitored.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that by the closing date of the tender exercise four bids were received, namely, from -

(i) Consortium MAN/Sotravic,
(ii) Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor A/S;
(iii) Anglo Belgian Corporation, and
(iv) Finning (UK) Ltd.

Following the evaluation of the bids, the Central Procurement Board approved the award of the tender to Burmeister & Wain Scandinavian Contractor A/S for a contractual value amounting to EUR 8,995,679 and Rs122,786,378 (Approx. total in Mauritian rupees: 482,613,538.)

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that the expected completion date of the project is 23 December 2012.

As far as part (d) is concerned, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that it had obtained the EIA License for the project prior to the launching of the tender and that it is adhering to all the conditions mentioned therein.

I am further informed that after commissioning of the new engine, the Central Electricity Board will ensure close monitoring through an Environment Monitoring Plan to ascertain that all conditions under the EIA are complied with.

BEAU VALLON STADIUM - UPGRADING

(No. A/75) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Beau Vallon Stadium, in Constituency No.12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state if consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof into a synthetic one and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: It is not envisaged, for the time being, to upgrade the Beau Vallon football ground by providing it with a synthetic turfing in view of the high cost implications.
IMPASSE NICOLAS, ROCHE BOIS - REINSTATEMENT

(No. A/76) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Impasse Nicolas, at Quartier Shell, Roche Bois, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as if it is found in a bad state and that there is presence of wastes thereat and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the –

(a) reinstatement and tarring thereof;
(b) urgent removal of the wastes;
(c) provision of drains, and
(d) installation of street lanterns thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that following a site visit effected on 17 May 2012, it has been noted that Impasse Nicolas at Quartier Shell, Roche Bois is in a clean state and no accumulation of wastes has been found.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Impasse Nicolas is a private access and procedures to declare the access “public” have already been started and tarring of Impasse Nicolas will be considered only when it will be declared “public” and subject to availability of funds.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, a regular scavenging service is provided in the region every Monday and Thursday.

As regards part (c) of the question, the Council has informed that no problem of water accumulation/drainage has been noted in the region.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that there are already three street lanterns along the Impasse.

JEAN LEBRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - PHASE II CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/77) A. Mr Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Phase II of the construction project of the Jean Lebrun Government School, he will state the scope thereof, indicating where matters stand, including the expected date of completion thereof and the upgrading of the football ground thereof.
Reply: With a view to ensuring the smooth running of school activities while works are in progress, Phase II of the construction project at Jean Lebrun Government School has been divided into three phases - Phase II A, Phase IIB and Phase IIC.

The scope of works in regard to the three Phases are as follows -

Phase II A

(i) renovation of existing Classroom Block;
(ii) demolition of existing pre-primary Classroom Block and any other existing structure on site;
(iii) construction of a new 2 storey toilet block along with pump room and water tank and all related plumbing and sewerage works, and
(iv) demolition of watchman’s quarters and construction of a new store building.

Phase II B

(i) demolition of two existing Classroom Blocks, toilets, and other existing structure on site, and
(ii) construction 3 storey building consisting of classrooms, canteen, toilet complete with ancillaries like pump room, water tank, store, children’s playground, parking lot, new entry gate at the rear site, new boundary wall/retaining walls etc

Phase II C

(i) demolition of two existing Classroom Blocks, Corrugated Iron Sheet Shed and boundary wall, and
(ii) construction of two storey Administration Block, CIS shed and central courtyard complete with ancillaries like, covered and open parking at the front side, entry gate at the front side, new boundary wall, landscaping, painting of new boundary wall, pavement areas, site works etc.
As regards to Phase II A, works started in May 2011 and were completed in 09 December 2011.

For Phase II B, works which started in December 2011 are ongoing and are expected to be completed in September 2012. Building works are on schedule, while site works have been slightly delayed due to difficult site conditions and inclement weather.

For Phase II C, works would start after the completion of Phase IIB, and are expected to be completed in March 2013.

2. With regard to the upgrading of the football ground, I am informed by the National Development Unit of the Ministry Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping that the following works are involved:

(i) reconstruction of chainlink fencing over blockwall along 3 sides of pitch (total length 166m);
(ii) removal of existing topsoil, levelling of pitch, provision of new topsoil and turfing;
(iii) provision of french drain within pitch, and
(iv) associated works such as provision of gates, water point and new access.

These works started on 11 January 2011 and have been completed last year.

However, I am also informed by the National Development Unit that following requests from the local community, additional works such as the construction of two covered spectators’ stands with canopies, a footpath with drains and associated safety fencing have been included in the scope of works.

These additional works have extended the initial scope of the project and are expected to be completed by end of June 2012.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT - MUNICIPAL COUNCILORS

(No. A/79) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Councils, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, the list of the municipal councilors who have been disqualified as such, as a result of the coming into force of the new Local Government Act, indicating in each case, if the said councillor has resigned or been removed from office.

Reply: I am informed that no Municipal Councillor has been disqualified with the coming into force of the Local Government Act 2011.

CUREPIPE - INTRA-URBAN BUS SERVICE

(No. A/85) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the intra-urban bus service in Curepipe, along routes 44, 104, 114, 121, 128, 131 and 144, he will state if he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for an extension of the running hours thereof till 20.00 hours instead of 19.00 hours to assist the working public and students who turn up at Jan Palach North, after 7.00 p.m., and if so, when and if not, why not.

Reply: The service along routes 44, 104, 114, 121, 128, 131 and 144 are as follows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rte No.</th>
<th>No. of buses</th>
<th>Served by</th>
<th>Itinerary</th>
<th>First Bus</th>
<th>Last Bus</th>
<th>Released Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>UBS</td>
<td>Ian Palach to Bigara</td>
<td>06h30</td>
<td>19h45</td>
<td>10-15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individual Operator</td>
<td>Ian Palach to Icery</td>
<td>06h30</td>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>25 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individual Operator</td>
<td>Ian Palach to Cité Malherbes</td>
<td>06h25</td>
<td>19h05</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual Operator</td>
<td>Ian Palach to Camp Le Vieux Eau Coulee</td>
<td>06h10</td>
<td>19h00</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During checks carried out at Jan Palach on late hour service, it was observed that the passenger flow is very low along the routes mentioned above. All buses leaving Jan Palach Bus Stand had many vacant seats.

No request for extending the bus service has been received from travelling public.

However, the National Transport Authority intends to convene a meeting with all parties concerned to discuss whether the need for extension of services along the abovementioned routes are justified.

**EDGAR HUGHES STREET - DRAINS**

(No. A/86) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Edgar Hughes Street, from the Pope Hennessy Street, he will state if he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if consideration will be given for the installation of concrete slabs over the existing drains found thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that action has already been taken by it to cover the existing drains along Edgar Hugues Street from Pope Hennessy Street up to the James Burty David Gymnasium over a length of 280 metres.

I am further informed that these works will be undertaken as soon as the contract will be awarded to the successful bidder in one month time.

**GRANDE RIVIÈRE NOIRE - DRAINS**

(No. A/88) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to domestic wastes, he will state if he has been informed that the drains constructed in the region of Grande Rivière Noire, at Avenue Eucalyptus, in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, do not properly address the waste management problem thereat and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken to prevent threats to health and to the environment thereat.
Reply: I am informed by the Black River District Council that it has received complaints regarding wastes in the drain constructed along Avenue Eucalyptus, Grande Rivière Noire.

I am further informed that the drain has been constructed by the Council for the evacuation of surface run-off water in the area. However, it has been observed that there is infiltration of domestic wastewater into the network due to the inadequate and defective wastewater disposal system of individual houses in the vicinity.

I am advised that the Council intervenes on an ad-hoc basis by pumping out the used water but a permanent solution would be the provision of a sewerage system in the region or any other alternative deemed fit by the Wastewater Management Authority.

**ROSE BELLE - FIRE STATION - CONSTRUCTION**

(No. A/89) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a new Fire Station in Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to –

(a) the regions that will be covered and

(b) where matters stand, indicating if the approval of the Public Plans Committee has already been obtained therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Fire Services Department that the proposed construction of a new Fire Station at Rose Belle -

(a) will cover the following regions -

   (i) Rose Belle;
   (ii) Union Park;
   (iii) Nouvelle France (partly);
   (iv) New Grove;
   (v) Mare D’Albert;
   (vi) Plaine Magnien (partly);
   (vii) La Flora;
   (viii) Grand Bois;
   (ix) Bois Cheri;
   (x) Mare Tabac;
   (xi) Gros Billot;
Moreover, the proposed new Rose Belle Fire Station will provide assistance to Mahebourg Fire Station, St Aubin Fire Station, Curepipe Fire Station and Airports of Mauritius Limited, and the Project Plan Committee has already recommended the project in June 2010 and the Government has already approved the project. In fact, the project is the Programme Based Budget 2012 – 2014. The drawings have already been finalized and same would be submitted to the Building Plans Committee once all relevant clearances are obtained. Thereafter, bidding documents would be prepared.

**QUATRE BORNES MARKET - FOOD COURT - STALLS**

(No. A/90) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the food court to be set up in the vicinity of the market in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to if the stalls thereat have already been allocated and, if so, indicate the criteria used therefor and give a list of the beneficiaries thereof and, if not, indicate when same will be allocated.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that the stalls at the new food court at the Quatre Bornes Market have not yet been allocated.

I am informed that this exercise will be effected by calling expression of interest from residents of Quatre Bornes as provided under section 57 of the Local Government Act 2011 and after the Council would have finalized the number of stalls per activity, viz seller of fried noodles, cakes, briani, dholl puree, etc.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES – WIFI INTERNET SYSTEM**

(No. A/91) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the wifi internet connection, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of
Quatre Bornes, information as to where matters stand, indicating the regions which are presently covered therewith.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that it is providing a WIFI system within the Town Hall Yard since 18 July 2011.

With regard to the WIFI project to be implemented by ICTA within the Town Hall Yard in replacement of the existing one, I am informed that same is not live yet due to a technical problem to be sorted out between the contractor of ICTA and the Mauritius Telecom. However, the five network stations have already been installed at Sir James Burty David Municipal Complex, Sodnac since 13 April 2012.