



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2010**

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*Members**Members***THE CABINET****(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>

Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 15 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 16 November 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Bank of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2010.
- (b) The Digest of Productivity and Competitiveness Statistics – 2009.
- (c) The Annual Report and Audited Statement of Accounts of the Employees Welfare Fund (EWF) for the years 2004-2005/2005-2006 (In Original).

B. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reforms Institutions –

The Report of the Director of Audit of the Non-Governmental Organisations Trust Fund for the year 2009/2010 (In Original).

C. Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection –

The Annual Report 2008/2009 of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
SALARY COMPENSATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the payment of compensation to employees of the public and private sectors, old-age pensioners and social aid recipients, he will state if –

- (a) the Discussion Paper circulated by his Ministry last week has been withdrawn;
- (b) the compensation will be paid to all of them, as from 01 January 2011; and
- (c) a Tripartite Committee has now been set up to look thereinto and if so, if consideration will be given to –
 - (i) the rate of inflation and compensation paid, since 2005; and
 - (ii) reviewing the thresholds.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate what I stated while answering the PNQ last week. First, this Government is committed to dialogue and believes in tripartism as a basis to ensure a fair distribution of income and provide workers the best compensation the country can afford whilst creating the conditions to generate the growth required to support employment creation and an increase in purchasing power.

It is our commitment that this process has been behind our proposals to set up the National Tripartite Forum. Furthermore, it is with both the current difficult situation in mind and looking to the future that we formulated a proposal that would have best protected workers purchasing power.

In line with established practice on dialogue, the Discussion Paper was a submission by Government to seek the views of social partners on the best way of approaching this issue at a time of worldwide economic turmoil. The paper proposed a possible mechanism to protect workers whilst ensuring competitiveness and job creation.

After taking cognizance of the views expressed by the Trade Unions and the Private Sector on the Discussion Paper, Government has evolved on its proposals. I am glad to report that the mechanism now proposed by Government has been accepted by all parties.

As is well known, we are a caring Government that strongly believes that the gains from growth need to be fairly distributed and most importantly, workers' interests need to be protected but in a responsible manner.

That is why we had made a proposal that would have ensured that Public Officers would have received the PRB every two years instead of every five years. Moreover, we envisaged that under the mechanism we were proposing the PRB could have been advanced by one year to January 2012. But I must say we are puzzled why Trade Unionists representing Public Officers have rejected this proposal.

Our proposals, however, must be seen in a wider context of commitment to tripartism as a means of ensuring the welfare of workers whilst maintaining the competitiveness of enterprises.

This is why we have disbanded the National Pay Council and replaced it by a National Tripartite Forum (NTF).

As I explained last week, the NTF is about much more than compensation only. It will be a permanent forum for discussions amongst the social partners with a view to better understanding and responding to the challenges that face the country. The NTF Technical Committee on Compensation is only one of the several sub-committees to examine and make proposals on a wide range of issues of concern to workers and employees.

It is in this context, Mr Speaker, Sir, that one should view our proposals for the operation of the Technical Committee on Compensation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposals made by Government aimed at finding the right mechanism to provide workers the best possible compensation that could be afforded in these difficult times when many countries are cutting pay, reducing pensions and even firing not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector.

Concerning part (b), it is up to the Technical Committee to make recommendations on the amount and the timing for compensation. The process and the agenda for the Technical Committee have been agreed by all parties.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has no difficulty whatsoever in supporting compensation from 01 January 2011.

Regarding part (c), the National Tripartite Forum has already been set up. It is the vehicle for dialogue both on the mechanism and to determine compensation as well as discuss

other matters relevant to the welfare of workers and issues of concern to employers. Now that the mechanism for salary compensation is agreed upon, we look forward to the deliberations.

Regarding the issues mentioned in part (c) (i) and (ii), these will be looked at by the Technical Committee. However, all parties have agreed that “salary compensation will apply for financial year starting 01 January 2011 taking into account the movement of the price index in financial year 2010 and prevailing economic factors.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards old age pensioners and social aid recipients, as I explained last week, their compensation is a matter of Government social protection policy to be announced in the Budget. I would ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be patient for a few more days until Friday.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is committed to support households and income-earners to ensure that there is improvement in their living conditions and I explained last week the measures we have already taken in this regard.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened to the hon. Minister of Finance and I understand why he could not bring himself to say that the so-called Discussion Paper has been withdrawn, but the facts that he put forward show clearly that that Discussion Paper has been withdrawn. But I note that he says that it is Government that came forward with this so-called Discussion Paper. Can I ask him whether that Discussion Paper, which went to the roots of tripartism, was approved by Cabinet or, at least, by the Prime Minister?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has not withdrawn any paper whatsoever. Government had made an initial proposal and, as I have stated in my reply, views of the trade unions, the confederations had been sought, they made representations. In the light of those representations, Government has amended this Paper and I am happy that we have come to a conclusion. There has been consensus and the Committee, therefore, is going to meet.

Secondly, we work as a Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this matter of setting-up the National Tripartite Forum is, first of all, in our Programme and, as everybody can see, we have moved on that. We are honouring one of our engagements that we have taken with the population, especially with workers and employers, that we would come up with this Forum and this Government has taken the decision, therefore, to move forward.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question was whether the Discussion Paper had been approved by either Cabinet or by the Prime Minister, in particular, the two main

components thereof. One, that the private and public sectors should be delinked and that there should be no wage compensation in the private sector as from 01 January 2011. Can I repeat again: was that approved by Cabinet or by the Prime Minister?

Mr Jugnauth: I am surprised that the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not understand my answer. I have said: Government.

(Interruptions)

Pas comprend! Don't understand English!

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: I have answered. I have said: Government came with the proposal to set up the National Tripartite Forum.

(Interruptions)

If he does not understand, what can I say?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Resign!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! There is no need to get excited. Please!

Mr Bérenger: The Minister of Finance should have resigned! Instead of that, he is arrogant! Can I know whether that Discussion Paper was prepared by officials of the Ministry of Finance or by politically appointed advisers?

Mr Jugnauth: That Discussion Paper was submitted to the trade unionists on behalf of Government.

Mr Bérenger: *Pas capav répond!* Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, when it was proposed in that Discussion Paper that there would be no compensation as from 01 January 2011, can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance why he has deemed it fit to be *plus royaliste que le roi*? The Mauritius Employees' Federation (MEF) has declared that it is prepared to consider wage compensation in the private sector. Why did he have to be *plus royaliste que le roi*?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is nowhere in the paper mentioning that no compensation will be given as from January 2011.

Mr Bérenger: Shame on you! Shame on you!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: There is nowhere...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I am not in presence of the document and, therefore, I cannot say who is saying what is said. I have to accept the answer that has been given by the hon. Minister.

Mr Jugnauth: As I have stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, this was a proposal. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has been a trade unionist before. He should know that when a proposal is made to the trade unionists and to the employers, it is subject to negotiation, it is subject to discussion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Can I request Members to please keep quiet?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not finished with my answer.

Mr Speaker: The Minister can go ahead.

Mr Jugnauth: This is subject to discussion and negotiation. This is what has taken place. We have had the views - although they were strong views, fair enough - but they were views of the trade unionists, they were views also of the representatives of the employers. Government had a look at all these views and that is the spirit of negotiations. We don't come with a paper and we say this is the proposal and that's it, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been doing in the past when ...

(Interruptions)

It is good to remind, and I will remind him ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: ... because I know his memory is failing him. If he can remember once upon a time when he was discussing with the trade unionists, he came with eight per cent and he said eight per cent and the final was eight per cent.

Is that the spirit of negotiation?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, a Minister of Finance is coming to the House and saying that nowhere in that so-called Discussion Paper it is said that in the private sector the wage compensation would not begin on 01 January 2011. Can I quote Paragraph 8? Paragraph 8 says

“Moreover two effective dates are proposed for compensation: 01 January for the public sector and 01 July for the private sector...”

And he goes on and on! Shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I will have to interpret the answer. Now that I have heard this, it is a proposal that was made by...

(Interruptions)

I have caught the word. It is a proposal. Now can the hon. Leader of the Opposition phrase his question on that?

Mr Bérenger: He has said that this proposal is nowhere to be found in the paper. This is a lie and he should resign on that.

(Interruptions)

Resign, if he has any pride!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: He is lying, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you should withdraw what you have said. It is unparliamentary to say that he is lying. You must withdraw that, please.

(Interruptions)

You should withdraw what you have said.

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw, but he is not saying the truth.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Time is running out! The Leader of the Opposition should put his questions and let the Minister answer.

Mr Bérenger: I have put my question and I am adding that not only is it *noir sur blanc* that there will be no wage compensation in the private sector, but then he goes on to justify and he even said –

“Thus there is no material time to set up a system and to begin the discussions and eventual negotiations for an agreement by January for the private sector.”

Shame on you!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! I am asking Members to understand my position and let the Minister answer. There is no need to make remarks that are provocative, please!

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is wrong again because, as I said, the purpose of this paper was to set up the mechanism to allow a system to be put in place whereby trade unions would be represented, the private sector would be represented and, as a result of that mechanism, then discussions would start and then we would know in terms of what kind of compensation to be paid, where is the starting period for the compensation and all that. So, that's why I said last week, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the hon. Leader of the Opposition was *mettre la charrue devant les boeufs*. He was jumping the gun because, first of all, we need a mechanism to be put into place and then discussions will take place on salary compensation.

Mr Bérenger: It is still not clear exactly what forms the tripartite subcommittee, that is going to examine the wage compensation and other matters, is going to take. Can we have some more precision? Can we know when that subcommittee is going to meet, who is going to chair that subcommittee? Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance whether he is prepared to lay as evidence before that subcommittee his speech of 07 December here, in this House, which is in Hansard, where he had calculated that there had been a loss of purchasing power of 17% that needed to be *rattraper*?

Mr Jugnauth: With regard as to when the committee is going to be set up, I must say that the Technical Committee, has already been set up and with the agreement of the representatives of the trade unionists and the employers, this committee is going to meet this afternoon.

With regard to laying it on the Table, everybody can take judicial notice. I can lay it on the Table. It takes me some time to get it from the Library; I'll lay it on the Table of the Assembly for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to have a look at it.

Mr Bérenger: He did not understand what I said.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister of Finance inform the House whether he can give us an estimate of the cost of 1% increase in salary to the Government and to the private sector and what percentage of GDP will that represent to the economy given that the ERCP, which he has presented lately, is going to cost 4% of GDP to the economy.

Mr Jugnauth: This is a technical question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I need advance notice of that question to be able to furnish the information.

Mr Ganoo: In view of this unprecedented situation that we are i.e. three days away from the Budget and the Tripartite Committee has not met - no committee, no forum has met as yet - doesn't the hon. Minister think that since the Minister of Finance who is usually the lead Minister in that type of exercise and now that his Ministry has been snubbed by the Minister of Labour - *un désaveu* - he has been forced to withdraw this Discussion Paper, can we ask the hon. Minister of Finance...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: May I remind hon. Members that they cannot make comments when putting questions?

Mr Ganoo: Can we ask the hon. Minister of Finance then what guarantee does he give to the House once again that Government will not unilaterally impose any decision in terms of quantum of compensation on the trade unions?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been no snubbing; there has been no withdrawal of any document. He doesn't understand, I must explain again.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said that there is no need to use provocative language. Could the Minister please state his position and explain what he has to explain?

Mr Jugnauth: The initial proposal has been subject to discussions and I am happy that there has been consensus on that. I have forgotten about the second part of the question.

Mr Speaker: Guarantee that Government is not going to impose...

Mr Jugnauth: I say it, Mr Speaker, Sir. This Government is going to take its responsibility. I have said this Government is a caring Government and, as I have stated in my answer, we are going to look at the interest of the workers, bearing in mind, of course, the prevailing economic situation.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, pendant la campagne électorale et ici, au Parlement, le ministre se faisait le grand défenseur des travailleurs. Maintenant on entend le langage d'un patron, on sait!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Soodhun! I am taking care of what the hon. Member has said, there is no need for you to do that. The Member can put his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Il utilise le langage du patronat.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, I don't agree.

(Interruptions)

I am in the Chair. I am asking the hon. Member to put his question. Please, help the Chair and put the question!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree that he has been called off by the trade unions.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Would the hon. Minister agree that he has been called off by the trade unions and he has played a foul game with them?

Mr Jugnauth: No, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two questions, with your permission, instead of one. Will the hon. Minister of Finance - Budget day is Friday, in three days - give the trade unions the guarantee that wage compensation will be thrashed out before presentation of Budget?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already answered. There has been consensus on the agenda and the process. There is a Technical Committee that is meeting this afternoon, and, of course, in the light of this - it is already envisaged that there is going to be a report of that Technical Committee to both myself and my colleague, the Minister of Labour - the process will continue until we come to a finality.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is *sans précédent*. Never has something like that happened. As a result of this *volte-face sans précédent*, we are left with the Minister of Finance that has no credibility left and yet Friday is Budget day. Will he resign before Friday?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition was heard in full silence. It is the right of the Minister of Finance to be heard in full silence, please.

Mr Jugnauth: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only time that will tell who has lost credibility.

(Interruptions)

This Government and myself will be judged, of course, in due course, but let me again remind....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Aimée, I can't hear the Minister of Finance. If you have to talk to your friend at the back, could you please go out?

Mr Jugnauth: I thought that, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking a PNQ on salary compensation again, he would have, at least, the decency to come today and correct *cette grossièreté qu'il a pondue dans la Chambre la semaine dernière*, that he has failed in the past, for three years, to preside over the Tripartite Committee, *pour faire face aux syndicats. Il a pondu une énormité, il n'est même pas venu aujourd'hui* - the hon. Leader of the Opposition had the chance to correct himself. He wants credibility. What credibility does he have?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Time is over now! Quiet! Quiet, please!

(Interruptions)

Quiet, please! Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Please, I must be heard! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, I do not want to qualify your behaviour in this House. Please, keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

Enough, enough! Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. 1B/596 and 1B/597 have been withdrawn and

Parliamentary Question No.1B/635 will be answered by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. Hon. Lesjongard!

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT - PROMULGATION

(No. 1B/588) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Equal Opportunities Act, passed by the National Assembly on 16 December 2008, he will state when it will be promulgated, indicating the reasons for the delay therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Equal Opportunities Act of 2008 provides for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Division as a Division of the National Human Rights Commission; and an Equal Opportunities Tribunal.

At the time the Equal Opportunities Act was passed it was intended to have the Equal Opportunities Division as one of the four Divisions of a restructured National Human Rights Commission; the other Divisions being the Human Rights Division, the Police Complaints Division and the National Preventive Division. The intent was to have an umbrella organisation having supervision over the administrative functions of the other four Divisions.

It is in this spirit that Section 27 of the Equal Opportunities Act provides that the Equal Opportunities Division shall be composed of the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission at its Head and the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission as the second person; and any such other members as may be assigned to it by the Chairperson.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Office has been working closely with the Attorney General's Office on the new legal, institutional and administrative structure of the National Human Rights Commission in order to give effect to the provisions of the Equal Opportunities Act. In the process, difficulties and complexities have arisen.

In fact, during this process, it has been realised that within such a functional framework one of the principal objects of the Equal Opportunities Act, that is to work towards the elimination of the discrimination, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status, as mentioned at Section 27(2)(a) of the Act, might not be attained fully.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have come to the conclusion, that in a society as diverse as ours with the wide spectrum that the Act will cover specially as it will apply to both the public and private sectors and is expected to influence the emergence of a new behavioural pattern in our society where every citizen will have the same opportunities, it would be inappropriate to have it under an umbrella organisation. Rather, it is felt, it should, given its importance, stand on its own, and undiluted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after lengthy discussions with all those concerned, Government has now decided to create a fully fledged, independent and dedicated Equal Opportunities Commission separate from the new restructured National Human Rights Commission.

I would like to reiterate my determination to ensure that every single citizen of this country has an equal opportunity to live up to his or her potential.

The amendments to the Equal Opportunities Act are being finalised and will be introduced in the National Assembly at an early opportunity.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer and I concur with what he has stated, but can he confirm to the House the statement made by the former Attorney General that there is a strong lobby within Government against the proclamation of this piece of legislation?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. The former Attorney General is no longer a Member of the House. Whatever comment he has made cannot be raised in the House or bind the Government.

Mr Lesjongard: Without reference being made to the former Attorney General, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there is a strong lobby within Government, preventing the proclamation of this piece of legislation?

The Prime Minister: To tell the hon. Member, I am not aware of this declaration by the former Attorney General, but I can assure him that never in my life, has any lobby managed to make me do something that I don't want to. We have passed the legislation and it is going to take effect. I have explained the difficulty. There is not just this difficulty. There are other difficulties. For example, I can tell the House that in one of the divisions, the National Preventive Division, there are also difficulties there because the UNDP feels we should involve more the NGOs in that. That also will have to be looked at.

Mr Bérenger: It is already two years ago that we were called upon in this House to approve the Equal Opportunities Act. Will the hon. Prime Minister remember that we, in the Opposition, made that point, that is, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Human Rights Commission should not be mixed up one with the other? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why has it taken two years to come to the conclusion that we had reached two years ago?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we said two years, but the Act was passed on 16 December 2008. Mr Speaker, Sir, and that is why I have said we have looked at all these aspects including what the Opposition has said. We have looked at it again. We have looked at certain difficulties that have cropped up and I have explained why we have decided to bring these amendments and not just on this, but also on the National Preventive Division. We will probably have to do it differently and, also we are restructuring the National Human Rights Commission itself.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the answer of the hon. Prime Minister. Would the hon. Prime Minister agree that one of the reasons is, as was stated by hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing in this House on 13 July, and I quote from Hansard -

‘The reason is that when you are talking about equal opportunity you must find that rare bird who does not have one iota of prejudice. You must find that rare bird (...). How many Mauritians can we count on?’

Does the hon. Prime Minister agree that in this country we don’t have so many Mauritians that don’t have one iota of prejudice as the learned hon. Ms Deerpalsing stated?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I also stated that at the beginning we found difficulty as to whether we should relook at the package also. We have to look at that also.

Mr Lesjongard: Can we expect that, before the end of this year, we’ll have the amendments brought to this House?

The Prime Minister: As I said, shortly, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is my hope that this would be the case, but provided we finish the work.

Mr Speaker: Last question from hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Now that we know from the hon. Prime Minister that there will be a different commission for the Equal Opportunity Act and that the Human Rights Commission will

stay as it is, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to take the appropriate step to ensure that the vacancies, which exist in the Board at the Human Rights Commission, be filled so that the Human Rights Commission, at least, can start to function properly?

Mr Speaker: The question does not arise from this one.

RODRIGUES – HIGH WAVES - 26 OCTOBER 2010

(No. 1B/589) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the unusually high waves which struck Rodrigues, mainly at the St Francois, Gravier and Mourouk beaches, during the night of Monday 25 October 2010 and early morning of Tuesday 26 October 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information -

- (a) from the Meteorological Services, as to the causes thereof, indicating if any;
 - (i) tsunami bulletin was issued from any international meteorological service in relation thereto and;
 - (ii) decision was taken in response thereof, and
- (b) as to the extent of the damages caused.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director of the Meteorological Services that the unusually high waves which struck Rodrigues in the early morning of Tuesday 26 October 2010 were the combined effects of an anticyclone and the high tides which coincided with the low magnitude tsunami waves generated in the wake of the earthquake off the coast of Indonesia on 25 October 2010 at 18.42 hrs local time.

Regarding part (a)(i) of the question, I am informed by the Director of the Meteorological Services that, in accordance with existing arrangements, the Mauritius Meteorological Department receives tsunami advisories from the Pacific Tsunami warning centre in Hawaii and the Japan Meteorological agency.

Following the occurrence of the earthquake on 25 October 2010 near Indonesia, both Centres issued a Local Tsunami Watch Bulletin at 1849 hrs and 1901 hrs local time respectively. The Local Tsunami Watch Bulletin is issued by the two bodies when they consider that the

occurrence of an earthquake can give rise to a tsunami only in the region where the earthquake has occurred up to a distance of not more than 100 km from the epicentre.

On 25 October 2010, at 2057 hrs local time, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre issued another Local Tsunami Watch Bulletin indicating that the threat of a tsunami had diminished and was over for most areas. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre then cancelled the bulletin it had issued earlier.

For its part, the Japan Meteorological Agency maintained in its subsequent bulletins the information contained in its first bulletin that only a local tsunami had been generated.

In regard to part a (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Director of the Meteorological Services that, on the basis of the advisories received from both the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and the Japan Meteorological Agency, no tsunami warning was issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services in the night of 25 October 2010.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Chief Commissioner, Rodrigues, that 14 boats suffered minor damages in the regions of Gravieres and Saint François.

I wish also to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a Disaster Management Centre has now been set up under the aegis of the Commissioner of Police. One of the main functions of the Centre will be to disseminate information and to advise the public on the precautions that need to be taken in the event of a likelihood of a natural disaster. Following my official visit to France, in September last, the French Government has agreed to provide assistance for the effective operation of the Centre. Also, during my visit to the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore in September last, I visited the Earth Observatory of Singapore which comprises the Faculty for Catastrophe Risk Management. After discussions, I invited the Director to undertake a complete risk assessment for Mauritius and Rodrigues in the event of a tsunami. The Director has responded positively to my request and contacts have already been established with the Mauritius Oceanography Institute for appropriate follow-up action.

In the light of the events of 25 October last, the Meteorological Services have been instructed to bring to the attention of the Disaster Management Centre any advisories received from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre and the Japan Meteorological Agency, even if such advisories only refer to the occurrence of a local tsunami.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has looked into the issue and whether he will agree with me that our meteorological services has lost a lot of credibility in that affair? For days they went on, they were adamant that the high waves in Mauritius and Rodrigues had absolutely nothing to do with the tsunami in Indonesia. At the same time, all around us including Réunion Island, everybody, of course knew that this was not the case and then they had to admit it was a mixture of the tsunami and meteorological conditions. Does he agree that this is bad for the credibility of our meteorological services and has he looked into it?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I have looked into it and I can also say that the acting Prime Minister immediately chaired a meeting on that. They did issue warning about rough seas and possibilities of slightly high waves than normal, but they say that since the two foreign agencies did not issue an ocean wide tsunami warning for the Indian Ocean, but only a local watch tsunami bulletin which does not affect more than 100 kms from the epicentre of the earthquake that is why they did not. They also told me that in Réunion island the bulletin which was issued at around mid-day, that is, after the events of 26 October, the waves had already occurred during the morning of that day. He indicated to me that, after 1200 hrs, at the météo France Réunion bulletin, he personally called the Director of météo for Réunion in the afternoon of the 26 to query about the bulletin, whereby mention was made of a tsunami threat. He added that, afterwards, around 1400hrs, météo Réunion amended its bulletin issued earlier, and no mention of a tsunami threat was made therein, and that is what he went upon.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister got me wrong. I am not saying that they lost their credibility because they did not issue tsunami warning. That is not the point. The point is that for days they went on saying that the high waves had nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with the tsunami and, finally, they agreed. They said it is explained by both the tsunami and meteorological conditions. They admitted that they had to withdraw their statement.

The Prime Minister: My understanding is they maintained it for about one day because they wanted to fully enquire whether it was just because of the high tides which coincided with the low magnitude of the tsunami waves and that is why they maintained it. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of what has happened now, I have told them that if they get these advisories from the pacific tsunami warning centre and the Japan metrological agency, they

should still refer the occurrence of that to the Disaster Management Centre even if it says that the concern is about local tsunami and will not affect us. They still have to pass this message on.

Mr François: Along the same line, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the report it says clearly that the advice is for Government at local level to take decisions and in the evaluation it clearly stated that areas away from the epicentre will be struck by continuous coastal waves and this is what happened to Rodrigues at around one o'clock in the morning. My question is: why was there no communiqué? We did not want any tsunami communiqué, but why was there no communiqué saying to the local people to take as measures of precaution and safety that there will be high waves that will strike the coastal region of Rodrigues because the tsunami watch from Japan or from the Pacific Centre issued bulletin as from 18.49hrs local time on the 25th? It was clearly said for all regions of the Indian Ocean.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this contradicts of what I have heard today. They say, for example, that since Saturday, 23 October, weather bulletin issued by the Mauritius meteorological services especially for fishermen in Rodrigues, highlighted the fact that seas would be rough and the public were advised not to venture at sea. The weather bulletin for Rodrigues issued on Sunday 24 October and Monday 25 October also mentioned the strong winds to the order of 80 kms/hr could be registered and that seas would be very rough. So, they did give an indication of that.

Mr Leopold: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that now Rodrigues is frequently being hit by earthquakes and being given further that this concerned event occurred very late at night in October, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister what concrete measures or mechanisms are being put forward to, at least, make the local people, and particularly fishers, aware to prevent reoccurrence of same in the future?

The Prime Minister: I have already indicated what measures we are taking including tsunami alert and system to tell us that there might be tsunamis in the area. We are, in fact, getting assistance from other countries on this. This is what we can do, Mr Speaker, Sir. I listened to the bulletins that we get from outside. If you remember the big tsunami that came from Indonesia a long time back, even CNN got it wrong. CNN said, in its bulletin, that the waves are coming to Mauritius – it mentions Mauritius by name – that was also untrue. So, it is

very difficult to be absolutely clear on the prediction, but what we can do is to put all the preventive measures that we can in the area.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned the Pacific Tsunami Warning System and the Japan Met Agency. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there have been serious criticisms on the part of experts to the effect that even these two agencies are no more hundred per cent reliable and even the Met Services of Reunion Island has stated that they will not rely on these two agencies? Because, with the course of time, since 2004 that the systems have been set up, several defects have arisen in the system and many alerts should have been emitted, but were not done because of the failure to maintain the equipment because of the costs so much so that, at the end of the day, these two systems have now turned out to be not hundred per cent reliable!

The Prime Minister: As to what I am saying, it is absolutely very difficult to predict. I should also have added that in spite of all this, I have asked an international expert to have a look as to whether we could have done more, but it does not appear that we could do that.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS - LIVE BROADCAST

(No. 1B/590) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House on radio and television, he will state when he proposes to introduce the motion in the House for the setting up of a Select Committee to look thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated in my reply to PQ No. 1B/1 in June last year, I intend to present the motion for the setting up of a Select Committee in the current session of the Assembly after consultations on the matter.

As the House is aware, a motion to that effect was, in fact, circulated in the Assembly on 21 November 2009 and appeared on the Order Paper of 15 December 2009; unfortunately, it could not be taken on that day, as the hon. Member probably remembers, due to the demise of Dr. the hon. James Burty David.

I wish to restate the fact that I am all in favour of the idea of live broadcasting of the proceedings of the National Assembly and I shall accordingly present a motion anew to the House.

Mr Bhagwan: It is now six months since the last PQ, and this has been discussed for so many years. Can we have a time frame by the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: In fact, for decades I have been asking for this myself, when I was the Leader of the Opposition, if you remember. Governments have priorities and we are looking at it. If we have time, I will like to bring it, because we have the Budget on Friday, we have debates. I hope Members will curtail the debates so that we can move on to other things.

MBC - MRS P. P. - DIRECTOR OF RADIO

(No. IB/591) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to whether, in regard to Mrs P. P., Director of Radio at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if she has been asked to go on early retirement and if so, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, after a series of warnings and cautions and unsatisfactory replies, the Board of the Corporation on 28 October 2010, invited Mrs P.P., Director of Radio of the Corporation, to retire voluntarily from the services of the Corporation.

As Mrs P.P. was not agreeable to the terms proposed for her voluntary retirement, she was notified on 03 November 2010 of the grounds on which her retirement in the interest of the Corporation was being contemplated and was requested to submit her reply by 11 November 2010.

On 12 November 2010, the Board took note of her reply and considered it to be unsatisfactory.

Accordingly, the Board decided that she be retired in the interest of the Corporation.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister about her years of service?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I can give you the reply. I think she has been there for a very long time. On 01 April 1989, she was a producer, on 18 August 2000, she was made a senior producer, on 19 January 2001, she was assigned duties of the Head of radio (general) and on 25 October 2005, she was made Director of radio. She was also employed as a freelance from 1977 to 1986 and from 1988 to 1989.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the Prime Minister been drawn to the fact that *si vous n'êtes pas dans les bons papiers du Directeur général, vous êtes mis à l'écart de la MBC/TV ?*

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know the lady also, I must say, and I looked at the matter. There are certain things there which obviously made them issue her warnings and she was cautioned at one time and reinstated. I don't want to go into the details, but it appears that they are not satisfied. Certain programmes were missed and there were things that have reached a point. She was invited, in fact, to submit proposals for certain things which she has not done also and there is a series of things that has led to this.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether it has been brought to his attention that it is claimed that the regulations which are being used by the MBC to make her retire do not apply at all, are not relevant and that the MBC is going against the advice of its own legal adviser?

The Prime Minister: I must say that I checked that, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am told by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that they are following strictly the advice of the legal adviser and they have proceeded accordingly. In any case, clearly she will have recourse to the courts if she wants to.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned a series of complaints and warnings against that lady. Can we know whether these complaints and warnings are very recent or are they spread over years of service at the MBC?

The Prime Minister: It appears there was one on 07 August 2008 when there was an accident. In fact, a Member of the Opposition asked the question and I answered it. I did not go into the details, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I would rather not. It appears there was a warning, but she was not suspended and there were different ones again, as I said, starting from what I see on 03

June 2010. I really don't want to go into the details, because I don't think I should. If she has a court case, she will have to go through the whole procedure.

Mr Ganoo: Is not it a principle of our labour law that when an employee is asked to retire or is dismissed for misconduct...

Mr Speaker: ...be asked to give a legal advice or opinion. Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member cannot ask the Prime Minister.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Prime Minister say whether, when she was suspended for the first time, a few months ago, and reintegrated afterwards, this lady suffered a lot of harassment from the part of top management at the MBC? In fact, she is being made to retire; she is being dismissed now for reasons which have nothing to do with her unsatisfactory performance, but just because top management wanted to get rid of her, that's all!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to avoid going into the details, but I don't think that falsification of attendance is something that they have cooked up, failure to passing on a commercial break - I am reading from what I have in front of me - in a religious programme, putting advertisement that is really offending. She received, in fact, several complaints from the public, but she failed to apologise, that's why she was cautioned, she was reinstated while an inquiry was going on.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been made aware that the Director-General of the MBC/TV has tailor-made somebody to replace that lady and that person is within the MBC? Would the hon. Prime Minister see to it that this job be advertised now that this lady *a été mise à la porte*?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of anybody who has been chosen for her replacement. As I said, I don't want to go into the details, because there might well be a court case. I will let the court decide.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, we all pay Rs100 at the MBC/TV and we pay the salary of the Director General as well. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, the country and

the nation whether the Director-General of the MBC/TV uses his proximity with the Prime Minister to harass people at the MBC/TV?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Not allowed! Next question, hon. Ms Anquetil!

MBC – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES

(No. 1B/592) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the use of sign languages, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if the Corporation will consider introducing sign language interpreter services during news on television and local emergency broadcast, such as cyclone warnings.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, for the past three years, the Corporation has already introduced, on a weekly basis, a pre-recorded ten-minute television news programme with the help of a Mauritius Sign Language Team. The programme is broadcast on Saturday at 1925 hrs on MBC 2, with a repeat on Sunday after the midday news on MBC 1.

I am further informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the provision of sign language interpreter services for the daily TV news bulletin will require additional human and technical resources. The modalities for the provision of such services are under study. However, the Director-General has indicated that the Corporation intends to continue the promotion of sign language interpreter services and will, in the first instance, provide sign language interpreter services for cyclone bulletins.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been provided by the MBC or whether he has looked at it and asked how many *malentendants* are concerned? In Mauritius, how many such *malentendants* need that kind of service?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the exact figure with me, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(PQ No. 1B/593 – See Written Answers to Questions)

POLICE OFFICERS – MOTOR BIKES – DUTY FREE FACILITIES

(No. 1B/594) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he is aware of the difficulties encountered by some members of the Police Force to commute between their respective home and place of work, outside normal working hours and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, recommend to the Commissioner of Police, to make provision for the extension to these officers of duty free facilities for the purchase of motor bikes.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Government Programme 2005-2010, it was announced that a Special Transport Scheme would be implemented to enable police officers to return home after night duty. The scheme was introduced in February 2008. In line with this scheme, the Police Transport Guard Room organises and dispatches four buses daily all over the island to transport police officers working on night shifts and residing outside the region covered by the Division where they are posted. At divisional level, each of the seven Divisions has been provided with one 26-seater minibus, which is used for the transportation of police officers working on night shifts and residing in areas covered by the Division where they are posted.

In addition, since February this year, the scheme has been extended to police officers residing in areas where they encounter transport problems to proceed to their place of work for the first shift duty, which starts at 0630 hrs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, presently, police officers are entitled to loan facilities for the purchase, without any duty remission, of an auto cycle or motorcycle with an engine capacity of up to 150 cc. A total of 1,250 police officers have taken advantage of the loan facilities to purchase a motorcycle.

I am informed that the proposal to extend duty free facilities for the purchase of a motorcycle to police officers was submitted to the Pay Research Bureau, which is the authority which is responsible for the review of the conditions of service for all civil servants, in the consultations for preparation of its 2008 report. The proposal was, however, not retained.

The Commissioner of Police will make fresh proposals to the Pay Research Bureau during consultations for the preparation of its next report.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the first shift in Police stations starts at 06.15 in the morning, at a time where even buses in psome areas are not running, and that the transport service of the Police collecting a Policeman at 2200 hours in the evening leaves that policeman in the vicinity of his house or in his town at about two hours later, which is a bit too much for somebody to travel? There would be quite a saving in cash in those transport facilities if such facilities were to be afforded.

The Prime Minister: As far as I know, the shift system starts at 06.30 a.m. But, maybe, they have to leave home a bit earlier. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, since February of this year, this scheme has been extended to Police officers residing in areas where they encounter transport problems for the first shift duty, and that is being provided. I think I have mentioned earlier on that they are also being provided with transport at night. Probably the hon. Member is right in saying that they can't actually leave them at the spot where they live. Maybe there is a difficulty in that.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. Hon. Ramano!

VICTORIA HOSPITAL – RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

(No. 1B/599) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the construction of religious structures which have been left in a derelict state in the premises of the Victoria Hospital, she will state if her Ministry now proposes to take a stand as to the fate thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry had already taken the decision to refurbish and make use of the two uncompleted buildings on the premises of the Victoria Hospital since July 2010. The one situated opposite the Skin Unit will accommodate a store for the Medical Records Section, and the other one near the Radiotherapy Unit will be used by the Family Planning services.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has been requested, since 14 September 2010, to assess the existing infrastructure.

TOURISTS - ARRIVALS

(No. 1B/600) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to visitors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to the -

- (a) number of arrivals in the category of -
 - (i) consultants
 - (ii) businessmen
 - (iii) travellers in transit
 - (iv) holidaymakers, and
 - (v) Mauritians holders of a foreign passport, indicating, in each case, the number thereof, who, during their stay reside at -
 - (i) the place of Mauritian residents
 - (ii) residences
 - (iii) guest houses
 - (iv) *table d'hôtes*, and
 - (v) hotels indicating the average duration of stay, and
- (b) forecasts of arrivals over the next six months

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that, according to our official tourism statistics, from January this year up to September, 646,656 visitors, categorised by purpose of visit, travelled to Mauritius, as follows -

- (i) Business - 23,680
- (ii) Transit - 4,047
- (iii) Holiday purposes - 596,707
- (iv) Conference - 2,372
- (v) Sports - 1,311
- (vi) Others - 18,539

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that, under the present system, no information is being compiled separately in respect of Mauritians who are holders of foreign passports. In fact, when they produce a foreign passport, they are registered as foreigners, whereas consultants are included in the category of businessmen.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the information required on the place of residence of each category of visitors and of the duration of their stay in the different types of accommodation, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to his Parliamentary Question, 1A/80, addressed to me at the sitting of 17 August 2010. I mentioned that the data is available only in respect of specific categories of accommodation and is based on the findings of the latest Survey of Outgoing Tourists, which was carried out by the Statistical Division of my Ministry in 2006. The latest exercise was carried out in 2009, but the CSO has not yet completed the compilation and analysis. In fact, the final report is scheduled for March 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also pointed out that no information is available in respect of *tables d'hôtes*, since these do not provide accommodation facilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am circulating the information compiled for the year 2006, in respect of percentage distribution of tourists staying in the different types of accommodation, and the duration of their stay thereat.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that, according to the MTPA, a growth rate of around 7% to 8% in tourist arrivals is expected for the months of November to December 2010. For the first semester of next year, an increase of, at least, 4% is forecasted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight that, for the period ending September 2010, we have recorded 646,656 tourists visiting our country, which represent an increase of 6.2% over the corresponding period of last year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further advised that, at the beginning of this year, the Tourism Statistics Committee had estimated tourist arrivals for 2010 to be around 915,000. However, the Committee has revised upwards the figure to around 920,000, which would represent an increase of approximately 5.5% over last year.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, le ministre a parlé de l'institution d'un *Economic Intelligence Unit*. Peut-on connaître les *terms of reference* de ce département ?

Mr Bodha: I need a specific question on this matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

CWA – WATER CUTS & WATER TANKERS

(No. 1B/601) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information, since the beginning of this year, as to the -

- (a) regions of the island affected by water cuts and where recourse to water tankers had been resorted to, indicating since when in each case;
- (b) expenses incurred for the provision of water tankers thereto, and
- (c) measures it proposes to take during the coming summer period.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem of water cuts and provision of tankers has been the practice since the creation of CWA in the 1970s. The regions affected during the wet season for this year are as follows -

Caroline, Ecroignard, Mahebourg, Bois des Amourettes, Kenya, Bambous Virieux, Poste de Flacq, Stanley, Camp Le Vieux and Roches Brunes, and in so far as the dry season is concerned, I am circulating a list (**Appendix**).

The list also contains the provision of water tankers to these regions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the water tanker services have been provided by the CWA tankers and whenever needed, by private water tanker services which has cost till now Rs600,000.

As in previous years, the CWA has planned its water supply management for the forthcoming dry season. Furthermore, control of valve operations which have been subject of acts of vandalism, is being strengthened with the support of the Police. The contingency plan in the six water distribution zones is as follows –

- **Port Louis System**

(i) Operation of two additional boreholes at Palma to supplement Pierrefonds source by about 7000 m³ daily.

(ii) Assistance of Mon Desert Alma Sugar. Estate and Medine Sugar Estate has been enlisted for the release of irrigation water in Grand River North West during weekends and sometimes on weekdays.

- **District Water System North**

Release of irrigation water from Nicolière reservoir will be curtailed to give priority to domestic supply.

- **District Water System East**

Draw off from Piton du Milieu Reservoir has been reduced from 25,000 m³ day to 21,000 m³ daily and off-take from River Rempart (6,000 m³ daily) has been resorted to meet the shortfall at Piton du Milieu treatment plant.

- **District Water System South**

Bananes Borehole (4,000 m³ daily) is in operation to supplement supply from Piton du Milieu.

- **Mare aux Vacoas System**

The yield at Holyrood borehole has already decreased from 22,000 m³ daily to 13,000 m³ daily. Additional Irrigation Water Authority boreholes and Cressonville borehole (Medine Sugar Estate) are being operated by the CWA, and additional resources from La Marie Treatment Plant, to meet the shortfall from Holyrood Pumping Station.

It is also to be noted that depending on rainfall and water availability, the number of hours of supply will be adjusted accordingly. Water tanker services will be maintained and the services of hired water tankers will be resorted to in case of necessity.

Mr Bhagwan: M le président, je suis un politicien et député depuis belle lurette...

(Interruptions)

Je le dis parce que c'est *relevant* car, M. le président, dans ma carrière politique - et le vice-premier ministre le sait- je n'ai jamais fait de démagogie.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Allez-y!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: A moins que vous ne descendez pas dans vos circonscriptions ...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is making comments.

Mr Bhagwan: Jamais les Mauriciens n'ont eu autant de problèmes concernant l'approvisionnement en eau ces temps ci. Il y a des régions dans les centres villes comme dans des régions urbaines où les gens n'ont pas été approvisionnés en eau pendant sept jours et ils ont eu toutes les peines du monde avec la CWA. Est-ce que le vice-premier ministre peut nous dire quelles sont les mesures qu'il compte prendre pour remédier à cette situation ?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I make an appeal to my hon. friend to be present this afternoon when I will explain the situation. There is no doubt that there is a problem, but sometimes improvement in the system like the one done for Rose Hill and Beau Bassin creates further problems which have to be attended to. The problem in Rose Hill and Beau Bassin was that when we put up the new reservoir, we found that there was leakage downstream and that is the reason. So, we cannot address the problem without resorting to the specific issues. We have had problems with the interference of the valves and boreholes. So I make an appeal to the hon. Member to come this afternoon and I will explain the situation.

RODRIGUES – WORKERS – CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

(No. 1B/602) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he is aware of cases whereby workers in Rodrigues are laid off and re-employed on a series of new contracts of employment with the same employers and if so, will he state if consideration will be given to amending the legislation to afford additional protections to the workers against this practice, keeping in view the restricted employment and career opportunities open to the workers in Rodrigues.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been made aware of certain cases particularly in the construction sector, where workers in Rodrigues are indeed laid off and re-employed on new contracts with the same employer.

In fact, as regards the construction sector in Rodrigues, usually those employees are on contract of determinate duration for approximately one to two months and, very often, we also have such contracts of determinate duration that goes on for approximately 11 months that is not renewed and very often there is a break of one month depending on the stage reached or availability of new projects.

We also have situations where certain of those construction companies take advantage of the law and break the contract for approximately more than 28/30 days and such a situation is also becoming recurrent in Mauritius and, as such, I can reassure, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member that consideration is indeed being given to amend the appropriate legislation to provide additional protection to such workers.

Mr François: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, and along the same line, will there be amendment to the legislation regarding those workers on contract? There is also a problem with the Workfare Programme in Rodrigues which is actually not working.

(Interruptions)

No job fare, because there is no job actually in Rodrigues.

May I ask the hon. Minister to see to it so as to review this programme as there is a situation in Rodrigues where there is no private sector as such to enable new job placement?

Mr Speaker: With due respect to the hon. Member, he must come with a substantive question as it does not relate to this question! Next question!

RODRIGUES - STUDENTS - GOVERNMENT LOAN SCHEME FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

(No.1B/603) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that Rodriguan students encounter difficulties when applying to financial institutions for loan facilities under the Government Loan

Scheme for Tertiary Education and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Human Resource Development Council, information as to the reasons therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker Sir, under the Human Resource, Knowledge, Arts and Development Fund provision is made for a Government Guaranteed Loan Scheme for students in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues who cannot provide any security to benefit from loans to pursue post secondary education. Students with an offer from a TEC recognised Post Secondary institution in Mauritius and whose families do not have the means to secure such a loan are eligible for a Government Guarantee under that Scheme.

The Scheme is meant to give significant financial relief to students who come from families with modest income and who could otherwise be deprived of opportunities to pursue post secondary education. The students will, in principle, service the loan only after securing a job at the end of their studies.

The modalities for application for the Loan Scheme have been posted on the website of the HRKAD Fund. Students having enrolled for tertiary level courses can readily access information relating to application procedures for loans as these are communicated to most post secondary institutions locally. Full details of the Government Guaranteed Loan Scheme have been made available to the Education Commission of Rodrigues to be brought to the notice of Rodriguan students. In addition, a delegation comprising the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee of the HRKAD Fund dealing with the Government Guaranteed Loan Scheme and Scholarships proceeded to Rodrigues in April 2010 to sensitise students and stakeholders on the Scheme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that at the start of the Government Guaranteed Loan Scheme at the beginning of 2009, some difficulties were in fact being encountered by students in Rodrigues as banks operating there were not fully conversant with the operation of the Scheme. Necessary clearances had to be sought by Branches of Banks based in Rodrigues from their respective Head Offices in Mauritius and this led to undue delay in the submission and processing of applications. Furthermore, students who had applied for loans in Rodrigues and then proceeded to mainland Mauritius, had difficulties to follow up on their loans. With a view to resolving this problem, dedicated contact persons were identified at the level of the Banks operating the Scheme in Mauritius to maintain a close liaison between the students and their Banks.

I am informed that two appropriate Desk Officers have been designated by the Education Commission of Rodrigues to assist and guide students in respect of the Scheme and to alleviate any difficulties they may face.

The HRKAD Fund, Mr Speaker, Sir, is sustaining its efforts to further streamline its processes and better serve the students concerned.

I am informed that, at present, no difficulty whatsoever is being encountered for eligible candidates.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that not all the commercial banks accept the option for repayment of loan after a student has secured a job?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, I don't know because we started giving the loans only two years ago, even less, so I'll have to look into the matter and see if ever there is this problem, we will try to look into it.

Mr François: Secondly, there is also a problem with the Government guaranteed loans from these commercial banks regarding the land lease as a guarantee and most of the land leases are being pledged for either building a house or whatever and some of those commercial banks are having problems to give loans to those students because their lease has been pledged and there is a big problem. Will the hon. Minister look into that?

Dr. Bunwaree: If it falls under the purview of this fund, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, but the fund itself is supposed to look into cases where parents who do not have the means to secure, act as the guarantees themselves. But, I will take that into consideration.

Mr Leopold: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I simply ask the hon. Minister to give an indication about the time frame on mainland Mauritius from the time the application is made, approval is obtained and disbursement is made?

Dr. Bunwaree: As I said, in the case of Rodriguan students, it was about six to eight weeks at the start. Now it is three to four weeks and we are trying to make it still less.

MAURITIUS/SAUDI ARABIA – EMBASSY & DIRECT AIR FLIGHTS

(No. 1B/604) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Saudi Arabia, he will state if Government will consider the advisability of –

- (a) setting up an Embassy thereat, and
- (b) establishing direct air flights between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a good coincidence that this Parliamentary Question comes today, a solemn and auspicious day which is very special for Saudi Arabia. Indeed today, millions of people of Islamic faith, including our own Mauritian brothers and sisters of Muslim Community celebrate the culmination of Hajj. We take this opportunity to convey our best wishes to them.

My Ministry is keen to consolidate ties with Saudi Arabia with the aim of creating better opportunities for trade, investment and cultural exchanges between our two countries.

To that end, Government is currently engaged in discussions with Saudi Arabia for the conclusion of a general framework agreement on Cooperation.

With regard to representation in Saudi Arabia, it may be recalled that Government appointed an Honourable Consul in Jeddah in 2008. In addition, our Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt is accredited to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and presented his credentials to His Majesty Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia on 11 May 2008.

As much as we would like to further consolidate our relations with Saudi Arabia, the opening of a Resident Embassy in Jeddah can only be considered in light of budgetary constraint resulting from the international economic situation and Euro Zone crisis and in consultation with the hon. Prime Minister.

Currently, there is no Bilateral Air Services Agreement between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia to enable the operation of scheduled direct flights.

Traffic from/to Saudi Arabia is channelled via Dubai on Emirates/Air Mauritius Code share flights and via Mauritius services to Mumbai.

In view of the low level of traffic between our two countries, Air Mauritius Ltd. does not propose, at this juncture, to start direct services to Saudi Arabia.

Mauritius will give due consideration to opening talks with Saudi Arabia for an air services agreement if a request in that direction is made.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understand, the hon. Minister's answer is that the opening of an embassy depends on the availability of resources. May I recall the House that in 2007 the same answer was given to PQ No. B/650 and to a question from hon. Reza Issack in 2008? I quote –

“(...) would be given consideration as and when financial resources are available”

May I understand from the answer that the hon. Minister just gave that from 2007 up to now no resources are available to open an embassy in Saudi Arabia?

Dr. A. Boolell: We can make financial resources available provided they are available and we have to look at priorities. Having said so, it is fair to say that the Saudi Government has made a proposal in respect of land to be if ever we take the opportunity we will grasp the opportunity. But we will give due consideration. In fact, the Deputy Prime Minister will travel to Saudi Arabia and afterwards the Prime Minister will do so and in the light of discussions which are going to take place then, of course, due consideration will be given.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Minister saying that we appointed a Consulate some time back, an Honorary Consulate. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister, in terms of costing - even if we don't open immediately an embassy - could it be considered that we have a small Consulate based there with Mauritians to service, especially, the Hajj pilgrims?

Dr. A. Boolell: This is a very good suggestion. Let us look at this in a very positive manner when the Prime Minister, in due course, will travel to Saudi Arabia. There is a standing invitation. All these issues can be taken up and I said though we have strong ties with Saudi Arabia, we have, of course, to look at priorities. For the time being we will give due consideration in respect of having a consulate in Réunion Island. So, let us look at priorities, set our priorities right and give due consideration to the proposals made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: As far as Air Mauritius and direct air flights between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia is concerned, can I ask the hon. Minister whether Air Mauritius has carried out a full-fledged study to see whether it is commercially viable?

Dr. A. Boolell: There has been a study carried out by Air Mauritius. Of course, the content of the report cannot be released. Yes, indeed, there has been, not only in respect with Saudi Arabia, but with other destinations which can become lucrative at a later stage.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer and he informed the House that the Deputy Prime Minister would soon travel to Saudi Arabia and then the Prime Minister will follow, but can I ask the hon. Minister what time frame is Government looking at? Especially, we know that there are about 5000 Mauritians travelling to Saudi Arabia every year and currently for Hajj almost 2000 travelled and there are a lot of issues in terms of visa and that a Mauritian Embassy would ease all these problems and also would help us in terms of international trade. So, my question is: what time frame Government is looking at?

Dr. A. Boolell: We will give it the priority it deserves. We cannot rush things through and as much as we would love to, but depending on priorities and availability of resources, we will give it due consideration.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of priority, may I ask the hon. Minister whether - being given that we do not have any consulate at the moment in Saudi Arabia - he will consider, as a matter priority, the appointment of a full-fledged ambassador to Egypt because I understand that there is a vacancy there?

Dr. A. Boolell: Of course, this is being looked into. There would be a full-fledged ambassador with all the powers conferred upon him to do a good job.

At 1.01 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.47 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - EMPLOYEES - OVERTIME ALLOWANCES

(No. 1B/605) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the

Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to if some of its employees have not yet been paid their overtime allowances and if so, give a list thereof, indicating, in each case -

- (a) since when;
- (b) the quantum thereof, and
- (c) the reasons therefor.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that some of its employees have not been paid their overtime due for the months of February to October 2010, due to lack of funds.

I am further informed that, following a reallocation of funds made on 15 October 2010, arrangements are being made by the Council to effect payment in the November payroll. The reallocation exercise could not be made on a piecemeal basis but rather in a global manner. This explains that the exercise could only be completed in October this year.

The list of these employees, together with the quantum of overtime payable, is being compiled by the Council and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

Mr Ameer Meea: I did not hear the reason why the overtime was not being paid.

The Deputy Speaker: It was due to lack of funds.

Mr Bérenger: I take it that the Municipal Council calculates year after year, and makes provision for overtime. So, what has happened? Is it because of general elections that they were made to work more overtime than another year? This is the case!

Mr Aimée: No Sir. Every year, it is like that. It happens that the funds lapse, and then you have to take from another code to do the exercise. As I said, here it can't be on a piecemeal basis, because you can't take one case by one case. You have to wait till you have some cases to go ahead with the compilation.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Minister if the overtime was approved by an authorised person?

Mr Aimée: Of course, it has been approved by an authorised person. That is the only way to be accountable. In any department, parastatal body or Ministry, it is the same.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to confirm whether there are sites which have been abandoned as a result of that, where works have stopped completely and workers have left the sites?

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Member should come with a substantive question on that issue.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House and the taxpayers of the urban areas that Port Louis is not the only case? Can the Minister inquire and report to the House that this also applies to Rose Hill and even Quatre Bornes, where - I can say illegally, because normally there should be provision for overtime - approval has been given when there was no money, just for election purposes, and now reallocation is being carried out?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Aimée: I regret to tell the hon. Member that this is a specific question on Port Louis, and he is looking at other local authorities. It's not possible for me to have all the information.

The Deputy Speaker: If the Minister needs notice, he should say so.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have heard the Minister say that overtime has not been paid since the month of February. I think that the financial year is from January to December. Must I take it that, after only one month, there was no money for the payment of overtime?

Mr Aimée: I have replied to my question from information that I have got from the Council. If there is any other information that hon. Member wants to know, please put another PQ.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order!

Mr Aimée: If there is any specific question that the hon. Member would like to ask, then I can come back after it has been compiled; but not now.

PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE LICENCES - APPLICATIONS

(No. 1B/606) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the issue of Public Service Vehicle Licences for the regions of Henrietta, the NHDC of Glen Park, Bhagat, La Marie, Boutique Tamarin, Cantin, La Vanille, Granum, Cité Mangalkhan, Cité l'Oiseau, Rivière Sèche, Curepipe Road, Allée Brillant, Lapeyrouse, Lamairée and Engrais Martial, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if it proposes to invite applications therefor and if so, when.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Authority that, except for Glen Park and La Marie, where there is a need for additional taxis, the other regions mentioned by the hon. Member are adequately served.

I have also been informed that the National Transport will shortly invite applications from the two abovementioned regions.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

(No. 1B/607) 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 Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme, he will state

—

- (a) the amount that has been disbursed as at to-date to support the —
 - (i) textile industry
 - (ii) tourism industry, and
 - (iii) other industries, and
- (b) if the new Private Equity Fund has been set up and if so, indicate —
 - (i) since when;
 - (ii) the shareholding structure;

- (iii) the funds mobilized and deployed as at to-date, and
- (iv) the state of affairs and fate of any existing Private Equity Fund.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme (ERCP) was presented...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Carry on, Minister!

Mr Jugnauth: ...on 13 August 2010 to replace the Mechanism for Transitional Support to the Private Sector (MTSP). It was Government's first response geared towards mitigating the impact of the crisis in the euro zone on our economy. The ERCP comprises a series of measures to foster and support long-term restructuring and deleveraging of enterprises while providing short-term breathing space, especially on cash flow problems and financing requirements.

Three months after the presentation of the ERCP, applications have been processed and disbursements already effected for seven companies for an amount of around Rs247 m. The breakdown is as follows -

Industry Classification	No.	Amount Disbursed (Rs)
Textile and Garments Sector	4	228.5 m.
ICT Sector	1	8.5 m.
Fishing Sector	1	8 m.
Leather Sector	1	1.7 m.

Applications from ten other companies are currently being processed. These include companies in sectors other than those I mentioned earlier, like in dairy products for instance and others. The amount of financial support requested in these cases stands at Rs178 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards enterprises in the tourism industry, particularly the small and medium hotels, they have as at now availed themselves of the facilities under other schemes enunciated in the ERCP, namely the facilities under the Bank of Mauritius line of credit and the reduction of interest rates on 50% of overdrafts at the level of commercial banks.

The total package disbursed as at 11 November 2010 has helped in maintaining some 3,000 jobs.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the new Private Equity Fund has not yet been set up. As it is a complex mechanism, discussions are being held with various banks, private equity managers, equity fund managers and financial institutions on how best the Private Equity Fund could be set up. The shareholding structure and the fund deployed for the Private Equity Fund would be discussed at a later stage when the Fund will be set up. In as far as the funding is concerned, Government will use the money derived from the 2% special levy imposed on banks to fund the Private Equity Fund.

Concerning part (b) (iv) of the question, I am informed that there are two existing equity funds under the responsibility of the State Investment Corporation (SIC), namely the National Equity Fund Ltd (NEF) and the SME Partnership Fund Ltd (SPF).

The NEF was set up in 2003 with a maximum stated capital of Rs1 billion in order to increase investment and stimulate employment. The two shareholders of the Fund namely SIC and DBM had to invest in the proportion of 25% and 75% as and when required. The NEF has invested a total amount of Rs210 m. in four different projects, but since 2005 it has not been active. As at to date, the NEF has disinvested in three projects and still has small amount of debentures in a fourth project. It is currently being envisaged to wind up the Fund once NEF disinvests from its fourth investment.

As regards the SME Partnership Fund Ltd, I am informed that it was set up in 2006 to assist SMEs by providing them equity capital. SPF invests between Rs300,000 and Rs10 m. in terms of shares in a company and up to a maximum of 49% of its equity capital. Until now, SPF

has assisted 50 companies for a total investment amount of Rs66.3 m. The initial capital of the fund was Rs151 m. and was subscribed by the following parties: SIC Ltd (Rs25 m.), DBM Ltd (Rs25 m.), Government of Mauritius (Rs50 m.), MCB Ltd (Rs25 m.), SBM Ltd (Rs25 m.) and South East Asian Bank Ltd (Rs1 m.).

SPF is presently engaged in the process of revamping its mode of financing in order to attract a larger amount of SMEs.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the vice-Prime Minister, therefore, confirm that it is again a case of zero realisation of undertaking, because the NEF...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question! Do not make comment, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: It is not a comment, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: If any hon. Member wishes to draw the attention of the Chair to any matter, he will have to ask the permission of the Chair and he can then make his point or take a Point of Order if he wants to.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Address the Chair, please!

Mr Bérenger: On a Point of Order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member was precisely putting a question and you stop him and tell him: 'Do not make comment!'

The Deputy Speaker: In fact, the purpose of supplementary question is to have additional information on an answer. The hon. Member started to make comments about zero realisations. I want the hon. Member to put his supplementary question and not to come with a statement regarding any opinion he may have. This is not allowed.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the non-fulfilment of the undertaking under ERCP with regard to the new National Equity Fund, can the hon. Minister confirm - in the context of that non-realisation - whether it is a failure of implementation or whether it is a failure of assessment of the need for such Equity Fund?

Mr Jugnauth: There is no failure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member has not listened to what I have said. I have said that under the ERCP, applications have been processed and disbursements already effected for seven companies for an amount of Rs247 m.

Mr Bérenger: We are talking about the new Equity Fund, not ERCP.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is the Point of Order? The hon. Member has put a question and I am answering. He might not be happy with my answer just as I am not happy with his question, but it does not matter.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer, please! If any hon. Member has supplementary questions to ask, he can do so thereafter.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the Private Equity Fund, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have stated that the matter is being looked into. We are seeking the advice of a number of experts, namely banks, private equity managers and we have also sought the advice from the World Bank in order to set this Private Equity Fund up. So, let us give it the time that it requires and then the hon. Member will come later and say whether it has been a failure or not. But, only time will tell and we will see at the end of the day whether this will be set up and how it is going to achieve the objectives that we have set up.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Minister, therefore, confirm to the House whether there has been a request for proposal for appointment of a Fund Manager for that new Equity Fund?

Mr Jugnauth: I have just replied that we are doing all the necessary in order to be able to set up this Private Equity Fund.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister of Finance said that seven companies have been granted financial assistance under the new ERCP. Can we have the names of the companies and the amount disbursed in each case?

Mr Jugnauth: There are a few. There is Star Knitwear – I wouldn't have the exact figure, but I can circulate for the amount. I can give the names at least: Star Knitwear, Mac'Allan Limitée, R.E.A.L Garments Ltd, Fit U Garment Ltd, Candy Tex, IKS Fishing Co Ltd, DCL, I

don't know what DCL stands for, but I have stated also that there are ten enterprises which have also submitted applications. These are right now under process.

Mr Bérenger: It is as if we cannot have the figures and the names are very tentative. Can we have therefore the names and the amounts concerned circulated? Can I know whether there are any SMEs amongst those seven companies?

Mr Jugnauth: I undertake to circulate also not only the names, the amounts that have been disbursed, but whether there are SMEs and under what category they fall.

Mr Bérenger: On the new Private Equity Fund, I heard the Minister say "give time." Can I remind him what he said in August when he presented his stimulus package and I put my question? It was three months ago and we are in November. He said in August that an initial seed capital of Rs300 m. will be raised this year. In August, we are in November, the year is ending. Has it been raised?

Mr Jugnauth: I have stated that the levy that has been imposed on the banks, part of the money will be used for the Private Equity Fund.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm how much of the aid given under ERCP is in the form of purchase of building or equipment?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member must come with a specific question for me to give that information.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

SUGAR INDUSTRY - GLOBAL CESS

(No. 1B/608) 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 support to the sugar industry under the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme, he will state –

- (a) if the Global Cess has been reduced in the current year 2010, indicating the quantum thereof;

- (b) the financial effects on the revenue of cane planters, especially the small ones, and
- (c) the impact on the financing and restructure of Cess financed institutions.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this PQ.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government, in its policy measures “Facing the EURO Zone Crisis & restructuring for long term resilience”, had agreed that the Global Cess will be substantially reduced over a period of two years starting in 2010 and ending in 2012, so that in 2012 and subsequent years it does not exceed 4 percent of the ex-MSS price against 7% for year 2009, that is, Rs1,365 per tonne of sugar. The undertaking is to reduce cess equivalent to an increase in the revenue of planters to the tune of Rs450. per tonne this year and Rs600. per tonne as from 2011.

The House will note that for crop year 2009-2010, Government, has, as an exceptional measure, already contributed 60 m. rupees in favour of the small planters holding up to 12 *arpents*.

Under the ERCP, provision is made for the setting up of a joint public/private sector Committee under the aegis of my Ministry to work out the details of the restructuring of the cess-financed institutions. The Joint Committee started its work on 03 September 2010 and is still having discussions on the way forward for the reduction of global cess and increase in the revenue of small planters. I understand that the Committee will submit its recommendations by end of November. Thereafter, we will be fixed on the situation.

The reduction of global cess will result in an increase in revenue of planters, and will particularly provide financial relief for 28,000 small planters who are feeling the brunt of the Euro crisis. It will also result in right sizing of service providing institutions and reduction in their costs of operations.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Will the Minister confirm whether the reduction in cess has already become effective because up to now the small planters have not been refunded the amount that has already been collected in the form of cess for the crop 2010?

Mr Faugoo: As far as I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the needful has been done for the provisions which were made, as I mentioned earlier, for the year 2009 /2010. I understand that the Mauritius Sugar Authority has done the needful.

Mr Bérenger: That is another matter. That was something that was done exceptionally as the hon. Minister, himself, has said. We are talking about the reduction in cess to the benefit of the planters as announced in the recent ERCP in August last. Can I remind the hon. Minister that the Minister of Finance said then that the global cess would be substantially reduced over two years starting in 2010? Will we achieve that? Will there be the beginning of a substantial reduction in 2010? We are in November?

Mr Faugoo: This is what was said in the ERCP and it was also said that there would be a committee which would be set up including the MSPA, the Mauritius Sugar Authority together with my Ministry. The Ministry of Finance will also be present. We have to wait for the report of that committee. As I said earlier, we are expecting the report by end of this month.

Mr Bérenger: May I remind the Minister and put a question afterwards? The hon. Minister of Finance also said, I quote: ‘the sugar industry will finance the cost of associated reduction in the workforce when the reduction in the global cess will take place’. I repeat the sugar industry will finance the cost of associated reduction in the workforce. Can I know how many jobs the hon. Minister is talking about? The reduction will hit how many jobs. What kind of cost we are talking about and whether this has already been discussed with the sugar industry?

Mr Faugoo: This is what exactly the committee is working upon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the Minister give us an undertaking or an idea of how much of the EU aid that has been granted in the context of the sugar industry reform, has been earmarked or is likely to be earmarked for the restructure of the cess financed institutions?

Mr Faugoo: This is premature. I cannot pronounce on this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

MEDICAL PREMISES – HOSPITAL STAFF - ASSAULTS

(No. 1B/609) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether in regard to physical assaults on hospital staff on

medical premises, including dispensaries and health centres, she will state the number of reported cases thereof, on a yearly basis over the past five years, indicating the –

- (a) remedial actions -
 - (i) taken to improve the situation, and
 - (ii) being considered for implementation, and
- (b) inquiries undertaken thereinto, if any, and the outcome thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information relating to the number of reported cases of physical assaults on health staff is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As regards remedial actions, I wish to inform the House that, following the recent incident that took place at Victoria Hospital, immediate actions were taken as follows -

- (i) Police presence has been reinforced in all Accident & Emergency Departments;
- (ii) a more strict access control to hospital compounds and wards in particular is being exercised, and
- (iii) the Regional Security Management Committees are meeting regularly under the Chairmanship of the Regional Health Directors to closely monitor and review security measures in the hospitals.

Moreover, the following actions are being considered for implementation -

- (i) new specifications are being worked out with regards to the age and physical fitness of security guards for future recruitments;
- (ii) CCTV cameras would be installed in strategic positions in all Regional Hospitals;
- (iii) a common set of guidelines for a more strict control on access to Wards is under preparation to ensure uniformity in its implementation;
- (iv) an Alarm system would be installed in wards and linked to the Police Post in the hospital, and

- (v) appropriate infrastructural improvement works in all hospitals would be carried out.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that, though all cases of physical assault are offences against the law and same are reported to the Police for inquiry, the Regional Health Director of each hospital concerned carries out a preliminary inquiry in each reported case of assault for determining the causes of such incidents with a view to reinforcing/reviewing the existing security measures at the hospitals.

Dr S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Minister whether she would consider to have an independent Commission of Inquiry on the state of security in the hospital, independent of the Regional Health Directors who, maybe, bear a little bit of responsibility in the inducement of some of the incidents?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Regional Health Directors do their work, they know what they are doing, they are competent and I don't think that I would go forward with an independent body.

Dr. S. Boolell: I am not challenging the competence of the Directors; evidently we have had a lot of assaults in the recent past! Would the hon. Minister consider having a *Comité des Sages* from retired professionals of the sector to have a look at hospitals from an independent point of view and make recommendations thereon?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the time being, I have not contemplated on this.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister stating that she is looking for more control to access which presumed there was control to access. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 17 September, I personally drove into the compound of the Victoria Hospital. I was surprised there was no check at all. At night, 23.00 hrs, I was there. I drove around, went up to Ward 4 - I don't know which ward it was - spent one hour in this hospital, got out of the compound around midnight and there was nothing. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she will look into that? If ever there was control, on that particular date, there was not.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should say that we have had some problems with the recruitment of companies for security measures. That is why I am saying that

the security aspect is being looked at again and when we would be doing our tendering exercises, there are other things that we are going to add on the specifications for recruitment of security guards.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware that at Victoria Hospital and also in other hospitals, there are security officers - above 75 years old from private companies - who are working and they themselves need surgery?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is very true and this is why I have just said that we are drawing new specifications when we are going to allocate tenders this time so that we are going to put, at least, an age limit for those security companies so that they do not recruit people above 60.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the time being, these people are working. When we go to hospitals we see lots of problems as these people themselves may be sick.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member knows full well - because he has been a Minister also - that there are procedures to be adopted. I cannot go against the procedures because if I do so, I will be criticised also.

The Deputy Speaker: We proceed further. Next question, hon. Uteem!

PORT LOUIS - HAWKERS

(No. 1B/610) 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 hawkers who operate illegally in the region of Port Louis, during the end of the year festivities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know whether the hon. Member would be in favour of the prohibiting illegal hawkers to operate particularly on the days preceding Christmas and New Year. As for me, I am of opinion that, on humanitarian grounds, it would not be proper at all to prevent them from earning a decent means of livelihood. I am having a dialogue with the Municipality of Port Louis to look into the ways and means to accommodate

the hawkers without causing any prejudice to the traffic flow and without jeopardising the normal activities in Port Louis.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 15 June 2010, the hon. Minister gave exactly the same answer. This time we are talking about the end of the year period. There are hawkers who work all around the year and then there are new hawkers who come in just at the end of the year. So, we are talking about these new seasonal hawkers. Are there any measures being taken to control the overflow of new hawkers during the end of the year period?

Mr Aimée: I am sorry to reply to the hon. Member like that. This is almost a normal practice since I was 20 years old.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Aimée: Every year it is the same dialogue. The hon. Member said that I repeat the same reply as last time. The hon. Member should tell me what the reply was.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should give his answer.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister a simple question? Everybody who knows the problem knows that there are two types of hawkers in Port Louis at the end of the year. There are those who can call them regular, they work the whole year through, as my colleague has just said. Then, there are thousands – not hundreds – of new hawkers who turn up just for a few weeks. For the first time the Municipality of Port Louis announced this year that they would provide badges to those year-through hawkers and the others would not be allowed to operate. Rightly so! At least, has this been done or is this going to be done for this end of the year?

Mr Aimée: Yes, we are in the process of creating badges for hawkers to wear, but even so, as is mentioned in the reply, on a humanitarian ground, we are prepared to give a chance to these people, the seasonal ones, to work, but not jeopardising the normal activities.

(Interruptions)

We will try and find an area for that.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether humanitarian consideration stops only at these temporary hawkers? The hon. Minister has to take into consideration these people also on humanitarian grounds. It is their livelihood and they cannot earn a living at the end of the year because there are thousands of temporary hawkers.

Mr Aimée: Yes. I made mention of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I said I am of opinion that, on humanitarian grounds, it would not be proper at all to prevent the earning of a decent livelihood, but I said also that we won't let them jeopardise the normal activities. This is clear.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister wishes to accommodate those seasonal hawkers, can he give an indication to the House how many of such seasonal workers will operate at the end of this year during the festivities?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not be able to answer to this question. He is pre-empting something that would happen next month or around the year.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether direction will be given to municipal workers and inspection not to go after regular hawkers who operate during the end of the year because there has been lately a lot of inspectors who come and prevent hawkers from working in the region of Port Louis?

Mr Aimée: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have set up a committee comprising of Police officers, officers from the Municipality and from my Ministry to look into all that particular matter to find out ways and means how to deal with it, particularly during the new year season.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister tells us that, yes, badges will be provided to the regular hawkers. We are on 16 November, *les fêtes de fin d'année sont derrière la porte*. Can we know by what date these badges to be provided to the regular hawkers will be ready?

Mr Aimée: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very sorry, because when you give straight order to the Municipal Council, they tell you that the Minister is interfering in the day to day management of the Council.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Aimée: I have sent a circular to the Municipal Council, to all Local Authorities that they have got to wear badge, but now I am not going behind them with a stick.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for those hawkers who pay regularly a licence to the Municipal Council and the Municipal Council already have data of hawkers who pay a licence, at least, these people can be given a badge immediately. They do not need to wait.

Mr Aimée: That's what I have said from the very beginning, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

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

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that he can't take stick and go behind Municipal Councillors. I agree with him. But can he inform the House that procedures have been launched for the issue of badges to the hawkers who work permanently during the year just to differentiate between those illegal hawkers? Can we confirm to the House whether procedures have already been launched to issue the badges?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the job of the Ministry and the Minister is to send letters to them and it is for them to implement. But I am not going to implement it myself. I am waiting, they have got a time frame, they are doing their jobs and if it lasts so long, then I am going to advise them to go a little bit quicker.

Mr Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, for the past five years, unprecedented measures have been taken especially at the level of the local council of Port Louis not only to cater but to facilitate the activities of regular hawkers? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I have a confirmation?

Mr Aimée: Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

Mr Aimée: Since my nomination as Minister in January, I am trying to find ways and means how to deal with hawkers. We must be frank here. Even those who are in the Opposition now and who were in the Municipal Council between 2000 and 2005 had also the same problem. I am looking into it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Aimée: I am doing my best to remedy the situation, to put in place where they need badges and space.

Mr Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are given to understand that the Pont de Paris project is being extended with additional funds of some Rs4 m. being invested in the project. Can the hon. Minister confirm that this extension of the Pont de Paris project at SSR Street is being made to cater for regular hawkers?

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, I have not mentioned all the projects we have done since I have been in office. But, in fact, hawkers are working in the SSR Street since years ago. We have created places for 70 hawkers at Pont de Paris where they will sell foods.

FASHION & DESIGN INSTITUTE - EXHIBITION

(No. 1B/611) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the exhibition held on 22 October 2010 by the Fashion and Design Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons for the holding thereof, indicating the expenses incurred in relation thereto.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Fashion and Design Institute that an exhibition was held in the evening of 22 October 2010 at the ex-Textile and Apparel Development Centre of Enterprise Mauritius, in Vallée Des Prêtres, to showcase the best of the institute in terms of realisation, design work, garments and other facilities which the Foundation Art & Design, Fashion & Textile and Graphic Design & Multimedia Departments are presently offering.

Further, the exhibition also aimed at marketing the institute, enhancing its visibility and raising awareness on all the possibilities, facilities and services that the industry could benefit.

The total expenses incurred for the holding of the exhibition amounted to Rs397,463.37 including also uplifting works.

The House may wish to note that students have made strong representations. The FDI Board has appointed an independent enquiry to look into those representations and to submit its recommendations.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that usually at the end of the course, there is an exhibition to promote the work of the students. Has there been a change in this policy this year and for which reason it was not for the promotion of the works of the students and whether the works of the lecturers too were being exhibited on that particular day?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do appreciate the point being raised by the hon. Member. This has been sorted out. There is going to be an exhibition as has been the usual practice, in December.

Mr Bérenger: My question is we spent Rs3 m. from the public funds. Already the exhibition *qui a foiré* has cost Rs3 m. Am I right in saying that the Minister is requesting the Fashion and Design Institute *de corriger le tir* to have the new exhibition and, if yes, how much money is that going to cost?

Dr. Jeetah: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition did not get me right. It is not Rs3 m.; it is Rs397,000. And to shed more light, I did enquire. An exhibition normally costs between Rs650,000 to about Rs2 m. I did say that part of the funding was for the upgrading of the facilities at the Vallée des Prêtres site.

Mrs Labelle: As regards the exhibition which will be held, may I ask the hon. Minister what will happen to the works produced by these students? Their works have been damaged and were taken off their personal dummies and thrown into the staircase. I am going to table a picture of that. What will happen to this and who will bear the cost for the new works of the exhibition that the hon. Minister is proposing?

Dr. Jeetah: I am aware of what the students have as concern, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. That's why the Board has appointed an independent inquiry and it would be a matter of a couple of weeks until we would know of the outcome and then we'll take the proper decisions.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last question. Must I take it from the hon. Minister that consideration will be given to help the students whose works were damaged to produce new works? Will consideration be given to that?

Dr. Jeetah: If this is the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fashion and Design Institute will have to take its responsibility.

Mr Bérenger: Can we know the composition of this Board or Committee that is going to carry out an independent inquiry?

Dr. Jeetah: I know that he is a person who is acting as a PAS in another Ministry. It is the Ministry in charge of public infrastructure.

MAURITIUS SUGAR AUTHORITY – MR M. A. – MEDIATION MEETINGS

(No. B/612) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether in regard to the case of Mr M. A., and the Mauritius Sugar Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the outcome of the three mediation meetings held in relation thereto, indicating if recommendations were made and, if so, if they have been implemented, and if not, why not.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr M. A. registered a complaint against his employer, the Mauritius Sugar Authority (MSA), at my Ministry regarding –

- (i) sponsorship for his MBA studies;
- (ii) non-payment of incremental credit since December 2005;
- (iii) non-payment of cash in lieu of vacation leave not taken since 2006, and
- (iv) right of promotion.

Subsequent to the complaints registered, three conciliation meetings were held by my Ministry with the management of MSA and Mr M. A. Following these meetings, payment of an incremental credit since December 2005 has been agreed upon and according to my information has already been paid on 27 July 2010.

As regards the other points in dispute, of which I have made a list earlier on, they have been and are continuing to be subject of lengthy discussions at the level of the conciliation

meetings at the MSA and the MSA is considering them. There is another meeting which has been scheduled for Friday 19 November 2010 for the management of MSA to communicate its stand as regards those other issues that have been brought about apart from the issue of incremental credit.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the MSA was agreeable to sponsor the study of Mr M. A. according to a letter that was sent, and that up to now this has not been done? He was to be paid for the study, but this has not been the case. Is there any particular reason to that?

Mr Mohamed: I am informed that, when Mr M. A. started his 3-year MBA course, he applied for sponsorship from the MSA. Being given that the course was not relevant to his job, according to the information, the management disallowed the demand. This is the stand, according to the version of the MSA. However, on humanitarian ground, the MSA sponsored only 50% of the cost of the course for the first year. As for the remaining second and third year, no financial support was given. He is, therefore, claiming the 50% on the first year fees, and the cost of the second and third year. Actually, in two subsequent meetings, this matter was taken up, and the management has then asked, following the intervention of my Ministry, for some time, to take a stand on this particular issue of sponsorship. This is what is going to happen when they will have to communicate the stand at the meeting scheduled for the 19th.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I table a letter where it is being stated that sponsorship for year two and year three will be reviewed on progress and the results of these two years? So, Mr M. A. did receive a letter stating that he would get payment of 50% for the first year, and for the second and third years, it is stated that, based on his results, of course, this would be done. This letter is dated 2006, a copy of which I am going to table.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for intervening and trying to sort out a case of injustice. I may reassure the hon. Member that we are on the same wave length, and we want to find a solution. Most probably we already have that letter, but I would like to have a look at it, to see to it that we can make use of it to bring back conciliation closer.

GENTILLY & LA LAURA - BRIDGES - UPGRADING

(No. 1B/613) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bridges at Gentilly and La Laura, near the Shiv Shakti mandir, he will state if they will be upgraded and if so, when.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the bridges at Gentilly and at La Laura, near Shiv Shakti mandir, fall under the purview of the Moka/Flacq District Council. The Moka/Flacq District Council will have to make provision for the reconstruction and upgrading of bridges.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I draw the attention of the hon. Minister that this bridge is very old and the retaining walls are showing signs of collapsing? I will impress upon him to liaise with his colleague Minister, because there are traffic signs stating that vehicles below 1.5 tonnes can pass over, but this is not the fact as there are vehicles over 1.5 tonnes passing over, which is really a serious hazard.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Dayal: Before anything untoward happens, I appeal to the hon. Minister to liaise with the relevant authorities, and the job be done.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this question could as well have been addressed to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government.

L'ESPERANCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - DRAINS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/614) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of drains at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, near the Shivala, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, works order will shortly be issued for the construction of drains at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, water stagnates because there are no outlets, and this is a serious health hazard. Therefore, I would like to impress upon the hon. Minister if he could expedite matters.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned that works order will be issued. Unfortunately, I have neither any road contractor nor any building contractor. I am awaiting the appointment of contractors by the CPB. That's why there is a delay in the implementation.

L'ESPERANCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - FOOTBALL GROUND - LIGHTING

(No. 1B/615) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire &Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the lighting of the football ground at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a contract for the provision of lighting of the football ground at l'Espérance, Quartier Militaire, for the sum of Rs2,246,640, has already been awarded on 28 September 2010.

Mr Dayal: Can I know from the hon. Minister when works will start, and when it is supposed to be completed?

Mr Bachoo: The very fact that the contract has already been awarded means that works will start soon. Be a bit patient.

(PQ Nos. 1B/616, 1B/617 & 1B/618 – See Written Answers to Questions)

ARTISTS (LOCAL) - INCENTIVES

(No. 1B/619) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to artistic creativity and innovation, he will state the -

- (a) specific incentives available to support the local artists, giving details of the packages offered, and
- (b) mechanisms put in place to inform the local artists thereof.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information sought.

ARTISTS (LOCAL) - FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

(No. 1B/620) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether he is aware that local artists who perform in the hotel industry have suffered financial hardships as a consequence of the effect of the euro crisis on the industry and, if so, the measures his Ministry proposes to take to alleviate their hardships.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, although I have met several artists since my appointment as Minister of Arts and Culture, I have not received any representation from local artists performing in hotels as to the financial hardship they may have suffered as a result of the euro crisis. I am also informed by the MTPA that no such cases have been reported to the institution by local artists. I wish to reassure the House that I am ready to consider any grievance.

COUPE D'AFRIQUE DES NATIONS – NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM

(No. 1B/621) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the preliminary of the *Coupe d'Afrique des Nations* for the under 17, he will state the reasons why the national football team did not play the match against Egypt on 07 November 2010 in Cairo, Egypt.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 28 October 2010, the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) informed my Ministry that our under 17 football team had been drawn to play against Egypt on 07 November 2010, and that the return leg would be played in Alexandria Egypt on 19 November 2010. The MFA also requested my Ministry to finance the airfares and other related costs, which would amount to about Rs1.2 m.

As the annual grant allocated to the MFA by my Ministry had already been disbursed and spent, it was not possible for my Ministry to provide additional funds to the tune of Rs1.2 m. The MFA was informed accordingly on 01 November 2010. The MFA was also verbally requested to explore other sources of funding to enable participation.

Unfortunately, on the same day, the MFA decided to withdraw from the competition, and informed the *Confédération Africaine de Football* of its decision. My Ministry was officially informed of this decision on 03 November 2010.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre si la décision de son ministère et de la MFA de n'avoir pas recherché le financement nécessaire au déplacement de cette équipe n'est pas en contradiction avec la politique du ministère et du ministre lui-même, en ce qui concerne la relance du football à Maurice.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have 42 federations which are being granted their budget for their functioning all year through, and the MFA had a budget of Rs8.6 m. They have already utilised all the funds and, of course, it is the MFA which is supposed to prioritise its participation. We have helped the Federation to participate in the under 11 competition, under 13 competition in Réunion Island and Rodrigues Island, under 17 for the CJSOI games and also the under 20 and the senior team. It all depends upon the Federation, as they should know what their priority is. At least, at the level of the Ministry, we help them, so that they can give the opportunity to several selections to participate.

Mr Bérenger: Sir, I am not suggesting that the Ministry should control the federations. But when the Ministry approved the sum of Rs8.6 m. for the MFA, was it spelt out that it includes funding for the participation of MFA to the *Coupe d'Afrique des Nations* for the under 17?

Mr Ritoo: No, we say that they would be allocated Rs8.6 m., and each and every time they come for funding for the different selections. They should always choose their priority. In fact, we are actually collecting money to help preparation for the senior team for the IOIG games. The under 17 football team already participated in the CJSOI games in the islands, and we won the championship. I think they should know whether to ask for additional funding for other competitions.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the Minister whether he has made any emergency application, according to laid out procedures, to the Ministry of Finance, being given that he just mentioned that the under 17 won the tournament? I think this is a bad signal to the youth, especially at a time that we are working on the promotion of our national team. Here we have a case where our under 17 has won a tournament and they have to participate at an international tournament and the reason given is that Mauritius does not have money. I am asking the Minister whether he has made an application to the Ministry of Finance and whether the Minister has

responded? I find it very shocking that Mauritius has not been able to participate because of Rs1.5 m.

Mr Ritoo: Well, we are actually on the eve of the presentation of the Budget. Of course, this does not only concern the football federation, but all the sports federations. In fact, there are 42 sports federations which have already exhausted their budget. Of course, we have asked for additional funding in the context of the IOI games which are much more important in the island.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai bien compris la réponse du ministre, mais malgré tout ne pense-t-il pas que la décision de ne pas participer représente un coup d'arrêt à la progression de cette équipe ? Le ministre, lui-même, a dit que cette équipe a remporté la médaille d'or au dernier jeu de la CJSOI.

Mr Ritoo: Non, M. le président, ce n'est pas un coup d'arrêt, au contraire. C'est à la fédération de voir quelles sont ses priorités. C'est à eux de choisir s'ils veulent participer à la préparation de l'équipe senior au niveau des Jeux des Iles. On a fait la demande pour un budget additionnel pour cela. Nous sommes à la veille de la présentation du Budget et toutes les fédérations ont déjà épuisé tout l'argent qu'on leur a donné.

(Interruptions)

Je comprends. Bien sûr, si on a gagné la médaille d'or au niveau de la CJSOI on doit soutenir cette équipe, mais il y a des priorités.

SPORTS ACT- AMENDMENT

(No. 1B/622) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Act, he will state where matters stand in relation to the -

- (a) twenty-two Sports Federations not recognised by his Ministry, and
- (b) proposed amendments to the Act.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (a) of the question, I would like, first of all, to point out that the twenty-two sports federations referred to have not lost 'recognition' of my Ministry as such. They are, in fact, non-compliant sports federations in so much as they have

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- (i) either not filed Annual Returns for the last accounting period, or
- (ii) not amended their rules as required by the Sports Act, or
- (iii) both.

If the hon. Member is referring to non-compliant sports federations, the situation is as follows -

- (i) all the 22 sports federations have not amended their rules in accordance with the Sports Act, and
- (ii) five of them had not submitted their Annual Returns within the prescribed time, i.e., as at July 2010.

These five federations were given a further delay to do so. As at to date, three of them have already submitted their returns and the remaining two have failed to do so despite reminders. My Ministry has, therefore, suspended these two federations as from this month.

Regarding part (b), a first draft amendment bill has already been submitted by the State Law Office. However, the Committee which I had set up earlier under the Chairmanship of Mr Ravin Chetty, has proposed further amendments to the Sports Act to, *inter alia*, address the problems concerning the non-compliant federations. These proposals have been forwarded to the State Law Office for examination and inclusion in the draft bill.

Mr Quirin: Le ministre peut-il nous dire quelles sont les fédérations qui ont été suspendues?

Mr Ritoo: The two federations that have been suspended are the Bridge and Chess Federations.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister said that so many federations have been suspended. Can I know what that entails, what that means and what do they lose?

Mr Ritoo: I have set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr Ravin Chetty to request them to comply with the submission of returns. In fact, they have drafted a model form which has been submitted to these 22 federations so that this may help them to comply with the Sports Act.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister said that so many federations have been suspended. What does that mean, what does that entail and what do they lose when they are suspended?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have said that they have not lost 'recognition'. We are asking these twenty-two federations to comply with the Sports Act but, on the other hand, we are catering for the athletes. We cannot just suspend 22 federations, because if we do so there won't be sports activities in Mauritius. We are giving them opportunities but, at the same time, we are asking the federations to submit their annual returns so as to comply with the rules and regulations of the Sports Act.

Mr Bérenger: *Ine tourne en rond là!* There are important amendments from what I heard, additional amendments that are going to be brought to the Sports Act. In the meantime, those federations are asked to comply with the existing Sports Act. Obviously, there is an incentive for them to wait for the new Sports Act and when they amend their rules they comply with the new amended Sports Act. Will the Minister agree with me that, maybe, it is worth not suspending any more federations, but to come fast with the amendments, to have a new Sports Act and then to act decisively?

Mr Ritoo: In fact, that is what the Committee is doing. It is asking the federations to comply as quickly as possible so that we can come with the amendments.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre ce qu'il pense de la déclaration du représentant de la CIO qui était à Maurice récemment, M. Mustapha Beraf. Il a indiqué qu'il existe des disparités entre le *Sports Act*...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question without referring to any declaration made.

Mr Quirin: Je dois en faire référence, M. le président, parce qu'il a indiqué qu'il existe des disparités entre le *Sports Act* et la Charte Olympique. Donc, le ministre peut-il préciser qu'elles sont ces disparités et les dispositions prises pour y remédier ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr Beraf made a comment regarding the *Charte Olympique*. This is another question. Regarding our Sports Act, it is clear that all the federations are requested to comply with Sports Act to which we are bringing amendments. We can't just compare the *Charte Olympique* and the Sports Act.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether any recommendations for amendment have emanated from the Commission of Youth and Sports of Rodrigues to be included in the Sports Act?

Mr Ritoo: In fact, all the sports federations will be participating in the amendments, even Rodrigues is taken on board.

Mr Khamajeet: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the Minister has said that 20 sports federation are not compliant to the Sports Act. Can I ask the hon. Minister if his Ministry is still entertaining financial requests from these federations?

Mr Ritoo: This has already been the case. We are still entertaining their financial requests. As I said, the suspended federations are the Chess Federation and Bridge Federation and they are not getting any financial or technical assistance from my Ministry, whereas those federations which are not compliant but which are still practising sports like bodybuilding, golf and swimming – which are very important and we have got our champions in the swimming federation - there is a committee which is trying to help these federations to comply with all the rules of the Sports Act.

Mr Barbier: The Minister just mentioned bodybuilding. With regard to the federation of bodybuilders, I see that there was a *litige* between two groups of athletes who are trying to control the federation. Can the Minister inform the House where matters stand so far concerning the bodybuilding?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, each federation is autonomous. The federations operate separately and they are affiliated with the international federation. Now, each one wants to have a federation separately or to run in parallel. The Ministry recognises only one federation and the federation that is recognised gets all the financial and technical assistance, transport facilities and everything. But, if there are other people who are creating other federations and are just quarrelling among themselves, they are not recognised by my Ministry.

Mr Barbier: I would like to know whether there is actually one federation for bodybuilders and who is controlling it?

Mr Ritoo: There is only one federation, the federation of bodybuilders.

The Deputy Speaker: There is only one federation.

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking of the Sports Act, but what is happening to the Sports Council?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, avant de terminer, j'aimerais demander au ministre s'il peut préciser quand ce dossier sera bouclé de manière définitive concernant le *Sports Act* et les fédérations non-conformes, etc.?

Mr Ritoo: Well, very soon.

CLINIQUE DU NORD – MRS M.N.V. – LIPOSUCTION SURGERY

(No. 1B/623) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the death of one Mrs M. N. V., on 29 October at the Victoria Hospital, following a liposuction surgery at the Clinique du Nord, she will state if an inquiry has been carried out into the causes of the death and if so, the outcome thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the death of Mrs. M.N.V. on 29 October 2010, at Victoria Hospital, an enquiry had immediately been carried out at the level of the hospital and a report submitted to my Ministry.

In light of that report, I appointed a technical team to conduct a thorough enquiry into the causes leading to the death of Mrs. M.N.V.

The enquiry is still ongoing and the most appropriate decision will be taken in the light of its findings.

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

Mr Bérenger: Can I take it from the hon. Minister that this high level enquiry will, very seriously, look also not just at what took place at the hospital but what took place at the *Clinique du Nord*? Who took the decision to send her to Victoria instead of the nearest hospital or the different stages in that drama?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that all these information is being taken care of by the enquiry which is being carried out.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister say when will the enquiry be completed?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot say when exactly but I can say very soon.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister be in a position to inform the House about how many deaths have occurred from liposuction in the recent years? And whether the same...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon Member ...

Dr. S. Boolell: No, it is a question linked to this one. It might be the same guy practising liposuction. Whether doctors are qualified in this country to practise liposuction, having performed so many before?

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister can answer, I have no problem?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is another question, totally different from the main one. I am replying to a question in regard to the death of Mrs M. N. V. and I cannot generalise.

Dr. S. Boolell: Liposuction is a super specialised procedure. May I ask one question to the hon. Minister? Despite the enquiry, what is the cause of death in this case?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this does not relate to the question. The question relates to one Mrs M. N. V. and not to liposuction in general.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister cannot answer, then she must just say so if she does not have the information.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question is asking the causes of the death. So, we want the cause of death; one line which is public information.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There is an enquiry going on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How can I pre-empt the conclusions of that enquiry?

The Deputy Speaker: All right, we move to the next question!

GRNW - BUS SHELTER

(No. 1B/624) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bus shelter erected at Grand River North West, he will state –

- (a) the cost thereof, and
- (b) if a preliminary study had been carried out to assess the feasibility of the project, and if so, who carried out same.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are actually two bus shelters which were constructed long ago at Grand River North West. However, if the hon. Member is referring to the bus shelter situated in front of the building of Defi Media Group, I wish to state that following representations made by stakeholders, mainly bus commuters the bus shelter had to be shifted, with no additional cost, to another location where it is serving its purpose.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the hon. Member will appreciate that construction of a bus shelter does not warrant a preliminary study.

I wish to emphasise that this location of GRNW is very sensitive and highly accident prone in view of the very high density of traffic throughout the day. Every year, at least one fatal or serious injury accident has been recorded.

Given the complex road traffic and pedestrian interactions over this area, my Ministry is adopting a holistic approach to further improve the present situation. Technicians from my Ministry are working on the feasibility to rehabilitate the old GRNW bridge and to provide a partial grade separation at the junction of the main road of Coromandel and the road to Bambous. This global approach will definitely enhance the overall traffic distribution, mobility and safety in this region.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister how much the two bus stops on the lay-by cost Government?

Mr Bachoo: I am not in the presence of the figures. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I am going to answer this.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one bus stand has been removed. Can the hon. Minister inform us as to where that bus stand has been removed? This is the one staying there for months as an eyesore. Has the hon. Minister been informed of the situation and what action does he contemplate to take not only to remove, but also to take action against those who have planned that development which has cost a lot of money and there have been another work to alleviate the first job?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that there has been no cost. This is one. Secondly, we have removed one bus stop because there have been too much complaints; I had myself been on the spot together with competent, capable and clever engineers. They had been on site and we have taken the decision on the spot because it is very difficult to pre-plan beforehand. At times, we take a decision, then we have to wait for a few weeks and even for months and we have to see how fluid the traffic is and the hon. Member will accept that there had been certain problems. We had been there following representations made; we have removed the bus stop and placed it elsewhere and I have used the words 'with no cost'. But, how much does a bus stop normally cost? I do not have the figures with me. Once you come forward with a question, I am going to answer, but I have just mentioned that it is a very critical and sensitive area and that is the reason why Government has decided that we have to upgrade and rehabilitate the GRNW Bridge. At the same time, a partial grade separator junction has to be placed a little bit above, at the junction where one road leads towards Petite Rivière. These are all works which we are trying to do probably as from next year or in the forthcoming budget, if funds are available, I can go ahead with the projects.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has just stated that works have been carried out following his site visit. Can I inform him, in the names of all those who travel there and who use that road that the work which has been carried out, *c'est ene travail casse la gueule*. If the hon.

Minister will go and see, he will see for himself that it is the cause of daily accidents occurring there in front of Le Defi. They have removed the traffic lights and left pieces of *béton* there.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has just mentioned this to me. I will see to it that by tomorrow morning, if really a few pieces are left, these be removed.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ganoo!

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT & EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. 1B/625) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act, he will state the representations received by his Ministry emanating from the Trade Union organisations in relation to the proposed amendments to be brought thereto, indicating when the proposed amendments will be introduced in the House.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question.

As the House is aware, the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act which were passed by this Assembly in August 2008 were proclaimed on 02 February 2009. Since then, it has been noted that some problems are being encountered to apply some provisions of both Acts in view of new issues which have cropped up in the world of work. I have invited stakeholders to submit to me any proposals that they might have on amendments to be brought to the Act. In this context, some workers' organisations have already come forward with several proposals in the form of a Memorandum and they are at this very moment being currently examined at the level of my Ministry. After further consultations with all stakeholders, the amendments that I intend to bring will be presented before this House.

RICHE TERRE - PLANTERS - NOËL-RAMKISSOON REPORT

(No. 1B/626) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the small planters of Riche Terre, he will state if he proposes to meet them or their representatives with a view to finding a solution to their claims, indicating if he proposes to table copy of the Noël-Ramkissoon Report.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me state at the very outset that I have always been willing to meet the planters with a view to finding an acceptable solution. In this connection, I have had a number of meetings with the planters concerned and each time I have impressed upon them that it is in their best interest to accept the package that Government had proposed which is based on the assessment made by the competent authorities.

In this regard, the House may wish to note that I have replied to several Parliamentary Questions and also one Private Notice Question whereby I gave comprehensive details on the subject.

Let me recall once again that Government decided that the 13 planters who had been occupying their land be paid a cash compensation of Rs120,000 per *arpent* together with accrued interests for period 23/24 May 2007 to end June 2010, averaging some Rs25,000 per *arpent*; and that they be relocated at agricultural stations, namely Bois Marchand or Arsenal, that is, on land with higher potential, fertility and productivity for a lease period of eight years with the possibility of renewal. The rental value of the land was kept unchanged at Rs120 per *arpent* per annum against Rs1,000 presently charged.

This is in line with the core mission and priority of my Ministry which is to promote food and agricultural production for enhanced food security.

In addition to the compensation of Rs120,000 per *arpent* and relocation, the planters are having their Irrigation Authority and Central Electricity Board debts written off; DBM loans rescheduled; and they are also entitled to further incentives under the Food Security Fund for land preparation, fertilizers and seeds, upgrading of irrigation network, fencing and other upgrading works. Such support measures have been estimated to cost around Rs120,000 per *arpent*.

As for the remaining nine ex-planters who had abandoned their land, they would be granted the cash compensation with accrued interest only. However, if these nine ex-planters, inasmuch as they had abandoned their plots, are once again interested to revert back to crop production, the grant to them of land and other facilities currently available under existing schemes at my Ministry will be considered.

Unfortunately the planters concerned have systematically refused the proposals made by Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in view of the wider implications of the Report, Government has decided to set up a Ministerial Committee that would look into all these implications.

As soon as the Committee would complete the assignment, a decision would be taken in the light of the conclusion of the Ministerial Committee. Government will then consider the advisability of making the Report public.

Mr Bérenger: I welcome the idea of setting up a Ministerial Committee. Can I know who will chair that Committee and who will be members thereof? Secondly, will the Minister see to it that that Ministerial Committee works very fast because there are people, including Père Labour, who are on hunger strike outside?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, the Ministerial Committee comprises of my Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and also the Prime Minister's Office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We will try to sort out things at the earliest possible by early next week.

Mr Bérenger: Ministerial Committees are composed of Ministers! *C'est élémentaire!* Who is the Minister who is going to chair that Ministerial Committee? Are there going to be Ministers from other Ministries?

Mr Faugoo: I am going to chair. My colleague, the Minister of Finance, is in the Committee and there will be a representative of the PMO who will be in attendance. He does not form part of the Ministerial Committee, he is not a Minister, but he will form part of the Committee.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Minister whether the Ministerial Committee will consider the necessity of making public the report and will they hear witnesses like Père Labour himself, Mr Alain Noël and Mr Ramkisson?

Mr Faugoo: We do not see the need to hear witnesses, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As I said, the mandate of the Ministerial Committee is to see the wider implications of the report which is already there.

Mr Ganoo: This is a novelty in the situation: the setting up of this Ministerial Committee. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has talked about the urgency. How long does the hon. Minister think it will take?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, by early next week. Today is Tuesday and by early next week, we should come out with it.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (NEW) - INTRODUCTION

(No.1B/627) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the introduction of a new Local Government Bill, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, a major review of Local Government legislations will be undertaken in order to better meet the aspirations of the population. It was also announced that consideration will be given to the creation of new Municipal Councils.

My Ministry is currently working on the proposals and a new Local Government Bill will be presented to the National Assembly in due course.

Being given that the Bill proposes the creation of additional Municipalities, the legal and financial implications are being examined as well as the redefinition of new boundaries of the local authorities.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL - FOOD AND BEVERAGES - SUPPLIERS

(No.1B/628) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether in regard to the supply of food and beverages for the events organized by or sponsored by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the suppliers, indicating the -

- (a) criteria used for the selection thereof, and
- (b) amount paid to each of them.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION - BAR VOCATIONAL COURSE

(No. 1B/629) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Council of Legal Education, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House obtain from the Council, information as to the number of students who were enrolled for the Bar Vocational Course for the years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 respectively, indicating in each case, the number thereof who have been successful at the Bar Examinations, and
- (b) state if Government proposes to review the functioning of the Council of Legal Education.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West for putting this question pertaining to an issue, which I myself raised as Government back bencher in 2007 and 2008.

I am informed that the Bar Vocational Course starts in January and ends in July and I, therefore, believe that the hon. Member is in fact requesting for statistics with regard to the Bar Vocational Course (meant for prospective Barristers and not the course conducted for prospective Attorneys and Notaries) for the years 2009 and 2010 respectively. These statistics are as follows -

Year	No. of candidates registered for Bar Vocational Course	No. of candidates registered for Examinations	No. of candidates who passed Bar Vocational Exams
2009	67	56	4

2010	52	47	1

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to admit that these statistics are a serious cause for concern. In fact, I met the representatives of the students following the course a few weeks after assuming office, and they expressed their anxiety to me.

I am informed by the Chairperson of the Council of Legal Education that the Bar Vocational Examination is a very difficult one, and that success at the examinations will depend on a percentage pass of 50% in every paper (including the oral test for Barristers), coupled with an overall minimum percentage of 60%. This is provided for under the Barristers' Examination Rules, Attorneys' Examination Rules and Notaries' Examination Rules made pursuant to section 4(2)(b) of the Law Practitioners Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the current state of things, the Chairperson of the Council of Legal Education himself has requested that the whole course, i.e the syllabus and examination, be reviewed and be conducted by a different institution.

In this respect, I must inform the House that Government is indeed in the process of reviewing the functioning of the Council of Legal Education (CLE) and, in this context, substantial changes are proposed to be brought to the Law Practitioners Act (LPA), under which the CLE is established. I wish to further inform the House that the views of the Judiciary, the Bar Council, the Law Society, the Chamber of Notaries and the Law Reform Commission have already been obtained in relation thereto.

It is being considered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Law Practitioners Act be amended -

- (i) not only to alter the functions of the CLE, but also the composition and secretariat of the CLE, to enable it to better cater for the aspirations of law students;
- (ii) to ensure that prospective law practitioners undergo an adequate period of professional and vocational training and pupillage;
- (iii) to enable a citizen of Mauritius who has obtained a professional qualification as, or equivalent to that of a barrister in another Commonwealth country or a Civil Law State to apply for admission to practise in Mauritius as a barrister;
- (iv) to make provision for law practitioners to follow Continuing Professional Development Programmes, and
- (v) to ensure that persons who wish to be considered for appointment as a judicial officer follow an appropriate induction course.

The result of the proposed amendments to the Law Practitioners Act may be that vocational courses and examinations will no longer be conducted by the CLE, but by accredited persons, i.e the University of Mauritius or a person authorised by the CLE.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is committed to set up an institute for the training of Judges, Magistrates and law officers, as stated at paragraph 290 of the Government Programme 2010-2015. In this context, the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Bill is being finalised.

In short, if the proposed changes are implemented, legal education in Mauritius will undergo a major overhaul.

Mr Bérenger: Can I congratulate the hon. Minister and thank him for his reply. Without blaming the present Chairperson of the Council of Legal Education, I believe the hon. Minister will agree with me *que c'est un crime contre la jeunesse qui a été commis*. Without blaming the individual, some of the students have sat twice, three times, who are brilliant, who have succeeded at the University. Four times! *Les espoirs sont brisés*. Now, what the Minister has

announced is going to take some time. But can I plead that we do the restructuring as rapidly as possible with those young students, for them to be allowed to resit as soon as possible?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, time is of the essence in this issue and we have to act rapidly. I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has stated sometime back that he is going to propose the setting up of a select committee, but let me inform the House that the amendments to the Law Practitioners Act are almost complete. If the hon. Members of the Opposition want to have their input, they are most welcome because this is a matter of national interest and above party politics. They are most welcome to come over. Let's discuss and let's go ahead as soon as possible.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister will have understood that it is not without reason that I haven't proposed today a Select Committee. I think that we can move much faster. Therefore, that proposal for Select Committee is redundant.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister mention that there would be an extension to allow people more qualified outside Mauritius, not just in England but from other jurisdictions also, to be able to practice in Mauritius. May I know from the hon. Minister whether these people would be required to do a conversion course to be familiar with the laws of Mauritius, or would that be an automatic qualification?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I'll request the hon. gentleman to be patient. We are in the process of finalising the Bill. The matter is being considered, as I mentioned in the reply.

Mr Seetaram: In relation to the reviewing and functioning of the Council of Legal Education concerning the exams, can I know whether the Minister will consider the system, the procedure that has been used by the Bar of vocational course in England, that is, in England and Wales, where you have 12 or more exams per year, and this is broken down throughout the year on a selective procedure, where you have more time and much fairer approach to the system itself?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I followed the course in UK as well, but I don't recall that the exams were spread throughout the year. What I agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the course should be practice based, and that is why there is a need for reform.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - BUILDING PERMITS

(No. 1B/630) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the allegation of fraud and corruption with regard to the granting of building permits at the Municipal Council of Port Louis and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the actions taken to ensure that the granting thereof is made in a transparent manner.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has received a report against one officer of the Planning Department of the Municipal Council of Port-Louis to the effect that he has alone processed some applications for building and land use permits from start to finish.

After being apprised of the report against the officer, I have instructed the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council of Port-Louis to refer the matter to the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) for investigation. Disciplinary proceedings, if any, will be instituted against the officer in light of the findings of the investigation.

I am informed by the Chief Executive of the Council that more strict control is exercised to enhance vigilance over the granting of building and land use permits.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister whether that officer is still sitting in that committee granting building permits.

Mr Aimée: No Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. 1B/638 has been withdrawn. Next question! Hon. Ribot!

NATIONAL LOTTERY - CONSOLIDATED FUND

(No. 1B/631) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the money collected from the operation of the National Lottery, Loto, he will state the amount paid into the Consolidated Fund since the creation of the lottery, indicating the projects financed

therefrom as at to-date and the projects that are proposed to be financed with the remaining balance.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Accountant General an amount of Rs 511 m has been paid into the Consolidated Fund from the operation of the National Lottery since its creation.

As per the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act, the proceeds from the National Lottery is to be used to finance the implementation of projects relating to community development, the promotion of education, health, sports and culture, for reimbursement of the public debt of Government and for such other purposes as may be prescribed.

A number of projects have therefore been identified in this respect. Some of them were announced in the 2010 Budget Speech. Details of the other projects will be provided in the 2011 Budget.

It is also proposed to include an appendix on projects that have been financed from the proceeds of National Lottery in the 2011 Budget.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask hon. Minister if a study has being carried out on the number of betters and the average sum bet so as to situate how far we've become a *nation zougader*?

Mr Jugnauth: Well this is not related to this question. The hon. Member is asking about how much money has been in the Consolidated Fund. This is a totally different issue.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the Minister if the company is enjoying any incentives, for example, not paying the corporate tax?

Mr Jugnauth: Again this does not arise from this question.

The Deputy Speaker: This does not arise from the initial question. We move to the next one!

OSTEOPOROSIS - MEASURES

(No. 1B/632) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she is aware if there is an increase in the number of cases of osteoporosis and if so, will she state the measures that her Ministry proposes to take for the prevention thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Osteoporosis falls in the category of muscular – skeletal diseases as per the International Classification of Diseases. It is a natural process which weakens the bones and increases the risks of fracture mainly because of ageing.

Mostly women are more vulnerable to this disease as the period of menopause approaches.

At the level of Ministry and the hospitals, no records has been kept of Osteoporosis as such, but I have given instructions that records should henceforth be kept.

As preventive measures, the following actions have been taken to minimise the disease process -

- (i) patients are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and practise regular physical exercises;
- (ii) they are also counselled to take a balanced diet and to avoid alcohol and smoking;
- (iii) when symptoms suggest Osteoporosis, supplements of Vitamin D3, Calcium and Magnesium are prescribed, and
- (iv) hormonal treatment to female patients is prescribed as and when required by the gynaecologist after proper assessment.

My Ministry is envisaging to purchase a bone densitometry apparatus for more accurate diagnosis, although the diagnosis remains fundamentally clinical.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as Calcium is concerned, I would like to ask the hon. Minister what preventive measure is being taken by her Ministry.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I just said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that whenever symptoms suggest Osteoporosis, supplements of Vitamin D3, Calcium and Magnesium are prescribed.

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, according to studies that are going to be carried out, if they have not yet, if the youngsters and young ladies should not be encouraged to take yoghurt from their very young age?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot give any statement on this. I am fully aware of what should be given and what should not be given. I leave this to the medical officers to advise on this issue.

CITE ROMA, RICHE TERRE - DRAIN SYSTEM

(No. 1B/633) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Cité Roma, Riche Terre, he will state if consideration will be given for the carrying out of a complete study of the drain system found thereat.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following requests made by the PPS of that constituency, engineers of my Ministry have already prepared scope of work for the construction of a drain in that region. Works order would be issued once district contractors are appointed.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I 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 Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour for tea.

At 4.23 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.18 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms S. Anquetil) -

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved”.

Question again proposed.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker Sir, let me, first of all, congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker for your respective appointments and for the very distinguished manner in which you have always been conducting the affairs of Parliament and assuming your duties. I wish to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for his re-election at the helm of the country and for the dedicated way he is conducting the affairs of the nation. I also congratulate the hon. Leader of the Opposition, *in absentia, parce qu’il est bien à sa place.*

M. le président, c’est un moment solennel pour moi en tant que vice- Premier ministre et ministre des finances et Leader du MSM de m’adresser à la Chambre sur le Discours-Programme du nouveau gouvernement PTR-PMSD-MSM que le peuple a plébiscité démocratiquement dans sa sagesse et sa maturité.

Le moment est solennel parce que c’est l’avenir de notre pays qui est au centre des débats ; c’est la vision d’un gouvernement fort et avant-gardiste avec un leadership fort que je défends avec beaucoup de fierté ; c’est le peuple mauricien et son épanouissement qui sont au centre de mes préoccupations, surtout à quelques jours de la présentation du premier Budget du gouvernement de l’Alliance de l’Avenir.

M. le président, je suis très heureux de faire partie de l’équipe gouvernementale Bleu-Blanc-Rouge deuxième génération qui a été concrétisée sur la base de la confiance, de la

sincérité et, certainement, d'une volonté farouche pour servir le pays et le peuple en vue de marquer de son empreinte l'île Maurice moderne de l'avenir. Et là, je profite de l'occasion pour remercier le Premier ministre pour la confiance qu'il a placée en moi et en mon parti, afin que nous puissions ensemble propulser notre pays vers de nouveaux sommets en matière de développement socio-économique. Le Premier ministre a cru dans la capacité et les compétences du MSM et, en dépit de toutes les tractations, des manigances, des combines dans différents milieux pour tenter de marginaliser mon parti, le Premier ministre a accordé au MSM la considération qu'il mérite sur l'échiquier politique. Et, je profite, donc, de l'occasion pour dire au Premier ministre dans cette auguste Assemblée que mon parti et moi-même, nous sommes plus que jamais déterminés à travailler avec la sincérité qui a toujours marqué notre action politique pour mettre à exécution le projet de société qui a été énoncé dans le Discours-Programme.

Je parlais tout à l'heure de la vision du nouveau gouvernement. Cette vision tient compte bien évidemment des impératifs et des défis économiques.

Mais, plus important, elle tient compte des exigences sociales et de notre devoir en tant que dirigeants du pays d'œuvrer en faveur du bien-être de la population et de son avancement.

M. le président, le nouveau gouvernement bleu-blanc-rouge veut travailler en partenariat avec le peuple et, bien sûr, les différents autres *stakeholders*, afin que notre pays puisse faire un bond vers la modernité, tout en préservant nos atouts environnementaux ; qu'il y ait davantage de création de richesses ; qu'il y ait des opportunités pour tout le monde et, qu'ensemble, comme une nation unie et ambitieuse, nous devenions, une nouvelle fois, un exemple cité à travers le monde en matière de développement socio-économique. Au sein du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, nous avons pris le pari de relever de gros défis dans l'intérêt du pays et du peuple. Il n'est plus question, M. le président, de parti ; il y a une équipe bleu-blanc-rouge homogène avec, comme je l'ai souligné, un leadership fort, des leaders déterminés, regardant dans une seule direction, et un programme réfléchi, avant-gardiste, réaliste et réalisable. Je n'ai absolument aucun doute que, dans la solidarité et en travaillant dur - il va falloir travailler très dur pendant les cinq ans - nous allons relever les défis présents et ceux qui se présenteront en cours de route durant les prochaines années.

Le discours-programme du gouvernement énonce, en effet, les différents chantiers et champs d'action des années à venir. Le gouvernement a pris des engagements, et nous nous attèlerons à honorer ces engagements bien sûr au cours de notre mandat de cinq ans. Innover, moderniser, démocratiser et assurer surtout un juste équilibre entre l'économie et le social sont les grands axes du discours-programme.

Quand nous parlons d'innovation, c'est surtout remodeler le paysage économique en consolidant les piliers existants, développer de nouveaux piliers et réaliser aussi de grands projets infrastructurels, à la fois modernisant et écologique. Tout cela cadrant, bien sûr, avec notre rêve de faire de l'île Maurice un *duty-free island*. Quand nous parlons de *duty-free island*, M. le président, il ne s'agit pas tout simplement, comme certains le prétendent, d'élimination de tarifs douaniers. Malheureusement, pour certains qui écrivent, je ne sais pas s'ils pensent que la question de *duty-free island* s'associe uniquement au *duty-free shopping*. Le *duty-free island*, c'est tout un ensemble. Il est question d'un pilier économique à part entière, offrant de nouvelles avenues de business, de commerce, d'entrepreneuriat, et de nouvelles opportunités pour tous nos compatriotes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am convinced that transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island will unleash a new and unprecedented dynamism in our economy for investment, trade and business. Mauritius, being a duty-free island in the years to come, in the way that this Government conceives it, would benefit Mauritians not only in terms of new opportunities, but, of course, in terms of lower prices of consumable and non-consumable goods.

Our vision to make of Mauritius a regional hub of excellence and transforming it into a duty-free island like Dubai and Singapore will not be realised if we do not invest massively in modernising the physical fabric of our country. That's why this Government is determined to invest in modern and sophisticated infrastructure that will support a higher growth path and improve the quality of life. Only such a physical fabric can take our country to a level that heralds the emergence of a modern and determined nation. The Rapid Mass Transit project will be, in fact, the backbone of the new development vision that we have for our country. I am happy that we have consensus on this issue in Government, on the way to move forward.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at the same time, the Government Programme reaffirms the environment friendly development approach, in line with the Prime Minister's vision of *Maurice Ile Durable*.

The House will recall that, even when I was in the ranks of the Opposition, I had supported the Prime Minister's initiative. I fully share the vision of the hon. Prime Minister, as our environmental assets are the only treasures that we possess, and we must preserve them at all costs.

M. le président, un autre aspect important du discours-programme sur lequel je voudrais m'appesantir, c'est la volonté affichée par le gouvernement de poursuivre le processus de démocratisation de l'économie, pour que l'opportunité soit offerte à tous les mauriciens, et même à d'autres étrangers, à investir dans le pays, et à contribuer à faire grossir le gâteau national et, en même temps, démocratiser pour que les travailleurs qui produisent la richesse dans le pays puissent devenir progressivement les partenaires dans leurs entreprises respectives, au lieu d'être considérés uniquement au même titre que des outils de production. L'idée émise dans le discours-programme de mettre sur pied un *Tourism and Hotel Investment Trust* et la dynamisation de l'*Employees Real Estate Investment Trust* pour faire participer les travailleurs dans les grands projets de développement fonciers et immobiliers vont dans cette direction, sans oublier la démarche courageuse du Premier ministre de faire participer les petits planteurs dans l'actionnariat des nouvelles entités dans la filière cannière.

L'autre axe fondamental du discours-programme que nous tenons à cœur au sein du gouvernement, c'est assurer un juste équilibre entre l'économie et le social. Je reviens là-dessus, car pour nous, dans ce gouvernement bleu-blanc-rouge, nous estimons que l'économie doit être au service du pays et du peuple et non au service des tout-puissants uniquement.

Nous sommes déterminés également, M. le président, à tout mettre en œuvre pour soutenir les groupes vulnérables de notre société et, dans ce contexte, je salue le Premier ministre pour sa décision de créer un ministère spécifique, notamment le ministère de l'Intégration Sociale, pour combattre la pauvreté. Et pour donner un signal fort de la détermination du gouvernement de s'attaquer à ce problème, le Premier ministre a confié la responsabilité de ce dossier à nul autre que mon collègue, le vice-premier ministre, notre ami, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval. Je soutiens pleinement cette initiative, et je n'ai aucun doute que jusqu'à la fin de notre présent mandat, on aura parcouru un long chemin dans notre combat contre la pauvreté.

Sous ce même registre, je tiens à saluer l'initiative annoncée de construire des milliers de logements sociaux, car nous devons nous rapprocher davantage de notre devise 'un toit pour tous'.

M. le président, outre nos atouts environnementaux, nous n'avons que des ressources humaines sur lesquelles on peut compter pour atteindre nos objectifs de développement socioéconomique. Développer et former nos ressources humaines en fonction des besoins du développement du pays est également l'une des grandes priorités du programme du gouvernement. Nous investirons davantage dans l'éducation. Nous allons élaborer des programmes de formation appropriée et y consacrer, bien sûr, les moyens nécessaires, car nous devons franchir un grand pas en termes de gain de productivité et d'efficacité ; tout cela, pour réaliser notre ambition d'excellence à tous les niveaux. Le discours-programme me réconforte sur les mesures énoncées pour maintenir l'ordre et la paix dans le pays. C'est d'ailleurs l'une des grandes priorités du gouvernement. Le Premier ministre mérite tous nos encouragements et notre soutien dans les initiatives envisagées pour s'attaquer au problème de criminalité et s'assurer que notre pays demeure un havre de paix. Le gouvernement est aussi déterminé à s'attaquer à des fléaux sociaux comme l'alcoolisme et le *gambling*. Des mesures audacieuses sont imminentes.

M. le président, je suis également heureux que le discours-programme met l'accent sur l'importance et la nécessité de préserver et de promouvoir nos valeurs religieuses, culturelles et linguistiques. Déjà, la *MBC* a lancé de nouvelles chaînes, dédiées à chacun des courants culturels présents à Maurice. La mise sur pied envisagée de l'Arabique, du Bhojpuri, du Créole, du Mandarin et Sanskrit *Speaking Unions* est une autre grande étape dans la valorisation de nos valeurs linguistiques. C'est une démarche qui, bien sûr, bénéficie de tout mon soutien.

M. le président, j'ai privilégié la vision du gouvernement tout au long de mon intervention jusqu'à présent mais, bien sûr, je ne pourrais conclure sans réagir aux commentaires d'ordre politique qui ont été faits par le *Leader* de l'Opposition et certains autres parlementaires de l'autre côté de la Chambre.

Tout d'abord, M. le président, what a shame! The Opposition is absent for this debate and they have signified their intention of not participating in the completion of the debates pour le discours-programme. They are not assuming their responsibility. In fact, they are paid from public funds. They are supposed to be defending the population at large and to be voicing their

views with regard to that important *discours-programme* and we do not see them! Le *Leader* de l'Opposition s'est dit choqué que le nouveau gouvernement vient de l'avant avec des projets comme celui du métro léger. Je vais prendre un seul exemple parce qu'il y en a tellement. Je ne vois pas d'où vient ce choc, à moins que le *Leader* de l'Opposition soit toujours KO après la cuisante défaite de l'Alliance du Cœur qu'il avait dirigée lors des dernières élections. Si les conditions sont maintenant réunies pour que certains projets puissent être reconsidérés et implémentés dans l'intérêt du pays, je n'y trouve rien de choquant, M. le président, d'autant plus que, dans leur manifeste électoral, ils s'étaient engagés à mettre en place le métro léger au cas où l'Alliance du Cœur parvenait au pouvoir. Donc, peut-on savoir aujourd'hui si le Chef de l'Opposition est contre ce projet? *Which is which?* Si le *Leader* de l'opposition dit que certains projets qui reviennent à l'avant-plan maintenant sont bons pour le pays et qu'il est d'accord, que l'on aille de l'avant.

M. le président, le commentaire de l'honorable Alan Ganoo est extraordinaire sur le point de vue du MMM que les élections n'ont pas été *free and fair*. Moi je dis que ce n'est que du cirque au parfum mauve. Dois-je rappeler au député Ganoo que l'Alliance du Cœur prédisait qu'elle se dirigeait vers une large victoire. Après la défaite, il brandit une parade pour tenter de sauver la baraque mauve. Alors, le MMM revient à la charge pour s'attaquer cette fois-ci à des institutions aussi sérieuses et crédibles comme la Commission Electorale et *the Electoral Supervisory Commission* dont la responsabilité est d'organiser les élections et de veiller à ce que ces élections se tiennent dans une atmosphère de *free and fairness*. Ils sont en train de mettre en doute les capacités, les compétences et la bonne foi de ces institutions.

Plus grave encore, le MMM s'est attaqué à l'intelligence de l'électorat. L'honorable Ganoo, fidèle à l'habitude dans le camp mauve, a réagi, je dirais, en mauvais perdant. C'est vraiment dommage pour la démocratie de notre pays. Je ne voudrais pas aller dans les détails. Il a fait de graves allégations concernant, supposément, certaines choses qui ont été données en termes de *bribes* électoraux à l'électorat. Je le mets au défi, pas d'aller répéter dehors, mais s'il était sérieux - d'ailleurs comme l'a fait Raj Ringadoo, qui, à l'époque, avait entré une action contre l'ancien député Ashok Jugnauth et il est allé en cour et nous savons tous ce qui s'est passé.

M. le président, si l'honorable Ganoo et le MMM étaient sérieux, s'ils avaient des éléments concrets, ils auraient pu entrer une action en cour pour demander la disqualification de

quiconque. Mais nous savons que ce n'est que du bla-bla-bla. Ils ne font ça que pour la parade et pour essayer de se justifier. D'ailleurs, nous savons qu'à l'époque, lors de mon élection à l'élection partielle qui avait eu lieu, il y avait une action similaire qui avait été entrée, *but we knew the fate of that action*.

Je dis à l'honorable Ganoo qu'aujourd'hui le MMM s'est transformé en une véritable succursale de malhonnêteté intellectuelle et de la démagogie. C'est cela d'ailleurs que l'électorat a sanctionné. Malgré cette cuisante défaite, l'honorable Ganoo a fait un calcul pour faire croire que le MMM a recueilli plus de suffrages en termes de pourcentage. Quel est son calcul, M. le président? J'ai pris la peine d'étudier et je ne sais pas s'il a inventé un nouveau style en mathématiques. Il dit que 50% des 78% des électeurs et électrices qui se sont rendus aux urnes ont voté pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir, ce qui représente, à son avis, seulement 39% de support. Mais il ne fait pas le même calcul pour l'Alliance du Cœur. 43% des 78% revient à 33,5%. Alors 39% et 33,5%, l'honorable Ganoo a occulté ce chiffre! Il a balancé que 61% des électeurs ont voté contre l'Alliance de l'Avenir et a affirmé: «c'est pourquoi nous disons que le MMM est le plus grand parti du pays». Je viens d'entendre le *Leader* de l'opposition qui disait «c'est pourquoi nous continuons la lutte.» C'est dramatique ce qu'est devenu le MMM aujourd'hui. Je dis à l'honorable Ganoo que lui-même et son parti refusent délibérément de tirer les vraies leçons de la défaite. Je suis d'accord que la lutte du MMM va continuer, mais ce sera dans le désert de l'opposition, pour être englouti bien vite dans le désert lui-même avec le genre de raisonnement que nous entendons et que nous avons entendu ce matin dans les rangs du MMM.

Combien de temps, M. le président, - je le dis aussi *out there* comme mon ami a l'habitude de le dire- les militants du MMM vont-ils vous suivre dans ce désert stérile? Combien de temps les Mauriciens vont-ils subir – je n'ai peut-être pas le mot pour décrire ce que le *Leader* de l'Opposition a l'habitude de faire, je l'appellerais des '*coustiques*' - l'hypocrisie du *Leader* de l'opposition ? A peine quelques jours...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, the hon. Minister cannot use the word hypocrite against a Member, but against the Opposition, yes, but not to a single Member!

Mr Jugnauth: D'accord. L'hypocrisie du MMM alors ! A peine quelques jours avant l'annonce de la concrétisation de l'Alliance Parti Travailleuse/PMSD/MSM, le *Leader* de l'Opposition mendiait d'une alliance avec le Parti Travailleuse, après avoir déclaré quelques semaines auparavant que «tout sépare le MMM du Parti Travailleuse».

Je me souviens qu'à l'époque - comme veut la procédure démocratique du MMM - il avait rappelé en urgence son Comité Central pour faire ratifier cette motion qu'on allait faire une alliance avec le Parti Travailleuse. Le bureau politique avait siégé en urgence et tout le monde était d'accord. Comme quoi nous savons comment fonctionne le MMM, quand le Chef dit quelque chose, tous les moutons et brebis doivent dire «oui, Monsieur». C'est comme ça ! Parce que je l'ai côtoyé, je le connais très bien. Donc, il avait entraîné tout le monde, le bureau politique, le comité central, tous les militants dans une logique d'alliance...

(Interruptions)

Oui, j'ai oublié, l'instance encore plus importante. Et aidé en cela, M. le président, par certains *agwas*. Il y avait des *agwas* qui essayaient de faire le pont. Les *agwas*, je veux dire, même certains *agwas* dans le milieu de la presse. Il disait qu'il n'y avait pas de différence entre lui et le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam; qu'il était d'accord que le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam soit Premier ministre, sur ce point moi et lui nous sommes d'accord.

(Interruptions)

En fait, M. le président, le renard a été pris à son propre piège. Il a été laissé au poteau. En fait, il s'est rendu ridicule. Je suis triste qu'il ne soit pas là. Je suis triste parce que peut-être cela aurait été plus excitant pour moi de lui dire cela en face. Mais l'électorat lui a infligé une cinglante défaite. Aujourd'hui, qu'est-ce qui se passe? Il a le culot de s'attaquer au Premier ministre. Maintenant, le Premier ministre n'est pas quelqu'un - il y a de grandes différences maintenant. Maintenant, le Premier ministre n'est pas bon. C'est pourquoi je me pose la question: combien de temps encore les militants vont-ils suivre un *leader* qui ne cesse de zigzaguer et que le MMM patauge dans une hypocrisie incroyable ?

But let me come back since he is not here. It would have been more fun, as I said, if he would have been here. I would have gone to some distance, but let me come back to the Government Programme, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not wish to be too long as I shall be dealing with, in fact, many aspects of Government's intended action that has been enunciated in the President's Address in the 2011 Budget that I will be presenting to the nation on Friday.

I wish, however, to seize this opportunity to apprise, once more, the House on the very difficult times that we are going through with the current euro crisis which is impacting on our economy. As you are all aware, we depend largely, in fact, till now, on the European markets for our exports and for our tourism. The present turmoil in Europe has led many European nations to

launch plans to reduce their public deficits. Italy approved an austerity package in May; the United Kingdom has announced a freeze on public sector hiring. In fact, they are reducing the number of public officers and they are cutting, to a large extent, ministerial budgets. Spain and Portugal adopted a series of unpopular austerity measures - Ireland considered, along with Greece, Spain and Portugal, to be the weak links of the European Union - introduced a general reduction in social spending and a five to fifteen percent cut in civil servants' wages. The public deficit has escalated to a massive 20% of GDP. France also, which is our main tourist market, is introducing harsh measures to contain its deficit and, according to a recent Infracore poll, more than 90% of the French believe that the euro zone crisis will affect all aspects of their daily lives in years to come. We are not talking about months, but years to come.

All these developments, Mr Speaker, Sir, indicate to us how challenging our task ahead is. Indeed, we are in dire times, but these circumstances must not prevent us from taking actions and measures in the best interest of our country and our people. We are committed to turn challenges into new opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in our vision to propel Mauritius towards new heights in socio-economic development, it is imperative for Government to take a number of bold and concrete measures to consolidate and to diversify its economic base, diversify its market altogether, support new emerging sectors and create new economic pillars and enlarge economic space for Mauritius. And to rise to these challenges we must, of course, be dynamic, we must be creative, we must be innovative and we must be able to drive growth.

The Government Programme focuses specifically on these fundamental aspects. In fact, our Government's vision is to put Mauritius into the league of high income economies with inclusive and sustainable development. Our vision is to transform Mauritius into a vibrant hub for trade and commerce, for business, financial services, ICT, medical services, knowledge and research. We have the potential to further position Mauritius as a services hub for the region and as a platform for the Asian economic giants to invest into Africa.

We have the vision, the team and the competences in this Government to make Mauritius glitter as a real Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. Wherever and whenever there is trust, sincerity and solidarity, the scope for achievement is heavenly immense and despite the hard times of the moment, I am confident that we shall weather the storm and put Mauritius on the path of a new socio-economic miracle and on this note, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you.

(5.46 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I join the long queue to congratulate you and you know my feelings, this unanimity confirms, once again, how you have been able to get such a disparate team to form a democratic Assembly. And this is to your credit and also my congratulation to the Deputy Speaker for his election. We hope that in the years ahead, this will further the bond between us all.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to thank the hon. Prime Minister and I repeat, once again, that 1995 was the turning point in my career from paediatrician to politician and to Minister, in 1997. I stayed in the House at the request of the Prime Minister and of my constituency, not joining that crowd, that every time they are given responsibility, they avoid it and run away from their responsibilities. In 2000, I joined the Labour Party. I was not a Member of the Labour Party between 1997 and 2000. In 2000, I joined the Labour Party and I was given again the possibility of standing in Constituency No. 2 and in 2005, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Labour Party, asked me to be the Deputy Leader of the party - eventually and I hadn't thought about it - to be the Deputy Prime Minister and to this I am most grateful and I thank him again. In 2010, there were no negotiations, nothing, it was not even mentioned. It was there tacitly understood and I gathered from other sources, but it was not on negotiations with anyone else or any party and for this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Prime Minister once again.

The President's Address, Mr Speaker, Sir, translates the Prime Minister's vision to develop and modernise our country during the next decade and, most importantly, to make this country a *Maurice Ile Durable* with all that it entails. And it is not just a *coquille vide*; it is not a sort of a slogan; it is a vision which gradually and slowly, over the past two or three years, have permeated throughout the island, in all layers of society and, today, there is an effort, there is a belief, there is a consensus that without a *Maurice Ile Durable*, our future is very bleak. And to this, I think, the Prime Minister has added his authority, but, most importantly, his belief in this vision and this is very important. As the vice-Prime Minister has just mentioned, we have the team to do it. We all understand this vision and we want it to go ahead and we will.

Recently, Mr Speaker, Sir, we had the election of Mrs Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau to the office of vice-President on a motion presented by the Prime Minister and voted unanimously. The Labour Party with the Government of today has, once again, made history. Never till now in

the history of this country has a woman assumed such a high constitutional position. I say bravo Monique. We are all proud of you! This motion of the Prime Minister consolidates his belief in the promotion of gender equality and to appoint women in position of highest responsibility to participate in the socio-economic development of this country.

Compare this, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the words from the other side! Since 1970, they have been talking about women and women empowerment, women committees, all sorts of things and nothing happened. Yet, when we put up women candidates, they were the source of all sorts of *dénigrement*; comments that were unworthy of a party that *se gargarisait pendant des décades* on women. Shame on them!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to congratulate previous speakers, especially on this side of the House. Marvellous! It shows solidarity amongst us, and to my dismay, when I hear the other side and what they have said about the electoral campaign and what they have pretended, it is as if they look at the looking glass and they do not see themselves, but they see us. That's their problem. *Incroyable!* I, personally, Mr Speaker, Sir, and my family have been the target of the most abject attacks at personal level and it started, Mr Speaker, Sir, since I left the MMM. In 2000 - that's ten years ago - I was too old and today, they are of the same age as I was in 2000. In 2005, I had a foot in the grave.

(Interruptions)

Yes! In 2010, they saw death on my face. They were scared: "When you look at the Deputy Prime Minister, you get scared; there is death on his face." What happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? Terrible! But, more important, Mr Speaker, Sir, we put up a woman as candidate in Constituency No. 2. I knew of the dangers. The hon. Prime Minister was aware of it and we talked about. I said: "let us send a message to the country"; we want a woman in that Constituency which is supposed, and has been in the past, a stronghold of the MMM. The moment that a woman was nominated as candidate - SMS *partout, la nouvelle technologie*: women are not allowed to serve as candidates and they put it on a religious principle. Totally wrong! We had Benazir Bhutto. We have had Hasina in Bangladesh. Where did they get all these beliefs? I do not know! But the campaign was strong: women are not allowed to stand as candidate. I do not know where they got it from. Yesterday, interestingly enough, some of them who participated in this, came to see me and said - he meant it well: 'when will a Muslim

become a vice President in this country?’ I took this opportunity to tell him: ‘when you change your mind about women, when you will allow them to stand as candidate and vote for them in a Municipal election, in the general election and elsewhere’. This is how you empower women.

The first was about women and the second, despicable, Mr Speaker, Sir: women and then we cannot vote for a Chinese. Terrible! Third, and this is worst - it gets worse and worse, as they said, as we go along: ‘that fellow who has a *‘tika’* on his forehead has no right to stand as candidate in Constituency No. 2’. That fellow is me because I went to a religious ceremony and someone would put a *‘tika’* on my forehead and I accepted, and I am honoured that this was done to me. There is nothing wrong about it. The next is: *‘chirag wala’*. The *‘chirag’* is I again, the one who, with hon. Minister Anil Bachoo, lighted the *‘diyas’* on Divali day. I am proud that I have done it and I will continue to do it; I have done it this year and I will do it next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my pride is being a Mauritian. I am a Mauritian and we are enriched with the cultures of others and we have absorbed their cultures like they have absorbed ours. Our hon. Prime Minister talks on Islam on certain occasions better than most of those so called Islamists. Yes! On Yaum-Un-Nabi day, it is a pleasure. This is Mauritius at its best, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is what we want to uphold.

Four weeks ago, I saw in one of the American newspapers, four school children aged 10 to 15 had committed suicide. Do you know on what grounds? At school they were being bullied and they had sent on the mobile phone doctored pictures about some of them, saying that they are homosexual and so on and so forth. That’s what they did here – *photos truquées* – and it is dangerous.

If you go along Desforges Street and anywhere in Constituency No. 2, all across, you will see a *marchand gâteau piment* or a *marchand sorbet* saying: *‘ou ine guete sa photo-la là, coumsa DPM ou pou ena’*. It is a photo *truquée* where they had put a big *‘sindoor’* on my forehead and I was lighting the *‘diyas’*.

(Interruptions)

I do not pretend it! I don’t want it! What I am saying is that these people who talk about unity and national solidarity and, in international fora, talk about all these principles, are themselves devoid of all principles and they have no right to be here.

(Interruptions)

They are *les fossoyeurs de la démocratie*. They have torn this country apart during the election on a question of caste, community, creed and so on and divide to the lowest common denominator. I think history will never forget or forgive them and I would say, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the years to come, there should be a study of this: how the last elections were held and on what grounds and principles? None! There were no principles over there. It was all a question of addressing to the lowest feeling of the electorate.

(Interruptions)

Fortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, in spite of all this, we have got an electorate which eventually knows how to decide and has decided that with the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, and the team that he has presented, this is a best option for this country and for the future of this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, listening to my good friend, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, I am moved by his determination, his statement, that we are one Government; there is no parallel Government, no *co-pilote*. Nothing! If you remember the episode of *co-pilote* in the 1995, we have no *co-pilote* now. We have one leader and one vision and one Government and we are *soudés* and I appreciate that you have restated it boldly and unequivocally. I am also touched with the intervention of our vice-Prime Minister, Xavier-Luc Duval. I was moved by his sensitivity and commitment to the cause of addressing poverty. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, bodes well for the future of our fight against poverty.

Having said all these, I will now go very briefly to the different sectors under my Ministry and, of course, the most important is the water sector. I must say it is a matter of concern for all of us - vulnerable and unreliable - and we have to do something about it. There is no doubt that we need radical rethinking of its management at different levels in an integrated manner from water resources development to water distribution to wastewater disposal.

Here, I am thankful to the hon. Prime Minister, who during his visit to Singapore raised the matter at highest level. Following discussions he had with the Singaporean Authority, with the Prime Minister there and the Public Utilities Board, Government of Singapore promptly responded. Within two weeks they were here. A delegation came and visited Mauritius and looked at the management of the whole water loop - we call it a whole water loop - the whole water cycle, and will soon report on the management of an integrated water sector. We are

waiting for the report, it should come within days if it has not already come today and, with this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I move on to a review of our water sector and the resources available.

I would like to remind the House that only 30% of our water supply comes from impounding reservoirs. The rest 50% ground water and 20% run off from rivers. Therefore, 70% of our potable water is dependent on seasonal variability of rainfall. This underpins our vulnerability during the dry season which starts in November. Availability of water during the dry season is heavily dependent on winter rainfalls which itself significantly varies from year to year. The winter rainfall is not the same each year and every year. For example, last year, in 2009, and the year before 2008, we have a good average rainfall and we did not have the problems we are facing today. If you look at this year in September, October, November, the rainfall has been 65%, 70% and, in the first two weeks of November, only 30% of what is an average rainfall for that period and the crux of the matter is this variability in the rainfall during the winter season.

With the rainfall being deficient, we have deficient river flows, we have a groundwater not filling up properly and, today, for example, the Pierrefonds tunnel which supplies water to La Tour Koenig, West of Port Louis and Holyrood borehole in the regions of Quatre Bornes are at 50% down. 50%, Mr Speaker, Sir, and Port-Louis relies entirely on water from river and water from underground and so does Quatre Bornes. So we have to manage the situation and it comes to what we have been doing in the water sector in the past 15 years. I start with 1995, because this is when I was around.

Mr Speaker, Sir, 1995 to 2000 was a defining moment in the development of the water sector. The first and the most comprehensive and the only geological, hydro geological map of Mauritius and Rodrigues was made between 1995 and 2000. I am thankful that at the time I was guided by the Deputy Prime Minister, who is now Mr Speaker in the House. He gave me advice of what to do and how to handle the situation in 1999 and with that hydro geological survey, Mr Speaker, Sir, we started with a project of deep boreholes which never existed in Mauritius before. Between 1995 and 2000, we got 31 boreholes including deep ones and it gave us 33 million additional metre cube of water annually - just during that period 1995 to 2000. Since then we have been going on with more effort and, as we go along, I must say that, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is very important, our potential for further development in groundwater is now coming to an end. We still have limited potential in the South and there is not much. At least, 75% to

80% of the potential is already achieved and we have difficulty in getting significantly more water from boreholes. Hence, we go for impounding reservoirs.

Again, we look at the history of reservoirs, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mare aux Vacoas, 100 years old, was upgraded in 1960. La Nicolière reservoir was built in 1926 and Piton du Milieu in 1950. The only dam constructed in recent times was started in 1999 under the Prime Ministership of Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam. The first and only modern dam was started in 1999 and, if we did not have this, today I don't know what would have happened. This has really made a great difference but there are others to come, Mr Speaker, Sir. They have talked about Bagatelle.

Bagatelle dam situated at River Terre Rouge is a new concept. It was further downstream with difficulties about permeability; there was a need to move it upstream and this is what took the time and this is why there has been some delay, not on our side. I hear that, during the weekend, they were talking about delays in the Bagatelle dam. The delay in the Bagatelle dam was because the site has to be changed to a more optimal site and today we have a good site 14m.m³ capacity with an annual yield of 24m.m³ and this will ease the water problem not only in Port Louis, but also in Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Coromandel and La Tour Koenig. This is why I invited hon. Bhagwan to be here so that he could know what we are doing and what he has not done while he was there. This is also the important part.

Apart from that, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also the Rivière des Anguilles dam and this dam, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a concept of 2008 and we are moving very fast with it. It is probably the best annual yield that we will get from any dam in Mauritius. 50m.m³ per year - a record - and when this is on, it will take about three or four years. Construction will start next year and it will supply the south and the south west and permit not only economic development but also satisfy the need of the country.

We are also doing river diversion to increase the capacity at Mare aux Vacoas and there are others as well. I will come to one point. Hon. Alan Ganoo, former Minister, Member of the Opposition, talked about the dam at La Ferme. The delay has been because between 2000 and 2005, they allowed squatters on the site and, my colleague, the Minister of Housing and Land had great difficulty trying to find an alternative site for them. Once this is done we can then work on La Ferme reservoir and improve the water supply of this region. So, with these plans, I hope that the water situation over the time will improve.

What did hon. Ganoo say? He said: “I can’t understand the idea of developing a master plan for water resources when there is already a master plan.” This is an error, a mistake. Either he does not know what he was talking about or he can’t remember what it was all about. I would like to remind the former Minister that the master plan which he prepared when he was Minister in 2005 was for water distribution only. It was not for resources and he did not cover water resources and significantly the study that he asked for concluded that they should have prepared a master plan on water resources first before going to water distribution. In other words, *ils ont mis la charrue devant les bœufs* as usual and this is the result of the conclusion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now come to water distributions and this is probably the most challenging, the most difficult task, not easy to tackle. We have 5000km of pipelines in the distribution network of which, at least, 2000km are of asbestos cement and cast iron. They break easily, difficult to repair and have to be repaired time and again. What happened in 2002? The then Government quite rightly asked for a study on the baseline level of Non Revenue Water. But the mistake then followed. A foreign expert funded by EIB was appointed and the expert identified a number of pilot zones. There were 10 to start with, but eventually 24 and repairs went on in these pilot zones. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was improvement. From 60% losses, it came down to 40%, but the year after that, in 2008, it all went back to losses again, 60% losses more or less. So what is the utility of repairing something which is beyond repair and we have to change the network and, at the same time, making sure that we keep, that we maintain those that are in good working condition. It will take massive investment, but we have no choice. We have to do it and we have to get expertise to do it and we have to be accompanied by, I hope, Singaporeans or French or European or whatever it is that will help us to put that water sector into a state where the non revenue water comes to, I hope, less than 25% in the years to come. Without this, there is no point getting water from boreholes if we are not going to manage the distribution network. We are investing in it, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are spending about a billion rupees. It is already budgeted to change, not to repair, the network in the deprived areas at the moment. Work will go on, other work will follow and improvement will happen. Several Members of the House have approached me and I have explained to them. Unfortunately, at the moment, it’s a matter of value operation and water tanker, but, in the end, a solution is on the way to many – not all – of the deprived areas. So, there is hope and, at the same time, I agree we have to relook at the Central Water Authority. We are taking our responsibility. We are going to

do it and we are going to do it in a radical way so that things get done professionally and that we get value for money. In the meantime, I would like to thank those in the CWA who spend their nights looking after leaks, who spend nights looking after those reservoirs that are empty because of fraudulent practices. We have one. We have two. We have three. We don't have many and if we dedicated persons had half a dozen of them, today we wouldn't have this problem, but I would say, Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem of vandalism, deliberate interference with the valves is a matter of serious concern and I am grateful that the Police is helping us to control this. For example, during Divali, someone had broken the pipe in a sugar cane field and taken away the valve. Water was being lost in the cane field while our religious ceremony was being deprived of water. Inacceptable this sort of attitude!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now move on to the energy sector and I'll start with some general comments and background information on policies in renewable energy. We are a small country, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are distant from the mainland and we have our own specificity. We have a concern about our energy security, and with that affordability, the availability of technology. Renewable energy has a high cost. We are concerned with a reliability of some technologies and the extent of Government financial support as incentive for the development of renewable energy projects are essential considerations in our decision-making process, but this constraint does not mean that we are not getting on, we have to. We have to learn. We have to learn how to introduce new technologies. Sometimes we are disappointed, but often it works. At present, as it is today, renewable energy technologies are not cost competitive - we know that - and it is up to now viable in financial terms only if Government incentives are provided. Such incentives have to be sustained over time. We have learned recently that countries like Spain, Germany had to revise their incentives downwards because of the heavy costs and also sometimes there have been technical problems associated with disseminated production. We have to learn from them, it's not easy, but we are going to do it. We have to remember that renewable technology does not supply firm power but it's as and when, when the sun shines or when there is wind. Regrettably till today there is no storage facility for energy on a magnitude that matters. So we are limited by this technology. Hence, I say all this and it leads to two things, Mr Speaker, Sir, - we need a global carbon emission tax on a global scale to help developing countries to secure the necessary funds to develop the renewable energy programme. I was in New Delhi two weeks ago and this

was a message time and again drummed into all participants that we need to get this carbon emission tax. Without a fund, we will not be able to progress and help the poorer countries to develop their own renewable energy technology. It was raised in this House - do we have access to a clean energy development mechanism? The access is complex, complicated. It is tedious. Unfortunately small projects do not qualify. It was decided and there was a resolution in New Delhi that these procedures to have access to a clean development mechanism should be revised taking into account the specificity of small island states. It is important otherwise it is business as usual in the developed countries leaving us to struggle with what they are doing, that is polluting the environment and we'll have to pay for it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme at paragraph 56 states that Government will continue to encourage the use of renewable energy. There have been concrete achievements during the past five years, small but they are the blueprint for the future. We have started with wind energy and Rodrigues has set the tone. The wind regime in Rodrigues is much better than Mauritius and today we have 1.1 MW installed there, but we have learned our lesson. The wind regime is better, but there is no storage capacity of course. So what happens at night when the energy demand is low, we have to decrease the output from the wind energy. It goes to waste. It's wasted at night; we have to switch off or whatever technical term is used. It's not being used, so energy is being dissipated. This will have to await new technology. In Mauritius, we already have our wind farm projects at Plaines des Roches and at Curepipe Point. The tenders are out for Curepipe Point and it is being processed now. So, we will know soon how we will get on with it. As I said we work, we tread cautiously, but we tread all the same and we have a capacity to introduce wind energy up to 30, 40, 50, 60 MW. We'll develop it as it goes along. We know that with time – in a next year or so, we'll have 90 GWh of wind energy and that is very encouraging.

Hydropower – thanks to the vision of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, we have the Sans Souci dam. Today there is not much else. There are not many more sites that can be exploited, but we have looked at mini hydro projects and we have had a mini hydro project at Nicolière, the other one will be at Midlands all producing one into one or two GWH annually and it will help. The next project will be probably an increase of storage and we are looking at the Sans Souci dam to see if it's worth increasing its capacity and help storage and use this water to avoid using the expensive gas that we have as *turbine à gaz*. So, these are the possibilities in wind, in hydro

and we go to landfill gas. Again, it's beyond comprehension. In 2005, when the landfill site was being used, there was a golden opportunity to integrate the landfill gas energy into it. Hon. Joe Lesjongard missed this opportunity. I don't know. He has to go and explain it to the public, to explain it to the country. It did two things, Mr Speaker Sir, polluting the air with methane which is highly emission. We have about a hundred GWH of energy over the past four/five years. It's terrible. I think it's criminal. It's criminal to see all this methane escaping into the environment and not being burnt. But we are doing it and, by next year, it will be operational. We hope that with 2 or 3MW installation, we'll have 20 GWH of electricity, at least, every year. Mr Speaker, Sir, the land-based oceanic industry is taking shape.

Now, we come to solar energy, Mr Speaker, Sir. Solar energy is the future; there is no doubt about it. I am grateful to the Prime Minister for letting me go to New Delhi, where we see things happening. It is by seeing and looking what is being done, and not sitting in the office, listening to theoretical discussion that we learn. There is solar power. There is not only photovoltaic, there is also solar thermal, using concentrated solar energy to heat, or to produce steam and produce energy; both of them.

We have already embarked on the solar water system for solar thermal. We have already doubled, and we hope to treble the number of solar water heaters, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, in the photovoltaic section, it is expensive. Today, it may be three or four times what it costs for the traditional system, but it does not mean we won't do it. One thing you learn is to have faith in technology and in the future. I was asked in New Delhi what I thought about the projections that we have here. If I had been asked that question about a year ago, I would have been very pessimistic.

To take an analogy, if we take medicine, today, we are doing cardiac surgery, which 15 or 20 years ago, was only being done in America and some high-tech centres. Today, we are doing it here. So, why can't we face the challenge and do it for renewal energy, for solar PV, for all these technologies? We have to get our young ones directed to go and study, come back and participate in the development of this country. We have a lot of good will. We have Professor de Rosnay.

Recently, we had also the Nobel Prize winner from America Woodrow Clark II who visited us. He was first-class. He said: 'I will come back and help you'. He gave us some

practical advice: 'don't start it piecemeal; have a holistic approach as to how you are going to introduce solar PV in Mauritius; otherwise, you will waste your opportunity, it will fall into disrepute, and you will not succeed.' He said that he is coming back in December or January. We also have Professor Pachauri from India, who is also a Nobel Prize winner. He has offered to come. We have offers of help. We must get our act together and get the solar thermal, solar photovoltaic in place in Mauritius. Progress is there. Today, we are getting only 8% or 18% of efficiency silicon based PV cells. But with new technology this will probably increase to 35%. It is there on the market, but it is still expensive. As the market grows, it will be within our grasp. So, we should have faith in the future, Mr Speaker, Sir. I personally consider that this highly difficult target to achieve will be achieved if we put our faith in the new development, and we get the right people to come and advise us of how to get on with it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I won't go much longer, but one thing is interesting. We have talked about geothermal energy. I was lucky enough to meet the Minister from Iceland in New Delhi. She said: 'we have got the expertise; you only have to ask'. We are going, through New Delhi, to be in contact with her, to get a memorandum with Iceland on exploration for geothermal in Mauritius. It is a possibility. I am not saying it is very promising, but, at least, we should look into it. If it materialises in the years to come, it will change completely our thinking and our approach to the problem of energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, last but not least is energy efficiency. I am not going to talk at length about it, because we already have the Bill and it will be debated in the House. But this to me is the key for the next few years to decrease our growth in energy demand. We are already doing it. I am grateful to my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resources, the Minister of Information and Communication Technology and the University of Mauritius. We have all put our heads together. We have had umpteen meetings about energy efficiency with students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. We have been in many places, and there has been a lot of *formation* also. We have to train people to do this energy efficiency audit. It is all being done, but quietly. Maybe, one of the problems is that we do not talk enough about it, but it is being done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

With these concluding words, I would say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we face exciting time. It is a challenging time and, as my colleague, the hon. vice-Prime Minister has said, challenges are

also opportunities, and we must grasp them. With the leadership of the Prime Minister, I will say again: we will, we can, and we will succeed.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.26 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start first by congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker and the election of the Deputy Speaker. I also thank both of you for presiding over the debates with patience, tact and wisdom.

The Government Programme of 2010-2015 is an ambitious programme.

I listened to many orators from the Opposition and, while going through comments from the press, I am pleased to note that there seems to be consensus on, at least, this point. Even our fiercest critiques tend to agree that the Government Programme is full of positive measures, whose realisation will take Mauritius to that higher level of socioeconomic development which we are aiming for.

On radio, a couple of months ago, I even heard a front-bench Opposition Member using the word 'ambitious' to describe our programme.

Where some doubts have been expressed, sometimes, maybe with genuine concern, they are about the capacity to deliver on the promises contained in the programme.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to say at the very outset, that it is a fact that, when preparing this programme, we did not think that we would be doing ourselves any favour by being complacent. We deliberately set challenging but, in our view, realisable objectives, because we believe that, through strong leadership and a clear vision of where we want to take this country, we can mobilise the human and other resources which will allow us to achieve our goals.

The Government Programme is a translation into concrete proposals of what we promised to the electorate regarding our project of modernisation of the economy for sustainable growth, as well as a more equitable distribution of the fruits of that growth - although I must say it cannot contain all the details in the manifesto; otherwise the Presidential Address would go on for hours and hours.

May I also point out that while it is the prime responsibility of Government to set out the programme and define the road ahead, it is also the responsibility of one and all, especially

people in positions of authority, whether in the private or public sectors, to create the most conducive environment for successful implementation of these projects?

We, in Government, are determined to put in place the necessary mechanisms and institutions to monitor progress, identify binding constraints on implementation, and define policy recommendations for the removal of these constraints.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as you know, the debates on the Government Programme, as for those on the Budget, are perhaps the only occasions where Members of this House have the opportunity to talk about whatever policy concerns they may have.

Unfortunately, the Opposition today, once again - and I don't include the Member over there - is absent. They say we should not have had a break. The problem is that there was so much repetition, going on and on and on, with no constructive proposals so far. Unless I have missed something very important, I did not hear any constructive proposal. In any case, they seem to have forgotten that the Opposition also boycotted the Presidential Address itself. That was at the beginning, just maybe because, as you said, the *cuisante defaite*, it was difficult to swallow for some reasons. It seems, Mr Speaker, Sir, that some things do not change, we have moved to a different century. The world is changing, but the MMM won't change.

(Interruptions)

That is worse! But they take responsibility for what they choose to do or not to do.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as we face a global economic environment characterised by the quasi permanent threat of a global double dip recession and we have seen the turmoil in the euro zone which will impact directly on our economic prospects, we have to take all the necessary measures to prepare for the worse while hoping for the best. This should not, however, lead us to paint a gloom and doom scenario which can only result in paralysing initiatives or cause us to fall into the trap of the eternal whiners and opportunists.

For instance, we must balance the view about the gloom in which the developed nations seem to be mired with the more resilient performance of the emerging giants like India and China and, might I add, of many African economies as well. I have always said it, the vice-Prime Minister has just said it, the Deputy Prime Minister has just said it - we must look at challenges as opportunities and innovate and adapt and be flexible. It is clear that we must steer our economy to make it less Eurocentric and to look for more opportunities in Asia, specially India, China and Singapore.

As far as the Euro Zone is concerned, it is definitely an area of grave concern with direct negative impact on the export sectors of our economy, especially sugar, tourism, textile and garments – although the Euro has climbed up remarkably recently. The Government is monitoring the situation closely. We have already taken steps to ensure that specifically tailored support programmes are provided to the affected sectors through the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme (ERCP). The ERCP, whose main objective is to protect jobs and support enterprises in financial distress, was presented in August of this year. We had, in the recent past, taken a number of measures under the Stimulus Package in the face of the global financial crisis with a clear objective of again saving jobs in what were considered basically viable enterprises trapped in the short-term cash flow or liquidity problems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is now conventional wisdom that the global economic crisis and the euro zone debacle in particular, largely reflect the deep changes working through the global economic architecture as the centre of gravity of economic activity is moving from the West to the East. What will eventually emerge from the ongoing economic turmoil will be very different from what we have known up to now.

The greatest challenge facing policy makers all around the world is how to cope with the immediate consequences of the crisis on their economy and populations while, at the same time, not losing view of the more long-term opportunities which such transformations inevitably bring up. This is not a time for faint-hearted leadership, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to be bold enough to admit that only a radical restructuring of our internal business and governance models will prepare us to leverage our strengths and mitigate our weaknesses in this new evolving scenario. For example, as the flows of trade and commerce intensify between the emerging Asian economic giants and resource rich Africa, Mauritius is again finding itself in an envious position at the “star and key” of the Indian Ocean.

In my view, never before have the conditions been so ripe for us to realise our ambition of becoming a business services platform between Asia and Africa. We shall accordingly intensify our economic diplomacy which we are already doing and mobilise our resources to leverage this new opportunity for achieving our ambition of positioning our country as a trade and business platform to serve the region.

As I have just said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the biggest challenge is to devise solutions to our immediate, urgent problems while not, at the same time, losing sight of the bigger picture that is emerging from the global economic architecture.

The world we have to operate in is fraught with uncertainties, much more than ever before. We would be deluding ourselves if we believe that such momentous transformations in the global environment can be dealt with simply by tweaking our existing businesses and governance models at the periphery or without a revolution in the mindset of the nation, especially of the decision makers whether in the private sector or the Government.

What we need is a structural break with past practices that will liberate the productive forces of our country and mobilise our people for the challenges ahead.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the '*Alliance de l'Avenir*' has been elected on a platform based on democratisation of the economy, keeping in mind a vision of development that is sustainable, equitable and inclusive. The concept of democratisation is very close to my heart, Mr Speaker, Sir, and not just for the cane industry. We are talking about the whole concept in other sectors as well. The more participants we have in the economic development of this country, the better it is for all the players and for the nation. This goes without saying, but some people don't want to have competition at all. The concept of democratisation of the economy has too often been deliberately - and I have seen this during the campaign - twisted and turned, especially by the Opposition, by conservative forces and their political representatives' intent on maintaining the *status quo*. I will not dwell lengthily on all the issues here but I feel that it would be appropriate to clarify at least two of the basic tenets of the philosophy which will continue to guide our actions over the coming years. First is the question of concentration of wealth. Let me make it abundantly clear that in our mind, this is not just another squabble about ownership. It has become a critical issue in our system of governance that encompasses dimensions of social justice, competitiveness and our ability to deliver on our commitments for sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth. While respect for property rights remains an essential principle in any democracy, including our democratic system, we shall vigorously pursue policies which will broaden the circle of opportunities for all our citizens. Closely linked with this is my second contention regarding the question of inequality.

As a matter of policy we must distinguish between inequality in outcomes and inequality in access. The decision of any country to prioritise one or the other will impact on the entire

social and economic policy framework. In the prevailing circumstances in the global environment and in our country, our philosophy of democratisation of the economy has identified inequality of access as our priority. It must be our first priority. This implies that a set of institutions and mechanisms consistent with that choice will have to be put in place.

These institutions and mechanisms will have to play three roles -

- Firstly, to build the capabilities to take advantage of equal access, that is, education, healthcare and social policy. All these fall into this category.
- Secondly, we must ensure that what we intend in theory is actually translated into practice by enforcing all channels of equal access.
- Thirdly, we must keep monitoring the degree of effective inequality and devise policies to address it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I hope that this short digression will be helpful for those who genuinely did not understand what are the guiding principles of the actions of this Government. As one goes through the measures announced in the Government Programme, one will see that this is the rationale that dictates the choices which we have made.

This programme sketches out a vision for the development of our country and the wellbeing of our citizens based on widely shared values. They are values of sharing, tolerance, equality of all citizens and hard work and discipline. It is also a vision that builds on a record of five years of policy successes and effectiveness in all spheres of life in our country.

The success we have achieved has come in large part from –

- a strong economic growth;
- a significant increase in *per capita* income in spite of a series of adverse shocks, we have mentioned it so many times;
- lower unemployment;
- protection of purchasing power in spite of huge increases in prices of certain basic foodstuffs and oil and related products;
- a more democratised economy;
- more equitable sharing of the wealth of our nation;
- greater social justice, and
- important breakthroughs in the fight against poverty and the bridging gender gaps wherever they were conspicuously impinging on the rights of women.

We have also made visible achievements in enhancing the hard and soft infrastructure of our country, with emphasis on transport infrastructure, a cleaner environment, sound education and effective health care.

For five years we have listened to our citizens and focused our policies and actions on the issues that are most important to them. The Government Programme outlines a comprehensive and coherent set of policies, measures, reforms and actions that build further on these achievements. The emphasis is also on social integration, social justice and equity, a robust economy, a cleaner environment, as I said, and the well-being of all our citizens and nation building.

The Government Programme, Mr Speaker, Sir, shows our determination to implement the policies and actions required to take on the challenges of the new global economic architecture. Underlying the economic strategy that will be pursued during the next five years is a strong and unprecedented commitment to further democratise the economy and to transform Mauritius into a society of equal opportunities based on the values of unity, equity and modernity. As stated in the Government Programme of 2010 – 2015, the focus will be on building the pillars of the future while consolidating the existing ones and enhancing their competitiveness.

In five years, the economic architecture will be more diversified; the economy will become more resilient, growth more robust and our workforce more productive. Higher education and training, a modern port and airport, the JinFei Project, the Land-Based Oceanic Industry, culture and leisure, the duty-free island and the light railway system will be the main landmarks of the new Mauritian economy. In fact, during my visit to Singapore recently, I went to look at the light railway system. My wish is that our future investments must be in a modern transport system which will benefit the whole of Mauritius eventually. These will be the visible. We will continue the outstanding progress we have made in the area of doing business in the past five years and equally important will be the greater investment in human resource capacity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our commitments are clear. To us, more than technology and production processes, it is our human resource that is at the base of all our achievements. As we rely on the dedicated men and women in our workforce, we must also empower them to improve their productivity, their income and their standard of living. We will expand access to education with emphasis on tertiary education, training and re-skilling. The diversification of our economy can only succeed if we have diverse talents. Government can set out the vision and the agenda, but it

is the dedicated men and women in our country who will make it happen. That is why Government Programme is centred on building the human resources that can match our vision. We have kept our promise to phase out the National Pay Council and to reinstate the tripartite mechanism as a permanent forum for discussions among social partners. We heard the vice-Prime Minister today answering a Private Notice Question, all this is happening. In fact, we will take actions on all fronts to improve the productivity, the well-being and the standard of living of workers. We will give them opportunities for training and education, ensure greater security at work, better working environment, more protection and more effective institutions to ensure good industrial relations.

It is also very explicit, Mr Speaker, Sir, in our Government Programme that no one will be left out of economic development. One of the most important benchmarks of our achievements five years from now will be the eradication of poverty and integrating most of the 8% of families who live with less than half median income, that is, those families living in relative poverty. We must bring them back into the mainstream. The setting up of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment demonstrates our commitment to this endeavour. We will ensure that we mobilise all the financial resources we can to pursue our war against poverty. We must ensure that no one is left by the way side on our development and modernisation path. We have seen, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I said this to him when he was speaking, my friend hon. Xavier Luc Duval, the vice-Prime Minister. When he spoke about what his Ministry is trying to do, he spoke with such passion that I have no doubt at all that I have the right man in the right place.

(Interruptions)

It is true, as I said that the Government Programme is an ambitious one. It includes a vast array of proposals which we will have to implement. I will not deal with each and every one of those areas covered in the programme, Mr Speaker, Sir. But I want the people of this country to know that there is a *fil conducteur* in this Programme. It is work in progress. We are going to continue on the path of reform and the modernisation of our country and we have had new and innovative ideas which will allow us to make the leap forward to a first world country and a proud nation.

Although I said that I will not go into the details, let me give you an overview of some of our priorities. One of these, of course, remains the nation's security. I want to ensure that our

citizens feel safe to walk the streets at any time and that those who break the law, whoever they are, pay the consequences of their acts.

(Interruptions)

For this to happen, we need to continue the policies we have embarked upon. We must continue to take further measures to improve the effectiveness of the Police, which we are doing. We must continue to make use of the latest technology available such as the CCTV cameras, amongst others. We must increase the efficiency of our investigative processes including the Forensic Science Laboratory. It now has – I don't know whether hon. Members know - a new Director from the United Kingdom with many years of experience in forensic science. It is a fact that the overall crime rate has declined from 5.4% in 2007 to 4.9% in 2009. But, these figures mean nothing to the victims of crime. We have seen some odious crimes which have been perpetrated. That is why, I have no doubt, we have to strengthen the laws against such crimes and drug trafficking. We must also think of the victims of crime, Mr Speaker, Sir. Sometimes we tend to forget about the victims.

We have approved the National Policing Strategic Framework proposed by the Commissioner of Police. I must thank him for this because he really did a lot of work on that framework. It contains six pillars, namely -

- community policing;
- enhancing the reactive capability;
- intelligence-led policing;
- permanent strategic planning capability;
- human resources management capability, and
- achieving a human rights compliant organisation which is currently in the process of implementation.

As part of the implementation of the NPSF, Local Community Policing Committees are being set up for the elaboration of local crime reduction strategies. The purpose of each committee is to work towards creating a healthy and safe community environment for all who live and work within a given area. We have seen one thing that maybe has escaped the attention of many, whenever crime is being committed, look at the rapidity with which the Police are managing to stop these criminals!

(Interruptions)

They must be given credit for this; it is too easy to criticise every time.

As regards the prison service, my Government's objective is to improve security while, at the same time, getting the know-how to train those working in these services. We want to introduce an efficient management system for our prisons and zero tolerance for those who continue to break the prison rules. In the wake of the disturbances which occurred at Grand River North West Prison on 27 June of this year, security measures in place in the prisons are being reviewed. New technology and equipments are being introduced to tighten security. Existing prisons' infrastructures are being upgraded and the new facilities are being put up to improve the living conditions in the prisons. During my official visit to Singapore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a working session with my staff and the Singapore Prison Service. I have asked the Director of Prisons from Singapore to assist us to audit our security system. It was actually quite unbelievable to look at how they work. The Prison Officers have no keys and all is done by computers and remote. What they do very often here, they steal the keys to open the gate themselves.

In Singapore, the propensity of a prisoner to commit a further offence is very low, much lower than ours, which is 70% for Mauritius. The Director of Prisons from Singapore will also advise the Government of Mauritius on our needs in terms of security for the new Melrose Prison. I asked him this because we are building this prison. We have seen something that we think we should be implemented in the building of this prison. The idea for the construction of this modern prison, Mr Speaker, Sir, as you know, dates back as far as 2001, but could not materialise for various reasons. This would be a prison which will be modern and will accommodate about 750 detainees.

We must also put emphasis on rehabilitation. We must ensure, especially those who commit petty crimes, that they can be made to reform and become responsible members of society. I can tell the House that a new Commissioner of Prisons will be appointed shortly. I had discussions with him and he will be appointed probably next week.

The existing National Identity Card, which will expire in 2012, has served its purpose for over 25 years. It contains a number of deficiencies. A new Identity Card will therefore be introduced with enhanced security, including biometric features, so as to improve identity authentication and combat identity fraud and, I hope, we shall use them in future elections.

Already for the municipal elections, we have discovered some people who are registering while they are not in that area; already this is happening. The new multipurpose card will, apart from improving national security, also support applications to enhance the delivery of e-Government services, in the first instance for social security and health sectors. The Government of Singapore has agreed to provide assistance in the implementation of this project and Mauritius will benefit from the Singaporean expertise in line with international best practices and we will ensure that this new ID card is to the level that we expect and not to a lower level that we have to replace it again in ten years' time or whatever.

The modernisation and expansion of our national airport remains a priority for Government. Our vision is to transform the SSR International Airport into one of the most modern airports of the region. It is in this context that the project of construction of the New Terminal has started. In fact, it has started since March of this year. Upon completion of this project, the Passenger Terminal will be able to accommodate four million passengers annually. It will have a state-of-the-art architecture, meeting international security norms. Particular emphasis will be put on the protection of the environment and comfort for the passengers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the agro industrial sector will be modernised and professionalised as it has been mentioned. The sugarcane industry will continue to be an important pillar of our economy in a different way. The reform measures will be maintained for its transformation into a competitive industry with an active participation of small planters as the vice-Prime Minister has just mentioned. I have taken on board to ensure that the small planters are on board and not only them, but others, the *metayers*, for example, who were not in the deal.

Food security will remain a major challenge and measures and schemes will be revisited for greater access and affordability to smallholders. The sugarcane industry has been undergoing major structural changes to maintain its viability and competitiveness. The reform process is already ongoing with the implementation of the measures mentioned in the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy 2006 – 2015. Every effort will be made to ensure that all the remaining measures are completed in an efficient and time bound manner. Particular attention will be given to the following measures: acceleration of the centralisation process of the sugar factories; reform of the cess funded institutions with a view to reducing the cess payable by planters; optimal use of the by-products to increase electricity production, and production of ethanol.

Government will seek other avenues and opportunities available to increase the revenue of producers through value addition. More specifically, the Fair-trade certification that enables producers to obtain a minimum of 60 US\$ per tonne of sugar will be promoted and Government will provide the necessary support to small sugar cane producers to subscribe to that Fair-trade system.

We recognise Mr Speaker, Sir, that the most important mission of this Government must be to ensure that no one is left out of an economy that is thriving. The Maurice-Ile-Durable project, the Food Security Programme, the infrastructure we build, the greater space we create in education they must benefit all our citizens and central to the sustainable development are three essential, and to my mind, integral elements: economic development, environmental protection and social equity.

The importance of biodiversity and the consequences of the environmental degradation have induced the United Nations to declare the year 2010, the 'Year of Biodiversity'. As a Small Island State, we are even more at risk. The hon. Minister himself noticed very well because he is among the first who was pleading for the different treatment that Small Island states should have.

As Prime Minister of Mauritius, I have the vision of making Mauritius a '*Maurice Ile Durable*', that is why I have brought this project. This is not just mere words.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the MID policy, we will have an improved framework for managing human and economic development, while ensuring a proper and optimal functioning over time of the natural environment. The unprecedented progress witnessed by our country and our people is evidence of the commitment and the will of my Government to protection of our environment as a precious asset and to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Since I initiated the Maurice-Ile-Durable vision, the fund and the different structures that have been put up in place subsequently, including a Steering Committee in my office, we have started to see results. Indeed through Energy Reduction by the increase in use of compact fluorescent light bulbs and solar water heaters funded by the MID Fund and the accompanying sensitization campaigns for energy efficiency, our electricity consumption has increased only by 0.7% for an economic growth of 3.1% in 2009. That is a very good sign. In 2008, the increase in electricity consumption was 4%. In the same breath, our Total Primary energy requirement, which covers transportation, electricity, household, agriculture and manufacturing, has decreased by 4.1% in 2009.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another positive note is the commendable progress we have made in improving our environment. The Deputy Prime Minister has mentioned this and this is reflected in the Environmental Performance Index which is published in collaboration with the World Economic Forum. We have moved from the 58th position in 2008 to the 6th position in 2010. It is a jump, it is a huge leap. This places us first in Sub Saharan African countries and first in the Alliance of Small Island States. We are now faced with the daunting task of at least maintaining the position and to improve it over the years to come.

In this new mandate, I have created a dedicated Ministry for Sustainable Development. I am confident that we will be able to achieve the objectives of the Government, be it in terms of climate change or sea level rise, environmental preservation and its enhancement, production of renewable energy and the democratisation of the sector to small Independent Power Producers. In fact, we are having discussions and I hope this will conclude very shortly.

The Steering Committee on the *Maurice Ile Durable* project will assist policy makers through a road map on sustainable development. This road map has already obtained the support of the *Agence Française de Développement* to the tune of 125 million Euros as an Environmental Aid Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Health is another area where we are determined to ensure that each and every citizen of our country can get access to proper treatment and enjoy a healthy life. The Government's policy is to ensure that our national hospitals are upgraded and can deliver on the best treatment possible while encouraging at the same time the private Health providers to continue providing for those who opt for private treatment.

Unfortunately Mr Speaker, Sir, as we prosper as an emerging nation, we are witnessing the same pattern that we have seen in developed countries. We have seen an increase in breast cancer; we have seen an increase in cervical cancer - in fact, cancer in general. We are also seeing an increase in mortality associated with giving birth.

That is why I have discussed with the University College of London to assist us to set up an institute for women's diseases just as in the UK. All investigations and all the treatments specific to women will be treated under one roof with the latest technology. A team from the Institute for Women's Diseases of the UK will be visiting us very soon.

We also intend to build a paediatric Hospital to provide specifically for babies and children because they need highly specialised care, including specialised paediatric surgical units.

Again as in developed countries, Mr Speaker, Sir, our life expectancy is increasing. Mauritians aged 65 years and above numbered 86,382 in 2008. By 2030, this number will more than double to reach around 200,000 people. The Minister for Social Security keeps reminding us of this. It is also estimated that the number of individuals older than 85 years will triple in the next 30 years. Therefore, there is clearly need to address this not just in terms of social security but also in terms of a modern Geriatric hospital. Not just because the number of old people is increasing but also because they have specific caring needs and they need specific treatments. Maybe from the same diseases they react differently to disease. We have already embarked on this project, I know.

Government's vision is a Mauritius where no new HIV infections occur and where people living with HIV are assured optimum treatment, care and support, with full respect of their human rights. The epidemic is concentrated, we know, among injecting drug users. 75% of new cases being detected are among the vulnerable group. Much progress has been achieved towards reaching the goals of the National Strategic Framework (NSF) set up which is for 2007 to 2011 for HIV and AIDS.

The National AIDS Committee, which I chair, represents the highest level of stewardship of the response and democratic accountability to the people of Mauritius. The National AIDS Secretariat has been set up within my office and has assumed the responsibility of leading the national response to HIV and AIDS. Recognising the impact that HIV and AIDS has on the economic development of a country, as well as on the welfare of the population, Government has constantly increased the budget for this fight against HIV and AIDS.

In 2009, we obtained our first Global Fund Grant bringing significant additional funding for HIV and AIDS to the country. We are also getting help from the Clinton Global Initiative.

A number of other initiatives to strengthen the health response will be undertaken. These include –

- Continuing decentralisation of integrated services for people living with HIV and AIDS;
- Development of psycho-social support services, and

- Development of a comprehensive strategy to include follow-up of those who test positive and do not then return for their results.

Under the leadership of the National AIDS Secretariat, a multi-sectoral approach will be used to enhance evidence-based prevention among most at risk populations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since July 2005, Government has taken a series of substantial measures to empower women and allow them to become autonomous. This is being done through training, job placement and support for the setting up of new enterprises.

New infrastructure including Women Development and Empowerment Centres has been set up to help women in their endeavours. Additional similar centres will be constructed to reach women who have so far not had easy access to these facilities.

The rate of unemployment among women has decreased from 16.4% in 2005 to 14% in 2009 but it is still too high and it has to be reduced substantially.

This year, I have created a new Ministry for Gender Equality. Women must be able to enjoy their full rights. My Government will sustain its policies, programmes and projects from a gender perspective. I can also say it – again, we have the right person in the right place.

Mr Speaker, Sir, experience in countries with a narrow resource base has clearly demonstrated that higher education contributed significantly to sustainable wealth creation. You just have to look at the GDP figures and compare to see it. That is why it figures so prominently in our policy agenda.

Higher education and development are closely intertwined. It is the key to national competitiveness through its contribution to the economy in terms of high level human capital. And there is need to do more Research in our country. That is why I have detached Tertiary Education from the main Education portfolio and created a specific Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology.

During my official mission to Singapore I have invited the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) to send a team to Mauritius to carry out a thorough quality audit of our tertiary institutions. At NTU, - I must tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir, - their grant depends not upon the Government but upon quality performance. They have to keep standards high. We must ensure that also in this country we do not allow standards to be lowered.

The recent transformations in the world have made necessary to re-examine the importance we attach to tertiary education in a rapidly changing environment.

We are targeting tertiary education to emerge as a pillar of our economy. Besides its capacity for upgrading the country's workforce and increase in productivity, tertiary education has the potential to generate foreign exchange earnings and contribute to economic growth and development through increased value-added and employment creation.

My Government will intensify its efforts to develop the country into a regional knowledge hub and an international centre of higher learning. We are, in this context, aiming to attract 100,000 foreign students to come to study in Mauritius by 2020 and, I must say that hon. Minister Jeetah is really applying himself to this and I can see the progress we are making already. Another right person in the right place! In fact, all of them are the right people in the right places.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the fisheries and the seafood sector contribute about Rs18 billion to the national economy. I have created a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Rodrigues. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I know, for the first time the Minister for Rodrigues is also the Minister for Fisheries for the whole Republic of Mauritius. Government has created the necessary effective and enabling environment to stimulate the development of the seafood sector through –

- A unique public/private sector partnership;
- A dynamic business environment;
- A dedicated One Stop Shop service exclusively for the seafood industry, and
- Capacity building of the Competent Authority for inspection/certification of fish and fish products because we need to meet the high requirements of the EU.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the independence of Mauritius major decisions have been taken to satisfy the increasing aspirations of our citizens living in Rodrigues and Agaléga so that they can participate fully in the management of socio-economic affairs of the island.

My Government, I am proud to say, has done more than any Government for the Agalegeans and including when hon. Hervé Aimée was at the Island Council there.

(Interruptions)

I hope you don't want to go back there!

(Interruptions)

I do not want to go through the list. There was a question this morning, which was withdrawn for some reason, but we are giving 59 people a Letter of Intent for their houses and the land. We are building a Refugee Centre and I must thank him because when he was there, he is the one who drew my attention on the need for the Refugee Centre which is on a high ground so that if there is a cyclone or even a Tsunami, they are protected. We have also put agricultural land at the disposition of the local population so that they can start learning how to grow things that they need instead of buying them from abroad. The list is very long. If they fall very ill in Agaléga, they depend on transport to bring them to Mauritius and we are looking - the question was there this morning - about extending their airstrip and rebuilding it. There is no port there; in fact, there is a jetty; to put a small port there it is going to cost a lot of money and that's why we are trying to see how we can do it. In the meantime, we have also decided that we will put up a small clinic or hospital there for emergency services and for the women to be able to have their babies delivered there instead of having to come to Mauritius every time. It is true that they come here because the service is better, but we can make sure that they have a good service in Agaléga as well.

The creation of a new Ministry of Rodrigues does in no way, as was suggested, put in jeopardy the powers and functions of the Regional Assembly. A strong synergy, in fact, has been created between the Ministry and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This will greatly help in the development of Rodrigues.

As regards the amendment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, consultations with the Law Reform Commission are underway. Special attention will be given to provide Rodrigues with other amenities. Government has initiated consultations regarding the construction of dams for the storage of water and the improvement of the water distribution network as well as the setting up of desalination plants. The Singaporeans, when they come here, will also look into the water supply in Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will continue to press for the early return of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius and for the resettlement of the Chagossians. In recognition of the hardship encountered by the inhuman and illegal deportation of the Chagossians from their birthplace, my Government has decided to declare 03 November, a special day of commemoration of the deportation of the Chagos community. That decision has coincided with the provocative decision of the UK to set up the Marine Protected Area around the Chagos

Islands, but excluding Diégo Garcia. This is a disguised and deceitful means to prevent Mauritius enjoying its sovereignty on the archipelago and avoid the return of the Chagossians to their birthplace.

We will pursue our legitimate claim for the recognition of our Sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and the resettlement of the Chagossians and on that we must speak with one voice.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I was mentioning water in Rodrigues, but it remains one of the top priorities in Mauritius as well. The Deputy Prime Minister spoke of it, it is a strategic resource for social and economic development. We have to satisfy the increasing demand from both domestic and economic consumers and address the problem of water shortage and as the Deputy Prime Minister has rightly said, it is not a problem that we can fix by just doing one bit in one area and one bit in another area. We have to look at it globally. We must have a look at the whole picture. We have undertaken to invest about Rs4 billion in the construction of two large dams at Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles and mobilise additional water at Mare aux Vacoas. An investment of more than Rs 6 billion is being made in the development of sanitation infrastructure which will go on until 2013. This investment includes a heavy Government subsidy for connecting households to the sewer system. During my official mission to Singapore, I had a working session also with the Public Utilities Board (PUB). PUB is the sole body responsible for the water sector in Singapore. In Mauritius we have four bodies responsible for the water sector. Four bodies we have duplication or else we have one not doing what the others are doing or are doing exactly what the others are supposed to be doing. We need to rationalise this. That was the first thing that struck me that they have only one body responsible for water sector in Singapore. Singapore imports water from Malaysia. We know the story. Actually, it imports water from Malaysia. It has set up water catchment areas and installed desalination plants. The country covers one third the total surface area of Mauritius. Its population is nearly five times that of Mauritius plus the number of tourists that comes and goes, but still water is supplied to the whole country on a 24 hour basis and clean water on top of that. In Singapore, the price of water reflects its strategic importance. Wastage is rated to 5% compared to 50% in Mauritius. So, we have to look at that too. People must know what commodity is strategic and is important for the country. I am sure that you know that Einstein said that the third world war will not be about oil, gold or diamond, but would be about water. Here, we are surrounded by

water, we have plenty of water, but there is unbelievable wastage. That must stop; there are ways of stopping that and that is what we intend to do. I have asked the PUB to send a high level delegation to Mauritius to advise us on the measures to adopt to better manage water supply in Mauritius and Rodrigues and I must say that I was there only recently. They have already been there, they have already met those they had to meet and they are about to submit a report. In the meantime, as the Deputy Prime Minister has said, we have decided in the meantime to have a complete overhaul of the management of the Central Water Authority (CWA).

Mr Speaker, Sir, in May 2010, I solicited the support of the electorate for a new mandate with a feeling of achievement. We have kept our promises and steered the country through an unprecedented global recession, without forgetting the most vulnerable groups in our society. We have combined economic efficiency with social justice. But we must remain vigilant. We still have the threat of a double-dip in the world recession. Stronger economies than ours are experiencing great difficulties. You only have to read the international news or look at the television to see what is happening in the world. After Greece, recently, we are witnessing what is happening to the Celtic Tiger, Ireland – a country which the Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself know very well. Today after Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Iceland, the UK and the USA, now Ireland is in dire economic straits. Ireland had become the richest country per capita in the whole of Europe maybe about less than 20 years ago – that is why it was called the Celtic Tiger. Today, the Irish people are facing the worst austerity measures ever. For the benefit of everybody who is listening to me, they are now facing massive cuts in public expenditure. They are facing tax hikes including VAT, they are facing wage cuts with thousands and thousands of people losing their jobs. The same thing is happening into UK, but in Ireland it is even more. That is why we must not ignore what is happening in the world. Today globalisation is a reality. We cannot act as if we are immune to the world economy. We can make our economy resilient, but we cannot be immune totally to what is happening in the world. Mr Speaker, Sir, the election is over. At least I think so. This Government, this Alliance bleu-blanc-rouge got a clear mandate to take decisions and govern. And we are united in our purpose. We are determined to work together in the national interest.

(Interruptions)

Criticism in a democracy is important. I am the first one to say it. It is part of democracy, but I find it inconceivable that those timid souls who never dared to jump in the political arena

and to face the public, who prefer to be in the background or who were roundly rejected, go and see I think sometime they write opinions in the papers. Go and see how many votes they got. Some of them got 1% or 2% of votes, but they have opinions, very important opinions, and they want to dictate the newly elected Government on what it should or should not do. The Government has had a resounding mandate from the people to govern. That is exactly what it intends to do.

(Interruptions)

I have not been elected, the front bench, and all the hon. Members have not been elected here to sit and to listen to people who are not elected by the people. That is why we have been elected. We have to face the population. We have a vision and we have a purpose. We cannot, of course, please everyone. Government was never about pleasing everyone. We cannot do all we want also when I hear some people speaking especially those do gooders who write long articles in the press. They do as if Mauritius is Eldorado. America is not able to do everything it wants to do. It is basic economics. Even if we had all the resources in the world, we would not be able to do all we want because time is a constraint.

We must get our priorities right, and we have stated in this Government Programme what our priorities are. We must, and we will act in the interest of the whole nation. That is what we must do. I always welcome constructive criticisms, but not criticisms just for the sake of it, without any proposition, as I have heard the barren Opposition speak, Mr Speaker, Sir. No alternatives! No proposals that they can make! What we should do as a nation, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to come together, and I'll tell people: grow up. We are in a new century. Lots of things are happening in the world. The world is changing. We must look at our interest, our national interest. As a nation, we should come together, mobilise all our creative energies, change our mindset, act responsibly with discipline, and build our future together in unity, equity and modernity.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(7.21 p.m.)

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, c'est pour moi un privilège de clore le débat sur le discours-programme 2010-2015 présenté par le Président de la République le 08 juin dernier. Il s'agit incontestablement d'un programme très ambitieux qui s'inscrit dans la continuité du précédent gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale pour une société basée sur l'unité, l'égalité et la modernité. L'objectif de ce programme est de poursuivre la transformation du pays, tout en se donnant les moyens pour lutter contre la pauvreté et améliorer de vie des mauriciens et, en même temps, de rehausser le pouvoir d'achat de la population dans son ensemble.

Je regrette l'absence du *Leader* de l'opposition et les députés du MMM cet après-midi dans l'hémicycle. Je tiens à féliciter quand même tous les intervenants des deux côtés de la Chambre pour la qualité de leurs interventions. Nous avons entendu des idées, des opinions divergentes et convergentes, mais aussi des critiques. L'opposition a beaucoup critiqué le discours-programme, sans pour autant apporter des propositions concrètes. Je tiens à saluer en particulier les nouveaux députés qui, comme moi, sont à leur première participation, pour la haute tenue des débats. Il s'agit d'une belle preuve de démocratie vivante au sein de notre Assemblée nationale.

Constituée le 06 mai dernier, l'équipe gouvernementale, composée d'hommes et de femmes motivés et compétents, ont bien entamé le début de ce mandat. M. le président, on dit souvent qu'en sport, la valeur individuelle des joueurs est importante certes, mais qu'elle est loin de tout faire. C'est l'esprit d'équipe qui compte avant tout, parce que, sans cet esprit d'équipe, il n'y a point de réussite, et qui dit d'esprit d'équipe dit aussi excellent *leader* ; un *leader* imbibé de qualités hors pair.

Nous avons la chance d'avoir à la tête du pays un *leader* solide et clairvoyant, en la personne de notre Premier ministre, le docteur Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Il n'y a pas un seul jour où il ne fait mention de l'importance de l'unité nationale comme toile de fond pour tout cheminement menant vers le progrès social et économique. L'effort pour maintenir la paix et l'équilibre du tissu social, surtout dans un pays mosaïque comme le nôtre, est un combat

quotidien et sans relâche. On doit saluer notre Premier ministre pour son dévouement, voire son obstination sur ce point, dans quasiment tous ses discours et interventions publics.

M. le président, à peine six mois depuis l'installation du nouveau gouvernement aux commandes, et avant même l'adoption du programme gouvernemental, on peut constater que le gouvernement est déjà au travail, et plusieurs projets annoncés dans le discours-programme ont été entamés. Je souhaiterai, permettez moi, M. le président, citer quelques exemples. Le pays est un vaste chantier, surtout au niveau de l'amélioration des infrastructures routières qui favorisent la mobilité de la population et contribue à l'amélioration de la circulation des biens et des personnes. Concernant l'éducation, je voudrais remercier le ministre de l'éducation et des ressources humaines, le Dr. Vasant Bunwaree, qui a tenu son engagement d'organiser un forum national autour de la langue créole. En parallèle, des actions ont été entreprises pour l'introduction du bhojpuri. Un comité technique, sous la tutelle du MGI, travaille sur les modalités.

Mr Speaker, Sir, still in the field of education, paragraph 151 of the Government Programme introduces the right mix of measures to reverse the failure rate at primary level. I have no doubt that the enhancement programme, the 'bridging the gap', the diagnostic assessment, as well as the remedial education, programmes which are called upon, be further consolidated next year, and will bring more fairness and justice in our education system. Furthermore, I totally abide to the various means and ways that the Minister is presently embarked to fight absenteeism.

M. le président, le 25 novembre prochain, nous allons commémorer la journée internationale pour l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes. M. Ban Ki-moon, secrétaire général des nations unies, a dit, je cite –

« Il y a une vérité universelle applicable à tous les pays, cultures et communautés. La violence à l'égard des femmes n'est jamais acceptable, jamais excusable, jamais tolérable. »

Le gouvernement est évidemment préoccupé par cette situation. En tant que femme, je condamne l'augmentation sensible des actes de violence sexuelle dirigés notamment contre les femmes et les enfants. Je suis au courant des efforts entrepris par madame Sheilabai Bappoo, la

ministre de tutelle, pour restructurer les services concernant la protection des enfants. Des *community child watch* seront opérationnels dans vingt régions, pour identifier les enfants à risque et signaler la rapidité des mesures correctives. Madame Bappoo a déjà engagé une bataille acharnée pour combattre toute forme de violence envers les enfants. Aussi, le mois dernier, une campagne nationale de consolidation des valeurs au sein de la famille a été lancée par le ministère de l'Égalité du genre, du Développement de l'Enfant et du Bien-être de la famille, pour démontrer clairement la volonté politique de réduire le nombre de cas de violence dans les familles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as mentioned in the Government Programme regarding the tourism sector, the House will be pleased to note that direct air links are in the process of being negotiated towards new destinations such as China, which represent a high potential for growth. Furthermore, aggressive campaigns are being carried out to position Mauritius as an attractive cruise destination in this part of the world. The House will wish to know that a wide array of leisure activities in general for tourists are organised for the local population. Also, a series of measures have additionally been adopted by the Ministry to promote Mauritius as a clean environment-friendly and up market tourist destination and to democratise the tourism sector with priority being given to small operators.

Nous avons écouté à l'instant les brillantes interventions du vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, du *Deputy Prime Minister* et ministre des énergies renouvelables et du Premier ministre lui-même. Le message du Premier ministre est extraordinaire et très prometteur. Il s'agit bien d'un signal très fort pour l'avenir de notre pays.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we understand that during his recent official visit to Singapore, our Prime Minister was highly impressed by the level of infrastructural development and he has voiced out this opinion that Mauritius should develop the ambition of becoming an island city State. *Il faut oser et à partir de là bâtir notre réussite. C'est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup de travail à faire. On n'a pas la prétention de devenir une copie de Singapour demain, mais il n'y a aucun mal à émuler le model singapourien.* Naturally, it will entail a levelling of our infrastructure and services between our towns and villages. May I hasten to add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Government Programme for 2010-2015 already contains a gamut of initiatives and project in this direction. The *métro léger* is back on the drawing board as part of that strategy.

M. le président, le gouvernement, sous la direction du Premier ministre, est résolu à relever le défi multi formes auquel est confronté notre pays à la lumière des changements sociaux, économiques et politiques qui se produisent dans le monde. Les ambitions et les moyens sont là. Sous le *leadership* fort et visionnaire de notre Premier ministre, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, j'ai la ferme conviction que nous avons entre nos mains tous les atouts nécessaires pour mener à bon port l'éclosion d'une nouvelle île Maurice, moderne et prospère, non seulement matériellement mais aussi en termes de respect, de valeur humaine.

Notre Premier ministre prépare l'avenir pour que notre pays puisse hisser aux plus hautes côtes du bien-être et de la qualité de la vie. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam avait une grande vision et il a jeté les bases d'une île Maurice moderne. Nous sommes convaincus que son héritier, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, Premier ministre de la République de l'île Maurice, au terme de son mandat va réussir son grand pari de transformer notre pays d'ici 2015 en un pays beaucoup plus uni, fort et prospère avec de nouveaux pôles de croissance. Sur cette note je clos mon discours. Je remercie la Chambre pour son attention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these words, I now commend the motion to the House.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The motion was, on question put agreed to.

Resolved:

"This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved".

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the House to Friday 19 November 2010 at 5.00 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 7.36 p.m. the sitting was, on its rising, adjourned to 19 November 2010 at 5.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

AGALEGA - INDIAN AUTHORITIES - DISCUSSIONS

(No. 1B/593) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if any discussions have been initiated with the Indian Authorities concerning Agalega and if so, indicate -

- (a) the nature thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to state again in an unequivocal manner what I have said before. This Government has never agreed to cede the Island of Agalega to any foreign state.

As the House is aware, my Government has already invested significantly to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of Agalega and to foster economic development there. 59 Agalean families have already received the letter of intent for the lease of land and houses. Agaleans also receive Television and Radio programmes from Mauritius and now benefit from cellular phone facilities. Other development projects in Agalega include -

- (I) the construction of a refugee centre for use by the inhabitants in case of natural disasters such as tsunami and cyclones etc;
- (II) a tide gauge has been installed to monitor the size of waves;
- (III) the construction of a National Coast Guard building has started in June 2010 and will be completed in December 2010;

- (IV) under the Food Security Fund a Food Security Unit has been set up. Two acres of land have already been cleared for the growing of vegetables on the island;
- (V) a fire fighting vehicle is being purchased by the Outer Island Development Corporation;
- (VI) a Coastal Radar Surveillance System is being set up in Agalega; the construction will be starting soon.

I have also decided to set up a small clinic for emergencies and for the delivery of babies. (at present Agaleans have to travel to Mauritius for the delivery of babies).

However, the lack of basic infrastructure, in particular, a port and a proper airstrip has seriously constrained further development of the Island.

There is no port as such in Agalega but only a jetty and this is not appropriate. These projects are costly; only the resurfacing of the airstrip is estimated to cost Rs187 m. and even a small port would cost more.

This is why, during an official visit to India, I discussed with the Indian Authorities the possibilities of providing financial and technical assistance for the development of the Island, including the construction of an airstrip and the development of the port infrastructure.

The Government of India replied positively to my request and dispatched a delegation to carry out an audit of existing facilities on the Island. The experts concluded that the development of Agalega should be planned in two phases. The first phase related to the reconstruction of the runway and the second one planning over a period of three years, aimed at extending the airstrip to provide for landing of bigger aircrafts and cargo planes.

We are presently considering an appropriate framework encompassing areas of assistance in the context of the development of Agalega – whether the assistance would be in the form of a loan or a grant and so on.

The Indian Government has also agreed to provide assistance for the development of economic activities such as fishing, agriculture and tourism-related projects.

I should also like to state that a Mauritian national together with foreign partners have submitted a tourism project (Arcon). The project is being reviewed as the original project covered too large an area. We have to realize that Agalega has a fragile eco-system. The promoters are resubmitting the project and they have been asked to include the participation of local inhabitants in the project.

**MURDER & MANSLAUGHTER OFFENCES – 2000-2010 –
CONVICTION & BAIL**

(No. 1B/595) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the offences of murder and manslaughter, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since 2000 to 2010, indicating the number of -

- (a) conviction secured, and
- (b) persons accused therefor, who are currently on bail.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that between 2000 and 11 November 2010, 297 cases of murder and 41 cases of manslaughter were reported. 119 persons were convicted for the offence of murder and 11 for manslaughter.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 153 persons accused for murder and 19 persons accused for manslaughter are currently on bail.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

(No. 1B/596) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the proposal for constitutional reforms and/or for a “Second Republic”, he will state if consideration will be given to -

- (a) bringing changes in the electoral system;
- (b) strengthening the provisions for the freedom of expression and association to include, *inter alia*, freedom of the press;
- (c) the setting up of a Senate, and
- (d) making provisions for -
 - (i) the safeguarding of democracy in local government;
 - (ii) the abolition of the mandatory declaration of communal belonging by candidates, and
 - (iii) a charter of social, economic and ecological rights, and if so, when, indicating the procedure therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MEDIA TRUST – BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(No. 1B/597) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Media Trust, he will state when was the Board of Trustees last appointed, indicating if the Board has been regularly reconstituted as provided for by the Media Trust Act and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MOTORWAYS – MOTOR BIKE RACES

(No. 1B/598) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he is aware of the holding of motor bike races at night on the motorways and if so, indicate the -

- (a) measures that have been taken to interdict such races, and
- (b) number of reported cases of accident related to these races, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that motor bike races are not allowed on the motorway.

As regards part (a) of the question, Police is taking the following measures to clamp down such activities -

- (i) since September 2009 a new field operations-oriented unit known as the “Traffic Field and Motorway Patrol Division” is implementing the motorway policing strategy whereby Traffic Field Officers provide mobile patrol throughout the night along the motorway from SSR International Airport up to Grand Bay roundabout, and
- (ii) localised crack down operations are carried out by the Divisional Support Unit, the Divisional Traffic Police, the Criminal Investigation Division, the Emergency Response Services, the Special Supporting Unit, the Regular Police and, if required, the Special Mobile Force.

Also, as a preventive measure, the Land Transport Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping is amending the Road Traffic Act to provide for harsher penalties for illegal road racing.

In regard to part (b) of the question, no accident related to any such illegal motor bike races at night has been reported to the Police.

CITÉ LA CURE – CYCLONE REFUGEE CENTRE

(No. 1B/635) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether she is aware that there is no Cyclone Refugee Centre at Cité La Cure and if so, will she state if Government proposes to provide one thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare that the Cité La Cure Community Centre was listed as a Cyclone Refugee Centre prior to 2007.

The use of the Cité La Cure Community Centre as a Refugee Centre was thereafter discontinued as part of the Centre is being temporarily used to house the Community Health Centre of the locality.

In the circumstances, the refugees in the locality of Cité La Cure will be directed to the Ste Croix Social Welfare Centre and the Vallée des Prêtres Cooperative Credit Society Complex.

PRISONS - INMATES

(No. 1A/131) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the -

(a) total number of inmates, as at to date -

(i) indicating the number thereof being first time offenders;

(ii) giving a breakdown in terms of broad categories of offences committed, including drug offences, and

(b) the present policy and practice concerning the designation of any particular prison for the detention of any individual, once sentenced to imprisonment.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows -

(a) As at 12 November 2010, the prison population stood at 2,481, of whom 1,672 were convicted detainees and 809 were on remand.

Out of the 2,481 detainees, 1,021 were first time offenders, of whom 670 were convicted detainees and 351 on remand.

(b) A breakdown in terms of broad categories of offences committed by the detainees for which they are being detained in penal institutions is given in the table below -

OFFENCES	NO. OF CONVICTED DETAINEES	NO. OF DETAINEES ON REMAND	TOTAL
Larceny	632	386	1018
Drug-related Offences	563	263	826
Murder	27	84	111
Wounds & Blows causing death	57	2	59
Manslaughter	50	1	51
Rape	37	12	49
Assault	24	13	37
Others	246	84	330
TOTAL	1636	845	2481

**CIVIL SERVICE – SENIOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE, PERMANENT SECRETARY
& ASSISTANT SECRETARY - VACANCY**

(No. 1A/132) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the grade of Senior Chief Executive, Permanent Secretary, Principal Assistant Secretary and Assistant Secretary, he will state if there is any vacancy and if so, indicate the

(a) number, and

(b) reasons for the non-filling thereof.

Reply: As at to date, the number of vacancies in the grades in question is as follows -

Senior Chief Executive	-	5
Permanent Secretary	-	12
Principal Assistant Secretary	-	1

There are no vacancies at present in the grade of Assistant Secretary.

Following the reconstitution of the Cabinet in May last, and the consequent creation of new Ministries, an exercise was undertaken to reassess the human resource requirements in the Administrative Cadre. This exercise having now been completed, appropriate recommendations will be made to the Public Service Commission shortly for the filling of the vacancies in the Administrative Cadre to meet the exigencies of the service.

However, filling of vacancies is not and cannot be automatic as it is precisely the exigencies of the service that dictate the need or not to fill them.

It is to be noted that, pending the filling of the existing vacancies on a permanent basis, most of the vacancies have been filled on a temporary basis by assigning the duties of the posts to officers from down the hierarchy. As a matter of fact, nine Principal Assistant Secretaries have been assigned the duties of Permanent Secretary against the existing vacancies and 12 Assistant Secretaries have been assigned the duties of Principal Assistant Secretary against the consequential and other temporary vacancies.

In fact, no Ministry has been left without either a Supervising Officer or a Permanent Secretary, (either full fledged or in an acting capacity) at its head.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1B/616) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the

Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating in each case –

- (a) since when their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Curepipe and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE - FOOD AND BEVERAGES - SUPPLIERS

(No. 1B/617) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the supply of food and beverages for the events organized by or sponsored by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the suppliers, indicating the

- (a) criteria used for the selection thereof, and
- (b) amount paid to each of them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Curepipe and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE – MAYOR’S FUND – BENEFCIARIES

(No. 1B/618) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mayor’s Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, a breakdown thereof, since October 2005 todate, indicating the names of the beneficiaries thereof, and in each case the –

- (a) quantum thereof, and
- (b) purpose therefor.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Curepipe and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

CRÈVE COEUR - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/634) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the difficulties experienced by the inhabitants of Crève Coeur regarding water supply and if so, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that are being taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed that the villages of Crève Coeur and Malinga are supplied from Beau Bois borehole through Malinga Reservoir. The normal production at Beau Bois Borehole is 1800m³/day and during normal season water is supplied on a 24 hour basis to the two villages.

Due to the dry season, the yield at Beau Bois Borehole has decreased from 1800m³/day in September to 1000m³/day as at today. As a result, water is being supplied from 04.00 hrs to 10.00 hrs and from 16.30 hrs to 19.30 hrs during the dry season. This is supplemented by a water tanker service.

As a long term solution to improve the water supply in the regions, CWA proposes to -

- (i) construct a pumping station at Notre Dame to be fitted with a booster. It is expected that the works would start in 2012, and
- (ii) increase the treatment capacity of the La Nicolière treatment Plant from 66,000 m³ to 100,000 m³ daily. AFD has been approached to provide funds for this project.

LES SALINES – HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT

(No. 1B/636) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the implementation of the Highway project at Les Salines, Port Louis, he will state if private properties will have to be compulsorily acquired for the purpose

thereof and if so, the mechanisms set forth to inform the inhabitants and the owners thereof as to their delocation and compensation.

Reply: In regard to the implementation of the Harbour Bridge Project at Les Salines, private properties will have to be compulsorily acquired. Acquisition will be carried out in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act. Searches are presently under way to establish the list and ownership of properties likely to be affected by the project. In parallel, a Technical Committee chaired by my Ministry and comprising representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Road Development Authority, the Mauritius Ports Authority, the Municipality of Port Louis and the Valuation Office is working on streamlining procedures to ensure that the acquisition process runs smoothly and compensation and relocation issues are resolved early. Consultations with the inhabitants whose lands will be affected will start shortly.

INTERNET ACCESS - PRICING POLICY

(No. 1B/637) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to internet access, he will state if Government proposes to review downwards its pricing policy and if so, when.

Reply: It is a fact that, in a liberalised market, the question of pricing of internet offers made to the public lies with the Internet Service Providers, i.e. the ISPs. The ISP has to seek the approval of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) for any intended change in tariffs. This procedure is in accordance with the requirements under Section 31 of the ICT Act and is mandatory prior to a decision being made by the ICTA regarding tariff for any telecommunication services. The ICTA has not, so far, received any application from the ISPs.

However, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom Ltd, which offers bandwidth to ISPs, that it is currently working on a proposal for a reduction in tariff and that the proposal will, very shortly, be submitted to ICTA for approval. Such a reduction in tariff would enable ISPs to offer reduced retail tariffs to the public.

I would also wish to inform the House that this Government has recently introduced an 'Open Access Policy' for undersea cable landing stations in Mauritius with a view to further stimulating competition in the ICT market. The Open Access Policy would allow interested parties, on equal conditions with a transparent relation between cost and pricing, to get access to and share communication resources on one level to provide value-added services on another level in layered communication system architecture. It also encourages market entry from smaller local companies and seeks to ensure that no entity can take a position of dominant market power.

I have every reason to believe that this policy decision will lead to a further decrease in the cost of internet services in the near future.

MOTORWAY M1 - LIGHTING POSTS, RAIL FRAMES & DRAIN MAINTENANCE

(No. 1B/638) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Motorway M1, he will state how -

- (a) from Sorèze to the Caudan Roundabout, the lighting posts, overhead lamps and the two kilometers of metal protection rail frames and accessories aligning the motorway have been disposed of, indicating;
 - (i) by whom, and
 - (ii) to whom, and
- (b) from Montebello to the Caudan Roundabout, the maintenance of the newly built drain will be carried out due to the narrow inlet of rainwater.

(Withdrawn)

L'AVENIR, ST PIERRE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/639) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground at

L'Avenir, St Pierre, he will state if consideration will be given for the fencing and lighting thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that the lighting of L'Avenir Football ground is in progress and is expected to be completed by the end of December 2010.

With regard to the question of fencing the football ground with block wall, the Council has informed that it will not be in a position to undertake these works estimated to cost Rs2.8m. due to financial constraints. However, consideration will be given to the implementation of this project in the next budgetary exercise.

CONSTITUENCY No. 3 - NDU - PROJECTS

(No. 1A/133) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the National Development Unit, in Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, for the period July 2005 to-date, he will give the list thereof, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) nature;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

HAROLD ALFRED WHELDON STREET, CITÉ ROCHE BOIS – STORM DRAIN

(No. 1A/134) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the presence of stagnant water and waste in the storm drain, found along the Harold Alfred Wheldon Street, towards the Ruisseau Terre Rouge Sanctuary, Cité Roche Bois, thereby emitting foul smell and causing recurrent environmental problems and if so, will he, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Reply: The Municipal Council of Port Louis has informed that there is a problem of water stagnation and waste in the storm drain found along the Harold Alfred Wheldon Street in Cite Roche Bois which is due to low gradient of the drain.

I am informed that appropriate corrective measures are being taken by its Works Department to address this problem. Meanwhile, Maxiclean Co Ltd, the Contractor of the Council has been instructed to intensify and monitor the cleaning of the drain and scavenging service in that region on a regular basis.

CSR - CONTRIBUTIONS

(No. 1A/135) 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 multiple payments of Corporate Social Responsibility contributions on the same book profits depending on the number of layers of ownership, he will state if Government proposes to exempt from the 2% CSR contribution, the portion of “CSR book profits”, made up of dividends, from companies already subjected to the CSR.

Reply: Companies have the duty to balance their own economic growth with the sustainable social and environmental development in their respective areas of operation. Some companies were fulfilling their obligations voluntarily whilst others were not doing enough.

This situation compelled Government to introduce the Corporate Social Responsibility contribution as from July 2009 on all profitable companies. Those companies are now required to devote at least 2 percent of their book profits, that is, the profit figure published in their financial statements, towards programmes that contribute to the social and environmental development of the country. Any amount not spent by those companies is required to be remitted to the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Extensive guidelines have been prepared by the National Empowerment Foundation to allow those companies to implement approved programmes themselves and facilitate CSR contributions to approved NGOs and approved national programmes.

The 2 percent of profit figure is the minimum contribution required and companies are encouraged to do much more. I am informed that there are companies allocating more than the statutory requirement to CSR activities.

The question now being raised is whether CSR should not be imposed on dividends received by holding companies out of profits already subject to CSR.

Representations have indeed been received in this respect in the course of the budget consultation exercise and are currently being examined at the level of my Ministry.

DOG ATTACKS - CASES

(No. 1A/136) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to attacks by dogs, he will state the number of reported cases thereof, since 2005 to 2010, on a yearly basis, indicating the-

(a) breeds involved and

(b) steps taken by his Ministry to

(i) protect the population against such attacks and

(ii) prevent the proliferation, breeding and importation of the extremely dangerous breeds.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since year 2005, till date, 657 cases of dog attacks have been reported to the Police. A breakdown of these cases is as follows -

Year	Number of cases reported	Breeds
2005	84	
2006	84	
2007	96	1 Case 3 dogs Boxer
2008	91	
2009	141	2 cases for German Shepherd
2010	161	2 cases Rottweiler

(as at 12.11.2010)		1 case German Shepherd
Total	657	

In only four cases the breeds of the dogs were confirmed to be a German Shepherd, Rottweiler and Boxer, while the rest are of unknown breeds.

(c) According to Section 6A of the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, any person wishing to breed dogs must register as a breeder with the MSPCA. However since this Act dates back to 1972, many aspects of breeding and importation of dangerous breeds of dogs have not been taken into consideration.

In order to address all the issues in an effective manner, my Ministry in close collaboration with the State Law Office is working on a Dog Control Bill. The Bill will make better provision for the care and control of dogs, damage caused by dogs and will regulate dog breeding. Obligations of dog owners and dog breeders will be clearly spelt out in the Bill.

A schedule indicating breeds of dogs which are not allowed for imports have been worked out. The list includes breeds like Pit Bull Terrier, Boerboel and Japanese Tosa. Another list of dogs which could be allowed for import but under very strict conditions has been worked out. This list includes breeds like Doberman and Rottweiler. A first draft of the bill has been discussed with all stakeholders and their views taken on board.

HUMAN TISSUE COLLECTION AND TRANSPLANT - LEGAL FRAMEWORK

(No. 1A/137) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to human tissue collection and transplant, she will state where matters stand in relation to the putting in place of the legal and logistic requirements therefor.

Reply: The Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) Act 2006 was passed by the National Assembly on 25 April 2006. The Act aims at providing the appropriate legal framework for carrying out the removal, preservation and transplant of human tissue, other than blood, under appropriate medical supervision.

Only section 16 of the Act was proclaimed on 11 July 2006 with a view to set up the “Organ and Tissue Transplant Board”.

The Board was constituted in August, 2007. It has met on three occasions and found that there existed shortcomings in the Act and proposed in full review in order to address these loopholes.

In that connection, it was decided to seek assistance of the World Health Organisation to get the services of a Consultant in this field. On 25 October 2010, WHO delegated Dr. (Mrs) Marie Pierre CRESTA-GRAZANIA, Consultant, to Mauritius for a period of one week. During her visit, she had working sessions with Members of the Board, Consultants in Charge and other stakeholders. She also visited the SSRN, Victoria, J. Nehru and S. Bharati Eye Hospitals.

She will submit her proposals on the amendments to be brought to the Act and is expected to visit Mauritius in January 2011. Based on her recommendations and further consultations necessary amendments would be made to the Act.

CWA - LA CHAPELLE BRIDGE, CITÉ LA BRASSERIE – WATER SEEPAGE

(No. 1A/138) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the deplorable state of a major Central Water Authority pipe found under the La Chapelle bridge, at Cité La Brasserie, and of the urgent need of repairs thereof and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the course of action that will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that it has observed water seepage from the concrete surround along the ductile iron pipe crossing La Chapelle bridge.

Since it is not advisable to break the concrete surround near the bridge, the Central Water Authority is taking steps to realign the pipe over a stretch of 200 metres.

HAJJ PILGRIMAGE 2010 - HAJJ MISSION

(No. 1A/139) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis & and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Hajj mission for the

Hajj Pilgrimage 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to the composition thereof, indicating the –

- (a) criteria followed for the selection of the members thereof;
- (b) training given to the members, and
- (c) *per diem* allowances and all other benefits to which each member is entitled.

Reply: The information sought is as follows –

The composition of the Hajj mission 2010 is as follows -

1. Dr Farhad Aumeer
2. Mr Rashad Daureeawoo
3. Dr Farard Kauroo
4. Mr Swadeck Somally
5. Mr Nazeem Ellaheebaccus
6. Mr Twahair Budullah
7. Mr Aboo Bakar Manjoo
8. Mr Yassin Dulloo
9. Mr Mustapha Bholah

As regards part (a), criteria for the selection of the members are as follows -

- knowledge of Hajj rituals and organisation;
- familiarity with operation of Saudi bodies responsible for the management of Hajj;
- interpersonal skills and communication abilities;
- ability to perform in a team;

- capability to work in difficult situations at odd hours in a foreign environment;
- knowledge of Arabic Language, and
- experience in Hajj matters.

As regards part (b) of the question -

- Some members formed part of the pre-Hajj Mission and accommodation inspection mission and attended training session on the new transport arrangement for Hajj 2010.
- ICC organised preparatory meetings prior to the departure of the mission members to Saudi Arabia.
- Mission members have also attended the 'Hajj Awareness Programmes' held at the ICC.

As regards part (c), each member is entitled to the following -

- (i) Airfare;
- (ii) Accommodation;
- (iii) internal transport, and
- (iv) an allowance of 2000 Saudi Ryals.

TRANQUEBAR - RING ROAD PROJECT

(No. 1A/140) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Ring Road project, he will state the number of people in the region of Tranquebar who will have to be relocated, indicating the sites where they will be relocated.

Reply: A preliminary survey has revealed that some 60 families in the region of Tranquebar are likely to be affected with the implementation of the Ring Road Project. These families are presently residing on privately owned land.

Once the alignment of the Ring Road is finalised, the procedures for the acquisition of the private land will be initiated and appropriate compensation will be paid to the owners.

(1A/141) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Non-Governmental Organisations and *Forces Vives* he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Fund, a list thereof who have received funds from the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable groups Unit of the National Empowerment Fund for the distribution of school materials and social housing, since 2006 to date, indicating in each case, the amount of money disbursed.

Reply: Information obtained from the National Empowerment Foundation in respect of funds disbursed by the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups to approved NGOs for the provision of school materials and for social housing during the period July 2006 to October 2010, is being placed in the Library.

AFRIKAN TOWN AND TROIS BRAS, SURINAM - ROAD ALIGNMENT

(No. 1A/142) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the survey plan and details of road alignment of the squatter areas of Afrikan Town and Trois Bras, Surinam, he will state where matters stands.

Reply: The survey plans and details of road alignment for the squatters of African Town and Trois Bras, Surinam have been completed and have been forwarded to the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands for the tarring of roads and provision of basic amenities.

It is to be noted that the National Empowerment Foundation is also working on an integrated rehabilitation project for the African Town and Trois Bras, Surinam regarding construction of roads and drains as well as provision of social amenities including water and electricity.

COTTEAU RAFFIN - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1A/143) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he is aware that the Cotteau Raffin football ground, in

Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, requires a proper surface, fencing and lighting and if so, will he state if remedial actions will be taken in relation thereto and if so, when.

Reply (The Minister of Local Government & Outer Islands): I am informed by the Black River District Council that the upgrading of the surface of the coteau Raffin football ground will be carried out by the end of December 2010.

As regards the project for fencing and lighting of the football ground, I am informed that same may be considered during fiscal year 2011 subject to availability of funds.

MINISTER OF YOUTH & SPORTS – SPECIAL VACANCES - ACTIVITIES

(No. 1A/144) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the forthcoming school vacation, he will give a list of the activities that his Ministry proposes to organize in respect of each region, indicating the dates and venues therefor.

Reply : List of activities for Special Vacances –

November / December 2010

Date	Activity	Venue
3 – 16 November	Animation Sportive Petanque/Table Tennis/Badminton/Basketball	Riv. Du Rempart Youth Centre
9 November	Community Service by Goodlands Youth Centre	Gandhi Ashram, Petit Raffray
9 November	Voluntary Day	Cheshire Home Tamarin
12 November	Journée Récréative	Anse La Raie Youth Training Centre
13 november	Creativity Day by Roche Bois Youth Centre	Lacaz A, Cassis
15 November	Hiking (for regions of Savanne/Grand Port & Upper Plains Wilhems)	Le Souffleur & La Cambuse

16 November	Hiking (for regions of Moka & Flacq)	Le Souffleur & La Cambuse
15-21 November	Animation Sportive	Tranquebar Youth Centre
16 November	Journée Recréative (Carrom/T.Tennis/Questions pour un Champion)	Goodlands Youth Centre
18 November	Salon Culinaire	Riv. du Rempart Youth Centre
18 November	Streetfoot	Floreal Youth Centre
17 -18 November	Jeux de L'Avenir	Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium, Vacoas
18 November	Mountaineering by Plaine Verte Youth Centre	Lion Mountain Vieux Grand Port
22-08 December	Youth Exchange	Rodrigues
23 November	Table Tennis & Volleyball Festival	Mahebourg Youth Centre
19 November	Volleyball Competition	Souillac Youth Centre
20 November	Street Football/Volleyball Festivals & Presentation of prizes	Dockers Village Youth Centre
20-27 November	Streetfoot	Chemin Grenier Youth Centre
23 November	Hiking and Fun Games (for Black River, Port-Louis & Lower Plaines Wilhems regions)	Bras d'Eau & Poste La Fayette
23 November	Journée Recreative by Pamplémousses Youth Centre	SSR Botanical Garden
22 November	Chasse aux Trésors by Goodlands Youth Centre	Grand Bay
25 November	Initiation à la Planche à Voie by	Grand Bay

	Roches Bois Youth Centre	
26 November	Basketball Festival	Mahebourg Youth Centre
26 November	Beach Games by Roche Bois Youth Centre	Flic en Flac
26 November	Table Tennis/Petanque Festival	Rose-Belle Youth Centre
26 November	Hiking (for Pamplemousses & Riv. Du Rempart regions)	Black River Gorges
27 November	Animation Musical & Dance Competition	Tamarin Youth Centre
27 November	Animation Sportive	Kennedy Youth Centre
27 November	Chasse aux Tresors & Presentation of prizes	Florida Youth Centre
27 – 28 November	Open Air Hiking & camping by Floreal Youth Centre	Le Petrin & Le Morne
29 – 30 November	Organised Camping by Florida Youth Centre and Pamplemousses Youth Centre	Anse La Raie Youth Training Centre
30 November	Animation Musicale & Talent Hunt	Riv. Du Rempart Youth Centre
30 November	Film Show	Floreal Youth Centre
2 December	Initiation à la Planche à Voile by Plaine Verte Youth Centre	Grand Bay
2 – 4 December	Animation Sportive	Pamplemousses Youth Centre
3 December	Inter generational meet	Pamplemousses Youth Centre
4 December	Pétanque Festival/Fun Games & Presentation of Prizes	Florida Youth Centre

4-5 December	Musical & Sport Animation by Floreal Youth Centre	Malherbes
6-7 December	Camping by Riv. Du Rempart Youth Centre	Anse La Raie Youth Training Centre
8 December	Animation Sportive Jeunesse en Action	Plaine Verte Youth Centre
11 December	Animation Musicale	Kennedy Youth Centre
11-12 December	Residential Seminar by Floreal Youth Centre	Anse La Raie Youth Training Centre
11-12 December	Street Football	Triolet
Sundays	Natation en Mer	Mont Choisy & Flic en Flac Public Beaches

**INTER REGION MFA FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT 2010 –
CHEBEL SC – FACILITIES**

(No. 1A/145) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the participation of the winner of the Beau Bassin/Rose Hill 1st Division Football Tournament 2010, namely the Chebel SC, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to the additional facilities put at the disposal of the team before their participation in the Inter Region MFA Football Tournament 2010.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that the following facilities were made available to the winner of the Beau Bassin/Rose Hill 1st Division Football tournament 2010 namely, the Chebel S. C. before its participation in the Inter Region MFA Football Tournament 2010 -

- (i) a 60 seater bus was put at its disposal on 09 November 2010 to convey the football team to Anjalay Stadium;
- (ii) a set of jersey/shorts and 2 footballs were donated to them on 18 August 2010, and

- (ii) the football ground of Chebel is also put at its disposal on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays as from 1800 hours for training sessions etc.

**LES GUIBIES, MORCELLEMENT RAFFRAY & MORCELLEMENT LE ROC –
RING ROAD - ACCESS**

(No. 1A/146) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the residents of Les Guibies, Morcellement Raffray and Morcellement Le Roc, he will state if they will have access to the Ring Road.

Reply: Residents of Guibies, Morcellement Raffray, Morcellement Le Roc and the general public in the area will have access to the Ring Road through a round-about which will be provided near Fong Sing Reservoir on Leal Road. Access to the Ring Road to these residents from the Motorway M1 (southbound) is also possible.

MOTORWAY – FOOTPATHS & FOOTBRIDGES

(No. 1A/147) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the motorway leading to Port-Louis, he will state the actions that are being taken to ensure the safety of the pedestrians and of the motorcyclists when the bus lane will become operational as there will be no passage connecting Camp Chapelon and Pont St. Louis to the local residents.

Reply: For the safety of pedestrians, footpaths have been constructed all along the Motorway and protected from traffic by the provision of Concrete Jersey Barriers. Pedestrians will cross the Motorway using the three existing footbridges and the new one being constructed near Food Canners. Regarding motorcyclists, they will have to use the Motorway as at present.

**JACQUES ROUGEOT POLYVALENT CENTRE – COMMUNITY HEALTH
CENTRE**

(No. 1A/148) Ms L. N. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the conversion of the Rougeot Community Centre, in Rose Hill, into a Health Care Centre, she will state where matters stand.

Reply: The Centre referred to by the hon. Member is, in fact in a Polyvalent Centre situated at Trèfles, under the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill in which my Ministry is operating an Antenatal and Family Planning Clinic.

Representations were made by the “*Forces Vives*” of Trèfles and Stanley for the setting up of a Community Health Centre at Jacques Rougeot Polyvalent Centre at Trèfles.

However, my Ministry could not accede to the request of the “*Forces Vives*” because of space constraint to accommodate a Community Health Centre there.

Negotiations were therefore initiated with the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill for additional space in the Jacques Rougeot Polyvalent Centre. The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has agreed to relocate its existing library on the ground floor elsewhere to make available additional space for the Community Health Centre, subject to my Ministry financing relocation works (masonry, electrical and other related works) to accommodate its library. My Ministry has already conveyed its agreement to the proposal. I am told that the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill will undertake the renovation works shortly. It is expected that the Community Health Centre at Trèfles will become operational within one month of the relocation of the library.

CAMP LEVIEUX - TRAFFIC LIGHT

(No. 1A/149) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the putting up of traffic lights in front of the Winners Hypermarket, in Camp Levieux, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has informed that following a survey carried out at the locus in front of the Winners Hypermarket in Camp Levieux, the setting

up of a traffic light is not warranted since the junction is operating at an acceptable level and no traffic congestion has been observed.

CITE LA CURE - NHDC HOUSING ESTATE - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1A/150) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the renovation works of the NHDC Housing Estate, at Cité La Cure, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the start and completion dates thereof;
- (b) the total cost thereof;
- (c) if there is any delay in the completion thereof, and
- (d) if the contractor has erected any illegal structure within the compound of the Estate.

Reply: From information obtained from the NHDC Ltd., renovation works are being carried out at the NHDC Housing Estate, Vallée des Prêtres, also known as Cité La Cure. The complex comprises 336 units.

The information requested for, in parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question is being laid in the Library.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the NHDC has confirmed that the contractor has not erected any illegal structure within the compound of the housing estate.

JHELUM STREET, CITÉ LA CURE - EMBELLISHMENT WORKS

(No. 1A/151) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the embellishment works along Jhelum Street, Cité La Cure, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the –

- (a) start and completion dates thereof;
- (b) total cost of the project;

- (c) percentage of works completed to date, and
- (d) cost of materials and labour therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the embellishment works at Jhelum Street, Cité La Cure started in June 2009 and will be completed by end of December 2010.

With regard to parts (b), (c) and (d) of the question, I am informed as follows -

- (i) the total project cost is Rs3 m.;
- (ii) percentage of works completed as at date is 60%, and
- (iii) cost of materials and labour as at date is Rs2,061,822.00.

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIÈRE – NDU WORKS

(No. 1A/152) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the ongoing works carried out by the National Development Unit in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will give a list thereof, region wise, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) start and completion dates thereof;
- (b) value of the contract, and
- (c) implementation schedule for the year 2011-2012.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

DRUG ADDICTS - SURVEY

(No. 1A/153) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to drug addiction, she will state the number of drug addicts in Mauritius, indicating the –

- (a) age and gender breakdown thereof;
- (b) number thereof undergoing treatment, and

(c) number of public and private centres dispensing treatment, indicating the location thereof.

Reply: I have been informed by the Commissioner of Police that there is no database as regards drug addicts. However, since 2005 and until 12 November 2010, 13,943 cases of drug addiction have been established by the Police, of whom 11,609 are male adults, 496 female adults, 158 juvenile males and 4 juvenile females.

My Ministry has carried out an Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (IBBS) Survey with the support of a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Consultant from October to December 2009 to estimate the number of Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in Mauritius.

According to that survey, the number of IDUs in the population of 15 years and above is estimated to be in the range of 5,699 to 10,444.

With regard to part (a) of the question, according to the findings of the IBBS Survey, nearly 10% of the IDUs are females. There are no figures on the age group in the estimated female IDUs.

The percentage of IDUs in the various age groups is as follows -

Age	%
< 24	6.7
25-29	15.3
30-34	19.9
35-39	15.1
40-44	13.6
45-49	13.5
>50	16.0

With regard to (b) as at 12 Nov 2010 -

- (i) 3,354 IDUs were already induced on the Methadone Substitution Therapy in public health institutions, and

- (ii) 11,175 persons were following treatment in private Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres for drug and substance abuse.

With regard to (c), Public and private centres dispensing treatment to drug and substance abusers and their locations as at 12 November 2010 are as follows –

Public Institutions

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
1.	Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital,	Port Louis
2.	Q. Victoria Hospital	Candos
3.	J. Nehru Hospital	Rose Belle
4.	SSRN Hospital	Pamplemousses
5.	Flacq Hospital	Flacq
6.	Mahebourg Hospital	Mahebourg
7.	B.Sequard Mental Health Care Centre	Beau Bassin
8.	Dr. Bouloux AHC	Port Louis
9.	Prisons Hospital	Beau Bassin
10.	Harm Reduction Unit	Barkly
11.	Mahebourg Methadone Day Care Clinic	Mahebourg
12.	Ste Croix Methadone Day Care Clinic	Ste Croix
13.	Mobile Services	Vacoas, Rose Hill, Plaine Lauzun, Port Louis, Pailles, Vallée Pitot and Sainte Croix

Private Centres:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
1. Dr Idrice Goomany Centre	Port Louis
2. Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge	Terre Rouge
3. Centre de Solidarité Pour une Nouvelle Vie	Rose Hill
4. ACTReSA Human Service Trust	Pamplemousses
5. Sangram Sewa Sadan	St Paul
6. Help De Addiction Centre	Cassis
7. LacazA	Port Louis
8. Groupe Renaissance	Mahebourg
9. Etoile d'Esperance	Moka
10. Chrysalide	Bambous

PAILLES – BUS SERVICE

(No. 1A/154) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the bus route No.150 at Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to the reasons

why the request from the stakeholders to increase the number of buses along this route has not been acceded to.

Reply: Route 150 is actually served by 12 buses owned by individual operators grouped into the Bus Owners' Cooperative Society (Port Louis).

According to the National Transport Authority the number of buses plying in route 150 is sufficient to cater for the needs of the travelling public, the more so, some of the buses have now been replaced by those with more seating capacity.

On the other hand, in order to ease the problem of students attending Pailles SSS and the residents of the other side of the motorway who actually have no direct bus service in the direction of GRNW and Cité Vallijee, the Authority, on 04 August 2008, approved the extension of route 150 to Morcellement Raffray, Pailles. It is to be noted that the initial itinerary of the route was between Vallée Pitot and St. Vincent de Paul Avenue, Pailles.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – FUNDS,

LABOUR FORCE & TRANSPORT – POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITIES

(No. 1A/155) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that municipal funds, labour force and transport are being used by the Municipal Council of Port Louis for political party activities and if so, will he state if remedial actions will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I am not aware that municipal funds, labour force and transport are being used by the Municipal Council of Port Louis for political activities.

CAMP FOUQUEREAUX - DRAINS

(No. 1B/156) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Camp Fouquereaux, he will state if he will consider -

- (a) the construction of covered drains from junction Tout-Court and the Hermitage road to join the existing drains opposite the Camp Fouquereaux roundabout, with a view to alleviating the flood prone zones in this area, and

(b) covering the existing drain aligning the Camp Fouquereaux main road leading to St Antoine.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the section of road from junction Tout-Court towards Hermitage Road is narrow and built up. Consideration is being given to acquire land on both sides of the road with a view to provide drains. In this connection, a survey will be carried out by the Road Development Authority.

Concerning part (b), the Camp Fouquereaux main road leading to St. Antoine falls under the purview of the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix. The council has informed that the drains on this road is partly covered and consideration may be given to have the remaining part covered. A survey will be carried out and a report for the covering of the uncovered part would be brought before the appropriate Committee of the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix for approval and work will be executed, thereafter, upon availability of funds.

PALMA –ZEBRA CROSSING

(No. 1B/157) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to security hazards in the region of Palma, he will state if his Ministry is envisaging the installation of a pedestrian crossing across Palma Road near the junction of Pousse Passe Avenue and Palma Road.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has already been requested to initiate necessary action for the provision of zebra crossing near the junction of Pousse Passe Avenue and Palma Road.

BELLE ROSE MARKET – PUBLIC TOILETS

(No. 1B/158) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Belle Rose market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the reasons why public toilets have not yet been constructed thereat, indicating if the construction thereof is still envisaged and if so, when.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that a public toilet already exists at Doyen Fair (ex-Belle Rose Market) which is operational every Sundays from 06.00 hrs to noon.

I am further informed that presently painting works are being carried out and a water tank is being fixed at the market.

LIST OF WATER TANKERS

SECTION	WATER TANKER NO.	DRIVER – MOBILE NO.	REGIONS SUPPLIED
Port Louis	6534 OCT 07	GOINDO 752-4961	Vallée des Prêtres Petite Rivière/Beerjeeraz
	796 FEB 99	HEMRAZ 428-9374	Industrial Estate La Tour Koenig
DWS – North	793 FEB 99	T RUPCHAND 766-1781	Colline La Pointe Morc Swan – Pereybère
	6475 DEC 07	L BALDOVOO 770-2425	Upper Crève Coeur Camp La Boue
DWS – East	795 FEB 99	COONJBEEHARRY 773-3235	EDC Bramsthan Trou d’Eau Douce
	4190 SEP 05	MANICON 932-2634	Belvédère/Lallmatie
	365 SEP 01	TOOLOOA 938-1996	Flacq Hospital (on/off)
DWS – South	6529 DEC 07	TOOFANY 764-0655	Bois des Amourettes, Kenya Bambous Virieux
	3866 DEC 02	KUREEMAN 781-4374	” ” ”

	794 DEC 99	OODHOO 709-9201	Savanne Camp Berthaud Camp Diable
MAV – Upper	4185 SEP 05 6397 DEC 07	R TOOLSEE 784-2110 A SEETA 777-4786	L’Espérance L’Avenir Dagotière Verdun Quartier Militaire Nouvelle Découverte
MAV – Lower	6311 DEC 07 3867 DEC 02 797 FEB 99	R BAWAH757-8719 KALOOTAY 913-4320 RAMBURRUTH OOTAM	Black River/ Black Roc Flic en Flac (End) Rose Hill/Quatre Bornes/ Ebene Cybercity Schools Attach to ECC Mamade Bandhoo